

***Questioning Constructions of Black Identities in Post-Apartheid
South Africa: Cross-Generational Narratives.***

Siyanda Ndlovu

25 March 1982 – 5 April 2010

Supervisor: Professor Jill Bradbury

Co-supervisor: Professor Corinne Squire (University of East London, UK)

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- 1) Ndlovu, S. (2012). "I am More (Than Just) Black": Contesting Multiplicity Through Conferring and Asserting Singularity in Narratives of Blackness. R. Josselson & M. Harway, (Eds.). *Navigating Multiple Identities: Race, Gender, Culture, Nationality, and Roles*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2) Bradbury, J. & Ndlovu, S. (2011). Dangerous Liaisons: Ties that Bind and Lines that Divide. *Psychology in Society (PINS)* 42, pp. 3 – 20.
- 3) Frankish, T. Ndlovu, S. and Clark, J. (2011). The Challenges of 'Re-Imagining' Psychology: Critical Reflections on the First Southern African Students' Psychology Conference, in E. Fourie, S. Hagen, Y. Mitchell & B. Semeya, *Re-imagining Psychology, Proceedings of the Southern African Students' Psychology Conference*. Pretoria: UNISA.
- 4) Ndlovu, S. (2010). Deracialisation! What Deracialisation?: There is no end to Race. *Psychology in Society (PINS)* 39, pp. 56 – 62.

SECTION THREE: Unpublished Papers

- 1) Ndlovu, S. (2009). *There is No-One Black: Exploring Divergent Points of Racialisation in Narratives of Blackness*. Unpublished paper, presented at the SANPAD Intergenerational Identities Research Forum, Durban, South Africa.
- 2) Ndlovu, S. (2008). *The Story of One Black Man*. Unpublished paper, presented at a Postgraduate Guest Seminar, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, 6 April 2008.
- 3) Ndlovu, S. (2007). *African Scholarship: The Impossible Ideal*. Unpublished paper, presented at a Symposium, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, 2 February, 2007.

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SECTION ONE

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Rationale for the Study: 'Race' and (My) Identity

The question of 'race' continues to be of critical significance in this globalized, postmodern multiracial and multicultural world. My interest in the study of 'race' and 'racial identity' and, in particular, 'black identity' can be expressed as a personal reflection on the fact that 'being-black-in-the-world' (Manganyi, 1973) today is quite a different experience or 'state of being' in post-apartheid South Africa, post-colonial Africa more widely and in the black diaspora, given the different socio-political, economic and material conditions that exist. This focus is fuelled by my own biography as a young, middle class, black African, Zulu-speaking, South-African man, attempting to make sense of my racial identity and social location. On one hand, I seem to be highly culturally and socially assimilated (Min and Kim, 2000) into Western culture and lifestyle while, on the other, I constantly assert and affirm my racial and ethnic identities as irrefutably marked on and by my (black) body. Thus, my interest in 'race' generally and 'blackness' or 'black identity' specifically, is not an arbitrary or merely abstract, intellectual fascination. My interest is fuelled by ideological and psychological processes of identification with and a sense of belonging to or 'being black' which is a historically marginal, oppressed socio-political category. As Du Bois (1970) would argue, as a black African, I have always felt:

...an intense personal interest in discussions as to the origins and destinies of races: primarily because back of most discussions of race with which [I am] familiar, have lurked certain assumptions as to [my] natural abilities, as to [my] political, intellectual and moral status, which [I] felt were wrong (p. 269).

In du Bois' (1970) thinking, my interest in the study of racial and black identities can be explained by my own blackness. It is because I am black that I concern myself with issues of 'black identity' and 'the black condition'. However, of course, 'blackness' as difference is not only of interest to those who are themselves black and Cashmore (2001) is critical about the prolific and intense academic inquiry into the subject of 'race' more generally and of

'blackness' and 'black culture' specifically. Cashmore's (2001) concern is primarily about the commodification of 'blackness' in both popular and academic discourses. Cashmore (2001, p. 18) asks "at what point does scholarly interest become an unhealthy obsession?" Despite such concern and suspicion about the objectification of 'race' and 'black culture', and the invisibility of 'whiteness', the question of race remains central in South Africa. The question that we need to ask is why it remains so? Why write about race and blackness 18 years after the demise of apartheid in South Africa? Surely, with the demise of racial oppression and racist legislation, 'race' should not matter anymore! I want to argue that it does and will continue to matter. Steyn (2001, pp. xxi-xxii) argues that the demise of apartheid demands a re-negotiation, a re-construction, a re-writing, a kind of re-thinking and re-making of the self and identity, both black and white.

South Africans, willingly or unwillingly, successfully or unsuccessfully, are engaged in one of the most profound collective psychological adjustments happening in the contemporary world. Situated in an existential moment that combines unique intersections of structural constraints and agency, they are selecting, editing, and borrowing from the cultural resources available to them to re-interpret old selves in the light of new knowledge and possibilities while yet retaining a sense of personal congruence. In light of the re-constitution of racial identities, the experience of being black, I argue, remains significant in South Africa despite the changes in political structures, despite the drive for economic equality and despite the adoption of the new democratic order based on non-racist principles. Having argued that, it is important to note that although the experience of being black remains central, its significance and signification do not remain the same across time and place. 'Being-black-in-the-world' (Manganyi, 1973) is a critical psychological and embodied experience that still needs to be explored and understood in both post-apartheid South Africa and the post-colonial world more widely. An exploration of 'black identity' poses existential and other questions about what it means to be black in the world. A shared black history of oppression and of 'Africa' as a common ancestral place/home, are clear departure points for defining blackness. Put differently, blackness has a clear connection with the history of racism and oppression. Mama (1995) suggests that blackness is synonymous with 'struggle', a black struggle for autonomy, for freedom and for self-definition. Like Mama (1995), blackness for Manganyi (1973, p. 19) tells a narrative of suffering and exploitation in that "black people share the experience of having been abused and exploited. This is part of [their] consciousness." Similarly, for Body-Gendrot (1998) blackness is about a shared and common history of imperialism, colonialism,

slavery and racism. However, while these historical roots are clearly significant, questions about what it means to be black in the world ‘in the present’ and ‘in the future’ are less self-evident and require explanation and it is these questions with which this study engages.

A study on blackness is an identity project that attempts to go beneath and beyond the ‘black skin’ and its clear connections with oppression to consider the following question: How does ‘race’ intersect with other dimensions of identity, such as gender, age, class, culture, ethnicity, language, time and place? Gunaratnam (2003) suggests the interconnections between ‘race’ and other formations of social identities are complicated and ‘messy’ and, therefore, we need to understand the contexts and conditions in which the constructions of difference are produced and the implications of those conditions to and for individuals and their identities. For Gunaratnam (2003), constructions of difference and their “meanings are ... dynamic and contingent, and can be negotiated, resisted and reworked by individuals” (p. viii). My project is precisely about how individuals negotiate, resist, conform, and rework notions of racial difference and their interconnections to other social identities. This study, therefore, seeks to complicate what seems obvious and argues that there are different ways of being black created by different historical, political, personal and cultural conditions.

This project aims to explore the construction of black identities in the complexly transforming political context of South Africa. Of primary interest is cross generational accounts of ‘being black’, that is, ways in which the older black generation living under apartheid and the younger black generation in the ‘new’ non-racial South Africa talk about and see themselves as ‘being black’. In addition, the project will explore and question the links between identity and ‘place’. Massey (1994) argues that our identities are fundamentally ‘place-identities’ or ‘place-bound identities’, constructed in relation to geographical spaces and places. Place, in this sense of identity, is not merely geography but connected to people’s sense of history, belonging and rootedness. Relph (1976) goes so far as to suggest that ‘place’ is a source of identity, in that it provides psychological and existential ties to being human. ‘Place’ embodies meaning and holds historical and socio-cultural significance (Bammer, 1994; Holloway and Hubbard, 2001; Massey, 1994; Relph, 1976; Sarup, 1994). This study is, therefore, interested in the ways in which blackness is tied to and articulated in relation to the rural and urban spaces; in relation to the place of South Africa, and the (re)invention of

nationhood and the ‘mother’ continent of Africa.¹ This dual foci on ‘blackness’ and ‘Africanness’ invariably allows for the interrogation of changes in the structural nature of oppression which, implicitly, connects ‘blackness’ and ‘Africanness’ with struggles and shifts in class, gender, culture, language and nationhood.

This work is concerned with ‘race’ and blackness and, in particular, what it means to be black in South Africa, a country that was historically racially divided and structured by institutional racism under the system of apartheid. The question I seek to answer is: what does it mean to be black in a multicultural and ‘non-racial’ society like South Africa? Further, how do black South Africans understand and talk about their blackness in an ostensibly increasingly de-racialized or raceless (Asante, 2001) post-apartheid context? Being black (and equally being white) is not a neutral space of existence and meaning but rather a historically invented mode of being-in-the-world (Manganyi, 1973) imbued with the dichotomous constructions of difference; of inferiority and superiority; oppression and privilege; non-being and humanity. For the purposes of the study, it is useful to briefly review the development of ‘race’ as an explanatory tool and resource that has been used historically to serve different political agendas. This project is *not* about racism or racial oppression. It is an attempt to understand identity construction in a context of political and social change. It is specifically about the ways in which individuals use ‘race’ as a salient feature of their identity; ways in which individuals identify *themselves* as ‘being black’ (Durrheim and Mtose, 2006) and the different constructions of blackness that are now possible as a consequence of economic, political and social changes in post-apartheid South Africa.

Researching ‘race’ runs the risk of maintaining the same assumptions of racist discourses. Stevens, Swart and Franchi (2006) argue that talking and writing about ‘race’, racism and/or racialization has the potential of “re-inscribing racial formulation” (p. 6). Similarly, Clarke (2003) warns that when we use the concept of ‘race’ it may inevitably imply “...an acceptance of the existence of biological differences between human beings, differences which express the existence of distinct, self-reproducing groups” (p. 12). This is something that I worry about whenever I use the concept of ‘race’. What am I (re)producing? This study accepts the idea that ‘race’ is a social construct and political invention. This is precisely what the study

¹ Although the focus of this study is on South Africa, participants from elsewhere are included to provide a reference point for the particularity of the South African context.

seeks to explore: the social construction of 'race', in particular, the social construction of blackness by black individuals. In her book, *Researching 'Race' and Ethnicity*, Gunaratnam (2003) thinks through how we (can) theorise, how we (can) produce knowledge and do research about 'race' and about difference in complicated ways that, on one hand, erase 'race' and, on the other, critically recognize difference.

Confronting 'race' invariably means confronting its oppressive history in both apartheid and colonial discourses and practices. It also means confronting the constructed nature of 'race' as a category to define and divide humanity. Unlike du Bois (1970) who argues forcefully that 'race' matters because of the objective or real basis and existence of races, I argue 'race' matters because it has been historically constructed to matter. 'Race' is about identity, who we are and who we have been constructed to be. This immediately raises a critical counter-argument about the social construction of 'race': if 'race' is constructed and 'made' rather than natural, it means that it can be 'un-made' or made differently. The theoretical efforts geared towards the 'undoing' of 'race', or the demise of 'race' and the possible implications for both theory and lived experience must be engaged with. 'Race' is about marked and embodied difference. And (racial) difference is not a neutral space but rather carries particular meanings, which are re-constituted and re-made for future generations.

The project is guided by the work of Gunaratnam (2003, p. 5) who provides the following four questions that any study researching 'race' should ask:

- Can we have an empirical approach to 'race' ... that is not reductionist and does not reify (concretize) the dynamic, interrelated and situated meanings of lived experiences of 'race' ...?
- How can we make decisions about the points at which we fix the meanings of racial ... categories in order to do empirical research?
- How can we make judgements about the epistemological and the political repercussions of such decisions?
- How might we use empirical research to challenge and transform, rather than to reproduce, racial thinking?

1.2 Theorising Identity

In order to think about ‘race’ as an intersectional dimension of identity, it is necessary to establish a way of thinking about identity more broadly and this study adopts a particular theorisation of individual personhood as inherently social. The conventional dichotomous conceptualisation of the individual and the social; or between identity/self and society; or between cognition/mind and culture (Miller, 1984; Vygotsky, 1978); or between nature and culture (Eagleton, 2000), and/or between embodiment and linguistic practice (Archer, 2000) is both false and limited. These domains of existence are not oppositional and do not exist independently of each other. This means that self or identity is social in nature and in origin. The following famous quote by Marx and Engels (1975) succinctly captures the theoretical parameters of the study and its conceptualisation of identity/self and society:

Men [sic] make their own history but not of their own free will; not under circumstances they themselves have chosen but under the given and inherited circumstances with which they are directly confronted. The tradition of the dead weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living (cited in Billington, Hockey & Strawbridge, 1998, pp. 21-22).

Framed in this way, identity and human action are therefore constituted, constrained and enabled by and within social, cultural, material and political structures. History and embodied practices provide, as Williams (2005, pp. 37-38) suggests, “a dynamic interplay between human beings and their material circumstances”. This study of black identity offers an analysis of the changing ways in which people talk about *themselves* as racialised, gendered, national and embodied beings.

It is in the realm of talk that the concept of identity is conceptualised in a particular way, decentring the ‘Enlightenment’ subject (Sampson, 1989; Silverman, 1999) and reframing it in terms of a historical and relational self that is inherently social in nature (Billington, Hockey and Strawbridge, 1998; Miller, 1984; Vygotsky, 1978), allowing for fractured, multiple and at times contradictory identities or subjectivities (Mama, 1995; Barker and Galasinski, 2001). Weedon (1987, p. 3-33) argues that the concept of identity is better thought and conceived of in terms of the term ‘subjectivity’:

The terms subject and subjectivity are central to post-structuralist theory and they mark a crucial break with humanist conceptions of the individual which are still central to western philosophy and political and social organisation. 'Subjectivity' is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world... (P)ost-structuralism proposes a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being constituted in discourse each time we think and speak.

Using 'subjectivity' rather than 'identity' shifts the theoretical focus to consider personal identities as both constrained and enabled by structures; as fluid rather than fixed; as multiple rather than singular; as contradictory rather than coherent. This decentred and dynamic identity is produced, re-invented and constructed within social contexts that are themselves changing and contradictory (Mama, 1995). The study adopts the theoretical position that historical structures, such as race, gender, class and nationhood constitute individual subjects and identities which, in turn, produce and reproduce those very structures. The primary focus of the study is to question and interrogate the different and cross-generational constructions of black identities/subjectivities in a transforming South Africa. Second, this project aims to interrogate the links between blackness, or race, and Africa and an African identity by exploring narratives of Africans whose country of origin is not South Africa and Black people who live in and/or were born in the UK.

1.3 Rationale for adopting a Narrative Approach

This is a qualitative study that seeks to question and interrogate the multiple and diverse constructions of black subjectivities in post-apartheid South Africa, in particular, exploring the ways in which race remains a salient marker of black subjectivities and questioning the degree to which blackness (race) is central to the idea of African identities. The study will 'collect' multiple stories and narratives in order to question the intersections between race/blackness and history/time, gender, place, class, sexuality and ethnicity. These narratives that people tell about their lives are expressive and constitutive of structural and material conditions, of the historical shifts in global politics and economic contexts that impact on and alter the ways in which people talk about themselves. Framing this study within a narrative

approach, therefore, allows for an exploration of both individual lives and experience, *and* the material, political, historical conditions that enable that life and that provide a context for the story of a life. Narrative theorists argue that human life and experience is constructed in and by the stories that people tell about themselves (Crossley, 2000; Denzin, 2000; Riessman, 1993; Sarbin, 1994; White, 1980) and the stories they tell themselves (Fay, 1999). The narrative approach sees human beings as essentially and universally ‘storied selves’ (Andrews, Sclater, Squire and Tamboukou, 2004), with an ability to recall the past, make sense of themselves in the present and imagine future possibilities. This uniquely human ability is accompanied by the human fascination with the stories of others. In this way, social researchers are also storytellers, telling stories about other people’s stories (Denzin, 2000), interpreting other people’s interpretations of their lives. Narrative methodology is an increasingly popular storied methodology in the social sciences. Frosh (2001, pp. 28-29) suggests that the increasing popularity of narratives in the social sciences is indicative of the more general *turn to language* and the discursive in our attempts to understand human life, meanings and experience:

All over the place people, including academics, are busy putting things into words, making narratives out of them, giving linguistic shape to experiences which are otherwise fragmentary and confused.... Through this means, there have come important advances in understanding how each of us – each individual human subject – wrestles with language and culture as part of our life’s work.

Narrative methodology is taken to offer particular opportunities for linking the personal and individual world and the social, historical and political contexts in which the person lives. Narrative allows researchers to pay particular attention to individuals’ lives and how they make meaning of those lives. Chase (1995) argues that all forms of narrative share one feature: making sense of how people construct meaning about their lives. On the other hand, narratives can be read structurally for the socio-cultural and political context that has, in a sense, allowed the story to be told in the first place. Narrative methodology is particularly effective in the quest for the interpretation of human experience and meaning (Josselson and Lieblich, 1995). Narrative will allow for the exploration of the ways in which black people see and understand *themselves* as being black and the saliency of race in their constructions

and representations of black subjectivity. The abstract theoretical and political questions of 'black identity' can, in this way, be explored through the specifics of personal experience.

The research also draws strongly on feminist contributions that argue for 'radical reflexivity', for the explicit location of the researcher's biography and theoretical commitments within the research and reveal power relations inherent in the relationship between the researcher and participants². Gunaratnam (2003) suggests that researchers have to link their research to the social and historical contexts in which the research is "conceptualised, developed and practised" (p. 8). This is what it means to conceptualise our research as a discursive practice. For Gunaratnam (2003) conceptualising research, particularly on 'race', as a discursive practice allows us to examine and "interrogate our current understandings, interests and research practices" (p. 8). By doing so, we challenge the traditional view of social research as a transparent reflection (Gunaratnam, 2003) of the world and as a neutral, objective practice (Mama, 1995). Further, research as a discursive practice critically embraces the Foucauldian insight into the nature of knowledge as productive and constitutive. This demands that we, as researchers, recognise and acknowledge that the knowledge produced from our analyses is "an emergent property of the interactions between and among differently constituted and located individuals" (Gunaratnam, 2003, p. 8), including both the researcher and the research participants. Reismann (2008), therefore, frames the research interview as a conversation, recognising that the researcher is an interlocutor who actively participates in the constructions of participants' narratives. This means that my biography, research interests and theoretical and ideological commitments, as the researcher, shape the research process. Both the participants and researcher openly engage in the process of co-constructing who they are, in the process of writing their narratives and interrogating those narratives in relation to key questions under investigation.

The project is, therefore, framed to incorporate the (auto)biographies of the researcher and research participants in their co-construction of meaning, experience and identity. In this construction, particular emphasis will be placed on the articulation of how history, place and material conditions in which the participants live and find themselves constitute and shape

² **Examiners' Footnote:** The candidate's reflexive account of his own positionality in relation to his participants and his subject of study is expansively articulated in Ndlovu, S. (2008) *The Story of One Black Man* and Ndlovu, S. *There is No-one Black* (2009) included in Section Three (Unpublished Papers).

their lives and stories of their lives. The research aims to privilege the participants' '(Black) voice' to reflect on what blackness is and what it means to be black in different cross-generational material, political, geographical and historical contexts.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 Racial Identity/ Subjectivity

- 1) What does it mean to say that race is 'socially constructed'? How do these discursive constructions of race articulate the world of material practices?
- 2) What does it mean to be black in post-apartheid South Africa?
- 3) What is the personal and/or political significance of 'race' in a political context that promotes non-racialism? Asked differently, when blackness is no longer 'repressed' nor denied expression, what significance does this mode of being-in-the-world retain? Or, how is it remade, reconstructed or changed?
- 4) What significance does the 'black body' have for identity? How does the black skin structure the ways in which black people see themselves and how they are defined by others?

1.4.2. Africanness and Nationhood

- 1) What is the relationship between blackness (race) and Africa or an African identity?
- 2) Who or what is an African?
- 3) Who is included or excluded in this definition? Why and on what grounds?

1.4.3. Multiplicities of Blackness

To what extent is 'race' salient and how is 'race' differently interpreted in relation to other intersectional identifications. How might "being-black-in-the-world" (Manganyi, 1973) vary in relation to:

- 1) History and across generations
- 2) Place, Geographical and National or other forms of political structures
- 3) Gender and Sexuality

CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

THEORIES OF RACE AND IDENTITY

CHAPTER TWO

THEORIES OF RACE AND IDENTITY

2.1 Introduction

In order to place ‘race’ in post-apartheid South Africa, it is important to contextualise ‘race’ within historical and contemporary debates about its political centrality and its marginality. This chapter will first consider how the concept of ‘race’ as an explanatory/analytic tool has been used historically to serve radically conservative political gains, in explaining and justifying ‘white’ privilege and legislating ‘black’ oppression in apartheid South Africa, colonial Africa, and the colonial centres. Second, the theoretical framework of the project will entail tracing the transposition of ‘race’ thinking (Malik, 1996) from the realm of *biology* to *culture*. Third, there is a need to confront the ‘anti-race’ or post-race discourse (Gilroy, 2000) that seeks to erase race from our analytic tools for understanding human life. And finally, I establish my position as a critical anti-racist orientation (Durrheim, 2005) that is ‘race conscious’, seeking to engage ‘race’ rather than wishing it away or sweeping it under the carpet.

2.2 A History of the concept of race

‘Race’ “seems to be both everywhere and nowhere” (Malik, 1996, p.1). ‘Race’ is *everywhere* in the sense that it seems to dominate and define our lives, inform our social interactions and our perceptions of our social world, and remind us, as South Africans and Africans, of our history of apartheid and colonial oppression. Also, ‘race’ is everywhere in more implicit, structural and insidious ways. ‘Race’ is a central and controversial issue in South African contemporary political debates about Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), Affirmative Action, the Native Club, Black Consciousness and questions about Africa and who is African. These debates also extend into academic debates about African history and culture reflected in new disciplinary developments and contestations around what constitutes ‘African psychology’ (e.g., Manganyi, 1973; Mkhize, 2004a; Mkhize, 2004b), ‘African philosophy’

(e.g., Appiah, 1992) ‘African scholarship’ (e.g. Miller, 2008; Ndlovu, 2007³) or the value of indigenous ‘African knowledge systems’ (e.g., Asante, 1991, 2007; Makgoba, 2002). Arguably, all these concerns and debates are essentially questions about ‘race’ (Howe, 1999). At the same time, however, ‘race’ appears to be *nowhere* in the sense of the general, and almost universal call against the discrimination of people on the basis of their difference. ‘Race’ also becomes less important or, ideally, should be invisible in the contexts of post-modernism, multiculturalism, cultural diversity, cultural relativism and pluralism.

Historically, ‘race’ has been used as an analytic and explanatory tool (Malik, 1996), often under the banner of science, to explain everything: differences in behaviour, intellectual capabilities, psychological disposition (Howe, 1999), and social privilege. Helen Suzman, the sole opposition politician in the South African Apartheid parliament, had this to say about the use of ‘race’ in apartheid South Africa: “...the political, economic and social status of every individual is conditioned, if not predetermined, by his [sic] race. Indeed, the whole pattern of every individual’s life – from the cradle to the grave – is circumscribed by his [sic] race” (cited in Boonzaier, 1988, p. 58).

‘Race’ has been used to distinguish and divide humanity into ‘discrete and stable groups, each with its own distinctive physical, cultural and intellectual [psychological] characteristics’ (Boonzaier, 1988, p. 59). In South Africa, ‘race’ has been used to rationalize ‘white privilege’ and social power and to justify black oppression and disadvantage. Using ‘race’ in this way, cemented the idea that humanity could be divided, on the basis of physical characteristics, into various discrete types and subdivisions (Boonzaier, 1988; du Bois, 1970; Landry, 2007; Malik, 1996). Much scientific enterprise in anthropology, psychology, biology and eugenics, to name a few, went into legitimizing these divisions and differences between people. These ideas were readily taken up, applied to and provided the rationale for slavery, colonialism and apartheid.

It is now commonly accepted that biologically ‘race’, is not ‘a real thing’, not a natural fact in the world; but a social and political construct (Gilroy, 1998; 2000; Gunaratnam, 2003; Harris, 1995; Landry, 2007; Malik, 1996; Stevens et al, 2006; Essed, 1990, 1991). ‘Race’ is,

³ **Examiners’ footnote:** Ndlovu, S. (2007) *African Scholarship: The Impossible Ideal* is included in Section Three (Unpublished Papers).

therefore, a socially, politically, culturally and historically meaningful concept. There are different constructions of 'race' or racial groups depending on a particular geographical place and political context. For instance, the concept of 'coloured' as a racial category is an officially recognized, historically constructed category denoting 'mixed' descent in South Africa, whereas this is an empty signifier in other contexts. Also, who is defined as 'black' shifts with different historical contexts.

'Race science' in Europe took a turning point in the aftermath of the Second World War. Boonzaier (1988) and Malik (1996) similarly observe that, with the aftermath of the Holocaust and the post-war era, the idea of (scientific) 'race' takes a 'knock' in public and political discourse and cultural memory. 'Race' is almost abandoned as a concept out of the recognition of its danger and potentialities of human suffering and atrocity. However, this contestation has not meant an end to the idea of 'race', as the concept lives on 'in both popular and scholarly discourse' (Landry, 2007, p. 3). The concept of 'race' lives on in postmodern discourse. Silverman (1999) suggests the postmodern or 'new racism' is partly defined by the:

...abandonment of the old discourse of racial purity and racial hierarchy in favour of one based on cultural difference and cultural essentialism. Racial discourse is too closely associated with a discredited Nazism and condemned colonialism to be respected today, whereas under the banner of 'culture' and 'nation' the stigmatization of particular groups can be couched in a more acceptable form (p. 44).

Landry (2007) notes that the abandonment of 'race' as a concept has not led to the complete erasure of 'race' in experience. The post-war era gave birth to discourses of equality, pluralism, cultural relativism, and mutual tolerance. Malik (1996) observes that the 'de-politicisation' of 'race' (and its removal from the political agendas of the post-war context) meant that its problematic underlying assumptions were left untouched, un-interrogated, 'repressed' and, hence, 'race' constantly resurfaces everywhere. Malik's (1996) primary concern is how major atrocities in the world, like the World Wars and in particular the Nazi experience, have laid the ground for the denunciation of 'race' and racial theories without first interrogating, examining and 'undermining the underlying assumptions of racial thinking, in

particular, the assumption that humanity can be divided into discrete groups and that these divisions have a social consequence' (p. 129).

2.3 Race, Culture, and Difference

The underlying assumptions of racial thinking have not simply disappeared nor have they been erased. Rather, they have been reformulated and rearticulated in and through 'the discourse of culture' (Malik, 1996) or, to use Eagleton's (2000) phrase, in and through 'the idea of culture'. The idea of 'race' as a biological explanation has been displaced onto the idea of 'culture' as the 'new' apparatus through which difference and human nature are explained. 'Race' masquerades under the guise of 'culture' and cultural difference. And for Malik (1996), this is evident in the debates on nationalism, immigration and xenophobia that dominate contemporary political agendas of many countries around the world. These debates, which are highly contested, are essentially questions on and about 'race'. For instance, stricter immigration laws, hostility to refugees and asylum seekers, the war on terrorism highlight that 'race' is intricately woven into the fabric of our society and humanity (Malik, 1996). This means that we need to interrogate 'race' and not deny 'race' its place within academic and analytical discourses. However, this has not happened! What has happened rather is the 'transposition' of 'race' or racial debates to concerns about culture and cultural difference (Boonzaier, 1988; Malik, 1996; Stevens, Swart & Franchi, 2006) and on to 'questions of language, history and psychology' (Silverman, 1999, p. 43). What has happened is what Stevens et al (2006, p. 4) call the 'culturalisation of race'.

Culture becomes a 'safer' concept to use in thinking about humanity rather than 'the tainted' concept of 'race' that is laden with and carries historical baggage of racism, genocide, the Holocaust and apartheid:

... culture and history could account for human differences as well, if not better, than race and biology... the shift from 'race' to 'culture' was largely painless and fuelled by ideological commitment rather than scientific knowledge (Malik, 1996, p. 159).

Historically, the concepts of 'race' and 'culture' are seen as carrying different social meanings. 'Race', on one hand, is delineated as immutable biological differences that mark

and embody notions of inferiority and superiority; while ‘culture’, on the other hand, refers to social and historical differences that are mutable. In this way, the idea of culture is taken as a more powerful explanatory tool as it avoids the traps of (biological) essentialism (Malik, 1996). However, the concept of ‘culture’ does not necessarily escape the traps set by essentialist or absolutist discourse and is, perhaps, guilty of the very same limitations as those of racial thinking.

Ideas of ‘culture’ and ‘race’ operate in similar ways (Malik, 1996; Silverman, 1999) by (re)producing problematic, limited and limiting ideas about common human nature and difference. Clarke (2003) argues new racism is “...not new, rather it is a way of articulating older beliefs about race by shifting the emphasis of discourse to make cultural comparisons of biological things” (p.11). The idea of ‘culture’ or the discourse of culture re-articulates the same underlying themes, ideas, assumptions of racial discourse, only in a different guise. For Malik (1996), however, both concepts, ‘race’ and ‘culture’, are *anti-humanist* at their core; cast and posited against ideas of (*human*) *universality*. Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) meticulously argue that ‘problems’ of and with race are only framed differently, along cultural relativist lines:

...racism... is no longer predicated on biological conceptions of race, but on a relativist rhetoric of cultural difference... [Subtly] ... cultural relativism shifted from an emancipatory cultural weapon (as a counterbalance against domineering cultural imperialism and condescending evolutionism) to an argument in defence of the supposed incompatibility of cultures, the need to allow cultural groups to develop without outside interference, and the thesis that culture contact and hybridization distort the natural order of things in such a way as to cause violent reactions (p. 4).

Cultural relativism is a reaction to universalism and standards of measurement, accentuating difference in human life and the diversity of human experience and values. It is a reaction to universal claims; to the abstraction of people from their context, culture and history. What does it mean to consider an individual’s context, difference and diversity? Looking at difference in human experience means that we judge people differently according to their *race, culture, values, ideologies, nationality, ethnicity, even gender and sexuality*. Such a

position, while ostensibly emancipatory in challenging Eurocentric formulations of the ‘universal’, resembles the foundations and premises of racial discourse in explaining difference. From this, it becomes clear that the racial oppression of the apartheid regime in South Africa, the genocide in Rwanda and the Holocaust in Germany were means and strategies employed to deal with difference.

2.4 Post-Race: Against Race⁴ or Erasing Race?

Like Mama (1995), I want to place ‘race’ at the centre of understanding identity and, in particular, contribute to the further theorization of new and emergent black identities. ‘Race’ and ‘identity’ are keywords in contemporary debates about difference, the individual and society. However, some suggest that the issue of ‘race’ and racism is so obvious as to render theorization banal. This is a kind of post-race or even anti-race thinking that calls for the obliteration of ‘race’ in the post-modern, globalized multicultural world. This critical discourse seeks to achieve more than a recognition of diversity and non-racism, pointing to the potential for a world unmarked, unlimited and undefined by ‘race thinking.’ Gilroy (2000), author of the persuasive book *Against Race* writes that the demise or the renunciation of ‘race’ or raciology, as he terms it, is a (politically) legitimate goal to be celebrated and sought as:

...the creative acts involved in destroying raciology and transcending ‘race’ are more than warranted by the goal of authentic democracy to which they point. The political will to liberate humankind from race-thinking must be complemented by precise historical reasons why these attempts are worth making. The first task is to suggest that the demise of ‘race’ is not something to be feared. Even this may be a hard argument to win... (p. 12).

Gilroy’s (1998; 2000) apprehension about ‘race’ seems to be twofold. First, for Gilroy (1998) theorizing ‘race’ invariably assumes we accept du Bois’ (1970) claim for the universal existence of ‘races’; that we are ‘complicit in the reification of racial difference’ (Gilroy, 1998, p. 838). ‘Race’ for Gilroy is an ideological concept rather than a scientific one (Body-

⁴ This phrase is taken from Gilroy’s book title, *Against Race* (2000).

Gendrot, 1998). Therefore, the question is why 'race' as a concept continues to be deployed when social constructionists refute its existence and question its validity (Nayak, 2006). Second, Gilroy (1998) is concerned with the historical and contemporary repercussions, or the 'pathologies' as he calls them, of 'race' and raciology as reflected in scientific racism, evidenced by Nazism, apartheid and colonialism and perpetuated in continual acts of racism and discriminatory practices. Therefore, the renunciation or the erasure or the obliteration of race is both a (theoretically) critical and ethical response to racial hierarchy, and racial power, differentiation and classification. Gilroy writes from a social constructionist, deconstructionist (post-race paradigm) theoretical base that argues for the social and discursive construction of 'race'. From this stance, 'race' is a fallacy and fiction (Nayak, 2006) and, consequently, a false concept.

Steyn (2001) argues there is an increasing resistance to talking about 'race' and by implication, a resistance to talking about blackness (and indeed, whiteness). The resistance to talking and writing about 'race' is premised on the belief that to name 'race' is to be racist (Steyn, 2001) and, hence, contrary to the drive for a non-racial democratic society and in the context of South Africa, in particular, a single national identity:

Nonracialism is also often recast in the mould of liberal colour-blindness, with the consequence that middle class South Africans, both black and white, frequently express the belief that drawing attention to race as a societal issue is anachronistic and harmful. To name race is taken to be racist (p. xxxi).

While the argument for the demise of 'race' is a theoretically compelling and even 'legitimate' one, it may, however, be too soon to erase 'race' as an identity marker especially in South Africa. While I share Gilroy's (1998; 2000) concern about the ways in which 'race' and racial hierarchy pose theoretical and political dilemmas and his call for a humanity unstructured by racist ideologies, I do not know what a world without 'race' would look like. My resistance to the erasure of 'race' is a concern for the potential loss of a historical identity and a strategic mobilization against oppression. Nayak (2006) succinctly captures my resistance and reservations to the erasure of 'race' in that for historical:

...minority groups the erasure of race may equate with the obliteration of an identity and shared way of life, so coming to silence our racially marked historical experiences. Indeed, it could certainly be argued that the concept of race, however tarnished it may appear, has provided an important meeting place for political mobilization, inclusion and social change (pp. 422-3).

I am a black man, 'coloured' and embodied by my pigmentation. The black body, like the white body, is not a neutral entity. As Gilroy (1998) himself suggests, seeing the body is not 'unmediated by technical and social processes, for there is no raw perception dwelling in the body' (p. 838). Our bodies and indeed our identities are highly historically, socially and ideologically mediated. However, Body-Gendrot (1998), in response to Gilroy's position, suggests that 'it would be a privilege to be able to think of the world in erasing race. But this is not people's experience' (p. 852). Let's, for a moment, consider the erasure of gender as a metaphor here in thinking about the implications of erasing 'race'. I do not think that women across the world – black; white, African, Western, Christian, Islamic, rich, poor, middle-class, working, heterosexual, lesbian, old, young, educated, illiterate, businesswomen and housewives - would consider such a proposition for eradicating gender as a political, historical identity marker. As Hall (1996) suggests, identity is, after all, about, living in and through difference. And I would argue that difference is not something to be feared or erased but rather engaged. Difference is not the problem as much as the "social attribution of 'essences'" (Body-Gendrot, 1998, p. 852) to that difference. Gender is not the problem but sexism and misogyny. Race is not the problem but racism. To end, Asante (2001) reviewing Gilroy's *Against Race* book, brilliantly captures my uncertainties for a post-race world this way:

... I do not look forward to such a colourless, heritageless, abstract future, and I do not see how anyone should look for it. Only those who have a need to escape from their own histories have a need for such a raceless future. On the contrary, it is much more hopeful that we defeat the notion of racial superiority and establish a broad new moral vision based on mutual respect for all human beings. I cannot believe that racelessness, whether that means racial amalgamation or the obliteration of the African phenotype would amount to

anything except the diminishing of the world... To me, it is not the elimination of race or races, but in the elimination of racism, the defeat of White racial domination, that we will discover the way to a new humanism (p. 851).

For me, we need to critically deal with and confront 'race'. For Stevens et al (2006), dealing with 'race', with its new forms and concealed nature, is vital as 'race' poses a threat to their ultimate objective, that is, the possibility for deracialisation in South Africa. For me, dealing with 'race' does not and should not mean an end to 'race'. We should rather seek to understand 'race' and its intricate interconnections to subjectivity. Stevens et al (2006) characterise South Africa's political transition from an apartheid state to 'a liberal democracy' (3) as a historical watershed. This makes South Africa an interesting and rich context for exploring questions of 'race', identity and the changing nature of formations. We should rather critically engage the dominant discourses on 'race' in order to understand their historical creation; their current manifestations and expressions; and possibilities of alternatives or fragments or discontinuities that exists for subjectivity (Stevens et al, 2006).

2.5 The Psychology of 'Race' and Identity

...despite broad consensus about the status of race being scientifically invalid among most social scientists today and an acknowledgement that its time of historical hegemony has passed, it is nevertheless consensually accepted as a tenacious social construct that continues to evolve with great elasticity to shape social relations, subjectivities and configurations of personhood (Stevens et al, 2006, p. 4).

Despite its constructed nature and the many political gains in contests against racism and racist ideology, 'race' continues, rather stubbornly, to shape social life, social relations and personal identity. Is it possible to have or talk about racial identity without the idea of 'race'? Although 'race' is not a real entity, people's experiences and identifications with 'race' are real, shaped by the gaze of the Other and by self identification. Constructed or not, people's sense of identification with 'race' is a critical starting point. By implication, individuals' experiences as 'black subjects', though based on a biological fallacy, is profound. As

discussed, the study accepts that 'race' as a biological category does not exist. The study is acutely aware of the dangers of treating 'race' as a real category, the danger of reifying 'race' as an objective fact in the world. This is what social constructionism has significantly contributed to race theory: 'race' is a social production and invention (Donald and Rattansi, 1992; Gilroy, 1998; 2000; Gunaratnam; 2003; Nayak, 2006). However, 'race' is implicated in people's senses of themselves as social beings. This research is precisely interested in the ways in which 'race' shapes black subjectivities and how 'its continued presence and resurgence in material, social and symbolic forms of differentiation clearly highlights the ongoing importance it has as a social marker of difference and Otherness' (Stevens et al, 2006, p. 5).

Helms (1990) points out that we commonly and incorrectly confuse 'race' with racial identity. Helms (1990) suggests that we tend to use 'race' when in fact we mean racial identity. Racial identity, for Helms (1990), refers to '...a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group' (p. 3). For this research, the question is not whether 'race' is real or not but how individuals construct their identities in relation to the concept of 'race'. The issue of 'race' and, in particular, black identity, and for Harris (1995), African-American identity, is at the centre of debates about 'ethnocultural identity'. 'Race' as an identity marker is fought for at cultural, political, material, historical and personal levels. Harris (1995) suggests that our world has always been characterized by racial and ethnic diversity. It is within this diversity and plurality that the individual must 'affirm his or her unique identity' (p. 1). Individuals face challenges, tensions and struggles that question 'who they are'. Racial and ethnic identity is the most contentious identity marker that we have to engage, negotiate, question, and embody. Psychology has had much to say about 'race' and racial identity. The discipline of psychology has interesting historical links with and connections to racist ideology. Bulhan (1985) shows how psychological theory has been used to explain and justify the colonial West's conquest, oppression and violence on the rest of the world. The chapter now briefly turns its attention to the contributions of psychology to race and racism.

There is a prolific body of both psychological and sociological literature that endeavours to explain and understand the psychology of racism in attempts to answer the question: why are some individuals racist and others not? The psychological body of work includes earlier approaches on prejudice (Allport, 1954), 'authoritarian personality' (Adorno, Frenkel-

Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford, 1950), and the use of psychoanalytic theory, in particular, the use of the theoretical concept of ‘repression’ (Durrheim, 2005) as means to explain racism; its origins and perpetuation. Durrheim (2005) provides a critical overview of approaches to understanding ‘race’ and racism in social psychology. Earlier psychological work focused on *prejudice* in explaining racist attitudes and behaviour. Horkheimer (1944) asserts that “prejudice is one of the problems of our times for which everyone has a theory but no one has an answer” (cited in Young-Bruehl, 1996, p. 7). Psychology attempted to provide the answers to the basis of prejudice. To do this, psychology turned ‘inward’, to the realm of the individual (pathology). Allport’s (1954) work explains prejudice as resulting from a ‘prejudice personality’ or the individual’s hatred of the other (Durrheim, 2005). Similarly, Adorno et al (1950) saw prejudice as a stable trait within the personality of the individual, hence, the term ‘authoritarian personality’ that entails qualities such as rigid, ideologically conservative, conventional and disconnected (Young-Bruehl, 1996). These significant psychological studies focus primarily on individualistic kinds of explanations of racism and racist attitudes and behaviour. Hayes (1998) terms this tendency of explaining social issues in terms of individual qualities, *psychological reductionism*. For Hayes, the specific focus on the individual or social reductionism obscures and negates the broader socio-political and material sources and contexts in which individuals live.

Much psychological research investigates, Harris (1995) argues, “the extent to which negative or conflicted identities internalised from a prejudiced society could be a source of psychological compromise” (p. 3). For Harris (1995), Psychology has a lot to say about the role of ‘race’ in the complex process of identity formation. Early psychological studies focused on minority children, their development and challenges/dilemmas faced by these children growing up in a society that marginalises and renders them to the periphery. The work of Mamie and Kenneth Clark in the 1930s and 1940s epitomises psychology’s focus and interest in ‘race’, development and racial identity in the United States. The Clarks investigated 3 year-old children’s colour preferences. Some of their findings show that although black children ‘correctly’ identified themselves as ‘black’, they show a preference for white skin over their own black skin. This work laid foundations for the ‘thesis of Black self-hatred’ (Harris, 1995). This thesis is based on the idea that ‘identification with one’s own racial or ethnic group was normative and that the preferences expressed by Black children reflected the damaging effects of societal racism’ (Harris, 1995, p. 4).

These findings were subsequently expanded from children and applied to 'the collective Negro experience' (Harris, 1995, p 4). The implications of the thesis of Black self-hatred was that the experience of slavery and segregation in America, colonialism in Africa and apartheid in South Africa leaves black people without a 'genuine cultural identity other than the cultural stereotypes of the majority society' (Harris, 1995, pp. 4-5). The thesis of Black self-hatred has been critiqued on methodological, political and conceptual grounds as its focus is 'psychopathological interpretations of the past' (Harris, 1995, p. 6). Much of the psychological research on racial identity tends to understand racial identity in theoretically problematic ways, that is, in reductionist terms (Hayes, 1998) assuming an essentialised fixed, pre-existing identity that can be observed or rather measured empirically. For instance, traditional experimental psychology has investigated topics such as theory and measurement of racial identity, attitude scales for black and white racial identity, stages and models of racial identity development, factors promoting better racial identity development, practical applications of racial identity theory applied to culturally and racially sensitive counselling situations and explanations of behavioural predispositions (Helms, 1990).

While psychology focused its attention intra-psychically, sociological studies interrogated social structures and processes such as colonialism, slavery and the apartheid system. For Clarke (2003), to understand 'race', racial identity and racism we need a bridge between psychology and sociology, so that we can read both the structures of modern life and the psychology (psyche) of individuals. This study will employ sociological and psychological concepts in its attempt to understand the social construction of black identity. The work of Frantz Fanon (1967) connects the structural conditions of oppression with the psychology of what it means to be black post-colonially. There is also a substantial body of work on blackness or black studies, Afrocentricity and (Pan) Africanism from African Diasporic perspectives, mainly from black African-American writers and theorists (Anise, 1974; Asante, 2001, 2003, 2007; du Bois, 1970, Gates, 1985). The question of African identity is at the centre of most of African Diasporic writings. The question of African identity entails questions about 'race', culture, citizenship and nationalism, place, identity and belonging: how people are defined, 'who belongs where' and 'who does not belong' (Halisi, 1999). There are fascinating texts that have surfaced in recent years written by a variety of black intellectuals such as Asante (2001, 2003) , Appiah (1992, 2006) Gilroy (2000, 2001, 2005), Hall (1996), Mama (1995, 2001), Ratele (1998, 2003) and Shelby (2005), to name but a few.

The seminal work, *I Write What I Like*, collects together the writings of the South African thinker, political activist and martyr Steve Biko (1978), who is considered to be the father of Black Consciousness in South Africa. Biko (1978) provides us with a way of thinking about and understanding what it means to be black. In the same year, Manganyi (1978) published his classic collection of essays entitled, *Being-Black-in-the-world*, that concerns itself with the 'black experience', the black body and psychological explorations of what it means to be black. The decades of the 60's and 70's saw a proliferation of studies on blackness, on 'Africa', on the 'black condition', 'black experiences' and 'black culture' by black authors, poets, activists and intellectuals. This critical historical phase focused on attempting to re-write the colonial and racist dual notions of blackness and whiteness: where whiteness was constructed as 'good', 'superior', 'civilised', 'intelligent', 'rational', while blackness represented and embodied that which is 'evil', 'inferior', 'savage', 'primitive' and 'superstitious' (Steyn, 2001).

These decades also gave birth to the *Civil Rights Movement* and *Negritude* in the United States; *Afrocentricity* and *Pan-Africanism* on the continent of Africa and in the Diaspora and *Black Consciousness* in South Africa. These counter discourses challenged the thesis of Black self-hatred and sought the development of a more assertive, positive, actively resistant Black identity (Harris, 1995). These conceptual and socio-political moves rejected the assumption that 'blacks either lacked a positive identity or aspired to adopt the identity of the majority society' (p. 5). These were conceptual and political strategies seeking to interrogate the socio-historical context rather than locating 'race' and racial experience in the individual. These 'pro-black' philosophies serve as counter discourses in deconstructing and challenging what Steyn (2001) refers to as the 'master narrative of whiteness' constructed in colonial discourse. The more recent deconstruction of whiteness has led to an intellectual interest in the study of whiteness and the social construction of white identity. The focus on whiteness is significant in that it renders the historical master narrative of whiteness visible, and reveals its socially constructed nature as opposed to its seemingly natural, fixed norm against which all human experience should be measured.

The postmodern critique of essentialism is useful here as it allows for the deconstruction of white privilege and 'natural' supremacy, on the one hand, and naturalized black inferiority, on the other. bell hooks (1990) argues that this critique reveals both whiteness and blackness as socio-political constructs and historical inventions, rather than natural, biological entities and

essentialist difference. It is for this reason that Steyn's (2001) work on South African white identity is critical. In her book entitled *Whiteness just isn't what it used to be: white identity in a changing South Africa*, Steyn (2001) examines what it means to be white in South Africa after the demise of apartheid. Whiteness would seem to be "...now subordinated politically in a country that is redefining itself African, within the African context" (Steyn, 2001, p. xxii). Therefore being white is a fundamentally different state of being than what it used to be. By implication, this means being black in South Africa also takes on different meanings - politically, economically, socially and culturally. Or does it? This study, therefore, seeks to do the converse of Steyn's work: that is, examine and question blackness and black identity in post-apartheid South Africa.

2.6 Blackness and Black identity: What it means to be black in South Africa

This work seeks to place 'race' at the centre of understanding identities and to examine the ways in which 'race' constitutes black identities. Steyn suggests that the demise of apartheid has demanded a renegotiation of both black and white identities. This study aims to apply Steyn's (2001) approach to whiteness, aiming to, "'investigate', 'analyze', 'puncture' and 'probe'" (p. xxvi) the construction of blackness and black identities in a transforming South Africa. With the dawn of democracy whiteness can "never be again what it used to be" (Steyn, 2001, p. xvii) and the same is true for blackness. Hence, there is a need to interrogate racial identities in this post-modern and seemingly post-race and even anti-race world. Race still matters in South Africa, partly because:

The construction of race has been used to skew this society over centuries. If we banish [race] from our analytical frameworks, we serve the narrow interests of those previously advantaged, by concealing the enduring need for redress. To deal with the expressions of power, we have to call [race] by its name (Steyn, 2001, p. xxxii).

I, therefore, take what Nayak (2006) calls a critical, reflective race-conscious position. I frame the study within critical race theory (Gunaratnam, 2003) and examine the social construction of black identity in the context of rapid economic, material, cultural and political transformations in post-apartheid South Africa. The dawn of democracy in South Africa has

meant rapid, constructive political changes that cannot be denied (Barber, 2001; Stevens and Lockhat, 1997; 2004; Stevens et al, 2006). South Africa comes from a particularly oppressive and violent past and, for the most part, has successfully moved towards liberation, non-racism and multiculturalism premised on constitutional respect for human rights, social justice and equality. Post-apartheid South Africa is characterized by a:

...black majority government, and black people can ostensibly participate as equals in economic, cultural and political life. Racisms and segregation have been outlawed, and Affirmative Action, Black Economic Empowerment and other progressive policies for change have been legislated and implemented. We have witnessed the emergence of a black middle class and a black political and economic elite now serves as a beacon in the imagination and for the aspirations of the populace (Durrheim and Mtose, 2006, p. 153).

The political changes undoubtedly mean that both South Africa and South Africans must reconstruct ‘a new single national identity’ and new ways of relating to self and others; re-conceptualising difference, culture and identity. Barber (2001) argues that political change implicates cultural change for the creation of the new South Africa. Furthermore, democracy in South Africa has entailed a “dizzying cultural flux”, as Barber (2001, p.178) calls it, opening our borders to foreign and international business, globalisation, Americanisation of the media and programming, mass consumer culture, tourism. These new conditions create new realities, new opportunities and new possibilities as well as new challenges for South Africa and South Africans at macro-structural and psychological identity levels (Barber, 2001). Stevens and Lockhat (2004) articulate the impact of political changes in that:

The transition of the country [South Africa] from apartheid rule to democracy has not only had a profound impact on its legislated political arrangements, but has also redefined interpersonal, social, cultural and arguably, to an increasing degree, economic relations. The consequences of the transition are then being felt not only at a large, macro- or group level, but reverberate at a micro- or interpersonal and intra-psychic level as well (p. 130).

Perhaps, the most significant impact on structural and identity realms is specifically about 'race' and the ways in which South Africa remains racially structured. This is visibly manifested and expressed through material conditions or 'racialised' poverty that the majority of poor black South Africans are condemned to even after effective dismantling of apartheid as a legislative system. The gap between the rich and poor is widening in the context of global capital. The question remains, to what extent have things changed in South Africa? The reality is that the material conditions for most South Africans have not been altered or changed significantly since the dawn of democracy (Barber, 2001; Stevens and Lockhat, 1997). 'Racial capitalism', Stevens and Lockhat (1997) argue, is still entrenched in South Africa. This means that 'race' still functions to structure access to resources and particular social identities afforded by the globalized, capitalist consumer ethic. Many historically disadvantaged people are 'being prescribed roles that are consistent with a capitalist framework, but which are frequently unattainable due to the racist legacy of South African society' (Stevens and Lockhat, 1997, p. 142).

At first glance, the 'rules of the game' seem to have changed, that is racial oppression has been erased. However, it becomes very clear that 'the game' has not changed fundamentally. We seem to have replaced racial oppression with a 'new' and different form of oppression and exploitation. The new system operates in similar ways in that it provides access to resources for a privileged few while denying access to the majority of people and relegating them to the margins of society. The demise of legalised racial oppression in South Africa has been replaced by forms of economic oppression that are continuous with rather than distinct from the recent racialized past. South Africa, like most countries in the increasingly globalized world, has openly embraced capitalism as its economic and political strategy. This new world demands a negotiation and re-constitution of 'struggle' or 'liberation' identities into globalized consumer identities. Stevens and Lockhat (1997) eloquently capture this shift in black adolescent identities as follows:

...the new political dispensation has severe and unforeseen impact on people in general and black adolescents in particular....virtually

overnight, they have been required to change their life scripts from ‘young lions’⁵ to perhaps ‘young entrepreneurs’ (p. 142).

Macdonald and James (1993) echo similar sentiments on the formation of new identities that relegate the majority of black individuals to the periphery in that “non-racial capitalism will re-cast the black majority in internationally acceptable terms with blacks becoming victims of market forces instead of state racism” (cited in Abdi, 1999: 159). The ‘new’ South Africa has produced new social, political, economic and cultural realities that individuals have to contend with in the post-apartheid context that are connected to increasing globalisation and Westernization, or Americanism as some might argue. Democracy in South Africa has meant greater acceptance and adoption of the influence of western ideologies and socio-economic and political models. Stevens and Lockhat (1997) suggest that South Africa is increasingly becoming ‘individualised’ as a result. This so-called ‘western individualism’ demands a construction of South African identities that will accommodate this socio-historical reality based on competition and capitalist aspirations. This is a complicated task given the fact that black identities are thought to be culturally based on collectivism rather than individualism. In addition, a shared political consciousness and collective identity of resistance during apartheid makes the ‘identity shifts’ from collectivism to individualism complex, contradictory and nuanced.

It is, however, important to recognize that historically disadvantaged groups are not merely victims of change confronted by new socio-political structures. In fact, many of the historically disadvantaged individuals actively embrace the change and the shifts in face of the multiple and contradictory identifications and identity spaces. In an attempt to redefine themselves and actively engage with the imperatives of the socio-political and material world, new spaces of identity have been created. These new spaces include what Stevens and Lockhat (1997) call ‘Coca Cola kids’⁶ and the formation of the new Black political and

⁵ ‘Young lions’ refers to young black political activists during apartheid that played a critical role in the struggle, resistance and liberation politics and movements (Stevens and Lockhat, 1997). Abdi (1999) defines ‘young lions’ as: “the vanguard of the revolution, and the foot soldiers of the liberation movement” (p. 157).

⁶ This identity space is in opposition to the ‘young lions’ discourse, premised on the embrace of western ideologies or Americanisation, representing a shift and a move from collectivism towards individualism,

economic elite (Abdi, 1999). What this means is that identity is never linear or fixed but is always a fragmented, varied, dynamic, nuanced process that is constantly under construction and negotiation. New socio-political conditions give rise to new social identities that have to be contested, resisted, embraced and improvised. Identity development is never a finished project but, a state of becoming, always in the making (Abdi, 1999) and a negotiation of internal psychological life as mediated in and through social processes.

This study is primarily interested in the ways in which ‘race’ either loses or retains its significance or primacy in the construction of black identities, or the extent to which ‘race’ is displaced in other kinds of identity locations such as ethnicity, culture, gender and class; and/or the ways in which ‘race’ is re-configured, re-articulated, re-made and reformulated. Secondly, this project aims to interrogate the links between blackness (racial identity) and Africa (place). We cannot talk about black identities without talking about ‘Africa’ and ‘African’ identity. The question of an African identity is almost synonymous with ‘race’ (Appiah, 1992) to the point of being taken-for-granted and seen as naturally unquestionable and inseparable from blackness. However, the critical questioning, on the one hand, of white African identity and on the other, African-American identities within the socio-political discourses of Pan-Africanism and nationalism indicate the need to rethink and rework the seemingly unquestionable intersections of Africa (as an idea and place) and blackness (racial identity).

2.7 Blackness and Africa: Identity, Pan-Africanism and Afrocentricity

In 1996, Thabo Mbeki, who is regarded as the principal campaigner for the revival of ‘the African Renaissance’ (Vale and Maseko, 1998), delivered an emotive, poetic and nostalgic speech entitled, *I am an African*. In this speech, the South African president sutured together many and different histories of the country, linking South Africa back to the African continent and asserting that we are all, irrespective of colour/ ‘race’, gender, religion, culture, South African and indeed African. How are we to interpret such a statement? Is it an absurd assertion? Isn’t it obvious to the world that Mbeki is African? Or rather, who and what else would he be?

competitiveness, capitalist aspirations (Stevens and Lockhat, 1997), and the creation of the new black elite commonly referred as the ‘BEE [Black Economic Empowerment] breed’.

Mazrui and Kariuki (2006) argue that Mbeki's assertion is by no means absurd or self-evident. It seems to me that Mbeki was doing three things simultaneously. First, this is a powerful political declaration and reclamation of an identity that, not long ago, black South Africans were denied. Oddly, as Mazrui and Kariuki (2006) put it, Africanity or the assertion of 'African-ness' was reserved for the white 'Afrikaner' whereas the term 'native' was bestowed on the black South African. Second, Mbeki was rescuing the category of African from the historical, colonial European gaze that constructed and associated 'blackness' with the 'Dark Continent', which is portrayed as primitive and dangerous, enmeshed in cannibalism and witchcraft, the savage and the barbaric (Cashmore, 2006). Third, Mbeki was widening the definition of 'who is an African', defining an African identity that transcends racial lines in particular to include 'all those who live in it' – a phrase taken from the Freedom Charter of 1955 (Halisi 1999), and appropriated for the continent: "[Africa] belongs to all who live in it, black and white" (p. 65).

Mbeki's definition of an African identity, some would argue, situates him within the non-racial *multicultural discourse* which is usually seen as oppositional to *black republicanism*⁷ or Pan-Africanism⁸, Afrocentricity and Black Consciousness (Halisi, 1999) as well as Eurocentrism (Mazrui and Kariuki, 2006). Halisi (1999) traces the tensions between multiculturalism and black republicanism in South African politics and in their respective conceptions of 'race' and citizenship. Halisi (1999) argues that there seems to be an implicit suggestion that multiculturalists have risen above racial consciousness, while black republicans lapse into reverse racism. Multiculturalism, according to Halisi (1999) fosters racial integration, a (cultural) diversity that is (almost) colour blind and emphasizes national

⁷ In South African politics, the ANC has positioned itself as non-racial seeking the creation of a single national identity and based on "interracial social incorporation" (Halisi, 1999, p. 1) and calling for "class alliances across racial divides" (Halisi, 1999, p. 4). Whereas, the Pan-African Congress (PAC) – as its name suggests – is premised on a nationalist consciousness of black African people; on racial exclusivity and racial nationalism. From this position, multiculturalism and ANC politics are positioned as liberal, and black republicanism and PAC as popular and communitarian.

⁸ There are many proponents – intellectual and political; Africans on the continent and those in the Diaspora, most notably African Americans – of Pan-Africanism. The impressive list includes names such as "Kwame Nkrumah; Julius Nyerere, Malcolm X, Muammar al-Gaddafi, Molefi Kete Asante...Cheikh Anta Diop, Marcus Garvey ... W.E.B. du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Bob Marley, Patrice Lumumba... Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, Kenneth Kaunda... Steve Biko, Thabo Mbeki..." (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan-Africanism>).

rather than racial identity. This is epitomized in South Africa's idea of a 'rainbow nation'⁹ that transcends and cuts across 'race', class, gender and culture. Similarly, for Mazrui and Kariuki (2006) multiculturalism is a pluralistic and inclusive strategy that is premised on the universal interconnectedness of all people, a melting-pot of different cultures and peoples.

On the other hand, Afrocentrism or Afrocentricity is a dialectical strategy seeking the dismissal of the negative portrayal of Africa and of African people (Mazrui and Kariuki, 2006). Put differently, in Asante's¹⁰ (2003) terms, Afrocentricity is both African-centred and Africa-centred and is "a philosophical perspective associated with the discovery, location and actualizing of African agency within the context of history and culture" (p. 3). In addition, Mazrui and Kariuki (2006) see Afrocentrism as an antithesis to the thesis of Eurocentrism and 'white history'. In this way, Afrocentricity becomes more than just a knee-jerk reaction to Eurocentrism but a way of confronting Eurocentrism with an alternative perspective. For Asante (2003) Afrocentricity challenges, not Eurocentrism, but explicitly white racial supremacist ideas on the continent of Africa, in the Diaspora and the rest of the world. Asante (2003) defines Afrocentricity as the:

... mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values and perspectives predominate... it is the placing of African people in the centre of any analysis of African phenomena... it is a devotion to the idea that what is in the best interest of African consciousness is at the heart of ethical behaviour (p. 2).

Politically, it is an assertion of the autonomy of Africans¹¹ that is concerned with creating a self-reliant Africa in the context of Western globalisation and capitalism. However,

⁹ This term was coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

¹⁰ Asante is credited as the main proponent of Afrocentricity and has published prolifically on the subject. According to Itibari M. Zulu, the Editor of the Journal of Pan-African Studies, Asante "has published more scholarly books than any contemporary African author and has recently been recognized as one of the ten most cited African Americans" (2007, p. 1).

¹¹ Here, I want to add 'Black Africans'. This is precisely the issue that this work seeks to address. Is African only black? Oddly, Afrocentricity literature never makes this clear. However, if you read between the lines, it becomes obvious that African refers to and means 'black'.

Afrocentrism tends to appeal to ‘ancient’, nostalgic and romantic ideas about Africa and emphasizes the oppression, exploitation and colonization of Africa and her people by the West, in particular Europe. Halisi (1999) argues that Afrocentrism often gets branded as reverse racism that is based on exclusivist principles giving the concept of ‘land’ cultural and spiritual significance and, hence, land expropriation is a central political issue, and lamenting the destruction of African values, traditions and communal identities (Halisi, 1999).

Afrocentrism is further based on relativist, culturally essentialist (Gilroy, 1995) ideas, which are implicitly expressed in the belief and premise that Africa and African people are particularly unique and different in terms of their philosophy, personality, social and cultural identities, their way of life and thinking. Interestingly, these are the very same bases, grounds and logic that the apartheid system was legislated and founded on and, consequently, produced policies on separate development for education (Bantu education) and land (policies on segregation, the creation of homelands and regulation of movement between racialised spaces). Afrocentrism does not:

...necessarily claim that one people is better than another, they are content to claim that one people is different from another. The old segregationist precept in the United States, of separate but equal, effected to be racialist. It did not always proclaim that blacks were inferior or necessarily insist that they were subordinate; it could, and on rare occasions did, make the more modest claim that standards for blacks must be different because they were black (MacDonald, 2006, p. 6, italics in the original).

The following quote also demonstrates the manner in which Afrocentricity is positioned and constructed in juxtaposition to the West, resulting in a problematic relativist idea of Africa that is idyllic, unique, self-contained: “...an African renaissance is only possible if there is an African ideology, distinct from a Eurocentric ideology, that allows African agency, that is, a sense of self actualizing based upon the best interests of African people” (Asante, 2003, p. 1). This is a commonly articulated position especially within political discourse that seeks African solutions for uniquely African problems without any interference from outside. It implies constructing an African identity that is unique and distinct from the ‘West’ with this

term implicitly referring to that which is white and, at the same time, bringing together all African people across national and cultural lines as a collective.

I would argue that Asante (2003) constructs black identity and African identity in essentialist, monolithic, universal and homogenized ways. Asante (2003) suggests that ‘Africans’ [both continental and in the Diaspora – in the United States, Costa Rica, Mexico, Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Barbados, Brazil, Venezuela] have the *same/one African cultural system*¹². Asante (2003) slips between universalizing, on one hand, and relativising (i.e., in relation to the West), on the other, to produce the following sentimental, over-romantic idea of who is ‘an African’:

We respond to the same rhythms of universe, the same cosmological sensibilities, the same general historical reality as the African descended people. Indeed, Shango, Ogun, Oshun, and Obatala have meaning for us even if it is only at the essential level of symbol. This much must remain clear (p. 4).

However, “Shango, Ogun, Oshun, and Obatala” do *not* have meaning for me. Does this mean that I am not an African? Asante (2003) essentializes and homogenizes that which is African and black. Gilroy (1995) critiques the idea of a singular, essentialised notion of black identity, arguing that the sameness is cast in “(myths) of origin” (p. 21) located in a place called Africa. However, this sameness “turn(s) away from that continent’s contemporary ecological and economic catastrophes, preferring instead to contemplate the imagined community made possible by an acute overinvestment in the notion of anteriority” (p. 21). Ironically, Asante (2003) goes on to defend his position as *not* essentialist:

Literacy critics who attack Afrocentricity as essentialism have given essentialism a bad connotation. I have never defended an argument for any type of superiority based on biology. I detest such biological arguments and argue fundamentally that African culture

¹² Asante never explains what this African Cultural system is but argues that all Africans, Yoruba, Asante, Wolof, Ewe, Igbo, Mandinka, Haitians, Guadelopeans and African-Americans, possess it by virtue of being African. It is not explicitly stated but implied that ‘whites’ in Africa do not possess this African cultural system.

is basically, indestructible based on history, education and experiences. Indeed, I have a definite view on the history and culture of African people. On this I shall stand. This does not mean that I do not believe in change, modifications, influences, and so forth... [Africans] and African-Americans possess values and beliefs derived from their own particular histories yet conforming to the African Cultural System (pp. 4-5).

Asante clearly takes a culturally essentialist and reductionistic position in constructing continental and Diasporic Africans. And, unlike Mbeki's inclusive definition of African, Asante (2003) provides us with a narrow, racialized definition. Although Asante (2003) never explicitly articulates that 'an African' is only and can only be 'Black African', both continental and in the Diaspora, his silence assumes this. But perhaps Anise (1974) offers us a historical explanation for the conflation of 'race' in particular blackness and Africa in that the notion of the 'Dark Continent' clearly carries a racial connotation:

...implicit racial factor can be linked with the Sub-Saharan African identity. Sub-Saharan African is often identified as Black Africa, and Black Africa belongs to Black Africans. This has given rise to the problem that no definition of Africa can be purified of its racial connotations. All early historical accounts of Africa leave the distinct impression that the continent is largely inhabited by Negroes. In contemporary terminology it means that Africa belongs to the Black race (p. 28).

The quote above explicitly demonstrates the conflation of Africa with 'race' and, in particular, with blackness. However, this is an oversimplified equation. A historical 'fact' problematizes and complicates this characterisation of Africa as a 'black place' or as belonging to the black 'race'. As Anise (1974) puts it, "the white presence within so-called Sub-Saharan Africa has made it impossible for anyone to establish the intended coincidence between 'race' and territoriality in contemporary Africa" (p. 28). Notwithstanding, Asante (2003) suggests that to be black (and by implication African) means "... to be against all forms of oppression, racism, classism, homophobia, patriarchy, child abuse, pedophilia and white racial domination" (p. 2). Asante (2003) implies that 'being black' or blackness is a

‘trope of ethics’. In Asante’s (2003) terms, blackness represents that which is good and just whereas, by implication, whiteness embodies that which is evil and unjust. This construction of blackness offers a version that is explicitly simple, idyllic, untarnished, unblemished, perfect and flawless. Gilroy (1995) suitably calls such a view of black singular identity ‘an absolute or ‘cleansed’ identity’ that is a “highly compressed and *cheerfully essentialised* understanding of identity [that] is the favoured subject of all forms of *ethnic absolutism...*” (p. 20, italics added for emphasis). Black identity is more complicated than what Asante would have us believe. In a compelling paper, *Roots and Routes: Black Identity as an Outernational Project*, Gilroy (1995) examines the impact of globalisation on black identity. Gilroy (1995) seeks to understand black identities in Britain and in particular to understand the influences on Black identities from and by intercultural connections. Theories of identity do not adequately explain different aspects of black identity such as internal differences within Black communities largely created by economic imperatives (Gilroy, 1995) as well as other identity formations: gender and sexuality (Ratele, 1998, 2003), geography, nationality, and language. Gilroy (1995) fittingly points out essentialist perspectives, like those of Asante (2003) and other Afrocentric writers negate differences within black communities in their attempt to provide us with a singular, unproblematic, static, and essentialist view of blackness and black identity:

The more that Blacks differ from each other, the more identity politics tells us that these differences do not count... The impulsive obsession with racial identity conjures away material, ideological, and sexual differences, but they live on stubbornly under the very signs of their attempted erasure. In these circumstances, the idea that there is a fixed, invariant and essentialist Black identity that can be held constant while supposedly superficial differences like money, power, and sex proliferate is a defeat (Gilroy, 1995. p. 16).

Quite clearly, we cannot theoretically speak of a singular Black identity. Writing of black identity in the singular conceals difference within and uncritically essentializes what it means to be black-in-the-world. Questions of (racial) identity pose complex and interesting theoretical, historical, political and cultural questions. Gilroy (1995) warns that we need to pay particular attention to variations of Black identity, both internal and external. We need to understand the changing conceptions of black identity. Mindful of postcolonial imperatives

and the aftermath of the diaspora, Gilroy (1995) seeks a global perspective and approach to the questions of racial and ethnic identities, which invariably raises questions “of culture’s variations and mutability” (p. 18). A global approach calls into question the idea of a fixed, unchanging singular Black identity and culture. Gilroy (1995) argues that we need to rather “learn to work with the concept of culture [and identity] in new ways that are capable of somehow operating against its own inner character, which was defined long ago by the notions of rootedness, stasis, and fixity...” (p. 18). Gilroy (1995) is also mindful that questions of culture and identity are political and warns that ‘there is no innocent idea of a purified prepolitical or apolitical identity. The idea of the singular, fixed black identity was used as a political strategy by social movements for “racial emancipation, liberation and autonomy”’ (p. 18). Concepts such as ‘Negro’, ‘coloured’, ‘Black’ and African’ are deployed successively towards racial equality. So, the idea of the singular Black identity does not “exist prior to political action in the broadest sense, and [does not] remain outside it... [it] plays multiple roles, but [is] more likely to be the product of racialized politics than its essential precondition” (p. 18).

The appeal to a singular Black identity as expounded by Afrocentricity is a historical, political strategy. The question is whether the social, historical, political and economic postcolonial conditions are different from the colonial? Or, quite simply are they two sides of the same coin? Does it make (political) sense in the post-colonial and post-apartheid South Africa to speak of a single, homogenous Black identity, as was critical during apartheid, the civil rights movement in the United States, and the antiracist movement in the United Kingdom? How do we begin to speak about and write Black identities as created by economic conditions, class, geography, sexuality, culture? Does the conceptualisation of black subjectivities as fragmented rob ‘blackness’ of anything? If the singular Black identity was a critical political strategy against overt forms of racial domination, is it still appropriate today? What political function does the concept of Black *identities*, as opposed to identity, serve?

In the context of colonialism and western imperialism, we needed a singular Black and even African identity. We needed a single narrative as a people, as a marginalised group. We needed a (black) solidarity transcending all boundaries and all borders – whether real or imagined, biological or social, geographical and/or ethnic. The black African-American struggles against white racism in the United States were our struggle on the African continent. South Africa’s struggle against apartheid was a struggle of all black peoples of the world. A metaphor for this solidarity is captured in class struggles and the workerist slogan ‘*An injury*

to one is an injury to all.' The solidarity transcended class, gender, ethnicity, location. 'Race' was the only critical unifier against the oppressor, unifying all oppressed people as black and fixing and essentializing that which is 'white'. Evoking sameness and racial authenticity was a political strategy (Gilroy, 1995). The creation of and emphasis on the Black singular identity in, as Gilroy (1995) suggests 'modern Black political culture' was a critical political strategy because of:

...the need to refuse and escape the identities into which we were both coerced and seduced during a history of terror which language has inadequate resources to communicate. The tension between chosen identities and given identities appears in a very stark form in the history of the Black Atlantic diaspora, where the obligation to engage in self-discovery has always involved an act of refusal, and the conventional understanding of what it means to be an individual has been either imposed on its subordinated Others, or premised on their exclusion (p. 19).

As with the first wave of feminism in the West, all women united for one cause and campaigned against the common evil of sexism. For political reasons, in such contexts differences within the group are overridden or downplayed as they would differentiate, divide and annihilate solidarity.

2.8 Reinterpreting Black Identity in Contemporary Conditions

But what is the contemporary situation in South Africa, in Africa and the world? Does identity singularity or cultural particularity make sense with the advent of democracy, liberation, African independence, globalisation, nation-states, economic policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank? Perhaps it is time to uncover and reveal our differences. Concealed differences may mask kinds of oppression, exploitation and struggle. Being black in Darfur in the Sudan is fundamentally different from being black in South Africa, let alone the United States or United Kingdom. Being a woman in one part of Africa is a different experience from elsewhere on the continent or in the world. Postmodernism highlights and celebrates difference; different cultures, different values, different struggles and different narratives of being. We cannot deny differences between

black here and black there; between ‘African here and African there’ (Gilroy, 1995: 27) as the Afrocentric movement, which appears to be Americocentric, would have us believe. We could make parallels between different struggles for identity in the United States, United Kingdom, and in Africa but these parallels, as Gilroy (1995) points out, are hard to sustain. The 2007 rejection by the African Union for a *United States of Africa* signals the differentiation and fragmentation within the continent of Africa. The question of identity, of black and African identity, requires a careful interplay between local and global imperatives and politics of nationality, of history, of power and much more. In this context, it does *not* make (political or psychological) sense to speak of and write about a singular Black identity transcending gender, nationality, class, sexuality and economics. These different formations create different opportunities, struggles and social locations for people that inhabit them. Gilroy (1995) suggests that we need to think about the concept of black identity in the contemporary context, not as fixed, not as singular but rather, as multiple, diverse:

Certainly the emergence of Black voices that accentuate the language of racial authenticity in contradictory ways – gay as well as straight, from the “underclass” as well as the academy, from Europe and America as well as from Africa – have thrown the idea of a fixed and unitary racial identity into crisis. The challenge and the opportunity this provides is the chance to produce a theory of racial identity which is neither lazily essentialist nor prematurely pluralist (pp. 18-19).

A project about black identity in the postcolonial world needs to take the current situation into account: an increasingly globalized world, a meeting of different cultural spaces, ideas and people. Theorising black identity and identification requires that we look at and grapple with appeals for a common (Black) identity as well as points of difference in the search for such an ideal.

CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

NARRATIVE THEORY

CHAPTER 3

NARRATIVE THEORY

3.1 Introduction

This study is interested in ways in which black people talk about what it means to be black. It is interested in the stories individuals tell about who they are and what it means to be ‘black-in-the-world’ (Manganyi, 1973). The fascination lies not only in the stories of blackness but also in how stories of blackness intersect with stories about other forms of social identities, for instance, age, class, place, gender and sexuality. At an epistemological level, the study is explicitly interested in the ways in which the stories that people tell about themselves are essentially social. This means that in the telling of these stories of identity, of self as a ‘racialised subject’, the wider social, cultural, political and historical context will be revealed and made manifest for interrogation and questioning. I have constantly asserted that race matters – that being black specifically still matters in South Africa. These stories of blackness or of being black will explore this claim and hopefully offer new lenses through which we can think about ‘race’ and identity in South Africa. Stories, therefore, offer me, as a researcher, the double vantage point of working closely with individuals’ accounts of their lives and their constructions of identity, on one hand, and, on the other hand, of interrogating the social, cultural, political and historical contexts in which these stories are told and to which they give permission and expression. Stories seem to offer the social and human sciences a way of theorising the interrelationship between ‘self’ and ‘society’. In this chapter, I will introduce *myself* to this exciting, and increasingly popular field of narrative research (Frosh, 2001; Squire, 2005; Roberts, 2002). As a new researcher, I will articulate my theoretical, methodological and political excitement and concerns about narrative. The chapter will then address some historical and theoretical assumptions that underlie narrative, that is, the theoretical tensions between modern and postmodern conceptions of self and narrative; the relation between life and story; the interdisciplinarity of narrative research (Squire, 2005) and the questions of theoretical eclecticism and diversity in narrative research (Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou, 2008).

3.2 The promise and possibilities of Narrative Theory

As a new researcher, narrative appeals to me for different theoretical, methodological and political reasons. First, stories seem to be everywhere, invading and touching every aspect of our human lives. Squire (2005) suggests narratives are increasingly popular in the social sciences because of their perceived universal appeal that seems to cut across culture, time and place. Jerome Bruner (2002) opens his book, *Making Stories*, by posing the question whether we need to theorise narrative as it seems to be simply everywhere, a ‘natural’ part of life:

We listen to [stories] endlessly, tell them as easily as we grasp them – true or false ones, real ones or make-believe, accusations and excuses, we take them all in stride. We are so adept at narrative that it seems almost as natural as language itself. We know how to tailor our stories quite effortlessly to further our own ends (beginning with those sly twists that shift the blame for spilt milk to a younger sibling) and know when others are doing the same. Our lives with stories start early and go on ceaselessly: no wonder we know how to deal with them. Do we really need a book about anything as obvious as narrative? (p. 3).

Bruner (2002) goes on to argue that it is precisely the ‘obvious’ or seemingly ‘natural’ that needs explaining and understanding. Although we all seem to know how to tell stories (about ourselves) and we do so ‘effortlessly to further own our ends’ we do not necessarily understand what it is we are doing when we craft and make our stories. Second, narratives ‘promise’ to pay ‘comprehensive’ (Squire, 2005) attention to individual life and experience. It is, perhaps, this ‘promise’ of attuning to individual experience that makes narrative theory contentious in relation to the postmodern declaration of ‘the death of the subject’. Like Squire (2005) and Roberts (2002), Frosh (2001) suggests the increasing popularity of narratives in the social sciences is indicative of the *turn to language* and the *turn to the discursive* in our attempts to understand human life, meanings and experience. Roberts (2002) suggests that the ‘cultural and linguistic turn’ in the social sciences has been followed by a “narrative, biographical or auto/biographical turn” (p. 3) signalling critical shifts in the study of lives and the social world. The ‘narrative turn’ is regarded as an important development (Roberts, 2002) in the social sciences as it brings with it suggestions of universality and new

conceptualisations of the relationship between theory and praxis and between self and society (Squire, 2005). The ‘narrative turn’, therefore, answers epistemological, methodological and political questions in ways that allow researchers and scholars to theorize human life in its socio-cultural world and to bridge theory and practice. For instance, narrative is taken to provide links between the personal/individual realms of experience with the social, historical and political contexts in which the person lives. Narrative, as I will hopefully demonstrate in this chapter, is an adept strategy that seeks to study and understand human life that is inherently ‘messy’, fragmented, contradictory and multiple.

Third, I perceive narrative as more than *simply method*, rather as offering different and new ways of understanding human life by theorising individual/personal realms of experience within wider social, cultural and political contexts. Narrative, therefore, demands that we re-think the conventional dichotomous relationship between ‘self’ and ‘society’ and see these realms as interpenetrating each other (Giddens, 1984) and as intimately tied to one another. Roberts (2002) observes that ‘self’ and ‘society’ cannot be separated because “‘individuals, while using wider modes of thought and expression (e.g. myths, symbols, beliefs), construct their own narratives according to their interpretation of experience in socio-cultural contexts” (p. 119). Personal narratives, therefore, are not merely narratives of individuals (Roberts, 2002) but tell and reveal dimensions of the wider socio-cultural context. For this reason, narrative is a powerful approach to understanding experience and identity as embedded, (re)produced and grounded in the wider social context.

3.3. Narrative History: Contradictions in Epistemology

Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2008) raise a number of questions. What is narrative? What do we do with the stories people tell us? And what do we do when people do not tell us stories? They identify much divergence in the field, differing approaches, and often contradictory theoretical commitments and underpinnings of and in narrative. In his book, *Biographical Research*, Roberts (2002) identifies the differing and interchangeable use of terms as one of the difficulties within biographical research. Terms such as ‘biography’, ‘autobiography’, ‘story’, ‘narrative’, ‘oral history’, ‘life story’ and ‘life history’ fall under the rubric of ‘storied’ methodology in the social sciences and are sometimes confused and used interchangeably. For instance, Roberts (2002) uses the term biographical research to refer to any work that uses stories of others and other ‘personal materials’ to understand the individual

life. Defining each of these terms is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Roberts, 2002) and for the purposes of this chapter, the terms *narrative* and *story* are used interchangeably. Before going any further, we need to consider some historical and theoretical underpinnings of narrative theory.

Narrative emerges within two historical and contemporary socio-scientific paradigms and debates: first, between *positivist* and *humanist approaches* (Squire et al., 2008) and second, between *humanist/modern* and *postmodern approaches* (Crossley, 2000, 2003; Squire et al., 2008). Humanism particularly underscores “the uniqueness of each individual, also strongly affirms a belief in our [conscious] personal agency – our ability to take effective action in the world around us” (Crossley, 2000, p. 8). In this regard, humanist approaches are a reaction to positivism. Crossley (2000) argues that humanistic approaches and narrative have “shared roots in the philosophical branches of phenomenology and existentialism” with emphasis on ‘experience and experiencing’, ‘uniqueness’, ‘meaning’, ‘freedom’ and ‘choice’ in their attempt to “capture in all its full complexity the subjective nature of self and world experienced by each idiosyncratic individual” (p. 8). In keeping with this, Josselson (1995) suggests that narrative has been positioned as an “alternative to the traditional ‘scientific’ understandings of the individual as ‘abstracted’ out of his or her context rather than as part of it” (cited in Roberts, 2002, p. 115).

Second, narrative emerges within the theoretical tensions between *humanist/modern* and *poststructuralist/postmodern approaches* (Crossley, 2000, 2003; Squire, 2005). For Crossley (2000), narrative falls within the overarching social constructivist approaches, which are sometimes referred to as ‘discursive’ or ‘language-based’ approaches in the study of self. This is because “narrative approaches to the study of self and identity ... [give primacy to] the inextricable interconnection between ‘self’ and ‘social structures’, particularly the interrelationship between ‘self’ and ‘language’” Crossley (2000, p. 9). Many discursive approaches are largely anti-realist and anti-humanist and argue for multiple, incoherent, fragmented selves and identities (Squire et al., 2008) that are at times contradictory. The postmodern self, as Gergen (1991) argues, is not singular, unified and coherent:

Instead, of a consistent, coherently defined ‘inner’ self, a more ‘open slate’ emerges on which a person may inscribe, erase and rewrite their identities, as the ever-shifting, ever expanding and

incoherent network of relationships invites and permits (cited in Crossley, 2000, p. 27).

Narrative theory has not, however, resolved these debates and tensions. Nor does it seek to resolve them. Narrative sits in between these theoretical tensions and inherent contradictions in the understanding of the relation between 'self' and 'society'. Squire et al., (2008) suggest that for many narrative researchers it may be "more important to do useful and innovative work across the contradictions, rather than trying to resolve conflicting positions which are historically and disciplinarily distinct, as well as logically incommensurable" (p. 7). In fact, elsewhere, Squire (2005) says that narrative is often viewed as a strategy for synthesis, for bridging and combining.

'[M]odern' interests in describing, interpreting and improving individual human experience which underpinned much qualitative social science in the early and mid-twentieth century, with 'postmodern' concerns about representation and agency that drove the later 'turns', such as the 'turn to language;' and with a set of questions, broadly derived from psychoanalysis, about subjectivity, the unconscious, and desire, that accord at times with modern and at times with postmodern frames of thought (p. 2, italics added for emphasis).

Similarly, Squire et al (2008) argue that narrative holds these modern and postmodern tensions together in contradiction, endorsing a "humanist conception of a singular, unified subject, at the same time as the promotion of an idea of narrative as always multiple, socially constructed and constructing, reinterpreted and reinterpretable". This does not seem to 'solve' the problem. Is it enough to suggest that narrative bridges and synthesizes two incommensurable theoretical orientations? The modernist and realist project of seeking a unified, singular and coherent subject stands in direct contradiction to the postmodern 'dead', multiple, contradictory and fragmented subject. Is narrative trying to 'have its cake and eat it' at the same time? This is the question that the chapter now addresses.

3.4 Narrative: Having and Eating its (theoretical) Cake?

Crossley (2000) places narrative under the rubric of discursive approaches such as post-structuralism and discourse and rhetorical analytic approaches. Narrative exists along with these discursive approaches because of its emphasis on the intricate relationship between language, social realities and identity. Narrative and other discursive approaches share a “concern with language as a tool for the construction of reality, especially the reality of experiencing self and the way in which the concept of self is inextricably linked to language, narratives, others, time and morality” (Crossley, 2000: 40). In this sense, narrative is interested in ‘talk’ and the ways in which individuals represent themselves in language and, in particular, in stories. However, narrative approaches are distinguished from other such approaches because narrative is grounded in ‘the real’, in ‘the material’ and in its attempt to understand individuals’ experiences and lives (Crossley, 2003). Narrative approaches remain:

... very much grounded in the attempt to understand the specific experiences undergone by individuals. This is in contrast to the postmodern approach which tends to be pitched at a more abstract, theoretical level, and the discourse and rhetorical analytic approaches which have a methodological focus... [T]hese approaches tend to ‘lose’ the experience of the subject by operating at these levels. By contrast, narrative psychology recognizes the need ... to operate with a realist epistemology which is able to accord sufficient respect to the experiences of specific individuals (Crossley, 2000, p. 40).

Despite the postmodern conception of individual life, experience and identity as multiple, fragmented and contradictory, individuals do not live their lives in a constant state of flux, fluidity and fragmentation. People have a sense of themselves as ‘fixed’ and coherent overtime as well as changing and multiple. Individuals are in a struggle: “between a sense of self (unity) and non-self (disunity, fragmentation) [and this] remains a central feature of human existence” (Crossley, 2000, p. 41). Narrative posits a ‘real’ subject and not simply an “empty grammatical depersonalised object” (Crossley, 2000, p. 41):

The plain fact is that the kinds of experiences many of us undergo cry out for the kind of ‘old-fashioned’ narrative ... we frequently find ourselves having to make sense of what is going on; we have to create a stable, solid version of what and why this or that happened; and in order to do this, we have to have some sense of ourselves as a unified, coherent person (Crossley, 2000, p. 41).

In this way, narrative incorporates a critical realist epistemology with postmodern concerns for the possibilities for re-writing, re-construction and re-interpretation. This bridging of modern and postmodern insights (Squire et al, 2008) is, however, not a lack of theoretical positioning. Rather, narrative mirrors the very nature of human existence as an interplay of the ‘messy’, the contradictory and the fragmented, with the search for unity, coherence, the ‘real’ and the material.

3.5 The Relation between Life and Story

The relation between life and story has been fiercely debated and continues to yield much disagreement and divergence across disciplines and theories (e.g. Bruner, 2002; Chase, 1995; Fay, 1996; Freeman, 2004; Ricoeur, 1991; Taylor, 1996; Widdershoven, 1993). Widdershoven (1993) argues there are two conventional ways in which the relation between life and story is conceptualized. Life and story are seen as either different, independent, separate sites of meaning or as the same ontological entities (Widdershoven, 1993). Different theorists tend to commit themselves to either one of the positions. The first view positions ‘life’ as outside of language, discourse and signification but, holds that life can be told, represented in narrative and “depicted in stories” (Widdershoven, 1993, p. 1). The corresponding perspective is that lives are lived independently of ‘storying’ but may nonetheless be inflected by them. Stories are, therefore, the means through which life is told and symbolized in discourse. The second view positions stories and lives in the same ontological place. In this view, stories are universal, primary, existing before and predating each individual. Stories are conceptualized as archetypes for life. At the same time, lives already have the shape of stories and indeed determine human storytelling by their experiential shape. Human life and experience, therefore, are “measured against the meaningful patterns [structures] presented to us in literary stories” (Widdershoven, 1993, p. 1). This position treats life and story as ontologically conflated: life *is* a story and people live

the stories they tell. Different theorists have argued against such dichotomous alternatives. Widdershoven (1993), like Ricoeur (1991) adopts a *hermeneutic* perspective in suggesting that life and story are “internally related” (p. 2) but have some relative autonomous elements. Likewise, Fay (1996) adopts, what he calls *narrativism*, eloquently suggesting that “our lives are enstoried and our stories are enlived” (p. 197). It is critical here to spend more time thinking through the ontological dichotomous or collapsed relations between life and story prior to engaging narrativism and hermeneutic insights.

The relation between life and story is both theoretically contentious and intriguing. Are our lives stories? Or do we tell stories about our lives and experiences? How we conceptualize the relation between life and story has theoretical and methodological implications for narrative research. Fay (1996) suggests that how we conceptualize the relation between life and story largely determines what we think individuals’ narratives tell us; what we look for and what our findings are actually about. The following question is a critical one that all narrative researchers should ask themselves when working with a story that an individual has told. The question is *what am I looking for?*

[A]m I looking for something which is a property of that person’s life - its dramatic structure or plot? Or am I inventing a pattern which is significant for me given who I am but which may not be significant for the person I am trying to understand in part because it is not contained in that person’s life? Am I trying to discover something which is already there, or to create something which isn’t (Fay, 1996, p. 179)?

These philosophical questions are about the nature of human reality and, importantly, about the nature of social scientific research. What are we doing when we ask people to tell us stories about themselves? The converse is also significant here: what are people doing when they tell us stories about themselves? The answer lies in how we conceptualize the complexity of life and story. In thinking through the different positions in the debate, it is useful here to deal with the philosophical question posed by Fay (1996) of whether we live stories or simply tell stories. Fay (1996) interrogates the commonly accepted idea that human life and indeed identity are primarily storied. This question conjures up unresolved debates between realist and constructivist bases of life and story that Fay (1996) refers to as narrative realism and

narrative constructivism¹³ respectively. Fay (1996) poses a series of questions about the relation between life and story:

[A]re our lives in fact stories in which we are central characters? Or ... does our culture enact some inherent narrative pattern? ... Or ... are the stories we or others tell instead mere constructions which we make up after the fact in order to render our lives and cultures meaningful? Do we perform in the stories we or others relate about us, or are they instead simply tales we or others spin to lend some semblance of order to lives in themselves without inherent order? Are our stories in our lives to be extracted from them, or are they only about our lives such that they are imposed on them? In short are the stories of our lives lived or merely told (p. 178, italics in the original)?

Fay's (1996) questions relate to the ontology of life and story. Is human life a story, lived according to the already existing narrative patterns? Or are stories mere constructions, tales we craft in order to make sense of Aristotle's *peripeteia* (Bruner, 2002) in order to render our disorganized experiences into an ordered sequential narrative? To paraphrase Fay (1996), do we tell stories or live them? Are life and story ontologically collapsed or separated? Here we can turn to Widdershoven's (1993) excellent piece, *Narrative and Life History*, which deals precisely with the relation between life and story and the two theoretical positions within the debate.

The first position conceives of life and story as *ontologically collapsed*: stories are all pervasive and invading; human life is fundamentally storied and structured into narrative. This position is grounded on the idea that "we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative" (Hardy, 1968 cited in Widdershoven, 1993, p. 3). From this

¹³ Fay's (1996) use of constructivism is not the usual sense of social and discursive construction. What Fay (1996) refers to as narrative realism, I have termed the ontologically collapsed position: where life is seen as narratively structured and narrative as deriving from life. Fay's use of narrative constructivism is appropriated to the position that treats life and story as ontologically different: where stories are linguistic means employed by people to make sense of themselves and their lives.

position, life is understood as following stories and literature (Widdershoven, 1993). Researchers who argue for life as story oppose the idea that human life and experience is disorganized and meaningless outside of narrative. Freeman (2004) sees life as fundamentally storied in that there is a:

... '[N]arrative fabric' of the self and ... that human life is itself narratively structured. As against those who imagine life to be essentially formless, and narrative to be an imposition from without, my own perspective is that it may profitably be understood as a kind of literature (p. 63, original emphasis).

From this position, human life is already structured into a story, that is a narrative structure already exists (Fay, 1996; Widdershoven, 1993) and is prerequisite for the individual life. Human life is, therefore, already narratively structured with a 'beginning, middle and an end'. "Life already has meaning, before it is a subject of stories" (Widdershoven, 1993, p. 4) and individuals living these lives simply 'discover' and reproduce already existing narrative structures in their telling of stories.

The idea of life following story is not as peculiar as it sounds. For Lee, Rosenfeld, Mendenhall, Rivers and Tynes (2004), this means that stories, whether narrative or literature, inspire life. The inspiration takes different forms, for instance, "epic poetry imposed order in ancient times. The Bible added moral order ... the spiritual quality of folktales in many cultures, and character-rich moral tales in others, are frameworks for how people perceive and evaluate their lives" (Daiute and Lightfoot, 2004, p. xiv). For Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) we need to appreciate the impact that literature and literary work has in our lives and in shaping individual life. To illustrate the ways in which stories inspire lives or the power that narrative has in leading its readers to action, Sarbin (2004) refers us to the novel by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774). The story is about "unrequited love ending up in suicide" (p. 7). The significance of the power of the novel lies in the increased number of suicides by young men in Europe. Sarbin (2004) argues that "Werther, a fictional character in a novel, had been transfigured to become a model for living and dying" and this was at the time that "when death and dying, especially dying by one's own hand, was seen as romantic" (p. 7). Can all the suicides of the time be attributed to this one novel? Sarbin (2004) believes so because the fictional character's name was frequently mentioned in suicide notes.

This led to some European countries banning the book. Sarbin (2004) uses other literary works such as Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605); Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) about the dehumanizing slavery institution; John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) about a family's struggle under the Great Depression to show the psychological and social impact of stories in these literary works, on individuals and society. These examples illustrate the idea that life follows stories and that stories provide us with tools with which to construct ourselves (Daiute and Lightfoot, 2004).

The second position conceives of life and story as *ontologically separate*: stories are constructions people tell when attempting to make sense of events, others and themselves. This position holds that life and story are ontologically different in that "the one [life] being without structure and the other [story] being structured in a specific way" (p. 3). The premise of this position is better articulated by Mink (1987) who argues that "stories are not lived, but told" (cited in Widdershoven, 1993, p. 3). Life is conceived of as unstructured, in a state of flux and characterized by a series of events. Consequently, stories, here, are seen as organizing frameworks that are employed by individuals to represent themselves and give meaning to their lives. Fay (1996) eloquently captures how this position views narratives:

[As] ... products of art as historians and biographers attempt to make sense of life, not products in life itself. The lives of people are composed of mere sequences of events which require a biographer later to impose on this sequence a narrative structure to render them intelligible. Narratives are constructed, not discovered, are creations after the fact when one can assign – from one's own perspective – particular stories to various events and relationships of persons' lives (p. 190).

Do these two positions adequately account for the relations between life and story? Is life already ordered in narrative or do we precisely represent and order our lives and experiences in narrative to make sense of them? There is no simple answer. I would like to recount an experience that I had after a couple of weeks of studying and living in the United Kingdom. A friend suggested one Saturday morning that we go to the Portobello Market in Notting Hill. Nothing particularly happened that makes this experience significant. We did not even buy anything in the market, although there were many things

that I wish I could have bought. We walked around and perused lots of different ‘stuff’: from old coins to music CDs; from kilts to second-hand army uniforms; from London T-shirts to food stalls and the famous shop with the ‘blue door’. The experience was a pleasant one. Why am I telling this story (if it is indeed a story)? Well, it is to demonstrate a few things about the nature of experience and the art of story and narrative.

First, the experience recounted lies in the past. It has already happened and I can only have access to it, retrieve it as it were, through the story(ies) I (will) tell about it. Second, in trying to put that experience into words, into language, into discourse, into a story, something is lost (Frosh, 2001). I cannot really ever capture, in words, the ‘actual experience’, the emotions that I felt, the bodily reactions experienced. The story told above seems to ‘steal’ from the experience. Some aspects of the experience seem to resist signification in narrative (Frosh, 2001). Third, the experience of being at the market, before telling it, was already meaningful. It did not become meaningful or organized only when symbolized in words and in the story. But, through the telling(s) of the experience, it takes on a different structure, a linguist, discursive and narrative structure. As much as something is lost in words (Frosh, 2001) something else is gained - a new structure - and the experience acquires new significance for and to me. Stories impose structure on life, unlike common sense would have us believe that “the story is a transparent window on reality, not a cookie cutter imposing a shape on it... [W]e use stories to shape our everyday experience” (Bruner, 2002, p. 6-7). Fourth, although the experience is or was meaningful before the story I told about it, the experience was not wholly organized into an already perfect and neatly package story. It had to be (re)constructed and it was re-made as I carefully chose how to tell the story, consciously omitting some parts of the experience I did not want to reveal. The story about the experience is *different* in that, for example, it is certainly condensed as I spent five hours at the market but the story I told is only a few sentences. The story told is indeed a (re)construction entailing a changing revision and revisiting of experience. And lastly, the telling of the story is a kind of re-enactment (Widdershoven, 1993), a reliving of the past experience in the present moment. Narrative is a strategy of tying together the past, present and future. In this way, experience is never truly gone or past because of narrative and stories we tell about it. Therefore, experience and story are neither completely separate entities nor are they identical realities. Life and story are, as Widdershoven (1993) suggests, ‘internally related’. Using a hermeneutic lens, Widdershoven (1993) argues that:

[T]he meaning of life cannot be determined outside of the stories told about it. Consequently, life cannot be regarded as an independent touchstone for the adequacy of a story. Neither, however, can the meaning of a story be determined without any reference to human life as it is lived. Thus a story is never a pure ideal, detached from real life. Life and story are not two separate phenomena. They are part of the same fabric, in that life informs and is formed by stories (p. 2).

Given the above discussion on the relation between life and story, the two conventional ontological positions of collapse and separation are problematic as they do not explicate this complexity of the relation between life and story. What we need, Fay (1996) argues, is a position that ‘steers a middle course’ (p. 194) between the two positions. Using insights from narrative realism, stories are not simply vehicles and modes for representation and meaning-making and from narrative constructivism, stories are multiple reconstructions and re-makings of the self. Using these insights must at the same time avoid the shortcomings of narrative realism, life and stories are not mutually exclusive categories and narrative constructivism, human life does not free-float in an endless discursive sea of stories without grounding in the ‘real’ and the material. Fay (1996) calls this ‘middle’ position *narrativism* and Widdershoven (1993) argues that a hermeneutical perspective sees life and story as internally related. For Fay (1996) narratives have a dual character – the lived and told character of narratives:

Stories are lived because human activity is inherently narrational in character and form: in acting we ‘knit the past and the future together’. But stories are also told in that with hindsight we can appreciate narrative patterns which we could not appreciate at the time of acting. We tell stories in acting and we continue to tell stories afterwards about the actions we have performed... [Therefore]...we might say that our lives are enstoried and our stories are enlived (p. 197).

Similarly, Widdershoven (1993) concludes this way about the relation between life and story:

[S]tories are interpretations of life. Story and life are similar, in that both are supposed to have meaning. The story tells us in a meaningful way what life itself is about ... [A]lso ... there is no meaning prior to interpretation. This implies that the meaning of life does not exist independent of the stories that are told about it. Thus life does not merely anticipate stories, its meaning is essentially dependent on stories... [T]he hermeneutic position emphasizes that life and story are only meaningful in and through mutual interaction (p. 4).

3.6 Divergent Theoretical and Methodological Approaches in Narrative

Squire et al (2008) identify one of the difficulties in narrative research as the diversity and the incompatibility of theoretical and methodological approaches. As mentioned above, the authors acknowledge much divergence and often contradictory theoretical commitments and underpinnings of approaches within narrative. What is clear though is the fact that there is no consensus in the definition of narrative, there are no clear rules, step-by-step recipes and formulations of the procedure, on how to analyse narrative data. Indeed, as narrative researchers, we are not told:

...whether to look for stories in recorded everyday speech, interviews, diaries, TV programmes or newspaper articles; whether to aim for objectivity or researcher and participant involvement; whether to analyse stories' particularity or generality; or what epistemological significance to attach to narratives (Squire et al, 2008, p. 2).

Researchers, it would seem, are left on their own to decide, conceptualise and think through the problem of narrative. The lack of clear-cut definitions, rules and procedures offers little comfort to a new researcher, like myself, in the field of narrative. However, Squire et al (2008) consider these 'difficulties' (as they call them) as positive and productive rather than hindrances. That is, the variety of approaches enables researchers to work at multiple levels, see different and "contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with

each other and to understand more about individual and social change” (p. 2). Some researchers do not try to bring divergent approaches into dialogue, rather they work within a particular approach with its benefits as well as limitations. What narrative is and how narrative is to be analysed is *determined* by the theoretical approach chosen. What attention you pay to the structure or the semantics or the context of the narrative or a combination between them, is theoretically driven and underpinned. The following section outlines the contributions and limitations of three different theoretical and methodological approaches within narrative research: event-centred; experience-centred and culturally contextual narrative approaches.

3.6.1 Personal Narratives as Event-Centred

The work of sociolinguists Labov and Waletzky (1967) provides a canonic reference in the definition and analysis of narrative. Robinson (1981) remarks with surprise that while telling stories about personal experience is a large part of everyday activity, it tended to be neglected by linguists and other language theorists until Labov and Waletzky. Squire (2008) also notes that, perhaps, one of the contributions of the work of Labov is its particular attention to language itself, “not just what language ‘means’ and social science work on narrative has a common tendency to move too quickly and easily from language to ‘meaning’” (p. 98). With this in mind, Robinson (1981) credits Labov and Waletzky as being the first theorists to attend to people’s “reporting of experience in everyday conversation” (p. 58). Labov and Waletzky’s work on the structure of personal narratives has provided researchers with a base (Labov, 2006) from which to identify ‘good’ stories. However, this work has also been the subject of much debate (Patterson, 2008) and is open to critique for further inquiry (Robinson, 1981).

The event-centred approach focuses on personal narratives as stories of *events* and, in particular, how individuals recount and tell a story about past events that have happened to them. Patterson (2008) argues that this approach “understands the personal narrative primarily as a text, and that the text’s function is to represent past events in the form of a story” (p. 23). This approach is more interested in the story’s ability to represent, refer and correspond to past events in time (Labov, 2006) and is less interested in the politics of performance and the interactive social context in which stories are told (Patterson, 2008). The primary function of narrative is to reiterate past events in story form. For Labov (2006), the sequencing of clauses in a story should match the order of events in time. It is for this reason that the *temporal and*

referential dimensions in narrative are critical in the Labovian approach (Labov, 2006; Patterson, 2008). Consider the following definitions of narrative within this approach:

... one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred (Labov, 1972 cited in Patterson, 2008, p. 23).

...as a particular way of reporting past events, in which the order of a sequence of independent clauses is interpreted as the order of the events referred to ...narrative construction follows the order of events in time (Labov, 2006, p. 37).

From the two definitions provided by Labov above, two interrelated assumptions can be made explicit. First, a story is a way of ‘replaying’ (Squire, 2005) and ‘recapitulating’ (Patterson, 2008) past events into the present storytelling moment. Second, how the story is told, how the clauses are put together and ordered (directly) corresponds to the order of events in time. A strange yet powerful assertion given the discussion on the relation between life and story! Labov seems to suggest that the story ‘captures’ “what actually happened in past real time” (2006, p. 39). But, we are getting ahead of ourselves with the critique of the Labovian approach. We still need to explore two foundations upon which the event-centred approach is premised, then consider the contributions and critique of treating stories that people tell about their experiences as narratives of events.

First, Labov (2006) posits a general and universal structure for narrative of personal experience “with an abstract, orientation, an evaluation section embedded in the complicating action, a resolution and a coda” (p. 37). The exploration of each part of Labov’s model of the structure of personal narrative is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Elliott, 2005; Patterson, 2008; Squire, 2005). The chapter concerns itself with aspects of the Labovian approach that will serve as points of contention and show inherent limitations in the approach that focuses on narratives as events rather than experience. Labov (2006) argues that this structure characterises ‘ideal type’ narratives of experience told by adults primarily in natural, everyday situations (Robinson, 1981; Squire, 2005) as opposed to the controlled settings of research interviews.

Second, Labov's (2006) characterization of what constitutes a narrative is interesting. "A narrative", Labov (2006) asserts, "is about something ... it is only when that something is an event – something that happened – that the speaker will signal to listeners that a narrative is to be initiated. If the something is a state of being ("I am tired") or the location of an entity ("Dad is home") what has been told is a simple report that does not require a further turn of talk" (p. 38). For Labov (2006), what qualifies as narrative is an event that is most "*reportable or tellable*" (p. 38, original emphasis). Reportability or tellability is measured by the fact that the event either does not happen everyday or is an unexpected occurrence that warrants, or as Labov puts it, "calls for an accounting" (p. 38). Labov's characterization of what constitutes a narrative is similar to Bruner's (2002) use of Aristotle's concept of *peripeteia*, which he defines as "a sudden reversal in circumstances, [that] swiftly turns a routine sequence of events into a story" (p. 5). Bruner continues to suggest that "... everybody agrees that a story begins with some breach in the expected state of things ... Something goes awry, otherwise there's nothing to tell about. The story concerns efforts to cope or come to terms with the breach and its consequences. And finally there is an outcome, some sort of resolution" (p. 17). For Bruner (2002), like Labov (2006), stories are about some transgression of the normative and the expected and individuals' efforts at restoration. If stories are not about this then there is nothing to tell about (Bruner, 2002) or to account for (Labov, 2006).

Implicit in the above discussion are theoretical and methodological problems within the Labovian approach with which I will now deal. First, Labov's insistence on personal narratives told in a natural situation is particularly anomalous with the nature of social science research. What would a natural storytelling situation look like? Labov's focus on the 'reporting of experience in everyday conversations' (Robinson, 1981, p. 58) by African American informants (Patterson, 2008; Squire, 2005) was exceptional in its time. The problematic lies in what Labov refers to as 'natural' story telling situations. The presence of the researcher necessarily 'pollutes' the process. Feminist research has argued for researchers to explicitly acknowledge their presence in social science research and make explicit their theoretical, political and personal biases. Social science research is never neutral or natural. Labov might insist on a less-structured formal interview situation where, as Atkinson (1998) argues, researchers suspend their "history, giving the teller ... complete respect, and being as objective as possible in the interview" (p. 33). However, the search for objectivity has been

fiercely debated within social science research. Amina Mama (1995) puts it this way, “the goal of intellectual rigour can best be served not by claiming objectivity and ignoring the values underpinning one’s intellectual work but rather by acknowledging the commitments, motivations and conditions that are likely to have played a part in its production” (p. 2). Riessman (2002) also suggests that narrative privileges “positionality and subjectivity” (p. 696).

Further, the event-centred approach overlooks the interview context as it focuses on narrative as events, rather than as a site for co-construction between the narrator and researcher. Robinson (1981) refers to personal narratives as ‘situated communications’ and “the situated character of speech exerts important constraints on the content and form of personal narratives. A proper account of everyday storytelling must take into consideration that a story is being told, to whom, when, and for what purposes” (pp. 58-59). The issues of narrative context, audience and narrative function are precisely what the Labovian approach negates (Patterson, 2008; Robinson, 1981). The telling of personal narratives always occurs in conversational settings and it is, therefore, critical to move beyond solely focusing on the structure of the narrative to “accommodate storytelling in its many forms” and answer the questions of “why, to whom, and when the story is told” (Robinson, 1981, p. 78). These points are taken up by the second approach that conceives of narratives as experience-centred.

The second problematic is what Labov (2006) considers as narrative, that which meets the criteria of tellability and reportability. The work by Robinson (1981) is of particular significance here as he directly confronts Labov’s conception concerning what counts as narrative or as a ‘good’ story. Labov would consider events that are ‘unusual’, ‘unexpected’, or ‘remarkable’ about ‘sex, death and moral injury’ as “proper candidates for personal narratives”. Also for Robinson (1981), “routine or familiar activities, such as going shopping, watching television, or making a telephone call, would not be reportable as narratives unless there were some untoward element in the activity, for example, having one’s wallet stolen in the department store” (p. 59). Robinson does not deny that unusual or unexpected experiences are what ‘good’ and interesting stories are made of. The problem is that other kinds of talk are excluded from the realm of narrative such as for Patterson (2008) “stories about events that did not happen directly to the speaker, that happened more than once, that may happen in the future or that might have happened” (p. 28). Squire (2008) lists other fascinating accounts which might be denied the status of narrative, such as:

Stories that get hold in reverse, in fragments, or collaboratively; stories about general events, thoughts, emotions or things that happened to other people, and stories told as part of conversations – including those with interviewers Written stories... (p. 97).

The issue here is that the criteria for defining narrative may be based on problematic and concealed assumptions. The question we should ask is how do we judge what is tellable, what is unusual and what is unexpected? Whatever answer we might offer, it would be relative. Well, what about experiences listed by Robinson (1981) such as “assaults, accidents, injuries, winning a lottery” (p. 61)? Surely, these experiences can be considered ‘unusual’ and ‘unexpected’ as they are not daily occurrences. For Robinson (1981), we have to look developmentally or at what he calls the individual’s ‘diachronic’ perspective:

How any particular event in one’s past is appraised depends upon the current psychosocial stance of the individual. Whether an incident continues to be regarded as interesting in the sense of Labov and others is subject to a host of psychological influences. It is clearly possible that even an event may fulfil the social (or normative) conditions of remarkableness yet be regarded by the individual as no longer worth telling about (p. 61).

This quote demonstrates that what counts as tellable is not only determined from the outside but selectively fashioned by the individual narrator. In addition, Robinson (1981) argues that experiences of victimization such as “criminal assault, racial abuse, sexual harassment and political or military imprisonment ...have an ambivalent status as candidates for narration” (p. 63) as they transgress the definitions of ‘remarkable’ or ‘unusual’ versus ‘common’ or ‘everyday’ experiences:

For members of socially oppressed groups victimization may be a typical but nevertheless continually salient experience. Stories about victimization cannot be described as interesting or remarkable without risking academic sterility for our constructs. Nevertheless, stories told in private to cohorts are stories, and the fact that

transcripts of such interactions are rarely available should not justify scholarly neglect of these narratives (p. 63).

The fact that in recent years researchers have been calling such experiences ‘narratives’ and working with them suggests that Labov’s criterion for a narrative should be questioned and reframed. Perhaps, what is considered worthy of telling should not be defined from outside the narrator. The narrator can and should decide what is tellable and this could be an ‘unusual’ and ‘unexpected’ experience but may also be ordinary and typical events told in particular contexts in time told to a particular audience – real or imagined - for particular purposes and functions. So, in this way personal narratives can truly embody what Robinson (1981) refers to as “a linguistic resource for making life interesting” (p. 63).

The third theoretical limitation of the approach is its underlying assumption of the correspondence between the temporal sequence in the clauses of the story and events (Patterson, 2008; Squire, 2005). For the event-centred approach, narratives represent events without any construction, without social and linguistic mediation. Labov (2006) suggests that event representations in the narrator’s “biographical memory have a *veridical relation* to what actually happened in past real time” (p. 39, italics added for emphasis). The Labovian approach, therefore, collapses the relation between life and story. Patterson (2008) aptly argues that “an event-centric approach, which assumes the primacy of events, fails, therefore, to appreciate the essential creativity of the act of telling a story of personal experience, which involves *reconstructing* the past for the purposes of the present telling” (p. 30, italics in the original). Recalling past events is never a linear report of what happened. It is a necessarily creative and selective (re)production. Goffman (1974) illustrates that the act of remembering and retelling the past is a dramatization and theatrical performance.

What a speaker does usually is to present for his [sic] listeners a version of what happened to him [sic]. In an important sense, even if his [sic] is to present the cold facts as he [sic] sees them, the mean he [sic] employs may be intrinsically theatrical, not because he [sic] necessarily exaggerates or follows a script, but because he [sic] may have to engage in something that is a dramatization – the use of such acts as he [sic] possesses to reproduce a scene (pp. 503-504).

Recounting the past is a creative attempt, as Goffman presents, at organising the past in meaningful ways. Robinson (1981) argues that psychology has many insights to offer us here as people have a “tendency to rationalize remembered experience, that is to make remembrances conform to orderly explicable processes of cause and effect, and of social and personal meaning” (p. 65). Narratives, therefore, are not direct records of what actually happened in the past as Labov would have us believe. This means stories are, as Squire (2008) contends, “distanced from the happenings they describe, have many meanings and are never the same when told twice” (p. 1).

The event-centred approach to narratives does not address the questions that my research seeks to answer. Labov’s definition of narrative is not sufficient for the purposes of my research as Patterson (2008) recognizes that most people do not produce the ideal narrative structure as outlined by Labov. The focus on un-dialogic, ‘natural’ settings is questioned here as social research is not a neutral enterprise but is one that is lodged within the theoretical, political and personal biases and commitments of the researcher. Furthermore, I am less concerned with identifying a ‘good’ story and am less convinced that a narrative needs to match and correspond to events in time. The analysis of personal narratives as event-centred and focusing on narrative structure feels mechanical and devoid of human life. Patterson (2008) concludes that an experiential approach is better because it “enables researchers to produce richer, more comprehensive analyses and interpretations of the full range that personal experience narratives can take” (p. 15).

3.6.2 Personal Narratives as Experience-Centred

Let us now turn our attention to a different narrative approach that characterises personal narratives as stories of *experience*, not events, and “aims to understand stories’ meanings within lives” (Squire, 2005, pp. 99-100). The experience-centred approach overcomes some of the limitations inherent in the event-centred approach, but is not without its own theoretical problems. Unlike the Labovian approach, it does not insist on a natural setting of narration. It embraces feminist research insights and takes a critical stance on the role of the researcher. The approach acknowledges the presence of the researcher and what influence the researcher’s own biography, political and theoretical commitments exert on the research process. In this way, this approach conceives of narratives as Robinson (1981) demands, as ‘situated communication’, as an interactive process between “storyteller and listener, researcher and research participant, in the co-construction of stories” (Squire, 2008, p. 1).

Narrative context is, however, not only limited to the interpersonal relationship between the researcher and research participant but extends to the broader social and cultural context.

Unlike the Labovian approach, the experience-centred approach extends the definition of what constitutes narrative to include different media and also non-verbal material. The “semantics of narrated experience” (Squire, 2008: 2) is taken as primary, that is, the individual and social meanings behind the stories that people tell. For both the Labovian and experienced-centred narrative approaches “there are assumed to be individual, internal representations of phenomena – events, thoughts and feelings – to which narrative gives external *expression*” (Squire, 2008, original emphasis). Both these narrative approaches take narrative as an objectification of internal individual reality. For the experience-centred narrative representations are multiple, varied and dependent on context (Squire et al., 2008). However, both narrative approaches assume that the stories people tell about their lives, events and experiences, whether represented consistently or differently over time, are somehow connected to the experiencing person telling the story. Again, before we get too ahead of ourselves, let’s first consider what the approach has to offer; the different ways in which researchers work with narratives of experiences; and what these narratives actually reveal or allow researchers to see.

At the outset, it is helpful to make apparent the epistemological base upon which the experience-centred narrative approach is premised. The experience-centred approach to narrative is hermeneutic in its aim at gaining full understanding (Squire, 2008) of individuals’ experience and constructing meaning of the narrated experience. Ricoeur (1991) skilfully argues for the intersections of *the world of the text* and *the world of the reader*; “the process of composition, of configuration is not completed in the text but in the reader and, under this condition, makes possible the reconfiguration of life by narrative” (p. 26). The act of reading or of interpretation is the critical point where the world of the text is opened up to the researcher to enter it. Upon entering the text, “a world in which it would be possible to live” (p. 26) is offered by the text. Stories draw us in, invite us to enter and inhabit the world of the text. Elsewhere, Ricoeur argues the task of the reader is not to get behind the text to discover the intention of the author but rather to construct meaning of the text (about life) in front of the text.

It is only through the act of reading in front of the text that “narrative and life can be reconciled with each other, for reading is itself already a way of living in the fictive universe of the work. In this sense, we can already say that stories are recounted but they are also *lived in the mode of the imaginary*” (p. 27, italics in the original). In this light, the meaning of text is neither already contained in text nor behind the text with the intention of the author. Rather, meaning is actively constructed through the act of reading in front of the text, in the intersections between the world of the text and the world of the reader. For this reason, the meaning of the text is *not* fixed but actively constructed to allow for different meanings, divergent interpretations or as Freeman (2007) suggests ‘multiple truths’. As a result of the ever-open hermeneutic circle, experience-centred researchers read narratives on many different levels. For instance, some researchers work psychoanalytically analysing that which is not easily captured or linguistically signified in, for example, pauses, silences, and tones. From the hermeneutic perspective, experience-centred researchers seem to have leeway of interpretation of diverse material identified by Squire (2008); interpreting what and how participants tell stories, interpreting that which escapes discourse such as contradictions, silences, emotion, interpreting the interpersonal relationship between researcher and participant, interpreting the research context and interpreting their own location within the research.

In line with hermeneutic epistemology, Squire (2008) fittingly reveals the phenomenological base upon which experience-centred research rests, asserting that “experience can, through stories, become part of consciousness” (p. 2). Phenomenology assumes that there is a ‘chain of connection’ (Crossley, 2000) between what people say, the stories that they tell and people’s cognition, emotions and experiences. The phenomenological position is concerned with:

... getting to grips with how a person thinks or feels about what is happening to them ... [It therefore] operates with a ‘realist epistemology’: [quoting the work of Augustinus and Walker, 1995] that there is a knowable domain of facts about human experience and consciousness that can be discovered through the application of certain methods (Crossley, 2000, p. 33).

The experience-centred approach attempts to balance its commitments to *language*, on the one hand, and its goal of understanding individuals on their own terms, on the other hand. However, as Squire (2005) observes this narrative approach tends to move away from language too quickly and focuses rather on narrative meaning, narrative function and narrative context. Already this leaves the approach open to a postmodern critique which is suspicious of ‘the chain of connection’ (Crossley, 2000) between what people say about their experience and the individual that sits behind and produces the account of experience. Postmodernism is “generally sceptical of mapping what people say onto underlying subjective experiences” (Crossley, 2000, p. 33). However, before we dismiss this approach, let’s consider its positive contribution as it allow us to work with narrative in ways that the Labovian approach does not.

The first advantage of this approach is that it conceptualises narrative in less delimiting ways than the Labovian approach. The approach defines narrative very broadly as any kind of representations that are both “sequential in time and meaningful” (Squire, 2008, p. 2). Narrative can, therefore, be about a host of ‘things’ that people tell about whether real or imagined, past, present or future, coherent or fragmented, a single clearly defined event or a series of events. Narrative research can be about a variety of experiences obtained in a single interview or a full life story interview (Squire, 2008). For example, Crossley (2000) works with trauma, particularly with individuals with a long-term HIV-positive diagnosis; Squire’s (1999, 2000) work in South Africa looks at HIV support and how people talk (or do not talk) about their status openly; Andrews’ (2007) life history research with lifetime political activists critiques psychological conceptions of aging.

What constitutes narrative is broadly defined by Patterson (2000) to refer to “texts which bring stories of personal experience into being by means of the first person oral narration of past, present, future or imaginary experience” (cited in Patterson, 2008, p. 37). Other researchers, Squire et al (2008) argue, elaborate on the definition provided by Patterson and not only include imaginary experience but also “fragmented and contradictory” experience (p. 5). Squire (2008) suggests that other researchers within the approach do not only work with verbal accounts but rather work with language’s full variety: *written material* that includes diaries, letters, biographies and autobiographies; visual material such as photographs; and the *paralinguistic* by looking at what is not said and lies beyond the realm of the spoken word such as pauses, bodily gestures and tone. It would seem that *anything* and *everything* is

afforded the status of narrative. Unlike Labov who restricts what counts as narrative to events, the experience-centred approach more generously conceives of much more as narrative. Squire (2008, p. 8) suggests that such a broad definition of narrative “[robs] it of descriptive, let alone explanatory power”. The verdict is not yet in pertaining to what constitutes narrative: whether it is structure as Labov contends or anything that is sequential in time and meaningful as researchers within the experience-centred tradition propose.

At this juncture, let us examine the defining qualities of narrative assumed by experience-centred researchers. Experience-centred narrative researchers hold the view that narratives are the means that people utilise in order to make meaning (Bruner, 2002; Crossley, 2000; Ricoeur, 1991; Squire, 2005; 2008). Narrative becomes the organizing principle that humans use to give meaning to their lives and understand what happened in the past. “Time becomes human to the extent it is articulated through a narrative mode” (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 52). The following remarks from different narrative theorists illustrate the imperative of time as a human-defining feature.

Everything experienced by human beings is made meaningful, understood and interpreted in relation to the primary dimension of ‘activity’: this incorporates both ‘time’ and ‘sequence’. In order to define and interpret ‘what’ exactly has happened on any particular occasion, the sequence of events is of extreme importance. Hence, a valid portrayal of human selves and behaviour necessitates an understanding of the inextricable connection between time and identity (Crossley, 2000, p. 10).

Squire (2008) submits that some experience-centred researchers assume that, “Humans are imbricated in narrative ... [T]he sequential temporal orderings of human experience into narrative are not just characteristic of humans, but *make us human*” (p. 43).

We can discuss two issues emerging from the above quotations. The first is fairly uncontroversial; the narrative mode is characteristic of human meaning making. That is to say, human beings give meaning to and make sense of themselves and of past experiences by putting themselves and their experiences into narrative form. Humans tell stories about themselves to others and to themselves. The act of narrating is a uniquely human

characteristic that separates humans from any other living species. The act of narration, like the interpretation of literary text, provides “mediation between man [sic] and the world, between man [sic] and man [sic], between man [sic] and himself [sic]” (Ricoeur 1991, p. 27). From Ricoeurian hermeneutics, both literary work and narrative serve these three mediation functions of *referentiality*, *communicability* and *self-understanding* (Ricoeur, 1991); as a referential point between individuals and the social world; as interpersonal or situated communication (Robinson, 1981); and as a form of self-understanding and reflexivity. Narrative is employed as a mode for (i) making sense of the world, (ii) for understanding others as we can only know people, though partially, through language (Frosh 2001) and (iii) for ‘knowing’ and understanding ourselves. Now, whether we can understand our ‘true’ self through narrative is, like many debates in social science, unresolved. Nonetheless, it is commonly agreed that narrative is a powerful resource employed by people for understanding and interpreting the world, others and themselves. Bruner (2002) succinctly defends the view that humans “constantly construct and reconstruct [them] selves to meet the needs of the situation [they] encounter, and [they] do so with the guidance of [their] memories of the past and [their] hopes and fears for the future. Telling oneself about oneself is like making up a story about who and what we are, what’s happened, and why we’re doing what we’re doing” (p. 64).

This brings us to the second, rather more contentious, issue concerning narrative in human meaning making. Narrative, according to Ricoeur (1991), is more than a meaning-making device and humans are essentially storytellers. Ricoeur (1991) contends that human life is necessarily storied. In his essay, *Life in Quest of Narrative*, Ricoeur (1991) wrestles with the separation of life from story. His project is to show that narrative should not, as he puts it, be confined “to the region of fiction” (p. 20). For Ricoeur (1991), narrative is not merely a human quality but rather it is narrative that makes us human. This returns us to the philosophical question on the relation between life and story. We will not rehash the different arguments in the debate but illustrate Ricoeur’s (1991) argument for the continuity between life and story using his example of a typical psychoanalytic interaction between patient and therapist where the patient brings ‘a story not yet told’ of:

... scattered fragments of lived stories, dreams, ‘primal scenes’, conflictual episodes. One can legitimately say with respect to analytical sessions that their aim and their effect is to allow the

analysand to draw out of these story-fragments a narrative which would be at once more bearable and more intelligible. This ... implies that the story of a life grows out of stories that have not been recounted and that have been repressed in the direction of actual stories which the subject could take charge of and consider to be constitutive of his [sic] personal identity (p. 30).

Ricoeur's (1991) analysis above supports the claim he then makes about how humans are implicated in narrative; how narrating emerges out of stories and how "recounting, following, [and] understanding stories is then simply the continuation of ... unspoken stories" (p. 30). This leads Ricoeur (1991) to the conclusion that "life can be understood only through the stories we tell about it, then an examined life, in the sense of the word as we have borrowed it from Socrates, is a life recounted" (p. 31). An un-narrated life, he holds, is not worth living. Life is lived and self-understanding emerges from the stories we tell about our life and about ourselves. While we use stories to make sense of our lives, the stories we tell make that life possible. As Taylor (1996, p. 58) puts it:

Story is a vessel for carrying meaning. Meaning inhabits story the way a morning mist envelops a pine forest – everywhere present, but nowhere tangible. Detach meaning from story and both die. So it is with our lives ... Seeing our lives as a story interacting with other stories gives us that sense of being part of a sequence of meaningful events that lead to a significant conclusion.

In addition to this all pervasive quality of meaning-making, another defining feature of narrative, assumed by the experience-centred approach, is that these meanings are multiple, unstable and mutable. Squire (2008) attests that "narrative involves some reconstruction across time and places. Narratives cannot be repeated exactly, since words never 'mean' the same thing twice and stories are performed differently in different social contexts" (p. 6). The changing nature of narrative is dramatically captured in the 1972 film, *Betty Tells Her Story* (see Mishler, 2004 for a detailed analysis of the film). What the film powerfully demonstrates is that a story is never told the same way (even if the retelling happens on the same day). The telling and retellings are never complete or fixed but are "often quite different from [the same] person. People story their lives differently depending on the occasion, audience, and reason

for telling” (Mishler, 2004, p. 101). It is for this reason that some researchers argue that there are many stories as opposed to one; that “any personal story [is] just one of many narratable ‘truths’ (Squire, 2008, p. 7). The following account by Bruner (2002) demonstrates the idea that there can never be one story told exactly the same way across time and place:

It is not that we have to make up these stories [of ourselves] from scratch each time. Our self-making stories accumulate over time, even pattern themselves on conventional genres. They get out-of-date, and not just because we grow older or wiser but because our self-making stories need to fit new circumstances, new friends, new enterprises. Our very memories fall victim to our self-making stories. It is not that I can no longer tell you (or myself) the ‘original, true story’ about my desolation in the bleak summer after my father died. Rather, I would be telling you (or myself) a new story about a twelve-year-old ‘once upon a time’. And I could tell it several ways, all of them shaped as much by my life since then as by the circumstances of that long-ago summer (p. 65).

Bruner (2002) illustrates quite fittingly how stories that we tell others, and indeed ourselves, are shaped by occasion, audience, and reason for telling (Mishler, 2004). Narration is in no way fixed and singular but involves an active process of construction and reconstruction. Narrative is shaped by the motive behind the telling, by who the listener is – both a real and imagined audience - and by the context in which such a telling is possible. I am sure that Bruner has told the story of his father’s death many times, to different people for different reasons. And each time he has told the story, a new version of events is produced or rather constructed. These different retellings encompass Mishler’s (2004) thesis that stories “are always twice-, thrice-, and indeed endlessly retold tales” (p. 102).

Narrative is particularly shaped by the research context. The research context can refer to the interpersonal relationship between narrator and listener, between researcher and research participant. Squire (2008) reflects on the many levels of context that come into play in her HIV research work. She is a white, female, middle class English-speaking British researcher interviewing South African black, working class, mostly isiXhosa-speaking women. The stories that the women told her could be different to the stories the same women would tell, if

they were interviewed, for instance, by someone like myself, a South African black, middle class, isiZulu-speaking male university student. Likewise, I shape the stories that my research participants are going to tell me about what it means to be black in South Africa 18 years after apartheid. The research context extends beyond the confinements of the interview setting to include the broader social, political and cultural context. Stories that people tell are intimately shaped by the context in which people live and tell these very stories. The stories of blackness that my research participants (will) tell will be shaped by contemporary public and political debates on race, culture and language. It is for this reason that the narrative context is never a 'natural' space, as Labov (2006) insists but rather a dynamic context that is acutely shaped by the personal, the social, the political, the ideological, the real, and the imagined.

People are, as Mishler (2004) suggests, "historians of their own lives. They tell and retell their stories in variant ways and, thereby, continually revise identities" (p. 101). The act of retelling raises questions of 'truth'. The multiplicity of stories that people tell raises the question of whether we, as researchers should 'trust unreliable data' (Mishler, 2004)? How we answer this question depends on what we conceive people to be doing when they are telling their stories. How we answer this question also depends on our theories of self and identity. Is the self 'there' and behind individual experience or narratives? Is experience only constructed in a single immutable storyline? Do we assume a singular identity that can be unmasked in narrative analysis? I will consider these questions below as I deal with theoretical shortcomings of the experience-centred approach to narrative.

The experience-centred approach to narrative places less emphasis on events and on narrative structure and, thus, overcomes some of the theoretical problems inherent in the Labovian approach. This approach is, however, not without its own theoretical problems. Principally, this approach assumes what Squire (2008) terms 'an authorial subjectivity' behind the experience. It assumes a phenomenological subject that is both unified and agentic. This approach also assumes a 'chain of connection' (Crossley, 2000) between narrative and experience. The experience-centred approach faces a dilemma described by Mishler (2004) as characterizing human sciences; "between believing there is an objective reality to discover and the fact that information about this reality often comes already organized into narrative form" (p. 101). The very unifying subject assumed here is problematized by discursive postmodern approaches that take a more complicated view to human subjectivity. Mishler

(2004) is critical of using stories that people tell as basis for making any claims about identity and experience because:

[T]his assumption of a singular identity implies that if we elicit someone's account of important episodes or experiences in his or her life, we then have the basis for characterizing that person's identity within some framework of identity-relevant concepts. The problem is that the retellings are often quite different from each other; that is, we story our lives differently depending on the occasion, audience, and reason for the telling (pp. 102-103).

Mishler's (2004) concern with the problematic of a singular identity reflected through a single storyline does not directly ask the question that Squire (2008) poses "is there a 'subject' of experience" (p. 22)? Whether the subject is singular or multiple seems to me secondary to the question of its existence in the first instance. The experience-centred approach moves our attention away from language and the narrative structure that the event-centred approach deems central. This move away from language to paying comprehensive attention to experience is a critical one and should be viewed a 'rescue' of what is 'human' from the pervasive discursive realm. However, Squire (2008) implies that the focus on experience leads to a "forgetting [of] language" (p. 23) and continues to argue that "even if language is seen as reconstructing experience and not as a direct translation of it, language's patterns and effects tend to be uninteresting to experience-centred researchers" (p. 23). Crossley (2000) sees all phenomenologically inspired or experiential-based approaches as "retrieving the subject" (p. 34) on one hand, and "losing discourse" (p. 34) on the other. Understanding experience should not come at the expense of locating experience and what people say about that experience within discursive and socio-cultural formations that structure that experience.

The two approaches of personal narratives as events and as experience limit narrative research to a focus on narrative structure (syntax) and narrative semantics. This raises the question whether narrative research can allow researchers to do 'more'; can narrative research deliver on its promise of reading human life as an intricate interplay between the personal and the social? Some researchers work beyond the confinements of narrative syntax and semantics, working with "the social patterns and functioning of stories, whether the 'stories' are short, disjointed sequences of conversation or much more extensive representations that exemplify

broad cultural narratives” (Squire, 2008, pp. 8-9). Some researchers are more intrigued about what narrative can do when tied to broader social, cultural, political and historical contexts. For instance, Riessman (2002; 2005) uses her own narrative as a researcher reflexively to argue for what she calls, ‘ethics-in-context’ and the social changing nature of narrative. Phoenix (2008) reads narratives as a socially meaningful space for the performance and negotiation of social identities. Plummer (1995) examines how personal narratives reflect, are limited by or oppose existing socio-cultural storylines. It is what lies outside of narrative structure and semantics that brings us to the third approach in narrative research, which conceives of personal narratives as ‘culturally contextual’.

3.6.3 Personal Narratives as Culturally Contextual

Most researchers within this approach treat stories as “manifestations of social or cultural patterns” (Squire, 2008, p. 9) rather than as expressions of internal, cognitive and emotive individual states. Here, there is scope for a psychology that recognizes that subjectivity is intertwined with these social realities. Culturally contextual narratives take “the individual, social and cultural character of particular narrative formations ... [and] places more emphasis on context than either the Labovian approach, preoccupied with narrative syntax, or the Ricoeurian approach, centred on narrative semantics” (Squire 2005, p. 104). This approach overcomes some theoretical problems identified in event- and experience-centred approaches but is also not without its own theoretical problems. This approach to narrative is further characterized by divergent research interests and levels of analyses. As a result of the variety of approaches under the umbrella of culturally contextual narratives, it is almost impossible to present a single ‘narrative’ of the different research interests and levels of analyses. To show the ways in which this narrative approach takes the individual, the social and cultural character of narrative (Squire, 2008), the chapter uses the work of Riessman (2002; 2005), Phoenix (2008) and Plummer (1995) as cases studies to exemplify this approach’s commitment to linking the personal and the social realms of narratives.

The work of Riessman (2002) represents one kind of a mid-level approach of personal narratives as culturally contextual. Working from a performative perspective and following on from the work of Mills (2004), Riessman (2002) argues for the intersections between biography, history and society. From this perspective, stories people tell can be read symptomatically as manifestations of social and historical realities. We can better understand the intersections between biography, history and society by turning to Riessman’s (2002)

narrative work, which she categorizes as the ‘study of life disruptions’ looking at life events and experiences that “fundamentally alter expected biographies” (p. 696) such as divorce, chronic illness and infertility. Riessman (2002) illustrates the intersection this way:

The ‘personal troubles’ that participants represent in their narratives of divorce, for example, tells us a great deal about social and historical processes – contemporary beliefs about gender relations and pressures on marriage at a junction of American history (p. 697).

It is not possible to exhaustively review Riessman’s work here. However, there are two things that I wish to say about Riessman’s approach to narrative. First, like Andrews (2007), Riessman (2002) demonstrates the value of revisiting previous data, even decades later, for re-reading, re-thinking and re-interpretation. The act of going back to data effectively demonstrates that narratives are not fixed constructions but changing realities depending on the social and historical background against which they are produced, read and understood. In 2005 Riessman published an essay using her personal story reflexively to question the application of ‘universal’ ethics principles in narrative research and, in turn, to argue for ethics-in-context. Riessman (2005) concludes this reflexive exercise suggesting that:

Like all interpretations, my narrative about fieldwork is situated in time and place, crafted from field notes, letters, interview transcripts, memories and recent reflections. As narrators do, I have re-imagined the past from a position in the present. At one level, the essay can be read as an effort to make sense of a difficult time (we are all meaning-making creatures), when taken-for-granted categories of value to me began to unravel. At another level, the essay speaks to moral issues faced by all ethnographers and narrative researchers who value a dialogic approach and self reflexivity (p. 487).

The second point about Riessman’s (2002) approach to narrative is connected to her view that when people tell stories they are performing their (preferred) identities. This view of narrative as performance, not unique to Riessman, sees narrative as situated and accomplished in social

interaction. For Riessman (2002) research participants “negotiate how they want to be known by the stories they develop collaboratively with their audiences. [They] do not reveal an essential self as much as they perform a preferred one, selected from the multiplicity of selves or personas that individuals switch among as they go about their lives” (p. 701). Narrative is, therefore, a means of interpersonal, social and cultural positioning as well as identity negotiation and performance. Social and cultural positioning in stories for Riessman (2002) is an active process that can be decoded in the many ways in which narrators “choose to position audiences, characters, and themselves” (p. 701). Whether participants position themselves as victims or as agentic, Riessman (2002) argues that this signifies “the performance of identity. They are enacted in an immediate discursive context, the evolving interview with a listener/questioner... ” (p. 702). Riessman (2002) analyzes a narrative of a childless woman she calls ‘Gita’, in South India who constructs for herself and performs a positive and preferred identity as lawyer and political activist. Riessman (2002) reveals for us how Gita, in the cultural context that devalues childless women, “resists the dominant cultural narrative about gender identity with an autobiographical account” (p. 702) of womanhood that transgress the biological and underscores occupation. Personal stories are for Riessman (2002) always located in history and culture and provide individuals with a stage upon which they perform their identities.

The work of Phoenix (2006; 2008) is an interrogation of personal narratives in answering the question, how people use culture in constructing themselves in narrative. Phoenix’s (2008) narrative interests lie in the performative aspects or, as she puts it, ‘the doing of narrative’ (p. 64) in ‘small stories’ as “the minutiae of the interactional context [which] can facilitate analysis of wider canonical and cultural contexts” (p. 65). This view is one shared by many conversational and discourse analysts that ‘construct’ (a deliberately chosen word) the narrative context as a microcosm of the wider human world, structurally, socially and culturally. Paying attention to the ‘small story’ and, particularly, to *how* people develop and their storylines, enables us to create fruitful syntheses of the personal or the biographical and the wider cultural context. Phoenix (2008) foregrounds Gubrium’s (2006) argument as follows:

[I]f we take the time to understand how members of society use culture to interpret and represent their own and others’ lives, we stand to diversify what it means to become who and what we are. In

the process, we glean a more culturally nuanced and narratively active understanding (cited in Phoenix, 2008, p. 65).

Phoenix (2008, p.65) goes on to argue that if we want to understand how people use and are inserted into culture then researchers must “go beyond what narrators say”. On the surface, this assertion seems unproblematic to most of those in the social sciences that understand the role of interpretation. However, we have to ask, how far should we go? To what extent is our loyalty, as social researchers, to the text of what people tell us? To what extent is our loyalty to Ricoeur’s never closing hermeneutic circle? Already we can start seeing some theoretical, methodological and even *ethical* problems with discursive kinds of analysis. We shall return to consider these problems but must first explore the value of examining how people ‘do narrative’.

In her chapter, *Analyzing Narrative Contexts*, Phoenix (2008) demonstrates how the local contexts of the immediate interview setting, particularly the researcher-participant relationship and the wider social context, are inseparably linked. To show the links between local and wider social contexts and to demonstrate her treatment of narratives as co-constructed, situated practices in which the wider social context is always present, Phoenix (2008) analyzes the narrative context of an interview she, a black female had with Clare (not her real name), a white mother of mixed parentage children in a study on social identities. She analyzes how Clare negotiates and positions herself in talk in relation to Phoenix (as the interviewer) as ‘not racist’ and in fact as someone who stands up against racism and deals with it. To do this, Clare draws on a variety of cultural resources to construct herself as a moral subject who ‘stands up’ and has raised her children to do the same. How Clare positions herself is interesting to Phoenix (2008) as this position is related to the dominant or canonical narrative that illegitimizes racism. She argues that this position is vitally important to Clare, as a mother of mixed-race children, as someone who has herself experienced discrimination from her own mother due to her ‘darker’ skin and as a white woman interviewed by a black woman (see Phoenix for detailed analysis).

From a hermeneutic perspective, one cannot find fault in Phoenix’s interpretation of Clare’s narrative, nor would I want to. My concern with Phoenix lies in her assertion that we have to go beyond what people tell us in order to see how they are drawing on cultural discourses to negotiate social identities themselves. This assertion is not unique to Phoenix and

characterizes much of the social sciences in which we are all in the enterprise of interpretation. However, my concern is how far should we go beyond what people tell us! In addition, Phoenix makes claims about Clare (i) that are not adequately supported by the excerpts of the interview material and (ii) that I doubt Clare would be comfortable with if she saw the way that she has been positioned and portrayed. Going beyond what the individual actually says raises ethical questions around how we represent our participants. Do we represent our participants anyhow we choose? Dunne (1995) points out that discursive approaches are often criticized for their focus on language and their understanding of human and social life in terms of “the individual, discursive acts” and that “Language and context are emphasized to such an extent that the self is engulfed, if not annihilated” (cited in Crossley, 2000, p. 32).

The work of Plummer (1995), like the work of Riessman (2002; 2005) and Phoenix (2006; 2008), exemplifies a narrative approach less interested in narrative structure and semantics and firmly grounded in the cultural context of narrative. In his book, *Telling Sexual Stories*, Plummer (1995) examines the emergence and proliferation of intimate sexual stories such as rape stories and gay and lesbians’ coming out stories in the West and as Squire (2005) suggests, within “the larger context of the contemporary cultural and political power of autobiography”(p. 103). Of particular interest to Plummer (1995) is the role of social processes, like the media, in the creation of “a sexual story telling society” (p. 5). Stories must have an audience or interpretive communities, “at least partly prepared to hear them if they are to achieve currency” (Squire, 2005, p. 103). Plummer’s (1995) argument is:

[F]or narratives to flourish, there must be a community to hear; that for communities to hear, there must be stories which weave together their history, their identity, their politics ... There is an ongoing dynamic or dialectic of communities, politics, identities and stories which have their roots in the nineteenth century ... It may help to see a parallel development between the biographical history of a gay identity and the social history of a gay culture (p. 87, italics in the original).

Squire (2005) points out that one of the theoretical problems with cultural analyses of narrative is their ‘cultural particularity’. They “run the risk of either ... claiming

unsustainable generality for their accounts, or ... making no explanatory or predicative claims at all, confining their accounts to description” (p. 104). In this section, I have attempted to show the theoretical and methodological divergence characterizing narrative research. This was done by examining the three major narrative approaches that treat narrative differently: as an event leading to a preoccupation with narrative structure; as experience leading to a preoccupation with semantics; and as culturally contextual. However, there is something else missing here. It is not sufficient to point to theoretical divisions and raise theoretical and methodological problems with narrative approaches without answering the following questions: What approach is my work adopting? What view of narrative does my work take? How am I using and working within such theoretical divergence? Does my research fit neatly within one of the narrative approaches elaborated? How do I resolve the theoretical problems identified in each of the approaches? The following chapter outlines the narrative methodological approach that this study will adopt.

3.7 Conclusion: A mid-way approach combining Experience and Culture

My approach synthesises experience-centred and culturally contextual approaches to narratives. Such a midway approach is advocated by Squire (2008) although she remains unconvinced whether such a synthesis of approaches ‘resolves’ theoretical problems inherent in each approach.

Putting the experience-centred approach in a broader cultural context can make it less prescriptive, less controlled by temporal progression, less focused on coherence, more aware of language, more likely to understand selves in non-essentialist ways and more able to break out of hermeneutic reflexivity with its social referents ... Expanding the remit of experience-centred narrative research may just force it to operate with two incommensurable theories of the speaking subject: the agentic, storytelling subject of the experience-focused tradition, at odds with the fragmented, culturally produced, ‘postmodern’ subject of more culturally-oriented analyses (Squire 2008, p. 57).

A synthetic approach between the experience-centred and culturally contextual approaches to narrative does allow for the intersections between the personal, social and cultural of narratives: paying attention to the individual stories while at the same time critically focusing on language and the ways in which the social and cultural are implicated in narrative. My research will limit narrative to oral accounts people produce in interviews. A story is not defined in the strict Labovian sense but rather Patterson's (2008) definition is more appropriate here as "texts which bring stories of personal experience into being by means of the first person oral narration of past, present, future or imaginary experience" (p. 37). Narrative, my approach holds, is the means through which people represent themselves, co-constructed in a relationship between the researcher and research participants. The approach takes seriously Mishler's (2004) argument that narratives are storied differently depending on the occasion, audience and reason for telling.

The narrative approach adopts a view of identity that is multiple, fluid, performative, fragmented and at times contradictory. Like Riessman (2002), I argue there is no essential self but narrative reveals varying constructions and performances of preferred identities. However, unlike discursive approaches, I argue for an 'embodied', 'material' subject. Poststructuralist theory is helpful in providing an alternate re-conceptualisation of identity as 'subjectivity' (Weedon, 1987). But, as we have seen, there are problems with the 'linguistic determinism' implicit in the discursive approach. Crossley (2000, pp. 31-2) summarizes as follows:

[They lead] to an understanding of the 'self' as a phenomenon characterised by interpretation, variability, relativity, flux and difference. From this perspective, it is impossible to make universal claims about the nature of human selves because such selves differ in relation from different historical, cultural and practical contexts. It is from this theoretical recognition of a lack of unity and constancy that postmodernists declare the 'death of the subject'. If there is no 'one' essential nature of self to describe, then the concept of 'a' self, of 'having' or 'possessing' a self, must be abandoned ... we need to find some way in which we can appreciate the linguistic and discursive structuring of human psychology without losing sight of the essentially personal, coherent, and 'real' nature of individual experience and subjectivity.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

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4.1 Framing the study

The study is framed as an exploration of the intersections between ‘race’, history, class, place, gender and sexuality. Research participants were selected in terms of these intersectionalities, in particular, across different national origins and geographical locations. Before considering the different groupings of participants, I must make explicit the ‘problematic’ primary selection criterion used. The participants are selected on the basis of their ‘race’ specifically for ‘being black’. This immediately presents theoretical problems for the research articulated in the following set of questions: Who is black and who isn’t? Asked differently, how have I decided on what constitutes being black? Is being black defined by skin colour, or by ethnicity, an equally problematic term, or by culture or by language?

The question of what it means to be black in South Africa is a complex one posed in the post-apartheid era and the seemingly post-race global context. The complexity lies, partly, in asking the question in the first place. Donald and Rattansi (1992) call this “a paradox [confronting] anyone who tries to understand the perplexing and persistent phenomena of ‘race’ and racism ... today” (p. 1). It is a commonly accepted idea that there are no natural differences between groups defined as ‘races’ and yet ‘race’ and racism continue to mark individuals’ lives. The paradox of researching ‘race’ while maintaining its social invention is a difficult space to navigate. Donald and Rattansi (1992) suggest that “reiterating that ‘there’s no such thing as ‘race’” offers only the frail reassurance that there *shouldn’t* be a problem. It cannot deal with the problems that do exist, because it fails to see them for what they are” (p. 1, italics in the original). It is almost impossible to research ‘race’ without reifying and naturalising it. I accept that ‘race’ is a social invention without any real or scientific basis. However, saying that ‘race’ is socially constructed does not solve the problem in any way. We should, rather, argue that identifying ‘race’ as a social, historical and ideological construct is, in fact, the starting point of any theoretical and empirical work.

This research is not interested in the question of whether ‘race’ is real or not. For me, being black is less to do with the debate about the social construction of ‘race’ and more to do with

the 'real' effects that the historical construct of 'race' has on my life, experiences, interpersonal relationships and identity. I could also defend my selection criterion on the basis of skin colour using Spivak's (1987) notion of strategic essentialism.¹⁴ Self-defining as black, I am particularly interested in the multiple meanings of intertwining the visible embodiment of blackness and 'African' in reference to both place and 'culture'. 'Race' and, in particular, what it means to be black and/or African, needs exploration following the demise of overt and sanctioned racist oppression and legislation of apartheid. The demise of apartheid demands, as Steyn (2001) points out, a re-negotiation and re-construction of both black and white identities. The question of being black in contemporary South Africa is much more than 'black skin' and its obvious connections with oppression. Rather, being black is intricately connected to other forms of social difference such as history, class, place, gender and sexuality. Our understanding of 'race' must consider these intersections and the different historical, material, political and cultural conditions that are created by and produce multiple constructions of blackness. It is within this complexity that the South African participants of the study are selected and grouped. Rather than juxtaposing the narratives of these participants with those of other South Africans, the study includes two further groups of participants of other African or British national origins as counterpoints for thinking through these intersectional identities and the ways in which blackness may be differently experienced and understood.

The different groups of participants were not intended to create a strictly comparative study, rather the different narrative accounts were used to access different constructions of blackness and to think through the complexities of intersectional identities. The narrative accounts were analyzed as means to generate 'thick descriptions', addressing the nuances of what it means to be black in post-apartheid South Africa, post-colonial Africa and Europe. The different geographical sites and origins (national, language, rural and urban) and generational and

¹⁴ Howe (1999) rightly points out that the interest in 'race' tends to be restricted to particular distinctions between 'black and white', or what he calls "the central object of the obsession" (p. 21). This study also falls short in this regard or rather limits itself to this 'central object of obsession' – black and white. Further, all South African participants in this study are 'black African' excluding black participants who might be identified by the Apartheid race categories of 'Indian' and 'Coloured'.

historical legacies allowed access to different formations of blackness and experiences of being black in the world¹⁵.

4.2 Participants

There were three groups of participants: eight South African, eight African and seven British participants, presented in Tables One, Two and Three below.

Table One: South African Participants¹⁶

NAME	Gender	Age	Language	Childhood home	Occupation
Mandisa	F	30	isiZulu	Urban Township	Actor
Daisy	F	Late 20s	seSotho	Rural	Poet / Science student
Maria	F	40	isiZulu	Urban Township	Corporate sector
Musa	M	40	isiZulu	Rural	Educator / Ward Councilor
Mxolisi	M	Late 20s	isiZulu	Urban Township	International Development sector
Ndumiso	M	Early 20s	isiZulu	Rural	Government
Sipho	M	40	isiZulu	Rural	NGO sector
Elijah	M	40	isiZulu	Rural	NGO sector

As can be seen in Table One above, the first group of participants consisted of eight South Africans, three women and five men, of urban township and rural origin, predominantly isiZulu speaking, working in different contexts, and of varying ages. The older participants grew up under Apartheid, were involved in the liberation struggle in direct and indirect ways and now find themselves in different socio-economic, political circumstances in the ‘new’ South Africa. Younger participants would only have experienced formal apartheid in early childhood. This offers an excellent opportunity to look at generational shifts and changes, similarities and differences in constructions of blackness. Second, the narratives of this group

¹⁵ These are the intersectional dimensions of identity of primary interest for analysis but multiple other identifications emerge as pertinent in participants’ narratives, e.g. gender, sexuality and (dis)ability.

¹⁶ **Examiners’ Footnote:** Pseudonyms have been assigned. Transcripts of interviews with all South African participants are available for reference on the CD “*Ndlovu PhD Transcripts*” included as Appendix One. In addition, Narrative Portraits of Daisy and Musa are included in Appendix Two.

are clearly framed within particular places in the context of rural, urban and township spaces, which (re)produce different kinds of experiences of being-black-in-the-world.

Table Two: African Participants¹⁷

NAME	Gender	Age	Country of Origin
Bili	F	Early 20s	Botswana
Tamara	F	40	Zimbabwe
Fayola	F	Late 30s	Nigeria
Doris	F	Late 20s	Kenya
James	M	Late 30s	Tanzania
David	M	40	Zimbabwe / Botswana
Gabriel	M	Mid 30s	Eritrea
Jacob	M	Late 20s	Kenya

The second group of participants consists of eight young Africans, four women and four men, from several different countries of origin on the African continent but living in South Africa, either currently or initially coming to South Africa as postgraduate students. These narratives explore ideas of blackness as tied to nationality and Africa, particularly in relation to the experiences of mobility and migration to South Africa. Further, but connected to the idea of place, these narratives of postcolonial Africans will also explore new challenges, shifts and tensions with reference to class realities as afforded by education, explore intersections with ‘other’ dimensions of identity (notably, language) and explore the impact of new cultural and economic conditions such as global capitalism and consumerism on black identities.

¹⁷ **Examiners’ Footnote:** Pseudonyms have been assigned. Transcripts of interviews with three of the African participants (Bili, Doris & David) are available for reference on the CD “*Ndlovu PhD Transcripts*” included as Appendix One. In addition, a Narrative Portrait of Bili is included in Appendix Two.

Table Three: UK participants¹⁸

NAME	Gender	Age	Family Origins	Nationality & Migration to the UK
Dina	F	Mid-30s	West-Indian (grandparents)	British-born
Tasmin	F	Late 20s	Yemen (father) Somalia (mother)	Born in Yemen, early childhood in Kenya, UK since middle childhood
Daphne	F	Late 20s	Jamaica	Born in Jamaica, schooling in Bahamas, College in the US, Graduate student in UK
Janet	F	Early 30s	Zimbabwe	Born in Zimbabwe, schooled in Zimbabwe, UK since early adulthood
Aalam	M	Early 20s	Ghana (parents)	British-born, Schooled in Ghana
Albert	M	Late 30s	Nigeria	Born in Nigeria, university in Nigeria, early adulthood in Germany, Ireland (Irish citizen) recently UK
Madani	M	19	Uganda	Born in Uganda, childhood in Uganda, adolescence in UK

The third and final group of participants consists of seven participants; four women and three men, of multiple national origins (only two British born), living for various lengths of time in the UK. These narratives explore specifically the intersections between race and nationhood and/or between racial identity (blackness) and place (Africa). In this way, these narratives will reveal interesting, perhaps different constructions of blackness and what it means to be black and ‘British’ or in ‘exile’ or away from home or the place of political and cultural belonging or one’s imagined community (Anderson, 1983).

¹⁸ **Examiners’ Footnote:** Pseudonyms have been assigned. Transcripts of interviews with five of the seven UK participants (excluding Janet and Madani) are available for reference on the CD “*Ndlovu PhD Transcripts*” included as Appendix One. In addition, a Narrative Portrait of Dina is included in Appendix Two.

4.3 Data Collection

In designing the research and, in particular, deciding on how I was going to collect the data, I moved between two units of study, that is, narrative and life story. I did not know which one of the two approaches to use. My indecision was partly about how many biographical researchers tend to use these terms interchangeably without making any ontological distinctions between the two. As a new researcher, I found myself confused and the terms such as life story, life history, oral history, narrative, story, biography and autobiography (Roberts, 2002) confusing. From the early conception of the study, I have maintained an interest in *narrative* accounts of constructions of post-apartheid blackness. One of the reasons that I was drawn to narrative research is connected to the nature of my research question – *what it means to be black* in post-apartheid South Africa. How would one address such an abstract question? What exactly would I ask the participants? Eliciting stories about a life seemed to allow for a general exploration of the ‘whole’ life in which moments of when race was salient would be highlighted. I was also wary of asking questions about race directly as this, so it seemed to me, would limit the kind of stories that participants would tell. It should not be surprising that I was stuck between *life story* (as the general account that allows for opening up the specifics) and *narrative* (the specifics or the moments when race becomes salient is my primary interest).

For a long time, I toyed with the idea of possibly combining the two approaches. And for a long time, my research felt too broad and undefined. Catherine Riessman¹⁹ helped me gain focus by asking, ‘What is your unit of study and what is it that you are really interested in?’ These questions posed to me by Riessman are methodological decisions that although difficult to make, are nonetheless critical in framing how data are collected and subsequently analyzed. ‘I am not actually interested in the whole life, but in the moments when ‘race’ becomes salient in black people’s lives’, I said. It was at this moment that I made the methodological decision that my work is not life story but narrative accounts of the small specific moments in people’s lives.

¹⁹ Catherine Riessman and I met for over an hour talking about my work, as she attempted to get me thinking about my research design – in particular who my participants are and what my unit of study is.

Atkinson (1998) provides the premise upon which my participants are invited to tell stories about their experiences of being black: “Most people are eager to tell of their experiences, to tell the stories they have lived, because they are what they know best and are also what are of most interest to them” (Atkinson, 1998, p. 22). However, I must acknowledge that although people ‘love’ to tell stories about their lives, their telling in a research context is a particular kind of telling. This means that my presence and who I am influences the kinds of stories told. Further, my research topic and the kinds of questions asked in the interview structured what the participant told, what they chose to tell and how they narrated what they deemed to be of ‘most interest to them’.

Social researchers are increasingly sensitive to how the context of the interview impacts on the interview and what participants say. Ironically, there is little or no work done on how researchers choose *where* to conduct the interviews. Suggestions for relaxed, comfortable and familiar settings abound with no guidelines of what and how to choose the location of the interview. With no guidelines provided, I decided to leave the question of where to conduct the interviews open to the participants themselves. All the interviews were conducted in settings chosen by each participant. In an attempt to foster interview settings that were relaxed, comfortable and familiar, I travelled to the locations chosen by participants whether their homes, places of work or another preferred space.

I constructed the open narrative interview as conversational and as a carefully negotiated space for co-construction and collaboration between myself and the participant. In line with a narrative approach, the participants did most of the talking and I did most of the listening. However, my presence in the interview was critical in shaping what story got told and the form in which it was narrated. Here, I take feminist insights seriously in ways in which the researcher’s biography, theoretical and political biases shape the research process (Phoenix, 1995), unlike others who argue that the interview is “not a conversation [where] your knowledge and your voice should remain in the background” (Atkinson, 1998, p. 32). The role of the researcher is considered in detail in the section on ethics below. Narrative interviewing, for the purposes of this study, is a collaborative enterprise, a deeply personal engagement and emotional interaction based on what Andrews (2007) sees as the habitually neglected skill of listening.

Almost all participants were interviewed twice²⁰; the first narrative interview providing for the telling of the life story and the second in-depth interview enabling follow-up and probing of aspects of the narrative more specifically relevant for the research focus of the study. Deciding to frame my work within narrative tradition was the easier step. Working within and introducing myself to the ‘messy’ world of narrative was challenging. The greatest difficulty I encountered was thinking through what kinds of specific questions I would ask in the interview to invite participants to tell stories. I ask this question again, how do you ask people to construct stories about an abstract topic such as ‘what it means to be black’? The topic is clearly one that I am passionate about and is an autobiographical attempt to make sense of my blackness in the world. I do not know whether other people are as preoccupied or, as one of my friends once commented, ‘obsessed with ‘race’ as I am.

I have often imagined being on the other side of the research; what story of my life and of blackness would I tell? What are the kinds of questions and probes would I need in order to construct an account of my blackness and what I think it means to me and others. I am fully aware that this is not a simple matter to talk about (and not only for the obvious reasons of racism and traumatic or other negative experiences associated with ‘race’). The difficulty of talking about ‘race’ and the question of what it means to and for people was precisely my attraction to narrative in the first place. But once the work had been framed this way, the real work began of what questions to ask in order to invite stories.

I thought of entering all my interviews strategically: with an initial short biography. I am fully aware that this methodological decision can be seen as ‘polluting’ the data by a narcissistic focus on myself. Why would I want to speak about myself when the interview is specifically about the Other? I can appreciate how this can be judged unfavourably by some. Nonetheless, I will use myself and my story as an entry point to invite the other to tell me about them. My story would not be my life story but rather about who I am, what my research is and why I am conducting it. Wouldn’t this structure what participants tell me? Of course it will. But, there are no essential and true stories. Participants always tell and negotiate their tellings based on their expectations and what they think researchers want (to hear). This

²⁰ **Examiners’ Footnote:** All eight South African participants were interviewed twice; four of the African participants were interviewed twice, four only once; six of the UK participants were interviewed twice, one only once.

strategy serves two functions: first, anecdotally creating and setting the context for the interview. Second, the strategy functions as a scaffold for the abstract nature of the research topic.

As much as I am not interested in people's general accounts of themselves, I am interested in what life is like and how life is lived by a 'whole' black, racialised subject. I am interested in, to use narrative terminology, *turning points* in people's accounts of their experiences and awareness of being black. I use the term "turning points" here carefully because, as Riessman pointed out to me, these points could be moments in a story when race matters most, points of heightened awareness and consciousness, not necessarily a marked sharp change in the narrative. The interview was opened with an invitation to the participant to tell a story of his / her life: "Tell me about growing up in [South Africa]". Here I was looking for "...particular moments in a particular time and place ... with characters, actions, thoughts and feelings. For each event describe in detail what happened, where you were, who was involved, what you did and what you thinking and feeling in the event" (Crossley, 2000, pp. 70-71). This very open narrative question, not explicitly focused on race, was usually sufficient to elicit a very rich story from participants, including multiple references to identification and experiences of race. Additional follow-up or probing questions, usually for the second interview, included the following:

- Tell me about peak experiences or the most wonderful moments in your life.
- Tell me about nadir experiences or the worst moments in your life.
- What do you consider to be the turning points or points of significant change in your life?
- Please talk to me about important childhood memories. Please talk to me about important adolescent memories.
- Please talk to me about important adult memories. Tell me about where, if, and when race 'comes up' for you in your life. Possibilities to explore: Geographical place, School/education, Friendships, Work, Love and relationships.
- Let's talk about moments where your 'race' and other social formations, e.g., age, class, gender or sexuality, collide or when your race was a resource or a hinderance.
- How is life in South Africa 'now' different from 'then'?

4.4 Data Analysis

4.4.1 Transcription

I must begin this section with an embarrassing ‘confession’. I had never given a second thought to what the process of transcription is. I have always taken transcripts for granted as un-problematically representing straightforward ‘raw data’ – what was said in the interview. Poland (2002) asserts that “the transcript, as text, is frequently seen as unproblematic and given a privileged status in which its authority goes unquestioned” (p. 635). This is exemplified in the fact that there is no section or discussion on transcription in all my previous research reports except for the brief mention that transcription is a time consuming mechanical chore (Tilley and Powick, 2002). In all my years as a student and in my research training I had never thought about what kind of text a transcript is (Poland, 2002). I have always recognized that some ‘things’ cannot be captured in the transcription process. Silences, pauses, hesitations and other paralinguistic elements in narratives, identified by Squire et al (2008) “as aspects of emotionality and embodiment” (p. 4), such as tone of voice, laughter, facial expression, body gestures and posture are not captured in the transcript. My recognition of what is impossible to capture in the transcript was secondary to my privileging of the spoken. When transcribing, I worked tirelessly in attempting to produce a verbatim account of what was said and what had gone on in the interviewing process and used that for my interpretation of people’s lives.

This view was shattered in the fall of 2007 when I studied at the University of East London in the United Kingdom and registered for a course, *Narrative Research*²¹. Suddenly, the transcript was not as reliable and trustworthy as I had imagined it to be. The transcript is an interpretation, I learned, my interpretation. The transcript is about selection and choices that are made about what enters the transcript, what gets edited and what remains forever lost in the tape recorder. The transcript is my construction of the interview process. In this section, I deal with the problematic of the transcription process, with what Samuel (1971) calls the

²¹ The Split-Site Commonwealth Scholarship allowed me to spend a year of my PhD at a British institution of my choice. I chose the University of East London to work in particular under Dr. Corinne Squire. There, I registered for Narrative Research, a course team-taught by Dr Molly Andrews, Dr Corinne Squire and Dr Maria Tamboukou, a brilliant course that challenged me to think about doing narrative research theoretically, ethically and personally, and creatively. It was here that many of my assumptions about what research is, the politics of the transcript, ethics in narrative work were provoked, shattered and questioned.

‘perils of the transcript’ and Squire et al (2008) refer to as ‘the tyranny of the transcript’. First, the section will consider what Poland (2002) calls the “modernist obsession with transcription accuracy” (p. 636) and the ‘verbatim’, a position that up until recently I had blindly used as a framework for all my previous work. Second, I will problematize the insistence on the ‘verbatim’ that characterizes much of qualitative research practice. The ‘interview-tape-transcript interface’ (Poland, 2002) is a complicated theoretical, methodological and ethical process requiring active engagement. Finally, I will make a case for transcription as a situated and interpretive process (Green, Franquiz and Dixon, 1997; Josselson, 2004; Poland, 2002; Roberts, 1997; Tilley and Powick, 2002). Arguing for the transcript as the researcher’s construction does not answer the question of how we (should) produce transcripts, whether we edit making them readable or preserve ‘the original’ speech even when intelligible, grammatically erroneous and disjointed (Poland, 2002; Roberts, 1997; Samuel, 1971). Perhaps, there is no answer but recognition of what transcription is and what it is not.

Transcribing audio-taped interview material is a common process undertaken by researchers working within the qualitative tradition (Green et al, 1997; Poland, 2002; Tilley and Powick, 2002) and is the only mechanism available for translating the spoken word into the written form. As long as we work with what people tell us and how people use language and narrative to account for their experiences, we have to worry about how we (can) reproduce what is said into a textual form for analysis. The translation of the spoken into the written is *not* a straightforward reproduction. “The spoken word can easily be mutilated”, Samuel (1971) writes, “when it is taken down in writing and transferred to the printed page. Some distortion is bound to arise whatever the intention of the writer...” (p. 389). I have embarrassingly confessed that I have never considered the issue of transcription as a determining factor in my so-called attempt at rigour in my research practice. Both Poland (2002) and Tilley and Powick (2002), however, exonerate me in that the process and politics of transcription have received little attention from most qualitative researchers.

The lack of attention paid to the process is related, at least partially, to perceptions that transcription is merely a matter of transferring what was captured on tape to text, a perception entrenched in the field. Connected to this notion of transference is the assumption that a one-to-one correspondence occurs between the tape and text, that transcribers have captured the reality of the recorded conversation

in the transcript... Such positivist assumptions support the acceptance of transcripts as authoritative texts that hold certain truths, and maintain that the accuracy of transcripts is dictated by the ability of the person transcribing to sustain an objective stance (Tilley and Powick, 2002, p. 292).

While the process of transcription has received little attention, most qualitative researchers are “exhorted to be ever more vigilant in the application of a growing number of possible conventions and measures to ensure that transcripts are verbatim facsimiles of what was said in interviews” (Poland, 2002, p. 629). This is an interesting paradox: on one hand, the process of transcribing is commonly overlooked, for lack of a better word, in the search for the ‘perfect’ transcript; on the other hand, attempts to accurately depict what was said or what Green et al (1997) have ingeniously termed ‘the myth of the objective transcript’ abound. Most researchers, according to Poland (2002), are particularly concerned with ‘getting it right’ or ‘getting it as close as possible’ to the original audio-taped interview. ‘Getting it right’ takes first place. The fall back position is an attempt to ‘get it as close as possible’. Why the fuss, we have to ask! ‘Getting it right’ is simply not possible. It is not possible even with all careful measures and possible conventions. Why the insistence on ‘the verbatim’? Well, Poland (2002) argues ‘getting it right’ or ‘getting it as close as possible’ reflects “a bias toward a realist ontology ... That is to say, from a naturalistic idiom [a concept from Gubrium and Holstein, 1997], it is typically ... assumed not only that the research interview adequately captures social reality as it is experienced and expressed by respondents, but that the translation to audiotape and then text is not inherently problematic, so long as careful attention is given to ensuring the accuracy of transcription” (p. 630).

From the above, we can problematize the idea of an objective transcript in four ways: First, there are technical and linguistic constraints in moving from the realm of the spoken into the written form. Samuel (1971) argues that the way people’s talk as represented in the transcript or “the imposition of grammatical forms” (p. 389), in the first instance, contravenes the way people talk in everyday life. Samuel (1971) asserts that people “do not usually speak in paragraphs, and what they have to say does not usually follow an ordered sequence of comma, semi-colon and full stop; yet very often this is the way in which their speech is reproduced [in transcripts]” (p. 389). This is an insightful observation pointing to the linguistic craft and reproduction of the transcript by the researcher’s attempt at fixing the

spoken word onto the page. We will return to this idea of transcription as an interpretive construction. Further, Poland (2002) identifies some logistical and interpretive challenges that enter the transcription process no matter how much the researcher/transcriber attempts to be “faithful to the original language and flow of the discussion” (p. 632) and how vigilant to the pauses, silences and hesitations in between (see Poland for discussion of these challenges). Like Samuel (1971), Poland (2002) recognizes that the concept of ‘a sentence’ is not easily translatable to the process of speaking. When transcribing, you are constantly making (methodological) decisions about “where to begin and end sentences” (Poland, 2002, p. 632), about where to insert commas and other grammatical conventions. The decisions of where sentences begin and end can fundamentally change the speaker’s intended meaning. Using Poland’s (2002) example “‘I hate it, you know. I do’ has a different meaning to ‘I hate it. You know I do’”. Such a subtle change may have significant implications for interpretation and analysis. For Poland (2002), where we ‘put quotation marks’, ‘omit words’ or ‘mistaken words for other similar words’ are challenges that make the attempt to reproduce an original verbatim record of the interview an impossibility. Second, the verbatim transcript is an impossibility in terms of what it leaves out and fails to represent in words. Poland (2002) comments:

[M]any aspects of interpersonal interaction and nonverbal communication are not captured in audiotape records, so that the audiotape itself is not strictly a verbatim record of the interview. In other words, concern with ensuring that transcripts are accurate may unreflexively conflate lived experience of the one-to-one conversation with recorded speech (tapes) and this speech with the written word (transcript) (p. 635).

Many intangible, non-verbal and emotional aspects of the interview are not captured by the audiotape that, like most of social science research, privileges the verbal making these important aspects visibly absent in the written form. Gorden (1980) lists four nonverbal aspects of communication that powerfully shape our interview contexts that are absent both from the audiotape and the transcript: “*proxemic* communication is the use of interpersonal space to communicate attitudes; *chronemic* communication is the use of pacing of speech and length of silence in conversation; *kinesic* communication includes any body movements or postures; and *paralinguistic* communication includes all the variations in volume, pitch and

quality of voice” (in Poland, 2002, p. 635, italics in the original). If we cannot even capture these nonverbal communicative aspects in the first place, how can we possibly search for an original written replica of the interview? Why do we want to?

Third, the insistence on the ‘objective’ or verbatim transcript seems to point to a realist epistemology that social reality and the person are contained somewhere in talk. That is to say, by analyzing and reading talk or language or the narrative in the transcript you can somehow retrieve the essence of the subject. The insistence on the verbatim does not appreciate that the subject is not and cannot be wholly represented and captured in the transcript. Maria Tamboukou²² suggests ‘the essence’ of the subject cannot be reducible to the content of the story told. Also, for Frosh (2002) some things, like traumatic experiences, fall outside the realm of linguistic representation, pointing to the limits of language and narrative. We need not go as far as psychoanalysis or debates about the representation (or lack thereof) of traumatic experiences to argue that stories that people tell us in interviews are partial representations (Green et al, 1997). There are many different possible retellings (Mishler, 2004) and (re)constructions and (re)interpretations at any given moment. The transcript is at best an unreliable, imperfect text reproduced by the researcher/transcriber reflecting “a discipline’s conventions as well as a researcher’s conceptualisation of a phenomenon, purposes for the research, theories guiding the data collection and analysis, and programmatic goals” (Green et al, 1997, p. 172). It is for this very reason that we have to be aware of and take care in the kinds of claims we (can) make about people based on what people tell us, based on the transcribed material of what people told us in interview settings.

Fourth, a verbatim transcript is problematic as it conceals the interpretive (Green et al, 1997; Roberts, 1997; Tilley and Powick, 2002) quality involved in (re)producing a transcript. Poland (2002) asks the question “what kind of text we envisage a transcript to be. How do we construct the transcript as an object of research? As recorded conversation? Phenomenological experience? Literary text? Linguistic data set? Dialogue? Narrative?” (p. 636). Green et al (1997) provide the following answer that “a transcript is a text that ‘re’-presents an event; it is not the event itself. Following this logic, what is re-presented is data constructed by a researcher for a particular purpose, not just talk written down” (p. 172). From this logic, transcribing is not a neutral exercise but interpretive work underpinned by

²² By personal communication in a series of lectures on Narrative Research in December 2007.

methodological “choices made in representing data” (Green et al, 1997, p. 173). The choices range from decisions about where sentence begin and end, to decisions about what counts as silences and pauses and how to represent the non-verbal in language. The act of transcribing is both an interpretive and selective process. Researchers actively decide and select what is to be represented and how is it to be represented. So, when transcribing, we are making methodological choices right through. In this vein, Andrews²³ charges that we need to ‘come out of the closet’, as it were, about the decisions and choices that we, as researchers, are making rather than pretending to be presenting an unproblematic written account of the intersubjective interview setting. We need to see transcribing for what it is, that is, an interpretive and integral part of the research process (Tilley and Powick, 2002). We need to explicate the decisions, choices and interpretations we are making and have made because, as Roberts (1997) notes, “every decision about how to transcribe tells a story. The question is, whose story and for what purpose” (p. 169). Roberts (1997) further suggests “we can ask of any transcription: How did it come to be produced?... How much story does it tell?” (p. 170). The following quotations demonstrate the interpretive quality inherent in transcribing.

What counts as language and what is perceived as a meaningful bit of language in situ depends on the researchers’ cultural knowledge of that language’ system and discourse practices. Such knowledge shapes researchers’ interpretations of what they hear, see, understand and do. For example ... To see silence as meaningful, and not merely the absence of talk, or to see someone as taking the role of questioner involves cultural understanding of the discourse practices of a social group... Thus, writing down what one hears is the result of a range of interpretive acts (Green et al, 1997, p. 173).

As transcribers fix the fleeting moment of words as marks on the page, they call up the social roles and relations constituted in language and rely on their own social evaluations of speech in deciding how to write it. After all, transcribers bring their own language ideology to the task. In other words, all transcription is

²³ By personal communication in a series of lectures on Narrative Research in December 2007

representation, and there is no natural or objective way in which talk can be written (Roberts 1997, p. 168).

The argument advanced here is that participants' stories are in the first instance already their interpretations of their lives. The transcript, by the same token, is my interpretation of their interpretations. However, arguing that there can be no 'objective transcript' does not address how transcripts should be reproduced. Does it mean that anything goes? Do we have to take care in ensuring that there is a match between what was said and what is transcribed? Tilley and Powick (2002) maintain "although perfect transcripts do not exist, the degree of match between tape and text will vary with the amount of care taken in the transcription process" (p. 306). For me, this presents a dual concern of how to display talk in text and, most importantly, the ethical question of how to represent participants; either as incoherent users of language or as polished, sequentially-ordered speakers. As researchers, we need to think through how we represent 'others' in text. This is an ethical dilemma that we cannot escape; how we represent others in our transcripts and our interpretations. Roberts (1997) reminds us that we have to be conscious that when we are transcribing talk, we are in fact "transcribing people" (p. 170). Further, we need to be cautious that how we transcribe has direct implications on "the range of meanings and interpretations possible" (Green et al, 1997, p. 173). We can never overstate our ethical obligations in how we choose to represent our participants, both in how we represent their talk in the written form and how we interpret and give meanings to their lives in our research reports. This brings us to the question of whether transcripts should be edited for readability or 'left as they are'.

To edit (the transcript) or not to edit, that's the question. Some of us might wish to answer, 'no' expressing some loyalty to the original text, again reproducing some kind of verbatim transcript. Arguing for the integrity of the spoken word, Samuel (1971) points out that speaking and writing are different forms of representation and there is a need to preserve the original text, otherwise we lose the nuanced nature of speaking.

[In talk] there is a sense of a speaker thinking, wondering and trying to answer the questions in his [sic] own mind rather than those of the reader ... There is no reason why sentences should make an orderly progression from beginning to end, with verbs and adjectives and nouns each in their grammatically allotted place. If

the speaker allows his [sic] sentences to tail off, or remain incomplete, why should not the transcript reflect this? ... He [researcher] should stick to the speaker's own order, otherwise he will be in danger of providing a gloss of his own instead of the original text (p. 391).

Others might answer, 'yes' in their quest to represent participants as coherent and readable. But, how much editing is too much to the extent of changing the participants' intended meanings. Tilley and Powick (2002) are suspicious of edited and polished transcripts.

Transcribers often feel pressure to tidy up 'the messiness' of conversation and to produce a polished text that, although nice to look at, may not reflect the original conversation or intended meanings. Producing a transcript as close an approximation as possible to the conversation taped is a worthwhile goal that may not be achieved as a result of such a polishing process (p. 300).

Both these positions are not without their own sets of theoretical and ethical problems. Like Roberts (1997), I argue for maintaining the tension between concerns for "accuracy, readability and ... the politics of representation... The challenge for the transcriber is to produce transcriptions that are accurate and readable but that are also reflexive in how they make explicit to the reader the constructed nature of written talk and so the problematic nature of accuracy and readability" (p. 168). In my transcription work, I adopted Tilley and Powick's (2002) aim for: "consistency while acknowledging the interpretive, analytic process that transcription involves and the challenges inherent in attempting to produce accurate re/presentation of taped conversation" (p. 294). This means that I took care to preserve my participants' intended meanings. The transcripts will be edited for readability, deleting "extensive repetition of words such as 'um' and 'ah' and repetitive phrases ..." (Tilley and Powick, 2002, p. 293). The following steps, adapted from Tilley and Powick (2002) will be taken to improve transcription quality:

- Step 1: A constructed set of transcription conventions adapted from Poland (2002) and Tilley and Powick (2002) was used to underpin the transcription process (see Appendix One). These transcription conventions are less concerned with reproducing

the verbatim transcript and more concerned with conveying “in words the quality of the original speech” (Samuel, 1971, p. 391). I am less concerned with depicting every silence, pause, the ‘ums’ and ‘ahs’. Such conventions, note Tilley and Powick (2002) would be inadequate for ‘language-based research studies, such as conversational analysis and discourse analysis.

- Step 2: As the researcher, I did most of the transcription myself as I am familiar with the data and have large investment, a factor that Tilley and Powick (2002) identify as influencing the kinds of transcription, in the project.
- Step 3: Review each transcript and return to the audiotape for comparing the tape and text “to ensure, in as much as possible, a measure of agreement between what was said and the way it was re/presented in text” (Tilley and Powick, 2002: 295).

My objective in this section was not resolve the problem of transcription but rather to “bring into view the interpretive, analytic and theoretical aspects of turning tape into text” (Tilley and Powick, 2002, p. 306). Researchers need to problematize the ‘interview-tape-transcript interface’ (Poland, 2002); be aware of how transcripts are reproduced; and need to be careful of what possible claims they can make based on transcribed data. In short, Tilley and Powick (2002) warn that “it is important to dispel the embedded assumptions that tape is equivalent to data, that the transcript is equivalent to the tape, and therefore that transcripts equal data” (p. 301).²⁴

4.4.2 Narrative Analysis and Interpretation

How narrative data are analyzed is dependent on how narrative is defined and what approach is used to frame the research design. In the previous chapter, we reviewed three major approaches in narrative research: namely approaches that view narrative as event-centred, approaches that consider narrative as experience-centred and approaches that read personal narratives for the wider cultural context. These approaches delimit how narratives are read and interpreted. As this research was not neatly framed within one particular approach, how narratives were analysed becomes less clear and difficult to pin down. There are different

²⁴ **Examiners' Footnote:** Transcripts of 19 of the 41 interviews conducted are available for reference in Appendix One.

levels of narrative analyses that are possible. Josselson (2004) indicates a number of "...interpretation(s) of [narrative] meanings ... produced, either through analysis of discursive practices, genres, plotlines, thematic structures, symbolization or cultural referent" (p. 2). Here, issues of text and the task of interpretation are important to consider. Participants' stories are their way of interpreting their experience by constructing a narrative and Josselson (2004) argues the researchers' task is "hermeneutic and reconstructive ...[because] meanings cannot be grasped directly and all meanings are essentially indeterminate in any unshakeable way, interpretation becomes necessary, and this is the work of the hermeneutic enterprise" (p. 3). This subsection has two objectives. First, two kinds of interpretive positions, i.e., the hermeneutics of faith and the hermeneutics of suspicion, underpinning narrative research, are examined. The distinction between these two kinds of interpretive positions was originally made by Paul Ricoeur and has been subsequently applied to narrative research (Josselson, 2004). How researchers analyze data, in this case narratives, is based on theoretical interpretive stances they adopt. Rarely do researchers 'come clean' and reveal what interpretive stance they are working from. In a paper entitled *The Hermeneutics of Faith and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion*, Josselson (2004) makes explicit the different and often concealed epistemological assumptions, and considers the ethics and questions of reflexivity involved in each interpretive stance. Second, a discussion on how narratives in this research were analysed and interpreted is considered.

Josselson (2004) argues the hermeneutics of faith or of restoration, as the name suggests, "aims to restore meaning to the text" (p. 1). This means the meaning(s) of text, the transcribed narrative, is seen as transparently contained in the text itself and on the surface of the text. The interpretive task of the researcher is, as Josselson (2004) puts it, "one of distilling, elucidating and illuminating the intended meanings of the informant" (p. 5). On the other hand, the hermeneutics of suspicion or of demystification attempts to go beyond what is said in order to uncover concealed meanings that underlie participants' talk. As best typified by Freud's psychoanalysis, the hermeneutics of suspicion "is characterised by a distrust of the symbol as a dissimulation of the real and is animated by suspicion, by a scepticism towards the given" (Josselson 2004, p. 3). This means that the meaning(s) of the text are not taken at face-value but considered to be disguised and distorted. This work is characterized by reading the surface differently and beyond the symbol to look underneath. The researcher's interpretive task here is to problematize "the participants' narrative and 'decode' meaning

beyond the text” (p. 3.). The role of interpretation is to transcend the given, to bypass what is said and go beyond the text in order to discover hidden meanings, and the untold narrative.

These two interpretive stances are premised on different epistemological assumptions. The hermeneutics of faith is phenomenologically inspired in its aim to understanding people on their own terms, in its attempt to ‘give voice’ to marginalised or oppressed groups. Precisely for this phenomenological motivation, the researcher’s task is simply that of representing and “remaining faithful to the ... intentions of the narrator” (Josselson, 2004, p. 6). The researcher’s task is *not* to construct meanings differently to participants, rather to stay close to the interpretations offered by the narrator of the experience the researcher is trying to represent. Josselson (2004) observes from this interpretive stance that the participant is constructed as “the author of and authority on his or experience” (p. 12). The participant is seen as “the expert on his or her own experience and is able and willing to share meanings with the researcher... The aim of the hermeneutics of faith is to re-present, explore and/or understand the subjective world of the participants and/or the social and historical world they feel themselves to be living in. The interview thus provides a window on psychological and social realities of the participant...” (p. 5). Is it possible to know and understand the Other on their own terms? This presents a theoretical shortcoming as researchers attempt to ‘bracket’ (Josselson, 2004) their own personal and theoretical biases in order to understand the Other on their own terms. Such a neutral commitment is impossible as we can only understand the other through our own biases and assumptions. This is what feminist insights have argued for that “...prejudices [our assumptions and beliefs], understood to be horizons of understanding constituted by language and culture, are the position from which we live – and interpret others. Thus, the researcher is a constitutive element of the hermeneutic circle and must speak his or her own positioning in the world” (Josselson, 2004, p. 10-11). Researchers are part and parcel of the hermeneutic circle and cannot theoretically separate themselves from the interpretations they make about other people’s lives. I share Atkinson’s (1998) sentiments that “... the interpretations of life stories are either from a theoretical or personal or subjective basis” (p. 13).

From the hermeneutics of suspicion, “experience is assumed not to be transparent to itself: surface appearances mask depth realities; a told story conceals an untold one” (Josselson, 2004, p. 13). Researchers working with this interpretive stance direct their attention to what is said and/or unsayable, the omissions, disjunctions, inconsistencies and contradictions in an

account. It is what is not said that is of primary interest rather what is said, Josselson (2004) writes:

Interpretive work involves paying attention to how the story is construed and how its parts are ordered and juxtaposed, noticing the “negative spaces” of silences and omissions, and focusing on contradictions and inconsistencies. Analysis and interpretation involve “reading between the lines” for indirect reference and for signs of unconscious processes (p. 18, italics added for emphasis).

In order to access what is hidden, researchers working within this interpretive stance look to language in order to analyze discourse and “texts for markers of social class, authority relations, power dynamics, gendered experience or other bits of social life that may not be consciously recognised by the teller because they are so much part of the taken-for-granted fabric of life” (Josselson, 2004: 15)? The common assumption is that individuals know about themselves, that they ‘are in the know’. Social and human science research is built and premised on the idea that people themselves are ‘in the know’ about themselves and their experiences. But, is this accurate? Crossley (2000) precisely questions this assertion, by positing a psychoanalytic insight that “many of us spend large portions of our life in a state of mixed confusion, subsumed by contradictory thoughts, feelings and emotions. Even on those occasions when we know exactly how we feel, we’re not always sure why we feel the way we do...” (p. 3). Crossley (2000) argues here from the hermeneutics of suspicion: “wouldn’t it be more accurate to say that we are ‘strangers’ to ourselves, our whole lives lived much as mystery? We bumble along like second-rate detectives, fitting the pieces together as we go, but invariably failing to pull it all together...” (p. 3). For this reason, people’s lives and texts about lives need to be subject to further layers of interpretation. Ochberg (1996) advocates “a way of listening to the stories people tell that systematically refuses to take them at their own word” (p. 97).

Can we read in a text what is not there? (Josselson, 2004). Answering this question conjures up ethical questions of how we represent our participants. Do we have ethical obligations to represent our participants the way they want to be represented? Or do we present them according to our own conceptual frames with little concern with what they say? What right do we have in representing participants? For Ochberg (1996), this is an unavoidable ethical

problem in the nature of interpretation: “When I interpret a life story, I try to show what an informant accomplishes by recounting his or her history in a particular fashion. To succeed, I must undermine the usual assumption: that people say what they mean and mean *only* what they say ... showing [the reader] how everything that has been said has other meanings, ulterior purposes” (p. 98, italics added for emphasis). Researchers working within this interpretive stance, Josselson (2004) points out, are “making a claim to privilege, to the capacity to know beyond the text under construction” (p. 19). Ethical problems abound here; can we read into the text what is not there? If so, to what extent can we go beyond the text? If the researcher’s primary goal is to go beyond the text and read into what is not there, this begs the question, why interview people in the first place when the aim is to look at ‘what is not there’, ‘what is not said’. Interpreting a life story is, for Ochberg (1996) “Like the dead body in a mystery, it announces a puzzle” (p. 100) and it is the task of the interpreter to put pieces together. Researchers working within this interpretive stance might want to argue that they are writing for a different audience, a scholarly audience (Josselson, 1996; 2004; Ochberg, 1996) and not interested in understanding the phenomenological experience of the speaking subject. I would argue that issues of a different audience have to be made explicit, even to the participants themselves, for ethical research practice. I would also argue that as narrative researchers we tell our participants that we are going to interpret their stories beyond the actual content of what they tell us. Chase (1996) concurs that “We could tell prospective participants that during the interviews we want to hear about their experiences fully and in detail but that our analyses will reframe their stories through connections to the broader cultural context” (p. 56).

Chase (1996) argues for claiming her interpretive authority as a researcher because research is done for particular personal, theoretical, political reasons, and sometimes the interests of the researchers and participants do not match. However, for Chase (1996) the researcher remains in control of the interpretive process. Chase (1996) suggests that narrative analysis should go beyond the content of one story in order to analyse the cultural processes in and as produced by stories entailing a different level interpretation. “[M]y aim”, Chase (1996) reflects, “[is] not to analyze what participants intended to say. Rather, I [aim] to interpret the meanings expressed implicitly in their use of cultural discourses, their narrative strategies, and their linguistic practices” (pp. 53-54). From the perspective of the hermeneutics of suspicion, Josselson (2004) comments as follows:

Narrative research reports are not co-constructions of meaning between participant and researcher, but point of conversation between the researcher and a group of colleagues who share interest in a particular conceptual or theoretical frame ... Thus, the ‘participant’ in such a project becomes more like what used to be called a “subject”: that is they are subject to an analysis outside their own horizons of understanding... Interpretations of their material goes beyond what they told – and while it may be persuasive to the scholarly audience, may feel insulting, intrusive or demeaning to them in their own context (p. 20).

For Chase (1996), narrative analysis serves the function of turning our attention to the taken-for-granted in individuals’ talk and narratives. However, for Ochsberg (1996) interpretation may be construed as undermining participants. He boldly argues that: “To pay attention to speakers’ rhetoric seems to rob them of authority: It suggests that narrators do not know what they mean to say or cannot find the way to say it and someone else – the interpreter – can do a better job” (p. 98).

Most researchers tend to work from one or other interpretive stance. They are either interested in understanding the phenomenological experience of the speaking subject or interested in what lies beyond the text. Both these forms of hermeneutics are legitimate efforts at interpreting lives. I, on the other hand, am uncomfortable and sit in tension within each interpretive stance. Depending on the nature of the study, who the participants are and the interests of the researcher, one stance is more appropriate than the other. For me, this is an ethical question of how we, as researchers (should) represent our participants. In 2004, I worked with traumatic accounts of survivors of violence in South Africa. Initially, the study was framed as a discourse analysis of the experience of trauma by rural South Africans. My attempts at discourses analysis were hindered by feelings of betrayal. By focusing on what was not in the text, I could not but help that I was ‘playing language games’ with people’s real and painful experiences. In the end, I worked from what I now see as the hermeneutics of faith, attempting to understand their traumatic experiences on their own terms and, in this case, in their own indigenous language. However, I have theoretical concerns about the hermeneutics of faith and its claim to give ‘voice’ and to know the other on their own terms. The idea of research as giving ‘voice’ to marginalized and oppressed groups masks the

inherent power relations in the research process. Citing Sparkes (1994b), Roberts (2002) argues that “a difficult issue remains – a commitment to giving a ‘voice’ may be insufficient since little is added to their perceptions of the world, which may in turn reflect dominant discourses” (p. 14). Knowing the other is not and cannot be independent from the researcher’s own biographical and conceptual frames. Having said that, I have ethical concerns about the hermeneutics of suspicion and its objective of reading into the text what is not there. Josselson (2004) articulates this better “in going beyond the intended narrative of the participant, many researchers feel uncomfortable with the authority they must take to re-author the meanings of the person who shared their stories with them” (pp. 15-16). It is the claim to authority that I am uneasy about.

For the purposes of this study, I adopted a mid-way analysis, paying attention to participants’ experiences as narrated in the content of the story, while also focusing on how the narrative was put together and ordered. This study was interested in the analysis of both the content and form of participants’ narratives. The interpretive stance advanced here functioned at three levels of analysis:

- **The first level of analysis: Thematic analysis of the narrative content and form.**
Here, narrative analysis works thematically what is said in the stories as well as how stories are organised and put together into a narrative. This level of analysis allows for the interpretations of the participants’ experiences and accounts of what it means to black. In the first layer of interpretation and as a way of creating an ‘image’ of the life, ‘narrative portraits’ were constructed from stories told.²⁵
- **The second level of analysis: Analysis of the Narrative Interview Context.**
Elliott (2005) argues “within narrative, there is an increasing and insightful recognition of the ‘importance of the context of ... telling and the role of the listener in the construction of narratives” (p. 10). The context of the interview and the role of the listener shape what is said and what is not. The listener or the audience – whether real or imagined - is an active and important part in the construction of narratives. At this level, narrative analysis moves to interrogate what is not said in the story, in

²⁵ **Examiners’ Footnote:** The development of these “Narrative Portraits” as an analytic approach was an original contribution by the candidate. Four such portraits are included in Appendix Two.

particular, the relationship between the researcher and the participant; the positioning and reflexivity of the researcher.²⁶

- **The third level of analysis: Analysis of the wider cultural context in personal narratives.** Here, narrative analysis links individuals' personal narratives to social analyses, perhaps the most critical aspect of this study, thinking about how the social structure of 'race' is played out in individual²⁷ lives in relation to other aspects of social identity, such as class, nationality and gender.

4.5 Studying (An)other: Issues of Ethics in Narrative Research

This subsection deals with two critical aspects of any research enterprise involving human subjects. Issues of reflexivity and ethics are paramount in the narrative study of lives. Plummer (2001) reminds us, as narrative researchers, that we are often unwelcome, and I would add uninvited, guests in people lives. Narrative work is like a journey, to use Plummer's metaphor, "through a minefield of ethical traps" (p. 226). Ethical problems abound in our work and they are often impossible to avoid and resolve. The only means we have is through our critical reflexivity as researchers to locate ourselves in our work and reveal the struggles and conflicts in our narrative work. This subsection aims to (i) chart the ethical problems inherent in narrative work and (ii) argue for the location of the researcher in knowledge production and the research process. It is only through critical reflectivity that some of the ethical conflicts can be exposed and discussed: "The wisest know that the best they can do ... is not good enough. The not so wise, in their accustomed manner, choose to believe there is no problem and that they have solved it" (Malcolm, 1990 in Josselson, 1996, p. 71).

Narrative research is fraught with theoretical, methodological (Squire et al, 2008), moral, ethical, emotional and practical complexities (Josselson, 1996; Plummer, 2001; Roberts, 2002). The following questions illustrate the ethical problems that abound in studying human beings. What are the ethics involved in studying human lives? Where does our ethical

²⁶ Analysis of the interactive dynamics in the interview situation between the researcher and participant is included in published work presented in Section Two.

²⁷ Explorations of the intersections of social and personal narratives are presented in the published work in Section Two.

obligation to our participants begin and end? Does our ethical obligation end when a particular study is finished and results published? What is our ethical obligation in how we conceptualise a research problem? What is our ethical obligation to our participants while we are interviewing them? What is our ethical obligation in representing our participants in transcripts? What is our ethical obligation in our interpretations, and the interpretative frameworks we use, of people's lives? These questions are especially pertinent now as Josselson (1996) suggests that "we collect interviews for the purpose of shaping them into our own story about them" (p. xi). Whose story is it anyway? Is it ours to craft and use as we see fit? Or, does it remain always our participants' as it is them who have lived the life and told the story. This complexity of whose story it is, is potently demonstrated in the dynamic between Alex and Stuart in the book, *Stuart: A Life Backwards*, where Alex claims authorship of Stuart's life (Masters, 2006). If narrative research is truly a collaborative effort then where does ownership and authorship lie? Who controls the interpretive process (Chase, 1996)? If the interview is truly a co-construction between the researcher and participant who should benefit from publication and royalties (Plummer, 2001)? What is our ethical obligation in the effects of our research beyond our aims, rationale and intentions? Are we ethically responsible for the fact that research once public takes on a life of its own? If we are not, who then is? Josselson (1996) asks the same question in this way: "What are the ethics we hold to in order to morally defend our work? And how can we take account of the fact that our work will have effects beyond our intentions in doing it?" (pp. xi-xii). Josselson (1996) emphasizes that as researchers we need to come clean or 'come out of the closet', a phrase used by Molly Andrews (2007, personal communication), about our role in the research process and remain accountable for how we are constantly and consistently shaping the process and making certain decisions about the process:

When we listen to another's story, our intention is to bring our own interpretation to the material. Even if we ask our participants to corroborate our interpretation, it is still our interpretive framework that structures understanding. As with any work, each observer interprets from his or her meaning-making horizon. This is the essence of a reflexive hermeneutic stance. But only rarely do we write lives in a way that fully recognizes our role as inventors of the questions we pose, shapers of the contexts we study and co-

participants in our interviews and in their interpretation (Josselson, 1996, p. xii, italics added for emphasis).

Like my previous views on transcription, ethical considerations in research never took centre stage so long as I produced a form with assurances of confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent. Coming from psychology, I also included a phrase about referring participants for counselling services should they require it. With these measures written and passed by the university's ethics committee, I conducted research on trauma and homelessness, presented papers at conferences and obtained qualifications firmly believing that I had acted ethically. In retrospect, measures of confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent are not sufficient responses (Riessman, 2005) to our ethical obligations as researchers. These might be necessary but are in no way sufficient (Riessman, 2005), not by a long shot. Josselson (1996) questions the ways in which I have dealt with ethics in my research:

Merely waving flags about confidentiality and anonymity is a superficial, unthoughtful response. And the concept of informed consent is a bit oxymoronic, given that participants can, at the outset, have only the vaguest idea of what they might be consenting to. Doing this work, then, requires that we find a way to encompass contradictions and make our peace with them (pp. xii-xiii).

I had never thought about the ethics of representing and writing about participants' lives. Plummer (2001) criticizes most studies as written as if they were "executed by machines" (p. 205) with no reflection on the process and ethical problems encountered. Research involving human subjects can never be neutral. The nature of social science research is an ethical engagement laden with unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched. Researchers decide on what topic to investigate, how to select and what to write about others, often making public people's private lives. Bakan (1996) is especially sceptical on whether narrative work can ever be ethical precisely because, by its nature, it is about people's lives and making public individuals' private realms of experience. Bakan (1996) express his misgivings in that narrative research, "based on the real lives of people made public, converts what is private into public; can violate privacy; and can cause mental, legal, social and financial hurt and harm" (p. 3).

We researchers, are ethically responsible for what and how we write about our participants. Josselson (1996) observes that “we write, as scholars, for our peers about our participants ... [However] our knowing or writing about our participants’ lives may expose them to consequences that neither we nor they could have foreseen” (p. xviii). As researchers, we need to ask ourselves how we can protect ourselves and our participants for future, unintended consequences of our work. Is it possible to know in advance about potential harm and consequences? Of course not! However, that should not be an answer that satisfies us or give us confidence that we have acted ethically. We need to, we have to, ask ourselves the hard questions. We cannot resolve every ethical problem and dilemma. But, we have to recognize that our work is fraught with contradictions, uncertainties, ethical problems rather than hide behind our institutional regulations and ethical committee guidelines and go beyond as Josselson (1996) argues “ethical pieties and idealized procedures to the gritty realities that form both the challenge and the torment of working in a narrative framework” (p. xiv). We need to think through and engage these questions and problems throughout our work (even beyond the limits of a particular project) – did we do enough? Did we act ethically? Josselson (1996) puts this markedly that “our narrative about doing narrative research must recognize its dangers and its pitfalls; our search must be for a way to contain this awareness rather than to silence it” (p. xiii).

We cannot solve or foresee all ethical problems in our work. There is no escape from ethical implications in our work as it involves ‘real’ people and power resides with us as afforded by our conceptual and interpretive frameworks. As a consequence of this authority and status we are ethically obligated to our participants, how we represent them and how we write about them. Participants entrust us with their private lives and we have to ethically work with these. “Although we are also only human”, Bar-On (1996) acknowledges, “I feel we are responsible because in such a delicate kind of research, we hold the meaning of people’s lives in our hands. Our successes will be gratifying, but our failures may become irreversible” (p. 20). For this reason, we should not pretend that our work is ‘problem-free’. We, as researchers, must ask ourselves the hard questions; what right do we have to enter people’s lives and write about them? As narrative researchers who study the lives of others, make sense of others’ contradictions and ambiguities we have to, as Josselson (1996) challenges us, “expose [our]selves - the process of [our] work and [our] thoughts and feelings, [our] anxieties and concerns while doing it” (p. xiii). Josselson’s (1996) challenge is that we need to critically

and reflexively write about the struggles and anxieties we face along our research journeys and our working with people's lives and narratives. We should only take solace in our critical reflexivity. Before we consider issues of reflexivity in narrative, I want to conclude the section on ethics with a rather wordy quote from Josselson (1996) that reflects the ethical angst and tension of doing narrative work:

Doing narrative research is an ethically complex undertaking, but I do not advocate that we stop doing it. Rather, I am suggesting here that although this is important work, it is work we must do in anguish. That we explore people's lives to make them into an example of some principle or concept, or to support or refute a theory will always be intrusive and narcissistically unsettling for the person who contributes his or her story to this enterprise. I don't think that there is any measure one can make to prevent this (beyond the usual safeguards²⁸, of course). No matter how gentle and sensitive our touch, we still entangle ourselves in others' intricately woven narcissistic tapestries [and our own of course] ... Yet I would worry most if I ever stopped worrying, stopped suffering for the disjunction that occurs when we try to tell an Other's story. To be uncomfortable with this work, I think, protects us from going too far. It is with our anxiety, dread, guilt and shame that we honour our participants. To do this work, we must contain these feelings rather than deny, suppress, or rationalize them. We must at least try to be fully aware of what we are doing" (p. 70).

4. 6 (Re)presenting People's Lives Through Critical Reflectivity

More researchers are becoming acutely aware of how their presence, theoretical biases, biography and social positioning such as gender, race, class, or religion impacts on how they conceptualise a research problem, select participants, interview and interpret participants'

²⁸ The usual safeguards are measures of confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent. These safeguards are necessary but not sufficient (Riessman, 2005). They will allow us to continue to do our work, but, the hard questions must persist and must underscore everything we do in the research process.

lives. Owing to feminism and, as Plummer (2001) recognizes, multiculturalism and postmodernism, the researcher is asked to locate and situate herself or himself firmly and explicitly in the research and knowledge production process. There is now a growing emphasis placed on “a recognition of the collaborative and reflexive role of the researcher” (Roberts, 2002, p 13) and a call for “a much more committed, reflexive, politically aware, personally grounded style of research” (Plummer, 2001, 205).

The question of the researcher’s role, shaping the research process, is a deeply methodological and ethical imperative (Roberts, 2002). There is growing body of literature tackling issues of ‘reflexivity’ in research practice and knowledge production. Some perceive this as negative, “as a narcissist preoccupation – an introspective navel gazing that deflects from *what* is being argued to *who* is arguing” (Plummer, 2001, 205). Others see reflexivity as a precondition for good ethical research (Plummer, 2001). However, as Roberts (2002) rightfully points that while the explicit location of the researcher is important, the danger, as I would say, or rather difficulty, as Roberts (2002) puts it, is in “assessing how much of the personal life of the researcher should be considered and entered in the text” (p. 13). Sparkes (1994a) warns against ‘too much’ of the researcher as: “‘self absorption’ or ‘narcissism’ may intrude” (in Roberts, 2004, p. 13).

Roberts (2002) reminds us about the ultimate aim of biographical research, which is to understand individuals’ life experiences within their socio-historical context. This is an important idea as it relates to the role and place of the researcher within biographical research: “To place the researcher fully within the research is to recognize that we all have stories and it seems a fundamental part of social interaction to ‘tell our tales’” (p. 13). Roberts (2002) proceeds idealistically to claim that: “In the collection of stories (via interviews), interaction is not only helping individuals to reflect and give form and structure to their lives (in the interview situation) but also helping researchers to begin to draw on their own experiences” (p. 13). Roberts (2002), at first, does not seem to question his bold statement that through the interview we help individuals structure their lives. However he goes to question and almost undermine the very same statement pointing to complicated relations in the research process:

How ‘collaborative’ this relation is in the interview, the interpretation, and the presentation, has been open to much discussion – whether the power relation is fundamentally unequal

and cannot be overcome or whether it can be modified during the full research process. But the application of terms such as ‘power’, ‘authority’, ‘empowerment’, ‘voice’ and ‘reciprocity’ in regard to relations between researcher and interviewee should be used with caution to describe what is a complex and problematic process (pp. 13- 14).

Some researchers/theorists see this kind of work in evangelical terms as a means of, as Roberts points out, ‘consciousness raising’, ‘personal or collective realization’, giving ‘voice’. “A feminist or radical response may also include a word of caution – that narratives may appear to provide a forum for empowerment and self-definition through a recovery of ‘voice’ and alternative perspectives but they often reflect dominant conventions and hide ideologies, such as patriarchy. Thereby, they can restrict new possibilities of expression and alternative actions” (Roberts, 2002, p. 124). I argue that the researcher’s reflexivity and narrative provides the backdrop against which the researcher’s interpretations can be read. Reflexivity provides the opportunity for the researcher to look at the research process and think through the ethical tension inherent in the process. Reflexivity, Plummer (2001) suggests, “takes us into more intimate worlds of doing research. We start to see that the doing of life story research is also personal, interactional, emotional, embodied work that can have implications for the self of the researcher as well as the researched” (p. 213).

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SECTION TWO

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IDENTITIES
RACE, GENDER,
CULTURE,
NATIONALITY,
AND ROLES

Edited by
Ruthellen Josselson
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9 “I Am More (Than Just) Black”

Contesting Multiplicity Through Conferring and Asserting Singularity in Narratives of Blackness

Siyanda Ndlovu¹

[I]dentities are historically conferred, [and] this conferral is ambiguous (though it works precisely and necessarily by imposing a false clarity), that *subjects are produced through multiple identifications, some of which become politically salient for a time in certain contexts*, and that the project of history is not to reify identity but to understand its production as an ongoing process of differentiation, relentless in its repetition, but also and this seems to me the important political point—subject to redefinition, resistance, and change. (Scott, 1992, p. 19, emphasis added)

Although it is now commonplace that we inhabit and are produced through the intersections of our multiple identities, I argue that there are critical contexts and moments when and where certain aspects of our identity are made more salient and dominant than others in the articulation of who we are. I therefore take multi-

¹ Siyanda Ndlovu was an exceptional young scholar who died tragically while this chapter was in preparation for publication. The final edit of the chapter was completed by Jill Bradbury (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa) and Corinne Squire (University of East London, UK), who were supervising his doctoral work in this field. This chapter encapsulates Ndlovu’s position, provoking and extending theoretical debate about (black) identity and, simultaneously, pointing to our profound loss of his potential future contributions to this intellectual conversation.

plicity for granted in engaging with the question posed by Brubaker and Cooper: “if [identity] is multiple, how do we understand the terrible singularity that is often striven for—and sometimes realized—by politicians seeking to transform mere categories into unitary and exclusive groups?” (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 1). My focus, though, is not the intentions of politicians or even activists in mobilizing around a fixed singular category of identity. This chapter works with narrative accounts of three black women in exploring *when* and *how* singularity is *conferred* or *asserted* and consequently *what happens to multiplicity* when singularity in identity is realized. In some paradoxical way, focusing on these moments of singularity allows us to revisit and re-interrogate multiplicity and how intersectionality works in the construction of ourselves.

This chapter explores three ways in which the singularity of “black identity” is realized. First, there are moments when a quality of singularity in identity is *conferred by (an)Other*. One way of reading the title of the chapter exemplifies this conferral of singularity. “I am more *than just* black” captures an individual’s protest against such an external conferral of singularity by (an)Other. Projection by the other in the articulation of one’s identity has its roots in, and is the route of, racism and other forms of oppression. A second reading of the title of the chapter, “I am *more* black,” is a particular instance of strategic essentialism, where subjects *assert singularity for and by themselves*. Here, singularity has quite different roots or origins in resistance, and offers us routes to further “identity politics.” This is what happens when black people psychologically connect themselves to others by “invok[ing] collective history in a continuous struggle to counteract racism ... of their cultural milieu and so to develop new subjectivities” (Mama, 1995, summary book page). Finally, I argue that though singularity can be conferred in racist ways or, conversely, asserted as a strategic form of resistance, these apparent moments of singular identity *always* contain within them the traces of other intersecting identities. Statements conferring and asserting singularity such as, “You are just black” or “I am more black,” are always in tension with unsaid or absent threads of identity, as it is impossible to be just black at any given moment. A deconstructivist reading that attends to these absences or erasures in the stories of identity (Sampson, 1989) reveals that these moments of singularity conceal conflicting, multiple identities, so that foreclosure is always only momentary, always contextual.

CONCEPTUALIZING SINGULARITY IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTIPLE AND COMPETING IDENTITIES

How do individuals navigate through their multiple, often contradictory and competing identities? Bhavnani and Phoenix suggest that “identity is not one thing for any individual; rather, each individual is both located in, and opts for a number of differing, and at times, *conflictual*, identities, depending on the social, political, economic and ideological aspects of their situation” (Bhavnani & Phoenix, 1994, p. 9, emphasis added). Competition presupposes a contest between two or more rivals for victory, for a prize. So, we must ask the question: What is the prize in the realm of identities? We can also ask the subsequent questions about competing identities:

Who wins? Who is defeated? How and why does the victor come first? These are important questions even in light of "intersectionality," examining "how different categories are constituted, transformed, and given meaning in dynamic engagement with each other" and considering "the multiple and mutually determining ways that they shape each other" (Omi, 2001, p. 256). I do not want to reproduce the idea that social categories, such as "race," gender, class, or nationality, are rigid, distinct "forms of stratification and difference" resulting in "dogmatic assertions of the primacy of one category over the other" (ibid.). However, at certain moments and in particular contexts in which multiple identities are in *competition* and *conflict* with each other, one aspect of identity may be made more salient and dominant than others.

Some aspects of identity are more ideologically charged than others. Some are more roughly cut along the edges. Some forms of identity compete more forcefully; some are more contested; some are more inscribed on the body; more (in)visible, more pervasive. Some forms of identity seem to matter *more*, and have more critical implications for subjectivity, than others, given particular genealogies, histories, politics, cultures, and geographical locations. The aspects of identity that seem to have a quality of singularity in certain situations and moments are precisely the structural forms of identity that are historically pervasive and entrenched. These structures of identity, such as "race," gender and sexuality, class, nationality, and ethnicity, cannot readily be concealed and submerged even in the context of other multiple, legitimate, forms of identity, such as, for instance, being a postgraduate student, a smoker, and a sibling. This is not to say that there are no contexts when the intersecting identities of being a student, a smoker, and a sibling are most salient. Rather, there are aspects of identity that are historically hegemonic over others, and it is around these identity markers that contestations of singularity occur.

IDENTITIES AS "IMPROVISED IDENTIFICATIONS"

"Improvised identification" is a phrase that I first heard used by Beatrix Campbell, the British author and journalist, at the *Soundings* "Cultures of Capitalism" seminars held at Marx House in London in January 2008. I was captivated by the word "improvised"; it immediately conjures up something "moving," "changing," "evolving," "mutating"; the opposites of fixity, stasis, and essentialism. The word "improvised" is also obviously connected to the world of the arts, the stage, and the practice of theater and has do with creating, making, re-acting, performing, *doing* something *in the moment*, constructing and *making* something up "*on the spot*." I understand "identification" in Stuart Hall's terms as "*a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a subsumption*" (Hall, 1996, p. 17; emphasis added).

Identification is therefore conceptualized as an ongoing, partial, incomplete "improvisation" or "articulatory practice," making connections by foregrounding sameness with particular others while at the same time creating disconnections by highlighting difference from others. This process of making connections and disconnections based on imagined shared forms of identity or "a fantasy of incorporation" is not fixed but is conditional and fluid, a site of contestation where there is a struggle to be "won or lost" (Hall, 1996, p. 16). This process is always improvised

and contingent on particular social, political, economic, historical, and ideological aspects of a situation, moment, and context. It is in this light that I use and appropriate the phrase “improvised identification” to think about identity in general and the shifting ties of identification and difference in “racial” identity in particular.

Conceptualizing racial identity as “improvised identification” means thinking about racial identity as being about *making* and *improvising* allegiances based on the historical, social, and political dimensions of the body. This is when “race” functions as a resource to make allies in constituting sameness while also relationally marking difference. However, these markers of identification and difference are *improvised in the moment*; in a particular situation and context. They are not essentialist but rather they shift, evolve, mutate, and break across a series of social differences and in struggles for identity in different situations and at different moments. There can be different conditional improvisations based on different aspects of identity where one form of identity is, momentarily for differing motivations, made primary over other multiple identities; when singularity and sameness are conferred by the other or when singularity is asserted by individuals themselves, over fragmentation, multiplicity, and difference.

Writing about the inevitable fractures and ambiguities in the social constitution of black masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa, Ratele comments that “the identity labelled black is being contested. It is becoming increasingly difficult to hold blackness as a political community together because of the changes in the politics of bodies and identities, as well as the opening up of and reconfigurations of material and psychological spaces” (Ratele, 1998, p. 60). It has been necessary for scholars writing about blackness and black identity to “reiterate [that] there is no single black identity shared by all black [people], that black [people] are not a monolithic group, and that multiple versions of blackness coexist” (Mahon, 2000, p. 286). The multiple versions of blackness, or of “*blacknesses*,” are about the different ways of being, doing, narrating, and performing blacknesses that are articulated, realized, and lived out in those messy, intricate, and entangled networks between race, class, ethnicity and nationality, gender and sexuality embodied in everyday practices and in encounters between people (Hall, 1993; Mahon, 2000; Ratele, 1998). To understand the nuances in black identities, Hall demands that we “recognize the other kinds of difference that place, position, and locate black people” (Hall, 1993, p. 111), as well as what Mahon terms “the social and historical processes that produce these differences” (Mahon, 2000, p. 286). This chapter explores what we can call “intra-individual multiplicities,” interrogating how individuals navigate their multiple identities when some aspects of identity are historically structured as entrenched—and when certain situations and moments seem to have a quality of singularity.

THREE BLACK WOMEN'S NARRATIVES

To illustrate these moments when singularity is either conferred or asserted over multiple identities, I will tell the stories of three black women employing an increasingly popular methodology in the social sciences, narrative research, to both generate and analyze data (Frosh, 2001; Roberts, 2002; Squire, 2005). Narratives offer researchers a

double vantage point of working closely with people's accounts of their lives and their constructions of identity on the one hand, and on the other, of interrogating the social, cultural, political, and historical contexts in which these stories of life and identity are told and to which they give permission and expression. These three women's narratives instantiate the telling of a specific theoretical story—that is, there are moments when singularity is conferred and/or asserted in people's lives. All three participants are black, middle-class, university-educated women, but they differ in the important respects of national origin and geographical location. Dina is a 35-year-old British woman, born in England, living in London; Bili is a 26-year-old Motswana woman, born in Botswana and living and studying in Durban, South Africa; and Daisy² is a 29-year-old South African woman, living in Durban, South Africa.

Dina self-identifies as "first-generation black British." Dina's grandparents came to the UK from the West Indies in search of a better life. She was raised by her working-class maternal grandparents, with her grandmother playing a critical role in her life. Dina's father was absent in her childhood. As a result, Dina characterizes her relationship with her father as ambivalent, complicated, conflictual, and unreliable and characterized by great angst. One of the significant issues Dina has with her father is that he has married a white woman and has a new interracial nuclear family. Dina's concern is about the effects of this on her father's and her biracial heritage half-sisters' sense of blackness. She is particularly concerned with issues of black authenticity and says she cannot imagine dating a white man. Dina has worked for many years as a medical representative but at the time of the interview she had returned to university, having dropped out as a young student many years ago. Dina is married but separated from her husband and contemplating divorce. She has a 6-year-old son.

Bili is currently completing her masters degree in psychology at the university in Durban, South Africa. She comes from a middle-class, Christian family of five children. Both her parents were teachers. Bili's father, who had passed away by the time of the second interview, was a very important moral figure in her life who taught her a lot about politics and from whom her love for reading comes. Bili completed all her schooling in Botswana. Although her wish was to study in Cardiff, Wales, financial constraints resulted in her enrolling for university studies in neighboring South Africa, where she has been living and studying for the past 7 years.

Daisy is a 29-year-old South African seSotho-speaking woman living in Durban, South Africa. She was born in one of the homelands created by the apartheid South African government, into a rural, working-class background. She was raised in her maternal grandfather's house primarily by her mother and grandfather, although her father did also play a significant role in her childhood. Much later in life, she discovered that this was in fact not her biological father, whom she met for the first time as an adult. Growing up, Daisy excelled academically, but she struggled when she reached university and subsequently dropped out. She left home and worked as a waitron at a

² All participants' names have been changed to protect their identities and ensure anonymity.

fast-food restaurant, later being recruited by a property development company. She has since had many jobs in different parts of the country. In Durban, Daisy discovered her artistic side and started writing poetry. She is now a published South African poet working on her second book. Daisy's work focuses on women's voices and women's experiences. Currently, she works for a prominent arts foundation in South Africa that promotes writing in indigenous languages. She has a 4-year-old daughter and has recently returned to university to complete the degree she started many years ago.

CONFERRAL STORIES

In this section of the chapter, I use Dina's and Bili's stories to explore what happens to their multiple identities when singularity is conferred upon them by (an)Other in the articulation of who they are. In these cases, singularity is conferred by (an)Other in racist ways marking difference and exclusion. Here, I explore the conferral of singularity by two kinds of Other, a distinction referred to by Ratele (2003): the "same other" and the "other other" (p. 238). The first conferral story, that of Dina, I have entitled "Mommy, Mommy, the Black Girl Won." This story tells how singularity is conferred upon Dina by a "white" Other or, in Ratele's terms, "the other other" (Ratele, 2003). Dina's identity as black is defined for her by and in her encounters with whiteness in Britain. Such a conferral of singularity of identity by the "white" other has its roots in racism and is the route of racist practices. The second conferral story is that of Bili: "But There's More to Me than Being Black." This story describes how singularity is conferred upon Bili by "black" Others or, in Ratele's terms, "the same other" (Ratele, 2003). Bili's identity as black is foregrounded for her in and by her encounters with blackness in South Africa. Both stories tell of critical moments when and where singularity is conferred, despite the multiple identities each individual embodies.

"MOMMY, MOMMY, THE BLACK GIRL WON": CONFERRAL OF SINGULARITY BY THE "WHITE" OTHER

Dina's narrative account of an early inscription of herself as a racialized subject and of racism offers insights into *how* people attempt to navigate their multiple identities in the discursive contexts of competing and contested forms of identification. The story is about how Dina's racial identity, *being black*, is foregrounded *for her* while other aspects of her identity are erased in the articulation and imagination of *who she is* by a "white" Other:

I was good at what I did [ballet] until my first dancing competition. I think I was either 7 or 9, I don't remember which, and it was a big stage show, and there was one white girl there—Alexandra, her name was ... they were all very kinda well-to-do, or they seemed like that to me at the time. She helped me, we were warming up together, and we did the competition, and I actually won, and she ran off the stage saying, "*Mommy, Mommy, the black girl won,*" and that was [pause] amongst the first ways of me differentiating myself as a colour or having somebody differentiating me rather than just a thought

that goes to my head. Obviously I can see I am different, obviously I know I am black, obviously ... nobody ever before brought that their difference, my colour difference, in front of me like that, and that was like, "Hold on a minute, I was just warming up with you, you are the only person here who helped me out, but that was on the condition that I stay beneath her," so the fact that I won freaked her out, freaked her out, she ran off the stage crying—and I thought, "Look at that" and just the whole trust thing and how people are towards you starts to change. [italics indicate emphasis added]

Though Dina has at her disposal an array of identifications from which to "choose," there is a moment in which one aspect of her identity, racial identity, is made salient in the articulation of her identity by (an)Other, negating the multiplicity of her identifications. Before we explore further how and why this happens, it is instructive to examine first the intricate intersectionalities of Dina's multiple forms of identity as revealed in her narrative account of dancing ballet.

While there can be no doubt that Dina experiences Alexandra's conferral of singularity as a painful and violent ascription of race that throws her into a singular identification, the avowal of "I was good at what I did (ballet)" is, nonetheless, a powerful subversive performance of blackness. Though Dina describes ballet as a "very classically English white" dance form, as a child she not only enjoys ballet but masters this dance form. In their study, "*Ballet it's too whitey*," Atencio and Wright observe that ballet is often constructed as "the pinnacle of the dance world ... both 'normative' and 'civilising'" (Atencio & Wright, 2009, p. 32). Dina masters ballet with all its associations of whiteness and middle-class European high culture. Dina's assertion "I was good at what I did" and her winning of the ballet competition tells a paradox of stories—stories about a young black girl who is, on one hand, not merely good enough but *better than*. Specifically, Dina is better than Alexandra and the other dancers in the competition. On the other hand, and despite her being "good at what she did," evident in her winning the competition, she is ultimately disqualified culturally and forced to become a paradoxical, oxymoronic subject. Dina is disqualified culturally despite being "better than," pointing to the elusive, impossible character of the "black ballerina."

"Mommy, mommy, the black girl won" is a violent conferral of singularity in Dina's identity, trapping her within blackness. The violence lies in the way in which this conferred identity robs Dina of her multiplicity and, very specifically, of the immediately salient singular identity pronounced in her winning the competition: "the best dancer." At this moment, there is what Philomena Essed considers a kind of radical reductionism, in that Dina is *just black* and *only black!* Dina's own account of what happened to her in this moment offers insight into the contestation of identification and (mis)recognition (Essed, 2009, personal communication). Dina explains, "That was amongst the first ways of me differentiating myself as a colour or having somebody differentiating me". Of course Dina "knows" she's black: "obviously I can see I am different, I know I am black." What makes this moment profound for Dina is the fact that it is the first time (an)other; someone other than herself, someone "white," marks her identity, her difference as black by "bringing my difference, my colour difference in front of me like that," precisely at a moment

when this dimension of her identity is not salient for her. Alexandra's protest of "mommy, mommy, the black girl won" is not only a rude reminder to Dina of her blackness, lest she forget. It also represents the perpetual control and policing of racial boundaries and borders. Fundamentally, it is that "strange phenomenon" that at once constitutes Dina as a racialized *blackened* subject (Althusser, 1970, 174). Dina's early encounters with whiteness in Britain, in Althusser's terms, interpellate or "hail" her into a racialized subjectivity, into blackness (Althusser, 1970). Weedon offers us insight into what has just happened to Dina by suggesting that "the process of recognition by the individual of [herself] as the one addressed by the call to recognition *interpellates* the individual as a subject within ideology. The individual is hailed, and responds with an identification through which [she] is a subject in a double sense. [She] becomes both the agent of ideology in question and subjected to it" (Weedon, 2004, 6; original emphasis). Dina, the racialized subject, is defined and "hailed" by the Other, Alexandra, as well as subjugated to this Other. It is through the process of her identification that her subjectivity is constituted within ideology and she is subjected to the power of the other to identify her as singularly, black.

As a "first-generation black British woman," and unlike her grandparents and parents who she says came to Britain in the historic Windrush, Dina's life story significantly transgresses the often highly policed and contested boundaries of race, class, and culture. Dina's life story also "indicate[s] the ways the combination of [her] race, class, generation, and education disposed [her] toward certain practices and aesthetics" (Mahon, 2000, p. 294). Through her mastery of ballet, Dina extends her range of identifications and is able to hold multiple and often competing forms of identity. However, this fluid multiplicity is shattered by the moment in which Alexandra undermines Dina's identity as the best ballet dancer and foregrounds her racial identity. As Mercer observes, "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (Mercer, 1990, cited in Weedon, 2004, p. 1). Alexandra casts "doubt and uncertainty" on Dina's otherwise sutured multiple identities by foregrounding Dina's blackness, fixing her into singularity.

What makes this ballet story instructive about how people navigate multiple identities when their identities are conferred by the Other is that it is about precisely a moment where "race" should not be the primary articulation of identity. The performance of ballet makes movements in space and accomplishment of specific types of movements, such as pirouettes and arabesques, markers of a good dancer. The story, however, revisits a moment where Dina's race is called to the surface to take prominence over all her other identities and social locations. In this moment, Dina is nothing more than a *black girl* who won the ballet competition when she shouldn't have because *she is black* and ballet is "white" territory.

"BUT THERE'S MORE TO ME THAN BEING BLACK": CONFERRAL OF SINGULARITY BY THE "BLACK" OTHER

There are parallels with Dina's narrative in Bili's narrative of ascribed racial positioning—with one critical difference: in Bili's experience, it is the same Other

that confers this identity (Ratele, 2003). The foregrounding of Bili's identity as *black* by other black people ensues from her movements across geographical and national borders from Botswana to South Africa; from what she considers "nonracialism" to "racialisation"; from Gorra's "invisibility" to "visibility" as her embodied identity gains particular political and racialized signification in South Africa (Gorra, 1995). For Bili, her racial identity is made dominant for her, for the first time, by other black South Africans foreclosing all her other legitimate plural identifications.

To understand Bili's interpellation into racialized subjectivity in South Africa, we have to consider Bili's shifting multiple identifications across place. In Botswana, according to Bili, her identity and identifications are unmarked by race. Let's explore the effects of thus foreclosing race as the dominant marker of identity in the interview excerpt below:

[Having to define oneself as black]: that was such a foreign concept for me that was SO foreign when I was at home [Botswana] being black I know I am this skin colour but it doesn't come into my definition of how I am. Like, if somebody was to ask me, you know, "Describe Bili," black wouldn't necessarily come into it; *being female*, maybe, and *my personality traits*—you know, I am an . . . extrovert . . . and [that] . . . I've got a very strong character, you know, I'm very forceful in nature, and you know, those sort of things, and maybe *where I come from*, the *family* and stuff like that, but being black in Botswana would have not come up as an issue not at all. [Capitals signify Bili's verbal emphases, italics signify added emphases.]

In Botswana, Bili maintains that her individual identity is *not* "predicated on . . . racial difference from most of the people around" (Gorra, 1995, p. 434). Because the majority of people in Botswana are black, there is no existential, psychological, or political reason to define oneself as primarily black. In this way, racial identity is rendered invisible and discursively disavowed as a form of individual and national identification and difference in the interview. Bili constructs both Botswana and her forms of identity in Botswana as fundamentally "un-raced"—or, better yet, as "race free." In fact, Bili actively resists any kind of racialization or race-talk, maintaining herself and Botswana as "beyond race," hence constructing race as "not there." Bili herself suggests that she does not think of herself and/or others in racial terms. She tells me that in Botswana "there was no 'I'm black.' I promise you, being black and being whatever was the *last* thing in our minds, the *very*, very last thing" (Transcript; italicization signifies Bili's emphasis). Race and racial identification in Botswana are constructed as "foreign," which opens up discursive and productive spaces for identification along "other axes of stratification and 'difference'" (Omi, 2001, p. 254).

Bili frames her identity as multiple: within discourses of gender as a woman; along intrapsychic realities of her "personality traits"; in relation to narratives of belonging to a family and coming from a particular place. In this way, the foreclosure of race as a salient marker of identity in the national imagination of Botswana allows Bili to articulate who she is as both positional and plural (Hall, 1993). A move beyond the hegemony of race "releases" Bili from the clutches of racial essentialism,

providing her discursive spaces in which to imagine and construct her identity within the frame of multiplicity.

“Being black” as a form of personal identification only “comes up” for Bili when she moves to South Africa, a highly and persistently racialized society with its recent history of legalized forms of racial oppression. It is in South Africa that Bili’s identity as black is foregrounded. Blackness is conferred upon her and she is forced to construct herself first and foremost as black before any other form of identification and difference. Living in South Africa for over 7 years now, her embodied identity is charged with particular political and racialized meaning. In South Africa, Bili *learns* that she is black, and that her blackness is primary. While Bili attempts to navigate the social context through her other forms of multiple identifications, these are rendered invisible in the Other’s articulation of her identity as singularly black. Hall’s thinking about what it means to call Jamaica a black society, when Jamaicans themselves never thought or spoke of themselves as “black,” helps us in our attempts to make sense of what happens to Bili in South Africa: “[t]he fact is, ‘black’ has never been just there either. It has always been an unstable identity, psychically, culturally, and politically. It, too, is a narrative, a story, a history. Something constructed, told, spoken, not simply found . . . Black is an identity which had to be learned and [can] only be learned in a certain moment” (Hall, 1987; cited in Scott, 1992, p. 15). What is rendered invisible in both Jamaica and Botswana in the ostensibly nonracialized present, and in Bili’s personal narrative, is history. Although different in the specifics of Jamaica’s history of colonialism and slavery, Botswana too was a British colony, subjugated in “racial” terms.

Bili suggests that coming to South Africa was a “rude awakening” for how she was to define her(self) and be defined by others. Omi asks the following question: “[w]hat transformations in racial self-identity take place as immigrants move from a society organized around one concept of race to a new society with a different mode of conceptualization?” (Omi, 2001, p. 247). The following interview exchange reveals what happens to Bili’s self-definition and multiplicity when her racial identity is foregrounded for her by other black South Africans in their articulation of her identity:

BILI: “And then I came to South Africa...”

SIYANDA: [laughs]

BILI: “... and then I got a rude awakening . . . It was, you know, it was very, very interesting coming to South Africa . . . where if you are not black, *decide on who you are because you can’t fit into the society; if you are not of a particular race, choose a category where you are going to fit into* . . . so it was very, very difficult, and imagine one individual trying to stand against something that has been embedded for—”

SIYANDA: “Years.”

BILI: “More than 50 years . . . [interracial relationships in Botswana were] okay, and then you come to South Africa: ‘Aaahh, she’s walking with a white guy! There’s something wrong with her’ and coming here and having to, you know, say who you are, having to resort to saying, ‘I’m black’ was— I was

like, *no, there's more to me than what you see on the outside*. You know, I wanted to, I was used to having my personality attributes—"

SIYANDA: "Being the thing..."

BILI: "Out there, rather my being black. So coming here, and it was very hard because it was not only other race groupings saying, 'Who are you?' *It was also the blacks saying to me, 'Who—*"

BOTH: "... *are you?*"

(ITALICS indicate added emphasis)

When in South Africa, Bili is "rudely awoken" to how much South Africa remains a rigidly racialized society. To belong in South Africa you have to be classified into its racial categories— "[Y]ou have to decide what race you are and where you fit in"—because, as Bili observes, one cannot fit into South African society if not "neatly" categorized into one of the historically constructed racial categories. Wald argues that "racial identities have been—and continue to be—important sites of negotiation and struggle in a society that vests enormous power in the fictions of race and in the notion of stable embodied difference" (Wald, 2000, p. viii). Bili, for the first time, has to, as she suggests, "resort to saying 'I'm black.'" For the first time, Bili's racial identity is made salient as she is forced to think of and define her(self) primarily in terms of her blackness, backgrounding her other multiple identifications. As with Dina, there is a conferral of the singularity of race as Bili is interpellated or "hailed" into a racialized subjectivity, into blackness, despite her attempts at resistance and her assertion that she is "more than just black."

The identity questions posed to Bili by black South Africans—"Who are you?" "Why don't you behave black (enough)?"—reveal interesting intricacies. Bili's attempts at resisting the conferral of a racial identity above other aspects of her identifications allows us to examine the struggle for recognition between the essentialism of identity in the singular and the counter-move of identities in the plural. Bili protests that there's *more* to her than her blackness, *more* to her than being black. "There's more to me than what you see on the outside" is Bili's attempt at resisting the violent conferral of racial singularity and the erasure of her multiplicity in the imagination of the black South African other.

Bili experiences a double conflictual articulation of her identity by the black other: she is defined as primarily black but at the same time disqualified as black. In the following interview excerpt Bili eloquently captures this double, yet shifting, articulation of her identity as conferred on her by the other:

I supposedly don't know what behaving black is, you know, because I'm doing things that I know how to do from my family and my family is BLACK, you know. . . so being told that "You are not black—the music that you listen to, how you do things, you know." I was very like, "Okay, so what do you want me to do? You know, how do you want me to do it?" And then knowing that I'm also NOT of a different skin colour, it was very . . . it was very interesting 'cause I know I have written somewhere that "*I have never felt so black and yet not so black at the same time as I have in South Africa,*" because I have been, I have been called, because, "You are black. Behave black." But then, "You don't

behave black.” *So I have been qualified as black but then disqualified at the same time, which—you know, at first it used to infuriate me. It used to make me really mad. But now, it’s just like, you know what? It’s fine. It’s the way the society works. It’s, you know, it’s HOW, unfortunately, it’s how the society has been moulded.* [Capitals indicate Bili’s emphasis, italics indicate added emphasis.]

Like Dina, at the moment when singularity is conferred in the Other’s articulation of her identity, Bili is robbed of multiple, different forms of identifications and difference as her blackness is made overwhelmingly salient. However, unlike Dina’s experience of the conferral of singularity from encounters with whiteness in Britain, Bili’s interpellation into racialized subjectivity is articulated in relation to *blackness* in South Africa, although this blackness is itself relationally constructed in relation to whiteness in South Africa. The double articulation of Bili’s identity by other black South Africans throws her into a paradoxical subjectivity, at once defined as primarily black, while at the same time relegated as “not really black” or, more instructively as “not black like us.” In South Africa, Bili is primarily overtly and discursively identified by *black* South Africans as “being black,” but this identity operates relationally against whiteness. She is defined as *black* because she is *not white*. However, Bili is also, at the same time, denied blackness as she dares cross multiple lines, transgressing racial boundaries and borders as well as transgressing the rhetoric and discourse of black “authenticity” (Mahon, 2000; Smith, 1998). She is disapprovingly gazed upon when she transgresses racial territory by happily “walking with a white guy,” and the ideological charge laid against her is that “there’s something wrong with her.” Bili’s cost for her transgressing racial borders and boundaries is that the very same blackness conferred on her is constructed as “inauthentic.” The way Bili behaves and the kind of music she listens to further render her blackness as “not really black.”

Bili’s “not behaving black enough” is also entangled with her other salient social identity as a “foreigner” in South Africa. The double articulation of Bili’s identity as “black” and “yet not really black” also brings into focus the intersections between race and nationality. Though Bili is black in the sense that she inhabits a similar body to black South Africans, she is, however, also a Motswana, not like them, and her nationality and language relegates her to the position of “foreigner,” “the Other,” and “the outsider.” Bili illustrates the tension and competition for recognition in the external articulation of her identity between race and nationality: “[when in South Africa] if you are black, say you are black and start behaving black so that I can rejoice with you, but at the centre remember that you’re a black foreigner, so you’re not quite part of us. You do things differently and you are here to take our opportunities, so, you know, and remain in that, in that unbalance, we don’t want you to get too comfortable in our country.” “Not being black enough” is operating, Bili’s story suggests, as a way of representing hierarchized national difference without speaking it, at a time, moreover, when South African concerns about migrants from other African countries and those migrants’ greater employability were intense (Hassim, Kupe, & Worby, 2008; Wa Kabwe-Segatti & Landau, 2008).

Again, although in quite different ways to Dina's experience, Bili's story alerts us to the fact that the singularity of black identity is asserted precisely when this identity intersects with and is in contestation with other cultural and national identifications. At the moment of interpellation, Bili's other aspects of (her)self are rendered invisible; however, they still operate to inflect the character of her racialization, turning it in this case into a "failed" racialization. Bili's story thus demonstrates what may happen to multiplicity when singularity in identity is conferred from the outside by the same Other, who imparts yet withholds singularity at the same time.

RESISTANCE STORIES OF ASSERTING SINGULARITY

I have so far explored what happens to multiplicity when others confer singularity in the articulation of an individual's identity. I now turn my attention to what happens to the multiplicity of identities when singularity is asserted by and for the individual for the purposes of particular personal, moral, and political gains. I call these kinds of stories "resistance stories." Such stories are about discursive moments when individuals themselves assert singularity in their own identities for both psychological and political struggles. We return to Dina's life story to (1) examine the moments and motivations when the individual personally foregrounds and privileges, from a variety of possible identifications, only one form of his or her identity and (2) explore the consequences of strategically making one aspect of identity dominant over other forms of identification and difference.

"THERE'S US AND THERE'S THEM": ASSERTION OF SINGULARITY OVER MULTIPLICITY

One of the most dominant narratives of blackness, one that stubbornly refuses to be erased, ties the definition of what it means to be black to the discourses and histories of oppression, colonialism, and slavery (Asante, 2003; Mama, 1995; Manganyi, 1973; Ratele, 2003; Shelby, 2005; Verharen, 2002). Such a meta-narrative of blackness tends to be unremittingly and ideologically invoked and (re)produced, particularly within Afrocentric scholarship, by people positioning themselves as "Africans" not only by virtue of living on the continent of Africa, but also significantly by those in the diaspora throughout the world, most notably in the United States. In the groundbreaking book *Beyond the Masks*, Amina Mama suggests that blackness seems synonymous with "struggle," a black struggle for autonomy, for freedom, and for self-definition (Mama, 1995). Blackness, for the South African biographer and psychologist Manganyi, is defined by a narrative of suffering and exploitation, and he suggests that this shared experience becomes part of their "consciousness" (Manganyi, 1973, p. 19). However, I argue that the meta-narrative that ties blackness to oppression mutually homogenizes and essentializes both black and white identities by "locking" blackness into the position of victimhood, and by fixing whiteness into the position of eternal oppressor. This notion of a totalizing singular blackness grounded in essentialized unity and exclusively tied to the history of black oppression seems to present serious theoretical and political shortcomings

(Gilroy, 1992). On the one hand, the meta-narrative of blackness as tied to discourses of oppression robs black subjects of agency or potentially new ways of being black, imagining or performing blackness (Mama, 1995; Ratele, 2003). On the other hand, this meta-narrative constructs blackness as “a trope of ethics” representing “all good” and as having the upper hand through second-hand moral superiority precisely because of the history of oppression to which blackness has been subjected (Asante, 2003, p. 2). The nuances of this debate are beyond the scope of this chapter; what is crucial for our purposes here are the moments when, and for what particular struggles, individuals strategically invoke this meta-narrative and gather around its calls for personal identification and political solidarity.

Let’s now consider how, in her resistance to white supremacy and racism, Dina mobilizes around a singular notion of blackness. The critical issue here is: what are identity effects of ascribing, for oneself, singularity in one’s own articulation of identity at the expense of other forms of identification and difference? Dina uses a strategically essentialized and singular notion of blackness in confronting the history of oppression and racism to which *all* black people of the world have been subjected (Shelby, 2005). Here, Dina uses the pronoun “us” as a way of identifying herself in Hall’s (1996) terms, with all other black people. As Ratele suggests, presenting “a united front, for unity at all costs” creates a kind of solidarity allowing all black people to stand together as one *singular* group (Ratele, 2003, p. 238):

DINA: “And then you had a whole generation of black British that aren’t grateful anymore and watching ‘Roots.’ Anybody who watched ‘Roots’ back in the day ended up with an attitude. That film revolutionized everything. It’s like, ‘THEY DID WHAT TO US?’”

SIYANDA: [Laughs]

DINA: “*Everybody* who was black, I don’t care where you come from, now it’s an *us*, there’s *us* and there’s them.”

BOTH: [laughing out loud]

[CAPITALS indicate Dina’s verbal emphasis, italics indicate author’s emphasis.]

It is in the face of racial oppression visually revealed in the film *Roots* that Dina uses the notion of a singular black identity of a historically oppressed group as a psychological strategy to define herself and make intimate connections with particular others. It is the realization and articulation of “what *they* did to us” that cries out and demands an essentialized, homogenized, strategically (though not grammatically) singular “*us*,” which relationally fixes and objectifies the “*them*.” Invoking the notion of black solidarity and singularity erases differences within the group that would otherwise fracture such unity. Dina *manufactures* this unity and solidarity on behalf of and between black people (Gilroy, 1995). She does this regardless of what Riley calls “individual temporalities” lived through class, nationality and ethnicity, gender and sexuality (Riley, 1988). Indeed, Dina does not care where you come from, who you are, whether you are female or male, homosexual or heterosexual, working class or middle class, citizen or refugee—the most salient identity marker is

your *blackness*. At the moment of Dina's articulation of the "us," what is important is your cooption into this imagined historically marginal community with a history of oppression and not individual particularity. What is less crucial here is the idiosyncratic "I" that must give way to the "us" cast in sameness and singularity in response to the fixed Other, the *white* "them" out there. Ratele suggests that such a deployment of "we" and "us" demonstrates a wish for an imagined community with an imagined shared history:

'We' [and 'us'] is always an indication of, and often, a wish for unity, rather than an accomplished fact. There is a certain pull to claim a commonality when one writes or speaks—saying we feel this or that, this is *our* heritage, this is how we do it, it comes down to *us*. But often the speaker or writer cannot really know how his or her auditors feel, how a particular reader stands in relation to such and such an historical event, let alone what she or he inherits ... and whether indeed the person wants to be part of the assumed group. Rather, words are always intended to do something . . . one speaks or writes to cultivate a community, a way of looking at society and history. One writes [or speaks] not merely to say something about oneself, but to produce an 'us' ... (Ratele, 2003, pp. 247–248: emphasis added)

Interrogating Dina's production of an "us," we can reiterate Dina's reasons for invoking the notion of racial singularity and homogeneity. It is the encounter with white racism and the realization of, as Shelby argues, "the black experience of unjust treatment and discrimination [that helps] create strong bonds of identification" (Shelby, 2005, p. 1). Invoking black singularity as a political strategy to counter racial oppression is a way to "initiate a powerful political language of agency, personhood, self, and sameness," writes Gilroy, that is "congruent with demands for racial emancipation, citizenship and autonomy" (Gilroy, 1995, p. 19). Through strategically activating the notion of a universally singular and homogenized black identity, or what I have referred to as a meta-narrative of blackness, Dina is able, even if only for a particular moment, to connect herself and all black people of the world together in their quest for identification and unity against all forms of racial oppression. This articulation of a homogenous black identity I term *improvised solidarity or identification*. It transcends all boundaries and borders between black peoples of the world, whether these boundaries are real or imagined, whether these borders are lived out differently or similarly across class, gender and sexuality, nationality and ethnicity. De la Rey and colleagues defend assertions of essentialized black subjectivity like Dina's, arguing that while it is important to "historicise, acknowledge, and celebrate our multiple identities, it is equally important to acknowledge the political gains that 'totalising discourses' like black nationalism have been able to effect. We need to understand the way in which speaking from an essentialised standpoint can be a site of political power as well" (De la Rey et al., 1997, p. 21). But the moment Dina's narrative produces an "us," racial solidarity is forged where blackness is the *only* critical identity and signifier, foreclosing all forms of identification and difference within and between blackness that would otherwise fracture and divide the collective black "us."

The notion of manufactured singularity in black identity effectively constructs racial connections and identifications from heterogeneity and fragmentation by simultaneously engineering racial sameness and backgrounding any form of individual or smaller-scale collective particularity or difference produced by the entangled intersectionalities between race and class, gender and sexuality, nationality and ethnicity. Dina's assertion of an essentialized and singular black "us" is a form of resistance; as de la Rey and colleagues instructively suggest, "[p]art of the power of our resistance [against racial domination] lay in our ability to go beyond difference and focus on commonality" (De la Rey et al., 1997, p. 22).

While Dina's production of the singular, essentialized black "us" is a powerful political strategy, it also has implications for subjectivity, particularly "the inherent ambiguities and contradictions that exist when people inhabit a space of multiplicity" (de la Rey et al., 1997, p. 22). In the face of white racism and racial oppression, Dina strategically asserts singularity by and for herself, connecting herself to *all* other black people. At this particular moment, she constructs her identity for herself, as primarily black, in relation to whiteness and white forms of subjugation. Perhaps the conferral of "black identity" by the same Other as illustrated in Bili's story entails a similar inclusionary impetus, one that is fractured both by the simultaneous assertion of difference in cultural and national terms, and by the subject's own resistant assertion of multiple identifications.

UNDERSTATED TENSIONS: NEVER QUITE SINGULAR

What happens next in Dina's story makes it very clear that such constructions of singularity are tentative and strategically improvised, revealing the ambiguities and contradictions in her articulation of identity as her racial and national subjectivities combine and compete for signification. Extending the narrative excerpt above opens up a critical space to interrogate the politics and contradictions in multiplicity. While Dina racially asserts singularity as black, she also complicates her identity by asserting her particularity as *West Indian* black:

[Being] black British, it's really hard to have a sense of the identity, [but] to be *West Indian black British*, we don't have our own language, we don't have our own names, there's not much that we really have . . . All you've [I, the interviewer] got is your customs that you have inherited from your parents . . . You know, you could say where your name comes from, and this part from here, and this tribe is related to this . . . We don't get seen by the black African people over here as being black African, and because, because we're kinda looked down on 'cause *we were just like the slaves* that got cast off to the West Indies, and now we are nobody. We just got slave names, no sense of education. The people, the black West Indians people coming over here, didn't come here for an education. They weren't sent here to come and study. The parents came here because there was no job opportunities where they were, so you didn't have the *crème de la crème* of West Indian people coming over here. So we are not starting at the same start-point. So even though being black gets you stigmatised here, and you are a minority here, *being black West Indian means not only are you a minority, you are minority of no status* . . .

By extending Dina's narrative account of (her) blackness, ambiguities, nuances, and contradictions begin to show. De le Rey and colleagues remind us that "identity is nothing if not contradictory" (De la Rey et al., 1997, p. 22). In confronting white racism, Dina appeals to a singular, essentialized and homogenous notion of blackness that can however be thought of as improvised identification and solidarity. It is an articulatory practice; it is socially manufactured specifically as strategic resistance against white domination. Dina's own "individual temporalities," as Riley describes them, and her intersectionality between "race" and nationality fractures and complicates her improvised racial identification with the universal identity "black" (Riley, 1988). Faced with her particular history as a descendant of West Indian parents, Dina constructs her identity as specifically *West Indian-black-British*. By hyphenating her identity in this way, Dina's articulation of who she is reveals the complicated and entangled networks between "race," nationality, and historical patterns of colonization.

Dina narrates an emotional West Indian story that I call "Once Were Slaves³," which tells of different struggles shaping the multiple experience of what it means to be black. "Once Were Slaves" articulates different ways of being black in relation to place, specifically nationality, and reveals multiplicities or what Ratele refers to as *blacknesses*: being black British; being black West Indian; and being black African (Ratele, 1998). This story is about the multiple and different experiences and meanings of diasporic blackness relative to African blackness. Fundamentally, "Once Were Slaves" is a psychological story because it is about identity and subjectivity and about Dina's own intra-individual multiplicities.. It tells how Dina's multiple identities are the amalgamation of both her racial and national identities. Such a combination, Mama suggests, "contests the dualistic world order which deems blackness [and West Indian-ness] and British-ness to be mutually exclusive" (Mama, 1995, p. 114). Dina's story is more about "the logic of coupling," as Hall (1993) argues, "than the logic of a binary opposition" (p. 110). It is about "the struggle ... to replace the 'or' with the potentiality or the possibility of an 'and.'" Reading this story from the theoretical view of identity as positional, as hybrid, and as multiple (Hall, 1993, 1996; Omi, 2001), Dina is at once black *and* British *and* West Indian. Dina is black, connecting her to histories and centuries of black oppression, and she is also black British, which she suggests is "really hard to have a sense of the identity" of, and she is also West Indian black British, which "*means not only [is she] a minority [but she's] a minority of no status.*"

Although Dina strategically and psychologically asserts her blackness as primary, her identity as black British West Indian shows us that the singularity she is asserting is always in tension with other dimensions of her identity. This is what multiplicity, rather than duality, means. People do not have to and cannot choose to inhabit only one context. So, though singularity can be conferred by others and can be asserted

³ This naming of the story plays on the title of the 1994 film by Lee Tamahori, *Once Were Warriors*, about a Maori-origin New Zealand family, exploring themes of violence and gendered identities against the backdrop of colonial history.

by people themselves, the other multiple forms of identities they inhabit cannot be simply or completely erased.

AIN'T I A WOMAN? CONTESTATIONS OF RACE AND GENDER

Finally, we will explore a story in which two ideologically laden identities compete for prominence in an individual account of identity: “race” and gender. Appiah and Gates recognize that “it is not surprising that important events occur in the landscape of identity when race and gender compete for and combine in a single body” (Appiah & Gates, 1995, p. 4). The political stakes are high when the assertion of singularity entails the foregrounding of either “race” or gender. For a long time, politics within the worlds of academia, civil rights, and even some women’s movements considered “race,” rather than gender, as the most salient and primary form of identification for black women (Gay & Tate, 1998; hooks, 1982; Zinn & Dill, 1996). bell hooks suggests that the privileging of race over gender results from an erroneous view that does not “see ‘womanhood’ as an important aspect of [black women’s] identity. Racist, sexist socialization [has] conditioned [black women] to devalue [their] femaleness and to regard race as the only relevant label of identification.” Race is made the dominant form of identification and difference, and racism “the harsher, more brutal reality” of oppression and exploitation (hooks, 1982, p. 1). Such a binary opposition constructs blackness and womanhood as mutually exclusive rather than seeing these structures of identity as mutually reinforcing and a result “puts black women in [an untenable] position of having to choose between supporting the interests of blacks or those of women” (Gay & Tate, 1998, p. 170).

However, critical feminist work, in its deployment of the concept of intersectionality, considers identity and subjectivity “a site of contested negotiations” at the entangled interconnections between race, gender, sexuality, class, nationality, and ethnicity (Smith, 1998, p. 90). Brah and Phoenix regard “the concept of ‘intersectionality’ as signifying the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation—economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential—intersect ... different dimensions of social life cannot be separated out into discrete and pure strands” (Brah & Phoenix, 2004, p. 76). This way of thinking about identity and subjectivity demands that we think of race and gender as mutually shaping each other and of “each individual [as bearing] multiple, often competing, allegiances” (Gay & Tate, 1998, 171; Omi, 2001). Yet, there are moments when, from a range of multiple forms of identification, only certain aspects of identity seem to be foregrounded, moments when either racial or gendered identity becomes primary.

Let’s consider what happens for Daisy, a black South African woman, when her racial and gendered identities compete for dominance in her story. We join the story in the last few minutes of a very long interview focused primarily on her story of growing up black in South Africa. Daisy and I are talking about the collection of poems by South African women she has published. Talking about the fact that she published a book written by and about women, Daisy and I explore which aspect of

her identity, being black or being a woman, is most important or salient in her definition and positioning of herself:

"I think woman, hey! Absolutely. Okay the book." When I began, when I started with the project, I was specifically looking at young black South African women because, one assumed—well, I came from the assumption that—okay, black women probably go, "Of course, now ... you're looking at being BLACK now" and, but I think for me, then it . . . became BEYOND being black . . . and more about being a woman, because some of the group members, and where we've also performed before, it has not only TOUCHED, ah, or we haven't just, ah . . . reached out to BLACK women, but we have reached out [to] women of, from all spectrum . . . across, you know, and *so first and foremost I see myself, I guess first and foremost I would see myself more as a woman than a black woman*, and therefore when I address it, I look at it more as *women than black women* because some of the—ah, I mean, some of the people that we also have on our forums, it's white women who probably who go through the same STUFF, you know . . . [Capitals indicate Daisy's verbal emphasis, italics indicate emphasis added.]

Daisy's multiple identities as a black woman combine both her gendered and racial subjectivities. However, here Daisy constructs and sees herself "more as a woman than a black woman." Despite her dual location within race and gender, Daisy purposefully foregrounds for herself gender over race as the most salient form of her identification and difference. There is a temptation to suggest that Daisy's assertion of singularity lived through gendered identity necessarily challenges the concept of "intersectionality" and takes us back to a "duality polarity" of identity, hence making womanhood and blackness mutually exclusive realities (de le Rey et al, 1997, p. 22). However, I suggest that this is not necessarily the case. Understanding how and why Daisy foregrounds gender is useful here. Understanding "how different categories are constituted, transformed, and given meaning in dynamic engagement with each other ... is precisely what intersectionality is about" (Omi, 2001, p. 256). As a woman, Daisy privileges her gender over her racial identity because of the "group's distinctive experiences and ... the needs ... following from those experiences" (Nicholson, 2008, p. 2). In the following excerpt, Daisy narrates what it means to be a woman focusing specifically on, as she puts it, the "special challenges" that are unique to the identity of being a woman. Daisy narrates a story about sexual victimization at the age of 7, which forges solidarity with all women across different axes of fragmentation and temporalities. It is in the context of this narrative that Daisy constructs her gender as the most salient aspect of her identification and difference:

Being a woman also comes with its OWN special challenges, and what an honour it is to be able to come up with a way to give voice to . . . or give a platform for voices of . . . women . . . We all know the challenges that, you know, that are faced by, by young women, and I'll tell you, ah, now just a quick thing . . . One of poems that I've written, ah, I [chuckles] . . . It's a funny thing. When I was growing up [brief pause]—my childhood is a little bit blurry sometimes and, and I think for various reasons that you block certain

things that happen that are not so great, so you end up just placing a block on it . . .⁴ These are, as a woman, as a young woman, I'm 29 years old, and I'm SITTING with this THING . . . AND it's here. It AFFECTS, whatever, my sexuality, how I approach sex . . . and it was, it was IN this platform that I was able to jot it down when I heard other stories—but not only just write it down for me, but to be able say it out loud, you know . . . I'm fine with it because I already tackled it in my writing, and when I voiced it out to, to other women also, so that's really [brief pause] . . . My personal experiences . . . I think they influence me to just solely look at women, young women, and because of our experiences, some of the challenges that come along with growing up . . . but to be able to lay it on the table and HAVE a platform for it—wow, you know . . . Our [women's] issues are perhaps different from [brief pause], ah, men's issues, men's issues, and therefore we not even isolating, but we saying, "Can we raise a level where we CAN talk as women?" because we really do have all sorts of, ah, you know, ah, experiences that we go through, and to be able to speak about it now and not feel ashamed or shy or, you know, because these things happen [brief pause], and that's life and ja. [Capitals indicate Daisy's verbal emphasis.]

There are many issues to pursue embedded in the story that Daisy tells of her sexual abuse. We could, for instance, focus on the healing power of story(ing) experience. For Daisy, it was narrating in writing this traumatic experience that enabled her to deal with, "tackle," and overcome it. We could also examine how stories gather people around them, how stories invite witness to our lives, how stories are about a search for a community of listeners or, as Plummer argues, that the production and consumption of sexual stories are in fact "community building" or are about "the making of a new kind of community of support" (Plummer, 1995, pp. 43, 45). Daisy's sexual abuse story is significantly about "identity politics," about what connects and constructs all women as a group with a shared identity constitutively different from men's. Black women are "doubly bound," with multiple identities, raced as much as they are gendered (Gay & Tate, 1998). Nonetheless, as Daisy's story shows, in the context of gendered relations, sometimes gender is more foregrounded than blackness. bell hooks captures the nuances and intersectionalities of race and gender in and for black women's lives when she says that "[u]ntil black people redefine in a non-sexist revolutionary way the terms of our liberation, black women and men will always be confronted with the issue of whether supporting feminist efforts to end sexism is inimical to interests as a people" (hooks, 1998, cited in Gay & Tate, 1998, pp. 169–170).

CONCLUSION

Taking for granted the multiple identities each individual inhabits opens a critical space for thinking about the moments when and where singularity is sought and realized, in the perceptions and projections of others and sometimes in moments

⁴ The specifics of Daisy's rape story are purposefully edited out here for ethical reasons.

when we ourselves assert certain aspects of ourselves as most dominant and salient. Wald's suggestion that people have enormous "investments in identity," both in the identity of others and their own, offers us insights into the motivation for conferring identities upon others and asserting particular kinds of identities for oneself (Wald, 2000, p. ix). I argue that though people inhabit multiple identities, there are, however, particular situations, moments, and contexts where certain aspects of identity are made more dominant than others in the articulation of who we are. "Racial identity" is such an aspect that remains a dominant marker for and source of identification and of difference. Knowles claims that "[r]ace ... operate[s] on the surface and in deep structures of our world. Intricately woven into the social landscapes in which we live, race is all around us; a part of who we are and how we operate. It is *outside* on our streets and *inside* ourselves. It is part of the way the world operates. It couldn't be closer to home or further away" (Knowles, 2003, p. 1). Analyzing narratives about racial identity, and blackness in particular, demonstrates how singularity is and can be conferred in racist ways by an (Other). Singularity of identity as primarily black is violently conferred upon Dina in her encounters with whiteness, precisely at the moment in which her blackness is *not* salient and at the point at which she crosses cultural boundaries of identity to inhabit the world of "white" ballet. She is in this moment "more than just black"; she is the best dancer in the competition. It is in fact this competing identification that paradoxically constructs her identity as singular, the reduction of her identity to "black." Conversely, Dina asserts and appropriates a singular black identity for herself in her talk about the history of racist and colonial oppression, linking herself across boundaries to connect and identify with all other black people. In this narrative moment, Dina strategically essentializes herself as "black."

The conferral of singular identity on Bili by the same-Other is more complex in the ways in which it articulates racism and conceals multiplicities. The attempt by her fellow students to define her as "black" serves to include her as part of their own imagined community, reflecting a similar impetus as Dina's identification. However, this identity is ambivalently conferred as she is simultaneously identified as "not black enough," different in the important respects of culture and national identification, which are highly politically loaded identities in the xenophobic context of South Africa. It is the ways in which she is *not* black that seem to provoke the assertion of her blackness by others. Bili herself also rejects this reduction of her identity, articulating multiple lines of identification and asserting her individual particularity.

Dina likewise fractures her own presentation of herself as "black" by drawing subtle lines between and across multiple ways of being black that allude to temporal or historical shifts, particularly with reference to the iconic original status of Africa in the imagining of "blackness," and to contemporary tensions of national and cultural identifications. The assertion of singular black identity for herself eventually gives way to a hyphenated concatenation of identities.

Daisy's story illustrates the confluence and contestations of two ideologically significant identifications: "race" and gender. Despite the fact that the narrative context focused on black identity, Daisy asserts her gendered identity as more salient in the story of who she is, explicitly connecting her experiences as a woman with

women who are “white.” It is pertinent that this connection is made by Daisy with reference to gender-based violence, perhaps in her personal story overriding more abstract histories of racial oppression despite growing up in apartheid South Africa. However, this assertion that she defines herself first and foremost *as a woman* is made against the assumed backdrop of her black identity, going beyond rather than erasing this dimension of herself.

In exploring the politics and psychology of conferring and asserting singularity, I engage with questions of by whom, for whom, when, and why singularity is sought and realized. Most importantly, the chapter argues that there is always tension in the conferral and assertion of singularity and that, paradoxically, this focus highlights the inevitable multiplicity of identities. People always inhabit more than one context (Mama, 1995); identities are always intersecting and producing complicated and entangled forms of identification and difference. Statements conferring and asserting singularity such as, “You are just black” or “I am more black,” are always in tension with unstated or absent traces of multiple contesting identifications, as it is impossible to be “just black” at any given moment—we are always more!

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Email: grahame.hayes@gmail.com

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EDITORIAL ADDRESS**PINS**

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DANGEROUS LIAISONS: A DIALOGUE ABOUT TIES THAT BIND AND LINES THAT DIVIDE

Jill Bradbury
Department of Psychology
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

Siyanda Ndlovu¹

Abstract.

This article offers a dialogical exploration of “race” and national identity. The argument is developed along three trajectories: 1) theoretical, drawing on the insights of Anderson, Appiah, Gilroy, Mama, Nussbaum, Ratele and others; 2) empirical, drawing on narrative interviews with black participants of different national origin, and on practical development work with South African youth; 3) personal, reflecting dynamism and oscillation in our individual positions in dialogue with one another. Bradbury’s initial position that in a society like South Africa, the “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983) of the nation may serve to undercut divisions based on “race” (and class), is challenged by the emergence of xenophobic difference. Ndlovu’s initial position that black identity is fragmented and multiple, is challenged by the possibilities for identifications based on “race” to overcome lines of difference drawn by national or other dimensions of identity. By juxtaposing our positions, we argue that neither “race” nor national identity can be simply erased and that, although there are both theoretical difficulties and political dangers entailed in these identifications, fluid and contingent interpretations may offer emancipatory possibilities.

Keywords.

Identity, race, nationality, cosmopolitanism, blackness, xenophobia, imagined communities

CONTEXTUALISING THE CONVERSATION.

This article is based on a paper first written away from home, for a British audience and presented at a seminar at the Manchester Metropolitan University in 2009. We wrote it “together” in the sense that although we wrote different parts of the paper independently, we wrote most of it in the same space, across a kitchen table from one another and interspersed our writing with much talk, dialogue that shifted and destabilized our positions rather than making them more certain. Broadly speaking, these shifts relate to questions of strategic essentialism and fragmentation in the

¹ Siyanda Ndlovu died on 5 April 2010, just after his 28th birthday (See **PINS 39**, 54-55, 2010).

articulation of our identities; for Bradbury, from the idea of national identity as unifying, to increasing fragmentation and uncertainty; for Ndlovu, from multiplicity to strategic essentialism or singularity in black identity.

We subsequently presented a version of this work at the Centre for Critical Research in Race and Identity at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. In the process of this rewriting, we had further conversations across a different table overlooking our hometown of Durban. These conversations included reflections on how talk about “race” and nationality is critically impacted upon by audience and context and a recognition that both aspects of our identities are rendered strange in different ways by being at home or away. We recognized that the context of writing and saying was important when we first presented these ideas in England but the significance of context became even more apparent as we prepared to re-present these ideas to our “home” audience, as the dialogue continued between us. As we anticipated different forms of (mis)interpretations, we became aware that some things can and can’t be said in different places. Can we talk about “race” or does this inevitably feed into racist discourses? Is it time to move to a post-race position? Can we talk about “national identity” beyond clichés such as rainbow-ism or is such talk inevitably reliant upon colonial demarcations and necessarily fodder for xenophobia? We felt that the experience of these constraints on what it is possible / impossible to say, who can say what to whom, was in itself informative, provoking us to be reflexive and preventing fixity in our positions. So, we decided to talk rather than be silent, although we were *very* tempted to retreat into not speaking!

In both contexts, our audiences engaged us vigorously and we are grateful to all those voices that further complicated our subsequent conversations. We were in the process of reflecting on these exchanges in preparing this paper for **PINS**, when one voice of the dialogue was tragically silenced forever. Siyanda Ndlovu died in a drowning accident on 5 April 2010. This means that his position is unfinished but it also makes it imperative to capture and inscribe his voice on these critical issues. Siyanda’s engagement with the question of identity, particularly black identity, was passionate and personal but was tempered by intellectual doubt in the best possible sense. The complexity and nuances of his position will speak into contexts of future conversations for which he cannot be physically present.

Jill Bradbury: Our purpose in this paper is to think about whether identifications of “race” and “national identity” can be deployed “progressively” in the service of more equal relations between people by creating “ties that bind” or whether they are *necessarily* implicated in the reproduction of power and difference, as “lines that divide”. Of course, we recognize the social construction of such categories and accept the implication that “there is no such thing” as either “race” or nationality, however, we are not willing to dismiss them as irrelevant or un-real in the narration of our-selves. For both of us, at the moment, we have no option but to continue to use these terms “under erasure” problematising them, unravelling them and fraying the edges of their meanings. Perhaps this is simply a matter of strategy, an inadequate and transitional strategy but with emancipatory possibilities. Featherstone (2005: 21) refers to such strategic, political deployment of what he calls “... earlier sources of anti-colonial resistance – religious-derived thought, for example, nationalism and pan-Africanism – both as components in a common history of anti-colonialism and as themselves valid theoretical practices.” And Appiah (2005: 141) points to the potential for identity politics

to entail their own ends, linking this possibility to a reassertion of persons at the centre of any such theoretical / political struggles: “There is no shortage of liberation movements that call for the erasure or, anyway, transformation, of the very identities they serve – as appears to be the case with some versions of radical gay politics ... To make sense of such politics, we must see it as advancing the interests of its constituents as persons, in the first instance, not as identity holders. A movement for poor people does not seek to affirm their identity as poor people. Here the object isn’t preservation but cultural or socioeconomic change.”

However, while this invocation of strategy may allow us to wriggle off the hook of essentialism, we have to admit that our sense of ambivalence about the erasure of both “race” and nation is less instrumental and far more fraught with emotion than this argument sounds. For both of us, although perhaps in quite different ways, these identities do not feel complete, finished-with or dispensable and do not feel able to align ourselves with calls to “go beyond race” (e.g. Gilroy, 1995), or for a cosmopolitan negation of nationality (e.g. Nussbaum, 2002). We feel that Mama (2001: 9) eloquently expresses our protest: “We are being asked to think ‘beyond identity’, when for many of us identity remains a quest, something in-the-making.” Although we come from the discipline base of psychology, neither of us are “mainstream” psychologists and we don’t always sit comfortably in our own disciplinary space; this displacement is evident in resources on which we draw to formulate our positions, we have to cross multiple disciplinary boundaries to talk about what we do! However, in this instance, perhaps what we are trying to do is to restore a psychological dimension to “identity”, to take seriously the lived and felt dimensions of our own sense of our-selves. In Nussbaum’s (2002) provocative edited collection **For love of country?**, we find passionate responses to her call for a cosmopolitan ethos and an end to nationalisms. In a wonderfully titled piece, *Eros against Esperanto*, Pinsky (2002: 85) says: “The patriotic and the cosmopolitan: these are not mere ideas, they are feelings, indeed they are forms of love, with all the terror that word should imply.”

The possibilities and terrors of the love of home, of nation, may be related to how a particular nation is situated in the order of things, globally and to how we as individuals are situated within a particular nation. We take for granted an understanding of the historical emergence of nations as the products of war and conquest and, particularly, of the quest for empire and the colonial project. However, in the postcolonial territory of the 21st century these lines on the maps of war that divide and the ties that bind are complicated. Perhaps those in powerful nations with commitments to social justice or a more equal world are obliged to negate their belonging to a particular nation or place because of the others from whom this would separate them. However, conversely, perhaps where the birth of nations is not yet “history” but intertwined with living, personal memory, the same lines of identification may be effected by the converse process, that is, by identifying with the “new” nation, separating ourselves from our various histories of colonialism and pre-colonial formations of difference. South Africa is a peculiar amalgam of a state that is both powerful and disempowered, relative to different “others” in the global map, and exemplifying the complexity of lines that divide within. Moments of disavowal or identification may serve quite different functions in different contexts, and for individuals differently situated in these contexts. Claiming or stating one’s identity as “South African” may mean quite different things when the “other” identity to which this is counterposed is Moçambican, Kenyan or British ... or Black or White, or Zulu or Sotho. Likewise, asserting strong ties of identification on the

basis of blackness must surely have very different connotations to asserting identification on the basis of “whiteness” or when such identification is juxtaposed with more narrowly defined specificities of “blacknesses” that rupture this unitary notion.

Siyanda Ndlovu: When I began this work and, in particular, writing this paper I was clear about the theoretical and political shortcomings of the notion of a totalizing singular blackness grounded in the history of oppression. As the working title of my doctoral thesis, **There is No-one Black**, suggests, my aim has been to explore the fractures and ambiguities in the social constitution of black subjectivities. As Ratele, (1998: 60) whose own project is an exploration of the ambiguities of black masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa, argues, “[t]he identity labelled black is being contested. It is becoming increasingly difficult to hold blackness as a political community together because of the changes in the politics of bodies and identities, as well as the opening up of and reconfigurations of material and psychological spaces.” He asserts that “a breaking up of sameness” (Ibid.) is a political imperative because blackness is teeming with “differing personal histories, personalities, desires, and class positions” (Ratele, 2003: 237). Following this line, I have argued for different ways of being, doing, narrating and performing *blacknesses* that are articulated, realized and lived out in the messy, intricate and entangled networks of “race”, class, nationality and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, generational and religious affiliations, embodied in everyday practices and in our encounters with one another. I was convinced that thinking of blackness in this *plural* sense was politically more progressive and theoretically more productive, than the singularity of blackness invoked by the positions of some African-American (e.g. Gates, 1997, 1999, 2000) and Afrocentric (e.g. Asante, 2003, 2007) writers. These positions seem to uncritically appeal to the discourse and rhetoric of black authenticity, asserting blackness in the singular in theoretically limited and dangerously essentialist and homogenized terms.

However, in writing this paper in dialogue with Jill, I have become less certain about formulating this objective as simply to replace singularity with a more fluid, pluralized and fragmented notion of blackness. I am no longer entirely convinced of the move to talk about *blacknesses* because it seems that the fragmentation and difference entailed in *post-modern blackness* may unwittingly (re)produce and (re)inscribe, “a new resurgence” (Stevens, Swart & Franchi, 2006: 4) of racialisation; the culturalisation of race; the racialisation of culture; of ethnic forms of Othering; of xenophobia and more recently, Islamophobia. Similarly, Bulmer and Solomos (2004: 7-8) argue that, “[w]hat seems to characterize the contemporary period is, on the one hand, a complex spectrum of racisms, and, on the other, the fragmentation of the definition of blackness as a political identity in favour of a resurgence of ethnic, cultural and religious differentiation.” In this paper, I seek to ask of both conceptions of blackness the following questions: what are the contexts where singular or plural conceptions of blackness serve more progressive and equitable relations between people? And in what contexts do these conceptions of blackness serve violent and conservative political aims? What connections between people can be forged through singular or plural conceptions of identity based on “race” or nationality? And what divisions might these conceptions (re)produce?

JILL BRADBURY.

NATIONHOOD – TIES THAT BIND.

Anderson (1991) makes his claim for the “imagined community” of the nation as a vital “good” on the basis that these imagined connections create the possibility for the inclusion of otherness or difference, offering the means by which the circle of human concern can be extended beyond those who are immediately known to me, making it possible for me to imagine that their experiences are in certain important respects like mine. From this perspective, the nation “is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson, 1991: 7, emphasis added).

In his conceptualisation of what he terms “rooted cosmopolitanism” Appiah (2005: 239) too refers to the ways in which national identity can serve to cross boundaries of difference and connect people suggesting that this can be a mechanism for widening rather than narrowing the circle of belonging:

“National partiality is, of course, what the concept of cosmopolitanism is usually assumed to oppose, and yet the connection between the two is more complicated than this. Nationalism itself has much in common with its putative antithesis, cosmopolitanism: for nationalism, too, exhorts quite a loftily abstract level of allegiance – a vast, encompassing project that extends far beyond ourselves and our families. (For Ghanaians of my father’s generation, national feeling was a hard-won achievement, one enabled by political principle and dispassion: though it did not supplant the special obligations one had with respect to one’s *ethnie*, matriclan, and family, it did, in some sense, demote them.) That’s what makes the contrast between cosmopolitanism and nationalism so vexed. Nations, if they aren’t universal enough for the universalist, certainly aren’t local enough for the localist”.

By contrast with Appiah and Anderson’s arguments for national identity as effecting unity between people who would be otherwise divided, Nussbaum (2002) argues against recent appeals to reinvent the American narrative of nationalism (this, prior to Obama, who has of course re-invoked, reworked and retold a great American national story) and is virulently dismissive of any potential for national identity to unite. In this regard, she takes on those who seem to think that “the alternative to a politics based on patriotism and national identity is what he [Rorty] calls a ‘politics of difference’, one based on internal divisions among America’s ethnic, racial, religious, and other subgroups” (Nussbaum, 2002: 4). Given that these “subgroups” exist both within and beyond national boundaries, appeals to unity by invoking a supranational identification may conceal antagonisms and subvert struggles for equality rather than invigorating them. Differences within national boundaries are best confronted and changed by engaging a cosmopolitan conception of an inclusive human solidarity, universal justice and equality. Nussbaum thus argues for the imagination of community beyond or without borders and a universal humanism.

However, as we well know, even at the very local, immediate level of those nearest and dearest to us, imagining the life of others is not an easy task and may often slip into mere projections of the self. The abstraction of the universal “person” may not in fact take us very far at all in the task of understanding others or even ourselves. Scarry

(2002: 102) alerts us to the great difficulties associated with imagining other people, to the interpretive work that this entails and argues that this conundrum “*is both the cause of, and the problem displayed by, the action of injuring*”.

She points us in two different directions towards solving this difficulty, both discursive and both linked to nationhood, one deeper into the world of the imagination and the other away from it:

- 1) Works of art that inscribe narratives and textualise stories that *work* the imagination, create routes into new, other worlds for readers;
- 2) Institutionalization of rights. In this sense the nation is not that which is imagined (or experienced emotively) but that which is circumscribed by law and in constitutional values.

NARRATING THE NATION: THE WORK OF INSCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION.

Homi Bhabha’s (1990) idea that the nation is narrated or discursively produced derives from Anderson’s earlier assertion that the imagination of the nation is only possible in a textual world, where readers are anonymous rather than embodied interlocutors. For Anderson, these textual others belong to a “community” by virtue of shared language and in this standardized print version of the language, commonly accessible representations of the nation become possible, recruiting individual “readers” to this hypothesized social world. Critically, chronological forms of representation (specifically he suggests the novel and the newspaper), generate continuities and connections across time as well as territorially in space. In this way, the private act of reading connects individuals to unknown (and unknowable) others – dead or alive, near or far – creating a sense of simultaneity. However, the fixity of text and its apparent authority belies its active construction and Bhabha (1990: 2) reminds us that the story of a nation is always a “transitional history” characterized by “conceptual indeterminacy” and a “wavering between vocabularies”. Here, a deconstructivist reading follows the cracks and slippages of language, rendering the narratives of nation open and uncertain.

Appiah (2005: 297) suggests that our understandings of the nation and our sense of ourselves in terms of national identity, rely both on a reading of such inscribed texts and symbols and on the performance or enactment of such interpretations:

“The scraps, patches and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a national culture, while the very act of the narrative performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects. In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative. It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of *writing the nation*”.

I find this coupling of the pedagogic (drawing on heritage, and the more stylized representations of the nation, having a trajectory or historical sense) and the performative (in the recurrences of daily life, not least in our language, in our talk) very productive for thinking about continuities and discontinuities in the ways in which collective identities play themselves out and are made and remade in individual stories. An experience of a pedagogic performance of national identity that Siyanda and I shared with a group of young South Africans serves to highlight the ambivalences and ambiguities entailed in national identification and difference. For a number of years we

have collaborated on a project, the **Fast Forward Programme**, in which we work with young people to explore questions of identity. In 2005, we met via video-conference with a group of British youth. At some point in the conversation, someone asked the British group to sing their national anthem. The request was met with bemusement and, after some awkward shuffling, someone blurted out, “We don’t know it!” The South Africans reacted with disbelief and loud laughter, and then we rose to our feet to sing “Nkosi Sikele”. The performance asserted our identification with one another, our difference from our interlocutors. However, the recording reveals splinters and schisms within this apparent unity. While the young people confidently sing their way through the multilingual amalgam that is the “new” South African anthem, Siyanda and I stop singing and exchange amused glances at the point where the old apartheid anthem “Die Stem” is grafted into the song. This reflects our generational straddling of two versions of South African national identity and, for me, the ways in which my racialised position makes my national identity ambiguous and possibly even precarious.

However, despite the obvious discomfitures, textual fissures, ambiguities and ambivalences entailed in the performance and narration of the nation, I have to say that I remain hopeful that patriotism, or the love of place and of a particular people, of home, and nationalism (in the usual militarized sense entailing notions of superiority) need not be equated. Is it possible to invent a kind of nationhood which embraces difference in which the national “character”, as it were, is about openness to the experience of others, to creating new narratives drawing on the threads of others? If the nation defines itself as multilingual, multicultural perhaps identifications with this story may enhance personal and collective agency and challenge monolithic structures or monological identities. In interesting ways, some versions of the South African national identity make our borders elastic, stretching to fit the continent – the representation of home in my imagination is the whole continent – perhaps this is what Appiah (2005, 2006) means by rooted cosmopolitanism. Perhaps because I am a “white” South African and in attempts to refute certain positionings entailed by that label, I want to claim my Africanness as primary rather than the specific national identity of being South African. This is of course contested, and many would deny my right to that identity and perhaps that is why I feel compelled to claim it, to articulate it. (Interestingly, in our preparations for this paper, Siyanda vehemently asserted the converse prioritizing of identities in his sense of self, highlighting what can be taken-for-granted and what needs to be agentically claimed.) This stretching, however, is not easy and entails the “work” of imagination, the confrontation of what Steyn (2009) has called “active ignorance”. To engage this “ignorance” imaginatively entails crossing boundaries, not only the physical boundaries of Apartheid spaces, but also those symbolically erected and entrenched by schooling and public discourses. The imperative is to imagine alternatives to the histories of ties that bind us to the north-west corner of the globe as if that were “the world” and separate us from those both within our national borders and beyond them on the continent.

BEYOND IMAGINATION.

In order to do this, to harness the most progressive potentials of a national identity, I am sure that we will need to combine imaginative acts with institutional and political authority, developing what Barber (2002) has called a “constitutional faith” whereby it may be possible to link patriotism or identification with national narratives to commitments to values of justice and equality.

I am suggesting that the idea of the nation, and our individual shifting moments of identification and disavowal, remains a significant dimension for understanding human life. Attempts to simply negate this seem both theoretically and politically futile. In particular, while acknowledging the dangerously exclusionary effects that appeals to nationhood may have, in some contexts, narratives of nationhood may serve progressive purposes. For example, national identity can be, and has been in the South African context, an antiracist move and a move to counter the multiplicity of ethnic and linguistic divisions similar to those that Appiah describes in his home country of Ghana and that the Apartheid government entrenched and intensified in the spatially divisive mapping of the homeland system. At this moment in narrating the nation, the appeal to commonalities across “race” or for the disavowal of the inherited apartheid racial classifications, serves to redirect the trajectory of the story in very important ways. National commitments to constitutional values have also produced the implementation of institutional mechanisms for equality in other spheres, e.g. gender and sexual orientation, that are undermined by more localized cultural particularities (Ironically and sadly, reactionary politics in relation to gender and sexuality creates bridges between people divided along racial and “cultural” lines: both Christian colonial traditions and those of Africa are invoked as grounds for discrimination.) By creating constitutional “rights” to which all citizens have recourse, the legal framework of the state may both protect minorities and enhance collective action. As Gutman (2002: 271) points out, “Democratic citizens have institutional means at their disposal that solitary individuals, or citizens of the world only, do not.” The hopeful potential is that the institutional resources of the state may serve to harness, legitimise (and perhaps even provoke?) new versions of our selves. However, I have to soberly acknowledge that in South Africa, national identity has served only the most superficial unifying purposes, typically around sporting events such as the World Cup and has *not* been a mechanism for mobilizing struggles for greater socioeconomic equality and most recently in particular has also produced (or at least underpinned) the devastating xenophobic dynamics in relation to “foreign” Africans among us, leaving patriots only the somewhat plaintive appeal beyond national identity to the Freedom Charter’s assertion that South Africa belongs to “all who live in it”.

The contrast between historical formations of nationalism in South Africa reveals that the conflation of national identifications with power is misleading. But this distinction simultaneously alerts us to the mutation of nationalism as resistance and struggle into a form of oppression or domination. When our national stories take such violent and oppressive turns, we can disavow our belonging, we can rewrite our histories to conceal these abuses in our names, or we can confront and incorporate these moments of shame as part of who we are, part of our process of becoming. Appiah (2006: 26) argues that national identification evokes shame as much as pride; “the patriot is surely also the first to suffer his or her country’s shame: it is the patriot who suffers when a country elects the wrong leaders, or when those leaders prevaricate, bluster, pantomime, or betray ‘our’ principles”.

Where nationhood is premised on the “horizontal comradeship” that Anderson hopes for and where those equal relations are inscribed in constitutional law, it may be paradoxically possible to mobilize commitments to universal human equality by appeals to national identity, through “the idea that the principles of their national identity [are] betrayed by violations of human right” (McConnell, 2002: 81). I do think that in South Africa the constitution has served, and can still be recruited to serve this purpose,

providing a potentially equalizing language through which we can understand ourselves, and others. However, fluency in such language and access to the resources of the constitution may itself be uneven. Habermas (1994) warns that, what he terms “constitutional patriotism” can only work where people understand themselves as co-authors of the very system of rights to which they might appeal. He argues that national identifications of this kind cannot be sustained unless there is a link between the constitutional system and the “historical context” and motivations and commitments of citizens, a version of democracy that entails joint authorship and shared meanings, rather than simply equal consumption of benefits. This link cannot be taken-for-granted where the invented nation means that people are “unequally yoked” coming together as “one nation” from oppositional and conflictual positions in history. The gaps or disjunctures between constitutional values and lived life are acutely evident in contemporary South Africa which continues to be criss-crossed by “lines that divide” and in particular, by the writhing live-wire of “race”.

SIYANDA NDLOVU.

BLACKNESS BEYOND BORDERS.

While national identification may be used to counter divisions based on “race”, “race” and specifically blackness, can conversely be used to counter lines that divide such as nationality and ethnicity, creating ties that bind. I make this argument cautiously, recognizing again that, like national identity, homogenizing “race” can operate to conceal important divisions. While we recognize that “race” as a concept operates “under erasure”, as “a concept that cannot be thought of in the ‘old way’ as representing essential, discrete differences between groups, but which we still need in order to address and dismantle racism” (Gunaratnum, 2003: 31). This speaks to the dangers of the “treacherous bind” in doing research on “race”. While I find that I still want to talk about blackness despite discourses of non-racialism and calls to move beyond “race”, perhaps this talk takes new forms and directions that are discontinuous with past conceptualisations. Although “race” might appear “to be stable, transparent and visibly embodied, the very authority of the colour line must also give rise to the possibilities of racial transgression, or crossing the line” (Wald, 2000: 5). Rewriting and reconfiguring racial identities seems premised on talk rather than silence, on recognising the realities of racialised experience while simultaneously acknowledging the unreality of the concept of “race”.

More specifically, the definition of *blackness* is problematic. I am apprehensive about defining blackness as primarily and exclusively tied to oppression by “the white colonial Other”. Mama (1995) suggests that blackness is synonymous with “struggle”, a black struggle for autonomy, for freedom and for self-definition. Like Mama (1995), blackness for Manganyi (1973: 19) tells a narrative of suffering and exploitation in that “black people share the experience of having been abused and exploited” and he goes further to suggest that “[t]his is part of [their] consciousness”. Both Mama and Manganyi locate the basis for black solidarity within a shared history of racial oppression. However, this does not seem an adequate basis for explaining the ties that bind me to other black bodies in the world. I am resistant to the political and psychological implications of restricting blackness to histories of oppression and exploitation. Ratele (2003: 238) asks the provocative question, “who are black [people] when they are no longer victims of oppression?” Such unity is not sustainable and cannot provide adequate ground for

human connections and relationships in the future. It is not sustainable because it is, for lack of a better word, a pathological connection. If nothing else lies beyond our black skin, than the history of victimhood, that connection will break in the face of new political struggles and new divisive forms of (particularly economic) postcolonial power. And it did break in May of 2008 in South Africa with the outburst of brutal xenophobic violence. It is in such a context of the unintended consequences and expression of nationality that I want to argue for strategic essentialism based on “race” (specifically *blackness*) as a means to counter xenophobia and divisions based on national, cultural and ethnic lines. However, in this very context of xenophobic violence, I struggled to theorise the links with fellow Africans in terms of our shared blackness, questioning the roots of this identification as defined by a shared history of oppression. If *all* that connects *all* black peoples of the world is their history of oppression and their “shared hatred” of “white” people then we are in trouble both politically and theoretically. Questions about what it means to be black in the world “in the present” and “in the future” are less clear than what it has meant “in the past”. I argue that we need to attend to the discursive spaces where blackness is constantly “invented, policed, transgressed, contested” (Favor, 1999: 2). We need to craft new narratives to live by that destabilize racial hegemony not by ignoring or erasing “race” but by finding the cracks and slippages in our discourse that will allow us to remake and rearticulate what it means to be black in the world.

However, I do first want to consider the instrumentality and politics of mobilising around an essentialised and homogenised notion of blackness. Under unequal conditions of power and overt forms of oppression, the idea of the singular, fixed black identity may be a useful and necessary political strategy. This call for solidarity, and “desire for unity” (Ratele, 2003: 238) forms the basis for collective political identification and action. History abounds with examples of political activism, mobilisation and action in challenging hegemonic and oppressive regimes of power under the rubric of legitimized *manufactured* (I like this word from Gilroy) sameness and essentialised unity. Social movements for “racial emancipation, liberation and autonomy” (Gilroy, 1995: 18) in the US, Britain, South Africa, Africa and other parts of the world have invoked such a strategy as progressive for emancipatory mass political action. Black identity in the singular may homogenise racial identification for collective political gains. To essentialise “is to posit a timeless continuity, a discreteness or boundedness in space, and an organic unity. It is to imply an internal sameness and external difference or otherness” (Werbner, 1997, cited in Gunaratnum, 2000: 29). Black identity, in the singular, effectively constructs racial connections and racial identifications from fragmentation; emphasizing racial sameness and coherence while foreclosing individual or collective particularities and intersections of class, gender and sexuality, nationality and ethnicity. This is of course, what Spivak (1993) has coined “strategic essentialism”: mobilizing around a singular, fixed and essentialised notion of identity, that is both unified and coherent across all other forms of social difference for particular collective political purposes. But in making this move we must remain mindful of the ideological construction of sameness and its corollary, the erasure of difference and particularity.

Let me now turn my attention to an empirical example to illustrate how people lay claim to certain identities for particular political action and collective identifications. Dina, a British participant in my PhD study, uses a strategic essentialised and singular notion of blackness in confronting the history of oppression and racism that *all* black people of

the world have been subjected to and have suffered at the hands of their white counterparts. Here, Dina uses the pronoun “us” as a political rallying call for, as Ratele (2003: 238) suggests, “a united front, for unity at all costs” and a kind of solidarity to stand together as one black group:

Dina: “... and then you had a whole generation of black British that aren’t grateful anymore and watching **Roots** anybody who watched **Roots** back in the day ended up with an attitude. That film revolutionized everything, it’s like, “THEY DID WHAT TO US!”

Siyanda: (Laughs).

Dina: “Everybody who was black I don’t care where you come from ‘now it’s an us, there’s us and there’s them’.”

Both: (Laugh loudly).

It is in the face of racial oppression visually represented and revealed in the iconic film, **Roots**, that Dina mobilizes a singular black identity as constituted by shared oppression. It is the realization expressed in the cry “what *they* did to *us*” that articulates an essentialised and homogenized “us” and that relationally fixes and objectifies the “them”. Invoking the notion of black solidarity and singularity erases and transcends internal differences that would otherwise undermine such unity. Dina *manufactures* (that word again) this unity and solidarity on behalf of and between black people regardless of what Riley (1988) calls “individual temporalities” lived through in class, nationality and ethnicity, gender and sexuality. Indeed Dina “does not care where you come from”, “who you are” whether you are female or male, homosexual or heterosexual, working class or middle class, citizen or immigrant, the most salient identity marker is your *blackness*. What is important is your co-option into this marginal community with a history of oppression and not your own individual particularity. What is less crucial here is the idiosyncratic “I” that gives way to the “us” cast in sameness and coherence in response to the fixed Other, the white “them” out there. Ratele (2003: 247-248) has something instructive to say about the deployment of ‘we’ and ‘us’ as a wish for an imagined community with an imagined shared history:

“‘We’ [and ‘us’] is always an indication of, and often, a wish for unity, rather than an accomplished fact. There is a certain pull to claim a commonality when one writes or speaks – saying *we* feel this or that, this is *our* heritage, this is how *we* do it, it comes down to *us*. But often the speaker or writer cannot really know how his or her auditors feel, how a particular reader stands in relation to such and such an historical event, let alone what she or he inherits ... and whether indeed the person wants to be part of the assumed group. Rather, words are always intended to do something. They are infused with all kinds of motives, among them the motive for unity and power. Thus when their author lays claim to *unity*, *oneness*, *solidarity*, in the best of circumstance he or she hopes that there is a shared community of interests with those in his or her mind. The community might seem to arise out of a shared history, a feeling brought about by a certain legacy. Perhaps more appropriately though, one speaks or writes to cultivate a community, a way of looking at society and history. One writes [or speaks] not merely to say something about oneself, but to produce an ‘us’” (emphases added).

What I am cautiously arguing here, using insights from Dina’s use of strategic essentialism, is that invoking a notion of racial singularity and homogeneity may be strategically necessary to counter the divisive effects of nationality and ethnicity.

Invoking (Black) sameness as a political strategy against different kinds of oppression is a way to “initiate a powerful political language of agency, personhood, self ... congruent with demands for racial emancipation, citizenship and autonomy” (Gilroy, 1995: 19). This notion of a universal singular and homogenised Black identity can connect all black people of the world in their struggles against oppression, transcending all boundaries and all borders, whether real or imagined, whether national or religious or “ethnic”. Ratele (2003: 238) concurs that “one must note that in the face of ongoing xenophobia, increasing racism, racial and cultural ‘incidents’ the world over, this desire for unity among those on the sharp end of these practices is understandable, perhaps even necessary.”

However, while such a theorization of blackness in the singular can be a progressive political move, it can also serve to conceal other kinds of struggles and inequalities that exist and intersect with other dimensions of identity and social formation. The particularities of struggles in different times and places and intersecting with divisive lines of power, may be obscured. Solidarity based on the concept of “race” assumes that “race” is the *only* critical signifier, foreclosing all forms of difference, and can be deployed progressively to counter xenophobia or ethnic assertions of “cultural” superiority. While I have some sympathy for this position, if we leave the notion of black singularity un-interrogated we run the grave danger of reproducing problematic, hegemonic and subverted notions of power that lie in class, gender, nationality and ethnicity that divide people one from one another.

BORDERS WITHIN BACKNESS.

This returns me to a position that theorizes blackness in pluralized and fractured ways rather than as an essentialised, homogenised singularity; in ways that embrace the complicated and varied ways of being black in the world; in ways that are not about mythical past glories or forced unities for a hypothetical future but in ways that allow for fractured and divergent political and social realities in black people’s everyday lives and practices. Gilroy (1993: 1) argues that there is “no single way of living, thinking and being black [that] is able to claim automatic priority over all the others”. Let me illustrate this idea of blackness as fractured by extending Dina’s interview excerpt I used above. Dina first appeals to a singular notion of blackness that effectively ties all black people together as having been oppressed and enslaved by the white Other. She then proceeds to account for her life not only as black, but specifically as *West Indian* black. And in doing so, she reveals different generational struggles and national inequalities that are in fact masked and concealed by the singular essentialised notion of blackness. The “us” she now deploys is a different, more particular, “us”. This new “us” no longer refers to all black people but rather it refers only to “West Indian black” as a particular kind of black with a particular kind of history and culture:

Dina: *“It was at looking at the gratitude that my family had and the subservience that they had versus the generation that I was part of who would watch things like **Roots** who were starting to get more militant who had gone out and faced racism on the streets. There is a new level of anger because we didn’t have we don’t have this whole gratitude ... We didn’t come from there we were born here ... We’re not grateful anymore do you see what I mean we’re just not grateful anymore so it’s not good enough. So some of us got angry some of us got focused and for each generation there’s more of us that are getting focused but there’s still a helluva lot that are getting angry cause if I look at the population of*

universities now I know back when I was a kid there weren't this many black people in university... if there were black people guaranteed they were from Nigeria because they were from a well-to-do enough family where they sent their children over here to be educated...except for we didn't come from the same place we didn't come from the same starting point. You take yourself away from any form of cultural identity put yourself in a foreign land be made to work under the colonial British rule then be taken from that poverty to come over here poor to subservient parents and then see how far you get then ... which is why I look at where West Indian black people are now and I am bloody proud of us because in a very short space of time we doing alright or more and more of us each generation are doing alright".

Dina talks here about different ways of being and performing blackness cross-generationally in Britain, revealing the first fracture in blackness. Dina constructs the older black generation as "grateful", "subservient" and complicit in a white racist society that continues to subjugate and discriminate against them. However, the younger black generation born *in* Britain are, unlike their parents who are born elsewhere, and are constructed as "angry", "militant" occupying a radical agentic space precisely because they personally confront racism on daily basis. As a result, the younger black generation is "not and cannot be grateful anymore" as they are not *the immigrant black Other*, like their parents, born outside Britain. Rather, the younger black generation, as racialised subjects, afforded the cultural capital of citizenship, attempt to "undermine, question, or threaten [racial] power through practices that mobilise race for various self-authorised ends" (Wald, 2000: 5). "Some of [them] got angry" at the status quo and "some of them got focused" through education and class mobility in their attempts to appropriate and remake blackness in Britain. So, we get a different version of being and doing blackness when we look across generations that is otherwise concealed by the discourse of a singular blackness or simple reference to a homogenised concept (and hypothesised experience) of oppression.

The second kind of fracture in the singular conception of blackness revealed in Dina's talk is along national lines. Dina's explanation of the lack of West Indian black people at British universities immediately demands a focus on differences between being "black here" and "black there"; between being black in Africa and being black in the Diaspora. Extending this interview excerpt sharply draws lines that divide the experience of being and doing blackness as lived through broadly-defined "national" lines, revealing different struggles and histories shaping the imagination, articulation and construction of different kinds of blackness.

Dina: *"To be black British it's really hard to have a sense of the identity to be West Indian black British we don't have our own language we don't have our own names there's not much that we really have ... all you've got is your customs that you have inherited from your parents ... you know you could say where your name comes from and this part from here and this tribe is related to this ... we don't get seen by the black African people over here as being black African and because, because we kinda looked down on cause we were just like the slaves that got cast off to the West Indies and now we are nobody we just got slave names no sense of education the people the black West Indians people coming over here didn't come here for an education they weren't sent here to come and study, the parents came here because there was no job*

opportunities where they were so you didn't have the crème de la crème of West Indian people coming over here so we are not starting at the same start-point so even though being black gets you stigmatised here and you are a minority here being black West Indian means not only are you a minority you are minority of no status."

It is in relation to different kinds of blacknesses that are imagined, produced and articulated in relation to being *black British*, *West Indian black British* (her own term) and *black African*, that Dina tells an emotional story, **Once we were slaves**, about what her own diasporic blackness means, in juxtaposition to African blackness. Being black in Britain is a marginalised position but being black West Indian entails a further marginalisation, defined by a slave history, born to poor subservient parents, without a distinct language or cultural identity.

Another one of my participants, Bili, a Botswana national, studying in South Africa, presents another instance where lines of national and racial identity intersect, marking her as belonging and not belonging at the same time. She says, "I have never felt so black and yet not so black at the same time as I have in South Africa ... I have been qualified as black but then disqualified at the same time". Bili occupies a very interesting liminal space in the highly racialised South African context, of always being in-between. Though black, which means she is "just like them" [her fellow black South African students], she is nonetheless "the foreigner", "the Other", "the outsider". Here is how Bili reflects on her position in the context of the 2008 xenophobic violence in South Africa:

Bili: *".... you become, you begin to feel, very foreign, you begin to feel very alone within South Africa. And the recent xenophobic attacks, it didn't help a lot. You know, I thought I had accepted my being in South Africa and my being part of South Africa and then when that happened I felt very foreign, I felt very out of this place. It didn't happen in [brief pause] on campus like, we didn't, I didn't personally experience it, I just see it happening on TV and the newspapers but every person that I talked to that was a foreigner, it was we felt very out of place we felt threatened we were all shaken up and [brief pause] it amazed me because we did not confront it, we, but because we are foreigners we just felt it. I felt for those guys that were being burnt and you know their homes being burnt down and I was, it was, like me, you know but it was not me. I think it's a fact that we are all foreigners, just, you know."*

In such a context, the notion of nationalism or, in particular, the idea of a South African national identity, though it may be instrumental in countering racism, devastatingly fails us in the project of creating "imagined communities". I want to cautiously argue that notion of racial and/or African singularity and homogeneity may be strategically necessary to counter exclusionary notions of national identity. Invoking (Black and/or African) sameness is a way to "initiate a powerful political language of agency, personhood, self ... congruent with demands for racial emancipation, citizenship and autonomy" (Gilroy, 1995: 19). Perhaps a universal singular and homogenised Black identity can be deployed to create solidarity that transcends boundaries or borders, whether real or imagined, whether national or religious or "ethnic". The question is whether "race" is the *only* available unifier to counter xenophobia and whether the oscillation between "race" and nationality can create progressive movement.

SAMENESS AND DIFFERENCE AT THE SAME TIME?

My own vacillation in response to this question indicates the imperative to find new discursive and methodological resources that will enable us to recognize multiplicity without dissolving completely into fragmentation. We need analytic tools, as Gilroy (1995: 27) suggests, “to think sameness and differentiation at the same time without privileging either term. That is, to consider the differentiation within sameness and the sameness within differentiation”. And perhaps we need to ask different questions rather than binary formulations that prioritize either singularity or fragmentation in blackness. It seems more productive to ask questions of contingency; what are the discursive contexts and spaces when and where “race” or blackness specifically can be deployed progressively to create ties that bind, and to challenge the contexts and spaces when and where blackness creates lines that divide.

In working with South African youth on the **Fast Forward Programme** that Jill referred to earlier, the shifting contextual political terrain has alerted us to counter-productive consequences to the project of national unity. In one of the tasks, we gave the participants a map of Africa and asked them to identify and locate as many African countries as they know. Their responses were interesting ... and alarming! In general, learners can only successfully locate South Africa and one or two other African countries; usually southern African neighbours, although even these may not be accurately placed. Further, many maps of Africa include the United States of America, Australia, China or Britain, suggesting the dominance of these distal reference points in the mental mapping of young people’s worlds. This reflects a simultaneous parochial nationalism and a skewed global “cosmopolitanism” that eclipses the African continent. Though national identity can be used to counter racist and racial divisions between people, it can work problematically to reinstate difference and forge a deep chasm between us, and the rest of Africa. So, in this context, it might be more progressive to break boundaries between different African countries and reconnect to the broader idea of a Pan-Africanism, identification that most would argue necessarily implicates a singularity of shared “blackness”.

In 2004 I attended the opening night of **Poetry Africa**, an annual Poetry Festival held in Durban. The festival brought together over 30 poets from 12 different countries all over the world. We were treated to an electrifying performance of praise poetry to open the festival. As we sat in the cover of darkness in the auditorium of the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre, our eyes fixed on the stage, we heard the beat of “the African drum” as if it were summoning ancestral spirits to embrace us with their divine presence. A peculiar sense seemed to connect all of us in the room to some romantic and mythical idea of Africa, a nostalgia that transcends all reason. It was as if a kind of sentimental and spiritual tie descended onto and connected us all: black, white and brown; young and old; South African citizens and foreign nationals. My body was covered in goose bumps as the sound of “the African drum” filled the room. And then a succession of *izimbongi* representing different cultural and linguistic communities in South Africa, recited praise poetry in their native tongues, in *isiZulu*, *isiXhosa*, *isiNdebele*, *seTswana*, *Sesotho* and *tshiVenda*. The whole performance was deeply moving and despite the possible exclusionary effects of the languages that not all of the audience could understand, functioned at the emotional level to forge a sense of connection regardless of “race”, ethnicity or nationality. Our task theoretically and politically is to harness such

performative effects, in which sameness and difference are simultaneously acknowledged, and work to create ties that bind rather than lines that divide.

Jill Bradbury and Siyanda Ndlovu.

CONCLUDING THIS CONVERSATION AND OPENING LINES FOR FUTURE TALK: BEYOND RACE / NATION – IMAGINING OTHER CONNECTIONS?

Appiah (2005, 2006) suggests that it is not sameness or agreement that should provide the basis for our connections with others but rather, the quest is to develop a common language through which to debate, negotiate and disagree. Of course this is no easy matter – to speak the “same language” is of course to agree at some quite fundamental level. He argues for a kind of interpretive work, and imaginative engagement that attends to the meanings of others in their own terms:

“Conversations across boundaries of identity – whether national, religious, or something else – begin with the sort of imaginative engagement you get when you read a novel or watch a movie or attend to a work of art that speaks from some place other than your own. So I’m using the word ‘conversation’ not only for literal talk but also as a metaphor for engagement with the experience and ideas of others. And I stress the role of the imagination here because the encounters, properly conducted, are valuable in themselves. Conversation doesn’t have to lead to consensus about anything, especially not values; it’s enough that it helps people get used to one another” (Appiah, 2005: 85).

Can the constitutional values of “human rights” provide a language for conversation across difference? Can we use this language of the abstract, individualized human “person” to think about, debate, argue and fight about the rights of particular groups or collectives to recognition? (Taylor, 1994). Can the stories of race or nationhood contribute to this conversation or are they incompatible languages, creating a kind of noise that drowns rather than amplifies the debate? Are we doomed not only to misunderstand or misread each other but also to misrepresent or misspeak our-selves? We are uncertain of the answers to these questions – and our uncertainty has increased rather than diminished in the very writing of this paper and the conversations that we have had with each other about these issues. Perhaps what we need is a kind of multilingualism, crossing between different discourses depending on the context of conversation, remaining alert to the problems of translation. “What is needed ... is not to learn that we are citizens of the world, but that we occupy particular niches in an unequal world, and that being disinterested and global on one hand and defending one’s narrow interests on the other are not opposites but positions combined in complicated ways. Some combinations are desirable, others are not. Some are desirable here but not there, now but not then” (Wallerstein, 2002: 124).

We conclude that liaisons of “race” and nation are certainly “invented” and may even be “dangerous” as McClintock (1995) has argued, but they nonetheless seduce us into passionate responses and perhaps even potentially great love affairs with one another.

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THE CHALLENGES OF 'RE-IMAGINING'
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PSYCHOLOGY CONFERENCE

ABSTRACT

The inaugural Southern African Students' Psychology conference, held in June 2009 at the University of Botswana holds much promise for the growing discipline within the region. Despite, and because of, our optimism regarding the possibilities of such a conference to contribute to a re-imagined psychology within Southern Africa, we feel it pertinent to raise a few broad issues that continue to challenge the discipline as well as our praxis. The first issue concerns the powerful legacy of the medical model regarding how students think about, talk about and 'do' psychology. We question whether we are simply doing 'the same old thing', just 'spun' differently. Second, we unpack the powerful and pervasive 'The West versus Africa' debate, looking at the historical terms for the debate and its implications for an 'African psychology'. Third, we explore the role of critical voice within psychology, encouraging students to broaden their lens of interrogation so as to grapple more substantially with the ideologies and assumptions informing research. We conclude that we need to have a critical and healthy suspicion of this thing called 'psychology', and more actively explore the ways in which it can more effectively facilitate individual agency and social change within our African context.

Tarryn Frankish

School of Psychology
University of KwaZulu-
Natal
South Africa
tarryn.frankish@gmail.com

Siyanda Ndlovu

School of Psychology
University of KwaZulu-Natal
South Africa

Jude Clark

School of Psychology
University of KwaZulu-
Natal
South Africa

AUTHORS

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A NEW EXCITEMENT

The establishment of a Southern African Students' Psychology Conference, with its inaugural conference held in Botswana in June 2009, is a laudable undertaking. Such an endeavour holds much potential and has many positive aspects. It validates the student voice and acknowledges the contribution that students make to the process of knowledge production, something that is not often made visible due to the broader power politics of academia. Such a forum provides a rare space for scholarly engagement and increases student confidence in sharing and debating their work. Furthermore, the attempt of the conference to extend the dialogue to include students of psychology from other Southern African countries is commendable in light of the general isolation between universities within specific countries and across the region more broadly. While there are of course many challenges to facilitating this kind of dialogue, a conference like this holds the possibility, in the long-term, of ushering in a multiplicity of voices and issues from Africa on the international stage.

We were initially quite taken with the sense of enthusiasm and excitement that surrounded the conference. This energy (and our intrigue) was no doubt fostered by the sense of newness characterising an inaugural conference, the newness of psychology in the University of Botswana, and the newness alluded to in the conference theme: 're-imagining psychology'. Under this broad theme, which suggested a collective discussion on the relevance of psychology in Africa, students were asked to creatively engage with both the content and form of the work presented, seeking fresh ways of knowing about and relating to psychology within our Southern African context. As the conference website stated:

Being the first student psychology conference in Africa, we should go where no man [sic] has gone before – completely jazz it up; after all, it is for the

students who like innovation and novelty. Out with the old and in with the new – goodbye boring academic-type-lectured-presentations and hello interactive, energised formats that will get the blood flowing and the mind racing.

Heady stuff! We were eager to be part of a student collective that would grapple with ‘the good, the bad and the ugly’ of psychology and research. To this end the conference certainly has raised a number of issues that we feel invite further commentary.

In this paper, we provide a broad outline of our reflections on three key, but overlapping, issues that came to inform the general tone and discourse of the conference. The first concerns the powerful legacy of the medical model regarding how students think about, talk about and ‘do’ psychology. We question whether we are simply doing ‘the same old thing’, just ‘spun’ differently. Second, we unpack the powerful and pervasive ‘Africa versus The West’ debate, looking at the historical terms for the debate and its implications, particularly regarding the possibility for an ‘African psychology’. Third, we explore the role of critical voice within the discipline, encouraging students to deepen their interrogation of the taken-for-granted aspects of psychological research.

Our commentary is informed by our recognition that research is a particular form of meaning-making, having considerable political implications for the ways in which we come to ‘know’ and represent not only people’s experiences, but the broader historical, cultural and political systems of power that produce our subjectivities and position all of us in specific ways. What we end up ‘finding out’ in research is linked to *how* we proceed through the research process to know these things. However, the methodological cannot be removed from the epistemological and the political. As such, we see research as a site of institutionalised power that needs to be taken seriously.

We hope that the points and issues raised in this paper will provide some food for thought for other students grappling with similar tensions in their work and outside of it.

OUT WITH THE OLD AND IN WITH THE NEW?

In light of the 'new' space offered to 're-imagine' the discipline, it seems pertinent to explore the ways in which students who attended the conference (re)produced certain dominant (and problematic) notions of psychology. Although there was a range of creative presentations, what was striking was the dominance of the medical model informing how we conceptualised and spoke about psychology. Linked to the over-reliance on, and the application of, the medical model to explain psychological 'reality', some pervasive themes evident in the papers presented seemed for us to encompass the following: (1) Explicit foci on health and disease, in particular, the measurement and treatment of abnormal psychology and disorder, which included investigations of psychopathology, personality disorders and coping strategies; (2) studies that relied on measurements, correlations and predictors of behaviour and psychological states; and (3) calls for different kinds of therapies, intervention and rehabilitation in line with medicalised diagnoses.

The medical model holds much power within the domain of psychology, seductive in its appeal to science and professional status. Wampold, Hyun-nie, and Coleman (2001) write that, 'because the medical model appears more scientific than various alternatives, and because the economics of practice are embedded in a health care delivery system, the natural tendency has been to adopt medical model language' (p. 268). Within this framework, dominant theoretical formulations divide the 'normal' from the 'abnormal', prescribing a scientific recipe of professional diagnoses and treatment plans to address individual pathology or social ills (Painter, Terre Blanche, & Henderson, 2006; Wampold et al., 2001). These hierarchical categories of pathologisation serve as potent forms of surveillance and regulation of

individuals (Parker, 1999a).

The regulatory demands and appeal of professionalisation need to be interrogated, as it has been argued that this particular professionalisation functions to produce the subject of psychology as a passive recipient of scientific and medicalised knowledge. For Haraway (1994), what is important are the ways that this particular kind of psychological subject is discursively produced: ‘The discourse is dominated by evolutionary frameworks, biologizing frameworks, the discursive production of the psychological subject as the measurable subject and by the construction of an individual subject’ (p. 34). The unintended consequences of the medical model with its focus falling on the individual and its demand to understand human nature by looking ‘within’ are that it produces and maintains problematic binary distinctions between ‘the inner’ and ‘the outer’, the private and the public, the personal and the political (Rose, 1985). Within these binaries, even psychologists are produced as subjects whom Callaghan (2005) views as ‘apolitical, raceless, classless, and de-gendered’ (p. 143).

In light of the conference theme to ‘re-imagine psychology’, it seems surprising that this (re)production of a medical and professionalised discourse appears to speak of precisely the kind of psychology that such a theme challenges us to overcome, that is, mainstream ‘Westernised’ models of psychology. The concern is that by producing such a psychology, we fall short of producing *relevant* psychologies which speak to the needs of the diverse (Southern) African context. Furthermore, in failing to acknowledge the power which plays out in the construct of ‘professional psychologist’, we close off options to engage in alternative, activist kinds of psychology (Callaghan, 2005).

To understand this concern we need to take seriously the basic idea of critical psychology which argues that ‘psychology is always – even in its most everyday and mundane forms – *political*’ (Hook, 2001, p. 3 emphasis in original). In recognising

the politics of psychology, we must hold the practice of psychology up for inspection, and acknowledge that the discipline can never be ahistorical, apolitical, raceless, classless and de-gendered. Holdstock (2000) contends that we should indeed shift from seeing psychology as ‘the scrutinising subject’, rather making psychology ‘the object of investigation’ for precisely this reason. In doing so we come to see that the reliance on traditional, medical and conservative (and neo-liberal) discourses underpinning professional psychological practice, as evident at the first Southern African Students’ Psychology conference, is not something new but rather a reproduction of how psychology has always been done.

If medicalised versions of psychology are simply doing the same old thing, perhaps ‘re-imagining psychology’ in our context means to move beyond merely relativising psychological knowledge, which Parker (1999a) has argued is not sufficient to ‘comprehend and combat the discipline as part of the “psy-complex”’ (p. 61). Perhaps the challenge is for us all to (re)insert a political agenda into the discipline. And as we should remember, students have historically constituted a crucial part of mobilising political agendas within and outside of the academy. So, *aluta continua!*

THE ‘GOOD, COLLECTIVE AFRICA’ VERSUS THE ‘BAD, INDIVIDUALISTIC WEST’: AN UNHELPFUL AND INADEQUATE JUXTAPOSITION

‘The West versus Africa’ debate dominated and captured the imagination of the conference in a range of diverse discussions about the existence of an African Psychology. Linked to the broader theme of questioning ‘the role of psychology in Africa’ and ‘the role of Africa in psychology’, some of the following ‘buzz phrases’ reverberated throughout the conference and inspired passionate agreements and some kinds of solidarity between presenters and the audience:

Charges of Africa uncritically importing and consuming Western-derived psychological modes of explanation, theories and concepts that sit uneasily on the fringes of African experience and African culture.

Calls to 'Africanize' and 'indigenize' Psychology on the grounds that Africa has its own rich, diverse and legitimate indigenous psychological knowledge bases that predate Western psychology.

Critiques of (seemingly) universal grand psychological narratives in terms of their applicability and contextual and cultural relevance in Africa by highlighting Eurocentrism ingrained in Western psychology.

Questions of whether incorporation, blending and integration of these seemingly antagonistic epistemologies are possible or whether we should create a new psychology from scratch.

'The West versus Africa' is an age-old debate and has not only been a 'hot topic' across disciplines within the academy, but has also been contested more broadly within political and public discourses in much of Africa. This debate forms the principal basis of *Afrocentrism* or *Afrocentricity* advanced by Africans on the continent and most notably by Africans in the diasporas, particularly 'Africans' in America. Asante (2003) conceptualises Afrocentricity as a 'critical' response to Eurocentrism, which is taken to distort African values, knowledge systems, worldviews and identities (Asante, 2003; Howe, 1999; Mazrui & Kariuki, 2006). This debate rigidly positions Africa and the West in a binary antagonistic opposition, a flawed corrective attempt at undoing and rewriting Africa's colonial past.

This debate also unmasks the social construction of knowledge production – and for our purposes here, this is the critique of psychological knowledge in Africa. Those arguing for

Africa's own worldviews, perspectives and indigenous knowledge systems seem, in an implicit and accidental way, to be appropriating Foucauldian insights about knowledge: as always 'partial, oblique and perspectival' (Stevens, Swart, & Franchi, 2006, p. 7). Of primary concern is the construction of Africa within the imagination of the 'White colonial Westerners' whose sole goal, as Afrocentrists would have us believe, is the total and deliberate distortion of Africa's 'real' and 'true' history, culture, identity and agency. As a critical reaction to the West's imperial and hegemonic cultural and intellectual machine, Africa is imagined within the Afrocentric discourse, not simply as *the* legitimate cradle of humankind and civilisation, but as fundamentally *different and unique*. Hence, the incontestable existence of an 'African mind/psyche', 'African personality', 'African culture' and 'African Psychology'.

So, what is our concern with the constructions of Africa and the West in a binary opposition as a variety of papers in the conference sought to (re)imagine and articulate an African Psychology? Such a binary opposition is premised on *homogenising* both the West and Africa. Imagining and constructing 'the West' and 'Africa' as separate, autonomous, homogenous entities or as sites of power and resistance is deeply problematic as it does not take seriously the fundamental ruptures and discontinuities that abound within the West and Africa. An erasure of (internal) difference within the West and Africa does not account for the multiplicity and fragmentation within, as much as between the West and Africa. Further, it downplays how the economic, social, cultural, political, interpersonal and psychological realities intersect with each other in producing a complex and entangled network. In responding to the West versus Africa debate we should ask the question: Which part of Africa is being imagined? Mudimbe (2008), famous for his book *The Invention of Africa*, has suggested that it might be more instructive to think and speak about *Africas* in the plural rather than Africa in the singular. There is no one, 'real' Africa. The

divisions between the south and north as well as the east and west are so vast that it makes no 'real' sense to imagine and construct them together, conceptually in the singular, as Africa is marked and defined differently along social, political, economic, cultural, religious, and linguistic lines. Similarly, we need to ask: Who is the West? What part of Europe is included in 'the West'? Is Eastern Europe the 'bad evil West' as well? Or is it just North America? And, what about Great Britain?

We are critical of Afrocentric scholarship and of 'the West versus Africa' debate as these discourses seem rooted in relativism. The problem we have with relativist epistemology is its creation of the conditions of impossibilities. What we mean by this is that if everything is relative then it is impossible for us to *know* and *understand* one another because, as relativism would have it, our conceptual frameworks of knowing and understanding are relative to us all as individuals and as group members. It then becomes impossible to know each other because of our many, and critical, differences and particularities. Similarly, Howe (1999) opposes the way in which Africa is represented within Afrocentric scholarship as 'fundamentally distinct and internally homogeneous "African" ways of knowing and feeling about the world, ways which *only* members of the group can possibly understand' (p. 2, emphasis added). By extension, this means that people of the 'out-group' (the West in our analysis) are unable and incapable of knowing and understanding people of this geographical mass we call Africa.

We feel that it is possible to know of and about one another across our many differences. Re-imagining African psychology has to be about our collective quest and search for commonalities and universalities (as one paper proposed in the conference) despite the fact that we inhabit different geographical spaces, despite our gendered bodies, despite the different languages we speak, and despite the different racialised modes with which we navigate and embody our physical and socio-cultural worlds.

So, is there any merit and legitimacy in pursuing what has been called an ‘African Psychology’? What do we do with dominance of Western psychological knowledge in Africa? Can we translate the different psychological concepts and explanations in our ‘local’ contexts? Are these even translatable? Or are they fundamentally culturally-bound and context-specific? This reflection would be incomplete if we neglect to engage these questions which were posed at the conference in different ways and forms. These questions are necessarily about what our psychological knowledge is about and where it comes from.

If there is one thing that we take seriously, it is the idea that our knowledge is neither neutral nor objective but a function of history and power. Hence, deconstructing our psychological knowledge bases is a critical political, intellectual and pedagogic endeavour. If re-imagining psychology in Africa and the contexts in which we practice means revealing not only ‘what we know (in psychology)’ but also ‘how we have come to know what we know’, we support such an engagement. If questions around what an African Psychology could look like entail banishing existing psychological theories, concepts (such as ‘the unconscious’), uncritically and simply labelling them ‘Western psychology’, *then we do not want African Psychology*. Our response is: Not just ‘African psychology’ and ‘Not just ‘Western psychology’’. However, if re-imagining Psychology in Africa is about unpacking our psychological knowledge bases and claims, and dealing critically with the questions posed by Van der Velden (2004) – ‘What is knowledge? Who decides what knowledge is? Whose knowledge matters? By whom and for what will that knowledge be used?’ (p. 75) – then it is a worthwhile endeavour to support and develop. The critical question, for us, is how we should and can bring different knowledge bases together. How we can bring so-called ‘indigenous’ African knowledge and Western/scientific knowledge into dialogue, is the question we should pursue rather than placing these in some hierarchical order. We argue that students and practitioners of psychology in

Africa need to re-imagine 'African Psychology' in more creative, critical and agentic ways, not in defensive and reactionary ways that construct Africa as 'the object' always defined in opposition to the West and its constitutive knowledge bases that lock Africa into a perpetual victim space. We advocate for an articulation of an 'African Psychology' that is responsive to its local contexts while remaining reflexive of its history and hegemony and yet never loses its particular explanatory power as a discipline and a form of praxis.

ENCOURAGING A CRITICAL VOICE WITHIN THE DISCIPLINE

Related to the first two issues, an additional observation we have made of the recent student conference concerns the paucity of critical interrogation in many of the papers presented. The topics presented were undoubtedly interesting, many of them relevant to the social issues and challenges facing our Southern African context. Despite this, many papers failed to move beyond a relatively superficial engagement with the research topics. The largely descriptive nature of analytic commentary and the relative lack of critical engagement with the conceptual and methodological cornerstones of mainstream approaches within the discipline of psychology characterised the general tone of the conference and, as such, demands further commentary.

To clarify what we mean by being 'critical': The notion of critique describes a process of questioning, of taking apart and scrutinising the conceptual and methodological cornerstones of mainstream approaches to knowledge-making (Burman & MacLure, 2004). An awareness of the conceptual shortcomings, ideological underpinnings and political effects of frameworks of psychology is inextricably linked to its historical contextualisation. Regardless of the research topic chosen, projects need to be informed by an interrogation of psychology as a historical practice, and a critical awareness of the function of the discipline regarding its implication in institutional practices of

power.

As stated by Sawicki (1988):

. . . freedom lies in our capacity to discover the historical links between certain modes of self-understanding and modes of domination, and to resist the ways in which we have already been classified and identified by dominant discourses. This means discovering new ways of understanding ourselves and each other, refusing to accept the dominant culture's characterisations of our practices and desires, and redefining them from within resistant cultures. (p. 186)

Challenges to traditional psychology have emerged from cross-fertilisation and dialogue between various theoretical and disciplinary paradigms. Despite their diverse genealogical and theoretical trajectories, what these various theoretical resources broadly have in common is that they challenge the normative assumptions that function as facts about the world. The fields of literary and cultural studies for example, have long offered paradigms, theories, concepts and vocabularies for theorising and researching the nexus of subjectivity and sociopolitical context (Lewis, 1996). It should be noted, however, that commentary positioned within a critical framework should not be conceived of as something 'outside', or apart from psychology, nor as aiming to replace these knowledge domains (Burman, 1998). Critical praxis is simultaneously positioned both *within* and *against* the parameters that define the bodies of knowledge being critiqued.

HOW THEN CAN WE BEGIN TO MAKE OUR RESEARCH CRITICAL?

While there is much to be said for the incorporation of pedagogies of critical thinking, reading and writing at all levels of formal education, we do not have to search very far outside of ourselves for a critical lens. Many of us have memories (past or current) of people in our lives (parents, teachers, friends) that have triggered, nurtured and facilitated our critical awareness, sometimes by just encouraging us to always ask 'WHY?' Furthermore, historical and contemporary events on our continent and in the world provide ample resources for critical questions around the social construction of identity and experience. In this sense, critical reflexivity is a useful resource. It alludes to a process of questioning our own personal notions of who we are and where we are in the world – questions of identity and positioning. It means exploring how the subjective investments we make in our everyday practice (for example in research activity) can be traced along networks of institutional power that contain us and necessitates unpacking the discourses and ideologies that inform these subjective investments.

We do not necessarily have to wade through tomes of heavy critical literature to become more critical. Throughout research projects there are moments which stand out due to the way in which they impact on the research process, perhaps unsettling the ways in which we attempt to make sense of them. These moments can be useful resources informing a critical methodological and analytic process of inquiry. Our own personal experience of the research process can be a useful springboard to this process of critical reflexivity. We need to welcome the messy moments of confusion, the guilty moments of translation, the secret moments of silence, the strategic performances in supervision. We need to curiously explore the dynamics, assumptions and ideologies that underpin our experiences and representations of research. We need a renewed passion in mobilising a critical collective voice within the discipline,

remembering that we have a responsibility to usher in the kind of psychology that has something substantial to offer in response to the many social ills facing our continent. Where such a space for discussion does not exist it is our responsibility to create it. This would be a space where we can reflect on our work and the world, where we can step back for a minute from our frantic ‘doing’ of psychology, and ask ourselves a question that has fuelled psychology from the start – ‘WHY?’ But we need to broaden our horizons in searching for the answers to this question.

CONCLUSION

We do not discover psychology but live and produce it.
(Parker, 1999b, p. 13)

It has been widely argued that because psychology is reproduced through that which it speaks about, psychology itself must form part of the object under investigation (Foucault, 1980; Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, & Walkerdine, 1987; Parker, 1994; Rose, 1985). We need to integrate a healthy suspicion of this thing called ‘psychology’. Certainly, in our African context, we do not have to think too far back to be reminded of the ways in which the institution of psychology has been complicit in the establishment and the protection of privilege and status and in systematically maintaining the status quo of racialised and gendered power inequities. Hook (2001) suggests that by putting psychology into the spotlight, and in becoming aware of the ways that knowledge and practices of psychology are the products and producers of social, discursive and historical dispensations of power (the politics of psychology), also allows for thinking about the ways that psychology can reconstruct or deconstruct alternative forms of knowledge, and connect into activism (a psychology of politics).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES



Tarryn Frankish has submitted her Masters thesis in Psychology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Her research delves into theorising post-apartheid identity, working with narrative theory and method, as well as navigating trauma theory and practice within South Africa. She has been awarded the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam NRF Desmond Tutu Doctoral scholarship to extend her Masters work into a PhD.



Siyanda Ndlovu, at the time of the conference, was appointed as a lecturer in the School of Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal and Commonwealth PhD student, UKZN and University of East London. His thesis is titled, *'There is No-One Black: Narratives of Blackness, exploring the boundaries of time and place'*. This work interrogates the multiple constructions of what it means to be black-in-the-world. Siyanda passed away in 2010.



Jude Clark is a lecturer in the School of Psychology UKZN, teaching modules on social psychology and on trauma. She has a PhD from Manchester Metropolitan University (UK). She is a peer reviewer for a number of national journals of psychology and an international editorial board member of *Social Psychology and Personality Compass* (Critical Psychology Division), and *Annual Review of Psychology*. Her research interests include: Discursive representations and socio-cultural reconstructions of 'trauma' in South Africa; HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence; Processes of memorialisation and constructions of 'the new nation'.

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PINS (Psychology in society) aims to foster a socio-historical and critical theory perspective, by focusing on the theory and practice of psychology in the southern African context.

EDITOR

Grahame Hayes (University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban)

Email: hayes@ukzn.ac.za

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Arvin Bhana (HSRC; University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban)

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EDITORIAL ADDRESS**PINS**

Box 17285

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South Africa

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DERACIALISATION! WHAT DERACIALISATION?: THERE'S NO END TO RACE (Review article)

*Siyanda Ndlovu
School of Psychology
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Howard College Campus
Durban*

Reviewing **A race against time** (2006) 2010, four years after its publication, is perhaps a blessing in disguise. Such an accidental, critical distance is a significant opportunity to reflect, as one chapter in the book suggests, on “the role, nature, utility and longevity of race” (Bowman, Seedat, Duncan and Burrows, 2006: 91) in the landscape of post-apartheid South Africa. A landscape that once held so much promise and hope of something “new” and “better”, of a “rainbow nation” united in its diversity and unrelenting in its moral quest for human rights, equality, social justice and of course its national vision of non-racialism. So, we must, as the book attempts to, ask the question, how far have we come in achieving the promise of non-racialism and the dream of deracialisation? Since the book's publication in 2006, there has been what Hall (1996) in his work on identity, refers to as, a “discursive explosion”, in the national, political and public imagination around “race” and all its varieties in South Africa. It is useful to briefly reflect on and take stock of some of the events and debates that have happened in the post-apartheid landscapes since the book first appeared on book shelves.

2007 saw the country being “plunged regularly into darkness” (Nuttall and McGregor, 2009: 9) as load shedding took its toll on this once “rainbow nation”. “2008 was a hard year for South Africans”, reflect Sarah Nuttall and Liz McGregor (2009: 9) in their astutely titled collection of essays, **Load shedding: Writing on and over the edge of South Africa**, and “[2008] seemed to be the culmination of a shift in the national psyche. It marked the end of the Mbeki era, with the president fired from office by the ANC, and the rise to prominence of Jacob Zuma, newly elected president of the ANC, a man with widespread support but whose populism, polygamy and political vision left many South Africans uncertain”. While Barak Obama captured the imagination of the world in the United States, 2008 was the year that black South Africans turned against black African foreign nationals resulting in brutal scenes of xenophobic violence around the country. The most dramatic and polarising national elections were staged in 2009. Smaller oppositional parties were almost completely obliterated from the political scene. Questions of who to vote for dominated dinner-table conversations around the country as many middle-class South Africans, black and white alike, pondered on how to vote strategically, disillusioned and yet united in and by the fear of being called “counter-revolutionary”. These elections also, momentarily, sought to significantly fracture the black vote as COPE, a new break-away oppositional party emerged. Its promise, however, was short lived.

And then there was (and still is) the belligerent Julius Malema with his rhetoric of race-talk – and what some consider to be “hate-speech”, inciting violence of different kinds - with his disconcerting call to take up arms and “kill for Zuma” and recently in 2010 songs about “shooting the Boer”. There was also the case of Caster Semenya that saw a clear “gender”, or more acutely “sex”, issue discursively hijacked and given a “race” flair and racist overtones. Who can forget the University of the Free State’s disturbing and racist video where white students subjected black cleaning staff to humiliating and dehumanising acts for their amusement? Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Jonathan Jansen’s decision in 2010 to re-admit the students to the university, in the name of reconciliation, further threw the spotlight on the wavering race relations in the “new” South Africa. 2010, it seems, has already had its fair share of drama. The news about the consideration for a presidential pardon for Eugene De Kock has reopened some old wounds imperfectly bandaged by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. While the country prepares to host the FIFA Soccer World Cup, revelations of Zuma’s twentieth child born out of his polygamous marriages have sharply put issues of “race” and “culture” on a collision path. This resulted in one of the most fascinating accusations by the leader of the Democratic Alliance against the ANC for playing, not just “the race card” but “the culture card”. It has not all been gloom and doom, this year also marked 20 years of freedom for the iconic leader, Nelson Mandela.

The question of “race” remains at the centre of our globalised, “postmodern”, multicultural, and seemingly post-race, world. There is perhaps no other more highly contested idea in South Africa than the issue of “race”. Like the many questions the book raises, Erasmus (2008: 169) asks the following questions about race in post-apartheid South Africa: “Why does ‘race’ remain central in post-apartheid everyday life and consciousness? Is a future beyond race simply a fantasy, or a real possibility? Answers to these questions lie in asking others first. How did the idea of race emerge? How do these ideas shape the ways in which most South Africans use the term ‘race’ today? What would it take to unmake race or, at least, to make it less central?”. While “race” seems to be *everywhere* in post-apartheid South Africa, there is, nonetheless, political and intellectual resistance to talking about, confronting, debating “race” in order to finally, as Mamphela Ramphele (2008) argues, “lay this ghost to rest”. Intellectually, the resistance to talking about “race” is premised on the idea that talking about race is to be “racist” (Steyn, 2001). To consider political resistance to talking about “race”, we can take the **Mail and Guardian’s Special Issue on Race** (2009) where the editor, Nic Dawes, argues that “there can be no question of whether we should confront the race issue or let it lie. Race confronts us and race-talk is unavoidable. The real question is how to talk about race”? What is most striking about the **Mail and Guardian’s Special Issue on Race** is the fact that it was published a month after President Jacob Zuma suggested that “a debate on race will take the country backwards” and he rather called for the embracing of non-racialism.

However, the book under review poses questions regarding the (im)possibilities of deracialisation in South Africa. The subtitle of the book (“Psychology and challenges to deracialisation in South Africa”) would have us believe that it is as much about “race” as it is about the discipline of psychology. I am, however, unconvinced and this is one of the criticisms which I shall turn to shortly. Like most disciplines in the academy, what psychology has had to say about “race” historically is not only embarrassing but also an untruth. The discipline has, for example, provided “scientific evidence” that served to

maintain the modern hegemony of race and fuelled ongoing scientific racism. This history is one that the discipline would rather forget. One of Derek Hook's (2006: 171) chapters (*Psychoanalysis, discursive analysis, racism and the theory of abjection*), reminds us that psychology has been "an instrument of both racist practice and knowledge". In some senses, I see this book as a corrective attempt to rectify and rescue the discipline of psychology from its own racist history. At first glance, this is a psychological book and the editors (Stevens et al, 2006: 4) suggest that the main objectives of the book are to "... explore the contemporary status of race in South Africa, and the conditions of possibility that exist for deracialisation, from perspectives within psychology, and in a manner that views history as present and running forward". Though I mostly enjoyed reading this volume, I found, disappointingly, that the book fails, with the exception of a few chapters, in its objectives in two regards: Firstly, *all* chapters, with the exception of one (Brett Bowman, Mohamed Seedat, Norman Duncan and Stephanie Burrows' chapter - *Race, social transformation and redress in the South African social and health sciences*), *do not* in any real and explicit way explore the challenges and prospects to deracialisation in South Africa. In fact only three chapters in the book even mention the word "deracialisation" in the text (the editors' introductory chapter - *Changing contexts of race and racism: Problematics, polemics and perspectives*; Bowman et al's chapter – mentioned above; and Garth Stevens' chapter - *Truth, reconciliation, reparation and deracialisation in post-apartheid South Africa: Fact or fiction?*), and only one chapter has the word "deracialisation" in its title (Garth Stevens' chapter – mentioned above). Some might contend that this is a petty issue, but I disagree and see this as a significant oversight and shortcoming. Secondly, despite the fact that all the contributors to this volume are themselves psychologists of various kinds and therefore draw on different psychological theory and concepts in different and uneven ways, it is unclear, to me, how the book is *psychological*. Hook's (2006) chapter, above, is one of the few chapters that engages the issue of "race" psychologically. Before I get ahead of myself, let me first say a few things about what the book does manage to do.

The fourteen chapters, excluding the introduction, are organised into four parts, namely i) Race and signification; ii) Race, self, subjectivity and personhood; iii) Race and social location, and iv) Race, nation-building and citizenship. Together, the different chapters in the book successfully navigate the different post-apartheid landscapes of contemporary South Africa and explore the status of "race". The introductory chapter draws a useful intellectual, cultural and political map that contextualises the book as a whole. The post-apartheid context demands that we re-look, re-think, re-conceptualise "race" and race relations. But more importantly for psychology, that we consider how this complexly changing context impacts on subjectivity; on how "race" is reconfigured, rearticulated, remade, maintained and/or subverted in the social constitution of racialised subjects in the new South Africa. The work of Melissa Steyn (2001) on whiteness is instructive here as she similarly argues that the post-apartheid context requires a re-negotiation of racial identities, both white and black (and of course not forgetting the "grey" in between).

Two themes seem to tie the different chapters in the book together. First, all chapters (and the editors make this explicit from the beginning) are caught in the profound paradox and dilemma that confronts everyone who works and researches race. In this way, the editors and contributors are caught in, what Radhakrishnan calls "the treacherous bind", of working with and against the imperfect and potentially dangerous

categories of “race”. This is because the possibility of re-inscribing, as the editors argue, “racialised subjects, categories and asymmetries” (Stevens et al, 2006:xix), is almost unavoidable. Gunaratnam (2003:28) suggests that when we continue to deploy the concept of “race” we are in a “treacherous bind” in that we are “working with and against racial categories”. Most of this bind is because we are, using insights from Derrida (1981: 29), “thinking [with the concept] at the limit”. Hall (1996) argues that we need to understand the nature of deconstructive critique of many essentialist concepts such as “identity”, and following Hall, obviously “race” for this book. On the issue of questioning our concepts, Hall (1996: 1-2) argues that “[u]nlike those forms of critique which aim to supplant inadequate concepts with ‘truer’ ones, or which aspire to the production of positive knowledge, the deconstructive approach puts key concepts ‘under erasure’. This indicates that they are no longer serviceable – ‘good to think with’ – in their originary and unreconstructed form. But since they have not been superseded dialectically, and there are no other, entirely different concepts with which to replace them, there is nothing to do but to continue to think with them – albeit now in their detotalized or deconstructed forms, and no longer operating within the paradigm in which they were originally generated”.

Similarly with the concept of “race”, we can no longer think of and use the concept of race in its original emergence and modern production, that is, as an essentialist and deterministic category. Since all of us, working with the concept of “race”, recognize, and here paraphrasing Hall (1996), that there is no “truer” concept to be supplanted in the service of the concept of race, we have no choice but to continue to deploy the concept of “race”, albeit strategically and “under erasure”. We continue to deploy the concept of “race” in Hall’s term, in a “detotalized” form. As we use the concept of “race”, we do so with the recognition that when we use the concept “race” we are immediately thrown into the “treacherous bind”. For Derrida (1981: 29), using a concept “under erasure” precisely means using “a concept that can no longer be and never could be, included in the previous regime”. Therefore, we need to continue using the concept of “race”, however we need to be mindful of the fact that we can no longer use it or think of it in “the old way” (Hall, 1996); or “in the previous regime” (Derrida, 1981) or in its original emergence and production. This is where one of the theoretical shortcomings of the deracialisation project or the post-race discourse lies: how can we counter different kinds, forms and variations of racisms without the concept of “race” - in some detotalized or deconstructed form? As flawed as the concept of race is (and might be); as tainted and perhaps even dangerous, we have *no* choice but to continue to use the concept of race, albeit as a strategy, that can be deployed in various ways for emancipatory and political mobilization; as a source of personal identity and identification; as a site for re-articulation, subversion, and resistance. The editors themselves eloquently capture this dilemma of working with concepts under erasure in that “[t]he approach consistent throughout the contributions is *a priori* to dismiss race and racial categories as valid entities as deployed in scientific racism, but nevertheless to utilise the terms in recognition that they are socially constructed features that have historically reflected and impacted on the nature of social relations in South Africa and across the world continue to do so” (Stevens et al , 2006: xix).

The second parallel theme is about the persistence of the continuities between apartheid and post-apartheid landscapes in terms of racialisation and the stubborn role race continues to play in shaping “relations, subjectivities and configurations of personhood” (Stevens et al, 2006: 4). Race refuses to go away. Its refusal at erasure is

despite the “damning” deconstruction critiques of “race” as a social construct, nothing more than a political fiction and illusion (Donald and Rattansi, 1992; Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Gunaratnam, 2003; Stevens et al, 2006), “a myth of modernity” (Nayak, 2006: 411), and “a flawed scientific construct” (Bowman et al, 2006: 92). Race, nonetheless, remains salient and central in post-apartheid South Africa in a variety of domains of life, such as access to social and economic benefits.

Let me now turn my attention to the criticisms of the book I alluded to earlier. My criticisms are contained in the editors’ objectives in the introductory chapter, which are succinctly captured in the subtitle of the book, **Psychology and challenges to deracialisation in South Africa**. An immediate question I asked myself as early as reading the preface and introductory chapter, no doubt a question triggered by the word I find problematic, “deracialisation”, as what do the editors and contributors actually mean by “deracialisation”? This question led me to ask subsequent questions. I must also say that I ask these questions as a “black” South African whose own work is an attempt to understand and question the changing and multiple social constitutions of black identities. More personally, I ask these questions as a “racialised subject” with enormous psychological investments in the concept of “race” generally and in the construct of blackness as a source of and marker for identification and difference specifically. Is, and should “deracialisation” be, the logical outcome and progressive project following the demise of apartheid? Is deracialisation the editors’ and contributors’ theoretical endeavour and political pursuit? What is the relationship between deracialisation and non-racialism? Can either of these ideals ever be achieved in a place like South Africa, with its far too recent racist and racial history? How is deracialisation similar to or different from, what Daniel (2000) refers to as “deconstructive postcolonial thinking” or the post-race discourse, chiefly exemplified by the work of Paul Gilroy’s (2000) call for a move beyond “race”. How is deracialisation similar to or different from colour-blindness? Or does deracialisation mean, what Bowman et al (2006) in their attempt to engage the issue of deracialisation suggest, “the dissolution of race” – that we stop using the concept of “race” all together? While a few chapters impressed me, I was left with the same question after reading all the chapters (except for Bowman et al’s (2006) chapter): so what are the actual challenges and prospects for deracialisation? The book leaves this question unexplored in a direct way. Much is left to the reader to infer that the deracialisation project is difficult, if not impossible, given the re-inscription of (re)racialisation processes post apartheid. This is a profound limitation of the book. With this limitation in mind, I now offer my own thoughts on the deracialisation project.

In the preface Vourc’h (2006: xv) writes: “[i]n reading the chapters in the volume one takes cognizance of how difficult it is when embarking on a process of deracialisation to do away with the illegitimate categories of apartheid”. He then immediately poses the poignant question: “*Who are we if we are no longer blacks, coloureds, or whites?* It is neither simple nor evident how to implement a policy that *wipes clean the slate of racist ties without affording the victims of this odious system the opportunity to be vindicated for their oppression and to gain recognition for extreme prejudice endured in an all too recent past.* “Yes” to deracialising social relations and ties, but for whose benefit?” (Vourc’h, 2006: xv; emphases added). Vourc’h’s (2006) question, “for whose benefit” is a critical one. Who does deracialisation benefit? Who benefits from non-racialism or colour-blindness? Who reaps the discursive, material and psychological benefits for not talking about race, for not calling a thing by its name? For me, Steyn (2001: xxxii) offers

us insights of this dilemma by pointing out that “[t]he construction of race has been used to skew this society over centuries. If we banish [race] from our analytical frameworks, we serve the narrow interests of those previously advantaged, by concealing the enduring need for redress. To deal with the expressions of power, we have to call [race] by its name”.

Let me capture my own resistance against the theoretical and political calls to move beyond “race” or what I take the deracialisation project to mean with a play on words and ideas taken from this edited volume. The Introductory chapter opens with a famous quote from Justice Harry Blackmun (1978): “In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race”. This means that we need the concept of “race”, no matter how flawed and how dangerous it might be, in countering racism and all of its varieties and manifestations. And here I am talking in Hook’s (2006: 179) terms of “unmediated or pre-discursive varieties of racism” and not simply institutional forms of racism. It is only then, that we can even begin to imagine a world unstructured by “race” and race-thinking. But as long as different kinds of inequalities and racisms are insidiously and structurally embedded in our social world and relations with and between each other, non-racialism, post-race and the deracialisation projects will remain forever an elusive possibility, and an unattainable utopia.

Rather than deracialisation, there is an urgent need to deal with race and its obstinate nature. Rather than wishing race away, we have to find ways of confronting race and talking about it intelligently and seriously. Without the concept of race, we are left blind to its disguised and latent forms and expressions. This is Freud’s insight of the *return of the repressed*. What is repressed will haunt us because it has to come out sooner or later - in some indirect forms until it finds some resolve. Gilroy’s work and the deracialisation project are of course important in imagining possibilities of the demise of race. However, that theoretical work is difficult to translate into lived realities and experiences, as we live in a historically racialised world, and we ourselves are racialised subjects - whether we like it or not. The hegemony of race is such that we cannot undo the past. We need creative ways of dealing with, talking about and engaging “race” that are not simply apologetic and confessional (as much of whiteness studies has tended to produce); ways that do not appeal to some nostalgic and mythical ideas of blackness (as much of the Afrocentric scholarship and black consciousness imagine); and ways that do not problematically reinforce and reify essentialised notions of “race”. But, we need critical and pluralized ways of continuing to talk about “race”; to engage “race” and its continual residual power. We therefore must look elsewhere, to other people and not only this book, to understand the prospects and challenges to deracialisation in South Africa. One such person we can look to is Thabisi Hoene, who in November of 2004 published an article, *Closing the race debate - no way to resolve tensions*, in the **Sunday Independent**, where she argues that “[t]he challenge is to recognize that a yearning to have a non-racial society should not detract from persistent engagement with race. Otherwise reality is distorted”.

With that, I consider the second criticism in a form of another question I posed to myself while reading this book. In what ways is the book psychological? I am aware that asking *this* question in *this* way runs the risk of falsely positing rigid, strict and yet arbitrary boundaries between disciplines. By psychological, I also do mean to return us to that problematic traditional and abstracted conception of the individual. However, I do not yearn for an inward turn into the intra-psychic realm of the individual.

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SECTION THREE

UNPUBLISHED PAPERS

Siyanda Ndlovu

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SECTION THREE: UNPUBLISHED PAPERS

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3. Ndlovu, S. (2007). *African Scholarship: The Impossible Ideal*. Unpublished paper, presented at a Symposium, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, 2 February, 2007.

There is No-One Black: Exploring Divergent Points of Racialisation in Narratives of Blackness

Siyanda Ndlovu

2009

SANPAD Intergenerational Identities Research Forum¹

I will do two things in this paper. First, I will contextualize this paper and the study from which it derives. In contextualizing the study, I want to draw a map in which I will chart some aspects of the autobiography of the topic and the journey that I have embarked on in conceptualizing my PhD work. Second, I will analyze three life story interviews of three very different black individuals in order to pluralize what it means to be black and show different points of racialisation in these narratives in the attempt to argue that “there is no-one black”.

1. The Autobiography of the Topic

In giving you the autobiographical account of the topic, I will take you back to some of the earlier events and encounters with ideas that have shaped this project. The significance of these earlier events and encounters should not be understood as linear temporal causality leading to the current conceptualization of the study. But rather, as in Elliot Mishler’s (1999, p. 2) *Storylines*, the significance of these earlier events and encounters is “retrospectively constructed [and] not prospectively given”. Such a perspective or as Mishler puts it, “the trope of the double arrow of time where the present (and the future) anticipations shape the past as well as the reverse” is, for me, a useful approach in the analysis and understanding of narratives. So, let me now retrace my steps.

¹ This is an extended version of a paper presented at the *Graduate Seminars in Narrative, Discourse and Social Representations* jointly hosted by the Centre for Narrative Research of the University of East London and the Gender Institute of the London School of Economics in February 2009.

1.1 Walking the Streets of Manchester

My research problem began for me in the summer of 2004 in this very country [the UK]. I was doing my MA at the time and that was the first time I had ever left South Africa. I had come with Jill Bradbury, my South African PhD supervisor, to give a paper at a Postgraduate Psychology Student Conference in Manchester, on trauma in a rural South African context. I was walking around the streets and I had a strange experience and I am not entirely sure how to articulate this experience in words. So, I will tell you how I felt in the exact words I used to talk to myself. *I felt black*. In the midst of all white bodies, I felt visibly and uncomfortably different. The interesting part of the story is that nothing happened: nobody looked at me funny and nobody had said anything to explain why I was feeling this way, very conscious of my black body. That's half the story because something else happened. Whenever another black body appeared in the midst of this sea of whiteness, I caught myself feeling relieved and actively identifying with that person as like me, as my black brother or sister. I spent a lot my time following these outnumbered black bodies in the hope that they might lead me home, where I belong, lead to other black bodies hidden somewhere in the inner city of Manchester. I was intrigued by what had happened and my emotive reactions to it. I wanted to theorize this experience: why did I suddenly feel so conscious of my skin colour? I was used to being, to use a provocative title of a book by Eric Mnyeni (2007), "the only black at the dinner table", in South Africa. What was that active identification (on my part) with other black people about? What ties black people together? What had just happened to me?

On my return home, I offered this experience to my friends in order to make sense of it. I remember my [white] friends were not particularly moved by what was to me 'my existential crisis'. In fact, they suggested that my experience is not that unique or that particular at all. In fact, they reassured me "it has nothing to do with race" but it is about the experience of displacement. "We all have experienced this before", I was told. They proceeded to tell of wondrous tales of their travels and adventures in far and distant lands. Each offering their story and their sense of being displaced onto unfamiliar spaces and cultures. These stories deflated me. They were robbing me of and taking from my rather

‘traumatic’ experience, I thought. Suddenly, we all seemed to have so much in common in terms of the experience of being displaced and being an outsider. There was nothing particular about my individual experience. Well, nothing particular apart from one fundamental difference. I was black and I remained convinced about the realities and politics of the body, about difference that is inscribed by and marked on the body. After all our bodies are not neutral sites; whether we like it or not our bodies are racialised and imbued with politics and history that we cannot escape no matter how much we would like to. I began to theorize my experience in Manchester as an interplay of embodied displacement as well as, what I have come to term as *the Fanonian moment*. I shall return to this concept later in the paper.

1.2 Poetry Africa

Later in the same year, I had a different experience that would shape and inform my thinking and conceptualization on race, and blackness specifically. I attended the opening night of an annual Poetry Festival, called Poetry Africa. The festival brought together over 30 poets from 12 different countries all over the world. We were treated to an electrifying performance of praise poetry to open the festival. As we sat in the cover of darkness in the auditorium of the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre our eyes fixed onto the stage, we heard the beat of the African drum as if it were summoning ancestors and spirits to brace us with their divine presence. A peculiar sense seemed to connect all of us in the room to some romantic and mythical idea of Africa, a nostalgia that transcends all reason. It was as if a kind of sentimental and spiritual tie descended onto and connected us all: black, white and brown; young and old; South African citizens and foreign nationals. My body was covered in goose bumps as the sound of ‘the African drum’ filled the room. And then about five or six different *izimbongi* (praise poets) representing some of the different cultural and linguistic communities in South Africa, one after another, came onto the stage to recite, in their native tongue, praise poetry – in *isiZulu*, *isiXhosa*, *isiNdebele*, *seTswana*, *seSotho* and *tshiVenda*. The whole performance was deeply moving, however, I could not help but feel dissatisfied and concerned on two different levels.

I was dissatisfied with the version of blackness that was represented, recounted and performed through the praise poetry. Each *imbongi*, one after another, as far as I could understand the language (as I do not understand all of the eleven official languages in South Africa) invoked a particular version of blackness that was both singular and historical. It was a version blackness connected primarily and exclusively to oppression, and oppression by the ‘white colonial evil Other’. It seemed to me that a shared black history of oppression and Africa as a common ancestral place, whether real or imagined, are clear departing points for defining blackness. This means that blackness has a clear connection with the history of racism and oppression: Mama (1995) suggests that blackness is synonymous with ‘struggle’, a black struggle for autonomy, for freedom and for self-definition. Like Mama (1995), blackness for Manganyi (1973) tells a narrative of suffering and exploitation in that: “black people share the experience of having been abused and exploited. This is part of [their] consciousness” (p. 19). I was left dissatisfied because questions about what it means to be black in the world ‘in the present’ and ‘in the future’ are less clear and, I argue, need investigation. I am interested in a study on blackness that attempts to go beneath and beyond the ‘black skin’ and its clear connections with oppression to consider how race intersects with other dimensions of identity such as gender, age, class, culture, ethnicity, time and place. A study that seeks to complicate what seems obvious and argues for different ways of being black created by different personal, historical, political, and cultural conditions. My second concern is about the moral/political and psychological implications of defining blackness as exclusively tied to different forms and histories of oppression and oppression. The best way I can attempt to capture my discomfort is by paraphrasing something that Jill Bradbury once alerted me to: If *all* that connects *all* black peoples of the world is their history of oppression and their “shared hatred” of “the white folk” then I am afraid ‘we’ are in deep trouble. We are in trouble politically and theoretically because such unity is not sustainable, or rather, it cannot provide adequate ground for human connections and relationships in the future. It is not sustainable because it is, for lack of a better phrase, a pathological connection. If nothing else lies beyond our black skin than the history of victimhood, that connection will break in the face of new political struggles and new divisive forms of (particularly economic) postcolonial power. And it did break in May of

2008 in South Africa with the outburst of brutal xenophobic violence. If we leave blackness un-interrogated we run the grave danger of reproducing problematic and subverted notions of power. We need to question what it means to be black rather than holding onto some forced unities. It is under such a context where I want to assert a moral humanist position, however, one that is not colourblind but secure in holding the tensions between similarities and differences in people. I am concerned about what the notion of blackness as singularity leaves out; of what it obscures and conceals. If we only invoke blackness in this way we run the risk of losing sight of other struggles and inequalities that people live in race, but live differently. So, I still want to talk about race and about blackness specifically. But I want to do so in critical pluralized ways rather than in an essentialised, homogenized singularity; in ways that embrace the complicated and varied ways of being black in the world; in ways that do not hold on to some myth of African or black unity; in ways that are not about mythic past glories or forced unities but in ways that allow for fractured and divergent political and social realities in black people's everyday lives and practices.

1.3 Encountering Fanon

Unsurprisingly, I was drawn to the work of Frantz Fanon, in particular, *Black Skin White Masks* (1967), as it powerfully examines the psychology of oppression and the psychology of what it means to be black post-colonially. One of the ideas that I take from Fanon and develop in this work is, as he puts it, the black man's moment of "being for others" (110). What I am most interested in is, the moment in which he is violently thrown and locked into blackness:

"Look, a Negro!" it was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile.

"Look, a Negro" It was true. It amused me.

"Look, a Negro" The circle was drawing a bit tighter ...

"Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" ... (pp.111-112).

Fanon analyzes this moment:

My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recoloured, clad in mourning in that winter day. The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly; look, a nigger ... (p. 113).

In questioning what it means to black and the different kinds of being-black-in-the-world (Manganyi, 1973) I am fascinated by this moment in black people's lives and narratives. There is lot of black writing about the moment when a black person becomes crudely aware of their black skin and black body. And the most famous account of this moment is given by Frantz Fanon above. It is a moment at which he is 'outed' as black and violently thrown into blackness. I am interested in precisely those moments when black people recognize that their bodies are not neutral states of being but rather their bodies carry in them history and politics. And that awareness has implications for their sense of themselves as racialized subjects. The following excerpt from Jay David (1968) exemplifies that moment of acute and crude awareness in black narratives:

Probably the single most important event in the life of any [Black] child is his (sic) recognition of his (sic) own **colouredness**, with all the implications of that fact. The realization can come as mild awareness that is taken in stride, or it can come as a rude shock that results in a trauma; but whatever the circumstances, a new understanding of the self influences the child's every thought and emotion from that day forth. Truly, he (sic) sees the world through different eyes, from a different perspective, with somewhat less innocence of his (sic) earlier years (David, 1968, p. 3).

I refer to this moment as *the Fanonian moment* (of race consciousness). I recognize that these moments of awareness are not the same moment that Fanon experiences himself but rather are appropriated from that experience as they capture the sense of being made visibly and negatively different. Further, I argue that these racialized moments are perhaps what tie the different experiences of being black but configure them differently. In narratives of blackness, I am interested in the Fanonian moment; the narrative point or

the moment of racialization where and when the black person is thrown into blackness and positioned as black. The Fanonian moments in black narratives are not of a positive kind but rather as David (1968) suggests a kind of ‘loss of innocence’, a burden of racialisation.

2. Fanonian Moment(s) of Racialisation in Narratives

The three life stories analyzed here are taken from three very different black individuals living in different spaces, the United Kingdom; South Africa and Botswana: *Dina*, a first generation black British woman living in London, the archetype of a globalised multicultural context. *Musa* is a black South African man whose life and story begin in apartheid South Africa spans through to the new post-apartheid South Africa. South Africa has a long and recent racist history and remains highly racialised today even after the birth of the new ‘Rainbow’ nation. *Bili* comes from Botswana, a Southern African country, and has been living and studying in South Africa for over five years.

For the purposes of this paper, I am going to look at the divergent points or narrative moments (Morrison, 1992) at which ‘race’ first appears in the narrative account of a life and the place at which racialisation is inscribed. The three life stories analyzed here complicate and pluralize the narrative moments when racialisation is inscribed, and I argue, that they point to different ways of being black or individual ‘temporalities’ (Riley, 1988) of being black. The early inscription of racialisation interestingly happens in a much more globalised, cosmopolitan, multicultural context of the United Kingdom rather than the rigidly racially charged context of South Africa. It is Dina who is blatantly confronted with her own racialisation from a very young age of seven years in primary school.

2.1 Dina’s Fanonian Moment: Foregrounding Blackness as ‘different’ and ‘authentic’ in Britain

Dina recounts two early childhood experiences, her Fanonian moments, with two different ‘white girls’ that make her conscious of her skin colour and what she can and cannot do because she is black. Dina recounts these experiences in reverse chronology.

The first moment happens when she is about seven years old and her grandfather is driving her and her then white friend, Jane, for their brownies' event. Dina tells this story second. The second moment, which is told first, happens when Dina is in ballet dance and warming up with a white girl, Alexandra, for a competition:

Dina: ... I was good at what I did until my first dancing competition I think I was either 7 or 9 I don't remember which and it was a big stage show and there was one white girl there Alexandra her name was ... they were all very kinda well-to-do or they seemed like that to me at the time she helped me we were warming up together and we did the competition and I actually won and she ran off the stage saying 'mummy, mummy, the black girl won' and that was [short pause] amongst the first ways of me differentiating myself as a colour or having somebody differentiating me rather than just a thought that goes to my head obviously I can see I am different obviously I know I am black obviously I know that the kind of music I listen to at home versus the kind of music they listen to, the things that I eat, the things that my gran prepares, the way she talks I know is different to these other people, that's my difference. Nobody ever before brought that their differ[ence] my colour difference in front of me like that and that was like "hold on a minute I was just warming up with you, you are the only person here who helped me out but that was on the condition that I stay beneath her". So the fact that I won freaked her out freaked her out. She ran off the stage crying and I thought "Look at that" and just the whole trust thing and how people are towards you starts to change and that was actually the second experience like that....

Here comes the first moment:

Dina: The first one was in infant school and there was a white girl Jane that I used to kick about with sometimes. Sometimes she would go out to my house after school and I'd go out to her house ... both me and Jane

were in brownies and my granddad used to take us there in which ever day of the week it was and I remember with us both in the car and this is before you had to wear seatbelts so I was sat in the front and Jane was sat right in between the two seats ...

BOTH: [Laugh]

Dina: And then he says to us well, “what do you both want to be when you grow up?” a standard parent question and Jane says something like teacher from what I can remember we are already about 7 we couldn’t have been very old but I remember and I said I wanted to be a doctor and I wanted to be a doctor of children I didn’t know the name was you know whatever as such and Jane says ‘well, you can’t do that’. So, my granddad said, ‘why?’ I didn’t say anything, I didn’t say anything. “Because my mommy said black people could only be a nurse” (pause) and I thought, ‘we played together I go to your house you come to mine, your mom is nice to me and my mom is nice to you but there’s limits there’s a glass ceiling on being black and you people are letting me know this I have got my family saying, ‘you know what this is the land of opportunity we have come here because there wasn’t opportunities in the West Indies and to be here you could be anything you want if you put your mind to it’. Then I have got this girl saying to me her mom [sounding upset] who is more than nice to me is saying ‘well, actually that’s not the case you can only be a nurse’... But then in my whole view I don’t ever remembering seeing her again after that and if I do I don’t remember because we are not on the same page I thought we were but we’re not on the same page because we are doing things that are equal but your view on where I could get to isn’t and then I am hit with this whole Alexandra person ...

I want to make three kinds of different commentary from this rather extensive quotation. The first commentary is on the nature of narrative evident by Dina’s articulation of the second experience, first and the first experience, second. When people narrate stories of their lives they do not necessarily do so in linear, orderly, sequential and chronological

ways. I suppose this shows that it us, researchers, who attempt to impose this linear and sequential form on what people tell. This linear order seems to come after the fact and the time of narration. Dina, in particular, resists any kind of linearity imposed from outside. In interviews, participants transgress the oversimplified canon of what narrative is, that is, 'the beginning, middle, end' structure'. In narrating, participants move all over the place: they leap forward into the future only to return to what has already happened. They do not speak in themes; despite what our trusted thematic analysis method would lead us to believe. How are to make sense of Dina's talk in particular her narrative placement of the second moment first and vice versa? Well, one kind of analysis could point to the politics and the work of memory in terms of remembering and forgetting. However, I want to focus, not on memory but, on the nature of narrative and narration. Dina's nonlinear and non-sequential movement in narrative time illustrates the idea that people do not already have neatly packaged stories waiting to be discovered by the researcher or waiting to be simply reproduced in words before the actual telling. Stories are actively constructed and co-constructed in their telling. Perhaps, our challenge, as narrative researchers, is to find other ways of analysis that can deal with the messiness and the complicated nature of telling stories about oneself that are not fixated on linearity, order and coherence. Possibly, Deleuze and Guattari's notion and the metaphor of "the rhizome" is more appropriate in that it allows for ruptures, multiplicity, and non-linear connections in participants' stories.

The second commentary is about the significance of these 'Fanonian moments' for Dina, and to explore what happens to Dina we have to go back and closely consider the interview excerpts above. There is no doubt that Dina experiences the 'Fanonian moment' as a painful and violent inscription as she is fixed into a negative identity of blackness. "I was good at what I did" is a powerful subversive performance of blackness. Even though it was Dina's mother who insisted that she does ballet as a strategy to 'keep her off the streets' of Moss Side (something that Dina later reveals in the interview), Dina not only enjoyed but mastered this dance form, ballet, which she herself describes as "very classically English white" dance form. Dina indeed masters this dance form with all its associations of whiteness and European 'high culture'. "I was good at what I did"

and winning of the ballet competition tells a paradox of stories – stories about a young black girl who is, on one hand, not merely good enough but *better than* (the other white ballerinas). On the other hand, and despite her being “good at what [she] did” as evident in her winning the competition, she is ultimately disqualified culturally and forced to become a paradoxical, oxymoronic subject. Dina is disqualified culturally despite her winning and being better than, pointing to the ever elusive and the impossible ‘black ballerina’.

Alexandra, the white girl’s cries of “mummy, mummy the black girl won’ is not simply a rude reminder to Dina of her blackness, lest she forgets, but the perpetual control and policing of racial boundaries and borders. This dynamic puts race, class and cultural capital (Mahon, 2000) in a collision path. Mahon (2000) suggests that “racialised thinking can impede the acquisition of cultural capital and, by extension, class mobility – even in situations ostensibly geared to countering the effects of racism” (p. 298). From a very early age Dina transgresses racial boundaries of various kinds: attending integrated schools with children from diverse cultural and cosmopolitan backgrounds; forming interpersonal relationships like friendships across racial lines; mastering ballet and acquiring the cultural capital of the dominant mainstream (all which can be seen as betraying black authenticity by those to ascribe to discourses of Black Consciousness). Dina’s achievement and mastery is disavowed and taken away from her while she is forcefully and violently thrown into blackness. It is this moment of being made visible and *blackened* that I conceptualise as Dina’s very own Fanonian moment of racialisation. Toni Morrison (1994) eloquently accounts, in an undeniably psychoanalytic manner, for Dina’s Fanonian moment, in *Conversations with Toni Morrison*, when she examines the multiple social silences and political repressions that occur around race in the experiences of childhood:

I remember saying that you know, in the moment when you first realize you’re a boy or girl or your toilet training is this or whatever – all these little things that happen in your childhood – no one ever talks about the moment you found out you were white. Or the moment you found out you

were black. That's a profound revelation. The minute you find that out, something happens. You have to renegotiate everything. And it's a profound psychological moment. And it's never talked about, except as paranoia, or some moment of Enlightenment (p. 152).

For Dina this is one of the moments where she finds out 'she's black' – a profound psychological revelation that she must now attempt to renegotiate, to make sense of and remake (her) self. I am fascinated with this moment in Dina's life, in particular how she then explains what has just happened to her. So, what has Alexandra done to Dina? How does Dina understand what has just happened to you? Dina herself provides us with the first clues of what happened to her: "that was amongst the first ways of me differentiating myself as a colour or having somebody differentiating me". Of course Dina knows 'she's black' (whatever that means): "... obviously I can see I am different I know I am black". What makes this moment profound for Dina is the fact that it is the first time somebody else, somebody white differentiates her as black by "bringing [her] difference [her] colour difference in front of [her] like that" and further attributes particular meaning to that blackness. Alexandra is performing a particular version of whiteness laced with colonial and racist constructions and associations of whiteness with superiority and of blackness with inferiority. The performance of this particular version of whiteness relationally demands a corresponding version of blackness that is "beneath" it – no matter structurally that Dina actually wins the competition because she is better than. At this moment, Dina is *just black!*

One further issue deserves attention in this analysis, that is, Dina's definition of what her blackness is, which she suggests is obvious to her (and maybe should be to others). She articulates her blackness or rather her racial difference in cultural terms. In both constructing who she is or knows herself to be (i.e. black) and who she is not (i.e. white), Dina conflates notions of race and culture. This is a common move or strategy used when talking about race, as Wilkins (1996) observes, forming a link between race and culture that seems inevitable and immutable. Dina ties race and culture together in order to claim and assert her racial identity, in two corresponding ways, both as legitimately and

fundamentally different as well as authentic and ‘really black’. To excavate the two ways Dina constructs her blackness as both ‘different’ and ‘authentic’ we have to look in two parallel places in her life story. First, let’s consider how she accounts for her blackness as legitimately different by tying together notions of race and culture:

Dina: ... and I actually won and she ran off the stage saying ‘mummy, mummy, the black girl won’ and that was ... amongst the first ways of me differentiating myself as a colour or having somebody differentiating me rather than just a thought that goes to my head obviously I can see I am different obviously I know I am black obviously I know that the kind of music I listen to at home versus the kind of music they listen to, the things that I eat, the things that my gran prepares, the way she talks I know is different to these other people, that’s my difference.

In order to claim and assert her (racial) identity as different (as demanded by identity politics of the 1960’s) from Alexandra’s, Dina places race and culture within the same conceptual schema of experience, collapsing race into culture and culture into race. In the above excerpt, she makes no conceptual or experiential distinction between race and things like music, food and accent. She knows and it is obvious to her that she is black because of the music she listens to, the food she eats and the kind of accent with which she speaks. And all this is fundamentally different from “these [white] people” and it is precisely *this* that makes her black and makes her different simply because it is *her difference*. Whether it is her racial or cultural difference is not only unclear but unimportant for Dina. This is her difference. Tying race and culture together allows Dina to create and assert a stronger version of (*her*) blackness rooted and grounded in a particular culture, a particular way of thinking, a particular way of doing things and a particular way of inhabiting the world. In this view, Dina and Alexandra are simply different kinds of people with very little in common and hence creating conditions of impossibilities (of translation, knowing and understanding each other). Blackness and whiteness are created in this way as simply different modes of being-in-the-world

(Manganyi, 1973) with no apparent and probable points of convergence as these modes of being-in-the-world are located and arise differently in culture, history and society.

Let's now consider the second, yet corresponding, way Dina constructs her blackness by tying together race and culture to claim and assert her racial identity as 'really black' (Mahon, 2000) and more authentic:

Dina: ... but dancing school was [brief pause] an experience. I did tap ballet contemporary dance all kinds of very classically English white forms of dance which took up a lot of time and I was very [brief pause] *black culturally if that means anything at all* there was one girl who was [the] same age group Tracy and we both grew up in the same neighbourhood she was always into white guys she was always pally with all these white girls and had a completely different home life or outlook on life to me I was always into reggae I was always into black music I was always into black people I can't even imagine going out with anybody white I can't but then I'm in a white environment but I only need to take it for what it is so I've always felt very kind of isolated there cause things I talk about place I'm [going to] want to go [to] these people can't be part of that ...

The above interview excerpt shows that Dina might be somewhat aware of making the slippery move in conflating race and culture "I was very black culturally". What does being black culturally actually mean? Conflating race and culture is deeply problematic, particularly theoretically, and Dina tries to rescue herself from this problematic with the qualifier "if that means anything at all". Whether Dina is or is not aware of making this move, what we can term *the racialisation of culture*, is less interesting. More critical is her motivation for doing so. By intimately tying her racial identity, that is, her blackness, to culture, Dina is more able to assert a stronger and *legitimate notion* of her racial identity than what her race "standing alone" (Wilkins, 1996) would allow. This is because culture is taken to be fundamental to, and even the prerequisite for, all human

life and practices. Tying race to culture invariably allows her not only to foreground her blackness but to make a legitimate case for its preservation as a 'real', inevitable and inseparable part of herself (because it's her culture). Dina is 'really black' or authentically black because, and unlike her black friend Tracy, she is "into reggae ... [and] always into black music [and] always into black people". Dina uses her taste for black music and black popular culture as the signifier for her authenticity. In the same way, she then lays a charge against Tracy of *inauthenticity* because though they both grew up in the same (presumably black) neighbourhood, Tracy is "always into white guys [and is] always pally with all these white girls and [has] a completely different home life or outlook on life [compared to Dina]". Tracy is, therefore, "not really black" or "not black enough". Mahon (2000) observes that there is "an investment", or an over-investment I want to add, "in black authenticity ... [characterized by] a tendency to conflate the notion of culture with the idea of difference" (p. 285). Interestingly, Dina uses taste for 'black music' and inter-personal and sexual relationships (within one's own 'race') as "a tool for policing racial categories" (Mahon, 2000, p. 285). Tracy is "not really black" because she transgresses the lines of racial black authenticity by her taste of music and having friendships with white girls and worse sexual relationships with white men (something that Dina "can't even imagine" doing)! "Concepts of black authenticity ... reinforce a limited vision of what black identity can be and suggest that behaviours and beliefs that fall outside certain parametres are not "really black" ... Blacks and nonblacks assume that sustaining authentic black culture and blackness ... requires maintaining difference and separation from what they regard as contaminating cultures" (Mahon, 2000: 285). While Mahon's (2000) critique of the notion of black authenticity as creating and reinforcing a limited, singular, static, and problematic view of blackness is significant, it, however, does not open up spaces for interrogating and understanding Dina's passionate sense of (*her*) self that is tied to being black. The discursive notions of authenticity that Dina ascribes to and performs allows her to construct her blackness as "really black" and as "really different" while disavowing and rejecting others' blackness as "not really black" and "inauthentic". Dina is able to do this strategically as she conflates race and culture in accounting for and performing her blackness.

Dina's 'actual first' moment of racialisation reveals other nuances and intersections of identity to which now I turn. Looking more closely at Dina and Jane's interracial friendship at infancy school can tell us something about the multiple and often competing intersections of race, generation and class in the particular cosmopolitan context of Britain. Dina as "first generation black British girl born in Britain, unlike her West Indian parents and grandparents who come from outside in the historic Windrush, is already embedded in a cosmopolitan society and has profound interactions and relationships with all kinds of ethnic, racial and national difference. Though Dina herself characterizes Britain as a fundamentally white environment, she nonetheless makes profound leaps and jumps relationally, materially and culturally by transgressing the often highly policed and contested boundaries of race, class and culture. The fact that she is or rather *was* friends with Jane, 'the white girl' as she calls her, reveals a great extent of her 'crossing over', often facilitated by class mobility, into the 'white environment'. The fact that Dina was friends with Jane tells us not only that they went to the same school, but critically that they shared interests beyond the colour line, forging alliances and connections across their race. They were in 'brownies' together; they "played together"; they visited each other's homes and penetrated each other's private spheres (excuse the heterosexual tone); their respective families supported if not nurtured their interracial friendship; Dina's grandfather drove them weekly to and from their brownies events and activities; both their mothers were "nice" to the respective girls; and both girls did, to use Dina's own words, "things that [were] equal". This friendship was a significant one created and maintained by a set of complex networks around issues of generation, class and even nationality, (and all beyond race it seems).

The central feature of this relationship between Dina and Jane is precisely its formation beyond race. Interestingly, while this friendship is formed beyond race and grounded in shared interests and commonality along gender, national, generational, and possibly class, lines it is, however, fractured precisely because of *race*. It is fractured by Dina's blackness and all its sociological and political limitations as well as its ideological constraints that are foregrounded in and through talk about 'futures', abilities and aptitudes (or lack thereof). "The standard parent question of", as Dina sets the context,

“what do you want to be when you grow up?” frames the discursive space for Dina’s blackness to be foregrounded *for her* (by her white friend) in such a way that this interracial relationship cannot survive or be sustained as Jane constructs Dina’s blackness as ‘inferior’, ‘incapable’, ‘incompetent’ and beneath whiteness. Jane’s protest, which we can reconfigure as, “black girls can’t be doctors” profoundly and violently throws and locks Dina into a version of blackness that she does not recognize or identify with: a blackness that is fundamentally constrained and defined primarily in terms of lack of capabilities and intellectual ability. A blackness, as Dina explains, with “a glass ceiling”. Though Dina may not recognize and identify with this version of her blackness, suddenly thrown at her, and what she as black can do (i.e. be nurse) and cannot do (i.e. be a doctor), she nonetheless and immediately knows that Jane is talking about *her*, about *her blackness*. Further, Jane throws Dina into what I see as a metaphorical ‘existential crisis’; a contradictory and confusing site of being. This crisis emerges clearly when we consider the generational aspect of Dina’s and her family’s constructions and reconstructions of blackness. For her West Indian family, Britain represents not only “the land of opportunity” but a discursive space for making and remaking the self; for re-imagining and reconfiguring blackness – in relation to education and class mobility, in relation to being “anything you want if you put your mind to it”. *This* is a different kind of blackness laden with potential and the possibility of transcending the confines of the colonial and slavery past. *This* is a ‘new’ kind of blackness created from the hope of generating from that past a new present and future in which it is possible to live and self-actualize in the new place that is Britain. Then along comes Jane! No sooner Dina is confronted with and boxed into a rigidly limited version of blackness that is not equal to whiteness no matter what political, social, economic and psychological resources there are for re-imagining and remaking blackness. This is the profound psychological revelation Toni Morrison is talking about that occurs in the intimate and acute moment one finds out they are “black”. For Dina, this was not to be a once-off experience as her blackness is soon after constructed by Alexandra in this very way as she tries to “dance ballet”.

The last commentary to make about Dina’s Fanonian moments of racialisation informs the remainder of the paper and forms the basis through which the other two life stories

(Musa and Bili) will be analyzed. Embedded in Dina's narrative accounts of the moments where and when her racialisation is inscribed in her life or when she 'found out she was black' (Morrison, 1994) is, for a lack of a better word, 'the source' or 'genesis' of her racialisation. The idea of 'the source' is important here because, as I will demonstrate later, points to different experiences of racialisation. There are divergent and multiple sources of racialisation that make racialisation itself different for different black people. I want to argue that because the source of and racialisation itself, are different for different black people the experience of being black is also articulated and experienced differently. Importantly, Dina's Fanonian moments are precipitated by her encounter with whiteness; with people who are racially different from her (Jane and Alexandra) in a cosmopolitan society. This is significant because, as we will see now, for Musa and Bili, their moments are not necessarily violent encounters with whiteness. The source and context of racialisation is important as it is *not* the same for *all* black people. And because it is not the same, the experience of being black cannot be same and therefore should not be configured in the singular. Critically, race intersects with other dimensions of identity and social positions in the world producing a complex, contested and fluid reading of what it means to be black. Dina has to negotiate her blackness in relation to being a first generation black British woman born of parents and grandparents of West Indian descent, and therefore located differently in Britain as a function of education and class mobility. Within such a location and context, it is not surprising that for Dina, her blackness is foregrounded in her interactions with others (specifically as illustrated in her interview excerpts quoted above, other white people). For Dina, being black is more important as a young West Indian, first generation black British girl trying to dance ballet well and being disqualified in her encounters with the white mainstream. It is because of this disqualification that Dina 'retaliates' by, as she herself says, being "militant from a very young age" in claiming and vehemently asserting her '*different*' and '*authentic*' blackness (in relation to whiteness and those she constructs as not 'really black'). So, the question we could pose is: what happens (to blackness) in a context where blackness is normative? How is blackness constructed, articulated, performed when and where blackness is the mainstream? To address these questions, let's now turn our attention to a South African story whose narrative beginnings start under apartheid where blackness is configured in

this normative sense (of course as a directive of the apartheid government's policy of separate development).

2.2 Musa's Fanonian Moments of Racialisation: Blackness as 'normative' in South Africa

Musa redefines the Fanonian moment. So far the moment of racialisation has been theorized as a 'discrete', circumscribed, clearly defined and articulated moment in one's life and narrative. Dina exemplifies this characterization. Such a characterization is, however, limited and forecloses other different possibilities of racialisation. Musa's racialisation is not configured in this discrete way. In fact, you could say that what is interesting in Musa's narrative is the absence of the clearly circumscribed Fanonian moment. The implication is a peculiar yet completely logical idea, that is, 'Musa is not black'. It is for this reason that it is useful to think of blackness as more than *just one*; as more than just configured in the same ways for all black people the world over. It is here where a revision of the Fanonian moment of racialisation is necessary. It is more instructive to conceptualise the Fanonian moment in multiple ways: rather than a discrete and circumscribed moment to think of it as also gradual, continuous process that is dispersed throughout life and narrative. To think of the idea that comes from Riley (1988), who is working with the question of what it means to be a woman? Riley (1988) is working with feminism and in complicated ways to think of what it means 'to be a woman *sometimes* rather than all of the time. Riley (1988) offers a useful metaphor of 'swaying in and out' of an identity. In this way, we can think of the point of racialisation beyond 'moment' to 'swaying in and out' of blackness rather than being totally thrown in and trapped in the black abyss, pun intended. What is interesting with Musa's racialisation is that it is more an insidious and structural form of exclusion and marking. The power of apartheid as a racist and oppressive system lies in its covert and structural kinds of power, control and surveillance.

Musa is born into an extremely poor, rural, working class South African family in the Bantustans where recourses are strictly and officially allocated along racial lines, where whiteness is privileged and blackness severely disadvantaged – politically, culturally,

socially and economically. As he transitions from childhood to adulthood; from school to university, his awareness also gradually increases. In the interview, he reflects on racialised poverty in South Africa and on his life and family as heavily constrained in the material sense; his educational opportunities and development constrained by socio-political realities; and on growing up black in a place where everyone is black. There is no clearly defined and articulated moment of realization of Blackness for Musa in his childhood. This shows the embeddedness and continuous sense of racialisation in a rigidly and highly policed racist society. Though gradual, we can see that his awareness reaches climax when he moves from a homogeneous black community into the city of Durban where he attends a previously white university, the University of Natal. It is in the context of higher education, a liberal emancipatory context where and when Musa overtly encounters racial difference, much later in his life.

This moment is particularly interesting because though South Africa is highly racialized with a particular racist formation (especially at the time Musa went to a ‘white’ university in the late 1980s), Musa encounters racial difference for the first time in a very intimate and personal way. He meets ‘white’ people for the first time (standing in front of him, lecturing him) and has general curiosity with white people in terms of ‘what kinds of people they’ and ‘the different lives they live’. Musa stares at and is fascinated by this visual difference that is inscribed on and marked by the white body:

Musa: ... like kuqhamuka le-gang lena o-Jill no-Anita ngiqala ukubona umlungu emile phambi kwakho lecturing I mean u-busy wena ubuka yena

....

Siyanda: ... [laughs] awulalele

Musa: ... ehe aahhhuwu!

BOTH: laugh

Musa: ... I mean yinto ongayizwa kahle but ubuka yena ukuthi “kanti lo umlungu unje, lo umlungu unje” uyabo all those sort of things².

Musa’s first overtly narrated encounter with racial difference is very different from Dina’s in two important ways. First, Musa’s encounter happens much later in his life when he is in his twenties and at university. This is due to apartheid policies on difference and separate development of people of different racial groups in South Africa. Such encounters were highly regulated and restricted by the apartheid government. However, on the other side of the world, Dina’s life was already defined by and thrown into racial and cultural diversity in Britain. While multiculturalism is constructed as an affirmative socio-cultural context, Dina’s experiences were of negative and painful kind. Dina’s painful encounter with difference is the second way in which Musa’s narrated encounter differs with Dina’s. Like Fanon, Dina is violently inscribed and locked into blackness as she is negatively positioned as ‘black’ by the white racial Other. Unlike Dina’s violent inscription, Musa’s encounter is that of curiosity about difference and in particular of the white body.

2.3 Bili’s Fanonian Moments of Racialisation: Thrown in and out of Blackness in Transition from Botswana to South Africa

Bili introduces to our analysis of different kinds of blackness a further nuanced and complicated narrative of racialisation. Tracing Bili’s narrative moments of racialisation in their chorology opens a critical space for questioning different kinds of racialisation and ways of being black within one life narrative that moves across two geographical places, as Bili herself moves from Botswana to study in South Africa. The genesis of Bili’s

² Here we could make a number of observations about the possibilities and impossibilities of translation. However, the scope of this paper does not allow for such an exploration. I have *decided* to translate and footnote this excerpt in this way:

Musa: ... like [when] this gang of Jill and Anita came it was my first [time] seeing a white [person] standing in front of you lecturing I mean you are busy looking at them [the white person]

Siyanda: ... [Laughs] [and] you are not listening

Musa: ... Yes aahhuwu!

Both: Laugh

Musa: ... I mean it is something you don’t really understand but you are looking at them [thinking] “kanti this white [person] is this [kind], this white [person] is this [kind]” you see all those sort of things.

racialisation, unlike Dina and Musa, is not an encounter with racial difference, in this case whiteness. Paradoxically, Bili is thrown into blackness by other black people in South Africa that question her blackness as inauthentic. Let's now trace Bili's narrative moments of racialisation in some chronology.

Bili starts off by constructing Botswana and her life in Botswana as fundamentally un-raced, better yet, as 'race free'. Her story works very hard in determiningly maintaining non-racialism in Botswana and Bili as free from race and any other kind of racialisation. In this way, 'race' is not problem in Botswana and Bili herself does not think of herself and others in racial terms. In fact, she actively resists any kind of racialisation to maintain herself and Botswana as beyond race, constructing 'race as not there'. Like Dina, Bili suggests that her early years were defined by multiracial and multicultural encounters. However, in direct contrast to Dina's early inscription and the burden of racialization in Britain, Bili is somehow free of race. There is total foreclosure of race as Botswana and Bili's childhood is constructed as an un-racialized idyllic paradise.

Botswana's non-racialism is further ingrained for Bili in school, particularly her secondary school, which is an international school with over 43 nationalities represented in the student body. So, the school itself like the country is both multiracial and multicultural. This school would be formative and influential for Bili in how she thinks about or rather outside of race (unlike the experiences she was to have in South Africa). At school she encounters difference – racial, cultural and religious and yet she navigates such a space untouched by race and race thinking. For instance, Bili suggests that she made friends across a range of social difference and formations. Bili had a mixed group of friends and she interestingly identifies them this way: as 'Indian', 'Pakistani'; and 'Scandinavian'. Bili's friendships, she suggests transcended race and colour:

Bili: Yes and coming from that like that's how we were in class and people were friends they were not friends because of their colouring they were friends because of ...

Siyanda: ... who they are

Bili: ... ja personality how people used to do things together and what interested them the things that they had in common not, not race other than race and we, to tell the honest truth we were very, very mixed up class like you had your Muslims you had your Hindus you had your and ...

I am quite suspicious of non-racialism or colour-blindness of any form. I am very interested in the work that Bili's story does in foreclosing race and racialisation while maintaining Botswana, her school and herself as free from the weight of history, from the burden of racialisation. I want to suggest that race and racialisation is *very* present in Bili's account of Botswana and her life there. And it is powerfully present in its absence. For instance, how Bili defines her friendships in the above excerpt reveals the *slipperiness* of repressing, to use a psychoanalytic term, race as the repressed comes out, as Freud so brilliantly theorized, in disguised forms. The repressed will always (and has to) return until dealt with, until called by its name. Bili defines all her friends by their ethnic, cultural, religious and/or national identities and *not* by their personality traits that she says are more important than race. In this way, ethnic, cultural and national identities take over (from) racial ones, as Bili is working hard in constructing herself as transcending racialisation of any kind. It is less problematic and less determining to speak in the terms of culture than to speak in race terms. This is a common theoretical move; from race to culture that is not without its own problems, new racisms, as sociology terms it. The move to cultural, ethnic and even national terms functions, in part, in the very essentialist and problematic ways that 'race' is often guilty of. We can read Bili's focus on non-racialism and emphasis on ethnic and national identifications as her attempt to move and go beyond race.

Coming to South Africa, for Bili, was a turning point for her specifically in terms of thinking of herself as black. Unlike Musa who is already living in South Africa and has different points of racialisation, Bili's coming to South Africa disrupts that which she valued in about Botswana, that is, non-racialism. Bili is thrown into blackness by other black South Africans. Coming to South Africa meant that she had to for the first define herself as black and had to say that she was in fact black:

Bili: ... [interracial relationships] was it was okay and then you come to South Africa “Hhaah [gasps and takes on a different tone of voice] she’s walking with a white guy there’s something wrong with her” and coming here and having to, you know, say who you are, having to resort to saying “I’m black” was I was like no there’s more to me than what you see on the outside you know I wanted I was used to having my personality attributes ...

Siyanda: ... being the thing

Bili: ... out there rather my being black so coming here and it was very hard because it was not only other race groupings saying “who are you?” it was also the blacks saying to me “who ...

BOTH: ...are you?”

Bili: ... because [brief pause] when you start taking a particular racial category you are also taking things that are attributed to it there’s a culture that goes with every, every race so when I say I’m black I’m, I’m [brief pause] putting a cloak that says I’m black and I’m going to behave black I didn’t behave black for a lot of people

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... so that was a problem because I didn’t behave black and I don’t think I behave white ...

BOTH: laugh

As illustrated in the above interview exchange, for the first time in her life, Bili is forced to think of herself in racial terms, in terms of her blackness. She is disapprovingly gazed upon when she transgresses racial territory. At the same time Bili protests that there’s *more* to her than her blackness, *more* to her than being black. Having come from Botswana, Bili is not used to being identified primarily by the colour of her skin but rather, as Martin Luther King once proclaimed “by the content of [her] character”, or by her personality traits as she puts it. Coming to South Africa is hard for her as she’s defined first and foremost by being black and paradoxically it was other black people that

identified her as black, and not necessarily the other ‘races’ as with Dina who is thrown into blackness by her white counterparts. Part of Bili’s objection of being assigned to one racial category is the implication of such classification. She suggests that by taking on a particular racial category, you are invariably taking on certain attributes that are associated to that ‘race’ or as she puts “the culture that goes with [that] ‘race’”. Identifying as black, for Bili, means having to ‘behave black’ and in her case she is always questioned about who she is because she does ‘not behave black (enough)’ for many black South Africans. Bili has published, in an academic journal a discussion of her identifications and dis/identifications with blackness and she eloquently captures this experience in this way:

Bili: I supposedly don’t know what behaving black is you know because I’m doing things that I know how to do from my family and my family is BLACK you know... so being told that “you are not black the music that you listen to, how you do things you know” I was very like okay so “what do you want me to do?” you know “how do you want me to do it? And then knowing that I’m also NOT of a different skin colour it was very, was very it was very interesting cause I know I have written somewhere that *I have never felt so black and yet not so black at the same time as I have in South Africa because I have been, I have been called because “You are black behave black but then you don’t behave black” so I have been qualified as black but then disqualified at the same time* which you know at first it used to infuriate me it used to make me really mad but now it’s just like you know what it’s fine it’s the way the society works it’s you know it’s HOW unfortunately it’s how the society has been molded.

The phrase “*I have never felt so black and yet not so black at the same time as I have in South Africa*” ... *I have been qualified as black but then disqualified at the same time*” powerfully demonstrates the changing nature of (racial) identifications. Rather than thinking of them as essentialized identifications, it is more instructive to see these identifications as moving, changing, evolving and mutating over a variety of social

difference/formations. And I think what is at play here is her nationality – the fact that though she is black (*she is like them*) she is nonetheless ‘the foreigner’, ‘the Other’, ‘the outsider’- she is precisely not like them and ‘eternally locked’, it would seem, to being the Other – especially given South Africa’s tenuous and fragile Pan-national identity and its relation to the rest of Africa.

As a direct consequence of living in South Africa for the last five years, Bili has now become more conscious of race both her own and that of others. She tells interesting stories how *now* she notices the race of others unlike before coming to South Africa. She also traces how noticing race has evolved for her:

Bili: but now when I go into class and I looked around I’m like okay there’s so many black people there’s so many white people and you know because my, my *I’ve been, I’ve been awoken to, to looking at race* but I went to this party part of my Masters group and there were only two black people there it was me and ...

The story introduced here tells of Bili’s increased race consciousness. She was the party with her other classmates and there are two “blacks at the party” and the assumption made at the party was that she and the other black man were a couple “just because he’s black” she says. And in that moment she felt different; she felt ‘black’. So, what happened at this party? Well, *nothing*. But the gaze of the other. Two hours into the party Bili realizes that she is being stared at:

Bili: ... [A]fter a while after like two hours of talking I realized they were like people looking [at] me funny and, and then it clicked “I’m black” like I was very unaware of my being black I was just “these are people that I’m having fun with” you know we are sitting here celebrating one of my classmates birthday party and then you know somebody just had to find out “You’re black you don’t quite fit in” and it was just, I found it very interesting it’s hard to be A PERSON even not classified according to your colour people have to always remind you that you’re black ...

Siyanda: ... so that they could put you in your place

Bili: ... exactly, exactly I think I am starting to, to, to get out of my place and they had to bring me back in...

BOTH: laugh

Bili: ... so it sort of like dampened the whole evening cause now I was I had to constantly think I'm black ...

Siyanda laughs

Bili: ... I'm black

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ...I'm black

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... I'm black so ja

SN: [laughing] ... and don't you forget it...

BOTH: laugh

Bili: I bet I guess ja it's a, it's a very interesting society that we are in.

What Bili experiences is what I now refer to as the Fanonian moment of race consciousness, that moment when you are completely marked and inscribed by your (racialized) body and there is no escape. It is a moment at which you feel completely 'your race' (whatever it may be and whatever historical and political meaning is imbued in and marked by your body).

Bili also introduces another variety 'to the black experience' in South Africa, as a foreign African national. Though black, her nationality renders her an outsider. In KwaZulu-Natal, Bili is confronted with the hegemony of the Zulu language and culture and her attempts at resistance (to it). This foreign language and culture relegates her to the margins and the position of 'the Other', of 'the foreigner'. As a result of not being able to speak the language, her blackness and Africanness are both questioned. For this analysis, I not focus on language nor the recent xenophobic attacks. Bili struggles with being rendered a foreigner while at the same time with being fixed into a racial category of black and determined by it:

Bili: ... “who are you racially?” you know “get a category and stick to it if you are a coconut say you are a coconut so that we can look down on you be a coconut if you are black say you are black and starting behaving black so that I can rejoice with you but at the centre remember that you’re a black foreigner so you’re not quite part of us you do things differently and you are here to take our opportunities so you know and remain in that, in that unbalance we don’t want you to get too comfortable in our country” ja ...”

Blackness is not a singular experience but one that fractured and defined by its variety and different versions of black. There is no and can never be just ‘one black’. Black people are divided and fractured by ethnicity, nationality, geography, class, gender, sexuality and many more axes of difference. Unifying the experience of blackness and invoking singularity and solidarity is and has historically been a progressive emancipatory political strategy. However, foreclosing differences and pluralities of blackness might also serve narrow interests of a few while obscuring other kinds of inequalities, struggles for power of the many different black people of the world.

The paper has attempted to show different points and moments of racialisation in black people’s lives and narratives in order to argue for “individual temporality” (Riley, 1988) of being black and differences in ways of being black. The three different narratives of blackness show not only different points of racialisation but, I argue, different experiences of ‘race’ and blackness. Out of this nuanced investigation, I have attempted to reconceptualise the Fanonian moment of racialisation. Dina’s racialisation is inscribed early by her encounters with the white racial other in the multicultural context of Britain. Her narrative moment of racialisation is experienced as a violent marker of inferiority imbued in and by her black body. We cannot think of Musa’s moment of racialisation in the same way as we theorize Dina’s. We have to rethink ‘moment’ in terms ‘series’ and think of the moment of racialisation as ‘gradual’ and continuous as Musa accounts for a more structural and insidious form of racialisation in apartheid South Africa. Bili’s account of her racialisation is much more complicated as it spans through two different

countries, from Botswana to South Africa, from 'where race is not there' to 'where race is everywhere'. Bili, unlike Musa, is more overtly and violently thrown into blackness in South Africa, but, unlike Dina, she is not thrown by those who are racially different from her. Bili's racialisation is particular as she is also a black foreigner in South Africa and has shifting (dis)identifications around race and nationality. Though Dina, Musa and Bili are all black, and their exclusions are all based on 'race', they nonetheless have very different experiences of racialization, being Black means something different for each of them.

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The Story of One Black Man

Siyanda Ndlovu

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Narrative and Life: impossible beginnings - where and how to begin?

Since Jill [Bradbury] called me in England about two months ago and asked me to give this seminar, I have struggled greatly in deciding what to talk about. And the title of the seminar offers very little help in this regard, although Jill and I chose it together. So, what do I want to talk about today? “Well talk about your life” Jill says “and think about your life as narrative”. Up to the point that I sat down to write this paper and even as I sit here to give it today, I am still unsure about what I want to talk about (and this says something about the complexity of narratives and their telling). I am reminded of a life-story interview I conducted with one of my participants in the UK for my PhD study. He pointed out to me that he found it hard to talk about his life, not because he did not have anything to say, rather because he had too much to say! The process of narrating oneself and producing a narrative out of one’s experiences is a complicated intersubjective process that is contingent on a number of factors such as occasion, audience and reasons for narration. Talking about one’s life in a systematic and structured way entails particular choices and considerable effort unlike talking about one’s life, in what Labov would call a ‘natural’ telling situation. We all engage in this ‘natural’ telling; in fact, we all like talking about ourselves and our lives, some more freely and openly than others; others might enlist the help of fermented grape juice or liquidized hops and barley. We all like talking about ourselves, we are quick to interject and refer to our own experiences when a friend asks for our advice in getting over a partner or resolving a conflict and problem.

So, this is the challenge that I am confronted with: what should I talk about? What aspect of my life? Where should I begin? How should I begin? Where does the story of ‘me’ begin? Is the beginning perhaps my birth or is it my family or my growing up in different townships around KwaZulu-Natal or my studies at the former University of Natal or is it my ‘coming out’ or my awareness of my skin not as a neutral entity, but as an embodied site of meaning imbued with the historical and the political or is the beginning of my story my PhD work on post-apartheid blackness? The real question is whether there is one single beginning to a story or to a story of a life. Or, are there multiple and different possible starting points on different occasions and for different audiences? At another level, we could ask whether it is ever possible to fully and wholly represent 26 years of life in a story? In three hours? Can a story ever fully capture the essence of a life or, if you are scared of the word essence or essential, can a story ever fully capture the individual, or the subject or the narrator of the story? Can words, can discourse capture it all? Do we only have language? Those of you that are committed to the post-modern project would want to argue for the absolute centrality of language. I am rather more persuaded by Stephen Frosh’s 2001 essay, *Things That Cannot Be Said*, where he argues for limits of language and that some aspects of life are extra-discursive or non-discursive. And it is precisely the most central aspects of human life that resist linguistic and discursive symbolization. But I am going off at a tangent.

In this seminar, I am going to talk about my narrative and the ways in which my own life history has led me to do the particular kind of intellectual work that interests me, framing my PhD project on Black Identities through the personal ‘*Story of One Black Man*’.

Framing my work as Narrative Research

Narrative research is increasingly popular within the academy as many of us ‘turn to language’ in order to understand individual and social life. We are told that narrative is universal and that the process of narration is distinctly human and universally common across time and context. Narrative theory obviously began in literary studies but has since penetrated a very wide range of disciplines: from sociology to psychology, medicine,

anthropology, cultural studies, history, philosophy and the arts. There is a proliferation of terms to refer to the approach, such as Biography; Auto/biography; Story; Oral history; Life story and Life history. Perhaps this confirms Ken Plummer's (1995) insight that we are living in a story telling world.

I have three primary reasons for framing my work within narrative research: the first is connected to my research question, that is, *what does it mean to be black in South Africa?* I have worried and still worry about how I will pose such an abstract question to my participants. In attempting to answer this question, I imagine how I would answer such a question if it were posed to me. Telling stories about the moments in life when 'race' mattered, or when blackness was salient, seems to offer a productive way to mediate between the abstract concept and specific (empirical) experiences. In other words, narrative is a methodological strategy in getting people talking about the abstract, but in specific ways.

The second reason lies in that narrative promises the vantage point of understanding the subjective and the personal while interrogating the wider contexts of society politics and history. This is really the insights put forward in the late 1950s by C. Wright Mills arguing for a 'sociological imagination' that understands the complex relations between biography, history and society. And narrative promises to enable us as researchers to pay particular attention to these interconnections.

Third, theorists researching 'race' suggest that if we want to interrogate ideas about 'race' as socially produced, as relational and as situated we then have to look at narratives of identity. Narrative accounts, they argue, are precisely the sites for 'race-making' where we can examine subjective and social processes. Gunaratnam (2003) suggests we need to look to narrative if, as I am, interested, "in what ways, when and how are racial ... identities claimed and/or resisted by individuals in [narrative] accounts about their lives? How do these identities relate to wider political processes of the mobilization of collective identifications? How might racialized identifications be formed and mediated

through their intersections with other forms of social difference, such as gender, class or sexuality?” (p. 110). For these reasons I find myself working with narrative methodology.

I will work with narratives on different levels. I will work with the *content* of the narratives: what people say about their racial identifications. I will also work with the *form* of the narrative: this is about how narratives are crafted and put together. The form implicates the *function* of the narratives. The work of Riessman is important here as she suggests that people reach for and perform preferred identities in the stories they tell about themselves. Narratives perform certain functions, we only have to look to the stories told and heard during our TRC. There, stories were conceived of as having a healing function and Pulma Gobodo-Madikizela’s (2008) recent book with Chris van der Merwe on *Narrating our Healing* is a case in point. Looking at the form of narratives also implicates looking at the interview context as co-construction, what narrative theorists have called *positioning of* the researcher and research participants: this is about looking at how I am positioned in the process by the participants and the kinds of stories they produce and also how the narrative told position the narrators themselves. Finally. I will read for *wider context* – history, politics and society in the narratives produced by individuals in accounting for their individual lives. This reading is perhaps what Mills meant by ‘sociological imagination’.

The Story of ‘Me’ (Positioning?)

Like each and every one of us, I can tell multiple and different stories about my life. In this seminar, I will consider different ‘fragments’, ‘bits’ or themes that are always present or alive in my living or life performances. It is a story about ‘race’ generally, my ‘race’, my skin, my blackness. In this way race can never be dislocated from my living, it is always present, although not always at a conscious level, but rather at a performative level. It is always there, and put differently, it echoes in and haunts my living. This story is also the subject matter of my PhD work, where I argue for continued significance of ‘race’ in this globalized, postmodern and multicultural world.

The experience of being black, I argue remains significant in South Africa despite the changes in political structures, despite the drive for economic equality and despite the adoption of the new democratic order based on non-racist principles. As I seek to understand and question what it means to be black in post-apartheid South Africa, I find myself looking at and questioning myself, my blackness. I have often said to some of my friends that my work is an autobiographical attempt at understanding my blackness, which is irrefutably marked on and by my body. In my journey through the different stories of blackness told by very different people located in different geographical places and varying socio-economic positions I am overwhelmed by the sense that all these different black narratives are tied together by a longing for identification, a sense of belonging and an attempt not only to reclaim but also re-write and re-make what being black is and means.

No longer is writing blackness the project of colonial power or the liberal task of giving voice to the Black other. Put differently, Blackness has largely been written about by the 'Other', often White males, or has been largely 'apologetic' in its attempt to give voice to the Black 'Other'. But there is a danger here.

No sooner do we mention 'race' than we are caught in a treacherous bind. To say 'race' seems to imply that 'race' is real; but it also means that differentiation by race is racist and unjustifiable on scientific, theoretical, moral, and political grounds. We find ourselves in a classic Nietzschean double bind: 'race' has been the history of an untruth that unfortunately is our history ... the challenge here is to generate, from such a past and a present, a future where race will have been put to rest forever (Radhakrishnan, 1996, cited in Gunaratnam 2003, p. 31).

Talking and writing about 'race' runs the risk of (re)producing 'race' as a real; essentialised; fixed; homogeneous and deterministic category of difference, rather than as 'performative', 'fictive' or open to (de)(re)construction. However, Gunaratnam (2003) suggests that perhaps employing the category of 'race' by marginalised groups could be a way of carving up and mapping out new ways of being. Perhaps the time has come in

South Africa and elsewhere for black individuals to write about their 'race' and what it means as opposed to being written about. We can work with the category of 'race' strategically so that when the category of 'race' is "... mobilized by socially marginalized individuals and groups in asserting claims to personhood, can be less about a preservation of oppressive racial hierarchies and can be more about ambivalent, situated and strategic moves to transform such hierarchies and to invent new discursive positions within them" (Gunaratnam, 2003, p. 28). Maybe this is what my story is about; finding new ways of being and new stories to live by.

Walking the streets of Manchester

The path I took to get here, to think about my blackness was borne out of the experience of displacement in 2004. Maybe this is where my narrative of blackness actually begins. I had travelled with Jill [Bradbury] and Vicky [Campbell-Hall] to the UK for a Postgraduate conference held in Manchester. It was one of those defining moments in my life where I felt completely out of place, sticking out like a sore thumb. One day I decided to walk around the city by myself and the strangest feeling came over me. I felt black. I am, and have always been, conscious of the colour of my skin. This should come as no surprise given South Africa's particular history. But this was a different feeling; walking the streets of Manchester was a particularly interesting and strange experience. Now how do I make sense of this? Was it partly that I was displaced in a foreign space? It seemed to me that there was more to this story. Because in the mist of all those 'white' bodies, every single time I saw another black face, black body, my heart skipped a beat. There was an immediate identification on my part. He/she is 'like me'. They look like me; I am like them, I belong! Something ties us together. Again I ask what is this identification about? Racial difference is interesting in that it is visual and visible as it is marked on the body, it is embodied difference and the black body, like other racialized bodies, is *not* a neutral entity as it carries with it history and politics. Gilroy suggests that our perceptions of the black body are *not* unmediated by history, the social and politics. I am looking to understand the different identifications that people create with each other. I will give you an example of how these identifications are formed or function later on in the paper.

Now, I just want to turn my attention to the moment or the point of realization and awareness that one's skin is a historical and political product. There seem to be a moment or moments in our lives when we are made aware of our racialized bodies. For example, my colleague who is about to embark on a study on Whiteness, and who also happens to be my flat mate, acknowledges how increasingly aware she is becoming of her white skin and what this embodiment of her race presents and how it affects her interactions with others, in particular, black people. She confessed that at one point in her life, her whiteness was assumed, normalised and privileged to the point of not recognising it and that through a period of historical and therefore personal change this has began to shift). I have had a few of these moments in my life. And I will almost suggest that most black individuals have these moments; that black narratives, if there is such a thing, have these moments, not necessarily turning points, but heightened points of awareness:

Probably the single most important event in the life of any [Black] child is his (sic) recognition of his (sic) own *colouredness*, with all the implications of that fact. The realisation can come as mild awareness that is taken in stride, or it can come as a rude shock that results in a trauma ...” (David, 1968, p.3).

Perhaps the most famous account of this realisation is Frantz Fanon's story of the moment a white girl said “Mommy look a Negro, I am scared”. In his book *A Man Called White*, Walter White recalls his own moment of (mis)recognition as Black:

In that instant there opened up within me a great awareness; I knew then who I was. I was a *Negro*, a human being with an invisible pigmentation which marked me a person to be hunted, hanged, abused, discriminated against, kept in poverty and ignorance, in order that those whose skin was white would have readily at hand a proof of their superiority ...” (1948, p. 8).

I am interested in those moments when you learn that your skin is connected to a long history of oppression (and my flat mate would argue with regards to herself, a long

history of privilege) and what that does for your sense of yourself and your life story. The stories that I have collected so far definitely have these moments of acute and crude awareness that being black (and equally, being white) is not a neutral state of being but a historical identity. I have had many of these moments. And coming to study at a previously white university was a profound leap and conflict for me in terms of who I was and my story at the time. It meant different things such as: 1) an escape from a particular kind of material life; 2) the possibility of entering a new (and perhaps a 'better' that is, 'white' world 3) new resources (material and symbolic) for the making for a new self, a new identity and a new story to live by. The university provided the context for interpersonal relationships across race. It also, nonetheless, provided its own challenges and crises. There I was for the first time in class, sitting side by side with white bodies and worse, being taught by many of these bodies. It is in this context, in this world, that I became acutely conscious of the fact that my 'race' matters at many different levels. My 'race' informed and shaped the kinds of relationships I had, and could have with other people. I never knew what my [white] friends made of me; were they friends with me because of my blackness or despite my blackness? *When people recognize me as black*, I get offended! Is black the only thing they see? Foregrounding my blackness is painful in all sorts of ways. "You are black". This is a kind of putting me in my place lest I forget the colour of my skin and lest I think that I am part of the 'in' (read, white) group. On the other hand, *when people claim not to see or not to recognise my blackness*, I am equally deeply offended! How can you not see the colour of my skin? It is most visible and undeniably and irrefutably the first thing you see. My blackness may not matter to you, but do not say that you cannot *see* it. Interesting paradox, I think. But, it could be a productive space, working through and with the apparent contradiction, as opposed to wishing it away.

Landscape of the township

As I trace my narrative beginnings I inevitably end up thinking about place. The place of my past, the place of my childhood, the place I call home: the township. The township is an ambivalent place for me. The privileged notion of home embodies notions of comfort, care, belonging and safety. The township is an interesting space for identity that

ideologically disrupts the privileged notion of home. The township is an apartheid invention to separate whites from blacks, an apartheid institution that still exists 14 years into the so-called New South Africa. This has always bothered me. Why do these ‘homelands’ exist? Why do we accept their continual existence? Why don’t we problematize and resist these spaces? The township is one space that is explicitly non-white. Every time I go back home, home to the place of my birth at Mandeni, home to the place of my childhood at Esikhawini, I am reminded of the reality in South Africa. I am reminded of black inequality and racialized spaces. And the township as a ‘Black’ space has a particular character; it is impoverished, ‘unsafe’, seen as a ‘hub of criminal activity’, ‘threatening’ and ‘dilapidated’ and therefore an exciting space for research, for tourism, for ‘illicit’, ‘exotic’ sex.

I have always wondered what effect the township has on me, on my blackness and on my story. I am reminded of one life-story interview I conducted in the UK with a black South African, a close friend of mine. In the interview, he reflected on growing up black in a township. His reflection instantly led to a dialogue between us with incredible identification of growing up in a township in the early 1980s and 1990s. Though we grew up in different townships in South Africa, our story of home and place were similar. He reflected on the township as home (with its associations of safety, family and belonging) while also as a space characterised by material lack, political violence and unrest (including, for example, the memory of walking past dead bodies on the way to school). Given where he comes from, how did he end where he is today, an integrated (‘untraumatised’) being? How did I? Here, I am reminded of Fast Forward¹ learners and the kinds of histories that they inhabit and bring with them. I have been with Fast Forward for five years now and each year I ask myself, what are we doing? What are we doing to those kids? What are doing to their blackness and their stories of themselves? I think that we as co-ordinators, facilitators and the learners themselves are together seeking new stories to live by. In seeking new stories to live by, we begin with their past and their incredibly constrained present and in this way we seek future stories, shifts

¹ Siyanda Ndlovu co-directed with Jill Bradbury, the The Fast Forward programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (1998-2003) working with township and rural youth.

between the present, past and future, between the known and the unknown, between youth and imagined selves, between self and others. And it is in this dynamic and intersubjective plane that we help the Fast Forward learners seek new stories to live by and they, in turn, also help us seek out new stories to live by. I am reminded here of Stuart Hall's (1996) notion of 'identification' rather than identity as 'what we really are'. Our identities are a matter of becoming, creative constructions filled with ambivalences and fragmentation, as well as being. Our identities are not fixed entities, but are always in process, they are as much about the past and present as they are about the future. It is important to be reminded, however, that this flexibility does not mean that through the process of finding new stories, our histories are dislocated and erased, they will always be an integral part of who we are.

Imagined community – improvised identifications

Living in London for a while has allowed me to reflect on my work on blackness in a different way. London was the perfect place to be displaced in as it is a highly cosmopolitan place and necessarily exists outside the binaries of simple black and white. As a result of being outside South Africa, I increasingly began thinking of racial identifications and in particular blackness as *improvised identifications or solidarities* that are *not* essentialist but shift, evolve, mutate and break across a series of social difference. One example of blackness as improvised identification uses 'race' or skin colour as a resource to make allies, to constitute sameness and mark difference from the Other. One of my good friends, Tanecia [Brits], an African-American, and I, identified with each other in this way although what it means to be black in America and South Africa is fundamentally different. Our blackness became an improvised solidarity beyond gender and nationality. This was also demonstrated when she and I were waiting for our laundry to dry that we met two Black British women: so there it was an African-American woman, two black British women and a Black South African man talking to each other – strangers in fact, but improvising and performing solidarity based on 'our shared blackness'. The talk was about finding other black people, black spaces like Brixton, about where to go to listen to 'black music'; where to go to have your hair done, our Afro hair or 'ethnic hair' as it is referred to in Britain. At a glance, there is overt

distinction between us, that is, gender and more implicit, nationality, however, with one visible marker of similarity, i.e. being black. At that particular moment, gender and nationality become secondary with an immediate identification and recognition of each other as black and as the same. I put aside my distaste of America since the war. I forget about my aversion to Britain's conquest in Africa. At that moment, they were 'like me', 'my people' despite our very different social, economic, political, gendered and cultural positions.

But these identifications on the basis of 'race' shift and break, across different formations of difference. This happened to me on campus while in Britain. We were walking back from the campus pub with some friends, a black Jamaican woman, two Hungarian white men, a black Nigerian and me, a South African. The Nigerian man and I had established our connectedness, our common identity within the group; we were both black and from the mother continent of Africa, until he burst out in a homophobic insult at me. I am a black gay: at once, my identification with him as a black African brother was broken as my sexual orientation renders me different and *not* like him and like the gay Hungarian men. Our racial identification with or differentiation from each other becomes secondary in the context of different sexualities.

Wrestling with Gilroy's Erasure of Race

To end the seminar, I want to consider a 'threat' to my story. I say 'threat' intentionally. This 'threat' to my story comes in the form of arguments and critical theoretical voices that call for the erasure of 'race' as a category, arguments that seek to get beyond 'race', move us on, to forget that past and history. What story can I tell of myself without the past? What kind of future could that look like, I wonder?

Some suggest that the issue of 'race' and racism is so obvious as to render theorization banal. This is a kind of post-race or even anti-race thinking that calls for the obliteration of race in the post-modern, globalized multicultural world. This critical discourse seeks to achieve more than a recognition of diversity and non-racism, pointing to the potential for

a world unmarked, unlimited and undefined by 'race thinking' suggesting a transcendence of 'race' (Gilroy, 2000).

The resistance to talking and writing about race is premised on the belief that to name 'race' is to be racist (Steyn, 2001) and hence contrary to the drive for a non-racial democratic society and in the context of South Africa in particular, a single national identity. While the argument for the demise of 'race' is a theoretically compelling and even 'legitimate' one, it might, however, be too soon to erase 'race' as an identity marker especially in South Africa. You only have to consider the continuing racial character of material conditions and popular representations of 'race' to recognize that 'race' continues to be an important identity marker that shapes and informs perceptions, encounters and interactions between people. Take for instance, representations of black people that are intertwined with those of crime, poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, access to public health care and educational systems. These material and social plights of *access, vulnerability, economic deprivation* and *illness* are proliferated by black faces, black images and representations. What this means is that South Africa is still a racially structured society and 'race' matters because:

The construction of race has been used to skew this society over centuries. If we banish [race] from our analytical frameworks, we serve the narrow interests of those previously advantaged, by concealing the enduring need for redress. To deal with the expressions of power, we have to call [race] by its name (Steyn, 2001: xxxii).

While the argument for the demise of 'race' is a theoretically compelling and even 'legitimate' one, it might, however, be too soon to erase 'race' as an identity marker especially in South Africa and the African continent. While I share Gilroy's (1998, 2000) concern about the ways in which race and racial hierarchy pose theoretical and political dilemmas and his call for a humanity unstructured by racist ideologies, I do not know what a world without 'race' would look like. My resistance to the erasure of race is a

concern for the potential loss of a historical identity. Nayak (2006) succinctly captures my resistance and reservations to the erasure of race in that for historical:

...minority groups the erasure of race may equate with the obliteration of an identity and shared way of life, so coming to silence our racially marked historical experiences. Indeed, it could certainly be argued that the concept of race, however tarnished it may appear, has provided an important meeting place for political mobilization, inclusion and social change (pp. 422-423)

I am a black man, 'coloured' and embodied by my pigmentation. The black body, like the white body, is not a neutral entity. As Gilroy (1998) himself, suggests that seeing the body is not "unmediated by technical and social processes, for there is no raw perception dwelling in the body" (838). Our bodies and indeed our identities are highly historically, socially and ideologically mediated. However, Body-Gendrot's (1998), in response to Gilroy's position, suggests that, "It would be a privilege to be able to think of the world in erasing race. But this is not people's experience" (p. 852).

I do not think that it would be a privilege. Let's, for a moment, consider the erasure of gender as a metaphor here in thinking about the implications of erasing race. I do not think that women across the world – black; white, African, Western, Christian, Islamic, rich, poor, middle-class, working, heterosexual, lesbian, old, young, educated, illiterate, businesswomen and housewives - would consider such a proposition in eradicating gender as a political, historical identity marker. Identity is after all about, as Hall (1991) suggests, 'living...through difference' (cited in Body-Gendrot, 1998: 854). And I would argue that difference is not something to be feared or erased but rather engaged. Difference is not the problem as much as the social attribution of 'essences' (Body-Gendrot, 1998: 852) to that difference. Gender is not the problem but sexism and misogyny. Race is not the problem but racism. To end, Asante (2001), reviewing Gilroy's *Against Race* book, concludes this way:

... I do not look forward to such a colourless, heritageless, abstract future, and I do not see how anyone should look for it. Only those who have a need to escape from their own histories have a need for such a raceless future. On the contrary, it is much more hopeful that we defeat the notion of racial superiority and establish a broad new moral vision based on mutual respect for all human beings. I cannot believe that racelessness; whether that means racial amalgamation or the obliteration of the African phenotype would amount to anything except the diminishing of the world... To me, it is not the elimination of race or races, but in the elimination of racism, the defeat of White racial domination, that we will discover the way to a new humanism (p. 851).

For me, erasing the category of 'race', would make it impossible to talk about racism and challenge its expressions and displacements. 'Race' as a category still matters in postcolonial and multicultural contexts as it can be used as a political strategy by minority groups, creating a sense of group identification so as to mobilise in order to resist and counteract dominant racist ideas, new racisms and white supremacy (wherever it may be). Gunaratnam (2003) argues that the 'race' as a category is a powerful and useful political tool that is and can be used to challenge different expressions of racism:

...self and group identifications among minoritized people have been, and continue to be a necessary and politically valuable tool in resisting racism and in collective mobilization (p. 6).

Post-structuralism can therefore, as Alexander and Mohanty (1997: xvii) argue:

... foreclose any valid recuperation of these categories ['race', class, gender and sexuality] or the social relations through which they are constituted. If we dissolve the category of race, for instance, it becomes difficult to claim the experience of racism (cited in Gunaratnam, 2003, p. 6).

I have had to question my work many times: being in London has challenged me to think about what the significance of my work really is. In a multicultural context such as this, where other issues are foregrounded (and should be as they are more immediate) and 'race' obscures other critical struggles: for instance, the issue of migration and asylum seekers from Africa and the East; education and language; class; gender and sexuality. If we only focus on 'race' we run the risk of losing sight of these struggles and inequalities. Here, I begin to find a new appreciation of post-race thinkers suggesting that we look beyond 'race' in social analyses. Questions of identity are never simple, linear and singular. Being black is more complicated for me than the above account would lead you to believe. I have to consider the intersections of my blackness with my other dimensions of identity, namely: sexuality, class, gender and geographical and symbolic place in positioning me as Black.

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African Scholarship: The Impossible Ideal

Siyanda Ndlovu

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Unlike the people that I am sharing the panel with today¹, I do not have a clearly defined and articulate position on what African Scholarship is, what it looks like and what it ought to be. For the past week, I have attempted to position myself within a position – any position for that matter; to negotiate a stance and re-examine the different debates around this question of identity. Indeed, the university is in a search of an identity which it seeks to call African – this is the same question that post-apartheid South Africa is asking itself, trying to re-think its place within the continent and this is epitomised by our country's central role in the creation of the African state body, a mirror image of the EU, reborn as the *African Union* – preceded by the OAU as it was known. Put differently, the university is in search of an African identity at a time when the country as a whole, the Mother continent and all her people are embarking on the journey of re-constructing identities in the context of a) the history of colonial occupation and cultural imperialism that Africa has had to endure and b) the current and possibly future context of globalization, multiculturalism, capitalism and consumerism. It is in the context of these socio-historical, political and economic realities that we ask what an African Scholarship is.

My position is *not* an oppositional one; it is *not* an either / or! I have been reading a lot of Afrocentricity, Pan-Africanism and/or Afrocentrism. And it seems to me that the debates about African Scholarship, Africanisation and African identity derive

¹ Grahame Hayes (Head of the Department of Psychology, UKZN); Luvuyo Makhaba, (Lecturer in African Psychology, UKZN); Ronnie Miller (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, UKZN, who coined the Vision Statement of the newly merged university: “The Premier University of African Scholarship”).

from these African Philosophies and questions of knowledge, in particular, as the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Makgoba argued in his installation address on the African University, questions about the meaning; the context, the relevance, the use and cultural relatedness of knowledge. These are obviously critical questions that an academic institution has to engage with and critically debate.

First, I am in favour of this idea. When we consider the history of Africa, her exploitation; her oppression and her physical, mental and psychological subjugation, there is a definite need to confront and uproot, as it were, Eurocentrism in our educational systems. If you look at the content of school text books, whether geography or history or art or literature, and consider the volume of ‘foreign’ ideas by Western authors then I say we need to re-think what gets taught. A couple of years ago, the University hosted the West African writer, Ayi Kwei Armah, best known for writing the book, *‘The beautiful ones are not yet born’*, a seminar was held that Jill [Bradbury] and myself attended. It was in that meeting that Professor Pitika Ntuli, the Executive Director for Organisational Culture in the University, said something that I think holds true for many (if not all) Africans in schools across Africa; that before he learnt about the history of his people, he first learnt about the history of western people; before learning about Africa and all her diversity and cultures, he had to learn about the Americas and Europe; before he knew about the rivers, dams, lakes and mountains that shape our African landscape, he had to learn about the mountains in West. We can expand on Ntuli’s sentiments and ask the following questions:

- Why must we learn about ‘Socrates’? When there are so many African philosophers!
- Why Shakespeare? Why not Ellen Khuzwayo? Or Eskia Mphahlele? Or D.B.Z. Ntuli?
- Why Beethoven? And not the many talented African musicians and composers?
- Why Martha Graham and not the many African dancers and choreographers?
- Why learn to speak French and Spanish and Not isiXhosa and TshiVenda?
- Why must African history, contribution and knowledge come second in its own context? Why should Western knowledge be prioritised in our context?

It is in this light, that Nadine Gordimer warns we need to look our context lest we became what she refers to as ‘Africanized outposts of the West’. It is also in this light that, Zerbo a historian from Burkina Faso quotes an African proverb: “*When lost, it is better to return to a familiar point before rushing on*” (cited in Brock-Utne, 2003, p. 25).

Second, having said all this, I want to say something different that contradicts all that I have said so far. Universities as institutions are not African entities/products in their origin. They are inherently Western, culturally and historically! Universities in Africa are imported British or French institutions. They are elite and bourgeois institutions. All of us in this room make a small fraction of the entire population. We are a privileged few, allowing us to engage in these sorts of arguments. We cannot deny this. Even those of us who are Marxists, like Grahame [Hayes] have to accept this. For me, the interesting thing is, if you were to examine and deconstruct the discourse used by the very same individuals that seek to Africanise scholarship, for instance, Professor Makgoba, President Mbeki, Asante and members of this panel, we are using the Western rhetoric and discourse that marks us as having entered this cultural world. We are making reference to Shakespeare; modern and even postmodern thinkers and ideas in order to Africanise scholarship. The West is not out there in the White House, but in our heads already; expressed through our talk, dress, our lifestyles.

I am particularly concerned about the theoretical and moral or ethical questions of a position that constructs Africa as uniquely, different and unconnected to the rest of the world. In my view, such a position is, to use James Proctor’s phrase, “a dangerous flirtation with relativism” (1998, p. 352). The idea of culture, used as the prime explanation of identity and difference, is a problematic position theoretically in that it raises questions about, as Fay (1996) argues, the possibilities or rather impossibilities of the translation of knowledge and human experience or of intercultural connection across place and time. In these terms, we cannot know another. But mostly importantly for me, relativism reminds us of the very basis and grounds that apartheid was built on, the idea of ‘separate development’, that different societies/cultures should develop in isolation from others.

For me, the debate about African scholarship is a debate about the functions of universities in Africa and the world over. All universities seek to do 3 things: teach; research and contribute and respond to the social and economic problems of their location in time and place. This raises a different debate; the question of seeking a balance between 'academic integrity' and the social plight of communities. Arthur Porter (1997) sees universities as institutions of both 'cultural change' and 'cultural preservation'. However, the question of Africanizing scholarship, the content and the teaching-learning process, and indeed the teaching staff, this seems to be a different kind of debate. What does it mean to Africanize? I am uncomfortable about the racial undertones implied by this and suspicious of the silence around who is African. This is what I am not sure of and I remain unconvinced whether this project provides us with a way forward in dealing with the systematic racial injustices of the past. My concern is simple, that a response to local context and culture should not take precedence over a commitment to universal knowledge and the pursuit of answers to the condition of humanity.

Now, allow me to contradict myself once more by focusing on the critical issue of language in education. Brock-Utne (2003) makes an alarming observation that there is *no* university in Sub-Saharan Africa that uses an indigenous language as its medium of instruction, not a single university. Cognitive psychology has long recognised the fact that language shapes and structures thinking. Taking this seriously and recognising that the language of instruction in schools and higher education is a barrier for many students in gaining access to tertiary education, then this may be a crucial aspect of Africanisation; a shift to mother tongue instruction as suggested by both Paolo Freire (1972) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1994) in *Decolonising the Mind*. Then I want to say, yes, let's *Africanise* scholarship; break this Western cultural imperialism through language, a kind of re-colonisation of the African mind.

Finally, we cannot even speak of African scholarship until we resolve or at least offer up a definition of who and what an African is. Most often, the definition of

who is an African is conflated with race; African means black African. Are white South Africans, African? Appiah would say 'yes'; Asante definitely 'No'.

- Is being African defined by birth? (If I were to emigrate and have a child – God forbid – born in Canada, is that child not African? Are African-Americans African? Can we say that Oprah Winfrey is not African or Zulu as she claims?)
- Or is being African defined by language and culture? (If so, which? There is so much diversity on the continent; the difference between North and South is tremendous. Does it even make sense to speak of an Africa rather Africas?)

Achebe beautifully captures the difficulties in defining an African identity: “[T]he African identity is still in the making, there isn’t a final identity that is African. But at the same time, there is an identity coming into existence...” (cited in Appiah, 1992, p. 73). I want conclude my argument with Ali Mazrui’s comments in a *City Press* article last year. Mazrui perhaps captures my position better than anyone:

Western cultural hegemony in the world cannot be challenged by Afrocentrism alone. It must be tackled by an alliance of other cultures threatened by that hegemony, including dissident elements within Western culture itself, such as European Marxism... Contemporary world culture is Eurocentric; the next world culture is unlikely to be Afrocentric. The best solution is therefore a more culturally balanced world civilisation. That is the challenge: to enlist the participation of other civilisations, not to provide an alternative hegemony, but to provide a new balance. Africana studies should include studies of Latin America, Middle East, East Asia and other parts of the Third World.

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APPENDIX ONE

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Interview with Bili

SIYANDA: Bili alright let's start with our childhood so tell me a little about where you were born and about your family.

BILI: Okay well I come from Botswana and I spent a great deal of my life I grew up in Orapa it's a small mining town diamond mining town and towards the central of Botswana I [brief pause] like everyone in Botswana has a rural place that they call home like when you ask me "Where you from?" as a Mtswana I'd say Serowe which is like the rural place where we're from so everyone identifies themselves by their rural roots if I may say so ...

SIYANDA: ... Okay!

BILI: ... Ja we do have an urban area that you attach yourself to as well but when you ask a person "where you from?" they will say like their rural area and that's where you get your funerals and your weddings taking place ja but I spent most of my time in Orapa cause that's where my parents worked that's where I went to school and ja [pause].

SIYANDA: And what kind of place is it? Is it OH you just said it's rural so how ...?

BILI: (interrupts) ... No, no I grew up in Orapa it's an urban area ...

SIYANDA: ...oh it's an urban area!

BILI: ... ja but I come from Serowe.

SIYANDA: OH

BILI: Ja so we'd sometimes go to Serowe for like school holidays and so I do know how like it's not rural-rural as in rural like I have seen here it's rural area cause it's a village they call it a village that's why it's referred to as rural but it's got like running water and electricity and so forth ...

SIYANDA: ... (laughing) That's not rural.

BILI: Well that's why I had to explain ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... that's why I had to explain it's called ok maybe I should say village.

SIYANDA: Okay

BILI: Ja my home village is Serowe so I used to go there ja we do have a road it's like a run road and, and street lights RECENTLY but then we don't have other many things like they have in urban areas so in that in those terms it's [rural]...

SIYANDA: ... so what kind of things you have ...

BILI: ... like ah your garbage collecting people ...

BOTH: laugh hysterically

BILI: ... I am sounding very [still laughing as she talks] very snobbish

SIYANDA: ... YES (cracks out laughing)

BOTH: more hysterical laughter

BILI: ... I mean it's getting updating with all those things but it's not like an urban area where eh, eh, eh ok I am finding it very, very we have the biggest hospital now because of political issues like they managed to get it there but it is still a village you know we are still considered to be a village oh it's got, it's got eh it's got what do you call it? Tribal authority it's got we have a chief and things go according to that line of authority and ja but I didn't I didn't live there I just went there for like holidays.

SIYANDA: And what political issues were you alluding to?

BILI: Well [giggles] most of the guys like in Parliament are from that region so when it came to, to I think like when they are updating upgrading the hospital back home in my home village then they made sure that it was like the biggest ...

SIYANDA: ... OKAY they come from there.

BILI: ... hospital ja they come from so they have the influence to make it the biggest hospital in the world I mean in Botswana ...

SIYANDA: (teasing her) in the world! (laughs very loud)

BOTH: laugh

BILI: Nowhere near South Africa's hospitals.

SIYANDA: Now ahmm I have a question oh who takes care of your village while the family is in the urban areas?

BILI: As in my home village?

SIYANDA: Yep

BILI: Ok [brief pause] ahmm [brief pause] we are the parents have a house in my grandparents' place like my grandparents have passed away so my mom thought that it would be easier for her to build a house there so that she'd be like the caretaker of the yard because like my everybody else is gone they are like all over the country for work purposes but then there came a point where they realize that they also have to have their like their own land so that you know they don't get issues over who owns the land and stuff so they had a house in that area and they used to ah my uncle is there so he'd like take care of the cultivating and stuff and then they have another area where they are finishing off their house now my parents and they had like somebody who lived into in the place to just take care of it and weed it and stuff like that but otherwise ja.

SIYANDA: Tell me a little bit about your family so your parents your siblings.

BILI: Ok [brief pause] I am one of five kids I have got an older brother an older sister and then a younger brother and younger sister so I am right in the middle and ahmm I grew up with both my parents there, there was a time when they were working in different places especially when I was really young my father was working in one area my mom was in Orapa and ...

SIYANDA: ... what kind of work?

BILI: ... oh they are both educators they are both teachers ...

SIYANDA: ... cool

BILI: ... ja and ...

SIYANDA: ... good God both my parents are teachers.

BILI: ... (giggles) ah I was really but I remember we stayed with my father then he was like a real hands on person he bathed us he fed us and he cooked for us and stuff like that and then eventually we moved to stay with my mom and he was still working but then he retired and they move in together finally.

SIYANDA: Did they only move in together after he retired?

BILI: Ja but then they stayed together before she went to work in Orapa it's just that she got the job there and then there was that space in-between ja.

SIYANDA: And coming a family of teachers would that make your household middle-class sort of thing?

BILI: [brief pause] I guess it would to tell the honest truth I [Pause] I have never thought of it in terms of class no honestly ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... I have never thought of in terms of class but they did their best to provide for us and [brief pause] with my mom working for Orapa Debswana Mining Company ...

SIYANDA: ... for what?

BILI: ... Debswana Mining Company.

SIYANDA: Debswana Mining Company I thought she was a teacher?

BILI: She's a teacher but she okay I'll have to tell you about the town ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... the town came to being because of the mines ja it's do you know DeBeers? DeBeers is part of that mine ...

SIYANDA: Oh

BILI: It's DeBeers and Botswana that's why they call it Debswana so the town is actually a ... [an inaudible word] you should see it it's a complete it's just a perfect little town with neat streets and very labeled very clean and stuff like that they were like I used to think that ... [an inaudible phrase] ... cause at some point it was the safest place in Southern Africa you need a permit to go in we used to that why I said they it's not though ...

SIYANDA: Good God it sounds like gated communities all around now here is it like that?

BILI: Well it had to be because of wild life ja because like they used to get lions it's Orapa it actually comes from *Borapalelo-ja-ditau* which means it's a place where loins used to just bask in the sun.

SIYANDA: O... say that again

BILI: Borapalelo-ja-ditau

SIYANDA: You are gonna have to trans ... I am gonna have to for translation ja.

BILI: It means it means a place where like lions used to just bask in sun so they had to have that, that, that fencing for the wild animals and ja so the town came into being there were diamonds and they had to get people in and then they needed other people to support these mines with services your teachers ja your everything and nurses and ja so that's why my mom is there my mom was initially there and now I have lost track where was I? [brief pause] Oh yeah so because she was working for this mining town they didn't really have to struggle so much in terms of education there were schools were affordable they were very, very cheap for the workers and they offered like very good quality there the standard could be, could be said to be like well they were English medium schools so ja they didn't have to struggle so much and then what I am trying to get to is that even if their life was not like middle-class life but the services they were avail to within Orapa was middle class you know very good standard ...

SIYANDA: ... did you go to that school?

BILI: Hmmmh [agreeing] ja

SIYANDA: Ok

BILI: That's where I grew up and ja and like your healthcare was very good because of the town some of the services that they offered their workers your [brief pause] like safety even in the town was very, very good housing your water your electricity they paid next to NOTHING for housing with electricity and water so they had very good amenities and [chuckles] it's a very funny town well it's now that I think of it it's very classist that you have your small houses for certain grades in terms of salaries and then it progresses to it gets bigger ja.

SIYANDA: And what do you know what other people think about such a town? Or think about people who come from such a town?

BILI: Hmm [brief pause] Ahh [brief pause] ok there's this I will tell you now there is this school that I went to for secondary education and [chuckles] I am going to sound very snobbish now [brief pause] and it's [brief pause] it's a very good school it's really, really good it's according to me it's got like one of the best edu... well when I was there like one the best education levels that there could be it's while I was there it was the most expensive school within the country I have to tell you about this Harvard would come and recruit people to go there ...

SIYANDA: ... to the US

BILI: ... exactly we had a lot of people that I know from my school that went to Harvard that are in Harvard PGrad school now and it had ties with a whole lot of schools from UK and the US, the US more especially ah I went there not because my parents could pay for it but because the mine paid for my education now this school brought together a whole lot of people it had I think at some point you have more than 43 nationalities, it's an international school, within that school that's what I about it, it was so mixed and so we had a whole lot of other people going in there we had ahmm it was the most expensive

school so we had people from all over we had people who were sponsored by different companies to go there and ...

SIYANDA: ... what school is this?

BILI: It's called Maruapula I don't know if you know it

SIYANDA: Mara?

BILI: [slowly] Maruapula it's got a beautiful history as well and NOW the reason I am telling you this is that some of the teachers used to have issues with kids coming from mining towns they are two mining towns Orapa and Jaini (?) they are own by the same they are ran by the same company and especially Orapa the kids were thought to be very spoiled and very Snobbish ...

SIYANDA: [teasing] ... that is you basically that where you come from.

BILI: Ahmm I happened to stand out ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... before you go on you see I am not from a rich family I don't think I am from a rich family we did I mean my parents tried as much as they could to provide for us but we were not rich not at all so I knew where I was coming from and I knew that I couldn't put up eh I couldn't put up as in pretend to be somebody I was not so and you know I had friends who were from like extremely rich families whose fathers were ...

SIYANDA: ... Ministers

BILI: Ministers for example Police Commissioners and judges and so forth but I was not one of those so you know I could make friends I could like get on well with them but I just didn't lead the life that they did and because I knew I where I was coming from and my parents made sure that you know when I left they made sure that please do remember where you are coming from and for some reason I stood out I did not a lot of people didn't know I was from there actually until I did say that "Okay I am from here" and because we had transport to take us to and from home but it was organized by the place that's how they got to realize that I was from there but you are asking how did people think of these kids? That's how they used to think of them [that] they are very spoiled cause even in other schools not necessarily this one they were considered to be very spoiled they had everything that they wanted you know and they had too much money according to other people cause a lot of like people who abused alcohol cause they have too much money

SIYANDA: So how did you stand out in school?

BILI: [Pause] Now you are asking to, to [giggles] to blow my own horn.

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: Tell me

BILI: Okay the reason why I came to realize that "Wait a minute there's a difference" my, my deputy head teacher was asking me "Carmi (?) where are you from?" cause that's how they identified a lot of people and I said "Oh I am from Orapa" he's like "You are

joking” I was like “Ja” he’s like “But you don’t behave like some of them” and that’s when I started to take note like some of the expulsions you see are from the mining town ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ...exactly...

SIYANDA: Okay so you were sort of well behaved prim and proper

BILI: ... If you may say so ja

BOTH: prolonged laughter

BILI: [giggling] yes Siya

SIYANDA: [giggling] okay I get it now I get it okay, okay now let’s go back to your household you have got five brothers two

BILI: I’ve got two brothers two sisters ...

SIYANDA: ...but four siblings is that a relatively big family or average in Botswana?

BILI: I think it’s [brief pause] it’s an okay family I mean looking at my, my the rest of my family as well it’s the biggest number of kids within like our extended family but when I grew up it didn’t seem like a very big number you know especially if it’s people that you knew they have always been around and you [chuckles] wish any of them away I mean didn’t feel like there were too many of us ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: I didn’t honestly until when I had to talk to other people especially outside Botswana and then they will go “So how many of you are there?” And I’m like “Five” and they are like “Hhaaa”

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... and I am thinking “well is that such a big number” you know but I never thought [of it] to be a big number and I think it was also because between me and my older sister there’s a very huge age gap there’s like seven years so when I was in Standard One she was in her Secondary education so I guess ja that also makes for the difference ...

SIYANDA: ... and how’s the relationship with your siblings? So you come from a very big family and there’s only two parents so I am sure there had to be competition for the parents’ affection ...

BILI: [giggles] I guess

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: ... and how came out on top and being the middle child ...

BILI: ... everybody came out on top ...

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: ... oh that is impossible

BILI: Everybody came out on top you see the only person that I think had [chuckles] issues...

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: [giggling] it's the younger one no?

BILI: No it's my sister the one that I come after ...

SIYANDA: ...Okay so the second one in terms of the

BILI: ...ja, ja because this is what I think personally because she, she had all the attention for like...

BOTH: seven years

BILI: Plus within the extended family she was the only girl for a very long time so she had everybody's attention and then I came along ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... so I think she's still trying to get over that ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ...but otherwise, otherwise everybody else is I think fine the funny part is at some point or another all of us were thought to be the favourite all of us at one point or another like me and my brother and my sister but ja I think I think my parents did a very good job to tell the honest truth because if you were to see all five of us we're very, very different I mean as in kids we are very different in our personalities in the way we handle ourselves so much so that if like very independent as well very self worth so much so that if like you were to meet each one of us separately you would think "oh she's the only child or he's the only child" because of the contentment they have with who they are and I think you know on my parents part that was very, very well done having five kids who have very different personalities cannot possibly be easy and how I got to realize that "wow these guys I don't know how they did it" like when we have our arguments they know how to deal with each one of us they know where to meet with us and you know we're all are wrong at some point and they'd know how to tell us that "you what? You were wrong here and you were wrong here" so coming from that I think they have done a very, very good job bringing up all five of us.

SIYANDA: And what is the most sort of significant memory you can share with me of your childhood if you were to choose one or two memories the thing that you remember the most the fondest memory you can think of your childhood

BILI: [Pause] Hmm I don't know if this [brief pause] eh repression ...

BOTH: hysterical laughter

SIYANDA: [laughing] ... it's working very hard ...

BOTH: more laughter

BILI: [Pause] hmmm [Pause] I'm thinking [pause] it's not a particular memory but one of the things that I appreciate about my childhood is that I talked a lot and I am sure you do know that ...

SIYANDA: giggles

BILI: ... and my parents somehow entertained it like they, they didn't like stop me from I'm a very inquisitive person and I think I am a thinker I think I am a philosopher by nature and my parents used to nurtured that not like letting it get out of hand but they didn't suppress it cause you know I remember the times where my mom would get tired and she'd be like "you know for every times you guys called me and you would give me like what? Five cents I would be a very rich person by now" but they were very open, they were very open and they would talk they would sit down and talk to me oh I remember like one memory that I have was my father sitting down with we were just watching TV it was at night and he said to me "you know there is one thing that guys are after" and he's saying it in a very he it came out as a parable and I was only until later that I got to that I got to understand what he was saying and he was saying "there is only one thing that guys are after it's a diamond and you really have to safeguard that diamond you have a diamond and you have to keep it very safe and ja you know when they are asking for you to walk with them at night and stuff like that" and like there I was just thinking "What on earth is he talking about?" and I asked my mom and my mom refused to explain for me and I was only till later that I got to understand that "oh my dad was actually talking about relationships and boyfriends and stuff like that and virginity well not only virginity but you know that intimate part of a person just to you know keep it safe" and for him to, to say that to me you know and it was just like wow like right of passage sort of stuff and there was another time when he was saying to me "Okay now you're old" cause he's a very, very strict person very strict he wouldn't let me go out so when I was like a certain age he was like "No you are not you know you're too young ye-di-ye-di-ja" and there came a time after I turned eighteen he's like "Now you are old you can do what you want to do because you've come of age BUT you know, know that there are responsibilities that come with it and stuff like that" so having that freedom having you know it was hard at first to just understand what he was doing but having him protect me and, and guiding me and then giving me that freedom and recognizing that 'you are now old' it was like wow ...

SIYANDA: ... that's very nice ja

BILI: Ja plus he, he was married before and ja I used I used to ask why? Why? ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... what happened? What made the first marriage end and ye-di-ye-di-ja and then you know there was a time he just said "Okay come" I just to brother them I used to bug them I would not let anything rest until I understood I was much young then and then he just said "Okay come sit down" and he sat me down and he told me the whole story and afterwards I was just like WHAT [laughs] you know?

SIYANDA: No I am curious about the story so is his first wife still around or is she...

BILI: ... no she is gone ahmm I really never knew her I knew the kids I never knew her

...

SIYANDA: ... so your dad has kids ...

BILI: ... two one's past away last year.

SIYANDA: Your brother essentially

BILI: Ja [giggles] yes my brother he past away last year it was a difficult time for my father ja ah ja he it's not part of the five ja the other two ...

SIYANDA: ... the other two

BILI: Yes ah I didn't know her at all and they never really said anything bad about her they just tried to live in peace with her so ja what do you want to know?

SIYANDA: Ah okay is your family now and the other family close? Are you in each others' lives? Do you see each other?

BILI: We see each other like for like for [brief pause] ja we do see each other like my dad has not been well this past how many months now? [brief pause] he had to he has to get like tests and tests and stuff like that ja he was really hectic he's much, much better now it was hectic and ja we do see each other cause you know like the support that they offer it's basic it's just now that, that my sister my, my elder sister who is there in terms when you are saying with the other family in terms of the OTHER family it's just my elder sister ja.

SIYANDA: Okay so you basically told me about your interesting memory what is the worst memory ...

BILI: Ha-ha-ha in childhood?

SIYANDA: Hmmm

BILI: ... was the discipline I remember this my, my parents yes my parents are like spare ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... spare the rode and spoil the child ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... they are very big on that ah this one time we had a neighbour my family was very like strict and proper it's very strict and proper like no swearing type of family so swear words were a thing it was a thing not to do or not to say in my family so there was this lady this is in my home village now for some reason she came up and I always remind my mom of this she came up and, and she just said to my mom that I said a WHOLE lot of words...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... to her and to this day you know [giggles] I don't remember saying that I promise you I never did and I got you know I got disciplined because of that and ja it left me a very, very angry person [chuckles] on that discipline but ...

SIYANDA: ... who was the one that disciplined you?

BILI: ... both of them ...

SIYANDA: ... both your parents?

BILI: ... my mom did it she did it like very rarely you see at times like that she would do it to show that we don't condone this behaviour she was a very Mostwana ...

The office phone rings

SIYANDA: ... sorry [unplugs the phone]

BILI: ... so she was a very Motswana woman in that she was trying to show that you know we do discipline them and her being a teacher you know ...

SIYANDA: ...it did help

BILI: ... EXACTLY

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... exactly cause she had to say to them okay you see you are not giving them preferial treatment so ja so I got the hiding ahmm my dad tended to do more of it then my mom did my mom would just was more of a spare of the moment type of person but she was very, very ready when she did it my dad would sit down with you if some happened he would sit down with you and say to you "LOOK don't do this or this shouldn't have happened" and then it happens again then you know you are in trouble ja so that's how it used to be.

SIYANDA: What did he use to punish you guys?

BILI: You mean to hit us?

BOTH: laugh

BILI: Punish sounds like go stand in the corner ...

SIYANDA: ... [laughing] yes quiet time

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... yeah exactly ah they basically just used like a stick ...

SIYANDA: ... oh ja

BILI: ja they would get a stick like from a mass tree and, and I remember he was very particular where he, he hit us it would be like in the butt or like ja but ...

SIYANDA: ... my gran used to sent me to like "you and select your own" [laughs] rod for punishment

BILI: Ja, ja that's what he used to do and...

SIYANDA: ... and did he sort of punish everybody like even your brothers and your sisters like no favouritisms ...

BILI: ... there was no favouritism but my sister was much older so by the time I was aware of punishment she was no longer in that league ja so like she used to get like talking to she used to get talked to because she was older you know there comes a particular age where you can't be hit anymore okay hit sounds like a very terrible word ...

...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... but given a HIDING ...

SIYANDA: [laughing] yeah

BILI: ... that's better but ja so but from me downwards it was like if it's wrong if you deserved the hiding then come there was no, there was no favouritism I used to loathe that I must say I just used to loathe that but ja.

SIYANDA: How important has religion been in your family?

BILI: It has been very, it has been very important ahmm phew now you are asking me for another ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... you are me for more history my mom's parents ...

SIYANDA: ... it's your life history

BILI: ... my mom's parents were very, very [brief pause]...

SIYANDA: ... religious?

BILI: ... okay ja I don't like the word 'religious' cause 'religious' is just being through some routine doing things and it's not like that for them like Christianity was a lifestyle rather than something you have to observe and do this and don't do that it's not like a do-do-do don't-don't-don't list but that's how like God was very much central to their lives and they past that on to their kids so my aunts and mostly my aunts my uncles don't ...

BOTH: laugh out load

BILI: ... so the aunts and everybody they are like very you know ah, ah they have that sense that awareness of God so they pass it on and then in my family I started going to church from a very young age before I understood what was happening so it's something that I have always that has always been there ...

SIYANDA: ... and what church is that ...

BILI: ... it's, it's ahmm what do you mean what church is it?

SIYANDA: Like is it Anglican or ...

BILI: ... no it's not, it's not even a traditional church like okay it's not mainstream okay this is mainstream would be like your Catholic or African ...

SIYANDA: ... what is it called?

BILI: Assemblies ...

SIYANDA: ...Assemblies of God?

BILI: Yeah

SIYANDA: Ohh that's ...

BILI: ...that, that is that where you used to go?

SIYANDA: ... that's not mainstream at all it's ...

BILI: ... it's protest you know like churches you've got your Martin Luther who like was protesting against like the tradition the church tradition and then he went on to, to form the Protestant movement so that's where your Faith Mission and your Assemblies of God and all the others but I also turn to Pentecostal where I come from ja.

SIYANDA: And so is religion a big part of life today?

BILI: Ja very much so very much so you want me to expand?

SIYANDA: Yes

BOTH: prolonged laughter

BILI: [laughing] Oh Siya this is so just another ah it's another world it's like I said it's just like, like a lifestyle you know it's, it's something that are it's not it's not like a coat that you put on for one day and take off another day it gives you a it gives you a it's a worldview it gives a particular a perspective ja.

SIYANDA: And when cause I suppose when you are growing up you just go to church for cause your parents are going to church and

BILI: ... ja at first ...

SIYANDA: ... and when did it become a sort of a personal conviction to, to take it seriously and adopt it into your lifestyle?

BILI: [brief pause] Well when I was when I was about ahmm how old was I? Fourteen fifteenish when ja I had just thinking about stuff and meaning of life and ja and what Christianity it was also what Christianity really, really is not only what life means and you know why I am doing what I am doing and then when I got to understand what Christianity really is from like from a biblical perspective and stuff like that's when I decided I made a choice that "Okay this is what I want to be and this is where I am going with my life" hmm.

SIYANDA: And so you said religion was a big part of your family's were politics ...

BILI: ... yes [laughs] yes ah my father at some point actually I am told considering, considering to, to considering politics he actually stood for elections to be a ah a what is it? A councilour

SIYANDA: ... a councilour

BILI: ... member of Parliament ...

SIYANDA: ... oh, oh

BILI: ... I don't know something it's, it's just something in the past I heard cause I was not aware back then but he's a very like stanch member of the leading party just the BDP in Botswana ...

SIYANDA: ...B what?

BILI: BDP

SIYANDA: BDP

BILI: Ja Botswana Democratic Party ...

SIYANDA: ... thank you I'm gonna learn some history

BILI: [chuckles] He's like he's very he used to be like very, very supportive now things are changing and, and ah I grew up with a whole lot of newspapers in my house cause it was also the time when South Africa was going through you know changes there was a whole lot of violence you know prior 94 when they got the state and had to negotiate for, for democracy in South Africa so there was a whole lot of newspapers I grew up with a lot of newspapers and the NEWS even then you know it just influenced my thinking my

dad used to read a lot and I got that from him I started reading from him I remember there used to be this Citizen around a lot I started ...

SIYANDA: ... that's a newspaper right?

BILI: Ja it's a South African newspaper the Citizen I started reading just the comic part of it the comic strips and then eventually I just went on to reading the news they used to be HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE reports of, of the violence and how you know they used to be very graphical in reporting how people were killed and stuff like but from that from just reading the newspapers I became very politically minded cause my parents are teachers and you know they I used to have to learn about Ministers who is the Minister of what and what's happening in the world and this is my dad he's like "If you know your friends' names you should know your Ministers like the Minister of Education and stuff so I become very aware of who was who and what was happening and ja I think it was mainly cause of his, his interest and then as time went on I also started realizing that my mom was actually politically ahmm [brief pause] ...

SIYANDA: ...minded

BILI: minded in different ways as well they had actually tried to recruit her to the opposition party and ja for a very long time they tried to get her to join them but for reasons known by her reasons known by her she decided not to especially as a teacher I think that could be [giggles] ja so ah like NewAfrican [there was a copy on the table] is in my home ja ah and stuff like that and that's how I got to find out about the history in Zimbabwe and the Lancaster Agreement and you know ...

SIYANDA: ... but everybody forgets about that ...

BILI: EXACTLY ...

SIYANDA: ... nobody speaks about that Agreement.

BILI: Ja so and then getting that sort of understanding getting that insight into things it just made me very politically minded.

SIYANDA: And growing up how familiar were you with the South African story?

BILI: Very, very, very much I was very, very familiar [giggles] with that my father had a very particular interest in South African history and you know he used to share a lot of it he does have a gift of talking which I think I got from him so he used to share a lot about it and plus you know back then it was in the news it was writing affairs and I'm very inquisitive that I want to know why is this happening in a particular way and that's when actually I think race started to be something that I started thinking about because I used to I used to watch the news and they used to report that the BLACKS or the whites and for me cause I was in a country where that was not, not of an issue I used to say to myself "Surely this is making things worse than they should be because if you start looking at people in ways that differentiate them and then people will start going to think of themselves in those ways" that's what I used to think I am telling you and I was very, very young then it used to bother me how people were differentiated especially according

to race cause it was something that was very FOREIGN to me in Botswana and I just used to think “That is so wrong why do you need to have people identify themselves by their skin colour what’s the difference?” it’s like [brief pause] okay I was, was very naïve it’s like it’s like I went for a programme where they’d say this is a group for like divorced ahm parents of I mean kids of divorced parents and I used to say to myself “Surely they are making problems where there are no problems ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... who said divorced kids have problems

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... you know ...

SIYANDA: yes

BILI: ... so they are just attracting they are just attracting problems cause that’s what I thought of the differentiation between black and white cause I first saw it on TV when they are reporting news and they say “The blacks this and the whites that” and I said “Surely they are attracting problems now they are trying to separate people into these categories and they are telling people they have problems but they DON’T ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... you know that’s why I used to say to people that you know when I grew up I used to think I’m you know I’m going to change the world and I realized that I had these really tainted glasses and then I took them off ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... and then I started to see the world for what it was ...

SIYANDA: [laughing] ja

BILI: ... and that changed ja.

SIYANDA: Well I suppose what is could be different for me is not identifying yourself by race ...

BILI: ... EXACTLY

SIYANDA: ... especially in this ...

BILI: ... ja I know, I know I know what you mean ...

SIYANDA: ... I don’t what it would mean to live in a country like any other country in Africa besides out of South Africa so I don’t know what life would be like in Botswana ...

BILI: ... without people calling you black ...

SIYANDA: ... ja and without knowing *ukuthi*¹ so [sighs] like I just can’t understand it do are you conscious of it ah [brief pause]

BILI: ... of my skin colour?

¹ ‘Ukuthi’ is a Zulu word meaning ‘that’ in English

SIYANDA: Yeah like I mean ah *ngoba mina*² here I am completely and utterly conscious of it and I can't imagine not being [brief pause] ...

BILI: ... black

SIYANDA: ... ja or knowing and feeling that I am

BILI: I guess that's what, that's what ahmm [brief pause] how can I put this? [brief pause] gives meaning to your existence you're black before everything else you know that's, that's what makes you remember that "I do exist I'm black" [brief pause] that was such a foreign concept for me that was SO foreign when I was at home [brief pause] being black I know I am this skin colour but it doesn't come into my definition of how I am like if somebody was to ask me you know "Describe One" black wouldn't necessarily come into it being female maybe and my personality traits you know I am a ah ...

SIYANDA: ...extrovert

BILI: exact...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... I thought I was an introvert.

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... you know and you know that I'm, I'm [brief pause] I'm I've got a very strong character you know [lowering her voice as if she is whispering] I'm very forceful in nature ...

SIYANDA: chuckles

BILI: ... and you know those sort of things and maybe where I come from the family and stuff like that but being black in Botswana would have not come up as an issue not at all

SIYANDA: And, and does it come up now or is it just a ...

BILI: ... and then I came to South Africa ...

SIYANDA: prolonged laughter

BILI: ... and then I got a rude awakening ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... it was, it was you know it was very, very interesting coming to South Africa [brief pause] where if you are not black decide on how you are because ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... you can't fit into the society if you are not of a particular race choose a category where you are going to fit into ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... so it was I was, I was and I am more of a person where I don't like being categorized I don't like people think that they can predict how I'm going to do things just because ...

SIYANDA: ... just because you are X...

² 'Ngoba mina' is a Zulu phrase meaning 'because I'

BILI: ... just because I'm, I'm a female or just because I'm black I don't like people thinking "Okay she's black she is going to do this or she's going to ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... so it was very, very difficult and imagine one individual trying to stand against something that has been embedded for ...

SIYANDA: ... years

BILI: ... more than fifty years so that was, that was, that was plus coming to South Africa post ahmm 94 you would think that you are now coming to an integrated society but phew it was, it was, it was something different I've always come to South Africa like to visit not to stay ...

SIYANDA: ... to stay okay

BILI: ... so I have never had that experience ...

SIYANDA: ... was that under apartheid?

BILI: No, no

SIYANDA: ... post apartheid?

BILI: ... post apartheid like you know your Joburg your Polokwane and Limpopo ah ja Pretoria just to visit and not to stay and then when I came to stay then I started I realized seeing how people constructed meaning and how they started you know how they constructed identity and other people's identity it was very, it was very interesting when I first came to South Africa I had like South African friends I had if I remember one South African friend and she was not from KwaZulu-Natal she spoke isiZulu but not a lot so you know somebody that I could identify with she, she *buwas*³ it's not seTswana but it's something that I understand ...

SIYANDA: ... is it close enough

BILI: It's seSotho ...

SIYANDA: ... seSotho ja

BILI: ... coming from Gauteng it's seSotho mixed with seTswana and Sepedi ...

SIYANDA: ... oh ja

BILI: ... so it's ja, ja

SIYANDA: Breyani

BOTH: laugh

BILI: Ja so I could understand her ah [Pause] I find easier to make friends well I went to an international school we didn't we had Indians we had what's the other thing? We had people who are called Coloured here ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... who we didn't call Coloured in Botswana and I know this sounds funny I had a friend called Kim and Kim was Kim she was not Coloured she was Kim and I know her

³ 'Buwa' is to 'speak seSotho'

mom was very, very particular about [brief pause] Kim being Coloured or not like she's not Coloured she's a person so Coloured you know we were aware of it cause of our proximity to South Africa but I had a couple of actually I remember also Juaane they were PEOPLE they were not COLOURED you know we had Indian friends we had friends from Pakistan in one class had people from what's this what's this place? I forgot but it's somewhere one of the Scandinavian countries you would not find you know like when you come in KZN you'd find your whites there you'd find your blacks there you'd find your Indians there we had a whole mixture of people and the Indians within Botswana were actually from INDIA you know not like South African Indian and some of them had naturalized like they were [giggles] naturalized interesting word ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ...they'd naturalized that's how they put it in Botswana so they were now Batswana they were now Batswana so coming into ja [brief pause]

BOTH: laugh

BILI: Yes and coming from that like that's how we were in class and people were friends they were not friends because of their colouring they were friends because of ...

SIYANDA: ... who they are

BILI: ... ja personality how people used to do things together and what interested them the things that they in common not, not race other than race and we to tell the honest truth we were very, very mixed up class like you had your Muslims you had your Hindus you had your and I was I actually had like a couple in my class were well no the girl was in my class and the guy was in [the] class ahead the girl I think was Muslim and guy was Hindu which was which is unheard of and it's unheard of their parents were like totally against it but on campus they used to walk off together and we knew they were going out we knew the parents were against it it's you see it's stuff like that, that, that, that went on and maybe just to give you a background of the school the school was set up in I think it came into being in 1972 and it was it's the first interracial school that we've had in ...

SIYANDA: ... in Africa?

BILI: ...no, no in Botswana

BOTH: laugh

BILI: THE FIRST SCHOOL to call itself interracial because back then we had like your schools and, and whoever could do there it wasn't like it was restricted to any particular grouping like it was in South Africa ours schools was opened to whoever who wanted to go but it was the first school to call itself interracial ja so what happened was that because of that South Africa was actually against it the South African government was against it

...

SIYANDA: ...OHH of course

BILI: ... you remember they were against ah my first president's ...

SIYANDA: ...Ohhhhhhhh

BILI: ... marriage to a white woman...

SIYANDA: ... yes

BILI: ... so ja having a school like that was telling other countries that you know the races can be mixed ...

SIYANDA: ... yes that it's possible

BILI: ... and South Africa was very much against it they there was a time where they had a plane that was circling over the school and the kids had to be vacated to the field in case of bombing they had a teacher coming in pretending to be a teacher and then he disappeared after a while and they realized it was actually a spy sent in to come in ...

SIYANDA: ... oh my good god

BILI: ... we had, we had one like we had a couple of South African teachers and you know like black people coming to Botswana was an issue cause of the South African government cause they were probably running away from South Africa I remember my history teacher I had in one of the years I had a black history teacher and she ...

BOTH: from South Africa

BILI: ... and she had ran away from South Africa so like that sort of history and where they are coming from to, to when I came in to that place it was a very mixed school there was n I'm black I promise you being black and being whatever was the LAST thing in our minds the VERY, very last thing we were very used to interracial marriages I was it was like cool you know they've found somebody they love my aunt is married to a white guy it was like it was no BIG DEAL it was like okay he of a different tradition it's fine but we will [brief pause] we will it's not like it's not a train smash it's not you know it's what people were used to it's what happened ALL the time you know it was very rare to get Indian and black but we did get them and they had the most beautiful kids ...

SIYANDA: ... babies yeah

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... it was it was okay and then you come to South Africa "Hhaah [gasps and takes on a different tone of voice] she's walking with a white guy there's something wrong with her" and coming here and having to you know who you are having to resort to saying "I'm black" was I was like no there's more to me than what you see on the outside you know I wanted I was used to having my personality attributes ...

SIYANDA: ... being the thing

BILI: ... out there rather my being black so coming here and it was very hard because it was not only other race groupings saying "who are you?" it was also the blacks saying to me "who ...

BOTH: ...are you?"

BILI: ... because [brief pause] when you start taking a particular racial category you are also taking things that are attributed to it there's a culture that goes with every, every race

so when I say I'm black I'm, I'm [brief pause] putting a cloak that says I'm black and I'm going to behave black I didn't behave black for a lot of people

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... so that was a problem because I didn't behave black and I don't think I behave white ...

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: ... well

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... I, I know I'm not open to [brief pause] ja I can't as well but it was a problem it was and staying in Res⁴ which is predominately black people and I supposedly I don't know what behaving black is you know because I'm doing things that I know how to do from my family and my family is BLACK you know...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ja

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: [sighs] so being told that "you are not black the music that you listen to how you do things you know" I was very like okay so "what do you want me to do?" you know "how do you want me to do it? And then knowing that I'm also NOT of a different skin colour it was very, was very it was very interesting cause I know I have written somewhere that I have never felt so black and yet not so black at the same time as I have in South Africa because I have been, I have been called because "You are black behave black but then you don't behave black" so I have been qualified as black but then disqualified at the same time which you know at first it used to infuriate me it used to make me really mad but now it's just like you know what it's fine it's the way the society works it's you know it's HOW unfortunately it's how the society has been molded. I have a friend I identify myself differently and I have, I have a Zulu friend she finds it very hard you know to, to think out of race she finds it very hard and the other thing with people in KZN they don't travel a lot so they [are] very used to being like this she finds it very, very hard to think outside race you know when you talk and she's like "but race" I'm like "there's more to race" and she, she's coming to Botswana so I'm hoping she be able to see what I'm talking but ja.

SIYANDA: Now having in South Africa for how long have you lived in South Africa?

BILI: This is my fifth year

SIYANDA: Fifth year?

BILI: Ja

⁴ University Residence Halls

SIYANDA: Ahhmm are you, are you, are you now more race conscious than you were before or when you go back to Botswana you switch back to ah, ah [brief pause] ah do you know what I mean?

BILI: Ahhm I have become race conscious in terms of like looking watching TV for an example and there are some things being done and I'm like "Hohh that's a black person what are they doing?" because of my being here and the expectations thereof but I have realized that I am not as race conscious as I thought I was well I went for a party one of my classmates my Masters class there are [counting] one two three four black people out of, out of thirty you see now I have been aware of that like I'd check out to see if there ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... I'd, I'd before I promise you Siya before, before like I'd go to class and I would sit next to a white person and I would not be aware ...

SIYANDA: ... ukuthi

BILI: ... I would not be aware that I'm sitting next to a white person I'd go and sit next to a black person and not that I'd choose and go okay I would just sit where there is space available and you know and I like sitting in front of class cause ja well [giggles] for reasons known to me cause I talked a lot when sat at the back so in order for me to concentrate ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... I need to sit in front the way I know because the lecturer is there so I can't talk but you know that's how it used to happen not because I preferred any race but because I wanted to be in front and because there was a sit available and I didn't think because I was black I needed to sit next to black people okay why did I say that?

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: Oh ja so ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... but now when I go into class and I looked around I'm like okay there's so many black people there's so many white people and you know because my, my I've been, I've been awoken to, to looking at race but I went to this party part of my Masters group and there were only two black people there it was me and ...

SIYANDA: ... Sphi?

BILI: ... no, no some guy Sibu in my class and because there were only two black people it was automatically assumed that we were a couple and it took me a while for me to realize that we were that you know ...

BOTH: hysterical laughter

BILI: ... I was, I was just, I was just talking and you know talking to people and just saying hi and then I started to realize that people are reacting I'm like HE'S NOT MY BOYFRIEND ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... just because he's ...

BOTH: ... black

BILI: ... and you know it was it came as a very [brief pause] it was very interesting that these are my classmates and I was sitting there were a whole of other people other than my classmates but I was sitting with my classmates and Sibu was one of them there was but other than Sibu they were all white plus their friends there were my classmates their friends and we were just talking and [brief pause] after a while after like two hours of talking I realized they were like people looking [at] me funny and, and then it clicked "I'm black" like I was very unaware of my being black I was just these are people that I'm having fun with you know we are sitting here celebrating one of my classmates birthday party and then you know somebody just had to find out you're black you don't quite fit in and it was just I found it very interesting it's hard to be A PERSON even not classified according to your colour people have to always remind you that you're black

...

SIYANDA: ... so that they could put you in your place

BILI: ... exactly, exactly I think I am starting to, to, to get out of my place and they had to bring me back in...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... and I guess you know I guess it was hard for them to make jokes cause you know, you know they were talking about some security guy and you know the everyday security jokes that security people are like difficult you know they are like exercising authority ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... and stuff like that and then this person said the very person he's like he thought was *Man on Fire* ...

SIYANDA: ... *Man on Fire*?

BILI: ... oh he watched *Man on Fire* Denzil Washington I don't know it there's like it's a movie he's like he watched *Man on Fire* now he thinks he's *Man on Fire* and then you know ...

SIYANDA: ... and what does that mean I don't know ...

BILI: ... I was thinking what does that mean and then it made me realize that Denzil Washington is a black guy I think it's I don't know I have to go and watch it but then for me ...

SIYANDA: [giggles] ... I have too now

BILI: ... it went back for me it just went back to race that you know he's a black guy and he was doing something that maybe he shouldn't have done and this guy is trying to do it back and he's black so it sort of like dampened the whole evening cause now I was I had to constantly think I'm black ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... I'm black

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... I'm black

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... I'm black so ja

SIYANDA: [laughing] ... and don't you forget it...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: I bet I guess ja it's a, it's a very interesting society that we are in.

SIYANDA: Ja now can you tell me a little bit about the politics in Botswana so what are the issues there politically speaking?

BILI: There's not much issues expect that we don't have a strong oppositional party that can take on the leading party the leading party has been in power since Independence we have our elections democratically and everything [sighs] but you know and I'm somebody who's politically conscious I'm very ah ja I'm a little bit worried about the fact that we don't have a strong oppositional party because for any healthy ...

SIYANDA: ... democracy

BILI: ... democracy there needs to be a party that will keep the leading party in check ...

SIYANDA: ... it is the same thing that is happening here the ANC is going to be in power for [brief pause] at least for the next fifth years...

BILI: ... and what happens as a result is that they are so used to being in power they just do things for the sake of doing them and not you know not because they know like if I don't perform somebody else will take power from me and you know looking out for the interests of the people so that's really, that's really bugs me especially now when there is so much about the economy of the world and somebody needs to be thinking about the people ja and our first president who made history Sir Seretse Khama(?) ...

SIYANDA: ... what was his name again?

BILI: ... Sir Seretse Khama (?) he was knighted...

SIYANDA: ... yes, yes

BILI: ... he married a white British woman which was unheard of as well and South Africa decided to put him on EXILE even though he was not from South Africa ...

SIYANDA: ... I mean just I recently read this I didn't know about that I was flying from England actually I was reading the *Sawubona* magazine I was like cool I think I've got the *Sawubona* here I stole it off the plane ...

BILI: ... no they had a really difficult time in their marriage she, she actually got married in a black dress because they had a date set for their wedding and South Africa got ah some British Minister to, to stop the wedding from taking place and then they had to negotiate for another day and she came in a black dress so that people wouldn't know that they were getting married so that's how they got married and then coming back home was difficult because South Africa I mean to get to Botswana from overseas you must

come to South Africa and then they exiled him so he couldn't come back home and it was, it was, it was very difficult and then back home we were a Protectorate (?) remember Botswana was a Protectorate (?) it was not a colony when the okay PLEASE correct me if I'm wrong we say Boers at home but I know it's not a word that's, that's very common around here so I've to [be] very careful but when South Africa when the whites you see whites is difficult cause ...

SIYANDA: ... the Afrikaner

BILI: ... the Afrikaner ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... so there was the Afrikaner and the Randlords (?) when the I don't know who it was I think the Afrikaners when they were conquering South Africa and the neighbouring [brief pause] well when South Africa was taking ...

SIYANDA: SOUTH AFRICA

BILI: ... [when] the whites were taking South Africa and the neighbouring counties cause remember there was Northern Rhodesia within Rhodesia cause they'd colonized it Botswana three chiefs from Botswana went to the UK to ask for protection so they became a Protectorate (?) instead of a colony and ja so we got our Independence from being a Protectorate (?) ja rather than a colony ...

SIYANDA: ... and your first president was a chief ...

BILI: ... [proudly] was the chief of my tribe actually ...

SIYANDA: ... which is?

BILI: Bamangwato

SIYANDA: Bamangwato

BILI: Bamangwa ja [brief pause followed by a chuckle]

SIYANDA: Let me see how do you write that Bamagwanto it's such a nice word Bamangwato

BRIEF PUASE

BILI: [writing the word down] and consequently all the ah the presidents expect one were, were Bamangwato ...

SIYANDA: ... oh so are you like a dominate group in Botswana like the Zulus here?

BILI: Not necessarily ...

BOTH: hysterical laughter

BILI: Like the Zulus I hear you see the thing in Botswana is the people are very mobile they are very like coming from home to the capital city and the capital city was where I did my secondary school I was a boarder it's like going from Durban to Joburg but that's a distance that people don't shy away from they travel a lot it's a very interactive country people are not restricted to their, to their areas they travel so because of that you don't have a particular tribe in a particular area of the country thinking okay it's me it's just ourselves and our kingdom like it happened here exactly so there is so much there is a lot

of interaction rather than being I'm Watu and I'm Bira and stuff like that those are different tribes you have I'm Mostswana obviously there are issues like the Basaruwa who are you know they have been sidelined but on the larger scale there's we don't have much tribalism no.

SIYANDA: And how are about poverty as an issue is it a big issue?

BILI: It's, it's, it's for me somebody who's politically minded it's an issue because ah the gap between the rich and the poor is a concerning one you know we are not very far from South Africa and, and Brazil in terms of ja it's we have like very rich people and then you have your ...

SIYANDA: ... very poor

BILI: ... your very poor but ja you do have those poor ones but ah what I used to really admire about my country was that the people were farmers you know they had their own land so they would grow crops and Botswana is a big country for you to be a proper Motswana you have to have cattle ...

SIYANDA: ... yes

BILI: ... you know ja so they used to have that and they used to be self-sustaining people and even if, even if they were poor in terms of you know how much they had at the end of the month there would still be something to eat at the end of the day you know they won't be like ...

BOTH: ... starving

BILI: per se you know they would be very content but now you know [brief pause] ja I mean there was that and I used to console myself with that coming from the country but now with the economy ...

SIYANDA: ... globalization

BILI: ... globalization and the world economy doing what it's doing now people having to pay for school fees having to pay for transport having to pay for food it's I think it's people are getting strain from that so ja and I think the government needs to do something we could diversify do whatever it needs to be done economically to get to the people they are doing a lot actually they are doing a lot they are trying to develop the farming industry ja in terms of my country 1.8 million people ...

SIYANDA: ... please come again

BILI: ... I'm coming from a country of 1.8 million people it's not very easy to ...

SIYANDA: ... what do you mean Botswana ...

BILI: ... the whole country is 1.8 and Durban alone is more than three million ...

I BRING OUT THE MAP OF AFRCIA

BILI: ... this country here ...

SIYANDA: [surprised] 1.8?

BILI: ... the whole of it is 1.8 million people ...

SIYANDA: ... that's unbelievable ...

BILI: ... it is I mean there's so much that could be done but you know because of, because of the number of people it also compromises on the manufacturing level we can't have much industry because we don't have the capacity for it ...

SIYANDA: ... wow ...

BILI: we actually have more people than Lesotho ja I think so

SIYANDA: Ja alright ah I think let's end there for now ...

BILI: ... with the politics?

SIYANDA: ... no with your childhood

BILI: okay

SIYANDA: Unless you've got a burning thing to tell about your childhood

BILI: Hmmmm not that I can think of no

STOPS THE INTERVIEW FOR A LUNCH BREAK

SIYANDA: Ahmm alright let's now speak about your school ah your school experience your first school what do remember your first school?

BILI: My first school I remember my name is three lettered three letters O-N-E

SIYANDA: Oh One [pronouncing as the number 1]

BILI: Ja One

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: And I remember I couldn't get the 'e' to face the direct direction ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... and the teachers couldn't understand why...

SIYANDA: [laughing] ...why? What's so difficult...

BILI: ... and they would say to me this is pre-school they would say to me "You have a three lettered NAME WHY can't you just get it right? You know ...

BOTH: chuckle

BILI: ... and ja and ja that's my first memory of school.

SIYANDA: And did you have friends? Did you make friends easily and how were your friends?

BILI: Ah I don't remember them in primary well I remember, I remember some person called Eric that I used to sit next to so it was obviously a guy ...

SIYANDA: ... was he your boyfriend?

BILI: ... no pps [laughs] no I was I don't know I was [sighs] I was I think a very [brief pause] strange child in that [Pause] well maybe it looking at my nephew now maybe it's, it's what kids do I was not concerned about whether I have friends or not it was just you know go to school and but I remember Eric used to sit next to me and I used to like try shield him from the teachers when they were shouting at him and stuff like that...

SIYANDA: ...really why?

BILI: ... this is nursery school ja I don't know why [brief pause] cause he was weaker than I was ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... so I happened I had to protect him and then started I did my nursery school with, with my aunt in Janing the other mining town but she was not working ...

SIYANDA: ... where?

BILI: ... Janing ja the two diamond mining places in Orapa and she is a teacher as well she was not, she was not working for the mine but she's a teacher but it's got a different setting to the one that my town is the only that's like that Orapa is the only one and I moved in then I went to where my mom was for my Standard one we use Standards I don't know if you guys use Standards ...

SIYANDA: ... we did before but it's changed

BILI: ... changed ja for my Standard One this is in my mother's school I don't know why they took me to the school where my mom was my older sister went to school where my mom and DAD were so I think she had it worse but anyway when I was in Standard One she taught Standard One when I was in Standard Two she taught Standard Two ...

SIYANDA: ... was this your mom or aunt?

BILI: ... my mom this is my mom now.

SIYANDA: So your mom taught you in class?

BILI: No, no she was teaching the other class Standard Three she taught Standard Three and then I did Standard Four I was apparently weak in Maths so I used to get lessons at home so I'd go from school to home another school I never got any preferial treatment she'd make sure you know if any thing I was treated worse than the other kids just for them to understand that just because I'm a teacher's child doesn't mean I'd get, I'd get any preferial treatment she used to know about the teachers' meeting before I'd did ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... ja she'd know, she'd know you know when there was a teachers' meeting she'd KNOW STUFF before I did she'd know there was a letter to be given to her before I you know she'd know the report was coming so there was never any surprises for them they knew ...

SIYANDA: ... and you couldn't skip school I suppose cause ...

BILI: ... hmmm ja not at all and I never had issues with going to school to tell the honest truth I, I enjoyed PRIMARY SCHOOL was a beautiful time ...

SIYANDA: ... why? Why was it so beautiful?

BILI: ... I didn't struggle with anything or any homework and stuff things just came so EASILY I, I started reading from a VERY young age very, very young age cause all of the materials that was around me by Standard let me see by Standard Two I had finished all there was cause my mom was a Standard two teacher all the reading material there was for Standard Two I had finished it and I was going on for other things by Standard

Four [giggles] how old was i? [brief pause] about nine-ish nine ten-ish, nine ten-ish somewhere there I nine I was already reading novels that were way above my age and so ...

SIYANDA: ... and what kind of novels? Can you ...

BILI: ... this is Mills and Blooms I read my first novel ...

SIYANDA: ... [shouting] OH GOOD GOD [laughs]

BILI: ... back in Standard Four

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: Let me tell you why it was because ...

SIYANDA: ... trashy

BILI: ... ja tell me about it

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: [chuckles] And now I look back and I'm like "who introduced me to those ..."

BOTH: laughs

BILI: ... ja I had read everything there was to read and I am sure a reader and I was looking for something to read just something to get my hands on I'd read the newspapers I'd read the books and I wouldn't read Encyclopedias but ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... I read I was reading for something to I was looking for something to read and I found my sister's novel and then I got my hands onto it and I read it and ja from there on I just ja ...

SIYANDA: ... and the best book you have ever read at that time can you remember what it was?

BILI: At that time?

SIYANDA: Ja

BILI: No I can't actually I can't UH then I started reading ah is it Jeffrey Archers? *The Firm* the guy who wrote the Firm

SIYANDA: Oh good god

BILI: What's his name?

SIYANDA: I know *The Firm* but I don't know who wrote it ...

BILI: ... ja I read it around about that time so after reading THAT I was like wow one of the ja I was like wow it was, it was very interesting.

SIYANDA: And tell me about your experience at Secondary Education.

BILI: Ahmm oh I moved primary schools when I did Standard Four and [giggles] you see my mom was a teacher in my school so she was not on like good terms with some of teachers and it started reflecting on me like the teachers take it out on me like I would get first position in class and we used to have a prize givings and stuff and you get your General Education Manager to come and do the prize giving and he's like a really high

person within the, within the mine and I would get a prize that was worth like third position in class ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... so my mom didn't like it even though I was like first position she made me move schools so I moved to a school that was very far from home but that was fine I didn't mind at all we had buses and stuff and ja it was a totally new world new people new teachers but ja I managed ...

SIYANDA: ... were you able to adjust to this new school or did you struggle?

BILI: I was, I was not really, not really I didn't struggle at all it's just that I was new people having to get to know the teachers you know when you are in a school you are used to the system and you know the teachers but eventually I got to know them I was not really concerned I was a person in my own world I was not really concerned about you know as long as I, I could do my work and then go back home I was fine and ja I, I was a prefect I didn't know why the didn't get me head girl...

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: ... are you still bitter about that?

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... but I was actually surprised that they made me prefect to tell the honest truth actually I was a prefect and from that school I got the scholarship to go to my Secondary School ...

SIYANDA: ... wow

BILI: ... ja [brief pause] and ja and then I went to my Secondary School it was a BOARDING SCHOOL ...

SIYANDA: ... oh wow

BILI: ... so I was staying away from home and Form One this is like Grade what? [counting] one two three four five six seven eight ja ...

SIYANDA: ... Form One but do you still call it that now?

BILI: Well we are very like [brief pause] we have a British education system ...

SIYANDA: ... ja we used to call it Form One Form Two Form Three...

BILI: ... we are following the British you know everything they do we do ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... you guys ...

SIYANDA: ... so much for not being a colony

BILI: ja

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... tell me about but anyway ja and then my ja I don't know I thought I was too young to be in boarding school because from then on I've never been home like for long periods of time I would just go home for holidays and then go back to school [sighs] it was ohh but my Secondary School was BEAUTIFUL I loved, I loved it but it was a bit of

a challenge in first year secondary school coming from primary school to there adjusting educational-wise and I remember, I remember I had like a six month subject Geography we were doing Physical Geo and it was, it was something very, very foreign to me and the teacher asked me I had an interview with him and he's asked me "Why are you having difficulties you are doing very well in all these other subjects? Why this one subject?" and you know he's like "Well everybody goes through that when they are trying to adjust to, to it" and you know at the end of my secondary school life Geography was my best mark ever ...

SIYANDA: ... really?

BILI: ... ja it's very funny AND ja it was I went to a beautiful school I loved that school well ja I am out now but I really loved that school ...

SIYANDA: ... why? Why did you like so much?

BILI: ... it's [sighs] the atmosphere we [brief pause] we okay it's going to sound strange we did not have [brief pause] prefects we did not have head-boys or head-girls we did not have prize givings and let me tell you what it did instead of having well we had people getting expelled you had like discipline you had your detention and the other but instead of having the external structure to try and mold the person they cultivated the person from within they're trying to get the person to develop a character that will help them be a better person and a lot of people who are leaders or company owners or trend-setters are actually from that school because you get founded in such a way that you get, you get to have initiative you know, you know that it's up to you, you, you know it's not the external structure it's about you and what you do to the environment around you ...

SIYANDA: ... now is this the interracial school?

BILI: ... ja it is, it is and I actually appreciate that we didn't have head-boys or head-girls cause now you don't refrain from certain things cause somebody is watching you but you do it because you know it's the right thing to do or kids are kids they'd be those who do whatever stuff but you know on the whole it was a I think it was a very well managed school WHEN I WAS THERE it changed ah hands with the leadership so I don't know what's going on now ...

SIYANDA: ... it went down the drain.

BILI: ... I don't know actually ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... honestly, honestly I don't know the reputation now so what else? What else? ...

SIYANDA: ... but now the experience of being boarding school so for the first time you are a young girl you are living away from home how was that? Was that exiting was it scary for you?

BILI: I tended to take things as they came at that age it was like okay this what I have to do now and my first roommate was a girl who did things she we I don't know we just clicked we didn't like [brief pause] we both talked but our level of talking was not like

heart-to-heart we just like our own space so what you'd we both liked reading that's the nice part of it so at a particular time of the day we'd both be reading we were two people per room so we'd both be reading and that suited us fine and ja so we just clicked we stayed together until like for three years we had no issues and it's just that she decided she wanted change I was fine no...

SIYANDA: ... she had enough of you

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... no she had other friends that she wanted to see and I wanted to stay in a single room so we, we changed but ja it was, it was freedom but [brief pause] there were also rules in terms of like boarding house ah [brief pause] what do you call them? They call them like we had a boarding house mistress but later on we had boarding house PARENTS we had a couple who decided to overlook the boarding house [sighs] I didn't find it hard so because I was used to taking care of myself I was used to we didn't have to cook we had to go to the boarding school I mean to the dining hall ...

SIYANDA: ... and how was the food?

BILI: ... the food [chuckles] I [brief pause] like by other standards it was, it was actually good but when you are in there ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... you get tired of the [laughs] same ...

SIYANDA: ... [laughing] same menu

BILI: Exactly it's only when I got outside that I really got to see that these guys really tried their best to provide but there were some I'd had enough of cottage pie even today when I look at cottage pie I just think ...

SIYANDA: ... [surprised] you guys were eating cottage pie in boarding school?

BILI: [hesitant pause] ja

SIYANDA: And you are complaining about the quality of the food?

BILI: See when you are on the inside you don't get to appreciate what you [laughs] ...

SIYANDA: ... COTTAGE PIE pie!

BILI: [pause] okay let's move...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... okay [laughs] okay that's why I said I understand that, I understand it was good it was a very lax atmosphere ah [brief pause] we had a very not a very we had an informal like a students here it was not an informal relationship with the teachers but could, we could ...

SIYANDA: ... talk to them

BILI: ... talk to them you know and we didn't call them sir or madam or whatever you just call them like what? Mister Long Mister Damal Mrs. whatever, whatever their names were and I, I, I appreciated that sort of relationship with, with the school given that the relationship was like that we never had any like scandals with the teachers going out with

the students we both knew our boundaries it was a very communal school it was a boarding school as you know plus the history that it has just enriched it what they tried to do was that they would get a teacher and HIS wife on board for example my history teacher's wife taught me Jazz dance and what's the other thing?...

SIYANDA:what's ...?

BILI: ... Jazz dance ja.

SIYANDA: What's that?

BILI: It's something

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: [laughing] is that another British export?

BILI: No it's like ah modern dance it's similar to modern dance she's a ballet dancer she's whatever like they would get the couple to be involved with the school community which just sort of rounded it all up it was really nice and I got to baby-sit for them I got to baby-sit for one of the teachers so just the whole school atmosphere for me was very good it was safe I could walk around late at night I could go jogging nine at night you know so it was, it was, it was a time I really enjoyed and what else? Ja I had friends there like when I left some of the teachers were my friends and we kept in touch and ja.

SIYANDA: And so it was an interracial school so was this your first contact with people of a different racial background to you when you first came to the school?

BILI: Ahmm [brief pause] it was not my first contact but in fact like proximity within the space yes it was but it was not like "WHOA that person is white" "Whoa that person is Indian" it's just THEY ARE PEOPLE you know.

SIYANDA: Ja but okay now so now the first time you had contact with somebody of a different from a different race group can you think like what that experience felt like for you when you first met see somebody who's different to you racially?

BILI: I don't remember actually but I mean I used to have ahmm like an old white teacher or two in primary school so they were there even or even though I didn't have A teacher in my class there were people around ja and I'm told that I used to consult ahmm a white doctor so like when I was young so I don't remember so maybe that shaped it so it never like it was in my subconscious so I never really got to, to think WHAT, what interested me was the different ways of doing things that people brought in from their different cultural backgrounds ja especially also with religion cause you know I'm from a particular religion and then you had your Muslims you had your Sheiks you had your Hindus and a whole lot of, a whole lot of other religions you had your Jews a whole lot of other religions there.

SIYANDA: And were you able to form friendships across ...

BILI: ... yes, yes, yes ...

SIYANDA: ... tell me about some of your of who your friends were

BILI: ... Ahmm [brief pause] ahmm well my best friend across what do you mean when you say across?

SIYANDA: Whether racial national religious ...

BILI: ... okay my best friend was not of the my first best friend who was my best friend throughout my secondary school she was not [brief pause] ah Christian and she understood that's what amazes me at that point I was able to I don't how I did it but I was able to say "this is who I am and you know I'm not going to compromise with it" and she said "Okay I understand this is who you are but then this is also who I am but we have a meeting point and I understand I can't do some of the things you and I understand you can't do some of the things I do" and we kept it going she actually gave me my first, my own first album Christian which I thought was like wow at that I don't ...

SIYANDA: ... CD?

BILI: ... it was hhhh CD?

SIYANDA: Oh no [laughs]

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: Was it a cassette?

BILI: Yes.

SIYANDA: Sorry

BILI: You are rather old

BOTH: laugh

BILI: Ja and ah [brief pause] we used to have people who well we didn't understand the fasting back then but we would know that at this point like your was it Muslims?

SIYANDA: Muslims

BILI: They won't eat with us you know they would have their scarves on and everything we didn't have those like Muslims fundamentalists now we call them that they'd have they'd take their clothes off ...

SIYANDA: ... the scarves?

BILI: ... the scarves and the black the scarves off when they are not fasting but then when it came to fasting and then they'd have their full attire on so I don't know maybe we were too see they're also ja we were too liberal cause they also call Botswana like one of the most globalized places so maybe that's why I'm sounding very it's sounding very idealistic ...

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: ... JA a fantastic marketing thing for Botswana you know it's very cool ...

BILI: ... when I talk I don't want to make it sound like it didn't have its own issues it did it's just that there were not [brief pause] like South Africa is experiencing for example ja if we had people who were treated differently it's not, it's not what South Africa has faced for example like I know there's much more of an issue in Botswana for gay people than there is for, for South Africa you know so we have different things that are problems

as compared to South Africa so it's not that you know perfect world ja ah what more of my secondary schooling?

SIYANDA: Friends other friends ...

BILI: ... friends [chuckles] I find it very easy to make male friends very easy and but what used to fascinate me was that people would think that I was going out with anyone of them like I don't know I, I don't understand why you can't have a male friend as a female and you know and for people not to ja for people not to expect that you're involved in an intimate relationship but I used to have a whole lot of male friends and ja especially those termed as bad boys well some of them not all, not all of them, not al of them ...

SIYANDA: ... so you like your bad boys?

BILI: [sighs] It's not that I like my bad boys it's just like understanding where people are coming from and not [brief pause] not, not ah [brief pause] not putting what I think they are on them but just letting them open up and just be you know so I think that's what made it easier for them for me to connect to other people it's just that I gave them the space to be who they are and not trying to corner them into what I thought they should be or what the world says they should be ja and [giggles] I was not, I was the best athletic ever ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... but I'd take part in every athletics like every year I'd take part not because I was the best person there was but because of like the team spirit that's the other thing we had GREAT team spirit we had three houses it's going to sound funny but is how it used to be it was X Y and Z that was it [chuckles] we didn't have like fancy names for them ja and like the whole school was divided into these three houses that used to then compete and ja it was the [brief pause] I didn't mind coming last as long as ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... as long as I had a point for my house you know ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... I remember I'd go home and I told them [in an excited voice] "Ja I was running" they'd be like "WHAT? Had they ran out of runners?"...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... and then my cousin was like "You took part in ATHLETICS?" I'm like "Yes I did" ahmm I didn't I was not so big with swimming because in swimming you have to disrobe but...

SIYANDA: ... you had to?

BILI: ... disrobe ...

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: ... good god disrobe [laughs] I haven't heard that word ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... so but it was just such a it was it was such a fun time what I also really appreciate about the school was the community service that it used to have they, they were very good with community service there was lots and lots of programmes and they, they also like I said they worked at developing the individual and their leadership skills I, I had the privilege and the honour [of] being involved in the number of their community services we had one where we'd go out to a ahmm primary school in the neighbouring village and the students would be involved in doing afternoon classes in English so they used to teach English there I had lots of them I'll just mention some of them ahmm like my favourite ones one was Remote Area Dweller Project ...

SIYANDA: ... the what?

BILI: [speaks slowly] Remote Area Dweller Project ...

SIYANDA: ... dweller or dollar?

BILI: ... ja, ja it's the RAD some people I, I, I think I don't know if RADP ...

SIYANDA: RDP here?

BILI: No, no it's something different RAD what happened about this project was we had somebody who was a former student at the school he was working for UNICEF then and he came and he proposed it to the schools that "Okay this is what we want to do we want to have a project called RAD and this is what it would be for" it was for settlements that were not recognized as villages or ja villages by the government which meant that because they did not qualify as villages they could not get services from the government and there were services that the Council and the Council did not do ja didn't do a good job and we were particularly concerned with the schools and the kids cause what happened is that you'd get these kids it was a boarding school at primary level so you could imagine like your 6-year-olds your 5-year-olds people who were coming there and they were from, they were from remote areas so some of them were Basarawa who [brief pause] are ah disadvantaged to a large extent as a group as a tribal as a tribe within Botswana because they you know they're hunter-gatherers and making a living and earning a salary is not something that's on ...

SIYANDA: ... part of them

BILI: ... ja part of them ah way of living ja and you know a lot of them will take care of cattle for other people because you know schooling is not so much part of their agenda or maybe they don't have access to it I don't but they just not they are a very disadvantaged so we were working with those kinda people and what tends to happen is that the kids will attend school seasonally if there berries to be picked in the forest they are not there you see if it's winter they are not there cause they'd rather be warm elsewhere and ja so we had to come up with a way of encouraging them to be in school and then like bring others bring other help to the school stuff that we could do for them so he was presenting this and we responded and we had a ah service club set up for, for this thing and I actually helped found it and I left when I was the chairperson of it so you know like this

is at secondary school and doing things like this for me was like ja was like wow we raised funds we there was a point where we had a photo exhibition and we got the First Lady to come in and you know ...

SIYANDA: ... of the country?

BILI: ... ja ...

SIYANDA: ... wow

BILI: ... and come in and you know we got we were on radio we were advertising this, we were advertising this and people responded in such way it really killed me people were responding and they are coming to support us you know and we raised money that people donated for us we got this school cause this is not the school it's, it's US as the students coming together and then we would write proposals to the school and to whoever is willing to donate and we manage to get blankets we managed to get windowpanes window frames cause of the windows were broken we actually have incidents with people coming from the community breaking in to the girls hostels so we were worried about rape and all sorts of things so getting all of that sorted out and coming in and sitting down with them and see what we could do for them and you know how we could improve it and arranging for a visit to the capital city so that they could see you know ja all of that and just trying to encourage their ahmm attendance level and of course teenage pregnancy and talking about all of that and some people would say "I don't want to go on with schooling" primary schooling mind you so you had like ages ranging from about six to about twenty because of, of, of the of where the school was and the type of people that it's accommodating so looking at all of that and having to work within that and a school that houses those of opportunities for you as students to be wield (?) in they were very, very community minded which is what I like we had, we had Gabane the city ...

SIYANDA: ... what's Gabane (?)?

BILI: ... Gabane is a village ja that was where they used to visit like old people and just try brighten up their day to see what they could do I don't know if you know the Kellogg Foundation?

SIYANDA: Hey ah I have heard about it

BILI: Ja and we became we started working with the Kellogg Foundation for the Gabane visiting ja we actually had an exchange programme that Kellogg Foundation to Atlanta Georgia so I'm just trying to give you a background of the richness they had in community service and I really appreciated that ...

SIYANDA: ... it's amazing ...

BILI: ... ja so that's what they did and giving back to the community and being minded having that conscience about the community and the people around you so the fact that there was that happening and that the school was expensive but it was not a Snobbish school it was a school where you had different from all sorts of backgrounds, all sorts of

backgrounds from people who couldn't afford to be there at all like with the allowances and the school pitched in for those kinds of people to people who could go to the States for their shopping you know so that sort of brought an awareness of what the society was like it's not all roses you know there's, there's ...

SIYANDA: ...it's an equal

BILI: ... hmmm it's like that and you know it sounds like a rich school it didn't look like a rich school in that we had our duties in the dining hall if you ate in the dining hall there was sweeping there was cleaning tables there was washing we washed our own dishes you know there were different people to do the washing and the drying and everything that went with it so [brief pause]

SIYANDA: And what did you want to do? You're in school so you are already thinking about your career so what did you want to do? With your life? When you grew up?

BILI: WHEN I WAS IN [brief pause] primary school I started thinking about being a lawyer not a [shouts out] TEACHER ...

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: ... you never wanted to be a teacher okay

BILI: Coming from a family of ...

BOTH: ... TEACHERS

BILI: ... it's a last thing on my mind my mom always goes "WHY?" [giggles]

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... that was the last thing on my mind cause being a teacher is not easy Siya [brief pause] I think, I think it's a calling ja I think teaching is a calling it's one of I think it's one of the MOST demanding professions ever because you are dealing with kids from [brief pause]...

SIYANDA: ... from all over the place

BILI: ... exactly and [sighs] ahh you get difficult parents you get KIDS you want to help but you can't because they are coming from a particular environment and they are embedded within that environment and you get all sorts of problems KIDS manifesting things in class because it's one space where they can you know be themselves and they are offered some sort of comfort and it takes a lot I've seen what it did what it does to my mom she'd come home and there would be all these kids going through a whole lot of things kids coming to school without clothing it's not just teaching it's what goes with it ...

SIYANDA: ... everything

BILI: ... ja it's everything plus no I don't think teaching is for me maybe lecturing at some point but, but not being confined to a school.

SIYANDA: So you wanted to be a lawyer...

BILI: ... I wanted to be a lawyer

SIYANDA: To prosecute or to defend?

BILI: I wanted to TALK ...

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: ...nice one

BOTH: more laughter

BILI: ... and then I realized “no, law is not my thing” and then I went on to wanting to become a [brief pause] A DOCTOR and ja I held on to wanting to become a doctor just like okay it’s an option let’s put it there let’s just hang it there and I wanted to become to work for UNICEF to just work in an environment where I can make change you know like UNICEF is all over the world and is making like [brief pause] one of things ja one of the things that used to get to me was the violence, the violence, the violence you know in the news it’s ja I had to watch I watch news I like watching news and seeing what’s happening all over politically and like in the war zone like [what] people are going through and it came to such a point that there was so much of violence I’d I built a wall around myself I became very sensitive towards the news cause there had been too much and you know the news don’t spare the details they will just tell it I remember there was a point in the news in the Citizen where a family had been killed mom father kids the dog the cat and two pigeons ...

SIYANDA: giggles

BILI: ... and, and [brief pause] it’s, they were all, and you know things like that and forget about the [an inaudible word] forget about everything else you know but you know just the VIOLENCE ...

SIYANDA: ... ja, ja

BILI: ... the violence and getting into war torn areas where people are being systematically raped you get a nine-year-old being raped by ten UN keeping UN...

SIYANDA: ...Peace keeping ...

BILI: ... Peace keeping all this you’re like you know ja so those sort of things I wanted to work in like UN sort of like organization just to make change and ja AND ja after school I thought “okay” you know I looked at the list I was ah like being a doctor what’s there for me? Just seeing sick patients and ...

SIYANDA: ... and the blood

BILI: ... ja you know and being restricted to this white ward institution it’s not quite my calling and [brief pause] I think politics started coming up very strongly ahmm what had I applied for? Oh ja by the end by then I did, I did like my Form Five which is like ...

SIYANDA: ... standard ten which is a matric ...

BILI: ... ja, ja and then I did my A-level because I thought I was going to get to go to the UK [giggles]

SIYANDA: [laughs] okay

BILI: ... but then during, during my last year of A-levels ahhh...

SIYANDA: ... okay now this time what do you wanna do in your head?

BILI: Psychology now ...

SIYANDA: ... okay

BILI: ... ja now it's, it's, it's gone off to Psychology ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... okay let's look at the individual person

BOTH: hysterical laughter

BILI: ... and then so there's remember there's still Medicine and there's still Politics and now it's Psychology none like all these things are forgotten even though later on I totally forgot I forgot all about Medicine I made sure that I forget about Medicine cause it's so much work and I just don't want it's nice being called a doctor but no ...

SIYANDA: hysterical laughter

BILI: ... Medicine is not my field and during my last year of my A-levels I got an ear infection like at some point I wouldn't hear ...

SIYANDA: ... shit!

BILI ... ja [laughs] ja but then I didn't know what was happening and then they realized that it was an ear infection so they cleaned it out and stuff like that ahmm one of my friends passed away ...

SIYANDA: ... Oh good god

BILI: ... and ja academically it then became very hectic so it was a terrible year it was a very, very terrible year and I had applied I'd paid for my everything, everything it was expensive paying in pounds I'd paid for everything that needed to be done for my applications to the UK I wanted to go to Plymouth I don't know if you know ah Cardiff and I think the other one Liverpool it was six but these were my top three I don't know, I don't know Cardiff Plymouth and Cardiff cost their Psychology programmes were like ja top of the list ...

SIYANDA: ... Valerie Walkerdine is in Cardiff

BILI: ... ja okay ja so and, and my friend passed away like instantly car accident so all of that just everything coming together was HECTIC plus my academics were not going as well as I thought they would have been so it was hectic AND THEN at the last day the post comes back from the UK that I'd done something that I needed to put in and post to them and the closing date was tomorrow ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... it was a HECTIC year ...

SIYANDA: ... Oh no...

BILI: ...it was TERRIBLE and then my teacher one of my teachers said "Well you could go to the University of Natal" and I'm like "South Africa was not even on my list..."

SIYANDA: [laughs] ... yeah

BILI: "... South Africa WAS NOT on my list ..."

SIYANDA: more laughter

BILI: "...how can I go there? I'd paid for my APPLICATION fees" ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... I was already you know I'd looked at you know like where I'd be living and stuff like that South Africa I was not even thinking of South Africa and Durban mind you Durban is where but then I was okay whatever...

SIYANDA: ... where what?

BILI: ... it's far...

SIYANDA: ... oh okay.

BILI: ... compared to where I was well ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... WELL ...

BOTH: more laughter

BILI: ... so anyway so I decided to apply I applied through [brief pause] fax everything I just picked up the phone and called them I applied through fax I didn't even pay my application fee I said to them "Can you please take my application fee to my fees, my application fee to my fees" to prove that I was coming you know I just send in that one application I didn't even apply anywhere else and they got me in Durban and what's her name? Nicoleberg (?) Joanne [brief pause] in, in, in Humanities she helped me because then I didn't know what was happening I was just so depressed I was in shock I didn't want to come to South Africa but she was very understanding I didn't pay my application fee and, and I got in you know and I came to South Africa and I registered for Politics and Psychology

SIYANDA: ... oh okay so you hmmm, hmmm okay hmmm

BILI: ... ja I found it to be very interesting kind of mixture and then I said "I'm set this is what I want to do Politics and Psychology and I will go on to do my" I already knew I wanted to go on to postgrad with Psychology and then in was it second year? Or third year? ...

SIYANDA: ... when, when was your first year so ...

BILI: ... two owe (?) four.

SIYANDA: Two owe (?) four.

BILI: Ja second year or third year I [prolongs the 'I'] ja you see those two years for A-levels were what took me back like according to like the educational level here I'm a bit older ja cause I did my A-level had I been to the UK I'd have done three years ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... I would have gone on to ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... anyway and ahmm I think it was second year ja second year when the merge happened and things were just going haywire and then I realized ...

SIYANDA: ...ohh wait the merge happened on that year two thousand and ...

BOTH: ... four

BILI: But then when, when the subjects something happened with subjects and they were suddenly clashing and these were my majors ...

SIYANDA: sighs deeply

BILI: ... exactly and I'd sat down and I'd thought about what I wanted to do so now I have to think of something else which do I drop Psychology or Political Science? And I was really passionate about both of them I remember I was talking to my [brief pause] ahmm Politics lecturers and they were like "well what about the other one ...

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: [laughing] drop them

BILI: ... and then I looked at, I looked at my I've never liked Sociology NEVER I had an option of doing in A-level and I said "No way I'm not doing that" and then I looked at my, I looked at the courses that I'd done in the past what? Year and a half and then I decided that you know I could try Sociology cause that's what I could do with what I was given without having to go back to year one so that I could change my majors and then I went to see them I didn't have Psychology, Sociology 1B but the they looked at all my other subjects and they were like "Okay it's cool you can go forth we can exempt from this one" so then I changed to Sociology as my major WHICH I ended up enjoying big time, big time I really enjoyed it and why did I start this whole story?

SIYANDA: We were talking about you now coming to South Africa to study.

BILI: Ja and then so I ended up with Sociology and Psychology as my majors and I don't regret it one bit maybe I will get to [brief pause] I will I remember now what did I wanted to be ...

SIYANDA: Yes

BILI: ... so I'm just taking you through my career path and maybe I will get to do finish off my Political Science and get a degree in it sometime cause I, it's something I'm really passionate about and [brief pause] I am studying Psychology now Masters Clinical Psychology and I don't think that this is [what] I will be doing all my life you know it's part of what I want to do but it does not you know entail all that I want to do all my life Politics is definitely bringing its head up whether it could be Politics and Psychology cause it's coming again and again you know you can't escape from like the racial past of South Africa it's bringing its ugly head all over the place whether it's people trying to account for their failures or you know people wanting to do something not being able to because of their past that you know that's hindering them JA.

SIYANDA: Alright now take me back to the experience of preparing to ahmm leave your home country to go live in a different country and then *nanokuthi*⁵ you didn't want to come to South Africa because you had your hopes for the UK but when you were finally

⁵ Zulu for 'and that'

getting to leave and prepare how was that experience? Leaving your home country to go

...

BILI: Ja

SIYANDA: ... effectively live in a different country

BILI: I was still oh South Africa for me was not, was not ...

SIYANDA: ... completely foreign

BILI: ... ja because I used to come here and I was not prepared for coming to KwaZulu cause I DID NOT KNOW ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... I DID NOT KNOW KwaZulu I promise you I was not prepared for a foreign language to start off with I was not prepared for a foreign culture so when I came here you know like it felt like I was in a vortex it felt so strange being in an environment where you can't understand what's happening around you, you know people talking you can hear people talking but you can't hear what they are saying ...

SIYANDA: ... and everybody assumes that you are Zulu

BILI: Of course, of course there's that as well ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... there's that as well everybody assumes you are Zulu they'll come "*Sawubona sisi*⁶" and you are like "hi" and they are like "How come you not speak isiZulu" "I'm not Zulu" [takes on a forceful tone of voice] "Well you have to speak isiZulu because you are in KwaZulu" and I'm like "But I just have only came" [adopts the same forceful tone] "Well you have to learn what are you doing here if you are going to learn isiZulu, isiZulu is the most important language in Africa you have to be African" "Well I speak seTswana can we do can you speak seTswana ..."

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... "No isiZulu is the most important" isiZulu is one out of twelve languages in South Africa and South Africa is one out of fifth-two countries in Africa so I don't know what the importance is ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... but it is ...

SIYANDA: ...ehyi respect

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ...you know when I first came here I like diversity I like learning about different cultures it's something that I really I'm really passionate about and I stayed in the res [university residence halls] that I stayed in then I had these beautiful people on my floor and they used to teach me and we would talk about the different cultural practices and I would ask them especially about funerals and weddings and what takes place what does

⁶ A Zulu greeting "Hello sister"

this mean and you know we'd share it and they would ask me about my culture and we would just put it on the table and then I started encountering people [sighs] and for me this is really strange coming from elderly people because back home elderly people are supposed to be respected and they act in a particular way you know ...

SIYANDA: ... yes, yes

BILI: ... that they should be respected so when I started encountering people who would come like elderly people who'd come down to my level as a young person and start shouting at me that's sort of like [giggles] okay what culture is this [giggles] like you know I remember when I was greeting this aunt and she, she cleaned in Tower⁷ and I was like "Sawubona" and she's like "Sawubona" and then she starts going off [claps her hands] in isiZulu we were waiting for a taxi that's the other thing I couldn't just wait with her and not talk to her which is a norm here because and I mean I understand there are more than three million people here so you can't ...

SIYANDA: ... we've got millions of people here [laughs]

BILI: ... exactly but it's very weird in Botswana you're standing next to somebody and you are not, not even saying hi you know it's very, very weird so I say to her and she starts shebering (?) off in isiZulu and I'm like "Excuse me I don't understand isiZulu" and this is not in a very like you know with attitude it was not with attitude and she looks at me she's like "where are you from?" and I tell her "You can't be here and be able to speak isiZulu yadi-yadi-ya" she starts going off in isiZulu and I'm like "Okay fine" and I just ignored her...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... you know experiences like that said to me "You know what? I've had enough of this Zulu nation ...

SIYANDA: OHHH

BILI: ... I'm not going to learn any isiZulu who do they think they are? And from there on I have just blocked my ears off to isiZulu it's like whatever ...

SIYANDA: ...really?

BILI: ... the stuff that I knew is the stuff that those guys taught me ...

SIYANDA: ...taught you

BILI: ... UNTIL I don't know until I like I got over it I was like "You know what? It's not my issue it's their issue" and then I started learning again and like I can hear a lot more than people think I can but the, the situations were it just goes [using her hand to demonstrate that language is difficult to grasp] and I go ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... and I become a foreigner again like I can't speak isiZulu even if I can hear there are situations where it's like I can't hear isiZulu and that's, that's that you know I guess

⁷ Tower is a Residence Hall at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

it's a defense mechanism I don't know but and being a foreigner in South Africa as well is you know having grown up with [pause] media reports of how violent South Africa is so it has not been very easy cause you come here and you have this perception of South Africa I remember when we were back home with my classmates a lot of my classmates were coming here after we did our A-level and I was asking them "what's the one thing that scares you about going to South Africa?" and a lot of it was rape, crime, rape, crime and you can already hear what perception there is of South Africa and coming here to a place where because you are a foreigner you are a target you know they know you are foreigner because of the way you walk because of the way you talk to people ah foreigners tend to be more friendly towards white people and ja you become a target and hearing these stories of some guy not knowing which taxi to take home and he asks for help and this guy says "Oh it's this taxi" and you get all these taxi drivers going in and then they beat him up and take his stuff you know and you become you begin to feel very foreigner you begin to feel very alone within South Africa and the recent xenophobic attacks it didn't help a lot you know I thought I had accepted my being in South Africa and my being PART of South Africa and then when that happened I FELT VERY FOREIGN I felt very out of this place I didn't happen in [brief pause] on campus like we didn't I didn't personally experience it I just see it happening on TV and the newspapers but every person that I talked to that was a foreigner it was we felt very out of place we felt threatened we were all shaken up and [brief pause] it amazed me because we did not confront it we but because we are foreigners we just felt it I felt for those guys that were being burnt and you know their homes being burnt down and I was it was like me you know but it was not me I think it's a fact that we are all foreigners just you know.

SIYANDA: And how do you I mean honestly I, I that's one thing I have not [brief pause] I have refused to engage with I have been unable to read newspapers I have been trying not to think of it ahmm it's too heartbreaking so how have you made sense of it or have you tried? What sense have you made out of it? Like why it happened how could it happen? Where it comes from? So how have you made sense of what happened?

BILI: [Sighs] at first it was easy to just say "You know what it's South Africa and South Africa, South Africa is a violent place to be in but I started talking to like just talking about it and being open about it and then cause I'm also doing Psychology and just trying to understand it rationally you know and I began to see that it's one South Africa has a lot of issues with service delivery and [brief pause] you know they were promised a whole lot of things after, after, after they gained their democracy which are not happening yet people are frustrated and they needed to take out that frustration in, in, in, in they needed to take it out in some ways the world economy is slowing down and it's beginning to take its toil on the people forgot that look at Zim it's something similar ...

SIYANDA: ... yes

BILI: ... to what happened Zim so having seen that and, and looking at that it made it easier to understand of course I will never for the life of me understand how you can burn another human being and laugh at it I cannot understand that but just the general picture of it people are frustrated THEY NEED a way out the leadership is not responding to a way that, that is beneficial for the people so they take out their frustrations on foreigners and somebody said "If the foreigners were to leave what then?" do you think the situation will stop and I don't think so something will happen it will be the whites it will be whoever something will happen you know people are angry because for me it's [brief pause] it's fine you know I mean there are all these people who have been, who have been ah [brief pause] ah what's the word? Acknowledged for their fight in the struggle I still say the average man on the streets who gave his life and nobody have any plug on his grave what about them? What about them? We talk about mass protest we talk about all of these things people gave their lives and nobody knows about these people that person who did it whether they are in KZN Polokwane or Eastern Cape wherever they are they GAVE their lives and people seem to forget this there are all these people who are being sang about and they are getting rich with BEE and whatever else what about your average man who put his on the line people's children are growing up fatherless because their parents gave their lives for the struggle people had to die for people to recognize that there's something happening what about those people you know if the average man is not benefiting there's something wrong that's what happened in Zim people fought for something they are not getting the benefits for what they fought for so I think it's in the way manifesting in, in, in even though I mean people will say "but if the young people" there's just this tension that people are wanting to expel.

SIYANDA: And how did you how do you make sense of it in terms of what it means to be African?

BILI: It made me angry because South Africans were housed by SADC ...

SIYANDA: ... yep yes

BILI: ... my people as in people in Botswana died the South African government bombed Botswana because there were people staying in Botswana from South Africa and people died as a result of that and I think I don't know if they forgot about that or if they have no understanding of what actually happened during apartheid and that you know there were some camps that were said to be like the health camp and then you know different camps that people went to for help in order to leave South Africa so I don't know but I didn't understand the reasoning with killing people when it came to that with regards to be African hmm [brief pause] I don't know [Pause] ah [brief pause] what amazes me as well is that some South Africans were killed and it goes back to how do you tell who's South African who's not and then the other people who like were married to South Africans what does that you know what does that mean? Where do you draw the line? And some of those people who were doing the killing what do they mean when they

say they are South Africans? Where their parents South Africans? Or you know somewhere along the line you found there was somebody who came from Angola and settled here and, and you know the great, grandchild of that person did they does it make them more South African than you know do you know what I mean? So there's all of that but it was, was a very disturbing time it was really disturbing and I got more support as a foreigner from white people than I did from black people which I find very interesting like my Zulu friends decided to be very ignorant about it we had a meeting with our Assistant High Commissioner from Botswana and I remember my friend was like "But why is he here" and I'm like "xenophobic attacks" and she's like "why" and I'm like "Look I'm a foreigner [chuckles] we need to be ...

SIYANDA: ... hello

BILI: ... ja you know like she I'd constantly to remind her I'm a foreigner it's like "Whoa we don't have a problem here" so and it was very easy to get angry at her but I realize that you know what I don't if it's a defense mechanism not wanting to be, to be open to the idea that you know it's blacks turning on blacks you know and sadly there were other people on the university who were like "Ja that should happen these people are, these people are getting money they are staying Musgrave they are doing this they are doing that what should they have it better if we don't?" and you know you could hear the tension it was very interesting because you could feel the tension even on campus with people saying "Ja" there were actually reports that some people from campus organized for people from outside to come in and beat some guys on campus so [chuckles] it's pointing to a bigger problem than ja so I don't know I wanted to go home then I just wanted to go home to feel safe ...

SIYANDA: ... and now?

BILI: ... now it's I guess it's settled it's funny how you just get over the feeling of being in danger and ...

SIYANDA: ... and just sort of get on with your middle class existence ...

BILI: chuckles

SIYANDA: ... I'm being very serious that's what I feel has happened though refugee camps are still out there there's still violence happening in those camps and we have sort of you know we have sort of all you know we contributed those few things took food down and but we have just continued ...

BILI: ... I was looking at how close the shelters were to each other and thinking about rape and how it's such an issue in South Africa and I was just thinking "Is that safe" but anyway that's another hmmm.

SIYANDA: On that note what, what challenges have you sort of faced in your life when you think of sort of very generalized question I know sort of challenges you faced as you were growing and becoming who you are now

BILI: Okay ah one of the things that I view as a challenge was determining what I wanted to study I am interested in a whole lot of things and just trying to bring it together and channeling what I wanted to do because education in this part of the world as opposed to the States is like you become something that's what you're stuck to it's like cast and stone you can't change it so trying to bring everything together that I'm interested in like the individual person how they construct their meaning who they are and how to empower them and to what's the broader society the politics part of it and you know just trying to bring it together it was very difficult for me and just, and just you know it's like say who you are and you know take a place and just bringing that together for me was challenging and plus ja not doing what I wanted to do like go to the ...

SIYANDA: ... the UK

BILI: ... to the UK and coming back here and another challenge which is what I found out here is [brief pause] one that you know I haven't mentioned is you're a woman you're not doing what women are supposed to do you are transcending where women are supposed to be and this is a challenge that I have actually [brief pause] being exposed to in like my religious settings like you know you are a woman you are not supposed to be doing that and having to deal with it cause it was also on like identity and who you are you know I'm a [chuckles] woman I can't change that it's part of who I am but [brief pause] coming from Botswana as well maybe it's just my upbringing I don't know if it's Botswana my upbringing but I know that they are more tolerant in Botswana as a whole of who I am like as an individual and things that I used to do I took them for granted cause I could just do them and then I came here and I found people like "you're in Africa [chuckles] we don't do things like that" and it got me thinking "Which part of African am I from" [laughs] you know and it really it used to irritate me when people say 'in Africa' because Africa is fifty-two countries and Nigeria alone has more than a hundred cultures and they do things differently you know so what more about the different countries and I'm, I'm African but I don't ascribe to the same cultural beliefs that other people do who say they're African and when they say an African and ja and I consider myself to be very rooted in my culture you know when you when I go back home I think I fit in very well within my culture and stuff but being questioned on that was very like you know people forcing for you to sit back and look at who you are and your identity was like YO and turning to come up from that and saying "You know what it's a different society different people do things differently but this is who I am my country and the cultural background have to a large extent contributed to who I am which is why I think I'm facing the conflict cause it's a different context you know and you know I'm grounded differently so that was my other challenge plus the racial challenge and you know "who are you racially?" you know "get a category and stick to it if you are a coconut say you are a coconut so that we can look down on you be a coconut if you are black say you are black and starting behaving black so that I can rejoice with you but at the centre remember that

you're a black foreigner so you're not quite part of us you do things differently and you are here to take our opportunities so you know and remain in that, in that unbalance we don't want you to get too comfortable in our country" ja so I think that are some of the challenges [brief pause] which ja I mean especially the race one and BEING woman it's just that [lowers her voice] being woman is a challenge that sounds silly ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... people questioning you on the values you hold as a woman you know just because you're a woman there are certain things that you can't do and in this day and age I thought that's ridiculous especially in an institution like this that's ridiculous but anyway that's what happened and I don't know.

SIYANDA: What opportunities have you so you've just sort of said about challenges faced what sort of opportunities you think [stutters] your life as a woman if you want to as a black woman if you will has afforded you?

BILI: [brief pause] hmm as a foreigner I can things that other people can't and get away with it because I'm a foreigner I'm different ...

SIYANDA: ... like what?

BILI: ... as a foreigner woman like I can say I can do things that are considered to be un-woman-like and people will just look at it "well she's a foreigner she's not part of us" you know I can get away with it and I'm, I'm very happy about it [chuckles] okay also being a foreigner I can challenge the, the system I can challenge like [brief pause] I can talk about the racial past and how things are today because people won't say to me "well you're being racist or you're being against whites or whatever" because I'm a foreigner and it's very hard for other people to do it because they are South African and to just take a stand and say this is what you think is happening this is what you think should be happening so I think and I have used that a lot as an opportunity that I have had ahmm [brief pause] ah I think it's ah it's going to be [brief pause] it's going to be contradictory to what I said but I think [brief pause] I can do what I want ja as a black woman I can what I want not be restricted by anything I think maybe it's cause I'm I don't know in Botswana I can do what I want and I'm sort of transferring it here ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... and the same things that have been challenges I am turning into opportunities because like with race for example it made me look at race in different ways and to be able to try and understand it and have a better appreciation of where people are coming from and you know I have been thinking a lot about it and getting just trying to get understanding about it so it's, it's I think it's been, it's been an opportunity for me to learn more about the differences and just try and embrace them and different ways of thinking that people bring in I remember when I first went into Newslands East [chuckles] it was very foreign to me finding a sea of Coloureds if I may used the word 'coloured' just like an area dedicated to a certain racial grouping it felt so surreal but

[brief pause] I appreciate the experience it's not been very easy but having gone through it and just getting that knowledge and understanding of, of how people think and how the world is you know it's not like everything is not like it is in Botswana ja and I think the challenges just made me stronger and then look at how what I say I am and you know whether I truly believe in it or not and just stick, stick to the mind (?) and say "this is who I am" whether people agree with me or they don't it's cool this is who I am and I think it's to a large extent preparing me for the working environment because it's not all roses out there so I'm cool bring it on ...

SIYANDA: [chuckles] very cool ah last question what do you think about your future what lies ahead for you? So what's next for you?

BILI: Hmmmm what? MARRIAGE? EDUCATION?

SIYANDA: Would you like to get married?

BILI: [chuckles] That's the second time you have asked me that question do you know that?

SIYANDA: REALLY?

BILI: Ja not today ...

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: Oh yes I remember outside?

BILI: Yes

SIYANDA: I still remember.

BILI: Ah ahmmm ah what's my future like? I am going to finish my degree THIS YEAR

...

SIYANDA: ... become a Psychologist

BILI: ... become a CLINICAL Psychologist ahmmm...

SIYANDA: ... are you gonna practice?

BILI: [Pause]

SIYANDA: Can you practice in SA or ...

BILI: ... well that's another one ...

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: ... [laughing] another challenge ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... in order to practice clinical psychology I need, I need to do community service I can't do community service in South Africa currently if I am not South African currently so I don't know if they will change it or not I hoping they will change it [chuckles] that also says I might be staying in South Africa for a while it's something that I have come to accept cause I have been trying to get out of here for two years now but it has not worked I didn't think I will be here for my Honours forget about my Masters but I'm still here so ja if they change I will be practicing here I think I will be practicing for a certain amount of time and but there's other things I would like to do as well ...

SIYANDA: ... such as?

BILI: ... such as Politics you see it's easy to say Politics you know what exactly is it? It's not like, like Minister being a Minister or a Cabinet member necessarily but just being in a position of being able to effect change you know to, to deal with power control and you know giving more to the people not, not saying I wanted to be a communist or whatever but just you know [chuckles] having people getting better than what they are and just talking for the disadvantaged person ja and just effecting change for the better making possible change hmm.

SIYANDA: And then you are gonna ask the question

BILI: What was the question? [chuckles]

SIYANDA: For the third time do you wanna get married [laughs]

BILI: I don't want to get married because it's something to do I will get married because I have found someone worthy of getting married to ja.

SIYANDA: Okay you see you answered the question I asked the question three times

BILI: [laughs] so it's not like I'm going to say "okay now I'm going to get married" ...

SIYANDA: laughs

BILI: ... you know like an agenda so okay let's move on now ja.

SIYANDA: And so do you ah so are, are you seriously considering making South Africa sort of your home for the next couple of years?

BILI: Next COUPLE of years ...

BOTH: laugh

BILI: ... next couple of years and then I will see where it takes me ja cause jo⁸ I used to be very passionate about my country ...

SIYANDA: ... used to be?

BILI: ... ja just wanted to get there but I've began very detached to what's happening politically and stuff so ...

SIYANDA: ... why?

BILI: ... being here we have changed the presidents since I have been here ja and there has been other concerns I mean being in South Africa you cannot help but be involved in what's happening around here but hopefully someday I will be able to go back to my country and contribute to what's happening hmm I'm sorry I didn't like the "Let's save the world Miss Universe" ...

SIYANDA: ... and ja Oprah Winfrey you know

BOTH: laugh hysterically

SIYANDA: Alright I think we could leave it there oh in record time thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS

⁸ An exclamation

First Interview: David

Siyanda: okay David so maybe we looking start at the beginning where were you born eh

David: okay (clear his throat) hmm I was born in Chiredze

Siyanda: Chiredze

David: yes this is in Zimbabwe next to Mozambican boarder

Siyanda: okay

David: and eh

Siyanda: how far was this back so

David: this was about 1969 yeah so my father worked for the company eh Impovoli Estate which was a big company at the time and eh we basically lived there

Siyanda: on the estate

David: well it was company, company ja company house if you liked and well at same stage that is in 1969 till about 1976 my family had to move to Botswana now there something very interesting here in ... in my generation if parents to make movement like my father had move to Botswana but I learnt that he originally came from Zim but obviously the movement and everything else was not fully explained - you know when you ask him you asking to much so

Siyanda: obvious yes

David: that was the situation at the time obviously in Zim there was these myth war you know it wasn't very easy so my father felt that we needed to move to Botswana a country very laid back life so cross over to Botswana in 1975 and so that I can start my primary education 1976 years in Botswana eh yes

Siyanda: so you were six

David: yes about six ja 5,6 or 7 it where you do your first year primary back in Botswana so I don't know if I'm given

enough information on that we we if I can just carry on and talk about

Siyanda: what kind of things do you remember back in Zimbabwe about your life at childhood since you were a child in Zimbabwe

David: oh eh I think I had a I enjoyed I enjoyed it I guess life it a season there something that I liked one zimbabwe was very exciting farm that was one we lived in a place where there were different people you know people I grew with people from Malawi people from Mozambique people from Tanzania Kenya and children ja my childhood the things that I enjoyed most was meeting these young people and a soccer soccer was a big thing we had eh a company had good facilities around you know play cars so we would go have clubs monitored by a company officials so that one thing that I enjoyed two I enjoyed eh we did a lot of fishing as well ja so and that another thing that I enjoyed I'm I guess again growing as child growing and in a little city obviously you will be fascinated by you know having an opportunity to go to town and the life that I know at the time was you know was that sought generally I would say we had a it what we had at the time yeah yes and eh the other side though at some stage although I can't remember the times it was the war

Siyanda: who was fighting

David: there was the war the there this mystery regime and basically there was this the myth against the locals the zebra and the zondalfo they were trying to liberate the zimbabweans cause at the time it was Rhodesia

Siyanda: ooh

David: cause it was Rhodesia so there was arm forces were trying to basically free zimbabwe for black people then because of that in there were all sought of thing things that people started going missing because of that and I know that my father was so so active with the organization and stuff he was very active with that and so when it started he was very fascinating there were all this meeting I could see there were meeting we were not allowed to talk about them you know that it when I later realize that people coming interrogate my father and then we realize it had to do with that but then again my father old that he

was even that time they will not discuss issues openly he would had to sought read things of thing in between lines the that was the experience that we had to to live with and the other thing that I didn't like like was the eh after these things has gone there was the coming in of a bareshwana conflict you know the white issue had gone there those war you know zebra zangla and it came at a later stage too yes but we were still visiting as I was moving from back and forth you know I think the only thing I can remember was that the conflict that we had but then it was the war you know we were traveling on a bus and a short distance about 400km would take three days because literally ja I mean actually the soldiers had to clear the path cause they was all this fight and the train will take almost a week because they will be landmines what I remember vividly what I remember vividly was the trains because of the landmines the I mean you would had to have you know goods carriages upfront

Siyanda: oh to protect you

David: like yes yes and then they the engine will be after five or ten if they vibrate or even explosion it will hit the ja ja so that that one thing that is very you know memory the bad memories you know literally be a train would be soldiers everywhere guns everywhere that wasn't nice

Siyanda: what was this black or white soldiers

David: these were white soldiers because the white were trying to free you know this was when they defend the Rhodesia then of cause they had Responsibility to look after people but then people obviously were support free natural yeah it was sought of cause people had to move on with their lives yes ja through the as we talk some of the things you know I start thinking about some of this experience but in an action it was that it was that you know it was the war you know the disappearing of people I mean you know like even not disappearing traveling were there is a roadblock and people will be pick out of the bus there would know definitely that was it this people would never come back this sought of a thing and ja I grew up worried being feaful of my father I never thought he would survive you know you would expect that they will come in I mean do something to him yes and

Siyanda: yes

David: ja so I think those are the the at the moment major things that I can

Siyanda: sorry when you were very young were you aware of the white black issue in zimbambwe

David: oh big time I mean big time I can't I don't remember you know there is a issue of black and white was very strong in the sense that you have a group of people who are knowingly that there are in your country and they are going around killing people and you growing up and you look at your people and you think that good thing people who have cars big houses are white people and black people are living in this I mean I think naturally you have to be genius to worked that thing up I mean we grew up knowing and the unfortunate thing through in my view is that the older people for some reason had I don't know whether to say accepted or succumb they the I don't know whether it question of poverty on wanting to survive but they you would say most of them would have these worshipping mentality as if I mean like you know like yes but it was very clear it was what people who have good houses would have everything black people like you know in my case it was very very strong

Siyanda: so now your father being very involve eh I don't what I call it struggle was being involve you were very politically minded then your family was in a sense

David: ja I think naturally yes I mean we are a product everybody is a product of socialization and primary socialize family you definitely I mean seeing at what your father does and I think when you have certain doctrine they is no way which they cannot fitter to your family the way you talk thinking and stuff but then it very tricky because my dad had to work for this company at the same time to fight

Siyanda: fight them

David: ja ja you see so very tricky very I personally believe they were very sophisticated I think it take a lot of tacked to be able to to deal with that because he had to make us survive and at the same time in the long-run he wanted freedom for the country yes

Siyanda: and eh how do got your family your dad yourself your mama your sibling

David: so we family of (thinking aloud)

Siyanda: how big is your family

David: it a big it a five kids ja there is five kids and then there this eh I'm counting because there is this five of us and at the time at later stage the four had to come to Botswana I was the I stayed with them because I was young

Siyanda: oh are you the youngest

David: yes yes actually last born so I was with them I'm counting because the others had gone to

Siyanda: Botswana

David: yes Botswana I stayed there till little lateres yes

Siyanda: why did you stay behind

David: I guess I was young so my parents my mom is a she just felt I needed to be with them to look after me the other ones were bit more independent they could they could

Siyanda: so who went to Botswana first was it your sibling or your dad

David: no I stayed with mom and dad in zimbambwe ja ja then they had my two brothers and two sisters cross to Botswana they lived with aunties and I guess

Siyanda: how easy was to you Botswana and zimbambwe

David: no no it wasn't it was actually a hustle this in another drama in my life because liked I told you my father move to Botswana then I didn't have passport we cross over at the time things were bit casual we cross over and then we started having battle with the **(106:36)** my dad said I'm from here but where are your kids they were born in zimbambwe where are the document but no document so ja we started so ja that another drama were will clashing with officers everyday we had this car coming home having to go through it wasn't easy it wasn't easy the other thing that

was hustle was even traveling during through those time was the war I think it was sought of reason we manage to survive moving from that country where there was war having to know when to go and a bit of luck I think the other thing was my mom she made a living out of sewing she was a tailor her suppliers was getting fabric materials from zim and the respective of these war she had to go and get stuff and comeback and ja ja so she lived that life I think very luck to have actually survive

Siyanda: and can you remember when you like left zimbambwe to go to Botswana were you excited were you sad or happy

David: eh it was a eh obviously no because I think yes no because one I haven't gone to Botswana this was for me a big switch I'm talking about the only thing I could see was bushes and

Siyanda: laughing

David: and as young person you live a life where you know the ice cream man will coming and pass and the milk man you know you get a place where is actually nothing I mean I mean talking about at that time the life where we live now was I mean you could not imagine I mean people who grew up there now I don't think have an idea how bad it was so the shift you can imagine as a young person if you had to go to swimming pool and walk and stuff then you go to a place where

Siyanda: just nothing

David: nothing ja ja nothing then the next thing was the change of the expectation of the culture now the culture coming in we living in town in a different area so your dad try to teach you things but you don't see them in the community you know like what my father belief is not what the other kids ja so you see ja it now when I reflects that I realize okay that he try to teach me these then people in around you know my ages they different cultures and norms so that was hard but yeah going growing to Botswana that was difficult I felt and I remember literally asking that question it was a time when I literally I use to run away when we were suppose to go to Botswana and they try to grab me force me to go so it was that then because of this sudden change and and mind you they have

Siyanda: can I ask you actually to stop I need to go to the bathroom before I die

David: okay

Siyanda: thanks

David: where are we at

Siyanda: you were talking about you being

David: ja it was very hard because I think at the early stage life turn to be more material you know this is what you see the little thing you know walk facility facilities and stuff ja it was very difficult I mean I had to literally run away one day when I was mad to go to Botswana I it was pretty hard it different and I mean I had to start learning another language basically

Siyanda: shw

David: and like I said the culture I mean how do you greet elders and because it was very rural so naturally again the trend of culture tends to intensify when you to pocket ja so and eh must as well the also the difficulties is I think acceptance as well you know when you moving and speaking different language to a large extent you rather feel that people have their own ideas about you know you ja jastuff like that I think this are some of the things and I felt for my mother who of cause as an adult to try and learn a language later stage it was very for her yeah for us it was tough but yeah after a while we actually we never notice and the changes we we fitted in and yeah so

Siyanda: and then at that particular time did you consider Botswana or zimbambwe to be home so where was home for you at that particular time when you move to Botswana

David: it a hard question I think every time people even today I'm battling with it I always say I mention two at the same time people like because one where you born it always going to be home and then of cause now that we have moved live there that is where going to home because that it where you lived so I think even today I would when you ask me I would want people to know that I lived in Botswana I will quickly regardless of what is happening in zim now I will quickly want someone to know that it home cause I

believe that country has done wonders for me ja so obviously from my father point of view it the drilling that this is home

Siyanda: Botswana

David: ja I mean drilling from parents I mean you know that it bad war this is home and ja like forget about this parent wish I think that at some stage my dad was a bit bit worried that we might want to go

Siyanda: to go back

David: ja to go back

Siyanda: so now I you sought of officially classified as

David: ja I am

Siyanda: zimbambwean

David: I am Botswana I'm all the Botswana yes

Siyanda: where did it happen officially

David: hm let me put it this was at whether you basically my parents were moving to Botswana so they had to decide the parents obviously my mom family so they wanted to stay so they decide we had to by government laws at 21 that when you start thinking so yes to making a decision and then apply renounce zimbambwe citizenship like I'm surrendering being a zimbambwen now I am a Botswana that what we had to do

Siyanda: at 21

David: yes this is eh when I was at 21 though that did not take place quite at the time because there were a lot of other problems that we had to deal with and stuff you know it difficult having to consult with hospitals you know in zim ja ja so obviously it 21 was couple of years later than that

Siyanda: let speed ahead eh zimbambwe eh still very important place for you now

David: I think so I think I think now where it is I want look I my father unless and everybody I actually every January I go to zim

Siyanda: okay

David: I go to zim

Siyanda: what is

David: the uncles

Siyanda: oh they still there

David: yes yes yes I mean ja and my other it tough like I said I didn't want to get into that there is two sisters that were not from my father side there is two brothers and a sister who chose who were old by then so they stayed behind so we had this three of my family members that stayed so we still

Siyanda: anytime

David: ja so from that point I mean we still we still have connection with the uncles and anybody even when we have problems like actually I remember when my mom and like mom passed away at the funeral we had to speak Ndebele because 80% of people from zim had came and they were there so

Siyanda: shw

David: ja so

Siyanda: so your mom is buried in Botswana that home

David: in Botswana ja ja that home ja

Siyanda: and now the heritage what are your thought and feeling about that

David: ooh that a big one eh

Siyanda: you can't avoid it ja I know I know it's look I remember the situation had been very tough eh I'm not I think my thinking if I had to think like a landsman I think in most cases it embarrassing I don't think anybody has can understand you know what happening in zim so I'm I find the

whole thing appalling embarrassing I find the whole thing sad in the sense that

Siyanda: yeah

David: I mean if you look at zim potentially

Siyanda: yap

David: it's zimbabwe should have been one of

Siyanda: one of the countries like south Africa you can actually

David: yes yes yes and unfortunately you know you know things are going in that direction ja so I mean I at one stage financial had to suffer my brother had a son who was at university I had to sponsor this boy I had to literally sponsor this boy I had to literally sponsor this my sister who lives in brawlaw because there is no food literally I sometimes had to up until I came when in have of cause I'm not working but I would time and again had to support because the situation is bad the problem is there too many of them and it just **(96:10)** in a name starter so for it it very emotional I know we meet people and people just talk things for me it emotional because I have relatives who are directly affected by by the situation and of cause not in beyond that as a human being the situation is and I'm simply saying it that a country that have such potential you know people had to go through what they you know what is happening now yes

Siyanda: then I must ask who would you ever return to construct zimbabwe or it now your real life gonna be lived out here actually forever and ever

David: eh eh ja I actually I do not see myself going back to zimbabwe eh I think the zimbambwen case it it it big if you look at the damage I've seen beautiful zimbabwe personally and now it the I think damage for somebody fix them I don't know how how many years behind are they

Siyanda: yes

David: so I rather choose to be coward maybe I say look it a bit too much for me and I think I'm quite the Botswana at the moment to be honest with you it quite eh warm and very

stable and I've got job now as I speak and I I'm not in form of pleasure to to go to zimbabwe it not me it think the situation of zimbabwe even people who live who are living there now I have a feeling that there something that had happen to people and their trust in politics something there is something you I don't want people talk try to talk in terms of trail but if you look at what happen in the past

Siyanda: yeah

David: and now zimbabwes they have they realize people had know people had fought the war I have many many many relatives who taken part war to liberate zimbabwe they are not even I don't think they are here in zimbabwe as we speak some of them I don't even know where they were fighting the national army was there then after that they were told they will be given this and that so I think people are are bitter and and the figure is so so it a action I have no well you don't say I'll never I but have no plans in near future of returning yes

Siyanda: fine and let go back and speak little bit about your youth your early life in Botswana now in a foreign country you are going to school tell me about going to school

David: ja eh I think the my earliest ages eh was couple after you know of years having adjusted to the cultural you know set up and stuff I think I manage to to fit in and I think I did my best and the though it was very hard maybe let me talk about the things that I enjoys eh if living in in small in in cultural set up **(92:15)** what I admire most is the sense of living for each other in you know you I know some of things you know people will when you are young from example spanking kids for example when you looking after cattle

Siyanda: yeah yeah

David: and then you start to play and and not know when the cattle are any adults would come and spank you

Siyanda: spank you

David: ja ja you know and what if you not being impulsive ja you will say all sought of things but if you look at the

intent the intentions and the what people are trying to achieve I think that I think in fact this is one thing that I find very exciting about you know life in Africa I can talk about Africa because culture that I know that it one thing that I really ja I really like that this thing of living for each other you know be it you having a problem that this thing our parents mom and dad okay we sought of move with them but even than my mom had to adjust and they had they were problems but hey when you have a problems in the small villages be it let me give you a good example you started family you wants to clean you just needed samp cook samp you talk about issues of the yeah people coming
(91:06) this and eh are institution that we that was made life I think personally I think are way or the other I might have directly benefited from those but then they supported my family they supported me in a way in shaping this eh thing of thinking of having a child that can fit in a community when somebody is ill you know this is one thing that I've like living in I think ultimately I sought of appreciated so you have a sense that everybody is a parent

Siyanda: yes ja

David: and that also I think it kept a lot of problems you you scared of doing this because this parents is watching you ultimately you shaping your behavior and ja I think that something that we cannot take away from from traditional set up that that are thing that a I'm saying because I can reflect look at the lives say in chiredze where everybody is busy it that race you know

Siyanda: (making an expression how car racing)

David: ja and where in Botswana and hello how is your mom those sought things it raining you from school any house you stop oh whose daughter this and that ja ja ja so yeah people from the farm you getting lemon ja tell your mom will pass by and give her these I think from that point this one thing I sought of enjoyed and a lot of support and stuff now the other thing that I sought of enjoyed I guess anybody would if growing up coming from chiredze zimbambwe generally speaking English widely spoken so I was going to primary school we already could speak English so on so primary education for me was not a walk - over but it was nice you know I remember I will be asked to go to standard one grade 3 I mean come and assist some kids so any ja any kid you'll be you know little hero

(Both laughing)

David: would love that so that I enjoyed I mean and the funny thing which actually as an educator now I started seeing I was smart I was very lucky you know the book that we read were very british were very colonise british and zim some so I came in you teaching about how to use a phone this is a exercise whose 99% kids had not seen a phone then you sitting there explain this thing cause he his lucky ja so that was I mean that was who you want to be you know I had I was very lucky in terms of exposure in the books and the stories that were read would things that even so-called bosses for my parents the white bosses we would have chance to meet them also I meantime we learnt somethings from them so that that was I think some moment to remember eh ja I think the during my studies at school I also claim to have like learning and **(86:50)** I mean I think I've always enjoy studying and I was good fun I'm ja I'm an artist painter drawer I started at a early stage

Siyanda: how young were you when you started drawing

David: I think it standard 1

Siyanda: shw

David: I been drawing and I use to go to standard 7 classes and you know draw a cow for them and then they will copy it so ja ja and then also getting awards they will be competition and I will be I love to drawing from that primary yeah primary standard 1 I started drawing very very seriously

Siyanda: you must be famous in sought of that small rural

David: ja well that what I said if you coming you have opportunity to be speak not only that as I said you coming in with lucky to have a father who at the time just having descent shoes this and this and that I think it was beautiful complexion of cause ourselves esteem I mean I will be boosted naturally yes

Siyanda: and hm so you mention things you enjoyed what other thing you least enjoyed

David: hm as I was growing the eh I'm going to heat again on my culture you know why I say there is a lot of good things I think there is a there something very tricky about hmm I love African culture so much sometime I fail to criticize

(Both laughing)

David: learn to try learn to try in terms of the the when you when people live together I think there something less honest there is eh I wish to use a word jealous ja but I can't explain it but it is the easiest word I can think of there ja people tend to while they have this smiling and looking after each other there just I don't want to say black thing because I will be talking about my area there just this thing failing to appreciate and to appreciate and to see somebody doing fine

Siyanda: hmm

David: eh let speak examples you know from examples you living with the cousins I liked school from the word go and when I get home for me book was and I know I'll get into trouble for that and at one stage

Siyanda: what kind of trouble

David: if for example you should be going looking after cattle eh

Siyanda: oh yes

David: ja and

Siyanda: ja

David: and I felt at one stage I felt I was more like a personal vendetta you know I was just being victimized

Siyanda: hmm

David: even at a later stage when I was because I just did well all the way

Siyanda: ja

David: and ja

Siyanda: (83:52)

David: no I'm not sure I'm about that but I felt it at one stage it was there day one coming out from zim not knowing how best you you know there tacked in how you look after cattle but you know in nobody really tells you now when you stand this side of a cattle and then so that nobody given a cattle today you not going it Saturday it your turn and you don't know how far we I'm not boy who grew up swimming and I so and then time cattle will be maybe 5km and I don't know the place I don't even know how to I go home till the cattle come I really one moment when I was told you not going to school you to come with us to find the cattle because you the one who lost them

Siyanda: shw

David: I remember one incident when I had small washing I could not telling me you not going to school was I remember one time I had to have a soap and it was for the washing took put in my pocket who am I not even in school uniform cause I wasn't given a chance to bath so when fortunately we cross the river they were there I said they are here so they say you can go back to school I was already ready so just I arrived late I was crying and very upset but the fact that I went just one the thing then this thing persistent and at one stage you always going to have you know the psychologist I'm not going to be wanted

Siyanda: laughing

David: you know some families for some reason could be I don't believe I.Q could be other reason could be background motivated but within the family this pattern certain families don't do very well

Siyanda: laughing

David: now this thing sometimes you begin to wonder whether this other behavior is it at the time to say don't go to school like our kids because they very

Siyanda: hmm

David: eh at one stage to be honest with you though nobody ever clearly came and say to me at one stage I like at a

later stage of cause when people start to say making remarks I remember when people use to saying to me you going to you'll never work you'll get old and when and came study until walk with a walking stick and stuff but this are old remarks but with understanding understanding this most of the people in this village all of them if not 99% they were working in south African mines and so the big thing in a village where I lived all my classmates in grade 7 they will leave and go like run away from school

Siyanda: I can just imagine

David: cause coming back with a bike with a mirrors who has

Siyanda: eh a bike

David: ja ja and for me it wasn't so I had a feeling at one stage eh families doesn't feel I don't think there too happy with me with my excitement about to school and ja stuff like that

Siyanda: shw

David: ja and also that one thing I think that that really ja you know I actually even change the way I reacted to some of the cousins because you know my cousins there that they just for some reason they I have my own ideas I think they maybe their elsewhere they were not maybe they very unfortunately but ja schooling was not big thing that for me I think it was bit something that ja I always valued I mean from on set I don't think at that thing the thing from some people that are suppose to be trusted the cousin who stays with us when they are now trying to not supporting and trying to make it difficult for you to go to school eh for me it was like taking life from you and that that that one thing that I

Siyanda: why why did you love school so much where did your love come from

David: that hard one that a hard one because I'm still trying to find the answer for that ja I don't know I mean I I have a feeling that my dad was smart actually I use to tease him I use to tease him that you know you came to early when you from school so you wouldn't go anywhere my dad use to read a lot use to read a lot the it old you know that grade 6

Siyanda: and grade 6 like

David: like long time 6 grade 6 was

Siyanda: laughing

David: ja ja

Siyanda: seriously

David: ja exactly so my dad read a lot and I think he was a very intelligent I think he was very smart and he his been to places his been working everywhere and I think I think he also I don't know there is this very Interesting that I wrote you know parents sometimes won't do things for you they don't have the limbo but they want good things for you and I think my dad attempts to move us from zimbambwe he

Siyanda: hmm

David: to be honest with you the last born as well will admit this we were protected

Siyanda: he is a small boy

David: I will say protected ja I will say protected ja will say protected ja ja I think my dad spent a lot of time that was even when I was old we were buddies he always always always in a later stage I will tell you that some of the thing that he he was saying that were trying to tell I think putting a lot of pressure and expected like like you know my son my son my son my son ja

Siyanda: tell me a little bit about what he use to tell you

David: ja I think I think he if there was problem let me just highlight something have when there was this was in zim the zimbambwe I had a brother who was also very smart

Siyanda: hmm

David: he went to high school

Siyanda: hmm

David: runaway from high school noboy eh he wanted to go zambia to train and so he had all the chance the zebra chance and drawing of guns and all the you know change and stuff getting wanting to then that wanting was a threat to the government of botswana he was kick out of school

Siyanda: so he was doing it when you were in botswana

David: ja we ja were ja cause he did stay here I think the my dad I already forget that he he actually you know he ja ja ja but then ja he got so scared then he than to put the rest to me especially think like please please my son ja

Siyanda: forget

David: ja because apparently I as I grow I listen to 90% of my music is reggae and then of cause people like Zwakhe Mbuli even when he was old my son when you finish even when I was doing my diploma very cautious of of materials that I deal with like my son you know politics that the I think I think because what happen to my brother he became very very I think protective two I'm thinking the the I think we suddenly skinned through his family probably seeing that brothers things didn't go right and then of cause others in the middle were not really into that I'm just thinking maybe he had hoped that one of my kids ja and of cause I guess other reason that I don't know it but ja it is a there something that is always fascinated me I think ja ja

Siyanda: you now growing up did you always know that you ended up be a artist or did you have other bolded dreams what did you want to be when growing up

David: good goodness i-yoh you know when you growing up you have all sought of all sought if you ask me now I tell you one thing that I wanted was to marry a rich woman stay at home

Siyanda: laughing oh really

David: paint everyday that was ja that was

Siyanda: laughing

David: ja that was ja but of cause life always to a large extent dictate you know what you'll be yeah I think I've

been very stubborn with what I like hmm I think I long long long discovered I sought of so my creativity hmm

Siyanda: as early very

David: early ja having done a lot of drawing when I started even moving up to called form 1 you be standard grade 8 ja I then I had action so even the flame started glowing ja big time so I started having opportunity to you know exhibitions having informal training eh even at home I did quite you see like eh I remember a gift I gave it to my mom eh I think I've always like to manipulate things eh

Siyanda: hmm

David: for me you can lock the doors and as long as the house doesn't burn and there things to play with

Siyanda: hmm

David: I'm I've always want wanted to I'd I remember this thing I gave to her was paper-macheya you take newspapers and then you you shaped them like it seems like mask but you use newspaper but it you don't know you wouldn't you just take newspapers use glue or flour to other make a I made a face

Siyanda: shw

David: an African face then I had a rose and colorful thing than I put bulb inside then I put a battery and then a

Siyanda: that it

David: ja ja ja but it was a face ja so these are just some of the things that I use at time same musician I use like draw faces of presidents

Siyanda: shw

David: eh you know super cars you know

Siyanda: yeah

David: kids come you know some musician Steve Kekana at that time was one of the ja so I think knew I love arts so when moving to high school I had a dilemma because I like

science so much I spend weekends when people giving like in a boarding school you out for me it was the science lab ja I always like playing with the chemicals and simple like making like every year from form 1 I use to make some projects presents it at the at the national so for me everyday I will be at the science lab and ja

Siyanda: shw

David: but my biggest problem was my math's I admit I wasn't very sharp so

Siyanda: (laughing) during the class

David: so exactly yeah but then I had the arts I was doing so well and then when I completed the fights started with my parents now wanting me to go to university and I'm like what course do you have in mind they didn't have any for I mean it was clearly and this is an old man who want to see my daughter to go

Siyanda: (laughing) to university

David: yes so this is where the battle started I to be honest with you I think and also one thing I have to be honest with you I met quite a lot of friends as I was living high school I met a lot of friends from Europe I stayed with friends visit ... visit home like ja young as I was have some Irish friends who would come

Siyanda: what did you do

David: they were teachers they were teachers but

Siyanda: you mean in school

David: ja but then I was very I think I was very (laughing) all over the I was very enthusiastic I would exhibit and I started at that level sell works at high school

Siyanda: shw

David: that how I made pocket money you know I would go and make steel lives lives painting at high school

Siyanda: hmm

David: earn some money at the time this is like way back and

Siyanda: so you became very famous cordy de berg

David: well I'm famous (laughing) that such a big word ja yes so I think that one thing I think confuse me more I met a lot of people when you start what what ja

Siyanda: exactly yes

David: hmm so as as I was growing so I think I was very actually very lucky to have met people I because I think regardless of whether you believe what people tell you

Siyanda: hmm

David: I think it a good thing to be meeting people from different because you learn each time and that I think to me as I was growing I came to realize that life is all it it redefining direction each time you know you reach the truth and this what you believe in and couple of month you realize actually this truth is somewhere yes do yeah ja ja I think I I've come out with love science done all sought of things quite naughty I remember on time actually needed how the science has cause I was actually getting all the books I handed my hands on the books that say not tried in in a science in a science lab

Siyanda: so you tried it

David: ja ja tried it

Siyanda: (laughs)

David: ja ja so I had been you know very enthusiastic about things and ja so

Siyanda: so now what happen between fights with your parents about what you gonna do art school

David: ja they they the end I mean when my parents failed as I said I had friends and friends who from Europe I got a lot of present like arts my understanding of arts was beyond just they just who people who have skills who just skilled just to show the people I think I've always seen arts as a living you know thing that I can

Siyanda: live with

David: yes yes exactly and I had I think in my confession I had belief that I'm to push these so when my parents failed to a hey look my life as I said I would be bit awesome that brings a lot so problem when you with adults people make decision but I think always set you free when make a decision and you to be able to make a decision I think it very important thing life I think I did that I because too independent at a very early stage

Siyanda: hmm

David: ja so when my parents did that I went to college this was a diploma and obviously they were not excited I did my art education

Siyanda: hmm

David: because at eh time it was the only place that offered

Siyanda: yeah

David: art because you can only do the diploma in secondary education so I was happy so though when I got there I was frustrated because there is lot of other thing about teaching but not art

Siyanda: but not art

David: and ja ja of cause there was lot of problems you can imagine when you choose too you want to do art the other thing that I discovered was those people were teaching art some of them actually they were not even artist

Siyanda: artist

David: ja themselves they say if you know it if it you if you something

Siyanda: if you know it you know what to do if you teach me (laughing)

David: ja you became a teacher exactly ja yes ja and ja so...

FIRST INTERVIEW: DORIS

Siyanda: Yes JA so let's begin like that like eh where were you born where were you born

Doris: Well I was born in Kenya umh you want the date laughs

Doris: No Laughs I was born in a little town in Kenya umh by two very wonderful parents' umh

Siyanda: What was the town called

Doris: It's called Kutiwi

Siyanda: Kutiwi

Doris: Kutiwi in in Kenya in the umh Eastern part of Kenya umh about two hour drive from Nairobi umh Southbound

Siyanda: And eh was that a rural or town

Doris: Uhh yes and no it was semi rural semi rural yes semi rural in a sense that we was there it was a munici municipality little town so we had all the municipal offices there and all the government offices there and we had a little town centre where people could access services in-terms of supermarkets and post office and all of those things and then

Siyanda: You had Water electricity and all

Doris: Water and electricity umh available then as you went out skirts of town then you got to rural areas so what happ it was like the major business centre of little rural other towns yes so

Siyanda: And you were born in the centre

Doris: I was born I was actually born in Nairobi sorry I was born in Nairobi and my parents stayed in Nairobi for what two years no no one and a half years then they moved to Kutiwi

Siyanda: Why

Doris: Because my dad wanted to start a business in this town and he went and started this bookshop and umh that was it I grew up in Kutiwi my entire life and did very little travelling while I was growing up and didn't understand where Nairobi was about Nairobi and I actually didn't give a damn about Nairobi was laugh sand only when I got out of the country so I moved from Kutiwi I went to Jamakenyata international airport I left to go and live in Botswana and then only when I went back in 2006 then that when I explore what Nairobi was so I lived from rural to another country and then go back and try and identify eh you know this other places I wanted to find out then in Nairobi really

Siyanda: When did you leave Kenya for

Doris: I left Kenya for Botswana in 2002

Siyanda: Why was it to study

Doris: To study to do for my first degree yes

Siyanda: And Why not study in Kenya

Doris: Well umh largely because my parents couldn't afford for me to study in Kenya and so I had to be adopted by my dad's sister who lived in Botswana so that how come I

Interviewer: That's weird I think to studying abroad would be more expense

Doris: Well because she lived in Botswana and she was a taxpayer in the country and she worked at the university and children you could get a waiver and so it was easier for me go and to study in Botswana then to study in Kenya yes

Siyanda: Ok and then you said your father had a bookshop

Doris: Yes a very long time ago

Siyanda: Researching I think

Doris: Yes umh

Siyanda: How did that come about for him to open up a bookshop

Doris: Its Its I don't know how well my dad my dad's sisters husband that's my uncle had a bookshop in in that little town centre and so when my dad and my mom had me they went and worked for him and in that one and half years after 1987 I think between 1987 and 19 1989 they got enough capital to start their own business

Siyanda: I hope you know you've e just given away your age laugh

Doris: So umh in 1989 they decided to go and start their own business and it's when they started their business it's been running up until now yes

Siyanda: Well what kind of books do they sell

Doris: Well they predominantly sell umh primary school books umh and all your stationery and JA

Siyanda: So growing up was reading and books part of your life

Doris: Oh absolutely absolutely growing up was quite nice because every eh time my dad would go for his supplies in Nairobi he always find a new book for us to read so all your hare and lion and rabbit stories we read first before anybody else read in school and we generally had quite a good education up to secondary school eh which is what my parents could afford umh yes it was all good

Siyanda: And were the books in your own language or

Doris: No no no they were in all English because in that little town that we grew up in when I went to my primary school which eh was in the same town the two main language was Kiswahili and English because it was classified as a district school and that meant was not only had it kamba

speaking people but it had all kinds of other students from all parts of the country and their parents would come to work in govt offices so you couldn't pick one language yes and so ja that how I ended up learning in Kiswahili and I learnt in English from std 1 to std 8 then I finished and I went to another school that was a provincial high school and by that time any school in Kenya your predominant language is either English or Kiswahili its English the entire time except when you have a Kiswahili lessons so ja that was the mode of communication it always been ja so unfortunately I didn't have the privilege of learning in my native language I can't write in Kamba and some of the Kamba I speak is quite terrible yes and I feel terrible about that laugh

Siyanda: So you've said

Doris: So I'll get there when we talk about my journey in 2006 going back home and trying to find out who I was in that society then I will let you know where where my language

Siyanda: Let's go back there now

Doris: Laughs well I went back home in 2006 and I want to really

Siyanda: Now was this after you had to had study your first degree

Doris: This was after I studying my first degree I finished my first degree and I wanted to go back and be part change in the country and do the best that I could and I wanted to be patriotic person went back home and I couldn't get a job then

Siyanda: What did you study sorry

Doris: I studied Public administration and Environmental sciences umh and I really wanted to work with government coz I believed it's in govt where you can make most change then I went and was confronted with this idea that you had to know somebody and if you don't know somebody you can't get a job and ah it just sucked so instead of looking for a job I tried to figure out what I wanted in my life where my next date was and to appreciate the things I had then because I knew if I'm going to get out of the country the chances of me coming back to the country and leaving for a long time would be quite slim umh and so I sat down with my mother and asked her to teach me Kikamba properly my native language and that

Siyanda: Why the need though because you not going to

Doris: I think it's because I am now grown up and obviously living in Botswana they spoke Setswana I saw the way all my friends they all knew their language and they were very proud and wanted to speak it and before I left for Kenya wed just moved to my mother my aunt had just moved to South Africa and I helped her move to South Africa so we came to Durban and everybody was speaking in Zulu and I thought to myself now why is it that I have to speak English and speak Swahili and I must have a good grasp of my native language so I went back home and I said to my mother could I please I want to perfect my kikamba so we must just speak kikamba every time so that I can do the right thing and that what we did for six months I spoke with my mother in kikamba and she corrected me and that was good

Siyanda: And how was that experience

Doris: That was very good

Siyanda: And did you feel by the end of six months that you had learnt the language or something else or was it about really learning your home language

Doris: It was about learning my home language and also about having a better relationship with my mother and umh it was about knowing my roots where do I really come from umh I remember I was very inquisitive about my grandfather I remember I was very inquisitive about my grandmother and I wanted to know what makes me the person that I am this characteristic that Dorothy has where did this come from who had this in my previous life in my yes in my family and I remember asking my dad my aunt my mom all these people umh ja I got a number of answers

Siyanda: So were you able to reach them with your roots

Doris: Not really I think it takes quite a long time to get to that point where you can say now I know my roots are firmly are firmly rooted in this particular place and this is the language that I speak not necessarily the spoken language but also in the way you present yourself to people the way you dress the way you know your morals and stuff like that umh but unfortunately you know being a person if you have to travel to other countries and and leaving other cultures one by one you culture is you've got to almost fit in to other cultures and umh ja unfortunately it's still confuses as to who you really are ja

Siyanda: So would you think that u would by getting in another place that u loose the sense of who you are or where you come from

Doris: In my case I wouldn't say that I've really lost it it's just that some of the things that I know if I went home wouldn't be accepted are accepted in another culture and because they are accepted in that culture and you are living in that culture you have to because I also strongly believe that you have to appreciate other people culture and if I go to Zululand and people the woman are bear breasted I must not feel that to be bear breasted because if I belonged to that culture that what I would be in my culture that is a no no laugh you see and so I have this experiences and then you sit down and you try and ask yourself now who am I you know who am what culture must I be following now I keep on asking my mother now my aunt if I got married today to someone who was not from my culture what culture would we have to follow because obviously I have changed a lot in the way that I behave what I believe in and I'm meeting another person from another culture not my culture what culture would we have to follow would they have to come back home and pay lobola speak to my parents and have meeting even though they don't understand what's going on you know or should we just say oh she's married to a foreigner now and we should just accept them and let it go and umh unfortunately I am told I have to follow the culture.

Siyanda: You tell me you've changed a lot is the change more westernized if I can use the term or not

Doris: In a lot of sense I have no I wouldn't say I am more westernized I think I am now beginning to form an identity that I am not Kenyan

Siyanda: That's interesting

Doris: That I am African because I have lived in Kenya but Kenya did not shape me in my teenage hood what shaped me in my teenage hood is Botswana and now in my mid not mid 20s in my adulthood I'm living in South Africa and South Africa is shaping me to become the adult that I am going to be so I can't keep saying that I am I have to follow everything that is being done in Kenya because I am not in Kenya I am here so I often tell my friends that I don't classify myself as Kenyan I classify myself as African

Siyanda: Being African what does that mean

Doris: What does that mean for me umh what's being African that's a very difficult one hey laugh Being African for me is following the cultures of our African forefathers what they wanted how they wanted us to live our lives but acknowledging the fact that we are changing and it's the the 21st century and that I cannot go bear breasted in gateway I must clothe myself that I have to remain an authentic person but at the same time grappling with the idea of what is changing in my world if I can give you an example of being a woman in the African tradition means that you get married at age 19 and you start having children and you must obey your husband when they comes home drunk its fine and if he wants to take another woman you must say yes because that's just how my grandfather had five wives how did he get them all to work because he was their man you know and that how it is unfortunately I have I have said no to that part of being a traditional African woman and I've said yes to the fact that I can work I can go to school I can I can shape my own destiny the way I want it to be and I must not let culture be my hindrance in doing whatever I'm doing so in a sense for me being African is just living everyday knowing that you whatever you are portraying to people is what your your morals because I believe that our African morals are very firmly ground I'm doing that properly but at the same time acknowledging within myself that there are certain issues about the culture that I don't necessarily want and those things that I don't want I must just not do them because that's not what I want and that's going to hinder me from achieving things in my life and so then in a sense that its.

Siyanda: I can't resist now so for you who comes as African there's this debate especially in South Africa at least around who is African and who is not

Doris: I think umh that is a tough decision I think umh I have white friends that were born here their third generation white South Africans now do you call them European or Africans or South Africans I would call them Africans I don't think it's a question of whether you were born in African I think it's a question of what what as an individual you believe you are I don't think we can sit and generalise who an African is because people immigrate to other countries and they change citizenship if I immigrated to Australia now and became an Australian would I call myself an African or would I call myself European I don't think it's a question of colour and I don't think it's a question of place of birth I don't think it's a question of nationality I just think it's a question of of what you believe in and if what you believe in is umh is what has been constructed as African socially then you are an African

Siyanda: Interesting

Doris: JA that what I believe in

Interviewer: See like I wanna deny other people the claim to being African

Doris: You want to deny

Siyanda: So For instance Oprah Winfrey could say I am an African I would wanna say no you are an American first I do want to deny some other people African connections I wanna give other people back but I don't know how what do you actually see

Doris: Let me give you an example I come from a huge huge family huge means that like 500 of us laughs in a family and fortunately or unfortunately we are all dispersed all around the world and it so happen that one of my cousin fell in love got engaged married a black American and so because the wedding was done in America he had to now bring her back home and come and introduce her to her ancestors no his ancestors and the family she comes home and Joy goes likes I am so happy that I'm finally at home because this is my home this is where I come from and I am African and she's always believed she is African yes she is America and she's African now what right do I have to tell joy that she is not African none because its clear in history that they somehow came from Africa so I don't know whether we should go back to use science laughs and go back and use social things that have happened before to classify people as African or not but this issue of African I think is quite complex mm

Siyanda: But then let come back to your family laughs so how many siblings do you have three

Doris: I have three siblings umh Yes I have three siblings

Siyanda: Brothers' sisters

Doris: Two sisters there three of us sisters theres three of us three sisters

Siyanda: No boy

Doris: No boy

Siyanda: So what was that like for your father growing up in a family of woman?

Doris: My father my father grew up in a family of women because he was the only brother of 4 sisters been in the middle so two sisters then him then two other sisters that how he grew up and he married and had 3 daughters with no son I think he is content I think he thinks I'm his son laughs

Siyanda: In what sense

Doris: In every sense of it umh and so I don't see him being unhappy I think he's quite proud of what he's done he's quite proud of what he's daughters are achieving everyday and if there's 1 thing I've learnt from my father is that you can do and be anything you want as long as you work hard and believe in god and you know shape your destiny according to what you were taught by your parents and the morality that our African culture teaches us ja and if I do that I will shape my destiny properly

Siyanda: And where are your siblings nowadays in Kenya or

Doris: The 1 sibling is here with me and the other one is in Kenya mh

Siyanda: And you said something about your father wanting you to believe in god so what religion or spirituality is important in your family

Doris: Oh spirit is very important in my family both my parents are Christian my father is catholic and my mom is Christian protestant and laughs it's never

Siyanda: Phoenix

Doris: Yes it's never been an issue in our family my mother has always gone to her church and we went to the catholic church because we followed the line of its just the way ja so everything is not orientated in our culture unfortunately umh and So ja my dad was always very he always told us to believe in god that god was always number 1 though it was not always in his actions laughs but I knew that what he wanted us to be ja it was quite part of our family

Siyanda: And now is it part of your life now as a young adult

Doris: Absolutely everyday mh

Siyanda: Do you go to church or is it more which church do you go to

Doris: it's interesting because for a long time up to maybe about a month ago I went to a catholic church I still go to catholic church but I knew that something in my life was missing because um when I went home in 2006 as a way of bonding with my mother I always went to church with her and so I find her ministry in her church very different very vibrant and and it was something captured me in the way the pastor ministered and all of that umh then I started questioning whether I want to be catholic or not I've come to the decision that I don't want to be catholic I want to be protestant and I've started reading the bible more I've accepted Jesus as my saviour I haven't moved from the church but a lot of my actions I do every day umh wouldn't be classified as catholic as such umh so yes spirituality is a very important part of my life I think I think umh God is at the centre of my life everyday and he's the only one who can shape me you know ja and umh so in that sense I don't believe in African religion umh I don't believe in African religion because I believe that when the missionaries came and they taught us the word of God that is what God intended for us so I don't think we must still remain in that umh this can be highly contested what I'm saying I don't think we must remain and believing that my grandmother is gonna give me rain and because she is in whatever place that she is you know because she is she is not it's not God God is the only one who gives that and she cannot be a medium to which god then comes and speaks to me I don't believe in that ja

Siyanda: And not believing in African religion does it conflict or clash with your idea of being African or not

Doris: For me for me personally no it doesn't

Siyanda: Ok it doesn't

Doris: Umh because I have chosen umh to not have that in my life but also I think the fact that I didn't grow up in a family that believed in African religion and I didn't see my parents going to dance traditional kamba dances and stripping and being possessed by whatever is people are possessed with I was never exposed to that it was things that I heard my parents not my parents but my mother never spoke about those kinds things only when I started living with my aunt then she told me what her mother used to do and what their not her mother great grand grannies and aunts and other people also my grandmother was the first woman in the entire of her village to accept god and baptised as a catholic church and my grandfather built the first church in the entire district I think so they instilled the religion in their family and in children and so those dances and those religion they used to believe in before was almost crushed in our our village and in our district so I have never seen African religion as ever part of me being an African largely because I was never exposed to and second I have strong believe that I can only believe in one thing and that is God and I cannot believe that grandmother who is dead can come to me and talk to me about the rain or how many children I should have for me that is a fantasy that I can't believe in I'm sorry laughs

Siyanda: Ok spirituality was an important thing growing up in your family what about education

Doris: 1 second Laughs It's so happened that my family lets go back a bit my grandf grandfather had 5 wives

Siyanda: Oh I thought you were giving me an example

Doris: No

Siyanda: Same one who built the first church

Doris: Yes conflict laughs had 5 wives My grandmother happened to be the 3rd wife and out came 5 kids with my father being one of them the last born being my aunt I lived with was the first woman to get a PHD in the entire village village in entire municipality right so and she got her PHD when 1994 -5 this is very long time ago but even before then my grandfather was also the first man in the entire district to take his girls to school and he always preached that if you get an education as my girls when you get married you will know the kind of food that you need to give your children you can then get married to doctors if you have an education you know so for him he almost always equated the fact that he would get more cows and lobolas if his daughter went to school and married the right people then he knew that his daughter s would be taken care of and he always said to them they must go to school you must go to school you must go to school and you must read because reading is important and he was always the one parent who was there when they closed school every term and went to the parade and I'm being told that during those days all the kids that came to position no 1 to 3 were announced at assembly of final closing term day he was there so he was the one parent that was always there so he could find out if any of his children came tops and it so happened that every term 1 of his children came tops and those children were more girls than boys so he believed that girls would be the ones that drive this town somehow this is in the 1950s I don't know where he got that ideal from so education has been key part of my family it's always been we've always been told that education is key to success key to everything umh my dad said it all the time and he encouraged me every time I wasn't doing well at school he said Dorothy you must remember that if you get good education it means you will live a better life and I have

been able to provide for you you will provide for your family with a better life you will be able you can take better care of us instead of us being thrown somewhere so it's always been a part of our family ja its always been for my grandfather

Siyanda: Yes very interesting stories

Doris: Laughing interesting stories hey

Siyanda: Let's go into politics so spirituality was important growing up education was important politics was there any important part in the family

Doris: Quite laughing

Siyanda: Keep going you everywhere

Doris: My grandfather was a chief laughing

Siyanda: Oh so are you royalty

Doris: Yes

Siyanda: Really

Doris: Yes I am umh

Siyanda: You serious

Doris: Yes laughing

Siyanda: Oh my good god ok continue

Doris: My grandfather was a chief laughing umh and his he he he I'm told he was very good with politics and its part of the reason why he was you know reinstated is that the right word no that's part of the reason why they gave him chieftainship and that was the colonial government in Kenya then

Siyanda: Oh

Doris: So he was a co colonial chief it was not an inheritance kind of chieftainship or umh and so we don't we no longer have the chieftainship within in our family anymore so it taken away because it's now become part of the government. structure so it's now so I don't know now the president appoints the chiefs or something now well I'm not sure of politics in Kenya now umh but apart from that my dad is very political he has a view of everything umh he's never wanted to contested the parliamentary seats but he is very strategic in his political views so he's very good at analysis of politics and he knows who to vote for and ja it's an interesting thing it runs through the family when we have family gathering politics of Kenya politics of the world they they are very much part of us umh up to maybe 2006 I was very much interested in politics myself I went back home and I just thought this is just not the path I want to be in and iv since change what I want to

Siyanda: And growing up and I suppose coming from a political sort of family were you aware or taught or told stories about what had happened in Kenya had been colonised historically

Doris: My dad did that quite a bit umh he told us he was never involved in any of this because he was still a child but he was never involved in struggle or any of that my grandfather I think I don't know how he ended up in colonial government but he did so I don't know whether he was a traitor no but I've never heard people talking about him as a traitor but I know he fought in first world war laughs yes so we still hoping we have a family in Bama that my grandfather had a 6th wife laughs you will never forget this interview will you

Siyanda: Laughs your grandfather is messing around

Doris: MMH laughs you will never forget this interview will you but we are not aware of them I'm still going to find them sometime yes

Siyanda: Now if you can look back to your childhood can you find the most significant memory growing up in Kenya

Doris: I think growing up knowing that I was Angila

Siyanda: Angila oh yeah

Doris: Knowing that I come from Natta family that I came from it was quite a privilege umh I remember my parents throwing huge family parties umh for everybody knowing the village I remember I remember us us being happy family the entire family it was a privilege to come from that family to interact with the people I interacted with the people that shaped my life I wanted to do a 1st degree I wanted to do a masters degree because my aunt had gone through this thing so she had I had all the role models that I could ever get in my family and they still are they still are yes I look at my mother and I want to be a good mother to my children I want my husband to have good characteristics just my father I want to achieve academically like my aunt be a good business person just like my other aunt. And these are the people that have shaped the person that I am and so I had all the role models I could want in my family lucky for me I tapped into. In my immediate family we were a together family we didn't have and drama my parents never fought in public or drama in my family or that 1 parent has been cheating up to now maybe they fight in the bedroom they are always united

Siyanda: When they come out

Doris: When they come out of that and that has been a motto for for the kind of family I want what my mother taught me she obviously comes from an old school that a woman must please her husband and doing chores in the house my mother taught me about cooking doing chores hard work she was a mother she was a wife housewife no she was a wife business person she was everything and if it wasn't for her we would be where we are right now

Siyanda: So was your mom working as you were growing up in the shop with your dad

Doris: In the shop with my dad and she managed every affair in the house and you must remember we had a home and a rural home and a home in Quitawa and at some point my dad moved to

Nairobi that's another business that didn't work out so my dad came back at that point my mother was running these homes and this business and that's I find a lot of strength from my mother

Siyanda: Ok I'm confused now if your family were running so many homes how come you didn't have enough money for university

Doris: University because it's very expensive and you only go to university if you could really afford and my parents unfortunately couldn't afford and I think they didn't plan for their children and didn't plan for our lives and so when it came to university they just couldn't afford. I think is part of our society they didn't really plan well for us and by the time I went to university my dad had lost his shop and was at home and he just couldn't afford just couldn't afford

Siyanda: And what is yours worst memory

Doris: Worst thing was being shipped away to go and live with another family and knowing that my parents couldn't afford to pay for my school fees and I wouldn't live Kenya it was my worst but ended up being my best what's my other worst my other worst is the expectations that my family had of me

Siyanda: Which are

Doris: No if you ask my father I must never get married laugh That I must be this role model to everybody so my father has this high expectation of me and what I can and cannot do so I can't afford to slip up so I must be aim high and must be this person which has put a strain but it has also given me motivation to do the best I can do probably my other worse

Siyanda: Does your father treat you as a son

Doris: Yes in a lot of ways he consults with me he calls me his strategist and because I'm a strong minded person and I say things the way they are I don't mince my words I think he sees that as a very good quality so he is always speaking to me about how things must be run and how I think things should be done yes I can tell he is very proud yes he definitely sees me as his son

Siyanda: Let's speak about your experiences in school when you went to your 1st school

Doris: When I went to my first school I was always youngest in class

Siyanda: That must have been nice being the youngest in class

Doris: I was the youngest but always the biggest laughs so no one ever believed me that I was young anyway I went to school when I was 4 yrs

Siyanda: You mad

Doris: I promise you I went to std 1 when I was 4 somehow I went through and I finished when I was 13 I finished std 8 no when I was 12 then I went to high school when I was 13 finished when I was 16 started university when I was 17

Siyanda: Yeah

Doris: Yeah I was always the youngest in my class I was not always the best in class laughs actually failed in my case

Siyanda: Did you fail

Doris: Yes when I did my std 8 I didn't fail but I didn't pass either laughs I was on the border and I remember my father had to go and try and look for a school for me because I was going to be thrown in those rural school and I could never emerge as a person as a good person who could then go to university so my father had to look for a school and he spoke to 1 of his friends and I got a place in her school and I then did my high school there but my memories of primary school were nice I had good friends yes I had good friends I don't keep in touch with any of them

Doris: I probably maybe one maybe 2 maximum

Siyanda: What's her name

Doris: Huh

Siyanda: Did you say your parents' name

Doris: No no I said maybe maximum of 2

Siyanda: Oh and what would you want to be when you grew up

Doris: What I wanted to be it was always my dad's dream Laughs to end up being a lawyer or a doctor or do geography and end up being a geologist or I don't know my dad knew about all that

Siyanda: Where did you come from geology growing up wow that's very advance good god

Doris: What else did my father want me to be I don't know it was always my dad's dream that's about it

Siyanda: You personally what did you want I assume you liked English you're good in English

Doris: I've always wanted actually to be a

Siyanda: Journalist

Doris: No I wanted to do something to do with home economics

Siyanda: Laughs what can you do with home economics

Doris: I don't know I wanted to do I wanted to be a chef and I wanted to have my own hotel it's still my dream I'm still going to have my hotel somewhere that's part of the reason I'm doing the masters I'm doing

Siyanda: Oh tourism

Doris: Yes that's my dream that was my dream I can't remember what else and then I also wanted to get into business coz I saw that my aunt was doing very well in business goes back to role models hey then in high school I still wanted to be a chef wanted to be something to do with home

economics maybe tourism management then obviously I went to do my 1st degree and did something totally different yes

Siyanda: And how was it like growing having strong woman role models has that been a positive and productive space for you

Doris: Definitely Very fortunate for me that my aunt always spoke to me because I'm told that I looked like their mother

Siyanda: Your grandmother

Doris: My grandmother so they always wanted me to work as gram worked I was their hope and they saw their mother in me she must look like her behave like her be like her part of it was that they lost their mother at a young age maybe age 5 so they saw her in me so they spoke a lot to me about being the better person working hard in school achieving things in life and all of those things and that really did shaped it more of what they spoke to me but their actions because they are strong women and they led their families and they did all those wonderful things and I could tell I wanted to be part of that generation yes so they shaped me a lot

Siyanda: Lets pick up being in high school now high school is usual an awkward period for most kids

Doris: I was a very rebellious child when I was in laughs high school got suspended from school twice

Siyanda: Suspended from school for what

Doris: For refusing punishment I was not a good child and lead people to strike and all kind of other things laughs

Siyanda: What strike did you lead

Doris: Well it was the fact that people were not being treated well or we had male teachers behaving very nasty at school and I just could never take it that a man taking advantage over a woman because this woman is less than them and the power relationship is not balanced and I always thought that these little girls in school just sat there and let these men do whatever they wanted to do even though they had families at home and once his ruined your life that's it you know and I couldn't take it so yes a couple of my friends and I organized a strike

Siyanda: Was it successful

Doris: It was successful besides the fact that my father came to school and gave me beatings at school Laughs

Siyanda: Was it at school

Doris: In school my dad came in and the fact that I had organized a strike to him it signified potential failure it signified potential not going to university potential end of my life he didn't want me to be one of those woman who sat at home and had children you know laughs and so he came and he told me I will not let you in that path and I will beat me in front of your teachers and that what he did that was embarrassing but it never stopped me from fighting for what I believed was right but

generally I did keep bad company in high school laughs looking back there were all girls that liked to go clubbing drinking smoking boys and luckily that influence never took hold of me I think I had a further understanding of what I wanted my life to be and even though I was in their company I knew I have something more in my life that Qutiwa was not enough for me that I had to move out of there and I wanted to be something more

Siyanda: So did you go clubbing did you smoke did you drink

Doris: No No believe it or not I did drink but I was very conscious when I was drinking I did drink

Siyanda: Alcohol

Doris: Yes I did drink

Siyanda: Oh ok

Doris: I did drink alcohol and I was very conscious I would never let myself get drunk because I knew getting drunk would incapacitate my state of thinking and boys could take advantage of me and my life would be over laughs And so yes that was about it I knew smoking was bad and clubs were not my scene I'm a noisy person I'm noisy when I'm talking but not clubs and overly drinking I knew you had to have a limit and you can't just drink and drink cause that is just disgusting

Siyanda: Did your family know you were drinking

Doris: No my mother was going to kill me

Siyanda: So nobody found out

Doris: Up until now nobody knows I was drinking Yes that was about it

Siyanda: Let's talk about boys now you were in high school

Doris: I was in high school

Siyanda: And you were a growing girl surely you were attracted to boys a few young men and they were attracted to you

Doris: I did luckily enough I always say it was probably gods way of protecting me I had this 1 boyfriend from when I was in std 8 until I was 16 and finished high school and the time we were together he was a gentlemen looking back he was a gentlemen he respected me I think he respected the fact that I came from a family that could potentially harm him if he did anything to me

Siyanda: Potentially harm him

Doris: Potentially harm him in a sense that if anything happened to me he could go to jail or something bad would happen to him if something bad happened to me laughs I think he knew that and so it was a very puppy love kind of a relationship love hold hands and nothing else for 6 years

Siyanda: Laughs No I don't believe that

Doris: I promise you

Siyanda: Really

Doris: yes and so I passed through those stages with him he drank smoke clubbing he did all of those things but I just didn't get involved in those kind of things and I think its because I knew there was more to me than that yes I knew there was more to me than that

Siyanda: So he was your first love

Doris: He was my first love yes in a sense not in a sense he was my first love

Siyanda: Laughs and you see him do you talk to him

Doris: No hey I absolutely don't know what happened to him the last time I heard

Siyanda: They say first love is the most important one of all so they say

Doris: I don't know where he was but I will always be grateful because of the years I spent with him and the fact that I never got myself in a mess whenever I was with him I believed we outgrew each other we both wanted something bigger we wanted more than just living in Quitiwa you know so I don't know I know he has since moved to Uganda he is at Makerera university or something but I know he has also moved on with his life laughs makes two of us laughs

Siyanda: Maybe let's talk about before the break the final year of high school

Doris: Well The final year was an emotional rollercoaster what happened that's the time I lead the strike that's the time I was trying to read for my exams and my father was on my case saying I must work harder than we had a national strike of teachers what else it was up and down but I sat for my exams I did them and I did well in that year I was crowned the best English student in school

Siyanda: Wow

Doris: And what else yes

Siyanda: And did you apply to go and study further

Doris: No I didn't apply to go and study further you don't do that in Kenya because you only go two years to university after you finish your its one of our major problems we have with our education system in Kenya in 1984 there was attempted coupe so the people who were supposed to sit for exams that year didn't because of the political situation in the country they instead sat for exams in 1985 and combined with 1985 class and only went to university in 1986 so the people who were supposed to go to university in 1986 had to move so we've always had a backlog of people going to university

Siyanda: Oh

Doris: And they have never been able to sort it out

Siyanda: You're kidding me

Doris: Yes so every now from then you always have to wait for two years

Siyanda: And do what in those 2 years

Doris: That why some of the girls don't make it they get married or get frustrated and all kind of things the friends that I went to school with I'm doing my masters now they are probably doing their final year in their first degrees yes that's just a bad

Siyanda: What did you do in those two years while waiting to start

Doris: I never had to go through that two years I finished 2001 I finished 2002 August I started university in Botswana

Siyanda: Oh ok

Doris: So that was an advantage a good one

Siyanda: We will speak about Botswana after the break

Doris: Yes

Siyanda: So the decision to go to Botswana was it discussed with your parents

Doris: Yes

Siyanda: And did you know what you were going to study

Doris: mmh

Siyanda: No or so you were

Doris: No no no I knew what I was going to study I was going to study public admin and I was going to study public admin when I got there I realised I could do double majors so

Siyanda: You could do a

Doris: A double major degree and so I did environmental sciences its part of it

Siyanda: So tell me about that experience was it your first time you've never been outside Kenya

Doris: Absolutely it was my first time to be outside Kenya and I had to live by myself for 1 month after I landed in Botswana at the age of 16 laughs

Siyanda: Your first flight I can

Doris: First flight yes I was a brave young girl got to Botswana safely laughs and started my life away from my mother away from my parents

Siyanda: And your first impressions about Botswana when you first

Doris: Completely foreign less chaotic than Nairobi umh order what's the other impression good infrastructure umh less people JA those were the first impressions

Siyanda: And what university did you study

Doris: I went to university of Botswana university of Botswana yes yes

Siyanda: Tell me about that time when you were living by yourself

Doris: I was living by myself because my mother had to go for holiday in Kenya so I was left in the house and she went on holiday for Kenya

Siyanda: So you stayed in her house

Doris: I stayed in her house yes and I had to do registration and find my way around university it was a small campus umh then I met a few friends not from Botswana foreign students and we've been friends ever since yeah

Siyanda: What are some of the experiences you had in Botswana

Doris: It was

Siyanda: Good and bad shall we start with good experiences

Doris: Let's start with the bad the bad was that umh unless people had had exposure with foreign people umh they were rather apathetic to foreign people umh there was an attitude that foreign people are here to take our money and to take diamonds and to take our jobs ah ja that was so terrible the other thing is they were not friendly sometimes only the people that didn't have initial exposure with foreign people because out of my eh my journey in Botswana iv made very good friends that were Motswana and they've always been friends ever since so it was only those that didn't have an exposure that behaved like that but either than that that was it actually that was I really enjoyed Botswana very small no big country small population we had space space is there and I really enjoyed it was peaceful no crime umh and you know thing were done properly things were run properly things were run according to proper government structures very few incidents of corruption that were routed out so I found a country that was well run in Africa which was quite rare to find and ja the good is that I met very good friends I became very good friends my first ever best friend girl best friend was in Botswana I had very good memories of Botswana met good people both foreign and locals I got my education from there that was very good I had g exposure to one of the best mix of lecturers in you know in Africa and it was lovely umh lectures I mean one minute I would be taught by an Indian next minute by a Nigerian next minute by Motswana next minute I had a Malawian the next minute it was a diversity of people coming in from different background bringing in in all this knowledge and I knew I was in good hands ja

Siyanda: And how long did you stay in Botswana

Doris: I stayed there for 4 years

Siyanda: And were you in touch with people at home were you writing emailing

Doris: Yes it was telephone it was by telephone calls I spoke to my parents often but Botswana shaped me to who I am today

Siyanda: In what sense

Doris: The way I present myself my maturity the way I interact with people appreciating that other people have a right to their resources I think appreciating that that I am lucky in a lot of ways to have been exposed to other cultures ja

Siyanda: JA you know I have that experience of not having two mothers umh since I was there you have your

Doris: Mother my both my ja That was umh quite good because both of them knew what their roles were in my life and my aunt said to me I'm not your mother but I will act like your mother here and because of the good upbringing that my mother had done for me my mother didn't have a lot my aunt didn't have a lot of

Siyanda: Trouble

Doris: Trouble with me umh ja so it was very good we have a very good relationship very open relationship umh she is more of a friend than a mother to me umh ja and I can feel like feel like I can talk to her about almost anything ja so we've had that since I came ja

Siyanda: Alright then so then you there in Botswana you do your degree that you finish in your 4 year degree

Doris: Umh 4 year degree I finished eh in 2006 then I decided to go home

Siyanda: To go back to Kenya

Doris: To go back to Kenya

Siyanda: To find your roots

Doris: To go find my root to go try and get a job and to go and spend time with my family because I knew that was a that was a transition point for me that there was something bigger I believed there was something bigger that was going to happen in my life and that something bigger was probably not going to happen in Kenya and so even though I had hopes that I was going to go and work in Kenya I kind of thought that it was short lived it was going to be a short lived moment in Kenya so I tried to be the best I could in Kenya and do the all the things I wanted to do and all the things I wanted to do was spend more time with my mother spend more time with my father spend more time with my family you know umh before I had to spread my wings wherever else I had to go

Siyanda: And how long were you back at home for

Doris: I was there for six months

Siyanda: Ok

Doris: Yes within the six months I spent time with my family I worked with an NGO umh what else did I do umh I also helped my father with with the business umh ja that's about it

Siyanda: And when did the decision to study further in South Africa how did that come about

Doris: When I was leaving here when I was leaving to go to Kenya lv we we moved so I finished my degree in in May 2006 in Botswana then my mother just got this job in akin so we moved

Siyanda: Your mother

Doris: My aunt

Siyanda: Your aunt so sorry

Doris: Yeah then we moved in June I stayed here June and July June to July in South Africa then I went to Kenya

Siyanda: Oh k

Doris: Until the following year January umh but I came back in October of the same year to go and do my graduation in Botswana umh JA so that was quite a period

Siyanda: Yeah it sounds like it

Doris: In my life ja that was quite a period it was a period of realisation that because I had left I had left the country when I was very young it was hard to go and now start picking up the pieces when I was 16 you know it was harder for me to get a job because I didn't

Siyanda: You didn't know anybody

Doris: Know anybody umh it was realisation that I didn't want to work in Kenya that I fel felt I didn't belong in Kenya umh

Siyanda: And was that done because you had been away from Kenya from so long

Doris: mm the things were done differently umh I don't know whether you know the history of Kenya but corruption is very rough I don't believe in corruption I believe in you know getting everything done properly in the right channel s umh things were chaotic I had been used to order umh that men treated you uggh laughs and I thought there is no way I could actually survive in this country

Siyanda: Yes

Doris: Just I just couldn't umh

Siyanda: But that's the country of your birth your home

Doris: I know but I had changed remember that I had been woman in Botswana are very liberated umh women work women can get their own property woman can do can be whatever you can

Siyanda: But you come from a family where all that is possible

Doris: Society con constraints in Kenya I could never buy my own property because my husband has to sign in the b bank if I've got to get a loan that how it is

Siyanda: Good God

Doris: In Kenya I can't buy I can't take a loan in the bank that's number 1 I can't buy property because when you sign that document your husband has to sign on your behalf because you are a second class citizen

Siyanda: Till today

Doris: I don't know whether they've changed the law but in 2006 that was what was happening in Kenya it's it's just aagh ja then then I also started seeing because the way our family and the woman in my family had very strong minded not just in my that immediate family my grandmother but all the other families as well but the men the men are just another ja they just I saw the way when I visited their homes I saw the way they treated their wives somebody would come and sit down and expect you to serve them and they want you you just must be this

Siyanda: Servant

Doris: Servant even though you've been working the entire day you must wonder what the kids are going to eat and this man is seating there and I thought to myself there's no way what's the probability that I was going to meet somebody in Kenya that was going to treat me differently for me it was almost none none nonexistent umh but also it was not about me meeting a partner it was about me working with these same people so if you treat woman like that at home what's the probabilities that they are going to treat me the same way at work almost a 100% I thought no man I don't want to work here I don't want to work here I don't want to live here I just want to visit

Siyanda: No

Doris: No mm no because I have a number of family members that don't live in the country its always known that somehow either going to leave or they'll end up leaving anyway so that was it that was it it was ja it was hard decision to make but not that hard because I dint have an income I needed to make money I needed to go back to school and I couldn't see myself doing that in Kenya

Siyanda: So then your dad spoke to your aunt if you could study in South Africa

Doris: Yes and she said yes so we applied and I got accepted in akin and I knew that next year February I would come

Siyanda: 2007

Doris: 7 last year yes and that was my journey in Kenya in 2006 it actually opened my eyes a lot a lot a lot more than I thought it could ja now I know I don't like to live in the country and now I firmly believe I am not just Kenyan because going back to where I came from and not accepting the way things were being done opened my eyes to the fact that this is not what has shaped you for the rest of your

Siyanda: Life

Doris: Your Life something else has shaped you and you can't continue saying that I am Kenyan yes I am Kenyan by nationality imp I'm not Kenyan by personality you know I carry more there is more to me than just being Kenyan you know cause then I couldn't fit in that society you know umh

Siyanda: Could you fit completely in Botswana

Doris: No because I still carried a bit of being Kenya

Siyanda: And you were a foreigner I suppose in Botswana

Doris: Yeah umh JA that was my journey in Kenya but I came back to South Africa last year

Siyanda: Let's speak about your impressions of South Africa when you first came

Doris: When I first came to South Africa in 2002 umh ok population like Kenya laugh lot of people good infrastructure seemed to me like there was order umh yes those 3 things then I st came in in umh last yes and yes there is or order laugh there is order in a way laugh umh much better than Kenya By far and there is ja its definitely much better than Kenya in terms of the way things are done umh it's a beautiful country umh because I love nature we have a lot of that in Kenya but I haven't explored it umh I would I definitely love the way the country is

Siyanda: When you were aah in I mean for me South Africa is very race conscious

Doris: JA

Siyanda: So you coming from a country which is predominantly black and went to Botswana another country which is predominantly black and then you come to a country with aah race baggage ahh how is that like

Doris: Umh I'm gonna tell you that my entire life I've lived my life without prejudgement of people based on their colour based on their tribes based on their whatever it is because I knew when I went back home I couldn't get a job because of the tribe that I came from it was a minority tribe and people didn't recognise it and because of that I could never get a job even though id passed so well in my first degree that was and ever since that day I decided that I was never going to judge anybody based on their tribe or colour or whatever it is I was you have to look at the person umh and you then as a as a human being and that is that's for me race has never been an issue so ja fortunately for me race has never been an issue if somebody wants to be racist to me that's their own problem I will probably detect it but that would not be my the basis of my interaction with them that's their problem it's your own baggage that you are carrying in your heart umh I'm not carrying that baggage that's none of my business so and I don't I try as much as I can not to judge people by whatever it is that they

Siyanda: But do you feel conscious ah of your race

Doris: No

Siyanda: In South Africa

Doris: No

Siyanda: Not at all

Doris: No no

Siyanda: Please tell me that I don't understand

Doris: Not at all not at all I don't because I've decided not to iv decided not to be conscious of my race iv decided that I can work I can work hard I am successful in my academic record I am successful when I work with people and that counts for me more than what my colour is I have also had the privilege of work with the best in our department who happen to be white umh and they have taught me that it's not about colour it's about you working hard it about you placing yourself in the market based on how you can perform then being you being a black person or you being a white person and umh yes that's that's that's that what I base my entire experience in south Africa with I don't mm I don't feel race conscious at all yeah laughs do you

Siyanda: Completely every single day of my life

Doris: You do

Siyanda: JA

Doris: But I think it's also I'll tell you what I have a very good friend of my mine who's also struggle who struggles with with umh accepting other races and she became my friend of mine and based on our conversations and our interactions a lot of things in her mind have started to changed but you you can't actually prejudge people based on their colour umh and the minute she internalized that then you start changing your whole perspective on a lot of things

Siyanda: Like in I'm conscious of the fact that I am black so now I worry about what are people thinking of me now so that I'm I'm completely conscious of my chocolate skin at all given times

Doris: I am I tell you what I am proud that I am African number one I am proud that I have this skin I am proud that I can work hard I am proud that this skin doesn't qualify me to get jobs at the top there it's my hard work and and and what I've been able to achieve in my life that are going to determine whether I get to at the top there or not and that is what I would like it for me to be not the colour that I am and I make it very clear in my interactions with people that I am not a race conscious person and if you are you have to disengage from your that personality of yours when you are dealing with me that is the one thing I make very clear to anybody who wants to be close to me including my boss so and and I think the minute you make that clear to people then they begin to see you in a different light yes

Siyanda: That's very interesting

Doris: Mm I have found it very difficult though to interact with black South Africans

Siyanda: Mm In what sense

Doris: Umh it is only those black south Africans Again like in Botswana that are being exposed to other foreign people to other people that have an understanding not the importance of foreign people but that that they here to fulfil a certain task a certain responsibility not to take away from you umh and in that sense I've got friends who are black south Africans but I'm conscious again of umh I am conscious of the fact that we just had the xenophobic attacks umh and the root of this is because people don't like African foreign people and umh for me it has sh not shaped but maybe

shaped shaped the way I interact with with with black south Africans I'm sorry but that's just the reality umh

Siyanda: Lets let's look at when those attacked happened where were you when the first one happened what did you feel what did you just think what happened

Doris: Tell you what when all that stuff happened I was doing my research I'm in Eastern Cape no access to radio no access to TV in a lovely hotel in the Eastern cape got out of that haven laugh and came back to south south Africa cause I didn't believe I was in south Africa then I'm just beautiful and I came and I saw that people were being killed foreign people and my mother said you can't go town and you can't do this and you can't do this and I had my mother from Kenya calling in and finding out whether we were alright and I was wondering what's going on sat down and asked my my aunt what was going on and she said people are being killed foreign people are being killed by south Africans so ja that was very sad for me it was sad because umh so I was very sad but umh that people didn't understand the importance of foreign people in their country that people did not appreciate the foreign people bring into their countries they didn't appreciate that most of the power blocks we have in the world were not built by by locals they were build by foreign people it only when you interact with foreign people because they are obviously different backgrounds different mm technologies and whatever it is and they are the ones who shape an economy but I also understood that there were real concerns from umh locals about people taking up their jobs and I kind of I don't blame the government I'm one of those that doesn't blame the government for things that happened umh I blame maybe lack of exposure lack of education lack of umh lack of self control and lack of communication for all these problems that we had umh yes and ever since that day I probably have not been to town cause I'm consciously worried about what if I go to town and something happens you know to me umh ja so I've been confined to certain spaces where I feel more comfortable at home at Westville because I know that my neighbours are going to be fine and I can go and shop at the pavilion or the Westville mall wherever but I don't have to go to town because of what happened and people are still you don't know I don't know whether that's still closer to peoples heart about foreigners not being in the country

Doris: No laughs

Siyanda: And so if you don't consider Kenya to be home do you consider it as South Africa to be home

Doris: That's a tough one yes I do home is where you are home is where you make it for me

Siyanda: JA

Doris: JA

Siyanda: And aah

Doris: This is where I am now this is my home for now I'd like to be here for ump 3 years from now get an experience go back and do my PHD

Doris: I'd like to go and do my PHD Elsewhere

Siyanda: Elsewhere

Doris: JA

Siyanda: Elsewhere in African or elsewhere in the the rest of the world

Doris: The rest of the world umh yes then we will see where my life goes from there

Siyanda: Okay let me ask the last question

Doris: Okay

Siyanda: And it's about We've already touched on dreams inspiration the things you'd like to achieve for your life what is that

Doris: What is that what

Siyanda: JA

Doris: What are those things umh I definitely want to finish my masters which I'm going to finish I will I'd like to get work experience I'd like to work my dream is to work in a research institution umh that's dream number 1 my dream number 2 is to work with a Non Governmental Organisation my dream number 3 is to work with government my dream number 4 is to work with private sector laughs dream number 6 is to own a hotel dream number 7 is to have a a PhD dream number 8 is to write a book about my grandfather and the 3 generations that have happened in our family

Siyanda: JA

Doris: That those are my dreams amongst others

Siyanda: JA

Doris: Yes

Siyanda: JA and which of those are the most important and that you think you are going to pursue straight away

Doris: Straight away I will work with a research institution for the academy of south Africa then I will do my PhD then I will work with the NGO I will definitely do all of them laugh all of them but most important is that before I die I'd like to write that book and before I die I'd like to have to own that hotel umh because it's through everything I do now I do with an end result and the end result is to have that hotel and it's to have it umh with a proper of clinics of community participation and how things can be managed successfully that's my my my main goal umh yes that's it

Siyanda: Another question cause you are in a unique situation of having you being in 3 different African countries for an extended period of time and so could you compare life in these sort of these 3 countries Kenya I mean we've spoken a little bit about Kenya Botswana and South Africa umh in-terms of life and how your experiences having been in each

Doris: umh my experiences in Kenya obviously early childhood and up to late teenage hood that shaped me a lot to who then I became afterwards umh I would say that Botswana shaped me largely who I am now shaped my identity umh in terms of wanting to achieving in my life and wanting to be a role model and wanting to work harder and wanting to to do things that are going to umh ensure that I achieve more you know achieve more and it's not in terms of money or anything like that it's just in-terms of me being able to do something more something more something better umh Stanley

Stanley: Yes

Doris: Close the door yeh that s fine umh what else

Siyanda: In South Africa

Doris: In South Africa

Siyanda: In South Africa what South Africa has given you

Doris: South Africa is shaping me as a woman umh living in a country where people where woman are where woman are taking a lead more and more in things is very inspiring for me umh living with a woman in my life who is achieving things everyday of her life more and more is really shaping the person that I am its shaping the choices that I continually make in my life umh and having friends that are achievers is very good motivation for me umh and I believe that all these things have happened to me because I am in south Africa mm so I'd like to do more

Siyanda: Yeah

Doris: Yeah

Siyanda: That's very cool well I mean I think we've

Doris: Cool we've touched part of it haven't we

Siyanda: Yeah yeah yes yes that's very nice thank you thank you very very much umh

First Interview with Daisy Conducted in my office 2008

Siyanda: So start there where you were born?

DAISY: My name is Palesa Daisy Sekotho **yes so ...**

Siyanda: ... so why do you use ...

BOTH: Daisy?

DAISY: ... ah that's, that's gonna come ...

BOTH: Laugh

DAISY: ... so Palesa was born in ahmm the homelands ah the Free State in Qwaqwa and ah I was born in the little rural sort of village called Monatza (?) and ah I grew up in my grandfather's home as I was born out of wedlock so my mom had me when she was TWENTY FOUR in 1979 the 11th of August ...

Siyanda: chuckles

DAISY: [giggles] and ahmm ...

Siyanda: ... so you just had your birthday earlier this month?

DAISY: ... **yes, yes, yes, yes** so ah basically as you know back in the day you born out of wedlock most of the kids actually in the household where we grew up ah it would be a whole bunch of these children whose fathers have kinda like either disappeared or you know ah but it was ah ja I mean I go back to Monatza (?) **NOW and I go "Oh my gosh"** I look at the children there and I say "That was me eh you know 29 years ago or well a couple of 20 years **ago"** and ah **it was, it was my childhood** mainly my mom was the ah well **she was working so I didn't really have a father for**, for a number of, number of years ah then so we were living it was, it was like a whole family ah, ah family ah relatives and ah these children **that didn't** have fathers ah and then when I was around 7 ah my **you know there's** this man that keeps coming into my life now **who's now** my father and ah my brother was born in **1986 so I was about 7 years old ...**

Siyanda: ... now is he like your biological father ...?

DAISY: ... no ...

Siyanda: ... or no?

DAISY: ... no my stepfather ja but however in African terms he was ...

Siyanda: ... your father.

DAISY: ... ja I call him "Ntate" and ah I mean at **the time I didn't even know that it's a funny thing because I didn't know right up until when I was 19 that he was not my father** so I sort of had ah maybe not normal but I had a relatively NORMAL childhood so my mom was there my grandfather was there and a couple of us kids running around in the yard and so my stepfather came into the picture coming with my brother [chuckles] because [it was] the same year my brother was born ah you know he would, he **would he didn't live with us** so he would come drive a car you know so there were not we didn't have a car at home so whenever ...

Siyanda: ... he came.

DAISY: ... he came he came with a car so one of the memories that I have is me standing by the fence and **I didn't because the car was parked outside I didn't** wanna play with my friends anymore ...

Siyanda: laughs

DAISY: ... because you know I'd be clinging onto the fence and going "Ja you know my dad is HERE ..."

Siyanda: laughs

DAISY: ... I didn't go out play with other kids and ah I mean even the, the, the child living next door she had a similar kind of a thing where the father worked OUT in Durban actually the father was, her father was a member of the Soul Brothers if you the Soul Brothers ...

Siyanda: [in surprise] good god ...

DAISY: [chuckles] so you know he drove a red COLT if you remember the Colt or maybe you could be ...

Siyanda: ... I don't know anything [about cars] ...

DAISY: but we had an XR3 the Ford XR3 so also red so when the red cars were there then you know ...

Siyanda: giggles

DAISY: ... we just we don't get out of the yard we just like [in child-like bragging voice] "Hi my dad is here da-da-da" ...

Siyanda: laughs

DAISY: ... and eh ja so that was, that was those were the really the fond memories that I have of my childhood as well as ahmm **you know you must tell me when I'm rambling** ...

Siyanda: laughs

DAISY: ... about irrelevant stuff ...

Siyanda: Laughs

DAISY: ... okay cause I can ...

Siyanda: laughs

DAISY: ... ahmm **but ah** one of the other memories that I have [in an excited tone of voice] was MY BROTHER coming was that my mom went to **HOSPITAL and then** ...

Siyanda: ... she comes back ...

DAISY: ... next thing she comes with a baby on her back not even you know ah it was just my mom went away and then came back with a baby on her back so that was, that was quiet interesting and then so with the regular visits of my; and then on the same year **my grandfather passed away so he'd been head of the family** but ah so when he passed away the house kinda it was my mom who lived there and myself and two or three cousins ahmm but anyway so when my dad started visiting on a regular basis he ah you know he ah he became sort of the man of the house but then he decided "**Okay we gonna move**" or rather 3 years later when I was like 10, 10 years old we moved to Tsiyame (?) Tsiyame (?) is a was sort of like ah you know when ah black teachers nurses ...

Siyanda: ... oh yes

DAISY: ... the, the newly built place I mean then we moved to Tsiyame (?) which was about 40K's from, from Monatza (?) and the house was BRAND new you know you could still smell the carpet and ah, and ah there was a telephone in, in, in the house and there was a TOILET in the house ...

Siyanda: ... that flushes.

DAISY: ... that flushes because we didn't have that there was electricity and there was a TV that was ON most of the day you know unlike back in Monatza (?) where we used *i-generatha* and ahmm you know in terms of the television I remember when we were back in Monatza (?) you know when Shaka ...

Siyanda: ...oh Shaka Zulu?

DAISY: ... Shaka Zulu came on I mean we glued to the TV ...

Siyanda: laughs

DAISY: ... because you know ah and the kids from the neighbouring houses would come to the house and you know it was not a good thing when it rained because then the MUD comes in with the people but ja it was, it was quite ah something to move into the suburb kinda of a thing you know ah no mud houses ah, ah you know and had my own bedroom my parents had their own bedroom ...

Siyanda: ... nice ...

DAISY: ... well I did have my own bedroom but it was like a really nice bedroom you know and ahmm, and ah but I mean just to talk about bedrooms the thing is in Monatza (?) when I [brief pause] I used to sleep in a bedroom **I'm not sure whose** bedroom but when grandfather passed away I then was move to the bedroom where he slept in ...

Siyanda: ... wow

DAISY: ... and ah I will tell you a funny story okay ah I remember I started sleeping in that bedroom but I used to have such nightmares ...

Siyanda: ... nightmares [chuckles] oh I was about to said you.

DAISY: ... I used to have nightmares and [breaths in] dreaming of crocodiles and I would see things and YO my gosh it was HORRIBLE and then one night and of course the parents think you [are] just having you know and I remember one night ah, ah I was sleeping then I had this dream and in this dream my grandfather came into my dream and he's coming and he says "Listen I want you to move this blanket" like there's a mattress and obviously the base so he says "I want you to move this blanket between the base and the mattress and ah and then I woke up like AAAAA

Siyanda: chuckles

DAISY: ... you know and he walked away and then in the middle of the night and the dark I'm like heading to my ...

Siyanda: chuckles

DAISY: ... my parents' bedroom and I tell my mom "Please eh you know Ntate-moholo says we must take this blanket out" and they were hectic in their sleep there and ah but the following day they removed the blanket and after that I never had the nightmares so **I don't know** you know, you know is it, was it real? But these are the things that I remember and every time I, I which, which maybe influences my ah African ah my need for or my belief in ancestors and my grandfathers and so forth so anyway that's, that's the bedroom moving back to Tsiyame (?) now obviously we had our bedroom and it was really great and ah I will tell you the story about the telephone now ...

Siyanda: Laughs

DAISY: ... I remember when we into the house it was around the Wimble[don], the Wimbledon was on and it was Pete Sampras ...

Siyanda: ... the tennis?

DAISY: ... ja Pete Sampras was the big guy at that time he'd just come into the scene and ah you know telephone and they ran this competition line on the television that "If you can say who's gonna win today's match you know you can win this and that" and I didn't tell my folks but I kept phoning many times because ...

BOTH: laugh

DAISY: ... you know eh, eh but I didn't realize that there were probably MILLIONS of people dialing you know ...

Siyanda: laughs

DAISY: ... I somewhat had this idea that maybe eh I would eh ...

Siyanda: ... win

DAISY: ... win you know and I wouldn't, my folks wouldn't mind me using the phone because I would have won you know but anyway that didn't happen but I mean I remember when we moved it was around the Wimbledon days eh schooling I went to Tebehakgano (?) my primary then I went to Monatza (?) ah, ah, ah Senior Primary and then when we moved to Tsiyame (?) then I ahmm, ahmm I finished off my senior primary which was, which was Standard I did my Standard 4 and 5 in ah Tsiyame (?) Whipopo (?) Public School ja and ah and then so schooling was sort of ah [brief pause] you know I was sort of quite clever ...

BOTH: Laugh

DAISY: ... no seriously, seriously I MEAN IT ...

Siyanda: laughs

DAISY: ... I was one of the clever ones okay ...

Siyanda: laughs

DAISY: ... and ahmm I mean I remember okay back in, in Monatza (?) then I was in Standard 2 and for some reason or in Standard 1 for some reason or the other I knew this thing and then the teacher moved me from my classroom to the other classrooms because I knew this thing and I was this clever child you know so I was "Eyi you know this child da-da-da-da" and then in Monatza (?) also you know ah, ah you know I was till clever there

Siyanda: chuckles

DAISY: ... then moved to Whipopo (?) I was clever ...

Siyanda: chuckles

DAISY: ... but ah just to mention that there was no form of contact of like white people in my younger years I honestly and actually the superstitions went that "If you dreamt of a white person it was a witch ...

Siyanda: laughs

DAISY: ... you know so I don't know if that had to do with the politics the fact that white people were doing such bad things that we referred to them as witches but if you dreamt if in your dream you dreamt of a white person ...

Siyanda: laughs

DAISY: ... it was a witch ...

Siyanda: laughs

DAISY: ... so anyway even if ...

Siyanda: ... can you remember your first encounter ...

DAISY: ... with

Siyanda: ... white people

DAISY: ... yes maybe not the first one but ah I mean right through

12:00

even in Thiyame there were no white people they actually didn't exist in my sphere you know it was only when I went to boarding school now I tell you story now when I was 10 years old, I just finished standard 5, I was turning 11 when I went to high school, **standard 6 so I emphasize once again now I was clever "they laugh together" but** anyway so I then eh my parent tell me you going to be schooling in Tihambe you can imagine **I was 10 years old, I'm shipped off anyway the next thing my bags are being** packed we use to have this trunk those big one, next thing the trunk is packed with my thing with little goodies and we drive about couple of hours and we end up in a place **called Tweespruit anyway I still don't understand what is going on the** next thing my mom and dad they eh ,

Siyanda: Were they saying their farewells to you?

Siyanda: There were good byes, sees you, cheers and okay I'm in the school but I wasn't really eh I think I'm fairly adaptable person I just got eh okay this is life, you know and then eh I was in a boarding school **I remembered the first couple of days I'd forgotten my toothbrush, I wasn't brushing my teeth for a whole week and we shared a** domes with other 11 girls in a domes, I remember down stairs were the classroom, and upstairs were the domes in Maristaal Girls High in Tweespruit near Thabachu, let me tell you a interesting things about this school it had black learners but the teachers were white, it was a convenient school actually the principal was sought some eh, it was a Catholic school and our principal sister Electra. She was from Germany, we had also **had sister "**

"she was also from Germany so anyway we had 11 of us in a domes at the time. For once I was really confused about stuff, what a my doing here in this school, we were all this kids from different background like from Soweto bearing in mind it was in 1988 so it was 1990 just after Mandela was release and there were riot in Thokoza right through South Africa except back in Thiyame back in Monantza there were no, I was never politicized people were just there, there were no white people so there was no need for uprising or whatever, there were no white people, there were no like black person would go into town and encounter brawl things but in my life there were no white people featured right up until, when I was in high school where now teachers were now white, getting into a school or getting into or through **this some sought of white system a I think the first six months of my standards I didn't** hear a thing; that the teachers were saying and I remembers that cause we use to **watch days of lives, bold and the beautiful eh it was Capitol "they laugh together" and** the I must have watch it and only pick up from the visual, but I never verbally understood, what they were saying so it was nice to match so never I rather but so

after six months, then I started picking after English you know. So it was strange because you are put in this situation, suddenly you have to but anyways that was my first year, I made a lot of; I think my high school years my high school education that where I really sought of started finding out about myself in terms of who I am, what am I about and actually in standard 8, we were going to a this a for parents, for parent day. All parents will come and we will be performing for them and I remember I think it was a class in middle of I think in 7 or 8 I think it was standard 8 our class teachers was Mrs. Ama she was a very sweet white lady, so now anyways one girl from Thokoza **came up with an idea that we could eh reconnect I don't know how to put this, but do the Sarafina whoa man that a was a big one., we couldn't** do Sarafina of course I was I **couldn't because it was a big thing, there said no it too violent if you gone do it for** parent, we just could not do it, and but actually before I move to the Sarafina thing eh our school it was a funny thing, here the classroom here the convent okay. There were the sisters some runs in the middle there was the border eh of Bophuthatshwana one side of South Africa, on the other side actually I grew, when we were in the high school, we learnt civic history, the history **of Bophuthatshwana I don't what high school** had South African history was you know, what it was, but we leant because what it called civic history, it was the history of Bophuthatshwana so everytime there were thing happen we heard of Magope, Mr. Magope you know the president Mr. Magope was the president of Baphuthatshwana who eh he would come on and we sang the national anthem of Baphuthatshwana because it use to be an independent state before it merge with South Africa took over so it was just funny because you were sought of in between two states, South Africa on one side and Baphuthatshwana as a independent state which was ruled or under the black by Magope you must do a check up on him. He is now still around but anyways it was yeah that was a funny thing about the school, but anyways but most of us were from South Africa you know; so the Sarafina thing came on it was a big wow and we go a slack from sister Electra, some of our activities there eh some of teachers knew eh what was going and what had happed and of course the kids which were coming from Soweto and Thokoza, they knew they were bringing up stories like, there were gunshot and some of his **Didn't know, what the hell** and therefore when they said no Sarafina. I remember they said all those who want to do Sarafina must go to the **recreational region, the ones who don't mind, I had my big glasses. I was completely like ignorant, I wanted to. I didn't care if we were not going to do Sarafina. But I didn't realize the movement that was coming with that. I didn't** think the kids understood what they were saying. I think it was a real statement that we wanted to do. Sarafina eventually was approved. However we had a little tape you put it to the jam blaster, so we mimed and danced the guns, so that was quiet interesting.

Siyanda: At that time in school, were it like what was happening in South Africa?

Siyanda: Yes, the other kids did definitely you know, but in our school we were isolated. We were in a bush somewhere okay. We were removed from what was happening, I remember February 1990, and **I don't think Mandela was released. I was in high school, I don't know. I didn't note anything, so I don't think it was. We were**

like; I think ideally the teachers should have brought us and watch television you know, **we didn't even know what was happening.**

Siyanda: Obviously it was just a dream, running up the hood you know.

Siyanda: Yes, anyway I began high school in 1990 to 1995. So in 1990 I was still at home, I only started high school in 1991. In 1990 it was a special year for me because my sister was born that year in February. It was quiet a big thing in my family, because my mother had a new child and Mandela was released from prison that year. There was a sought of Euphoria and then I went from 1991-1995. I was in boarding school, I never had a boyfriend.

Siyanda: Really your entire high school?

Siyanda: Yes, the school was quiet strict. There was a girl section and the boys section, divided by the dinning hall. Off course you will have incident where suddenly you know when it a break up day and it **is two o'clock in the morning we are running looking for other pupil. So because they haven't come back to their dorms,** the whole school would be sent out in the middle of the night looking for her. Because she hasn't come back to her dorm, we knew she had a boyfriend out there somewhere. We will go to the squash court and go to the bush, they would run. If they are gone to the library, we will go with torches and everything, so it was a very interesting thing. I will tell one story in my school, there was a girl which had a father who was very popular. Her father was a very prominent figure in the Bophuthatswana government. I think he pump in the money for our school. She did those things; she went out and was suspended. She came back when the school re-opened. It was a bad thing, and the **other girl did the same thing, she didn't have the parents, she was poor and was expelled from the school.** Those were some of the inequalities which came with the school. If you were rich at school, but that girl was poor, it was an eye opener to the fact that you know to everything you are doing better not mess up, because you will be out of the school. If you are rich, you can do whatever you want, you will be suspended and brought back to school. Anyway I have finished my high school years and I was in a great high school. I had a really good friend named Rose Maphika, she thought us a sketch. We used to go to the mountain nearer and we wanted to build a tree house. We would go on it in such amazing times with my dear friend. I actually wrote an article about her in Oprah.

Siyanda: Is she still around?

Siyanda: Yes she is still around. She is a senior scientist in Sasol. Together we entered a competition, Colgate win a smile. We built a house, covered up in Colgate. We collected the boxes and stuff and we came second or third in the competition. I guess there was already that artistic thing that was coming out. In 1996, I went to Rhodes.

Siyanda: Ooh, that is where you studied?

Siyanda: Yes, I went to Rhodes in Graham's Town. When I got there I sought of invented myself because at high school they use to call me Seputi or Spa, compare to Varsity I thought no, I am going to re-invent myself. Because I was at the new environment and I was trying to leave some sought of baggage, maybe not being pretty enough eh, **I don't know but there was a need to re-invent myself.** I called myself Rose because the first six months was chaos. We go like Rose and I wouldn't

know, I would keep on walking (They laughed together). That was my way of re-inventing me, so I came with a price but eventually I got used to it and being called that.

Siyanda: It wasn't like a domestic choice of a language?

Siyanda: No, it was just a saying. I remember, I must have got it there and I said to myself I was going to call myself Rose. You know, nobody knows we are here; I am going to be a new born again Christian. So that was great and once again, my parents drove with trunks, suitcase and they dropped me off there. That year, I was 16 years old.

Siyanda: How did you pay your fees? Who paid your fees?

Siyanda: I think I got a bursary or something (Tefsa) loan, at that time. Now it is called NSFAS. Anyway I got to Rhodes and the first year was great.

Siyanda: What did you study?

Siyanda: I was doing my Bsc in Biochemistry. The plan was to be a micro-biologist.

Siyanda: Really?

Siyanda: Yes. (She laughed)

Siyanda: Good God, (they laughed together). You have diverted from that plan.

Siyanda: I did Biochemistry, Batons, Urology. I was wearing my glasses, and I had my lab coat. You know, I was one of the science students.

Siyanda: Ooh, this is where your friend, Rose diverted.

Siyanda: No, we were not together. She went to Wits, or either University of Pretoria. I did Chemistry, Batons, Urology. I went to second year, it was fine. I remember at that time political issues, SASCO because Rhodes was predominantly whites and in that year, there were marches things like that. The SRC not SASCO, sorry were looking for transformation you know. The normal stuff we use to complain about, for me it was a **big thing, I didn't want to be involved.**

Siyanda: Why didn't you?

Siyanda: Because I was new, maybe the nerd in me came up to me again. I just wanted to study you know. I just wanted to go to the lab, do the experiment. I didn't know about this stuff. That was the thing; it was even in the news. I remember my mom phoning me, asking what was going on and being in Graham's town. I tell you because the black people that were there, you find out that the majority were Xhosa. Xhosa speaking people it was their territory hey. The girls could be mean, because sometimes they will let you talk in their Xhosa language and were calling you names and be rude. That how it was like. It is where I learned IsiZulu because I didn't know IsiZulu at high school.

Siyanda: Now why did you learn IsiZulu not IsiXhosa?

Siyanda: At that time in school, were it like what was happening in South Africa?

Siyanda: Yes, the other kids did definitely you know, but in our school we were isolated. We were in a bush somewhere okay. We were removed from what was happening, I remember February 1990, and I don't think Mandela was released. I was in high school, I don't know. I didn't note anything, so I don't think it was. We were

like; I think ideally the teachers should have brought us and watch television you know, **we didn't even know what was happening.**

Siyanda: Obviously it was just a dream, running up the hood you know.

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Siyanda: Now why did you learn IsiZulu not IsiXhosa?

Siyanda: Well I would eh have learnt little bit of Xhosa and isiZulu, I don't know what I was speaking back then so Zulu people can understand me or Xhosa people can also understand me but in primarily I'm a Sotho, it was hectic also than I was expose to others okay back in high school I remember there was a girl from Uganda her name was Nana Nkwagrewa, I remember people from Africa they were really dark. So Nana was really dark, but she was very smart and she thought she was this big something or big short someone, eh anyways even coming to varsity one got expose to Zimbabweans

also other people from Africa and eh I hadn't been kissed before, can I just mention I haven't French kissed "they laugh together" that was not funny I was 16, you know that 16 never been kissed I was a leaving proof that it was possible and you know this are the things that you carry with you, I don't have a boyfriend I eh don't what is to French kiss I don't know I was really behind in that so anyway I found this boyfriend and eh a lot of things I hadn't been expose to and some of them I just so embarrassing so anyway, I found this boyfriend he was just a drunk, I remember his name was King of all, I don't know but he was King and he was a Xhosa and u-King comes to my room ooh my gosh smelling of alcohol so now I know I was under pressure

Siyanda: You had to do something

Siyanda: and I kissed this boy and it was terrible experience, all the alcohol I don't know what I was doing I don't know what I was doing honestly, I know the moment was going to come and I don't I don't know what I was doing so anyways at least that got that out of the way and eh then mm.. All this thing happening, I hadn't been to movies coming from Thiyame, Qwaqwa in Thiyame I had the school in the bush you know eh there was so, I remember this guy took me to the movies.

Siyanda: Was it King

Siyanda: No, king then I kicked him out of the curb; he was out there I know that I might be desperately but come on now, you know kiss wasn't great this guy was an alcoholic no, no king was out of the way so there was another one short guy, I never eh Xhosa guy never, oh he went to the mountain he use to dress those jacket, wear a hat he was just un-cool and he was short on top of that eh he was interested in having eh no, no... eh then there this guy who was interested in me he was a hunk, good looking guy and he took me to the movies and that it was a really because I went to watch Independent Day with this guy, that was my first experience of the movies shocking hey eh,

Siyanda: "they laugh together" you had to see that movie

Siyanda: and then after that he was taking me out and right now I wondered if he wanted to have sex really because I wasn't that good looking girl, he would have really got anybody. I was this girl from the farm so anyways this guy wasn't in varsity he was from outside, I don't know how I met him this guy so anyways then I went got my first waffle we went to Spurs, that was my first waffle anyways there were lot of first experience so on that year. Rose had her first experience waffle in 1991, I was now man eh okay first when he got into the restaurant I don't know what I 'm going to order I wasn't show that I'm completely like and I said I'm going to have a waffle with ice cream, cause I saw that picture It looked sweet, so anyway I had my first waffle and this guy took me back to the hi hotel where hr was living and t remember eh,

Siyanda: So it was your first hotel experience

Siyanda: No, no ways my first was in eh it wasn't a great hotel, Graham's Town had this funny little hotel I remember it was at a corner, right down, was it on road which goes straight down, I remember probably this guy was trying to have sex with me or whatever but it didn't happened I remember wanting trying to get out but we got locked in there we couldn't get out,

Siyanda: serious

Siyanda: eventually we I met and her had a fantastic time he was my boyfriend immense in all of schooling, I had passed my first year, went to my second but I drop out of Macro – **biology cause I didn't like viruses anymore eh but bio-chemistry** was still very interesting but macro –**biology was just no I can't** deal with this viruses and then you had to a fungus on the thing oh it just line no, no.. So then I left macro-biology. So then I was very good in Zoology so then I would do bio-chemistry and zoology but the idea was that I would major in Neurology because it like the to know how the brain works and stuff, anyways went to my second year eh this guy Zubz we went out we had great relationship, we went out for four years even after varsity we still were going out, but now speaking about him I remember going out around about six months and **we hadn't sought of engage in sexual activities and I remember one thing he said to me " is it because I'm a Zimbabwean"** because there were a lot of xenophobia.

Siyanda: Right actually here,

Siyanda: There was a lot of xenophobia around that time, that was stupid or maybe he was trying to get some so or saying something like come on now, I had my first experience with him, it was great It was nice, the xenophobia was there, but for me it **didn't make sense not because I had** Zimbabwean boyfriend but because we were just people, what the hell so what if is Zimbabwean or whatever. So I think there was really that provided naturing environment or white people, black people, Zimbabwean and all African you know all the thing and eh yeah that was that, I went into third year I was nineteen when I was in my third year I was having problem with Zubz then I phone my mom, you know this, that and **that my mom says to me yeah you know man don't trust** anybody and eh stuff, I just remind a little bit when I was going to varsity my dad said **to me come let take a walk it was the day before we were going to drive to Graham's Town, I'm talking about when I was going to varsity my dada** said come let take a walk the following day we were going to Graham's Town and his giving me advise you know, we taking walk to Shoprite to go but chips.

Siyanda: You know this was going come eh

Siyanda: Yes and my dad said to me you know boys are snake, me and your mom we met when eh 25 years old, she was actually 25 **obviously I'd been born. I don't know why it didn't click that; okay wait a minute how did that happened. I was still like, I didn't eh ... we had a lot of misunderstanding me and my dad, I assume but don't know** why was not coach about that but I did not assume anything then I eh my mom and I had only you know this and I laugh at my dad for that he told me this and that you know and he gave me a super glue, that I remember a super glue cause it always linked with the close of eh yourself up you know. One of the things I always use it, you know things given by father to use it was like radios etc, it suddenly comes to use it later on the super glue was one of the things he gave me, I had to use it later on cause to glue something; so I always fondly remember my dad telling me of course giving me super glue, anyways my mom says to me put the clutch forward now that we here tell me that boys are like this, that and so on and she says you know eh they is something I need to tell you, this is on the phone, yes eh **I don't know how I'd sense that he was** not my father and that was like eh it made sense somehow but it must have definitely **done something to found out, 19 years later that the man you'd been calling dad , I**

called him dad is no longer your dad come into the picture when I was 7 years old. I only remember him as my father at age, it never occurred to me that something, eh **where was he? Cause he was always in and out but anyways then I don't when, then I got the news I told my boyfriend at that time and we took a long walk to third class monuments', it called the monuments we'd says I'm going to monument it a long walk to there I had some excitement that maybe my real father or my biological father is rich, ooh but anyways.**

Siyanda: You weren't some like emotional about that eh the news

Siyanda: Not really eh mm... I didn't cry, but I was like some excitement maybe this guy is rich honestly thinking saying he must not be bloody eh, I hope his rich gut he'll give me anything you know. So the possibility were there eh mm.. I flunked my third year, I don't know if I can link it to that, so I flunk my third year and I went back I flunk again so this was terrible I don't know what drug I was in but also I think I around that time I got to be an alcoholic, I was having too much alcohol from Wednesday, Thursday and then the weekend, also in my third year I got into weed, I was smoking weed and was an alcoholic but I wasn't that much alcoholic, I had alcohol then, I was in relationship, than started cheating on this guy. I was just in a space, I was in some space you know and I went in the second time I was still that somebody who was fairly clever, to a somebody that just not getting anything in or whatever anyways that was eh but we still went out. Zubz then graduated and I didn't graduate then anyways that was 1999, I went back home.

Siyanda: You went home without eh you know what

Siyanda: Without a degree, I was excluded at home, I fail this same subject twice and of course my parent were freaking out.

Siyanda: So then all this years you never got eh

Siyanda: a suddenly nothing is working, so I eh went home

Siyanda: How was that? You feel that you'd come back with nothing

Siyanda: Of course there was feeling of failure and that not having achieved something and there some other things happening I was in other space, life was just happening and I remember staying at home, they try to get me to University of South Africa (Unisa) I was really not eh they should have just left me you know, also coming home there were tension I just found out about this guy, you not my dad so go away **just leave me alone and I went to work at Nandos "they laugh together"**

Siyanda: Ooh my god

Siyanda: Anyways I went to work at Nandos and other young people who have sought of failed you know we all drop out, we all waiting there but it was an experience. Life was happening soon after that I left home. I just said you know what I'm done, that is it, was like you don't leave home as an African; I packed my little suitcase I went and stay in a flat with friends, but then my dad barn my mom and my sibling visiting anyways all of this is happening and I'm working at Nandos and they had already eh paid for me to study in Unisa and I left in the middle of that, whatever; anyways whilst I was working at Nandos I was still living for day to day. I kind a like whatever eh Charles Pillay employer , he comes and I serve him lemon and herb and he says to me

"come to Durban we running a call centre would you be interested" I took a couple of weeks before

Siyanda: Was he working at Nandos?

Siyanda: He was a customer that come in and I was serving him and he says this that what do in Durban do you want to come, do you know anything about property, which was like **no I don't know anything about property, but then says we think you'll be good** but anyways let me just say eh before I left home I introduce Zubz to my parents so Zubz come and heritage my parents about. My mom say get him to come like on have a Sunday lunch and I did bring him over to the house

Siyanda: so she cooks for your boyfriend

Siyanda: Yes I was just a Sunday lunch so my dad is busy fixing his car outside and Zubz comes in, and eh go and get your father out there so I go get him and I says **there somebody in the house, then I'm 19 years old I'm putting my parents over this, but anyways my boyfriends is there I don't know he was courageous,** but we were serious, we were also serious about each other so we walk in a Zimbabwean, I remember my mom saying **oh my god couldn't you have brought someone whose South Africa or a Xhosa boy why? You know what is happening in Zimbabwean so anyways this was eh, so he comes in my dad doesn't shake his hands he just look at him and walk back, and he didn't join us for lunch so there nothing we can do, so she does what she can so he goes back to the hotel where he was staying and eventually my dad comes around and say bring back the guy and they start oh you from Rhodesia all that stuff, I remember Rhodesia this and that, but anyways on a note about my father that what happens my dad warms up to Zubz, he a good guy, his a charmer, he a great guy; on the note of my biological father that no inclination after while the feeling to meet him just disappear, cause where was he? They were a little blaming on my mom why did she leave him? So what happen my mom fell pregnant while she was at the teaching college and then this biological father was from Gauteng now they were riot all sought of things happening there, when they split he gone to Gauteng and my mom went back home and that politically it was not good to move around, my mom say I could have gone there but she was advise not to go to my father. My mom says my **grandfather wouldn't allow me to take me anywhere because she's threatened to go my biological father and they had to take he from Monantza because she was threatening to do all sought of thing, crazy stuff, I could imagine like " saying I'm going to so and so"** it was not good time so they decided either took her to Bloemfontein to her brother, you know **she's out of danger there,** either they kept her under a locked doors so that she doesn't get out of the house so that was the feeling maybe if it wasn't for the state of affairs, it could have easy even for him, this biological father guy I saw him, his not all that and eh,**

Siyanda: Have you seen him?

Siyanda: Yes two years ago

Siyanda: How did that happened?

Siyanda: Eh I went and lived in Johannesburg for a while and I then, then my mom would say try meet him, so I met his family an then he came in I saw him and eh

Siyanda: But eh did you speak to him

Siyanda: Yes we spoke like hi, how I are you, that so a spent the afternoon together and eh I had my life also I just didn't have time and to have start another relationship now, which is going to demand or have it own demands like that, but anyway he a descent guy, sweet guy.

Siyanda: is he rich?

Siyanda: No he is a teacher, maybe he'd been rich hey maybe you know I'll start he was just a normal guy you know, there was nothing like you know eh,

Siyanda: You now with Charles Pillay

Siyanda: Okay I'm serving him lemon and herb, he say com to Durban and then I left for Durban, with my little suitcase, with little pillow with my trunk, I don't know anyone here

Siyanda: What happen to the boyfriend? You know,

Siyanda: Actually we were going out and then we split and started seeing other people and I told him that I think I need to explore, I broke his heart, even today he says you eh he was based in Johannesburg and I was in Harrismith which is 3 hours away from each other so like we would visit or I would go there, **eventually it just didn't work and started involve in some crazy stuff you know, I don't** want to go there, I was young and experimenting and trying out anything and everyone, so we split, but we still talk hell of a lot you know, whom I move to Durban. I come with my little suitcase, a pillow and my trunk and my friend of mine organize a flat where I could stay a little while, while I was looking for a place. I was in property call centre so I enjoy myself there, I grew within the company from being a call centre, I then move to a admin manager, this was in 2001, that when I move to Durban and started in a job. So 2001 I work for this property job and 2002, 2003 and or 2004 that when I was still working at the same place, remained stegment from 2001 – 2004 doing the same thing and or it was a small company we worked at the back of a garage, eh it grew now it huge there are near East Coast Radio House in Umhlanga. So it was quiet interesting being involve in something which is starting afresh you know and it was really a great experience I learnt so much there and so I started eh It come to a point where I thought you know **even though I didn't finish my degree your parents always say or remind you that you** must go back to school, I **felt that even at Rhodes it wasn't just a** waste of time I learnt so much, beyond myself about myself and it prepares me for the next phase that how I viewed it , even at Private Property I was there for a while it prepared me for the next phase that is there, where I saw a girl from U.S.A who came in and she was really great, same age as me and so no but I also discovered my artistic side and begin my project with the book.

Siyanda: How did your artistic side sought of emerge?

Siyanda: I always maintain, you know I think it was 2003 when I went to Poetry Africa, Lebo Mashile was there and it was now and then

Siyanda: have you written before that

Siyanda: I remember I had written this nice letter to Zubz it eh really poetic written **but I hasn't poetically** hectic, then 2003 – 2004 I was sought of writing in that time I **wanted, so there was but I wanted to do this project and I'm really truly belief I'm just** a messenger in putting together this platform so that come about in 2004 when I begin

putting together this book by 2005. I was really heavy to the art scene here in Durban, I did poetry and then did the Playhouse then the book got published, but I was sitting working at Private Property, I had this sought of had double life of being professional. I grew in my professional space because I moved from call centre to admin manager and then got my license so I can be able to consult so I was given a company car, doors were opening in a funny little ways and my art thing was happening on the side and then I worked for DYR a little bit, I would do my property professional thing during the day and I had energy then at night I would do the DYR current affairs issues and I just went there for experimenting not knowing how to operate there,

Siyanda: Sorry what DYR stand for?

Siyanda: Durban Youth Radio, I was one of the presenters on the evening show, the current affairs show, that was in 2005-2006, eh when did I go Johannesburg no, it was late 2005 in October I had to go to eh early in 2006 I had to, while I was there I would do ooh I had energy though I was really flaming you know I wanted to put that way I had the thing I was really doing thing, and then I went, while I was doing something DYR I was parking out there because there were base in Berea Centre, this guy from **Johannesburg says "I'm starting this, he saw the car parked branded with Private Property, come or would you consider coming to Johannesburg like expand saying he just started a company in Johannesburg would you be interested finding out a little bit and more about it so that I can join them and then I always been interesting in something new, like I like starting things maybe I'm never finished but I like initial phase because it the most interesting thing, where it like expunction growth so anyways could I so his name was Kunda so then I gave notice to Private Property just like that, I gave note to Private Property I was living in Durban North, I packed everything I moved to Johannesburg. It was great it was exciting for the first three months after that the guy was an asshole, my fifth month, Peter Rowick from CCA phoned me and say they need a project manager for literature project so I thought hey this was actually not a bad thing and this guy is an asshole anyways but I mean even in Johannesburg it was fine, it was a great experience though cause I got to be my own boss my own place you know exploring different I always know that we multidimensional we not just eh it impossible to limit ourselves so it gave me a road to explore different side of me, so anyways moving from Johannesburg than I came back in Durban working in CCA and in terms of relationship eh Zubz fell out of the picture, I mean completely didn't get over him up until 2005 so although called it off, there was a time when I wanted him back it didn't he'd moved on and he'll say you missing what we use to have, I was having nervous break – down, I was really want you know, but anyways finally I got over him and found someone else, but I was single for couple of months before I found this guy whose now the father of my baby so we started going out also we met at Durban Youth Radio this father of my baby, the strangest thing so anyway his a lecture here in Durban University of Technology so he was doing it also as a hobby so anyway moving from there the first couple of months, I tell him I'm moving to Johannesburg I don't have time for the relationship okay bye, I just left the relationship just like that but anyways we still kept in touch and when I came back and we resume our relationship and working at the CCA also was an eye opener it was a**

wow it was a great experience at the end of Poetry Africa it was finished I wanted to leave CCA, it great but it a lot of work and I guess also coming from Private Property to work there, I was really my own boss I didn't have to come in at 8 and leave at , I could have come in at anytime I know that I didn't have to beg, I was not in that position where I'm in your mercy, if I wanted to do something I would, if I didn't like my work, I just could say " fuck off", also I remember Peter Rowick saying you'd eh "I would be retiring soon so you know could take my chair" and I dude either you mentoring me to your right hand or basically what he was telling me either you can only be in position when I retire or when I die and I thought no, no.. sorry cheers, so end of Poetry Africa I'm telling that I'm going and he say no please stay on until the time of the writers club time but then during that time of writers club I knew that I eh you know I've been working like a dog for what? To earn peanut and working from 8 to 5, but also not even that you end up nurturing other people talent and creativities while yours slack behind, unfortunately if you are creative there just no room for you to grow or maybe I didn't or couldn't create that space form e to nature my own creativity, but nevertheless good things come out of that eh the book has a launch during Poetry Africa, I mean I did gain quiet a lot of interesting stuff with the CCA and eh so in January 2007 so I found that I'm pregnant so I'm working at CCA and I can't take CCA and this thing. I'm pregnant and I'm not going to abort. I think I'm ready for a baby I really enjoy the or father of my baby he comes with another woman, anyways but I'm going to have this baby okay, I'm pregnant by the time of the writers club, it was end of match. I don't know whether I'm going to renew my contract, I told that I'm not going to renew my contract and I don't know where I'm gone go but, I'm done but eh I've always believed once you've taken the decision then universe also open the couple of doors so whilst still at the CCA we begin the school project with called Mazisi Kunene School Project, by the time I left Jennin was saying eh Jennin who heads the Mazisi Kunene School Foundation, she was saying listen course I kept telling her that I'm leaving, I'm not going to renew my contract with CCA so they found out why don't you come on board and run the foundation, you'll be your own boss, if you won't flexi time if you decide if you don't want to work today it up to you, all we want is result, but then I'm pregnant this is great so when I moved on, when I left the CCA I was going to be their Public Relation Liaison for the Foundation for the Mazisi Kunene Foundation which entailed getting a website done, I mean I was really an open because nothing was happening in the foundation it was really a blank book a book with blank pages to writes in, so we had to start with the website, the context so it was really exciting thing and flexi – time, I didn't have to come in the office at 8 or leave 5 they were also great, saying you pregnant soon but I didn't or haven't told that I was pregnant Jennin keeps on saying that every time she saw me she could just see this bump growing eventually but I didn't want to miss the opportunity on the account that I was pregnant you know, even at CCA I didn't tell them straight, I didn't want the situation where people treat you strange, different or start legging behind cause that I'm pregnant so I wanted to leave with my integrity in tacked and my work you know still in tacked so I didn't want that so you now eh give a chance for people saying that didn't happen because you obviously pregnant now, if I was to scream at somebody and they start saying it the

hormones you know all that stuff. I remember I left it was a very difficult thing and then I did manage to write at the end I did stick to being me, my tummy wasn't showing too much, even when I left Peter said he wishes I wasn't going I wanted to leave in good terms and when I join the foundation they were great and said you going to be pregnant soon we must be able to make sure you'll be able to work from home really awesome, so I didn't have to come in end really the foundation has been great, Mazisi Kunene Foundation is family. I'm still my own person I'm still able to explore my other interest and now working in this HIV project definitely diversity but now I think I want to go back and finish my studies. I think I've done, or feel like have I just pass straight away I would have missed out of all this experience that I've had but right now I'm at a point where I would love to go to go back to finish off cause right now that I feel that it something I want to do, I also want to question myself on I'm ready to eh I can go back to the lab and still be efficient, do I still got the brains with my baby now I want somehow leave or you know what I might have leave. I left it but it doesn't matter, I'm turning 30 next year. I'm now going back to school I to leave some sought of it okay to do this things and to explore in different spheres but also to say to her my mom finished her degree or completely a degree she was a granny, she had white hair but she still went back and finish so that what or that I don't know how relevant but that was my life that it, right now that where I am working for the foundation working on this exciting HIV project which is different in really eliciting type of media working kids from 14 to 16 years old, what message speak to them, that is exciting for me, it my first experience this HIV business

Siyanda: Is it a branch of a foundation?

Siyanda: It not a branch of the foundation but eh Reese Botha is the chairman of the foundation board of trustees and his then also a chairman for this "create Africa sound" so, you get Mazisi Foundation he seat in the board there, he is the chairman and they is Create Africa Sound he seat on the board there. This is a HIV program that under create Africa sound, so he spoke to Mazisi Foundation to say I can work 50% time of work and that they really like me so I was getting bored there also when this came up it was a blessing in disguise so eh.

Siyanda: So you work for the two organization is it flexi-hours?

Siyanda: yes I can still be working at 3 in the morning to the following day to 11 o'clock so I can start eh but don't call me before 12 o'clock that the kind of thing, so that what I am right now.

Siyanda: Let wrap for coffee and will come back

Siyanda: If I had to say something or anything about me in wrapping up, I'd say I feel that experiences in my childhood, early adulthood eh right up until now I've got a little baby never it really shaped and somewhat my perspective all of this experience we accumulate to say that for me being having grown up in complete being thrown from one extreme to the next where I grew up if you go back, like recently I went to the house I grew up in I'm actually written a short story a eh in connection that which sought goes back home I remember the house being big, big stoops, and the lawn was green, there was this big apple tree no it was not apple it was apricot, at the back we use to have chicken and we use to have this mud house, it was just big, but going now

it look so small and not and eh I just tell you another incident that I had and eh my mom worked. My mom worked ever since I was just, she been working ever since, **she's a teacher, she's been teaching since donkey years, now we talking over 25 year and she'd come home bring us a little something or sweet, chips** and this times she bought me an orange, we use to have this big lawn in the front big stoop eh big house and there was kraal just next to the house I think we had two cow at busy grazing and **roses being curious my mom just gave me this orange, I'm holding at it I can't wait to eat, and I'm looking at the cow and I wonder if cows eat oranges and I debate to myself for like two minutes and I probably not probably no not and I said and that I took the orange rolled it toward the cow and the cow ate my orange and it was finish,** but I mean experience not everybody have those experience because I mean I grew up around that, that the kind of environment you know, one could always satisfy one curiosity, and now one is living this life, living in the suburbs and living this fake life tat **I'm living you now but,**

Siyanda: Interesting; you were born under apartheid so now, what is the different right now? How does this stimuilirise?

Siyanda: It a funny thing with me, because of my location life was great but may be as eh **it was a problem but actually for me. Apartheid didn't have a deeper meaning for me,** once I again thy had chucked us in the mountain which worked for me honestly **and a white person wasn't an issue in my life but of course it didn't help because you'd become ignorant because the time people were telling us stories we were in high school, we were far removed from what was actually happening but it helped because it sensitive now, now try to do is live one can't completely ignore the apartheid has done to the people;** two you know it not like life is better now it better for some people **because most of us the one middle class, feel the effect, I don't know what to say now,** like life is better or great whatever for me anyways but back then one was ignorant about; **what was happening back then going outside; but I'll take people like Steve Biko,** people like eh particularly Steve Biko I feel they came on a time when we needed **obviously we still don't practice what Biko, it very hard because now you talk about** literate the mind and we no where close to that we are nowhere close to freeing ourselves from the mental of apartheid and which actually impose on us and I hope for my child she has a open minded mom I want her to be free and explore as much as possible, explore herself and the world around as much as possible by the time she my **age she's** fairly a cool kind of a person but definitely that there a long way to go that how I feel all the democracy thing it all a shamble but it important we reach this kind of milestone if we are to eh people we try to go somewhere I guess we do have move **toward something even now this democracy it can't be it, it can't be because you know,** where are we, we get two extremely rich and extremely poor, extremely rich and the greedy and the poor get demotivated you know the sense of that I could change my surrounds is still not there for some and extremely desperate come to a point when we **talk eh I've got a white housemate she's from Germany personally she just go back to Germany there nothing worse than person who like all you black people and are so poor, she is a lecturer she say my student can't sing, she so condescending. I'm sick of it, black people can't do this and that, like I bought these this country nothing work, but**

I don't want to leave, I'm like why don't you leave rather I actually starting to respect who have left cause it doesn't work rather the people who are complaining but they don't want to go so, we start speaking about crime she got why do want to leave your bag on the passenger seat, they going to mourn about you about smash and grab, come on now that is a the thing, ooh no this black people put a wall I couldn't get through and it has dark for as long as they is this two extremes we are going to have opportunistic and you going have organize ones, you going to have people who we are all trying to make it, you know people and just so can talk about street really.

Siyanda: Yes you can

Siyanda: The Street names of course there are some priorities that we think the money could have gone through but fine so the do the street names but personally I thought they should create jobs but listen they going to do the street names fine let accept it on let stop the thing about they say whose Hellen Joseph whose Jamie Mark and we are black people who trying to be popular with this white people but at the end of the day who was naming in the first place who was eh I only heard the other day that Samson Vrer, we didn't know Sir Vree Baxon but also we didn't care to ask and people, the white forks know who it was, now we need to look at it in one view which inconvenient to say who Hellen Joseph, whose Jamie Mark we don't know this people are we must Google this people we must move on. After so you know the mind of the black person the mind of the oppress that what they've got so that we cannot even naming like Manning it good now that you've change to Magwaza you know the most important thing is the mind of the oppress, now we sitting in a situation even mentally we cannot claim or further myself by I want more give more, I deserve this, even things change for the better we still find guilty become it goes deeply as your mind the minute you mind being captured, nothing is going to help we cannot claim things just a simple trying. I remember when I use to work they you'll be okay under the mercy of a job why? Why be under the mercy of something, you know just that person or do something you know that just my feeling sometime we eh enclose, entrapped ourselves in this might be apartheid it might be something else, even mentally we cannot claim we short change ourselves, we quick to be content with stuff, we quick to criticize, some of the stuff we should just celebrate little bit, maybe going to change Magwaza please if you going to ask me again who is this, sitting having wine you know, this place it expensive. Sitting with our white friend you know the street naming thing sucks you know convenience you like whose J.G. Magwaza anyways what does this rose do oh yes there is eh you know just say "fuck it" they named it so and so move on anyways that my feeling but sometime I know we have different views about it. Money should be going to something positive, but so what if the street names are Magwaza, Maphalala I'm freaking happy that it been name after Maphalala whoever anyways as you can see issue really burns me, we sitting there having win that the issue, we are quick to be popular in eh apartheid but in an lesser obviously may so, sought of sitting there, I'm just finish if I had to talk about religious story, Jesus this and that we will sit here forever. "they laugh together" anyways we living in trying times as black people can we not be quick to criticize you know what is being don, but I'm saying let not be critical but saying let be agreeable let be critical you know.

Siyanda: The way the conversation is going on I want to ask you this question, of how important is being black?

Siyanda: For me the question will be are you are your own black they is nothing I can do about it, but I think actually I honor for not being born white to be born born black, you know because really I understand why if were dreaming of white person it a witch, cause if you look at the history of white people all over the world this people are evil, **I've got white friend I'm saying as a joke, looking at it as in , but in looking at it as a big picture it an honor.** One you face our tolerance level or the tolerance of a black man you know, that humanity right there. I think being black is humane to how humanity should be looking at never mind the crimes but look at what has been impose on us you know the colonialisms the shivery all over world and you still burn black, it comes with responsibility cause it an honor cause you either uplift, or they this process of **uplifting this human being to a level where we should be, but because we've been oppressed and push down to level where we shouldn't be it an honor because it a process I'm looking revisiting what humanity should be as black man, that humanity on** a daily basis cause wherever you go, be a black it how you carry being black and being viewed, if you look at it as a responsibility but essentially I looked at process and honor to be a black person. I can remember what you call it re eh mm... Something humanity it been flawed so badly of what of what happen like colonialism and tainted, we actually in the forefront reclaiming it, our humanity we are not doing for only for black people but everybody who also white people the moment we try to move it up it comes with challenges and I look at it to be any, can you imagine being born white all the baggage **from your ancestors and they don't get it even right now but also, as black** men we are so scared we are in contempt so I start repeat myself.

Siyanda: We end with different question, in the other Siyandas; we ended up with **different question, the title of your book that "I'm a woman" which you are committed** to voices of women

Siyanda: I think and I know this is going to the sound un real, I view myself here I am here the great creator here the great artist and I view everyone as messengers, and okay for me what he says okay now a black women as a women we are faced with **inequalities and now unfortunately it doesn't take the many ways but the scale right** cause this is one of the way to do it actually beyond being women even before being women we are human beings, okay so already we are in position where are violated of human, are also violated as women, so if we can look at the difference or categories, but being a women also comes with it own special challenges what an honor to be able come up with a way to give voices to or give a platform for voices of women so, that even before being a women before being a man, we are human first right but I cannot not unpacked the task of **humanity but I've been given this to look at the issues of** young women and we all know the challenge which faces young women, I tell you now **just a quick thing one of the eh, I've written it a funny things my childhood is vey blurry** sometime cause we tend to block certain things that happened which are not so great so you start to blocked it I recall this are just memories of what I recall my cousin sitting on the gate his sitting on top of the gate and his giving me a lollipop and then we ended up in the guest bedroom, the house was actually big, we land up in the guest

bedroom which will be used by uncle, aunt when they visit and he was one of kids which was born out of wedlock he was much older than me I think he was just 15 years when I was 7 years or 8 years older than me, anyways we ended up in the guest bedroom I don't see everything because this was on my memory and whatever what I do remember; still don't know and can't remember is he in a police van. I'm going either to hospital or something, but I know my mom walked in into that effect and this thing as a woman I'm 27 years old, I'm sitting with this thing which I don't know and my mother has never spoken to me about it here it effect my sexuality my approach towards sex I think it had for a long-time even now really affect how I think about sex and sexuality it was in this platform I was able to jot it down and when I heard other stories and but write down but also say it out loud and I think for someone that was listening it would have net something and it was only right, until that gave me a voice of, even going back to that place writing given me that space of which I didn't want and be able to say it out loud even after two years, this year to be able to ask my mother was I molested and she says yes and I would have gone back to that place maybe she hasn't maybe we can't go back together, but I'm fine with it cause I already jotted it down for some other women so that really what we looking as young women that is my opinion also that my personal experience also influences also influences me to be more, as young women coming up and looking at the challenges that we faces growing up you know, you grow up with all the baggage's you still dealing with all this sought of issues and to be able to lay it on the platform and have a performance so that wow, that basically why it important to eh, know people why we isolate them, especially to women our issues are specially different from men issues and then men issues so why are isolating that we can say comfortable where we can talk with women you know that experiences cause be able to speak about it now and not feel ashamed or shy cause this thing happen that life.

Siyanda: It quiet powerful, we can also open platform for those group who appears to be oppressed like gay voices, black voices you know.

Siyanda: Obviously we talking oppress we need to be eh the oppression mean that you press,, so we got to raise the level, that give platform otherwise people say why even point out to Poetry Africa some of the point that come through from women, normally we had women in writing, I want to be classified as a women writers and so on, of course we understand that if you had to really domestically look at the fact that women has been oppress you know gay people are being attacked and killed, I mean what does it tell you. I saw the other day on television person by name of Xolisa Nkwanyana she was stoned to, she was you know eh

Siyanda: was it recently

Siyanda: No, but trail is going, either the guys are out and stuff like that, the guys actually committed the crimes, they are out as something like that, so all this space. Space where of human with different sphere, where there is been oppression of the same sought, what is wrong by say you know what I should speak for you know, so that what I'm basically saying.

Siyanda: I'm going to ask one last question, you sound like as women you do stuff like double daggers, you women, but black women you choose speak to prioritize

Siyanda: I think women hey absolutely, the book when I started with the project specifically looking at young black women of south Africa, one assume okay I came from assumption you know black probably got, but of course you looking of black women, for me it become beyond being black and more being a women, cause some members will also be performing, it not only touch you or but reach out to black women but reached out to women of spectrum across, the so first and for most I see myself men as women not black so when I address it some of people that we have on our forum is what not comfortably probably who goes through the same stuff you know also it a honor to be black also yeah

Siyanda: Sorry for keeping you, for so long so we end on that note

Siyanda: On that note yeah okay

INTERVIEW WITH ELIJAH

Siyanda: I would like us to start with your family, like where did you grow up?

Elijah: My family, I grew up in Kosi Bay, Maputo land, home is at Manguzi

Siyanda: Where is Maputo land, Manguzi?

Elijah: Maputo land, do you know it?

Siyanda: No, no

Elijah: You don't know it? Coz they are sort of north of Richards Bay.

Siyanda: Oh, OKAY

Elijah: Right nearby the Mozambique border.

Siyanda: OH! Okay eh eh.

Elijah: ja ja. So there I grew up there. And then...ahhh we live a life of subsistence, we are a fishing community. So I grew up fishing a lot when I was little. And then school is something which just happened you see, ja. Ah there was no vision that a person must go to school, 'why would you school and all that?' We were just schooling I mean when you had reached standard 5, it was said that 'go and take an ID¹ and go and work in a mine'. Ah but eh I think it was luck, that thing never happened [to me]. I stayed in school although I had nothing that I could say I stayed for but it was just schooling. I guess maybe because I entered [school] when I was very young, so...

Siyanda: How old were you?

Elijah: ...going...eh...not that I was young, people I schooled with were older and they made me young. I think I entered [school] at an age, I entered at the right age because I think I completed...I completed when I was 19. So it was almost there.

Siyanda: Completing matric?

¹ Take a 'pass': I translated a pass to an Identity Document.

Elijah: Ja [when] I completed matric I was 19 but I think that people especially, many people in all of the classes I schooled with were older so it came to...it was them if anything, it was them that had to take ID's and go and work in mines you see, so I think that is how, that is how it happened.

Siyanda: Tell me more about your family, like how many kids were you in your family?

Elijah: The...the...the family okay is complicated a bit. The family eh was broken [by] the time I was 12. So, no my mother's side it was myself and eh eh 2 sisters and a brother but the one sister she...she passed away. So 3 of us remain on my mother's side. And then but [my] father continued, he had another wife, so on that side I have got 3 sisters. So now basically...ja I have 2 families from that background ja.

Siyanda: And you all stayed in one place in Maputo land?

Elijah: Ja they stayed...well they are a little bit apart but it is not... it is about 15 kilometres, 16 kilometres apart.

Siyanda: So was it a big family? Like were you allowed to move.... in-between?

Elijah: I was allowed, I was allowed, I am still allowed but then I think because of that thing that happened eh for a long time eh for many years I never saw [my] mother, I did not see [her], I did not visit [my] mother. But my other sister and brother stayed with [my] mother and then I stayed with [my] father.

Siyanda: Oh, you were staying with [your] father?

Elijah: I was staying with [my] father.

Siyanda: With the new wife?

Elijah: ja, ja ja

Siyanda: Oh wow, and how was that like?

Elijah: It was, I think it was...it was all right...there. I mean I never did experience problems. I never...you know [she] never...I [never] regarded her like a stepmother, it

was just mom, you see (speaking very softly and looking down). But I think that there are deep things that happened that caused eh me to be separated from [my] mother eh because of the way that [things] happened. I mean I think that there was anger and then I could not...eh eh I think I had, had taken sides and I...that way I could not for...forgive [my] mother for many years and then as time went by I realized that it was a mistake that I [got] involved, I took sides in the affairs of people, of parents you see, they are my parents, both of them and no matter what happened you see ja, so....(lowering his voice).

Siyanda: Okay, the order of children, who is older? Where are you?

Elijah: I think that...well not think I am older...

BOTH LAUGHING

Elijah: ...there, there was a...a there is a boy who passed away at birth who was supposed to be older than me but as it is now I am older.

Siyanda: You are older from the first mother and [your] father?

Elijah: Bo...both from [my] father.

Siyanda: From your father?

Elijah: Yes...ja...ja.

Siyanda: Tell me about the place Maputo land. What kind of place is it? Is it a township or...?

Elijah: No, no it is...it is a rural place, it is a rural place. Eh we...we...we...it is rural as I have been saying that we live a life of subsistence eh and then we walk eh I mean...the first time I looked I think there are 3 stores ja in the whole area. There are 3 and then eh maybe about 13 kilometres apart. And you know you walked, when you did not get an item in that store, you walked 13 kilometres to get it from the other shop, you see. And it was all right eh the car we saw, there were 2 cars we saw or maybe 3 eh or maybe

even 4. The first, there was an outtie² who worked for the Department of Health and they controlled malaria, you see. So those were the cars that you see, government cars and the minister's car and obviously police's. But otherwise eh you were not able to see another car I mean seeing a car. It was like Christmas. Or maybe Sunday eh because we grew up worshiping in the Roman [Catholic church]. When it was Sunday, we, the minister had...had 3 churches, so we would start in the first one, when church was out we would ride [in] the car and go to the second one, we would ride the car....the car.

Siyanda: heh heh heh (laughing)

Elijah: Then from the last one we will walk back about 7 or 7 kilometres. But it was fun that when it was Sunday we would be able to ride a car and move around you see, ja.

Siyanda: Oh so it wasn't because that you were going to church?

Elijah: Well, no we would have done church al.....

BOTH LAUGHING

Elijah: Ja but it was that...eh...but then we were forced to go into church [and] do everything the [right] way so that the minister sees as if we love church very much. But no it wasn't that we love this thing...I am sure that it helped him too because at least it was full in church including us but ja it was the car much more than anything ja.

Siyanda: How far was your school from your home?

Elijah: Very close. I think that...eh...maybe it could have been 700 metres, 500, 700 metres. It was very close, I think that [it] was another advantage that I was there, school is there, so there was no excuse of not going to school ja...ja. It was very close.

Siyanda: And the place that you stayed in, were water, electricity and all those things there?

² This is slang for man and in many cases it refers to a young man.

Elijah: Okay no, no again because it is a rural place, we got water from a well, we used to dig a well or [from] a lake that already got water ah [or] rain water when it had rained but then you must understand because eh the houses...the houses are 'roundavel', [made out of] grass or you know so if anything you got water maybe with baskets, baskets [you will get] little water, unlike when you put corrugated iron you will never be able to get much water there, ja. And then electricity, no...we use, we use wood. Even now many places do not have electricity I mean it had changed a bit now with the water issue that people can be able to get water but not everybody eh others that can afford they get electricity in other places but at home and next to home electricity....it is still...it is still a wilderness.

Siyanda: This is now?

Elijah: Ja.

Siyanda: So you do go back home?

Elijah: Ja...ja

Siyanda: How is that like? Your experience....

Elijah: I think that because I grew up there and maybe as well as eh when you are a boy you are not involved in other chores like gathering wood etc. etc. so...but because I grew up there that...it...it...it is home. It feels like home I mean Durban doesn't feel like home it is just a place.

Siyanda: Seriously like here.....

Elijah: Ja, no I don't feel at home, no.

Siyanda: Okay talk to me about that! Why is that?

Elijah: Ahmmm I think that the...the...maybe that I feel that home is where my roots are and I can relate I mean I can move around and relate maybe to....to the terrain, to certain trees that I knew they are still there. It is like there is a connection between me and trees, the forests with rivers you know ahmmm. I mean there is a stream that runs here, it is dirty, it is polluted and all that you don't feel that 'this is mine', you see.

Whereas back home I used to get water there, I used to fish there, I used to get things so I could relate, I could say 'well ja I too have a share in this river'. Ahmmm but I think that the other thing that I believe very much in is...ancestors. Now somehow a person thinks this thing...that maybe they [ancestors] can be around here but I do not believe that this is a right environment for them, you see. Whereas at home you know that there is a their place, there is their house³ and then that where...many things are...you see so I think that's they thing. And also that it is relaxed you see, when I am at home it is...there is no pressure like pressure that is in the city I mean it is relaxed and you can relax with people and every person...there is no person that you do not know there eh I mean the people that we live with⁴...so and ja in that way I struggle to see a place like this like a home.

Siyanda: So how often do you go back home?

Elijah: Ah I have been going home especially maybe once a month but I think that in the last 2 years things got busy and he I have been going home maybe because there is a...[some] work that I do that takes me there but then it is difficult now just to organize a trip that I say 'I am going home because maybe it is a week-end [and] I want to relax' eh and then there is particularly this year the issue of petrol and so maybe you can spend about a 1000 rand just to go home, you might as well take that money and deposit it for them, you can call them. I think that another thing that makes a difference in the past recent years [is] the issue of phones because you are able to phone [and] hear how they are, you see. Whereas before you used to stay, you [have] no idea how they are, so that thing makes that...you know ja.

Siyanda: Even though you don't go, it is better now because you can communicate somehow?

Elijah: Ja...ja...yes, ja so you think twice I think particularly about this issue of not having time whereas if you consider that this money that you [use to] travel with you

³ This ancestral house can be referred to as shelter or home.

⁴ Or live among!

know, they could do something big eh...eh it [money] can function and do big things you see, it is better that...you sacrifice traveling and then you deposit the money for them.

Siyanda: Sure, so like if you do go back home, do you feel that people look at you differently....like you stay in Durban...?

Elijah: I feel that you know, as much as I say that, that is home ah it's more of a home to [my] relatives and to the area and to people that are closer you know. Ah but I sometimes feel that thing that...ah...I feel that I am a stranger and also that I also decided not to...I am not involved in...in structures like any structure you know, I decided that "no, let me not because eh...

Siyanda: Structures where? In the community?

Elijah: In the community...with community structures ja because eh...sometimes, most times, most times at work that I do, I go out and work with communities, so I prefer that if, if I do that things it is better that I appear neutral, eh it mustn't be that I mean if I could have interest in a place and everybody knows that this organization has an interest and all of the sudden I work there eh it would tarnish...I would not be able to be...to be neutral, so maybe that thing causes maybe I feel.....[a sentence inaudible]....So I think another thing again that maybe....when you are not involved in that community eh things...many things that...if the community can go on without you, your contribution isn't directly visible, you see, so ja I sometimes feel that thing.

Siyanda: So how do you balance it out because it is still home and yet you feel like a stranger at the same time?

Elijah: Well I think that it is not...ah...ah you know ah....things have changed a lot because another thing that made that eh when we were growing up as I had said that there was one store and the other was far as every person knew other person that was there but now there are grown children eh I can't expect every person to know me, you see, so things have changed, so I think that it is not easy that I can try and balance that thing because what, what I can do is that I still relate to people that know me and the

people that know relate to me but....people...new people⁵ are new people so that is what it is. And another thing eh...eh another thing other people, others do like, now...people pass away very much here and some guys can afford to attend funerals every Saturday. Now that thing you see is...is, if I can't even afford to go [and] be at home eh... and then there is a death in the family or a friend or somebody is difficult if you can just make a trip to go and attend a funeral and maybe that could happen twice I mean but other people maybe who work nearby, they can afford that and I think that way eh I think that another thing eh...that creates a sense of belonging and connection with people but I think that is an expensive way to do that.

Siyanda: Ja...ja

Elijah: Ja.

Siyanda: So like do you have children?

Elijah: No.

Siyanda: No, I wanted to ask that where would their home be if you don't feel at home here.

Elijah: Ja, ja I had a boy eh but it turned out that he was not my son eh at 17 eh we stayed with him here and eh I took him home every...during holidays...he spent holidays at home so I think that if...if I had children I could raise them in that way, they could stay here but during holidays....

Siyanda: They go there...

Elijah: I think the...the...the idea is that they would stay here so that it could be easy to take care of being at school but they could decide for themselves afterwards what they want to do but I think that, that experience they would need it, so that...they can choose afterwards but then I think, I think that I want to say I [do] have where I come from, this

⁵ The original isiZulu phrase was abantu abasha which can refer to young people (or youth) or new people in the area.

is home I mean I grew up this way but then you don't have to if you...if you [would] love [then] yes but if you don't want to [then] toy can go and stay wherever.

Siyanda: Alright, going back what is your earliest childhood memory, the one thing that sticks out, the most important memory...?

Elijah: Ah.... (Thinking) I was very close to [my] granny.

Siyanda: Oh, ja?

Elijah: I still am in another way eh....

Siyanda: Is he still around?

Elijah: No, she's passed away.

Siyanda: Oh.

Elijah: But I am still very close to her and eh I think that this thing eh I think that another thing.... My life sort of...somehow I think that it revolves around you know?

Siyanda: Yes.

Elijah: But I think that besides that thing maybe other things maybe it is not easy to pick one but besides that thing other things.... the way a person grew up which was something that was free eh going to play you... you know going fishing... that was I mean that in fact, in fact as I move and as I progress but if, if I define myself I always look at myself and [will] keep defining myself by that little boy when he was still growing up in that place cause it was nice. There was no pressure, it was nice, ja, ja. So if anything if [I] could be asked to choose I think I would choose to go back to that little boy ja.

Siyanda: That is very interesting.

Elijah: Ja.

Siyanda: What else do you remember about your grandmother?

Elijah: Ahmmm I think that she was [a] strong person and also with I mean again that she is another person who played a huge role that a person could be able to go to school because [my] father was working in eGoli [and] he came back once a year during June so...

Siyanda: Ohhh, so even though you stayed with [your] father but you did not stay with him?

Elijah: Ja, no...me...I never grew up with [my] father. [My] father stayed in eGoli, coming back once...once year ah but [my] granny you know she made sure that we went to school, that we had food and all those things you see...ja. Ja.

Siyanda: So stayed with [your] granny and [your] mother stayed in another place....?

Elijah: Ja.

Siyanda: And you had no contact with her?

Elijah: I had no contact but well, well I think that I decided not to have contact ja, ja I think that she was always open eh ja.

Siyanda: How was school like growing up?

Elijah: Ah I think again it was nice because it was fun I mean eh we had no idea that...I had no idea why I was going to school I mean eh I think that [it was] a place where we met with friends, we played eh...eh. Well another experience of going to school [was] eh classrooms were, there was one classroom. It wasn't big I think it was like a room, you know [a] small room eh but we were divided to have standard 6...

BOTH LAUGHING

Siyanda: and 7 heh heh heh (laughing)

Elijah: 1, standard 3 and 4 in that corner, 2...yes, yes you wrote an exam in here [while] others made a joke...

BOTH LAUGHING

Elijah: But then I mean that thing is not eh... I think that there was nothing that we knew it was....it wasn't something that you felt that it disturbed you that 'eh but how am I going to start the exam or the test when there are [people] laughing [in] here'. You left them [to] laugh in the same classroom [and] you concentrated on what you were doing ja.

Siyanda: Were you at this stage aware of what was happening around you in term of the politics of the country?

Elijah: No, no at that I think that politics happened quite late [when] I was in high school ah but [there was] little awareness I mean the only thing, the only thing that was strong⁶ that we were aware of was that there were *AIR POLICE*⁷ that we knew [if] there were police then there were AIR PLOICE eh that was a special branch.

Siyanda: AIR? [Were they coming in helicopters or was that just a name...?]

Elijah: No, it was AIR POLICE I mean it was a special branch, it is like eh [an] intelligence unit ja but I think that the idea to call [them] AIR POLICE [was] not helicopters I think that....it made us sacred because you knew that anything you did...not that, not that there was something that we could do because there was nothing that we could [do]....but ah ah we [had this] in our minds that these police could pick up things even from the air because eh people, I think okay speaking from today, even if the even the people that used informers⁸ to pick up things were not there, they could still get stories, I think maybe that name came from that. But eh they warned us a lot that we mustn't....but I mean the only thing we were....we were highly aware of was the

⁶ Or MORE VISIBLE or explicit or overt

⁷ AIR POLICE – amapoyisa ezomoya

⁸ Informers known as *izimpimpi* were infamous during apartheid as they gave police critical information about different community activities and ANC activities especially

issue of communists that there were communists, [and] that we mustn't pick up....you see a pen...you looked at a pen without picking it up, you didn't pick it up, you did not pick something off the ground even if it was a fishing line, you see. We used to...used to...[we] loved fishing, when you found a fishing line lying around you never....you would be told not to pick it up because maybe [it could] be a bomb, left by communists...

Siyanda: Oh, ja!

Elijah: ...so ja...we grew up [with] that awareness that communists were a big enemy and they were capable of, they could leave...they could do anything and destroy, you see.

Siyanda: Did you know who were the communists....?

Elijah: NO!

Siyanda: Or it was just a wor....?

Elijah: No, you didn't...no questions, you were told that there were communists, don't pick up [things] because that is it! Another thing I think that were grew up not asking questions, you were respectful when you were told that ja... ja 'that is the way it is'.

Siyanda: The time you counted cars that you saw, you said that you saw the minister's [car], then the police's, so do the police feature a lot in.....?

Elijah: (cutting me off) The police were most concerned with people that sold alcohol eh homemade alcohol, you see.

Siyanda: What? [That's] interesting.

Elijah: You see alcohol is the thing that...I think that helped a lot of people to make a living so that we could be able to [go to] school, many families....because the income was not there, alcohol was the things that generated income eh or maybe you wanted people to help you with a party or help you clean....we used alcohol but eh the police used to come and arrest whosoever, pouring out (lowering his voice) the alcohol. Now

these other cars were friendly, they were friendly cars we [used to] go closely [to the]. [But] the police cars...you would run and fill the forests.

Siyanda: Were they those yellow ones?

Elijah: Eh....there were white, they were Land rovers but so with that thing unless you were sure of which car you heard [its engine] run you know when a car appeared we would [run and] fill the forests, it would make you run and enter the forest because you don't know whether it is a police car or not, so we grew up fearing the police a lot.

Siyanda: Were they black or....?

Elijah: Eh.... [they were] black people, there were whites here and there but [it was] black people.

Siyanda: So, you first saw a white person there with the police?

Elijah: Ja, well again eh in church or the police but ja...

Siyanda: In church?

Elijah: Like the minister....

Siyanda: The minister?

Elijah: They were missionaries.

Siyanda: (surprised) The minister was white?

Elijah: Mmmmm

Siyanda: Hhayi-bo [exclamation] Never!

Elijah: heh heh heh (laughing) Ja, [they were] missionaries.

Siyanda: So ah in church did they speak English or....?

Elijah: No, they tried, there were those that tried, other were struggling a lot but they were forced to speak isiZulu because there is no way...there was no person that could translate so...ja.

Siyanda: So like you had two concepts/ideas, if I can say, of the white person: the minister who was 'okay' who drove you [around] in the car.....

Elijah: Ja, ja.

Siyanda: And the other were the police?

Elijah: Well maybe another concept was that of there doctor eh but again there was one hospital and...we...I think that being....being sick was not a thing that....eh you know, you just grew up without going to hospital, ja.

Siyanda: So, like these kinds of white [people] that you me, did you know that they could the enemy' or it was

Elijah: (cutting me off) No, no a white [person] was just a white [person].

Siyanda: You said that you became aware of apartheid late....

Elijah: Late, ja I think that the time I went to high school we started to slowly hear about Mandela and his imprisonment and all that eh and even though I won't remember [it] well but...the energy of people that disappeared stared being felt...eh you know maybe to join Mk but even that when you work it out now [when] you go back then you can see that... this is what was happening but then there is no person that I know closely that I can say they went in that way but [it was] news that [we] heard, ja. Eh but even so eh...eh....eh...I think that it was not possible to have this thing called freedom....the thoughts that I had, the thought that came to me, it just came that eh there is no way that Mandela will ever be released you know and it was something that you accepted that 'it's okay' and you saw the issue of freedom....that it will never happen. Maybe another awareness of...of politics even though we did not consider it as political at that time eh again maybe from primary to higher primary to high school eh there was a subject [called] Buthu Botho eh Buthu Botho was...was I can say it is like education about the IFP eh [about] Mangosuthu eh and ah at school you used to....used to all of you were members of the IFP.

Siyanda: (shocked) NO!!!

Elijah: You had cards and made contributions eh so that is....but that thing I think....even though it happened we did not see it in that way...that 'this is politics', you know. We saw it, well as something that should happen and maybe it was more strong around eh the date of the 24th of September because it used to be Shaka's Day. September used to be Shaka's Day. So that is when you...you know sang songs but then eh many songs were about Buthelezi like I remember when I was doing standard 6, when you prayed at school eh there was a song that went eh....(singing for me): *we believe what Shenge⁹ believes; South will be free.*

Siyanda: Oh God heh heh heh (laughing)

BOTH LAUGHING

Elijah: Ja so, every morning you sang that song at school I mean there were many songs that were sang but then that was one of the songs....

Siyanda: During assembly in the morning?

Elijah: During assembly in the morning you see, so Shenge was there at assembly before you started school ja and you said: 'Amandla....awethu'; 'UShenge...Owethu, Amandla....awethu'; 'UShenge...Owethu'".

Siyanda: But did you know what you were actually saying, or.....?

Elijah: Nooo, I mean Shenge was seen as this hero you see there was nothing wrong that we picked up....and again going back to this thing that eh when...when you grew up we did not ask questions so if teachers came and said here is the Buthu Botho subject eh because I think that it related with eh.... (Thinking).... [Boy] scouts, I mean scouts were not a huge issue where I was but in other schools it related with scouts eh

⁹ Shenge is Buthelezi's clan name!

they wore khakis and with these colours eh well it is now the ANC colours well it used to be IFP colours at that time....do you see the ANC flag?

Siyanda: Yes

Elijah: Because the time the ANC was banned those colours were used by the ANC...IFP, you see. So, you wore those colours around and then they wore khakis and then eh the other thing was this thing and the few guys went to 'Mandleni McKlerk'¹⁰ Camp in uLundi because when you were finished they used to take you and train you. They trained you then you came back.... [Inaudible]by the KwaZulu government.

Siyanda: Did you go and train?

Elijah: No, fortunate....well fortunately or unfortunately no I never went.

Siyanda: Where was your high school? Was it still in the same...?

Elijah: Same place ja I think it was like, in fact, in fact it is about eh 6 kilometres from home.

Siyanda: So you walked again?

I did not walk; I went and stayed in a boarding school.

Siyanda: Oh okay!

Elijah: Then I maybe...for one and a half years I then went....we had our own place with two other boys that we built ourselves...

Siyanda: Built it yourselves? What do you mean you built it yourself?

Elijah: Hhawu [exclamation] justit is easy to build here I mean eh...eh the material is in the forest, you use *umhlanga*¹¹, grass is there so we just [built it] ourselves eh the house [and] we stayed there, we finished, we [went] to school.

¹⁰ Isaiah was inaudible so I am not sure if this is the correct spelling!

¹¹ Reeds

Siyanda: How old were you?

Elijah: I think I was.....!

Siyanda: You were in high school?

Elijah: Ja I was eh... I am sure I was 16 at that time we built that thing ja eh....

Siyanda: So like your whole life, from being little to high school you stayed in Maputo land?

Elijah: Ja, ja....it is this thing....when we were growing up....we...as...ja...it was not easy to travel because where would you go? You grew up I mean, I first traveled [when] I was doing matric eh I went to visit [my] father in eGoli...first time I had ever had to leave the place eh you know, it was a big thing, you see.

Siyanda: Ja of course! Did you use a bus?

Elijah: Ja I used the bus ja so.... Oh no in fact what happened....no the bus I returned by bus. What happened [is] there was....eh...this is the other thing there were people that lived....they worked in eGoli so a few of them....you will find that he has a car so now and again during month-end he would go and gather parcels from people who worked at eGoli to deliver them maybe if anything there was...they would arrive so as to come back with him and then Sunday he would go and pick them up when he went back to eGoli, so [my] father organized a lift in this car [and] it then dropped me off [there] I mean it was eh....it was [19]90 no, not [19]90, [19]80...[19]85 I think ja [19]85. It used to take 2 days to go to Empangeni and the trip...even though you drove I think it was a 2 and a half day trip, a 3 kilometres I mean 2 and a half to 3 hours trip used to take I mean the time I was at college eh I remember that you know it used to be 2 days.

Siyanda: Why that long?

Elijah: No, it is because transport, you rode the bus that leaves Manguzo [and] arrives [and] leaves you at Mkhuze or leaves Manguzo at 11 and arrives at Mkhuze at maybe 2 or 3 and you would then wait for the train that will appear at 7 from Golela, which goes

to Empangeni, which will arrive the following morning, you see, so there you take 2 days ja, ja...ja.

Siyanda: Ja, tell me about your trip to eGoli!

Elijah: It's...it's....I remember [very] little ah I think that eh but eh....eh...[be]cause we traveled at night eh, so there is very little besides [the fact] that the road was bad and that we picked up people along the way even along the Swaziland border eh then I arrived and stayed a week [while] [my] father was working....there is very little that I can say I remember.

Siyanda: Where did you stay?

Elijah: Hilbrow, not...he was in Rivonia.

Siyanda: Oh!

Elijah: Ja he was in Rivonia and eh I think one thing, two things that I clearly remember...one, is that I was nearly run over by a car because I was....I was you see [my] father had....they had a team so during the week-end [they]played. We crossed a freeway then when we returned it was dark. Now I saw people crossing eh in my mind, you know when...I saw lights 'there' whereas the car was fast so but I crossed; as I had finished crossing when I looked for the cart it was 'not here' [but] it was 'there', you see. It was just a matter of seconds you see, ja because the concept of a fast car was not there, ja.

Siyanda: And the second thing? You said that there were 2 things....

Elijah: Ah ah well I went to the stores [like] from here to the stores and then when I returned I struggled, I got los.....

Siyanda:lost.

Elijah: Ja but I did not feel that I was lost at that time, you see when I was walking. I was helped by.....the time I went [to the stores] there were people that were waiting at the [bus] stop, you see. Now eh I do not remember what happened but as walked a bit and I

could not find [my way] I was helped by....seeing those people seeing that 'oh'; if those people were not there...ja, ja.

Siyanda: By the time you finished high school were you then aware that things were not right in South Africa for black people?

Elijah: Well ja, it was starting...it was starting to be there but then again eh little by little you see but it used to be there....a person was starting to feel the issue of discrimination ja, you felt it a lot.

Siyanda: How?

Elijah: I think that time [when] I finished....I completed in....19...I think 83...

Siyanda: 83, you finished matric?

Elijah: Ja and then...

Siyanda: I had just been born the pervious year.

Elijah: heh heh heh (laughing)...and then in [19]84 I went to work in Maritzburg...

Siyanda: to work?

Elijah: Ja.

Siyanda: Why did you have to go and work?

Elijah: Well it was, it was eh work that was labour eh it was a construction company that put ah, ah that put power cables for traffic lights for trains ah it was I think it was SA-Lics or something like that I can't remember, no, no, SA-signals ja, ja, it was installing those traffic lights. Now eh I came and worked, I worked for 3 or 4 months eh, I did work like labour work, we dug with pikes and spades.

Siyanda: Did the job pay well?

Elijah: Oh no, it was paying very well ja, ja.

Siyanda: How much did it pay? Do you remember?

Elijah: I think it was like R300, R350 a week....ja....no, it was, it paid well when you worked overtime. NO you got paid....no maybe I am making a mistake maybe R250 a week or so but it was money...it was powerful; when you worked overtime they doubled it...

Siyanda: So was that your first salary?

Elijah: Ja, ja, ja, ja.

Siyanda: So you worked for 3 months...?

Elijah: I worked for 3 to 4 months and then...at that time [when] I worked I was always applying. The thing that made me go was...there is something that I was running away from at home...they had said that because I finished matric I must go and teach at a school next to home...in the primary [school] that I had studied in.

Siyanda: For you to teach there?

Elijah: Ja, ja because when you have matric in that area you have really studied [and] you can become a teacher because other teachers that taught us had standard 6 or standard 9...

Siyanda: When you finished matric you could just go and...

Elijah: Oh, ja, ja you can go oh, ja hawu (exclaiming) when you have standard.... There is a principal who had... at that time eh they could principals [when] they had standard they had standard 6 [and] he/she ran a school but....

Siyanda: Hhawu (exclaiming) so how did they get that job? You would....?

Elijah: There is my cousin, Sizwehambenaye, who worked in Maritzburg, he was a driver there...ahmmm I was running away from that...if I had stayed then I would be comfortable eh I would end up not progressing you see because I saw others...you would find that they started out like that they go and become a teacher in that way...because they finished matric but eh after that he/she cannot go forward....

ELIJAH'S CELLPHONE RINGS

Siyanda: You can answer it!

ELIJAH ANSWERS THE PHONE

Siyanda: You were saying that...

Elijah: No, they....they studied and got [their] matric, [then] he/she [would] go and work and then become comfortable [and] not progress in the end, so I was....I think I saw that maybe when I was in high school....I had started to see that at least a person would come to matric and [there were] many things that a person could do.

Siyanda: What things did you think of at the time....?

Elijah: I thought... I applied you see...the time I finished I applied for 3 places eh I was....I was....again it was just applying, not that there was interest. But you [just] applied [so] that at least when I got in there I would live better. So I applied at...at Telkom eh I wanted to be a technician and then another application went to....I don't remember what company [it was] but it was in eGoli eh to train as a chef, cook and then...

Siyanda: So you just applied for ...heh heh heh (laughing)

Elijah: heh heh heh (laughing) Ja...no, you applied, not that you... they way you applied....the time I was in High school [as] I was about to finish I started to look at career guidance, so these things you pick them up [like] when you have matric so, so, so you see how long will you train for and then you will work, I think the thing that I was eager for very much was...I was eager to get a place where you can get training and

then they would give you a job or something that is sort of a short-term thing ah then I applied for conservation. These other applications delayed to arrive [but] the conservation one arrive when I was... when I was in Maritzburg. Then I...then I took it, you see because I saw that I did not want to wait for those other [applications] that I did not know what they would say, you see. I then...I then went to start there in [19]90...in [19]84. I then started eh at conservation as a trainee eh, eh the following year I was doing...we can...we can train and do a diploma in conservation but then we started [off] as trainees. They took us to game reserve(s) just to experience if we wanted to do conservation, you know, so there was a whole lot of us, ja.

Siyanda: Do you think it was easier to get work back then...than it is now or it is was just....?

Elijah: I think that it was easy, I think that it was easy because like I said when you had matric you were able to easily get work eh either you teach or you go to a hospital and become a nurse so,...eh I think there are many things that cause this thing. It could be...when I look at, especially at that place, the population I mean, the time we [went] to school in high school they used to say that our class had a lot of people because we were 15 and all the people were surprised that 'this is the biggest matric class we had ever seen' [because of the] 15 students, you know because they [classes] used to [have] 10; 11 [students], you see and then there were only two high schools eh in that area you see, so eh people who passed were easily accommodated so that they can get work but like if you look today I do not know how many high schools [there are]... but there are too many, you see and there is no high school...high school...I would be never be...it would a crime to say that it had 15 students, you see, so I think that thing also contributes, ja, ja. Maybe then... but I think another thing that I consider when I look at...when you look at Bantu education maybe we all did the same thing so competition ended up....I think that there are many places that need people very much but we did not have skills [needed] to enter there...maybe like [being a] doctor. We need doctors and engineers a lot and others, and others but then eh, ah, ah a lot of us do not have a background to enter those places.

Siyanda: So in [19] 84 you were in training?

Elijah: So, ja we did the training for 4 months, they took us to different game reserves and the...and then the following year for the next 2 years we [were] at college, it was called Cwaka College of Agriculture in Empangeni eh while we were in training we become conservation officers.

Siyanda: Did you study...like seriously?

Elijah: We studied seriously, we were sponsored by the college and we studied seriously....ahmm but I think that there was... ahmm there was another college of conservation in Pretoria, it offered a national diploma in conservation, so our diploma was low rate...but it was a diploma nevertheless.

Siyanda: Ja, ja and then where did you get the money to pay the bills?

Elijah: Oh, ja okay, no...no they paid for it the government paid for it (be) cause at that time they attracted people to enter, so what happened was that...our entrance eh in [19] 90 eh [19] 84 we entered as people who were employed, we were trainees. Trainees who were paid, I do not remember how much they paid us. Now...the time we were training, they paid us, we had salaries like government employees and then...and the college deducted fees and the [we were] left with pocket money, so It was well taken off.

Siyanda: Oh, wow that is interesting! So....

Elijah: (cutting me off) So, I left college to go and work eh at Mbazwana as a liaison officer almost doing like a PR [job] for conservation and communities for 3 years and then this other friend of mine who I said is in eGoli now...he ...I do not know how Jonty too heard about TTT eh they went in [19]89, they came here [Durban] and then they came in contact with TTT....

Siyanda: Where did you know them from?

Elijah: No, Jonty was studying at that time....this other friend of was working eh....there was an NGO, which was called COLT...

Siyanda: COLT?

Elijah: Ja COLT....eh....community research, some community organization, research....development eh so Jonty heard about TTT in that way, he... hw had just finished matric at that time and then they informed me about TTT, I then had an interest and then in [19] 90 I went to start...ja.

Siyanda: At this time were you aware of what was going on in the country?

Elijah: Ah, I was because at that time....at that time I was working at conservation, there many white people there, ah they were not educated people and then some even said that 'I have standard 3 but I am in charge of you'...so, you began to hear that that thing, this thing happens because these people are white and it was an organization full of white people so... you started to really feel discrimination...ja.

Siyanda: So...it was quiet overt?

Elijah: Ja, ja, ja.

Siyanda: But still they allowed you guys to work with them. How was that experience like [at the time] to work with whites?

Elijah: There were [some] who were all right others were...like in our department there was...we had a nice guy eh Brain Marshall was really nice eh I think maybe he was well educated. Some did not like him maybe it was because of that thing that he worked well with us... I think they needed to have black people because conservation at the time was forcing people to leave and they would fence [the area], so as to make a reserve, so I think they needed [black] people who will run around in communities...with pamphlets...

Siyanda: You moved communities away so that you would build a reserve?

Elijah: Ja, conservation did that and now my role that I played as a liaison officer was environmental issues, educating people that conservation is a good thing. But on the other had, the conservation concept is a good one [but] there.... there was forced removals and negotiations. They negotiated with....hmmm...with chiefs but chiefs did not pass it to the people and I think that [as] they were attached to the KwaZulu

Association, the chiefs would have not said no otherwise they might displease Buthelezi, so they agreed that it would be a bit bitter to others.

Siyanda: So they agreed that people be moved?

Elijah: Well they agreed that a reserve be built but maybe they did not consider what implications might be, you see.

Siyanda: OK!!

Elijah: Ja...ok!

Siyanda: So your job entailed removing people...isn't that like the same thing as forced removals?

Elijah: Well...it was forced removals...ja... my job was to negotiate with the people but then the people did not understand...at the end they were forced to move...it is not easy that people did not understand this thing, the did not understand.

Siyanda: Hmmm...how was that like for you to be part of that system?

Elijah: Sorry?

Siyanda: How was that like for you...?

Elijah: (cutting me off) It wasn't easy because it was the place that I came from I mean conservation had a lot of enemies and I did not feel comfortable to be part of the enemy to them, you know...to these people...even though it wasn't the place I [really] came from but I did not agree with the concept of forced removals, ja.

Siyanda: Did you fee like you were part of the enemy though?

Elijah: Ja, I was, I was I mean even wearing the uniform eh is being part of the organization even [though I had no] influence and decision [making]...I was part of it...ja... ja.

Siyanda: Hmm, ja that was interesting! So you were saying you came into TTT?

Elijah: Ja, I then came to TTT eh...

Siyanda: How did you apply?

Elijah: Ah well these guys, Simanga was the person that informed me about it...and then I cannot remember if I put in an application or they took my name....it was strict but...ja at university, I remember I applied to the university.

Siyanda: And then you came?

Elijah: Hmmm, ja they then took me.

Siyanda: How was that experience for you that jump into the university?

Elijah: It wasn't, you know...two things: the first is the time I worked for conservation I had started a bit to do studies through UNISA...I did...I cannot remember how many modules [I did] but...eh...eh [I did] first year or something like that...eh but then another exciting thing again was, I mean another interesting thing was that the time I went to work I only knew one university.... university of...the concept of a university was not there. I even finished matric and the university was just like... I had no idea what kind of a thing it was... I eventually...the time I was at Cwaka College, we had a trip to play at the university of Zululand. Then I started to say 'Oh [this is a] university'... Now again coming to Durban, I did not know Durban, I did not know Durban [even though] I passed to go to Maritzburg but coming [and] just walking around Durban...

Siyanda: Was this [in] 99?

Elijah: eh, ja...no, no [it was] 90, ja [19] 90...and then it was that [my] matric results were not good... they were not going to take me because even at UNISA I had to apply for an exemption, so they were not going to take me. My results too bad, so getting a chance to come to the university... eh against those odds was quite exciting.

Siyanda: Hmmm ja, talk to me about being there...at a university, a white university before democracy!

Elijah: Ja, you know I think that... I think in [19] 89...89 we had a trip to the South coast and on the way back I stayed with Simanga...you know it was a big thing, eh but I remember that weekend went, we went to...there a music [festival] at Umlazi [and] we went there, eh I think that there was rally or a reception openly....[however] it was not that open but I think that you felt the spirit of politics and it was exciting...ja but to come and study here was a cultural shock for a year or more than a year... I could not get used to it and that was thing was quiet something...ja it was not something, university was a big thing.

Siyanda: Can you remember some of the shock you felt?

Elijah: Well, I am not sure if I can pick something up but I think that...maybe not necessarily shocking...[but] something that disturbed me a lot was [my] fear of officials, you know like a white professor and that all these people are white...do you know every time you want to go and do something, you have to prepare because....I think that it was that and also I....an also I was shy, a little shy. Eh other day that I remember at work when they were looking for a social worker and they wanted someone who would during trips, so I put my name up, oh ja that was like something else...ja because I had to drive a car and I did not know the roads and all those things... I nearly had an accident because I went through when I was not supposed to....but I mean it was very difficult just to drive around Durban when you do not know it. But I think that I mean another thing was eh in Albert Luthuli [residence], when we arrived I think we were the first group to stay there when it was still being built....we were staying there when its construction was completed. So maybe... every person that we stayed with, they were all new so that also helped, so...

Siyanda: Were you all black?

Elijah: Ja, there a few whites, ja eh so I think that it was a little settled but still it was exciting I mean ja it was exciting.

Siyanda: I think you have had an experience of both the University of Natal before [19] 94, before democracy and after.... what is difference and what is similar?

Elijah: I think they...they have progressed a lot between the staff eh they have progressed a lot in trying to integrate black people... there were a lot of white students, there were a few Indians and blacks and so on...but I think, I think that things have changed around dramatically. Eh but another thing is... I do not know what you would link to but crime has gone up, I mean the time we were there it was free, free, free, the only thing they started building was that bridge from Albert Luthuli because of the cars but not the issue of fences. But I think that even before we left in [19] 94 the parties were starting to happen during week-ends and you would find people who were coming from outside staying over for the whole weekend.... And then ...that was something else that happened but I think that the student one was that, there student who stayed there and you will that person is not registered anymore, they are not studying anymore and you do not know how they are surviving. So, ja I think that maybe these things also contribute to the security issue but the time we had just arrives it was really free.

Siyanda: I mean that is so strange to say, its free when the situation is....!

Elijah: Yes, it is, at that time eh...ja... we...there were a few black people eh and then another thing, which was not really free was demonstrations because now and again you go to demonstrate [and there] comes the police, with tear gas and you run away and you get hurt... and so it goes on...and, ja but you say that it is now really free but the crime... [things have] changed.

Siyanda: You know the thing that I find strange is that when I think of apartheid I have always thought that [people] shot, if you were you black you were shot on the spot eh and yet black people were moving in white spaces, they went to universities, they worked with whites, it seems that it is not as restrictive as I thought it was...

Elijah: Well...I do not know< I am not sure...I think that the university was a different environment, a very different environment because I remember that ...eh... you did not feel comfortable walking late in the evening maybe from town to here, it was...you could not do that and another thing there is a flat, if you can go now...it was a flat in Berea

next to Kentucky, I forget its name ah the time we left here [residence] to go and stay there...

Siyanda: ... Bryston Heights?

Elijah: Bryston Heights, yes, even there...there were a few black people who stayed there, you see. You would go from Bryston Heights in the middle of the night to town and not meet a single person. I am not talking about black and white but just to see [a single person] there were no activities at night, you see... eh but you know I mean even at Bryston Heights and that area, it's so easy and I mean in other similar places like Russell Street I think it was quiet in those places, I mean there were a few black people who stayed there, in town, they had flats in town, you just saw that eh...'you can't sat in town'... I mean things have changed a lot....even there at Bryston Heights like those security [guards] there and security systems were not there ... it was... there was a security system...there was a security [guard] and a camera, you were able to see a person from your flat...eh but it wasn't as... people could came in up and down... but now you can't, you can't...ja there were closed up places but now it is sealed up completely, ja so things have changed.

Siyanda: Can you remember your graduation? Did you attend it?

Elijah: I attended it.

Siyanda: How was that like?

Elijah: Eh...ja, it was another thing which was very exciting and highly emotional I mean, I mean even now I always think because at home many people do not get a chance to go and study at a university. I mean...again if I look at myself...[as] that little boy I can that he traveled a long journey that he traveled a journey to [finally] graduate...so it was a big thing...ja.

Siyanda: and your parents were they there?

Elijah: My parents...eh NO...[but] my cousin and my sister were there...not my parents, I cannot remember what happened there but eh...

Siyanda: [And your] granny?

Elijah: [My] grandmother passed away when I was in high school...I think before I did matric, so it was my cousin and my sister.... hmmm and my wife...well my girlfriend back then, ja.

Siyanda: hmmm, was it not strange having a graduation without your parents there?

Elijah: It was...you see again, you know my background is...you always struggle with, you know with who am I going to invite I mean if I invite [my] mother, [my] father would.... So in that way they did not....I did not invite anyone of them... so what I did then after [the graduation] I went to...I do not remember the exact time but I had a ceremony¹² at [my] father's and I went to [my] mother's...ja.

Siyanda: Twice?

Elijah: Ja, I mean, ja. I think, well again that time they did not get on but things have changed maybe [it is] because I have been working towards...even though there might be differences [between them] but then it must not come to us... if there is something happening in my life they must, it is a must that they are there, so we are at that level, we are better now. But at that time, at that graduation...eh they did not [engage with each another].

Siyanda: You said that your graduation was emotional, how so?

Elijah: Well, I think that, you know I had never attended a university. Ja...no, very, very, ja...even that thing you know sometimes you cannot believe until you experience [it]...actually I cannot remember but wearing a[graduation] gown, you do not know how it feels. The time we were at college we...we did not wear gowns, we just wore [something]...NOW the wearing of an academic gown and all these things...so all those things were like; 'Ja, man'... and during [the graduation] everybody...'eeh' you know they look at you [but] you think of all the assignments at the time you wrote...building it up until that time...I think you feel that you have achieved something [important].

¹² Or celebration

Siyanda: What do you think are things that helped you achieve...from that little boy who was free and playful to a graduate? What have been the things or people that helped you along the way?

Elijah: Eh...there are a few...eh I think when I did matric there was another brother, who worked at conservation I mean that is where I started...he drove around with Land rovers, so I thought it looked cool, so that inspired me but I think that TTT played a big role because the time we arrived to do the 1-week course the year before...so that really forced us work hard I remember this woman...eh not Hanlie...eh...eh...

Siyanda: Anita?

Elijah: Ja, anta...eh Anita made us realize actually...like... that your mind is like a computer and it can allow things in, I mean we worked from early morning till very late. Now your mind had never been exposed to those things and then Anita forced you... (imitating Anita)"*You must force your mind to act, force your mind to act*" heh heh heh (laughing)

BOTH LAUGHING

Elijah: She did...So, now that thing I think that makes [your mind] to work in a different way in that way and so look TTT played a big role in that thing, ja I think, they did.

Siyanda: You have been saying [a lot], saying where you come from as a person that passed matric, graduated eh...if you were to compare yourself to your parents, are you surprised at the difference in terms of what you have achieved?

Elijah: Well yeah, it's huge I mean like writing I think if anything [my] father cannot if he were to write something, I do not know but I would not be surprised if he couldn't, he never went to school, never learnt how to write... but eh you can't read something to...I remember when we wrote letters I used to read them to [my] mother and other people in the area. I used to write letters for them [they used to] bring letters to me [for me] to read them out and write letters for them...so from that background, where people can't

read and write, people ho did not go to university or to school...so, going to university is a...a...

Siyanda: ... it is a big jump...eh a big one!

Elijah: Ja, ja...no, it is big I mean [my] parents...it is like...it becomes difficult to tell them that another things that keeps me busy like last year and this year and the other year is that I was busy studying... when I tell [my] mother that ...eh I have not worked [because] I am studying...she says, she looks at me and says '*what are you studying for [now]? You are studying to be white!*' ... She cannot understand why...I...I, ja, so I don't even bother now to tell her that I am studying...maybe I will tell her..."*I am finished and I will be graduating again'*...ja, so I don't even bother.

Siyanda: Okay, gain if you think back where you come from, your matric results were not good, being black during apartheid but you managed to jump so high, what.....?

Elijah: (cutting me off) I think that you can't discount luck, it's being lucky like I say that at school...I used to go to school...it's just like going to school maybe it was luck that eh I think TTT particularly was luck that I happened to know this person... and then it was luck that when that time came around when they were looking for people who did not pass their matric well but have work experience that was pure luck...eh but I think that ...that... that by the time I finished matric as I said that another thing that made me choose to a labourer was that I should teach at home...it is because I know that...eh at home...I wanted to progress or the idea of how will you progress, to what direction? ...it wasn't there because even the time I finished [when] I was working eh... I could have decided that ...no, I do not want to go to TTT because I was working hard, I have a diploma, I am working, you know, I was being paid well. So, I would have decided that no, 'I don't want this, I am fine', you see. But I think that id this thing is there, this thing, which says I want to progress even though you are not sure of where you will go but you say, NO I would like to progress... I think that working hard also contributes; I think that I worked hard the time I got to university... I thought the [culture] shock distracted a bit [because] I got supplementary exams for Psychology 1A and 1B but I wrote them and I was all right...eh I was fine in the other courses and the others were border-line

but I was trying, so I think that sometimes it helped me ...when there is something that I did and it was something I wanted to do...to focus all my energy there...so...ja but then you can't discount luck...ja.

Siyanda: Ahh, where are you now working?

Elijah: I am at the Institute of Natural Resources in Maritzburg.

Siyanda: What do you do?

Elijah: It is an NGO; it is sort of...it has 3 departments of Governmental assessment... Sustainable Agricultural and food security and then CBNR, Community-Based Natural Resource Management, CBNR...it is all about...I think in all things, it is all about eh resource management and using resources properly and in ways that are sustainable...ah and then there is research that we sometimes do...ja.

Siyanda: Why that job? Why not psychology or social work for instance?

Elijah: Ja, I think that, maybe, maybe it is 2 things. The first is I thought I should go to development...[I have] an interest of working with people and if anything helping in community development. But I think another thing, which happened was maybe because I have a background in conservation... I have always wanted to see people co-existing with natural resources but in a way would not... in a way that would have some balance between the natural environment and people...it must be one-way and not the other because I think what tends to happen is that conservation people they... they will prefer not to...but they will use...also the people that do development, they prefer to clear out [people]...I think that my interest, if it can balance it out, ja so I think that's why I do this thing.

Siyanda: And...if you look at your life as a student and what you are doing now, do you think that it has always been there that you will be where you are now or was it a surprise or...?

Elijah: I think that other things...maybe it will go back to what I said that you wish that you can progress, progression is always there but at times it becomes difficult to see where you are going...at least now, maybe now this thing sometimes comes back because I mean what do we do...the work we do is community development, these things are not easy...it is not easy, ja because many provinces are starting sustainable [development], I mean there are now why questions, you know, you always wish that there can be a mall with sustainable development in mind, you know...ah having said that I think that sometimes that makes you wish 'I would like be involved in something that will be successful because eh...well I can't say it has never been successful but then successful in a big way...eh so I think that besides luck, there many things which bring success. I mean there are things, which you can control and some you cannot have control over, so, ja.

Siyanda: Well, tell about the new South Africa...I mean it is interesting that you lived through apartheid and now...

Elijah: I think that ...hmmm... you know, I think that we are in a good place eh but I think that there are many things that we can improve on...like we can move away from corruption... and also that there is corruption at different levels, you see...there are these people, this thing of 'ghost workers'...

Siyanda: What are 'ghost workers'

Elijah: There are people who are registered and are being paid but they don't exist...eh that is huge corruption because each and every month these people are getting paid but they don't exist...other people take [the money]...so I think that it is...ah... unemployment. The best that you can do I mean I do not know what things we can do to improve employment. Another thing listen when other people talk, another thing that we do not want to see is that other problems are caused by the [fact that] there is too many of us, I mean the population is just shooting... you can't go out and say 'listen, let's kill a few people so that there can be a few of us' but I think that this thing also contributes because resources and jobs can only be that much, you see...eh I think that we are in the right place eh because our economy, even though it is not growing very much, it is

growing eh...and then there is also, if you look at the context of Africa...another thing that indicates that I mean we are in a better position is that there are a lot of people that come here from African countries because they feel that south Africa is doing it, that it will give them better chances...eh I mean if you go to other countries like Swaziland, Mozambique, Lesotho and the neighbouring [counties] that is when you see that these guys are like really struggling, you see, we [on the other hand] we are, we are a lot better [off]...so those are the issues. But another thing I think is...again our education [I wish] it could change so that we can have skills eh, ja because I think that this [makes our life difficult]...I mean you see the guys coming from other countries to do simple things like car-guarding, you know...people like...like, you see, just simple things...that is because that person is oriented to enable themselves to survive wherever they are...[but] we [on the other hand] we do not have that. Why don't we do those things before they can come with those [ideas], I mean if we can look around stores around Durban eh ja the many stores around are not ours so eh and I do not know what kind of skills we lack, educational or what? But, you know...ja there are many things that we can do to improve but I think we are in a good place.

Siyanda:eh how do you keep your tradition with this life that you lead? How do you marry that two?

Elijah: Eh...eh I do not forget how difficult it is, I think that...eh...eh people keep alive by studying and etc, etc but you always know where you come from... that is how you marry the two... you always know where you are coming from, I am not confused about where I come from and I mean this is what supports and [keep] you alive but, I mean I do not know....I can still go back and worship my ancestors... hmmm...maybe another thing which...another reason which makes me say that we are doing better maybe is this issue of balance between white people and black people; female and male...basically there are opportunities while during apartheid there were no opportunities, now there are! I feel almost like everybody.... If you can take corruption away but basically everybody can go out and do what others are doing...its your constitutional right to do that, you are protected.... But then I think that the key thing to me is that we are all equal.

Siyanda: Do you think it was easier to live in those times than living now? ... Do you think that living during those times taught something, which is not possible for people living now to learn?

Elijah: ... I think that eh, I think that it taught me and I do not believe that we can say apartheid or democracy ... I think that time as I grew up the population was low at home and you knew everybody [but] now I don't even go around...I [have] to ask who is that...now the population has gone up and there are many things that have happened [like] information technology puts a lot of pressure on people. I sometime notice, when we are out maybe working [out there in communities] you have got e-mail, you have a fax, we have got people in the office, but, no people...they want you because you have a cell-phone, whether or not you are not at the office, you are busy working, they don't care but they want you to attend [to them] at that time...they don't leave a message now and say ...if you don't get the person you don't bother, I mean he might be busy here he is, I think it puts pressure but I think growing up at that time I grew up in... you get in that area, where we respected an elderly person because you knew that they might punish you but now I am not saying that [corporal] punishment is good but it taught discipline but now you struggle to teach your children discipline, you really struggle...so I think because of that ... life is very different.

Siyanda: If you look at yourself now and at university and at the time you were a little boy are there similar things or you have ...?

Elijah: Can I please go to the bathroom?

Siyanda: Yes!!!

Elijah: I think that as people we live our lives...eh he I have lived a life that little boy, which was relaxed and without demands eh now the life that I lead now demands [a lot of me] like I am always learning about new things even [about] the computer... like and then another thing that frustrates me...I always say my parents do not know how much I work for what, you know like the computer [that I bought], they don't bother I try to explain my life to them ... when I am [in the] 'white world' that this is was I do. They

done even bother you know...eh think also that maybe...growing up eh and moving up at work eh like white people for instance are people that are always in top positions and there is always this thing, which says it is because it is a white person...that is how you look at it...but now...maybe usually like, you see ja, so I think that life [throws] different things [at you] like when I go home...now I think that if you don't find me at home, there is nothing like a day where you cannot find me there.

Siyanda: your relations with your parents.....

Elijah: It has changed [now] I did not say but it was changed....very much, I think that in [19] 90...eh around [19] 90 by the time I started at university I think that is where I started to develop I mean on e thing I saw that this is normal.... I cannot change it and it was wrong that I took sides...so I started to develop a relationship with them...now [our] relationship is quite good and it is the one thing that...[when] there are things disturb me, [my] parents, both of them know that they are there...ja.

Siyanda: So you had access to three women, I mean your mother; your granny...how is that like to have 3 mothers in a way?

Elijah: Ja...I think that they played roles that were different... eh in way [my] granny...I think that resources were not the same and the times were nit the same...[my] granny was responsible ...[she made sure] that we got food, that we were able to go to school and when I needed a pair of trousers I would go to her... eh but somehow I think that even at that time when I was little she stood as a spiritual figure eh there are dreams sometimes that if you consult [traditional] healers, they tell you that your grandmother is speaking to you... so she plays that role and I think that the [two] mothers have their different roles...ja...I do not know how I could explain them but then they are people with different goals and they do different things.

Siyanda: So you have always had women like you spoke about siblings being women what about males...brothers....?

Elijah: Ja, there are 2 I did not mention on my mother's side.

Siyanda: So, how does a boy grow up in that environment?

Elijah: The problem I think is ... eh I did not grow up with all of them at the same time...because eh we stayed with [my] grandmother [for a] very long [time] before [my] father re-married and then when he had re-married I stayed with the both of them...ah and then immediately after that well, maybe not immediately but a few years after that [my] grandmother passed away... and then...even now my sisters lived with [my] mother and then my other sisters eh it took a long time for them to get children but she got [one child] the first time she got children I was preparing to go to college and then since I returned from college I was never a home most of the time. When I left [college] I went to work and then I went to the university, I left and I went to work and then ja and so I cannot say that I stayed with them, you know...with all of them at one time but at the same time I do not know how I can look at... I have never had an experience to be with my other brothers. Ja, so I sometimes see that, maybe I was where there was conflict, so I don't know I happened to be older and I was that [little] boy but it was girls and a boy and there was no conflict perhaps the conflict would have been created by who would have to play a particular role!

Siyanda: Who were your friends... at university?

Elijah: Ah... I had a friend...Simanga was a friend and Zim was also a friend but we are not that close.

Siyanda: But like when you were at university did you have white friends?

Elijah: No...not in varsity...no I do now after I started to work eh.

Siyanda: Do you think there has been a shift in terms of race?

Elijah: I think that yes I think that yes there has been and maybe to others it has always been there, they were a few and it was not easy to see them...eh but there are pockets here and there of people who are... I mean in fact both sides you can sort of pick up that things from whites eh you also pick it up from blacks....there are programmes I

remember in [19] 94 we took a trip to Zimbabwe... these girls from somewhere in Johannesburg. They do not even buy white music... eh and I think that sometimes maybe they can pretend...white people sometimes you see that they do something well-meaning and you just see that, no this still affects them, you see... so I think all in all I think that we are moving.... There are many people both white and black who are prepared to move on but then having said that if you look at KwaZulu-Natal and you look at social activities even...not just South Africans if you look at sports there are sports like...rugby...ja, you know that their place and hlayi this is a white sport, you must understand...you can see that, ja, ja.

Siyanda: Do you remember the day that Mandela was released from prison?

Elijah: Ja, ja...ja it was a eh...I think it was a big day and we were sitting around at Mbazwana....eh ...ja watching TV...ja, ja I think that that was the plan but at the same time it was eh, eh because the divisions between the ANC and IFP were starting to be sharp...now I...eh you came and watched and you reserved your comments because you did not know you did not know who will comment you see.

Siyanda: ja, your area is actually [predominately] IFP!

Elijah: Ja...ja it was not usual for the youth to...I think to be ANC...no there....there are a few adults who are ANC so it was difficult, you just watched but I think, I think that I did think that it will ever happen but it did, you see.

Siyanda: The time you were growing up were you exposed to any kind of political violence?

Elijah: No...no, nothing....nothing you know that area even at time when violence was occurring in KwaZulu-Natal between the IFP and the ANC, in fact there was [no violence] because perhaps people there they are...connected, they are connected as they are relatives, so, so ja now people came, the IFP and ANC but when it comes to times of violence it became difficult because that is your parent at the end of the day, so

you see the only thing that happened was that there was a police special branch there in [19]84 but I do not remember which one it was but it has been closed [down] eh, eh you see if there drove around and find you at night , walking at night they took you and beat you up... those were the only cases but not that...eh not that it was the community attacking another community

Siyanda: That is....

Elijah: Oh it was the stability branch!

Siyanda: Oh! If you were to identify the changes in your life, like what have been your turning points where your life changed?

Elijah: Ja... I think eh, I think that eh maybe there are many maybe going to school was a turning point, eh going to college, eh leaving work it was a turning point because I was working but I left work and then you know...maybe the kinds of work I have done have contributed to my turning points...ja.

Siyanda: How kinds of work have you done?

Elijah: Eh...no, I have worked for conservation, I have worked for CROP, I have worked Interface Africa, I have worked for Bongumusa Special Development Initiative and then I have worked for...and then I started consulting with Tim¹³ and the other guys and then I left. It never worked out eh then I went to Buka-indalo and I was then taken here Natural Resources.

Siyanda: Wow, why did you leave these other jobs? Is it....

Elijah: I think that I have never...I cannot stay when I am not comfortable; I think that I want to stay at a job as long as I am still comfortable...I mean there are a few examples, at conservation I only wanted to go on leave so that I can go to the university so that I can come back to work and then I responded to an application and so I left and gave them 4-days notice and I left and then when I finished I never went back because I felt that they do not care about us but then another example at STI I left because I felt that, I felt that I could not develop because they make decisions for you and you simply

¹³ Timothy, another TTT graduate

come to implement...so I felt they could have used me more...so I left, there are sometimes places where I mean like TransAfrica for instance I left because I was approached by STI the we negotiated...it was a better opportunity, ja...ja.

Siyanda: What goals and plans do you have for the future?

Elijah: Well, there is...I think one thing I still want to stay here at the Institute to develop and I want to develop my writing skills like research, write, ja I want to do that... another thing, which I have always wanted to do for a long time and I think that I will try and do it is to make an input of where I come from, perhaps... I think set up a nursery of indigenous plants and then when we....just, just as an awareness but then the approach I want to use is that I just do it individually, not tell a soul about what I am doing, just do it...eh if people have interest they can do it but then other reasons for that are I want to identify... there are trees, fruit plants that we ate and used but now we have started to look down on them, I want to try to increase their profile...but as I say id people have an interest they can learn and do it if they do not have it, they don't I am running away from going out to people to say 'let's do this thing'...people will just go along until the time that ...and then that's it because it is difficult to see if people have interest about this or not because the idea is there, opportunity is there or so, ja I think that is what I want to do.

Siyanda: Do you think your interest in trees and natural resources comes from the fact that you come from a rural place?

Elijah: I think that maybe it comes from there but eh maybe from studying and working for conservation...it is a combination because I do come from that place because I mean not that you can blame people [but][sometimes, the time I stayed there it was not easy to appreciate the area... and also being aware because another thing is if you are not aware ... eh that is why people buy certain kinds of food because that food that you eat is not good, you see eh...whereas this food is good food, proper food, which is good for your health but we run to buy fruit, fish and things which is not very good....my people know!!!

Siyanda: Okay thank you, let leave there for now unless you want to add something else

Elijah: No, baba I think you ask me everything!!!

THE END OF INTERVIEW 1 WITH ELIJAH!!

INTERVIEW: MANDISA

Siyanda: Okay interview with Mandisa on the 24th of September 2008

Mandisa: Ms MK Khumalo

Siyanda: Miss MK

Mandisa: Ms Ms Ms MK Khumalo

Siyanda: Ok Ms

Mandisa: Yes

Siyanda: MK Khumalo lets do this

Mandisa: Ok

Siyanda: umh Ok so um let's start from ekuqaleni

Mandisa: eh

Siyanda: tell me a little bit about where you were born

Mandisa: ok well I do know ukuthi I was born eKing Edward on the 6th of February my mom is not really sure whether it was I mean it was definitely in the evening but she's not sure whether it was 6 or 8 pm

Laughs

Mandisa: and that's important when you are doing you know astrological stuff and horoscopes because I'd really like to know my rising sun or whatever but it mustn't at least it was Bob Marley's birthday so that is significant to my life yes I am an Aquarius and that's that's been a consistent thing in terms of who I am ngazalelwa eKing Edward that was King Edward back in the good old days you know nje they still had beds laughs umh

Siyanda: ow wait a minute why ungashongo ukuthi umh what year it was

Mandisa: 79 I was born in 19 dude I was born in and I was the last year of the 70s you know like the 70s you know historically nje

Siyanda: I'm sorry but the 80s were fabulous

Mandisa: ok that alright but I mean ngakhulake mina in the 80s but I was born in the 1979 and I think that's that's quite important for my life cause you know 79 it's like the last before something else and igama lami uWelile so those

Siyanda: oh yes

Mandisa: yes always always and also places

Siyanda: ukuwela

Mandisa: ukuwela mh to cross over but also in terms of geography and space ekhaya iseClermont next to it is New Germany it bord you know what I mean where New Germany borders between Pinetown Pinetown Westville so that's always been my heart always in between things

Siyanda: In between spaces

Mandisa: moving up to Joburg I was also in between spaces here it confused whether its Fairmont or Northcliff laughs so I've accepted there are things in my life I will always be in between even my relationships with people neither like you know neither point A or point B but I've always felt like ok I don't really have a clique of friends but I'm always in between

Siyanda: And what is the significance you draw on the fact that you share a thing with Bob Marley

Mandisa: uBob Marley was a social revolutionary he believed in justice one he was an artist and I am too and I just feel like in the time unamadreadlocks nami njeh you know so it means wayesaba ikama and so nje just please combing my hair haaaaa it was something nje I never flip I never liked it and thank goodness my parents were not into relaxing their hair so nje uma was anti but still this combing your hair you know we come up with Chinese eyes laughs no man hawema hawema kucwebezela nje so I mean Bob Marley thing is is important to me in those two levels one as an artist and one he was a social revolutionary he really st he really represented the voice of the people he really stood out for social injustices and iv always sort of in my life I was like oh is this a common thing and then that's why the horoscope thing is important for me because there are certain things that are you know strictly Aquarian but you know when you have friends born on the same star and you wonder why you go through the same thing and then I find that you know these people study it like it's a science im like ok dude it's a social tool you know I just need to know im an Aquarius and it's just great you know laughs nje ja but I mean like just in terms of understanding ipersonality yami ukuthi ok there are things that make it ok ja um so in terms of being born so I was born eKing Edward but I grew up eClermont and mina my memories of Clermont are very very very clear memories of Clermont one of my fi and see this one of my first eh really great memories of Clermont nje was just being ugogo that's

Siyanda: yeah yes

Mandisa: my grandmother is like when I think of home and growing up I think of iClermont there was no electricity then there was still you know amakhandlela we use to you know get to bed storytelling

Siyanda: prima stove

Mandisa: prima stove nje all those things but and this was to impact you know greatly in my life having my grandmother as a central figure and also having those candles cause you know we use to play finger puppet I mean 5 o'clock was like night time you know laugh whoo isebusuku 5 o'clock hawema we were out till 5 lord but it just affected me in terms of like this sort of narratives you know storytelling was for us wasn't cause see we didn't have TV then TV hadn't been invented or if it had it hadn't come

Siyanda: To you guys

Mandisa: to definitely not eClermont cause I remember we were one of the first families to have you know iTV eClermont you know I remember half a cent sithenga osqhafascotchi you know those sweets

Siyanda: oh I remem I know those

Mandisa: for half a cent you know and then so everything that had all my sense of moral justice all my sense of being and identity I learnt through stories when I was doing good you know good things or sort of bad things my grandmother would sit us down and she'd tell us a story I grew up with my brother who was a year and 6 days older than me so we literally grew up like twins cause it was very competitive he's also an Aquarian by the way so nje there was always this competition and so my grandmother you know like every other family used stories to teach us things you know

Siyanda: Can you remember the kind of stories

Mandisa: ehhee of cause

Siyanda: ugogo told you

Mandisa: I remember the one time my brother and I had such a horrible fight ugogo told us a story what's it ilitshe likantunjambili you know I just I just have a memory of that song ilitshe likantunjambili ilitshe likantunjambili sivulele singene akulwa izinkonjane zivulwa izinyamazane sivulele something like that but the point was was a story about a brother and a sister and then something happened but I remember at the end of that story I've forgotten the story but I remember at the end of the story I thought yo I only have one brother I'd better love him you know

Siyanda: I love him now

Mandisa: it was exactly so it was that kind of sense actually things happened but it's about loving each other umh singing nje was such a part I mean ugogo grew up telling us you know mina I was a princess I thought it was a myth ukuthi nje we were princesses my brother is a prince you know there's this kingdom mh that you know there's this kingdom of kaTembe and you know I used to think you know what like I thought my grandmother made this all up but its true there was a kingdom kaTembe I mean I recently went to it last year in Mozambique you know Maputo it's a kingdom that's where the Tembes and it was you know like the people did my great self some did go to Swaziland and when I was actually there last year I realised oh my goodness the people actually cons that story is so much part of their identity stories that I I sort of thought hawu my grandmother is making up things cause she always said if you're a princess there are ways to behave you know you must listen to people you must be kind and then if you don't like people you must get to know them because if you understand individual narratives then you get to understand what and then you realise you know you get to understand people you see their hearts you know and we often forget that and then once you do understand those individual narratives you actually realise that people are just like you so then it's you are less likely to be think that person is horrible now that was just an incredible way that's the way she taught us about life you know

Siyanda: and now umh coming from Mozambique are you Shangaan or are you

Mandisa: we are Ronga its Ronga it's called Ronga umh when you go to Maputo you say I'm Ronga and they know

Siyanda: so you are Ronga and Zulu

Mandisa: Zulu by Verwoerd

Siyanda: laughs what

Mandisa: I am Zulu by Verwoerd because because we even have Mokoena Mokoena is not Zulu

Siyanda: mh Mokoena is not Zulu

Mandisa: but because I grew up in KZN at the time you considered Zulu that's apartheid that's what it does you know so im Zulu by Verwoerd I mean I also grew up in the Zulu culture because you know I didn't grow up in Maputo you know so you know I'm I'm by cultural upbringing says im also Zulu

Siyanda: yeah so when did you go to Mozambique and

Mandisa: well in the family the family would go every once in a while but of cause I was always busy performing or doing something else so I went on my own last year like well not on my own but with just a friend

Siyanda: Tell me about that experience

Mandisa: that experience was well one it was inspired by heartbreak and just needing some time out so I was just going there to just deal with myself but also I was like well a friend was going there

and I was like you know this is the one time I think I'm ready to go and just you know my grandmother you know she she was murdered in 1999 so by the time she was murdered phela angithi iseClermont I mean it one of those stories ekhaya which you know sort of caused because we were building uma was extending the house u 4 4 room

Siyanda: into istezi

Mandisa: into well you saw the house yeah I mean so it's been long in construction and at the time that you know we seeked my mother was a firm believer in social you know like uplifting our people why hire contractors and pay fortune

Siyanda: hire people in the township

Mandisa: township because that how we get to you know improve by empowering each other she really lived my parents lived that kind of stuff

Siyanda: Even now actually

Mandisa: you know this you know this you've been at home so like I mean it's been frustrating for us because things that could have taken like a few months it's taken years

Siyanda: laughs

Mandisa: because because its like that whole you know what if we are going to improve and upgrade our lives the people need to be invested in that you know and I understand it and so then that's why we call my parents socialists for that and they hate and you know it's like don't give us names but its true they are socialists they really believe if we are going to progress we need to make sure everyone else around us is doing the same there is somebody who is skilled they're gonna get employed in some factory somewhere by someone be treated badly why not they come from this they come from the area lets use that skill you know so by the time the my my gran was murdered cause that's you know 2 of the builders nje you know they think we are rich or whatever nje we had sinemali we are extending and they came the one time and nje my mother came back from work and she found my grandmother tied up I mean she was old hey she could barely walk nje you know diabetes you know all that kind of stuff tied up her false teeth were under the bed they've cleaned out the house nje straight robbery but the one thing they didn't take were books and that's why I invest in books baby

Siyanda: babe

Mandisa: mh

Siyanda: the thing about your mo your your grandmom is hectic

Mandisa: it's very hectic and I find

Siyanda: she was found dead

Mandisa: by my mother ja

Siyanda: how what she

Mandisa: well I mean she was she was they tied umh ilento bambopha umlomo ne and then she was strangled that's how she died and they like left her there my mom was the one who found her but like this is 1999 5th of Wednesday 5th of May 1999 and we all guessed the time of death because all of us had some incident or another bizarre incident I fell asleep in lectures political science is my favourite subject I never fall asleep and I mean it was public policy there was no way I could fall asleep I fell asleep in class right and it was like in the morning ngabo 9h00 also umh my my brother was driving into eyenzekalayo uVukile like nearly had an accident round about that time my father

worked in a laboratory you know there were inci you know things like my mother was teaching she was like that day she just in the morning she my mother is like the most bubbly person nje you know
Siyanda: yeah yeah

Mandisa: super energetic so she got to work and she was feeling exhausted we guessed that it happened that morning my sister was at school that evening you know she called home and she was like ai you know she she just didn't feel well in the morning for some reason you know so by the time I got anyway those were the incidents around my grandmothers murder and she was the one so ja it was very traumatic

Siyanda: in a way its loosing umzali

Mandisa: Vese angithi thina in our culture my im not my parents child im my grandmothers child

Siyanda: ja that's where you belong

Mandisa: it was terrible it was I mean this was the first time I saw my father cry because we had problem with the church umh you must understand my the family pictures like our family was one of the first families to build e34 like to move in there and you know my ugogo and her older sister they were very very involved you know with the church esontweni with the Sunday school they built it up they were teaching etc I mean I used to hate you know all this stuff emancane nje we have to bake cakes and do all this stuff esontweni because you know our parents you know my are involved and you know we've been in this community forever lalalala and then my father was also involved you know with doing a lot of stuff for free for the church you know so we were very involved cause it's those old families that belong to the you know so you know my grandmother had made it very clear she had left 2 very strict instructions no actually 3 one our studies were not to be disrupted if she was ever to die two she was to be cremated and three instead of slaughtering and making in and simoshe imali wayethi ningamoshi imali nje uma ngifile please make sure nje serve people sandwiches after the funeral yoo

Siyanda: that is completely

Mandisa: this is my grandmother

Siyanda: this is completely un un

Mandisa: 1999 dude 1999

Siyanda: Jasus

Mandisa: yoo we have to follow because anifuni ukupokelwa ha

Siyanda: laughs yeah

Mandisa: so you understand ukuthi nje for her to be like please the simplest thing ningamoshi imali ngebhokisi and cause she made it very clear to my parents my kids must continue to study nizomoshha imali nithenge ibhokisi please educate my children you know so there's no way you could disobey that esontweni nizomoshha imali nifide abantu excuse me feed them sandwiches they can go home and then go you know the family go and incriminate I never seen my grandmother yeyiwena yoo the community hated us cause you know the people wanted to pay their respect ugogo was one of the oldest you know women there in the community

Siyanda: in the community in the area yeah

Mandisa: eseshonake ngicela ukukutshela ukuthi you know the house below us

Siyanda: umh

Mandisa: the grandmother left because if that can happen cause o ogogo they stay at home during the day so they like 3 grandmothers esezansi around the corner from my house the grandmother left as well nowasenext door up eh you know above us

Siyanda: eceleni yeah

Mandisa: ya like they left the community like in like a month's like ugogo she died on the 5th of May im gonna say to you by the end of May there were no old people because they were afraid ukuthi well if that can happen to ugogo what who are they you know what's gonna happen to them so it was quite traumatic in so many ways we no longer had ugogo do you understand ukuthi what that means in terms of the sort of ilento istructure yecommunity cause ogogo are the ones yoo yoo yoo and so mina im not surprised a lot of the time when I see or hear the things that I hear because there was a gap there was a huge gap only now my mother is manje ugogo you know so but it's like come on like there was a huge gap so by the time ke anyway so and it was traumatic in a sense that also we didn't go to counselling as a family we just dealt with it so going to Maputo nje for me was also just about honouring that the myths and the stories that she told and just going to find out ukuthi ekhaya kahle kahle

Siyanda: Niqhamukaphi

Mandisa: ey you know ngempela nje si indabuko yethu nje ikephi it was beautiful to see people also who look like me you know I could understand ok nabo banalamafeatures you know when im there I feel like mengithi ngiwumaTembe you know they know oh you know it means something that was really great

Siyanda: tell me about being i iprincess

Mandisa: well so my grandmother said

Siyanda: you are royalty

Mandisa: ok no no no I did that's not how I mean literally yes some people take it literary but for me it was more the idea of what it meant growing up as a princess nje kumele ngiziphathe kahle

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: respecting elders you know all those old fashioned concepts like honour loyalty integrity excellence

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: sana it's not just it's not just any word those are verbs you do you be I am is a complete sentence so when you say I am excellent I have integrity its complete you know

Siyanda: we've lost that

Mandisa: We've lost that a lot

Siyanda: behind closed door

Mandisa: but who's there to to instil those kind of values we shun our parents we disrespect our parents a lot of the time the iyouth angithi

Siyanda: we rape our parents

Mandisa: mh yazinje ukuhlonipha nje yo and mina I'm I am a self proclaimed I know ukuthi I'm old fashioned cause those values I take them very seriously it's very important to me that I honour that cause ugogo nje instilled that in me umuntu omdala umhloniphe you know all those things and being a princess also means ukuthi you you would lead you know you would lead people but you also need to listen to people you know kumele uzehlise ungacabangi ukuthi ungcono and also little

things like you know wena you are misbehaving princesses don't do that yoo ngangivele ngishintshe ah princess don't ohh no never

Siyanda: im a princess

Mandisa: exactly little things like you know I used to match I still have that thing I match my clothes you know I had you know like come Sunday you know I have to have the pink you know bobs in my hair matching my pink little hand –baggy and a ribbon on my socksi uba mina ooh excuse me I was a princess sana

Siyanda: now eh being a princess was there any times when you could trace it between your blood or

Mandisa: no I didn't understand it terms of blood it was the stories for me it wasn't

Siyanda: it was the stories yeah

Mandisa: and futhi also being umh just because umuntu uzalwa kazulu vese they are you know royalty still by virtue of the name but mina it wasn't because of the name I didn't understand that what I got when I was little ukuthi I have to be better than best that what it meant the best nje everything I had to be better than the best because if im too I need to be the example you know eskoleni you can't just get c you know

Siyanda: Haibo uC yini what's that

Mandisa: You exactly you know it's like only the best you strive for the best and you also don't rest you don't get comfortable with just nje mediocrity to this day im afraid of being mediocre

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: I am it's such a and it's an incredible thing that got re-enforced in many spheres of my life but that was the value ukuthi yoo we are the example I need to show the rest of the girls how to behave you know and I was a mischievous little thing you know I had for 9 years before my sister was born it was just my brother and I so it was heavy competition you know nje uVukile uthole iBMX hha what am I getting you know and then to this day I cannot ride a bicycle cause he used to push me off but if he get like blue short I'd get a pink skirt you know what I mean it was that kind of competition so then 9 years later when my sister was born oh Siyanda I have to tell you I prayed I've never prayed so much we were in my father's Toyota there was a time where everything I don't know where I picked the name Wendy but I liked the way it sounded in my lips Wendy so I think a few years before my sister was born anybody who asked what's your name ngithi Wendy you know like my favourite doll was called Wendy whatever so then I said I prayed to God I remember sitting in the car it was Westville hospital and ubaba had brought us chocolates and my brother had finished his and then I had to share mine cause you know he was like older than me so he'd bully me and then I remember thinking God I cannot live like this if it's a boy im going to suffer doubly please I prayed for a girl and I promised God if it's a girl nje I be nice to her I'll look after her I'll love her forever and it turned out to be a girl my parents named her Bongeka Swazi I stuck with Wendy hey you know she responded

Siyanda: named her what

Mandisa: Bongeka

Siyanda: Bongeka

Mandisa: Swazi mh

Siyanda: Bongeka Swazi

Mandisa: Ja Xhosa names we all have Xhosa names

Siyanda: that's very nice

Mandisa: so but nje I remember I just kept calling her uWendy and she would respond to Wendy now my mother claims that she named her uWendy im like hey I know where it comes from you know

Siyanda: so now why is it ukuthi you liked the name Wendy

Mandisa: I don't know it just sounded nice when I was little I don't remember why I liked it but I just did it through cause mina im Welile and it was a W fixation or nje but here is another interesting memory I have of you know Clermont and growing up which I still can't I don't know if it was a dream or what but ekhaya you know that hill I told you ukuthi those like leyamizi were never there it was like it was there used to be wildlife not like lions and things but like you know

Siyanda: Welile come on

Mandisa: no no some people no no no some people think it's you know when I say wildlife im talking like no but lapha kwakuyihlathi you know and ukhokho we used to sit lapha ekhaya emini before the house was done kwakukhona nje indawo actually like on that picture that you saw uWendy nogogo there's a picture open it I'll show you

Siyanda: I haven't seen it

Mandisa: there's a picture laphaya uh you see that picture upumpkin no middle middle in the middle ja kukhona ugogo ubambe ikati that's my sister that's what she used to do with my ugogo ehhe you see that ledge yabona ekhaya there no there no houses it's all green but developments had started then but there's a picture of them singing that's what's you know uWendy still had that with ugogo yes the singing they were singing there storytelling exactly yaunderstander ukuthi I'm so glad my sister at least grew you know

Siyanda: with ugogo

Mandisa: had that with ugogo you know and it's so important so ke ngiyakhumbula ke the one time I don't know if it was a dream noma yenzeka but I remember I like before I even knew what soldiers were I pictured armies soldiers on horses wearing red coming down that hill and futhi it was a time you know levioence you know ukuthi are you Zulu are you ANC are you IFP so I don't know if it was like in my mind translating all those words and images into something tangible but I remember quite clearly there were riding on horses and they were coming down the hill and you know I remember I had to I had you know put pack things away it was the most that was quite a traumatic thing for me and I think that's when ugogo realised ukuthi ok mina hawu isicathulo lesi laughs ukuthi you know I have I I dream you know like she got ukuthi ok kwesinye isikhathi izinto ngiyaziphupha but um and also another image ekhaya like there's one incident I when I do my speeches I tell them about ukuthi thina sisakhula ekhaya like everybody raised me like if my parents weren't around ugogo was busy I could go next door ngidle I would eat I'd be taken care of there'd there'd be no issues when it was time they just used to call me except mina I was one when I was little I I used to go around and tell people I was orphaned that ya im telling you my mother can tell you horrific stories of me like whole day spending time next door you know angithi omaqashana omasqashane like you know people who used to rent and I would like go there and be like no please be my mom and I would spend time the whole day I ngangizula I used to be called in every house like weWelile ngangimenyezwa like I mean now it's not far but when you are little the street up there haa you

Siyanda: my mother would say to you uyokhamisa emzini yabantu

Mandisa: exactly yaunderstander ukuthi like since I was little I used to go when they say to you like I used to go to people's houses and they'd welcome you in they'd be nice but I mean it was nothing unusual and then they'd be like uphumphu mm ma I don't have parents I used to lie and say I don't have parents because like I just had the desire to go to peoples house and hang out and chill and have a good time you know and it was worrying for my grand for one she was like whoo lomtwana kumele simenzele something cause she has a wondering spirit you know like

Siyanda: hlabele amadlozi

Mandisa: yabonje because angihlali ekhaya im always on the move somewhere like ngiyamenyezwa ngo5 like we we sometimes see imoto yasekhaya yehla laphaya you on the hill wed be jumping fences you know trying to get home because I was told ukuthi if what if im found in somebody's house again my friends had to come and play ekhaya so it was like yooo but mina I couldn't be like ngangishaywa almost everyday intombazane a young girl

Siyanda: ayiyenzi leyonto

Mandisa: intombazane sits at home you do this and id be like why uVukile can go angithi he's a boy why can he go and he you know he went and got Bilharzias from a river down there mina why must I sit at home you know and this was to become like worse as you know when I got older because nje im challenging my parents authority bangitshelile like ibhande how shame daily bread laughs daily bread sana ngangazi and like sometimes they used to beg ugogo please don't tell and ugogo say say ok hamba uyodlala but be back by this time but it like you meet interesting people along the way ngizula

Siyanda: shit

Mandisa: hey im like really young at this point but im like so trusting like yoo iClermont ngangiyizula like you know in the in our i34 i33 nase yoo ngangihamba so this this this image is I remember the one time I wanted to be cool cause I think I've always been a nerd I used to get 1st class pass or 2nd you know there was a girl we used to compete with at eskoleni I remember the one time I was tired of being teased for all these passing ne so ngabona ukuthi the cool kids bayafeyila so the one time I didn't study at all ngafe ngathola uF ooh I was so excited I went to show I was cool you know ukuthi ha ngithole uF wow ngicela ukukutshela ukuthi when I got home ne you know like at the beginning of our street uanti wakhona wathi how cause they all know it report day

Siyanda: yeah yeah yes and everyone can stop you like how did you do

Mandisa: Exactly how did you do and that's what they did ufeyili uthole uF pa bangshaya yoh go to the next house you know hawu Welile cause you know I miss goody to shoes you know Welile uyakhala ukhalelani uAnti wasenext door ungishayile ukshayeleni

Siyanda: ufeyilile

Mandisa: pa yaunderstander ukuthi by the time I got home uma wangishayela ukuthi ngihambe ngihlupha abantu these are your parents I'm causing a disruption why kumele bangishaye yoo never again I decided no thank you very much but uyaunderstander that sense of collective parenting that sense of you know what my parents may be may have biologically given birth to me but every single one of those they have invested in me so much so like I remember the one time we were messing around with like soap and stuff yoo uma wasenext door wafika wasishaya ini wathi yazi ukuthi icoster malini lento and im like uhm its it's not yours it my mother's ungangitsheli leyonto she hit me like sishaywa all of us like and there was a sense of collective justice you all of you there's no one who'll gets scot free ukuthi you started the very fact ukuthi ukhomba omunye you are all in this together you all get the same kind of hawema it was quite something because when I think when I

look back now we don't have that classic example you know lento yokuthi schools are by 2 o'clock you know kids are back at home ubone iyngane zigqoke iygqebhe in miniskirts ini ini nani huh and im like nenzani la you you see um what's it uminister of transport pulling over and they're ready I mean this guy should be dating me for starters laughs

Siyanda: Actually

Mandisa: actually but im just concerned ukuthi these these girls are hanging around estratweni waiting for Mr the Ministers of transport

Siyanda: and finance

Mandisa: you know and finance and entertainment and everything else heyiwena and so I ask them ukuthi nenzani lana godukani hhe Welile please they give me the whole attitude run down do you understand ukuthi yo I was like shit okay and then afterwards I was like no man they need to know ukuthi this is not on you know they're back chatting me ukuthi hey I have a right to be here if I want to and im like your studies tell me in that sense that sense is lost we have lost that sense and I don't know what it is because I know ukuthi mina to this day I'm like umama umama to me I don't care ukuthi she didn't give birth to me lokhuyakuhlonipha is no more there its actually

Siyanda: you've just spark a memory I have as a child I remember I I was walking from somewhere I don't know and I passed umama wakanext door and she just came from a shop for some reason I think I didn't see her or I ignored her but wayephuma esitolo

Mandisa: ehhe wayephethe

Siyanda: ephethe

Mandisa: jojo sana

Siyanda: and ngamdlula and I went home and remember that evening she came at home to say lo

Mandisa: ungibonile

Siyanda: Ungibonile wangidlula ah

Mandisa: you got it

Siyanda: I got it from her and from my parents

Mandisa: Exactly

Siyanda: you just couldn't do those things

Mandisa: that's umawakho umshiya ehamba ucabanga legrosa ekaba Siyanda next door ucabanga ukuthi mabangadlile halo exactly I miss that so much but you know what it is we have a responsibility like often when I talk like no like the issues or the campaigns that I do its about that I ask myself what am I doing about it what am I doing to change that status quo because you know what it is like speaking about issues because I am part of the scrutinise campaign I always campaign because I am tired of having to see our young black brothers and sisters being buried all the time what the fuck is that what am I doing to change that because it's not just any brother it's not ukuthi there's its somebody else's child or whatever those are my brothers and sisters what am I doing huh what am I doing because im just as responsible what am I doing to make sure yes people may question is it effective is it not effective but you know what it is at the end of the day im like I'm doing something because that's how I grew up and I know ukuthi it works it really works

Siyanda: Now are they your brothers and sisters because they are black

Mandisa: of course but also just nje generally why are we burying young people

Siyanda: why how

Mandisa: I'm 29 years old these these are Mandela's and Mbeki's children you know they know about this stuff they're choosing otherwise why are they choosing otherwise mina I grew up mina ngizi you know and yes we fall in and out of it but ukuzithanda ukuziqhenya it was instilled in me from a young age ugogo made sure of that I'm a princess so there's a certain way I should behave you know they talk about self love I'm like that's nothing new that's nothing new

Siyanda: self esteem is not something really that that I lack

Mandisa: no ukuzipha exactly

Siyanda: ja you know

Mandisa: our issues are economic predominantly

Siyanda: yes

Mandisa: essentially economic but we have a word ukuziqhenya you know like the songs we used to play u2sheleni that's how I always open my wherever I go now that's how I always open 2sheleni cause it's like and then I ask them about u2sheleni its fine imali but its speak about worth because the scenario 2sheli ngake ngahamba ngahlangana nama naba you know nabafana abawu2

Siyanda: 2sheleni

Mandisa: bangibuza ukuthi nguwubani

Siyanda: 2sheleni

Mandisa: ngabatshela ukuthi ngiwuWelile

Siyanda: 2sheleni

Mandisa: wakaTembe uMngwanase uMhwati understander ukuthi what's that's about who am I

Siyanda: who am i

Mandisa: I am uWelile

Siyanda: who I come from who I belong to that takes a long line of people yeah

Mandisa: I my name comes before you and my name means something and it has value we've lost that these kids are no longer playing 2sheleni they're busy namaplay station yaunderstander ukuthi those those games

Siyanda: they are on mix it

Mandisa: they are on mix it babe and you know on mix it there's porn and im like okay

Siyanda: there is porn yes

Mandisa: yaunderstander ukuthi nje futhi eh games like o2sheleni games like kheth omthandayo kheth omthandayo because uswidi was like you know couldn't just get uswidi you have to really afford uswidi it was it was some it was a privilege

Siyanda: it was a privilege

Mandisa: so ukuchooser umuntu onjengoswidi means you are alleviating them to high status it was about worth self worth my worth as an individual in gqezi wezintombi all those songs is about knowing who you are

Siyanda: worth was actually not about money

Mandisa: no

Siyanda: but but it's about values ukuthi

Mandisa: yes exactly

Siyanda: you must be this certain kind of person in order to attract the right sort of similar kind of person

Mandisa: And even though back then you know um somebody asked me recently ah you know Welile what do you think is a handsome guy ngaphendula ngesintu ngathi mina when I was growing up I was told ukuthi ubuhle bendoda iynkomo zayo

Siyanda: umh

Mandisa: and I just finished that I'm like lets why I we breaking down to physical attributes cause you know what somebody can have an accident right now does it mean he's less beau you know what the hell what kind of a question is that your character is important that's the thing those songs taught us about character your character is more important than what you do we've lost that those games we used to play they hold our sense of character being a princess wasn't about ukuthi ngiyiprincess I'm better than you no no I need to know me and these are the value systems that inform me and I am better than the best so everything that I do must inform that whether it is that I'm cleaning my room mama used to clean my room such that its better than best whether im a doctor whether ngi ngiyashanela whatever vocation I choose I must be better than best character is important my upbringing had a lot to do with it and for me also another thing that was quite traumatic that you know made so that when I was 8 turning 9 I had to leave fine there was political violence you know itear gas we were the last ge you know we used to experience it you know like you can't go to school kuneteargas uyakhala awazi you know what I mean sasithi iTgas you know cause we didn't really know what was happening iTgas hawema kuqhume iTgas kuqhume iTgas we would run to the next house whatever you know

Siyanda: it was fun

Mandisa: it no it wasn't fun because it was sore phela hawu our eyes

Siyanda: but it was um energy you were running

Mandisa: we were engaged even though not understanding the climate no

Siyanda: yeah so speak to me about that growing up as a black girl in a township under apartheid in South Africa

Mandisa: let me tell you something else before even growing up under apartheid because then I didn't know apartheid all I knew was that white people you know iyngelosi they're angels they do nothing wrong you know when we play we take false you know those there's that plant and it has petals and you know put it down our nails sithathe isherbet put is as lipstick

Siyanda: oh isherbet

Mandisa: we'd take our t-shirts and wrap them on our head then we have long hair because exactly do you know what I mean because that's ideal I grew up believing white people are angels but what I did and also that you know like you don't talk back to a white person you just say yes and then that used to confuse me cause when we used to go to town and we going to a shop and my mother is not happy she would talk back to the white person and I knew that was dangerous so I didn't understand um a ethi call the manager hhayi ma imanager umlungu how can you you know my mother is insisting no no no she's not happy with the service Mandisa what is your mother doing you know but what I was completely aware of was one of those cute little you know like ingane you know we used you know protected household you know we received lots of love we didn't want for anything we also a little better off than a lot of people cause mom is working my dad is working even though I all I knew was that we had a little more than other people and then often we gave a lot

you know like but you know I it wasn't like for me I didn't understand economics I just understood that sometimes we have things and when you have something I grew up knowing that you give ja and you share

Siyanda: you share it yeah

Mandisa: exactly but what I was aware of from a very early age you know all the boys would come and be like oh umuhle you know and and I knew it wasn't a good thing because you know like oh my mom would always be like mh mh you must never you know nje uthi yabo uma eseqala ukuthi umuhle you must run away cause boys do bad things to you exactly but it was also these old I mean teenagers was old when you 5 a teenager is yo

Siyanda: Yo

Mandisa: you grown up man hhaa you know what I mean like never mind 20 jasus so my parents say im 21 yohoho you understand that I was very aware ukuthi ok you know I was like the pretty chubby little girl that caught the interests of boys and that wasn't a good thing

Siyanda: and to p so you telling that being a chubby little girl

Mandisa: Ja and just and you know what it is like I had such a a sense like I knew that you know I I I could also material you know I could get cute little bob things on my hair all those girly things you know my parents could afford to get me that but I just for me I had such an awareness of I'm a girl and boys when boys say they like me it's not good you know and and looking back cause recently I've had to sort of you know ask myself where did I get that idea that you know I am not beautiful I'm not attractive I internalised that you know

Siyanda: why

Mandisa: because abafana these older boys they always telling me ukuthi ngimuhle you know lets meet that's how I got to leave you know how that's how I go to private school it was this one day you know there were bullies right eskoleni and me im not violent and also I was a teacher's pet I used to hang out I could go into the teachers tea room you know

Siyanda: nice

Mandisa: because mos you know I was one of those I was a nerd I was I was I was I mean that stuff was easy like do you know what I mean like school was never a challenge because I used to be bored at school you know we used to go to Saturday school and we learnt English there my parents you know we used to go for extra classes so school nje iBantu education was not the best that's it merit you know

Siyanda: yes

Mandisa: mh and often you know I'd be teachin helping other kids with their school stuff so like the one that that was the one final that was the incident my parents and ugo decided that's it I have to be removed you know they had choices like my father was involved in politics but you know he'd I don't know what had happened there you know cause I remember that discussion ukuthi you know they might have to pack up and go or whatever but it went silent so my parents then decided ukuthi yazini they will stay but that would mean but we can't be in Clermont anymore I remember it so clearly it was these bunch of bullies you know they came and said to me umh meet us umh you know ngasetoilet afterschool kusasa and I was like ok but I knew it was never a good thing to meet you know by the toilet because girls always came back crying and it was you know and my parents had warned me don't do that you know I knew it wasn't the right thing because bad thing happened in there and then came the following day and I didn't go I told my teacher there was you know a

bunch of boys harassing us but she was like you know she said you know teachers didn't take didn't think much of it coughs excuse me so then that day we took a different route you know back home because I knew ukuthi they'd be waiting for us cause I didn't show up behind the toilets the following day during tea break labafana bafika bangishaya bangishayela ukuthi I wasn't at you know I didn't go to the toilets the day before bathi nje that day if I'm not there ngizobona you know they could do anything and they were ingenge mos so like hello I remember being so shit scared like we took another route again but all routes eventually come out through one way basilinda at that spot they beat me up so badly and my friend uZanele we were the two you know we used to swap number 1 and 2 position at school she was so smart and so beautiful I saw her recently it was so incredible cause it was just she was like then she was like my partner in crime if I was number 1 this year she was number 1 the next year you know what I mean kind of thing yazi kodwa indlela abangishaya ngayo like I came home I was bruised and everything else and I remember exactly that year

Siyanda: how old were you

Mandisa: I was 8 9 huh cause I was 9 turning 10 the following year going to to Wikim nje that was middle

Siyanda: going to where

Mandisa: Wikim Wikim in Maritzburg I remember clearly that was middle of the year thereafter nje the next thing I knew I was going for interviews all over nje you know my parents nje were trying to get me to a good sch you know to a school away from here cause that was it I was indlela engangi I was so broken I didn't go to school for my but I still passed I was number 2 laughs which just goes to show you know how stupid the education system was and umh I remember going to Wikim and uh the Mrs Barnett liked me for some reason and I loved being there and I was like this is the place I'm supposed to be at I remember seeing so many white kids before I'd have all these dreams about to me like cause we used to watch the sound of music right like religiously

Siyanda: yes

Mandisa: my idea of a boarding school I imagined being on a ship you know cause that there were a lot of white people there must be on a ship on a boat somewhere you know that what I'd be doing for the rest of my life and it looked so amazing I remember dreaming about it and talk about it I even have a scar you know my pre you know Wikim scar it somewhere along here I don't know it used to be you know what I mean because I was so excited ngagxuma ngangisina ekhaya and I broke the glass table kind of thing and it was something for me because that was the incident that finally made my parents decide ukuthi they're not going we're not leaving but the kids need to go away and Maritzburg and you know boarding school to private school you know there were few other families also that had been referred to you know and so they were there and they were safe and fine from this stuff so so long as we were okay bona they could continue to stay eClermont cause another thing that was happening was some kids who went to boarding school you know were being followed you know and their families were murdered you know umona amongst people ukuthi oh ok you can afford blah blah blah so we used to lie umona as in like as in like there was this one child she you know their kid used to go to St Anne's abazali bakhona babulawa because abantu bebenomona ukuthi oh they must belong to this political party that's why they're able to go these schools they followed them to school it was never like I remember every time like my father would panic like he couldn't just go straight to school he had to you know ulokhu ume and check who's following you all those kind of things it wasn't easy cause umona people were jealous because they

also wanted better but they you know they couldn't but my parents it's not like they were wealthy or anything they were working class a nurse and a medical technologist you know just trying to get by but I also remember ukuthi um when I left um it was so traumatic for my brother because we'd grown up so close my sister was like a year old or something or 2 years you know ja I went to Wikim in 89 ja 89 I was and I was 9 coming in I turned 10 at school and then like my sense of self would change drastically ja

Siyanda: tell me about that you are a township born girl um under apartheid going and to this fancy private school eMaritzburg

Mandisa: well the fanciness didn't hit me I just knew ukuthi now I could play longer I got nice uniform there were uniform

Siyanda: niyafunda on the boat you know

Mandisa: you know nje and it was different it was hard we were in eh a dome of 12 girls and I'm the only black girl there and this is I mean we had standards ne this was between std you know class 1 no no no my dome was umh std 1 and std 2 dome and that represented the whole school the 12 of us boarders and of those 12 I'm the only black girl I was the only black girl in my class uyaunderstander ukuthi I was you know in each class there's only 1 black girl and on that black girls also were you know sort of royalty like you know there from the you know the you know iprincess you know princesses and per you know

Siyanda: that very important

Mandisa: Ghanian Ghanian royal families like you know all those kind of I went to school with black heads who

Siyanda: I don't understand it because I never went to a white school so I don't understand umh I can imagine it

Mandisa: royalty

Siyanda: ngifuna ukuunderstand like the distance of being a black girl from the township and coming to

Mandisa: A white school

Siyanda: A white school and apartheid I want to understand that

Mandisa: hawema Siyanda Siyanda let me tell you something I remember my parents telling me I must be agreeable don't cause trouble don't do anything you know

Siyanda: you stay under the radar

Mandisa: ja you are now her to learn when I get there I meet these black kids the one great thing about uniform in which is great then because in rele relative to the royal house of whatever what's this you know royal house we were poor I was like one of the poorest kids there but because everything we even had supper dresses I liked that I liked ukuthi you belonged to a house and then you wore the colour of the supper dress like not civvies which is civilian clothes casual clothes were not worn on our at Wikim when we amalgamated with the working colleges suddenly we wore civi you know civvies and then you could see the economic disparities and that's why that was quite traumatic for all us because before it was equalised because literally I mean some of the kids it was international school it was a private boarding school very British you know manners and decorum I mean our school motto was manners maketh man you know you I'm serious like and it was lovely like you know you're speaking properly and you know elocution and learning to eat with 7 dinner knives and durararara all that kind of stuff was essential

Siyanda: Aah God yeah

Mandisa: but my first impressions going there I always speak about this incident ngiya etoilet and I heard a white person farting for the first time

Siyanda: laughs

Mandisa: yindaba white people can fart oh ini they use the toilet they they're just like me uyaunderstander ukuthi

Siyanda: yeah they shit like us yeah

Mandisa: I remember though in our dome there was this one child who called me a kafir ngamqhumisa ngempama because that's what we do right that what I always seen if somebody calls you a kafir you slap them eskoleni the violence in not advocated so they called you know our parents in my mother ukuthi unghamambe ushaya izingane laughs but I'm like that's how we deal with issues elokshini ngizokube angithi now the thing you see the thing is now I knew they were all timid I'd always been the timid girl who'd run away you know I had a mouth uba ngibatshela ukuthi you don't know 1+1 uyislima and then I'd run away my brother would get beaten up you know he was my protector I used to always like you're something you know eskoleni ukuthi wena you can't even spell cat uyisdomu hey Welile sizokthola ha I'd be running away my brother would come you know he'd get beaten up on my behalf so I knew ukuthi these white kids they didn't know fists anything so when I heard kafir qhumisa ngempama not because of anything because I just for me it was like ja

Siyanda: That's how you settle things

Mandisa: yes that's exactly that's how that's how they'd always been threatening me you know and then I had to be socialised no no no you talk through things you know so it was that sort of social integration it was also hard in a sense I mean which is great I wasn't aware of how much my parents were struggling to pay cause everything was regulated everybody got R20 pocket money a month it didn't matter how much your parents earned and I'm gonna say to you these parents like half you know they earned you know they owned countries companies everything like it was an international little private college for white kids and a few black select kids you know so it was by some miracle that I was selected cause when I wro you know we don't have I mean the the it was the lu um abaLuvuyo ja Luvuno I forget though the family name who'd recommended it that you know that they accept us cause you know the family friends were doctors friends of our parents who worked in the same you know they all in health and they strongly recommended us to this school but the principal you know she told me years later that she just saw this little bubbly child and she's like this child you know she has such much potential and I was like that all it takes and that's where I learned how to dream you know before ngikhula eClermont I hadn't even thought about careers anything like that you know it had never entered my mind but in that year I knew that I could dream Siyanda I could be somebody what I was receiving love I wasn't 1 in 200 kids I was 1 in 10 kids in a class the teacher paid attention to me showed me love you know Mrs Stoke really really changed my life like that teacher but here's another funny incident umcwayizeni ukucwayiza angithi is to blink so I was in the back at school like ngiseselokshini maths I aced maths like you know I was a maths bof so coming into you know Wikim still I would pass but then you know there were story sums and things like that English was a bit of a problem you know that's why I had to repeat I had to repeat and I was frustrated a bit but you know I also understood because my English was not up to scratch everything like that and still I was young enough to repeat you know because I was 9 turning 10 in std 2 and that was still the average age you know fine but I remember them asking a maths question you know like they had a digital watch cause digital watches were still like new so they

wanted a name of this thing manje mina ngiyazi ngomcwayizeni which means blink eye directly translated eish so the teacher keeps asking and I don't know how to say this thing in English I don't have the word everyone is naming grandfather clock but im like ey ngiyazi umcwayizeni but the word they don't know umcwayizeni so I remember putting up my hand and saying blink eye iblink eye the whole class laughed yezwa and she's like iblink eye does this and she goes yes the watch does this but it has a name it's called a digital watch that was the most embarrassing thing for me cause

Siyanda: I can imagine

Mandisa: you know what I mean language you know so that year I used to go to extra English classes and everything else some you know there were very few Afrikaans girls it was very European and British cause it was Mary Moore was British you know mh

Siyanda: I think the thing that strikes a cord with me about you know what you've just said you know and going to these sort of school and for the first time dreaming being able to dream and being allowed to dream is that actually and I suppose im bitter inside ukuthi I never went to private education school and I'm bitter and sour that the majority of South Africa

Mandisa: Don't get that chance

Siyanda: Don't get that chance

Mandisa: And its simple though isn't it it's not about the money it's not about the money

Siyanda: No its simple and the majority of the people don't get that chance to dream and that's why I was so pissed off at those that try to rob us you know dream bigger you are better than that

Mandisa: to yourself better than this but also you know what it was Siyanda I learnt squash I learnt tennis and can I tell you what it is and this is one of the things that make me so sad going back eClermont they don't have extra mural activities

Siyanda: Absolutely not

Mandisa: A child develops

Siyanda: we have soccer

Mandisa: and grows because you are exposed to a myriad different things arts and crafts is not just about cutting izinto and painting you discover yourself you have somebody who's investing in you who's giving you the possibilities this is what you can do choose needlework there were all these things that we could do I'd never I mean ekhaya fine ugogo I used to saw with ugogo so I was really good at that but it wasn't just about gardening because that what you did you gardened and you learnt ikhishi

Siyanda: and you played soccer yeah

Mandisa: you know and netball dude I placed I became I got Knock

Mandisa: come in

Siyanda: since we've been rudely interrupted

Mandisa: ya

Siyanda: yes

Mandisa: so Siyanda do you know what it is also when you realise ukuthi you can dream having access to all these extra mural activities is what shapes you not ukuthi yes all the time especially when you're little all the time that you spend inside the classroom is important but it's just as

important the other staff that keeps you pre-occupied because it all of a sudden you suddenly realise I can play sport squash I used to just sit and stare and then I realised oh no like it's part of our study programme they'll be time dedicated until you discover what sport suit you if you like sport at all if you like dance all these things that are part of society you get you have access to them access to information access to opportunity is what the ordinary black child doesn't have can I tell you what I was so disheartening about uZandile seeing her again was ukuthi mina I then when I left yena she's yes she is still you know I can see she's still she's beautiful and she's progressed but ngiyabona ukuthi if she had had half the chance to dream had access that I did that's the only difference between her and I because we're just on the same par

Siyanda: yeah let me ask you this question one more question before we eat umh

Mandisa: ja

Siyanda: how how did you then back then

Mandisa: Relate to coming back home

Siyanda: no yes regarding now I wanna say it more crudely than that I wanna say how you negotiated being uh what's being coined coconut

Mandisa: I had no concern huh

Siyanda: and then relating it back to eClermont where you were born umh ja so stories about that

Mandisa: So can I tell you what was important at school is that you did well if you passed and you did all these things and I was there so there wasn't an issue yes there were subjects I had problems with like English and I went to extra you know extra classes ja back home I then started to see myself a little better but then also I started feeling lonely I'd come back home for holidays uh at school they'd give you home so you do that homework vese nje ekhaya my mother nje whether you were

Siyanda: forced into

Mandisa: whether you were at school or not at school whatever my mother used to teach us like my mother

Siyanda: hello wozo funda

Mandisa: Ngemgqibelo we used to attend extra Saturday class since I was little the minute we could read right like going through the library was a part of our daily bread since as far back as I can remember going to a library and getting a book having a card under my name of course my mother used to keep that card but uyaunderstander ukuthi I used to get so much joy this card has my name I could never take out a card under my brother's name even though my mother one blast my card I felt so disappointed but I was familiar with the library I think by the age 5 6 uyaunderstander so now to make the division worse not only was you know considered a little snobbish girl from laphaya you know e e 2671

Siyanda: Wikim

Mandisa: ehhe before I even went to Wikim 2671 was our house number e2671 but now when I came back what are they going to talk about it became an issue cause everyone else fine they still playing games I could play but then I wanted to talk about this story and I you know I want

Siyanda: and they not

Mandisa: they don't understand me

Siyanda: ngoba they can't relate

Mandisa: you know they can't relate and then what made it different I wanna talk about different dessert you know about the dessert bathi ngiqamba amanga ayikho leyonto

Siyanda: ujelly no custard

Mandisa: exactly you fit you know that's it

Siyanda: that's it yeah

Mandisa: I wanna talk to them about playing squash about swimming ayikho leyonto oh please I'm making it up I'm making up lies I wanna tell them about a computer ukuthi you can ungabhala izinto ngecomputer im lying slowly over the years it just I became isolated my brother and I also like my brother has his own interesting story because for him when I left he felt so traumatised cause it was only twice that my brother you know had been separated one was in hospital he had bilharzia I cried shitless so did he umh because you know what I mean we were now apart you know we used to hate each other yoo but just being apart so when I left eh my brother nje was so miserable my parents sent him to Escourt

Phone rings

Siyanda: Dude do you remember where you left off

Mandisa: mh I was talking I mean the question that you'd asked me was you know how did it feel as a young black woman having been in boarding school and then coming back and for me nje like I was explaining the relationship with my brother what slowly started happening was we became isolated from the rest you know our peers and our age groups because all of a sudden futhi there were things that I could you know I was experiencing at school that they told me it was a lie it didn't exist so less and less we had we began I began to have less in common with the kids around me already nje as it was cause of the way we grew up we grew up with those families you know that it was ok to go to so and so's house cause you know the parents knew each other and all those things and then now there was a further isolation what what are we going to talk about because they are not reading the same books and ekhaya vese they've been very book oriented but it became more so because we had homework over vac time so I ended up spending a lot of time at home I'd go out you know e to go to eytolo or whatever to go to the shops or maybe once to the beach or whatever but it was always focused on school work my brother became my best friend nje you know and nayeke eventually when he went to Escort and it used to pain me completely ukuthi I'd gone to boarding school my brother was at home and he ran away so many times and he always would be like no but the reason why he eventually also had to be sent cause he cried and said he wants to go where I am you know so at least with my brother you know we could talk about the same things I mean his experiences you know with was different but for me like at least endlini I had my own you know age group in my brother I had a younger sister so you know it was like looking after her whatever but then I had less friends eClermont I became completely isolated because what do you talk about it's not the same things anymore and that divide just grew and grew and like you really and like you only connected like I remember my parents used to complain about a high phone bill who else am I gonna to talk to because all my friends are in all these different countries imagine you making international calls to Botswana you know to the UK but event then my parents would lock the phone but we learnt how to tap the phone and continue with our conversations it became so it was lonely wena Siyanda it was horrible also because we could no longer now just walk estratweni cause the kids would tease us some kids were horrible you know those jealousies and you know kids are cruel with each other and it was just so difficult and like you you start you start having a social life

when you go to family functions you know and nakhona I was the nerd who always carried a book laughs and umh you know so I was even though I was like you know quite extroverted and flamboyant and all those things but there was also a shy side to me that I was very aware of ukuthi I was happy to sit and read my book and this is amongst family here I'm happy to sit and read my book because what am I gonna begin to talk to them even amongst my family I barely know them because I spend you know a greater part of the year at school in boarding school with other kids our boarder mistresses became our mothers I'm 9 years old you know

Siyanda: Mh

Mandisa: I turned 10 in boarding school since then until I was 18 I'm raised by boarding mistresses ja and so my exp you know coming home my mothers' sort of mothering role is not really she's there to overlook that I've done my homework ini ini nani so much so that she got such a shock when I finished high school because she was like hawu mntanami iwashingi awukwazi ngisho nokuwasha awazi nokupheka there wasn't that focus at school we were not supposed to do domestic duties we focused on our books we focused on building and creating ourselves you know I learnt really late how to cook and even then my mother was like insisting ukuthi no no no no mntanami hahe they're things that you need to this day I hate washing cause why because I can do there are other things to do I could be reading a book what washing excuse me you know and then even she also perpetuated that because she was like no kids eskoleni they've made it very clear kids are to do school work we're not to be disturbed you know you'd rather have us reading but even she used to give us mixed signals cause one minute she's telling us to read the next thing she's calling us lazy because we can't do house chores it was really difficult so like my life was really centred around my school friends those were the people I knew and like friends who also in eClermont like Noxy you know who I grew up with her you not with her she was also in another boarding school she was St John also a private school so we could relate and it wasn't the same also we couldn't the level of interaction even with kids like there is a difference between the private school upbringing and and public schools which were predominantly white you know the so called model C I mean recently it was so disgusting really because there was a joke amongst us little black kids all hanging together omunye athi ooh ningamamodel C and we are like no no no we are purely private and I was like flip we didn't even like what does that mean and we understand it as in because just being model C its tasteless it disrespectful it's just mediocre we're groomed in excellence you know and realising that ja so you know umh that's really it you know umh the for us the distinction it's not just about where you got educated it's what you were being schooled in ja and as a young black woman also something else like our language English was encouraged we spoke you know our home language it was an issue we're being anti social so you there's a denial of self and an identity to this day I was I mean like last week I was at Hilton Hilton art festival and then I stopped by my old mamartar and I gave you know a speech during prize giving that denial is still there

Siyanda: I mean it almost the idea ukuthi you know speaking English is equated with intelligence

Mandisa: Yes

Siyanda: being fluent in English means you are clever umh

Mandisa: yeah and that your own languages and that how they die out you know it's like don't invest in that and thank goodness for my parents who babesikhulumisa isiZulu I remember the one time I was acting so snobbish and pretended like I don't understand isiZulu my father was like not sending you to those schools to deny you who you are we there to just give you better education if

you're forgetting that sizokukhipha sikuyise eSobantu yoo and for me that just was like oh my goodness

Siyanda: Yeah and I remember for a long time like in cellphones when I got a chance I was 18 I always put down home language as English which was completely and I knew ukuthi it it it made me

Mandisa: Better

Siyanda: Better look better to speak English at home when actually in fact

Mandisa: Haibo kukhulunywa isiZulu

Siyanda: IsiZulu kuphela

Mandisa: yeah or a mixture of both you know JA

Siyanda: yes yes yes

Mandisa: nje a mixture and mina the way I got to know isiXhosa cause you know my mom is Xhosa yo sana wayengithethisa Welile mamela apha you know like and so like also for me lately it's quite an important distinction my mother's tongue is isiXhosa my mother tongue is isiZulu

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: mh I think also like I see it one of the things also which is really great by the time my sister went to boarding school cause she went in high school my brother and I we went there when we were really young so a sense of identity even little things like I started shaving not because I was hairy but because I felt peer pressure all the white kids are shaving they're hairy you know I mean my period came late I got you know I started menstruating at 13 I mean other kids had started already by 12 I felt so left out and I think that year that I got my period my period came like 3 times it was distraught you know like hawu is this it you know and I've been irregular since you know I think it was really into my 20s that I started being regular actually like mid 20s

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: but like I wouldn't know when my period is gonna come you know and if it came it was short so it's like I used to just wear you know sanitary towels just because and then they burst me one time actually Wels you don't have your period it was the most traumatic thing like flip I was so desperate to fit in desperate to fit and sense of identity like body issues sense of self like ukuthi you know I you know when I you know started developing breasts hawu your breasts are big Welile you know and it was also the time that I got sick and was taking medication that made me bigger you know physically so I you know there was a self hate that's I was like how come my body is like this I was very sporty and all those things I excelled you know at school in terms of like extra-curricular stuff but still it wasn't enough because hawu my body is expanding my hips are bigger than theirs you know my my breasts are bigger what's what's wrong what's wrong with me because you do you know what I mean cause they became my sisters like to this day when I say to you like my oldest friend like you know I knew her when I was 9 she's that's that's the one person she we're sisters cause we experienced puberty together that what you do at home I had that at you know boarding school environment with other kids as well you know so like we all to this day when people say oh who're your friends I'm like well yes they're my friends I went to school with them but it was we're sisters everyday like in all of us a lot of the majority of us were full time boarders so you can imagine ukuthi out of 365 days maybe 300 days we were at boarding school together that's a huge chunk of the year and you're growing up over a span

Siyanda: Of your life

Mandisa: Huge chunk of my life and it's influenced by all these different cultures literally and all these different nationalities which has nothing to do with race but also always being aware of being black little things like that was the one thing that was damaging about being in a private school where you know being black you literally 1 in 20 in a class was we used to do things by percentage angithi they 're being dipl democratic so it came socials right and also because in the other boys schools as well it's just the same few black boys blah blah blah but mina ngangiyisdudla mos you know I had a body so I was the little fatso you know I was never the you know so that also affected you know my sense of self also but I remember like ukuthi it came socials how they'd work out the songs that cause there were black songs they kept songs that we liked and trust me they were they're not as black as the songs really they weren't it's just like please they danced to them to you know like Dianna Ross come on how black you know

Siyanda: that's not black come on

Mandisa: you know what I'm saying exactly but that was like ok well we'll play your music lets work it out by percentage so if there're 20 in a class and there are 2 black girls so every 10th song would be a black song hello you work it out how many songs you would listen to a night like 5 that's not really you know what I mean it's not based on the reality of the world outside it was and and it was so terrible that by the time I entered university it was so traumatic for me that first week of uni actually the first 2 week at university I was so used to being a few I mean by the time I was in matric there were 3 bl no 4 black girls whoowhoo I mean you know the whole matric class was like 40 so it's a tenth

Siyanda: in the majority laughs

Mandisa: whoo wow I mean that was big to have so many black kids in one class and then umh so we used to the school from like grade R which is you can have grade 1 then you have grade 0 then you have grade R so it's like little ones I realise when I went two weeks ago there's grade RR okay and these kids hold cellphones huh ok so like the whole school from grade 0 nje class 1 to matric we're not more than 300 yaunderstander grade 1 to matric class 1 to matric that's the entire school 300 kids come to university kugcwele odarkie

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: they have no manners they don't say please they don't say thank you my goodness and this was not only odarkie it's also Indian people have no manners white people I was like it was horrible they don't stand up for an old you know somebody older comes by and offer their seat I was traumatised in the bus there just keeps you know they sit down as an older person I used to ngang ngangibuya ekhaya ngikhala I was crying because this isn't what I was used to I'm used to having manners knowing your elders you know what I mean so like the school environment really it was a small it was a micro-cosm of the values that I had been taught by my grandmother intensified so by the time I mean I was you know exposed to the real world not the world where you dine with 7 knives and forks cutlery and you know you learn different waltzes you know strictly come dancing please like we had this thing called women of the 90s ball you know you have balls to sort of you know where you gr it's like a mini sort of you know the finale is the ball that you have that evening and your parents come and then you invite boys from you know the boys school to come over and you you do the decorating like flower arranging I've forgotten it but I know I can do it I can set a table I know how to set one for this kind of function I mean come on in which life you know but so then coming into university it's like all sort liquorice all sort and they are rude they have no manners it's traumatic

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: It's traumatic because I've come to understand that this is how people are you are well mannered you remember other people you respect other people those values they're gone

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: and then at the same time that was happening I realised ukuthi even naseClermont cause I went straight from you know boarding school and then to living at home I have to now deal with taxis you know nje it was ha I mean I got picked up from school for the first two years and then my parents were like yazini this one she needs to get in touch with reality yoo it was horrible

Siyanda: and you did

Mandisa: I did and I I'm glad they did that you know but it's like you know my sense of self but also something else that was lost though having gone because to this day like I am still quite afraid of you know those black girls who are street wise I'm not street wise since I was little I've been traumatised to me that bullies have always been streetwise in my life even ngisaseClermont you know so streetwise thing it it you know it's like my sense of you know it's there is and it's a class issue really let's be honest about that it's a class issue and it's really terrible when you when you realise ukuthi flip all along I always thought It was me issue no it's a class issue it's about upbringing and realising my my sense of blackness and for so long I was so desperate to fit into the kasi vibe and then now that I'm older I'm like no flip this is the way I am I cannot deny it myself and I cannot apologise for being this way it doesn't make me any less black that why I hate the description ukuthi I'm a coconut coconut since when I'm as black as the next person I am a healthy shade of chocolate brown and that's inside and out

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: I am the sum total of my experiences I am the sum total of the narratives that my grandmother taught me those values

Siyanda: Yeah

Mandisa: I am more I am more than and also my background I am more than the genetics to the biology I am the dreams I am the things that I will become I am me I am as a complete sentence and that's something that is I'm having you know I am learning that now that I am is a complete sentence and when I say Welile I am Welile it's means something to me and then when I say I am Welile Tembe that's you know my name comes before me so that that's speaks of my ancestry the generations that come before me you know and also I don't have to defend that nginguWelile I don't have to justify to anybody it doesn't make me any less black just because you know I I have you know exposure to English and I can speak it you know sometimes English gets a bit much for for for my tongue it doesn't I'm not defined by the language that I speak

Siyanda: what are you defined by

Mandisa: my social circumstances my economics well no those don't define me my character you know what it is what's most important thing is my character to love and be loved progr you know what it it yes I am the product of a context a geography a place I am the product of of a family a consciousness I am the product of two people who decided in a certain space in time to get married and then create a family and their histories also I am I am south African and I'm proud to be south African and I know that our country is teething right now and it's ok but I am a young south African black woman

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: I am all those things but more importantly my character I also define myself by my dreams and aspirations I decide who I am the one of the reasons I left Durban is because you know in Durban you know I started feeling stifled one day

Siyanda: It's small hey

Mandisa: it's so small but also Joburg is just as small honey

Siyanda: laughs

Mandisa: Oh lord Oh lord you know I could say one time I'm a researcher oh ok you're a dancer oh but you said you're a researcher you're an actress decide what you are and I was like but I am all these things here I can decide what I am anytime at any place and it's ok because everybody here you know I ngiyazazi ukuthi ngingubani I know where I come from and I know where I'm going and everyone has that kind of mentality you need to know who you are and hence I haven't felt this rat race you know what what rat race there's none because I know what I'm about

Siyanda: I'm gonna ask a question which perhaps I shouldn't ask for the interest of research I'm gonna ask it because I'm thinking it umh in terms in the how how do you make sense or negotiate the the the history of this place of this country umh being black as tied to oppression which is what umh people suggest is what ties black people together

Mandisa: No that's not what ties black people together so Siyanda ne I have liberal upbringing and then I get introduced to feminism and then feminism betrays me I discover womanism it betrays me because I I don't recognise it I understand it and appreciate it but then it becomes insufficient

Siyanda: Please tell me the difference between feminism and womanism

Mandisa: Well feminism well womanism came about because a lot of black women felt they're a lot of things feminism be you know its white libe you know it's white

Siyanda: It's white

Mandisa: JA its white it's mostly

Siyanda: yeah yeah yeah its interests and not united

Mandisa: it's articulated and acknowledged and so when I came across womanism I realised ok I'm a black woman but still womanism isn't sufficient because I'm from South Africa

Siyanda: yeah mh

Mandisa: I am not from a developed country I don't always have access so womanism betrays me again but still feminism you know womanism those sort of concept are in me I appreciate I acknowledge I live I start dating and then I realise ukuthi but some things just don't make sense

Siyanda I'm a girly girl

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: Feminism doesn't well feminism is not kind to girly girls like excuse me the fact that I enjoy ukuthi men are chauvinist what you must be independent I'm like you know what actually I personally like it when a man is manly damn it ngiyawathanda amadoda please you know

Siyanda: laughs you are beautiful and strong

Mandisa: Exactly so it's you know what I mean it denied sounds like shit is there something wrong with me is there something wrong with me for I it doesn't make me any less independent no no no no let me finish this sentence

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: here is the other part of it too working at north KZN in Kosi bay I finally understood something also intricate I walked in there with the mentality that these women are disenfranchised no they're not and so you know seeing these women I came with that idea ukuthi nje woo shame these women are disenfranchised they're not purely because of how those power relationships played themselves out and I realised ukuthi flip all along I've been told that black woman are disempowered and for me I understood that power is taken away from them they fully understand where their power lies I started then questioning ukuthi if these cause you know it's always described as black people are disempowered and especially black women are disempowered I started having a working definition of myself of what empowerment is and empowerment is about choice am I saying that black people our history is a history of oppression it's a history of being less than our psyche is so damaged we have an inferiority complex there you know there's so many studies you know I remember doing race and race studies at university trying to understand me you know whether you do politics whether you do history or whatever you do but it's a coming to understand well where do I fit in the grand scheme of things do we have a history of oppression yes are we living out the consequences of that yes the residue everyday

Siyanda: JA

Mandisa: but disempowerment no there are levels of disempowerment there are people who are still disempowered in a sense that they don't have a choice things are dictated to them that's not empowerment you give people options the history of being black it is a history of pain and in this country I wrote in my diary I might actually even find it for you umh there's this I wrote it in one one of these days I was feeling so completely frustrated it's a little brown book is it here can you check there for me but umh

Siyanda: the one with the brown

Mandisa: no no no it's a little notebook it's like a little diary well it's like a tiny little journal or it might be even here but umh the important thing for me with that was realising that in this country no it's a little book it's like a little it's it's brown maybe you must stop the recording and I can find it something falls ooh I saw that coming

Siyanda: Shit

Mandisa: it's fine mh I will because it's just I mean this thing I mean besides the fact ukuthi you know I write in this probably never to be published a lot of these

Siyanda: laughs

Mandisa: Because isiZulu sami I'm sure here here's something this was during a TV series that we were filming and I wrote this am tired ukuthi kufanele sihlekile appear happy at all times even when we're hurting kufanele ngibe the agreeable black the happy black don't be political cause it's uncomfortable for them black smile and nod black all issues are in my head whenever wherever it doesn't suit them I'm a trouble maker kumele ngingakhulumi don't question ngoba I'm being a cheeky black bona they say what they please write what they please ngikhuthele or ngikhathele ukuthi black men are described as ugly huge violent people black people are beautiful when I'm having a hard day and I choose to be silent bathi I'm sulking where's that smile abantu abamnyama bayafa bayabulawa bayagula there is reason for my silence but kubona their dog dies and we must all be sensitive angizwa some young white boy tells me I've got issues ngimdala kunaye I'm more qualified but I don't have the benefits of a large inheritance interest upon interest compound

interest when I say ukuthi angithandi indlela black people are always portrayed they saying I'm being political but they fight for their characters to speak with irony wit and inche intelligence ngikhathela it's not palatable for me to raise these issues I'm being disagreeable insensitive but they sit there and say black food is chicken feet

Siyanda: mh

Mandisa: This is one of the episodes that we're doing and they like oh so what's black food or it's chicken feet and I came back and I wrote this and I was just like so so so so angry and that for me I mean just writing that it just explains so much

Siyanda: Interesting I think beautiful

Mandisa: I mean it's not just beautiful but it's about pain I mean there's another one umh the one that I actually wanted to

Siyanda: share with me

Mandisa: JA oh geez well ok that's a bit hectic

Siyanda: laughs share with me

Mandisa: Geez dude ok this one I ok I don't know where I was I've written it's called it's titled hospitality in books right

Siyanda: It's called hospitality in

Mandisa: Hospitality in books

Siyanda: In books

Mandisa: Conviction I am not the sum total of my bank balance oh no it's starts here action 1 sorry action 1 call a friend that say ha pause hello mh pause that disease of becoming nuisance conviction a car is just a vehicle I'm just a body vanity overrides a mangled corpse must look fab in the coffin there are other roads action 2 suicides I will not say I don't understand there is courage in choosing to discontinue this humiliation conviction I am not the sum total of my bank balance bankrupt broke action 3 take a taxi buy a book I am always welcomed there I know angithi I told you it's a bit hectic I mean some of them are about love a lot of them are about love oh listen to this one this is a love one it's called grammar and I was tryna to do rhyme you know iambic I want to see you it's a verb not a wish smile when you see me as hearts two thoughts of you and pronounce you care an adjective for or in love I wasn't sure whether it 's an adjective for love or an adjective in love noun sithandwa sami verb ngiyakuthanda grammar reflected in your eyes it is grammar yeah oh here this this you might find interesting this is one of the reflections but I don't know how to write it anyway today a colleague asked eh what the issue was with Lebo M I chose not to answer but I I googled his name and he and he read dismissively he said why is everything always brought down to race we didn't answer we all appreciate the value and meaning of rhetorical he persisted can I ask something and he doesn't wait for a reply did you ever consider that maybe black productions aren't good enough like quality I mean pressure cooker inside diplomacy diplomacy nearly vanished but I asked in the nature of rhetoric al questions isn't that the most dangerous form of racism conveyo covet do things have to be overt obvious for them to be justified quality is quality though it has nothing to do with race maybe what is out there is not good enough to be given awards he tried to engage me I I'd I what's it I'd last him five minutes pri oh something oh this is all about my issue with race and umh oh my goodness

Siyanda: can you read it for me

Mandisa: but but some of these words I'd last him five minutes prior to what he was saying or I'd lost him five minutes prior to what he was saying I kept thinking it's 2008 when South Africa quality has nothing to do with race fuck you how disingenuous I guess he hasn't been paying attention that's a privilege white people afford themselves choice choosing to be ignorant and then when Zimbabwe happens they are shocked he's white I'm black legacy is a position of power and history has not been an effective teacher to the likes of him either that or the worst he they white people never bold that's never

Siyanda: laughs

Mandisa: learn because they don't listen when the wind blows they don't like change and I guess he'll be asking the same question twenty years down the line that's not quality it's damn cheap what is he doing for positive transformation jesses I'm angry here

Siyanda: it was a he

Mandisa: yes clearly some guy that I was you know having a conversation with well you know saying cause Lebo M umh

Siyanda: Lebo M the composer

Mandisa: mh

Siyanda: ok yeah

Mandisa: There's another one my God does not exist in designated it's called designated areas my God does not exist in designated areas he is present in the laughs and broad shoulders of my friends my God does not exist in designated areas he is a spontaneous song and profound notes we sing to that song while sitting in a taxi my God does not exist in designated areas he is a smile of that stranger who smiles and says sawubona and affirms my existence my God does not exist in designated areas he is in the pages of those oh so delicious pages warm in front of cold Jozi cold nights my God does not exist in designated areas with designated people of the path sitting in designated chairs re what's it reacting oh reciting designated words wearing designated clothes shoes driving designated cars those designated people who indulge in designated speech at the expense of the undesigned my God does doesn't exist in designated areas my God is not confined to the designated title of fearful God he is my friend and in truth designated to sit beside me laugh with us and share in the warmth comfort of words ja right

Siyanda: shoo

Mandisa: some of this stuff is like umh oh my goodness some of it is all about heart break ja but there is this one that I wanted umh oh sweet I call this one popus development it all about love oh here it's called I am I am South African I am told to forget the past reconciliation is a rainbow tears of my parents cousins aunts brothers grandparents my ancestors reign bow tie noose hang dangle all the negotiated dreams as trophies fesard is my daily bread I am not allowed to moan you must get over it and move on apartheid was terrible this democracy has all the possibilities I am not allowed to heal the pain or say how much it's hurts I am South African liberated free possibilities reconciliation I'm getting nauseated I'm getting angry of being told how to feel I am saying it's not okay it's not enough it is not right I am screaming hear me I am whispering listen to me I am South African and I still hurt

Siyanda: shoo

Mandisa: That's the one oh this is here's another one I obviously it's two titles I didn't know whether to call it Sawubona or black South African woman it is criminal to be a black woman south Africa today I was a goddess ndlovukazi nkosazane yesterday miniskirts isidwaba tussles around my nourished thighs bare breasted celebrated virgin woman sister friend mother wife but today it is better being a black woman South Africa because yesterday you showed me how much you hate your brother across this boarder it is criminal being a South African woman but it a death it but it is death being a black foreign national south Africa our lives have blackened burnt I'm ashes for you South Africa today I'm not proud to be South African nginamahloni isondo liyajikajika jikelela jikeleza jikelele yesterday our brothers across the borders welcomed us today we can't even greet them and say sawubona asibaboni shame is a cataract blinding us South Africa today tomorrow look at me now and say sawubona

Siyanda: Shoo but what xenophobic attack

Mandisa: But also I mean the way it starts I remember I was just angry about all the miniskirts stuff that was happening and you know cause I felt like it's criminal being a black woman in this country whether you go ngasemataxi rank you know you just you know you get assaulted that's really it the rest you know it's all

Siyanda: I don't know whether it's a fair statement to suggest whether um a big chunk of your writing is around being black

Mandisa: mh big time

Siyanda: umh umh so what's that about

Mandisa: Siyanda you know what it is it's just me coming to terms with me it's also me coming to terms with I still do I still have a lot of white friends or whatever here is something that happened to me this year which was really really horrible umh which prompted the one about you know after speaking to these guys and you know and him saying you know well does Lebo M consider that maybe his writing is just not good quality or that there aren't good quality black plays here is something that's always frustrating me in Durban every year black people are producing plays but they don't get acknowledged it's like we don't exist and this is a thing for me like our pain is not acknowledged we are not acknowledged there's a line from umh Mamphela Ramphele's book because I'm really trying to everything ja when lain goes to rest can I tell you all if you look at my books it's all the same interests it's issues about being black it issues about being a woman those are the subject that I am interested in my entire life

Siyanda: wow

Mandisa: because I've been trying to make sense of me trying to find a space that is okay for me because you know whether I was growing up at school I still didn't fill quite accepted in back home I still didn't quite fit in and then you grow up and you realise there whole there is a whole society of people who also feel like me and it's okay and that just makes it okay

Siyanda: I mean I am glad you said that I think ngoba you are touching one perhaps the most profound reason why I'm doing this PHD on blackness umh and its largely pinpoint rather I'd like to think of it as my own autobiographical attempt to make sense of blackness and to find out I wanna find out what other people are thinking you know is are my thoughts valid umh I'm tryna check you know check it against other people

Mandisa: To affirm

Siyanda: check affirm question and provoke and JA

Mandisa: and it's true you know what it is it's so needed we don't do this enough we are not allowed as black people to get together and sit and discuss how much it do you understand I want to say I wanna scream ukuthi it hurts me yes I am black don't talk to me about BEE don't tell me ukuthi black people have been given all these you know opportunities don't talk to be about affirmative action cause we know who it benefits let's look at the figures let's look at the figures cause let me tell you something when I go into that job already I have the burden to prove to you ukuthi I'm qualified I'm qualified why is it a young student that I teach at university I tutor we enter the same industries it's not I haven't been doing the same things it's all access it's a legacy she can come to Johannesburg she her parents will buy her the car will buy that's access mina moving her I have to make it on my own I don't have that history she will tell me ukuthi how much her parents are struggling I'm like how how incredible for you your parents are struggling so much ukuthi bakwazi ukukuthengela imoto get you that apartment under so many kids on campus you know how much it pleases me to see a black child graduate I cry Siyanda I cry because I know how much it's taken I know how much it's taken I know how much it means it's not something we can take for granted we can never because these things are so real they are so real just press pause cause I really want to find this passage for you

Siyanda: well find it as we talk

Mandisa: okay and then you know she talks about I mean is great really this book is great because it also talk about leadership and all those things but she speaks I mean the passage I'm wanting to find is umh it's it's about acknowledging people's pain and that's the thing what's this umh oh I'm getting close cause here it says history is full of examples of people who had been oppressed turning into oppressors of others now this is such a free reading of it but she does this incredible and she writes it so simply and I just remember finish reading and I thought this is this is it this is what everybody should be hearing this is what needs to be acknowledged you know about black people's experience in this country

Siyanda: I mean I think you are right we in south Africa and fellow South Africa we are in every turn to move on move on

Mandisa: yes here's this passage it says the real heroes and heroines of the this is on page 38 right of her chapter chapter 2 of her book the real heroes and heroines of our transition to democracy are those many men and women who remain marginal disempowered and miserably poor and yet are prepared to forgive and make peace with the past they are the ones who had to make the extra effort to heal the nation this is it they are the wounded healers to whom society owes much it is this extraordinary generosity that has not been sufficiently acknowledged the notion of a miracle does an injustice to those who gave up so much in order to transcend the past and I'm like if people can understand ukuthi there are a lot of people whose pain has been unacknowledged we have not acknowledged ukuthi yazini this democracy we have is because of you no one is listening

Interviewing: can I ask you a question

Mandisa: Huh

Mandisa: when you read that passage I was immediately taken back actually it's quite strange immediately taken back to nothing but the truth play

Mandisa: mhmh oh JA those issues

Siyanda: umh JA and I promise you and especially when the Jonh Kani character says I paid for this with my you know I I you know

Mandisa: I paid for this freedom

Siyanda: Yes

Mandisa: yes I was one of those thousands who when Desmond Tutu called on those thousands to march I was one of those thousands do you know what that play is about it's saying please acknowledge lets acknowledge cause you know what it is can I tell you what is so dangerous and this is why I get angry when white people like when I listen to radio stations let's get over it let's move on and you know what as a black person too I've done that whole you know what we need to we have choices we have access and then I'm like yoo all I have to do is spend a week and understand ukuthi yazini no how convenient for me to be able to say to somebody must move on now yes we have a lot of feeling of entitlement but there's a lot that has been unaddressed there's something also it's like when somebody tells you to get over it they're dismissing you they are dismissing your history they are dismissing you as you are the sum total of those things that happened until that point plus many other things they're saying to you you are not worth it your experience has been meaningless they are dismissing uyaunderstander when you say to somebody dismissed it's like I hear you but it's not relevant I hear you but it's not important imagine how many millions of south Africans we have said that to your pain we hear you but it's not important

Siyanda: Ja mina I do feel that especially being young black and middle class son umh especially when I go back home eMandeni to my grandparents house or home eSkha eSkhaleni and when I look around and I see the living conditions

Mandisa: yo

Siyanda: and contrast that as we are driving to Northcliff

Mandisa: yes this area

Siyanda: contrast the the effect and then think about the majority of what South Africans

Mandisa: JA

Siyanda: live like and that's how the majority of the country actually live like

Mandisa: and we have you know what it is like this is the one thing I'm learning and as a performer listening is part of what we do

Siyanda: JA

Mandisa: but it's also just recognise ukuthi even I am guilty of not listening I am also just as guilty of silencing somebody I'm just because angithi I'm pushing the progressive agenda you know like I do it the changes I would love to make I mean there's also that place you know of course take initiative

Siyanda: yeah yes

Mandisa: but you know what it is you can all like it's two ways there are two ways you meet somebody half way our our mentally mentally we're being conditioned to be less than yazi like ngiseBrit taxi rank itaxi can go by umama ephethe amaplastic ukwazi ukumrunner over do you know I came home and I asked myself who who ever taught us that we are second class citizens I came home I was crying who made us believe than that we can abuse each other as black people who taught us that we are second class citizens in this country there's a huge history on this continent it's hundreds and hundreds of unacknowledged unaddressed issues we are like it's in our psyche it's in our genetic memory that we are second class citizens where I cannot I am able ukuthi umtomdala I can just run over cause nginetaxi and ngijahe imali who made us believe that we are second class citizens and you know what it is so many people I can I understand why a lot of people get angry I

understand why a lot of black people we didn't get revenge we didn't get that equaliser Freea has the most Paula Freea has the most incredible way of saying the oppressors cannot dictate the terms of liberation it is the oppressed who needs to dictate the terms in this country we did not dictate the terms of this liberation we had a negotiated democracy

Siyanda: Settlement

Mandisa: It was a settlement

Siyanda: It was a settlement

Mandisa: and you know what it is akukho dankie there has been no thank you that has acknowledged cause thank you acknowledges a sacrifice not enough white people have said and acknowledge a lot of them get defensive a lot of them get aggressive a lot of them say come on let's move on already it's been fourteen years

Siyanda: yeah and they end up and immigrate

Mandisa: And I'm like I'll help you pack I really will because you know what it is we need people who believe in this country I'm proudly South African I don't want somebody who doesn't want to stay here go go free to go but you understand like being black for me like this this my skin lesi for the longest time has dictated that I'm treated like a second class citizen that I see myself as a second class citizen currently it means ukuthi I have to work doubly hard do you know how painful it to tutor somebody to teach them how to do something and then still they get chosen because not because of qualification that's not based on qualification that's not based on experience I have more experienced than you I'm definitely qualified but you have done very few things a lot of the things that you've done are student things I've been more on professional stuff but we'll take you flip

Siyanda: sho

Mandisa: Don't tell you know like when people say to me get over it I'm tired of getting over it I wanna deal with it now deal with me being black deal with me being black and having an opinion you know this thing about like that one that I wrote about you know I'm I'm told when I'm quite bangitshela ukuthi you know what am I thinking what am I I mean there's another Zulu one that you know ngesiZulu I wrote one because I was just like I'm not silent I when I'm what's it umh I have to read it because it's so you know like often Siyanda I'm contemplating myself as a young black woman the disappointment like and the betrayal on one side you know we were educated and totally progressive and yet such is not really because let's face it it's still predominantly white based white ruled I'm better off than most because we were educated with them so we're palatable but there are times when I want to raise the issues it's like geez Wels why why are you being like this

Siyanda: the party bopper

Mandisa: Ja yep I I'm now you know because you know we come from the same sort of upbringing in terms of school so how can I betray that that you know agenda the progressive agenda and I figured it no no no no no I am a black I'm a black woman yes socially and class wise we may be the same but I have a lot more in common with abantu my family ezilalini my family still has we have relatives ezilalini it pains me absolutely you know where is it laughs I'll read it for you afterwards ja

Siyanda: JA

Mandisa: Siyanda I ponder my sense of blackness a lot I ponder being a woman a lot

Siyanda: why

Mandisa: and I ponder love a lot because

Siyanda: Tell me why do you ponder on it so much

Mandisa: Being black because Siyanda I'm just tryna fit it I'm just tryna find a space for myself in this country that allows me to feel completely me that I don't have to justify myself I don't have to I'm also trying it's also in a way trying to celebrate me because for the longest time being a black woman has not been celebrated and if I don't celebrate blackness then who will

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: and I need to celebrate this you know I'm a healthy shade of chocolate brown fuck it lets open a bottle of champagne to that you know and we don't and a lot of images of like like I was just telling you about the movie that I saw Jerusalema I have issues about representation I'm tired of black being associated with negative images I'm tired of that narrative when does it change it's not gonna change if we don't change it that I know for sure I know that for sure and I'm just so tired I mean this line just sums it all it is criminal to be a black woman South Africa cause that's how I felt I feel that I'm like where are those faces wow yaha

Siyanda: what

Mandisa: this is I'm a troubled I told you let's hear listen to this one I heard Salmon swim upstream

Siyanda: you heard what

Mandisa: Salmon yeah this is what it's called word on the stream I heard salmon swim upstream after they've laid eggs then they die I guess I should go upstream after we've separated infatuation will die word is salmon is healthy omega what what this and that word is I'm over you all for love laughs mcwa mcwa blah blah rumours rumours word laughs that's about love that's about heartbreak

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: there's this one umh its start I mean I wrote it as ku umh why am I not finding it it really plays on words of you know ngithule ngiyacabanga you know it really what it is okay no because that what I do Siyanda a lot of the time when I have spare time I I reflect on who I am because it's not what what they show me is not enough I don't believe it I don't believe those images of blackness which are violent which are less than because I know myself I'm black and I'm far from being less I'm more than that you know and the part that scares me the most oh here it is the part that scares me the most is that a lot of people don't get that chance they just see those images and they accept it and it's not okay I mean this one it was actually written last year it's called ngibonise ungibona ngimile ngimele ubandlululo ngihlezi ngihleli ngicabanga ekhaya kumele ngiyoncela izibusiso ungibona ngilele ngiphumuza izinkathazo oh no I'm sorry I'm reading it wrong cause it's supposed to happen so ungibona ngimile ngimele ubandlululo ngihlezi ngihleli ngicabanga ekhaya kumele ngiyoncela izibusiso ungibona ngilele ngiphumuza iynkathazo ngihlala ngizivu ngihlala ngivuswa uvalo engathi isizwe sidukile ungbona ngikhuluma ngixoxa ngixazulula ngihlezi ngithule ngithandaza impendulo ayikhanyise indlela cause that was the time I was feeling you know when like you told why are you being quite or what's wrong and it's like please I'm just being I'm not you know I must always be smiley black you know happy hap what let me have my moment of solitude to reflect heaven knows what they think they probably think I'm plotting some something grab that you know what I mean it's like no a bottle gcwalisa

Siyanda: of water

Mandisa: no

Siyanda: a whole cup

Mandisa: yeah laughs we're chatting for a long time mh

Siyanda: This interview has just gone haywire

Mandisa: has it

Siyanda: you no no

Mandisa: sorry babe I tend to derail that but I mean it's just to answer your issues of

Siyanda: you didn't derail but I mean what you've just said now reminds me of umh a thing I've just read on on umh that umh

Mandisa: Shame Siyanda

Siyanda: they known just umh wrote about umh being a good nigger and anyway being a good Negro and those are his words umh sort of the accepted role

Mandisa: yes palatable

Siyanda: a Negro you must be agreeable as he suggests umh smiling

Mandisa: yebo

Siyanda: umh and it's almost a form in which it is accept in which you can be accepted in that form

Mandisa: ja don't disagree don't challenge the status quo palatable I have been palatable all along and you know what it is it's so it's so heartbreaking I tell you ukuthi don't be political hawu I'm not being political and It's like this isn't politics this is me these are issues that affect me can I tell you what had happened in the series all the black all the aggressive roles

Siyanda: series

Mandisa: umh no let's not name it series the TV series that I was engaged in I was doing no Siyanda

Siyanda: no no I want to say the one umh

Mandisa: yes yes yes you know which one so and umh but mina I've done a few thereafter you know but still this one was a big one for me cause it was a first one

Siyanda: yeah

Mandisa: and all the black parts were violent they were rapists it was always some socially deviant day and I was like okay the black guy must play a gay guy the black guy must be the violent abusive beating and one day I was like angithandi I don't why is it why can't we just have a normal black guy he's gotta be you know the adulteress all these deviant things and I raised these issues and they like oh Wels don't be so politically mannered it's just that you know I was like I was just like hold on this is about me I'm like my father is black my brother is black like what do you mean probably one day I will have a black son too

Siyanda: laughs

Mandisa: so you know nje excuse me what are you saying about me if this is how you see black men I'd I couldn't take it and when I raised this in the form they told me not to be political and I'm like so then how do you see me do you see me as prostitute do you see me as loose do you know hard we have to fight to be sound intelligent because you know ukuthi already there are certain assumptions do you know what I do now on purpose I keep quiet and I let a person run their assumptions because I'm tired you know what so many battles you can fight I want please do make all those assumptions and I actually want to see the extent of your assumptions and then when I feel I have something valuable to contribute and then I'll speak and then uzozibona ukuthi who's really

the fool here because they'll make angithi they want to teach you oh do you know ukuthi well Microsoft word you press enter I'm like oh I just say oh and then you just show what white people think of you and it's frightening the level you know what apartheid didn't just do damage to black people it did a whole lot of damage to white folks too a lot a lot and you know what it is we also need to have the linguistic flexibility to describe ourselves in good terms as black people we need to start supporting things that are ourselves that are about ourselves and done by ourselves because that is one way to flip this thing around when we are doing good work not ukuthi sibe nomona sithi uwuh no let's celebrate good things Jerusalem is written and directed by a white guy why it's a black story it's a story about a township crime I mean hello why aren't we writing our own stories and you know what it is until such time I don't blame some white guy taking that story up our stories will be forever be taken by other people cause we do not write our own narratives

Siyanda: they are written for us

Mandisa: they're written for us why are we incapable of articulating our pain we certainly do when we e when we're on our own we certainly do we certainly do and it hurts it hurts our pain hurts and it hurts in the most intangible ways we're constantly bleeding the wou we are the wounded healers that is so true and there are a lot of people their pain is unacknowledged I could almost say the history of being black is fighting to have our pain affirmed acknowledge recognise that you hurt me because you cannot begin to apologise for something if you did not call by its name you cannot say I am sorry if you if you do not admit that you hurt me so the history of being black has been about saying to people acknowledge that you hurt me acknowledge and then for me it's just being a young black woman is really defining those things for myself constantly because I know being black is more than what it appears to be and its more than just about being black there's a legacy it's a legacy of pain that we've inherited but it's also a legacy of the most progressive things and that's seldom spoken about you know like wealth wealth of life that's being black and seldom we talk about that I'm done dude I've said everything I could ever say

Siyanda: laughs ok

Mandisa: yeah

Siyanda: Well I mean Welile I asked about your life story and we spent a significant part of that speaking about black

Mandisa: JA

Siyanda: and being black is that what your life story is about now or has been or will be

Mandisa: I think when I was younger at some point I stopped existing in definitions of being a black woman when I was given language frameworks ideologies I positioned myself in relation to those now it's about having that language knowing where I was before and saying well I don't want to define myself according to somebody else's language according to how somebody else sees me I want to find ways to assert uWelile to remember my greatness as a young black woman

Siyanda: as a princess

Mandisa: exactly

Siyanda: but then I think what's interesting about the interview and I don't know whether I'm speaking out of turn here but that you umh I suppose the difference between the two of us umh you stepped into the umh white world if we could call it that early on

Mandisa: I grew up with white folks yeah

Siyanda: JA umh and got access and and had friends and made friends across the racial barrier and and and umh private school education effectively white school education umh private school umh coconut if whatever

Mandisa: No

Siyanda: that means umh

Mandisa: Do you know why coconut is insufficient coconut just describes remember I was telling the difference between private school and just a government you know what I mean there's a difference for us its its so sick it is so sick you know old boys club old girls club like ngiyayitshela manje I can tell you someone else I can say to you whether they are private school educated or government privileged or model C we have a separation we say purely private or model C there's a distinction

Siyanda: I never knew that I

Mandisa: But do you understand ukuthi it's one of those sick things do you understand ukuthi it's a class thing it's a class thing and yet by upbringing I really don't belong in that class because ngiphuma eClermont elokshini

Siyanda: that's where you fam that's where you go back home to

Mandisa: That's where home is

Siyanda: Ja and so I supposed I am intrigued by the way you speak about who you are about blackness

Mandisa: Remember at the beginning I told you obvious I told you ukuthi its always in between I have access to this world I live in this word its whether its geography I'm always in between

Siyanda: As your name suggests

Mandisa: but my name suggest transcending and I always do I always do because we I need when I say I am I need to know that state of being I can't ask somebody else to define it for me

Siyanda: Then umh the umh and we gonna quite quickly because of time

Mandisa: Now yes ja

Siyanda: laughs um then can you explain to me the trauma you experienced coming to university and seeing all shades of black

Mandisa: I told you man

Siyanda: well explain it to me cause I mean after that you spoke very strongly and sort of connecting to being black and yet that was an experience a formative experience for you of varsity when you saw a different kind of black that you could not umh umh

Mandisa: I've been shielded from ja cause I had been protected from you know rough that wasn't just only about just the kind of black it was all sorts you know white people are rude you know it's like you say please you don't say give me this huh huh what holla please may you you know may is its not please can you it's whether you can you know we used to be cheeky whether you can or can't is your business but whether I may or may not

Siyanda: Oh gosh you remind me of my English class teacher laughs

Mandisa: Exactly exactly exactly so its little things like that you know umh

Siyanda: I can but I may not

Mandisa: Exactly yes exactly and those just issues are very important and you see that's that's a language thing once again but here's I mean the university thing it was also because there was a time when I was very big and my best friend uYolanda yenake she was in a different she was in a real exile not exiles from the current reality you know you're in the same country but you know I was in a the sort of exile cause I was protected excuse me but she came back if she saw the body issues that I had and she taught me to love myself again she taught me to celebrate being having izinga and all these things mh

Siyanda: mh

Mandisa: Absolutely excuse I've got hiccups and also need to pee

Siyanda: okay let me pause and then will be we gonna reintervene in 5 minutes

Mandisa: okay

Siyanda: okay umh given the time we have left umh I mean I must say ukuthi it's been a very interesting interview umh and very surprising it hasn't been the form I thought it would take actually so umh maybe its that's actually that's quite interesting ngoba we didn't actually speak umh extensively about your life and but we did so I'm gonna ask for your final thoughts and I've never ended an interview like this but I suppose it was an extraordinary interview in that sense uh so ja ja so final thoughts about your life as a young black umh South African woman in the new our teething South Africa to use your words

Mandisa: Siyanda these thoughts are not final because

Siyanda: of course

Mandisa: listen to me listen these are not my final thoughts these are my thoughts at this time

Siyanda: Ja yes

Mandisa: cause I'm also evolving I'm discovering things myself as I go along it is important to discuss what it means to be black because black is a colour but both you and I are socially described as black you are a healthier shade of dark brown I'm a healthy shade of brown I'm chocolate what's more important for me and that's the thing that I find so interesting you know like merchant of Venus in Shakespear

Siyanda: ja

Mandisa: when he says I have a heart you know I have eyes too I bleed under all of that skin and that race and that hurt under all those scars

Siyanda: the humanity

Mandisa: there's a heart babe that heart pumps blood I breath in and out I eat I cry they do too there are more points of intersection than there are nje differences but the reality also is I need to accept like being black is about a history we are all made of histories its context its its place and time its influenced by so many things but our character is more important black people to this time have not been given a character that is individual it's been a mass identity a mass identity that is prescribed certain forms of labour a mass identity that has denied denied the individual that has pretended like excellence does not exist in black communities blackness is seldom equated to excellence blackness is seldom affirmed as integrity being black is seldom equated to being progressive and I have a problem with that cause I know from the get go ugogo wangitshela ukuthi I'm a princess so if I'm a princess meaning I have the potential the capacity the access the world is my oyster whatever clichés you want to use then the things that I'm told by society the things that

I'm made to believe about myself don't ring true so something in me gets denied well I'm tired of denying that part of myself that is excellent I want that excellence acknowledged I want the beauty you affirm see it it's there don't silence silencing that is a history of blackness its unacknowledged pain its continued and covert and very subtle silences which are so dangerous blackness has to be given a voice and it has to be given a voice by us I need to define blackness

Siyanda: in its own terms umh to

Mandisa: me lo chocolate lo need to define blackness nobody else nobody else and that's it and then to celebrate it really I need to define and celebrate it

Siyanda: thank you

Mandisa: Sure babe

Siyanda: Thank you I mean I do love your story your interview ngoba manje umh you did actually um challenge me provoke me to think about different layers or levels of blackness umh ja

Mandisa: and then there's poems that I can read for you you know that there're and you know it's from you know it's my collection of thoughts I have a journal which is my everyday thing and then I have this one which is just the way I try to phrase the thoughts in a more coherent and accessible version so they're unpublished or whatever

Siyanda: You but it's your diary it's for you share your utmost intimate thoughts

Mandisa: I've never read it to anybody but that's what I feel Siyanda I am angry a lot of the time it's not easy being black in this country because we have to justify things we have to explain we can't just be we have to prove ourselves we have to qualify our statements we have to make we have to appease things and make it easy we can't just say something because not a lot of white people are defensive and in denial and there are a lot of white people who don't have manners who haven't said thank you just as they are a lot of black people who haven't said thank you I owe my being to a lot of black people who were willing black white all sort of people but the majority were black who were willing to take a bullet for uWelile

Siyanda: Ja it came at a very high cost

Mandisa: Ja

Siyanda: at a very high cost

Mandisa: And you know what tho those families they need to be named when you name something you give it breathe you give it life you acknowledge you need to like I feel in this country part of the healing comes because people have put on their earplugs you need to listen it's a narrative my skin before I've even said anything to anybody my skin greets you

Siyanda: speaks harder than

Mandisa: Shit my skin speaks volumes you know what sometimes when they say ooh we must wear you know umh you know we must have you know dress the way black people dress I'm like whatever dress is traditional I mean not traditional but I don't need to put on special outfits

Siyanda: to prove

Mandisa: aahaah

Siyanda: by

Mandisa: being naked is enough the black body is enough it's enough my finger print isn't just a print of me now it tells you about my history I just think people need to listen to those histories jaja oh ja

Siyanda: Thank you

Mandisa: ja no thank you babe

Siyanda: Thank you for your time officially for the record it's now ten to eleven laughs

Mandisa: Do you tell them we had dinner in between

Siyanda: laughs and dinner in between lunch thank you very much

Mandisa: ja ja so factor that in oh I can't wait for the second part cause I hope hopefully by then also my I hope to be less pained and less hurt and your spaces that are doing incredible things you know

Siyanda: absolutely

Mandisa: and oh there's a beautiful narra umh and just as an aside umh a friend umh of mine recently cause you know with all everything that's been going on she is the most incredible incredible incredible metaphor been describing how you know like how we have this joke about you know PHD the black PHD the Pull Him Down or Pull Her Down syndrome ne and its interesting cause a lot of like you know often I find myself in spaces of intellectuals and you know intelligent people and its young black people and we trying to figure out the way we are who we are about everything else it happens like that's my social life really it was fascinating discussions but the one this week that completely blew me over this friend of mine uPalesa used used a metaphor of ants and said the way that ants get across a river because they are so tiny and they can't swim

Siyanda: laughs

Mandisa: the first ant gets into the water the second one climbs on top of that ant and then they link arms or legs or whatever you call that the third the forth until there's a bridge that's formed and that's how they cross they get on each other's back the one goes forward and that's how they cross so by by the time at the end you know what I mean so you can imagine once the bridge is formed that last ant then climbs and all of those gets across until and I'm like that is an incredible incredible image especially considering that ants are either black or dark brown and that's how we need to be

Siyanda: Because the and I suppose the first ant that goes through the river is the one that dies ngoba there is no bridge to cross and I'm reminded of the fact that it came umh in our lives our right we enjoy in South Africa came at

Mandisa: at a cost

Siyanda: at somebody

Mandisa: Else's costs

Siyanda: Starting that bridge for the other ones to cross its beautiful

Mandisa: It is the most beautiful because even if you're the first one to get into the water you pioneer right but then you allow for somebody else to progress until all these people have progressed but because you're pioneered there's you know then you also get a chance to get across but the first person you know the person who then touch the ground first and is holding on whose the last they die and but you know what it is at what cost there're a whole lot of ants who've moved on and I was like that's such for me I just hold that so entirely because ants are also small and our history has been seen as insignificant I was just like that metaphor is so valuable as black

people wow wow that's an incredible metaphor and that's how I want to be I want to be like those ants to make it possible for other to get across

Siyanda: Across

Mandisa: Yebo angithi igama lami nginguWelile so kumele bawele kumele bawele so was the last thing those were my last thoughts. Yes, yes absolutely.

Siyanda: Thank you

Mandisa: Absolutely

Siyanda: Very, very beautiful

Mandisa: Oh

First Interview: Maria (South Africa)

Siyanda: Oh and you can actually mix languages

Maria: Oh okay

Siyanda: So soqala ekuqaleni about wazalwaphi realy

Maria: Sho long ago ya

Laughs

Maria: Eh nga ngaza lwa yabona isiZulu angisazi kahle so im going to mix a lot I mean I was in eSoweto ne but emeadolands that's thats where my mother house family is mh meadolands ngo 1969

Siyanda: Sho

Maria: So and I ngahlala khona that was the maternal partenal home lapha ezalelwe khona you know ehm I think she had just gotten married so they had bebengakahlali nobaba wami they were still looking for izindlu you know during those days bekusabhaliswa kuqala ubhekane nestamp sakhona esishoyo ukuthi as parents ukuthi they are allowed eh you don't know that

Siyanda: No

Maria: No actually bizwa ngeaccess control leyanto yokuthi they are are allowed istamp sakhona istamp sakhona besibizwa nge 10warn beer I think if I remember very well laughs but istamp sakhona bekufanele usithole from igovernment offices that says you are allowed to reside

Siyanda: Elokishini

Maria: Eh elokishini ya

Siyanda: oh

Maria: otherwise phela you are suppose to be in the bundus angithi ja so why sekuthi they are allowed to reside ngoba abazali babo they have a house there so bafana babe nalento ekuthiwa ipermit kudala bekunalento yokuthi permit iphepha elibavumelayo ukuthi kufanele bahlale khona mh so so bebe now you could only get a house umangabe ukwipermit yabazali bakho kuna les stamp bcoz you shoul d be working angithi basebenza ejaridini bafanele abelungu bavume ukuthi yes basebenza la kuthina ja so uyavunyelwa ukuthi bahlale la otherwise bazokudeep water yabona mh so

Siyanda: Jojojo

Maria: So bebe bebefanele oh bebesalindile now there was a long list apparently a waiting list yokuthola izindlu so they were on a waiting list so besihlala thina khabomama wami
Siyanda:Oh ok

Maria: Ja

Siyanda:eSoweto

Maria:eSoweto, ja eSoweto eMedowlands so I schooled ngihlale ngaze ngaba 6 years old, they found a house but I didn't move with them ngahlala nogogo

Siyanda:nogogo

Maria:because they were working both of them so bekungenamuntu ozohlalal nami and they actually got a house still in 70 but ePimville it was a new eh township

Siyanda:bebenza msebenzi muni

Maria:my mother was eh an assistant esibhedlela ewiper imibhede and assisting ja she was doing that eFlorence Nightingale kudala ihistory yabona laughing mhm and then my father was a mechanic mhm but umechanic wakhona akusiye lo wanamhlanje onamaphepha its actually interesting ukuthi waze wathola uthole amaphepha wakhe seng sengiseuniversity no no ngoba washona before ngibe seuniversity uthole amaphepha sengisesikoleni ngingazi ukuthi he is striving to ja ukuthole iphepha you know lokuthi uwenze lomsebenzi engafundile but now he wants some certificate of some sort mh so bekuyilokhoke so mina ngifundeke emeadowlands when I was 6 years old uSubA kwakusandwa ukuforma oSub A laugh then mesengenza uSub B

Interviwer: ok

Maria: Maria:masengenza uSubB then I had to move ke ngizohlala nabazali ePimville ja so I changed schools ngayohlala nabo so ngafunda e ePimville ke ehiger it was a combined school so it was higher it was lower primary and higher primary mh yayibizwa moni siPhitsa se Shego

Siyanda:what was that

Maria:Sepedi moni sePhitsa seShego ja eh it means you are with the one that wena that you accompany me at night I thank you in the morning it's eh bathi yini isi bathi yini ngesi ja isisho ja isisho jaja eh so ngifunde isipedi ke le esikoleni so sahlalake ePimville

Siyanda:Now ukumover from Soweto to Pimville how did you feel at that age as umntwana were you excited of going ukushiya ugogo or you

Maria:Mh you know what it was a natural move hey there were no like feelings yokuthi hey ngizohlala nabazali ja no I guess at that stage and ngalezoykhathi hai that when you realise ukuthi

our emotional angifuni ukuthi our our emotions those days didn't matter to anyone it was about the survival yamaparents ethu eh its only now that thina our children we we want to make sure ukuthi we take into consideration their emotions when we make decisions abazali bethu bebezenzela beyhambela nje besilandela yabona laughs

Siyanda:That's true

Maria:ja so so ngahlala nabo andim Im actually from a family of 3 children ive got a brother and mina nebrother yami samover ke because besihlala emedowlands nogogo

Siyanda:nogogo

Maria:ja my younger sister was born ePimville yena yes ja ja so then ngalezo ykhathi masisafunda ke ePimville ne you won't believe ukuthi bekunalento ye overcrowding even then because It was a new township that was built so obviously there were not too many schools and it was a township that was built it was the land was actually a farm it was called klerkspruit klerkspruit was a farm yebhunu yabona so obviously baythenga leyofarm babuiler itownship eh now there were not enough schools yabona so besifunda you know through idermacation yama yabantu that was actually the birth of Soweto that was was the birth yokuthi basuse abantu mos from eelaxender eSophiatown my parents ne were born e my father was born eSophiatown and my mother from eAlexander so they were moved bazohlala emeadowlands now mabebabekake babakeka ngokuthi amashangane one side amapedi one side

Siyanda:left

Maria:yes ngamazones

Interivewer:okay

Maria:so ize 9 bekungabesuthu zone 4 amashangane yabona into enjalo

Siyanda:nina beningamapedi

Maria:amapedi ja because my the father of my mother was a pedi mopedi ja ja so nathi because sikhule nabogogo sikhule kugogo sikhuluma isipedi that's why sifunda isipedi ke esikoleni mh mh so so ngoba ePimville ke that darmacation was still there

Siyanda:sho

Maria: eh isikole sethu because there were not enough schools bekufunda abapedi ekuseni and then laughs I actually remember it now its interesting and then emini sekungezake amashangane laughs nabanye yabona laughs

Siyanda:wow

Maria:eh so isikhathi masihamba ke because of of still overcrowding

Siyanda:yeah

Maria:amaclases agcine esewa amapedi uthole ukuthi sibaningi so bafunde futhi ekuseni nelesson ntambama yakhumbula ukuthi at some stage I had to mina bengingena ngo 1 esikoleni mh

Siyanda:sho

Maria:bengingena ngo1

Siyanda:1 until 3

Maria:Ja 1 until 3 isnt it suprising well it wasn't a long time actually you know

Laughs

Maria:bewungahlali isikhathi eside esikoleni ja ja eh I think lababanye bebephufunda bebephuma ngo 11 but kube nebreak yothisha or ichangeover or something because thina besingena ngo 1 so laughs

Siyanda:So nifundani ke what about iquality lento eniyifundayo

Maria:Ja ieducation yalesiyasikhathi bebesifundisa phela bekuleyanto yokuthi A E I O U which is not there now you know their parrot training mh uyoregitor I information it was that one so eh and besifunda ngaphansi kwesihlahla mina ngo1 bengifunda ngaphansi kwesihlahla

Siyanda:Good god

Maria:So this thing that you see kwiTV

Siyanda:Umh

Maria:Mh Ja no thina sadlula kuyo and that time I mean it was we accepted it

Siyanda:Yeah

Maria:that was we were just focused ukuthi kufanele sithole ieducation angithi okwamanje people have rights ngalesosikhathi we didn't have right laughs so who could fight ukuthi ngaphansi kwesihlahla ini ini no no you were happy there was a building actually you know and bengiya esikoleni yabona so bengi besifunda ke ngaphansi kwesihlahla and ehm nalento ke parenting parenting was different then because mangingena ngo 1 umama wami ubengiphelezela ne because bengicrosser imain road and that main road is the one that's in history now ne iold potchestroom road yona le ebikune e e june 73 ja ja bengicrosser lapho mangiya esikoleni so umama ubengicrossise nje cause there was the main road kwitownship amabus namataxi wahamba lapho so

eh ubengicrossisa masengicrossile then abuyela emuva ja then makangilanda nakhona bekangimela la on this road laughs angicrossiser bese siyahambake you know oh ngangihamba nobuti wami ke ngicrosser naye he was old several years older than me ja so bekuyilokhoke and it was nice those days it was nice you know

Siyanda:was it nice

Maria:and we enjoyed no it was nice ehhe

Siyanda:nanenzani what kind of things did you guys do or play

Maria:the thi the thi oh a lot of the times we would find ukuthi senza amaplays plays that are from the scriptures amaparables yabona lamaparables ja uthole ukuthi benza iplay ngawe esikoleni mina if I remember very well ngoba bekuwuMiriam igama lami bebethanda ukuthi ngidlale kuleplay leya ka yaka je when jesus was born uyakhumbula ukuthi uMary no not istory sakaMary sakaMoses

Siyanda:oh

Maria:when Moses was born

Siyanda:yeah

Maria:ja ukuthi bambalekisa bamfaka kubhaskidi

Siyanda:oh yes

Maria:yes so bengiba isister yakhe laughs so that was then no it was it was nice it was ja bekunalento yokuphila together even though bebesidermacaythile ukuthi amashangane amashangane ePimville ahlala ezone 4 amazulu ezone 5 amapedi ezone 3 eh zone 1 futhi amazulu namanje well the origins of it was like that its only now now that the young people like us are coming back to pimville sekuba ne otherwise the old status koremain because thina safunda sahamba sashiya abazali so abazali are still there so amashangane asase kozone ja ja the only into ey ey eymixayo manje besides ukuthi we cause young people are going back to Pimville Pimville and namanye amatownships that are affluent

Siyanda:mh

Maria:ngiktshela ukuthi the young people like us who cannot afford amabonds go back to the township so they've put that why you have maponya mall maponya mall isePimville maponya mall is the biggest mall la emzansi

Siyanda:mh

Maria:yes in the township ja isePimville yabona ja so those things have put Pimville on the map and because of the young people have gone back to the pimville that are building you will see of students there you will see affluent people building affluent surbarbs izindlu ezinhle futhi ePimville ja so its Pimville Rockville dube and diepkloof those 4 are the big 4townships ja so bekuba nalokho ke eh

Siyanda:Manikhula were you guys aware ukuthi umh there is some huge political thing eyenzekayo in the country

Maria:Mh mh eh look for the fact yokuthi abazali bazoxoxa bathi istamp sakho sesiyaexpire kwipasi yakho you know the parents would be talking istamp sakho sesiyaexpire kufaneke siye e ehovisini elikhulu bebethi konje yini endabazabantu

Siyanda:Mh Laugh

Maria:ja kufuneka uye kwandabazabantu uyo renewer istamp otherwise if they do find there was those days of fast law bebekthola bethi ipasi nyana lesastamp sikhombisa ukuthi siyaexpire you'l be deported here and then akuthiwa be on your way home mhlampe kufanele uvulela abantwana abantwana will because that what happened abazali bebuye bahambe nesikhiya manifika nina from esikoleni nidlala next door ja so mabakudeporter bakudeporter kanjalo nizolala enext door nina yabona and that must go on yabona

Siyanda:so

Maria:so it was like that so so we were aware because bekunale vigilance kubazali yabona ukuthi yo istamp kufanele sihlale sibe up to date nokuthi kufanele ahla ipermit that one I was telling you about ukuthi if uown indlu they were not owning bayayirenta aki

Siyanda:bayarenta

Maria:bayayirenta that's that's was the thing bebeyirenta mabayarenta leyondlu eh fanele bahlale benepermit with the permission yayibona umh yokuhlala kulendawo le uma bekudefaulter ngasomewhere or the other bayakhishwa you know so ngale in such that kwifamily house uthole ukuthi wonke umuntu umntwana waba wabazali kufana abe kwipermit angithi mengabe kucatshwanake kulaba abakhulile like we will see thina esikhule kumafamily house maybe an uncle or an aunt uba irresponsible kufanele acontributer phelala endlini ngegrocer angacontributhi ugogo ubekayomkhipha phela kwipermit laugh then the state will sort him out yabona yes angithi akafuni ukulalela so that uma esetrainini asathi uyabuya ekhaya babathi pass because babayifuna anytime eh uthole ukuthi mhlampe ja ukhona but istamp sepermit asikho uyabuye uyadeporter istate had its own organs and they used them efficiently so

Siyanda:yeah

Maria:uyabona ukuthi bekunamalaws amaningi enza sure ukuthi uhlala in one place but you are permitted to do that yabona ukuthi because there was the pass law you must carry the pass then there was this one of istamp sokuthi istamp sakhona sifanele sibe valid ukuthi you can move around within ja but ngesikhathi I didn't tell you ukuthi nabo ngesikhathi esithize nabo laba abasebenza emakhishini they should be out I think it was fanele behambile

Siyanda:everyday

Maria:everyday because the idea was to commute umangabe em evunyelwe umlungu ukulala kamlungu bebengavunyelwe okokuqala ngingakasho mangabe bevunyelwe bebecause because bebefihlwa

Siyanda:oh ja

Maria:yes bebefihlwa uma ngabe beyolala kamlungu ngalesosikhathi it was very clear you were not supposed to be kwiarea leyo after certain hours ja so bekungenaover time laughs lehlale kuthiwa hai ngisebenza ivertime because ibiya kwiworking class ja ja ibingekhoke leyonto

Siyanda:so ekhaya ubaba nomama umh never sat you guys down as abantwana and told you ukuthi kwenzekani emzansi at the time

Maria:aa

Siyanda:no

Maria:no we were beniyibona leyonto nje ngokuthi nizobazwa bekhuluma nizobezwa bekhuluma or nibona ukuthi because kunalento okufanele bayenze then then you know you get to know ukuthi ok this is whats happening they never actually sat us down bathi niyabonake basenza kanje kanje kanje and I think the reason for that was kubo bekunalento yokuthi bebengavunyelwe mos ukukhuluma ngalezozinto if you remember very well bebezothi bakhombisa ukulwa now against bangena ezombusazwe and it wasn't their plan to do that

Siyanda:mh

Maria:ja they were just here to work earn a living yabona because le emakhaya akukho ukuphila yabona so it was only phela aboTutu noMandela nobanibani that's why bebesebenza underground to do that because they were not allowed yabona so nobody really sat us down and like kanje kanje kanje yabona no one ja so besibona nje ngaleyondlela

Siyanda:if you were to choose mhlampe a few memories happiest memories in your childhood what would those be

Maria:laughs happiest

Siyanda:ja ukhula ePimville or noma even e eSoweto

Maria:Before I get to the happiest ngifuna ukukutshela ukuthi umh ledarmacation lena even though bekunedarmacation but bekunalokho ukuthi mhlampe uzothola by default by mistake ukuthi uzothola ishangane ezona 3 lihlala khona kodwa yabona but that helped because mina ngigcine ngazi ukukhuluma isivenda

Siyanda:Oh

Maria: that's how abantu baseSoweto bemulti lingual kanje

Siyanda:Yes

Maria:yes its because of that ja ja its because of that laba futhi abakhule ngeykhathi zethu they were very much lingual ngalendlela yokuthi even neAfrikaans siyayikhuluma kahle futhi yabona because we were taught iAfrikaans and thina yes barevolter mina bengenza uSub B meberevolter amauprising ka1976 bengenza uSub B mina mm and il tell you later about that but besisayifunda iAfrikaans even though barevolter even afterwards barevolter iAfrikaans it was still there phela kwisyllabus so besisayifunda yabona ja so amahappiest memories ngingathini ehm not ngisasemncane ngisasemncane angikhumbuli kangakho ngizothi mhlampe when I was when I turned 16 ifamily yami that was my uncle, my mother nalaba banye basenzela ibirthday nebrotner yami a big party yabona i16 yeminyaka laughs bathi hawu it's a milestone efike ku16 engekho pregnant because it was a problem kuthina ngalesosikhathi ja bebhulelwa abantwana yabona eh even not kakhulu but masubheka manje ukuthi its worse ngalesosikhathi it was like its was worse you know ja ja so bekuyilokho that's the memory the way engiyikhumbulayo

Siyanda:so iphathi yayihlanganise both

Maria:ja it was my brother and myself ngoba we were born in the month of june so mabeyenza iparty ke basenzelake ja yena he was turning 21 mina I was turning 16 because ungidlula ngo 5 years so basenzelake a big ibash laughs ja yiwona amamories now ngo1976 bengenza uSub B so ngesikhathi samauprising that morning when they decided to march to old potch

Siyanda:mh

Maria: ehm thina we were in school besisebancane I gues the word didn't go out properly ukuthi boycott you know eh so it wasn't planned properly kangakho so we still went to school amaparents did go to to work but thina ngabo 9 ekuseni some older pupils came to our school angithi esethu besicombined ja but bafika laba bo std 6 7

Siyanda:abadala

Maria:abadala you know bafika esikoleni basho ukuthi no kufanele isikole sivalwe eh ngoba bebethi yini konje Power ja kiriPower kiri Power

Siyanda:yini yini leyo

Maria:Power to the people so bebethi infact thina siyazi ngePower that time mh so bathi kunalipower power I knew what it was and there was no confusion about it okay and then mina bengifunda uSub B so basireleaser ke noma besireleaser my brother wasn't at school that day I don't even remember ukuthi ubekuphi I don't remember yazi ukuthi ubekuphi ithi ngibone sub b std 1 2 3 4 5 or ubesephumile mhlambe esefunda 6

Siyanda:6

Maria:Ja because I I was I was alone now and I had to find my way home now you must remember ukuthi I must cross that road yes and umama wami akekho you know ehm and and I I walked alone from esikoleni ne mebesireleaser kanjalo I walked aloneand besicrosser ehlathini ihlathi lakhona manje sekuyiMaponya mall

Siyanda:Okay

Maria:ja bekuyihlathi kuphinde kube amathuna eduze so besi ngacrosser lapho it's a long way actually so ngacrosser lapho ehm ngaze nga ngafikake kwicross roads but mangisacrosser ehlathini kunamahelicopter the whole time hhe so ngilokhu ngibheka phezulu ukuthi kwenzakalani yes during the elect in the morning the day yePower is the day uHector Peterson was shot that day ja so kube namahelicopter alokhu ehamba phezulu ehm so ngicrosser ne yilapho you know when I reflect I realise ukuthi there was actually a higher being that was protecting me

Siyanda:ukuthi kungabi like that

Maria:no ukuthi kwaHelicopter base bedubula phela ngalesosikhathi ukuthi bangangidubuli and ngize ngifike ekhaya safely yabona because bebelahla amateargas and all sort of things you know ja so mangizocrosser ke is porch iold potch umgwaqo angisho

Siyanda:yeah

Maria:asithi urunner kanje mina ngisuka esikoleni but ngidecider that day ukuthi ngizohamba I had two options normally ngangihlale ngihamba kanje ngizoqhamuka eMaponya mall bese ngiyekhaya sometimes bengiqhamuka kanje ngizocrosser la eold lapha bekuneriot that day then bese ngiya ekhaya ja but that day I decided look let me rather go this way ngizoqhamuka la kuneMaponya mall manje ja so mangila mangibheka ngala emgwaqeni ey ngiyabona bayacula kunecommotion bayacula eh igroupanyana ja bayaculake ehm amaphoyisa namahelicopter ke baloku bayaba e yabona yabona kunecommotion so but then ngacrosser I didn't go there ngacrosser so bengibona ukuthi hey kushukuthi kuyabheda kesisi I just needed to go home so ngaya ekhaya straight ke mangifika ekhaya konakele abazali nabo bayabuya bazama ukubuya theres no transport angithi laba are stoning amabus ngalesosikhathi imode of transport was buses and trains so they were stoning those buses ke namatrain bekubheda ngempela bekubheda but eh a lot of us get to make it home even

my brother came back safely and our parents came back safe yabona mh so it was the beginning ke ye yama leyo Uprising Soweto uprising ka 1976 ja

And ngesikhathi ukhula at that particular time umh wa did you see any political violence around you Yes of course because you must remember ukuthi eh a lot of the pupils lokhu bengikubonake manje mase ngisehigh school

Interviewr:Okay

Maria:a lot of the pupils eh that were engaging in the struggle had to come from school those days phela bekufundwa eh amazingly so you had to be at school beyingekho lento yokuthi im bored I don't want to go to school thing no ibingekho you had to go to school kangoba even kwakuba late was an issue ukuba late esikoleni ngoba those days bekulocker amagate yabo so

Interviewr:so

Maria:uzoshaywa wena you know ya and abazali bakho will get to know you know ngestaff meeting ukuthi eh umtanakho uba late esikoleni you know ja so besibabona phela esikoleni you know those who were engaged because they would move outside school premises mebenza lezozinto so mebenza lezozintoke eh amaphoyisa in fact bekungewona amaphoyisa bekungamasosha adeploywa from1976 in the matownships

Siyanda:in the

Maria:they were there the whole time the whole time bebekhona bebe kube worse mekunestate of emergency babuye baphume futhi babuye babuye uma kuba khona istate of emergency so ja the whole time ehm bekhona eh kangoba during istate of emergency yes kufuneka ube sesikoleni ngesikhathi esithize otherwise they lock the gates and when you out you have to deal namasosha ngoba bazokufaka kulemoto yabo bakukhahlakhahlele bajumper phezu kwakho bakwenze zonke izinto bese beyakuvala you know so so besidealer nalokhoke so you'd better be inside the school yard yabona

Siyanda:that's safe

Maria:thats safer so masise masisekoleni mekustarter lezizinto then uprincipal ke the onus was on him to call amasosha ukuthi manje the place is ungonable is ungovernable come in laughs yes so mabangena bayishaya igate ngaleside cutter yabo ithi chingkhahlakhla laughs bangene laughs ngalamahippo wabo all we did is we just get into class sizame ukukhiyake ngamadesk it it did happen besikhiya ngamadesk and then sithathe amajezi ethu siwafake amanzi ngalesosikhathi iteargas actually also evolved khona that time when iteargas bewukwazi ukuyidiffuser ngamanzi so ma mabeyilahlelile isitubhini sesikole phela angithi then abafana abadala bazofika bavule ifire hydrant ja bayishaye ngamanzi iphele laughs yabona

Siyanda: bayishintsheke

Maria:ja bayishintsheke kuze nale yokuthi amanzi awayenzi niks ipotecter ngalendlela yokuthi ikudla neskin sasibaba ngalendlele emangalisayo hhe so fanele leyoke ibaselwe ke umlilo ismoke esiyidiffuzyayo so khona oselanda amaphepha ngesipidi laughs

Siyanda:good god

Maria:but it was times laughs na nathi mayi evolver nathi siyashintsha you know and I don't know where that came from actually I suppose I intelligence yabo laba you know that came ukuthi ehm bebethumela I information kulaba bangaphandle ukuthi hai phela leyo sebenza kanjena otherwise how else would we know you know ja ja ja

Siyanda:so

Maria:so besi interpreter ke kanjalo so naleviolence ukuthi esikoleni uzokhiyelwa ngaphandle udealer namasosha eh even then amasosha akhona phela because bebehlele beselokishini also had to know iuniform

Siyanda:oh yes

Maria:yeyikole because sometimes you could lie makunevicinity yesikole uthi no kulate angithi ususaba ukuthi bazokufaka kuhi hippo uthi no ufunda isikole esithile bebevele bathi kubona ufake iuniform ewrong ufakwe ngaphakathi yabona ya so bekuyilokhoke bewungaphakathi kwesikole ke uprincipal athi ya lv had enough guys anifuni ukulalela ngyawavulela amasosha bangeneke badealer nani you know or ema emakhaya elokishini uthole ukuthi eh kuba nalokho kokutargeta ehm amavehicles azodeliver amaservices

Siyanda:mhm

Maria:amabakery amavan otshwala ini ini ini

Siyanda:mhm

Maria:bebebawisa bathi itarget bebethi itarget ngalesosikhathi phela ey target ifikile so bazobamba leyobakery depending on the mood of the day abanye bese kuba nobugebengu like you see a criminal element

Siyanda:mh yeah

Maria:so makwenzeke into enjaloke bawiseke itarget amasosha bewafikake elokishini bakhabe umnyango we every house where they suspect ukuthi nithathile nafaka endlini so nami ekhaya bafika bakhaba umnyango masikhona emini in fact bakwenza lokho ngiyi one ekhaya

Siyanda:mh

Maria:benghlala opposite nesitolo

Siyanda:mh

Maria:so mabawisa itarget kanjalo stupid they start kulemizi ngeke nathi sifake isinkwa sivele siyifirst target nathi bazoza la so I mean no angeke usifake isinkwa kini yabona

Siyanda:sho

Maria:uzoboshwa yabona

Siyanda:yes

Maria:so bafike bakhabeke bathi vula ibread bin vula ibread bin ok basingekho isinkwa so that means no awubambanga itarget but if besikhona singavulangwa it means yabona it means uyibambile itarget yabona

Siyanda:la lamasosha maphoyisa were they black soldiers or white soldiers

Maria:amawhite soldiers ah bekungenablack soldiers engena elokishini ngalesoskhathi they were very few bekuoperater very young soldiers laba abasuke bezo bathi yini laba ababizwayo angithi that time you had to be called ukuzoserve isikhathi sobusosha bekuba yilokho yilaboke yibona labomh

Siyanda:ehhe

Maria:mh kangoba even today actually at work my environment is very eh relaxed siyajoker namacollegues ethu abalingana nathi nabanye abadala ngithi mina your face looks very familiar wena bewungaoperate nje esoweto ngalesiyasikhathi 1976 laughs yazi you look familiar athi nomunye ja wena ngalokuganda

Siyanda:yini ukuganda

Maria:ukunyathela ngeboot

Siyanda:ukunyathela ngeboot laughs

Maria:yes so so kunaleyonto yeah ja ja so that how we interfaced ke nepolitic violence ngalesosikhathi

Siyanda:okay so a sad one sad memory that you had ukhula

Maria:oh yazini it was when I my dad passed away when I was just when I had just started ustd 6

Siyanda:sho

Maria:ngo1982 ngoMarch

Siyanda:I was born in 1982

Maria:Hawu izwa nje okay that when my father died laughs yabo so he never actually

Siyanda:Do you know idate yakhe

Maria:I think it was the 10th of march ay It was the beginning of march I think it was the 10th of march ja ja ja so that was a sad memory ngoba even you know thina mesikhula we were not very close to our parents mh we were not very close ehm they always put yokuthi they are stalked because they were dealing with the enemy yangalesisikhathi you know that how we saw it bebebashaya phela emsebenzini they were allowed to do that bebebahlukumeza bebahlukumezwe emsebenzini bahlukunyezwe ukuza ekhaya istate yabona leyanto yepass itransportation

Siyanda:Yeah

Maria:ehm so mayefika ekhaya uyazi assertake kini yabona bekuwugogo wakho ubaba umuntu okufanele ashaye umthetho you know so we were not very close so even though we were not but it was sad ukuthi washona and he died in his dream ja so it was sad because it was like

Maria:No no he was a boxer so he had a head injury long ago and he made a blood clot

Interviewr:Sho

Maria:so the clot was travelling and and ileyonto ukuthi in those days they didn't do amamedicals a lot they would have picked it up ukuthi you've got iclot and given him medication ize I I

Siyanda:Iphele

Maria:iphele ja iyihlakazeyou know to clean the blood and coz now sebeyayenza leyonto but they didnt bewuya kodokotela mase u mase ulele ngempela bebengathandi nabo ukuya kodokotela and because odokotela bebengabelungu nabo amabhunu yabona leyanto so this thing was anti them nje in all aspects yabona

Siyanda:sho

Maria:so bekuyilento nje amemories ukuthi washona ubaba so that was ukuthi hawu sengingena ehigh school and I was a good student ukungena ehigh school angeke esangibona so I used to think about those things yabona

Siyanda:yeah

Maria:mh so he never I don't know my teenage years with a experience of having father I don't know it I just know them with a one parent

Siyanda:mhm yeah

Maria:who had to become pretty strong ngoba ubesesiraiser eyi one ja so uvele waba strong nje you know

Siyanda:And how was ubudlelwano between you and your two siblings your brother and sister

Maria:no siyezwana but manisakhula we used to fight a lot yeyi we used to fight phela nilwelwa amahouse chores you know because there was three of us so the mother always uzoza late because of lento le yetransportation yize bechager ngo four but bazofika endlini ngabo seven Eight ngaboeight so kufanele sesiphekile and that was one good thing about that system ukuthi it taught us ukuthi ja irresponsibility yes grow up early and there was no thing ukuthi there was no demacation ukuthi ungumfana akufuneki ufunde ukupheka mhme we had to learn how to cook how to do all sort of things kangangoba I can paint ngenzi ingadi ngiyapheka the same goes with my brother he can cook he can paint he can do washing of course uyayi uyivila laughs but uyakwazi ukupenda you know those things ja ja ja

Siyanda:Umh and then oh ni nikhula how important was education in your family

Maria:Hha it was but abazali bethu ehm unfortunately Jerry bebengafundile kangako hhe ubaba wami the highest standard sakhe bekuwu std 6

Siyanda:Sho

Maria:and then umama wami I think it was std 8 and ngalesosikhathi bebesibiza JC angithi Junior certificate angithi you don't know he laughs ok std 6 there was a certificate

Siyanda:Ositholalyo

Maria:Ositholayo when

Siyanda:Whether you finish it or not

Respondent:When you finish it because eh it was also an exit formula you could exit isikole ngo std 6 and go and work but it was a system isystem was well entrenched but they had to generate labour angithi

Siyanda:Labour

Maria:llabour Yes yes so you could exit ke kastd 6 angisakhumbuli ukuthi isitifiketi sakhona besibizwani then bese besibizwani konje bebesifundisa ke lokho abazali bethu ukuthi hawu mina ngithole isitifiketi esithinithini ngizozikhumbula I think mengikhuluma then kube khona nesinye kastd 8 where the cream ke the cream yilaba abafike kustd 8 ja yilaba abazali benu bebe you know

bebeniphusha benisupporter atleast nifike kastd 8 ke because really why would they do that when you people can work kastd 6 now really you know ja so mina umama wami ke wafika kastd8

Siyanda:Sho

Maria: so ubekaneJC ibizwa ngeJunior Certificate mh so isenior certificate ile oyaziyoke iyona le imatric where few very very few because a lot of them baphume kaJC baya kosebenza because the idea was to go and work umzali onjani lo oyeka umntwana ayothola iseniour certificate uzokushada nini ke loyo laughs because that was the whole aim you know ja eh

Siyanda:so how come wafika

Maria:not thina kubazali bethu bengisakuchazela isystem yabazali bethu yes yabazali bethu ja because the whole aim was to generate labour for them ja so so they achieved that successfully so but eh even though bephuma koJC obanibani they furthered their studies later in life ja ja that how it worked yabona mh hhe thina mekufika kuthini me infact thina masifunda osub b besisakhona lesitifiketi sastd 6 besisakhona eh I think saphela thina masisafunda ostd 3 saphela because thina mesifunda ostd 5 there was natural progression std 5 std 6 ja ja eh but ngiseselapho sasisekhona esakast8 basiphaser later lesi sakastd 8 because what they could do also was ngaloJC lowo std 8 you could go and study to become a teacher so you come out of a school system and to another system and become a teacher or unurse ngoba kukhona uJC konesi maar thina mesisondelela kostd 6 balokhu beziphaser out ke yabona

Siyanda:ok ngenkathi usesesikoleni what were your wawufuna ukuba yini

Maria:yazini there was no time to think about that laughs you know I don't remember ukuthi ngicabange eh ukuthi I want to become e no hai no I don't remember ehe there was just this progression yokuthi kufanele ufunde fanele ufunde but ukuthi to become a no there wasn't even a career guidance esikole no no even ngisafunda ustd 6 mina because I exited mina I ibantu system kastd8 I exited then I went to a private school

Siyanda:oh okay mh mh mh

Maria:even ngisekustd8 bekungenacareer guidance at my school there wasn't

Siyanda:so I mean how did you get to exit kastd 8

Maria:ok mangikastd6 khona lapho ngithe kuwe eh mina I was a

Siyanda:a clever student

Maria:a clever student ja mina throughout my school life base infact I think ngingathi throughout my besekuintroducer lento zamabursary kumablack children the time beyiintroducer my parents always got their money back for school fees during the year because this is what happened ibursary

yakhona was hai ne no I think ischool fees sakhona was about R8 or so ngoba basengiphuma khona it was about R60

Siyanda:R60 ngonyaka

Maria:Ngonyaka ja Eh if you did well the principal nominated you ukuthi ubenefiter kwibursary mawuyitholile leyobursary then they repay your school fees then that means ufunde mahhala kulowonyaka ja so mina every year besibuya ischool fees sasekhaya besibuya ja so ngoku ngokuperfomer kanjalo kasted 6 amacompanies mase o AECl oSasol o Eskom base bekhona ukuintro I think they were approached by whoever ukuthi eh there is a need to expose amablack children to engineering and science so they put money together in pity bathi asifunde isaturday school that was one way they saw ezoimprover eh our exposer so they used to bring amastudents from wits to come and teach us ukusupplementa our knowledge in maths and science and other things ke bebesithatha siye kumaexussions siye ko konje yini le amafactories sibone ukuthi how are things made iproduction yabona siye koclover siya kuphi kuphi you know and that helped me a lot because it put me in an advantage position no black children could achieve that unless ube kulento

Siyanda:What year was this

Maria:1982 when my father died in 19 7 1982

Siyanda:So its still under apartheid

Maria:Ja it was still under apartheid then mhm

Siyanda:So what was the motivation you know these companies coming in to expose abantu abamnyama to

Maria:You must remember ukuthi ngalesosi ngo 1982 you know it was three years before e u yakhumbula ngo1985 kwaba namanye amauprising but it was then when the Greek strengthen ukuthi release Mandela so eh ngo1982 it was the beginnings bebona ukuthi yazini we are not winn we wont win this thing for ever namasactions were putting pre so but there were a lot of external factors yes ja ja baba nalento yokuthi yazini let us expose these children anyway they are they were probably they were saying they are the future labour cause laughs so asibeni nelabour cause enconywana kunale efana neyabazali babo yes ja so so babesiexposer ke kanjalo so then mesengifunda ustd 8 kwaba namauprising ngo1985 la e esoweto so I didn't write std 8 exams because of amauprising now nabo oEskom nabo bani bani bathi you know what we can we can find another way yokuthi nikwazi ukuqhubeka nesikole because sasithe we were not going to school until iphele leyoriot and eh the end was not inside it was not inside it was not inside we didn't know ukuthi iyophela nini leyonto so thina ngabo towards the end of no the beginning of 1986 because lento yayenzeka ngaboSeptember so sangabhala amaexams ngo1986 we were all taken out of Soweto like the Khutsong formula

Siyanda:Yeah

Maria:bathathe abantwana basekhutsong bayobabhalisa amaexams hai we went through that mina basithatha basikhipha la esoweto bayosihlalisa le emasurbarbs laughs ngayofunda etechnical ke so it was another way yokuthola atleast I

Siyanda:Exposure

Maria:Icertificate

Siyanda:Oh ok

Maria:because the idea was atleast find you know imatric that at those days imatric you could get it in two ways you could get le yetechnical ukuthi ufunde etechnical college and do two languages because that was iformula yematric is about two languages eh kuhigher grade namanye amasubjects eh so sayenza njalo and ngayitholake leyotechnical matric and then my fre then I decided the idea was to go to a technicon at least we were going through wind like but then mina my problem was if I do that I am going to be channelled into a technical field and I don't want that I want eh I want I want liberty to choose where I want to go I was always nginalento ukuthi mina angeke angifuni ukuchanelwa I want the liberty to choose so I decided ukuthi yazini after after having going through that eh that year because nga attender isaturday school this iexposure thing baletha futhi abanye abantu who were saying there is a private a new private school being built le efana nekaOprah yavalwake after a couple of years after thina eh it was built and eh the building was built ne eCiskei

Siyanda:sho

Maria:ya eh and besibhala i IEB independent examination board cause it was a private school so yayithatha std9 and 10 sasingafaki uniform it was based on isyllabus ya like le yaseAmerica yabona sasisebenzisa amafiles arch files sasingafaki uniforms sasihlalake ehostela sasidla edining hall and our parents could visit us just like iOprah formular mayifika mina ngibona sengathi yoh mina iv gone through that laughs

Siyanda:Iprofile yabantwana racially speaking were you mixed uhm

Maria: be be because It was geared for black people

Siyanda:Okay

Maria:It was only blacks

Siyanda:ok

Maria:Only ngoba ngiye khona ngo 1989 mina no 1987 ja ngo86 I went through this anti phase ngayithola 87 I went back to school I went back to std 9 but in a private school so ngo87 it was only

black baqala ukuintroducer abelungu mhlambe leformular efana neaffirmative action laughs ja uthola ukuthi two whitechildren in that school angazi nokuthi bangena kanjani ngoba bona phela they were advantaged ja but bebekhonake abelungu I suppose they had to make it be politically correct I suppose you know banganake abelungu ngaleyondlela so ngafunda kelaphoke

Siyanda:Then you were there for two years

Maria:Then I got the matric I wanted then I had an option to choose then I was so then I went to university of natal ngayenza iscience ke khona ja

Siyanda:But I can see you are still sort of coming to a white institution and

Maria:That was a challenge ja now

Siyanda:But but what happens in this place

Maria:This is interesting because mina I I you will see that you can experience yonke lento yesegregation but you will still come out the better mina I wasnt bruised I'm not bruised by this eh lentuza eh ehm experiences mesifika thina eNatal safika ngequota system uyaunderstander we were told ukuthi they wanted infact eres I know they wanted six black people in residence we were the first ones thina to occupy ires euniversity of natal black

Siyanda:Sho

Maria:It was still white so basebenzisa iquota system bathi hehe give us six so I was lucky I was the first one noKagiso

Siyanda:Oh yes

Maria:And the others ke ja umh so because amablacks phela bebengahlali ecampus bebehla e Allentein ja only when they were allowed we were luckily the first ones ukuhlala so sahlalake eres and iexperience jessus you know lento abahlala beyisho bathi children are very ruthless baba badlula abazali ja hai our collegues laba besifunda nabo jesses they were ruthless I mean things like inoise you know thina bantu abamnyama sisebenza nx I mean sikhulumela phezulu and always in groups laughs so you would find umuntu akuvakashele eres obvious niyahleka eroomini a white student like you uzosukuma from eroomini yakhe azovula umnyango akno angaknocki

Siyanda:Angaknocki

Maria:Avule umnyango eroomini yakho afike aye straight kuleradio yakho afike ayicishe bekuyima enitshela ukuthi nibanga umsindo im trying to study sasihlale sinalento yokuthi im trying to study ngoba bebehla bethi im trying to study laughs athi im trying to study avele anishiye nisakhamisile kanjalo ahambe nisale nithe ningabelieve ukuthi yenzakalile lento laughs nihlale futhi naye kwilecture hall laphayana e konje yini leyalecture hall e

Siyanda:Lenkulu

Maria:Ja

Siyanda:shepston 1

Maria:Shepston 1 nihlala futhi naye eshepstone 1 yena lo bekade enidelela laughs nithi manibheka nimbone uthatha amanotes nina nisaxakwe ukuthi iletecture isakhuluma lesingisi lesi hey it was a challenge nisafuna ukubhala every word le ayishoyo manithi nibheka loyamuntu loyana use uyahighlighter nje amanotes wakhe aclean usehamba kupage two wena usathe eish so laughs uyayihleka ne ja it was a challenge laughs kangangoba kwakunale prediction vele sonke besivele sithola isub kafirst semester because we were still battling with the environment we were still adapting yabona mh and the next thing you knowamaDPs asephumile lapha laughs you know laughs so it was interesting but we were strong hey we were strong ngoba sayenza eh siye sithi mesiyikhuluma no Kagi leyonto laughs ukuthi sasifike electure hall sibheke sixakeke sithi he kuthiwani ke manje laughs bakhulume ngalamaterms esingawazi ophyscho-analysis laughs futhi thina sasinale lecture eyayingingiza wahamba ngeykhathi zethu

Interviewr:Ehhe

Maria:u eish ngamkohlwa man wayevele afike akhulume kanjalo sihleke sibulawe ukuhleka sikhohlwe ukuthatha amanotes laughs angithi uya uyabona umuntu ongingizayo unale unalento yokungingiza a particular nyana word not even a word a vowe vowel not a vowel bathi a consonant ya I think a consonant and a vowel and a particular one so mayezothi physcho uzothi phycho ananananalysis sizohleka sikhohlwe ukuthatha amanotes abelungu bathi bayahleka yes maar bafocused ey thina ey everything is loose kuze kufike isikhathi samaDP eish awutholanga iDP or uyitholile you just made it isasekhona iDP namanje

Siyanda:isekhona

Maria:Ohho ok eich ja then you just make it uyobhala iexam ikushaye dizzy awu sasithola amasub ngefist semester

Siyanda:Mh

Maria:Mh

Siyanda:Sho

Maria:Mh sisastrugglisha ke but then ngesecond semester siadapter ke and e the way to adapt is to adapt was yena lo okugilayo ofika athi cisha iradio yakho bewuvele kufanele umj umjw umjwayele kube umngani wakho yabona umcele amanotes you know so you had to learn to survive u interacter naye lomuntu yayinga yayingekho lento yenu nini nithi hheyi im not speaking Afrikaans this dude uyangidina ini ini laughs no thina we had to know yabona ukuthi yazini I have to benefit from this

thing let me put this thing aside lapride aside ja so besiba na kangangoba even today thina esichampionisha ukuvula amasango for nina kumacoperate uthola ibhunu yibo phela abazi umsebenzi ja thina phela masifika kulama kulama

Siyanda:Industry

Maria:Ja kumandustry namaposition amakhulu

Siyanda:Ehhe

Maria: ewe a black person has never been there you must manage this work people kunzima

Siyanda:How do you do it

Maria:bayawazi umsebenzi labantu he and bazo bazokuformela icarpet under your feet and bazoyidonsa unga ungahla ungabhekile you know the idea is learn their language play the game and the game is uzehlise ufike kubo uthi hai phela you guys you know nina yini enazi ioperations mina I only have the skill to manage you but you are the expert in this sidlala ngabo

Siyanda:laughs ja

Maria:ja kufanele nigcine nizwana yabona ja so sisurviver ngalokho but even today

Siyanda:yeah back in university that's how you survived

Maria:back in university ja that's how we survived ja otherwise ubuzowatholaphi amanotes umangabe umukwatela loyamuntu mangabe ecisha iradio yakho mawulwa naye ubuzozifeyilela uyibonele ukuthi wenzenjani ngoba uGavin Ivy akanaso nesikhathi sokuchazela iconcept eyione kayihundred you know mfundisi besisaba nokuya kubona besisaba and im telling you besisaba nokuya kubona you know ufike uphethe iassignment eish ufike emnyango uvele ubuyele emuva laughs phela sibuya kulesystem yokusaba uprincipal you know ya so leyomentality ibisidriver mh

Siyanda: And then umh ok angithi wangena wenza iScience and then you changed ka social science

Maria:Mh I failed mina i isecnd semester ngefirst year

Siyanda:Mh

Maria:ifirst semester luckily mina I passed because mina I came from my background yepriate school I didn't have all these other problems ababeba nazo so ifirst semester ngayiphasa kahle isecnd semester ngayifeyila eh imajor imajor yami was ichemistry ehm so ngase ngi ngarepeater the following year eh I had to repeat because I still wanted to do science but because Imajor I failed imajor I had to repeat

Siyanda:yeah

Maria: but even though ngarepeater then I could take other subjects kasecond year ne so that's when I introduced amasubjects o o

Siyanda:augment sciences

Maria:augment sciences so ngayifeyila futhi hai then I realised ukuthi no maybe this is not it

Siyanda:hhe

Maria:ja and okokuqala ngalesosikhathi ifaculty of science was very racial very racial ooh sasibawusix or so

Siyanda:mh

Maria:thina bantu abamnyama kuscience ubone nangendlela amalecturers enza ngayo eish it's a pity ukuthi I want you to if mhlambe ukwazi you must ukhulume nalowomfana he is a professor now eh la eniversity of Pretoria

Siyanda:ubani lowo

Maria:e u woo ingama lakhe

Siyanda:uThokozani

Maria:uThokozani

Siyanda:uThokozani Majoji

Maria:ukhulume naye ja and he will unpack for you this racial element eyayi kascience mh ukuthi uzofika uhlakaniphe but because you're your ngizothini ukuphumelela kwakho kusezandleni zomuntu omakayo akumakhe down uthi mawuthatha isicript somlungu ufunda naye ubone ukuthi hawu kanti nami bengiright nalana mawubheka nalona yena even isingisi siyabahlula ke and we only go to know euniversity ukuthi kanti a white person doesn't necessarily know English which shows ukuthi isystem abebesifundisa ngayo beyi excellent actually even though bekuyiparrot learning but thina I amalanguages we are

Interviewr:very good

Maria:excellent excellent ukudlula nina you guys mh laughs

Siyanda:ja

Maria:ja so so kub kube nalokho ukuthi bewubona ukuthi yazini hai this thing but yayingasi sasingadumali wawuba nalokho ukuthi I will make it yabona

Siyanda:so you you never got angry enough to confront umh umuntu

Maria:uMajozi kuphela owaconfronter laughs

Siyanda:seriously

Maria:ja he confronted ihead of department because he wasn't given a prize

Siyanda:sho

Maria:and he had proof ukuthi he deserved that prize mina ngathola I no ngaphasa istatistics ngisenza iscience ngathatha nestatistics ne so one B ngayiphasa ngo ninety five percent ngeexam uyangizwa

Siyanda:sho

Maria:and I know that that question that I didn't get right I even went back to Reg ngathi mina kukhona iquestion engingayitholanga kahle I don't know ukuthi it was the only one I didn't find and that was ufive marks and that was the only one I didn't get so ngathola uninety five percent but i wasn't given a prize kuneprize giving function angithi ngofebruary I think

Siyanda:February the following year

following year ja I only got for isiZulu and angisakhumbuli eh neGeography I think but for this one subject I didn't and I thought to myself probably bakunika uma phela I was I was registering some of the subjects I thought maybe babheka naleyo history only to find that no they don't

Siyanda:they don't

Maria:its just that subject yabona its what get socialization we were socialised not to question izinto yes ja ja so ubandlululo lalukhona kakhulu lalukhona ubandlululo ja

Siyanda:and then ok so wa washintsha to isocial science wayenza enye and then what happened after that

Maria:I then moved on to do amapost graduate diploma nehonours ihuman human nx resources ja nepersonal management remember that time they were introducing it

Siyanda:Yeah

Maria:Mh so saba amachampion nyana wakhona

Siyanda:So every Wherever you go you always were the first one

Maria:Mh mh mh

Siyanda:Its very strange laughs

Maria:Masibheka emuva ukuthi ah ok iuniversity of natal its now shaped like this you know ja

Siyanda:ja And then ke umh did you have an idea ukuthi ufuna ukwenzani ke when you got your degree

Maria:No that time in fact mina then icareer counselling ngaqala ukuba exposed kuyona

Siyanda:Evarsity

Maria:no masengiseprivate school

Siyanda:Okay

Maria:Leyana then I got exposed to icareer counselling ngoba besibuye sihambe phela kumaexcussions basiyse on hiking trips and you know all these things ebezenziwa abelungu mina bese ngizazi besengizenzakelaughs

Siyanda:Ja

Maria: ja ja so ngabanayo icareer exposer and eh at some poi mengisafunda usTd nine because I was geared kwisciencei wanted to becomea ngangithe yini konje umuntu osebenza elaboratory ana an analyst ilaboratory analyst bengifuna ukuba ilonto enjalo at some point I wanted to study imedical technology I remember I was enquiring about it and what what what ja

Siyanda:and then what changed

Maria:yilento yokuevolver mangilokhu ngichanter new ground ngbone ukuthi hai hai hai ngiyilahle le ngiqale kabusha ja ja

Siyanda:tell me about your first job

Maria:bengisebenza mos euniversity angithi mh eh naboJerry kuleyaprogram yepct mh

Siyanda:you were working on pct

Maria:mh I was working

Interviewr:mh

Maria:ja I was iadmin person yabo so mabezothatha I was the link between pct and the university

Siyanda:oh

Maria:the first link nakhona laughs u u Hunly had this thing yokuthi she wants a link because pct was always on its own masebeqeda bese kuyima bebanika iuniversity yabona bathathwa ifaculty so uHunly waye it was ibranch kaHunly and she always wanted umuntu ozoba yilink yabona eh between pct neuniversity eh mabaqeda ukubhala kube uyena mina bengibhala izincwadi zokuthathwa euniversity eh and send them the books ja ja ja so bathi mebeyimaterialiser luckily mina ngangiqeda ukugrader and then because aboKagi they were tutors you know eh so ngathola kanjaloke uKagi bathi yazini o bafuna lento enje kwaku kwakuwuHunley kakhulu wayengitshelile esayistudent esaqedela imasters yakhe mh so ngawuthola ke kanjalo ke lowomsebenzi so ngangisebenza euniversity and then mengisebenza yes yayikhona nakhona ubandlululo

Siyanda:realy

Maria:hha wena uyadlala wena laughs uyadlala not kapct mase pct I think I worked for two years then kwase ngithola lento yokuthi manje sengifuna ipermanent position ngoba yayingekho ipermant position laphayan yayiba according to funding mase ngiapplyela iposition kucace ukuthi kufanele ngiapplyele phela le isupport administration ne yamafaculty so ngiyi applyele ke but angithi yayichithile izalukazi zabelungu nalamadean akhona angisile amadean akhona and you know leyonto even masengisebenza la engisebenza khona namanje nganginokuyikhumbula leyonto ukuthi I cant believe ukuthi at some point I had to compete nomuntu onomatric kuphela I was already studying my post graduate diploma for iposition ethile and she wasn't even advantaged because she wasn't working at the university at that point she was also coming from outside she was just temping at that time yabona

Siyanda:yeah

Maria:mina nganginexposure yokubhala izincwadi to students I could deal with abo o konje ubani loprofessor osehamba I could deal namaregistrar you know on issues eh so I had exposure I was actually advantaged more than her but

Interviewer: and you had a degree

Maria:I had a degree but the problem was how do they take her over me no how do they take me over her for the position that was their problem

Siyanda:Mmm

Maria:Umhlophe lomuntu

Siyanda:No

Maria:Yes I remember estrugglisher nefaculty off officer u sewaretire estrugglisha engazi ukuthi ahandlishe kanjani lento

Siyanda:Babmthatha

Maria:Yes bamthatha now mabemthatha afike futhi kimi angitshela ukuthi yazini wena uzoba under lo angitshela kanjalo wena uzoba under lomlungu uzokufundisa izinto laughs and at that point guess what I wasn't there to fight I just wanted a stable job because ngisafuna ukufunda so ngaba under lo for a couple of months then then ngaqala ukuputshuka ke you know mawuhlakaniphile uhlakaniphile I was just doing admin I have im holding a degree for christs for crying out loud kuzobonakala angithi by the way engenza ngakhona engi engager ngakhona you know ehm because lo uzolandela ibhuku okokuqala iexposure yaseuniversity akanayo mina benginayo I was a warden so nginale yase yase mares nginale yo yakapct so istudent masisuka siza kimi sizofuna usizo ngangizomnika iholistic you know yes so babegcina befuna ukusizwa yimina yabona ja so ngagcina se sengiputshuka kanjalo bagcina benginika iadmissions officer position ukuthi babethe bazonginika le esebenza ngamamarks that's one like a production line yokuthi masawufika yimina engizoya kokhokha eey ngangingayifuni ngangingayifuni but you know because ufuna nje umsebenzi ja kwa kwavela ukuthi no abanginike le yeadmissions officer because le yeadmissions officer yayifuna umuntu okwazi ukucabanga because it had to deal with idean eh nefaculty and nalokho konke konke the holistic part of the student ja ja so ngagcine ngiyithole kanjalo and I e enjoyed what I did ngalesosikhathi ngangi enjoyer loyamsebenzi

Siyanda:And then after that what happened

Maria:Hai then ngagcina sengi then I was a warden angithi

Siyanda:ehe

Maria:ja part time so ngagcina sengi I was a warden for amastudents

Siyanda:Eres

Maria:Eres ja ja eres so masengisha then I got married then I decided ukuthi yazini

Siyanda:Got married

Maria:Ngo 1996

Interviewr:Eh

Maria:ja ngo 1996 I got married eh then I decided yazini that was only after I moved out of res ngo 1997 ja I moved out after I got married ngoba now my life was beginning to change mh

Interviewr:mh

Maria:so eh ngase ngiyamover out I resigned from being a warden eh but I kept on being admission officer angithi so ngahlala ke ngase ngifunda ihonours yami ngo1997 part time and then I had my first child in 1998

Siyanda:sho

Maria:so I stopped ngo 1998 yabona infact 1999 mh eh then I got ngo 2000 cause it was a part time two years angithi mh

Siyanda:oh kay ja

Maria:mh and I was still working at iuniversity so ngaze ngaqeda euniversity ngaphuma ngo so when they underwent ichange kuze kufika oRonny Miller nalefaculty entsha I was there ja ikhehla sasihlala sithi kufika kufika istokvel soRonnie sasihlala siza njalo istokvel so Ronnie ngoba kwakuyi kwaku amaJuda angithi you don't know that one wena ne do you know

Siyanda:I know ukuthi uRonnie uyi

Maria:Is a jew

Siyanda:uyijuda ehhe

Maria:ngalesosikhathi kwakufike ne ne neDVC I think kwakuyi jew

Siyanda:ehhe

Maria:there was a group of them befika kwifaculty ja so ngangena ke kubona ngasebenza kubona eh then ngase ngiyahamba ke ngo 2002

Siyanda:so now let me ask the question now since wena wafika eNatal in the very first beginning when it was exclusively white and over the times

Maria:mayishintsha

Interviewr:mayishintsha you went through the transition how was that post transition uyibona yenzeka throughout the years

Maria:mh intransition was slow

Interviewr:mh

Maria:eh ngoba and you could see ukuthi iuniversity is trying very hard to to to ask to invite abantu amamnyama onto campus that was the first problem ngoba they were not on campus angisho ja so every year banamaquoters ba increaser amaquoters baqala kancane bagcina se ja be increaser but as that happened now there were other environmental factors suddenly iuniversity had to deal with

ihigh failure rate suddenly iuniversity had to deal with iproblem yamafunds from black people they never had to do that ngoba manje abelungu bayazikhokhela ja now suddenly they had to deal with ukuinvite manje amaloa amadonors emali and really go out there and look for these people you know so you see ukuthi and thina we could see angithi vese besesi o masecond year we could see ukuthi when all this was going through and they also had to transform nabo icouncil had to transform thina masifika sasi sasinokuriot against eh ijudge who was a chancellor eh kwakuwujudge bani konje kwakuwujudge bani he was a hanging judge then

Siyanda:ehhe

Maria:uyazi ukuthi yini ihanging judge

Siyanda:ee

Maria:he was a judge who always detain amablack people to hang to hang to hung

Siyanda: he was a a chancellor

Maria:he was a chancellor of

Siyanda:unamanga

Maria:yes but it was normal then it was normal ujudge ujudge ulang de lange I think u lange or de ulange ja thina mesenza usecond year sarioter waze wakhishwa as a because we saw a role of conflict how do you stay on a council yase yeuniversity ezama ukutransformer when you are hanging apartheid people it was apparent at the end of apartheid phela babembomba ama airport angithi bebeboshwa bayohengwa that was the ultimate angithi fanele bayohengwa ja so sa sayenza sariota against him wakhishwake

Siyanda:wakhishwa

Maria:so we could see those things euniversity itransformer you know and it was a painful exercise khona they really had to show that they are doing something ja ja

Siyanda:so then life manje keyou are now married how is your life now

Maria:it boring manje laughs ngalezizazikhathi it was nice vele nje kwakune ngiyadlala no manje im at a sta actually yazi my life has evolved at some point mangisuka euniversity I came here to carve a niche for myself to carve a career ne and I started nicely ngayiqali icareer and it was exciting but it meant ukuthi part of my life had to take a a back stage while im still carving this ja so eh I then had my son eh

Siyanda:e e unabantwana abangaki

Maria:two

Siyanda:two ok

Maria:so mangifika la I had my son in 2002 that year I had my son later in the year ja so it meant ukuthi I had to find unanny now

Siyanda:mh

Maria:to look after my my children and I stress that because the life in natal you must understand because especially wena useNatali the life in natal is slower then here in joburg

Siyanda:no a completely

you will have noticed ukuthi into yakho ngiyi answerisha kanjani mina you know life is very fast here and you have to put fingers in your a lot of fingers in a lot of pies to survive yabona so eh so kwaba nale fast life and trying to adapt and doing things yabona so eNatali I could cope ngangikwazi ukupheka ngangikwazi ukuba nabantwana sikwazi ukuya emall masibuya emsebenzini its its unheard of here I cant go to the mall mangibuya emsebenzini ngibuya late

Siyanda:you will be lucky if laugh

exactly that's another lentuza factor yabona so kuba nalokho so I had to find abantu abazongikhulisela abantwana ne so I was chasing when I brand that time of my life ngiye ngithi mina I was chasing the dollar then and carving a niche for myself and iv I got im satisfied I have created a brand for myself and Im happy with it iv put the dollar aside I am satisfied with the money that I make its not a lot but I can survive because now the my children are at a stage where they need me last year I was I was bengikwicareer that was very fast paced and I could see ukuthi Im going become something because when I work I work hard bakubanalento yokuthi I k now where im going nabo bayangitruster

Siyanda:bewenzani

Maria:The the time mengisuka eDineni I went to another company angithi ngiqale la ngoDecember I was a National training manager

Siyanda:Ok

Maria:Still here e airport for another company yes eh it was a very strategic position I could deal with the CEO directly with that position and I I could see where Im going eh but it was very fast paced bengifika ekhaya late ngikhathele see the children eh and they could never access me during the day they couldn't yabona eh and ngibabone mabalala and then I open my laptop that was the life hey eh ngilala late but in the morning im up again yabona and I used to travel a lot sometimes ngingababoni ekuseni ngibabone just before balale and it would be an undertaking in my part mangithi mina ey angifuni ukubabone sebalele angizame ukufika ekhaya earlier nyana just before balale you know so when I went out of that environment ngathi mina I want an environment where

it's a bit relaxed because the children are at a stage where they need me now one of the parents my husband was there for them then now he is at a stage where he is carving his career so we always always one off the bus one on the bus so sengioff the bus mina and I actually like where I am now living my life ngoba eh you wont believe ukuthi my child ukagrade 4

Siyanda:Mh

Maria:I know her whole work better than her that she does owokuqala ukagrade 4 owesibili usasekugradR ima eyoqala igrade 1 next year but I check the homework I check the diary you know makuzoba amaexam I revise with her kangangoba uyaye athi my husband im the one in school now because I make sure ukuthi she get and she does get it she does she does so and angeke akwazi ukuachie and she is happy with that and I can see ukuthi uya uma si mebabhala amaexam mayethola iscript sakhe ubekangifonele mommy I got my exam results I work so hard nami ngiyajabula ngoba yimi engimfundisaya you know we go through we revise the work ja so naye uba nalokho naye she looks forward to tell me ukuthi eish mommy ngiphasile yabona so ngiyabona ukuthi yazini eh if ever if anything I mustn't change this now because uzodeteriorater and she's at the point where eish marks are very important for her school life kithina yes they were important but jag bekunalento yokuthi its partheid laugh yena akanaexcuse kunalabantwana she needs to prove herself and I also actually want her to get a bursary ngoba ngifuna aye eprivate school yabona so ngibona ukuthi asiqale manje kagrade 4 ukuthi aphase kahle so that's that's the choice I have made and im happy with it

Siyanda:Ja

Maria:and I stress ukuthi ichoice because I actually we actually had to take conscious decision ukuthi sizohlala eduze nesikole

Siyanda:mh

Maria:tha that that's what it meant ukuthi as a family sodecider nobheki ukuthi you know what we had to stay eduze nesikole one of us has to work closer to home

Siyanda:mh

Maria:because la eJoburg you can work ePretoria but uhlala la as long as the car can take you there that that's what we say here but can the car get you there yes ok then we will take you or uzosebenza nathi you find ukuthi ucommitting for an hour or even two

Siyanda:two

Maria: you know so saba nalokhoke ukuthi yazini lets make a conscious decision one of us has to work closer to to home and the home has to be closer to the school

Siyanda:mh

Maria:ja so so that's the arrangement that we we and im happy with it ukuthi okwamanje im running the and im still fine at work im still fine ja

Siyanda:now as umama umzali you know and seing your childhood ukhula under apartheid South Africa and abantwana bakho manje are there similarities or or are there differences between impilo abantwana they are living now

Maria:no there are differences yazi there are differences eh for starters mh we were just saying ukuthi you know sesi affectwa izinto ebesingacabangi ukuthi zizosi affecter

Siyanda:ja

Maria:for example our children don't play outside they don't now you might take it for granted as a parent let me tell you what are the negative consequences imuscle tone yabo muscle tone they are not well developed because they don't play they only nePT yakhona phela esikolen its about i15 minutes 30 minutes or so that's that's the maximum for one week now imagine what it does to your body thina besidlala phela besidlala those are the things we take for granted and it was good for you thina we have to take a make conserted effort ukuthi imuscle toneyabo ibe ok we need to take we need to buy them a bicycle bayirider ibicycleyou have to tell them ukuthi today you are going to ride the bicycle you have to play with them because awukwazi ukuvula isango uthi abayodlala ngaphandle emgwaqeni because its dangerous so these are the things that we now finding ourselves having to deal with yabona eh nalento yokuthi you cant even trust your family members ukubashiya abantwana thina besihlala nomalume and there wasn't a problem I cant now you know you have to be extra vigilant because of nerape and and and e assault yabantwana ja ja so kuba nalezozinto you know so its its quite fast its apart

Siyanda:mh

Maria:we pay manje umangabe ungeke wena uthengela umtwanakho ibicycle umfundise ukudlala ngaphandle umixer ezinye izinto zokuthi adeveloper amamuscle namamotor fine motor skills wena mzali this is what you go through you take them for ioccupational assessment and itreatment it means you pay an expert to play with them that what it means mina I said no I know that because my son is suffering from that my daughter wasn't ja my son is suffering from that because bazokutshela ukuthi mayeyoqala esikole he must be able to hold a pen lezo zinto thina babe besingenandaba nazo our schools were not even emphasis those things

Siyanda:nonono

Maria:you will find those things in the white schools they must be able to hold a pen they must be able hold a glue in a particular way they must be able to put glue on the paper they look at the movement here it must move on its own not isandla sonke

Siyanda:thixo

Respondant:so it means he is not well developed those are the things they go through so it means wena as the parent you had

Siyanda:ja

Maria:to think of umtanakho uze wenze ideocision wena ukuthi this is how I want to live my life phela that why we sometimes say dollar aside the life of my children first yabona mh so

Siyanda:sho umh

Maria:so idifferent and the education system is also idifferent ngoba abantwana bethu abafundi ngo Simon van de stek did you learn about that thing

Siyanda:Simon van de

Maria:Van de stek the first one

Siyanda:No

Maria:to come to e South Africa on that ship

Siyanda:oJan van Reebik

Maria:noJan van Reebik ja oh he was on the same team

Siyanda:ja ngathi ngiyamkhumbula laughs sasifunda ngo jan kuphela laughs

Maria:kwakukhona nosimon van de stek laughs ja they don't learn ka kakhulu about those things but they learn I was just looking ukuthi you know what they are learning about they encourage them to learn about iSouth African history ngoba they will say to them choose an idol e study about that idol and then present amagrade 4 that what she does hhe so she goes into the internet she checks athi mommy mangingabhala I don't have to write about nelson Mandela because everybody writes about him what about Desmond tutu ngithi mina ya and guess what I also learn in that experience because ideoeducation yamanje iparent is very involved

Siyanda:mh ja

Maria: ja so mayenza leyonto I also go into the internet naye

Siyanda: eh

Maria: ngichecker naye and then maye phela ikhipha amapages amaningi I must summarize that for her so that azokwazi ikuyenza in the language that she can understands in simple English azokwazi

ukuyipresenter ayikhumbule so I also learn in that because I had to summarise it so ngicina sengikwazi ukuthi Oh uTutu uchampion kafirst of march in 19 bani bani you know yes ja so she also learnt

Siyanda:Now you have a fast pace setting and still have you so involved nabantwana It's the decision we took in the home remember I said to you we decided ukuthi one of us has to work closer to home

Siyanda:Yeah

Respdent:and one of us has to make sure ukuthi eh atleast uba available for the children so that's why I put the dollars aside im not chasing the career anymore im happy where I am now let me concentrate on this so that's how im im able to do that

Siyanda:umh interms of your future plans ikusasa lakho what do you wanna do still do still achieve

Maria:im at a point in my career where I think iv gained a lot of experience ne so into engifuna ukuyenza is to use le experience now in a positive way I want to go into consulting infact ngatshela uJulia last year and everyday sengiyayicabanga manje and im at a stage where I actually know from here this is where im going I want to go into consulting a lot of companies now are grappling with inviting and retaining and developing amaskills

Siyanda:mh

Maria:because you guys you just come into a company kwigeneration that nivele nibone ukuthi ahh I wont stand for this and you are out laughs eja and and amacompanies will always try you will find phela ukuthi inkampani yaqali ngo 19 bani amarewards amarewards amabenefits are also structured in that way awacaterishi for nina you don't want ipension fund nina ne

Siyanda:ee

Maria:you are not talking about retiring exactly laughs so you want your salary to be structured in a certain way to suit you so we are grappling with those things all of a sudden we find ourselves saying hai madoda this is what it means hey seriously so im serious about that that what companies are going through now now we need experts who will help us to do that and thina esenze ihuman resource ngalezizikhathi hai that education is not helping us its not talking to us about we are not talking to companies about that now so we have to always sifunde ngezinye izinto and and I thought im going to do that im going to study what they call organizational development you know it angithi kahle wena buti im going to stud im going to specialise now in that doing icourse yayo and just when I finish im not even going to stay in a company im going to consult because luckily where I am now im doing organizational development eh just eh using routed airline

Siyanda:oh

Maria:cause I work for samarai express ja ja just using the experience and the knowledge yokufunda you know ukufunda forms a very good foundation for you because njengoba ngifunde ihuman resource I easily adapt and easily learn lamaconcept amasha and apply them to where I am so but I thought you know what I really need to learn more about le OD specialization mangike ngayithola nje im moving out im forming my own consultant and my children will need me then kakhulu yabona

Siyanda:so you can work from home

Maria:so I can work from home ja

Siyanda:last question then we can end the first question if you think of your life as a black women in South Africa what has been the challenges you faced throughout impilo yakho and the second question is what has been the opportunities you have been given or created for your self

Maria:eh amachallenges throughout the life and it wasn't because of a black woman mangisafunda it was because of being a black child oh this challenge that I was telling you about oh it called group areas act ya now I remember ja amachallenges egroup areas act even nathi ngisho abazali bebesebenza ejardini akukho mgodi ejardini because it was forbidden ground laughs nizoboshwa nani yabona kwaze kwaqala ukurelaxwer ngabo1980 kwakungo 1989 kangoba infact kangoba eh then I had a mentor masengisebenza eACI ngiseyistudent ngoba bebenginika ibusary so imentor yakhona nayo had to sign lezinto zokuthi ngizolala kwakhe eh yabona yabona ey interface nalento phela this thing was well orchestrated very well planned ja very well planned yayikubamba yonke indawo yayikubambe ngeschooling system ikubambe ngokuhlala lapho uhlala khona ikubambe ngezikhathi ukuthi you should be out of the area yabona nje ja ja so yilokho nje amachallenges lawo bengikutshela wona wonke it was because of being a black child now as a black woman ngaqala ukuexperencer amachallenges ke kakhulu masengisebenza because mangisafunda it was just race issue ja not race and gender so masengisebenza kwaba nalento yokuthi ungawaface amachallenges now because you are a black woman mawufuna ukuba yimanager ai kube yiproblem yokuthi manje you are going to manage ubaba omngaka womlungu kuba nalento yokuthi phela kwimfundiso yalobaba you should be ichild yemaids yakhe who are you now to tell him and thina la eJoburg ke yasiiaffector kakhulu nalento le yobandlululo eNatal it was at university kwawubandlululo oluncanela lana kwakuyileli lokuthi yeyi you are black don't forget yabona

Siyanda:sho

Maria:em bakufihlele I information yabona nje oh yes they would make it very blatant

Siyanda:no laughs

Maria:angakutsheli umuntu angafuni ukukutshela athi uma eya eleavini ioffice yakhe kufanele ikhiywe this is a company mawukaHR you provide iservice to the whole company mangifika lapha ngiphuma eleavini what are you thinking do you still want to work here hier di se brik mayekuphendula umuntu wakhona hier di se brik I will burn it if uyidismis that's the attitude yabona

Siyanda:sho

Maria: Maria:but that's a lie ja but siyainterfacer nabo besiinterfacer nabo kakhulu oGenelle ke yabona yilapho nga funda khona ukuthi yazini eh infact iopportunitiy ithi ngikutsheleke iopportunitiy engayisebenzisa mawungibuza was kukhona ubaba who was a ohambisa iposi labobaba bayayisha iAfrikaans ngoba kade asebenza endaweni

Siyanda:Endaweni mh mh

Maria:Athi kimi ey yazi nina bantwana bami yazi ngiyanibona njengoba nifika la kumafirm yini vele enivula amasango ni occupier lamapositions ebesingacabangi ukuthi singanibona kuwona you know whats the recipe of survival ngithi mina hhayi baba athi vele ufunde le language uyikhulume ukhulume nabo and and I had this thing vele yokuthi angi undermine abantu ngamlalela lobaba washoke ukuthi hayi ubolalela ukuthi bathini ufunde lelanguage and you wont believe ukuthi laba if ukhuluma ilanguage yabo bayakwamukela ngezandla ezomusa yazi ukuthi ngayisebenzisa leyofomula yalobaba ngafunda iAfrikaans ke well siyayazi ke thina iAfrikaans thina bantu base goli but then I made a concerted effort yokukhulume nabo gosh mese ngikhulume nabo hai bebesho becabanga ukuthi im on their side angithi you are learning their languageyou must remember ukuthi in the ball of concertion in 197 iuprising was because of Afrikaans bathi abafuni ukufunda iAfrikaans angithi kwakunento kumabhunu ukuthi abafuni ukufunda ilanguage yethu so sizobamba I information mawukhombisa ukuthi engathi uyakhuluma nabo bayakuvulela yabona ja so mina I used that advantage ngase ngikhuluma iAfrikaans base bengifundisake ngafunda izinto because phela ufika uraw from esikoleni uzofunda iHR uzoyifunda kanjani lento ongayazi yes so sa ngafunda ngalokho enye futhi iopportunitiy engayisebenzisa ikhona futhi ebengiyikhumbula man ebengithi ngizokutshela ngayo oh amaopportunities abepresentwa oACE ngawathatha mina ja ukuthi ngihambe ngiyofunda eprivate school ngenxa yokuthi ngibhale ibursary ngayithatha leyonto eh nale opportunity yesaturday school ngayithatha and I didn't misuse it abanye some of my colleagues fell out of lawomaprogrammes because they fell pregnant mina I didn't misuse that I was very focused kangoba I even still went to university ngaze ngashada sengiqedi I even had my child after sengishadile yabone ja ukuba focused nje empilweni mh so its some of the opportunities I used

Siyanda: Other challenges you face now I supposed as umzali manje

Maria:Now is why you won't believe ukuthi there is still racism eykoleni zabantwana bethu there is still and you feel it as a parent and the reason you feel it is becauseyou we exposed to it wena mawukhula now abantwana bethu don't see it as racism babona nje idifference wena ngoba iracism ifana neharrassment umuntu uharrasser umuntu uzothi I wasn't aware that I was harassing you why didn't you tell me laugh you should have said no nomuntu oApplier iracism uthi you always take this thing

Interivewer:Seriously

Maria:and say its racism I wasn't being racist basho njalo but they wont know because they never suffer at the hands of racism kukhulu umuntu osufferishe oyaziyo leyofeeling ja ja yabona ja aj so kuba naleyonto yabona

Siyanda:and so are you concerned about abantwana bakho and the kind of what things they are exposed to esikoleni

Mariae:ah no they tell me it happens hhe they do go through that infact umtanami the grade 4 one said angithi iracism its not about it can be a remark that a person says that tells you ukuthi yazi lo is still caught up in the past one of iteachers yomntana wami yakagrade 4

Siyanda: Teacher

Maria:yes eh said one day not to her to the class now there is about 4 of them 4 black students in the class blacks in the class wathi kubo wathatha iexercise wathi I am sick and tired of how you blacks write a certain word in English you always get them wrong I am really sick and tired yabona washo njalo walahlela amaexercise wabo kubona wathi I always tell you ukuth I think its this wagtshela ukuthi mommy its when we say eh their children or their food people a lot of people write it as T H E there children there food there ja so that misunderstanding wayiracializer wathi im sick and you eh ukuthi black children always get it wrong even when I tell you a hundered times wayesethi kubo but the only ones that don't get it wrong kunina mablacks is Lebo Lebo is my child uLebo angazi nobani and then then I kept quite when she was telling me this ngifuna ukubona ukuthi uyazikhuphula uyazikhuphula yini lezi zinto basho njalo ngesilokishi uyazikhuphula yini lezinto and then mina ngathi so

Siyanda:oh

Maria:mh uyazikhuphula yini lezi zinto laughs so athi kimi ja but mommy you know what it wasn't nice ngithi mina what what wasn't it nice about it athi yena it didn't feel ok for her to say that ngithi mina oh okay ngithi mina ja you are right it wasn't good for her to say that it was wrong ukuthi asho njalo ngimbuze ngithi manjeubufuna ngiye esikoleni ngiyokhuluma naye athi yena hai uzongivictimizer ikhona phela leyonto laughs but yabona but you see that what they are exposed to but yena akazikhuphuli ukuthi iracism akayazi yimi engiyibonayo ibhaliwe lento ukuthi hai yazi lo usabanjwe yibhuku shes still caught up in the past

Siyanda:so wamconfronter uthisha

Maria:no I didn't address it because umtwana wami ubezoba victimised

Siyanda:yeah

Maria:eh that thing is always there its its there in the system it will never leave the system it wont ubezomvictimizer and then bengizoba nempi manje yokuprover ukuthi uhlakaniphile she's clever now she was going to suffer at the hands lo angithi uyena omakayo

Siyanda:Siyandae:yeah

Maria: Maria:so I was always have bengizohlala ngifuna ukubona iscript and I don't want to do that yabona I don't want to fight that war I don't want that war

Interivewer:did you have

Maria:exactly so im not going to do that yabona I don't ja ja ja so and no its still there its not going to leave the system now hai not it wont mhlambe bona mese bewothisha abantwana bethu some of them eh ngeke ba exerciser lento ngoba abayazi but you know what is the unfortunate thing is their parents still phela they they grew up ngesikhathi sethu so bayazi kahle ukuthi amaparents abo abethini and they practice this thing infront of their children and they make these utterances infront of their children two weeks back we were having breakfast eh sibuya esontweni as a family ewimpy i cant remember umntwana ona five said to my five year old son ungadlali kuletrampoline its not for black children

Siyanda:hai hehe

Maria:yes im telling you and I think its rife la eJoburg so my daughter says eh then ngitshelwa yidaughter yami because uyaykhuphula fast lo usadunyelwa akaboni lutho so athi lontombazane uyangitshela ngithi mina pho wena wenzani ngalokho uthi ngamtshela ukuthi mina uyithathaphi wena lento oyishoyo hes going to play angithi she is older so my brother is going to play play wena boy ayikho wena lento oyshoyo yabona so uyafika useyangitshela and guess what the parents of this child amshoyo bahleli la across us and they are young as me

Siyanda:sho

Maria: now what kind of parenting is that isn't that death to society what kind of parenting is that so mina ngakhulumela phezulu mengtshela ngithi really there are still people who say that what did she say angithi lo uinnocent akazi ukuthi mina ngiyazikhuphula ngifuna bezwe labaya laughs

Siyanda:lento ayishilo

Maria:ja she saiy no he said the trampoline is for black is not for blak children ngithi mina really ngithi mina there is no place for people who think like that wena my child here in this south Africa ngisho kanjalo laughs yabona so we fight this one now through our children

Siyanda:mh ja

Maria:ja ja ja so its still there and its not gonna to leave the system soon no it wont mh its just that the tools to fight are different we are using different tools ja ja so yilokho ke

Siyanda: oright that's it so what are the final thoughts on your life mawusuqedile nje

Maria:ungathi uyangibulala mawusho njalo finanl thoughts in my life laughs

Interview: the thing ethi I must know you need to understand your life how your life has been like

Maria: you know what this is how I feel at this stage iv iv I am happy with the choices I made throughout my life ehm anginayo lento yokuthi umuntu mhlambe mengibuza ukuthi what would you have done differently ngithi mina no 1 2 3 no I don't have that ive made the choices and im satisfied ukuthi ive made the right choices and I lactulay live to live to see the results of the choices I made ja and im happy with the choices I made ja

Siyanda:Yeah

Maria:Ja ja

Siyanda:That's a nice interview thank you thank you

Maria:Thank you thank here's my article you will read it ne ya

Interivewer:Oh yes

Maria:Ja See I was featured during womens month

Siyanda:Oh nice

Maria:Womans month

Interivewer:Oh you gonna do iprofilethis is our magazine

Maria:This is our magazine at an airline ja not all woman only a selection so laughs

Siyanda:I can see

Maria:You see yes laughs so we featured amapilot ethu woman and myself

Interivewer:Oh yes

Maria:Ja from the corporate environment

Siyanda:Thank you

Maria: ubulise uGill yezwa

Interivewer:no I will

Maria:umbonise indlela nami I must go back to the office now

Siyanda: Ja Thank you

Interview with Musa – Outdoors @ a Petrol Station

SIYANDA: 1,2,3,1,2,3, 1,2,3 Sifuna like just a taste of impilo yakho ukhula from ekhaya kwenzekana uya esikoleni ufika e-High school nasevasithi it's open that way

MUSA: Okay ja, ja i-medium ahmmm

SIYANDA: Mix uma uthanda so long as you mix isiNgesi kanye nesiZulu Hhayi ezinye izilimi (brief laughter)

MUSA: (laughs) Hhayi ngoba lolu olunye angeke ulizwe

SILENCE

MUSA: Hhawu

SIYANDA: (laughs) Sengilindile

MUSA: Oh no mina angisho mina I am expecting ukuthi mhlambe you will lead me ngama-Questions like...

SIYANDA: ...(interrupts) okay the first Question engingaqala ngayo ukuthi nibangaki ekhaya.

MUSA: Okay mina ngizalwa emndenini oya the children are seven one girl and six boys I'm the second boy ekhaya eh umuntu obewusizo kakhulu and being my role model at the same time was my sister...

SIYANDA: ...(interrupts) Lo oyedwa?

MUSA: Oyedwa the eldest I mean she was exemplary in many ways like umuntu obengikhuthaza ukuthi ngifunde isikole at one time I was, I was twenty by then ngingasafuni ukuya esikoleni enye into eyayidala lokho ukuba sasihamba long distances from home to school so and my father passed away I decided to go to

Joburg to seek for umsebenzi and I gave her an ultimatum I said to her there is only one thing engangenza ngibuyele esikoleni if ngiyohlala e-boarding school but if ngizoqhubeka nokuhamba ngezinyawo traveling from home to school **cause you're traveling close to** eight or so single trip K from home to school daily so and ngangi sure ukuthi angeke adabule ngimbambile **lapho uyabona...**

SIYANDA: laughs

MUSA: But surprisingly enough wayeyi-student nurse yena ngalesosikhathi vele I was, I was disappointed in a way cause waqhamuka esethi vele naye ebe-plan lokho ukuthi from that year onwards ngingaselokhuzane vele ukuthi ngizolokhuza ngizohlala e-boarding school so now wangisiza kakhulu ngoba ngaqhumeka ukuyofika la e-boarding school for two years and ngaphumelela-ke e-high school **and from there....**

SIYANDA: Wawukuyiphi i-boarding school?

MUSA: Ja i-boarding school iShayina High School ja, ja, ja from there I am from e-family e-poor I must say ngangingenayo imali yokuqhumeka esikoleni so what we did ngasengiya nga-apply kwi-Department of Agriculture eOwen Sithole College ...

SIYANDA: (interrupts)...Ngiyibonile (while driving up for the interview)

MUSA: Aha, aha laphayana wawukwazi ukuthi ufunde beku-subsidiza and then bese kubakhona i-allowance oyitholayo ja so and i-job security was there ngoba wawuzothi uma uqeda esikoleni then bese ukwazi ukuzosebenza then now ngafunda-ke lapho ngaphasa ngathola leyo-diploma ka-two years kwi-Animal **Health ... (inaudible word). From there on ngase ngiyahamba-ke** ngiya e-field ngiyosebenza but ngasebenza khona unyaka oyodwa. Ngisasebenza bese ngi (brief pause thinking) usisi wami futhi **helped me wangitshela ukuthi "No there is** ilokhuzana u-TTT that is helping abantu aba-needy abafuna ukuqhubeka nokufunda I think kwakuzosuka e-certain kwakuzosuka abantu beze la eManguzu

bezokwenzisa ama was it interviews or something but babezo kwenza ilokhuzana then I attended that meeting it was e-tribal, e-tribal¹ hall I was there bayichazake lento ngabona i-project is like this and this and that and I was so interested basinikeza-ke ama-forms sawagcwalisa ama-forms sabanikeza ngenhlanhla-ke ngibese ngathola i-call **ethi "no if I am interested ngizoya eThekwini come past the University of Natal for i-two weeks" what did they call it I can't still remember** but le-programme eni-prepayela before ningene ja, ja we went there for that workshop eyasithatha u-two weeks besitshela how is the university life and stuff like that people were helping there quite a lot and they were motivating us a lot people like uThami, uThami Mseleku people u-Jill people like u-Anita ja, ja, ja, so they helped us quite a lot then sasesiyaqhala-ke the following year but laphana kusho ukuthi according to kwakukhona i-sort of an IQ test like we went kwafika la they categorized us into two and then kusho ukuthi I think the way ababebona ngakhona ukuthi maybe this is lo u-ready uyabona and this one mhlambe uzodinga ukuthi anikezwe usizo eh ngangena kula bantu ababezodinga usizo and then kwakusho lokho ukuthi nge-first year kusho ukuthi kuzo-register ama-courses awu-two and then kubonakale ukuthi uwenzenjani but abanye babethi uma beqhala ba-**register for ...**

SIYANDA: ...mainstream

MUSA: Ja, ja but-ke uma kubonakala ukuthi uyawaphasa oyi-two and then kwi-second semester uthathe ...

BOTH: ... four

MUSA: ...uyabona so saqhumeka kanjalo fortunately enough-ke umuntu wakwazi ukuthi aphase it took me almost four years then kwase kuthi nge-fifth year ngasengenza ilokhuzana i-ITD Diploma the same institution ngaze ngaphasa

¹ Inaudible but the word sounds like 'tribal'

ngo-1994 ngiqhale ukusebenza ngo-1995 **ja that's how I went through i-** university ja, ja, ja.

SIYANDA: I'm gonna take you back to about uthe nakhula niwu-seven intombazane eyodwa nabafana abawu-six tell me about ukuthi kwakunjani ukukhula in such a big family well I think it's big...

MUSA: Ja, ja it's big but what is interesting ukuthi even by then I cannot tell ukuthi kwakunjani cause we were not comparing ourselves to other people but yimanje la engi-feela khona ukuthi we were struggling ja cause at times we could go to school without having eaten anything or else nidle nje junk stuff or nidle ukudla enikushiye ngayizolo eh nihamba animamali nihamba ragged uyabona nje but, but ja I remember at times sasingenawo amafutha okugcoba uyabona body lotion at times ubaba waye kwakunamafutha engingazi ukuthi ayefike kanjani i-oil, i-oil yemoto uyayibona leyonto and we could use that uyabona ukuze sithi ukugcwebezela sisebenzise le lokuzana ja so sasikwenza nalokho singenayo i-Colgate kukhona i-indigenous trees ke esasiwasebenzisa ukuxhubha amazinyo and then siye esikoleni. I think kwaku-tough, kwaku-tough ngalezo zikhathi ngoba uma kuthiwa kuyenzeka nima definitely sasihamba kunamazolo uyabona ukuthi uma uhamba endleleni phansi uthole ukuthi kunamazolo ufike esikoleni umanzi vele and babuye bethusane mhlambe kuzothiwa kunesigebengu endaweni ethize uma nidlula khona izigebengu zizoninquma nizithole ningayi esikoleni ngoba nisaba lezo zigebengu and we had to walk usually in groups so that sibalekele izinto ezifana nalezo ja, ja, ja (brief pause) **maybe that's what mhlambe maybe I can share with you emndenini eh ja** but enye into engingayisho ukulokhuzana kusho ukuthi like ngithe usisi wami waba yisibonelo and kwangisiza lokho ngoba nami ngikengakhula ngaba yisibonelo igenge yasekhaya eza emvakwami i-background yayo ayibanga yinhle kahle kodwa I am happy today cause bathe uma bebona ukuthi ngikhula ngiba ngumuntu onjani they suddenly changed uyabona they are responsible people njengamanje they have got their homes ba-responsible to them and so on so

and one of them came to me wabonga ukuthi 'No' ngibe yisibonelo esihle phambi kwakhe and he adores what I am doing uyabona ja, ja, ja

SIYANDA: And so and nisakhula nanihlala khona kule ndawo le?

MUSA: Ja ngenhlanhla-ke sizalelwe khona nje lana sakhula lana safunda lana ja, ja, ja

SIYANDA: Indawo has it changed much since ukhula?

MUSA: Oh yes oh yes kakhulu like I have said ngalezi zikhathi ngoba mina ngiqhale isikole ngo-1971 ngenza u Grade One it was 71 so by then we could travel a lot unlike today kune transport uyabona people are using cars by then even imigwaqo yayingekho in fact kwaku nje kuhamba isifu sezinkomo uyabona and ngiyakhumbula ngalezo sikhathi we could buy bread sasifika kanye on Saturdays ...

BOTH: ... isinkwa

MUSA: Isinkwa sasisithola once ngo-Saturdays kunama-queues amade futhi uzoma uyothenga isinkwa ngoMqgibelo sifica futhi sewumile eh ushukela lona ngoba ngenkathi nikhula isinkwa sasiwu-five cent by then ja in fact lesi esi-white it was five cents lesi esinye siwu-two rand no, no, no siwu two and a half cent uyabona so

BOTH: laugh

MUSA: Nano shukela sethi uma siwuthenga wawukalelwa like i-cup imali ethize uyabona sikhula kuleso isimo so now like ubaba wayesebenza eGoli uma befikile-ke babefika nezinkwa bebuya eGoli and uma efika ekhaya it was sort of a PARTY people neighbours would be coming home sizo-enjoya breads only without rama anything mhlambe efakwa esinkweni sizodla izinkwa mhlambe nombhubhuhlo you understand uyabona but it was so nice-ke nidle nibaningi **ja but thina like I stated earlier on we didn't** feel ukuthi siyahlopheka

uyabona ja, ja kuvele later on uma sesigqathanisa impilo **ukuthi "Phew" ja no** sasingaphili kahle uyabona ja so ngezikhathi zethu kwaku-tough and kwakushaywa esikoleni ja, ja, ja i-corporal punishment was there such that some people they ended up leaving school mhlambe beyosebenza komaGoli and so on and besides ukushaywa kwakunane i-influence like ngizothi umsebenzi wawusekhona ngaleso sikhathi ngoba lamadoda ayebuya eGoli lawa ahlulwe yisikole and uma ebuya eGoli mhlambe umuntu ubuya ne no-icer (?) ubuya uqgoke kahle **uyayibona leyonto and abanye babethathwa yilokho ukuthi 'Hhayi** no kungcono nami ngisiyeke isikole uyabona uma ngibuya eGoli ngizoba nabantu bazongihlonipha ngizobuya ne-icer (?) ngizobuya sengiqgoke kahle all those sort of things" **ja but-**ke as hard as it was sakwazi ukuthi siqhubeke sibe la esikhona ja, ja, ja.

SIYANDA: Tell me about abangani owawunabo ukhula mhlambe your best friends **ukuthi naninjani...**

MUSA: Abangani enganginabo though ngeke sengabakhumbula kahle like ukuthi yini eyayisihlanganisile in a sense but ngiyakhumbula nje just one of my friends u-Jeffson wakwaMthembu osewashona ja uMthembu unfortunately usashona eh but sasingebona abangani ukuthi mhlambe siya-motivathana ngomsebenzi yesikole but sabangabangani ngoba ngaleso sikhathi kwakufanele uma umfana ube-strong silwa siqhathwa uyabona ngazi ukuthi uma ngihamba naye ngi-safe naye azi ukuthi uma ehamba **nami hhayi no sizoyibamba ja, ja...**

SIYANDA: (a soft giggle)

MUSA: ..ja nanokuthi-ke sasingenawo umoya in fact wokungasithandi isikole sasinomoya nje yokusithanda isikole ukuthi noma abanye beyeka endleleni but thina siqhubeke thina sizoqhebeka nokefunda isikole ja, ja, ja. Umngani wami engimkhumbulayo nomunye-ke engimkhumbulayo uNkosinathi Ndimande anyway yena sibonane naye sesiya kwi-primary school but a very good friend of mine kodwa-ke sasiwayele ukuganga sinaye ngoba ngiyakhumbula ukuthi

omunye umuntu esaze safundisana naye ukubhema ugwayi ngangingawubhemi ugwayi saqhala sashayaya utshwala ...

SIYANDA: E-primary school?

MUSA: Ja, ja e-primary saqhala but not, not serious uyabona ja so like uma uthole isi-stompi **elsewhere** ...

SIYANDA: Oh ja

MUSA: ... ja uyabona lezo zinto lezonke sizoshayashaya but definitely enough lezinto zahamba zaphela then we became matured uyabona sasesiyaziyeka lezo zinto lezo kodwa akusalanga lokhu okunye sasikwenza like izinto zamantombazane and stuff uyabona ngoba saqhubeka sibe nama-girl friends nami ngiyakhumbula nje ukuthi eh I ended up impregnating omunye umuntu whilst I am doing standard ten ja, ja by then I was twenty and kwasho ukuthi ngiba nengane at that age and fortunately-ke uma[ma] yami wakwazi ukungisuppotha esemeni esinjalo like ingane yami wayithatha ukuthi lizokhulalela kuye ihlale naye uyabona ja kusukela lapho **kuze kube manje but yinto engi...**

[A person passes by and they greet]

MUSA: ... but yinto vele engiyi-regrethayo leyo ngoba lo sisi esathola naye umuntwana kwahambe kwahamba sahlukana kuthe noma sengishadile uyabona ingane e-out of wedlock uyayibona lento kuba khona lezo zinkinga ayimamukeli umama lona u-stepmother and nomama naye engayamukeli ingane there is not that bonding uyabona ja, ja, ja so izinto ezidala ukuthi u-regrethe sometimes i-past yakho uyabona ja, ja,ja but-ke ukusuka lapho-ke then like sithe uma siya eNyunivesithi ngase ngitholana noDumisani Malwane uDumisani-ke I knew him even before but eh we were not that close we were from the same vicinity area but when we were there at Natal saqhala-ke manje saba ngabangani kakhulu he

was my best friend I must say and still is sakhuthazana-ke kakhulu like eh we were competing among ourselves uma ethole kangcono kwi-course ethize nami **then bese I would say "Next time" so sasenza**-nje into efana naleyo and we were helping each other so much uyabona and then I think nokuphumelela kwami he **played a major role in it uyabona I deserve to say "mhlambe I have to thank you by the way" ja ngisho ukuthi** no he helped me helped me ja ngoba yayengikhuthaza nje ngikhumbula nangokuthi if mhlambe sinikezwe i-assignment sifanele siyi-submithe in time asambe siye e-library and waye-good-ke wena sasinakho lokho ukuthi singayenza i-computer but manje ngingqena ukwenza i-computer esikoleni yena eyenza like uma sizoya e-library ngibe nenkinga ukuthi incwadi ngiyithola kanjani angisize si-check kwi-computer then bese siyayithola incwadi uyabona engi-tyiphela ne-**assignment...**

SIYANDA: (exclaims) Hhayi-bo (laughs)

MUSA: Ja ngimcela phela...

SIYANDA: Yini indaba wena wawuvilapha **noma...**

MUSA: Eh ja ngangivilapha ngoba ngithe ngqhala ukubona ukuthi no kubalulekile ukuthi ngikwazi uku-type it was late uyabo ngicabanga ukuthi bese ngeza third year if I am not mistaken but bona babese-advancile uyayibona leyonto ja and ngacikwa yikhona lokho ukuthi bona sebazi kangcono kunami sebeyangitayilela I was discouraged uyabona ja ngangaqhumeka but engiqhonde ukukusho ukuthi uDumisani was of great help to me and my studies ja [brief pause]

SIYANDA: Ahmm if ubuka your life so far kulento osungitshele yona what is the most significant event eyenzekile empilweni yakho? If you were to identify **eyodwa noma ezimbili the most significant events into your life...**

MUSA: Engingakusho kakhulu I mean uma ngibheka emumva impilo yami ayibanga ne-foundation e-right I must say like kukhona isikhathi la engangiphuza

khona isikhathi la ngangibhema khona almost abukho utshwala engingakaze ngibuphuze ngicabanga awukho ugwayi engingakaze ngiwubheme but kube nesikhathi la I decided just to **quit ngoba ngibona uluthi lezinto won't help me** uyabona? And from there on ngayibona impilo yami ishintsha ngase ngiba nezinto engingangethamba ukuthi ngeke ngangeke ngize ngibenazo if ngangiqhubeka ngiphuza eh ngikwazi ukuthi ngizibhekelele mina ngi-self sufficient nje kuze kube manje ja I mean ngi-self-reliant and I became ilokhuzana even usizo nasekhaya uyabona nje baqhala nabo ukungiphatha njengendodana uyabona ngoba bebona ukuthi [brief pause – finding words] ngi-responsible kangakanani I think into engiyikhumbula kakhulu eshintshe impilo yami yilokho yila engaqhala khona ukuyeka lezinto ezibhendayo uyabona I even remember **1998 I think by 98 ...**

SIYANDA: ...Wawusuqhedile e-varsity?

MUSA: Ja, ja, ja ngasengiqhedile e-varsity ja, ja, ja yinto enkulu nanokuthi-nke mhlambe nkona-nke ngicabanga ukuthi ukufunda e-Nyunivesithi yikona okwangivula amehlo ngakwazi ukuhlukhanisa lezinto ngoba ukuba angiyanga lapho angikholwa ukuthi I would be that enlightened and kufike la ngibona khona ukuthi ngoba at times uma ufundile endaweni efana nale yasemakhaya uba ne-pressure yokuthi people want to see you as a role model people want to see you as a light now if-ke awubi iyona i-light now consciously nawe kuyasho ukuthi no you are not doing right ja cause if you go to church people want to see you as like want to see you within the government² (?) want to see you saying this, and this and that uyabona and if you want to go to community meetings mhlambe kuyokhethwa **let's say sifuna u**-secretary in the organization definitely bazothetha wena cause they know ukuthi ufundile so by then kusho ukuthi uma kunane-pressure societal pressure if I may call it ekuphoqayo ukuthi even though ubu-wild by nature but iyakuqoqa ukuthi no buya cause umphakathi ukubhekile

² Not sure as the word he uses is not clearly audible. He's either saying 'within the government' Or 'within the ground levels'

ja ubheke kuwe as a leader so ngingathi nje impilo yami yashintsha kanjalo nalezinto esengizibalile zaba nomthelela ekutheni impilo yami ibe-straight ja, ja, ja and ja.

SIYANDA: Now tell me about the experience of coming to e-varsity at that time like from the moment uthola i-call and ufika e-varsity take me through that process

MUSA: Eh e-varsity aku you don't eh not that easy cause you know coming from le ndawo ubona ubugcwebegcwebe baseThekwini ...

SIYANDA: laughs

MUSA: ...Ubona ugesi ubukade ufunda ngoba sasifunda ngamakhandlela ...

SIYANDA: Aninawo ugesi la?

MUSA: Ja no ugesi, ugesi into emuva kabi la uyabo sasingena gesi sifunda ngamakhandlela at times sifunda ngomlilo maybe you may never know ukuthi sasibasa umlilo uma ufunda incwadi uyibhekise ngapha ngakwi-flame eh emlilweni ufunda incwadi kusha amehlo uyabo uzwe sekushisa amehlo so now uma ufika eThekwini ngifika eThekwini kwaba khona lokho vele ukuba crazy ngibona izitezi uma ku like kuqhamuka le-gang lena o-Jill no-Anita ngiqala ukubona umlungu emile phambi kwakho lecturing I mean u-busy wena ubuka yena

SIYANDA: (laughs) ...awulalele

MUSA: Ehe aahhuwu

BOTH: laugh

MUSA: I mean yinto ongayizwa kahle but ubuka yena ukuthi kanti lo umlungu unje, lo umlungu unje uyabo all those sort of things. Well-ke nanesilungu ke uyabona ngaleso sikhathi sikhule kunzima nakhona uku-understand English like

eh umuntu wayekhulume uthole ukuthi you do not understand him or her talking ja ngiyakhumbula nje uDumisani umngani wami sasifundiswa u-Professor Canonish eh kukhona igama angazi u-Canonisha wayengalisho ngendlela **ezwakalayo in fact...**

SIYANDA: Yiliphi igama lelo?

MUSA: Igama elithi 'little' athi 'little' ('fancy' kind of pronunciation – different accent) so uDumisani imhlupha lento this 'little', 'little' ...

SIYANDA: laughs

MUSA: Aze ebuze mina 'no what is this little that you are talking about?'

SIYANDA: laughs

MUSA: So, this minute thing you know 'Oh you are saying LITTLE' (Zunglish pronunciation) ahh uyabona

BOTH: laugh hard

MUSA: Ja izinto ezinjalo sise-varsity a language barrier it was there eh nasesi-style-ke uyabona cause indlela okufundwa ngayo eNyunivesithi it was far, far more different than indlela esasifunda ngayo esikoleni uyabona? I remember one guy esasenza naye i-History sasinikezwe ama-references ukuthi sofike sithole izincwadi e-library then sizifunde so sanikezwa ama-references ngicabanga ukuthi izincwadi zaziwu-four by then now yena i-understanding yakhe kwakungukuthi uzoyifunda YONKE incwadi uthathe eyodwa uyifunde wayi deregister leyo course wathi no, no he cannot do it, he cannot do it uyabona lezi zincwadi they are too many I mean ja, ja and he went crazy ubona ukuthi he was worried wancamela lokuthi ayeke ukufunda if kanti e-varsity kufundwa ngale ndlela and uzoyeka but all in all wayenga-understand ukuthi kuqhebekani uyabona ja, ja and enye into eyayisi ukunzima esasinakho vele esikoleni kwaku ukuthi eh laphayana angithi ku-multicultural and that diversity uthola ukuthi

sasifunda nezinye izingane I would say mhlambe ezazi-advantaged or else ezazi-understand ukuthi iNyunivesithi life idingani it's like (brief pause) ngiyakhumbula sasinoDumisani sibuka i-TV namanye ama-students uyabona mhlambe nibuka ama-soapie laphana e-res mhlambe nibuka ama-soapie laphana uyezwa abantu sebayahleka wo-wo-wo bahleka gi-gi-gi "hhawu heyi Dumisani bahlekani labantu?"...

SIYANDA: laughs

MUSA: We were failing to locate i-joke uyabona ja

SIYANDA: laughs

MUSA: And 1,2,3 iyaqhubeka uyabona and leyonto basuke beyisho no man kusho ukuthi thina we are useless such that asikwazi ngisho ukubona i-joke it's like angithi le joke mhlambe it's in English and wena ikuthathe isikhathi ukuthi uyi-understand le joke bathi sebehlekile baqheda kube yima wena uqhaphansi uyahleka

BOTH: laugh

MUSA: ...uyayibona lento kube sengathi mhlambe uwusile kahle ekhanda but thank god ukuthi nje kwa-developheka lokho steady but surely and we ended up understanding and indlela yokufunda like I have said it initially ukuthi yayi-sussed kakhulu ngendlela esasibona ngayo kuyofanele sithathe ama-notes into esasingayazi ...

SIYANDA: laughs

MUSA: ...sasijwayele ukuthi thina ama-note...

BOTH: ...siyanikezwa

SIYANDA: laughs

MUSA: That's right

SIYANDA: Nifunda ama-notes

MUSA: Ja, ja, ja sifunda ama-notes kanti uma usuzenzela ohhh...

SIYANDA: laughs

MUSA: Ja, ja, ja kakuthatha kubenzima at times wawulaphana nje e-lecture theatre uphume unga...unga...

SIYANDA: ...ungawenzenga ama-notes

MUSA: ...ungabhalanga luthu

SIYANDA: laughs

MUSA: uyabona ngoba vele ungezwanga luthu and ezinye izinto vele ezazisinikeza izinkinga besides that impilo yaseNyunivesithi angithi these lecture halls are so many and (brief pause) kuke kube khona isikhathi la eniduka khona ja kufanele niye e T.B. Davis is it T.B. Davis? Or angisakhumbuli kahle then niye kwezinye izindawo, niye kwezinye izindawo uyafika laphana bayakubuka nabanye sebejwayelene ahhh kusho ukuthi uye endaweni e-wrong uyabona so ja, ja, ja but kwahamba anyway kwalunga so (brief pause) nokunye ubunzima nanokufika eNyunivesithi kuza nokukhululeka uqhale ukuzwa nokukhululeka okungekho-ke enye into eyafika yasinikeza sort of pressure again it's like i-feeling yokuthi you are liberated you are owning a house or uba nabangani nihlale nabo you are visited by your girlfriend and so on so you go to movies parties and the like ungalandelwa muntu ukuthi uyawenza yini ...

BOTH: ... umsebenzi

MUSA: uyabona ja, ja, ja so ezinye zezinto lezo owawuthi uma ubheka uthole ukuthi kunzima kabi ukufunda under those circumstances like uma ukhule

ubhekiwe ngaphandle kwesandla sabazali uyabona ja so ezinye izinto esasithola zilukhuni I mean though you are enjoying ...

SIYANDA: Yilokho ebengifuna ukukubuza yindaba kubukhuni if ni-enjoya?

MUSA: Ja like ezinye zalezi zinto awuziboni the time usazenza uyabona you say you enjoy but (brief pause) like uma sekubuya ama-results ufeyilile uyabona now you feel ukuthi ehyi ja vele phela I am not dedicating myself that much emsebenzini wesikole uyabona uwenza lokhu nalokhu impilo yakhona is very tempting ukwenza lezinto ezi-wrong noma osuke ongezela zona laphayana **ja, ja ngoba khona it's so nice but, but for a short while ja, ja, ja, it's nice and dangerous** I must say ja ngoba you end up regretting what YOU have been doing and ja.

SIYANDA: What thing what event do you remember most about being e-varsity mhlambe isifundo owawusi-enjoy **the most noma ...?**

MUSA: Ehe isifundo ikhona i (brief pause) i-social science (brief pause) I have just forgotten ukuthi (brief pause) kwakubani le lecturer lapha kwi organizational (brief pause) that guy (brief pause) he knew what he was doing you know into **eyayikuchaza ngaye nami futhi yayi...wayazi** i-material stuff azanayo like wayefika laphana a-lecturise (brief pause) ngaphandle kwe kungekho material ephambi kwakhe...

SIYANDA: Ubani lowo uRobert Morrell?

MUSA: hmmm

SIYANDA: Ikhehla?

MUSA: Ikhehla

SIYANDA: uDoctor noma...?

MUSA: Ehe, ehe and ubenga, ubenga, he's not a doctor ube ngu Mister, Mister I don't know, I don't know ngikhohkwe kanjani (brief pause) social science

SIYANDA: Ube fundisa i-Sociology?

MUSA: i-Socio no, no, i-sociology ja, ja, i-sociology ja, ja, that guy and negndlela owayekwazi ngayo wayengaphathi iwashi eyofundisa but uma efundisa 45 minutes uyofike afundise, afundise, afundise la iphela khona i-lecture yakhe ngempela i....

BOTH: ...iphelile

MUSA: So to me now ngabonakala ukuthi no the guy confident of himself and into wawuthi uma uyo usu-refer uyibheka encwadini ekunikeza ama-references out of nje ekhanda lakhe but uma ubheka uthole ukuthi ...

SIYANDA: Iqondene

MUSA: So, I was so impressed ngaleyandoda nangendlela ayefundisa ngayo ja, ja and bakhona-ke nabanye nabo ababefundisa kahle so ngingeke ngikuchithe ukuthi abanye babe babenakho lokho like this thing ye of being racist like (brief pause) there was another department ka-History there was one lady angeke ngimusho but naye kwakubonakala ukuthi, no, no, no unakho lokho ukuba racist ja, ja, ja.

SIYANDA: Like on that same point of i-race tell me about (brief pause) how it was like ukuthi ungumuntu omnyama you were black boy from eManguzu emafamu coming to i-Nyunivesithi an established institution emhlophe (brief pause) like try and capture that ungitshela ukuthi how was that experience like

for wena? I mean akuwona umbuzo osile actually like how was it like umfana omncane ophuma emakhaya coming into a white university eThekwini?

MUSA: No khona it was confusing like ngike nga-hinta earlier on like ukuthi you re coming there well mhlambe ufica abelungu obukade ubabukela kude ungazi ukuthi baphila mpiloni and nabo abazi lutho ngabantu abamnyama so if nihlangana kunezinto abazifunda kuwe each and every day and if probably uwenza into e-stupid mhlambe then they tend to generalize that ukuthi maybe **it's just because uyabona leyonto leyo ja like kukhona engake ngaxhabana naye** e (brief pause)

SIYANDA: Lowo wesifazane lowo?

MUSA: No, no i-student ja, so now kusho ukuthi kwaku sasizohlangana nje siyaphambana kanti one student e-black yase ilahla **iphepha uyabona ...**

SIYANDA: ... Phansi?

MUSA: Ja phansi then lo muntu lo mlungu waselicosha leli phepha wajaha lo muntu lona wamunikeza ukuthi akahambe alilahle ...

SIYANDA: ...emgqonyeni

MUSA: ...emgqonyeni uyabo so that student wasenqaba wagoloza ukuthi "no I cannot do that kwasho kuyacima" and as a result i-comment yakhe wathi "these blacks you know it's typical of them" uyabona and ngaphatheka kabi uyabona ngathi mina "don't say , don't say that again cause I'm black and I never sent that person **to do what he did**" uyabona and I really said what he did **he's wrong** ukuthi alahle into inoma kanjani uyabona but-**ke I don't think leyonto leyo uyi-**associate kanjani ne-race uyabona ja so it was maybe I would say it was because naye that white person kwakudalwa ukuthi aka-understand ukuthi abantu, abantu baphila kanjani uyayibona leyonto ja, ja, (brief pause) ja kucishe ngingasho kanjalo ngaleyo racism. Ngiyakhumbula one lecturer le engiyishilo omunye owaye kwakufeyilwe i-test wakhe uma ifeyilwa-ke le test **ithi "Never**

mind vele you blacks it takes time ukuthi ni-understand izinto you will get it the following year never mind even if you fail this year you will pass it next year uyabona so akwehlanga kamnandi uyabona ja so those by nature would be disturbing ja, ja so ja sasikuzwa but we did persevere nje indlela iqhubeka ja.

SIYANDA: Ake ngikubuze kanjalo what allowed you ukuthi ni-persevere even if nizwa izinto eze-negative ngezimpilo zenu?

MUSA: Okunye mhlambe okudala lokho **it's like (brief pause) one ukungazi** ukuthi if you feel something that is heartbreaking where do you go nanokuthi i-University of Natal by then I think even today sisafunda laphana **it's unlike** amanye ama-universities like laphana ngathola ukuthi liberal as it is ifundisa nje abantu ukuthi bazimele and if something **worries you it's your own baby it's not** mine if ekhulume nawe those racist remarks ukhulume ekubhekise kuwe but, but it has nothing to do with me so now ezinye izinto even though wawubona ukuthi **they are just peculiar but uthi "no well ngoba azithinti mina why must I worry"** so yingakho okunye kwakuthi noma kubuhlungu it just ended up just like that ja, ja.

SIYANDA: Ngesikhathi nise-varsity were you guys aware of what was happening outside la kwi e-South Africa as whole and what was the impact of that kuwena?

MUSA: Oh yes, oh yes kakhulu laphana sifike khona ngalezi zikhathi whereby kwakunalento eyayibiza ngokuthi i-black-on-black violence kubulawa kakhulu abantu koMlazi KwaMashu this IFP ANC political killings so (brief pause) ngingasho ukuthi politically nami ngifika ngaba-strong sengifike eNyunivesithi and ngibona ukuthi what is **politics where can I fit in ngoba even today ...**

TAPE ENDS

MUSA: ... No bengithi la ukuba seNyunivesithi it enlighten me in a way ukuthi we came to understand ama-political issues and connotations like we came to understand what was happening around Durban and sasesibana lento lena this solidarity thing like we heard ukuthi people were being killed by police **these ZP's** amaZulu eh Zulu Police and at times kukhona there was a guy laphana eyawu-Shaya isibhamu ...[Sharp]

GREETES ANOTHER PERSON WALKING BY

MUSA: ... ababeyibiza ngokuthi uMvuyane...

SIYANDA: u?

MUSA: UMvuyane ja, ja and wayenokuthi afike laphayana esikoleni but-ke sasingamazi...

SIYANDA: ...e-campusini?

MUSA: E-campusini

SIYANDA: Wayengumfundi yini?

MUSA: No, no babesuka nje mhlambe bezokuma-cherrini³ or bezodlala isi-Siyandaooker ja so now uma sizwa mhlambe esehambile kuthiwa Hhayi phela lana bekuno zibanibani ehhyi siphatheke kabi uyabona so now (brief pause) i-ANC yayizoba ne-march and sa-involva ourselves-ke kuleyo march njengama-students sa-march-ke saya edrobheni e Durban City, city ...

SIYANDA: ... i-City Hall?

MUSA: ... i-City Hall ja, ja, ja so ja kusho ukuthi impilo esasiyiphila nobuhlelwane obabukhona with the surroundings ngizothi nje mhlambe in short yilowo I am

³ A cherry is a slang for girlfriend

not too sure uma I have answered you but today I am so glad uyabona I feel, I feel proud there are guys esasinawo esikoleni who are big shots today and I always tell them mhlambe uma sisekhaya sibuka i-TV baze bathi "Hhawu kanti wena uwazi bonke labantu uyabona" ngithi mina "Do you see that guy?" like bengibona uSandile Buthelezi "do you see Sandile Buthelezi? That guy sasifunda naye." "Uyabona uCyril Xaba? That guy sasifunda naye" "Uyabona oThami Mseleku? Uyabona that guy was my lecturer" "Uyabona eh" (brief pause) ngiba naneyo-feeling leyo ukuthi iningi ngathi seli-reapile[inaudible phrase] ufunde nabantu aba like uma kufika bona oProf Sineke uSineke is something is somebody uma efike lana uyabona and unokuhamba nama-ministry uyabona ja ja, ja so now you feel proud about that I personally feel great uyabona and i-gang eningi esasifunda nayo they are big shots uyabona ...

SIYANDA: Mina I suppose that's why senza le-project ukuthi asifuni ukuthi all these stories go unheard so that the future generations can look back and know that once before kwakunabantu abanje.

MUSA: ja, ja, ja

SIYANDA: Tell me about the kind of umsebenzi owenzayo wena namhlanje.

MUSA: Eh umsebenzi engiwenzayo ngathatha le career yakwa-teaching ngiqalanku ukusebenza ngo 1995 ngiqala eStar High School ...

SIYANDA: ...ngapha vele?

MUSA: Ja khona la I was fortunate by then kusho ukuthi othisha babeseyindlala kalhulu cause mina they recruited me whilst I was ...

SIYANDA: Still esikoleni?

MUSA: eNyunivesithi

SIYANDA: eNyunivesithi

MUSA: Ja sure so now ngithe ngiphuma lapho ngangazi ukuthi ngizoya kuphi uyabona and I worked (brief pause) for (brief pause) three years then ngase ngiba I was Acting Deputy Principal nanokuthi ngangisema-committees babenakungithetha nje ngibe semakomitini amaningi esikoleni and ukuba i Acting Deputy Principal kaku yayingekho i-post yilokho so I was elected kwahlala nje ukuthi no we need in fact isikole sasinga-qualify ukuba ne-deputy but ngokomsebenzi kwakubonakala ukuthi there is a need ukuthi sine ne-deputy and then sahlala njenge-staff kwabonakala ukuthi who was going to be our deputy our acting deputy principal and I was chosen as one ngasebenza-ke lapho-ke I think it was 97, 98 then kwase kuthi 99 ngathola i-post yokuba a Deputy Principal full time Staviton (?) Primary ngasengisebenza lapho ngo 99, 2000 ja kuthe kulowo nyaka lowo the then Principal wayeseyashona the following year basebe-advertise leyo post then ngase ngiyithatha ngo 2001 ngaba u-Principal ...

SIYANDA: Ohhh

MUSA: Ja kuze kube manje

SIYANDA: Okay

MUSA: Ja, ja, ja

SIYANDA: And you said also you have a political role uyidlalayo emphakathini what role is that?

MUSA: Okay it's like (brief pause) I must say I'm ...I'm ANC so (brief pause) sikhule nje la endaweni indawo i-pro IFP so sibuya lapho sizo, sizo (brief pause) sizoshanela shishumayela ivangeli likaKhongolose and stuff and then sabona people are coming in numbers in the ANC so nje in short endaweni I am a Chairperson we ANC e-wardini ja i-Chairperson we ANC and bese ngithethwa ngaba i-Ward Councilor but-**ke unfortunately we didn't do** quite well e-wardini we were beaten i-IFP so now sasasi-lose kodwa-ke I was the candidate elect ja so ye ANC I think that nanokuthi sihambela yonke imihlangano personally

ngiyihambela yonke imihlangano ethinta umphakathi ja, ja, ja and people have got hopes in me they come to me for advices they come to me for different sorts of things uyabona ja cause mhlambe babona ukuthi ngingabasiza here and there ja.

SIYANDA: Awuthi ngikubuze umbuzo ongekho-proper uma ubuka impilo yakho njengamanje as umuntu omkhulu as a principal of a school as a Chairperson of i-ward and you go back uzibuke usemncane and sort of compare impilo yakho manje to impilo yakho usakhula do you think you have always known that you will be where you are namhlanje or it is a big surprise where you are uma ubheka isimo sakho usakhula?

MUSA: Ja it's a surprise cause I never knew that I would be where I was today well kokunye ngike ngizibuze ukuthi "how come? I mean kuze kanjani ukuthi ngithole la engikhona ngoba like ngike ngakutshela ukuthi ngikhule emndenini onjani and it is a surprise today ukuthi umndeni yakithi even namanje uyahlonishwa emphakathini njengomuntu ozala mina nabafowethu they are things emphakathini and ja we are **respected uyabona but I don't think it was** much or it is much of i-achievement I think something I am blessed ja, ja, ja I mean kukhona nalokho kune superpower lapho-ke yangisiza ukuthi ngoba some other thing maybe I would say fail to say kuze kanjani uyabona you understand it wasn't **through my effort ja** nje I never knew ukuthi it will come the day where ngizophila le mpilo engiyiphilayo comparatively speaking kunane mpilo engangiyiphila by then uyabona **ja, ja, ja, so it's a surprise** really.

SIYANDA: Tell me more about your family manje angithi uthe ushadile?

MUSA: Oh ja

SIYANDA: Tell me about your family now

MUSA: Ngishadile ngo 2000 unkosikazi wami owaseThekwini ...

SIYANDA: Uhlala eThekwini yena?

MUSA: No, na ngihlala naye la kubo kuseThekwini ngihlala naye la eh unkosikazi wami-ke engishade naye ngishade naye (brief pause) engenayo i-profession wayesebenza nje e-surgery but I motivated her ngalendlela yokuthi wagcina ese-apply oNgoye i-University of Zululand wathatheka khona wenza i-B.Care ayiqhedile this year January waqala ukusebenza this year njengoba eseqale ukusebenza and ngiyacabanga ukuthi ...

SIYANDA: Usebenza as what manje?

MUSA: As a professional nurse ja, ja, ja and ngike ngicabange ukuthi lokhu kudalwe kakhulu kube umthelela ukuthi nami ngiyile esikoleni ngafisa ukubona e-developa from what she was then waba yilento asehhiyo namhlanje she is really thankful ukuthi ngamsiza empilweni naye ubengazi ukuthi one day uzoba yilento ahhiyo namhlanje **lo mndeni anyway omncane enginawo it's myself my wife and** two sons unfortunately or fortunately these two sons are out of i-wedlock so nagbathola labantwana ngaphandle komshando ja so now sesishadile-nke nonkosikazi **asikaze si...** in fact wakhulelwa but wayeseba ne-miscarriage kuze kube manje asinaye umntwana ja, ja but technically uya-understand ngiya-**understand it's so nice nanokuthi we see ourselves developing ekhaya nezinto** esasingenazo ekuqaleni we have got a car sasihlupheka sihamba ngama-zerro (?) and now we have got our own car we have got our own house lezinto nje naye ama-appliances esasingenawo uyabona so impilo isithanda ukuba lula nokubamnandi uyabona ja though phela kukhona izinto eziningi esingakabi nazo uyabona ja, ja, ja.

SIYANDA: Obani abantu empilweni yakho you think have contributed to who you are? I know ukuthi umbalile udadewenu ukuthi waku-motivatha kakhulu uDumisani as a friend nanifunda ndawonye who else has been like abantu ababeku-motivetha and abantu ababalulekile empilweni yakho?

MUSA: (Brief pause) Abanye abantu mhlambe I cannot easily forget about kungaba my brother-in-law usibari wami ushade nodadewethu ngoba in fact kuthi akafane nosisi ngendlela abangisize ngayo ngoba I understand ukuba yena ebengathandi vele yonke into imingema ngoba they were helping me financially ja bengisiza nje ngezindlela eziningi so naye ngingasho ungomunye umuntu odale ubene-impact empilweni ja, ja, ja abanye-ke bakhona but mhlambe sekungaba ukuthi ngingakhumbuli mhlambe like ngibone ukuthi usibanibani ngingafisa ukufana naye just because mina uyabona kukhona odokotela ebesikhula bekhona **uthi "hmm one day I am dreaming I want become like usibanibani" uyabona but you end up ungasiyo** leyonto leyo uyaona nje in one way or another baku-motivatha uthi noma ungasabanga wuye udokotela but uku-accept lokho uyikho ukuthi **"no angikwazanga ukuthi ngibe yilento but even where I am I am happy" uyabona ja, ja, ja I think kukhona**-ke ezinye izinto ezi-motivethanayo negatively ja **it's** like ubone abantu enanifunda nabo like labantu engikutshele ngabo ukuthi babehambe beye emsebenzini koGoli and uthi uma ubabona manje abayilutho empilweni **uyabona then bese uthi "Hhha ngasebenza ukuba nami ngalandela lomqondo ukuthi ngiye eGoli I will be, I will be no where today I will be useless njengabo uyabona"** so labobantu yes basesimeni esingesihle but in one way or another they are motivating ukuthi ungafani nabo, **ehhe, ehhe, ehhe...**

SIYANDA: Why yena ungayanga eGoli when everybody around you yayephuma eGoli ethole umsebenzi yini eyaku-keepa HERE and not ukuthi uye lapha?

MUSA: Eh (brief pause) ngangingenaso kahle isizathu esingidala ukuthi ngingayeka isikole ngoba njengoba ngishilo ngathi ngizama ukusenza isizathu ukuthi no ...

SIYANDA: (sighs) ...uku-walka

MUSA: ...ngifuna ukuyeka isikole ngoba ngi-walk ibanga elide and lelibanga vele usisi wami ebekade eli-walk athi **"mina I have walked** for 12 years ngisuka

ekhaya ngiya esikoleni from Grade 1 up to Grade 12 so but-ke ngiyezwa ukuthi ibanga lide but what you are saying is genuine if you are saying awusafuni ukuya esikoleni provided uzohlala e-boarding school no I have i-arrangement vele ukuthi uhlale e-boarding school" now kusho kuthi lapho ngaphelelwa yikhona style (?) noma-ke ngizothi I wasn't clever enough ukuthi ngizoba-persuade kanjani ukuthi begcine benza lokhu okuthandwa yimi ngigcine sengiyile eGoli kusho ukuthi bangibamba ngasengiselwa ukuthi ngizothini as a result I had to go [to school] ja, ja, ja.

SIYANDA: Tell me about your relationship with abazali bakho

MUSA: (brief pause) Ja uma[ma] ngimthanda kakhulu njengoba sengishilo ekuqaleni ukuthi was very supportive of me was very supportive and ubaba angibanga nenhlanhla yokuhlala naye isikhathi eside ubaba ushone ngino 20 years I'm 31 now so ngaleso sikhathi ngino 20 still sasingahlali naye wayesebenza eGoli mina ngasebenza lana like ngishilo ukuthi babefika nje ekhaya mhlambe uma ephuma eGoli apha the lezo zinto ahlale it's a Christmas time ahlale those few days then ahambe so ubaba angimazanga KAHLE not ukungamazi but-nje ukuba that close uyabona sharing with him some of the ideas and stuff like that but umama she has been supportive all the way even today if I have got a problem personal problem ngisuke ngingakayi overcome ngingakamtsheli yena ja "Ma, I have got this problem" but-ke kwesinye isikhathi uma abantu sebesebadala like my mom like unezifo zoshukela and stuff ezinye izinto noma usubona like touchy things uthi uma ucabanga 'Ahha ngitshela uma[ma] bese umama into eseyithatha serious" noma into ingekho nje i-light but yena i-issue usevele eyithathe serious ukuthi injani kanjani uyabona so alternatively ngincamale ezinye izinto ngigcine ngingamtsheli ehhe, ehhe, ehhe (brief pause) Hhayi ngoba ngingafuni ukumtshela but ngoba ngibona ukuthi izinto esezithatha serious ngalendlela yokuthi zigcina sezimgulisa uyabona but there is no one like my mother ngendlela abeyiyo and kukhona nje lesikhathi la uyabona uma ethi exoxa ngama-past la esuka khona umthole exoxa ekhala izinyembezi uyabona exoxa nje ukuthi sikhule kanjani sikhule ekhayeni elinjani

uyabona nje ubone ukuthi no **it's really touching stuff uyabona** ja I thank uGod ukuthi umncine eze efike la ekhona ja, ja, ja.

SIYANDA: And nikhula kwakunjani ubuhlelwane phakathi kwakho nomawakho ngoba ubaba wayengekho kakhulu ...

MUSA: No I think uma[ma] sikhula I was just a child and ngoba uma[ma] yasesi-treat nje sonke ngendlela efanayo esishaya esifuma (?) esigqethinda (?) and (brief pause) ja ngiyakhumbula nje uma sikhula uma uma[ma] ebona ukuthi sizomshiya mhlambe ngejubane aphumele into engekho endlini **"Hey awuhambe** uzongithathela i-something endlini lapho awungithathele i-handkerchief isendaweni **ethize"** ungene endlini ...

SIYANDA: ...nangu emvakwakho

MUSA: ... kanti uyakulandela

BOTH: laugh

MUSA: ... usevala isicabha ...

BOTH: laugh

MUSA: akubambe then bese uyakunikeza ja so (brief pause) ja ngikhule nje ngikanjalo ekhombisa ukuthi uyangithanda ebathanda futhi nabafowethu though phela there is also **there's family politics** or something like kukhona kwezinye isikhathi la ubone sengathi uma[ma] uthanda usibanibani kakhulu kunami mina uma ngone kancane ungithethisa kakhulu kodwa usibanibani uma onine kuvele nje kudlule like kukhona umfana wasekhaya olama mina eh (brief pause) yena akabanga nayo inhlanhla yokuya esikoleni and nje implilo yakhe **it's not that straight it's not that good** uyabona but ngendlela uma[ma] amthanda ngayo uyaphuza (brief pause) nje **but uma[ma] uyamthanda ...**

SIYANDA: ...umagicna?

MUSA: No uwesithathu ungowesithathu ja but uMa uyamthanda if uma ukhuluma kabi uyabona uyabona naye esepatheka kabi impela sengiyabona ukuthi ohh no kudalwa ukuthi uzama ukumvikela ukuthi even though ephila le mpilo ayiphilayo but naye uyi-something kuye uyabona ja, ja, ja kwakungihlupha ekuqaleni ukuthi after all lo muntu lona u-useless u-irresponsible but uMa always like uma kukhona mhlambe uwenze icala endaweni ethize uzomthola mhlambe ekhipha imali uma[ma] **eh it's like** uyamdungela noma **it's like uvele uyamnika** ukuthi no asikho isikweletu **something "Ma kukhona into engiyiphathile** kasibanibani noma mhlambe siphuze utshwala bukasibanibani uma[ma] ish eh hhey Ma ngicela ungiphe leyo mali" **and uthole uMa** esekhuthuza mina noma uma esene mali yokugicna yomnikelo ukuthi ayokwenza into le ayicele yona uyabona kwakuba sengathi uya-spoila kanti yena uzama ukuvala this gap ekhona ngokwempilo phakathi kwethu naye uyabona ja, ja, ja so but my mom loves us loves me a lot ja, ja she loves me.

SIYANDA: Ubudlelwano benu as izingane[the rest of the question is inaudible]

MUSA: Ahhh buhle kakhulu, buhle kakhulu like Christ usisi uyikho konke ube ngubaba yami waba nguma wami kuze kube manje though siqelelene **but I can't** do nothing I mean **anything without informing her ukuthi what's taking place** and **kukhona ...[an inaudible phrase] ... even now kodwa useyakuyeka ukuthi uma** kuphela inyanga angitshela ukuthi kufanele ngenzeni ngemali engiyihlolileyo you do that you do this eh wakewakwenza lokho sengishadile sihlale sehleka yedwa **"Hhawu cha I am sorry konje besengikhohliwe** ukuthi usunonkosikazi ja ja ja but ungagangi ngemali uyabona so not that she was punishing me or else but kusho ukuthi unalokho nje ukuthi always uyafona uma kuyimali ngiyisebenzise wisely eh whatever I am doing ngiyenze nje (brief pause) ngokuhlakanipha uyabona ja, ja, ja. So nje i-gang yasekhaya we are always supporting each other very much ja, very much ja enye into esasiyenza **nje it's like uma mina nginonkosikazi** umfana ongelamayo unonkosikazi nalo owelama yena unonkosikazi bathathu

abeza emumva abangakashadi uma umuntu ezoshada sikwenza kube emahlombe ethu ukuthi we help him in whatever way we can like financially and otherwise ja

SIYANDA: (first part of the question is inaudible) ...if ubuka isimo sala eNingizumu from before ngesikhathi sobandlululo nanamhlanje iziphi izinto ozibonayo esezishintshile iziphi izinto ezingakashintshi for wena?

MUSA: (brief pause) Hmmm (brief pause) okuqondanene nami as a person?

SIYANDA: Whether nawe as a person or mhlambe ukuthi njengempilo yakho or...

MUSA: No ziningi kakhulu, ziningi kakhulu izinto esezishintshile uyabona like ngikhuluma indaba yokuthi eh sikhule endaweni enjani la eManguzu kungekho gesi kungekho mgqwaqo but umgqwaqo okhona njengamanje osuke ngawo lo, lo, lo, uwakhiwe after 1994 (brief pause) kungalesiya sikhathi sikhule noma ubungaba nemali eningi kangakanani but ubungeke uze ubenawo ugesi emzini wakho ngoba ugesi was there only for whites ukufika kwalogesi wala eManguzu kwakungukuthi lo gesi uzoba ePolice Stashi ugesi uzoba esibhedlela nakulezi izindawo lezi la ekuhlala khona abelungu kephela and la ekuhlala khona abantu uyo-applya angeke beze bekuphendule ukuthi beku-install-ele electricity but now sesihlala emakhaya sinawo ugesi sinawoumgqwaqo sesaze sathenga nezimoto we are mobile kuyahambeka ahmmm ja, ja luningi unguqko nase emsebenzini ama-working conditions are conditions nanemali esiyihlodayo imali okwaziyo ngempela ukuziphilisa ngayo I would like nje ukuthi angazi ukuthi kungenzeka kanjani uma kunomhlangano mhlambe wothisha you just visit there ubone izimoto ezinhle abazingibelayo exquisite cars ja kuyakhombisa ukuthi no impilo ishintshile impela uyabona ja, ja, ja so nje luningi kakhulu ushitsho ja no luningi kakhulu eh though phela kukhona la okusalele khona ngemuva ikakhulukazi indaba yomsebenzi ngicabanga ukuthi it's still rough and (brief pause) nje la, la, ngikhona we except abantwana ukuthi bakhokhe i-school fees but uthole ukuthi they are about 80% of people who stay here abasebenzi ja, ja, and only 20 so

uthole ukuthi ish ehhe kunzima ja nengane ziza esikoleni ezinye uyabona ukuthi ziza zikuhlubule and akukuphathi kahle nawe nokho uyabona ukubona isimo esinjalo ngicabanga ukuthi yes kuningi okwenzekile but there are still many challenges asasele ekufanele uHulumeni and business people bawa-overcome ja, ja like this question of employment and the question of i-crime nakhona uyabona if indawo i-developha nezinye izinto that are **negative ...[an inaudible phrase]** ..uyabona like la endaweni sikhule thina iningi lethu sasazana uyabona uzothola ukuthi ngendlela esazana ngakhona umkhombe lo usibanibani, lo usibanibani lo but ithe indawo i-developha kwaba kusuba khona abantu abanengi abafikayo la thina asisazani and abantu bayabulalana manje abantu bantshontshelwa izimoto eh i-crime is so rife ngalendlena uyabona ja, ja, ja so okuhambisana nentuthuko ukuthi okunye kuthi kuthuthuka but bese kuba khona izinto ezivelayo okudinga anyway (brief pause) ngicabanga ukuthi umphakathi ubambisane to fight against [crime] ngoba we cannot suddenly rely kumaphoyisa and staff but nathi ngoba ezinye zezinto like abantu abantshontshayo inini are our own children uyabona uthole ukuthi eyakho ingane entshontshile uyayazi but uzoyi-covera-pha uyabona ja, ja, ja so if mhlambe singafika la esivuma khona ukuthi we work together as a unit kungadingi ukuthi ingane izalwa ngubani if you have done something wrong **it's wrong** and sizame ukulisana nacho lokho ja, ja, ja.

SIYANDA: Akengikubuze umbuzo wokugcina-ke what are your dreams and goals for ikusasa lakho (brief pause) like izinto uzafuna ukuzi-achieva?

MUSA: Hmmm (brief pause) ja ukufunda kakhulu ngiyafuna like ngi-end up ngine PhD eh uyabona uma nginga impilo yami ingaphela lapho sengi-achieve into efana naleyo I think I will die happy though kunama challenges along the way like abafana bami one is doing Grade 12 this year one is doing Grade 11 so **ngiyabhaka nje...**

SIYANDA: ...basondelene

MUSA: ... Basondelene ngiyabheka nje next year lona omunye kuyofanele ukuthi aye e-tertiary and kuyofanele ngimu-support vele ngemali eh ngiyacabanga khona ukuthi ngiqhumeke ngifunde but kuna lokho bunzima ngoba kufanele ngibhekelele ekhaya ukuthi isimo sihamba kahle izingane futhi nazo zi-fulfilled izingane futhi nazo ziyafunda but ngingajabula kabi uma ngingafika lapho ja, ja, ja.

SIYANDA: Okunye?

MUSA: Eh (pause) ukukhulisa ingane ngendlela like unkosokazi wami like ngishilo ukuthi asikakabi nezingane ezethu naye and ngiyafisa ukuthi sibe nezingane and futhi esizozikhulisa ngendlela and siyinineze uthando lolu thina esingazange siluthole and, and siyacabanga nje ukuthi uyabona like bengisho ukuthi thina siya ema universities kwakukhona kwakufike kudume nje upotiyane ngingazi [ukuthi] kwenzekalani uyabona so now sayafisa ukuthi izingane zethu zingabi nalokhu ubunzima thina esakutholayo uyabona like iyakhula isiyazi ukuthi yini i-computer iyakhula I mean ayina problem in terms of expressing himself or herself uyabona cause mhlambe iyobe ifunde nabo labantu amanye ama-cultures and so on uyabona so ja those are some of our dreams ja, ja, ja

SIYANDA: Unless kukhona okufuna uku-add nami sengiqedile ngemibuzo

MUSA: Ja ngaphandle kokuthi ngingasho ukuthi eh mhlambe ngingakubalulanga ekuqaleni but umsebenzi owenziwa oJill umsebenzi owenziwa u-Anita umsebenzi owenziwa oThami maybe bona they did not realize ukuthi how much they have contributed in our lives but they contributed so immensely such that if kwakungebona **we wouldn't be where we are today uyabona ngoba and yibona** abeza nane programme sakwazi ukuthi sithatheke e-university definitely ebesingeke sithatheke if abezanga and it is through leya effort ukuthi some of ama-stereotypes akwazi ukuthi a-proveke wrong like kwakunalokho ukuthi you cannot do it if unjena ungaphasanga kahle esikoleni uyabona but bona baku-prova wrong lokho ukuthi **"no if nje umuntu** e-supportha uyabona kungaba uku-

supporta ngokwe-material ngama resources or what, what then umuntu can do **it uyabona” ja and ngempela kanjalo we did it ja, ja, ja so** nje abantu abenza unqaba empilweni yethu we cannot forget about them ja, ja, ja (brief pause) **it’s** like I have said mhlambe akuselula ukuthi sibonane wena mhlambe you happen to see them for a while uyabona tell them ukuthi we cannot forget about them even though maybe we cannot have said but then bezwe but yinto ekufanele bahlalenayo bazi ukuthi ukhoma umsebenzi omkhulu abawenza we actually did quite a lot in our lives in particular ja, ja, ja no **I think that’s it...**

SIYANDA: Ngibonga kakhulu ngesikhathi sakho

MUSA: Ja no you are welcome ja, ja, ja no problem

INTERVIEW ENDS!!!

1st Interview with Mxolisi House in South East London

Siyanda: Mxolisi, tell me about your childhood.

MXOLISI: Ahmm anything specific?

Siyanda: It's up to you.

MXOLISI: Ahmm ja I grew up KwaMakhutha and I grew up WITH umama and my siblings I went to school kwaThambo Ahmm [brief pause] ja and I think I remember periods of my childhood where I spent emafamu kwaFelekisi with ugoogo nomkhulu and everyone else [speaks to his housemate who has walked into the kitchen where we are interviewing] all I need is questions.

Siyanda: [chuckles] Alright so KwaMakhutha ...

MXOLISI: ... okay ...

Siyanda: ... tell me about the PLACE KwaMakhutha what place is it?

MXOLISI: Alright KwaMakhutha ilokishi Ahmm it's on south coast of iTheku Ahmm I'll tell you about the house cause I think it's quiet beautiful it was ah a house on a road that wasn't really recognized as umgwaqo so people just you know started building AS THEY WOULD emalokishini it was the first house of isitobhu ...

Siyanda: ... of isitubhu?

MXOLISI: ... isitobhu

Siyanda: isitobhu okay.

MXOLISI: ... ja isitobhu kwakwi-kathekwane ...

BOTH: laugh

MXOLISI: ... [laughing] it was situated right next to ah a rubbish dump

Siyanda: ... yeah and do you know why isitobhu sasibizwa ngokukathekwane?

MXOLISI: I don't know I don't know why I mean I guess from i-story I mean othekwane I guess as izinyoni who've got these elongated necks they could see from a distance but I mean it weird ngoba you couldn't really see far from KwaThekwane ngoba ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... it was in a DITCH it was in a valley so ja ne-colour of umuzi was yellow ...

Siyanda: ... iwu! [expressing 'disgust']

MXOLISI: ... a bright, bright yellow umuzi wasekhaya cascaded I mean it didn't cascade but wawuwa wawusendaweni eyehlelayo so I mean I remember a bunch of times kungena amanzi endlini especially during wet you know days and then everyone would be doing the, the whole sikhapha amanzi Ahmm but ja it was really, really a beautiful house one of the bigger houses elokishini ...

Siyanda: ... did you have to uyabo emnyango if kuna nibeka amathawula?

MXOLISI: Ja sisi, sasibeka amathawula no-blankethi nakhokonke ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... HOWEVER it just wasn't good enough ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... ayevese angene siminze yonke into and the following day everything will be kicked out of the house okhaphethi everything I mean I remember e-toilethi kwabhodlozwa eye imbobo encane at the bottom just so amanzi...

BOTH: ... ezophuma

MXOLISI: ... ja so it was a big house I was quiet naughty kid I remember [brief pause] I remember what do I remember? Childhood that's a funny one [whispers] fuck okay I remember this one time ngo-1988 there were there was some sort of uprising emalokishini so KwaFelikisi la okwakuhlala khona ogogo kwabakhona impi [ekubeni khona] impi wonke umuntu wa-mova waza ekhaya endlini so ekhaya basically had three bedrooms [a] pretty large i-garage a large dinning room by, by township standards ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... sassi-made ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... sasine-garage we even had a pantry i-pantry ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... i-pantry I think ebalungwini i-pantry ifaka ukudla but thina yayifaka amathuluzi ...

BOTH: laugh hysterically

MXOLISI: ... amageja I mean another luxury of the house was we had this 'fat' (?) bathroom that was never tiled for some strange reason it never ever got tiled and then the bathroom was just pretty tiny and I remember as a kid I used to on the corridors ekhaya ngangi ngangigxamalaza izinyawo ngibeke nezandla kanjena and I'd climb up you know e-toilethi nasemaphasejeni so nje kunama-footprints ami njena ngiyaphezulu ngiba u-Spiderman ...

Siyanda: chuckles

MXOLISI: ... so ja that was, I remember one time so basically the violence happens wonke umuntu moved in ekhaya ...

Siyanda: ... now which are these people umndeni?

MXOLISI: ... umndeni, umndeni from my mom's side. Umndeni from my mom's side [breaths in] umama wami omncane umama wami omdala ugogo nezingane so we had about 20 to 24 people in this house but umama ah umama always had people ngoba umama umzalwane so nje amakholwa ayehlale elala nje ngayoyonke indaba ja ...

Siyanda: [I say some thing about back home with my mother and start laughing making what I say inaudible]

MXOLISI: ... waye, waye, waye akungeni muntu well, well-ke ekhaya kwakuhlale kungenwa eh I remember this one time ngathatha ikhandlela ngaphandle ngaphansi kwesiponji ngalayitha ikhandlela mina ngahlala nje ngabuka ikhandlela lishisa isiponji ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... phatha-phatha kwaqhamuka ugogo uqhamuka e, elokuzana e-garage e, e, e-lounge uthi "hhayi-bo kukhona into enukayo la kwenzekalani?" mina se, kunembobo ...

Siyanda: ...uMthoko usashisa ...

MXOLISI: ... ja ngiyaphika "Akusimina!" ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: "...akusimina" but onke umuntu wayazi ukuthi imina ngabanjwa ahhhMxolisi ja I mean ubungane I mean ubungane kwakukudlala I mean I remember the game ngangidlala namantombazane ngiyingane EVERY game yamantombazane kwakuyimina u-number one ...

Siyanda: ... ushumpu ...

MXOLISI: ... ushumpu ngangiwu-number one u-R-gogo ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... ngangiwu-number one NOMA IYINI anything that you can imagine; around that time I think I was 7 or 8 around that time ah ulokhuza ngangihlala no a lot of girls so babesayana kanje [demonstrating how on me] and ...

Siyanda: ... bepansana!

MXOLISI: ... bepansane bethi "Eyi unamanga" ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... like izinto ezinjalo and I think I picked that up from amantombazane later on in high school I learnt it wasn't really desirable you know behaviour ...

Siyanda: ... for a boy

MXOLISI: ... for a boy but also I think there were other things you know growing up you know ezangenza ngacabanga ukuthi "hhayi-bo" one ngangibizwa ngo-sisibhuti you know basically umuntu bonke but one opposite ekhaya omunye nje ubhuti owayeyi-comrade you know owaye-strong kwi-struggle so nje mina ngangiwu sisibhuthi ngoba ngang-i-weak nginensa nje ngidlala oshumpu ngidlala umagalobha ngidlala o-3-tina ...

Siyanda: ... wawubhala u-four uma uhlala?

MXOLISI: Well I think so ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... ngoba kukhona lesi sithombe esisodwa ...

BOTH: laughing hysterically¹

MXOLISI: ... kukhona lesi sithombe esisodwa ngiyingane and nje ngibhale ...

BOTH: ... u-four

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... Mxolisim another thing sengiyingane I was very, very cute and wonke umuntu wayefuna ngibe i-patch-boy ...

BOTH: laugh

¹ As I know precisely which photograph he's referring to.

MXOLISI: ... so ngaba i-patch-boy iyeye mina and lapho ngiyi-patch-boy nginesudi ngipheme izinwele ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... ngi-right

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... you know so that was pretty fun, that was pretty fun Ahmm what else about childhood? ...

Siyanda: ... well tell me about abantu abasedlini you lived with your family so your mom your siblings ubaba ukephi?

MXOLISI: MxolisiMxolisi ubaba washone ngo-1981 ngangina-6 months so angimbonanga ubaba but apparently ubaba washona a few months after **we'd** moved into this massive house Ahmm so kukhona umama, umama ungunesi umama usebenza kanzima umama uya esibhedlela sometimes i-night shift kusale uMpume kusale uMsa kusale mina and basically uMpume is about sixteen seventeen u-1986 1987 **she's becoming of age** uyintombazane uMpume uname-stunts akhe I mean uMpume i-stunt sakhe esisodwa akanqeni ukuthi nje uma ngisokhi izingubo for a long time uMpume avese ethathe izingubo azidampe inside i- toilet ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... uMpume akanqeni ukuvese the one time kukhona uGugu noDudu uDudu are cousins from umama omncane uMpume uyahamba uhamba ne-future husband ...

Siyanda: ... e?

MXOLISI: ... future ex-husband uDimba uyakojola and then asishiye akukho ukudla hhawu umama uthengile end of the month kunama- Vienna e-frijini kunama-SAUSAGE kwakukhona lama-sausage okuthiwa u-mamso [laughs] ...

BOTH: laugh

MXOLISI: ... kukhona nama-sausage okuthiwa u-mamso kukhona le-period le okwakudume khona u-powder, u-powder wamaqanda ...

Siyanda: ... I don't know that ...

MXOLISI: ... uma ungawazi u-powder wamaqanda awazi lutho ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... so anyway-ke hhawu ama-cousin abhoyile ...

Siyanda: ... no wait u-mamso what kind of sausage ...

MXOLISI: ... u-mamso ...

Siyanda: ... is it?

MXOLISI: ... u-mamso I-SAUSAGE elingaka ...

BOTH: laugh

MXOLISI: ... like li-massive, like li-massive I can just imagine ukuba lisekhona lelo-sausage manje I can imagine ukuthi abantu bangenza izinto ngalo ...

Siyanda: [laughs] I was thinking kungabe asilambi e-Africa but you thinking something else ...

MXOLISI: ... well dear I mean lokho kuhlange ...

Siyanda: laughs

MXOLISI: ... ukudla kwe-Africa no-Mxolisiaso Ahmm so anyway bafake, bafake ama-vienna bafake lamaqada abholiwe a, a, awu-powder amiswa namanzi kufakwe ahhheee nkosi yame ja bafake konke and then yeah sidle, sidle, sidle HHA afike uPoppy ntambana ...

Siyanda: ... oh uPoppy

MXOLISI: ... "NENZE AMA-VIENNA"

BOTH: laugh

MXOLISI: ... niwanikwe ngubani ...

BOTH: laugh hysterically

MXOLISI: ... and she just completely loses it completely and ja I mean nieces got pissed off well not nieces cousins and they left ahh but ja I think it was, it was a fun house I mean like it was really, really fun but it was also very transient we had a lot of people coming in and going out I mean there was just so it **wasn't CONSTANT it wasn't** consistent there was there was always SOMEONE there, there was this beautiful, beautiful boy owayehlala ekhaya igama lakhe okwakuthiwa uMdu

(A005-11:05)

and this guy was super neat beautiful, beautiful a family far, far family member and this guy I never seen anyone who loves himself as much as Mduduzi, Mduduzi had this afro hair which was like one of the afro hair cut from a post card put on him he had one of those he like his black shoes always shiny had this black pants and he had this eh shirt flowery Mdu was good person and he passed away I think in 1991 he got shot he was security you know and that was it with Mdu we had a period also from 1990,91,92,93 where Siya died my older brother, Mdu died, my grandmother died and we just had this boom, boom, boom, boom and boom but after that it was all good for a while

Siyanda : Tell me about life in a township

MXOLISI : Life in location hMxolisi yeah very, very beautiful I mean location has this amazing beat I got this amazing and maybe in explaining that I mean as a child I think we grew up at a weird time South Africa was changing and as kids you go to school you had this idea that you are a kid I mean I remember from my first year in primary I carry my slate

Siyanda : Slate

MXOLISI : Yes a slate

Siyanda : What that?

MXOLISI : A slate is a thing where you use to write on, "kids from the 90's" slate, slate a slate don't you know what a slate is?

Siyanda : I grew up with exercise book

MXOLISI : Not a exercise book a slate where you wipe afterward so well everyone had a slate before exercise book it use to get finish slate you wipe off come back with it tomorrow and I mean I use to have hMxolisi eh or my day in school will be a slate a soup cup put on my grey trouser and go to school and school was absolutely fabulous I remember first year of school I use to pee in my pants right I remember saying a word of english at school it was such a big thing it was a big deal " mistress, mistress please, please, please, please mistress yes Mthoko what do you want, mistress my I please Mxolisi go out

Siyanda : Mxolisi go out

MXOLISI : It was fantastic but also was the weird time in terms of political Inkatha Freedom Party and Umkhonto weSizwe not even Umkhonto weSizwe back then it was called UDF my brother Siya was UDF you know so he was very, very politically in a way so life in a township was you sitting in your house at night and then boom a petrol bomb I mean we had family staying in section 12 we stayed in section 14 and there were staying over for a night and then we were sitting in all of a sudden petrol bomb was thrown inside house was burning down location at those time was eh

Siyanda : Gunfire

MXOLISI : Gunfire I mean I remember I've written about this night you know that night we sought of we all got squash I mean 15 of us got squash in this little passage for the whole night and I mean guns were going off like cricket you knew know one said anything but you knew something big had happen you knew you wouldn't be the same I mean you know the following day it was one of biggest massacre of apartheid where I don't know what his name eh it is Mallan, was one of the biggest thing around about 24 people had died KwaMakhutha this was 150 metre from our house so it was eh

Siyanda : I remember we had move of our house from Mandeni to eSikhawini where the family is right now and one night we watching television a new television color television and then as well gunfire I remember my father saying switch off the electricity and lay down on the floor we did that only to find out the next day that there was Shebeen I think four houses from our house and our house had been caught in that and I remember when we woke up the next day because no one told us anything we went swimxolisiing and I think

MXOLISI : It quiet strange, it quiet strange see yes that is how you characterize a location in those time I mean come to think of it right now it was

quiet a unstable you know time I remember moving when I was around about 8 yrs moving into Umlazi only to see men wearing dresses and skirt to counter attack SANDF it was a time of big trucks swarming into the township a time of road being barraged with big stones a time of stay-away they would just go on **you can't go anywhere like for a week**

Siyanda : Eh I suppose being a kid at that time was exciting for me there were exciting because **you'll stay at home that was really cool**

MXOLISI : Yes you don't have to go to school yes it was a big thing really yeah I'm reading these book right now "The Southern Sulkan and the lost boys on Siena Leone" I mean child soldiers basically there something Siyandaesting with them which **I can't really say we experienced or experience I think my brother experienced** cause he was involve, he was involve you know but this idea of how childhood is lost in a way of events that happened like you know just it something very, very settling about the book I keep on having it not a dream but I keep having a memory of walking to my aunt house because there was no one at home walking pass a dead body

Siyanda : Yeah yap

MXOLISI : You know I remember I walked out of the house it was quite cloudy grey day it was after **"Xhosa and Zulu domestic violence and I'm walking** up an I see this now you know blood is red, red, red I remember seeing that and I remember asking my sister when I was back home if did that happen or is it **something that I'm conjuring up** you know

Siyanda : and she said

MXOLISI : She said yes you know that something that happen eh when I **was in grade 2 I think I did something at school I can't remember** if I did not do my homework or something so I was skipping school skipping it, skipping Siyanda I think I skip around 40 days I just skip go sit in some big rock **sometimes I'll visit Poppy "Mpumi" because Poppy**

Siyanda : So you were skipping school regularly

MXOLISI : I think so Poppy was always with his boyfriend and skipping school too and flaunting somewhere or sit in that big rock and than here another **thing I'm not sure if this happen before or after I'm 6yrs old I'm sitting in a** classroom stones flying around and gun shot there are this men standing on a road which lead to my house if you looking at our house you just walk straight up maybe for kilometer and you reach eThambo where I went to primary there this men carrying knock-piere, bush knife, guns and all of a sudden we were

leaving through the widows and I fell I remember this girl called "Make" they were looking for two girls because they said they were comrades you know and **we ran this girl maPhumi like carried me because I was six yrs I couldn't run so** we went up the road and she carried me to somewhere you know I cannot remember **how and when I got home and I don't know** if me skipping school **started before or after I can't remember clearly but I remember I would go to school and then I would come running home I would pretend that it happened again and I couldn't I mean my mother** was at work Siya, Siya my brother that passed away was absolutely fantastic he was such a beautiful soul such a beautiful spirit he was very streetwise let me backtrack little bit those two girls Make and maPhumi I lok back I think there were older than me but they could have been 11 – 12 yrs old so to have violence or a fight looking for two little girls **yeah you get this very jealous I don't know if you do get this**

Siyanda : Yes, yes and I think you right when you say if you making this up, I was in Umlazi at K section it was known well for fighting domestic violence and I remember that something that I do remember vividly but it difficult because **Mazini denies something that I remember so but I'm very unsure of so it a problem**

MXOLISI : Yeah yes

Siyanda : I remember at my grandmother house at K section Umlazi these men I remember they cane in I hide under the bed thinking that they going to **kill us but I don't know**

MXOLISI : Yes it quiet weird it is quiet a strange I also remember as a child it was a very strange dream I had I remember dreaming I was this grown man but I had breast do you know I remember that dream I remember as a child I **think you know I didn't have a father you know I remember fantasize about my father but I was young Siyanda I was 5 – 6 yrs but I remember playing games with boys you know games and I guess you know "ukupiqana" which I didn't know**

Siyanda : What was "ukupiqana"

MXOLISI : When a boy goes in you; you know so I

Siyanda : No we didn't do that we didn't do that when growing up

MXOLISI : Well you didn't I did

Siyanda : You mean going in you

MXOLISI : Yes I mean you know once yes but the second time was, was not quiet

Siyanda : Ooh my god I think I remember now playing "Imizi"

MXOLISI : Imizi and all of that but yeah I mean all those thing were so funny I'd love **KwaFelikisi the fact that you know we had this pot before you dish** the pot we had to pray like looking for a kid who pray very well or calling holy spirit will get more food

Siyanda : Ooh my god

MXOLISI : I remember my grannies yard was absolutely fabulous we had hundreds of trees we had a river where you bath for Christmas you know going **somewhere in town they'll scrub you hardly almost till you so maybe they thought you'll light in complexion**

Siyanda : If you were going to town I mean you always you had to

MXOLISI : Ha, ha, ha maybe two times one I was going with my cousin **going to town they woke me at 6 o'clock in the morning saying you must go to** river to fetch some water we always bath with cold water when we were there but I was going to town I had bath with hot water they bath me scrub me thoroughly it was painful at that moment they took an afro-comb you know all of a sudden after they finish they put Vaseline os I can shine we were going to town it not even Amanzimtoti it a shop where there are Indians yeah that was my second experience of town

Ndumiso

Siyanda: Okay eh...

Siyanda: Let us start in the beginning, where you were born.

Ndumiso: Waiting for all the details, oh...

Siyanda: Yes, all the details. (They laugh together)

Ndumiso: Before we start, you are talking to Ndumiso. I was born at Mbojeni, but for what I know, I was born in a hospital. Eeh, Bethurst hospital at eMbojeni. In those days, you were giving birth at home or hospital because the clinics were not available at that time where I came from Umhlabuyalingana, a place called Mboza. It a place nearby uPhongola River. It a place where people survive through Agriculture. At that time, people lived through subsistence Agriculture. I was born in 1983, July 23, born by my mother Maria, and my father, Jeff. I was born in a family and I was lucky because my parents were already married. I was the second child, my elder brother Sibusiso was already born. We grew up living with my dad because at that time my mother was studying to be a nurse.

Siyanda: Can I just ask you why your parents had English names?

Ndumiso: I think it lies within our history religious beliefs, especially in Africa. You know that parents would give children names, two names. You get your maiden name and a school name. So your maiden name they give through some symbol when you were born. In English, you can call it symbolism or meaning which was a thought to them at that time you were born. So my father's zulu name is Themba¹ and my mother is Khethiwe. My mother was the last born in her family, so that is why she was called Khethiwe because they loved her. My father was named Themba because our grandmother had given birth to too many children, but they all passed away. But when my father was born, he brought hope so that is why he was named Themba and they believe he would bring hope the family. My grandmother raised my father by agricultural products believing that someday my father will bring those gifts. My father grew up and did what he was supposed to do. So basically we were raised by my father and my mother at that time she was still studying to be a nurse. We were brought up by a father who goes against prevalent perception. The father who was always detached from up bringing of children and stuff like that. So when I grew up, my father used to make breakfast for me, he also made supper for me. When I was going, he used to wake me up, he was like hands on.

Siyanda: That is unusual.

Ndumiso: Yes, it was unusual, but he took the pride that he was living with his child. He took pride that he could contribute to make first and for most my upbringing very pleasant but also in a way making his relationship or his marriage to my mother. The sacrifices were understood by both of them, and for them to enjoy their lives together. They needed to sacrifice at that time living together for her to get education and get a necessary qualification. And for her to enjoy of rather than to get that kind of employment. In that time

¹ The English and Zulu names of Ndumsio's parents and their meanings have been changed.

he remained at home to do the washing and look after the family which work the opposite to actually what was quite prevalent back then.

Siyanda: Was your father working?

Ndumiso: My father by profession, eeh. Let me start by saying that my father worked very hard and he did at his youth succumb to migrant labor. I think he came to Durban in the mid 70's looking for a job and anything else. But meeting up with people who were starting up the community development. He was luckily enough to find a gentlemen by the name of Clive Pulpy, who was involved in community development in Northern KwaZulu Natal. So after meeting my father, he showed interest that he doesn't really live his life working and developing areas outside his home town/village. He had a desire to go back to his village and do something about the state of living, which is how he got to community development. As a result, after some various projects they started a project called iMboza Relation Project. My father was basically a manager at that time because that whole project was started by a group of women, who wanted somehow to formalize their trade in handcraft and trying to sell and get some sort of cohesive program with regard to selling the farm produced and stuff like that. So being the young man that he was, he was tasked to co-ordinate all of these activities trying to be a go between the group of women outside which is their stakeholders. As a result, he found himself living in a home and working at home.

This is why I ended up growing under his care. I was schooling in the area for up until grade 9. Well my grade 1 and 2 was in the local area, Sihloko primary school. I did exceptionally well, but because of the age in those days, I could progress to the next grade. Unless you are at the certain age, so here I was. I think I was 5 years in grade 1 and did well. I was in a top ten than those graded according to your pass rate. But then, they wouldn't allow me to go to the next grade, so my parents felt it was a bit unfair. It was 1989, remember I told you. I was born in 1983, and then by 1989 my mother was working at Manguzi Hospital. So she had accommodation within the hospital premises because she was working in the hospital. Then the idea was that I had to go and live at Manguzi and study there. It was a sort of a village, which was on verge of becoming a small town. (They laughed together). Things were looking promising and my parents thought those schools will relax about my age. So I went to live with my mother, you know she was a sweet lady and also too sympathetic. To describe her, she was a good person to be around. Unfortunately she would sometimes work night shift, but beyond all of those difficulties I did very well. At Manguzi I excelled further by becoming 1st in every term. After a year at Manguzi, my parents realized that maybe I had a gift somehow in doing well at school.

Siyanda: "Ooh God, our son is very clever." Remarks

Ndumiso: Our son is making us happy and he is doing well and he is very young competing with older pupils. Our son is very clever.

Siyanda: Which schools did you go to, and standard were you in?

Ndumiso: No, no this was my second school, now BBC at Manguzi, and then I got a family at KwaMashu. I have two brothers, who are from the other mother. It was 1991, the idea was that I must come and live with them in

Durban. I enrolled in Redfern Primary School which was in Phoenix to do grade 3 in 1991 and I did well there. But then at that time, you know, things were political driven. It was quiet tense at Kwamashu because at that time, **what do you call these things which are fought within the country? "Civil wars", it was on** a low scale which we were experiencing.

Siyanda: But that was between IFP and ANC.

Ndumiso: Yes, so in the township life became a bit tough because you were uncertain about your safety.

Siyanda: Remember you always had to stay at home sometimes.

Ndumiso: Yes, I mean there was a lot of uncertainty about your basic safety in the afternoon because there will be demonstration of fights between the people. I think violence can manifest itself in a lot of ways, sometimes it could be eeh, I mean political scenario would be used as an excuse to perpetuity extra violent act. You heard a lot of taxi wars between taxi owners, obviously that will have a spill over effect on the community because it start to be unsafe on the streets. After a certain time, it becomes unsafe to use **motor transport and feeling somehow constraint you know. You can't move** around freely, you can not enjoy your childhood, experiencing different things, enjoying your childhood basically. Remembering I come from a childhood where I can do what ever I want, so there I was in this **environment where I couldn't enjoy riding my bicycle around the block, you** know what I mean.

Siyanda: it was that time as a child, I don't know if you were aware that it was political violence, or what do you think it was?

Ndumiso: I was aware because I come from a very conscious family, so I knew what was going on.

Siyanda: Did you?

Ndumiso: I mean before that as I said, you know growing up at eMboza, my parents were involved in community development work which was not community development which was viewed with a lot of suspicion those days by apartheid regime because they felt I was trying to advice a certain interest which was not in their favor. You would imagine all development practitioners were therefore treated with all lot of distained. So my family also suffered **consequences of that because in the late 80's, I think it was 1989 and you** know my father was attached because the people at the homeland government at that time could not understand what he was doing, where he was getting a funding from. What was interesting is that he was advancing his profession, you know.

Siyanda: Maybe he was getting help.

Ndumiso: Well, what they did was, they mobilized a lot of, you know in the rural areas those days you had a community policing forum that were very much in a dual-role in sought of speak. Because they were politicized to carry out those tasks political and also act some sort of security operations for local tradition/leadership. How it went about they called a huge meeting whereby representative, local of homeland government were called and traditional leadership from all ranks for these meetings to interrogate the eMboza village

Project staff. But particularly the project coordinator (my father) and he was doing where he was getting his funding from.

Siyanda: Sorry, what project?

Ndumiso: Mboza Village Project. He tried his best to answer these guys, but he could sense that his life was in danger because he was not winning them over and try making them understand that the project was not a political one. The thing is, it was really a community development at that time. Quantitize people about issues which were quiet prevalent those days, I mean migrant labour for one. Our area was hit by it, people with skills never remained in the area. They always leave, so what the Mboza Village Project was trying to do was to retain people in the area to actually utilize their skills, so basically **develop the area. Secondly, it was to mobilize them and don't wait for government to do things for us because looking at our job geographic location. It's very difficult for you to expect any changes now; I mean we** were lacking critical things within the community. Sorry critical services like in the community things, like having access to medical care, clinics. There were no clinics in the area, schools you know, basic services like water and stuff like that. So the eMboza Relation Project tried in a way to fill

in or assimilate the role the role now which is being played by local municipality structures by being a centre that actually tries to carry out all those services and really try to organize people in some sought of group of people who want to drive in a certain goal. I mean as much as local people understood these and really took whatever was happening I really gained a lot of skills. These went against some of high profile politicians who did not recognize the structure because this was not their produced. This was not something that came through their blessings, they attached, so how they did that were people march together to attach and try to burn down the houses, you know in those days that what happened. But fortunately, they did not burn the house and people were at the time, eh my father were in exile, Zimbabwe. I went to live with my mother at Manguzi, where she was a nurse at the hospital. It was actually a very secure area; a gate with the access to it was very much controlled.

Siyanda: Was it the same time you went to a new school?

Ndumiso: Yes, in Manguzi. That was part of the reason I moved. So coming from that background it make sense a little bit o what was going on in KwaMashu. But at the same time I could not enjoy staying there. I was very **much restless of why can't I do this and that. Then in 1992, I went to live** with a colored family in Sydenham. In those days there was a lot of boarding, you know when you are boarding with that family, you are staying with them and you become part of the family. I went to live with that family.

Siyanda: How did this come about?

Ndumiso: Eh, by word of mouth, my parents learnt about this family of which was taking in the kids from wherever outside areas. You come and stay with them and they take care of you like they are your own parents/family. By living with this family you meet them half way, in terms of rent payments and so on. I lived with them from 1992-1993, I was schooling in Sydenham, Ripped Primary School. I did my Std 2 and 3; again it was a bit of a cultural

shock because now it was my third cultural transition that was going through coming from areas I went to. A township set up which was sought of a shared experience with an Indian community in Phoenix, so you spend half of a day in school and you are exposed to different cultures for a half day you are at school and another half you are at the location, exposed to another different culture.

Siyanda: Was this an Indian school you went too?

Ndumiso: Yes Redfern was an Indian school Ripen primary was a colored the one in Sydenham eh that where I really enjoyed my schooling, because when I was in standard 2 I could speak on a lot of English, I actually thought it very fun story how I leant my English. There was a friend of mine whilst I was still living in Manguzi named **Themba Stewart his mother was.....**

Siyanda: Stewart, what kind of a surname is that?

Ndumiso: Let me tell you, his mother was Claire Stewart a white lady. She was doing a lot of development work in the area, she was very active. She has fathered Themba with a chap from Zimbabwe a black Zimbabwean chap of **which I've never met, but they gave birth to Themba. He stayed with her in Manguzi.** Themba and I were friends but he never spoke any word of Zulu and I never spoke of English, but he was a good friend (laughing together). So you know this is so funny I remember the first/three sentences that I could speak in English because he always use to try and teach me English. **I was very, very used to protest the fact that why can't we communicate, why can't you teach me your language & I'll teach you mine. I remember** the first time he used to ask me this question a lot in a way to teach me how to practice to speak English. He used to ask me, where does your father work? **They laugh together, and then he'll say where does your mother work?**

When I was paying with Themba around Manguzi people would come especially doctors and psychologists, all the senior white staff. They will like, **hi! Themba, how are you? Who's your friend you know obvious he'll introduce,** this is Dumisani. Than they will attempt to ask me questions trying to trace my origin, who are you? Where does your mother work? Is she working in this hospital? Now I remember that every time I was speaking to him I thought I was having a great conversation where I say where does your mother work? Where does your father work, I thought I was talking here. Laughing together, meanwhile I was repeating the same thing over and over again, so anyway.

Siyanda: I'm just asking now since you've mentioned a lot of places, which are different, place the fact you living in the 1980 are under apartheid but counted a number of different national speaking, were you aware of different race of people. So when you were in school Sydenham there were colored's in Phoenix there were Indians, how was that life?

Ndumiso: I was aware but, **luckily as I've said growing up with a parent involved in a lot of development work I was exposed to white people from a very young age. I was born and raised by a very eh, I don't know how to put this,** and you can say I was raised by different types of people because my parents were colleagues to a lot of white, brown and purple people. You know that the diverse group of people of people who really want to see a change in South Africa. Back in the days my parents were out going, social people so I

was introduced to all sought of people because they knew me from birth until now. To me there was no such thing as a white people in a sense that I never asked who was that or that; a white person was a person to me like Uncle Clive. I used to call him eh Clive Pulpy. **He was the first person I've grown attached too**, because he was always at home, you know I always had supper at his place, here in Durban; they used to stay in Moore Road. You know so we just grew up as a family. Yes I know he was a white person, as if he was a European descent in terms of our history. But I understood him as someone part of our family, I also understood that the difference was that I spoke Zulu and he was speaking English. At the same time he was fluent in isiZulu. We had conversation in isiZulu when we are speaking to each other. So I could not locate or find what differs between us, so I grew up in that environment. I wind & din with the evil one I did not know that you were not allowed to talk or sit with that person. I did not know that but I knew that there was something happening in South Africa.

I remember a story not necessary a story about an event in my life long ago **I was staying with my father, my dad will wake up about 5 o'clock warm the water in the kettle, prepare breakfast, after finishing bathing me he would sit me down and switch on the television.** I think it was 1988 or 1989, then we would watch news on the television, I actually got some consciousness with some of the issues of my early stage by watching news. I could always remember seeing FW de Clerk always give speeches & so on. Now I realize it was that time of state of emergency, so the president was on the lime light always on the news and I remember the words he used to say. He used to instill hatred for white people like saying look at that guy he this and that and so forth.

So he used to say look at the grandfather/ old guy de Klerk and I say Grandpa de Klerk and he would laugh at his bald head. Meanwhile he was the African National Congress (ANC) activist and he suffered quite a lot in some **activities, police forces harassing them, but what I'm saying I grew up benefiting from the environment whereby I was left to grow and see things for myself no one forced agendas on me, saying this is bad or safe as a result you'll see when we talk about what I'm doing at the moment, that where I am at moment today nothing was given to me.**

Anyway Sydneham I'd enjoyed that is where I started to see things in clever coloures in a community very accommodating. I really made out the most of my education but in 1993 things really started heating up, heading towards the elections. The distance between ourselves and our parents started becoming very uncomfortable before leaving for home there was a place where I stayed for a while which is near Phoenix it was called Bhambayi. I stayed there for a short period with that family because they live near to the house where I had first experience of violent, hearing gun shot being fired and basically you had to leave your house and run for cover because the IFP and ANC were fighting. They bloody shooting at each other, so I remember that time I was leaving with my eldest brother Sibusiso. I remember **complaining to him saying I don't like the way we are living and he said to me why are we living like this.**

Jokingly I said I must write a letter; write to our parents, telling them that you not living here on the very same letter it made them realize that they **must fetch us. I started it stating that I don't like staying there; because it's very dangerous people are shooting at each other. And I don't feel safe, you know.** Then my parents weighed my education, life and decided it was time for us to return home. In 1994 eh in January I met with Uncle Clive Pulpy to go to Mkhuze which was the nearest town from Lone village and it was a city well established/developed than ours. It had English school, so most of the **children were either farmer's children and white people who were working in the area.** So they built a school I remember when I had to gain admission I had come with uncle Clive so that he can speak on behalf of my parents, maybe he will say you must accept him. And one moment question I remember the principal ask me, he said can you speak in English and I said yes, and he asked me a very interesting question whether I was scared of a dog?

Siyanda: What that got to do with admission?

Ndumiso: I do not know, I think he was testing my vocabulary.

Siyanda: Ooh your vocab

Ndumiso: He did understand I was going to read through that question, that **why he's asking a black boy if he's scared of a dog, then I said no we've got lot of dogs at home, as I'm speaking my uncle Clive has a dog in his car his name is Rusgate.** We used to drive around with the dogs. So to answer your **question I'm not scared of dogs "laughing together". Oh his name was Mr Collen** so he also laughed since it was very funny. I began schooling at Mkhuze primary school in 1994, they sent me back to standard 3. I had the **time of my life, to tell you there isn't a school I enjoyed more than Mkhuze primary**

Siyanda: Why? What happened?

Because for one I had grown up and it was close to home. I had the best of both worlds; I was schooling with whites, blacks or yellow. Yeah man in a popular term you can call it multi-racial school. It was my first time seeing **blacks, whites, colored's and Indians schooling together, that was my first experience** it was in 1994, which was quite ironic because it was a year of democracy.

Siyanda: Which takes you back because things like that happen very often these days

Ndumiso: it happened in 1994 which I must say I really enjoyed my schooling, I did to testify all that you know, and I did well, athletic I was tops, swimming I was tops and academically I was starting to struggle a little bit already I remember **at one stage you know my teacher said to me I don't think math's it not for you "they laugh together" so there was that experience** in my life where like things were looking up for me, my father was still involve in his works and my mother was also back from Manguzi staying at home working at eMboza in one of the local clinics, they had open some by then so my younger brothers were growing up; my two younger brothers Menzi whose after me and Linda the last born started growing up.

Siyanda: How many siblings do you have? Because you mention others which were fathered by your father.

Ndumiso: My mother has four children

Siyanda: Is it boys and girls

Ndumiso: Only boys

Siyanda: Ooh yeah sis you going to pay there, to many lobola

Ndumiso: In the family which is in Kwamashu there is my sister Nozipho, my brother Sandile, eh actually Nozipho recently passed away in 2003 eh yes that right 2003. So enjoyed my schooling at Mkhuze eh in 1996 finished there, it think that when I had a very serious relationship with some girl yeah you can imagine.

Siyanda: How old were you in 1996:

Ndumiso: I was born 1983, which means 1993 I was 10 then 1996 oh I was 13 years.

Siyanda: Who was the girl?

Ndumiso: It was girl called Khethiwe Sifunda, up until today, she's the one that got away, yeah what I can say if only I could meet that Khethiwe if there was a person who can come to me and say what are the three things you'd like to happen to you, something like a wish list; one of them is to meet that girl, just to say hi, how are you; you know are you fine, you know I've often tried to find to someone who are in that something like that, but it never happens.

Siyanda: where did you meet her, was it at school

Ndumiso: Yes at school

Siyanda: Were you in the same class?

Ndumiso: Yes in the same class

Siyanda: Tell me the story about Khethiwe

Ndumiso: Okay no, you know I've gone through a lot of things like when you are still growing up, you try to find yourself like what type of person are you, in the process you might become someone you really not; because you trying to find out who are you? So well I was somehow an hyper – active when I came to that school, not very much hyper – active but I was very social able some sought of character and then I met up with Khethiwe because even

when I first came to the school, well I thought that she was a nice person to have, so I had those friend of mine; everyday after school I would call or phone you know,

Siyanda: Pay phones of course

Ndumiso: Yes, there was a shop called photofirst where you know you wash camera film but next to it there were Mr. Phone so I use to go there maybe **twice a week I'll phone my dad cause there were no Telkom phones at home,** so I can only phone my dad on cellphones so after that I would call her, so we got along very well until I finish my primary education; I think you save this for after supper because after this it become quiet very long.

Siyanda: Okay than when we came back we will still talk about Khethiwe.

Ndumiso: Yes if you want me to get into full details

Siyanda: Yes if it won't be problem

Siyanda: So you were telling me about Khethiwe, you and she in the same school and you became friends.

Ndumiso: "Yes that perfect lady" , we got along I think it was in a way I celebrated this newly found environment and at which I was comfortable, **couple with the fact that felt the same way. I don't know for what reason, but** we were just young we were exploring being a cheerful youth life and after Mkhize primary I went to school in Nottingham Road which was in the midlands eh to do my standard 6 cause Mkhize primary obviously it was a primary, so eh Kings College School in base on Nottingham Road I think earlier in 1989 or 1990 my parents had tried to get me at Kings College at that time **it was not possible something happen I couldn't attend so I went** back in 1997 to do my standard 6 there and again there were changes it a **private school, mostly for disadvantage kids, I don't know what that met. So** being in the midlands you know environmentally it such a wonderful experience I think that where the seed germinated whereby I just became in love with natural environment in it purest soul to see how it could be different it could be as you explore our country, knowing that to keep this way for our future generation to actually experience it will be a very wonderful feeling. The school was mostly based trying to get people off their shelf, I remember we had a liberal some sought of environment whereby you can call your teachers by their names and our head Mistress was Tanya and she always **use to say "guys I want you to live, get out of your shelves and live" so that** sought of school so did a lot of things to explore and it in the middle of a valley, I mean you know Midlands so she encourage us to take a walk in the forest listen to the birds all that stuff.

Siyanda: Oh dear god that was horrible

Ndumiso: You know it was that sought of school eh I really enjoy my staying, I was introduce into my first boarding school so we were boarding you know. I got into that school that had basically kids from all over the country the like of Johannesburg, cape Town, Lesotho, Namibia so that was my first international experience at Kings College. So there after, oh I met a very good friend of mine Mthokozisi Motabese from Eastern Cape a very close friend of mine eh so we you know, there were things you that had happened in standard 6 so during that year I got expose into social issues like talking **about class concept I'd really experience that, had difference** like it had South Africa was people who were rich, middle, and lower and first and foremost like sporting wise we competed with local private school like Hilton, Michael House which were cream of the crop when it comes to privatize education, so also Kesney College all these top school you know. So I started to be exposed to South Africa post 1994 and you know engaging for the first time, sometime I would speaking in the audience of kids whose parents were Ministers, at that time, so that where it started to be serious, where I found out what life was all about. There I schooling with some ministers kids, then it made me **realize that South Africa was moving at a certain direction but I actually didn't know what it meant at that time really I didn't know,** I know that we had an **environment whereby we had conflict, now I'm looking black people who** were fluent, you know which I saw that there was something going on which was beyond my understanding cause I had knowledge that every black people was struggle as I was struggling so I get it, I was schooling with kids whom were financially stable or rich if you put it. So they had parents who had everything because my parent only came to drop me off and pick me up after school term, and this kids their parents would drop and pick them up everyday and came on weekends to visit them and give them tuck, there was this thing called tuck which is whereby they bring snack at school for their kids. So what always haunted me was mp parents will put me in here with you know **with my own thinking was the best, but they don't do like other** kids parents, so I felt betrayed caused the other kids had attention from their parents and I was all alone, I also wanted that, so I decided that the only thing I want to do is to study, and I wanted to study in a way that not one can prescribe how I do things. I want to do my own way and my end **objective was to, I want to be comfortable I've always been scared to use the** word rich, because it can be abusive word and can have a negative consecutiveness toward it, but looking at life how comfortable you can be when you have necessary resources. I told myself eh I remember very well it was 1997 looking at life people were living, I told myself I want to do well I **told myself that I don't to conform** to worms maybe, I wanted to study to do this I wanted to be different. So in 1998 I had to leave Kings College again so discussion between my parents and Uncle Clive, so they decided to send me to Glenwood High School. So they had said if they take me in as their guardian, because they know that Glenwood had issues that they only take people from surrounding areas, so we wet to Glenwood I remember Hungely **Pulpy had accompanied me and they say they can't take because I was not** from the area she had told them that I was staying with her and they said she must bring proof, so we went back. Then my parents had to get a letter

stating that that Clive and his wife were my legal guardian and so I had to get that letter my application was accompanied by letter from court, this was in 1998 can you imagine. Clive and Hungley took me in and I started schooling, staying with Hungley than mid – year 1998 I got inside Glenwood Boarding **premises. Glenwood High School Old Boy's, then started schooling there I was** in a different environment, because you could see there were only boys, it was testosterone saving the environment because it all about rugby, sports no girls, and coming from a laid back environment the likes of Kings College where there was natural environment, whereby you had to listens to birds, listen to the trees rustling or listen to this and that. We were always concern about what happening in Drakenburg in terms of the weather, because whatever is happening there affect you directly, you know like if it snowing there oh my god they will be cold stories about that. I remember they was a guy when I was schooling in Kings College, so to go back a little bit Mr. John he was one of the **co-founders of Kings College, I don't know if he had** English background but he took us for English.

Siyanda: it college Kings what?

Ndumiso: Kings School

Siyanda: You said earlier on Kings College School

Ndumiso: Yes it the same, he took us for English and he was very interesting, I really like him because he get into class half asleep and half awake but very aggressive guys. He was a big guy there was a book he use to read to us, you eh he use to narrate you know and he never prepare for **his lesson, he'd just pick and choose and say let go with one. The book was called "the Pearl" it was eh I forget I can't remember eh ... what it was about, oh it was about a pearl that was eventually found by someone and so on.. ...** .. And he use to read it if you not listening he look at you and shout at the top of his glass yelling at you to concentrate. He was that type of character so even from that background it was more you know you always relaxed we were like extended family, people will be walking to teach with their short driving a motorbike even smoking his pipe and you know, it was those like form of English style cottage whatever whatever sought of lifestyle. I get to Glenwood is different bootie you pull up your socks, push up your chest, pull up your chick you know really sought yourself up. It was ship – in or ship – out so really eh **I don't know some straight or narrow you know they did things by the books and for the first time I'm carrying the code of conduct** and I really enjoy Glenwood but not as much, the reason the emphasis was **on the thing which I didn't cherished the most "sport" world some sought of** eh in a spirit of, you know I did not, not in a extent you know. it was very competitive in such a way that all the fun that I use to have on my previous school, so as a child given a privilege has no longer there, this was about do or die you know, you had to adopt that that competitiveness sought military **sought approach of life and that was not how I've been raised. I was to do** whatever or lay back life nevertheless took Glenwood for what it was and I

left in 2001, there is the end of you only boys you see it was a very strange environment for me and I finish in 2001 after we decided what course I was going to take next year was in varsity are else of course in terms of South Africa things are changing in terms of political scene, we becoming more fiscal in terms of what is going eh we no longer living under this rainbow nation thing sought there now a dog was a dog now you are ANC you are someone in ANC things start to change even the mood amongst young people I notice that I started to change you know my parents was no longer about growing to become people we want to be, started to realize that no there a certain rabbit we must chase now and now those rabbit would set us up for life and you know things started to became about progress in the economics sphere you know.

Siyanda: like tenders

Ndumiso: Yes tenders you chat to other big guys like you must do B.Com this is it eh economics was the future of South Africa that was the; eh popular belief so as a result I identifies with this. I enrolled for B.com.

Siyanda: Are you serious

Ndumiso: Yes I did, this was in 2002 in University of Natal and I could get on the straight so I went through the bridging course.

Siyanda: e- Mech.

Ndumiso: Yes I did it, eh I remember we did three subject economics, I did accounting and we did some law thing eh we did was commercial law, I tell you what I didn't even see that year going through, it was 2002 because I just use to have a miserable time in class, you know I could not comprehend.

Siyanda: I understand

Ndumiso: I just thought no man this wasn't meant for me, as a result I was introduce to the social life of university, tertiary education and I started partying and school life was like I made a mistake. Let me skip this year through I mean I was scrapping through my course I mean half of them so that was fine, 2002 beginning 2003 my parents summoned me to a meeting and said we don't think you enjoy what you doing, your marks are not reflecting that, this was the first time since we had raise seeing negativity towards your standards. And ask what is happening yeah I told that I enjoy what I was doing but it was merely doing it because I wanted to be one of them eh a dream team of who ever I wanted yappy actually someone who benefited from a situation, then my parents said look it hard for us to educate some people who are like you, your siblings so when we do things we must do it with an intention of knowing what we are doing. Why don't you think about what you want to do rather staying home that what they said, then they gave me keys to the van and said try and do something which will keep

you afloat financially whilst you decide what you wanted. Between about two to three months beginning of 2003, here I was pirating transporting people from between my village and the nearest town to eJozini. I use to take people and eh I woke up early, it was that thing, I did it you see for two months. Then Uncle Clive came to my rescue, stating to my parent my standard of education, it would be a **mistake if I continued doing this, why don't we ask him to help out**, because uncle Clive was doing a lot of tourism work, he was looking at tourism company and how they are working with local communities in terms of what benefit the local communities from this tourism enterprises, so now then I started working with him. I went to Ndumo Game Reserve, it was eh early 2003 around April I went to Ndumo game Reserve to work for one their wilderness safaris, I had a good time, first experience of working.

Siyanda: Were you also enjoying the nature as much?

Ndumiso: yes so there I learnt about working you know, we use to wake up **around about 5 and eh we went to bed around about 12 o'clock.**

Siyanda: Ooh good god

Ndumiso: I was part of a learnership or internship for young guides in the area, so in my job I met a lot of people from different background I had hell of a good time. I by then was familiar with socializing and with having parenting you know, I mean it was nice I really enjoyed it, then there was a particular visit from delegation from Ford Foundation from abroad, who were here for some sought project in the area which they were evaluating, so they were over nighting at the camp so upon their arrival I was actually tasked to be their guide during their duration of their stay so I use to take them to meetings, take them around the game reserve. They really became people I look after and part of that delegation there was a local consultant Japhet Ngubane who was consulting for the foundation for that particular project they were involve in. so Japhet knew me from way back, because I grew up in front of them cause he was working with my father eManguzi in community development project, he says hey you are still around, then we got chatting about what I was **doing, so I told him I have this experience but I'm undecided I chose a wrong course so I'm trying to figure out and we chat.** And this guys are leaving you know the in a lodge industry, tourism industry is mostly base on exchanging experience with people so obviously during their stay we exchange a lot of stuff like that so you know and normally when guest leave they give you a gratitude to say hey thanks, so these guy give me **R50 or something they were a big group so I'm like R50 that big group so that means I must've done a terrible job, that the first things that comes in my minds than two weeks down the line they call me this lady Paula Nompuno she runs the Johannesburg office of Ford Foundation, she's like Dumisani it Paula how are you? And I said I'm fine she say we were hell of impress with you and we realize from our conversation that you wanted to study so we going to award you with a scholarship of 100 scholarship for you to go back to school and study in a name of choice only on one conditions**

that we going to give if you going to study some exalt you know you must go back and contribute, and I said this is one hell of an offer thanks very much they facilitate this offer through the institution of International education based in new York stuff like that, so basically I had to get my fund directly from them this guys linked me to this guys so eh I ecstatic . This was in end of 2003, right I had to phone Japhet Ngubane who was lecturing at University Of Natal and I said **Japhet I hadn't made up my mind** what I want to do but in certain it not economic. I had a very special relationship with the **environment and social issues you know but I've had interest in that from** very young age so we look at the comprehensive package for to address all of those things for me, I actually realize it Geography Environment Management with this you address human geography, human issues and development studies etc. so 2004 I enrolled with geography Environment Management and I had a fantastic time. That a second place I had good time. I enrolled into the department 2004 eh mid 2004 I had my first job as a research assistant to Dr. Haroldwit from Economics History and Development Studies.

Siyanda: The guy with the bicycle

Ndumiso: Yes that the guy; so I really throw me into the deep end to actually try expose me, I use to do research for Manguzi, Magwaza but mostly Makhathini which lead to same papers being published and 2005 did more research 2006 I had my first international trip, I went to India.

Siyanda: What was the purpose of the trip?

Ndumiso: Eh because we were involve in research depredates and BT cozen eh it bio-technology so it genetically modified cotton, which meant to be more resilient to dry weather condition and that also meant it will be requiring a minimal pesticides stuff like that so we been pushing and promoting stuff eh in Makhathini particular for the cotton pharmacy to cultivate of course socially it had sought of problem because a lot of field has been use historically and used to cultivate food for the family which were now been converted to cotton field which in fact in dated a lot of farmers because for them to form this crop it was quiet expensive so they had to encrypts it so it was that cycle, although it particular the day so you can imagine yeah you had that situation so I went to India to actually part – take we actually participated in an international document that was recorded to tell the experiences of small scale farming in a diverse product which actually farming a BT cotton so the whole additional and the finalization of that work was going to take place in India so it in place called Afro – Pradesh which is province there so I actually **edited the filming for South African part eh it wasn't a film actually it was** editing the document and getting expose to the life in India that was very interesting eh the program that I was part of that which is run by organization the Deacon Development Society which is grass root sought of organization which promote and organize and oppose to in-organic culture so that totally revert back to organic traditional farming and they are very much

anti – usage livelihood strategies you can imagine how interesting it was so. I came back with a very renewed sense of responsibility because I think all of this experience which sought of shaped the out look, the choice that we make everyday, choices that we make, what are the reprecution and consequences for the choices. It start from minor things lifestyle choice like how cautious are you about certain brand, what does this mean, even though this belong to a friend you know, what does it mean to all of this?, what does it represent a certain way things which is actually consistently with eh certain issues which might be causing some sought of detriments to some sought of **eh. There are consciousnesses that I just can't articulate in a very coherent** question. There is this consciousness about questioning a lot certain thing, why you doing them? How you doing them? So when I came back I realize look if there anything I need to do, I need to insured that whatever I do is **based on social issues, I don't want this, this is where I differ a lot with my team yet couldn't get to development studies. I don't want to know, I've always said I don't want to be activist, but I'm not to operate within the system but question things in a very small ways make a different make my mark you know, I don't want to challenge against this and that even my colleagues' say why don't you but you working for government now, what does that mean you know, but for me that is not it, it about you can't change anything when you chanting, picketing from outside you have to assume the identity of people that you trying not really want to change, people but also letting them know that there is a way that it will be up to them if they see a difference or not, don't prescribe this thing to people; I mean this where the different is whether activism that was involve in my life especially in my research.**

Siyanda: Sometimes it good to conduct a problem but also in a constructive way

Ndumiso: Yes it doesn't sometime offer solution so my work as a research assistant was mainly about that if we had respected our differences, whether we respected that as a result after completing my degree in 2006-2007 I facilitated a program eh the very same department the communication development studies in northern Maputo Land which basically looked and working with schools and we did drama, art and drama all this things you know, working with the local youth teaching research skills, exposing them to this development issues, what is development, the programs worked partially well, I partial did it you know things in a rural areas that lack resources, we **didn't have resources and couldn't work effectively and sufficiently to make a different so the program under my leadership didn't do well sought fell through** I question myself like these not the start I wanted in a way **circumstaciously the result weren't like because of my failure as an individual** so why do I not look trying set myself up in an institution that is doing this type of work in Landed Dysen said seeing that is where I could make a difference which landed me my current job you know, the advertisement said it want someone who is trying to grapple and have understanding of development issues, someone who will engage communities, engage local /

rural government structures so I thought look this is a perfect to harness my skills and my involvement in this development has caused and that is what **landed we'd up here**, but what learn from my life is that there was a lot **influences, my parent influenced who I've always thought it will be very** wrong and eh something I would guilty about, if I was doing something that will put me very wrong for myself something that will put me out there with people and enable me to use the skill that I have to assist them. So my **parent have shed my life; I've also realize I was not raised by my parents** only, I had very big family people like Clive Pulpy and Hungley even Gill as **well I've** known Gill way back there been people whose been contributing direct or indirect as well to my up – bringing to the well being of my family, there been some of that expanded family community with my family trying to make a different at local level socially **so that at but at personal level, I've** always sense of social responsible but want to see, say this, that sound **political correct, I've always wanted to do well for myself, ensure that my children do not experience the hardship that I've been through** mean it very good for you to that very diverse cosmopolitan sought of up – bringing very **colorful your know experience, cultural, social but at the same time you don't** want to pass that on to your own children because that was then it was fine for that time in South African was under going a transition in any case, we were bound to be expose to that now, we are in a position as young whereby if you are, can have family that can afford and choices, see that the difference, back then we did not have a choice when he went under those situation, we want to have choice to bring up our children or families in a way **that you choose. This is what I'm saying in spite of why social responsibility I** want to be able to afford a kind of lifestyle and afford my family in a greater community as well a very comfortable life filled with choices, that is the thing that come with choices, if you want to be in Durban so be it, if you want to be **at eMboza enjoy it, it mustn't be limited and unfortunately we can't enjoy this** things without reservation and a status quo, materialism depoliticisation of people and lack of direction in terms of where young people are going I mean **I've been involve in youth structures although I'm not the greatest of wind of** how to lead something like that **I've always hope if ever you don't have big** dreams to actually sought out worldly issues or world peace at leas have a dream for yourself I want to be so and so I want to do this and that at the moment I think our youth is more Ndumiso and very much you know, **I don't** know but I think they try to buy into much same rhetorate that was express first election that we had in 1994 of eh being entitled to free housing, free education, free of this and that, that is entitlement has cripple the mentality the burning **desire you sense from youth of yester year the youth of 1970's and the 1980's who want to achieve these things and wanted a,b,and c** now we sought of position ourselves as recipients of the youth 1976 tried to attained and so forth , so now there that thing it very problematic because **what I've always known and what I've been told is that when you didn't work for a particular things, where does it come about you can't attain it.** So we have that problem as youth of today, we want to achieve things that we didn't work for, or fight for. So to achieve something, it difficult it comes to you and you don't know what to do with it. Yes it has to do with social fabric

which is existing now, the home that we come from are no longer homes which had furthers from yester year and also the situation with community in no longer the one which has pure and clean, and now it a situation where the community is volatile and conducive raise a person so all those things are the **main reason for what the problem is, don't get me wrong**, I know there is that challenge for the youth eh we were lucky to have people who can guide us in things that we are doing to go become people that we are today, but also we are not there get just to finalize the interview we re not there yet, I want to go further in life and to be good standing and leave my mark, that the main thing, I want to do, to leave my mark and say there is contribution **he had because I don't want to be talk** – active activist, you must be able to practice what you preach. I want to be a person who has quite but am able to do things, simple as that, I think that is where I end unless if you have more questions, but it difficult to talk if there is no direction of what is need from you.

Siyanda: I'm interested about your life, while you were growing up, I mean about experience and what you've leant growing up?

Ndumiso: I've leant that from South African background we come from very sad history I think but what've leant is a remedy of that situation you can not say this is a way out, eh for South Africa and this has what you should have doe to get over or hangover of apartheid era, but I think people who had the **most, I don't know how to put this people who were in a good position to** shape the future for the youth I think it was the parent, why? Kids you see when you raising a kid that a very sensitive thing to undertake because it can be small things, but you are still shaping the way he/she think and the way how he behave so sometimes I say I was lucky because I missed all the problem of politics of which they were involve in a way they tried as much as possible to politicised but rather make focus on positive thing in life in a way they knew it will reveal the critical issue that I must know, but not allowing me to know from their month, but to find them with my own enquiry with my **own inquisitiveness' and with my own curiosity with my own research to find** out that truth of information, but what was painful in South Africa was that **some opportunity weren't available to every youth because parents didn't survive to see the new South Africa eh some kids didn't survive to see the new South Africa but maybe what've leant in my life is that I will teach my child and raise he/she I will try to use the same approach that let someone be and decide what he/she want to do so as parent you don't guide the thinking but guide how he/she grow up and when things happen like this and that but you don't want start to impose things and getting into the way of thinking like don't unpack thing like this**, in the manner, do it like this because this will cause conflict when a child will leant by him / herself and respect it but if it **was impose to them he / she won't respect it. I think it pretty much like have** a good time you know I observe when I was growing up that white people at **sometime alcohol, they won't hide it from the kids, it not eh luxury item**, it just part of a meal, like when you having a meal you are allowed to have a glass of wine, drink it and enjoy your meal in a way, so you trying to social

with your child into understanding that alcohol work and exist and kid grow up with that understanding, but us we want to drink it while un-notice our **parents, why? Which resort to drinking uncontrollable, we don't do it in a way** which raise you to be better person, to find out that we given by our peers, to which lead to a wrong way to how to drink it, which may not be channeled or **package in a very responsible way, so to say what I've leant that there is** plenty like the freedom that they gave me to grow up and be what I want to be eh you know. Today I have this dreams I have this philosophy although there are too many, but I do have some of the philosophy they gave it to me.

Siyanda: You chose for yourself that then weren't given to you

Ndumiso: No they weren't given to me, but what they did they expose me to things which might help me eh come up with a certain conclusion, but also **what I've leant is you must have fun, you see me and my brothers eh they are all working but I'm different to them,** also they are different to me, it just for me it made me realize that truly there is that generation you see eh this is model c generation this is eh what it exist because my brother whose before me they is that 5 years age different but things that he does at the age of 20 – **21 years, I didn't do those things, eh the level of this consciousness at the** age is totally different than mine, I use to do things very early in my life, because the sense of responsibility, a sense of consciousness was there from a very young age, I looked after my brothers at a young age I use to take notes of important things of a very young, because I was part of a youth that has there at that time during a transition not, eh South African of apartheid **now I'm the youth of South African** and those issues and we could pick - up from those issues, but they are not the youth which is depoliticised , they born free, they are know who you want to be you know, without any sense of eh what does it mean.

Siyanda: You sad an very interesting line, where you said about 1998, we were called model c generation, were you called that or seen yourself as a model c

Ndumiso: We were because there were no benchmarks at that time, we were the first class of model c in 1994 so of course comparing ourselves as youth of those present generations, they are the ones who are more model c then we were

Siyanda: As suppose to model c, whatever that means eh

Ndumiso: eh model c for my knowledge in the de-naming word which describe a kid who had been schooling with white people and now eh you are person who is up there

Siyanda: Being there as model c did it crash with where you coming from, in terms of you do come from that particular background

Ndumiso: It didn't because of a person that I am, so I didn't show off eh my parent always say that "we didn't send you to multi-racial school so you be white, we send you there so you can understand who they are? Where they come from? And why are they what they are today, we send to those school so you be able to **communicate with them, don't be scared of them, it mustn't happen that they having a conversation and you don't understand a word** to what they are saying, we are doing this so you can get everywhere and anything and then comeback and develop your communities so that all. So with that understanding, like I was fluent in English but when I got home I was Dumisani Nyathi, so and be like other kids eh because in 1994 it was very sensitive to have a person who could communicate with white people, to a such point that it was big problem if a person showed off about that, which **might have contributed to family rivalries' and community too, may they will** say they think you are better cause, your kids goes to multi-racial school, that was the issues so one was really care not to make that an issue but being **people that we were we didn't make much of an effort, I enjoy my up – bringing, there nothing that I could say no, I didn't enjoy also it had it** moments where you were away from home, like from a young age, living with **people that you don't know even their background, but it help me to have parents who engage in social issue, maybe if my father hasn't been involve in what he was doing, it was possible, I wouldn't be here, so I wouldn't have** had the same eh outlook, **maybe I couldn't have been interested to support** multinational cooperation a proudly South African to support a black man company, of which what does that mean? What does it mean to actually to live in an area, to introduce a concept of which they do not know, and consider them and how they will view the situation, which local may would have chose to use another concept as a developer so it these small things **which don't have anything, it means something if you come with resources to** bring about change. Change which ends up being demanded / forcefully to people and work with people hand – in – hand so that kind of thing, so it **helped me to have that knowledge, I'm saying I need you to understand clear** that it not about who are your parent biologically cause not only my parents, but all the othr people who contributed in my up – bringing, "he raises you so can do whatever you want, so I wish one day eh because to have people like you, so one day to have aperson who will do research about people of South Africa, who had or have positive impact in youth of today or do research like some sought of case study. This person whoever, but I know this **academically speaking, he/she can't reassure it or investigate education wise** but I know people and a lot of people who had good influence everywhere **and doing major things in life, but they'll never acknowledge them which can** cause that type of contribution here in South Africa we have not research like let say what does it mean to have a person who have positive influence in some people lives. Ending up having or making a big influence on which he would have done alone, but with his influence, so it a challenge that we have as young academics, to be a doctor, it something big, it like you carry it through and get what you want it must really be done. Some research which will approve that South Africa, but all of them talk about one thing, where were from? Where his going so sought of thing. That the end

Siyanda: let hold it there

SIPHO

Interviewed in his home

SIYANDA: Can you tell about the home you come from?

SIPHO: Ok...ja, no, I Dumisani Malwane was born in Ndumo, Ndumo is under Chief Mathenjwa and in terms of the Municipality we are in Ward 16 under Jozini but basically I was born in 1968 and I went to Roman [Catholic] school called Saint Philips that started from Grade eh...uh...uh the story of grades was not know at that time **but the known story was of ...**

SIYANDA: ... Standards

SIPHO: ... Standard A until it ends in Standard 5 so I began there in 1976....

SIYANDA: ... and was it here in Ndumo, Saint Philips?

SIPHO: ... ja it was in Ndumo I studied there and then in 198...1 I finished Standard 5 eh I [then] went to study in Manguzu High School eh, eh at that time high schools that were close were high schools in Manguzu eh there were two in Manguzu and then there was on in Ngwavuma so if you were here in Ndumo you choose whether to go and study in Ngwavuma or in Manguzu but then the thing that made me go to Manguzu eh I am the third at home when my older sister was in high school she studied in Manguzu eh my brother who becomes below me he too studied in Manguzu so eh it would have been very difficult at home to support us if we went to different schools yes and then from 82 to 87 I studies in a high [school] Shayina High School in Manguzu where I finished [school] eh when I had finished there I got work in a hospital in Manguzu as a clerk yes I worked there I say for one and half years eh what made [me] work for one and half years is that eh what **happened eh in the first year [of the job] I got a busar... we got this TTT** programme eh it was ran by Father Moon Father Moon from the Star of the Sea which was a high school under [the] Roman [Catholic Church] eh and then I passed that interview that allowed me to go and study at the University

of Natal that said that you could [either] do a BA or Social Science and then in terms of work what happened was that because I did not have days I was not able to get days because it was eh the interview that you had to do when you arrived in eThekweni was two weeks so for me I did not yet have days even if I had taken leave for two weeks that could have been absconding then it meant that the application to allow me to go to eThekweni for two weeks for TTT was declined and then I had to wait for the second round and then when it came for the second time eh I then said "because I had passed it [the interview]" they said "No start afresh ..."

Both: laugh

SIPHO: And the change were just the same it does not mean just because you passed that there is something that is going to be easy and lucky I passed it for the second time you see then by that time I already had days that allowed me to go to eThekweni to do those two week tests there to enter university yes let me go back maybe to the situation at home at that time. The home where I come from it not that easy for them to afford monies so that we can go to university and let me also say that opportunities to go to universities in our area was not something that was usual a lot of people who were professionals who were around they were people who were teachers who go to colleges not universities and then there were people who were nurses who obviously train in hospitals and then there were people maybe other professionals who were there were police who obviously did not go to universities so university was just something that you did not even think about eh ja when we were there in eThekweni well it was interesting there because in [our going to school] from primary to high school we had never been taught by a white [person] you see and when we arrived to those interviews those two-week interviews we met Jill Thami and Anita and towards the last days Professor Zulu came ja, ja, ehhe¹

¹ Ehhe is another informal way of saying 'yes' or 'ja'

SIYANDA: Musa's father?

SIPHO: Musa's father yes even Musa there was then part of us but then he was a little bit ahead because he had entered ...

SIYANDA: ...before?

SIPHO: ...before and because of not being really used to [university environment] Anita used to say "JillnThami" a lot and then we did not know that those are two different people ...

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ...you see eh [it was] the way that she used to say it maybe you would pick it up from the others that there was something like that it took some time to [realize] what actually is 'JillnThami' ...

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: We took it as one word 'JillnThami' you see?

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: Then when we were ...you see when there was the closing function it was only then that it become clear that "No *kanti*² it's Thami Mseleku" because I do remember that in that function the Commodores' song *Jesus is Love* was playing ehhe we were saying goodbye to each other and then it became clear that "No Jill is [brief pause] Jill is this white lecturer and Thami is another one of them" ja certainly that was a good experience because it made me to ... us not to be the same with other students who just start [straight] into university for us [having] that those two weeks gave us an orientation in terms of the environment of the university and the residences and other things and also in terms of [knowing] how [learning and teaching] happens helped us eh because when we eventually came [to the university] it was just like we [are] coming to a familiar environment it was not the same

² I cannot translate this!!!

as just arriving when you are about to start you see and they had tried shame to tell us that the approach of learning [and teaching] at university is not the same as this approach in ...

SIYANDA: ... in school.

SIPHO: ... in school of which eh at school shame you just take something as it is and learn it and if you are able to memorize it you are finished [but] it is hard at university you will not be able to memorize it let me go on and say that my studying there at the university of it was still the University of Natal it was it was from 1990 yes I finished in 199...4 through 5 yes and something that happened there at university that I can remark on [is that] at the time we studied there we as black people were the minority the people that there were a lot of were whites followed by Indians and then Coloureds and then black [people] and that at that times was an intimidating environment ja you see because you too [black students] you would form your own groups there you see and then there was as result of there was that [issue] that there were people who entered not on merit basis I mean like TTT and that made a TTT group do you see that thing? [A group of] people that must be patient with³ ...

BOTH: prolonged hysterical laughter

SIPHO: ... ja I think that we were coming from disadvantaged, disadvantaged communities ehhe [and so] that thing started to be there so some of us wanted to break away from those TTT groups in such way that we were all going to study isn't go into the stream of either BA or ...

BOTH: ...social science

SIPHO: ...so others started to be tempted to go to Maths

³ Translated from 'bebekezelelwe' suggesting that the university had to me patient with the TTT group of students

SIYANDA: Ohhhhhh

SIPHO: Yes and those who went there they did not survive a semester [brief pause] ja the semester just throw them out you see so the people that survived are those that continued with these two streams eh I, the stream that I had taken was Social Science ja ...

SIYANDA: ... what are the subjects that you did?

SIPHO: Ehh well...

SIYANDA: ...if you can still remember.

SIPHO: ... Ja I started with English not knowing that English at varsity is about literature ...

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ...just thinking that it was just English ...

SIYANDA: laughs hysterically

SIPHO: ...even though there is English but that English comes eh right up there...

SIYANDA: more laughter

SIPHO: ... I then also took English and Communication yes ja it's about presentation skills and other things you see eh with it too I eventually passed it and in any case it was already a short course but the thing that I majored in I majored in Sociology and I then also majored in isiZulu and majored in History I majored in the majors I took were ...

BOTH: ...three

SIPHO: ...yes I then pushed through some of them another subject I took was Political Science eh but then when I just looked at it at the time I was starting it I saw me and Political Science and the place I come from "No it wont take me anywhere" ja so I dropped it but in a way I also took eh what is

this? Jewish Study but basically just taking things that will help you I will tell you where Jewish Study helped me ja eh then when I had finished the degree eh the bursary conditions stated that when you finish the degree we would **then do the Higher Diploma in Education ja HDE I don't know if that thing is still there so that's** why the most of us who studied through TTT are teachers now ...

SIYANDA: Ooohhhh

SIPHO: I want to add they are principals it was the conditions of the bursary...

SIYANDA: Oh yes

SIPHO: ...yes ja then but I said when I finished the [brief pause] the degree I said **"No I don't want to do HDE" what I said I wanted to do I said wanted** to do Honours in Sociology then I then lost the bursary I then took loans from the university I was helped there by another Professor called Professor Yvonne Nathan (?) ja so I then when I had registered [for Honours] because **my marks allowed for it what can I say? It was if you got above 60's 60% you could do Honours isn't it? So I had gotten all of my major subjects ...**

SIYANDA: ... above

SIPHO: ... above ja which meant I could do ... but I then said I will do Honours in Sociology I registered and I did not get the bursary money she even wrote a letter to the Financial Department to help me loan me money because my bursary cannot continue with me that made me to keep on attending [lectures] but I was not certain whether I would get the money as I was studying but I did study and I was not too behind [in class] then they gave me those loans eh [the loans] helped me pay for accommodation and for the course eh no I did repay them and they have **just finished ...**

SIYANDA: ... even now?

SIPHO: ...No it [loan/debt] has finished now I have finished [paying off] but another thing that a person like because we used to pay for ourselves it was difficult ...

SIYANDA: ... yes

SIPHO: ... sometimes you would pay and I did not ask for the statement stating how much money is left [unpaid] then you stop [repaying] the time you have stop [repaying] you would receive a letter from the lawyers and **you'd start repaying ohh as with me I say that I have finished but it** can happen that I had finished a long time ago but it was this lawyers [money] that I ended up finishing late [repaying] ja so I then did Honours that I finished in 94 if I am not mistaken but then I will go back to my degree year the time I was doing third year I also then studied part-time I was doing eh, eh [brief pause] Community Development so what happened was it means that you do know that there is Community Development at the university isn't it? **That was eh Madlala's Proteous Madlala was he who had** opened that unit at the University of Natal so I did it during weekends which meant that during the week ...

SIYANDA: ...did they allow you ...

SIPHO: ...yes

SIYANDA: ...TTT?

SIPHO: Ja they allowed me and that made me have a lot of work because I had majored with three [courses] and I then also did this one part-time that also helped me again because when I finished isn't **that when the others finished their BA's they then went on to do HDE they came out of there withy** they were qualified to be teachers so I when I came out having Honours I came out qualified to do Development because I had done the Community Development Certificate then in 96 in fact when I was still at Natal I was

utilised by Thala, Thala Bank it was still KwaZulu-Natal Investment Corporation it was this Rural Development component of that water project I was telling you about [while we were driving to his house] that was implemented **in 97 [it was] Mandela's [initiative] so there was a steering committee** and Thala was a project manager in the implementation there so they wanted a person who would translate minutes into isiZulu so that people could benefit so the Thala Head Office was in eThekweni then they identified me I was, I was at eThekweni so at the time when I was doing Honours I would also receive minutes I would translate them I would send them through and they were giving me 30 rands a page and that really was helping me I made me obviously have pocket money moreover at the time when I was **doing Honours ... we also tutored first years we got 500 rands a month** that put me to be better than those who were doing HDE because I started there **to but a radio that played CD's ...**

BOTH: laugh

SIPHO: ...when I came [back] from eh because Thala was using me it then said it would give me work but they would create a post [for me] while I was waiting there came a white person and said he had obtained a tender to manage water committees that were under that water scheme he then said eh he would ask to use me which means I was never stranded when I left [university] and for real he took me eh he then said if that permanent employment appears⁴ that one that post that they said is being created for me I would then leave so I worked until where eh JSB when elections were starting in [19]95 where there started these things [programmes/initiatives] to teach [people how to] vote and then from the group that was there it **became clear that the person with a drivers' license was me [I]** I ended up pushing⁵ but what was being pushed was the work⁶ to find committees I was pushing the JSB job to teach voter education I was the team leader no I

⁴ Kuvele means appear or materialize

⁵ Working

⁶ Umsebenzi would here refer to project or drive

ended up leaving that committee [job] and I went to the JSB one because eh we go as a group if there are rallies eh I then looked for a right guy he continued with this one [committee job] I also gave him there was car to train committees he continued with it very well then in [19]96 I got a call from Peace Foundation whose director was Laura Teger (?) Laura Teger (?) was there at the University of ...

SIYANDA: ...Natal.

SIPHO: ...Natal right now she has aged⁷ she is in eGoli yes she was, she was she then said there is a call for Israel scholarships because I had done that Jewish Study ...

SIYANDA: Ooohhh

SIPHO: ...do you see that thing?

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: eh, eh, eh

SIPHO: ...yes it was just easy you see eh when I was, I was very informed about Israel about how it was so it means that I got a scholarship that was seven months to go and do Integrated Rural Development and Planning the theory [part] was five months practicals were two months yes and it was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel that was covering costs you see then the advantage that I had was that again when I was here I did not yet have many days that qualified me to take study leave it was [then] negotiating with Thala because I had just started there that to be away ...

SIYANDA: ...for seven months.

SIPHO: ...yes the advantage was that I got a scholarship and just my salary was not disturbed you see and there was that contractual agreement with

⁷ Aged is taken from the original 'usegugile'

Thala that when I come back I will not resign before three years are up or so and then no I could tell you **I learnt a lot ...**

SIYANDA: ... tell me

SIPHO: ...about the Jews? Jews are very clever **I don't know** what I can say they are clever **Americans are also clever it's just that I have never been** to America you see if you are in Israel as we are approaching winter they have agreed with each other I am sure about that their winter starts for instance if it starts on 1 September so that time does not change you see [because] for us here our 7 [o'clock] in winter is the same as our 7 [o'clock] in summer so they reverse time by an hour so that [their] 7 [o'clock] in winter is the same as 7 [o'clock] in summer do you see that? I saw that as great intelligence we also here can do that you see instead of waking up early in the morning while it is cold it was another thing that I saw that you see these people are very clever eh they are, what can I say? They work with what can I say? They trade with Europe they are a small country that is similar to Swaziland you see because they tell you that if they travel on a plane a jet [plane] it takes them one minute from where [the country] starts to where it finished you see **especially if you travel from West to East the only stretch that's there is if you** travel from North to South from there it takes approximately five minutes **that's a small country so they couldn't be able to compete with Europe because if let's say mango is ripe in Europe there's a lot of mango in Europe** [so] if they [the Israelis] sell [mango] and include air transportation costs when they arrive back this side they cannot recover those costs no-one can buy some expensive when there is a cheaper one so what they do is change gases in the **tree[s] you see ...**

SIYANDA: ...what?

SIPHO: ... gases if they change gases like they change gases of an apple tree that will affect how [when] the apple tree produces [fruit] it means that if apples are produced in April in Europe they will change gases so that their apples are produced in November at this time when there will be no apples in

Europe yes when they sell [the apples] that side if they sell them fresh from the tree their [apples] will be bought a lot than those [apples] that had been already sitting packed in Europe you see again I saw that as great intelligence you see they say that it is expensive [to change gases] but once you have changed [the gases] well it would then just continue like that the tree would be confused then it will know that it produces [fruit] in November always at that time when [the fruit] is finished in Europe you see and other thing that I asked [was] you find that they are left-hand drive and even [their] plugs on the wall for our switches you do this while for them when you do this you are switching off by putting it down if you are switching on you push it up and then they say for most of the time they are in the centre and the people that are surrounding them are enemies so they save their resources like you know that **"as stingy as a Jew"...**

SIYANDA: laughs⁸

SIPHO: ...it's that they, their history tells them that if you just have a thing if you have an earring he/she will **not throw it away just because it's only one** he/she will keep it [because] he/she knows that there is somewhere when [the earring] is going to help him/her. They then say during the Holocaust time eh some of them were helped by these earrings that he/she would sell that earring to that person and that person would [help] him/her escape **seeing that "here's gold" so a Jew does not let [anything] go because of that** so with the electricity they are also trying to save it in that way so if you have a child especially when the child has started to stand up and does this to the electricity [plug switch] for them when the time [the child] does this [the child] is switching it off but for us when [the child] does this [the child] is switching it on you see I saw that as great intelligence and then when I got back I worked for Thala then in 2001 there was an argument for saying that they need a District Facilitator that would work at Mqanyakude that would be

⁸ This is the laughter that worries me. The first time I transcribed this interview, I edited this part out as to save face. So, the question is why did I laugh here? What function does that serve?

employed by Kellogg Foundation you see and in the programme for Integrated Rural Development you remember that I eh I had gone there to do Integrated Rural Development and Planning this means that it made that I did not compete with anyone if there was a post made available and I tell you that this post eh has increased my exposure because when I left Thala to work [for] this Kellogg Foundation programme eh it made me to eh we were working with six countries Mozambique Swaziland Botswana Zimbabwe Lesotho South Africa and also through this programme I may need to attend other international conferences in Namibia and eh then there were also opportunities that a person might end up in Malawi because [the programme] is spreading it is now in Malawi so within a short space of time a person has travelled to these countries many times like in Zimbabwe I have been there four times in Mozambique I have been there [brief pause] twice eh in Swaziland ah I can't even count because hhawu⁹ it is close in any case we did go even before this programme eh if you say "would you have reached there in a lifetime" I wouldn't have but then again one has to be grateful to TTT because it was [TTT] that provided this background you see and maybe I can leave it there in terms of eh being a person who benefited from this TTT programme I think who was able to motivate many people eh right now others, they happened to come and then a person says "you are my role model" you see and you [yourself] see that "okay going to university and coming back with something motivated others" because there is this tendency that if you [come] from a place as low as this one and if there's someone who goes and comes back with nothing hhawu they will say "in any case it does not start with me even if I go and fail" so one being a role model and that makes him/her know that if maybe they ...

[He then speaks to his sister who has just walked in the sitting room area]

⁹ An exclamation

... if you misbehave you are just destroying **other people's** futures so eh in terms of that what am I doing right now I am still with this programme that I said links many countries ...

SIYANDA: ...Kellogg Foundation?

SIPHO: ...Kellogg Foundation ja basically who is he? Kellogg started with cereals [he's the] person who started cereals Doctor W.K. Kellogg so he then made a lot of money in cereals in such a way that he started a Foundation so there was a lot of money. It's an American-based NGO [that's] supporting a lot of countries in Africa and no Southern Africa especially and also Latin American states and also Asian countries ja so eh then there were changes because we were working under the University of Pretoria our programme and it did not make development sense for the office to be in Pretoria while the beneficiaries are 600 kilometres away then they then said it is better if this programme is placed in a Community-based organisation and then the one that we got here that almost has a track record is MDIC Maputaland Development and Information Centre in Manguzu so right now eh we were seconded in those NGO's I work in Manguzu yes, ja then ...

[He speaks to his sister again]

... ja my working in Manguzu was because the Kellogg [Foundation] came and supported the organisation with money eh, eh the manager of the centre eh had an interest in the projects initiated by SBIC (?) before us but it has ended up with me being the only one I am the CEO of that organisation yes but I was not contested for that position it was just structural changes eh because we moved in to capacitate the organisation and we also sourced funding from Kellogg Foundation and the funder is logistically is happy with [the fact] that the person who is heading the organisation has a background with the Foundation it ended up like that but then eh for me there are many challenges because eh you find eh that there are many challenges of managing people like challenges of the work on the ground you cannot

manoeuvre the challenge of the work on the ground but a person is always changing creating problems just like he/she cannot be ruled over¹⁰ you see ...

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... **ja hhawu** let me just say that a person can just create [brief pause] there would be an issue that you maybe asked him/her to [come to] work at 7 today you see ...

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... that would be an issue ja so eh **I don't know whether I could stop** there but then say that eh I think TTT had a great input for my personal development apart from the contribution the person is making in the community but I just **I wouldn't imagine** being where I am without TTT and in my life I had never well if you are a man in this area you know for sure that you will have a wife but I did not imagine that I would be able to eh in my early age that would dream that I would buy a car but now ja there came a point where a person ended up being able to buy a car where you could have a choice if you wanted to move to buy a house in the city you see those are the things that were created by TTT if there was no TTT **I don't believe** that a person would have entered university because of money or maybe to get the points because that time the point system was being introduced yes and the assumption was that other people I could say who had never even met a white when they were in school **it's very difficult** that they could get the points that the blacks could enter university but really that was not the problem, the problem was money just consider that from here to eThekweni it is a lot of money for transport that is enough to discourage a parent that they could put you there. Right now the costs of university are estimated around 50 thousand a year if you look around here which family could afford that money? So that is why I am grateful to TTT you see and also maybe that

¹⁰ Ruled over is translated from the original 'angabuseki' which means cannot be subordinated

approach to orientate us for weeks before we started university was very great but **I don't want to believe** that maybe TTT had negotiated with the university to pass us even if we did not deserve it ...

BOTH: laugh

SIPHO: ... well eh the thing that I could say especially about this thing that you are doing **right now is the question that I'm just asking myself because after that we don't know where the others are but you are able to see [them]** maybe one is at a meeting appearing on the TV in a meeting [and] you recognize that this one ...

BOTH: ...we studied together.

SIPHO: ... maybe for this thing you are doing a person might ask how many are still here [and] how many have passed away I know only one guy who was called Tsembeni (?) that we were together with him he has passed away ja and I believe that as I know him maybe there are others from TTT who **have passed away that I don't know about ja.**

SIYANDA: ... I mean that's why we are tracing others ...

SIPHO: ...okay

SIYANDA: ... I have found a few and hopefully I hope that you will give me maybe those that are in touch with those that you have their numbers for so that I could phone them to be able to search for them [and find out] where **they are too ...**

SIPHO: ...okay those who studied through TTT? [brief pause] eh do you have Sakhile Gumede? But then [brief pause] on my side **I could say that's** what I have and then the challenge that was there and you will see it [yourself] at the time we started studying eThekweni eh I was the only one who came from this side also maybe you will see that there is no other person that you will find who comes from eNdumo and a lot of people were likely from Manguzu ja and **that's where the** interview was being conducted. The

thing that made me fortunate was that I was in Manguzu I was working in a hospital yes and the challenge that I had was that when I was going eh it required that I went to Manguzu to join the others instead of just taking transport from here that would leave me in eThekwini you see yes but then it **was [only] with becoming familiar that I saw that** "no man there is no need for me to keep on going to Manguzu and only then go to **eThekwini**" then I started myself going, going **[by myself]** "I know how to travel by myself to eThekwini ja [brief pause].

SIYANDA: Ja please could I ask you to tell me in detail about your family situation at the time that you were growing up what kind of situation was it financially?

SIPHO: Oh well at home what can I say? The thing that helped us a lot at the time that we were going to school was that there was [my] grandmother eh the person who was working at home was [my] father, [my] father had cows there are still here [even] now but there are few now there are ten [cows] eh the person that really helped us a lot was [my] grandmother with [her] pension [money] because [my] grandmother was there at home even though that time they only got paid their pension once after every two **months it's not the same as now where it's on** monthly basis you see but that money would come maybe three times [before] even [my] father had been home because in nay case here a lot of people were working in Mpangeni Thekwini and Goli [my] father was working in Empangeni at that time you would find that a person comes twice a year yes so it was [my] **grandmother's pension money that helped us a lot you see eh it is that money** that I can say played a role in our going to school because [my] father especially would come and pay for the school fees at the beginning of the year you see it was not easy to get the [other] monies for food and then it were cows, the cows that we sold to spread [the money] out here and there you see eh and them at home we were, not that we were [but] we are seven ja two boys five girls but then ...

SIYANDA: ... why aren't there cows then?

SIPHO: ... ahha, ahha they haven't received *lobola*¹¹ ja it's only now that the two [sisters] have started being lotsholwa¹² eh the last born at home graduated last of last year [she] was in Natal Technikon ja [she] was doing Environmental Health so the other is in Ngoye¹³ **[she's] the one I was** greeting ...

SIYANDA: ... oh yes

SIPHO: ... ja we see each other because our home is up there [up from where his house is] **she's** doing third year this year she will be finishing next year so there is no longer a lot of pressure because all these people are **professionals it's not the same as that** time when we were in high school you see but then all of us what can I say? The way we got educated is almost similar because those who are teachers what they did was they went to school [then] they worked it was easy to be employed by the Department of Education before you qualify eh **you would work and then when you'd worked I don't know maybe when you'd worked for two years you'd then be able to** even get that programme if studying at Egqikazi (?) College of Education so this boy that I come after¹⁴ also studied at Egqikazi he went there already having a post that he would come back to work you see and then [my] sister **too eh she'd taught while doing Distance Learning** she is now a principal you see and eh this boy that I come after is [also] a principal you see and eh for my education I have already told you how it went and then these others [the other siblings] are also, they are learning from the ones that have finished the **one [sibling] is also a teacher she's, she also went the Distance Learning**

¹¹ Lobolo is brideprize

¹² The process of receiving lobolo

¹³ Aka University of Zululand

¹⁴ Translated from the original 'engimelamayo' which refers to being born after a sibling

[route] this other one [sibling] is doing Education fulltime at university and this other one [sibling] is doing Environmental Health at **Technikon** ...

SIYANDA: ... are you telling me that all of these people are professionals?

SIPHO: Ja

SIYANDA: How come from one grandmother's salary?

SIPHO: Eh I mean that [my] grandmother's salary helped us a lot in primary and high school yes from there a person used to get a job ...

SIYANDA: ... Oh and then ...

SIPHO: ... and then you would push yourself paying for your own education which means [my grandmother's salary] covered us until standard ten when you finished standard ten **you'd then see to yourself because I too when I** finished standard ten I went to work as a clerk in a hospital and from there I saw to myself then especially with us the three older ones it was just like that but then at least for these other ones [siblings] who are studying now we are now helping each other ...

SIYANDA: ...it's better now!

SIPHO: ...yes ja that's how our educational story went.

SIYANDA: You don't really mention [your mother] a lot ...

SIPHO: ... [my] mother did not work but then [my] mother again you see I will just give one example that the soldiers who won the world war ...**[an inaudible phrase]**... they are the ones who see themselves as having won [the war] but at the same time the people who were behind [them] who were supplying them with ammunition and food claim the stomachs that if they had refused to bring food there it would have been that the ones who are fighting the war would have not won so what I am trying to say is that if we were in school and did not have [our] mother's back up, she was the one who tried to

get the money from [our] grandmother so that we could go to school, we would have not succeeded you see ja so [our] mother's role is just big ja, ja.

SIYANDA: What things like who were your friends growing up?

SIPHO: Eh well my friends when I was growing up here I could say that some of them have passed away others we were in school with eh like that boy there [says the friend's name but it is inaudible] we were in school with him eh in terms of passing [in school] at that time while we were in primary [school] together we used to be the top three yes so and then it was Musa¹⁵ [another participant in the study] as a result of going to eThekweni leaving [home] together he is the person that was my friend we used to motivate each other and other joined [us like] Sthembiso they were friends and then others who we were with [but] did not have the luck of [brief pause] going to school they ended up going to work you see eh they were working and you would find out that they are working in factories oh right now they are victims of retrenchments you see and they end up not working [anymore] you see yes [brief pause] but those I that I can count as friends now are professionals they are the ones that we finished together at the University of Natal eh because some of them that we studied together, we are in contact with each other and also work with each other on some other things ja like Jasper ...

SIYANDA: ... the one who is in Mkhuze?

SIPHO: ... yes I [can] count Elijah [another participant in the study] ...

SIYANDA: ... I got your number from him.

SIPHO: ... yes I have counted Musa, I can count ... Thomas ... I don't know whether you got ...

¹⁵ The names in this section have been changed as in many cases Sipho is here referring to other participants in the study.

SIYANDA: ...he's in North-West isn't he?

SIPHO: Thomas? I don't know but when I last saw him he was taking up being a pastor ...

SIYANDA: ... he's a pastor?

SIPHO: He's now a pastor ...

SIYANDA: ... Oohh

SIPHO: Yes of the Methodist Church ...

[asks to be excused for the bathroom]

SIPHO: ... ja so I can say that eh almost [all of] the people we were with we are still connected ja even though in terms of work we, we are scattered ja.

SIYANDA: You said that home is up here how close how far is it from here?

SIPHO: Eh it's close it's less than a kilometre ja...

SIYANDA: ...and how often do you go home or...

SIPHO: Ahha you see if it's a weekend and it means that it's once a week ...

SIYANDA: ... Ok

SIPHO: Ja I had planned that today because it's a holiday I would see them this evening so just we are connected and eh at home we are all just we did not move away too far [my] sisters are at home [my] brother is here the one we passed near the truck ...

SIYANDA: yes, yes

SIPHO: Ja that's the boy I come after

SIYANDA: Ohhhh

SIPHO: Yes he's also a principal in Manguzu [brief pause]

SIYANDA: Let me ask this question why didn't you move away from home?
you are all around at home.

SIPHO: Yes well the thing that motivated us was the way we were raised yes like I said we grew up staying with [our] mother and grandmother [our] father was working so if we left to go and stayed far eh that would have been difficult

TAPE ENDS

SIPHO: ... [A part missing] staying at home but because when you are married sometimes you want to go and get that independence ja and then, and then what can I say? Eh so that you could be able to start your own family but then in terms of us not going too far [from home] we believe that there is no enough money that you could repay your parent for supporting you but being close to [your parent] makes him/her feel eh [they] see that I **have not forsaken them that's how we pay back yes ja and even if there's no money at home if there is no food it comforts your parent if you are there [home] but if there is no food but you live in Empangeni it might happen that you don't have money there in Empangeni but he/she [the parent] will say "just look at yourself you eat well that side ..."**

SIYANDA: ...you are right.

SIPHO: ... you see so **that's the thing that** motivated us that we ended up not leaving you see and eh our parents have free access to our houses ja we are still a part of the family it means that if there are things that we need to take a decision as a family we go home you see if there will be things like maybe there are let me illustrate this **if there's a person who comes to ask for my sister's hand [in marriage]** for an example they send for us at home they inform us then they say when they [the family that's asking for a hand in

marriage] will arrive and then we say when we will come you see so even though we have our own homes but we are still part of the family yes.

SIYANDA: Tell me in detail about your family now the one that you have made yourself.

SIPHO: Eh well family, I started having a family **last year ...**

SIYANDA: Oh ok.

SIPHO: ... ja August 27 [it's] still fresh **I haven't even had an anniversary...**

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... ja but you see we manage with kids ja I have got two kids from the wife and then I have children that I was able to get because [brief pause] eh in the history of going to school eh you end up getting children but I stay with those children here ...

SIYANDA: ... so how many are the children all together?

SIPHO: ...no there are five children ja three outside two are hers yes [brief pause] but I stay with all of them ah **I don't know but we are very few who** when they get married they bring their children with most [of other people] leave [their children] outside ...

SIYANDA: ... true.

SIPHO: ... I too I am still testing whether this will stand the test of time or whether there will be problems along the way ja because there is that for instance if the child comes with the mother [the child] is abused¹⁶ by the father if the child ...

BOTH: ...comes with the father

¹⁶ Abused or mistreated: both came from the original 'ihlukunyezwa'

SIPHO: ...[the child] is abused by the mother you see and you will learn of that when the child has started to reach the adolescent stage you see now mine have not come to that stage I myself can see that most of the challenges will start when they have reached that age because **that's when if** it was a girl child **that came with the mother that's when she will start to say "Mom it's like [my] father wants to sleep with me" you see** if it is a girl child **that came with you that's when she will reveal that "Hhawu [my] mother doesn't love me eh she sends me the lot of the time than so-and-so because so-and-so is her child"** so I myself am aware of things that **that's the reason why other people don't like living with their children do you see that thing? Ja** yes.

SIYANDA: Let me ask another question when you look at your life now and the life you led when you were growing up ahhh are you surprised to see how far you have gone if you look at your childhood and where you are right now?

SIPHO: ...**ja well** I will say that you see at the time I was about to finish school I had a chat with [my father] he asked me question about what I wanted to be and I said I want to be a police[man] eh the police are the people that we were near to my home is near to the police station and some of the paths we used to walk on passed by the police station and moreover at that time police were a recognized profession hhayi¹⁷ because they even surpassed teachers you see in terms of because cars very were scare here **and teachers were travelling on bicycles ...**

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... so police were travelling in ...

BOTH: ... cars

SIPHO: ... **so** there was status and they carry a gun, a gun was something nice you see and then [brief pause] and then [my] father said **"No" he didn't**

¹⁷ An exclamation

see that as right you see eh he then said "Isn't there anything else you want to be?" I said "No I want to be a soldier" you see he then said "being a soldier and being a police is the same thing" ...

SIYANDA: ... it is the same thing yes (laughs)

SIPHO: ... so ...

BOTH: laugh

SIPHO: ... it meant that I did not want anything I then said "what you [dad] want me to be?" he said "why don't you think about studying to be a doctor?" I then just said "eh usually when you think as a child you think of sick people that's the thing that doesn't motivate you much to be a doctor" let me say for myself that now I see myself as much better than a police when I look at a police now you see and when then look at myself if I really became a police I can see myself that I would be ja, ja so from that mind even though maybe I **didn't go to the** level that [my father] wished that I could be because I still believe that doctors are still enjoying many better conditions but then hawu my being a doctor was not easy even my background of going to school at the time did not allow for me to be a doctor because doctors want me to have **mathematics ...**

SIYANDA: (exclaims) ey!

SIPHO: ...you see so when a person says like as we are talking about as government here at home [is talking about] skills now when you look at that thing that he/she [government] cannot say that he/she wants by next year for South Africa to have all those skills because when you speak of skills you are talking about that people should go and study and studying is not **attending a workshop and then you are right it's something that will take** 15 years to get the people needed you see even these 2014 Millennium Goals South Africa will not be able to have [all] the skills needed it will still depend on people from outside so I mean to say that coming from the background that I come from there is a big difference ja I never thought that I would be

here in the beginning growing up I never thought I would own a car to be my very own you see eh sure, sure you have a wife even if you don't work ...

SIYANDA: ... hhawu!

SIPHO: ... but I am saying having your very own house you see those are achievements that leave footprints yes ja, ja yes.

SIYANDA: Let me ask about varsity the time you left here for varsity obviously you were a black person coming from a rural area going to eThekweni at a white university and you said that you were a minority in an intimidating environment but how was it as an experience for you as a rural boy going to study at varsity?

SIPHO: Ja I can tell you that eh that thing was not easy but what was there was I was telling myself that this is a chance I have for me to be a person and at the same time eh what troubled me a lot eh was that we would meet **and talk and it was revealed that "ehhyi you see if we were to go back [home] without passing we would be laughed at" and that thing motivated us** because you would try by all means but then what I could say would be that the environment there you encountered when you came to study was eh those of you who come from rural areas you end up seeing yourselves as not clever an at the same time there was that thing that there were white groups coloured groups which meant that when you were looking for information you would end up looking for it from the [people] you came with you see it was difficult to cross you see ja you would go maybe to an Indian you would go to, that was something we started doing when we were in third year you see you find out that maybe, maybe we could have done better had we started that interaction when we were doing our first year you see [brief pause] ja in terms of there was that fear that if you come from rural areas and you come **to eThekweni you see it's like going from here to another country now that I cannot rule out that made us maybe you wouldn't be able to go to town without waiting for others that you go together ...**

BOTH: laugh

SIPHO: Ja, ja, ja and we, we went there [university] when there was a lot of [political] violence and that I can say made us to be people from eThekweni I mean to say that you left here for varsity to stay at varsity because others were coming from townships a person would go on a Friday on Monday you would see they are on a picture there's a memorial service ...

SIYANDA: ... immh

SIPHO: ... you see they were dying at the times of [political] violence you see and you too will agree with me that in most cases people who are in varsity have insight and are politically conscious yes and that made them vulnerable because when they go back home they start talking a lot and then, and then they get beaten up you see and that made us to be immobile you see eh can you imagine that if there was not [political] violence that we would have liked to be with our township friends we would have gone there and ended up knowing about the environment outside university but we ended up being very confined to the university we were afraid of going outside you see ja because we even just had our own law that "*eish*¹⁸ you see ... isn't ... there was ... **you would find** that if there were toy-toy it was decided that we should go there were buses that were going to take students who are going to toy-toy we just tried to discern our condition where there the toy-toy will be held **that you don't have to be right in front ...**

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... and you don't have to be at the back ...

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: (laughs as he talks) ... try by all means to be in the middle ...

BOTH: laugh

¹⁸ An expression!

SIPHO: ... you see those are really the things that intimidated me because we didn't know how to position ourselves [politically] especially when we were in these places you see ja so that our situation that we lived under at the time we were studying there during the times when there was a lot of [political] violence you see especially between the IFP...

SIYANDA: ... and the ANC

SIPHO: and then the university we were in for that matter was well known eh for being an ANC stronghold you see because during those times if you were at the University of Zululand and you will recall that the Chancellor was still Buthelezi it was just known that you are in the midst of the Inkatha you see ja we had students who had come from oNgoye to come here ... [lowers his voice to the extent that it's inaudible] ... that you don't want to be in the midst of the Inkatha you see [brief pause] that's a hard story.

SIYANDA: And then you studied at Natal during the transitory times in terms of South Africa from apartheid to democracy how did the transition affect your life as a student?

SIPHO: Ahhh ja well eh the thing that during that time of the transition what helped us was that slowly and slowly eh it made us have hope these whites had all dominated and also they were in power eh that helped us because it made us see that in no time eh it would be the black people that would now be in power you see and that also made that the intimidation we felt being intimidated of being with whites [it went away] after some time because very soon there was that hope especially when Mandela was released that it was just clear that [black] people have taken over they are about to take control and then there was a great need for transformation in the leadership of tertiary institutions yes including the University of Natal too so there was just that, just that eh maybe if there are now black people our government has taken over maybe eh there will be a lot of us at university and there was that thing of believing that the whites they know that eh their education allows them to do better at university so **they don't even think about a black person**

and when you are going to the exam the people who are at the bottom of what's this? What is it called? Year mark eh the year that is shocking is black people's ...

SIYANDA: giggles

SIPHO: ... and the people who were failing semesters a lot were black people and then there was that hope that maybe it will be possible to pass courses here at university I am telling you my brother if you arrived there and found a black person no they were not so many of them **and you'd question the** background of a black person for an instance I met who was doing Masters in English ...

BOTH: laugh

SIPHO: ... and that guy when he went to write the exam we ended up being familiar with each other because for us it was so fascinating how [black] people manage to reach to Masters level no he had gone far hhawu he very clever in that department ja he was very clever and even the whites were scared ja **he said "no, no he just does his [work]" he even said when he goes** to write the exam they give him [the question] paper for him to take away eh to take two hours to write [the paper] where he wants to and then he brings it back you see and these are things that you knew that if there is change [political change] it might happen and I tell you in that transformation that was happening more and more [black] people were slowly like if they were 6% in 1990 eh when we left there maybe they were 40% [black] people but then I tell you that contributed to by the time we left a TV was bought and **put there eh it stays one month after that it's gone [because] it's full of** [black] people and then you find that the whites start moving **on ...**

SIYANDA: ... they are no longer there at Res.

SIPHO: ... ja but when we came to Res they were full of white people because **everything was there and you find that it's clean you see because we** it's like God knows that [black] people are coming ...

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... once there is a [black] person no it just changes if he/she does not want to ...

SIYANDA: hysterical laughter

SIPHO: ... I myself sometimes see that no when *insizwa*¹⁹ has arrived ...

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... you see other things that make hhawu when we left there was vandalism if there are bashes ja if there are bashes there **maybe there's a bash and you are 50 in that Res but around four you will be 200 ...**

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... it would be full of the township [people] **THINGS DON'T GO WELL THEN even if you left a broken ruler when you look for it, it's gone ...**

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... hhayi! **ja, ja, ja** but in terms of transformation it ended up making studying at university easy because you were able to have people that you can ask information from you see **there's one guy** just that I quoted ...**[an inaudible word]**... his. I was doing Political Science eh and I know that person that was not studying **I don't know when he came or maybe he was doing** may third year doing Political Science I went [to him] to ask for books that might be clear when I read them ...

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... hheyi [inaudible phrase]...

SIYANDA: more laughter

¹⁹ A '*Insizwa*' is a young man but here does not work in this sense

SIPHO: ... so after some time I spoke to another boy eh I have forgotten his name but he was Mosothu he finished third year and he had a very useful book **I don't know who wrote the book [it was] a clear [book] he said "read this book it's the book that will help you"** because it takes it's very basic it will help to introduce well you to the course I then said "ehheyi just look man our people continue to paint the picture that university is difficult a person doesn't give you [information] because a person who did third year has had the opportunity to explore and see which books are easy that can make you and introduce you well [to the course/concepts] but still he [the first person referred to] brought a [very difficult] book **ehhyi!** ...

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... because when I enquired [about the book] trying to figure out what this person was thinking when I asked the lecturer, the lecturer said "hheyi **that book don't even take that book it won't help you with anything** that book is for people who want to write PhD's ...

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... just look at that he wanted me to fail ...

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... **ja** and he wanted to be the only person to pass and we as [black] people have that ja.

SIYANDA: To close off maybe could you tell me about your dreams and your aspirations for your future?

SIPHO: Ja well the thing **that I'm going to tell you is there is somewhere** where I have said [brief pause] eh studying at the university is so expensive that one child per is about 50 thousand and for the most part I myself do not have many dreams now I even say I have done enough for my personal development I do not think that there are any new things that I would need but what I do really have is planning for [my] children and then which for my

calculations I am late because eh if you are planning for your child like as they are five so that they will be able to study at university maybe you must have ten years to put away a lot of money and in this time that is left for **them to go to university I don't see myself being about to put that money away but very, very important it's about looking out for [my] children** I even say that if I were to win [brief pause] the lottery not even a big lottery just eh money that will be a couple of hundred thousands I could try to calculate what [brief pause] I would put aside 10% **I don't know how much money it** would be at that time I would **put it aside so that it's kept for studying then** I would be relieved my worry from now on is just planning for [my] children that they study you see ja and also I am able to better advise [my] children as right now the way to advise children is to look at how the economic trends in South Africa go and now you cannot continue talking about social facilitation or community development you now need bigger than facilitation so that if your child is studying he/she must look to the hard skills ja.

SIYANDA: And in terms of your own career or [brief pause] how long are you going to stay where you are [now]? **Do you think you're gonna move?**

SIPHO: Ahhh yes **I do ambition to go and just fetch a small degree just ...**

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... but then [getting] what **will not make me too tired ...**

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... **ja and** another thing there is eh another thing when I got that post I told you that I got it with no contest to be a CEO I am asking myself if I go to do to add another degree would I be throwing it away? Because **maybe it's better if I do management courses** that will me in the position that I am to be confident than now because I always say ehhyi we all study you see **but that's the thing that is confusing me but just the idea to put on something small²⁰ is there ja just something small you see ...**

²⁰ To put on something small refers to add another degree

SIYANDA: laughs

SIPHO: ... I once thought of doing a Masters but the University of KZN is far I sometimes think of doing it at the University of Zululand in fact I did go there and when I arrive no when a [black] person is now in charge things change I arrived to another man there that I was referred to who was talking on the phone while going around on the chair you see and when I entered [his office] he looked [at him] and then closed the door he said no he will get back to me and he continued on the phone and I believe rather I am convinced that he was talking to a woman and I had used blue forms ja when I eventually came to him he just said maybe I had waited almost 30 minutes **he said "No what must I do with this form you have used?" he said "you were supposed to use a white one" and then I said "but the information eh the questions [on the forms] are the same" because I filled it in because it was clearly the same I even asked what if I photocopied [the form] because it will be white ...**

BOTH: laugh

SIPHO: ... he said "Hhayi no" eh I just saw I was so discouraged I just saw that "Hhayi HERE hhawu you write [the exam] and then you mark yourself ...

BOTH: laugh

SIPHO: ... so I was just undecided but then what makes things difficult eh in this part of the world is distances there is no wing that is close by here if there was a wing of University of Natal I tell you if there was that wing there would be a lot of postgraduates here no you see just there would a lot of senior degrees but it is difficult because the more you become senior at work the more the responsibilities increase ja and then there is that you do not have time but just I still have that i-ambition to just put on something small **ja, ja...**

SIYANDA: Hhayi I am thankful I thank you very much.

SIPHO: Ja.

INTERVIEW ENDS

1st Interview – Alaam

December 8 2008

Siyanda : Let start from the very beginning where were you born?

Alaam : Right

Siyanda : Tell me about your childhood

Alaam : Eh well I was born on the 1st November 1984 in London and hmm

Siyanda : Okay hmm your parents

Alaam : My parents are guardians hmm I went t primary school at Debabour

Siyanda : What is that?

Alaam : Debabour it in hmm eh Dawson could you repeat question before I just confuse myself

Siyanda : Tell me about where you born a something about your childhood

Alaam : I was born in London on the 1st November 1984 got parents who are from Ghana hmm went to school at Debabour primary school and left England for Ghana 1996

Siyanda : How old were you when you left England

Alaam : I was eleven yrs yeah I was eleven and hmm I was sent to boarding school where I spent nine years

Siyanda : Why did they sent you to school in Ghana when you brought up in London

Alaam : Basically they thought that it will great opportunity to learn my culture and also hmm cause they thought I was stubborn but didn't know eh didn't know then what happening back school maybe because of my disability I got disable in my arm my leg and it affect my speeches

Siyanda : I kind of notice that

Alaam : Yeah hmm I went to I started primary school in Ghana hmm that was class four I was send back I was in mid term going to secondary school in England but they send me back to class four

Siyanda : Why

Alaam : cause they thought like hmm the education was much bad and hmm then England I was sent back to class four so I had to start all over in class four than I went to junior primary school and actually did well in my exams I got into one of the best school in Ghana Akiah Academy and hmm graduated in 2005 basically and came back down to England where I went to community college studied health and social care I won a prize as well

Siyanda : and eh cause now you spent eleven years in U.K. can you sought of tell me about the experience of going to Ghana for the first time and question of the country from the very very first time you in contact

Alaam : It was strange cause I use to get pick on a lot because of my ascent was different they would say you not in England speak like a Ghanian and hmm it was difficult to speak like a Ghanian cause I hadn't been brought up in that environment but then soon hmm because of socialization through socialization I began to pick up eh few words that Ghanians actually speaks in all that

Siyanda : what language was like

Alaam : it was arkan yeah it an national language

Siyanda : who took care of you did your parents come or just they sent you away

Alaam : just sent me away on my own I was posted basically

Siyanda : ooh my god who was on the other side waiting for you

Alaam : I'd stay with family friends

Siyanda : your family friends and

Alaam : hmm most of my time I spent in boarding school I only went to family friends on vacation yeah

Siyanda : hmm okay now how was growing up in London similar or different to growing up to Ghana cause I think you advantage of seeing two world together

Alaam : basically I thought basically it I would say smooth discipline in Ghana yeah there is a lot of discipline I got discipline quite a lot

Siyanda : in what sense

Alaam : cause of my disability their didn't came me but they taught me to kneel down and perhaps write lines and all that

Siyanda : what do you mean by lines

Alaam : write lines the actual lines yeah

Siyanda : strange way of discipline

Alaam : yeah and also hmm my parents also told me that Ghana was bit better country had better cultured hmm then the country that I was brought up in but one when I got to Ghana I realize nothing was really different I mean people still behave same as in England I don't really see any difference apart from discipline and culture other than that I see no difference

Siyanda : in terms of where do feel most at home I suppose

Alaam : well I feel more at home in England being born

Siyanda : why do you oh cause you were just born here or there something that you feel towards the country

Alaam : I feel like a part of society yeah I just feel like I'm part of society and hmm I'd been welcome you are not welcomed but I've integrated into society yeah

Siyanda : you don't feel the same about Ghana

Alaam : hmm I feel less less

Siyanda : why I'm trying to understand why are sought of have more strong connection to the U.K.

Alaam : well hmm I'm against a lot of African culture I'm against quite a lot of their culture things that they do such as hmm affect they do not order emotional they not supportive yeah

Siyanda : is clearly how your parents feel about that because I suppose they sent you there since you learnt something very I suppose in their heads and you feeling much more strong at home and how does your parents feel

Alaam : well actually we never discuss about that I always had problems with my parents we never see eye to eye so this is partly the reason why I'm saying that that there they not really emotional I now only kind of kind of studied my parents to know hmm they not eh hmm I mean I've kind of kind of different different eh homes yet my friends will ask to see how the parents deal with them react when they do things yeah I just see I personally think that African are especially the men the men saying you know we don't want to cry

but and they believe that and the culture you don't cry they make you more manly it doesn't really yeah and the women always complain we don't we don't want our men our men always cheat on us they make us do things that we don't want to do and they don't make us feel special like queens or princess or whatever but hmm what I'm saying they don't make they don't make feel special yeah

Siyanda : can you tell me a bit more about the places in Ghana where you went to school was it urban

Alaam : it was urban

Siyanda : and hmm sought of what do you remember the most about Ghana if you pick positive experience try to pick positive experience about growing up in Ghana what would those be

Alaam : it was the whole experience of boarding school I loved it hmm cause first I only look the fun side of life having fun all that but being in boarding school taught me to be contempt with what I got and hmm it taught me certain hardship of live like not getting things that you really wants

Siyanda : it must have been hard being in boarding school in a different city I mean I remember my parents didn't see me on weekend they never came down to visit when all the other parents would come but my parents were not there and now your parents are in a different country how does that like cause clearly

Alaam : yeah it was hard hmm I was gone for nine years boarding school my dad always use to come to Ghana for holiday that was every year but when he came he would publicly see just once but when his leaving telling that his leaving I will just get a phone call and said now I'm back in England yeah I mean it bothered me for sometime but I got use to it

Siyanda : and what other positive influences can you think of about Ghana

Alaam : education wow people are the student are majority are very good and very serious very very serious I said education

Siyanda : do you think it better than the U.K. that what you saying the education

Alaam : yes that what I'm saying

Siyanda : really the education system

Alaam : yes I mean the only difference we don't have resources if we have resources we would do extremely well extremely well yeah

Siyanda : I mean I suppose Ghana in sense is one eh country in Africa which is fought very highly in terms the way they fight connected to the history of places when you were in school were you taught the history of the places especially in terms of the president and how important was that at time

Alaam : hmm we taught a lot about history of Ghana taught about hmm the first president Khami Kumar and he fought for independent not only for the Ghana but for the continent and how he planned hmm bringing about a united Africa the same way America is united today unfortunately it didn't work yeah it was the whole thing about Casablanca and the Mugovium Movement and I think I don't know which group oppose the idea but just didn't happen and hmm I learnt quite a lot about the civilization of Egypt I mean the Egypt civilization yeah about how they invented the chaduff

Siyanda : what chaduff

Alaam : yes the chaduff is what we will call the watering can which is use to irrigate the farm land and how they brought about art and hmm was there what else civilization

Siyanda : hmm eh I want to ask you this question you know when I suppose you are in school and you are taught the history of either the African country or the continent and then you realize that African is not as dark as it made up to be I don't know if it anger or hatred or but you do feel it eh what am my trying to you feel something in relation to the European war the 1st world war they came to Africa and took Africa as it is now you were born in England so in a way England is part of you right so as Ghana I don't know if you understand how you position yourself with other the 1st war has done to the country or continent

Alaam : well I think I think hmm both Africa and eh western world must take Alaamnsibility I say this because I'm it was long for European search came and take the Africa to colonize the African countries but also it was our part as African to sell our own people so I think it eh I think we must both take Alaamnsibility for it

Siyanda : okay knowing the history of your I don't even know how to refer Ghana cause it not your country

Alaam : you can say

Siyanda : what do you call it what Ghana to you

Alaam : hmm I would think I'm it my second country

Siyanda : your second country hmm so knowing the history of your second country why then do you still feel the put the need to identifying more than the U.K. like

Alaam : well I'm here so I mean like I might as well today cause if I don't I will be marginalizing

Siyanda : eh okay what positive experience have you had here growing up in the U.K.

Alaam : hmm positive experience well I don't really have much cause I spent my greater days in Ghana so what I remember was kid bullying me yeah I just came back and trying to settle so I would probably would say my best moment in the U.K. since I've arrive is a when I won the prize at my college for outstanding work yeah so that the standout moment for me I haven't really other than that I never had any positive experience that I can remember

Siyanda : early you spent 11 years of your earlier life and in London what were the kinds things can you remember for those early years of your life

Alaam : hmm I remember writing a letter eh sympathy letter people killed in Dublin yeah about it was all about it was all about sixteen children and a teacher killed by a gunmen yeah and well we had to write them letter and the man who chosen as the best and I just remember the poems I use to write back in primary school standout hmm eh well memory for me other than that I mean I can only remember bad things that actually happen to me like bullying the teasing and the yeah

Siyanda : okay now let look at the bad things that actually happen both in the and Ghana you can start with either Ghana or U.K.

Alaam : hmm so both eh yeah well I mean there are so many things I would just say the experience in boarding school being bullied boarding school was my best experience bullying was my worse yeah and not not hmm my parents not understanding thanking that I was perhaps bad yeah basically that they thought I was the thing is that the whole things started actually when I was at class in England started I think it was history and a teacher asked whether anyone was being whether I was anyone was beaten by our parents and I put my hand up and hmm the teacher took the matter up with social services yeah took matter up with social services and then took the matter up with social services and hmm yeah and then call my parents in could have a talk but then I think there wasn't enough evidence to show they think I think my teachers thought I was being abuse because eh my mom will always pick up sticks from a tree take it back home and uses on me if I didn't understand something or say something happen at home yes so yes so those were my bad experience

Siyanda : like you mention that how did your parents Alaamnd or react to social services

Alaam : they were furious they were probably thinking why would I do such a thing like that and worst of all that when they got to Ghana started telling everyone that I report them to police when I never went to the police station that some of the African are good at they are very good at twisting the story especially the women yeah basically the whole

story what happen the events was twisted the word twisted really and then hmm yeah but they were furious though furious

Siyanda : so any if you sought of hmm think now look at your childhood was it abusive if you think or was different and much more harsh way of growing up more especially with physical punishment bringing huge gelling how you are raised

Alaam : yeah I think I think it was tough upbringing and I don't feel it was abusive relationship hmm eh I think hmm I think my parents fail to understand things were happening to me didn't have time to sit me down and explain or question me find out what was happening at school even my life eh yeah

Siyanda : let speak little bit about your parents the reason for being in the U.K. do you know how or why did they come to be in England and for you to be born

Alaam : absolutely no reason I mean no idea no idea no idea

Siyanda : really

Alaam : I know my dad was in the army eh I think it think they were some kind war or coup on Ghana and so he had to escape yeah but I'm not sure I'm not sure the reason my mom came to but probably for employment or something

Siyanda : so you were eh have other sibling brother or sister

Alaam : yeah I've got half brother and I've got a sister

Siyanda : and how are your relationship like growing up are they pretty younger or older than you

Alaam : my half brother is older than me my sister is younger than me yeah I don't really know my half brother I just see him once in a blue moon but I'm quite closer to my sister yeah she currently doing medicine at Woolman yeah

Siyanda : In growing up hmm were you guys close

Alaam : yes I was well as kids we always use to fight yeah we always use to fight hmm eh all in all I think we quite close yeah we are

Siyanda : so so you were like a nuclear family in the U.K. cause I can imagine family which are back in Ghana

Alaam : I've got family other family members over here actually I've got lot of family from Ghana here

Siyanda : so now why don't they came over what eh you know

Alaam : I've never actually asked him but eh but I hope I know that probably on thing is employment of their lives yeah

Siyanda : now growing up with family here how eh important thing like religion was it important part of your family life

Alaam : hmm eh yeah well I use to go to church a catholic church back in those days but then I stop and caused I just getting confused I just thought I was going that not a perfect Sunday going church sit down and listen to something which I will forget after leaving society I just I just really I just left but then yeah back in Ghana I always used to go cause it was compulsory cause I use to go to boarding school it was made compulsory yeah when I had my vacation I would sometime go but not all the time

Siyanda : and eh politics growing up in the family here or in Ghana how important was that in a family as such

Alaam : eh we never really spoke of politics eh yeah we I tend not like politics when I was growing up but now I do

Siyanda : how does that come about?

Alaam : it all came about through eh my study of history cause it kind of linked so yeah I learnt I learnt to love politics but then history

Siyanda : when was this was it in Ghana for instance

Alaam : in Ghana yeah

Siyanda : what kind of things did you learnt in Ghana about history

Alaam : as I already said I studied the Egyptian civilization history yeah we studied about eh hmm about Ghana itself about how it was eh first part of the Sudan Empire

Siyanda : I don't know about that ... you going to tell about that

Alaam : eh it was I don't know how to put this yeah it was part of like a big territory eh in the olden days where you hmm I really don't know how to explain it and I also learnt we learnt about war ourselves

Siyanda : the what? What's that

Alaam : I think it has to do with Henry V eh hmm I think they wanted to take out of the thrown and then eh we learnt about the 100 years orders between Fiction and the English and then we learnt quite a lot actually and we learnt about different culture really everything

Siyanda : let speak more about school cause you said you had more positive experience for you can you remember the kinds of friends you had who were they

Alaam : yeah I had lot of friends actually eh a Alao Dumber Tevin Cheune very intelligent they could perhaps study for about an hour then sleep the whole day yet they will pass the exam when it comes yeah eh lot of them they were really excellent student when I got to Ghana I knew I had to do well I had to work harder and I did actual eh yeah I did I remember like coming 1st 2nd and 3rd in class it took quite a long time not quite a long time but some time to challenge the best well I did actually yeah I did

Siyanda : and you said your school

Alaam : I went to two boarding school yeah primary and eh junior secondary together and then later to senior secondary school

Siyanda : all these time it happening eh hmm how was that to your parents you had very were you in contact with your parents except of father coming into

Alaam : my my mom use to call all the time my dad but I will see him once in a blue moon yeah but

Siyanda : I do want to talk a little bit it means cause it means that must have been not easy for you other kids in school probably would have closer contacts with their parents and you were not one of them

Alaam : yeah but I always had had one special eh auntie not my auntie really she hmm she was mom best friend and she took me under her wing she looked after me give me all the emotional support I needed cause I was a cause I was a broken person before leaving to leaving for Ghana leaving for England so leave for England I was broken I was I like eh hmm I would say I was demoralize yeah and eh I didn't know who I was eh hmm yeah and I just fell like I was an outcast basically yeah but but when I met this lady who I call my aunt she give me all the support and yeah she became like a mother to me and I still see her as a mother I don't see my parents as my real parents I really don't the whole separation thing is been a lot of bad thing that has happen in the past so I just see I see my mom friend as my real mom

Siyanda : that quite hard and your parents know how you feel

Alaam : my mom knows my mom knows but I mean it too late she can't do anything about it my dad was yet thinking but I'm sure his getting the message now I don't I don't feel close to him I don't feel part of him he never been part of my life his never been father type you know his never said come let go out let have fun his never been part of my life I've only know him a man who comes home crack jokes think his funny but he ain't funny but he ain't funny eh goes to his room listen to music yeah then the whole circle start all over again the next day so I'd never know my parents really I've grown up

just knowing my mom friend she's been part of my life every single day she's been there for me when good things have happen and bad things have happen to me yeah

Siyanda : eh your disability what it is were you born with it or has it something happen to you on later on

Alaam : I was born with it actually eh when I was like yeah before I was born now let not go there let put a I'm going to put it that way basically eh my mom biblical cord was wrap around my neck so I wasn't get enough oxygen and eh I think the doctors doctors at the time knew it but then they didn't do enough so eh I was basically the the oxygen didn't get into my whole body so I have developed eh hmm developed a really tight muscle were tight so they also gave so weak me and weak bones as well it also affected my brain as well and yeah so I can't walk I've kind like have it basically kind of stroke a mild kind of stroke

Siyanda : so like from half

Alaam : half mild stroke yeah

Siyanda : the moment you were born you had

Alaam : yeah but it took quite a long time for people realize I was I had disability cause as baby you know you can't really tell when I start growing up and realize I couldn't actually open my hand out it was always like kept in a fist hand yeah I was always gripping hard yeah

Siyanda : so you were bullied because of the for how long do you remember the first time it started

Alaam : you know I can't remember quite actually it I kind of lost for a long time and even in Ghana I was still being tease not as much in England

Siyanda : eh and now how is it now

Alaam : and now I don't get people teasing me now but because I've found ways of hiding hiding my disability I had to put my hand in my pocket or eh hmm yeah I just find different way of hiding yeah my disability

Siyanda : and how hmm I don't know how to put this question hmm so how sought of important or syndrome was physical disabilities you have

Alaam : it was hard it was I couldn't I couldn't do thing that normal kids my age were doing like playing football anytime I try playing like take part in sport I would get people telling me oh no go and sit down you going to hurt yourself I use to get left out really eh when they come to see exam I always found out that I didn't do my best cause I didn't get the time to finish off

Siyanda : and is it something in which you just couldn't be aware of

Alaam : yes there is

Siyanda : even now

Alaam : yeah I really I don't really I mean I don't trust my parents I don't trust people really I really don't trust people it got to do with quite a lot to for eh me to get use to you but I'm not I say I say eh my disability made me look at the world in a different way in different light yeah it made me it made me eh it made me it kind of yeah eh it thought I have this part eh I just could forget that part

Siyanda : don't you want to talk about it

Alaam : I'm a bit stuck

Siyanda : eh the story of your birth did your mom speak to you about that how did you eh find out about it

Alaam : well they did eh the parent ain't open ain't open at all most of the things I had to find out by myself eh maybe by doing that by doing things like eh trying to cook something trying to eh like as I say exam time I wouldn't be able to finish my question cause I was too slow in writing not actually not actually left handed I'm right hand

Siyanda : which this side which is affect

Alaam : yeah yeah it really affects eh my right side the problem with my right side but affect the left no it the left side which affect the right yeah so I'm kind of slow in writing I did affect me when I'm writing exams yeah

Siyanda : but did your mother or your father or family tell you story about you being born with biblical cord around your neck

Alaam : yeah I mean they mentioned it few time and yeah but never encourage me not to feel like I wasn't capable of doing things didn't even actually sat me down just told me look this doesn't stop you from achieving your goals in life oh we still going to love the way you are didn't say any of that yeah so I felt growing up I felt like I was different from everyone else and I didn't know how to fit in and every time I try fit in like playing football taking part in any other sport I was basically left out so it was hard it made it actually affected me now yeah I'm not yeah as I've said I'm really don't trust people

Siyanda : and hmm what did you do to fill your time cause like I can imagine in my head that you had somewhat lonely childhood in a sense if you able to do sought of other activities that people other kids were doing what would do to fill your own time and own space

Alaam : hmm I started writing poems I've wrote a lot lot lot of poems but when I'm when I left primary I didn't take them with me but I can decide one for you the that I wrote in Ghana hmm it called "black misery" oh take me up take me up away from this world of miseries away from those who break my heart surely there got to be a better world out there where there are the people will do shredded me as carpet oh I just can't wait till I part away to my grave in nothing they do

Siyanda : shh yeah

Alaam : that that was the very short one I wrote at the age of fourteen

Siyanda : and the can you think can you remember circumstances which surrounded which you wrote at peace what were think about what experience you were going through at that particular time

Alaam : I felt lonely eh hmm I feel like I was being punished all so my dad before I left for Ghana he told me that when I sent you to Ghana as punishment but I felt like it was a punishment because anytime he came he would only spend like say less than an hour we meet leave and when he leave anytime he left didn't actually tell me he was leaving so I felt was punishment I felt like I felt like I wasn't part of the family again and the I was leaving my own world basically I fell really I felt like I should go like I should die like be the end of me I should get burial just buried like like you know like I don't deserve a proper benefited burying I didn't think I deserve it

Siyanda : can now if you sought of look back at your 24 yrs of life what had been sought things which strikes you about your life whether important or important lesson you learnt your life really

Alaam : hmm I've learnt not to depend on anyone people can let you down eh oh they can basically let you down I've learnt to be more contempt with what I've got and and strive to have a success to fulfill my goals basically eh a I've eh I've learnt to always to always to cherish the people I love I love most and just to ignore the people that I don't really like cause I'm not a person who pretends if I like if I don't yeah yeah basically I've to be a discipline person yeah cause if I think I've been here I don't blame my parents for sending me to Ghana cause I think it did do some good to some extent and made me much much serious person and it showed me life was really like a reality eh yeah but then the whole experience I had while there it has made me who I am not a happy person but yeah

Siyanda : you don't think you are a happy person

Alaam : no I don't think I'm a happy person yeah

Siyanda : like why

Alaam : I feel like I've missed out in a lot of things in life opportunities bigger opportunities eh eh hmm I feel yeah I feel less to most people I feel like I'm lacking something that all the people have yeah

Siyanda : can you even try to put it in words what that something could be or is it something that you

Alaam : yeah eh it something I've always love singing but I mean I love cricket as well but I can't do those things I don't think there anything like sports for disable but there are I know that there are sports for disable but I would like to do I would like to play cricket and I don't think there anything like that but if I should get that opportunity eh I will feel much better yeah more fulfill person yeah

Siyanda : eh and so you always consider yourself as person with disability or is it something which and when did you start thinking as person with disability

Alaam : eh I always saw myself as someone with disability but it was when my mom use to call me stupid and when I use to get bullied yeah people use make fun of me called but call me bat

Siyanda : call you what

Alaam : call me a bat yeah call me a one arm monkey yeah those kind of things

Siyanda : it sounds very hard growing up eh your life as a black boy has that been a hard experience for you or is it rather let me ask a question which will make a different to you way if you think of your life to write eh story of your life adulthood how would that book look like in terms of what perspective view you would write it for eh who would you think would be a longly stay around being a black boy like man or like a man with disability or it will be both

Alaam : eh it will be a man with disability cause I never actually eh I wouldn't say I never experience racism but I've never seen like yeah may it happened eh convertibly but I never really I've not really seen happening to me I would say I would say someone if I never to write a biography be about my disability instead me being black yeah

Siyanda : and I'm sure I've ask you this question what happen to you I'm asking you again if you think of your life as a man with disability and eh two very different countries which has been hardest place to to be in with your disability

Alaam : I would say England yeah

Siyanda : why

Alaam : basically because I've got I had more people tease me over here than Ghana in Ghana it more of accepted I think I would in a sense that hmm it I don't know how to put

this but eh eh it people have would say his got this eh okay okay over here it like you still get people actually talking a lot about you and teasing you I think it probably cause I've been tease over here than Ghana Ghana I mean there were people who tease me but than it was less yeah yeah

Siyanda : what it is again I ask this question before I'm going ask again what cause you said you feel more at home in U.K. so why is it that you feel more in the U.K. then you think of Ghana as your second country

Alaam : well eh I'm a citizen I suppose

Siyanda : are you a citizen

Alaam : yeah I am

Siyanda : and to how do you call yourself as you are eh

Alaam : I sign British eh hmm as I've said I just feel like feel like I'm more like the society has accepted I'm able to do things as any other citizen can do access things go places

Siyanda : but it's interesting in a in a sense that or you were tease more here and it harder to live with your disability over here yet you live more accepted and more integrated here than you do in Ghana why is that

Alaam : I just think I just think where I've been born and the opportunity yeah I just think yeah I think about it as my

Siyanda : if Britain is home to you eh what Ghana to you what Ghana means to you

Alaam : Ghana means a lot to me I would you know I would never turn my back on Ghana Ghana means a lot to me eh it given me education a good education and it disciplined me in a way I wouldn't have been discipline over here and yeah I mean it taught me reality so Ghana is will always be part of my life I would never turn my back on Ghana I would be stupid to do that

Siyanda : you think eh what you mean by it taught you reality

Alaam : reality harsh I mean growing up always thought life was about fun thing fun things only but going to Ghana I realize that I wasn't the only one in facing hardship many other people with similar situation as I was so yeah it was mostly about being in contempt with what you have cause a lot of my friends I mean there were in terrible situation there were intelligent but they came from homes that were were like saying poor but they were contempt with what they had like they didn't have best of uniforms they didn't they didn't eh always hmm brings as much say food to boarding school say as

probably I did they live they contempt with what their parents gave them so in that sense that why I'm saying my reality yeah

Siyanda : can you tell me a bit more about your aunt that you consider your mom

Alaam : eh basically the first time I met her was very rainy that was my break time and this lady walk up to me and say I'm looking for Eli and eh I say I'm Eli

Siyanda : where were you

Alaam : I was in boarding school at that time I was on break having my break at that time and hmm it was as I said it was raining so I was like under a shelter yeah and eh I saw this big car coming park right in front of me but and then a lady walk up to me ask me I'm looking for Eli do you know who Eli is and I say I'm Eli and eh all happen from there really she became involve in my life from that very moment cause she brought me some biscuit and have goods and like food and eh and eh she will come and visit me every Sunday almost every Sunday with food prepare from home home made food and eh she would encourage me tell I'm not eh I shouldn't consider myself as a disable person I was capable of doing things as any person able body people and hmm and she will always eh she would always love me and I think that what I needed to hear at that time someone like someone I wanted to hear someone say that that I was good that they always stick by me even if I was bad they will punish of course but I would do all of that want me to be a better person yeah eh she just gave me all the support she brought me books eh all that mother can give I mean eh everything the whole package

Siyanda : and was she sent to you by your mother

Alaam : friend of my mom my mom introduce me to her yeah but then it was like after meeting her my mom took the she kind of sat back and let her do all the take kind of Alaamsibility as a mother yeah that how I felt so but in that 9 yrs that I spent eh hmm I was really close to her really close I even eh got to know other member I mean members of her family so they accepted me as well they didn't judge me or criticize me one thing that has hurt me the most is that hmm think my parents they always criticized me never look at my positives by my mom friend she she could criticized me if I did something bad if did something good she would praise me she will make me feel yeah I mean you did something good you deserve a reward or you deserve to be praise or congratulation so she made me feel special she doesn't make me feel like like I was a waste or useless like my parents did other people

Siyanda : so you were 20 when you finally left Ghana

Alaam : little more like 21

Siyanda : and can you tell me about that experience that sought of your life became to close in Ghana and have return home

Alaam : I was excited but at the same time I was lost cause it was like coming out of prison have to start life all over again yeah I fell I still feel the effect of it I wouldn't say I'm fully settled at the moment I'm still trying to find my feet

Siyanda : okay so you came back but can you think about the use question coming back to U.K. for the first time

Alaam : yeah eh it felt good it like eh a lot not because people use to you know drive like eh look a bit different it like people kind of cars and the area which I live in had developed it was much more hmm of an area then a place I left yeah so it was like the whole change the environment basically

Siyanda : what any question did you need from the U.K. from your second time around

Alaam : eh hmm the it was just difficult the just the difficulties finding my feet and having to start life all over again finding new friend starting new school eh yeah and hmm coming back to family that you don't really like whether they I was thinking they going to change themselves they send me to Ghana to change rather they will change no still same parents same old family yeah

Siyanda : so was it hard to coming back to your family again I mean who were excited to see you were you excited to see them

Alaam : no I wasn't excited to see them

Siyanda : but you were not with them for 9 yrs

Alaam : 9 yrs but I mean my mom okay let me clarify this in my nine yrs I use to come almost every two years for holiday I would see them but I wasn't I wasn't really happy to I wasn't excited I wasn't excited to see them not at all I don't think they were excited to see me well well probably my son is back that all other than that I wasn't excited not at all cause I knew I was in for harder times yeah

Siyanda : maybe let go back a little bit now in terms of how the other kids friends other kids school in Ghana saw you as I suppose you were bit of eh privilege kid over in sense that two years you'll be going to thinking some of them eh how were you receive or perceive by other Ghanese at that time

Alaam : eh hmm well you lucky they will say you lucky eh yeah they will ask the experience the whole experience living in the U.K. yeah and obviously I had nothing bad to the U.K. back then very nothing everything was really nice like I would tell them how school was about I wouldn't tell them bad thing probably speak about eh my poems and going to a cinema all those kind of things yeah see they were kind of interested

Siyanda : and what bad things can you say about the U.K.

Alaam : what better things

Siyanda : what bad things

Alaam : bad things

Siyanda : can you say about the U.K.

Alaam : hmm there a lot of eh yeah I think the racism kind of below racism in the eh we all pretend you know we pretend oh yeah you know and sometime sometime you can actually see it happening like you standing to a white man or white lady and they can't actually tell you that we don't like you move away from me they just move away from you and you can see it kind of blatantly blatantly

Siyanda : when what bad things can you say about Ghana

Alaam : what bad things I can say anything bad about Ghana really about if it particularly people in Ghana yes I can

Siyanda : what do you mean by particularly people

Alaam : like mom sister eh I can say but if it Ghana eh I can't pick up any bad things about Ghana really I mean I can say I spent my day time in boarding school so I would if you ask me about Ghana I would just talk about boarding school really yeah

Siyanda : what your aunt your mom sister

Alaam : she would fabricate stories I mean I did do things like leave home without telling people telling the people I was leaving with but I only did so cause they weren't interested in what I did whether I was eh whether when I was leaving for eh when I was going back to school they weren't interested in all that and so they will report me to my mom sister my mom sister will make stories she would add a bit more to it thing like I'm the bad person and I think all that will just do make maybe some kind of reward or something

Siyanda : so like why would you leave the place without saying where you going

Alaam : eh I did so because eh I really realize that they weren't interested in what I did and there is a lot of friction at the house that I lived in the house had two groups the men and women they don't get on well they always arguing and they got their separate groups so I didn't know which group to be with yeah if one sees me talking to the other I mean I wouldn't treat me well so and if the other saw me they wouldn't treat me well also so I was in kind of pick in the middle yeah I was in the middle and yeah basically that so everything that happen the story basically get twisted to suit they were very good at that very very good very professional at that if they want to get you into trouble they will get

you into trouble they wouldn't listen to you cause you are the kid or you the child so I think my mom contributed a lot to the problem that I'm having with her cause from the first place the relationship wasn't good my mom eh my mom and myself before I left but I think she contributed a lot to the resentment that I have for her she has for me as well

Siyanda : the resentment that your mother has

Alaam : eh sometime I think she hate she hate me sometime I think she do hate me

Siyanda : why do you think like that

Alaam : I don't know maybe maybe the whole separation thing maybe cause she never brought me up I don't have the values that she would want in a son

Siyanda : like

Alaam : I don't know but but I did hear from someone someone actually told me that I don't have the values she would want in a son eh that could possibly be the reason cause she spoke to her as well she mention something like that

Siyanda : who was this person that she mention to

Alaam : I'm going to keep that to myself

Siyanda : and did they say what values that you referring to

Alaam : no no so I mean I took it personally and since then I just I just don't want to know really I'm not bothered I've told myself that if she doesn't want to know me right now so she doesn't want know me it fine with me at a actually fine by with I know that probably one day she might need me she can't depend on other people kids to look after her cause she's growing old both are growing old actually my mom my mother his got a son he is kind of lucky but yeah

Siyanda : and so is there relationship even today or is a big frosty with your parents

Alaam : It not good at all not good if I don't talk to my mom she won't talk to me if I don't unless she need me to do something for her than she comes to me but if not we don't talk the whole day we wouldn't talk really wouldn't talk

Siyanda : and how is the relationship between your sister and your parents

Alaam : it good it good good cause they always consider her as brain of the family the like excellent one or the angel of the family yeah but me I mean I've been always considered as black sheep the person who does things to disgrace the family eh or the one whose never been serious yeah yeah the stupid one basically yeah and they've always

compared my mom always compared she has always me to other people that in a way eh made me feel like I'm rubbish I'm worthless

Siyanda : shh so they compare you to your

Alaam : sister yeah

Siyanda : is it around your physical disability or is it around you calling social service what the what the course of the conflict do you think

Alaam : eh hmm I think it I think it partly to do with the involvement of social services but I also think it separation and I think it me kind of rebellion cause they want to they want me they want children to submit to them and I've got lot eh where I'm against submission I mean

Siyanda : really

Alaam : if it well I submit to the rules of the university but I don't submit to rules of my parents or values my parents because cause a lot to me lot of them I rubbish I don't I don't see why I should so in a way it conflict maybe it culture conflict maybe it some other kinds of conflict but no and I think they also want eh one thing I know about African culture they want they want children they want women to submit they want them to and when you submit to people most of time you can't express and that what I'm going through at the moment I couldn't express myself cause I always had to live to other people expectation so I'm against it yeah basically maybe bad to what they say cause most of the time find it stupid I find it more authoritarian than authoritative and in a society we need we need the authoritative not authoritarian do we is it cause do as I'm how does that go do as I say not do as I do yeah the authoritarian yeah so I'm just against I don't submit into people eh I just feel like I should be able to express myself and the kind of the kind of some group that the African culture has eh people has to submit I think it rubbish it totally rubbish that that one thing that perhaps one thing I don't like about the African culture submission I mean submission toward extent it good but not to extent where a individual can express himself or herself

Siyanda : how are you able to eh transcend this or go beyond this thing you entice African culture in a sense cause you you went to Ghana for 9 yrs to sought of be part of so what has allowed you to think to be able to be rebellious

Alaam : to be rebellious eh hmm I think it just about eh to be able to express myself cause I've I've always felt that I'm not be able express myself cause eh cause I got to live other people expectation yeah cause I think it more and I'm in-need to express myself

Siyanda : where did you learn that sought of expression

Alaam : self expression I learnt a lot through eh say poems cause they liberating eh and I've learnt a lot from being here being British that people here in Britain are able express

those more than say African if probably a black child ask the parents to talk sex education they will be more reluctant to talk to him or her about about sex education than say British a British probably a British it more likely to it more likely to to learn from explaining reproduction to to child I'd say a black a black a black person will refuse cause they will try to hide it at least or just lies

Siyanda : and do you think it all British family or it in critically all black families or predominantly white British family

Alaam : predominantly white British families yeah

Siyanda : so and to that that one of the values you find appealing or attractive in a modern self expression which you can

Alaam : and affection I think I think generally sorry generally the British are more they are more passionate

Siyanda : I love this in terms of the stereotype go I wouldn't right off consider your British are passionate in terms of stereotype

Alaam : in terms of I'm go to let me finish not in terms of making love but in terms of making someone feel wanted and valued and they are I'm not going to changes my word that what I think

Siyanda : let me ... interesting ... I do find it interesting speaking about that also in a sense you're your aunt the woman you consider your mom eh being sought of a African Ghanian the woman she was able to still be passionate to you and allow you have that you in Ghana you were allow to have also not to have at the same time which was quite interesting I think

Alaam : remember that my aunt was one out of many I'm talking in general yeah general my aunt just this one person one African woman you know yeah I think general I think they less I'm not saying they not eh not eh passionate I think they are less they less passionate yeah

Siyanda : yeah right so you came back turning 21 I don't know if turning 21 is a eh big deal here I'm sure at home it a big deal you turn 21 you have massive you suppose have a massive celebration you now a adult you now did you have huge celebration party were you

Alaam : no

Siyanda : so were

Alaam : no the last time I had a party a birthday party was way back when I was about eh perhaps 9 or 10 I'm not too sure but nothing were organize by my parent though all of

them by other people really like aunties yeah yes so I mean eh I'm not particularly about birthdays sometimes you get scared and when you going to 23-24 I get kind of scary cause you haven't fulfill you want to do thing at a particular age

Siyanda : are there things that you haven't fulfill which are

Alaam : yeah

Siyanda : eh you were 24 last month

Alaam : November yeah

Siyanda : what are the things that you feel you haven't fulfill

Alaam : eh hmm yeah I would perhaps I would love to had job by now but it been difficult for me cause I've been unsuccessful eh hmm actually to be independent to live on my own to eh to to write more poems perhaps eh yeah just write more poems I would perhaps a become more recognize

Siyanda : are you still writing poetry by the way

Alaam : eh I haven't had time to do it actually I had lot of things in my mind

Siyanda : okay so you 21 you come back in England you are in Catholic College you say

Alaam : I went to Catholic Community College

Siyanda : what did you want to do with your life when you going into college

Alaam : I first wanted to be a social worker but then change my mind and now I want to be a councilor I know that to to become that counselor I want to be I just have to deal with my own issues cause I will be dealing with a lot of people issues

Siyanda : you know what what they say psychology they are they are referred to as wounded healers I think it make sense a psychologist wounded healers in a sense that most people in psychology are themselves wounded it their own wounds that pull them into the profession to help others but they better equipped actually because

Alaam : they been through

Siyanda : themselves in what wounds are about and they actually give them better help service that what they say basically

Alaam : yeah yeah

Siyanda : and so even now you expect your goal to become

Alaam : a counselor

Siyanda : why, why do ...

Alaam : I think I think my own experience s would help other people cause I know that a lot of people are going through a lot similar eh experience yeah I feel like I will be able to relate to them properly well yeah and yeah I just feel the need to help people not that not that I pity people I don't pity people but sympathizes yeah

Siyanda : how your experiences at Catholic Community College like

Alaam : it was eh good

Siyanda : why ... how ... what sort of experience ... did you have good experience ... did you have

Alaam : eh hmm learning perhaps hmm something that I haven't done before like nutrition I did a bit of nutrition eh

Siyanda : pyramid is it food pyramid

Alaam : yeah we did we did that we did and eh we did like dysfunction the basic functions of nutrient to the body yeah

Siyanda : you enjoy that

Alaam : I didn't enjoy but I had to do it cause it part of the yeah cause I did catering back in Ghana catering yeah I did catering back in Ghana so it was a bit similar a bit boring

Siyanda : I can imagine

Alaam : yeah

Siyanda : I'll be completely bored

Alaam : but then it was compulsory I had to do

Siyanda : eh what other things did you do

Alaam : you mean the unit or you mean the subject or eh did equality and diversity

Siyanda : what gods names is that

Alaam : it eh basically it eh subject that a that talk about it just talk about basic equality of all people and how diverse the multicultural the British society is

Siyanda : and your best coarse

Alaam : my best coarse was eh well I did two different side of psychology unit one was eh life span development second one was applied psychology which I laughed so much yeah

Siyanda : that really cool

Alaam : that where I learnt and PRJ and the Pudlocks and the Floyds

Siyanda : I remember that the Floyds stuff was really cool and eh how long was your coarse study by

Alaam : it was two years

Siyanda : two years and then you said you graduated on top of your class

Alaam : graduated on top I was one of eh I was a good student I would say and and it was recognize I got I got a prize a little medal yeah I was supposed to get money but they were to tutoring

Siyanda : oh okay

Alaam : I think they use it to buy resources

Siyanda : eh were your parents happy

Alaam : no

Siyanda : you got to be serious surely when they were proud

Alaam : they say okay they really don't show much emotion I wouldn't know they really don't show much emotion

Siyanda : but say well done shook your hand hug

Alaam : my my dad I mean my dad said well done my mom she was I can't remember what I think she gave a nod and said something I can't remember what she said my autnt was more happy she I don't know I spoke to her on the phone she surrounded more eh happy for me than any of them

Siyanda : and then when you college you left and come to why what did you study

Alaam : Circle Social Studies

Siyanda : how long is the course

Alaam : three years yes yeah

Siyanda : and then after that what did you plan on doing

Alaam : eh I'm not too sure at the moment maybe I will get a job yeah

Siyanda : yeah so we have spend sometime talking about your past now where do you find yourself will you talk to me about your future what things do you wants to do or goals what inspiration do you have

Alaam : well I just eh hope pass out eh three new colours get a good job start a family and eh yet contribute into society

Siyanda : how do you want to contribute to society

Alaam : through work eh

Siyanda : tax of course

Alaam : yeah tax or anywhere I can really

Siyanda : do you have conquered sought for your future or were you not given more thought

Alaam : yeah I haven't given thought but I believe I got so many things yeah

Siyanda : so I would like to end by asking two closing questions and they are bit up struck eh okay like two sought of connected question for sought of you think back and reflect on your life I like you to share some of the opportunity you think you had in your life and now and at the same time I want you to think what challenges you face on your 24yrs of life if you look back on it

Alaam : so the first one was a

Siyanda : opportunity and challenges you can start with whatever

Alaam : opportunity opportunity to to learn the hardship of life in a different way society of course eh to experience different differenties in education to eh cause to me my aunt cause she actually impacted bringing my life eh and yeah and which the other one the I think my biggest challenge is having to deal with my disability and I haven't manage yet I mean I still something I'm working on trying to put behind me but it kind of difficult eh yeah challenge of getting a good job after after completing the coarse cause it not

guaranteed that I get a good job rather maybe I have to do other jobs that you know yeah
getting into counseling

Siyanda	The date today is the 9 th of April 2009. I went over your first interview and just by listening to it, I think two things: you can tell me whether I'm right or wrong. I don't even know if you would still remember your fist interview but I've got a copy. Two sorts of things I think stand out. The most dominant things you speak about a lot. One would be your (how can I put this) troubled relationship with your parents and that comes up across throughout the interview. The second thing which I think you do speak a lot about as well is around your disability. Would you say that these two things characterise/ occupy your life? (It's a stupid question).
Alaam	They are the two things that stop me from achieving my potential. Parents make you feel very little and it doesn't help your confidence at all. In terms of my disability, it affects my confidence as well because I see other people my age doing and I'm not able to do a thing so those two things do impact badly in my life.
Siyanda	Have you thought of words to either try breaking them or solving them somehow? I know you can't change your disability but your parents?
Alaam	Yeh, what a lot of people tell me is that I'm in University now and all I've got to do is study hard and when I finish I can decide whether I'd like to be close to my parents or not. If you'd ask me, I'd say I don't want to be close to them at all. I want my own life back.
Siyanda	If you think back, has the relationship always been strange, what actually happened?
Alaam	It all started in childhood when I was misbehaving in school, making noise when my other friends were trying to study and we were stealing at times.
Siyanda	Interesting naughty, it what kids would do.
Alaam	Yeh, that's what kids would do. At times I wouldn't listen and my communication was very bad, communicating with the children. I would just tell them.
Siyanda	So then from that point on your relationship with your parents was not right?
Alaam	One other thing that kind of caused this was the fact that I reported them to my teacher. I think that was the major turn off point. I don't regret doing that because it was something that was affecting me. I felt the pain as a child growing up. Parents not wanting to communicate with you, not sitting down with you, not spending time with you especially my father. At the end of the day they would tell you, you need to identify with them. How do you identify with him when he is never in your life? I know a lot of people would disagree with me and say: "I'm making excuses" and all that. I don't think so. It what matters to me, it matters to all kids. They want them to look up to you someone, to spend time with them so that they learn new things and that is what I wanted to do. That's all I wanted.
Siyanda	We did touch on this a little bit but I want to bring you back to race.
Alaam	Alright, that's fine.

Siyanda	What are some of or maybe do you have experiences or memories when (maybe not your race, maybe your disability- that seems to be the most important thing) when those memories first became an issue for you or when you first took notice/ were aware of them?
Alaam	I became aware of my disability when I was in Primary School when the others were given hard work to do in class and I was given easier work to do. It made me feel like I was less than these people.
Siyanda	What kind of work was this?
Alaam	It was Mathematics, Comprehension questions.
Siyanda	Oh so, it was school work?
Alaam	I was given less because they thought I wasn't that intelligent and when I had to play football sometimes I felt left out because they wouldn't let me play because they thought I would probably get hurt. I used to be teased quite a lot as well. It really hurt me though. It made me angry, I was always in fights and that is probably the reasons why I had bad records written to my parents and they had to come down to the school.
Siyanda	And growing up whether in the U.K or in Ghana, you didn't have anyone to go to and to talk to about why you were getting into fights or did you?
Alaam	No, the teachers thought I was being abused at home and that is why they got me all sorts of services.
Siyanda	I've got this weird question and I don't think it will be appropriate to ask.
Alaam	Go ahead, anything
Siyanda	What does having a disability mean to you? How is it important to you, in your life?
Alaam	It has made me aware that I have to do ten times better than other people and with my colour, it turned down many chances because in the first place: I'm Black. I know that Black people in this country are kind of stereotyped and less than White people. That's one fact coupled with my disability. An able person and a disabled person I think, they would always go for a person who has an able body and I feel that so much when I'm applying for jobs because I can apply for so many jobs and at the end of the day I don't get it. I think it is part of my disability. They would go for people who would do the job properly. It makes me want to fight more. Lets say a White able person is achieving 70%, it means I've got to aim at 80% - 85%. It makes me a competitive person in that sense.
Siyanda	Would you say that is a positive or negative thing always?
Alaam	It does work out to my advantage because being the person that I am. I think I am an intelligent person; I don't care what other people think, I think I am intelligent. I'm not going to boast too much but from the time I was in sent to Ghana. I don't intend to change it. I'm kind of content; I know that I could do much more with confidence. I am relatively pleased with who I am at the moment.

Siyanda	What are some of examples at which when you feel your confidence because of your disability. What are sort of things that have happened that make you conscious of the fact that you've got a disability?
Alaam	I think I would say right now not getting a job that stands out. As a child I was basically not given a chance to mix with other kids, play sport that they played.
Siyanda	Sure. How important (do you think) is your disability on how you think and define who Alaam is?
Alaam	I'm a complicated person. I'm a person who is competitive in some ways, resilient. I hate some degree of control, people who control me too much. The biggest of them all is submission. I hate submitting to people. Attending a University I know there are rules, policies and procedures in place. I know I have to respect those things. I'm fine with that. What I'm talking about in terms of submission is the fact where I've got to do things that parents ask you to do when I do not want to do it because custom or tradition says I must do it. I'm not that person, I just hate that. I think I am submissive, resilient, I'm complex or complicated but I also think I've got a really big heart in that I care for people. I can actually see what a lot of people go through. If I were to put myself in their shoes. I think I've got that caring nature as well and not wanting to be controlled too much, not wanting to submit. I read that if you submit to someone, you might end up in resentment, I felt that way. I bought a book and it said the same thing inside. It said " <i>when you submit too much and it is not from your heart, you can feel a lot of resentment</i> ". That's the way I felt because every Sunday I had to iron my father's shirt for him to wear to work. I didn't want to do it.
Siyanda	Oh boy, absolutely.
Alaam	I didn't want to do it but because tradition says so. I have stopped it now. I have actually become a more assertive person since the last interview in that I don't do anything that I don't want to do.
Siyanda	So if your father asks you to iron his shirt?
Alaam	I don't! Let me tell you something, he drinks wine all the time and leaves the bottle for so-called child/son to recycle. I don't do it for him. It's always there. If you would go to my house, you will see the bottles. He eats and put leaves the dishes in the sink that pieces me so much. I don't wash it for him. He comes back to do it. My mother and sister can do it for him if they want to but I don't do it. I'm not going to do it.
Siyanda	And if he asks you?
Alaam	I tell him I don't want to do it and that's it!
Siyanda	And what does he say?
Alaam	"Ok, what can he say? I'm 25; I shouldn't be controlled that way. The fact that I'm leaving with him it doesn't mean if he tells me anything I've got to do it. I just hate that. I really,

	really hate it. I'm more of an assertive person now and I like it that way. Sometimes I feel like I'm a soft touch and people can talk to me anyhow and I don't do anything about it. I feel powerless and weak. One thing I've noticed I've got to say what I think, express myself even more because if I don't express myself, I feel kind of bottled anger in me.
Siyanda	It seems like there is tension between how you were raised in terms of and the fact that you are Western world and do you think that's a clash on how you and your parents relate to each other.
Alaam	You could say so to some degree. In the sense that children in Africa would do anything their parents tell them to do – submit to them. They would especially submit to their husbands. They don't treat them well. African men (I wouldn't say all African men but), the one's that I've met and lived with don't treat their wives well. Just a couple of them. Just a handful I would say.
Siyanda	In what way do you think that your life now in Britain is the same or different from the lives your parents lived either back in Ghana and in the U.K?
Alaam	I would say more expensive. I don't think they were able to express themselves. I'm a person that expresses myself all the time. That's why I've made a lot of enemies with family and friends because I'm very honest. People do want to hear the truth. I would try and change if that is the case. Please repeat that question again?
Siyanda	I'm trying to think of (it could be an unfair question). In what way do you think your life in Britain is similar or different to the life that your mom and dad lived in Ghana and in the U.K?
Alaam	I think they were more (they still are) submissive. I think I'm able to express myself. If I'm happy, I show that I'm happy and if I'm sad, I show that I'm sad. I don't like to play happy family when the situation is not. I believe I'm more afflictinate then they are. I think I am. I've got bad things which I can tell you about.
Siyanda	What are the bad things?
Alaam	Perhaps I am argumentative; I want things my way most of the time. I think that.....
Siyanda	You are always right?
Alaam	No, I'm not always right. I think a lot of the things I come up with are unique and in a way they are right. I have a massive ego.
Siyanda	Ego is good. Also in your first interview, you did say (in you first interview) something like you are against African culture and I think you put it in those words. Do you think there are aspects or African Ghanaian culture which you think are positive and aspects from British culture which are positive? Just take the positive from each and disregard the negative.
Alaam	Ghana yes, I've always said education was much better. I also think community spirit, togetherness and I also think they have a lovely history, I think it's the best.

Siyanda	Absolutely!
Alaam	I think it's the best when you hear how South Africa and Ghana gained their independence. You hear about all those great people who helped. In a way it despises you. I love African music and African dance. Yes, there are a lot of positive things about Africa.
Siyanda	I do think that's one contribution that Africa has to show the world is in fact music.
Alaam	Definetly.
Siyanda	You said Britain for you is home even though you struggled a lot in terms of more bullying happening more here growing up. You even said (quite nicely) how you injured your parts. The reason you feel home because you feel part of the society but you are not welcomed. What do you mean about that?
Alaam	Again, when I said I don't feel welcomed. You kind of apply for jobs and they always turn you down, it makes you feel you've got nothing to contribute. I feel integrated because I've been to school here I'm part of society. I lived here. I just feel part of it but because I apply for jobs and don't get it. I don't know whether its because I'm black or because they feel that I don't have the skills. They never give me a change to show who I am, what I'm made of. You get application forms and they tell you five years experience. If you don't give people experience, how do you expect them to have experience? It's just really silly. You keep on trying and nothing good comes your way. You just get really frustrated because of that. That's what I actually meant.
Siyanda	Black British, is that how you define yourself?
Alaam	Yes,
Siyanda	What does it mean?
Alaam	A Black African British.
Siyanda	What does that mean to you?
Alaam	Black British is just a title. To be British, it means I've integrated into society. I have taken up their culture by trying to merger with my African background as well. I try to merge them together. I don't want to take the whole African culture. I can't take the British one and forget where my ancestors came from. I try to put all the positives together and I've also asked a lot of African people that were born in Africa (I put it in a bad way). They come from Africa; they come with bad practices like how to bring up a child and the whole thing about love. They never really had it. Coming down to England (U.K). They had to make certain changes, they had to also learn about the British culture and put together the positives from both cultures. To me, it means I'm integrated into society but then I can also say it's an empty title. That is what I call myself. Its other black people call themselves. The fact that I'm integrated means I'm mix with British but again it's just a title.
Siyanda	I am coming from outside and to me the term British, the first thing/ image that pops into my

	head is “white”. It’s almost an automatic thing. When I think British, I think “white”. You are Black British, of cause this is your country and your “queen” because you are coloured in this way, your skin colour comes first. Its only when you say you are Black British.
Alaam	That’s why I said its just a title. I call myself British because I have integrated here. If I hadn’t integrated I’d say I’m Ghanaian or I’m African but the fact that I adopted British culture and I’ve integrated into British society culture that’s why I call myself British.
Siyanda	When you were in Ghana (you were nine years when you went), how did you introduce yourself? You did touch on your first interview that your accent gave you away as someone strange or at least you look like us but are certainly strange?. How did you define yourself? What label did you give yourself?
Alaam	It was funny, I mean, I tell everyone I’m British. I’ve always considered myself British. My parents are Ghanaian. I couldn’t speak the Ghanaian language. They would laugh at me because I couldn’t speak their language even when I tried to speak it, my pronunciation was different to theirs, they would laugh at me but they would teach me as well. I had quiet good friends in Ghana.
Siyanda	A lot of Black people who are in the West, they do tend to have this strange relationship with Africa (continent) the place of their roots and rituals. So, when you went back to Ghana, did you have a sense that you were going to your ancestral home?
Alaam	Yeh, yes I did. I heard a lot of stories about Ghanaian when I went, how disciplined their children are. There is no difference from here, I tell you. There are stubborn kids as well.
Siyanda	I’m interested to know when you come to Ghana, you were actually coming from outside into this place which you’ve heard stories about which is your ancestral home. I’m interested in whether you feel at home or not because even though you couldn’t speak the language and you were from outside, how did you live on those things from outside?
Alaam	I felt ok in a way because I went straight to boarding school and I saw that the kind of way they did things was quiet different from what my parents would do things. I did things different from the other kids. I found that they were more hardened on what would make a 10 or 11 year old cry over here. It took me more time to get used to them. I did integrate into it. It helped that I did subjects like History. I did Geography as well. When they were talking about Ghana and Africa, I could actually talk about it. Just talking about those things made me powerful. I also ate their food in England before I left and because I tried to change my accent to suit theirs
Siyanda	Did you have experience in the 9 years when somebody/ people would/ wouldn’t include you as part of them because of your British heritage?
Alaam	I have a Canadian friend, she lived in Ghana. We formed a good relationship. I had lovely friends, I still keep in touch with them. They made me a competitive person who was always

	determined to achieve. They made me more intelligent. I wouldn't see my friends studying and go to bed, I would want to be like them. In a way, I kind of looked up to them. I saw that seriousness I didn't see over here as a kid. A lot of them were a lot younger than me but I could learn a lot from them. I saw that they had something we didn't have over here. It's just that pure determination and perseverance and toughness to achieve things although they came from poor background.
Siyanda	When you said good bye and you came back here, how was that experience like because you were there quiet young? You are 21 now.
Alaam	Its quiet difficult because a lot of my friends that were in Primary School and Junior Secondary School, when I went to Senior Secondary School, I lost a lot of them. I didn't see a lot of them. A few of them they I saw I told them I was coming. They wished me good luck. There were a few teachers that I saw as well.
Siyanda	And coming back, were your parents happy because they sent you to Ghana. When you came back, was the mission accomplished for them or did you come back a strange creature?
Alaam	<p>I came back a different person not because of Ghana per say but I've got to testify what changed me. It was that woman I spoke about on the other interview. My mom's best friend that I call her my aunt. The support they gave me was special to me. To re-pay them, I wouldn't go back to my bad ways. I was a more serious person. I still am. I am determined and a harder person. If you were to ask my father he would say I am a different person. If you were to ask my mother, she would say I haven't answer. She would say I haven't changed at all.</p> <p>The only reason she would say that is because I tend to argue with her more and challenge her. That's why she would say I haven't changed and I get angry as well. As a kid, I was not really shy. All the bad things that I did, I didn't want to do it. I was pressurized by friends; I wanted to be like other people. Most of the people I played with were rough; they were looked up by a lot of people. I felt protected by being in a group with 'bad boys'. I associated with bad boys. I felt strong and important. I never saw myself as a 'trouble some' child. I wasn't problematic really. If you would ask my parents, they would say I'm problematic because I did the things that I did. According to facts, because people were teasing me so I used to tease them myself. I stole things. The only thing that I regret I did was stealing money. I used to steal money and go to the shops early in the morning and buy magazines or a lot of sweets.</p>
Siyanda	Who did you steal the money from?
Alaam	From my parents.

Siyanda	Oh, we all did that!
Alaam	<p>I would keep up my room in the dark and in tip toes. I would check their pockets. Even if 50 pounds but I would spend it wisely. I would keep it with me and spend it wisely, in a week or two weeks. I would buy magazines and sweets. I just wanted to be like the other kids and be in control. My friends parents would buy their kids games balls. I never had any of those things. I didn't have the courage to ask my parents because there was no communication at that time. Communication was so bad. I wouldn't say I was an angel. I was not an angel. I tried my best to change myself and I have changed. I'm not the same Alaam that I used to be.</p> <p>When I came back from Ghana, I went to College, I did my best, and I won an award (a medal). I was supposed to get money but the College took it to buy new computers. I don't really mind. The fact that I was recognized for the good work that I did was worth more than money. I have my B.Tech with eleven distinctions. Intellectually, I am happy with myself. My social life could be much better though. I don't think I have much of a social life. I could go out more. Most of the time I'm usually indoors and reading. I could perhaps interact with more people.</p>
Siyanda	How do you think your physical disability has affected how you form relationships with other people? Has it affected how you relate to other people or not?
Alaam	<p>In a way yes. It has made me think more aware about the world and things that are going on. It makes me try and find some solutions more aware and I'm able put myself in other people's shoes. It makes me try and find some solutions to help people. I am more helpful, I've always been very helpful even to my sister and teachers. I have also had that bad side of me. It has made me sympathetic towards people. I can see the pain that they go through. If there is anything I can do to improve their life, that's one of the reasons I took a Social course; I really want to go to counseling in the end. I should be able to solve my own problems first.</p>
Siyanda	What kind of problems or issues do you think you have that you think you should still resolve?
Alaam	My confidence. I'm actually on my way of doing that, taking part in more activities. I go out a bit more then I used to a year or two years ago.
Siyanda	Has your physical disability been a real hinderance or constraint, you did speak a little bit about sport and cricket and not being able to play cricket. You like cricket, besides cricket, has it also been something that has stopped you from doing things?
Alaam	Yeah. I wanted to do Science and because my Maths is not good because part of it is because of my disability. It has affected half of me. Part of my body is affected and my brain

	<p>as well. I'm not really good with numbers, I get really confused. When I'm working out an equation, I might be able work out to the second step and after that I'm not able to continue. I actually wanted to do Science but because of that, I did something that involves quiet a lot of reading.</p> <p>Sports and cricket: I love cricket very much. If I could I would play for England. I just love sport, its very nice. I would not be an athlete .</p>
Siyanda	But now did you ever play cricket?
Alaam	No. I would listen to it. If I had a dream, I would tell God to make me an able body person and to make me a best sportsman on earth. Look at tiger Woods, David Beckham and Michael Jordan. I wouldn't be anything else but a cricketer. I just love the game. I look up to K. Peterson.
Siyanda	He has just resigned as Captain of the English team? I read that somewhere.
Alaam	He was actually fired.
Siyanda	I know he had problems with the coach,
Alaam	I just love the man.
Siyanda	Why? I don't follow sport but why?
Alaam	I love his confidence. A lot of people say he's got a big ego. I don't think so. As a sports person and because he is outspoken he has made quite a lot of enemies. I just love his courage and confidence and his skill of betting. I have never seen him personally but I've seen him speak on TV, he kind of bullish and I like that on a sports man. Its an advantage especially in bowling. I love his character. He is English as well. I would consider him South African. He is my second South African after Mandela.
Siyanda	Do you still do writing, I remember last time you said you do poetry?
Alaam	I could remember writing one for teachers day. I can remember writing one about war. I can remember writing about father. I think I started saying: 'Oh father what is it today? That's the only part I can still remember but I think it was really good. I showed it to, she really liked it as well.
Siyanda	If you were to think about the kind of you write about in your poetry, what are the dominant things?
Alaam	You don't really find positive things in my poems. I am a negative person that is why I choose to right about negative things in my poems. I tend to centre everything on negative things and situations. I tend to write about life, troubles and battles and how we can perhaps change those things. I tend to write about sorrow which a lot of the time I see in myself. I mostly base it on negative things that go on. Often the biggest thing is sorrow and sadness and how people sink into depression. That's why I've always been interested in reading.
Siyanda	Why has been the topic that you have always been interested in?

Alaam	Well, I look at myself. I try to understand who I am and as well as people I come to contact with in my everyday life so that I would know how to deal with them. I was also looking at (what's the name?) Do you know "genetic sexual attraction"?
Siyanda	What is genetic sexual attraction?
Alaam	It's being separated from a love object from childhood and re-uniting with that love object or cherished one and form a real close bond of sexual nature. A sexual nature bond. I am trying to link that with separation. So, I am trying to link those two. I'm trying to see whether the children of second world war who were excavated to the Western dilemma whether they had this genetic in them.
Siyanda	Now the sexual bit, is that about sex activity?
Alaam	Yes, it's where a son is attracted to the mother or the other way around.
Siyanda	And they have sex?
Alaam	Yeh, a lot of them get together
Siyanda	What are you talking about? Where is his thing? Are you serious?
Alaam	Yes, in a way you may think of it as complex. In a way, its different because most of it has to d with separation from a love object.
Siyanda	So, it like if you were separated from your mother and then re-unite after 20 years?
Alaam	I don't know what to call this disorder. It happens between mother and son or son and mother, brother, sister, cousin, father and daughter.
Siyanda	So now you are interested in this topic?
Alaam	Yeh. I like going to these complex things and that's why I so admire Fraud. I like his kind of mystery. I'm just interested in that.
Siyanda	Besides your aunt in Ghana who else in your life has are significant people for you?
Alaam	All my teachers at Primary School, my teachers at Senior Secondary School
Siyanda	I thought you were in Boarding School
Alaam	Yes, I was in Boarding School. I went to stay at a hostel. She was looking after other kids as well. Something happened and she took us all to Boarding School.
Siyanda	Something happened? What happened?
Alaam	It didn't involve me. It involved a boy who never wanted to do his work. She got fed up telling him to do this and do that and she decided it was time for all of us to go to the Boarding house. I then spent the whole year in Boarding School.
Siyanda	So, its your Aunt, Teachers and Who else?
Alaam	My Mistress and my Aunt's family of course.
Siyanda	Do you come from an extended family in that your grandparents, do you know them, did you ever meet them?
Alaam	Yes, I've met them but they stay in a Village. All my time in Ghana, I didn't really go to the

	Village unless my parents were around. My mom's sister would come and visit me. I had an uncle who my sister lived with who also came to visit me. I had an uncle, my dad's cousin
Siyanda	I suppose, one thing I find strange is that and started their won families. You seem to grow up in a family network that include so many other people you grand grand parents, to your grandparents, cousins. So you are not close at all with the rest of the family.
Alaam	I'm not really close but I do have cousins, probably most of them are in Ghana, the few that are here. I am actually a family man. I do see myself as a family man. We don't have anything in common to talk about?
Siyanda	Why do you think is the reason you don't have things in common to talk about?
Alaam	A lot of them don't know me. Those that know me just know the bad things that I used to do, that I used to steal.

First Interview with Albert

Siyanda : As you know you were saying you left Nigeria 1992

ALBERT : Yes that right I left Nigeria 1992 and then I went to Germany through friends intention was to work save some money and go to Canada

Siyanda : Okay

ALBERT : For about stories because already had my qualification for primary degree and also had hmm practice in journalism before I left Nigeria in 1992 so the intention was to save some money in Germany and relocate to Canada for **the studies but it didn't quiet** work that way like money we make so ended up staying in Germany for 9 to 10 years I think

Siyanda : Is these about the money

ALBERT : **No let look at it I came in 1992 April and I left Germany 1980's no** sorry 1997 yes so

Siyanda : So it about bread and milk

ALBERT : Is that it, is that it eh I went back to Nigeria 1997 that same year I relocated to Ireland because in the meantime I had met my wife in Germany we were both so we started dating in Germany we got married in Nigeria 1997 and then we rather go back to Germany because I still wanted to do my studies now you reckon that although I spoke Germany I could write it but I reckon it will be easier for me if I did in a English within country actually the intention was to go to the European to Cardiff to do my Masters in Journalism but I hmm so that what we had in mind so we went back to Nigeria I made an application for or rather I re – activated the admission that I got I actually got offered admission to go to Cardiff 2 or 3 yrs before 1997 but I **couldn't go because of** this problems so I just wrote back to the university ready to re – activate it and they sent me a influential confirmation letter so that while we were doing that my mother in law she lives in Dublin cause my wife is Germany Irish and then she lives Dublin she say you going to go to Cardiff and do a post graduate in Journalism cause only offered in Dublin with Elize so she wanted us to be close by and eh so that was so she went to the university obtained the forms and faxed it while I was still in Nigeria I completed at it invited me to interview I did it I got the admission so we move to Dublin so we were in Dublin from 1997 to 2005 so that about 8 – 9 yrs so in 2005 February I got this job here and hmm later that year in August the family relocated from Ireland and join me that has **been my journey it hasn't been too long hasn't been complex**

Siyanda : But now what was the reason that you left Nigeria in the first time around in 1992

Albert : A combination of reasons really hmm I suppose the primary reason would be that I had I had prior aspiration in many ways I wanted to make advancement in my chosen profession which is journalism but at that time it was increasingly difficult in Nigeria because we were living on eh a dictatorship and eh and in a way I was I was at risk more than of my colleagues because when I started practice journalism in a regional newspaper called the Afzagad in Nigeria and then I started as reporter and I relocated to a national paper in Ladius called the Guardian and now in the Guardian I started do bad with each other I relocated Europhotia desk were news where I became a reporter and I was assigned to Defense Department which means Defense was my bitch that what I called out everyday which means I had contact with politic, army officers, all of that and many times we came close to having burying if you like a fatigue a country it was really becoming it was really becoming something that it became easily difficult to practice the profession it was because of the very political climate but there were more direct threat then that you know and we could **really write stories that were written we had to apologize for these but I don't know risk just sprung up two days ago so hopefully will sent you I know people kept on looking at our paper I don't remember so anyways that that was really it** until it came to a point where, where I would write stories and my editor will say you know if we publish the story you stay away for sometime you know because they could come for you **things like that or some we will write he won't publish** them at all

Siyanda : but now what kind of stories were you writing

ALBERT : Interesting stories cause I was assigned at the defense so I would write stories about really some top secret story I make you an example for an example so as a reporter I what you do every morning you start your days job not in the office or you go the places where you gonna reports so I go to defense department everyday I move from there to the navy I got airforce I got to the police I got beautiful stories it happened that in the defense department I had very good friend we wore Lieutenant den he wore lieutenant den I think he is now Colonel he was the Chief he was Public Relation Officer to the then Chief Army who later **became Nigerian Military Head of State Arbajh I don't know if you heard of him he is Major General Arbajh he was the head of army in the area and everything came down I'm just giving you an example to show us they** are very top secret I come warned this guy he was university educated he was a young guy so we had good friendship so I came in and go to his office and he says to me so because it for the newspaper I will report it for eruptive people, people wanted to get their faces and their views into that newspaper it like the

Guardian or the Times and he said to me look there going to be a massive re – deployment in the defense department this person is going to be transferred, this one is moving to this, this one is going to be retiring , this one is going to be **he gave me the whole list but as from that time it wasn't official but he had** access to the information but he gave it to me of course as a reporter that the sought of thing you want to publish is in it, you want to beat every other newspapers there is that was it my day was done I rush back to the newsroom I wrote the story and I gave it to my editor and he looked at it for a very long time as if he was staring at a piece of eh pizza or god whatever he was looking eh and just a story Sir and then he shook his head and he says you leave this in my care and I will take care of it I have to verify these and normally what they will do is call 2 or 3 sources of stories if it credible if publish but he never did that I never publish the story the whole day second day I came to his office Dexter **what happening why you never publish the story don't worry I`m going to** publish fourth day he **hadn't** publish then it was officially release on every newspaper had the story it was only then he publish along with other newspaper story that I got three or four before it became official that sought of only because, because if he had published it there was a likely that the defense people the army people would send soldiers arrest the editor, arrest me, arrest any element which is collected with the story and say we want you to tell us who the source is that was era it is said that we swear on the solemn oath as a **reporter it not right to disclose the source of your information you don't do it** because you damage their reputation you so there were cases like that and it made it quiet it made the job only interesting and even dangerous partly because of that but also partly because I had the craving to go to see other part of the world and I wanted to advance my educational so I relocate partly reason I left which was a good thing because I left in April 1992 and May the newspaper Guardian was raided by the army yes raided by the army reporters were ruttet to prison the whole office was seizure completely and later that I think the following year the girl who owns the newspaper was shot in the street of Lagos she was shot so badly they had to fly her in a private jet to London for treatment or he would have died

Siyanda : Ooh s she survived it

ALBERT : He survived it he survived it but he was he did was deformed in many ways

Siyanda : **I`m not quiet familiar with the Nigerian stories what led to this dictatorship?** And when exactly did it start?

ALBERT : The dictatorship started in eh hmm what had happened was in 1999 that Nigeria return to democratic government after many years of military dictatorship so in 1999 the elected the forcible government in 1983 we had a

bunch of army soldiers they took over the government again and since then we had coup and counter coup for military officer trying to have share of the national hierarchy you know and it happened at a guy who over threw the civilian government in 1983 was overthrown in 1985 I think that when Barbakarah came in he was there for a very long time and the guy who plan the coup is the head of army the guy I was directly dealing with the Arbajh guy he was the brain behind the coup but the who became the head of government was another general Barbakirah was there for a long time and in the mean time the guy who plan the coup Arbajh also wanted to be head of government so he was sought bidding his time and waiting and that was just it he exercise a lot of power and influence over everything and the what eventually happened is that eh in 1993 they had another election which was won by a Satarian someone from the South yeah by the guy who use hand the power to him so they annulled the election and he constituted the clerical committee and handed to over clerical committee headed by civilian but three months after election this guy who headed the army when I was, he took over government and sign the civilian you know he sign the civilian and took over the government and he was there until he died, when did he died? He died in eh I think he died oh he died suddenly yeah he died suddenly people there were a lot of speculation but he died anyway that was when eh and the civilian government and a army government came to power and organize election that brought in the present civilian regime that we have you know that the history of Nigeria since 1966

Siyanda : Yeah

ALBERT : Nigeria became independent from British rule in 1966 so in 1960 eh 1963 it became a Republic in 1966 six yrs or five and half yrs after independent the fiscal matrix happen that was in January and then in July the same year there was a counter – coup

Siyanda : Ooh my god

ALBERT : Yes the first war was led by, by the eh Hebrews the second was led by Hallasan which are from the North part of the country and there were there for a long time and then in 1976 there was another coup in February and that was led another it was a failed attempt that was led by the north not north Midelbare against the North Hallasan but his failed the next in line became head of state whose from the south that the history of Nigeria there been eh what it means the army the soldiers have played important part on the political landscape of Nigeria they more or less rule Nigeria and we had democratic elected government and that is a sought of thing that prevailed the institute corruption **institute oppression they don't their life they take what they want you** know that was partly the reason why I relocated to Germany and then but in

Germany the plan to go to Canada did not work I ended up doing a lot of work in the factories in the farm everywhere horses stables but the good thing I was a writer I was doing freelance writing and eh I completed a book a novel

Siyanda : Really

ALBERT : Yeah you know in time said that it (showing the book) I did these are when I was in Germany and eh so I did use the time well in terms of intellectually so and I eventually said to myself I had enough and I had to relocate to, to English speaking country where I could advance my, my education and career

Siyanda : and now tell what you remember growing up in Nigeria as a child

ALBERT : very eventful, very eventful I grew but the very interesting because I grew up in the country I never lived by the city except that I had **brothers and sisters cause I'm the youngest of five children eh and the others** are were much older then us they relocated and lived in different cities in Nigeria **and I grew up with my mom I think my dad died when I was 5 or 6 yrs so I don't** quiet had vivid memory of him but eh yeah I grew up in the country not until I was about 11 yrs cause I went to secondary school early I think I was 11 yrs I went to secondary school I went to a boarding school I had to leave my mom leave my home country my home village and I went to a secondary boarding school si I came back home I went on holiday to the city eh every other 3 or 4 months you know when you have your mid terms break so that was that eh I did **it so after I completed I relocated because I'm from the mid west part of the** country Nigeria form the south not necessarily from the south side where you have but eh when I finish my secondary school I relocated to the west because my brother was living in there in the west in the place called Ebado which is a biggest city in terms of land mass the biggest city in Nigeria population wise Lagos is the biggest of cause so I relocated to Ebado where I did my primary degree and I finished that I think in 1988 and in Nigeria when if you finish primary degree you are required to it compulsory national service not military it **eh paramilitary you don't carry guns you don't carry anything you do your camp** about a month or two I think a month you have all your exercise training and all that and after that they take you to different places to work the whole idea is that you should leave the part of the country where you are from where you did your schooling and go to another part of the country and be familiar with that part of the country yeah it a good idea so I did that so they sent me up to the north cause I never been to the north I went to place called Kaduna and eh I was teaching in political military to train journalism department eh so I did that for a year and then 1988 to 1989 end of 1989 I came back to the south to begin where I started a job as a observer in 1991 I relocated to Lagos where I had the job with the Guardian

Siyanda : eh these are all the countries do you know north and south what is the division amongst them

ALBERT : I think there is quite a lot it very complex between our side the divisions are there are a cultural there are hmm social in terms of educational much of them now is made up of Hausan eh traditionally Hausan in Nigeria at least are less then how do I put it eh hmm but generally believe that pursue education less I believe they pursue education less then Saramon are predominantly Muslim where the Saramon are Christian the Hausans predominantly Catholic you know South West Africa are Anglican so there is that division but politically division is also there they always believe that the British Colonial ruled favoured in the north they were more amenable to their rules they followed where as the Saramon always sought resisted and challenge whatever the independent and freedom so when the British left in 1960 they put in a system where power was handed over to the Northerners since then Northerners has never willingly let go of power they sought say they have a right to rule the country so there is that division there is a educational one is there the language one is there the ethnic one is there so Nigeria as a country the whole country there are over two hundreds and something languages and dialect

Siyanda : What?

ALBERT : Yeah in Nigeria ooh yes, yes

Siyanda : What

ALBERT : More than two hundred dialect and languages in Nigeria it is very, very, very complex and to live in the country

Siyanda : Are they official eh in terms of business

ALBERT : There are three eh English, eh English the first official written medium of communication but on the ordinary day to day street level it is mostly penguin English if you go on the street of Lagos or metro people speak penguin English

Siyanda : What is that?

ALBERT : Penguin English is a corrupted form of English language you know **for example rather say how are you I'll say how you there you know** that penguin rather say where are **you going I'll say where they go that kind of stuff kind of expression I'm sure you find on the street in terms written medial type of** instruction in school and offices these days and that kind of English I hope

Siyanda : and now being in terms of home you sometime eh where home will be for you

ALBERT : very complicated I know actually I rather point to something did **recently on that I give to you before you go because I'd given a lecture in December in the and I called the lecture " when home is no where"** hmm I was **looking at Roef Lettimoe eh " the experience of diasporas Africa in Ireland "** and eh I called it when home is no where because in many ways many of us find that, that natural home we come is constantly being disrupted is being reinstated and constituted and many of us are eventually actually saying you know what there is a home and one of my interviewers told me in Ireland he **said that I'm a diasporate I have no home I'm simply a diasporate he was** making a good point I quiet I can associate with what he was saying that, that in Ireland where he has lived for a very long time his got a very good job with IBM or one computer companies his not a truly member of society because his always be an outsider whatever the case they always say where you from and he say **I'm from no I mean where are you originally from you know the sometime he** say he does not have any attach to Nigeria so he can not say relate the word society is the word society the level of corruption the justice, the political there were politician handle the affairs in the country so if either he is sought of in a no mans land in terms of home and so in other word for me not because diasporism but simply because of my private personal life and finally the context of hope is becoming increasingly difficult to define and I just been to Nigeria came back last week or so and hmm of cause I do feel at home more at home when I go to Nigeria there is a different feeling that I get when I get to Nigeria then trying to be who I am to other countries **I do have a saying that "these soil that I'm going to step it my home"** but the experience of living there sometimes suggest to me that these places this is my actual home in my day to day brush on with people you know for example I go there I spent a day or two I find that **you still around when are you going home and eh I'm going home next week you know alright now okay that remind you that you belong here but also you don't** belong that not okay and the same thing when I go to Ireland I have a big thing that Ireland is my home and in many ways it is and I have Irish citizenship

Siyanda : Really

ALBERT : off course I do my children are Irish my son is also in Nigeria his got Nigerian passport my daughter **doesn't have yet but I'm going to get one for** her because at least it make it easier to travel there when I went there this time I went with my son who did not have to go Visa cause his got his Nigerian passport eh I might as well get one for my wife when she there but it the same thing the part from the official the sought that is the same I have a saying that **"I'm coming back to a place that I know so well where I have so many roots so**

many connection so many networks family networks” I have really, really feel that this is a place that I can rely and **that is true I can do that I’m going Ireland there and I’m coming I have three or four people offering to stay with them so in** a way that makes Ireland home to me but on the other hand if I walk into restaurant or into a bar or a pub or whatever people sit on and look at me because they interested to a African guy coming in here you know is he one of us and then of course all the question will follow because in you get into conversation with somebody they start of one of the sillies how is the weather are you coping, you like it here of course our reminder that you are the insider who is the outsider you know what I mean if very, very sought of difficult for me to do this fine but I think for me home I think place where I have my family with me my two children my wife my good neighbors and where I can manage my day to day affair with very little discomfort with very little with hazard you know **that will become I’ve long disappear myself notion of home sweet home I don’t** think that primarily exist in my life **in other people I’m sure it does you know it** might eh but for me that notion of home sweet home I think it sought of home it where this faces are I see them it pretty children there we have our jobs, we have our life we make our plans we do our thing for me that periodic time that become my home

Siyanda : but now what about the, your other family like your sibling and brothers where are they? now are they here are they back in Nigeria

ALBERT : Obviously they are all in Nigeria and eh they all have their families and eh I think it a different connection is in it, I think because I was there recently I said I saw everyone of them I flew into Abujah which is in the north then I drove south with my brother the immediate brother was there in Abujah he was with me he stayed with me for about two week he stay with me because **I didn’t have a car to go around I needed a car to go around Nigeria and yeah you know we use his so we drove and I’ve said I wasn’t going to drive these** thing of driving left and there is right you know it could be dangerous you know I had my son with me he was with me for two weeks he drove everyday that we were there and eh went to the home countries to see my mom stayed there for few days four days went to Bening now in the village in my home country where my mom is my I have one sister the eldest child in the family she live with my mom because she looks after my mom my mom is 89 eh 90 yrs so she there I live with her for about four days went to Bening saw my two brothers they live in Bening not far from one another saw cousin the nephew so I saw them in Bening we came to them we had a meal sought of big buffer drinks and everything you know I chat with family and everybody later in the day I drove to Ebado you **know keep going up I’m done with this country now I’m going to Ebado to see** my brother the whose been driving me so we stayed with family for about five days and then I saw other relative I think that is the connection really and eh **apart from that since I came back we’ve talking on the phone we talk a lot**

obviously some of them at some stage you want to have closer interact connection but the reality of modern life is some this is not possible I can not **stay with you because who is going to look after me I can't look after myself** I have to look after my family so that is there as much as possible we do our best to maintain that link we still have that family link and in that in my case that is **very strong though we don't see each other every year or everyday but it very strong** we have of course a phone we have plans we do things together you know I mean its 21st **century you don't have to be physically be in the same place to do things together so we do things together we make plans we execute plans together we plan my journey together there are always here and I 'm** always there for them

Siyanda : Hmm what kind of relationship you want your kids to have with Nigeria?

ALBERT : **I can't dictate what relationship they going to have with Nigeria or Germany or Ireland** but I feel that my rare AU-nsibility which I want to discharge as much as I can I want to give them enough exposure to about these places and culture and the way of life right they were born in Ireland they are maternal granny lives in Ireland we go to Ireland all the time maybe once a year or once every other year we go Germany every other year because my brother in law lives there so we go see them so they got exposure of this two places Nigeria is a bits more complicated because it far removed than this two places but at the **same time I'm becoming that they should** be they should have as much contact as possible with this places and that partly apart from the fact that my mom lives there my other relative mostly my mom which I want to see time to time that the reason why I make the effort to go back this time I went with my son we were there for two weeks he was admitted break for one week so I took him out **of school for one week so we were there for two weeks and the next time I'm going I don't know if I can next year but definitely** the year after that my daughter is coming along probably my wife I want to do that as much as possible because I want to give them eh I want to make that connection between I want to expose them to the different aspect their heritage because I believe they are unique in the sense that they are multiple heritage they I think the, the thing to do is to maximize, maximize the advantage because I believe they are advantage when you have multiple heritage they have this whole thing they have to use it where they have to use when they are expose adequately this aspect of their lives and doing that my son was there for two weeks he loved it, he loved it he want to go back in another three or four months and I say you make the money and we go but he love it he **just couldn't, just couldn't stop** admiring the people just that people were so friendly everywhere we go that is true at the airport people because you got special attention you know because yeah, yeah everybody in the immigration at the airport they had chat with him shook his hand they like him so it like he felt that everybody is so friendly over

here why is that? That the way they are so he liked that so he want to go he told his sister about his experience now his sister she is very anxious to go because his got this whole idealic pic image of Nigeria so I will keep doing that as much as resources keep permit but ventricle good relationship that they develop with these places will determine on them yeah I mean a life for mom I should be around her say hi everyday maybe goes as far to the city and come back but I have since made my own, own way

Siyanda : When you first eh you met your wife in Germany when you came back to get married how was that like

ALBERT : Well let put it this way before, before I met my wife I had **undergone a transformation in many way but two major one was I've been out** of my country for many years at least 4 – 5 yrs so my notion of people has change a lot eh 5yrs a reporter if you told me I would be married to anglo – person I would tell you forget about or if you told me I would be married I would say you were lying but yeah that had happen I had to find different perception of people then secondly in Germany I became a before I came to Germany I was very active well religious when it regard to but in Germany I became arouse weakness have heard of that my wife is one you imagine in a Kinabour

Siyanda : I'm eh a

ALBERT : In a kinabour where we worship eh and this sought of transformation in my life always relate back to Nigeria so my brothers my sisters my mom everybody knew what I was doing what was going on in my life so I **didn't quiet comes as a surprise to them when I appeared with here these is the one that I want to marry you know I didn't come as surprise and there were no** protest I think ordinarily they would be protest I think they sought of save my transformation and my deep outlook of life they are come to respect that when **we went there I don't remember anybody in a sense of why should you or why shouldn't you know it was** very much eh I think it was the fact that I kept everybody up to date with what I was doing you know they knew I had this they saw her picture I had been in touch she wrote letters to my brother we were already sought of so when we came which is not to state that the extended family the society as a whole heard it but the people that mattered people that mattered to me have to deal with my choice my decision so it was quiet good, it was quiet good

Siyanda : And when you first went to Germany eh were you easily as simulated to the planes and to people lives was did you find quiet hard

ALBERT : No, no, no it was in the beginning it was difficult because when I **went to Germany and my visa rendered and I wasn't ready to go out of the**

country I went and seek asylum for a person and in Germany back then that what the actually book is someone in my experience there in Germany when you seek asylum you had to stay in a government provided accommodation centre and that of course in it self it crucial it remove from society from people and all that you know but for many people it was very difficult not so much for me **because I'm always, I was always a reader I read I just do things I'm always if** you leave me in a house for a month I could stay there lot to tell you I just read my book between my book and the computer and that what I would do I will be very happy in my so that what I did and that how I cope and that how I started writing the book you know I just felt I have time on my hand I have experience to write about and I started doing that until a time when I was qualified to move out of the accommodation centre and rented a place I had more interaction with people and the of course I become a lithenes that of course gave me a new family, a new family totally you think one multi – culture family made up of eh two things among the litheness we had lot of wives army American that were stationed in Germany many of their wives were quiet into members of this so many of them were black so you know they were American black obviously black is black but you know there was this thing of connection at that time in Germany **1990 early 90's there was quiet lot of African in many cities and many of them** refugees in majority so some of them were student others were for their **purposes so and in other words what I'm saying apart from initials first few** months eh about a year or nine months when you are required to stay in a government accommodation centre once that was over and done with and I could, I could interact with larger society and I think I manage eh I think I manage and of course there was this burning desire inside of me to relocate to Canada and which never it never materialized and so few times you really want to go back to Nigeria and but somehow we did end up going back to

Siyanda : and how? When you move to Ireland how is that?

ALBERT: Again in Ireland I think I would eh it was a bit very in a beginning too it was sought of lonely

INTERVIEW WITH DAPHNE

SIYANDA: Right Daphne okay so I will start so let's talk about your childhood

DAPHNE: My childhood let's see well I was born in Jamaica a small town called Lloydsville

SIYANDA: Lloyd...?

DAPHNE: Lloydsville

SIYANDA: Lloyd-as-veil?

DAPHNE: Yes

SIYANDA: Lloyd is veil?

DAPHNE: LLOYDSVILLE

SIYANDA: Lloydsville

DAPHNE: Yes

SIYANDA: Very nice

DAPHNE: It's probably not pronounced properly I guess you know the Eurocentric decades whatever they mispronounced it it's actually a Spanish word

SIYANDA: Okay

DAPHNE: Yes and it supposedly means 'Valley of Fog' which is very fitting because ...

SIYANDA: Fog?

DAPHNE: Fog yes cause it's in a valley and the morning time and at night whatever it just completely covers you can't even see people walking in front of you

SIYANDA: How cool I like that

DAPHNE: It's sort of how London gets sometimes historically a cane town

SIYANDA: A can town?

DAPHNE: Sugarcane

SIYANDA: Oh my God that's cool where I come from Empangeni in Natal is full of sugarcane

DAPHNE: Ja (chuckles) so ja it's it was one of the most prosperous ones in Jamaica Hayworth Park(?) sugar estates and it's still in operation now still producing sugar cane and sugar, molasses all that other good stuff

SIYANDA: Hate it

DAPHNE: I love molasses (chuckles)

SIYANDA: It's sugar everybody needs sugar

DAPHNE: Yes and so it's in the valley and it's beautiful and you're up on a hill and you're driving down it's just you just see the green fields of the sugarcane it's just a beautiful town and then you see there's a factory this huge factory there and (brief pause) I guess the cane fields probably kinda separate the town from the factory owners kind of because on the way up to the town you have the cane fields and the factory and then you have to drive further up to actually get into the town itself so it's like the factory owners you know the white folks are definitely separate from the town's people there aren't any white people living in the town just the locals and then you've got they've got their own I guess what you call compound with their huge two-storey houses and whatever else that they have.

SIYANDA: Same story around the world

DAPHNE: Yes exactly and ja and there's that well for us Anglican Church would be the prominent thing because you know the historically British colonial system so we have the old Anglican Church that they built and ATTEND once a year probably for Christmas or Easter celebration cause I was going to that church for you know for the time that I lived in that town and I only ever saw them (laughs) on a special occasion which was usually you Easter or something like that and ja I was born at home not in the hospital...

SIYANDA: Really?

DAPHNE: Yes I was born at home and a nurse delivered me she, she lives in the town and she goes around to help the pregnant women nurse Bound (chuckles) is her name and she checks on the mothers and do whatever and whenever they are ready to pop them out...

BOTH: laugh

DAPHNE: She shows up so ja I was delivered at home ja to my mom who's a single mother strangely enough because my dad lived and still lives one house away yes.

SIYANDA: From your home?

DAPHNE: Yes from my family's home I wouldn't call it my home but at that time yes, yes one house away but the relations between my mom's family my family and his family were always very strained from when they were young so there's almost like a forbidden romance type of thing and she got pregnant gave birth to me but they weren't really allowed to see each other that kinda stuff

SIYANDA: What happened?

DAPHNE: I'm not really sure of the whole historical thing behind it I don't know much of the history but my mom said that they never got along her parents and his parents and whatever so it goes way back

SIYANDA: It sounds like Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

DAPHNE: Yes exactly (chuckles) exactly that's exactly how it sounds like so you know and so for the most of my life I didn't actually know that he was my dad I didn't find out he was my father until I mean I'd heard rumours about but when you're little you don't really think about it much or you know it's just you're with your family and your mother

and that's no father you don't really know what dad is I guess and mostly everybody cause it was a family house so you know all the sisters my mom's sisters and brothers all lived in that yard you know even in separate houses some of them like that and so all the sisters my mom's sisters they were for the most part single, single moms expect for one only one my grandmother has nine children and I think that there are five girls and four boys I think and all the girls are single parents expect for one only one of them is married.

SIYANDA: So everyone stays on one property on one land basically?

DAPHNE: Yes ja basically well at least when I was growing up they've since moved and now the house is basically empty expect for one uncle who, who still lives but now it's just for everybody family members visiting who need some place to stay while they are in town or whatever they can go to the family house but we all grew up little cousins running around in the yard you know something like that so that's was my childhood years ja and we, we had we had a farm and a pig pan in the back and we had chickens and all of that so growing up we used to like feed the pigs and you know hhaa just I guess kinda an island lifestyle I mean yeah

SIYANDA: It sounds as it was quite a big family then

DAPHNE: Ja it was a large family ja it's a pretty big family

SIYANDA: But you were the only child in terms of your own small family just you and your mom...

DAPHNE: My brother ja I have a brother so it was him and me my mom and the rest of them so ja but for some reason I can't I can't picture my brother hhaa I don't know being there for most of it I don't know.

SIYANDA: Is he older or younger than you?

DAPHNE: He's younger than me ja but we've lived a lot of our lives separately too which is probably why I can't picture him in a lot of my childhood.

SIYANDA: Cause he's your half-brother (I already knew this fact as Dahema and I are friends)

DAPHNE: Well not because he's my half brother but because after a while my mom just you know things got tough in Jamaica you know work was hard to find she WAS a teacher she was a teacher and went to secretarial school did all that stuff you know she had skills and but the economy in Jamaica in the 80's was that was the decline of the Jamaican economy was basically starting there and then and it was hard to get jobs and we live in this very small town so it's WAY you know it's far from Kingstone and the main economic areas of the country and you know she had a chance to visit the Bahamas and you know somebody offered her a job and you know well it took a while to find a job but you know she was offered to go and visit and she went and she thought you know "I might stand a chance here and it's gonna be tough starting up but" so she went and ...

SIYANDA: How old were you when she left?

DAPHNE: I don't (pause)

SIYANDA: And did you go with her ...

DAPHNE: NO

SIYANDA: ...or did you stay behind?

DAPHNE: No I stayed behind and she left meeee with I think it's a cousin of hers my grandmother's side her cousin or some close relative I'm not really sure so I stayed with that person for a while but, but we moved around a lot because you know being in the Bahamas and you know earning American dollars currency people tend to get KINDA reedy and even though she's a struggling parent and going to the Bahamas it's hard there because when you go and it's like no matter how skilled you are you're just when you go there you just have to do whatever you can get you know so for her was it's was doing housekeeping and all that kinda stuff even though she was skilled as a teacher because that's what was available you know and immigration issues in the Bahamas was and still is very tense between the Bahamas and Jamaica in terms you know immigrants coming in and whatever so it's really tough to get a start of any kind of work you know in Bahamas so you know she was a housekeeper and I was in Jamaica my brother was as well and we lived with different people my brother and I for most of our lives because you know and when she went to the Bahamas she never returned to Jamaica to live so she's always lived in the Bahamas for maybe seventeen she's been there for basically almost twenty years now.

SIYANDA: And when you say they let you live with different people were those people family...

DAPHNE: Yeah they were usually family yeah usually family so my brother stayed with well one cousin and I stayed with you know an aunt or something like that

SIYANDA: And as a child what did you make of that essentially your mom is away your dad you don't see much even if

DAPHNE: I never thought about my dad because it's like he was non-existent so he didn't exist well what was a father and I didn't I never remember having any idea of what that meant you know the term 'dad' ja it was just my mom you know and my aunt and my uncles that were around and cousins father no you know my cousins their dad's used to come around to whatever and so I recognized them as being fathers but for me I the thought never really crossed my mind as to why I didn't have any or you know whatever the case may be

SIYANDA: So what did you make of your mother leaving you that experience was it hard was it...

DAPHNE: Ehhhe

SIYANDA: ...the norm?

DAPHNE: It was the norm but even at that age I recognized the importance of her having to work because we, we were poor I mean we didn't grow up having a lot of stuff

you know we typical family I guess you share whatever you know and my uncles were farmers so you know they would bring in like the stable food the yams bananas stuff like that and you just bought meat or we had chickens and pigs whatever so right so it was that kinda situation but we never grew up with a lot buying clothes that never really happened we bought material and I have an aunt that's a very good dressmaker so she made our clothes and stuff like that

SIYANDA: I remember any new clothes we had was only on Christmas ...

DAPHNE: laughs

SIYANDA: ... once a year that's only new clothes other than that forget it

DAPHNE: Ja well I guess cause probably because buying cloth is probably not that expensive we ja we were cause of course she's our aunt so she made it for free for the most part so we had clothes but ja it was usually reserved for special occasions you know a little trip somewhere that's you know really special or like you said Christmas ja.

SIYANDA: So what kinds of games who were your friends that you guys played ...

DAPHNE: I didn't really have any friends outside of my cousins

SIYANDA: Really?

DAPHNE: Ja they, they were my friends cause we all just stayed together we went to school together walked home together you know during lunchtime we played together I don't remember having a single friend outside of...

SIYANDA: Outside of your family.

DAPHNE: Outside of my cousins

SIYANDA: It's very....

DAPHNE: And then we'd go home and we play games I can't remember exactly what we used to play expect playing teacher.

SIYANDA: How do you play teacher?

DAPHNE: Well I was always the teacher and I would sit the rest of my cousins down and we had a little chalkboard

SIYANDA: Oh my God I used to play teacher

DAPHNE: chuckle

SIYANDA: All by myself cause my cousins were quite small they couldn't b students so that's...

DAPHNE: laughs

SIYANDA: ...what flowers become the students I used to hit ...

DAPHNE: Ja

SIYANDA: ... and teach

DAPHNE: Ja

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: Oh my God deja vu

DAPHNE: And I had quite a lot of cousins so we ja so whoever wanted to stick around or have the attention span to actually sit there for a couple of minutes then you know I'd teach them and that's you know what I remember you know.

SIYANDA: So was education quite important in your family?

DAPHNE: AAHH YES actually yes it was very important to my mom and to my aunts and my grandmother as well my grandmother is actually very strict matriarch of the family I mean she's actually scary I was scared of her...

BOTH: laughing

DAPHNE: ... growing up to be honest you know and she, she was not very sparing when it came to using the rod (laughs) you know whenever it was necessary sometimes even when it wasn't necessary you know ja so at home all of us being little were scared and even the adults were scared of her to be honest you know she wasn't afraid to slap up the adults as well I remember my grown cousins getting slapped up ...

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: She was crazy ja but yeah there was some point like I said my mom was teacher when she was there and my aunts expect for one they are all teachers as well so I'm from a family of women being teachers and the men being farmers and so I remember we always had lots of books you know from the school and you know certain government books that we had to read and we always had to do homework and I know that Saturday you know is usually free time play time for most kids we had that but at some point in the afternoon after the house was clean we did have chores no matter how small we were there were certain little things we could do and not like these days when you have the nice shiny tiles back then we had to use polish on the floor so then we had to use we had to shine them which we use dry coconuts the husk from the coconuts

SIYANDA: Wow

DAPHNE: Yeah because it's abrasive enough and you can shine the floor with that with the polish so that was kinda our jobs you know the grown folks would do the polishing the hard part and then us kids juts fool around pretending to shine we weren't really doing anything at all but afternoon after chores were done and then we were cleaned up (brief pause) to the books we all had to read a book or you know talk about what it was about we used to get vocabulary words...

SIYANDA: What? So all your aunts were teachers...

DAPHNE: Yes they were teachers so we had to do that and my mom was very adamant about you know education and learning so and I enjoyed it to be honest cause I've always loved reading and from that time I used I always wanted to be a teacher so and I loved vocabulary words so ja so in terms of education ja it was a pretty big thing in the house

SIYANDA: And what...

DAPHNE: And my grandmother she always used to teach us different prayers which is kinda scary cause at nighttime she would call you into her bedroom so like you know (raises her voice) "It's your turn come in" and the other your cousins who had gone in before they would come out crying and screaming ...

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: ...because they got slapped up because you know they couldn't remember the Our Father Prayer straight or whatever it might be or any of the different I don't even know what you call them that you have to learn you know at Catholic or Anglican churches you know these different what are they called (pause) ?

SIYANDA: Ahhmm...

DAPHNE: Creeds

SIYANDA: Okay

DAPHNE: The creeds yes we had to learn the creeds ahhh (breaths out slowing)

SIYANDA: So Christianity was quite....

DAPHNE: Yes my ja especially for my grandmother and being in that house you had to pray every night and you had to go in her room to do it cause she had to make sure that you were doing it properly and that you were saying (chuckles) what you were supposed to be saying (laughs). Ahhh it's not like you know your parents like in on TV and you there beside and you say (mimics a child's voice) "Our father" these sweet little things No it was, it was...

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: ...it was a scary process you know it was a very scary process cause you know if you missed a line or missed a word you are getting slapped up so ja

SIYANDA: What would be like your most significant memory of growing up?

DAPHNE: My significant memory of growing up in Lloydsville especially would be growing up in Jamaica on the whole probably be as a child anyway would be being lonely ja that's my most significant thing I always remember being lonely and being quite and for the most part even at school just sitting by myself a lot yes my cousins were around and stuff but there were times when I'd just disappear or be separate from and just sit by myself and I guess it's always been an issue with kinda I don't know if you wanna call it antisocial but I've always had that problem well my teachers thought it was a problem because on every report card progress report that I'd had ...

SIYANDA: "Just too silent"

DAPHNE: ... "She's a brilliant child she's very smart but we wish she could talk more and we wish that she could find friends" when I went to the Bahamas same thing.

SIYANDA: My God even now

DAPHNE: And even now....

BOTH: laugh

DAPHNE: ... it haSIYANDA't changed

SIYANDA: (laughs) It has changed at all

DAPHNE: Some things have changed I crave solitude I don't know why bit I do...

SIYANDA: It's a beautiful thing though

DAPHNE: ... but I don't know if it's because it's a state that I got used to ...

SIYANDA: ... growing up

DAPHNE: ...growing up you know my mom not being there my brother was in a different town living with other people and we only saw each other when the adults saw it fit to say "Okay let's go visit you brother" so maybe it would be once in a couple of months maybe once a year maybe you know so I don't know so I was lonely for a lot for times.

SIYANDA: I just remembered I am supposed to put a book [under the Digital Voice Recorder] apparently there's vibrations on the table I don't know what that meant that what the manual said.

DAPHNE: Okay so ja and maybe when we were still living in Lloydsville you know the aunts and the cousins started moving out you know (brief pause) still the same town but off the family land and so I found myself alone as well and so it become harder then you know so I was alone and then I left living with the family and moved to another town living with other people AGAIN.

SIYANDA: Family still?

DAPHNE: No, no

SIYANDA: Who were you living with?

DAPHNE: Just like friends, friends of my mom's and different people so I've, I've moved around a lot and I've with many different people and so has my brother

SIYANDA: Was that hard?

DAPHNE: Ja it was very hard ja it was very hard because I was always alone and usually I would be the only child in the household so I've never had anyone to play with or anything like that and because I was shy I never really have friends in school either so, so ja it was very difficult for me (brief pause) and I remember always missing my brother and when I used to see him it might be for two hours if that much I remember always crying when I had to leave or when he had to leave me and I would sit there for hours and just cry outside by myself so I've never forgotten those things but you know which is probably why I'm so protective of him NOW I can't stand him being too far from me (brief pause) and so ja that was life growing up in Jamaica (brief pause) those people didn't always treat me well or him for that matter he was very badly treated even by

family by my cousins my eldest aunt the one who is married she has lots of kids I think she has like fifteen children some big and you know so you know those kids would [have] been grown for the most part when we were little and so my brother stayed with one of them and she, she was horrible she used to beat him all the time for no reason at all and she (brief pause) her not to feed him you know money would be sent for clothes and you know she wouldn't buy clothes for him so he was growing getting taller being a boy and you know his pants would be extremely short and tight because she wasn't buying him clothes and even my mom was shocked when she finally sent for him to come to the Bahamas the state that he appeared to be in when she picked him up at the airport in the Bahamas in his tight clothes you know that couldn't fit him and stuff like that and she just wondered what happened to the money you know

SIYANDA: And was it similar for you as well?

DAPHNE: Ahh for me I was better taken care of in terms of food and clothes but ill treated in terms of being beaten for things that you know I didn't necessarily do or just living these strict households where you know you know nothing was excused being a child you know being a child didn't excuse you from anything you got beaten for everything and so I was beaten a lot and at one point I lived with someone who had a son and I was the one who got the blame for everything so I was always the one getting BEATEN and the son would get away with everything literally everything he was a spoilt brat still is

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: Well he is so ja then now they were always writing my mom calling my mom for more money more money more money you can't see what they are doing with the money you cause our lives aren't necessarily better we are not getting what we are supposed to and so she finally SENT for me first my brother was still in Jamaica so I went to the Bahamas

SIYANDA: Okay let's go back a bit before you went to the Bahamas school in Jamaica your first school experience

DAPHNE: My first school experience my gosh that will be Lloydsville Basic School (chuckles) it's like preschool and stuff like that I remember it was just it's one little building which was basically one room and it's divided up by...

SIYANDA: [the school sounds like one of the schools I went to] Oh God (laughs)

DAPHNE: ... by chalkboards by yeah and (laughs) you just (laughs)

SIYANDA: You see everybody else in classroom

DAPHNE: Exactly and you could hear everybody else shouting and answering questions that the teacher is asking them or whatever so ...

SIYANDA: And the other class in the corner is having a fantastic time...

DAPHNE: laughs

SIYANDA: ...and you are like....

DAPHNE: Exactly and of course the meals are prepared at the school we always had (brief pause) we always had lunch you never had to bring lunch cause it's provided by the school but I don't know parents probably had to pay for it I'm sure so (chuckles) and I remember always having curry, curry chicken and white rice and real bananas

SIYANDA: That's fantastic....

DAPHNE: laughs

SIYANDA: ... we had porriDaphnee ...

DAPHNE: laughs hysterically

SIYANDA: ...day in day out ...

DAPHNE: laughs

SIYANDA: ... and I promise you every time I go back to where I was born and there's that there's a particular smell oh God it just takes me back there when we had porriDaphnee

DAPHNE: No, no we had food I was having curry chicken and some things like that it was good...

SIYANDA: Jerk chicken

DAPHNE: YEAH but things have gotten very bad in Jamaica now so now they just get like some kinda nutritional milk stuff in different colours but it has nutritional value or something and these buns these dried buns which they call nutri-buns in Jamaica

SIYANDA: And did you eat a lot of cou-cou¹(?)

DAPHNE: Ahh no

SIYANDA: You don't know what cou-cou is?

DAPHNE: No

SIYANDA: NO? Cause I was watching this food programme and she was preparing you know that programme I told you about Come Dine With Me and there was a lady who is also Jamaican and so she was preparing a Jamaican meal and dinner I think she prepared jerk chicken with cou-cou which apparently you peel them you hard boil them and peel them and it sort of helps you it cuts the spices from the jerk chicken

DAPHNE: Cou-cou²

SIYANDA: Cou-cou (pronouncing it as she did) sorry

DAPHNE: OHH okay OHH

BOTH: laugh out loud

DAPHNE: I don't like cou-cous

SIYANDA: You don't like....

¹ I was pronouncing it as "chu-chu"

² She pronounces it as 'cho-cho'

DAPHNE: No

SIYANDA: It looked fantastic on screen I was like “oh I want that”

DAPHNE: It’s a pretty thing I like it it’s green and it’s hard and...

SIYANDA: Yes, yes

DAPHNE: Yeah but it’s actually quite tasteless

SIYANDA: You serious

DAPHNE: It’s just it doesn’t have any taste

SIYANDA: Okay

DAPHNE: I guess that’s maybe that’s why it helps to absorb maybe the flavours or something maybe the pepper I don’t know I to be honest I’ve always wondered “why is this in the meal? It doesn’t have any taste” it’s like cause when you cut it it’s white and it’s, it’s like a watery thing actually it’s just like biting into water almost in my opinion

SIYANDA: Apparently it’s like a cross between cucumber and potato and whatever...

DAPHNE: Ja exactly so it’s very blend it doesn’t have a real taste I can’t stand it

SIYANDA: It looked fabulous on TV

DAPHNE: Ja people like it but now that you have mentioned it I have seen cou-cou in a while **SIYANDA:** I thought “cha-cha”

DAPHNE: laughs

SIYANDA: laughs back to school so there’s a terrible little class with everybody....

DAPHNE: Well for me it wasn’t terrible I mean it was just school that’s what the experience was you know you could hear everybody see everybody whatever ja the teacher is writing on the mark-board I just remember I always got good grades I always had Spelling and Maths and all that kinda stuff nothing spectacular and of course the school was on the property of the church the same Anglican church so it was on the same property and so I don’t know if it was run or subsidized in anyway by the white folks at the plantation but (brief pause) ja it was there and they may even like given books and stuff like that you know whenever they felt like that in a school year and they bring a couple of note books and pencils or whatever but nothing major ja.

SIYANDA: And was school mixed in terms of gender and...

DAPHNE: Ja

SIYANDA: ...and all this stuff

DAPHNE: Ja yes ja definitely and (pause) it was majority black town obviously black or mixed with East Indians of Eastern Indian descent at least and some Chinese who also came like the Eastern Indians as servants after slavery was abolished cause it was I guess kinda cheaper than maybe having to pay the expat-slaves and so we have a lot of Indians

and Chinese a substantial amount of Chinese in the Jamaican population every almost every town in Jamaica undoubtedly has a shop that is ran by Chinese man or woman or couple and so we had ours I think we probably had like two in Lloydsville.

SIYANDA: Ahh so from a little age you were sort of you did interact with people of different cultural backgrounds

DAPHNE: Well we did yes but ...

SIYANDA: ...How was that?

DAPHNE: ...but, but ahh it was nothing it was just it's just how things were because most families were mixed anyway a black woman with an Indian man or an Indian woman with a black man so a lot of families were always mixed there was no big deal you know but you recognize at the same time that "yeah they were Indian" or "yeah they were mixed" but I mean it was nothing it was just the way things were. In terms of the Chinese you recognized even at that age that they kind of separated themselves so you didn't have them out playing with the rest of the kids and stuff like that no they would play in the backyard with their families but they didn't interact with the rest if us yeah the only time we saw them was when we went to the shop and if they were in the shop and you would say hi to them or whatever ja so the Chinese always kinda separated themselves and I don't remember any of them actually going to the school in the town I think most of them went to a proper town school or something like that you know some kind of private school in another town close by so ja [an inaudible phrase] I mean and then you had the people that were on the sugar plantation who which is the only time we actually saw white people they used to drive through the town especially during cane time cane-cutting time you would see them driving through on the trucks following behind the cane trucks and all that coming through the town itself other than that you never saw them or like I said the once a year when they came to church so....

SIYANDA: ...so was it exciting? How was that experience....

DAPHNE: Aaahhmm I don't know I can't say it was exciting I think the exciting part about it was all these huge trucks driving through with their cane or whatever and not necessarily the white men passing through but we used to recognize "Oh there they are they are passing through town today" you know type of thing (brief pause) but I always recognized that the people in the town the adults were always kind of resentful when they did drive through cause it's like okay they don't care about the town and they only come once a year to show their face you know type of thing and they, they I mean you hardly ever see them they just stick to themselves I mean WAY OUT from the rest of the town basically maybe five ten minute drive from everybody else and ja and I guess they were kind of overbearing well I mean they were the boss anyway at the sugar factory and I know people always complaining about and whatever and even get scared because they also had like a (brief pause) orange, orange groves orchards you know for oranges and stuff and you know you'd have the locals picking the oranges and stuff getting them ready for whatever it was needed for or whether it's to go and make orange juice or whatever now and I always used to hear stories every now and then about how they had

to be careful and you know not even eat any if they were hungry or whatever because they could get shot, shot after if they found taking an orange or stuff like that I always remember people talking about that so, so they were always a bit scared of them and resentful of them you know and they always say that you know it's not any different human being and afraid is the same thing we are still dependent on them because every town basically still is dependent on that one sugar plantation almost the entire town even our cousins my age were working there (brief pause) you know and it's hard work for the amount of money that they get per week per month you can't you can't live on it it's ridiculous you know and I see these OLD men sixty year old you know men getting up at four in the morning (pause) walking in that very cold fog headed to the plantation to BEND all day to cut sugar cane and it breaks my heart even now and I always have that memory of seeing these old men walking cause I used to have to get up for school pretty early (chuckles) in Jamaica.

SIYANDA: What time was that?

DAPHNE: Well when I was younger when I was younger I was in primary school then (brief pause) school started eight I think so that was okay but when I returned to Jamaica later on after I got back from the Bahamas and I was finishing high school I used to get up at five thirty

SIYANDA: Oh my God

DAPHNE: Cause school was long way away and I think the bus left at five fifteen five thirty ...

SIYANDA: So if you missed that bus then you are definitely late for school then

DAPHNE: Well you could always take a taxi buy taxis were more expensive so I mean like you know you trying to save money somehow so and then you took the bus it was cheaper and then you have money to spend for lunch which is what it was all about you know you wanted to buy a boxed lunch you lunch (laughs) so ja.

SIYANDA: You have sort of touched on rather you said about slavery I think about twice now was that taught in school were you aware or made aware of that history in school or did that come later on in your life?

DAPHNE: That came in high school back in high school you know but you would hear the adults talking about it about how you know everything was just like slavery times it haSIYANDA't changed you know you know the white master basically and ja.

SIYANDA: And did your family in particular talk about it or...

DAPHNE: Ahhh my family did to a point because one or two of my uncles worked at the factory doing different things I'm not sure if they worked in the fields or in the orange groves or where but you know and I remember one of my uncles at one point being very scared of working there I think he might have worked in the orange groves cause like I'm sure he's the one I heard with the argument first about (brief pause) being shot at and stuff like that if you are if you're seen taking an orange or whatever it might be so ja.

SIYANDA: Okay, okay so in school what were your favourite subjects?

DAPHNE: (very promptly) English

SIYANDA: Okay

DAPHNE: (chuckles) English is my favourite subject in prim...I mean in basic school that's basically what you learn English and Math I can't remember learning anything else

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: Maybe we did little things like the national anthem and all things like that and the political allegiance ...

SIYANDA: Oh my God

DAPHNE: ... and things like that...

SIYANDA: Really?

DAPHNE: Ja you had learn that at an early age you know "Stand with your stand to your side or over your heart when you sing the national anthem or the pleDaphnee" or whatever ja and ja so it's like that but I don't remember learning anything else outside other than that and English but I could be wrong.

SIYANDA: You wanted to be a teacher ...

DAPHNE: I wanted to be a teacher at that point probably because it was the only thing I knew but then I always enjoyed teaching my cousins ...

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: Maybe it's that feeling of superiority

SIYANDA: Ja it's power

DAPHNE: Yes cause I really and truly was the only one who was interested (chuckles) in learning to be honest so ja.

SIYANDA: Alright and then at some point then your mom sent for you ...

DAPHNE: My mom sent for me.

SIYANDA: ... why did she send for you?

DAPHNE: Because (pause) the demands for money like I mentioned before for more money to take care of me and my brother and you know nothing is being done you know things aren't being paid for or whatever the case may be with the money that she actually sent and I guess she probably just started to miss us too and maybe she felt that at that point where she was in her life maybe she would have been able to afford it to have us so she sent for me.

SIYANDA: Yeah so then you pack your stuff and...

DAPHNE: I didn't know where I was going cause I was I left when I was nine years old two days after my ninth birthday I left I left Jamaica. The lady just packed up my stuff and she is like "Oh" I don't know and she suddenly said we're going to see my mom but

I didn't know what that meant you know I just remember getting in the car and driving some place you know

SIYANDA: Had you seen your mom in between? Did she come to see you guys?

DAPHNE: Yeah she came once in a while but I mean traveling was expensive and as a single mom who's taking care of two kids you can't travel too often so most of her money went back to us in Jamaica you know once in a while she would be able to travel you know.

SIYANDA: So they said you were going to see your mama

DAPHNE: "You gonna see your mom" I say "okay cool yeeeahh" for my birthday you know it was like you know you are gonna see your mom for your birthday great okay so I think we were gonna drive there because I maybe I'm not even sure if I understood the concept of you know flying places I just knew it as the Bahamas but exactly what the Bahamas was no idea but okay so get in the car ja she packed like a bag or two I didn't have that much stuff to begin with obviously cause I moved around a lot ...

SIYANDA: At nine

DAPHNE: (laughs) yes you know...!

BOTH: laugh

DAPHNE: ...my two limousines full of stuff

BOTH: laugh

DAPHNE: So and we drive and drive and I just remember the journey being...

SIYANDA: ...very long

DAPHNE: ...forever because of course we were headed to the airport well I lived in Spanish town we had to get to Kingstone which is only an hour away but when you are a child an hour in a car is forever so we finally get to this huge place cause I didn't know anything about an airport or planes...

SIYANDA: God that's new you are quite lucky to be flying at nine actually

DAPHNE: (laughs) I didn't know it was just it's strange the things you don't know because when I went to the Bahamas a whole different experience I mean kids in the Bahamas were traveling from like you know babies stuff like that they have been to the US and Canada or whatever but coming from a real small island of Jamaica I mean the Bahamas is tiny too but they are closer to the US relations are better you know the economy is better so I guess more traveling more moving up and down but for me Jamaica is very much an island. So we go to we get out the car huge place I have no idea what this thing is and I just remember people being everywhere and this nice smiling lady taking me saying (mimicking a cheerful voice) "Hello" asking me my name or whatever putting a little tag on me I guess my name tag or whatever for ID (mimicking a cheerful

voice) “so are you going to see your mom?” I am like (mimicking a child’s voice) “yes” or whatever and her walking me to this thing whatever this thing is ...

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: And me sitting down I have no idea what I’m doing or where I’m going and the lady who took care of me saying goodbye I don’t remember being anything special or tearful (chuckles) she was probably happy I was leaving.

BOTH: laugh

DAPHNE: So ja and (brief pause) next thing I know ...

SIYANDA: And the flight?

DAPHNE: The flight I don’t even remember I just remember being just being anxious and wondering where I’m going but I don’t remember being nervous or anything like that because the lady was she was really nice really sweet she spent a lot of the time with me I think she sat besides me for the entire trip the air hostess so and catching a conversation or whatever and ja and I just remember going to the Bahamas getting off the thing which turns out to be a plane...

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: So, I’m walking through another big building which would be the Bahamas airport and (brief pause) being put in this room to wait and wait and wait cause obviously when you are traveling by yourself or whatever as a child they put you in a room and wait to process you and to talk to the adult or whoever is coming to get you check the legal status and all that different stuff ‘the how long you gonna be staying in the country’ you know all those things that matter so I was in this room for hours waiting and waiting but there’s a huge line as there always is when a plane is coming from JAMAICA to the Bahamas it’s like the whole country is emigrating it’s ridiculous ja so I had to wait a long time before I actually got to my mom and they processed her and I remember going outside and seeing my mommy ja and that’s where life in the Bahamas started.

SIYANDA: Then starts life in the Bahamas

DAPHNE: Yes

SIYANDA: So tell me about life in the Bahamas

DAPHNE: Life in the Bahamas was (brief pause) was rough definitely cause at the time my mom was still doing housekeeping and such because it’s very hard to move up doing anything and you know (brief pause) teaching but then (brief pause) it was becoming more difficult because in Jamaica you are able to teach once you, you know you got like a teacher’s certificate and stuff like that but you know things are advancing and us becoming “Oh you need to have a degree” you know “or go to Teacher’s college and different things” so you know the requirements are different so it’s hard for her to teach so I remember she was still doing housekeeping when I arrive and going to school at the same time and paid for our education for me and....

SIYANDA: Where did you guys stay? Did she have a house? A flat?

DAPHNE: Ahhh we rented a house actually but there was more than one set of people I think it was maybe tow families in the place but the house is like split in half but we shared the kitchen and I think we shared the bathrooms but everything else was separate so it was okay in that sense it was the, the economics the money thing cause the housekeeper's salary obviously is not going to be that much (brief pause) ja so that was hard and I mean nursery (?) was expensive really BUT the thing is I was I guess education in Jamaica was really good because when I got to the Bahamas I took a test for a few private schools Catholic schools and the one that my mom really wanted me to go to I passed for it I took a test and I did really well you had to do reading and Math and some English whatever checked out all your skills and you know see what you know and I passed I did really well so then I started private school Catholic school that's where began my Catholic education which is stuck with me my entire life

SIYANDA: And how did you pay for this Catholic education?

DAPHNE: My mom paid for it which obviously is hard on her salary because it's a lot of money for a private school much less a private Catholic school which most more than other private schools that were there but you know she wanted the best for me and so she managed and then she also had a boyfriend too a long term boyfriend and I guess he took on the father figure so he probably helped out a few times as far as I remember it wasn't a consistent thing where he helped out all the time in terms of school fee or whatever so the pressure was still on my mom for most of it whatever. So I went to school I went to Xiaer (?) School or Xiaer's (?) College which ever one you wanna call it they are both the same place ahh Catholic school (brief pause) with lots of nuns and different people I remember being there and then you also had regular teachers as well but some of them were nuns. A brilliant education brilliant education fantastic place AND there's where I learned about swimming cause it was a private school we had a pool all of that so I had to get in a stain cold pool and learned to swim from end to the next with the help of the teacher and I remember you know by the time I got there I got there at nine so that was grade four and I remember everybody else had been there since kindergarden basically so since they were five so ja cause the school runs from I think kindergarden to grade six so I'm getting there at grade four so these kids (chuckles) are like you know sharks in the water and stuff. So I'm there the only one the new child not only am I new but I also have an accent you know a Jamaican accent and ...

SIYANDA: (in a rather bad Jamaican accent) Yeah man

BOTH: laugh

DAPHNE: ... I have an accent and I'm just there in the swallow little part of the pool holding on to the wall learning how to kick you know when everybody is doing lanes in the pool and stuff like that but then I learned and you know join in with everybody after a couple of weeks so it was a good experience probably the fact that I also saw my swimming teacher at the beach one day and she threw me in and so I had to learn to swim yeah which is probably when I did learn how to swim really it's when she threw me in she was like "Swim" and so I swam. The schooling was good and it was the first time

that I mixed with people from all over from all over the world and not just blacks and Indians like before...

SIYANDA: In Jamaica

DAPHNE: Like in Jamaica now there weren't there weren't any Indians but black and white so because the Bahamas is pretty mixed population all of them are Canadians Americans and British people who have moved there settled for the island life and stuff like that so...

SIYANDA: How was that for you?

DAPHNE: It was interesting and I guess when you are a child you don't really think of race you just realize that they look different but as you get older you realize "okay they white I', black" or whatever but back then it's just...

SIYANDA: Exciting

DAPHNE: ... more kids and whatever and we all just hung out and there was no separation they didn't I wasn't treated any differently you know I had some white teachers some are black and so yeah it was a good experience and so we all learned to get along and it was great it was just like nice little community of people mostly privileged cause we had politicians' children and you know well off people and just your average folks and then you know people like me a maid's daughter or whatever you know but it didn't matter we all could afford to go and we were going and we were learning and whatever so that never mattered ja. So I had white best friends I did one or two three you know so primary finishing primary school there was good and the education was fantastic and I did really well, well I was always good at school so it was great.

SIYANDA: And at this time did you change in terms of what you wanted to be or you were adamant that you wanted to be a teacher?

DAPHNE: I think at that point I still wanted to be a teacher ja, ja I wanted to be a teacher until (brief pause) the sixth grade ja until I graduated in primary school.

SIYANDA: Alright so I mean I think it sounds like at this point it was like a much more clearly defined time where you made friends.

DAPHNE: Yes

SIYANDA: Tell me about that

DAPHNE: Making friends oh gosh making friends it was I was shy but it wasn't difficult BECAUSE I was different in terms of that I have the accent kids were fascinated by stuff like that....

SIYANDA: So you were cool

DAPHNE: So it was kinda cool so they always wanted to hear my accent and I remember sometimes they tried to pay me just to talk

SIYANDA: Oh cool

DAPHNE: Ja

BOTH: laugh

DAPHNE: Of course I never took any money from them it was just like you know so they loved the accent and used to ask me where it's from and stuff like that but so that's how u made lots of my friends and they were just really cool kids I guess parents brought them up really well and they were like "okay this is the new girl we're gonna take her under our wings" and in the end that's what they did so I don't think I really had a chance to feel isolated I can't remember one day being at that school and feeling new like a new person ja with everyone

SIYANDA: So it was cool

DAPHNE: Yeah it was great ja and our school was like down town in the tourist area so lunchtime outside playing on the field and everything and Bay Street was just the main tourist street it was right there so tourists would always be passing and we would just stand there at lunchtime where even the tourists would come up and talk to us in the face or whatever so we were always interaction between races and stuff like so it was not a big deal (brief pause) not that much of a phenomenon as it is in Jamaica where it doesn't happen as much you know there's a lot of white people a percentage of white people but in Jamaica but they stick basically you know the wealthy areas and the corporate Kingstone and stuff like that you will see them you don't really see them out of that and only in the tourists areas as well so ja. But seeing them in the Bahamas is like an everyday part of life you know they were just a part of everything so ja but I become aware of wealth more than I did of race I think in the Bahamas (brief pause) and well I guess they were kinda attached to each other because all the white people that I did know and all my friends they were wealthy they WERE wealthy you know and they by then it's like Volvos were the big 'it'-cars you know the Volvos and BMWs and stuff like that and I remember a lot of them had the Volvos and these fantastic cars came to pick them up ...

SIYANDA: And you DID not have a Volvo....

DAPHNE: No I didn't have a Volvo.

SIYANDA: Were picked up from school?

DAPHNE: At some point in time my mom got a job as a live-in housekeeper (brief pause) for once again even in the Bahamas in that small place I had to live with someone else because her, her boss didn't want any children in the house so she had to pay someone again from her small salary and not only for my private education but to take care of me as well so plus send money to my brother who is still in Jamaica and ja (brief pause) it's amazing the things you remember

SIYANDA: (thinking of my mother) It's incredible it's incredible what actually mothers can manage to put together ...

DAPHNE: (agreeing) Hhmmhm

SIYANDA: ... and even do with very, very little I mean how on earth is she able to do that you know give you a private education take care of...

DAPHNE: Yeah

SIYANDA: ... and your brother at the same time!

DAPHNE: Yep making a dollar out of fifteen cents as they say (chuckles) ja, ja exactly and back then sleepovers were the thing so I remember going to sleepovers and all that seeing these fabulous houses with POOLS in their backyard and I was just “Wow” (chuckles) and ja most of them were white homes and one girl her family ran a ranch as well so there were horses I remember learning to (brief pause) ride horseback and things like that so that was fantastic so I had all these I guess privileged experiences that you know a lot of people don’t get to have just based on you know these relationships that I developed so I’ve lived a privileged lifestyle but myself I’ve you know I’m not wealthy you know.

SIYANDA: And did you inspire to that you know to the huge house with a pool horses and these fantastic cars the Volvos and all that?

DAPHNE: Ahhh well it wasn’t like I said “Oh I wanna HAVE that” I mean I guess when you are a child you are envious of certain things you see (adopting a child’s voice) “I wish I could have a pool to swim in the summertime” because you can see how much fun they are having you know but I know my only pool time will be when I go to school and we are having you know physical education so ja I did wanna a pool I don’t know if necessarily wanted a big fantastic house but just remember always wanting a pool ja and even as an adult I have always said you know I have to have a pool and I think it’s that thing for me because is because I saw that you know the type of pool ja so ja and then I became “hmm I think I wanna have a two storey house” cause most of them had a two storey house so you know because of course these are the things you, you know you consider to be sings of success or whatever it may be some I remember wanting those things so yeah but life is good and I had great friends I remember that’s how I met my best friend who’s still my best friend from when I was nine years old. I where I lived after I had to live with someone (brief pause) she had a car but she never dropped me to school even though school was maybe ten minutes away by car if that much maybe five minutes by car cause I think I could probably walk it in half hour but I was nine years old and I remember having to walk the streets busy streets I mean if you think about it nine o’clock everybody is headed to work kids are going to school you know they have to get to school by eight thirty, nine so traffic and I was small I was short and I was skinny this child walking the street to school and back you know if it’s a rural area it’s okay cause you know in Jamaica it was fine cause it’s a rural area and then you walked in groups but it was me by myself you know....

SIYANDA: Actually in a strange country as well.

DAPHNE: Exactly in a strange country and I always remember people looking at me because I went to A PRIVATE SCHOOL a Catholic school where everybody’s parents dropped them off in the morning and picked them up they left work at lunchtime or whatever it might be and picked them up at three o’clock you know but I always walked home and I always walked to school I remember them asking me why I was walking and I was “I just live right up there” but I mean

SIYANDA: But in actual fact it was up THERE

DAPHNE: (chuckles) It's up there you know but I mean I couldn't say "well you know I don't live with my mom you know" "My mom is a MAID" you know I mean (brief pause) back then I guess at nine you kind of you start I started to become aware then of you know this whole thing about being wealthy you know and the separation of the classes and stuff like that so saying my mother was a housekeeper you know she was a live-in maid and whatever was just (brief pause)

SIYANDA: A shame

DAPHNE: Ja in one sense it's not something you know when you see them pulling up in their BMWs and Volvos and the two storey house and pools (brief pause) we are the Jamaican housekeepers no less

SIYANDA: Did the subject ever come up about what your parents do....

DAPHNE: Actually....

SIYANDA: ...so did you have to ever say that well "my mom....

DAPHNE: NO actually no, no, no one ever asked no, no one ever asked I don't remember them asking but my best friend yeah her mother they always used to drive past me a lot in the mornings

SIYANDA: ...so she used to pick you up

DAPHNE: ...and she started picking me up cause my best friend was saying (in a child's voice) "Mommy that the girl from school the Jamaican girl" whatever and her mother used to wonder why is she walking by herself you know where is her mother you know type thing you know this protective instinct and so they started picking me up every morning whatever and she found out where I was living and used to drop me home and stuff like that and met the lady who I was living with and realized she wasn't treating me well but she wasn't she used to starve me or, or she used to buy cause she had a baby at the time too and (brief pause) I remember one time in particular it's was at night we hadn't eaten I'd hadn't had any dinner or anything and I remember (brief pause) she went to Taco-Bell I don't know if you've heard of Taco-Bell. It's a fast food restaurant that you have but they deal with tacos...

SIYANDA: Tacos yeah wow nice.

DAPHNE: ... and stuff like that and I remember she brought onion rings and stuff for her daughter and she didn't buy anything for me and she didn't offer me anything .

SIYANDA: So you could even hear the pack and smell this thing and not...

DAPHNE: Well I was in the car and they

SIYANDA: (in shock) YOU WERE IN THE CAR?

DAPHNE: Yes cause I was a child and I mean she was tolerable but I don't think she would leave actually yes she would definitely....

SIYANDA: laughs hysterically

DAPHNE: (also begins laughing) I was a bout to say she would never leave me in the house alone but

SIYANDA: more hysterical laughter

DAPHNE: ...of course cause if I used to walk home at three o'clock there was no one there she was still at work so I was in the house by myself which when you're nine years old you are not supposed to do and I remember just watching cartoons on TV (sings) "Brave Star" do you know Brave Star the cartoon ...

SIYANDA: (nods)

DAPHNE: ... and ja and silly other cartoons I used to come home. And ja I remember being starved and she would buy things that I didn't eat I wasn't used to being from Jamaica I mean cultures have certain things that they eat and Bahamians like grits do you know what grits is?

SIYANDA: (makes a noise signaling No)

DAPHNE: It's a thing like you know cornmeal?

SIYANDA: Cornmeal what's cornmeal?

DAPHNE: It's made from corn ...

SIYANDA: Okay, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes I know cornmeal

DAPHNE: And you make like breakfast ...

SIYANDA: Oh yes

DAPHNE: ...porriDaphnee from it whatever grits is the same I don't know if it's bleached cornmeal or what it is but it's that grainy thing just like how cornmeal is kinda grainy but it's white it's just disgusting when you cook it's just this white slob thing but then they mix it they grits and tuna grits and corn beef grits and egg grits and butter I mean anything you can think of with grits I was like 'what is grits? This disgusting thing'

SIYANDA: some laughter

DAPHNE: So I never used to eat it and I just used to wait till she left and threw it in the garbage or whatever so a lot of times I was starving in the house because she cooked it a lot and grits is pretty cheap as well so basically the money that she got from my mom just cut because bought the same thing and I remember always eating grits and drinking Ribena so far a long time I hated Ribena because she used to buy the big undiluted bottles nowadays they have the drinks that you could just drink like that but you know before and I don't know if they still have it but undiluted stuff that you pour it out and then you add the water to it (brief pause) I was too young I did not know that you had to dilute it

.....

SIYANDA: OOOHHHH

DAPHNE: ... so I used to drink this thick thing and I'm like "What is this nasty thing I'm supposed to drink" it was when I got older that I realized that you are actually supposed to put water in it cause I didn't know and she never told me so she was like

“there’s Ribena if you wanna drink some” so that’s how I used to drink it so it was bad and I remember the house had centrepedes (?) and stuff ...

SIYANDA: What’s centrepedes (?)?

DAPHNE: Those insects you know centrepedes and millipedes I remember they used to come up through the drain sometimes cause it was an older house I remember one bit me while I was in the shower it fell from somewhere up top there by the shower and landed and bit me. It was a strange and lonely time being in that place it was never a good experience being starved ja and weekends were the same weekends you know maybe you would think she would take me out whatever so but she never really even took me to see my mom maybe once in a while so my mom had to visit a lot as much as she could being a live-in housekeeper you can’t really leave all that much and so started another lonely phase for me and so my best friend after I guess they saw enough and realized what was going on that this lady wasn’t taking care of me so my best friend’s mom offered to take care of me (brief pause)...

SIYANDA: Wow

DAPHNE: ... and took me in and I moved there for a while and it’s probably one of the happiest times of my life actually until I actually got to live with my mom finally but you know before then that was the happiest time for me living there and my mom didn’t have to pay her she just did it and she bought me clothes just how she bought her daughter clothes when she was going shopping for anything you know she would buy for both of us you know just buy different colours you know but we both liked pink so we used to fight for pink so every now and then I would get pink she would get the blue and the other time she would get the pink and you know whatever it may be.

SIYANDA: So your best friend become like your sister?

DAPHNE: My sister ja she’s a I don’t call her my best friend actually I call her my sister and we are still that way and so I lived there and it was another cultural experience too because I was used to Caribbean but her grandmother is Jamaican as well but her grandfather is from (brief pause) Nigeria originally but they lived in Ghana for a long time because the grandfather’s father had a business in Ghana so the kids grew up in Ghana and knew the language and anything so a lot of the food was actually Ghanaian food stuff which once again I wasn’t used to it was different so certain little things I had to get used to and all that and they lived ockra and stuff like that a lot.

SIYANDA: What’s ockra?

DAPHNE: (faces a shocked face at the fact that I don’t know what it is)

SIYANDA: Ehhyi I’m from down south man

DAPHNE: Ockra is this you know ockra who was I talking to about ockra? Wasn’t you?

SIYANDA: Is it occar or ockra?

DAPHNE: Ockra I think it’s like (begins to spell the word) O-C-K-R-A it’s these long like green beans thin things...

SIYANDA: Like bananas?

DAPHNE: No not bananas (brief pause) they are long and green but they are you could eat them like that but a lot of people cook it in food and it's slimy when you cook it, it becomes slimy really slimy

SIYANDA: No I don't know it now I don't wanna eat it.

DAPHNE: I know it's a real African thing and I think the middle-eastern countries eat it as well so and I hate slimy things so a lot of the food again I had to get used to you know so I had all these different experiences going on you know (brief pause) and going to like a white house where my mom worked and she would take me she was doing a live-in thing but she had weekends free so weekends she would actually find somewhere else to work I mean she was a single mom and she still worked for some white people so now and then she used to take me and so I saw another side you know the really privileged people and actually feeling (pause) ja I don't even know what the word to use (brief pause) I guess kinda prejudice for the first time and feeling that separation like yeah not every white person is gonna great you with open arms or whatever like how my experience was at school with kids that you know it's still a bit different going to this white house and you just sit in the little corner your mom says "Don't make any noise" you know they don't like noise or whatever and you know you just had to sit there you are lucky they have a TV that you can watch until your mom gets done and they have kids but the kids don't play with you, you know cause like "you are the maid's child" I mean who's gonna ...

SIYANDA: ...play with you?

DAPHNE: ... they are not gonna play with you stuff like that so I had that I have those two experiences of being included race-wise and then NOT you know so I had those and, and I guess that was the first time that I really began to question this whole idea of race and you know people seeing me as being different you know and you know as being less than ja it probably started when I was about maybe ten I still I started to get those feelings ja you know being separate and having to sit there while they are playing in the pool outside or whatever and not being invited to join them or any such thing. I mean cause when you are growing up you think oh as a child you should go and play with the kids whatever but NO you know they call their own family over and family comes over so then you're feeling even worse because now it's a bigger group of them so you feeling even more excluded and they will pass and might look at you or whatever and whisper whatever it might be whatever but you know or they might say "Hi" you know tentatively or whatever but for the most part you just used to be ignored and you could wait for the day to be over just to get out and to go so ja. So I have had many different experiences of being in the Bahamas but for the most part my experiences with race there has been really good ja.

SIYANDA: And so how long then did you stay in the Bahamas before then you....

DAPHNE: From where I was nine till about I was sixteen I left when I was sixteen

SIYANDA: So you the early years of your teen years were spent in...

DAPHNE: Ja my teen years were definitely

SIYANDA: Tell me about being a teenager there

DAPHNE: Oh the teenage years were same as being younger when I was nine it was still hard for us but by my teenage years my brother had joined us so now it was two of us ...

SIYANDA: So when did he come over?

DAPHNE: Ahhmm I can't remember exactly when he came over but I think it was the start of high school for me that he came cause he was two years younger than me so he would have still being in primary school cause I think he did two years of primary school so it would have been about my first year in high school that he came over (brief pause) so my ten eleven and twelve so basically four years after I had already been there he finally came up and it was it took a bit of getting used to cause there was always me and then there was him and so there was sharing that had to go on and then just I remember feeling you know like my space is being invaded kinda so ja we are brother and sister though we had to get to know each other cause we never to be honest knew each other because we spent basically our entire lives maybe expect for the first two years or three years of our lives separately you know so there was an interesting experience but it didn't take long for us to gel and I became the protective big sister you know so ja (brief pause) high years they were tough I went to another private school which was like the sister school to the primary school I had been to. This one was even was larger it had a pool everything like the other school more nuns tons of them because there a monastery and convent as well (brief pause) so it was a mixture of white and black again then you had some Chinese mixed in and different people so then you know different races and I met finally I met an Indian person from Gayana but Indian descent so I realized there were other groups of people in Bahamas as well not just black and white which I'd always seen but you know there's Chinese or whatever well I had seen Chinese but you know Indians and different groups and not just Bahamians now I'm meeting Canadians British people you know whoever from all over and the Chinese people that I was meeting were Chinese not you know Bahamian Chinese or whatever they were born in China right it's like that so they brought their own experiences and stuff like that and it was cool it was just like primary school everybody gelled mixed whatever so I don't remember in high school ever seeing a group of students or a clique as you would say that had one race in it ever

...

SIYANDA: ...everybody was...

DAPHNE: ...everybody was mixed you know everybody was mixed, mixed up you know and you had your mixed people you know black and white mixed there as well so ja those were my the Bahamas really taught me about race I guess and introduced me to different kinds of people in that sense you know but it was a tough time cause now my mom has two school fees to pay for now in American dollars one used to send money to Jamaica and we would manage but now she is paying for both you know high school is more expensive as well and you need more things and more books more everything and then becoming a teenage you want more things because hey you are becoming aware of what you don't have and what you wanna have you kids in their Nike SIYANDAeakers and you want those and different things and you know you realize okay these people have it and I don't have it and we always had fun day and stuff like that where you wear your

own clothes and I hardly had anything new to wear or if I did have something new it was definitely superior inferior in quality than everybody else cause they were rocking their Nikes....

SIYANDA: Déjà vu again

DAPHNE: ... and the caps or whatever I'm like hmmm I bought this in this little store you know it doesn't have a name may be it would be Micky or something ...

BOTH: laugh

DAPHNE: ...who knows but and so (brief pause) and so that was the only thing for me you know seeing these groups of people who are well off affluent whatever and you know I'm still a maid's daughter but I still manage and I guess it was okay because I mean I hung out with cool wealthy people and I guess a lot of people didn't really know that I wasn't wealthy whatever

We suddenly and abruptly had to stop the interview the housekeeper was now upstairs and the vacuum machine was making a lot of background noise. We took a lunch break, had pizza and spoke how incredible our mothers have been and managed against all odds for both of us.

DAPHNE: So ja so I'm going back to Jamaica okay so back to Jamaica at sixteen

SIYANDA: Why did you go back to Jamaica?

DAPHNE: I it was totally my choice my mom didn't want me to go she wanted me to stay in the Bahamas finish high school or whatever but I really craved for some reason (brief pause) being in Jamaica and having my family with me in my head I just had that childish you know that picture when I was a child with my cousins in the same yard playing hanging out and I don't know why at sixteen I would think that would still be the same but you know I wanted that family thing cause I mean I never really had it I just had you know my brother and my mom basically and you know my best friend who became like my sister but I never had like my own family with that so I kinda craved that (brief pause) and so I told her I wanted to go back and I was also thinking about her financially too the pressure of you know having me in school over there going to a private school and all that and I said "well you know the money would go further with me being in Jamaica you can still send me to a pretty good school and it will still be cheaper" so in the end it was decided that you know we'd go back so my brother went too and we stayed with one of my aunts which was disastrous to say the least. She was terrible she treated us BADLY I mean the time she would even hide the iron sometimes so we wouldn't even be able to iron our clothes to go to school ...

SIYANDA: Oh my God

DAPHNE: Ja she did terrible things and she was just terrible and she's one of those Christians who believe that you know nobody is more saintly or more Christian than she than she is she used to wake us up at these terrible hours of the morning to pray we had to get down on our knees and cover our heads or something and pray and I she used to pray for hours I mean she could pray....

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: ...no literally she would pray for like an hour...

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: ... and we would be there dying of sleep you know it's like what the hell?

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: She's ridiculous and then she would leave us and then she would go into the bathroom which is right next to our room and pray some more so you could hear all the praying she is doing.

SIYANDA: (laughs) and the water filling up

DAPHNE: You know it's like (brief pause) it's RIDICULOUS I just hate people who are so overbearing with their Christianity you know there's no need for it. You're Christian good for you so am I you know you don't see me trying to force it you know force it on other people and I don't agree with that trying to force us to go to church so I had to go to church every Sunday and stuff like that churches that I, I don't want to say that I hate it but I'm not used to it I'm used to an Anglican or Catholic church that is really sedate quiet a Baptist or a Pentecostal or Church of God Church of Christ all these different things I'm not used to the "hallelujah Praise the Loooord" tambourine you know whatever it's cool now and then but it's not my style obviously you know my personality I'm not big on the excitement so and I never used to get anything out of it because all I used to hear was shouting I didn't get any messages so that was one aunt that situation got really bad to the point that we you know one day she just got fend up my mom was visiting my mom had just come and (brief pause) it was surprising that I just decided one day just to I had laundry and stuff so I said let me just wash and be done with it and you know clean my room whatever. Did all that stuff and just as I was finished I heard the gate open that was my mom popped out for a visit and of course it was fantastic and it was great you know "hey mom" whatever she gets upsets the aunt because she felt somehow that (brief pause) I knew my brother and I knew that my mom was coming and that's why we got up and cleaned and did all these things AND she held it against us that we didn't tell her that our mom is coming and there was some conspiracy and whatever so got mad so we spent the most of the evening with our mom at the family house which is literally right in front of my aunt's house so just walk up one cross the little narrow it's our grandmother's house and so we spent the time with my mom my mom she was staying at the family house so you know we wanted to stay with our mom as long as possible you know it's MOM. So it's night maybe after ten we go home back to our aunt's and ...[beeping sound, which is the other back up Voice recorder running out of space recording space] what's that?

SIYANDA: It's just time remaining on this one...

DAPHNE: Okay

SIYANDA: It's almost finished but there's plenty there

DAPHNE: Okay and we go through the gate we walk into the house and she says (adopting a different voice) “No you can just go back where you are coming from just go back to your mother take your things and go” she said that.

SIYANDA: She threw you out

DAPHNE: Just like that ja (brief pause) she said GO take your things and go to your mom so my mom is just visiting just to see us and how’s everything going and now she has the stress of tow children she has to get back to work cause she was only there for a weekend whatever what’s she gonna do? (brief pause) my other aunt who lived up the road said she’d take us so in a space of a day we move up there she’s just as bad as that one it’s a family trait

SIYANDA: chuckles

DAPHNE: She does the same thing we’re not allowed to go anywhere she locks up the place at night so we don’t have any friends basically Saturday comes she has two sons she has two boys who do nothing so it’s my brother and I we do everything. So every Saturday she wakes us up early she would just come bang open the door and of course you jump up out of your sleep you’re frightened “It’s Saturday get up” so wash our school clothes wash our clothes by hand obviously washing machine I don’t think so and she (brief pause) they go about their business the sons the boys play football whatever go for the whole day I’m stuck on my knees now polishing and shining the floor because it’s still the polishing and shining thing on your knees there’s no tile polish or whatever you just throw on the floor and use a mop or whatever and shine no, the brush the polish wipe the floor whatever so this is a big place imagine me on my knees doing that by the end of the day my knees are killing me so I’ve washed I had cleaned by myself because the boys ain’t gonna do it and my brother will help me sometimes to shine but my brother he’s very stubborn and he’s really big on his rights and he’s like “well if her children aren’t doing it why should I do it” you know so you know I, I like peace I like quiet I can’t take the quarreling and conflict so I will just do it and then when I’m done I might have to end up cooking to cook dinner maybe. Sundays I have to cook it’s either I cook or she cooks so it’s like (brief pause) I’m a mother or somehow or whatever the boys come home form school they go play football do whatever they want they leave a note saying that I need to cook dinner I’m not used to this kinda treatment I’m a slave literally a slave. Sunday comes (brief pause) she comes bang open the door “You’re not staying in bed get up you going to church” so I’m forced to go to church I’m forced to teach Sunday school then she volunteers me to teach children’s choir so that takes up my entire weekend (brief pause) and that’s how we were treated. Weekdays she might decide that she’s not gonna cook what do we eat? There’s nothing in the house we DON’T eat she has her friends that she can go hang out with she’s a teacher well she’s a principal now she would go and hang out by her friends of course if she’s there they are gonna give her dinner or whatever so she comes home with her belly full our cousins they go wherever and if they have money they can buy whatever to eat WE go to bed hungry expect for what we might have had for lunch at school my brother and I or I told you that they get these the milks and the those some they are buns basically that they give to the children I guess they have some nutritional stuff in them because she works at the Basic school she gets these things

so everyday the stuff comes in so whatever is left over she can take home so you just have a whole bunch of multi-coloured milks ...

SIYANDA: Milks?

DAPHNE: Yeah cause it's milk they are milk but they make them in different colours to get the kids to drink it cause it's milk not all kids like milk so they make them pretty colours and stuff but it's just for nutritional value make sure they have calcium and whatever, whatever but they are not necessarily tasty and they are for children so she has milk I'm lactose intolerant and on top of that I hate the taste of milk. That's to drink and then these buns every single day and I don't like those buns they are dry and disgusting and once again they are for children. So we had nothing to eat my mom sends money every month she buys she might buy little bits of meat if she does buy meat she might not she will just keep the money and when she needs meat she will just send to the shop and buy exactly what's needed then so have a huge friDaphnee bought with my mother's money of course and it's empty (brief pause) and she wants us to ask permission when we want something out of the friDaphnee there's nothing in there (brief pause) she'd buy like a month's worth of flour sugar those staple things we had to ask if we need to get some flour and sugar she we get up for school at four in the morning she doesn't make breakfast and she doesn't buy breakfast things that we can have breakfast so for the years that we lived I think we might have lived there for two years maybe three we were eating flour everyday just the flour because there's nothing else there and she wouldn't cook us anything just fine the flour basically every morning and so we got some tired of it that we needed something different so what we had to do was my brother and I put sugar in it so it would be sweet so we were having fried sweet flour basically and we had to do that with just some hot tea of some kind you know whatever and that's how we lived and we might come home and not have dinner so we were basically starving and I'm getting bloated and stuff because it's flour you know it's gonna bloat you up and stuff so it was just a terrible situation which is when I started to get depressed and that's when I started to become an insomniac I started becoming an insomniac when I was sixteen and it stayed with me ever since so it was always this fear that any minute now while I'm sleeping she's just gonna come and bang and open the door and I'd jump up so I never quite slept fully you know so that was that experience that I had when going back to Jamaica just (brief pause) the people that you remember when you were younger being so wonderful have turned into utter monsters you know (brief pause) crazy people. And then she has people from church looking at me on the streets so by the time if I stop and I say hi to you by the time I get back home "why were you talking to so-and-so?" one day she came to me and said "Pastor needs to see you" so I said "Why does the pastor need to see me?" Cause she had gone and complained to the pastor that you know she saw me talking to a boy or something like that and so now the pastor is gonna sit me down for a lecture you know basically how old was I then? EIGHTEEN about (brief pause) boys it's stupid things it's like "why don't you sit and talk to me if you have a problem or if you think there's something going on or whatever?" A church member I see it clearly in my mind I was headed home for my other aunt's house this dude stops me he's a friend of mine talking nonsense as usual probably about two minutes if three the most not even five minutes this woman from church one of the Elders as they call them happened to be passing and saw me talking to the boy by the time I get up to the house it's a big deal it's

a huge deal I'm not used to those kinda things I'm used to people sitting down and talking to me you know not this gossiping and so-and-so and blah blah blah I'm not used to that so I remember when I was in Jamaica it was a crazy time that's all I had to deal with so I spent most of my time being very unhappy and staying late at school whatever cause I was actually still doing well in school but you know that was the other thing she used to call my and say how she is worried about me because she never sees me studying and she doesn't know how I'm going pass my final exams and all that kinda stuff you know I'm just gonna be like all the other girls in the family just get PREGNANT and whatever cause she already sees it's headed in that direction

SIYANDA: Oh my God

DAPHNE: ... you know all these things and now my mom is panicking and worrying what's her child doing in Jamaica? You know who's she getting involved with? Why is SIYANDA't she doing homework and all that? Next thing you know (brief pause) I become a prefect at school I get a trophy for getting a certain if you get a certain number of distinctions at the end of your time at school after you have taken the external exams like GEC's and stuff they give you a trophy I got a trophy because I think I got like four distinctions out of five or something like that and she comes back to my mom and she's CRYING her eyes out I'm like "why are you crying?" (adopts a different) "Because she's done so well and my two boys they've done nothing they didn't even pass one subject"...

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: ... and I was like "but you were the one who said she doesn't even study you've never seen her pick up a book or do any work. How did she manage to get distinctions be a prefect get end of year you know end of term prizes and whatever else" (the voice again) "I don't know how she did it or whatever and blah blah blah". So those are the kinds of things I had to put up this constant watching constant talking you know and you know it basically became abuse well it was abuse really I mean she was starving us and then it was verbal abuse things she used to say to us like one day she told me how evil and wicked I was and how if my mother ever knew how wicked and evil I was she wouldn't want anything to do with me she would regret the day that she ever had me and stuff like that ...

SIYANDA: What on earth....

DAPHNE: ...it was like out of the blue (brief pause) so those things I had to deal with back in Jamaica and it was round the same time that I actually finally met my dad (chuckles) so that was interesting.

SIYANDA: How did that come about meeting your dad?

DAPHNE: Well I was going to my aunt's house and well my grandmother's my aunt was living there the family house my grandmother's house and I told you he lives one house away and my sister his daughter she's about two years older than I am looks very much like me she's just fair skinned taller but features almost the same basically and (brief pause) she I had spoken to her a couple of times just like hi or whatever you know and I remember once or twice when I was younger maybe when I was five or six I remember walking in the street with one of my cousins and she was passing me with a

friend or somebody who was a family member I don't know and she pointed to me and she said "That's my sister" and I always remembered that and I remember asking my mom about it but I guess my mom didn't think that was something for me to know at that time because I was so young she was like "Don't worry about that when you grow up I will tell you" I think is what she said "when you grow up I will let you know". So I'm coming home from school and it's like she was waiting for me literally because she standing in the middle of the lane with a photo album waiting for me to pass so I was passing and I said 'Hi' and she's like "Can you stop for a minute" and opens this album and she's like "I have pictures of you" like why would you have pictures of me? Because my mom does not talk to him from the day I was born till now my mother despises that man with a PASSION you know cause literally he wasn't a man cause even if you know when you are twenty something years old and you know you are in love with someone and then she gets pregnant or whatever you don't let your family maybe stop you from seeing her but from seeing YOUR CHILD? You know and then she never got over that and she you know she struggled with me and so she has pictures of me there are pictures of me in the album because it seems they have one mutual friend or something that my mom she used to ask my mom for pictures of me so my mom thought it was just out of personal interest not knowing that she is actually giving them to my father that's what she was doing so now there are all these pictures but somehow my aunts and uncles who being the (sarcastically) WONDERFUL aunts and uncles that they are found out about these pictures and one night just basically attacked me verbally about how wicked I am because behind their backs I'm giving out pictures to people that they don't talk to and don't want to have anything to do with and whatever and I just "I didn't give anyone pictures" till it turned into me having DINNER with them and lunches (brief pause) I pass people and I say hello because they are older people I don't care if he's my father or not if I pass a man or anybody sitting in front of their gate it's our culture to pass and say "Good afternoon" outside of that I've never had a conversation with him now I am hearing I am having dinner and breakfast and giving pictures (brief pause) my family is insane so anyway she opens this the folder and you know the album turning these pictures and she is showing me the FAMILY her dad's side you know they are all like fully Indian you know these Indian people East Indians and so I learned about that side of my family (brief pause) so yeah so my dad is Indian but because of my mom was black so I'm mixed but the rest of them are full Indian so it was very interesting to see but I've never met I never met my grandmother or anybody at that cause she died she died (brief pause) actually I'm lying well I'm not lying but I didn't meet him then I spoke to her and she like "well you know THAT'S your father do you wanna talk to him whatever? He wants to talk to you and so forth and so on" but I, I didn't I didn't talk to him I remember because everything that was going on with my FAMILY and the hatred between the families it was like I didn't even wanna bother to take the chance. He TRIED one day to actually come and see me at the house and my aunt she literally called the police and he's like "How can you call the police for me to see my own child?" and she's like "Well you're not welcome here" and it turned into a huge thing I mean neighbours were looking and whatever she made it into a big scene and he never tried again after that to come back so ja that's how I learned about that part of my family and you know ja and they are a bit mixed up you know.

SIYANDA: So when did you eventually meet him?

DAPHNE: Well after I left my after I got through the other college and I left cause I did a year of University in Jamaica but because the situation was so bad with my aunt and the way she was treating us and starving us and all that and I was getting sick all the time obviously because my body there's no nutrition there whatever which is probably why I don't eat that much why people are always forcing me to eat because you know I learnt to live without food so I don't enjoy food I just eat because I have to you know to survive and so I was getting sick all the time and she used to call my mom "She coming home university sick very week I recognize THOSE signs" you know she's trying to say I'm pregnant you know "She's always sick she always has some kind of flu or something" (pause)...

SIYANDA: (saying a short phrase that is inaudible)

DAPHNE: EXACTLY feed me and I would go to her and say "I need medication now" (adopts a hostile voice) "Where do you expect me to get the money from". Ahhmm the money that my mother is sending YOU when she sent me to university you are supposed to bring your own things you know your sheets your whatever else my mom sent her MONEY hundreds of US dollars she took a sheet off the bed that we had been using for years ONE sheet off the bed and sent me with that.

SIYANDA: Really?

DAPHNE: Yes she didn't buy anything that I needed so when my mom visited my mom had to spend money again to buy EVERYTHING for me that I needed (pause) she kept the hundreds of dollars HUNDREDS of dollars she kept and when my mom called and asked her if I had everything she said "Yeah I sent her off she's okay she's got everything she's good" they were all used second-hand things that she just picked up or had in her closet or whatever yep so that was that so my dad so when I left there and I went to university..

SIYANDA: What did you study in your first year at university in Jamaica?

DAPHNE: English, English ...

SIYANDA: And at this time you wanted to do what?

DAPHNE: I think I still wanted to teach but I wanted to (brief pause) actually that's not quite true I had seen when I was younger after I left primary school cause at primary school I still wanted to be a teacher but I think when I was about twelve and I had just entered high school in the Bahamas I saw a UN documentary guess what STARRVING CHILDREN IN AFRICA with the bloated tummies the flies pitching on their faces or whatever I was like (brief pause) and they were talking about helping and you know the work that the UN is doing and stuff like that and I thought to myself "That's it that's my calling that's what I wanna do" and it's never changed since then my passion has always been the same to work with the UN you know what I've wanted to do within the UN has changed a bit but it's still always had to do with helping you know whether it's going to be Human Rights or Immigration or Social Development but I think because of my leanings towards Law it's gonna be Human Rights and Immigration but I have always wanted to work with the UN and I have always said that I still teach I still have a passion

for teaching after I begin establishing my career and maybe when I want to finish that you know in later years probably teach for a little while ja as a Professor or something for a while so ja but my first year I did English because that was the only thing really you know they had like Nursing and all those kinda things and Science with all the Sciences me no Math no I was like hmmm History and English, ENGLISH so I chose English and I did very well my first semester very well straight A's second semester I collapsed I don't even think I made a one because you know I don't know if you know about the American system it's like here they go by percentages in the British system it's percentages in the American system it's a point scale so 4.0 is the highest it means you are an A student 3.0 B student 2.0 1.0 whatever so at that point I was first semester I was basically I was like 3.8 so basically an A student and second semester I was a F student cause I'd gotten depressed I wasn't sleeping I wasn't sleeping very well and when I did sleep it had to be in darkness or whatever I couldn't get up for class or any of those things because home life was so terrible with my aunt it was like all of that stuff that I had been dealing with over all the years just all of the sudden some I don't know it just came down on me at that time and so my mom realized it was really bad so she (pause) she took me away.

SIYANDA: To?

DAPHNE: Back to the Bahamas so when I was nineteen I went back to the Bahamas so then I had to restart the university stuff again you know first semester great but you know you basically messed up the whole year now. So I started school there ...

SIYANDA: Studying what? English again?

DAPHNE: No I chose Peace and Conflict Studies because the school is a Catholic School again but it was attached to both my high school and primary school cause they are based with the same Catholic school in Minnesota in the US so there's this long tradition of monks and whoever else The Order of Saint Benedict it's called that group of monks in Catholics so they had started these schools years and years ago in the Bahamas and you know they are still there whatever and so it was just a natural progression that you would go Xiaers Lower School then you will go to Saint Augustine's High School and then they started this university where you do two or three years in the Bahamas and then for your final one final year you can actually go to Minnesota and study for your final year if you want or which ever way you wanna do it. So I'm back in the Bahamas and I started that and because it's the same itinerary as the school in Minnesota I was able to choose what I wanted to do so I chose Peace and Conflict Studies cause it's the closest thing to the UN and anything I wanted to do in a War Peace Justice Human Rights all that stuff so it was fabulous so and I did really well. But for some reason I don't know well there are lot of stories one saying that they couldn't afford to keep the school open or whatever but I don't think but I heard that that's not true that's not why they closed it cause they ended up closing it after that first year when I was there they were saying they couldn't afford to it open because they didn't have enough students but what I later found out was that you know in the US at the Universities you have to have a certain amount of racial minorities to get a certain amount of funding from the government or whatever it might be including private institutions and so the school which is in basically 99% white population the only black people you really have are very few African-Americans I wouldn't even say it's 2% most of the black people who are there are Africans or mostly

refugees from Ethiopia Eritrea and Somalia and you know those groups do not get along because you know they warring groups of over territorial land and all that stuff so they hate each other but they all end up in the same place it seems that Minnesota signed some agreement that they would take them so the majority of them end in Minnesota so the black population is mostly that and so I think when they see (brief pause) black people there they see (brief pause) Africans you know it's just "Oh refugees poor refugees coming taking over our space kinda thing" you know so their outlook the white outlook on black people obviously so you know "they just need us" so it seems the school needed to make up this percentage to be able to get the funding or whatever cause they can close the school if you don't cause then you are showing some kind of bias or something it might be right I mean it's kinda hard because the State itself is majority white but, but still you should have a certain amount of black people and when we went to the school and I met...

SIYANDA: Was this in the US now?

DAPHNE: Yes in the US cause they close the School in the Bahamas so then we all had to transfer to the one in the US and my grades were good enough that I was able to get a Scholarship not for all of it but part of it so it was okay so I went ja it was (pause) DEFINITELY different you step off the plane and it's twenty or it was twenty below zero.

SIYANDA: Oh my God

DAPHNE: Yes so you can't breathe cause it's so cold your nose starts to bleed because it's so cold see you basically have to wear something over your nose I mean that's how frigid it gets of course I don't know that it was going to be that cold I mean they said prepare for cold but you never think twenty twenty-five thirty below zero ahmmm hello (brief pause) I have on a very thick sweater ...

SIYANDA: I think ten that's cold

DAPHNE: ... you know you know so it's a shock we get to the school it's definitely 99.9% white had a few African students international students actually all the black people at the school were international students which really probably proved that it was probably true them needing the, the minority students to make up the percentage that they would need to still get the funding because why you have a school an American school and you have no black Americans there we found exactly (brief pause) ONE African American at the school a guy and I remember his name DJ (laughs)

SIYANDA: Who?

DAPHNE: His name was DAPHNE I don't know I don't know what it stood for we weren't really friends but you know when you pass a black person you say "Hey" you know cause everybody else is just (brief pause) white.

SIYANDA: White

DAPHNE: And (brief pause) and then you realize difference from my experience in the Bahamas where everybody gets along we all mixed we go there (brief pause) there's a bus there are two campuses it's a Catholic School there's one campus for boys one

campus for girls classes are mixed but there are separate campuses because one school is started by the monastery for the men and then the other one by the convent for the women so they are separate by classes are mixed up and everything it works the same it just that you just sleep on different campuses basically not but not stopped anybody from sleeping on each other's campuses

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: Of course

DAPHNE: I mean cause I mean there's freedom to do whatever you want basically I mean you are not supposed to but I mean it's a college campus come on ...

SIYANDA: It's ... (an inaudible word)

DAPHNE: Exactly so we had these buses we called it The Link it's called the Link and it takes you cause you might have classes on both campuses so it takes you back and forth and it runs just like the Metro or any other place it's on time you have a million of them running so they are scheduled so you know exactly which one what time you need to get to the bus stop whatever so you are never really standing outside in the cold for you know maybe longer than five minutes for the bus or whatever or you can wait inside and so it worked well the thing is when you sit on the bus you're black person (brief pause) you wait and you wait and you wait the bus is filling up filling up filling up people are calling to their friends (in a higher and excited voice) "Hey" "Come sit, sit, sit" your seat is still empty and you wait and you wait and you wait...

SIYANDA: ... nobody is sitting next to you

DAPHNE: (brief pause) Ahh final seat the person sits YOU'RE ALWAYS, THE LAST SEAT TO BE FILLED IS THE ONE NEXT TO YOU always (brief pause) you know they, they I don't know what it is I think they don't want to sit next to the black person I don't know but I mean it's just my experience it was the experience of all the other black people who are on the campus that the seat next to them is the last seat to be taken or sometimes and I have had it happen to me I've heard from friends but it's happened to me as well they would rather stand next to the empty seat and you say "You can sit" (in a soft tone voice) "Oh no it's okay" (brief pause) they would rather stand for the twenty minutes ride to the next campus than to sit down and so I see another side you know I had seen a little bit of it with my mom working in houses but it's kinda different still from this really blatant...

SIYANDA: ... it's an overt kind of...

DAPHNE: Yes but at the same time they are trying to be nice and when they see you they give you this quick smile but it's so fake...

SIYANDA: ... iSIYANDA't it?

DAPHNE: ... but they are trying to be so bright with it you know (imitating 'that' smile and I know exactly what she means) "hmm"

SIYANDA: chuckles

DAPHNE: "Oh hi" you know

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: What is that? I would rather you not smile at all I mean...

SIYANDA: ... just say hi

DAPHNE: ... you know ja or don't say anything at all cause you don't wanna say hi don't pretend like you know (brief pause) and they would go through the door you will hold it for them because it's your culture they will go through (pause) ahmmm you still waiting for the thank you they will go through first if they go through first they will just slam it in your face you know it's like but I was right here (brief pause) so all these things I remember one time I went to a concert YES Backstreet Boys when they ...

SIYANDA: laughs hysterically

DAPHNE: ...they were in their prime and I still love the Backstreet Boys I don't care

SIYANDA: Well you know I love them perhaps for different reasons

BOTH: laugh

DAPHNE: I love Backstreet Boys still do and on my way to the concert and I got lost cause I mean I was just I just moved there but (brief pause) my best friend the same one from (brief pause) back then my sister yes she was in Minnesota as well but she was going to a different school so she was already there before me cause she'd gone directly from high school while I had gone back to Jamaica ...

SIYANDA: ...bad year

DAPHNE: Right

SIYANDA: And then you had to start again

DAPHNE: Right so she was already there different schools whatever so she lived in the city my school was out you know how East London is compared to Central London

SIYANDA: Oh my God don't remind me

DAPHNE: Ja so I remember getting lost because I didn't know my way and after the concert it was FREEZING it's probably one of the coldest winter nights ever I think it was about fifteen below zero and I just stopped this gentleman to ask him for the time (brief pause) and to ask him where the bus stop was so I said "Excuse me" I tried to stop a couple of people and they wouldn't stop they were all white so finally I said to this man "Excuse me" I go run in front of him he was trying to walk pass and "Excuse me I'm kinda lost I just need to know where to find this bus stop and to find the time" cause my friend said I need to get to the bus stop the bus is coming at such and such a time (brief pause) the man goes around me and as he's walking away he says "I don't talk to you people I'm sorry I'm just" and so I'm like "Well I just wanna know the time" he's like "No I'm sorry I don't talk to you people"

SIYANDA: Oh my God!

DAPHNE: Ja and that was my first real experience of somebody blatantly telling me THEY DO NOT LIKE ME because of my skin colour and I was in (gaps for air)...

SIYANDA: Shock

DAPHNE: I was in shock it was just like I (runs out of words) ... I couldn't believe it I mean that was like what? 2001 2002 I think 2002 (Pause: lost for words) ...

SIYANDA: Ja, ja

DAPHNE: I mean if they don't want to sit next to you on the bus okay fine but rather than to actually come out and say "well you know your skin colour ...

SIYANDA: "I don't talk to you people"

DAPHNE: (continues with her original thought)...you know is a problem you know and YOU PEOPLE YOU PEOPLE (pause) I've never forgotten it and I will never will it was it was very interesting and I remember another time I was walking around the street and I in my school town a small town and this older gentleman of course older generation he probably already has biases in his mind you know whatever the street is narrow but it's enough for two people to pass (brief pause) he steps out into the road so he won't have to pass me I mean it's not like it's a narrow, narrow street where you even have to brush against each other it's nothing like that we are both walking but he doesn't wanna walk pass me or next to me so he steps into road goes around me and then comes back up on the sidewalk the sidewalk is not crowded where you have to step into the streets I mean traffic is coming really fast and steps onto the road this old man (brief pause) cause I kinda saw him and I you know when you just get a vibe that something iSIYANDA't right cause I saw him he was trying to slow down like maybe he was waiting for me to pass or something before whatever but I just I guess I kinda sensed it and I think I kinda slowed down a little bit too I don't know but I just knew something wasn't right and when he stepped on the road onto ongoing traffic I was just like (brief pause) this is amazing he would rather kill himself get knocked down than to walk next to me (brief pause) you know?

SIYANDA: Shocking

DAPHNE: It's shocking and the thing about Minnesota is most of them are (brief pause) from they are either German descent Irish descent or Scandinavian descent like Norwegian or something like that so DEFINITELY very, very WHITE cultures who you know historically have had issues with race so I wasn't surp... you know so but it's still shocking and EVEN at the school we had problems because I remember there was a time when my friend she Jamaican she's very fair skinned cause I think she's also mixed but she's obviously black you know so they are in class and they are talking about issues of race and problems like that the question in class was "what are the biggest issues that do you think students of this campus are having right now or that they are facing?" and somebody said "racial issues" so one guy gets up and he says "well if you don't like how you are treated here go back where you are coming from half of your asses are here on scholarship anyway" so the first thing that comes to my mind is like "Hold up a minute MOST OF YOU being Americans are on scholarships government scholarships everybody knows that international students pay the bills ..."

SIYANDA: Yes

DAPHNE: "... for schools because that's where the money comes from that's why our school fees are so expensive" so for him to be so rude and bold and blatant to say that half of our asses are here on scholarships Ahmm excuse me (brief pause) my school fee was twenty seven thousand a year (brief pause) my scholarship was for (thinking: brief pause) six, six thousand per semester so that's twelve thousand a year so my mom still had to pay that the other part of that. They don't pay anything back to the government until they have graduated and gotten their degree and they have to start working I think three months after they've graduated or as soon as they find a job they start paying their loan back so basically we're running the school even with our low scholarships that they give us you know my twelve thousand dollars goes a very long way so that's ... (phrase inaudible) I'm tired and if things getting tension in class I could care do we really wanna go this route so my it's turning into an argument he's like "Ja so if you don't like it you know you need to take..." and he said this "... you need to take your black asses back to where you are coming from".

SIYANDA: Oh HELL NO

DAPHNE: Yes so then a complaint is loDaphneed in the school and there's a person who deals with these kind of issues she calls him to the office and chastises him and they don't do anything about it expect TELL to apologize (brief pause) so all he has to do is say he's sorry and you like ehhe? (brief pause) you know this country America is built on freedom of everything you know, you know and EQUALITY you know and you know nothing should be based on race or ethnicity or whatever so you thinking "Okay you just made a blatant racial statement you know" (brief pause) and he's still sitting here he's not being chastised he's not being suspended he's not anything he's just got to apologize whether or not he means it it's nothing (brief pause) and that's how it ended it was the place was tense for a while after that you know it was just like because international students were just like (brief pause) at that point just started to hate everybody you know and even felt strange being with their white friends that they had made there because all of the sudden it's just like "Okay they are talking to me but what do they REALLY think of me you know are they thinking the same thing" so you become suspicious of those ones who have been nice to you and it's fair to them you know if they are truly nice people.

SIYANDA: And how did you sort of make sense of it coming from historically from a place where it was fairly integrated across difference?

DAPHNE: I (thinking: brief pause) I don't know if I ever came to terms for me it was just it was just acceptance that okay this is the way it's going to be I mean you can't change their minds the most I can do is be nice and friendly with everybody and you know people who feel the same about me will gravitate towards me and we'll become friends you know whatever but I'm not gonna go out of my way to try and make friends you know whatever or like that with them because obviously they don't want to you know I mean if you think about it just the bus situation alone juts it came a point where you just got used to it and you were just happy to have the seats all to yourself ...

SIYANDA: Laughs

DAPHNE: ... you know you can rest your bag down beside you it's that kinda thing you just got used to it you just accepted it that, that's always how it's gonna be I mean I joined groups on campuses because I'm very big on Human Rights and all that so I joined group for you know at that time the war in Iraq was just starting so I joined groups on that you know groups on Racism all those kinda things and we did little things on campus but obviously they will not be very well attended cause nobody really cared that much you know and, and I think the other issue too and I ended up having quite a few white friends cause they were cool people but then I didn't know this because I was doing the subject area that I was Peace and Conflict Studies so I had lots of hippie type friends you know white people so most of them were hippies so you know they are all about peace love joy and happiness versus everybody else right versus everybody else who's doing you know English or Management or all that whose mentality I guess would be different so they may have had a harder time of you know making friends than I would have with my group so I made a few friends yes but they were really cool people but outside of that Peace and Conflict Studies group NO (brief pause) you know I didn't make any other friends white friends outside of that so you know (brief pause) I guess, I guess they didn't really wanna mix too much you know we'd we threw parties and stuff like that and even if they did come cause you know we used to invite them we used to have international students parties and it will just be the international students you know none of the other set of people wouldn't come you know EXPECT for the Japanese they had had some they really liked the Asians really like the Caribbean culture especially the Japanese they seem to have a thing for Jamaica especially I think it's the reggae music and you the outrageouSIYANDAess of it all they like cause they usually come so a lot of them are used to pretend that they were Jamaican one even started to try and talk like Jamaican ...

SIYANDA: (in my attempt at a Jamaican accent) "Ja man"

DAPHNE: Yeah so and wear the Jamaican colours I was like "who is this Japanese boy walking around speaking trying to speak Patwa, Patwa is our, our dialect it's like okay so you know certain people would definitely mix but I think we probably but it's the same thing again like you had these groups on campus but they were still also separate you had the Asians the Asians themselves are separated into Indians you know or whatever other groups there were but there were mostly Indians the most part and then you had Chinese Japanese and they all stuck to their own groups then there were Caribbean then you had the whites ...

SIYANDA: And the Africans

DAPHNE: Yes the Africans kinda had their own thing but for the most part they used to blend in with the Caribbean so we made a bigger group like a bigger support system for each other so because when you think about it a lot of us were not cause half of the people within the Caribbean group (brief pause) we hated each other to be honest we can't stand each other and since we left school we don't even bother to keep in contact as a matter of fact we've deleted them from our Messenger because we don't want anything to do with these people...

SIYANDA: Why?

DAPHNE: Cause we were friends in school cause WE HAD TO it's a race thing it was us against them so as a bigger group we made a stand you know we had our parties we were like "Yeah look at us you know we're cool we're from the Caribbean. You wish you had this much culture..."

SIYANDA: laughs hysterically

DAPHNE: "...you wish you had food like this or whatever" cause you know people always say Americans don't really have a culture their culture is everybody else's culture so through that we were proud to be Caribbean or African or just be Black whatever but we didn't necessarily like each other as people but we just bonded because of the colour because we had to us against them you know and that's what it was when we were going to parties or whatever you know or our school events we tried to go as a group you know be known be seen whatever ...

SIYANDA: "Don't mess with us"

DAPHNE: You know exactly kinda thing and you know some people thought it was cool whatever and then you also have this thing with the white girls going after the black guys you know the stereotypical stuff you know so you know couple of the Caribbean guys were dating the white girls and none of them really and honestly saw those girls as serious prospects for relationships it was just sexual things you know everybody wants the taste of the other side you know kinda thing ja so that was college of four years and then I spent an extra year in the State just working or whatever.

SIYANDA: Doing what?

DAPHNE: Office assistant basically cause when you study in the US they give the four years to do your degree and then they give you an extra year if you wanna work get work experience or whatever so that's what I did so I was there for five years but, but at times I mean it would be really hard because they can be so cold and you walking down the streets you know and they pass you or go in a different direction they don't sit with you in the bus you go to the restaurant and people behind you getting served first (brief pause) you know you're waiting for ten minutes to be seated but people who came after you are being seated...

SIYANDA: Oh my God

DAPHNE: ... you know things like that you know and those things happen you go into the store ...

SIYANDA: (from my experience in South Africa) They follow you? [suspicious of you]

DAPHNE: NO they didn't follow us they just ignored us you are looking at the clothes and you are waiting for someone to say "Hi, can I help you?" "Do you see anything you like?" and you are there five ten minutes waiting a white person comes up (very cheerful) "Hello welcome to so-and-so store, I'm so-and-so if you need any help I'll be right over here just let me know" and you are like "Okay" so at this point you are pissed off "I'm

not spending my money here” so you go to another store and if they say (very cheerful) “Hey, hi welcome”...

SIYANDA: (laughs) You’re buying

DAPHNE: “I want that, that and that” and it’s true that’s how it was you know so there was a small group of people white folks that were really cool and the rest of them weren’t. I remember there was an incident in the town where the couple interracial couple (brief pause) had someone pass and shoot at their gas tank to try and blew up the house I remember that it was in the news so and at other school it was a State school too they had these HUGE racial issues there I remember there was (exhales) it was all over the news teachers getting involved and I mean it was a mess because the students decided that they couldn’t take it anymore the racism was so blatant that they had to do something about so they were writing articles in the paper and sending it out to the press trying to get people aware of it and it turned into a really big deal and you know the school was trying to say “NO there aren’t any issues of race here everybody gets on here” and she’s like “Why would we be complaining if everything was great you know?” It’s was usual everything was trying to be covered up and they will say things like cause I remember when we were going and they were preparing us to go they said they said to us “IT’S NOT that Minnesotans are racist it’s just that it’s a different culture and you just have to get used to it but once they warm up to you, you will be okay you know it’s just a matter of two cultures getting to know each other” so in other words “We are not racist we just need to get to know you, you know or whatever”. It’s like okay when we go there NO this place is a...

SIYANDA: “We don’t want you here”

DAPHNE: Ja so (brief pause) but for the most part even though the race thing was kinda bad I, I like the state and I actually honestly if I ever live or work in the US that’s probably where I would wanna go.

SIYANDA: I don’t understand that you are gonna have to explain it to me

DAPHNE: (laughs) Because I think (brief pause) because I do think that the majority I mean there are people on that campus supposedly who had never they don’t have I met people even in my class who do not interact with black people until they got to the school because their towns are totally white so growing up they didn’t really see black people unless they drove into the metropolitan city but once they got to know you they really cool people and they were some of the friendliest people and so in my mind I think that the majority the percentage of really racist people is probably small you know and that maybe that really and truly it was an issue of you know (brief pause) two different cultures really just you know two races just trying to feel each other out and get used to each other I mean racism is there DEFINITELY and I am sure people have had worse experiences than I have had but (brief pause) I made some of my best friends there you know I had good experiences there I dated a white Minnesotan guy from there I mean and it was cool but then I did meet someone a guy and he did say to me “well” because we NOTICED black girls that we go to parties and the white guys if we go to class they wouldn’t talk to us or anything we would be in class for an entire semester and the entire year we will be on campus you know me I know you we know each other by name and

face but you will not when you pass me they don't even say hi they don't even look at you but they might look at you and keep going they wouldn't even nod to acknowledge your presence we go to parties and they would get drunk ...

SIYANDA: And they are all over you.

DAPHNE: And they would come over "Oh I think you are so..." this has happened "I think you are so beautiful you're, you're, you're absolutely gorgeous I just think you are so hot" and you are like "well ahmm you don't talk to me outside of parties you know when you are not drunk". Like well you know they don't know what to say so we've asked guys white Minnesotans and they are just like "Well it's not that we don't find you attractive and yes would date you but the fact of the matter is our parents will never accept you we cannot take you home" somebody told me this a guy told me this "We CANNOT take you HOME to our parents not matter how much we like you and admire you in class there's no point" (brief pause) you know and I guess they don't necessarily want to be bother with the trouble of you know having a conflict with their parents so they just date ...

SIYANDA: That unsettles me

DAPHNE: So ja

SIYANDA: That unsettles me great

DAPHNE: But I mean it's all over the US it's not just Minnesota you know Minnesota just happens to be a majority white population very white versus New York that's really multicultural down South that's you know kinda majority black then you've got the north but Minnesotans are you know a mid West town you know with corn fields or whatever surrounded by other very white towns it's like the whitest part of the US is that area the mid-West with the expect of maybe Chicago but the race thing in Minnesota is very blatant because there was also very huge Hispanic population lots and lots of Mexicans and I forget the other group I am sure if it's Peruvian but another group but lots of Hispanics and those who have come over from Chicago as well and so you had this mix of people (brief pause) so you would see all these groups together but they never meld together in any kinda way (brief pause) and the Africans did their own thing everybody has their own restaurants you know but you don't really see a mixture of people within those restaurants just your own type so it was really I don't know it was very interesting. The Hispanics will mix a bit more nothing spectacular that you can say okay well you know there is any kind of racial mixing here so ja that was my experience in Minnesota just (brief pause) trying to survive in a very cold place where you know people don't necessarily like having you around (brief pause)

SIYANDA: Tell me about your relationship with the guy you said you had a relationship with in this context

DAPHNE: Ahh I don't know I think maybe he just liked a (brief pause)...

SIYANDA: ...Chocolate

DAPHNE: Chocolate

SIYANDA: (laughs) Who doesn't like chocolate come on (laughs)

DAPHNE: Exactly because after he dated someone from Trinidad but they are both girls that he liked they were both Indians so I don't know if it's because I was part Indian maybe that's why I don't know I DON'T KNOW if he would ever date like a totally black person like a 100% black cause everyone he has dated it's either fully Indian or mixed cause the girl after me was mixed she was half Indian like me and then the other girl was fully Indian so I don't know it's just this thing I guess about dating someone who is fully black and then the ones the guys that have dated black girls that I have seen (brief pause) the girls have they seem to be (pause) obviously black by that I mean obviously they are blacks in colour but in natural hair and twists and stuff like that not you know with their hair straightened or whatever it might be so (brief pause) I don't know how to explain it but ja and maybe wear like some little African jewelry you know trying to show how African they are kinda girls you know trying to show that we are proud of our history type thing so the white guys that I've notice a lot of them date those girls but they don't seem to date (brief pause) you know so they will someone who is very, very is either mixed or very obviously BLACK native black you know the kinky hair you know tied up with sometime or whatever you know so ...

SIYANDA: (whispers) Authentic chocolate

DAPHNE: Ja nothing, nothing in between really so it was interesting

SIYANDA: Alright your five years is up in the US you then moved to your forth country Britain

DAPHNE: chuckles

SIYANDA: Life in the United Kingdom the land of Queen Elizabeth

DAPHNE: (laughs) Queen Elizabeth (brief pause) I think my experience here is a lot like Minnesota but...

SIYANDA: REALLY?

DAPHNE: I think so but still different in that I find it a bit situation where you, you have all these different groups of people racially you know ethnicities whatever but they are all here but they are not mixing each sticking to his own you know just as this comfort and it's really annoying to me because I mean you live home and you go to a place and you're looking forward to this mix because when I left Minnesota that's why I chose London cause I could have stayed in Minnesota gone to Law School and done all that but I said "you know what I want that real multicultural experience I didn't want to go to New York it's just too busy for me I'm a country girl really to be honest I don't like that busy lifestyle you know so I said hmmm London" very multicultural and after being in such an isolated place 98% you know white, struggling you know with all these different issues. Hey this is like New York it's perfect and you're in the middle of Europe you know gateway to everywhere else and I get here and I'm just shocked at how separate everyone is and I'm walking down the street and I'm hearing all these languages you know and I wanna have a conversation with somebody and take part but they are all just in their own groups and I'm just like "Okay so what do I do?" because I'm not used to having just one set of friends I'm used to having you know different ethnicities different races being in my social groups you know and right now I find that that's not the case

you know if I'm gonna be friends with anybody all of the people who have approached me since I've been here you know they are all black ...

SIYANDA: And Brigitte don't forget Brigitte (a former mutual friend of ours that we both fell out with)

SIYANDA: Laughs

DAPHNE: Brigitte was different I was token black person and so were you

SIYANDA: Laughs

DAPHNE: So ja I mean with her it was a bit different anyway because we were flat mates so it was a different situation so if you think about it she doesn't really talk to the African girl [in the flat] they don't really talk like that and if you know she never really liked her to begin with.

SIYANDA: Ja

DAPHNE: Exactly

SIYANDA: Ja I was there

DAPHNE: Ja so she's not my friend and she's not in my social group so she doesn't count but anyone other people who have approached me you know to want to get to know me better or whatever they have all been black you know and I've spoken to white people in my class you know different groups and you know Asians or whatever they might be Middle Eastern as well (brief pause) they come to class and they sit in their little clusters and they talk till class begins and then after class they leave together they don't try, try to blend or anything like that and so I don't know I think in a way it's worse for me than being in Minnesota where, where you kinda know your place whatever but here it's just like you're expecting the mix and it doesn't come and it's so disappointing.

SIYANDA: For me here it's very strange because unless I approach somebody or a group of people unless I initiate the conversation the asking "so where are you from? Wow" that's bad tell me more about that who? What happened? You find yourself worse at UEL in particular I think there have 120 countries represented....

DAPHNE: Yes that's why I chose UEL.

SIYANDA: ... you know and you think unless you really sort of approach somebody and it's always as I said I've found with me at least that I am the one who has had to sort of initiate with somebody who is not like me.

DAPHNE: Ja it's true it's very true ja when the sun came up last week I was really ... (an inaudible word) and everybody was outside enjoying the sunshine and you walk you know that big great area by the East Building by the library the gathering area there and see everybody walking about and you know there's just this nice buzz that's missing in winter time everybody just moving vibrant but then if you stand and look you see there are Africans over on the grass and Middle Easterns are closer to the East Building by the door smoking and talking or whatever and you know the white group is here doing something the Hispanics are here doing something so everybody is so all over the place yes it's buzzing and it's vibrant and they are all here but iSIYANDA't the point of

university to mix? And they come to school they are gonna be lawyers and whatever else they are gonna be ...

SIYANDA: Worse psychologists

DAPHNE: ...psycho (realizes why I have said this because Brigitte, the former mutual friend is in her training to become a psychology)

SIYANDA: Laughs hysterically and uncontrollably – laughing and clapping at the same time **DAPHNE:** ...and psychologists and managers and I mean (brief pause) the place the world is becoming smaller and smaller everyday because of you know advances in technology and all that kinda stuff and people are being sent all over the world on different assignments this is the place now where you should be learning you know to, to interact and get to know people because you never know where you are gonna end up and just out of human interest alone I'M fascinated by other cultures I wanna taste your food see if it's anything like mine I wanna hang out with you I wanna listen your music but they don't seem they wanna do the same and I find that strange because of my background where we have always mixed I go to a club and there are a million of white folks in their dancing reggae and getting down on the floor thinking they're black...

SIYANDA: Laughs

DAPHNE: Oh worse thinking they're Jamaican

BOTH: Laugh

SIYANDA: (again in my Jamaican accent) “Ja man”

DAPHNE: Right so I'm not used to this now you know (exclaims) ohhh and I'm, I'm glad that that everybody feels so strongly about their culture and their backgrounds but your culture and your background is not THE world you know and I can't stand that it annoys me and my mother every time I talk to her “Have you made any new friends yet?” (sort of an annoyed voice responding to the question) “No mom I haven't made any new friends”. I spoke to her the night before last “You're a beautiful smart girl you're friendly why can't you make new friends?” (raises her voice) “Because mom everybody sticks to their own and nobody will have me” which is true. I tried to make conversation whatever find out what people are doing for the weekend but they have never ever once said “well (brief pause) let's do this or whatever you know” and it's just the way it is and I'm still waiting to be a part of a social group I'm a part of any social group really once you leave that's the end of my social group

SIYANDA: You need a social group darling

DAPHNE: I know but how? HOW? Nobody is making themselves available to be friends with

SIYANDA: Yeah it's a very strange place and there is so much buzz and so much happening ...

DAPHNE: And I think the university itself DOESN'T (brief pause) have enough things to get people involved with each other ...

SIYANDA: I really doesn't ...

DAPHNE: ... you go to class and you leave class I mean most aren't interested in their class mates really so when they are done they just get up and go home or wherever they are going to meet with their social group

SIYANDA: And if you do not want to drink every night then you can't go to the bar cause I mean

DAPHNE: Exactly there's not a culture that you...

SIYANDA: ... the university wants students to socialize over alcohol.

DAPHNE: Right because supposedly that's the UK culture but I mean that's not the part of UK culture you know that's almost like the subculture you know this drinking thing so I don't know I don't know what to do about it and my mother keeps pestering me that I need to find friends "Yes mom I made two or three new ones" you know but I also wonder how or when I do make friends what kinda group it's going to be because if right now I'm only attracting black people will my circle only be black? I don't want that I would actually very much resent that, that fact if my circle is just made up of one thing I'm willing to learn about your culture wherever you're from cool but you know I'm here for the big experience everybody and also because of my upbringing I've been around wealthy people for the most of my life very affluent people and in a lot ways I have benefited from that and my mom who I've mentioned you know was a housekeeper whatever from the low money that she used to make she was able to buy property build apartments and stuff like that so she's now a businesswoman basically and you know so she's doing well for herself whatever you know so the people she meets and her bosses and all that so I have a circle you know people that I've grown up with I grew up in a house with Canadians and New Zealanders I don't know what they call themselves kiwis and ja and so I've adopted a lot things from them certain manners and probably even speech as well because I actually had this accent [her American accent] before I went to the States.

SIYANDA: Did you?

DAPHNE: Yes people think that I got it when I went to the States but no I've always had it I've had it from when I was little that was from being around ...

SIYANDA: (in my Jamaican accent) ...and you've lost the Jamaican I don't even sound Jamaica 'yeah man'

DAPHNE: Yeah I don't and

SIYANDA: I don't know how a Jamaican sound actually

DAPHNE: (Chuckles) Ja so, so I've been speaking this way for a very long time you know and that's from living in the households that I did whatever being around so even being around black people in the Bahamas especially I got teased a lot and they called me Oreos now if you know anything about Oreos cookies...

SIYANDA: I think in South Africa we call them as coconuts

DAPHNE: Well the Oreo cookie the outside is dark brown and maybe even black and the inside has the white creamy thing so everyone calls me Oreo ...

SIYANDA: So you're a coconut are you?

DAPHNE: Well that's what they call me because I guess I don't know what does a typical black person? I mean I do everything a black person does but somehow I still manage to be different

SIYANDA: Laughs

DAPHNE: I don't get it I'm still an Oreo "Ahh you talk like a white person you act like a white person" HOW? Because I wear my pants above my hip I don't show breasts and my ass you know that kinda stuff I mean when I go to the clubs I still get down like everybody else so why am I so different? I don't know what? (brief pause) what makes me WHITE? Compared to my black friends I don't know I'm still trying to figure it out

...

SIYANDA: That's the question

DAPHNE: And I still have that issue now cause when I say I'm going to Europe or I'm going to Britain "Oh you will fit right in"...

SIYANDA: Laughs

DAPHNE: What do you mean by that? "well you know (brief pause: looking for word exactly you're gonna be with your people" and it offends me I mean I don't have a problem you know with someone okay fine call me white whatever but when you start to make it seem as if that my IDENTITY you know or that's who I wanna be then it becomes a problem cause then it is seeming as if ohh you know I cause at point somebody came up to me and asked me "well why do you have that, that FAKE American accent or whatever you know are you trying to be white?" and it's like (brief pause) you don't know my history you don't know anything about me how can you come up to me and tell me that my accent is fake? (brief pause) you know all these things it's just ahh you know I hate black it's like the minute that you become somehow refined in your mannerisms your speech certain things you're white so everybody thinks I'm white "well you act like a white person" "Why are you eating that black people don't eat that" how do you know?...

SIYANDA: (laughs) I still insist that black people eat soup (laughs)

DAPHNE: Black people eat soup...

SIYANDA: (laughs) I KNOW

DAPHNE: ... in the Caribbean in Jamaica soup is a very big thing

SIYANDA: Ja, ja

DAPHNE: Ja you know so certain things like that just gets on my nerves so now I found myself in situations okay what is it gonna be like if I only make black friends you know? Are they gonna see me in the same way? Are they gonna think to themselves "Oh this girl is trying to be white"? (brief cause) cause I don't want that I don't know but I'll be

here for three years lots of time to figure it out but it kinda makes me uncomfortable in my own skin cause you know there was a time when I wasn't even sure exactly how I should be acting or whatever you know do I need to change to fit in or whatever which is how I actually started cursing in the first place cause I never used to curse because I didn't feel black enough somehow...

SIYANDA: because to be black you must curse

DAPHNE: EXACTLY which is like yeah you know certain things like that and then everybody shouted "she's cool she's black after all"...

SIYANDA: welcome home

DAPHNE: ...you know exactly and, and that shouldn't be (brief pause) you know it's just like if you have certain experiences you've black people don't ride on horseback, what are you talking about you, you did horseback riding WHAT? No you know (brief pause) so they made me feel badly about you know the experiences I've had like they are not black enough but yet still when they meet a real black person like say an African they are horrified because then that's too black for them that's just too native you know like I told you before my friends would never dream of marrying an African man they couldn't take one home to their parents just how the guys in Minnesota can't take home a black girl to their parents (brief pause) I don't know I grew up in a household where race didn't matter you know and now I've lived with white people my entire life I got treated just like everybody else treated like their children whatever same experiences you know so that's how and I guess stupid of me to believe that you know everybody would just see me as Dahema and not just see me as a black person or whatever but in London is a bit different because now I find I take on two identities one being black and two being Jamaican and I think for me being Jamaican here is harder than being black here...

SIYANDA: what do you mean?

DAPHNE: because of the stereotypes of Jamaicans Jamaicans have been coming to Britain for YEARS and years and years you know emigrating here for of course work reasons or whatever and of course Jamaica used to be a British colony so you now up to a couple years ago I don't know maybe 2000 we didn't need visas (brief pause) we didn't need visas we were just like Australia you know a lot of the Commonwealth countries you could just come freely so then so many people started to leave and not only were they leaving but when they got here they were doing so many bad things the drugs the drug trade these gang, gang stuff I mean a lot of the violence that takes place in the UK is Jamaicans (brief pause) we have a very bad reputation here and so when I come and people ask me where I'm from I just say the Caribbean I don't even want to say Jamaica because I know exactly what they are going to think and I dread that you know they're gonna be juDaphneing me that way you know and it's just this thing that it's gonna follow me for the rest of my life and it's just like as long as I have a Jamaican passport I'm gonna have a really tough life tough time...

SIYANDA: In Britain you mean

DAPHNE: In Britain and in other places any place that you know that's white basically you're gonna have a tough time because Jamaicans the kinda name that they've made for themselves so that's saying ok yeah these black Jamaicans these you know these natives you know they leave their country they come to the white man's country but they can't live their nativeness behind you know the violence and the drugs and all that they bring it here so they say go back where you're coming from (brief pause) you know so, so it's a lot of stuff to struggle with while you are here and you know and I was at where was I? I went to Westminster Abbey there was a group of us Hungarians and I was the Jamaican so one of the workers there asked us all where we were all from so they're like Hungary, Hungary, Hungary I was like Jamaica " oh well that's not uncommon... (brief pause)

DAPHNE:

SIYANDA: laugh

DAPHNE: of course now of course I laughed I was ha ha ha but I really felt bad about this it was just like (brief pause) is it that's what it's come to they're so many Jamaican here with such a bad reputation that now it's just like it's almost like an annoyance they're just like oh well that's not so uncommon I really felt badly about that (pause) I don't know

SIYANDA: You've had a fantastic life I think

DAPHNE: laugh

SIYANDA: And four countries you know in 27 years that's quite something

DAPHNE: Please don't remind me of my age never mention that again alright

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA:

DAPHNE: in twenty something years ok thank you very much

SIYANDA: You are just a year older than me ok so that's fine that's fine

DAPHNE: It doesn't matter a year is a lot

DAPHNE:

SIYANDA: Yeah right so let's finish off the interview perhaps with you telling me a little bit about where you see yourself in the few coming years where you wanna be whether in terms of your life generally in terms of work your career and stuff like that

DAPHNE: Ok sure where I see myself (brief pause)

SIYANDA: For some reason that's a very hard question iSIYANDA't it

DAPHNE: It's a VERY hard question

SIYANDA: It's like what do you mean

DAPHNE: I mean and the thing is we think about it all the time but nothing concrete I don't know I mean I could be here I mean at least for the next three years I'll be here but after that it's like (brief pause) God knows what I really want is if I don't get a job here of

any sort that I end up working for the UN I mean that's my main goal I've always wanted to work for the UN I remember when I was about fourteen or fifteen I called one of the agencies one of the offices the UN offices in Jamaica cause they've got quite a few of them there (laughs) and I said what kind of jobs are available when I can start work (laughs) they're like call us back in a couple of years at least graduate from high school first so I've always known I wanted to work with the UN so I see myself probably if not in Latin America because I'm very fascinated by Spanish culture Latin American culture and I think there's a lot of dynamics going on down there with social political cultural all those different things going on different conflicts and everything and so I've always wanted to work there so I'm trying to become real fluent in my Spanish which I'm not getting a chance to practice because that's the other thing I was like I'm coming to London so multicultural finding a place to do Spanish ...

SIYANDA: would be easy

DAPHNE: very easy now you have to think about taking a train to Central London and all that

SIYANDA: that's the thing about being in East London

DAPHNE: and I hate that and I also want to learn French because to work with the UN I mean it is their official language at the UN English and French and they almost require you to have it you know so I need to learn French and then wherever they send me to be honest I'll be happy with all I need is a start but my final destination is I don't know probably working at the UN and maybe like the international criminal court or something like that you know at the Hague being involved in that kinda conflict resolution human rights issues that come up and other kinds of stuff and playing a huge role in that maybe even in the policy making as well so that's my goal so I'm doing law in that hopes that it will get me there faster and then my peace and conflict studies degree has not because I found that yes there's a lot of wars going on and people are always like oh well finding a job should be easy oh no it's not having a peace and conflict degree does not

SIYANDA: it's the war that makes the money (laugh)

DAPHNE: exactly thank you please talk about war

SIYANDA: (laugh)

DAPHNE: exactly so to be honest right now I'm just in limbo trying to figure it all out being in a new place so it's basically having a new plan again because the one I had when I was in the US didn't work out my plan has always been to go back to Jamaica work in Jamaica build up my country that was always the thing for me no matter wherever I end up in the world and work at some point I'll be back in Jamaica and I'll be making a difference but the Jamaican government makes it so hard because it's so corrupt and so terrible and they just hire whoever they want people they know in circles whatever and it's all these old men who are fifties, sixties and seventies who've been there forever and they won't give the young people the chance to do anything so they are all leaving and finding other places to work other countries so Jamaica is falling apart brain drain obviously so when I finished in Minnesota I now went back home and it was just like ok I need to find a job check out the UN if they have anything you all these little places and they weren't hiring or they were issues whatever the case might be and I was in Jamaica

jobless for a year and I said to myself I can't do that maybe I've had it wrong all along maybe Jamaica is not where I'm supposed to be because if it was things should be working you know if this was where I was meant to be then I should have a job right now I should be doing what I set out to do so I decided ok you know what I'm gonna go back to school I'm gonna do the law get my Masters whatever and try again later on but I don't Jamaica is ready or has any kinds of preparations made for you know it's young citizens who are coming back home educated and more than willing to help it's a problem I have and everybody is frustrated with it you know my cousin just graduated he's a doctor and he's scared to be in Jamaica now he's looking to go somewhere far like Australia or someplace where there's no violence and no whatever else because Jamaica is so terrible so now what do you wanna do and then you come here and you worry because you have to get your visa because you have to sign saying that you plan to go back to your own country when you're done if you don't find a job here what am I gonna do go back to Jamaica? To do what sit down with my degree look at it on the wall everyday so I don't know so right now for me it's just working as hard as I can coming out with as many different plans as possible you know backup plans so there's no straight and narrow way for me you know I think it's harder when you're an international student to really have a solid plan you know if I was British and living here then it's different you know become a lawyer practice get the job with the UK get my foot in but now no

SIYANDA: oh just go marry Sir Paul McCartney

DAPHNE: exactly

SIYANDA: laughs

DAPHNE: you know or a footballer you know whatever but I'm NOT I'm Jamaican and I'm black so that makes it harder to make your way in the world because believe it or not people do see colour and I don't think it is as important as I used to be I don't I think things have changed a lot but it does play a part and I get angry sometimes because I think that Jamaicans who are here doing terrible things you know or any black person who does a terrible thing is spoiling it for me and for you and for the rest of us who wanna make it and doing it and going about things the right way you know because people don't remember us and the accomplishments you've made they remember the person who got killed and the person they got killed by a black man you know shot a boy on the street you know these black people running around killing each other having these gangs or whatever that's what they remember and so when they see you on the bus or whatever they don't see you as just a college student trying to make it they see you as a black person who probably has violent tendencies you know who they have to sit a couple of rows back and not sit beside you because you never know when you're gonna explode and start shooting you know that kinda stuff and (gasps for air) being black is not easy but I think that black people also make it hard on themselves because they rely on this crutch of their history oh we're treated so badly in slavery and they just keep looking back and back and back just going back over the same thing oh you guys owe us that was hundreds of years ago you know you've got your independence most of us come from independent nations we're making our way in the world WORK forget it and stop complaining about how hard it is to be a black person yes but people have done it and they have done it very well and they've become successful and well respected by

everybody you know when I go to the States people just complained all the time about not everybody but you know a lot of the black people oh they won't give me a job because I'm black no they won't give you a job because your pants are below your waist almost to your knees you know you're not speaking properly you didn't finish high school all these things but they expect things to be handed to them I don't think that there's anybody in the US that shouldn't be going to college I think I know that some people have it really bad and some people are in really deep poverty but I think there are enough chances there that if you have done well in school the government has scholarships that you can get you know to give you a start that you don't pay back until after you've graduated after you've gotten your degree go out and get it and stop waiting for people to do things for you and I hate that mentality so then when they see black people they think all we want to do is rely on them rely on America for aid to a black country rely on America and the UK to solve our aids crisis you know all those different things get up help yourself it's difficult and yes you might be a bit bankrupt but why are you bankrupt because of your corruption you know you live in a wealthy country with so many resources at hand but it's either you give it away to these multinational corporations or you split it up and your local compatriots within your party or whatever the case might be you know ruining the country and you know ruining for black people so now black people are just seen as needy people who just wait for handouts and I hate to think that's how people see us but they do (brief pause) it's sad really but you know I don't wanna be seen as someone who's relying on the crutch and say look I went to college and you know to get my degree I had to work hard to get it nobody helped me to get it I got it fine maybe you gave me the money to get here with your scholarship or whatever but the fact is actually I had to work to earn it so see me on that basis (brief pause- gasps for air) I don't know

SIYANDA: alright on that heated and uncertain note ...

BOTH: laugh

DAPHNE: that is uncertain but the issues of race are always uncertain

SIYANDA: they are always very uncertain very interesting and not simple and not just one thing

DAPHNE: you know yeah I'm sure if somebody heard me they'd probably say you know I sound racist myself like I don't think anything good of black people but that's not true we've done a lot I mean just looking at my mom alone and whatever she's been able to do starting off as just a housekeeper or whatever she's accomplished a lot and she doesn't have more than well she did start college whatever but she had to stop because work was more important money was more important with two kids in high school and then college so she had to stop you know because she was on her way to becoming a nurse but you know the nursing programmes were all daytime stuff and she has to work so she had to give it up so whatever she earned she just always put a little aside (pause) she was able to buy properties or whatever and do whatever that she wants to do and it's all good you know

SIYANDA: I guess then your point will be had she just sat down and not done anything she would not have been where she is right now

DAPHNE: right she would be with the rest of my aunts and uncles who are sitting in Jamaica waiting on her you know to help them we were out there last summer and my grandmother's house which I mean she just sold fruit and vegetables in the market you know and got them all her nine children she supported them through that and built the house now the house is falling apart so my mom she said to them well if we all got together we can change the roof on the house because the roof is falling down I mean our mother worked hard to build this to build this place for us you know to give us you know shelter we cannot allow this her memory her legacy to just be basically literally falling down you know what they said we're waiting on you that's what they said to my mom they have no intentions of doing anything and that's how they are and that's how Jamaicans are they keep waiting for people to help them you know one thing I'll have to say about American to a point they know their rights and they know the power of their votes you know Jamaicans don't and I think black people even in Africa too they don't know the power of their vote that they can get rid of their leaders if they really want to you know in fact that just annoys me (brief pause) just to sit back and wait wait for aid wait for food wait for healthcare and then in the meantime what starve to death (brief pause) and people might say it's easier for you you know you sound like a white person you grew up around them that's their kind of mentality maybe can be true maybe I picked these things up from listening to them over the years it's a possibility but I can't say that I disagree I mean these countries have deep seated issues no doubt going way back to slavery times and they're not easy to solve I'm not saying that but I'm saying that you should do something for yourself especially young people now who have so many more opportunities you know have all these scholarships available to them being able to travel do whatever do it (pause) so yeah that's me that's my life

SIYANDA: thank you very much

DAPHNE: nothing spectacular has happened but

SIYANDA: it's very cool I don't know why you even saying that it's very very cool and I think we'll end on this frustrated note now firstly it was heated and uncertain now it's frustrated

DAPHNE: I am I am frustrated with black people to be honest you know and when I'm home you know sometimes I sit with my mom's bosses or whatever and when they hear certain things you just cringe inside because you see them like just shaking their heads when they see people fighting in Kenya right now over the election I mean ok yeah it didn't go your way but why are you killing each other you know you're killing your brother and your sister and your neighbor that's not the way you solve the issue you solve the issue if don't like the way the elections turned out find another way you know if everybody rallies together and say ok we call for reelection or something that would work the power of the people it can happen it can happen in the US whatever just know your power but to go and kill each other and your neighbor it just doesn't make any logical sense or when I see my mom's boss or oh well they are my bosses too cause I work for

them in the summer in the office or whatever it's just and they see it and they're watching TV and they see these things and they kinda shake their heads and you just cringe cause you're just like oh God here we go again black people are doing what they always do you know ahh it gets me (pause) and they say things like when are black people gonna get it together you know that's what they do say I don't know what's wrong with those Africans

SIYANDA: it's interesting though that we're talking about your life and we find ourselves talking about very very political deep things which I for me it goes to show ukuthi that your lives are sort of tied into these bigger things and that's why I suppose I I'm trying to answer these questions through this approach that you know talking about you growing up and moving around that from your life story I am able or we're able to take into other bigger social political which you are now bringing up which is very very fascinating to think about

DAPHNE: and I've had lots of discussions on race and you know just you black people and colonization and all that kind of stuff with my mom's bosses because they are millionaires and billionaires which means they have businesses worldwide you know including Africa and South America and the Caribbean and all these places so they travel a lot and they see these things and then when they come home summertime or whatever and they throw their dinner parties and these are the things they talk about they talk about the issues in Africa you know that aren't being solved and what black people aren't doing what they should be doing and stuff like that and so I don't know I guess I just always grew up aware of these things you know (pause)

SIYANDA: wow we have twenty nineteen eighteen seconds remaining it's counting down it's an appropriate time to now stop thank you very much for your time it was fantastic talking to you

DAPHNE: thanks now you know about my whole damn life

Second Interview: Daphne 27 March 2009

<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Okay, well, 27 March 2009, 2 days after my birthday, Daphne for the second time. Okay, so, ja you say you were gonna tell me about your Poland experiences. What happened?</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>Well, yeah. I mean, the first thing is you do remember that Poland was a Communist state for a very long time. They just opened up in the late 80's I think, or maybe in some places even the 90's, so I'm not sure about Poland if it's the 80's or 90's, but pretty late. So, they were closed off from wherever you are so it's pretty much a marginal society. And now that things are open, you find different races going in there trying to prosper, economically prosper, of course. But, so far maybe, Asian population, mostly Indians, you'll find some, not a lot. I saw some, I don't know if they're Japanese or Chinese, but one or two walking on the street. And then for Black people, let's see, when I was there, I counted 5: 3 walking together and then 1 lady on the bus and then a guy walking by himself, so five, so not that many. But, I don't know, for a place that was closed off for so long, they're... I don't know if they just don't care or if they're just cool with it, it's hard to say, but they didn't really... I didn't feel uncomfortable at all; I mean I walked on the streets. I guess in a way it felt uncomfortable because I knew I was the only Black person in sight, but it's not as if they were giving me funny looks, that said you know, "what are you doing here, why are you in my country, can't you tell you don't belong here?". Yeah, I didn't get that kind of look.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>But, did you feel out of place?</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>I felt out of place, yeah, it's always weird to be out of, know, your comfort zone, but that's part of travelling though, and part of learning about other people's cultures and stuff like that, you know, you won't feel safe and comfortable all the time. But it was just weird and, you know, my friend was laughing at me because every time I saw a black person I got so excited and he kept on saying "must you count them, must you count them?" because each one I was like "number one, number two, ooh three together", so that was interesting because it's not the kind of place that you'd expect black people to be because it has been closed up for so long and Eastern Europe is known for, you know, neo-Nazi and all those other racist stuff that is going on. So, because they are just not used to it, they are used to their own kind</p>

	<p>forever and ever. But when I went to the malls and stuff, people did look but I think it was more curiosity than hostility, just like, “huh, what is she doing here?”. It was strange, you know, but when I went into the stores, I went to a lot of stores, and they catered to me just the same as anybody else: “hi, may I help you?,” whatever. Even though I spoke English, you know, but they came up anyway, and, you know, my friend was there who speaks Polish and he was able to translate things. They were pretty nice. I went to the bookstores, they, even though it was in Polish, they tried to talk to me about the books, what I wanted to find out about, and, all that. The only time that I really felt uncomfortable, we went outside, because we were in Warsaw which is the capital city, so of course you know its always more metropolitan, more mixed, multi-ethnic, well barely. But we went, uh, literally no more than 6 minutes outside of Warsaw and you can tell the difference. I mean 5, 6 minutes and it’s like a completely different place. Now they really stared, and I mean it’s a huge plaza, because its an outlet mall – so everything you’d want from Nike to blah blah is there. And of course it’s very popular, so there were lots of people there and they just stared and stared and stared. We went to the Food Court and sat down and I had to put my friend to sit in front of me to kinda block the views because people, they were just staring. It was so weird. And then we went into a particular Sports Store, I won’t say which one...</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Why?</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>Fine I’ll say which one, the Puma Store to look for football shoes and there was a particular Security Guard who was there. He was standing towards the back of, actually all the way at the back of the store, where we were because that’s where the women’s shoes were. And I went there and he watched me and he watched me and he watched me. I picked up a shoe to look at it and he moved closer and closer. So I thought I’m being paranoid, you know, I’m just thinking this because I’m black – I’m expecting people to think, you know, I’m a thief or something. So I put it down and I walk away a little and I pick up another shoe, he moves closer still watching. So I just say to my friend, “Is it just me or is that guy staring me down?” So he’s like “Well, I’m not sure, I wasn’t really looking”. So then I said “Just watch this”. So I</p>

	<p>moved again, I went to another aisle; I left where he was completely and I went to another aisle. He followed me to that aisle and watched when I pick up a shoe. So I'm like okay. So by this time he was directly behind me. So then I decided to go all the way up the aisle and then come down on another aisle. The dude met me going in the other direction coming from the other side. So I'm going down and he's coming up. So we meet. So he's honestly following me. So, like of course then I get pissed off, so I'm just like "let's go". So we go across to another sports store. Everything is cool, fine, everybody's nice. But then I realise, oh we need football socks. The only place that they have the size is the Puma store. So by the time we go back to the Puma store, I look to my left, it's the entrance to the place because the Puma store is the first one. And the security guy, he's outside, having a cigarette break. He sees us going back into the store; he puts out his cigarette and comes back into the store. I'm not even kidding.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Oh my God!</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>He was with someone; he was talking to someone outside smoking his cigarette. He saw us and he dropped his cigarette, crushed it out and came back into the store. And we were at the front because the socks are right by the cashiers, and he came and he stood right by the cashier. And he watched us and watched us till we left again. Yep. And now we went there twice, we went back another day because I bought something and it was too small, big boobies, and all that. So yeah, so we went back and he was there again, he was there but I don't know if they had him doing something in particular. He was watching us still but he kept to his side, he didn't follow us around but his eyes were always on us. And that is the only time I think I really felt really uncomfortable, you know. And I spoke to some Polish folk and they're just like, it's to be expected that the minute you step outside the capital city that you, you know, they become more suspicious of, you know, black people and all that. But now you could tell it wasn't curiosity, it's like he already had, you know, these ideas, preconceived ideas already of black people. So that was not, that was terrible. I spoke to my friend's aunts later, well I spoke to his parents and they were saying I should write a letter and complain because racism in 2009 is just purely unacceptable especially in an international store where a</p>

	customer is a customer no matter what. So they wanted me to write a letter to the Head Office, which I haven't done but I'm still thinking about it.
Siyanda	And why haven't you written?
Daphne	Well, I mean, the thing is what would really happen. I mean I don't live in Poland, that's the first thing and I don't know, I just, I don't know how many black people they're going to see for it to really make a difference. And they were not going to fire the guy over one incident, you know. I mean he could make something up, like "I've never seen a black person before, I was just, you know, enthralled or something". So that didn't really work out. But I spoke to my friend's aunt and she said one of the reasons why people might stare is because of my complexion itself, that though a lot of them have seen black people at some point, most of the ones that they encountered are extremely dark. And so for them it might just be a bit strange and a bit different to see someone who's lighter. And so that might be why they stare because it's something different from what they already know, so I don't know which one is true but that was my experience of the race issue in Poland.
Siyanda	Now, you say every time you saw a black body you got excited. What do you think that recognition was about for you to them?
Daphne	I don't know... it's like comfort in numbers I think. I think that's what it is, comfort in numbers. You always feel better when you have your own kind around. I mean it's the same reason when you leave home and you go to a foreign country to live and work or whatever, people usually tend to go into neighbourhoods where it's their own, maybe not their own countrymen, but their own ethnicity, in a general area that you know, you'll find, black people or whatever. It's just more comfortable by the way, it's almost like you can face things because you've got back-up rather than being on your own. And I don't know if there's anything wrong with that, I mean it's based on our own experiences of the world and, you know, and how we expect white people and other races to treat us. So I think we think we'll fare better in groups of us, that we probably could stand up to them better in groups. So I mean that's the thing, you know, when I went to the Plaza, not the racist Plaza, the other one I saw some black people there

	and then I felt, instantly felt more comfortable walking around because I knew then that I wouldn't be just this, you know..
Siyanda	...circus...
Daphne	Exactly, I wouldn't be the circus, people just staring at me everywhere I go. So then I completely felt at ease because at first I didn't want to sit and eat or whatever, I just wanted to look around and go and then I saw them, and then I went to stores and I tried on clothes and whatever. I just felt better. So yeah, and then I saw some interracial couples as well, which also helped, because then I didn't feel weird.
Siyanda	Ok, well, let's speak about interracial couples or rather you transgressing and crossing over, because you do cross over, or you have?
Daphne	Yeah, I mean I think all the time. I think in my lifetime I've probably only dated one black person and he wasn't completely black, he's mixed. And I've dated Jamaicans, but of Indian descent, East-Indian descent. And then of course I've dated an Eastern-European and probably now second Eastern-European. So yeah, I don't think I've ...
Siyanda	And a bit of rendezvous with a British boy.
Daphne	A British boy...
Siyanda	Yeah, the comedian
Daphne	Oh yes, yes, how could I forget? Yes, yes, but white. Yeah, that's the thing, I don't know. I've always wondered about this, I don't know if my preference for ... Well as it concerns the Indians, Jamaica is very mixed, in terms of the population with East- Indians and Chinese or whatever, through colonialism and slavery and all that so we're pretty mixed that way so seeing a black person and an Indian person together in Jamaica is nothing, it's just normal. So you find these mixes, but you rarely see a couple, a black and white couple in Jamaica. I don't think I have unless they're tourists or something. And that's because the relationship between blacks and whites in Jamaica, you can feel that there's a separation. I mean you can see it physically where blacks live compared to where whites live because all the white people that are there, obviously they're wealthy. They've either come down to invest or they own businesses there or whatever but they're wealthy. So they live in their own section, you know, well kept lawns, blah blah blah, you know... the norm. And then the black people on their side,

	and so the only time you'll see them interact is, maybe...
Siyanda	At church, the last time you said, I think, you saw them at church?
Daphne	Yeah, because I told you my town is a sugarcane town, traditionally and of course you know all about colonialism and the sugarcane. So, of course, there is the great house or whatever, which has now been knocked down to make a fantastic two-storey house. Well they don't really exist anymore.
Siyanda	What is a great house?
Daphne	The great house is where the master, the sling master lives is the great house. Oh well, in the Caribbean terminology it's the great house. That's where the sling master lives. So they still have that separate, apart, even in my town. They don't even live in the town, they live outside the town, a little outside the town, completely surrounded by - you've got the sugarcane on the outskirts and then high trees and stuff. So you'll only see little peeps of maybe the satellite dish on top of the roof or something. You don't see their houses; if you're not looking you might not even see that there are houses there. Yeah so that's how it is in Jamaica and they, the church, the Anglican Church in my town, it was built way back in slave time so obviously it would've been around by Europeans and British and stuff like that and by the white folks and if you go into the, what do you call that... the cemetery, you'll see that a lot of them are of their family, the white family, you know their deceased family are there. Yeah, and the only time that you really see, they don't come into the town and hang out with the people, even when we have, you know, the times when you'd expect to see them like Christmas, Easter; when people really get together. You don't even see it then. The only time that I've ever seen them is Easter really, in church. And it's usually just one person, probably like as a representative of the whole family. You wouldn't see the family come because it's quite a few of them but you don't see them come with their children or anything, you just see one person and maybe that person's child. But usually it's that one representative of the family, to say that "on behalf of our family, we'd like to wish everyone, you know. So its really strange, and then they come to church and then they leave directly after. They don't stop and chat, maybe just to the Pastor and then they're gone again. And then you'll see them next

	<p>Easter or if they want to grace you with their presence, at Christmas they might stop by. And now and then they might bring something for the kids for school, maybe a couple of notebooks or something to give out to the kids at church. So, it's almost like a charitable feel to the whole situation, not true goodwill and friendship and being part of the community. It's charity "hey, we're here, here's a couple of notebooks, take that" or "a couple of hymn notes for the church, take that". So that's how it is, and that's how it is through Jamaica, throughout. The only time you see interaction between black Jamaicans and whites is in the tourist areas, because they have to but not between local whites that live there, you don't see that unless you work with one in corporate Jamaica. Or if you come across them in the Supermarkets.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Or if you work for one.</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>Or if you work for one, yeah. But most of their businesses are in the tourist areas or in Kingston or the really corporate areas. Yeah, so in most cases, they'll probably be your boss somehow. And it's not that they necessarily have more experience or qualifications than you. It's just that once again that's part of, I don't know if it's black mentality or just black Caribbean mentality, you know but I've discussed this before about things being better that are coming from abroad, especially from white countries, like a degree from the UK is better than a degree in Jamaica. Even though the Universities might be just as good but say you went to Cambridge versus the University of the West Indies, and so even if you have more, more, even if you have more qualifications and more experience, they're going to choose that person over you because they just automatically feel that what's white, what's foreign is better and that's how it's done. Yeah, I mean I told you too that I've noticed even in our national airlines that the air-hostesses and all those people that serve you, they're usually Indians. So they're going to be light-complexioned, long hair. Or if there are a couple of black people, they're also brown, you won't really find anyone dark, you know with a good length hair or something like that. So you can almost see that that's what they see beauty as being. So, you know, and then that's probably why Jamaica is the way it is now, they keep that mentality that everyone in Jamaica now, I've told you this too, they're bleaching and they wear their long hair-weaves down</p>

to the middle of their back or touching their butts, oh come on now. And it's not as if we can't have long hair, black people can grow long hair, it's a matter of taking care of it; hair is delicate, take care of it, and you can have it, you know. But why is it even necessary to have long hair to prove that you're just as good or just as pretty, that doesn't make sense. And I think like the Rastafarian population in Jamaica, that's one of the things they fight against the most, you know this whole idea of white being better and that black is beautiful. You grow your natural hair, you lock it, you know, and it's beautiful, I mean I don't know if you've ever seen anyone with real dreads, it's long, it's beautiful, it's clean. It doesn't have to be dirty and looking like, you know, you've been sleeping on the streets for 10 years. It's absolutely gorgeous to see but I don't know, it's just our mentality, we can't; there's a popular radio host in Jamaica and he calls it the, he says that we can't get our minds away from the plantation. It's like it's always focused on the plantation, everything is better and even when we try, we don't even try to move forward, we just prefer to blame everything on the slave masters back then and on slavery and colonisation, and not moving forward and making our own name, you know, our own future even though we are now independent. So yeah, I don't know, it's just strange. But yes, we got so sidetracked, we were talking about my relationships, yes, back to the relationships. I was just trying to explain the background of the mixing in Jamaica itself. So my experience in the Bahamas, I've told you this too, it's a bit different; there's a lot more mixing, a whole lot more mixing. You go to schools, black, white, Asian, everything. And everyone, they're all friends and, you know, the way it should be, really. And I've told you that I grew up in household with white Canadians and many different nationalities but all white and I don't know if that's the reason why I usually tend to date white guys. Or prefer them, I don't know if I genuinely, genuinely just prefer them or because I grew up around them so I tend to lean towards them. If there was a cute black guy and a cute white guy, I'd probably date the cute white guy first, would be my first choice. But it's not to say that I'm not attracted to black guys, it's just my preference and I think it has a lot just to do with the way that I grew up. It does shape that, so it's more learned than natural, I think. So I

	mean I struggled with that a lot, I always wondered about that and sometimes feel guilty that I prefer them, that just sounds bad – prefer a white guy over a black guy. It sounds really bad.
Siyanda	Yeah, doesn't it? It's like you are betraying your people.
Daphne	Yeah.
Siyanda	What about them? What does that mean?
Daphne	Yeah, exactly. I don't even know what that means because as far as I'm concerned, you like someone, you date them. I don't care where they're from, you know, or what they look like but that's just me. I mean that's how I grew up too. Maybe that's why I don't have a problem dating a white guy. A lot of people wouldn't dream of it, I have friends who wouldn't dream of dating a white guy. No, they just wouldn't do it. But if you ask them they can't give you a good reason as to why they wouldn't. They'll say "oh, they're cute but..." but they can't give you a good reason why they wouldn't date one. It's the same thing with a white girl who thinks black men are attractive but would never date one; they can't give you a good reason as to why not, even if he's good looking, well-spoken, intelligent. I don't know. But then again it probably stems, just like me, from the way they grew up which is a part of it too, probably afraid to take him home to their parents who, of course, come from a different generation where it's just unacceptable. So I think that's a big part of it but it's my preference, I don't know, I just like white guys. And it's not because of their blue eyes or anything because I've dated guys and they have brown eyes just like mine. So it's not like a fascination with blue eyes or pink lips or anything like that and blond hair that I can run my hands through, none of that stuff. Well, that's just the way it is. But then again it could be part of my culture that, like I said even though I've dated a black guy, he was light-skinned, he was mixed and that could be because of the culture, the Caribbean culture, even within the black population if it's lighter it's better. A Mom would prefer her daughter to date a brown- skin guy than to date a dark-skin guy even though he might have better intentions for her daughter.
Siyanda	Why?
Daphne	Once again it stems back to the slave plantation, of the lighter skin being preferential, the one that works in the house and cooks for the

	master versus the pitch-black one that's out in the fields.
Siyanda	That's why he's pitch-black; he's out in the sun!
Daphne	Exactly my point. They won't always like that. I'm pretty sure that not all of them always had, but if you're in the sun, you know, 15, 20 hours a day, what do you expect to look like?
Siyanda	Light!?
Daphne	Exactly. And if you're in the house 24 hours a day serving the master in more than one way.... oh come on, it's true, so yeah, I don't know but it stems back to that, that light skin is better because that's what white people prefer. So I think that's what it is and they've just stuck with it. Light skin is better, long hair is better so, you know, if there were two brown guys and a Mom has to choose for her daughter between the two, do you think she's going to take the brown guy with the, I don't know, the rough nappy head – because sometimes you find light-skinned people but they have the really nappy, furry hair versus the brown- skinned guy with the smooth hair that you can run your hands through, which one do you think she's going to choose? She's going to choose the one with the hair as well as the skin. And that's just the mentality that, you know, silky hair that you can run your hands through is better than the other kind. So the mentality, we just cannot get away from the fact that we are okay the way we are, we can accept ourselves the way we are. I don't know.
Siyanda	So it does sound as if slavery still continues to...
Daphne	Oh slavery continues. In the Caribbean you can see it everywhere. In Jamaica you can see it everywhere, the economic situation and, but half of it is the mentality of the people, I don't think a lot of the things that happen in Jamaica, even with the economy and the way the government treats the people with no respect, no regard whatsoever, it stems back to the people and the way they see themselves. Black people do not see themselves as deserving of respect, at least within, you know; at least I can only speak for in Jamaica anyway, they just don't. They'd rather have a politician who was well- educated abroad, who comes back to tell them a whole bunch of crap, lie to them and they'll vote for them just because of, you know, the idea of everything that's foreign being better. You know, everything that comes from the white man's land is better. Then they would choose him even though

	<p>he tells them a bunch of lies over the home-grown black man who would have gone to the University of the West Indies or, you know, some local place. Even though he might know the people better and have better intentions and know how the country works better. But I just don't know. Black people do not have any regard for themselves and so they let the politicians make all their decisions for them, treat them whichever way. I mean there's just no human rights in Jamaica but the people don't care, they don't stand up, they don't fight; the most they do is call the radio stations to complain to a talk show host but where does that get you if you don't stand up for yourself? It's just ridiculous. So anybody can come from abroad with a nice little degree and you know, because even our constitution is ridiculous that... the way it's set up. If you're a dual citizen but say, you have an American citizenship as well, then you can't sit in parliament but if you're a dual citizen but your citizenship is of another Commonwealth country, say Canada, you can come to Jamaica and be a Prime Minister, it's in our constitution that you can sit in the House of Parliament, you can be a politician. So it just shows that, you know, even then the people who set up our constitution, a couple of whom are white, I must say, they had it all planned out from then, you know, that they'll always have someone from the outside who can come in and somehow lead, or if not out rightly lead, then do it behind the scenes. And Jamaicans-they complain but you must say that they must be alright with it, they let it continue, they don't ask for change in the constitution to suit them as black people and their needs. No.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>But now Daphne, you are also studying abroad...</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>I mean you've studied in the States and then here and you're going over to another European country, how does that fit in with you also not studying in the University of West Indies?</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>Me not studying at the University of the West Indies, mhh, well... I did try but you know we black people we do have our issues, we do. And one of them is our organisational skills are almost non-existent, honestly. So that was my problem with the University of the West Indies, I applied to go for Law; I did, even before I considered the UK, but they lost my application. So when I'm calling on the date to find</p>

out, because I called them after I sent my stuff, they said that they'd received it. So they said 'call back in a couple of months to know if you've gotten in or not.' I called almost daily, they can't find anyone by my name, then they told me that I didn't get in and when I check back later, that was actually someone else's name that they'd given me so it wasn't actually me. And so I asked, well, can you look for me again; they said there's no one on the system. So I don't know where all my transcripts went or where my application went so, obviously. And by the time you get the results, it's September already so it's too late to do anything else. So I ended up having to actually wait a year and I didn't want to have to go through that process again so while I was waiting, I just applied to go abroad but it wasn't necessarily my first choice, I had no problem going to the University of the West Indies. It's a fabulous school and it's well-reputed, so yeah, so that was the thing. And then once I got here, it was just a matter of, well, I'm in Europe, considering the way things are going and all these visa fees and visa applications – one, they don't have to let you in and two, they can kick you out anytime if they let you in—so I think I'll just hang around and get to see the fabulous Europe as much as possible because I don't know if they'll ever let me in here to do it again. So that's why I'm here, I'm just trying to study in different places and get the different experiences so I can at least say if I never come back that I was there, I did it. So it's not a matter of thinking that, "oh Europe is better than home, no." As bad as Jamaica is, Jamaica is home, I love that place with my entire being. And I can't imagine being away from there for too long. Like any place, even when you're home you just get tired of being there for a while and then you go away for a little bit and then you can't wait to go home again. It's just to renew that love you have for the place and that's what for me it is. But you know I find so many people that, once again, lots of Jamaicans, they leave and they never go back. They want to stay in Europe, for whatever reason, even if their living conditions in Europe are worse than they were at home. But it's just to say that they're abroad, just to say "I'm living in the UK", because like I said "everything in the UK is better." And they'll never go back home, there's nothing in Jamaica for them. How can there be nothing in Jamaica for you if that's your country – you're

	<p>Jamaican, that's the only place that's really going to cater for you as a citizen. Yeah so it wasn't anything like thinking that being in Europe will be better, being in a white man's land is better, no, none of that. It was just a matter of practicality because honestly, the education I'm getting in Britain compared to what I get at home, they don't really compare – home is better. That's just my opinion.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>I know for a fact that education in South Africa is superior; they're really, really bad. I mean, students here have shocked me.</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>They shocked me. Exactly. But it just goes back to this whole colonisation thing again, if it's Europe, its Britain – especially Britain “the motherland”, I'm serious, Africa isn't the motherland – England is, England is the motherland. That's how they see it and so it's got to be better, English education has got to be better even if they can't afford it. They'll try whatever it is to be able to send their kids here even if it means they'll be bankrupt and living in poverty for the rest of their lives. It's slave mentality, black people can't find their own identity as a people. Everything always has to link back somehow to the, you know, their colonial masters. And I don't know if we'll ever get out of it, I really don't. I see no signs that that's going to change anytime soon. And then I thought it was just in Jamaica. But then I come here and the black people here are just the same. I mean they find so many excuses for the way their lives are, when they have the same opportunities, they can get home student loans like everybody else – just all these things but they don't make use of it. And they'll always find an excuse “oh, we're being brutalised here or we're being discriminated against here.” I'm not saying that those things don't happen but you can't let it be your excuse for why you fail. Those things are just a stepping stone, if anything, they should help to push you forward. If the loans are there, then no amount of discrimination can stop you from getting it and going to University and doing well. That's my opinion. But it's just easy to blame everything on the white people again, the white people are trying to hold them back, don't want to see them doing well and I'm sick and tired of it. I thought it was just in the US when I was there, but no, it's here too. They'll blame everybody – the reason why they're selling weed on the street corner is because, oh, you know, this imperialistic system of education doesn't</p>

	<p>work for them and they don't get the same treatment. Whatever. Okay, there comes a point where people have to stand up for themselves, black people have to stand up for themselves. And maybe that's why we're not respected by white people and other races because we're not, you know, as a people; individuals yes, you see them succeed and do very well and that's the reason. It's because they realise they can't let those things hold them back. But for the majority, as a group, black people as a whole; we're stuck in that rut of blame, blaming the colonial masters. Slavery ended ages ago. Well.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>So how have you been able to break that slavery mentality, if you have, I mean...</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>I think I have. I think part of the problem is I find that black people for the most part, once again, tend to stick to themselves. They might mix with different nationalities but definitely the same race. And if they do mix with other races, it's usually other ethnic minorities. And so they don't get, I think, a real understanding or really get to know white people other than just being oppressors. And so they hold on to that idea of them being oppressors because they keep them separate and apart. They don't get to know them and I think sometimes, I've seen this for myself, even in the US that even when white people try to be nice, actually try to be genuine, black people are suspect of it which I guess to a point you might understand. But then, this isn't slavery time, it's a much different time and they might really want to genuinely get to know you as a person. But you have to allow that to happen. But black people, they're really sceptical, and they prefer to keep them on the outside and I think that's part of the problem. I grew up in a society, especially in the Bahamas where everyone mixed so I don't have that curiosity about them, I don't have, I don't view them as oppressors, I just view them as normal people, they just happen to be white but they're not different. And so I guess I don't really see them as being a boundary, you know, or some blockade towards what I want to do with my life. No. I think the only really boundary obstacle I'd have to succeeding would probably be economic, my family is poor, but that's it; I don't see white people standing in my way of doing that. Except when you think about being able to work outside of the country, like now with these new visa rules and stuff like that. Then</p>

	<p>people might tend to say oh well, it's the white people trying to keep all the black people out now with these new visa rules. Make it more hard and stringent for you to get in, making the fees higher but that could be so, I don't know. I don't tend to see white people as oppressors unless they show me that side of them that they are, that they are racist, they don't like black people then, but if that's the case I just stay away from those ones. If you can and just be civil to the ones you can't stay away from. You can't change everybody's mind; people will always have their own little thing going on. They'll either like you for your colour or they won't, you can't live your life for those people, they'll ruin you. So I don't bother with that, I don't see them as an obstacle; I don't have a problem with them. Sometimes I do, I get funny questions like, "oh well, you're browner than another black person from a different country, why is that?" and I get weird questions like that and I never know how to answer questions like that from people. Or, "your hair is different, it's not as nappy as that other person's hair," "oh you have nice hairs," whatever. But....</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Words for me like, "you're not like the rest of them."</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>Yeah, you're not like the rest of them, I get that a lot.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Like 'you're not really black, although you are but you're obviously not those...</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>Yeah and I think that's wrong. White people still have a lot of issues that they need to get over too. I think they also, just like black people separate themselves from us and they don't really get to see us as a people. But we can be just as good, we can be just as educated - brilliant minds, inventors, you know, entrepreneurs, whatever you can think of. But, I don't know, it's just this side of ourselves that we often show and they don't get to see that. When they go out on the street, they don't usually see a well-dressed black guy. They see one where hair is piled on top of his head looking like it hasn't been combed in about 5 years, you know, not cut, not neatly dressed, his pants is down to his knees with his underwear showing and I don't care if you're black or white, that's just not acceptable, that's not acceptable behaviour. You don't walk around, it just, it doesn't look good. Your pants is meant to be at your waist, and then they're waddling around looking like ducks because they can't walk around in the pants being,</p>

you know, so big. How do you expect them, you know, to view you in a good light? I'm not saying that they shouldn't look past those things but first impressions do make a difference. And it's up to us to now actually surprise them and say, "hey, we can dress well, we can speak well, we have a good knowledge of the English language as you do, maybe even better." I've found Africans and Korean people who speak better language than the English – superb vocabulary. Have you ever listened to well-spoken black man or black woman? It's amazing, it just blows you away. But then I get to see them, I see baggy pants and bleached-out girls with multi-coloured hair down to their waist or blonde wigs with the grey contacts. They can't respect you if you don't respect yourself. You can't expect to be respected as a black person when you're walking around with a platinum blonde wig on your head all the way down to your waist with blue contacts in. What is it, a carnival? We make ourselves into a circus and so they view us with suspicion, and they wonder if there could be anything "civilised" about us. And then we're on the street and we're cursing and carrying on like hooligans. And I see it very often, you know, it's not.... I'm critical of white people and I'm critical of my own people, because I want us to be better. I'm saying we should conform to white standards of, you know, European standards of being civilised is but there are certain things that when you go out you behave a certain way. You don't stand in the streets cursing, you know, pushing each other, smoking weed if you can get away with it; that's not acceptable behaviour. But that's what they see so that's what we're going to be judged on. You know if they pass us on the street and we're speaking properly, you know, have our pants up there, then they say, "oh, they're well-spoken, this is someone I can employ", you know, "this is someone I can give an Internship to, I can give this person a Scholarship" And they see us on the street behaving like that, the only thing they think we want to do is to sell drugs. Or that we're already doing it. So, yeah, but that's my experience of Europe really and of race for the most part. I don't know where I fit in all of this, I don't. I've had people tell me that I like white people better than black people, which is definitely not true. I just have, there are so many things that we have to get over as a people, there are so many obstacles. That's one of the reasons why I

tend to be critical of us, not that I like us less, you know, than them. But if I don't like you wearing your pants down to your knees, I should be able to tell you that, "nobody is going to hire you, I don't think a black person or a white person will hire you with your pants down there. If you can't speak properly and communicate, how are you going to communicate with customers? If you're not reading or studying English, how're you going to get to University to become your own entrepreneur, to become a scientist or whatever it is that you want to be? You can't sit on the street smoking weed and saying everybody's holding you back. What're you trying to do for yourself?" That's the only thing I'm trying to say. But, you know, people say, "oh, you're a racist, you prefer the white person, you're a traitor to your own race." I've gotten that quite often, even the way I speak, "oh, you sound like a white girl." I can't help the way I speak, it's not like I sat down in front of a mirror and trained myself, "ok Daphne, today you're going to learn to speak like a white girl, you're not moving from here until you figure it out and get it right." It's just, like I said, I grew up with many different people from all over the place and my accent is a mixture of all of that, you know. So as a result it's not like I did it myself. So, I don't know but I don't consider myself racist against my own people, I just want better for them, and for them to want better for themselves. So, maybe all my views stem from Jamaica and all the issues that we have there. But what's the odds that any of this stuff changes because it's one thing to be in England where it's very multi-ethnic, everywhere you go you just see a whole mixture of people; as a matter of fact I barely hear English being spoken when I go into central London, you hear everything else but English, it's frightening sometimes. But now, depending on where I go to study, I have Erasmus next year, I have so many choices, Germany is one, Czech Republic is another, Bulgaria, Holland, Poland and, yes even Hungary is an option but that's been ruled out. So I don't know, maybe I'll come back next year when I'm done and say that I completely hate white people, depending on what my experiences will be. If I have to live there for 5 months and being treated like crap, being followed everywhere from grocery store to the shoe store then, you know, then things might change. But I don't have too much of a problem with the

	<p>race, but then that's coming from a multi-ethnic society where we're used to mixing, the Caribbeans are used to mixing with everybody versus Europe where, you know, you just grew up in a certain society where it might just be white people in your neighbourhood, white people at your school so the only time you might see one is if you pass them on the street. If you pass them on the street, you don't necessarily want to know anything about them, they're separate and apart. So, that's part of the problem, I think, with places like Europe and the US.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>So, growing up and going to school in the Bahamas and now in England, quite a mixed, multi place-multi cultural, multi-whatever, how important is it, or has it been for you, in such a place to... how important has been your racial identity in a place where it's all multi? If that makes sense...</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>It's been extremely important, especially, well in the US of course, it was extremely important because, well, it wasn't as multi-ethnic and multi-racial as the UK because Minnesota is almost a homogeneous place except for the black people that are there but you'll hardly find any of the people that are there being African-American. I think you'll find that a lot of them are actually immigrants. There are few African-Americans but a pretty small minority. So there on campus with only less than probably 2% of black people and any kind of other ethnicity on campus, I felt the need to leave my mark as a black person, not only as a black person but as a Caribbean person as well. So, not only myself but a group of us, we made sure that we took part in, you know, set up our own Caribbean society, because there was one before but it went kaput after a while and so we found it necessary to have our voices heard so we set up our own, which had to take part in the student politics and all those kinds of, because it's important that people see you and respect you, you know, as a black person. Because a lot of them, I've told you the story about they only think that, the only reason we went there was because we got Scholarships and whatever, and it's almost as if owe them for being there, so if they say anything bad to us, we can't say anything because we owe them, which was absolutely not true because if you think about a home student's fees compared to International, we support them, we keep their schools running so we had to make, we had to say, "look, we can afford to be</p>

	<p>here, we pay thousands and thousands of dollars, believe me, if you had to pay our fees, you wouldn't be here' .</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Mother****, we're rich. That's the only thing. Sorry!!!</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>They wouldn't be there so we had to make our mark and have our own identity and show that we can be smart, even in class, even if we're shy. That's probably where I learnt to speak up because I'm extremely shy, I suffer from extreme anxiety and I cannot speak in class, I literally get sick, I vomit and stuff like that at the idea of speaking in class. It's a problem. Yeah it's a medical problem but in Minnesota, in the US I had to get over that because of the need to prove myself as a black person. Being the only black person in a class is a real motivator, it gets you over all kinds of things that you never think you would. Because, you know, I know they have that mentality that black people aren't as educated, the fact that they ask these stupid questions like, "oh, did they give you clothes at the airport when you were coming in, have you ever seen money?." I'm not kidding, these are the real questions that they asked us in, when did I go to Minnesota, 2001, if we wear grass skirts, if they gave us clothes when we got to the airport and if we'd ever seen money before, "oh, do you have cars there?" Honestly, I never thought I'd get asked those questions but we did and so we realised that they have these pre-historic, you know, caveman mentality about who black people are and we had to prove ourselves that, you know, we can dress as well as you, we can afford to buy nice clothes, we can... and when we go to class we're as smart as you and be sure we prepare for class so every time we go in there, we can raise our hands and answer every question and prove ourselves, and that's something that we've had to do, that I've had to do. I can't sit back and let people think that, you know, we're not smart enough, just because we're black, no way. And as for here, I feel the need to show myself or to prove myself as being a black woman just because of the way that I see the behaviour of black British people. You know, the same pants down, the nappy hair, the cursing – hooligan behaviour that I see a lot. Not all but the majority I've seen, they behave that way and so I feel like I've had to, as a black person, once again show that we can be "civilised" and speak well and go to University and do well and be out in public and behave properly. So I always feel the need to prove</p>

myself because everywhere you go there are just, you know, these misconceptions about who black people are, that we can't be civilised, we don't know money, we don't know clothes, we don't know education, we don't know the English language, which sometimes can be quite true but we do know the English language quite well. So, yeah, that's the only way I've had to prove myself, really. And then being away from home there's extra pressure to really do well because of all the money that's being paid, that's the other thing but that's not really a race thing. But then again, there are, you know, a lot of the employers if you stay here they're going to be Europeans, they're going to be white and then you're going to feel the pressure to try and do better, you know, to put yourself ahead of the game; even though right now you might be on the same level as the white person you're competing with, you always feel like you have to be one step ahead because if that employer had to choose, they're going to choose the white person over you. I don't know if that's our mentality from what we've been through or if it's actual fact. And a lot of times it is fact that they will choose a white person over you. So you always have to be pushing a little extra and that's the other thing I feel pressure about, always trying to be one step ahead, to prove that I'm better or best; that I can be just as good because of, you know, the employment pressure that I will feel later on, you know, and I've heard stories about being a black lawyer here it's very tough. You don't get the opportunities like, you know, a white lawyer would. So there's extra pressure to prove myself as a black person. Which, obviously if I was home I wouldn't have to worry about. I'd just have to worry about being the best in my class and whatever but then I'm competing with another black person. But if I go home now, considering that I have a degree from the UK, it might not be so much of an issue because there it's from a white man's country so it's got to be better even if I probably cheated my way and probably did not work for it. Not to say that I cheated and did not do any work, I did lots and lots of work. But, well, most of the time; if I'm not watching cartoons. But that's another story. So, yeah, I think that's it, that's the pressures here. But we'll just have to see what happens next year. I'm a bit worried about it because now that I've been in the UK and, you know, I've made friends, a few, not a lot, but

it's a safety net. I'm going to be somewhere where, a completely homogeneous society where I'm going to stand out like I don't even know what, like "Spot Waldo", "can anybody spot blacko? Oh yeah there she is". Oh Waldo, do you know who... it's a.... there are a series of books and Waldo is always the person you've got to find, so it's always like....they might give you a page and there're lots and lots and lots of people on the page and you have to try and find him. So that's 'Spot Waldo', so he's always hidden in there somewhere and you have to really search to find him because he might be hidden behind somewhere or you only see a part of him or whatever, that's 'Spot Waldo', that's what it is. Can you find her, it may not be much of an effort, and I'm nervous about that, I'm really nervous about that because even though I had to deal with racism in the US, at least they've seen black people. They might have misconceptions, but they've seen them. They might not even know how to behave around them but when you're talking somewhere like Eastern Europe like I said that's been closed up for so long till the homogeneous society where, you know, black people, minority ethnic groups might not even make up a percent of the population, that's nerve-wracking, you know. Literally I've just... it's the only thing that's holding me back. Every now and then I wake up at night and say, you know what maybe I shouldn't be doing this but then that's the thing, I can't let those fears hold me back from being better because all of these things at the end of the day are going to help me if I go to an employer and say that I've had these experiences and I can handle myself outside of my own comfort zone which is what a lot of employers look for. So that's one of the main reasons I'm doing it, to prove that I can actually do it and not....but it's a scary thing that I could be the only black person, again, on an entire school campus, you know, in the class, how am I going to be treated by the teachers if they have their own biases against black people; how is that going to affect my grades because I came here to do well and I don't want to go somewhere where that could be in jeopardy so I'm worried about all these things. But I think I'm still going to do it, I think it'll be good for me either way. And by then I'll decide how I feel about Eastern Europe and if it's a place I'll never go again. So, yeah.

Second Interview: Daphne 27 March 2009

Siyanda	Good for you, good luck!
Daphne	Thanks, I need it. Taking the bus or the train could be interesting, I wonder if people will get up and move.
Siyanda	Still I suppose your whole life has prepared you for that.
Daphne	It has but at the same time it still hurts the same doesn't it? Because I've had racist things happen to me quite a lot of times but it hurts the same every time and even more than hurt, I mean hurt is probably the least of it, just total infuriation that at this day and age with, you know, all this mixing and moving about, planes and trains and everything have a lot of people to all over the place and they won't even give you a chance. I mean what's wrong with sitting next to someone, no one is saying you must make conversation but if I sit next to you, if you see me sitting there, if the seat is empty you won't sit there just because I'm there? You know or if I sit next to you, you move? That's absolutely ridiculous. It's infuriating, it doesn't even hurt me anymore now it's just like "kiss my backside" and slap the crap out of you.
Siyanda	So, it doesn't hurt for you?
Daphne	Not so much as fury, yeah I think fury is the main thing. Hurt is secondary, yeah. And you?
Siyanda	Definitely hurt for me is major and always surprising, you know, because you just feel humiliated and you're angry that he should know better and he's stupid in any case, stupid as he is he still can touch it, that sore.
Daphne	Yeah, I guess hurt is mixed in with the infuriation, I think that's part of it but I think fury, it just.... this disbelief that people still now can't get past it, it gets me every time. But yeah, we'll see.
Siyanda	Now, because you know we spoke a little bit about black people with our people, and I've been thinking about this thing and I don't know, what do you think it is that ties different black people together, or what should tie black people together?
Daphne	I don't know what should tie black people together more than them tying themselves with other races or other ethnicities, I don't know but I know what ties us together now is, once again, just our sense of identity, common experiences. I think most black people if not all of them, have come from histories of colonisation, you know, and oppression. And that's the only real link that we have with each other

	<p>because a lot of times, you know, our backgrounds are so different outside of that. I mean that's the only thing we have in common is that we were both colonised by Britain or something like that. That's it. Our cultures are so different, foods are so different except the fact that we all like our food to be cooked through and not, you know, plenty of meat probably depending on where you're from. If you're from the Caribbean you probably like plenty of fish, yeah but I can't think of anything that holds us together apart from that – this sense of identity as an oppressed people. Yeah, cultures are different, I might not necessarily like all you know, all things about, Africa, Africa might not like all things about the Caribbean, you know. Oppression and probably music, it's the only thing that ties us together. Reggae especially, I think and hip hop and stuff like that but once again, stuff like hip hop, a lot of it – the real hip hop anyway, the real rap, most of it is about oppression of African-American by the white police or the white system, you know what I mean. So once again it's still very much the same thing, that identity of oppression, with oppression, you know. That' it. Honestly I can't think of anything else. We just really have to stick together to make it out... nothing else. Because I've told you before, lots of Caribbean people don't like Africans, for whatever reason, they might think that Africans are uncivilised, you know, or that their hair is too nappy or they're too dark. So....</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>See I never knew that until I came to this country, until I started interviewing people from the Caribbean. I never thought of it.</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>Really? Yeah, and like I'm saying it's the Caribbean, you'll find it in the US as well.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>I never thought there was ill-feeling between....</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>You know what I wouldn't even call it ill-feeling. Once again, like I keep saying, it goes back to that African, to that slave mentality again of believing that whatever is lighter is better. And then it's the media's fault as well because of the side of Africa that we see. We don't hear about the African countries that are thriving, that are doing well. We hear about the ones where they're starving to death and some riot has broken out because, of course, black people can only be violent, can only be poor and starving.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>But, you see I've heard the other side of that story, well, the few</p>

	<p>people that I've spoken to, that most African Caribbeans feel that Africans are more superior to them in terms of being more authentic and I explained that I went to see a fantastic play that explored issues between Africans and African Caribbeans and in the play at some point there's this Caribbean man who sort of.... he's breaking down and he says, "no, we were taken from Africa and we were enslaved" and this African man says "well, you know, you were taken or whatever" and this man says "you didn't come for us, you never came for us, you let them take us, you didn't come for us". And I'd never in my life thought of it, it was interesting, it was absolutely interesting.</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>Yeah, I never even thought about that. But when you talk about authenticity, in a way you're right in that we do see Africans as being very culturally aware, knowing who they are. They're not.... it's one of the reasons I admire about them because when you see an African woman go out, they dress in their cultural stuff, instead of jeans and you know, typical European or American clothes. They'll be in their little head scarf things and their national colours or whatever it might be and the music and the food and everything. You're okay with being African, with showing yourselves as being African. I think black people from the Caribbean it's true, we tend to want to blend in more, to try to be more American, try to be more white. That's why you find probably more of us relaxing our hair and wearing the clothes, wearing the contacts, eye contacts and all these kind of things. In terms of that, definitely more authentic in terms of identifying yourselves as a black people or as Africans, African descent. Yeah, I think we do admire you guys for stuff like that. But then on the back of our heads the other stuff is still there; violence like, "why can't those Africans get along," you know. And sometimes we don't even think of the reason behind it, it's just like "ugh, there they go, black people again." It's usually the first thing people say: "black people," you know, not investigating what's behind it. Could it be that some European country smuggling arms, starting a little something in there or whatever, but no, it's usually just, "those black people again". And I guess it's our fault too because we have to decide what it is that we want, do we want to rebuild the country or do we fight against each other for the benefit of a few. At the end of the day it's up to us if we pick up arms or not, so</p>

	<p>that's something we have to struggle with. But, yeah there've only been us being black as a collective group, we're very racist towards our own people, misconceptions about who Africans might be; misconceptions about who Caribbean people might be. But there're a lot of misconceptions about Africans like that they're violent, poor, uneducated. I don't know, it's a love-hate relationship because some people you might talk to and they might feel that's how Africans are, just violent, kids with the big stomachs with flies pitching on them and then you have other Caribbean people who are just like.... they always at the end of the day, I think, Caribbean people, black Caribbean, will always stand up for Africa because if any conversation about race comes up, the first thing we're always harking back to is the fact everything started in Africa and that's a pride for us, we are very proud of that, we'll say, "civilisation started in Africa, Africa has highly educated people, you go there and you see high rise buildings and everything just the same as if you'd go to Europe." And we're very proud of that fact, we're very proud of that fact. But then there's a love-hate relationship I think. Yeah, but I think we'll always stand up for Africa in that sense, proud of the history and "where we come from," "where we come from." And then you have groups like the Rastafarians who everything is Africa, Africa is the beginning and the end, they moved away from the Caribbean that's not so authentic you know, where in Babylon basically, so, well that's what they call it – Babylon so they want to move away from that and go back to the true thing and that's why a lot of them are moving back to Ethiopia and those places. I don't know if you know but there's a Jamaican colony of Rastas in Ethiopia, they have their own land given to them by the Ethiopian government so if you want to go to Ethiopia as a Jamaican you can as a Rasta, they have land. Mama Africa and all that, yes.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>That's interesting; maybe I should take that as the next project.</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>Yeah, it's cool and Martin he knows where it is, he's seen it, he's interacted with quite a few of the Jamaican Rastas there. Because for them it's all about becoming closer with to what they left behind, what ancestors left behind and it's hard to do that in the Caribbean because it's too caught up in everything that's European for them. But like I've always said it needs to start with us, to respecting each other as black</p>

	<p>people no matter where you come from whether it's Africa or America or the Caribbean, South America. First respecting each other and our differences, cultural differences and everything. And then moving on from there, then can respect and appreciate everything else and move on as a people. But if you have biases against your own, how can you not have biases against other people and blame them for things? So we have to worry about ours first, so I think, because even black people in the Caribbean, we, a lot of times look disapprovingly upon African-Americans because of the way they behave and when we go there we feel we have to be different, we have to show white people in America that we're different from African-Americans. So when we're in the US we're usually very proud of the fact that we're from the Caribbean, we want to separate ourselves from being African-American or whatever because of the stereotypes that are there about African-Americans, there're stereotypes everywhere. But, yeah, I'm proud to be black.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>You said, you know, especially when you were in Minnesota, that you wanted to sort of assert who you are in terms of race, work hard and stand up for the group, thank you very much. Are there any other contexts where your racial identity was the least.... was not the most important thing? In Minnesota it had to beAre there any contexts, you think, or examples in your life where it wasn't the fore grounded thing, or is it always the most important thing? Is it always the first thing?</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>In Minnesota it had to be. It depends on where I am, I've found. If I'm in a multi-national, multi-ethnic place then it's the least important because it's almost like I feel like I'm competing on equal grounds, kind of. But, in places like Minnesota where it's almost homogeneous then again it does really, it's almost that kind of thing so then I have to assert myself and try to be the best but I don't feel that pressure here so much. The only time I'll feel it, like I said, is when it's time to hunt for a job. But in terms of school right now because our school is very multi-ethnic and I think white people are probably in the minority, so I don't really feel the need, I don't need to feel like I'm competing against them, I'm only competing against the Indians and the Africans and the other Caribbeans students. And that's alright; I'm cool with that except for me academic becomes more important versus proving</p>

	<p>myself as a black person. But apart from that, it's usually in situations where I'm in the minority that I feel I have to do that. But when I'm in a 'safe' environment then there's not that pressure. I think for a lot of black people race will always be the main thing, it's always at the forefront of our heads, I don't know why that is.</p>
Siyanda	<p>Why do you think that is? It just seems to be always there.</p>
Daphne	<p>You know part of the reason is I think it's through discourse, that's a big thing; our communication with each other and our culture, and all these things get mixed up through the music, the oppressors there might be, you know, black people getting shot in the back by the police. All these different things and what we see in the media as well and then what we see in the fashion magazines, that's another thing, to break into modelling you have to look a certain way, as a black model you might have better success if you're lighter, all these different things and I think all of that come into play. And those are the things we discuss when we're in our groups together – the white people trying to hold us back or all these different things. And so no matter where we go, we'll always have that mentality, so unless we change our discourse in every form then it'll always be the same in our minds, I think. I don't think... I think slavery has been imprinted in us, just stamped through and through. I don't really see us getting past where we don't think that when a white person looks at us they're thinking of us in an inferior way, I really don't. And as comfortable as I am with white people I do wonder about that, like "when this person sees me, who do they really see. Yeah they're being nice and to me it might feel genuine, but is it really?" You always wonder, so I think it'll always be the same for us, I think it'll always be the same. So yeah it's the discourse that makes it that way. Because we've come a long way since slavery and race is still the biggest thing and I think that's why; discussion, discourse within society, our society keeps it there so it's always in the front.</p>
Siyanda	<p>And do you think it's a negative thing that it's there?</p>
Daphne	<p>It's both, it's negative and positive. It's positive in that a lot of times we... it gives us the motivation to prove ourselves as being just as good or even better in whatever area of education, whatever it might be – owning a business because a lot of white people think that black</p>

	<p>people can't handle money, they'll spend it on fancy cars and the latest sneakers and stuff like that and they don't save. Which for a lot of black people it's quite true, they don't save money and so they always stare at us, when you show that we can run a successful business, all these different things. And then yes, it gives us motivation to be better. But then it also gives us no motivation whatsoever because we can just sit back, not do anything, take charity and then blame it on the white people. So it's both, it does both. And I think for the majority of people it's probably, I don't know, taking of the charity part because even when you see a lot of black people, even within the UK, I always wonder why is it that so many of them live in the Council flats. Is it really that they can't find jobs and things are so tough or is it really because it's free and then they don't have to work, so they bother to work, because a house is provided for them. What do you think?</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>I don't know, leave me alone. Stop picking on me!</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>No, I... and it's one of the things I think that infuriate me because I have spoken to black people here and they're just like, "why should we work when we don't have to, we get everything free from the government," and I hate that. I really and truly hate that. Stand up for yourself and show that you can be good, that you can be great. Why settle for, I won't even call it mediocrity because that's not even mediocrity. That's just plain laziness, which falls into another stereotype about black people that we are lazy and we don't want to work, right? And sometimes it might actually be true but there are opportunities out there, sometimes it is tough, yes but there are opportunities out there and we don't take it because we don't want to work. That could be said for white people, I know lots of white people in the UK who live in the Council flats because they don't want to work either. But yeah, I don't think we'll ever get rid of that mentality, it's stuck with us and I think maybe it helps us with our excuse to keep perpetuating it over and over and over – this set of people being bad, that set being bad, that set being good because then it gives us an excuse as to why we stay here and not move up and not move up in society. Because we tell each other "oh, they're bad, they're bad, they're bad or those ones are good, those ones are good." It gives us an excuse to stay right where we are, we don't have to try. If we were to</p>

	get rid of all of that, we'd have to be forced to do better. But yeah, black people, we don't get past that, it's in us. I don't know if we were born with it at birth or once again if it's just discourse but somehow it's just ingrained in us.
Siyanda	What is ingrained?
Daphne	You know, that race is always the first thing we think about. Like if we go into a store and there are... you know it could just be that the store is really busy and someone can't come over to you and say 'can I help you' I'm just saying that sometimes it could be that the store is busy, I've seen that before where they are busy and they can't come to you and I've seen, oh where the store is dead-empty and it's just you in there and there's 10 salespeople and none of them come over to say "excuse me, may I help you?" I had that in Minnesota quite a bit where they just would not come over, you'd actually have to go to them and say, "hi, can I have some help please?" and they're like 'oh, yeah sure, sorry.'" I don't know but I'm just saying that because...
Siyanda	I hate going up to the bar to get drinks because I stand there and I stand there and end up going back, and like so-and-so, you go and buy the drinks because I can't, they just... the guy can see me, you've obviously seen me... You can see me, I don't know, I think about that...
Daphne	They can obviously see you, dude. Yeah I mean racism is definitely there, everywhere, in the Caribbean, in America, Europe. It's everywhere that you can possibly think of but I don't know if sometimes we imagine it to be there when it's not because it's just ingrained in us that white people are just against us and they'll never like us, they'll never see us as being anything good. So when you go in the store, is it really that they're ignoring you or are they just busy? Are they really watching you or are you just thinking that they're watching you? Well in my case in Poland he was watching me, he really did follow me but, you know.....
Siyanda	Or really, he was just doing his rounds...
Daphne	Yeah, he was doing his rounds outside when he threw down the cigarette to race back into the store, yeah. Part of his job is to jog behind me. But I'm just trying to say I don't know if we make it up in our heads sometimes, because I think sometimes we are paranoid

Second Interview: Daphne 27 March 2009

	about things like that, it's almost like we refuse to make ourselves comfortable in a situation where we're somehow the underdog. You refuse to get comfortable.
Siyanda	Yeah, I don't know.
Daphne	Yeah, me either and the race issue will never be solved, it's something we can talk about forever and ever with no conclusion whatsoever except that racism exists but you can say fight it but how. I don't know, it's hard to fight it, I think. And I'm scared now of the recession because you start hearing all this stuff coming up again and it is scary. The neo-Nazi is really raising their heads everywhere now and it's not just against black people but against the Jews again and everybody, and it's... which always happens when there's time of crisis that right now it's Britain for the British and... I don't know, it's absolutely.... I'm scared out of my mind about this recession and hoping it ends very, very soon before things get out of control. Because people are so angry right now that their governments are failing them but they don't really look at their governments, they look at the minorities – the outsiders who were brought here because... and wouldn't be here if there wasn't any need for us. But they don't see that, they just see us as taking what they could get but yet still when it was open and available they didn't want it.
Siyanda	I'm going home again.
Daphne	Yeah, I know, I know.
Siyanda	Now, let me ask you one last question and then we can end. And I think I suppose it's not a new question because you've touched on it from the first and second interview. What do you think has been the challenges or/and the opportunities that your racial identity has brought you, if the question makes sense.
Daphne	Opportunities that my race has afforded me, I can't think of any from my personal experience.
Siyanda	In your life?
Daphne	Yeah.
Siyanda	I can think of one.
Daphne	What?
Siyanda	The sort of pressure to try and do better at school, you didn't think of it in that, you know....

<p>Daphne</p>	<p>I don't know if that's necessarily true because I like being the best either way, so even if... like even now even though I'm competing against other minorities, I still want to be the best, if it was a class full of black people. So, it's just... But then I might be harking back to the fact that I know that at the end of the day my employer will probably end up being some white person and I have to be the best for that reason. I don't know if it's because I really, really want to be the best or it's because I'm forced to be the best. But I don't know if anything, that my race has afforded me.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Something that's a positive...because you're scaring me.</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>I'm thinking... Because if I think about everything that I've been through, all the blessings that I've had – with the opportunity to study abroad or just to have an education on the whole no matter where it is, it doesn't have anything to do with my race. It's not like I've been given a scholarship because I'm black and they're trying to promote blackness or any such thing. It's because I've got one scholarship and it's based on my grades and I was competing against my own, so I think everything that I've gotten has just been as a result of hard work versus anything afforded to me by my race. I don't know, I see everything in terms of the hard work on my part to be able to get the grades good enough to go to University. And my Mom, working as a housekeeper, a black housekeeper for European or American bosses or whatever it might be, working extremely hard to be able to give me that – the opportunity. I don't know if I'm answering the question but I can't think of anything I can say “oh, I've gotten this because I'm black.” Well, at the end of the day it's just been hard work and competition, I guess. You, anything? No, really anything that you can think of?</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>I'm the interviewer here, why are you...</p>
<p>Daphne</p>	<p>Because at the end of the day that's how it's supposed to be, isn't it? It shouldn't be about getting somewhere because of your colour, it should be on merit, that you've worked for it and for me that's how I see it, it's all been merit-based so far. But I don't know. Maybe that'll change when I'm working for the UN then I might apply as a Jamaican from there, that might really help me because I don't know that many Jamaicans that work for the UN so it might play a huge role then but</p>

	so far, like right now, it's just merit-based.
Siyanda	I think for me it has been, it motivated me to work harder.
Daphne	So you think you'd not have worked as hard?
Siyanda	Completely, had I come from a school.... because I remember when I first came to University to study with my people for the first time, and having access to a computer and seeing computers for the first time, cause I did not have that. It did sort of motivate me to work harder and try harder than any other student to....and I don't know whether had I went to a private school in South Africa.
Daphne	That probably it made a difference. I went to a private school and so I went to, you know, from primary school straight up, schools with computer labs where it's one on one or just your class in the lab learning, not just like in a library where they're just available but an actual computer class and it had a swimming pool and different sports or whatever it is that you want to do or choose to do. Whether it's music or swimming or ballet or whatever, you know, piano lessons, choir, whatever. So...so then, once again, then I'll be less...so my motivation's never really...like I said it's only when I'm in a situation where I know I'm the minority and I feel the need to do that. But, apart from that, like I said it's just been merit-based, because I have brilliant friends, doctors, and lawyers as well, and they've always been in my classes. My friends, that I have now, I've known them since the 4 th grade when I moved to the Bahamas, and so there's always been competition, you know, between ourselves. So, maybe that's the difference is once again it's based on their experiences, and you know, whatever. So, for you, you might get the motivation because, you know, being black and everything, the way things were in South Africa, and now getting the opportunities that you do. But, I guess, with me, I've always kind of had those opportunities, so it's been different, and that's the other thing too. The way you see race is based on your background and the opportunities you've been afforded. You're less likely to talk about oppression and race and discrimination if you've had a pretty...not overly privileged, like being wealthy, but where you've had...you can say that you've had the experiences as a white person or as a European, whatever. Like me, having a school with a pool, you know, my physical education class was swimming

	around, splattering all over the place in the pool. So, then maybe I'm less likely to say that it's oppression, I'll just say well, my Mom worked really, really hard to be able to afford to send me to a private school, because as a housekeeper, it's not easy, but if you want the best for your child and you know that's the only way you get it, it's to pay that much for it, then that's what you do. Versus you, you know where that opportunity might just not have been there. So, yeah, so definitely, I think opportunity plays a huge part in how we see race.
Siyanda	That's it. Do you want to add anything? I think, yeah.
Daphne	No. I don't think that there's anything I want to add. Nothing at all.
Siyanda	This opportunity won't come again.
Daphne	No. Nothing at all. I just want to make it extremely clear that I'm not racist, I love black people and I love myself.
Siyanda	What makes think you're not a black girl?
Daphne	Because I just always get that, "you're white girl" thing and it's so annoying. "You're an Oreo; you're a coconut, black on the outside, white on the inside. Blah, blah, blah." Just speaking properly has nothing to do with race.
Siyanda	Yeah, it's...I think I know what you mean. But, yeah...but...yeah.
Daphne	I have a friend, well, it's a mutual friend of ours and about a couple of months ago, we were walking, and she saw the length of my hair and she was just like... and of course she's black as well and she has lovely hair as well. But she saw the length of my hair and she's like, "Oh my god, is that your real hair?" I'm like "yeah", and she's like, "really, your hair is on your back?" and so I said yes and she's like, "Oh my god, you are such a white girl, Dee, you're so white!" I was like, "aah, here we go!" So, it goes back to the same thing, always just believing that you have to be white or light-skinned to have certain qualities assigned to you and that's... it's just absolutely not true and it's frustrating, even for people who fight every day for black rights and talking about how great it is to be black and all these things. In their mind, they're still thinking that somehow they're inferior because they don't have hair on their backs; it's just past their soldiers. Ridiculous, I don't know, frustrating. Really, it's frustrating. Yeah...but we just have to stand up for ourselves and prove that we can be better and I think we're struggling with that. There's too much reliance...I mean on the

individual level, on the governmental level, always waiting for aid from a European country, for the EU to bail us out, for Britain to send us some funds, you know, to be able to build something, build a new school, get us a computer lab. We have to get out of that and figure out ways to, you know, start our own manufacturing, our own exporting, to be able to have money to do those things for ourselves, instead of waiting for someone to give it to us. It infuriates me, but that's because of my experience in Jamaica where, you know, there's a lot of that, where there's so much debt that our economy is so bad right now, over a trillion, a couple of trillion dollars, because we keep...we just go everywhere and borrow money, from the IMF and all over the place. Stand up...you know, we said we wanted independence from Britain, we're tired of being a colony, we want to show, you know that black people are good enough to rule a country. But you made a mess of it, you're just borrowing and borrowing and borrowing, and not putting anything into the economy, nothing into manufacturing, exporting, you know, you're just...and once again, tourism. How many black countries that you can think of and their main industry is tourism? Where are the tourists coming from? Europe, Canada, the US, and if you see a black tourist and white tourist, which one are you going to think are rich, and which one you think had to work for years and years to be able to afford the vacation? When you see a black American tourist, the first thing you're thinking, "well mhh, they might not have that much money. They're black. They probably saved up for years to be able to afford it." But you see the white guy, you automatically think he has hundreds of thousands to spend, when he may have...in fact been the one saving for 15 years to be able to come. You know it's just these things; we have to stop relying on things from abroad, and start taking care of ourselves. And I'm sure it's the same in Africa, always aid for Africa for this and that and the other one and we just have to stop. We have to learn to manufacture for ourselves, start our own businesses, make our own money, to be respected, you know, and for self-respect. I... if you're borrowing all the time, how can you feel good about yourself? I mean, it's for our own good, you know, for the way we see ourselves, not even how *they* see us, because, I don't know, I guess, white people may never change their

	<p>view of us, but we can change the way we think about ourselves. If we can do it, we need to start our own businesses and be successful individuals, not necessarily wealthy, but successful, being able to live. Then, we change the way we think about ourselves and we won't really care too much about how they think about us and we won't feel the need to enter into their country to try to compete with them or be better than them or you know, to get something to be able to send home. We'll be quite content at home, with our own industry, not to want to go abroad. So, that's it.</p>
Siyanda	<p>You realise that, at the first interview, you ended in a similar point, very frustrated and heated, and now again.</p>
Daphne	<p>Yeah!</p>
Siyanda	<p>Don't you want to end in a much more upbeat way this time, given the opportunity?</p>
Daphne	<p>Yeah, black!! Bo, because, last time we'd spoken and now, nothing's changed really, so it'll always be an on-going struggle and things take time. I mean, raising a people up is not easy and you'll have to find people who're willing to do that. But then, you know the stereo-type of black people, that they always say that black people are always trying to hold each other down, so I mean, who knows. That's why I'll continually be frustrated with that. Being here and being in University and seeing so many black people who are trying to be better, getting their education, and really have a plan in mind of all the things they want to do, things that they want to go home and do, then it's hope. But a still small minority of people. So...then they face the fact of going home and trying to change the mindset of the people and those stereotypes and stuff that they've had for generations and generations and generations, which is another problem. But there's hope, as long as there're young people who are willing to try, who're willing to work hard, then certainly, things could change. Did you like my upbeat moment?</p>
Siyanda	<p>That's better. We can...</p>
Daphne	<p>I was hoping I wouldn't sound sarcastic or anything, but... it's okay. I'm not saying that I was, I was very upbeat, people.</p>
Siyanda	<p>Who are the people...?</p>
Daphne	<p>I don't know whoever will hear this, or type it out, or whatever.</p>

Second Interview: Daphne 27 March 2009

Siyanda	Thank you, thank you, thank you. Let's see if it taped. I'm sure it did.
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Interview 1: Dina

SIYANDA: Alright, thank you oh my golly this is cool (referring to the Digital Voice Recorder).

DINA: Okay

SIYANDA: Maybe you can start by telling me about growing up in Britain.

DINA: Okay well for me it is all about growing up anyway cause I have ever grown up any elsewhere anything that I say it's about growing up in Britain essentially. I went to a nursery from a very, very young age I think I was about 6 months because my mom and dad had me very young. My mom came to this country when she was when she was sent for because my grandparents were part of the wind rush (?)

SIYANDA: She was sent?

DINA: She was sent for so she was born in the West Indies my dad was born in the West Indies as well but my mom was born in Grenada and my dad

SIYANDA: Grenada?

DINA: Grenada is in the West Indies and my dad from Jamaica which is also West Indies. My dad came over here when he was 16 I think my mom was about 9. But my grandparents like a lot of people back then came over here first looking for work and somewhere to live and then sent for their children. And then my mom and dad met, happily, very, very young which very much disappointed my gran who was the centre of our household and with West Indian families it's very matriarchal. I know with certain cultures it is all about the dad but with West Indian families it's all about the mom she dictates, SHE DICTATES who does what how everything it's all about her. And my gran didn't like my dad cause even though there's politics between as I have grown up to discover West Indians and Africans, there's as much politics between the different islands of the Caribbean and Jamaica is to the West Indies Nigeria is to Africa. So, a lot of people base a reputation of a whole nation of people on one type of people and even and even within there, there's a certain types of Jamaicans that have given West Indians Jamaicans as well a very negative reputation and my granddad my dad had a lot of hair he used to drive around in a bike he used to smoke I mean it was just all the things that my gran did not want for one of her children that she has brought to this country to better themselves. So, when she got pregnant with me it was like you know to be part of this family he has to go. So my mom being very obedient at the time and kinda subservient to the fact that you know she did get pregnant young, she was sent for and she knew what her mom's objectives were for her to be in this country they broke up the relationship or the opportunity of a relationship with my dad so I was raised by my gran and I call my gran 'mom' I call my mom 'mom' and they both knew who I was referring to depending on what I asked for cause if 'mom, where is something' then I am referring to my gran if it is 'mom, can we go somewhere' then I am referring to my mom cause my gran didn't drive and she was always at home it depends on so everyone knew so they would kinda wait to hear what I would ask for next. So my granddad I called 'dad' and my dad wasn't around until lot later on because he was pushed away from the family that had its own affects on him so I didn't really know I remember knowing who he was to look at he didn't live far from me but he didn't grow up as part of my life initially. I was spoilt I had

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha

DINA: Yeah very much so I was you know the centre of everybody's world in the family.

SIYANDA: Were you the only child?

DINA: I was the only young person yeah the only one from my parents and I have four sisters but they are all my dad's children my mom and my mom is the only child and the only persons older me well the person closest to my age was my aunt my mom's sister who is 15 years older than me so I was essentially the only child in the family so everything came to me and it was part of an extended family so I lived with my gran, my granddad, my gran's brother her older brother he didn't have a family of his own and always lived with us. So, everything was all about me and I got everything that I ever had to ask

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha ha

DINA: Yeah it was kinda cool I didn't know any different it was like 'hey this is just how it is to be me'

SIYANDA: (continues laughing) ha ha ha ha

DINA: But my mom used to be in there she used to work nights so it eventually I mean me and my mom and my aunt used to live in the smallest room in my gran's house to the point where I was apparently in a chest of drawers growing up because it was really small my gran's got a 3-bedroom house her and my granddad have one room and my uncle because that was her big brother he had the biggest room in the house even though there was only him in there and then my gran's two of my gran's children and her grandchild having the smallest room and that just the way it is, which I never understood but it's a respect thing that her older brother full stop who actually came before her husband in terms of her regard for him. Yeah I went to nursery when my mom was given a house by the Council it was on an estate, it was on Moss Side estate in Manchester and

SIYANDA: You were born

DINA: I was born in Manchester I was born in a hospital when I came home from the time I knew myself I was in my gran's house and then because obviously the house is too small for us my mom had to get a place of her own because she used to work nights I could not go and live with her anywhere because she wasn't with my dad and so who would look after me at night so and plus the house was on the estate on Moss Side estate and my gran said no grandchild of hers is growing up on the estate so I wasn't allow to go and live there anyway I was quite happy living at my gran's and my mom would always pick me up from school she would always put me to bed so the fact that she slept in a different house to me was of no consequence really. So and my mom kind of as we grew up she was more like a big sister than my mom even though I knew she was my mom cause my gran was the overriding power and so if my mom told me off my gran would quite easily overturn that and vice versa you know my mom had she didn't really have power over me and or much money so everything all my care was provided by my gran and my granddad and so I have always grown up with a hell of lot respect for them and I think I remember being well my auntie Sandy she used to sometimes she'd get quite upset and many a true word is spoken in gest but she'd quite often say you know 'that's not your dad', 'that's not your mom' because I was getting quite spoiled and obviously before me she was the

youngest person you know so there's only 15 years between us which is quite a young respect (?) but when you've had a long time of being the youngest child and she was born in this country whereas my mom and her other brother weren't so she always had my gran and granddad to herself and then I came along. So, there was a bit of rivalry there in a way sibling rivalry but in a way not cause she was my auntie and we were close anyway but it was kinda cool very grateful for the fact that I grew up in a like 2.5 family extended family even though they weren't my family they were my relatives in a way. But going to school everything was kinda okay but I started dancing school and all kinds of extra-curriculum activities very young and as I've discovered that was my mom's attempt to keep me from getting into trouble keep me on the straight and narrow keep me off the streets. But dancing school was (short pause) an experience. I did tap, ballet, contemporary dance all kinds of very classically English white forms of dance which took up a lot of time and I was very (short pause) black culturally if that means anything at all there was one girl who was same age group Tracy and we both grew up in the same neighbourhood she was always into white guys she was always pally with all these white girls and had a completely different home life or outlook on life to me. I was always into reggae I was always into black music I was always into black people I can't even imagine going out with anybody white I can't. But then I'm in a white environment but I only need to take it for what it is. So, I've always felt very kind of isolated there cause things I talk about, places I am gonna want to go these people can't be part of that and but I was good at what I did until my first dancing competition I think I was either 7 or 9 I don't remember which and it was a big stage show and there was one white girl there Alexandra her name was

SIYANDA: Oh (laughs recognizing that Alexandra is D's name) ha ha ha ha

DINA: and we were all very, very

SIYANDA: How ironic

DINA: (laughs) I know, they were all very kinda well-to-do or they seemed like that to me at the time she helped me we were warming up together and we did the competition and I actually won and she ran off the stage saying 'mummy, mummy, the black girl won' and that was (short pause) amongst the first ways of me differentiating myself as a colour or having somebody differentiating me rather than just a thought that goes to my head obviously I can see I am different obviously I know I am black obviously I know that the kind of music I listen to at home versus the kind of music they listen to, the things that I eat, the things that my gran prepares, the way she talks I know is different to these other people, that's my difference. Nobody ever before brought that their differe... my colour difference in front of me like that and that was like 'hold on a minute I was just warming up with you, you are the only person here who helped me out but that was on the condition that I stay beneath her'. So the fact that I won freaked her out freaked her out (there is lot of children noise in the background as more people fill the MacDonald outlet). She ran off the stage crying and I thought 'look at that' and just the whole trust thing and how people are towards you starts to change and that was actually the second experience like that. The first one was in infant school and there was a white girl Jane that I used to kick about with sometimes. Sometimes she would go out to my house after school and I'd go out to her house and there what they had for tea was like I'd go home I'd be having rice and peas, my gran has made spilt pea soup, there's yams, there's dumplings, there's bananas that's food anything less than that is not food

SIYANDA: (in agreement) Yep (some laughter)

DINA: And you couldn't give my granddad a cottage pie and em like of thing to eat that didn't happen. Occasionally, on a Friday we would go and get chips, that's it in terms of English food in our house. And I'd go around to Jane's after school and her mom would put like a sandwich with some crisps ordinary crisps and nuts and little bits of Siyandaacks and that is tea and I thought 'these people live different'

SIYANDA: (laughs)

DINA: That's not food. But that's how they lived you know it was just a complete and that used to be the first house of somebody white that I used to go to cause everybody else was like a family friend and so culturally it's all part of the same we were all like well because I was the youngest or should I say because my mom had me very young and a lot of her friends didn't have children who had children young I was kind more similar in age to some of my gran's friends children and than anything else because of the age or what have you so the people that I used to go and see their culture was very much the same as mine we were all first generation black British really. So, there's that strong influence from the West Indies and they all kinda lived in the same areas because they needed that kinda solidarity so I had a very limited view on what it was to be anything other than first generation black British and that was one of the first ways of me seeing 'they don't eat the same things as us; they don't talk about the same things as us; the accent in the house iSiyanda't the same as ours' other than that I used to see kids at school and I would play and we have all the school's activities in common. When you go into somebody else's environment that's when you see, 'hold on a minute, you people don't live like me'. And then when we were in the brownies, you know girl guides and brownies?

SIYANDA: Yes, yes

DINA: Alright so before you get to girl guides the brownies is the smaller age group and both me and Jane were in brownies and my granddad used to take us there in which ever day of the week it was and I remember with us both in the car and this is before you had to wear seatbelts so I was sat in the front and Jane was sat right in between the two seats

BOTH: (laughter)

DINA: And then he says to us well, 'what do you both want to be when you grow up?' a standard parent question...

SIYANDA: (simultaneously) question hmmhm

DINA: And Jane says something like teacher from what I can remember we are already about 7 we couldn't have been very old but I remember and I said I wanted to be a doctor and I wanted to be a doctor of children I didn't know the name was you know whatever as such and Jane says 'well, you can't do that'. So, my granddad said, 'why?' I didn't say anything, I didn't say anything. "Because my mommy said black people could only be a nurse" (pause) and I thought, 'we played together I go to your house you come to mine, your mom is nice to me and my mom is nice to you but there's limits there's a glass ceiling on being black and you people are letting me know this I have got my family saying, 'you know what this is the land of opportunity we have come here because there wasn't opportunities in the West Indies and to be here you could be anything you want if you put your mind to it'. Then I have got this

girl saying to me her mom (changes tone to a higher pitch – sounding upset) who is more than nice to me is saying ‘well, actually that’s not the case you can only be a nurse’. And I am looking at my mom who is a nurse an unqualified nurse and I am thinking (short pause) ‘okay’. But then in my whole view I don’t ever remembering seeing her again after that and if I do I don’t remember (stutters) because we are not on the same page I thought we were but we’re not on the same page because we are going things that are equal but your view on where I could get to iSiyanda’t and then I am hit with this whole Alexandra person who is warming up with me, she is helping me out nobody else is we do a competition where it’s all based on your performance objectively and I won your treatment towards me then changes and it wasn’t ‘I didn’t win’ it was ‘mommy, mommy the black girl won’ and ran off the stage crying just because I won and so for me my whole concept of (short pause) white people were very different cause you can’t trust them as far as I am concerned and they don’t see me as being an equal. So, I don’t care how they smile in my face I don’t care what they do I don’t like them full stop because they don’t like me so I don’t have to like them and I am going to do well and it’s going to be in spite of whatever shit you can portrait (?) to me and I got very sort of militant from a very, very early age I don’t know what age but I know as a feeling it’s a felling that I have had for a long time

SIYANDA: Do you still have the same feeling now?

DINA: Ahmm (short pause) to a degree yeah. It affects me in things like I can’t imagine ever going out with anybody white. My dad’s wife now is white he’s got me as an only child to my mom, my sister Michelle is the only child to her mom and my sister Candice is the only child to her mom then he got married to a white woman and had his 2 kids right? And I say his 2 kids even though we are all his kids that is his little nuclear family and I personally think men a lot of men I have ever met have start-again syndrome you went out with this person

SIYANDA: What syndrome?

DINA: START-AGAIN SYNDROME you got it wrong there

SIYANDA: Oh (chuckles) start-again

DINA: So, you bypass that child you don’t do what you have to do with them anymore you go into a new relationship ‘you’re gonna get it right this time’. Forget your first child ‘you’re gonna get it right this time’. That doesn’t work start again! And the ones that you get it right for just think you’re the best thing since sliced bread but what about the 3 mistakes you made earlier on where do we factor? Ja. And his wife she works she is an occupational therapist she worked in South Africa for a good few years. She’s from Blackpool, blonde, typically box-standard white. Fair enough. Now my dad’s Jamaican, Jamaican accent, Jamaican mannerisms and it was a complete ‘Oh my goodness, my dad has got a white woman?’ What? How I mean the music he listens to is so how did you end up with HER? What? How can you? Anyway and even he says to me cause to me part of who I am is where I am coming from and part of where I am coming from is my family and the people that are important to me. Now (short pause) my dad might love his wife and that’s all well and good and they have the children and that’s great. He went to drop his wife and his 2 kids to her mom’s house in Blackpool her parents’ house and they were watching cricket and it was West Indies versus England and my dad wants West Indies to win he is West Indian he lives here but he is West Indian and her dad Angela his wife’s dad said ‘that’s not very patriotic Bob, you should be supporting England because

look how many years you have lived in this country' (short pause) And I thought 'so what did you say?' and he goes 'well, I am from Jamaica I am Jamaican so I am going to support the West Indies' and he had to use an analogy on him that said 'if you had to go and live in Australia because you want the sunshine, when you are in Australia, would you support England or Australia?' and he didn't answer he had to think about. With that level of ignorance I can't have personally my child being raised going to see that grandparents and that's the environment that they are being raised in. I don't want you to try and I wouldn't want my child's dad to try and take away their blackness. They want the nice pretty little mixed race girl with curly hair but they don't want the culture that goes with it and my cultural identity for whatever I see it as being however I have been raised is important to me and I have always looked at it the people I know that are in a mixed blessing it's all well and good if the parents are together when they split you've got a child whose hair don't know how to get combed, no one knows how to cater for it, they have got no sense of their culture they don't know what food they need to be eating there's nothing because the person that is raising them doesn't represent that lifestyle and they end up with this whole sort of confused identity they choose. One of my sisters the two that with my dad's wife one of them is black the other one is white not in completion but in mannerisms one of them listens to black music, one of them refuses to one of them likes to go to places that her dad goes to and likes the lifestyle and the kinds of friends that he has the other one would refer to go horse riding with her mommy. And there is a complete distinction between how they view themselves one views themselves as being distinct she'll say she's brown do not call her black and she identifies with a white lifestyle and the other one she is quite happy to be mixed race but she's black and that's it cause she will say but Bob Marley is black and he is mixed race and Halle Berry is black and she is mixed race yeah. And the other one yeah but they are not really black they're mixed race and she refuses to hold that as an identity and I think you are living with that you have that distinction if you leave your wife tomorrow both of those children are white because the wife we will have parties round their house once year and she's here and if there's only 3 white people there usually the wives of his friends that are got black you know a black guy with a white woman ...

There are children making lots of noise in the background. I suggest we found another place for the interview, Diane suggests her car. So the rest of the interview takes place in her car parked in a parking lot at Gallions Reach Shopping Centre

DINA: Ja, so they've had to make a choice between what it is well their identity and ja the party ja as I said he has parties once a year he will have a family get-together very few of his friends and when he first got with my dad's wife him and my gran fell out him and his mom fell out because of the circumstances and he'd left somebody to be with her and what have you. So, when they first met she was more than happy with him because she had him to herself and she had a black a guy who happens to be black brought into this whole nuclear family thing. When he made up back with his parents she then realised 'he is not an individual he comes with his people so they do things as a family' he goes round to his mom's because mom in any West Indian family your mom the oldest female is always the centre of everything so you go out to her house don't care how old you are and that's where you have Sunday dinner and you bring whoever you have with you for that is where it's at. And she didn't want to buy into any of that so she kinda did her own thing she's got her 2 children now so

they have their life so he has culturally black life and then he has his home life 2 completely different identities and to see my dad in his home environment he doesn't even appear to be the same person because he doesn't speak the same way, he doesn't eat the same type of food, he doesn't watch the same type of programmes, he very rarely gets the chance to listen to his music unless the kids are in bed to which some degree when you have kids it is all about them but he doesn't have his life, his lifestyle represented so he goes out to get that. He goes round to his friend's house to get that so and she doesn't come cause she iSiyanda't really into all of that. When they have a party at their house there's usually three of them because two of my dad's other friends have got white women and all three of those white women sit together and everybody else gets more with what they are doing and I, I talk to her and you know I don't try and impose anything onto her and she'd say to me 'I don't understand why they always have to have curry goat and rice every single party?' And I think 'you have been with my dad for nearly 15 no 18 years now and you don't get it (lowering her voice) you just don't get it'. I don't ask you why you have freaking cucumber sandwiches

SIYANDA: (laughs hysterically) ha ha ha ha

DINA: Or why you'd always have Yorkshire freaking pudding every a Yorkshire whatever it is every Sunday. So, that's what we do, that's how it is and she doesn't like that, she doesn't like the culture that comes with him, she just wants him as part of the way it's here without where he's coming from and to lose, to be black British it's really hard to have a sense of the identity, to be West Indian black British we don't have our own language we don't have our own names there's not much that we actually have, you see what I mean. All you've got is your customs that you have inherited from your parents that's it. You know you could say where your name comes from and this part from here and this tribe is related to this, this and that and the other you can't go to any African person and say 'yeah, hey bro' because we are not the same we are ide, we don't get seem by the black African people over here as being black African and because, because we kinda looked down on cause we were just like the slaves that just got cast off to the West Indies and now we are nobody we just got slave names, no sense of education the people, the black West Indians that came here didn't come here for an education they weren't sent here to come and study. The parents came here because there was no job opportunities where they were so you didn't have the *creme de la creme* of West Indian people coming over here so we are not starting at the same start point so even though being black gets you stigmatized here and you are a minority here being black West Indian means not only are you a minority you are a minority of no status so you have got a completely different fight you know and there is all of that fight means a lot to me and I find that the people that I know that have got who are in what I call a mixed blessing they choose they either choose one of three things they choose black life they choose a white life or they have created a new genre of cosmopolitan-ness and you know I can go around I have got a friend George he's into deep culture, culture music culture wear and reggae music when his partner is home, it's his house he still plays it when her family or her friends come around the R&B comes out because it's middle of the road so he can't be too black (sarcastically) that's too radical you know what I mean he will listen to all of her you know regular white music whenever she chooses to when George's friends or family come around the R&B comes out again because it's middle of the road and he would get embarrassed to play the kinda music that she would normally play and they have an acceptance of each other the people that are important to them don't have an

acceptance of them so how do you look into your cousin's space that you have grown up with knowing that they are not accepting your partner you know for a fact that they don't like black people for or that other person doesn't like white people and you are all sat together doing this whole mediocre sort of middle of the road cosmopolitan sort of everyone's gonna be nice to each other thing when I know I know from my experience with Alexandra I know from Jane it doesn't I don't buy in into this whole smily kind of courtesy thing because you don't see us as being equal we are sat here eating the same food in the same building and we could do the same thing we could do the same course and you still don't see me as being your equal. So and I can't live with that I can't, say this is the person I love and I love what they are what they represent, where they are coming from genuinely cause I don't and when you, if I have to have a child to you and anything had to happen to me God forbid how would you raise them, the kinds of influences that you would put around to raise them is not what I want as my legacy so there's more for me to it than just well yeah I'm in love (short pause) cause I am only in love if I stay in this whole in a new version of the modern culture rather than a heritage type of culture and my identity even if as much as yes I am studying identity to some degree now and yes it is historically-based and no there is no tangible beginning cause I can't how do I claim my identity as being West Indian when originally I wouldn't have been that. Where is my original point of identity? You choose something just because you know you are different you're gonna get treated as different so you need your own point of this is where I am coming from and it needs to be represented and if I have been subordinated because of it, which I have been and it all very indirect they way you get subordinated now then I have to stand strong in that rather than what I feel is selling out and 'I would become you so that you can accept me' No, I am gonna stay me and you will accept the fact that I am equal to you and that's very important to me and anyway that's all that's my dad and I kinda digressed

SIYANDA: That's fine

DINA: But, where, where I was coming from growing up after Jane I still did the dancing thing and I was a bloody good ballet dancer. I got to the point where...

SIYANDA: (interrupts) Actually let's talk about that I mean as you said it was like white dance, ballet how was the process of learning this new dance ...

DINA: (interrupts) It was interesting the dance teacher always used to say 'Pull your backside in, put your stomach in' and I am like, 'this backside....'

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha ha

DINA: '...can't do anything other than what you see it do'

SIYANDA: (laughs uncontrollably and loudly) HA HA HA HA HA

DINA: (chuckles) '...it was made like that go check my family, it was made....'

SIYANDA: (hysterical laughter) ha ha ha ha

DINA: '...I cannot pull it under and just have a straight back cause it's just not gonna go like that'

SIYANDA: (more laughter) ha ha ha

BOTH: laughing

DINA: '....so, it's not'

BOTH: Laughing

DINA: And that's how it was and she would ask me to do things that my whole structure would not allow me to do

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha, ja.

DINA: So, I can't

BOTH: Laugh

DINA: So, she was really interesting. So, I would try I would put it under there (trying to demonstrating). I can't be you know square it's not happening and you know I was like you have different dances that you would go and perform with and you used to do more than one different genre so you would study ballet and tap, modern dance, national dance you would learn a routine from a different country and I was never given a ballet dance to go and perform with ever. I wasn't Tracy wasn't in fact I don't remember any black girl in my dancing school which weren't many with a ballet dance that we were sent out there to perform with. Given the tap given the modern given all kinds of things given duets you name it but never a ballet dance. So, I didn't, I didn't kinda notice that at first then I stopped liking ballet because obviously I am being told that it's not I am indirectly being told that I am not my physique my everything is not gonna make me good at that. I would be allowed to do the exams and get to a different grade but I would never go, I would never be allowed to perform ever in a ballet which was interesting. But then I thought 'okay, let's face Di you go and see all of these ballets and operas and all kinds of things as part of your classical training' I have never seen any blacks in Swan Lake so I said 'alright so where can I realistically get to with this? Where, where is it gonna take me?' if I said I wanted to become a ballerina, where how is that gonna help me? The first black ballerinas I've heard of were the Harlem something, something or whatever ...

SIYANDA: (chuckles) ha ha ha

DINA: And I thought, 'well that's great for me living in Manchester England I am not in no kinda Harlem and I am not particularly intending to move there'. So this can't do anything else for me. It was taught me deportment (?) I have a good posture from it, it kept me off the streets it did a whole lot of other things for me but it can't take me down the same road and I kept seeing examples more and more of the Jane and Alexandra kind of scenario of where 'well actually you can't do this, you can do it alongside me right now but you can't do this'. And it's true it actually true to this day you won't go and see you know a ballet company and it's black unless it's specifically black and you know they are a little breakaway faction just on principle but you never gonna be mainstream so the best I could have been able to do is teach and let somebody else become it. So I thought 'Na this thing is not for me this is not for me, you people are obviously not for me'. And the I started I remember doing a one-man stage show and some woman headhunted in the audience cause I have been this high since I was eleven. She asked me if I've ever considered modelling and I hadn't and I said 'well I'd have to ask my mom' and my mom thought fair enough. Had a card went down to the modelling agency.

SIYANDA: How old were you at this time?

DINA: Ahmm going on 14 and they thought I was fantastic and blah blah blah now up until then I used to have people say to me (short pause, adopts a funny voice) ‘You are very pretty considering you are so dark’

SIYANDA: (bursts out laughing) ha ha ha ha SORRY ha ha ha ha That’s funny

DINA: (chuckles) At the time, at the time the only media conception of black was mixed race long curly hair that was black. Magazines in fact we weren’t really in magazines at first we kinda came in to the modelling circuit at black people before Naomi Campbell you had Iman you had like your one-off never-to-be-heard-of by anybody else black model Beverly whatever Johnson cause they were few and far between considering how many damn beautiful black people there are they are just we are just not represented. Asians fair enough because culturally they are not allowed to do it there is no specific reason why black people can’t model. So, at the time the only black that was represented even though they did not see themselves as black they were mixed race or whatever title they want to give themselves at the time half-caste that’s what we used to call them because as far as I am concerned I’m mixed race I’m part Sri Lankan I am part Indian I am part West Indian I am mixed race yeah. When I am referring to a black and white mix I am referring to half caste because that’s how I knew to refer it and then it became the new discourse that well ‘NO, you don’t say mixed race I mean half caste’ because it’s derogatory. So now there is no way of differentiating a black and white mixed race from any other kind of mixed race cause now you shouldn’t have to whatever the new way is. Well back in the day it was half caste so you had to be half caste to be a model long curly hair the whole thing so when I started out in the agency the agent was blatantly honest with me after about 7 or 8 months and he says look ‘I can’t place you because’ as far as they were concerned (sarcastically) you know cause there’s only one type of black person obviously. Ahmm my features were too refined for my completion ...

SIYANDA: (pulls a face)

A PAUSE

DINA: Ja that look of confusion ja that’s what I had people who had basically if I had exactly the same face exactly the same features but I was a lot lighter I would have work that I would be pick, choose and refusing. But what happens is when people want a model they phone up or they call up an agency and they say “I am looking for someone with blonde hair blue eyes” this description that description and the agency would send everybody they have got of that description. Nobody was asking for my kinda look cause they did have a market for it they hadn’t had a market place it. So I was struggling so I would get to do the odd stage show where every now and then they’d just send me out whether I’d been asked for or not and I could see what’s available clutching at straws if I’d get the job somebody would just have to be taken with me but I was not what they were expecting and it happened a couple of times where they had to kinda re-cast what they had envisioned for themselves or envisioned for the job but they had no place for me and that, that was kinda hard and then even my own black people they do things like, do things like (starts touching her nose) “it’s a big nose I’m give you a better nose bridge”

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha ha ha

DINA: That is what they would do because to be black and progress you have to be as pale as possible you have to be as non-threatening don't look like you have your cultural identity just blend in then you are okay

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha ha

DINA: Then you kinda accepted and the more I was supposed to do that is the less I wanted to and black people because I have a part Indian mix 'I am not black I'm coolie' that's the word they'd use for us. Now in India that's a derogatory term

SIYANDA: Ja, I mean it's a word also in South Africa it is....

DINA: It's derogatory

SIYANDA: It is ja.

DINA: Whereas a lot of people here used to it to say 'Okay well you just not black you've got an Indian mix, that's why you've got nice hair that's why that person why this' and so you are just coolie and you hear people calling themselves coolie because they know they are not just black they are black with an Indian mix which differentiates the type of black you are in the same way saying half-caste used to differentiate the type of black that you are you see what I mean. And it's only when you start learning the history of how certain terms came about that you stop doing that to yourself but in general especially amongst the older generation they are not interested in discourses that's what they know to call it that's what it is and that's the way I kinda got but I never wholly accepted in the black argument so when I used to go like the African Society when I used to do this do that all these very militant things that I started doing because I wanted some thing that represented black people to have a position of strength that I would attach to and I was never truly accepted there. I joined the TAB I don't know if you know the TAB?

SIYANDA: No

DINA: The Tabernacle they were very, they were very they followed like Fara Khan's teaching very militant people and they'd talk about you know your hair was 9 ethno and it was this and it was that but "You're not the same cause you're really black". So that was the stance of black people towards me and white people they would smile in your face and are far more courteous about their discourtesy and the people I know that were mixed race had to have issues as far as I was concerned they had to because even if your mom who is white loves your dad who is black your mom's mom doesn't love him your mom's sisters don't love him your people don't love him when you realise that he's more than just his colour he's a culture he's representing himself he's representing how he has been raised you two aren't gonna stay together you're your clan is gonna bring up this child to be white who iSiyanda't white and then it all goes wrong then you people who cling to an identity and I don't know about Lurraine I don't know about various other people it would be interesting for me to even find out from her why she chose to be so involved in race issues. What triggered her to find that interesting it would be interesting to know what happened in her background for race to be race and what it is to be black and most of the examples that she uses in her lectures are always about 'well, black this and what, what does it really mean to be black anyways' how did that become a big issue for you? I can guess cause she is mixed race. Ahmm

SIYANDA: For you how did it become a big issue?

DINA: Because I have been put into things that were very white dominated environment growing up because my grandparents and my mom thought they have got a very negative view of themselves because it's very hard to have a sense of pride when you go to school all you taught about is the Taj Mahal and the slave trade that's what you learn about ethnic minorities that's it so it's okay right so white people have got this invention and that bit this that and the other to be proud of. Asians at least have their own language their own culture their own discourse their own dress code their own sense of self so even if they don't learn it in school they have a structured self specifically to teach them what they need to know about themselves. African people don't respect West Indians anyway well that's the general feeling because we who are we we're just the slaves we're the ones that you were happy to get rid of and if we weren't slaves taken by white people sold for some pathetic thing that means nothing in the grand scheme of it then we would have been slaves in Africa anyway so who are we. We are just uneducated sent out there to work so now we are here there's still this whole class divide thing even though where everybody can be broke together still struggling there's a status change there's a status difference so you don't have any reason to respect yourself and then you have your grandparents who came over here just grateful to be in a country where they can work and they can maybe one day buy their own house and they don't know they are not interested in their own history to say 'How the hell did we end up poor in the West Indies in the first place?' all they know is they were and they had their house with a corrugated sealed roof and now they have an actual house so from where they are coming from they have built their castle they have gone as far as they were willing to go they are happy as hell so we should be just grateful and then you had a whole generation of black British that aren't grateful anymore and watching Roots anybody who watched Roots back in the day ended up with an attitude. That film revolutionised everything it's like "THEY DID WHAT TO US"

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha ha ha

DINA: Everybody who was black I don't care where you come from "now it's an us, there's us and there's them"

BOTH: (laughing out loud)

DINA: (pointing outside towards people) Them!

BOTH: more laughter

DINA: Ja as I say you learn about the slave trade that's it so that gives me a sense of pride and purpose you know. So where, where is that supposed to come from?

SIYANDA: Hmmm now were all these issues discussed in your family home?

DINA: Not really they just kinda got on with it.

SIYANDA: So, where did you pick it up where did you start ...

DINA: (interrupts) It was at looking at the gratitude that my family had and the subservience that they had versus the generation that I was part of who would watch things like Roots who were starting to get more militant who had gone out and faced racism on the streets. There is a new level of anger because we didn't have we don't have this whole gratitude of 'Well, look where we are coming from to where we are now'. We didn't come from there we were born here so I am comparing myself to that white girl there that Asian guy there that African guy there that whom I've cause

that's this is where I am and you're telling me I have to start from this level of (short pause) of disadvantage and you're just grateful. We're not grateful anymore do you see what I mean we're just not grateful anymore so it's not good enough. So some of us got angry some of us got focused and for each generation there's more of us that are getting focused but there's still a helluva lot that are getting angry cause if I look at the population of universities now I know back when I was a kid there weren't this many black people in university. They just 'zoom' and if there were black people guaranteed they were from Nigeria because they were from a well-to-do enough family where they sent their children over here to be educated. So they are looking at you "How come West Indian people" we must just be thick cause there's no West Indian people in university so "you must all be thick" expect for we didn't come from the same place we didn't come from the same starting point. You take yourself away from any form of cultural identity put yourself in a foreign land be made to work under the colonial British rule then be taken from that poor to come over here poor to subservient parents and then see how far you get then you start then you'll know what starting point you are coming from which is why I look at where West Indian black people are now and I am bloody proud of us because in a very short space of time we doing alright or more and more of us each generation are doing alright

SIYANDA: I am just checking if it's (Voice Recorder) working

DINA: Sure it's ok

SIYANDA: It's ok

DINA: Ja so me staying black by being black just become a point and people would say things to me you know all the remix of my life I went to a tutor growing up because Maths and English were always quite weak for me

SIYANDA: Maths for me

BOTH: laughing

DINA: However now I have discovered that I am dyslexic I know why at the time I was sent to a tutor. My tutor my first tutor Mr Blackman he was [a] black guy who if you went to him you had to do whatever subjects your parents sent you there for but you had to do Black History as far as he was concerned you had to do Black History which was an eye opener

SIYANDA: How old were you at this time?

DINA: Ehhh secondary school so I learnt about the Burning (?) Empire and the Marley Empire and I learnt about Mary Seacole rather than just Florence Nightingale and then I went 'No, we did that' How come no...then I looked (opening her mouth illustrating shock) and I felt like I'd been deceived and I thought like the school system everything is trying to deceive me and I thought it's not just me that needs to know this white people need to know this so that they don't have to look me with this ceiling that they have we all need to know this why don't we all know this? And you start checking out the history of why we don't know and then it's hard it's just you have this kinda sense of anger and then you look at all the people who don't really know where you are coming from I can meet somebody white tomorrow "Go rightly Di' they don't know where I am coming from we're in the same place we're went to the same schools they don't go home having to know where I am coming from. So Yes I am quite militant to a point where No I would go out with somebody white NOT because I don't like any one particular white person per se we all have blood

running through our veins we're all this we're all that great but I come with where I am coming from and that is part of who I am and I don't even want to change that I don't want to change that and I want my son to go out with somebody black preferably ultimately I want him to be happy and I don't care where that person is from or what nationality ultimately but given a choice I would like my grandkids my great grandkids to be a reflection of the struggle of, of his own people. I say 'Right yeah I am still this (touching her skin) and I am still this' I am still black I can still be black I can appreciate what it is to be black and I can still get to where ever I am going I don't have to be with any other kinda person generate a different way of living in order to get there and that's important to me and if it's not important to him I don't wanna project that on him but it's important to me. And I always had my own blackness made a point of for whatever reason now I have changed colour a lot but growing up I was very, very dark and even my auntie the same auntie that I used to live in the house with used to call me chocolate dark cause I am seriously, seriously dark and in the summer holidays I am playing out like every other kid and you come back and it's like 'Ahhhha'

BOTH: laughing

DINA: (chuckles) You should go outside

BOTH: laughing out loud

DINA: Yeah well I did. I used to wish to be lighter I used to I remember that because then at least then people don't have to make a point about two things aren't you really tall for your age and (lowering her voice to a soft whisper) 'You're so dark, you are so dark' Well yeah what did you think I haven't noticed

SIYANDA: (chuckles)

DINA: (chuckles) So yeah then I stopped wanting that I thought actually 'No I am quite okay with this I am kinda okay with me cause you find a way of being okay and being proud of yourself and partly it was me knowing a bit about Black History that made a big difference to my own pride.

SIYANDA: Tell me a bit more about that time in your life where you were in secondary school

DINA: Secondary school (short pause)

SIYANDA: Where was the school?

DINA: It was in a black area ehh (short pause) I didn't grow up I kinda must have really grown up middle (reluctantly) classy black when I think about it

SIYANDA: Strange when that happens iSiyanda't cause it's like what do you mean... (laughing) ha ha ha

DINA: Ja (laughs) ha ha h

SIYANDA: (laughing while speaking) What do you mean what are you talking about 'middle class'

DINA: I know middle class I didn't wanna be I thought (shouting) 'No I wanna be working class'

BOTH: laughing uncontrollably

DINA: I wanna be working class

SIYANDA: more laughter

DINA: (chuckles) Because anybody who is not is a Siyandaob is a this

SIYANDA: hysterical laughter

DINA: I don't wanna be a Siyandaob (laughs) ha ha ha

SIYANDA: (laughing) yes

DINA: I'm ghetto

SIYANDA: more hysterical laughter

BOTH: laughing

DINA: I AM GHETTO

BOTH: laughing and talking at the same time (unclear what is being said)

DINA: Because I am part of that struggle yeah bring me a (inaudible word) no no

SIYANDA: Ja

DINA: Really

SIYANDA: No

DINA: Sorry

SIYANDA: No, no

DINA: What can I say

SIYANDA: Yeah

DINA: Even like at Uni now "Yeah I don't know how I'm gonna pay" I know how I am gonna pay my bills actually No I am not broke and I do live a nice house and I do drive a nice car and I do and I have been to really nice places in the world sorry

SIYANDA: Yeah yeah

DINA: 'Well not really' but 'you making me feel like I should be'

SIYANDA: (chuckles) Ja

DINA: And I you all are trying to get there but whoever is there you don't like her for being there never did get that it makes me a Siyandaob or it makes me 'I think I am it' and stuff then anyway because I had the ballet training everybody else always thought that I thought that I am it you know cause I walk around a pole up my arse as I used to get told

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha ha

DINA: (adopts a different voice) "She thinks she's it" I don't think of anyone I'm walking you know to get to A to B like everybody else but I have been trained to walk in a certain way it's hard to "what do you want me to do what DO YOU ACTUALLY want me to do? So that was always very interesting but I was always the biggest blackest girl in the school I had the trombone I did drama I did all the things I wasn't allowed to do street dance I wasn't allowed to go youth club I wasn't allowed to do things as far as I was concerned that were getting black people in trouble and so it was

just as far as my family were concerned I cant do anything that even reflects that if my gran or my mom or any of them people had to have work done in the house they are not getting black people “Black people just rip you off” “Black people this black people won’t do a good job black, black, black, black”

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha

DINA: But white people are just gonna come in it’s so great and I thought (lowering her voice) “WHAT you can’t you haven’t tried every person”

SIYANDA: (laughs) Yes.

DINA: So if you try one white person and they get it wrong then there’s loads more white people and that was just one bad white person. If it was one black person then you are never trying a black person again and that’s not all people and I thought “Look at this as a problem now what is happening to us?” We don’t even respect ourselves and then when I think about why we don’t respect ourselves we have got every reason not to have been we brought up not to there’s nothing you don’t just get respect out of nowhere you have to see why, you earn respect and then you haven’t been given any reason to respect yourself. And I see Asians going through it now this whole kind of the subservience of their parents it’s just not there anymore we are not just grateful for whatever you wanna dish out to us anymore NOW it’s on we’ve got to be on par but yeah a lot of us are just choosing the wrong fight. It’s just we’ve too much attitude still and mine I’ve always wanted to become through a sense of achievement I want to be able to do whatever you gonna do and do it if not as well as you then my mom says to me “Look right you’re never going to be starting from the same point as someone else you starting from your point and you have to get to where you are going because of where you’re coming from” and there’s no point in trying to say ‘yeah but its not fair’ because that’s just how it’s and you are not gonna get any further by stop and still bitching about it. There’s certain things you have to get over but it’s still not fair cause you still living in a world where you can see everything else and you know you are not equal to it so it iSiyanda’t easy but and then she says then she’ll find me little ways of saying ‘Well look, look at how they can’t even go outside in the sun without getting skin cancer, look how they sit down on Sundays, look how they have to do certain things, anybody who puts you down for something it’s because they’re really jealous of it’. And I thought “Jjjja YEAH it’s alright being black’

BOTH: laughing

DINA: So I have had times where not being black is an issue but the completion because there was a completion era and it was only Naomi Campbell who made it okay to look like me to look black where a black she became the icon you can be a black person from Britain and do well in a certain industry for sure she went out with white guys and then the whole rumour of “well she slept her way to the top kinda came out years ago whatever you know and then she looses her brownie points

BOTH: (laughing) ha ha ha ha ha

DINA: Cause you have this whole ‘she sold out’ sort of attitude in order to get there so that didn’t work and then you know Iman is with David Bowie (short pause) okay then you think “Well, ja great okay so you might have fallen in love’ but some other people Naomi Campbell has been out with like Robert de Niro and stuff “you ain’t in love with him don’t lie’

SIYANDA: (creaking up) ha ha ha ha ha

DINA: “Don’t lie to us now”

SIYANDA: laughter gets louder

DINA: “That wasn’t love”

SIYANDA: more laughter

DINA: “We know”

SIYANDA: More laughter

DINA: “It’s on top” so ja yeah so but then Alek Wek made it okay to be black really black AFROCENTRICALLY black then when I still used to do the odd modelling job I got told then the story slightly changed I am either too dark for my features or too refined for my completion (lowering her voice) too refined what? Because to be as dark as I was then I needed to be more Afrocentric I needed stronger cheek bones I needed bigger lips I needed a broader nose I needed to be more Afrocentric because they only got one vision of what you must be like to be from an African continent you can only look like that or you’ve got to be all mixed race and all kind of look how I look but a lot lighter curly long hair and so the fact that I am neither I am just here and I am just me they have nowhere to place me. So I only did the work where there was no request for a particular type of look and now it would be great to be me if I was a model but if was like 10 years ago but at 35 I am not going into no industry like that now but back in the day when it would have been good for me there was no market cause they didn’t recognize the different types of black that they are which you know iSiyanda’t a shame it is what it is

SIYANDA: So in secondary school was being (stuttering) was modelling what you did and what you ...

DINA: (interrupts) NO I never wanted to be a model it was just the opportunity came for me to do it and the one thing it did do is make it okay for me to be tall which was nice and I actually wanted to be taller because I am quite short for modelling purposes but at the time when I was a kid I just “I am up here all my friends are down there” and when everyone is together having a secret and I have got to be kind

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha ha

DINA: ... be like a big stalk

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha ha, ja.

DINA: That’s all it did for me really. But school you know you were strong you were powerful to be black cause then it became really a strong thing an in it just became in to be blac...

SIYANDA: At school? Why? What happened in school?

DINA: Even like now you know how it’s in to be black?

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha ha. I know it is kinda it

DINA: It’s IN it is in you’re gonna be anything you can be Asian you can be you have to be black anybody has to be black and even Jamaican black is even the most cool of all cool that’s really cool

SIYANDA: (streams with laughter) ha ha ha ha

DINA: (shouting) I half Jamaican dete-dete-dete

SIYANDA: more laughter

DINA: I am good

SIYANDA: Ja, ja ja.

DINA: Super cool even so I kinda so when I was in secondary school I was at the beginning of the coolness of black and it's all good but I can only be a mus I can only be a musician or a runner obviously first I don't run fast so now what are you gonna do?

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha

DINA: I don't jump I can't catch or throw a ball really truly I am so pathetic at it I can't play rounders the bar is too thin I can't have netball is hard and it's coming at you that fast I can't hit I was a dancer I can't play ball I can't do shit like that really so I used to play netball for a while and I was ring attach and you didn't have to do as much fretting about but there was this whole push towards me doing certain types of things because I'm black I good at drama I was good at things like that rather than sport but yeah it was cool so my crew my set of girls we were the we were THE girls because we're black

SIYANDA: And so did you have what kind of grouping

DINA: Well it was a there was me and Charmaine both of us Indian black our parents knew each other well her mom and my grandparents because she was the youngest child in her family whereas I am the, the

SIYANDA: Ja, ja

DINA: So we were the same age and in fact there was Sharon and Karen who were very similar as well they were the youngest children so their parents were the same age as my grandparents as well in fact they had brothers and sisters that were the same age as my mom and dad and there was Lindsay white girl she used to like Zizi (?) top heavy mental all kinds of stuff and I love Lindsay to this day because she never tried to be anything other than what she is and that I respected her for yes she was white she didn't like our music never tried to and I really truly didn't like hers I was like 'What the fuck is kinda noise like that (imitating very Rock music) NIINIINIII

SIYANDA: (laughs) ha ha ha

DINA: How do you dance to that? What do you do? For Christ's sake now but I loved her for being her so she hung with us cause we got on for no other reason and then there was Eve who to me (sighs) she had a whole identity issues well she tried to become like us and wear what we wore and I don't respect wannabes I've got a problem with wannabes

BOTH: brief laughter

DINA: You be exactly how you choose to be however that is but don't start becoming more like us (whispering) "I didn't really Eve as part of our crew". But yeah school was actually good I didn't do the whole boy thing

SIYANDA: Didn't you?

DINA: NO no

SIYANDA: Why not?

DINA: Because it was all about our books it was all about trying to get somewhere ehmm (short pause) and I suppose I must have been actually quite scared I mean I was always too much bigger than other people and I didn't like what they did I mean you say 'hello' you walk to the top of the street you stand at the bus stop you Siyandaug for as long as you can before the bus comes

SIYANDA: (starts laughing)

DINA: And you go and I thought (pulling her face)

SIYANDA: continues laughing

DINA: "I actually don't I don't wanna do that" some say 'you'll regret' "I don't care I DON'T WANT TO DO THAT"

SIYANDA: more laughter

DINA: And then the only people that would come and talk to me were always a lot older they'd be people that weren't even in school LIKE older 20's and what do I know how to, I'm I can't I don't know what to do with a big 20 year old somebody when you are like 14 15 16, twenty-five twenty-six might as well be 70

SIYANDA: (cracks up laughing) ha ha ha That's grown!

DINA: You are like "you must know everything about the world" I don't know anything about the world

SIYANDA: laughter

DINA: "You must have a really great job you must be everything at 25" (sarcastically) OF COURSE

BOTH: laugh out loud

DINA: Well yeah so No I didn't go out with anyone till I was 18 first kiss first everything 18

SIYANDA: Tell me about that where was it when was it

DINA: Ahmm It was at his place cause he (changing voice into a slower more elongated articulation) h-e-w-a-s Skipper bless him

SIYANDA: He was?

DINA: His name was Skipper

SIYANDA: Skipper?

DINA: Well I they used to call him Skipper so when I've got to college he used to conveniently be hanging around cause I was the kinda person nobody apparently as I later discovered I am quite (lowering pitch) intimidating

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: Alright ME!

SIYANDA: more laughter

DINA: “Why? What did I do” I am quite intimidating I walk with my back really straight I carry on like I would never talk to somebody that I’d just cast them down if they tried to

SIYANDA: A pole in your ass

DINA: Yeah

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: My pole in my ass looking down at everybody

SIYANDA: more laughter

DINA: And I wouldn’t be further removed from being like that but for some that is the impression people have of me so I was never approached by people my own age and even in college I find out like a year after I’ve left you would have gone out with anyone you wanted and I am like “WHAT?” I used to walk by myself in college for where were these people

BOTH: laughing

DINA: So it was only older people with the front and the know-how to actually even approach me so he would kinda be hanging around he would conveniently be in the area if it’s was after college so when I’m walking home conveniently walk in my way and he called himself Tony but his name was really David he told me so his name was Tony and cause he was a lot older he knew how he had me figured he knew that I was a virgin he knew I didn’t know anything about anything really and I was always very cocky and so I kinda funnel it just because of my own pride but he knew he could see right through. But he told me his name was Tony he always told me he told me he was 22 and I’m I was year 18 and he wasn’t he was 28 and his name was David. Then anyway he was hanging around and I really started to like him and he kinda got off the scene for a while and cause I think people must have seen him talking to me and he got warned away cause I had quite a big family and people would do all kinds of work behind my back that I didn’t know about

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: “Don’t you come in and run in with my cousin’ kinda thing

SIYANDA: Ja

BOTH: laughing

SIYANDA: Ja ja

DINA: Great so yeah when he came back on the scene he said ‘ja I have got a secret to tell you, you know I am not really this age’ but by then I was completely like “Hhah you’re fabulous anyway”

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: So whatever and then I was kinda quite flattered that somebody so old would be interesting in ME and he says you know “You quite mature for your age you’re this you’re that” when really he was just terrible it worked out he was drug addict and you know when you pick and pick until you pick shit I didn’t know I wasn’t on the

streets I never used to hang out on the streets I didn't know people so whoever somebody told me they were I really wouldn't doubt them it

SIYANDA: You just take it at face value

DINA: That's exactly what you do when I found out he told me he used to be on drugs and I thought "everybody is entitled to a past" and that actually made him colourful to me I thought (whispers to the point of inaudibility) "...done this..." amazing he'd had been in prison and he'd had this kinda street ghetto life and I am not ghetto I am trying to be ghetto

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: (screaming) I'M TRYING TO BE GHETTO yeah my boyfriend has been in prison HHOOO

BOTH: laughing

DINA: Ah I am telling you em days so anyway I had gone round to his place one day and he was staying in temporary accommodation because at the time the council were giving grants to people to refurn the house so he had to be him and his dad who's an alcohol and his mom is schizophrenic he's had a just an extraordinarily hard background and he's had to fend for himself a lot and I found really interesting and I was really proud of him for his struggle and going through all the things that he'd been through. But we're coming from different worlds and I've got a thing about different worlds "you stay in your world yeah I'll stay in mine cause I don't like to handle your world in reality" that's face it. But at the time yeah ja fine and I'd gone around to see him and their living room wasn't done up cause they never really bothered to do the place up cause it was only temporary so he used to stay mostly in his bedroom so if even I came in we'd go straight in there and on this particular occasion he was in the kitchen so I thought "well you do what you do in the kitchen I'm gonna go into the bedroom" he was like "you can't go in there" so I thought "Okay he's got someone in there there's some reas[on] there's something going on in that room that's why I can't go in there" So I'd go in the kitchen with him and I said to him I'm gonna go to the toilet run in into the bedroom of course cause I need to know what's going on. And then I saw a plastic bottle a drinks bottle with a straw in it and I saw a bit of silver foil like kit-kat paper burnt out in the middle and I just ran out cause I thought "he's on drugs, he's on drugs" and that's hardcore drugs I don't quite know what kind but that's drugs and I gotta go and I never ever, ever went back never cause I thought "you know I don't I DON'T believe that I am stronger than anybody else I don't need to stay with somebody who is doing that because how long would it take for I would and I don't drink even now I don't smoke I don't I don't even want to so that can't work for me I never went back. After him who did I go out with? (brief pause) Oh yeah God the worst person in my entire life Micheal after him I thought "I don't want anybody who's had any connection or dealings with drugs". And there were a lot of people even a lot of people I went to school with they always used to sell drugs in Manchester especially the guys and a lot of the girls are at that age now such and such has had a baby! (exclaims) "Oh no way" there's all that kinda age all the teenage pregnancies that're all happening now I thought "I'm never going out like that"

SIYANDA: Can I ask you to hold on I need to go to the bathroom

DINA: Go ahead do what you gotta do. Do you wanna turn this off in between

SIYANDA: I just had too much Coke

DINA: laughs

BATHROOM BREAK

SIYANDA: You were telling me about your second ...

DINA: Yeah right so he I met him at my gran's front gate cause we lived on a main road and he actually I remember turning around shutting my gate turning back to shut the gate he grab my arm and he goes "I've followed you cause I've really wanted to talk to you for how long time I used to see you walking home from school when you were this age and blah blah blah and I know you'd grow to be whatever" (airing her face) All of the compliments it was all coming out fine

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: (changing her voice) And then he looked drop dead gorgeous I was like (imitates breathing heavily) "Wow you are truly amazing" however he was studying he was in London apparently doing an Estate Management degree and I was doing my A-levels so I thought "Oh somebody who's studying" so you are not out there selling drugs cause I knew because my college was in Moss Side I knew various heads and I thought "I don't want to know they are nice guys and they don't have this classic you know you think of somebody who's a gangster or they sell drugs and you've got I had a certain image of them and you speak to them they are just nice guys it's just like with any other job there's occupational hazards but they are nice people and I thought "you know what" and I envisioned myself at college or at Uni or going to balls or going to work dos and I thought "you know this is me this is my husband or my partner this is what he does" and I thought "Na that's not for me I just don't see my life being like that and I don't want to know anybody on that kinds level who is". At the end of the day starts to get my head around the fact that I am not ghetto

SIYANDA: brief laughter

DINA: I'm not ghetto so he's doing an Estate Management degree he'd modelled in South Africa for a couple of years and he was doing alright for himself I thought NICE this is it this guy is alright then a couple of weeks into starting to date him he ended up with this brand spanking new white M3 BMW so I said "Okay you're a full-time student where did the money what's going on? So he said "well you know" that's when he came up with the fact that he'd modelled for a few years and he'd done a lot of things he'd bought gold bullion for himself he'd invested in quite a few things and "no" he's not gonna keep it but he's insured it for a year and he's just that's the car he's always wanted "Good for you" so everything had a perfectly plausible explanation so I thought fair enough I wasn't impressed I wasn't happy about it but that's not the smartest thing for you to do with your money however that's what you want to do. Hadn't lied about his age or anything he was a good few years older than me and it worked everybody I was going out with was at least 10 years my senior as I say people my own age just didn't approach me in the first place. Then it was there was a clip in the Manchester Evening news "White BMW with 6 bullet holes in the side"

SIYANDA: (pulls face in astonishment)

DINA: Exactly that's what I did went (gasps for air) and his name everything

SIYANDA: Oh my God

DINA: That's what I thought called him up "what's happening" "Cant talk right now" phone went down and then a few days later he knocks on my gran's door with this car outside of MY grandmother's house like anything has ever happened to it I said "First of all you into your car and move it away from my grandmother's house and then actually I don't ever want to see you again period" and he goes "I need to talk to you so I went for a drive with him and he was saying to me he'd gone to see a friend of his or some family on the estate in Moss Side and there was a lot of taxing going on there so some of the guys some of the kids would come around on bikes or whatever and just try take keys and take the car and that those things did used to happen and if you didn't wanna give up the keys they'd try to shoot you or you'd duck down near the car that's how the car got holes in and I am like "Hhhah poor thing oh my goodness"

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: "Ohh how could they do that to you and you're trying so hard in life" and I'm all behind him ahhh the greenness in my grass was untrue but then it was a cousin of me who said "What are you doing with him? Do you know who he is?" I said "ja he's this he's that" "No he's Cheatheam"

SIYANDA: He's what?

DINA: Cheatheam now there were 2 gangs in Moss Side at the time well 3 but 2 areas there was Moss Side then there's North Manchester which had Cheatheam now Moss Side

SIYANDA: What is it called Cheat..?

DINA: Cheatheam is an area of Moss Side yes just like Moss Side is an area so you have gangs related to both of those areas. Now he was from the side of town I lived closer to Moss Side my school was in Moss Side my college was in Moss Side so o knew a lot of the heads and a lot of the faces from Moss Side didn't know anybody from Cheatheam so I wouldn't have recognised anybody who's from there so whatever he told me just like I had dome with, with Skipper I took it in cause that's what he's told me and certain things he could verify I used to see his college work I used to see I saw his portfolio so there was certain things that he'd said to me then actually checked out so I had no reason to disbelieve what he was all about but hey he was a big time drugs dealer but he, he used to operate on the side of town that I didn't know about so for him to even be outside in my house and I live on the Moss Side side of town and I am seeing a Cheatheam guy IT'S NOT SMART it's not smart for me to do this (giggles) so I'm like "Oh shit". So I tried to leave him and he said he'd just laughed at me and he said "You can't leave me" "What do you mean I can't I just have" cause I was still cocky at the time and he goes "Just, just, just try it you can't leave me"

SIYANDA: (pulls face in shock)

DINA: Yeah I know then he would come and he would drags me up and do all kinds of things for people I would talk to that I'd known in college I don't even know how he got to find out what kind of people I spoke to but there were a lot of threats a lot of threats and he made me believe that he was always gonna hit me and there was one time that I was I'd been to Bermuda on holiday cause it was like a present from

passing my A-levels or whatever I was told if I do well here I was very kind of talk about positive reinforcement in my house they invented it a behavioural psychologist would tell you

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: All I have to do if I do the washing up if I do what I have to do all kinds of things come my way so I thought “I can do the stay on the straight and narrow it’s alright” you get a lot for it so I come back from Bermuda I try to show this guy that I had knew for years my holidays pictures and he didn’t like coming to my grandmother’s house cause as far as he was concerned “look I am a friend for that I knew the street” unless I’m his woman he ain’t going inside of my grandmother’s house and doing the whole grandmother hello thing so he suggested I sit in his car with him so I am showing him my pictures and Micheal had phoned me to tell me that he wanted me to meet him at the nightclub that he used to be involved in and my uncle had shouted me but the car was facing outwards so I didn’t hear him I didn’t see him so my uncle must have gone back on the phone and says well you know she’s not coming now she’s talking to somebody. Next minute this car pulls up screeches outside of my gran’s house and Micheal comes out with his face distorted with anger

SIYANDA: Oh God

DINA: And the guy I was sat with Clive just said “you better go” now this Clive is huge strapping guy a gang a drug dealer himself right but you know as I say he was just a friend I knew him I knew a lot of people do did all kinds of things. And he just kinda pass through my pictures “You’re on your own I don’t do domestics”

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: And I thought and I just said “Clive you CANNOT leave me with him” cause he was losing it and I was scared and he goes “I gotta go” and I thought “I can’t ever respect you after you left me in that situation” and Micheal opens the car door I get dragged out I get pushed into his car he drives about two other news away (?) and he says “You’ve got 30 seconds to tell me what you were doing sat in the front seat of another man’s car” and I am like (making incomplete phrases and noises) “Aa da eeh hhhheee” and seriously nothing came out of my mouth cause it was all rhetorical anything came out of my mouth he was on it and he drove around for about a good hour convincing me that when he gets out of the car and takes me out of the car he’s gonna beat the living daylights out of me and he stopped the car several times and I kept sitting there thinking “Okay Diane get out of the car and run just run” and I thought “Hmhm [no-no]” if I do that and he catches me I’m gonna be in bigger trouble than I’m already gonna get in so I just stayed there and he didn’t he didn’t hit me but the threat the fear of it kept me completely subordinated for a long time to the point where (brief pause) I messed up I started to mess up on my A-levels anyway cause from the time I was seeing Skipper I’d gone from like 11 GSCSC’s all good grades piece of cake now I have involved the word ‘MAN’ in my life the grades gone everything’s out the window started work in college it’s was all so I had to do a re-sit. And then now instead of going to what was now a private college that my grandparents had paid for me to go to right I am literally driving around Manchester selling drugs for this because

SIYANDA: What?

DINA: Cause I used to drive him around in a little Polo a little just a little Polo and I am a girl so nobody is going to suspect he's not gonna get stopped by with police if I'm in the car with him so instead of I am being sent to college every morning and I'm coming home early enough to pick up my same auntie from work cause it used to be her car I'm driving around in and I've been to college all day and I would do this on his say-so believing that if I didn't he would beat me he never did at the time he never did but I believed he would he made me believe that he would and he would say things to me like "I would do this I would make sure this happens to your family blah blah blah" now if I was closer to my dad and I told my dad that wouldn't work it wouldn't have worked cause he was nobody as big as I imagined him to be or as he made himself out to be. But all my family are straight member just middle class they just do what they are doing they wouldn't brother and bloody buy a (stutters) video recorder back in the day unless it came out of a box it was from a shop they are just straight people and I kept thinking "I can't involve my family in this level of politics so I would do whatever I have to do to keep them out of it" so I did. Just about scrape through my A-levels how? God alone knows how I did Biology and Chemistry and got anything from it with the level of application that I gave it. And then there was one time when he well there was a couple of times when he did actually hit me so there's lot of the things a lot of the threats to me I it had it confirmed that he would have dome more had I not just allowed myself to go to subordination with him but t would get locked in rooms he would have all kinds of girlfriends up and down the place it was never about me he was just a complete narcissistic a complete control freak and I remember he used to go up to Jamaica a lot and over to Miami and do whatever he had to do from a drug related side of things and so it wasn't constant pressure even though he had people spying on me but he wasn't constantly there and pressuring me I remember saying to myself "My A-levels is my way out cause if I can get onto a degree" I didn't even apply to do Physiotherapy in Manchester cause I knew I couldn't stay I thought "for me to study is my way out otherwise how am I gonna tell my parents I want to leave home life" it was couchy for me I had no reason to leave home other than to study so I just said "I didn't get onto a course in Manchester but I just didn't apply so I made out like I wanted to move either to London or Birmingham and I can't off I had already started to lose a lot of my friends because of the kind of control I was under but I left Manchester and I left strict instructions "Do not tell for any reason anybody my contact details anybody I wanna be in touch with I will call them" and that was because of him I didn't want him to find me so I kind of told him "I'd failed my A-levels and I was gonna have to do a re-sit" and I just came to London and that's when I moved down here

SIYANDA: When was this....

DINA: However this was about 16 years ago but I had started seeing someone else in spite of all the pressure he was putting me on that which was Chris which I would say was one of the people I genuinely did fall in love with and Chris was a nice guy in all fairness and he knew the politics I was under but what I had done cause by then I'd known you know a couple of medical names and I told Micheal that I'd all kinds of conditions that I'd didn't really have and I didn't really know about

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: For why he couldn't have sex with me and as far as he was concerned I was there for the long-term keeps cause he was running around anyway so he just wanted me to be there for when he was ready to have me so I'd actually get out of having sex

with him and sort of reversed my psychology with him cause I used to say to him "Look I don't even like you and in fact I had more like or admiration for my first boyfriend who was a drug addict" that didn't go down too well at all. There was one time when I was driving the car because some he used to drive a Porsche by then cause obviously he whole why he bought the BM story wasn't real so after the BM he'd bought a Porsche and because he had a lot of people that he knew in Moss Side he couldn't park the car in Moss Side on the streets cause he'd get in trouble so I used to have to go drive behind him to a garage that he had help him park up his car (pause) He just hit him (referring to a driver in the parking lot) help him park his car and then drive him to wherever he was going and I was really pissed off with all and I, I got to a point where "I don't care what you do to me anymore I juts don't care whatever you want go on". So I said to him "Ja I've got more admiration for my ex who's a drug addict than I have you" "What did you say?" and he'd been training and he took his weight belts off and he just lashed it in my face as I'm driving the car and I just got soooo (struggling to find words) I blanked out I couldn't see what I was doing and I managed to pull in towards the side and I just got anger and I got out of the car and I said to him "If you're gonna fucking beat me beat me like a man let me stand here and you do it don't let me drive the car with my life in it and your life yeah I've got other people on this road and that's what you're gonna do". And he didn't he got "Just get back in the car" so I said "I'm not fucking getting back in the car with you" it's my car so I have to but I just started walking down the street and he said "Get back in the car" and I just had and I'd just had enough and the I didn't care what happens to me anymore whatever you have to do, do it but I can't keep living in fear of what you might do anymore. And then there was another girl he was seeing who I knew really well and she thought I was seeing him so she kinda tried to use in domain and she goes "Do you know a guy called Micheal?" And I say "Yeah, yeah, but he's just a good friend everybody thinks we are together but we're not" I wanted to see what she had to say and then she used to tell me chapter and verse of her relationship with him because as far as she was concerned we are friends and I knew before he was seeing her so I'm thinking "Why is he putting me through all this but he treats her great". And I looked at how I was towards him and I was always very cold to him cause I didn't wanna be with him. So I thought "Actually he will leave me alone if he thinks he has me" so what I started doing is I would call him five six seven times a day "Oh Micheal when are you gonna come and see me" and from the time I started doing that he left me alone cause he's got me so he doesn't have to keep putting his time in. so I just completely reversed my psychology on him and it worked every night then I had to link him up but as I say I managed to get out of the whole sex thing. So it was liveable it wasn't nice but it was liveable and I'd met Chris and that was kinda defiance as well cause I thought "I am going to live a life whether you know about it or not". And so by the time I'd moved to London I was already with Chris but it was a bad relationship cause it started badly it started out of insecurities we couldn't tell anybody we were together and it was all he'd got very obsessive he got very obsessed with me when I moved to London, London is not an easy city at all and in terms of friendships and knowing people and meeting people it's not an easy city and you meet guys a penny a dozen GIRLS you can meet them it doesn't mean that you gonna exchange numbers and stay in touch so I didn't have a network of friends when I was here and Uni was the most disappointing experience of my ENTIRE life first time round

SIYANDA: Was that at U...

DINA: UEL but at Stratford doing Physiotherapy now from year 1 to year 4 there was only me and God as black people on this course

SIYANDA: You and?

DINA: There was only from one, year 1 to year 4 it was a four year degree there were no other black people in fact there were no other ethnic minorities cause you don't really get it, if Asians are gonna do medicine they will be a doctor they don't do anything where you have touch people and overly get involved they go to the top or they don't do it so there was just me and they were all very middle class white now middle class black is one thing it just meant that I wasn't breadline growing up but middle class white is middle class white these people had never met black people before they used to say things to me like "why don't the insides of your hands tan?" they wanted to touch my hair you know that kind of white person who doesn't know anybody black unless they've see them on TV and a lot of the well-to-do areas never had black people in it it's only really now that you know we are getting into all kinds of corners and there's a lot more mixed relationships and there's a lot more going on but 50 even 15 years ago black people lived in black areas and you might get that odd one who lives somewhere else and even they won't associate with you cause they don't want their white friends to see you a being to see them as being a threat like having a coalition of black people so they kept themselves to themselves. So there was just me and I had no nothing in common and it's not the, the colour black that is a big deal to me just in its own right it's what it represents and it's the culture behind it and the level of understanding or expectation I expect somebody to have by being black by having a black colour and I don't expect somebody black to wanna touch my hair or to ask me why I don't tan on my hands and you know and say to me "Oh you're really nice you. You're the nicest black person I know"

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: "No, no Rachael I am the only black person you know" (chuckles) naturally so your whole big quantitative study of one" hhaah

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: Doesn't add up much really (chuckles) so she'd say to me "Yeah but my mom's a racist she doesn't like black people" "WHY?" (adopts a different voice) "Because while she was in Elephant and Castle and some black kids pushed in front of her on a bus" so I said "Yeah" "So she doesn't like black people". Right so if I had to not just like white people or anybody because of that I wouldn't like anybody

BOTH: chuckle

DINA: But that was enough for her mom which had been backed up with media images of black people anyway and that one experience made her mom her racist and all of these people (adopts a different voice) "HI DI" especially when they're drunk and they are all over you but no. I don't like the white guys who for sheer novelty purposes half of them just want to know what it's like to be with a black woman. I am not your social experiment trust me No it's just No and they would go out when they go out they would wear 501's and drink out of those long whatever those kinds of glasses are drink a pint of beer or however much beer out of those long glasses and fall over each other and then just start kissing and stuff but I'd never gone out gone out with white people before so that was a whole new thing for me cause where when I used to rave in ghetto and I used to go to places that I go you might see people

rubbing wallpaper off the wall in terms of how they are dancing but black people don't generally go out and start kissing and stuff and fall all over each other drunk and throw up in the corner and I used to think (makes an exclamatory noise) "Ahhnn" and you are not gonna go out in jeans you might go to somewhere where you shouldn't wear anything more than over-rolls but you gonna go out and you've got your clothes on you've got good clothes on and I'm not going out until quarter to one in the morning and I might be back at about half seven. They would go out at half seven in the evening in a pair of 501's and that is them dressed up so I had a totally different way of going out so every now and then I'd go out with them I'd be listening to Nirvana and I'm thinking "Ahhh"

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: "Okay" after a while that track doesn't even sound too bad anymore but this IS IYANDA'T ME this iSiyanda't me and they would be like "Diane, you never invite us to where you go" and I say "You can't come" 'Well why?' I say "You've never been a minority in your ENTIRE life and you will not feel comfortable about it I'm used to that trust me you won't be" right. And I took one girl out with me she lasted until the end of the queue

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: Cause she got people who are louder generally the way they speak is louder it sounds more aggressive there is nobody else white there and the odd one white person that might be there is essentially a black-white girl because she you can see she goes out with a black guy she's wearing a silver (?) her hair is all scraped back in a bun you can just tell she's got a black guy and all her friends are black the way she speaks is BLACK everything is black and then you've got this box standard white girl she can't cope SHE CAN'T COPE where I'm going so don't try to, go where you have to go so you know it'd only be guys that I could go out with cause it's only guys that I meeting but when I go out as I said I'm putting on clothes and I'm not leaving until after midnight and I wanna sleep first so that I can last the whole night

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: Right so then there was a rumour going around that I must be on the game

SIYANDA: Must?

DINA: I must be on the game I must be a prostitute cause I always had money I didn't drink I don't smoke I can't I didn't really have many people to go out with so my student loan used to my student money used to actually last me whereas theirs they were drinking every single striking evening I don't drink, water there's only so much that you can drink and it's kinda free if you get tap water so it was we were just on a different thing so because I am dressed differently to them and I would leave at a different time and I'd come back in when they are getting up and in the bathroom they didn't know what I was about and they'd never used to see who I'd go out with because I'd have my phone I am arranging "I'll meet you downstairs" and I'm gone and it was usually with a guy who's driving so what is that about where have I gone. So I didn't fit in to Uni life at all and then it was only officially discovered by the start of my second year that I was dyslexic (brief pause) socially it wasn't right Chris started to get more possessive cause we all had a notice board where we all had like a notepad on the back of our dormitory doors and we only had one phone per floor so if somebody called they'd leave you a note and say "okay well Tony ran or this person

rang”. So whenever Chris used to come and see me there’d just be a list of guys names this is my boyfriend who is in a different city who’s had to put up with me being in a relationship with some guy before where he knew I was under his control and now he’s come to London and there’s just all these guys names if he’s not here so it was always like “Well why you wearing lipstick? Where are you going? And just we just fell out and I said “I can’t do this I can’t do this” so I stopped going out I stopped doing things out of respect to him so I was just in London but I wasn’t living and if ever he didn’t come down I had I could quite easily stay in my room from Friday till Monday and most people would be rushing home Friday evening because they are gonna go Student Union and do whatever they do and what am I rushing back to do to go and sit in this room. I hated I HATED Uni the first when I first was here. I went to the African Society a couple of times with a couple of the guys and that was based in the Barking campus before the

BOTH: Docklands campus

DINA: Now I used to live in Whitechapel just me and as far as I knew like Essex was white racist or so I was led to believe

SIYANDA: I have heard that I was told (stutters) when I first came here

DINA: And you know and even BNP in power there so it’s not the kinda place as a single black woman that I’m gonna walk to go to by myself as an evening extra-curriculum university activity cause I gonna have to get back on the bus or on the train by myself so I never used to go anyway and I wasn’t involved in Uni life and course was very full-on like now 3 days a week 9 till 11 that’s it back then I was, fulltime for me on a Physio course I only used to have Wednesday afternoons off that was it and my minimum day was like maybe 9 till 3 it was a FULLTIME fulltime course and it was a different faculty and I found black people did like Business Studies and stuff like that so they were all on the Barking campus I was where everybody was doing Sciences black people don’t do Science. Generally they didn’t do the Sciences they did all your Bachelor of Arts degrees if anything they would do Psychology that’s the one thing they do Psychology but by and large it was all I’d be at the campuses so I’d never had anybody around that I had anything in common with and I hated Uni life so that affected my work, [I] got behind I had a study group we had to do a dissertation while we were doing it I ended up seeing a counsellor cause I was just so a lot of things from I’d come to London as baggage with plus how Uni life had worked out for me I just wasn’t happy at all it just got really horrible the whole thing. And I couldn’t I didn’t wanna tell them obviously that I was seeing a counsellor and they had arranged for study group on the day that I had counselling so I we did our research on the nation...on asthma the prevalence of asthma and I did oh you know I phoned the National Asthma Campaign contacted some drug companies got a load of information together but I couldn’t attend the meetings from what I’d gathered if you don’t pull your weight in an assignment after meeting with your personal tutor and you might get deduct 5% of whatever. But I was kicked off the assignment I didn’t even know it was only when I went about some essay and I was called into my tutor and he says “Look you know best we can do for you is that you re-sit this year in fact take a year out put your head together re-sit this year and go from that and I thought “I can’t do that I can’t even afford to do that” so I got I essentially I got kicked off the course because I didn’t I wouldn’t have time to catch up and it was the worse experience and I went into a serious depression after that it’s like I’m in London I don’t have my degree I don’t know anybody I don’t have much and I’d met Alex and

I'd just got my disability grant through my dyslexia grant through first time and I'd bought a computer table for the equipment allowance that was given me outside of Agus in Stratford and I'd met Alex or he had met me while I was outside with this box figuring out in the rain how I'm gonna get the box over to the bus stop in order to get back to my nursing home and he'd given me a lift and he was really a nice guy he was a carpenter they were two of them there was no come-on there was no it was like "Yeah you don't know many people here, here's my card come out with us" he was just a really nice guy and then when I had to leave my nursing home and I only had days to go he let me go and stay with him and I never moved out (laughs) and that was the best part of 14 and a half years ago now and I stayed with Alex all this time because he's a nice guy he works he's a good man but I don't think I ever fell in love with him he was just very different to what I'd known he was good for me at the time and I was good to him because he was good for me and then it was just another years gone by and another year and then we'd been together for ages and he's like "Well why don't we get married?". I kinda fell into what I have with him rather than fall in love with him which is how I kinda ended up at this point now it took we bought some property well he had a council right to buy and I said "I can't move in with you" by then I'd lent money off a friend of mine to get a deposit and first month's rent for my own flat so "Fine you have let me stay with you for it's early days relationship and I don't want to have to be with you because I haven't got anywhere else to live". And he ended up moving in with me there anyway but at least I knew you're got your place and I've got mine and so at the end of the tenancy he says "well you know come and live with me in the flat" I say "I'm not living with you in that flat unless my name is on it because don't need to feel like I'm that". So I went on a I'd got a job working I went to sign on at the Job Centre (chuckles) and I've got A-levels I've got GSCSC's and they found me a job for who? Whoever gets found a job at the Job Centre

BOTH: laugh

DINA: To work at the Job Centre so I feel like I would just go to the interview and mess it up cause it's the Job Centre so I ended up working there and from there I was applying for different vacancies I ended up getting work as a Recruitment Consultant for Physios and OT's based on the fact I did know a bit about them and then it was one of the guys my supervisor who was previously a nurse I saw him looking through a I think it was the Telegraph and I say "What are you looking for?" He says "Ahh nothing for you" and I go "But what is it?" he goes "I'm job hunting for a medical rep to get a job as a medical rep" he goes "You won't be able to get it cause you haven't finished your degree and you have to be degree calibre to become a medical rep". And I don't when people challenge me cause I'm like "Yeah? We'll see" if I apply and they tell me No that's fine but YOU can't tell me No cause who are you? I don't like you anyway even...

BOTH: laugh

DINA: So I applied and got a job working for Pfizer as a medical rep and it was earning good money and you get given a company car you get taken on conferences all over the world great job and then because I was on Alex's tenancy and I had the stable wage and he was self-employed I got us the mortgage on that place we took out extra money on it and I said "Let's use this as deposit on a house" cause by then we started talking well maybe one day if we have children I said "well I was brought up in a flat in a Council flat I brought up in a house with a front and back garden" and even though it was quite crammed in there for a while that's where I'm coming from

so I have not come to this I am not born in this country knowing where my gran has come from and the struggles they have been through for me to give my child any less than that otherwise they've come here and I've achieved nothing and so I said "let's have the house then if we don't do anything else for now at least it's there waiting for us". And the time it was the beginning of when properties really started to climb. So we bought that place he utilised his skills as a carpenter and did the place up and I was side by side with him and we kept doing that and I found what I was doing is keeping busy involved in projects because I don't have to look at the fact that actually I am not really in love with you but we are good together so let's be immersed in things so that I don't have to look at anything else and it's just like it just seemed like there was this sublime pressure to get married cause we'd been together for so long and you know mortgage is like a marriage anyway and we talked about getting engaged we'd gone on holiday we got engaged and I that's fine cause I'm wearing a ring it but doesn't mean we're gonna get married we're just engaged it's nice but we come back there was like an engagement party thrown for us I was like (makes a face) "Ahh"

SIYANDA: Oh my God (laughs) ha ha ha

DINA: Shit and then people "so when's the date? When you gonna get married?" and everybody you speak who now knows you're engaged is pressuring you to get married to them before you know I've booked and I'm getting married and that then I was

BOTH: laugh

DINA: (laughing) Oh shit I'm married okay it all become matter of fact this is how it was going rather than this is what I want with who I want it with and I'm quite loyal if this is who I'm with that's what I am doing and he's a good guy and then ja I stayed working as a medical rep but then you just I just thought "Maybe I would have more of an in love thing if I didn't do so much with Alex" so I ended up setting up a business with a business partner and cause I thought "Maybe if I do something that is an interest not around you, you would see me as just you know". We were really good friends me and Alex were good friends I mean we've always have been but that's all we were that's all it felt to me that we were so I thought "Maybe he'd see me more as a wife and as a partner if we don't do everything together" which didn't work it just kind of dealt with what was there unconsciously for me...(touching a screen) I don't mind somebody's on the phone

SIYANDA: You can take it

DINA: No it's okay I don't need to be answering that [edited out]

We then talk about her fancy phone that is connected to her car that I had never seen before

DINA: So yeah but Alex is very easy going I had gone from Chris who needed to know everything I am doing very intense very passionate relationship we were either making love or fighting there was no middle ground it was all very intense so Alex who is as cool as a cucumber nothing matters I can go anywhere I want I could say to Alex "You know what I've figured out that I'm a lesbian and I'm gonna go and leave in New Zealand for 6 years" and he'd probably just say "Send me a postcard"

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: He's just like so laid back he's horizontal it's frightening and at first that was great cause it was so opposite to what I'd known where try and control me he just let me do whatever I wanna do and that controlled me because he gave me so much leeway but then it changed from being just laid back to cold I just thought "There's nothing about you that I can love cause you're not giving me anything". If Alex saw me sat there crying he would say anything to me he'd wait for me to tell him what I was crying about THAT, that detached emotionally. First I say "Okay right, now I've gotten over all my past hurts this is Siyanda't enough for me" I am like "I need more from you I need there to be an emotional input you going out to work and being a good man is not enough that's not a relationship that's a flatmate" and then he doesn't do conversations cause I like to talk as you can probably gather

SIYANDA: screams with laughter

DINA: But he doesn't and so he, he would listen but there'll be no response that you know anything just okay and if I ask him something he felt he used to come across like "You mean you want me to talk about my opinion?" That's his you don't nobody needs that so I thought "This is all very one sided and that there's nothing here for me and I concluded after speaking to people like my gran who would say "After 50 odd years of marriage even if you do through 5 or 10 years and relative to 50 years it's nothing really" so I thought "fair enough it makes sense and or in everybody's relationship there's always something to work on like he doesn't beat you he doesn't this there's no women that come around to the house this and that whatever he's a good man so put up and shut up" so fair enough so I said "Okay nobody get everything behind the one door otherwise nobody would have a life outside of their relationship" so I got my levels of conversation my comfort in, in friends in other people and that's all well and good so long as one of those people is Siyanda't a guy then it's not good anymore. My business partner became closer to me and understood more and reflected that he understood more about me than my own husband (brief pause) which annoyed me but at least I had him there to talk to and we became too close and then I kinda figured "well I've got sistec (?) ovaries which means I don't always ovulate and I was always told it would be very difficult for me to have a child" and for about 8 years I wasn't on the pill I wasn't on anything I never got pregnant so I thought "okay this is a problem" we'd gone to an IVF clinic who'd said "Look you don't need IVF but you do need Clarmed which is a fertility drug" and I thought "Okay" I think I was 32, 33 but right your fertility all the chances of everything drop by 35 they've all told me "It's like look whatever could have happened if you 35 it's not gonna happen with the same likelihood" so I thought "Right I've put in over 10 years where I am I'm married he haSiyanda't got any children I haven't got any children" and I kinda sold out to a whole dream I just thought "I have to do what I am doing here cause this is where I'm at" and so we put aside 10 grand for IVF just in case I needed it and we'd gone to the drug clin we'd gone to the fertility clinic in the January by the February I was pregnant which was like (opens her mouth wide)

SIYANDA: Wow

DINA: I did, I did 5 tests FIVE so I wouldn't believe "No way I am having a baby OH MY GOD". So then it was like then I'd resigned myself even more to the fact that I'm never gonna leave because I never wanted my child to be part of a broken home especially because all I have is half sisters and my dad was never a major part in my life and I DIDN'T I didn't want to be a stereotypically black baby mother so for me to go out that's why it was important to be married it was important for me to have a

home and do the right socially right thing but my heart wasn't there, my heart wasn't there so I was just living an identity that wasn't backed up with who I am and (brief pause) after the shock after the business which went horribly, horribly wrong, horribly wrong

SIYANDA: What was the business?

DINA: I had a children's clothes shop not because I was ever interested in children's wear but because my own self-esteem over the years was quite pathetic really so I'd identified myself in support of others why I went into property investment because my husband is a builder he wanted to do that and looking at it I DID IT however it was his brain child. When I was with Chris, Chris was into music I knew everything about music did the music programmes you name it because the person I was with was into music when I was with Micheal I sold drugs because the person I was with was selling drugs so I'd never formed my own sense of self I was always defined as the helper of whoever it is I'm seeing and so the shop it was my business partner and his friend had come to me over the phone and says "Oh yeah we've got this idea we're gonna do this we're gonna do that" and now that I value myself "Actually I do have quite a good business mind" so he used to say things to me this is my business partner and I'd add to his ideas and add to how he thought things thought of things so him and his friend came round to the house years ago and says "Look you've had a lot of the ideas that we're following through come from you so how would you like to become a business partner on this?" well I said "If I'm gonna do it don't ask me to just go and get some clothes from a wholesaler and sell them I want to do it properly". So we went over to Italy I am talking about Versace, Christian le Qua, Truesady, PROPER brand clothes ordered straight from source made for us to order and we had a shop that registered the whole split

SIYANDA: Wow

DINA: Cause if I'm gonna do it I'm gonna do it I'm not gonna just on the streets do it cause I said "I've got a good job I don't need to do this and if I'm gonna do it, it has to replace what I am currently doing. So we did we set it up and I knew what my financial investment had to be and I knew what everybody's else had to be and when push-came-to-shav only my money came through and that was from 2 months before we'd opened the shop and then it just never catch up and then money that was promised from other people to go in never came and then it was all on me and then I just thought Look this iSiyanda't working and I'm not gonna sink good money after bad injury. So we gave that up and I just got very disillusioned I had 3 years out of salaried employment from a company as such. I left the shop pregnant and so we'd always said between me and Alex that I would spend the first year and half at home year and a half to two years at home with the child cause I just don't want to have a child to let anybody else raise it this is I think that's the most crucial time in a child's life I think that childhood is a crucial time and I want it to be with me being able to give the best I can. So I stayed at home and the dynamics of how things were just changed for me I had to hit my own sense of reality because I can't hide anymore I'm not hiding behind a project I am at home I'm not doing anything just to keep me busy anymore and I have to look at life for what it really is and it's the first time that I had to just stay still and be real with myself and a lot changed for me in that time a lot changed and even the way I saw Alex see me because did you have see Hong Kong Fu did you ever have that?

SIYANDA: No

DINA: Right you know how you get some cartoons or Inspector Gadget, you know Inspector Gadget?

SIYANDA: (laughs) No

DINA: No, okay some cartoons right you'd have like the person who's out there in the front and then you've got the person in the background who's really doing the work that was like Hong Kong Fu. Hong Kong Fu is this like karate kind of investigator who used to go out thinking it was that's doing all the work and it was really the cat. That's me and Alex and I allowed him to be in front and represent what I was really doing and somewhere along the line either he's in denial about certain things or to respect himself he couldn't give me the credit for where we were at so then he was the one working now he was the one earning consistent money I was always the one before and if ever he was on a job and he didn't like it he could come home early and leave it because he knows there's a consistent wage coming in I got our mortgages I found our houses I did everything but he was the one who was now working so now he's in support of me and I have never been looked after like that and he made me subliminally know it if there was ever a toy he would step on it because I've been home whole day and I thought (brief silence) "After all that we've generated together (lowers the pitch of her voice) how dare you treat me like that in fact how dare you see me like that all I ask you in return is a bit of emotional support and you can't give it me". When it was our wedding his mom is to blame for how he is his mom she's narcissistic she's, she's just all about herself she has her own hurts her own pains and she was there for her children not emotionally not in any particular way so he's grown up very hurt and so very withdrawn and he's never really dealt with that because he's a nice guy and everybody says "he's such a nice guy" he doesn't have close relationships he doesn't let people in but he never let me in either and then after a while I can't you can't keep knocking at the door and nobody answers it so I kinda just got real with myself and I thought "I'm not in love with you I can't be in love with you because of what you are not able to give" and I remember saying to him I said "you know what I am falling away from you I can't see me being with you anymore in 5 years time I don't see me being with you". Your wife shouldn't be telling you that maybe you should listen but instead he was like quite arrogantly really "well I love you enough to let you go. I am exactly how I've always been and if you don't like that then you have to go and find whatever makes you happy". And I thought "You shouldn't even be proud to be the same person you were 10, 15 years ago why would you want to be? You are supposed to grow that's what we are here in life to do so I thought "Well I'm not the same furthermore and I can't tolerate what I used to". And the absolute icing on the cake for me came after years of trying to talk trying to get closer to him and him not paying any attention so I'd just get on with it. The icing on the cake came for me when he said to me No I said to him "What do you value in a relationship cause to me your relationship is about the intimacy that you share which is about being able to talk being able to feel understood and understand your partner blah blah blah" and he said to me he thinks I'm quite shallow if I would be prepared to leave our relationship because we're not close when we have so much together and what he saw as being not shallow is the fact that we have 3 houses we have a son we go on holiday 2, 3 times a year to really nice places and he worked hard so what else is there to want? I thought "I would trade all of that to have somebody I'm close to that all of this if I was driving this that or, or I'm still getting where I'm going so this iSiyanda't what's all about" and I thought "you know what if I had to

die tomorrow I know people who have been on a death bed and I've had the privilege of speaking to them the things you have aren't what's important it's what you do with your life and who you have in your life that's important in the end and so for you to think I'm shallow for valuing the things that I value you obviously don't so I can't even make it an ambition I can't even say well it's something you really want to do if you don't know how to do. You don't have a value of the thing that I value I've got to go and that realization kinda came to me over last summer and I already knew for years I wasn't in a happy relationship I was just in a materially and financially progressive one which was comfortable there was no level of conflict but there was no real depth to it and my same business partner it was just before, before I started Uni cause it was our wedding anniversary in the September and I was applying I was looking for flats to move into in the July cause I thought "I can't stay anymore I can't I don't want to it's still an affect who I am and who I want to be as a person" and I thought "A lot of things have to change for me now my I have to develop my own self of self I have to figure out how Diane is and what I wanna be when I grow up rather than what I am in relation to who I'm with. So I signed to do Psychology with Personal and Professional Development cause I was actually quite interested in training consultancy and Equality and Diversity and I thought that would be a good course for me and weeks before I was due to start I got a phone call from a Dr Raman in the Stratford

SIYANDA: in Tesco (she had told me this particular story in our per-interview meeting the week prior to the interview)

DINA: Yeah, yeah and that's when he changed it all and I thought "Oh my God everything is crushing down on me AGAIN and my first experience of studying at university level was already bad and it just felt like it's gonna be bad again this is all crushing down it felt terrible and then I'd gone on my anniversary we'd gone to Malta for a week

SIYANDA: Where's Malta?

DINA: Malta is one of the Islands just not too far it's only about 3 hour flight so we'd gone there for our anniversary and it was the first time we'd been away together since Miles and I'd said to my mom "Mom I can't stay with Alex" and she said "Look it your anniversary" it was his 40th birthday in October and he goes she says "Look just see how you feel when you go away Miles is gonna be starting nursery you're gonna be starting Uni which means you'd be doing something for you. Miles would be off your hands so you won't just be your identity won't just be mom and wife anymore and you might feel differently" and I thought "I'm telling you this ain't gonna work but I will try why not". So we went to Malta and just like with a lot of other holidays the destination beautiful I could have gone there with anybody and equally enjoyed it so it wasn't about me and him so I came back and said to my mom "No I've got to go". And then when my mom was still in London because she was looking after Miles for me and she was going back to Manchester on the Monday and I was starting Uni to register and stuff on the Tuesday and one of my uncles who'd had Alzheimer for a number of years the same one who grow up in the house with us who had the biggest room he'd taken the turn for the worse in the nursing home so he was in hospital and it wasn't looking up to the point where the family had rang us to specifically tell us that so if it was something lightweight they wouldn't have bothered so my mom get really concerned cause she'd been his principal carer cause she was she used to be a nurse and rather than go straight home she went straight to the hospital cause she just

knew internally look it's not right and when I'd rang my mom she was crying and she says "Look Uncle's if he makes it to the end of the week it would be a good thing" and I'm about to start Uni and Miles is about to start nursery everything was all happening all at the same time. So I'm sat at my computer I can't even see the screen to register because my eyes are just full of tears and Alex is sat on the couch watching Heroes which used to go on a Monday some TV programme

SIYANDA: Ja I hate that programme

DINA: Ja I never did watch it but he used to really like it so he was watching it and he goes "Don't worry babe at the end of the day your uncle is probably ready to go cause he's been through enough" and stayed ...

SIYANDA: there

DINA: ...on the couch watching me in the height of distress and that was typical, that was typical it hurt me more then because I needed to see a glimmer of hope to see if I can stay but it was typical cause I'd always dealt with anything emotional by myself but I don't want to anymore I just don't want to and you don't even realize I am analyzing what we have for the final time you don't even know this and I should have to tell you for you to make an effort you should just do that cause I'm your wife. So anyway that was it for me there I thought Right I'll get my first grant cheque I'm gonna pay I HAVE TO on principle pay some of this mortgage so I can say I did that and when my second grant cheque comes in January that will be my deposit and first month's rent to move the hell out of here I'm done and I remember sitting there and saying that to myself. Went to college on the Tuesday and we had a cooker on the side of the house that we knew was for one of the tenants' houses so I had to go and clean it and Alex was going to go and install it on the Wednesday so I had gone round the side of the house I was cleaning it up and the same guy who used to be my business partner had called me up and he was gonna do a Creative Writing course which he had to book online and he had a debit card that they did not accept online so he'd asked me if he could put the money in my account and use my details so I thought "Yeah fine". Now I opened the front door I was cooking so I'd just elbow opened the front door and I'd hardly looked at him and he says "Are you alright?" walked into the kitchen and just from me doing that he said to me "Di what's wrong?" and I go "Nothing, nothing, nothing" and he goes "If you say to me that you don't wanna tell me I will respect that but don't tell nothing is wrong cause I know you". And I just burst into tears and I thought "Look at that you're my friend and you know me and you know what I need and you know what things mean and my own husband that I have invested 14 and a half years in doesn't. that's a major problem to me and I can speak to people who can look at all the peripheral things that we have and think "Alex's a great guy Di you have a great relationship I drive around in a 4x4 and he works brings home this money iSiyanda't he fantastic? And everywhere I go he's next to me he's not with me he's next to me so he looks like he's fantastic but there's nothing behind it. And as I say on the same Monday I'd decided categorically to stick to the guns that I'd originally had in the June July where I'm gonna leave. He was telling me things he kinds lived a simultaneous life cause he'd been in a relationship for I think 16 years where it wasn't right and they were staying because they'd a really house in a really nice area and they've got a child and you have all of these socially kinda acceptable norms to trap you but your heart not you just not there and you think this is it's actually soul destroying to live a lie to live an impression rather than the truth and I thought "I would lose everything I have tomorrow to be happy"

and that's why I listen to the people on the course and stuff and I think "The things you value you can value cause you've never had it to realize how little it is. But nonetheless ja I can't knock having had the things that I've had I've been to some really nice places in the world but I'd have sooner had things that I don't instead if I had a choice or both preferably. So anyway we are into the living room and I ended up I ended up sleeping with my own ex business partner a close friend of mine and afterwards I said to him "You've got to go you've got to go and you have to get out of here NOW" cause I thought "Wow". Fine yes I know in head I wanted to go but I didn't wanna have to do that so I remember phoning my mom and my mom was like "Hold on, shit". I tell my mom everything 8 o'clock every morning I speak to my mom she wasn't there so I thought I need to tell somebody I need to do something what am I gonna do Oh my God Alex is gonna come home in a few hours how am I gonna even look at him in the face? What am I gonna say? What's gonna happen? And I ended up phoning my auntie who says to me she was like "Oh my God"

SIYANDA: The same auntie?

DINA: The same auntie yeah yeah

BOTH: laugh

DINA: Cause my people I'm tight with yeah!

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: I'm tight with my people and she said "Diane you were gonna leave Alex anyway" cause everybody knew "DON'T whatever you do tell me because it will destroy him there's no if you were going to leave anyway there is no value to you telling him if you're gonna stay and those things you need to work on are fine there's no point of you living a lie. But if you gonna leave what, what value is there gonna be to letting him know" and I said "Yeah but how am I gonna look at him in the face?" And anyway she was at work so she said "I will call you back in 10 minutes". So I need to speak to someone else I rang my dad ...

BOTH: laugh

DINA: ...who now I do speak to and that's another whole new story of how I started speaking to him again but I spoke to him and he goes "Don't, don't tell Alex" that's the first thing everybody said "Don't tell Alex". Sandy rings back my auntie rings back I'm on the phone to her call waiting comes on and it's the same guy I sent slept with and he said "It's on top" and I said "What do you mean it's on top? And he goes "She knows" "Who knows?" "My girlfriend knows" "HOW? There was you and me in my house what do you mean she knows? How could she POSSIBLY freaking know (raising her voice) there was only me and you there". He had phoned her on his mobile and I think he hadn't put it down properly or when he put it down it dialled her or something. "My girl heard everything start to the very last minute". EVERYTHING (whispers) everything. Furthermore she's dropping her son off at her sister's house cause she coming round to see me. So I go back to my auntie who's on the other end of the call waiting and I just said "It's no longer optional as to whether I tell Alex or not now I have to cause if I don't she's going to" "Who's she?" and I'm telling her what happened and she's like "But yeah they weren't there, there's no need to confess you don't need to confess all they know it would have been on TV and just don't" and I said "I can't live that kind of level of a lie and I'm gonna leave anyway I need to get this off my own chest if that is selfish what can I say but I can't do this

anymore". So Alex I phoned him up and I said "When you come home I have something VERY, VERY serious to tell you" cause I thought my girl is gonna come knocking in the door anyway and he doesn't like her and she's always been quite jealous of me and in all fairness to her now I've discovered the same guy has proclaimed undying love for me and he's always loved me but he never wanted to disrespect my relationship and na-na-na and I can't and I go "ohh shit do I need this". This is all in September I had only just started Uni my uncle died the same week and do every part of all my life just came CRUSHING DOWN and I thought "Come what may this course has to see me through I HAVE TO stay focused on this cause it's taken all the courage I have to come back to this point and I can't let my own personal situations get in the way I just can't. So Alex came home we'd just finished bathing Miles and I told him and as I'm telling him the door bell is ringing and my girl is at the door but I know she has gone to drop her son away my son who's 2 is in the house you're not gonna come in here by my invite by me opening the door for you to start carrying on with yourself when my son is here if he wasn't maybe it's a different story but I'm not opening the door to you so I didn't. But needless to say Alex's world comes crushing down and I kept saying to him "But I was going to leave you anyway" and he couldn't hear that as far as he was concerned I have destroyed our family I've just destroyed it all yes we had our problems as he then trivialised them but so does everybody and I have destroyed our relationship and how could I do this to our son? Was I not thinking about him? And da-da-da-da-da and the thing is I have been left in a position of trust with my same business partner ex business partner I've known him for a long time we've away together on work on business conferences I'm godmother to his child he's godfather to my son he'd been left in the house and Alex feels like I've just been taking a piss for years he's out at work and I'm in the house with, so I totally see where Alex is coming from but I thought "It did go like that and the reason it was him it's because it's not like its something I went out looking for. I was in a situation as far as I was concerned from early in a week in fact from earlier in the year in fact from years ago I'd left you it's just that I didn't have the Dutch courage to then say to him "Look I don't wanna be with you anymore and I've got no elsewhere to go. So sooner what I was doing is waiting until January came when I've got my money and so least even if I haven't found somewhere yeah at least I have the means to go otherwise I'm just gonna create a very stale atmosphere and I can't even and we would have to stay in the same environment. But when I wasn't brave enough to actually call that upon myself by myself but yeah then shit hit the fan without a shadow of a doubt. He hit me which not because he's a woman beater but because he was SO hurt he went and he went and beat up the guy up I mean beat him up to the point where he'd to have an operation on the back of his eye because he broke the bone behind his eye it was all very, very VERY disgusting it was a horrible time. But I felt liberated cause I took my wedding rings off and I thought "I'm free of this for whatever else that has to happen right now and for however bad it's the comfort is I'm no longer having to live a lie I don't have to be your wife I don't have to present a certain way I don't have to be anything that has been predefined anymore so whatever the hardship I actually feel really good" and that's the genuine truth of the matter. And then I start doing my assignments I am on track for the first in my first semester I got to do an essay where I'm getting 75% and I think "What I'm actually doing something that I enjoy and this is me it's not me in support of anybody else THIS IS ALL ME in the face of adversity it's still me I've buried my uncle that raised me and I'm still here and I'm more empowered now than I have been in years but all the things that were built on a lie have to go and even though yes I'm in a house with

somebody that I'm split from I still feel okay because we sat and we had a talk and various other bits and he phoned everybody he could find a phone number for to tell them what I had done what kind of a cheating nasty bitch I am cause he got hurt and he got resentful he got spiteful and he did whatever he had to do he even phoned my gran who's just lost her brother who's 80 years old to tell what I've done and I thought "There's no need for that even for your hurt there's no need for that however it was done so fine it saves me a story of having to tell people cause you have already told everyone". The saving grace was after I'd been to the funeral was it the funeral? Or was it when I first went up after he died? I don't remember which I'd left Miles with him because his mom was supposed to look after him cause I didn't want him to go up to Manchester when everyone is gonna be really tearful I didn't want him to stay with Alex cause he's just had his whole life thrown in his face and so his mom was supposed to have him and he kept him to himself to cheer him up and I thought "You don't take a two year old to cheer you up". So Miles got really frightful and when I came back from Manchester it took ages to set him to sleep and I got ANGRY I got so angry marched into the conservatory and I just said to him "Look you have an issue with me you have an issue with me but I have not been happy for years and my son is one of the happiest children that I know and I've held it down FIX UP if you don't like speaking to me if the minute you put him to bed you don't speak to me again I don't CARE but in front of him he ain't going out with problems because of big people's politics full stop. So instead then he then arranged for an estate agent to come around cause he's got all drastic now (adopts a mocking voice) he wants to seel the house he's got nothing to do with me and he habitually anyway whenever we fell out there'll be no talking he would emotionally just cut me off so he would he just wouldn't speak to me and that's what he did he started not to speak to me now he's communicating via notice board "An estate agent due to call round at this and that time". So I just said "all of this childish shit has got to stop" and I was angrier that (starts to shout) THIS, THIS FOR A START YOU CAN'T SELL WITHOUT ME NA-NA-NA-NA. So I don't care how you feel I am not asking you to be interested in how I feel anymore we've got things business to now deal with". So the first time in all the years I've known him he then says to me "I feel really this and I feel really that" and Alex is talking to from an emotional stand point for the first time ever and I sat there and I thought "Who are you? Are you the same person that I knew?" And the started crying and then I started crying and then it was all just overwhelming and what happened is certain people that certain even mutual friends that knew that I was about to move out over the summer had let him know "well actually Alex she was gonna leave you, you had already lost her she did what she did because you had already lost her" and I think the realization of that had hit home so he had to drop his ego now it's not the case of some man's been into my house and slept with my wife actually you had your wife in your hands and you let her go and this is what's happened so you've to now check yourself and that really smacked him in the face and he started talking from an emotional stand point and the point of understanding for the first time ever and I remember phoning one of our mutual friends Sandra and saying "Look he is being now what I wanted him to be all the years I've been with him all the years "just tell me something about you from the heart listen to me from the heart" for the first time look what it's taken. However I'm not in love with him I'm not and in fact whatever love I did have for him I don't have anymore so it's of little use to me now. But for first it blindsided me I say for a couple of weeks I thought "I owe it to myself I owe it to Miles and the sense of continuation of what we started to at least see if how he's being now is something that I can grow to love or something that, that make a

difference because that was essentially all that was missing. But the reality of it is maybe I needed to have given it maybe I needed to give it 2 years or something I thought “No you’ve had all of my 20’s you’ve had half of my 30’s I’m done your expiry date has come so I’m hoping all I can hope is that for your next relationship don’t leave your emotional self behind because that is your relationship all these, trimmings, your heart is your relationship so for next time make that you figure that out. So I kinda went to Manchester for Christmas I had gone from maybe seeing how it goes but I said even still we still have to move out because I need space I need to still finish finding out who Diane is in Diane’s own right because now you’re being how you are don’t wanna slip into this subservient wife role again because now you’re being all these things that you’re being and in order for us to leave separately because we’re married we have to legally separate otherwise my finances would still be tied to his and in which case I can’t afford to live alone. So that and that what mindset I had towards leaving him before Christmas and I remember driving up to Manchester over Christmas saying you know “I’ve got to go”. I am glad he’s now got to a point of realisation because hopefully as parents we still have to have a relationship cause we are both parents so hopefully we have a different understanding but its not an understanding that’s gonna make me be wanna be with him because in all honesty if I’m being honest with myself I don’t think I was ever I have love for him but I don’t think I was ever in love and by me staying his wife I am committing myself to never being in love with anyone and that’s, that’s too much of a life trade off I am not (chuckles) willing to do that. So I went to Manchester with that mindset and I’m a spiritualist did I tell you I was...

SIYANDA: (she had told me in the pre-interview) You told me you were a medium

DINA: I can read yeah and that all came to me when I stopped working when I started to evaluate myself and stuff and one of my spiritual counsellors had told me then she goes “Oh you gonna get divorced you gonna this you gonna that” I said “No” cause at the time I was like “Yeah right” and you can’t and then also from a planetary point of view said that you know “Saturn and Mars Saturn and Uranus are gonna touch down in September you’re going to have a major turning point in September” and I thought, I thought “well maybe it’s cause I went up to Malta and I came back and I dint I definitely don’t wanna be here I thought that’s what the major turning point was I didn’t think it would be I’ve had an affair my WHOLE world is gonna crush down along with my uncle dying I didn’t think it would go like that but anything she’d said to me spot on but I didn’t pay any attention at the time. I’d gone out over Christmas in Manchester for the first time in all the years that I’d known Alex (brief pause) without him cause every Christmas we went home we went back to Manchester with each other and this was the first time I have gone cause now separate we are living separate lives and I’d gone to this it wasn’t New Years it was the 30th of January and I was coming back here for New Years and I’d gone out and I was milling around cause I’d seen people cause I never used to go out in Manchester after my gran I didn’t really when I go to Manchester I go to my grandparents’ house sit there and I’d go home. First time I’ve gone out so there’s people I haven’t seen since school days and I’m going around I’m talking and you name it and then I remember this guy Darren who I vaguely remember as being same Tracy the same Tracy I who went dancing school with me when I was younger

SIYANDA: Yeah

DINA: The one I told you that was more like in a white lifestyle who is now married with three children to a white GUY which I could have just predicated and her half brother I met him and I remember him saying to me “Oh can I buy you a drink” and I said “I don’t know no it’s alright” cause there’s so much water you can drink in any one night

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: And he goes “Treat yourself I’ll get you a fruit juice” and if I’m gonna have fruit juice I have orange and pineapple juice I hadn’t told him what I wanted he bought me an orange and pineapple juice and I was like “That’s my drink” and he goes “Yeah I thought it might be” which was quite bizarre and then his friends were all staring at me he goes “Look right” he goes “How’s married life and you didn’t even invite me to your wedding” and I it just came to me to say cause this was my sense of liberation “Actually by this time next year I’ll probably won’t be married” and went “What?” and I said yeah because you know we gonna split and this and that it’s alright it’s okay cause I feel really good about it cause I did I genuinely felt I have carried the weight of how am I gonna leave a good man now it’s gone so I don’t have to carry that anymore and I’m able to tell people and I’m happy I’ve gone out and I’m finding me again and it’s great in fact I hadn’t found cause I was either under Micheal or I was under Chris so this is who Diane is. Anyway I took his number he took mine and he sent me a text over Christmas I sent him one and we’ve been on the phone from sometimes 10 o’clock in the evenings till 5 o’clock in the morning and I’ve told him so much about him cause I can read him I can just read him straight read him and I thought “How liberating is it to even able to speak to other people” and I can now cause Alex and I are in separate rooms so whatever I do now it’s okay by me but I went to and speak cause I went back to my circle I spoke to my spiritual counsellor again and she says “You have met him haven’t you?” I say “What’d you mean? Met, met who? She goes “Your soul mate the guy I told you about” and I just said “What do you mean? And she goes “His name is either David Darren or Daniel and you have met him”. His guy’s name is Darren and she told me I would meet him before the year’s out but it never clicked cause I thought (a brief pause) and it was the 30th of January that I met and I thought “Oh my goodness”

SIYANDA: Scary stuff

DINA: Oh my goodness. Darren then says to me cause I told me just to freak him out just like you do and he said “I remember seeing you with my sister coming out from dancing school on a Saturday morning and I was 14 and I was riding my bike with a friend” and I don’t remember any of this and he said “when I ‘m older that who I’m gonna marry” and I thought “Ahh very sweet” whatever and apparently I lent him my watch before an exam when we were out during private college I have no recollection of this and he still has the watch. And I had gone to see him the last time I was in Manchester cause he literally LIVES behind my gran’s church literally and from my modelling days he had a picture of me that had somebody must have bought online or whatever and out it on a flier and the flier was from 1997 he still had it and he goes “I’ve I fell in love with you the minute I saw you and I’ve never stopped loving you but I just thought it didn’t seem logical. Okay now I am freaking out and then I just I said “Listen don’t call me for a few days I need to just think cause I just this is all freaking me out a bit”. There’s so much that is synchronized about life I go dancing school with the girl I go dancing school I meet her brother and, and, and everything kind of interrelate in some major way that especially that you don’t know too much

about your life in advance. So I can't even be sad right now and I said I said to my mom who as I said I say everything to "Right now Darren is making me happy and I don't know what or care if I end up with him all I know is it's making sure that I don't slip back into a comfort zone with Alex" and if that's all is there to do for me then its working and I'm happy and he's in Manchester so he can't cause me any harm I'm still getting on with my studies and I'm still doing what I have to do so now my great debate is do I do a 2 years legal separation and do things slowly, slowly or do I just claim adultery if though I can prove that's not the reason that I'm getting divorced because I can prove that I went to go and look for flats independently of September and this way in June but if I go out on the guns of adultery then before this year is out we're done and then I make again sooner rather than legally separated but still married and all of that for 2 years so right now life is extraordinarily transitional without a doubt so it's good. But my dad, my dad wasn't in my life this is a separate story but kinda runs alongside. Didn't really know him much but I look like him cause my mom looks very, very Indian sort of colour with sort of coolie hair if coolie is the wrong word to use whatever other word so I look nothing like my mom and my mom's family but my dad's very dark and I look a lot like him and as I grew up to look more like him people would say "Your Bobbie's daughter iSiyanda't" and I would be like "So I keep getting told whatever". And then he came to my mother's house when she was on the estate and I had to meet him there within one Sunday and I think I must have been about 9 and he explained to me what happened and my gran used to run him and made sure he never used to come around and stuff my mom chosen to honour my gran rather than take a risk on life and he said he would like the opportunity to be my dad and I had a sister and my sister is only however she was at the time and I thought "well my mom couldn't have any more children anyway and she wasn't with anyone and so I would be quite nice to be a big sister it would be quite cool" so I met her after I decided to let my dad in if letting him in is the right thing and he messed it up he just messed it up

SIYANDA: He did?

DINA: Yeah

SIYANDA: How?

DINA: He just cause he didn't know how to be a dad and he especially didn't know how to be a dad to somebody who wasn't a baby that he knew how to raise cause I'm already walking talking opinionated and I've always been very opinionated and I've always been quite deep and he didn't know how to relate to me and so the very first Sunday he picked me up and I'm thinking "Okay I'm gonna spend time just getting to know my dad" all he did was drop me to his mom's house so he could get off with one of his girlfriends and even to this day

SIYANDA: He did that I though he was married

DINA: Yeah but he's only married he's been married in the last (brief pause) well I'd say 15 about 18 years however I'm going back to when I was young. However married or not he still has girlfriends and you know what when he does screw up he never screws up with anybody white INTERESTINGLY they're always black which is a whole thing in its own right

BOTH: laugh

DINA: Yeah so he would take me out and he was with my sister's mom at the time so what he would do is he would say that you know he going to meet his older daughter and whatever drop me off at my gran's who's obviously not gonna say anything to gossip her own son and he would go out with whoever he's going out with so I just landed in this household of other people who I don't know and I used to hate it cause I used to think "I don't know anybody here and they're all treating me like I should know them" and I've got a whole family of people I do know I rather spend my Sunday with them. And then I met my sister and her mom was always there she in the end her yeah my sister's mom was always there because she knew the key to my dad was through his mom cause him and his mom were tight and you know why cause somebody haSiyanda't cut the umbilical cord yet my dad never did while my gran was alive bless her. And I used to tell me I remember one time I cursed him I said "You treat me like I'm your girlfriend" he would arrange to meet me and let me down and stuff like that and apparently well me and my sister fell out because it wasn't me with the issue of meeting my sister it was my sister who had the issue of meeting me because she was my dad's only child for long as I'm not in his life and all of the sudden you've got this bog sister and he's got now making time for her she was actually quite jealous of me whereas my dad's family thought I was jealous of her because they have had she's Michelle's had dad to herself all this and I'm jealous and I thought "Well my family, MY FAMILY as I see them there's nothing I want for so I've got nothing to be jealous of" but they didn't see that and Michelle her mom tried to make her complete with me. So I used to play the trombone not because I like playing it but because I hated I HATED I think whatever lesson it was in primary school and trombone lessons band practice was in that lesson

SIYANDA: Yeah (laughs)

DINA: So I wanted to play the coronet and they was none available so it was either I wait for or I play the available instrument which was the trombone and it worked out

SIYANDA: What's that....?

DINA: (demonstrates the instrument) One of those

SIYANDA: OH okay

DINA: And I was stick thin tall and skinny (chuckles) and then playing this bloody big trombone and I played it and it worked out I was really good at it so I wasn't allowed to give it up she was then made to play the trombone I was at the dancing school she was sent to the same dancing school I did drama she was made to do drama I went modelling her mom paid silly money to have these so-called professional pictures done. So her mom tried to make her complete with me and she wasn't good at being me maybe she could've been better at piano and I can't do the piano my hands end up doing the same things. But she was made to be me so she started to resent me for having to try and be me so we never got on and in school she was even sent to the same school as me. In school she stopped talking to me her and her friends would be like kissing the teeth after me and carrying on with themselves every time I walked passed but then when I go around to my gran's on Sunday she would be like "Oh hi Di" and it's all this nicey, nicey and I can't do hypocrisy and if I'm at my dad's she all nice to me and whatever and I remember being at the petrol station by my dad's after we'd after my dad had left us both at my gran's now he's taking us both home and she was talking to me up until my dad got out of the car to put the petrol in and I was in the middle of saying something and she stopped talking

to me so I got pissed off and I said “Look we either talk or we don’t you call it cause I wouldn’t wanna speak if you were the last person on earth and da-da-da-da”. I so at school

SIYANDA: But that’s your family that’s your....

DINA: She’s my half sister yeah I know but it’s by dad iSiyanda’t it’s by dad and my dad hadn’t done enough work to keep his children or there was two of us at the time to keep us tight and she had to a lot of stories about her mom she was involved in big people’s talk and her mom and my mom didn’t get on cause apparently she started seeing my dad before my mom had stopped seeing her mom politics and in all fairness to Michelle’s mom she’s only 15 years older than me so she wasn’t exactly a grown woman at the anyway so her level of politics iSiyanda’t gonna be mature so Michelle didn’t like because of some of the things she’d heard and because of the jealousy she had towards me and my dad bought me a TV a black and white TV years ago No a colour TV years ago as a first present and her mom made sure that she got bought one and stuff like that it’s pathetic. So the following Sunday when we had gone around to my gran’s she used to stay there overnight every weekend so every time I went around she was already there so she said “Hi Di” so I didn’t answer her so obviously to everybody else it’s me that has an issue with her and for years I kept trying to say to people it’s not like that they didn’t believe me but one of Michelle’s uncle had a christening at my gran’s church cause she used to go to the same church as my dad’s mom and I always used to go to my mom’s mom’s church but on this particular Sunday it was mothering Sunday it was either mothering Sunday or my gran’s birthday so I had chosen to go to her church so I can give her a card. So I go there on the week that Michelle’s family has got a family christening so it’s just me and all of Michelle’s family none of whom like me so it was like “Great”. But a lot of my gran’s church members didn’t know me and I’m her oldest granddaughter so after the service I thought I’d give you the card and let me go she just wanted to sit in the church so I’m sat alongside of the table like this and Michelle is sat on the other side like that and we were not even looking at each other and it was blatantly obvious and my gran felt really uncomfortable that she trying to introduce her grandchildren and there’s blatantly there’s politics so she says to me “Look you two don’t have to like each other but you’re sisters so you gonna have to learn to live with each other and I can’t have this and shake hands” so I thought “Shake hands with her” so she looking at my hand and I looking at her and I’m thinking “I’m not shaking her hands”

BOTH: laugh

DINA: “And I don’t see why I should” so in the end I could see in my gran was looking to me because I’m older so I thought fair enough, fair enough it’s not gonna cost me money whatever so I stood my hand down Michelle is looking at my hand and she was like this and she was just looking at it and I thought “If you don’t fucking shake my hand I swear I’m gonna hit you” but it’s church I can’t so she just about started to move her hand and HER MOM sopped down like bloody superwoman moved Michelle’s hand away and said “We don’t need people like that COMMON”. And it was then that my gran could see all of the things that I’ve been trying to explain to you it’s not me with the problem it’s Jennifer it’s Michelle’s mom who has the problem who’s created the problem between me and her more for her I did 11 GSCSC’s I was 2 years ahead of Michelle in school there is no exam she could have done that I couldn’t have helped her with there’s nothing that she has done that I couldn’t have helped with but you’ve turn us against each other so we can’t be in support of each other how does that work? But then they were all apologetic to me

and I thought by then I'm old enough to do what I'm doing I drive I don't have to come to your house anymore and my attitude was sod all of you cause all of these years you've made me feel like shit and it's wasn't me and nobody chose to listen to me so I don't need any of you. And I don't know what I had done to upset my dad but he'd chosen not to speak to me ...

SIYANDA: After that?

DINA: Ahhh it was after that but I can't remember what happened but we didn't speak for a long time I'd done something to offend him or upset him and rather than come down on me like you should do with your own child and say "Don't do that you shouldn't do this blah blah blah" he just cut me off and I'd had I was there when the first of his wife's children were born even though we weren't particularly close but I was there and I heard through the great vine that I've now got another sister Nisha and it was one of my auntie my dad's sister who had come down to stay with me and Alex she'd come down to go to the Lurayn Hill concert years ago and she was staying at my house and says "Are you coming back for Nisha's christening?" I say "Who's Nisha?" She goes "What do you mean who's Nisha? Your sister". And my dad had been going around telling people "Ahhwu Diane has got no time for anyone. She in Paris on a modelling she's here she's there". He has no idea if I'm dead or alive and he's making up stories to justify why I'm not there at family occasions and it's coming back to me via the same auntie the kinda of excuses that he would give and when I'd gone when me and Alex'd gone aboard and we got engaged and I'd come back and my gran on my mom's side had said to me "Look you have to you're your other gran and you have to tell at least your other gran if not your dad as well because it would be horrible for them to hear through the great vine that their oldest granddaughter is engaged and we don't even know" so reluctantly I ring her and I didn't like ringing my gran because she always used to push me to try speak to my dad and I would be like "Look we don't talk anymore it's as simple as that" because my definition of a father means they don't cut off they tell you off but they don't cut you off cause I'm not his girlfriend. Anyway she says hold on a minute and he comes she puts him on the phone so lost it so he goes "hello" and I say "Do you know who it is?" "Of course I know who it is' I lost it I LOST IT. I just the rage that came from me (shouting) "Don't f-ing tell me you know who it is you haven't spoke to me since whatever year RI-RI-RI" and I lost it Alex had to get me I was in the living room and he had to put his hands on my shoulders and sit me down physically forcefully sit me down because I lost it and I said "You have treated me like I'm your girlfriend like I'm somebody that if you get pissed off you can leave that's not what a dad does. How dare you enter my world you asked permission to come into my life right you explained to me what my gran had done to you for why you weren't there and you have chosen to be in my life and then you gonna just dispose of me. Why did you even why did you try and do that? Because at the end of the day 200% of love from my gran and gran's family only equals half of me because the other half of me is you it's as simple as that and you cut me you dare to cut me off and that really affected my self-concept my self-esteem and my role in a relationship so I'd always defined myself as my purpose to somebody I have to be able to do something useful for somebody or otherwise why would they want me around?" And that was all from him and I remember saying to him "I've actually gone to see a counsellor because of you". He said nothing and in a few years later my gran I got a phone call from dad and it happened to be on my birthday, it happened to be on my birthday. No. No anyway in which ever way I got a phone call from my dad and it was the first time I've heard

from him in years and he goes “You better phone your gran” and that’s all he said so I thought “Charming”. So I phone my gran and my aunt the same auntie that had come down for Lyrann Hill concert said “Oh I’ll just go and get your grandpa” nobody was saying hello there was no dignitaries so I was driving and gran had said to me “are you sitting down?” I said “yeah but I’m in the car” well she goes “pull over” so I pulled over and she says “I’ve got cancer and they’ve told I’ve got X amount of time to live” so I was like “Wowu”. And then all the perspectives I had on things changed like whatever reason I have for not speaking to her not speaking to my dad just didn’t seem important anymore. So I’d gone up to Manchester I’d gone to see her and this that and the other and then one of my aunties had put forward her wedding cause we didn’t know how long my gran was gonna last and stuff and then it worked out she responded really well to treatment but I know the cancer had metastasized to her lungs so logic is saying to me especially after having done Physiotherapy and Biology kinda space subjects all my life if you have metastasized into your lungs you ain’t getting rid of that you might last a while with treatment but you don’t you don’t you into remission after you have metastasized to your lungs and your liver but she told people she hadn’t she had gone a bit longer now it’s my turn to get married and set a date and my granddad has raised me so the only person that it would occur to me to give me away is my granddad so my gran is trying to push me to get my dad to give me away . What? He didn’t give me as much give me away so No full stop but they had convinced themselves that it must have been my gran and my granddad that for me to have them do it and I said “No and I will tell you straight if you didn’t get cancer you wouldn’t even be invited” and that was the truth. I told her because it was true and I can I can get very blatant when I’m ready “You wouldn’t be invited it’s just that your sickness changed my perspective” and my dad wouldn’t have been invited because I’d planned the wedding and I’d started to plan the wedding before you got sick and he was not on my invite list and that is not because of my mom or my gran cause they told me I should and I said to myself “I don’t want anybody there for face value. You have to have meant something in my life otherwise forget it

SIYANDA: What was the cause of the conflict with your family on your dad’s side?

DINA: The reason is well is because my gran on my mom’s side pushed my dad away yes so they had long standing issues and then Henry as my surname my original surname is actually my mom’s median name and not my dad’s so I wasn’t given his name they weren’t invited to my christening so a long history of politics which they kinds stifled when we all got back together but it was never resolved so it was very it was always going to be very fragile but you know he got invited to the wedding he got an ordinary invite he didn’t give me away and I sat him at an ordinary table in fact the people that grew up closer to me the tables were set out the table placements were set up according to people’s value in my life not according to who they were because of what things look like the fact that my dad had sent years telling people “Oh she’s off here” justified my absence I didn’t ask him to do that. It’s not my fault so I don’t really care and I’m not gonna put my granddad into a backseat on your behalf cause I had said to me “If my granddad can’t give me away” at the time my uncle hadn’t been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s if I wasn’t my granddad it would be my uncle if it wasn’t my uncle it would be my dad my mom’s granddad if it wasn’t them I would get my mom to do it or I would walk alone but under no circumstance was it gonna be you and I don’t it’s either you like that or don’t come and that really hurt him that really, really hurt him and his whole attitude towards me changed after that and he started to try and make an effort and it took me a long time to drop my own resentment towards

him cause I thought “My relationship with you is too fragile if I piss you off you will walk out my life and I can’t make too space for you if you gonna treat me like that”. But he was five daughters all he’s ever wanted is a son my mom told me he cried tears because I wasn’t a boy and all he’s ever what is a son and my sister the same Michelle she has a daughter who’s 8 now and so even in his grandchildren he never got a son and who was the one to bring a son to him? Of course it would ...

SIYANDA: laughs

DINA: ... life would always work out like that (chuckles) karma has it like that and I remember saying to me before my gran got cancer after I’d blasted him on the phone when I got engaged “so the next time you will hear from me is if by God’s grace I have a child because I want my child to have the benefit of knowing where they’re coming from and their own people and if you got it wrong with me that doesn’t mean you’ll get it wrong for my child but I’m not doing it for you I would be doing it for my child and then obviously my gran got sick so you know things changed a little bit but he has been exemplary since I’ve had my son he tries he calls me once a week and if I ever go to Manchester he’ll take Miles for a good few hours or watch me overnight and stuff cause he now has his boy. But I think you know but I can’t go around I see it as my dad’s house with his family and I can go around and I can drop Miles there but I can’t stay that’s not my and I don’t need with him I get on with him and I love him because I’ve always had a vacancy in my heart to love him as my dad but he can’t be anything more than just somebody who I’m related to that is a friend now cause the years I needed a dad he weren’t there and I already had somebody step very successfully into those shoes so but we do have a relationship now and because he’s a lot younger than my granddad and stuff certain things I can actually talk to him about and I don’t leave stones unturned so over the years especially since I’ve had Miles he’ll come and he’ll stay over at my house and then just one more thing and when this happened years ago and da-da-da-da so we’ve dealt with a lot of issues now so that how my dad re-entered (sighs) re-entered my sphere but yeah that is essentially that’s me (laughs)

SIYANDA: Fantastic, fantastic thank you very much. I mean I think we have spoken a little, a lot about your reflections on your past maybe we can end with you talking to me a bit about what lies ahead in terms of (refer to questions)

DINA: Good question

SIYANDA: Love, work

DINA: Good question well in terms of where I think you know that whole teenage thing that people have where “God they are just really into somebody” for the first time ...

SIYANDA: You’ve got that

DINA: For the first time closest before now was Chris but and even then I under a lot of clouds for the first time I have that for Darren interestingly, interestingly he apparently nearly went out with my sister the same Michelle ...

SIYANDA: Michelle (laughs) that could have been (laughs) ...

DINA: I tell you

BOTH: laugh

DINA: I tell you because we don't have the same surname and he befriended one of my cousins years ago who didn't tell me because she actually like him for herself when I was in the first college he befriended her because he knew she was my cousin and he wanted her to basically try and get through to me and she never said anything cause she liked him herself and then me and Michelle are quite in stature and in terms of quite a few things about us we're quite similar and you know he nearly went out with Michelle but it's just that we were talking they kinds got close but he was living in Manchester he had a flat in London on the Embankment and was sort of getting out of various situations in her own life and she ended up pregnant to the guy she has a child to and she had actually invited him to my wedding cause I got married closer to Manchester Shershiff she had invited him to attend the wedding with her just as company and when he realised I was that I was her sister so he wouldn't come so how, how weird would that be for me to now end up with I do at all end up with Darren? Well I now know apparently my sister had feelings for him so he said to me when we first started talking he goes "Look I can't believe I'm actually getting to speak to you but this is where it's been at and he's got brothers and he knows well you know if one of this brothers had gone there well obviously he can't this and that" and I said "you know what I'm not gonna lie to you I've got cousins that [are] more like my sisters my sister we never ever, ever grew up close so and he has half brothers and sisters by his dad so I said to him she'll understand if its your mom's children and you have grown in the same house obviously you can't but when they're people that I mean my sister lives in Lewisham I see her maybe once every year, year and a half...

SIYANDA: Really?

DINA: And that's if my dad and that's if my dad brings her around or something yeah I don't even know when she first moved to London cause we left not talking remember all the years ago we left not talking so we grew up and stayed that way and then (brief pause) I can't remember when we started talking I think it was over my gran's death and stuff like that we started talking and then when she had her daughter I thought "look this is a new generation I don't want a new generation to be involved in politics" so I went to see her and all kinds of things but my sister had been sexually abused by her stepdad and I dreamt her I used to dream her a lot and I used to dream [that] some is wrong so when I started speaking to her it was that made the effort I said to her "Look I keep dreaming you and you have an issue and I can feel it you need to tell me" and she told me and I brought it all out in the open cause she was destroying herself and I thought "I'm not doing this for her to like me I'm doing this because without her revealing what she's going through to certain people she has kept it in her heart for years it has not helped her so she needs to address it". And she didn't get what she expected to get by [it] being addressed so she kinda held that against me and she sort of cut me off again so I thought "You know what (sighs) whatever, whatever" Mish will know Mish she will grow she will live without me and I cant reach the ideal by myself so as I said to Darren I can't as bad as that may sound I can't make her feelings towards you or anybody else important cause we aren't important to each other if we were sisters sisters fine but we are not we just happen to have the same dad which is very different and I thought "well you know we both have got something to deal with I have to deal with the fact that you've been out with my sister you have to deal with the fact that I'm still married and you can't even come to my house so toshe` (laughs). That makes quite a difficult situation for both of us but for me I know one of my callings is to work in some way with children and I know cosmetically that's one of the things I have to do and I thought it's kinda represented

in different ways years ago when we were both Alex and I went to invest in a property we were going to open a nursery but the building the house that we were going for just in the last minute fell through so that didn't work out then I've worked in a children's shop and now it looks like fostering is going to be the way I do I do that. And when I went in to do Physiotherapy the reason was cause I wanted to work in something that means caring for somebody else and helping other people however the reality of it I don't like pathology I'm not into the really sick, sick kind I'm more into well people getting better than sick people getting well if you know what I mean and it was taken me a while to figure that out so I like the idea of training consultancy I like the issue surrounding equality and diversity I would like to do something like along the lines of motivational speaking but not so I'm not sure I would like to run workshops or seminars on various topics of self help things like that but not necessarily one-on-one life coaching as such so I would like to do something that can utilise maybe like a psychotherapy background with a life coaching sort of structure to life and also incorporate what I know spiritually towards people cause I know whenever I've done readings for someone or even if I dream them their state of mind affects what I can see for them which is blatantly obvious but it is that true I mean if I if I have read for somebody and their life is all encased then what I see for them is all encased and so it to share a vision or being able to share with somebody especially on one-to-one what their vision could be if they make certain changes in their own life. And right now I all about alchemy I have no idea what the destination is the journey is what I am choosing to enjoy and there's a lot about me that I'm learning along the way by not trying to orchestrate so much of my future anymore and I have spent years I mean years all my years with Alex I spent orchestrating what happens next year what I'm gonna do what I have to achieve how much money I gonna make where I wanna go on holiday I've orchestrated everything without internally being happy now today is what matters what I encounter today is what matters and how well I do out of today is what matters. So in terms of me going forward watch the space no idea, no idea there's things that are happening to me now I am opened to allowing them to happen that I couldn't not seen coming Darren has just descended out of nowhere, me doing well on a course that I didn't choose to be on has come out of nowhere so things are working out famously I mean me and Alex are getting on more now than we have ever EVER did as a couple officially and there's ways forward that I would have never have envisioned before now so I'm more open to rolling with the punches now but basic key requirement is to do whatever makes you happy in order to attempt to make everybody else happy. I look after my son and do the best I can by him I don't even know if I'll end up staying in London cause essentially after my course all my family all the people that mean SO MUCH to me aren't here and Alex's family are so (brief pause) disenfranchised they are so there are so many politics between them they don't have conflict resolution they don't deal with issues which is why he never had the skills to yeah. He fell out with his brother over a property that I told him not to sell to his brother but if you wanna help your brother buy take some money help him buy a place but don't sell him one of ours cause he will expect too much of a reduction and you don't have money between families in that way. He sold to him his brother wanted a bigger reduction as I told him and over something that could have been resolved in an argument or telling off they didn't speak for 2 years and when they did speak it was on the condition that nobody ever mentions anything again EVER so they haven't. Now Alex was raised to believe that him and his sister were full blow brother and sister they look nothing like each other but that happens and I had arranged for Alex to meet his dad and prior to our wedding which his mom had

threatened to throw acid on him if he comes which I thought was bizarre and very selfish which I thought “This is not your day it’s not about you” however cause I thought “maybe f Alex gets in touch with his family and make certain links maybe I can” I tried I dedicated my life to project Alex

SIYANDA: creaks out laughing

DINA: (chuckles) ... Project Alex I’m telling you trying to get him to come out of himself you know and you know “Is there anybody home?” (laughs) but he met his dad and one of the reasons his mom kept him away is because they don’t share the same dad and the mom had brought the two of them up to believe that they did and she changed their surnames and all kinds of things but when that came out on our way back from our honeymoon which we used some of it to go and see his dad when we came back well I say “it’s not for you to tell your sister it’s for your mom to do it to sit and tell her”. When he sat and told her there were some holiday pictures on the table all she did and say “Oh Hawaii looks beautiful” and to this day she’s never spoken to him about it and she stopped speaking to him for a couple of years as well so she just stopped speaking to him for a couple of years and they started talking again and still yeah again not mentioned it so he haSiyanda’t learnt conflict resolution for him raising an issue means somebody cutting you off and as much as I understand fully why he is the way he is I’m me and I know what I need in my life and I can’t you know I can’t help you (chuckles) and unfortunately it has taken for me to completely rock his whole world for him to get it but yeah that’s what he needed in his life that’s what he got breaks people’s comfort zones but we get on now and hopefully we can maintain getting on for our son and I think the fact he knows I’m not trying to stitch him up has helped me get on with me cause at first he wanted just sell everything and split it 50 50. However we have had two other properties for an excess of 10 years now if we had to sell well one for 7 years one for 10 years if we had to sell we would pay 40% capital gain tax and we bought the houses one for 80 grand one for 160 years ago both of them are worth just under 500 thousand if we had to pay 40% tax that’s a hell of a lot of money to go to the government so I thought “If I’ve had to ask you for that kind of money as my settlement you wouldn’t want to give it me but you sooner give it to the taxman” I said No so I thought I’m gonna find a way of nobody having to lose out so by me fostering I get to keep the house I sign over one of the houses to him like becoming residential he then it’s no longer an investment property it’s then residential property so you would have to pay the tax on it and we sign the third one over to our son so because I’ve always had the business head between us and I’m still prepared to help him and he can see how much he would have lost had he done it his way he’s kinda playing ball with me right now cause it makes sense for him to. Obviously he can’t know about Darren yet he can’t nothing even though there’s not officially anything to know I feel a lot for him there’s a lot he feels for me but he’s guards up because he knows of the situation I’m in and what he’s scared of he doesn’t know of such an amicable spilt he’s never heard of that he’s kinda used to people being at war and going via solicitors and stuff cause it’s like that he’s kinda wary of when Alex does actually move out I’m gonna have this weaker moment and think “Actually I’m really in love with you please come back honey come home which AIN’T GONNA HAPPEN but he needs to see what happens first which is fair enough and I need to sort of things towards the fostering and make sure I get this semester out of the way so I’ve got no re-sits to do and stuff like that first things to take care of and hopefully via this course via me staying focused

whatever I'm supposed to do my future will just come that's the plan not trying to overly structure life anymore (laughs) it doesn't pay you lose your sense of self

SIYANDA: That's the perfect place to end thank you very much

DINA: (laughs) You are very welcome

Interview ends DINA drives me back to UEL
Interview Duration: 2hours 55 minutes 45 seconds

INTERVIEW WITH TASMIN

SIYANDA: Alright, Tasmin please tell me about growing up

TASMIN: Growing up I was born into a family that basically my dad never stays in one place at the time in his job so I me and my sisters were born in Yemen in Sanaha ...

SIYANDA: Where is Yemen?

TASMIN: Yemen is it's in the Middle East just next to Syria and them places ja

SIYANDA: Ja ja

TASMIN: So I was born there I think cause my, my father is actually half Yemeni so me and my sisters were born there but then my brothers ended being born in Kenya that's when we moved.

SIYANDA: So where was your family (struggling to articulate the question) so where did your family begin? Where did your family life begin? I will ask it like that where was your family placed?

TASMIN: We were placed in Yemen.

SIYANDA: So your life began in Yemen?

TASMIN: In Yemen definitely began in Yemen yeah but then I have obviously since I moved from Yemen I think I was the age of 3 I moved to Kenya me and my family all of us we just moved to Kenya where my dad was working so a lot of my memories are in Kenya and then coming here at the age of 9 but then I still have a lot of good memories in Nairobi in Kenya.

SIYANDA: Can you tell me a little bit about those memories you had in Kenya?

TASMIN: It was in Kenya because it's because in the period of being born in Yemen and coming to Kenya at the age of 3 maybe 3 and a half we moved to Egypt we were living in Jordan and Kenya was actually because I lived there for I think 5 years it was actually home to me you know I had a house I had a set of friends who I saw everyday I had primary school friends which I never had before you know from moving place to place and so till this day I still have contacts from ...

SIYANDA: Kenya

TASMIN: Hmhmm (agreeing) Ja and a lot of my mom's side of the family are in Kenya at the moment due to the to the war going on in Somalia they moved there in the late 1980's so ja. (STOPS)

SIYANDA: Okay cool.

TASMIN: soft laugh

SIYANDA: Can you tell me a little bit more about your family structure?

TASMIN: It's very normal very (trying to find the right word) very strict very I don't know education wise you know you must go to school that kinda family with a dad but the mom my mom was always been a housewife she never worked her entire life. She

was born into a family of “girls should not be educated girls should be stay at home you know be the perfect wife mother” that sort of traditional thing but my father is always been work, work, work so due to that I think there was a breakdown of the marriage I think when I was about nine ten they had a divorce and then we came here me and my mom and my siblings and (brief pause) ja I’m still very close to both I still go over to see my dad wherever he is (chuckles)

SIYANDA: What work does he do?

TASMIN: He used to be in the army but now he’s into properties so ja he’s business (STOPPS)

SIYANDA: So let me take you back to Nairobi Kenya tell me about your siblings

TASMIN: I’ve got two sisters two brothers I am in the middle there’s five of us

SIYANDA: So it’s five children?

TASMIN: Five children yes

SIYANDA: Three boys?

TASMIN: Two three girls two boys

SIYANDA: And how is your relationship with your siblings as you were growing up

TASMIN: Then very close very (pause) very close with the girls the boys were very young so the relation didn’t really begin for the boys until we came to England but yeah very close me and the girls went to an all-girls school (brief pause) I mean just you know sisters jealousy everything that’s why I came back here obviously very close cause my father wasn’t around I will say a lot during us growing up so it was always my mother and with the five children so we have to be very close (STOPS)

SIYANDA: If you had to think back about your earliest fondest memory what would that be?

TASMIN: That would be (chuckles) me and my sisters my brothers weren’t born at the time that me and my sisters our first trip to Egypt to see my grandmother that was probably what I remember and there was like a lake (chuckles) that we that I fell in (laughing) and I have this (shows me a small scar on her forehead) scar to remind me

SIYANDA: Ohhh

TASMIN: Yeah, yeah so that’s my earliest anything I can remember from my childhood it has to be that ...

SIYANDA: Okay I mean I must say coming from a family where we have sort of stayed within one country in one place if we moved we moved as a unit so I’m still unsure about how your family was structured so let’s go back so your mom and dad where are they from originally?

TASMIN: My mother is full Somali she’s from full Somalian but my father is half...

SIYANDA: Yemen

TASMIN: Half Somali

SIYANDA: And half Somali okay.

TASMIN: Yes and they were both based in Yemen then my mother's side her father's side they were raised in Somalia but they you know they divorced so my mom's mother came to Yemen so that's it that's where they met that's...(Stops)

SIYANDA: So they met in Yemen

TASMIN: Yes

SIYANDA: And some of the family was back in Somalia your mother's side

TASMIN: My mother's side yes

SIYANDA: Alright and then you guys moved from Yemen to Kenya

TASMIN: Kenya yes

SIYANDA: For 5 years?

TASMIN: Hmm

SIYANDA: Why didn't you go back to Somalia?

TASMIN: Cause I think Somalia has always been a volatile kinda country which is not safe my father is not a really well he's half Somali he's not very into Somalia kinda thing you know education-wise you know (Pause – trying to find words) he's not it's not really a place it is I think it's a good place to raise a family you can raise a family anywhere in the world but with him he's always been "It's not stable enough you know I can't see my children being raised there" so he wanted us to speak English he wanted us to be you know educated that's the reason he ended up choosing to live in Kenya and he enrolled us into a seminary school where they you know it's a nice school big school where they you know where they taught everything just like here (stops).

SIYANDA: So tell me about you if you can remember you going to school in Kenya

TASMIN: Going to school with my sisters it was a private school different school than my cousins go and things like that so the school was very, very HARD (chuckles) very hard but also very fun (brief pause) begin school seven in the morning up...(chuckles) very early

SIYANDA: That's very early

TASMIN: Very early so ja, I've good memories of school, nothing bad

SIYANDA: Tell me a little bit about your memories of school

TASMIN: School it was okay it's just I don't know being young being okay in the world just going to school I liked it there because like I said I had a set of friends that I'd never had before you know people that I see on day-to-day basis I had family from my mother's side which I got to know I had you know cousins which I grew up with although not living in the same area but you know every other weekend we'll see each other ja so I have very good memories of Kenya and I still go there (chuckles) a little bit

SIYANDA: You still go back there?

TASMIN: I went there last year ja.

SIYANDA: And do you speak a little bit of ...

TASMIN: Ja no I speak fluent ...

BOTH: Swahili (brief laugh)

TASMIN: Yes

SIYANDA: Habari gani

TASMIN: (laughs) Nzuri

SIYANDA: I learnt a little bit of Swahili but I'm a bit rusted now

TASMIN: (chuckles) okay

SIYANDA: Okay alright so you're in school in Kenya and what did you want to be when you grew up at this time?

TASMIN: I wanted to be a teacher (chuckles) ja

SIYANDA: Why

TASMIN: I think it's to do with one teacher who was very a lady very nice very supportive very encouraging I wanted to be exactly like her she would always be the one who whenever you had a problem you know she'd be there and she'd encourage you and she would move you from let's say a middle class to a top class cause she thinks you can achieve that if she thinks you should be in that group so I wanted to be like her but then growing up I changed my mind (chuckles) coming here I changed my mind when I came here (Stops)

SIYANDA: To?

TASMIN: To I just wanted to work with migrants you know I just wanted to I it's to do with how I grew up and how I was raised I wanted to work with people similar to my situation but also refugees people coming to the UK as refugees especially my people you know.

SIYANDA: Who is "your people"? Considering you've been all around so who do you consider your people?

TASMIN: I mean I identify with Somalis I mean because they identify with me you know I (pause) I have a lot of friends from everywhere but then even if I, I've made friends from Africa from Ghana from Nigeria but then they sometimes they, they'll make comments they don't see me as them you know they really don't ...

SIYANDA: Why is that?

TASMIN: I've we have this conversation all the time even at Uni right now I've come to Uni and I've met many people from all walks of life and I it depends in what context at

times they think okay yes I'm just like them but then at times they will say "Oh no" you know "you are Somali you're not...you are African at the same time but then you're not really black are you?" And I would be thinking "no" you know I am but then when I am with my Somali people which I didn't really have that experience in Kenya cause Kenya is very (brief pause) you know Kenyan people kinda thing so when I came here that's when I started going to these Somali communities you know trying to find out about my culture my community I'm sorry my people I think it's them ja.

SIYANDA: Alright so I mean you're sort of touching on the fact that cause you were from you had moved in different places when you were in school in Kenya did your friends or your classmates ask you about where you were from and how did you explain that to them? **TASMIN:** No I don't think there was it's never been an issue in my life until I came here in Kenya it was all I think there's the age as well I was very young a set of girls boys and it was never about where you came from it was just we were the same I mean maybe there I don't know things minor things you know how light your skin is or the texture of your hair those things maybe were a factor back then it's more girls playing with hair but it was never, never mentioned you know the race was never.

SIYANDA: Okay and then so you spent five years in Kenya when did your parents then split? When was it or was it before you came to the UK?

TASMIN: They split it was I think they were going through trouble they were going I don't know through problems when my small brother was born and that our youngest he I don't know what was going on being very young I didn't know so then one day my mom just said you know my mom has brothers in Canada she has one here so my mom said to us I remember sitting telling us that we going overseas and we were going to Canada to stay with her brother for a while and then I mean you have no choice in the matter you know they've decided for you ...

SIYANDA: Were you excited though

TASMIN: Very but I didn't really think it will be a long time thing no (laughs) I thought it was just for a while then coming back you know but then we ended up coming to the UK they changed their minds last minute and it was never explained to me that we were never coming back never so we didn't have a chance to say goodbye or we didn't have proper chance to you know no you're not coming back it was I think for me it was always been like before maybe a year the most staying somewhere but then we came here early 90's and we still here

SIYANDA: Okay so you came here can you tell me about your first impressions of coming here in the early...

TASMIN: Cold

SIYANDA: Yeah

BOTH: laughing

TASMIN: Very cold but we came here in the early 90's like I said they were married my mom I think with them going through the difficulties when my mother came here she had

enough and she ended the marriage when she was here so I think that was the main that was like a big factor in her not going back because I mean there was nothing to go back to so she decided to stay here with her brothers they were already here she had a lot family you know second cousins you know distant families but nonetheless she ended up staying here we ended up staying with her brother.

SIYANDA: Where?

TASMIN: In North London North London yes and yeah we went through the process of applying for asylum and things like that and ja

SIYANDA: Tell me about I mean you said that your impressions of the country were that it was cold what other sort of impressions did you have when you were in the UK?

TASMIN: It was very different I mean I always imagined do you know like we used to watch a lot of Neighbours and Home and Away ...

BOTH: laugh

TASMIN: ... In Kenya and although I had er, er you know I had this I had I think there was like 2 white people in the whole school where I used to go

SIYANDA: Back in Kenya?

TASMIN: In Kenya yes I think it was only I think it was two or three the most so I knew that these people are different but then I had never been around them as much as in the UK especially the 90's right now it's not so bad but in the 90's that was a big wow ja (chuckles) that kinda thing the race thing that's when I (brief pause) that's when I, I mean being raised in a place where you are all the same in, in Yemen we were all the same maybe we were little bit different because we had some we had a lot of Somali black Naspun (?) it was the same in Yemen it was the same in Kenya now coming to the UK it was not the same you know we were it was different I mean my mother she didn't speak a lot of English but we did although you know very young school wise it was okay cause I we spoke the language we knew the educational system but it was very it was very I wouldn't say hard I wouldn't say very hard but it was hard adjusting to, to this cold life the winters I have never been through the snow you know I'd never experienced that I'd never experienced being in a house with just me and my mother it's always full of people so in terms of life it's very different.

SIYANDA: And then I mean you talked about going to school here how was that compared to ...

TASMIN: I started school here in I was in primary school the last year (brief pause) I mean like I said I didn't have any problems at school because I in a way I think I was better equipped for school than the standards they teach here at primary school I had already knew these things they were teaching so in terms of school-wise it was fine in terms of friends (brief pause) I mean I'm quite approachable but at the same time it was very hard because they spoke although I did speak the language they had an accent you know and it was very hard dealing with that and them dealing with my accent and the school was predominantly white but it was a lot of Asians some Muslims a few Somalis then I (brief pause) it was fine.

SIYANDA: And you touched on that you applied to be an asylum-seeker how tell me about that experience of coming here seeking asylum.

TASMIN: I mean I think it was when you are dealing with age I mean my mother was dealing with these things we were at school we were never going to these offices and looking for these kinda things so I don't think that affected me but my mother was granted stay in this country she had a lot of help from her brother her brother was always taking her places whatever but we (struggling to find words) we wasn't really I don't know we wasn't I don't know sort of I didn't face those kinds of problems I don't think (Stops)

PAUSE

TASMIN: I'm sorry

SIYANDA: No, no it's very, very cool okay so now you are in school in England tell me more about that experience like your favourite teacher your friends at this particular time in England

TASMIN: Okay moving from North London we came to East London

SIYANDA: When did you move to East London?

TASMIN: We moved in 1993 and we came into East London where we've been since and started school year 7 here and started secondary school it was another different culture shock because in this East London there's a lot of Asians I've, I've never really been around Asians as much I mean there were some in Kenya but we've never I've never been really exposed to as much as since I have coming to this coming to East London but at the same time I found them I found I identified with them a lot because of their religion you know when I used to go to these Muslim schools I used to see them kinda thing but school and that's when a lot there was a lot of influx of Somali coming to the UK so there was a lot of Somalis in the school who came who did not speak English who didn't know they'd never been to school before who were picked on for these reasons and I felt a need to stand up and you know speak on their behalf you know I feel like I had to you know they and then at the same time I felt "okay these people are coming in and they making me people would look at me and they'll think I'm just like them that kinda thing" I was very adverse (?) to it but yeah I felt like that at times I felt like I'll just be put in this group as them you know they don't know nothing they don't speak they are very different you know and in terms of but then that's where I learned a lot of that's where I think secondary school from the age of 11 to 16 I think that's where I learned about being different being black being Asian being white I learned all that in that five years but school-wise I had to I had good experience of school I had never been in trouble I (chuckles) I have teachers till to this day I still send an email to my favourite teacher....

SIYANDA: That's cool

BOTH: laugh

TASMIN: She's very sweet you know and we were very close and she was just like the teacher in Kenya very, very encouraging very you know very cause I wanted to be a writer when I was at school you see and she was an English teacher and she always pushed me to enter these little competitions and these things and I was very into writing when I was that age various poems and you know things like that but so she we still in contact she's very she's I think helped me deal with a lot of stuff that was going on at school you know growing up (brief pause) becoming a teenager I'll say because like coming from a Muslim family coming from a Somali family you can't go home and you can't tell you can't say to your mother or "mom you know today (brief pause) school was (brief pause) was hard because so-and-so bullied me because of my, my religion or my race or the way I speak" I mean I could do that to my mother is very understanding but then I feel like I couldn't in a way so the teacher Miss Clark she was very glad that I used to go and tell her all these things and ja.

SIYANDA: Ja okay and how were your family relationships like at this time cause you had some of your family on your mom's side here how were those relationships like?

TASMIN: Like I said my mom's brother was here and he tried to sort of take over the man of the house role at this point although we are very used of my father being there he was very his approach is very different my father is the kinda person who's very kind very understanding very you know the good parent very I don't know anything and you can do anything and you get away with him cause he says you know "my daughter is my size (?)" you know that kinda thing but with my uncle he's very (brief pause) very strict I would say very "you finish school at three-thirty you have to be at home at four o'clock" kinda thing he's very yeah very he's very hard for me and my sisters we've never experienced that you know with my father you could do anything and my mom is always (brief pause) the kinda person that takes the backseat and she doesn't really speak up she's always on the fence kinda thing she although she feels strongly about this she likes to put people's needs first especially with her with him being her older brother she used to let him maybe set the rules for us ja. I mean he was okay never bad I mean we used to think you know "you're not my father I mean why should we listen to you? We don't even know you we've only met you, you know recently" yeah, yeah something like that but I mean you know African family you have to listen to your elders you know we've always been brought up to be like that so there is no arguing but then we moved we used to live at Hamberland (?) coming to our own house there was no man of the family there was my mother who came here you know different culture different everything was different she had to deal with (brief pause) back home back I think especially in Kenya in Yemen there you have these people who help you with the house who with us she never used to take us to school we had people to take us to school people you know so coming here she had to (brief pause) five children you know I think my oldest sister was twelve at the time.

SIYANDA: Twelve?

TASMIN: Ja so she had under twelve year olds my brother was I think seven months when we came here she had to deal with all these things it must have been very hard for her and she's a I think she's a strong woman for her to come here. She had to take us to school my brothers you know primary school at the time and her not speaking the

language her not knowing where anything is but we moved like I said from North to East just ourselves just six of us and it has always been just six of us she's always taken the role of you know the father and the mother.

SIYANDA: I was just thinking now that's interesting the fact that you are now in the UK and you as children could speak English cause you had been to a good school in Kenya and your mom couldn't how was that like you...

TASMIN: My sister she my older sister she was twelve at the time so she used to take my mother to these hospital appointments to these banks to these places you know and she had to I think she had to grow very ...

SIYANDA: ...Fast

TASMIN: Very fast in a way and my cause I'm the third I have two sisters and my other sister while my other sister is doing all these things she had to stay at home she had to take care of us you know with a toddler in the house me and my brother nine eight she had to deal with us and I mean when you are going through this process of you know my uncle was always there but he himself had had a family had work he can't always be there twenty four seven you know so my sister yes she had to grow up fast she had to take us to these places you know but with I (finding words) I didn't really have to do much sort of thing right I have to do much because they are both married ...

SIYANDA: Your sisters?

TASMIN: Ja and it's my turn now (laughs) ja.

PAUSE

SIYANDA: You did touch on this so I do wanna go back a little bit to it so how different was you did sort of say that here it was different it was colder how different was it from where from Kenya and where you were born? What were the similar things? What were the different things?

TASMIN: (brief pause) I mean you know you get people who say (brief pause) "I feel different because the way I look I feel different because the way I speak" these sort of things in that sense I didn't feel different at all I mean there is obvious difference similarities between us but I didn't feel different the only difference for me was the family it was very mother the children family you know it was never like that back home (brief pause) plus it was the houses (chuckles) I think were different in terms of back home there's always I don't know there's always someone in the house someone to help you with anything and coming here you had to do everything for yourself as I think you probably know something about that...

SIYANDA: I just can't get over how small their houses are

TASMIN: (chuckles)

SIYANDA: I'm used to that space and gardens and stuff and you can sort of breathe (takes a breath)

TASMIN: Yeah, yeah

SIYANDA: A little more room ...

TASMIN: They are together

SIYANDA: They are together I mean they look like what in South Africa we call hostels where miners and migrant workers usually go and stay so just same houses I can't get over that. **TASMIN:** Yeah they are together yeah but no then like I said before when you watch these programmes on TV and you imagine you know Europe or America or anything it's like this you see like especially Neighbours you the children you know riding the bike and the sun is shining and you come here (chuckles) and it's like...

SIYANDA: laughs

TASMIN: And DIRTY you know and it's very it's not clean it's not (brief pause) especially the UK it's not very clean I mean other European countries are but the UK it's, it's just like some parts of Kenya that you got when you drive past and then you see the homeless and you see I didn't think that happened here

SIYANDA: Me too (bursts out laughing) I didn't think anything happened

TASMIN: It does everything that happens there happens here there's poverty here there's everything so that was a I didn't think that happened that was a shock but I think maybe if I came to the UK now it would be very different for me than me coming at a young age

SIYANDA: Why do you think that?

TASMIN: Because I think cause I have family members who came here two three years ago we're the same age and we both maybe let's say we both girls our thinking is completely different our way of seeing life is different.

SIYANDA: How that's very interesting

TASMIN: Because I okay I will give you an example I have a cousin who came here when she was four years ago she came here we exactly we are the same age same everything...

SIYANDA: Which was?

TASMIN: Ehhe?

SIYANDA: How old were you four years ago

BOTH: laugh

TASMIN: Twenty, twenty

SIYANDA: Oh that's a good age

TASMIN: (chuckles) twenty so yes with her it's being raised in being she has I think it's to do with opportunities having opportunities having going to school going to further after school furthering your mind going to further education with her she basically all she wants is just to find a husband to just to just stay at home to just breed ..

SIYANDA: laughs

TASMIN: I mean to have children I mean that's, that's all she wants in life I mean if that happened to her tomorrow I think you know that's her life and then with me I think there's more to life than having a husband and children I mean those things are very important to me you know I want them to happen to me in my life you know those things are very I think there's nothing more important than having a family it's better than this degree I'm doing whatever but at the same time I think there's more to life than waiting for a man to for a handout kinda thing cause that's what she wants she doesn't want to work she just wants to and I said to her "You in London you know you have all these opportunities to do something with your life you know so why don't you? Why don't you I don't know further your career? Help, help your parents who are back home you know you can't help them when you are relying on someone that kinda thing" but yeah

SIYANDA: Why do you think it is so that the two of you have such a different outlook on...

TASMIN: On life I think it's definitely how you were raised how not raised in England but how you were raised even back home it's how, how you see (brief pause) your parents I mean like my mother was like I said a housewife and there's nothing wrong with a housewife you know (brief pause) but I don't think that would be enough for me with in terms of my father I saw him as this big people you know respected him because of his job but the job doesn't define who he is at the same time he had let's not say power but he had a way of talking to people a way of people looking at him kinda thing because he, he was successful he had a job he was providing for his family kinda thing so I wanted to (brief pause) so I will it started from an early age when my father he's always that kinda person to push you to always tell you "you know just because you are a girl I don't expect you to you know marry at 16" like we do in my culture "I don't want you to you know feel like life is only you know there's only this direction you know" he always told me this you know "meet people experience different cultures you know" he's always been that's the kinda person he is and my mother is always very encouraging she says you know till today she says "if only I came to England when I was your age I would have got this, this and that you know if only". My mother didn't think that girls should stay at home cause her brothers went to school but she stayed at home no she didn't she had to cook (chuckles) and I mean I don't have those qualities I'm a very bad cook

BOTH: Laugh

TASMIN: But she (chuckles) she said "Instead of sending you to school I should have pinned you to the kitchen (laughs) but yeah I wanted to a mix of those things you know ja but with my cousin now I think even though we are in the twenty-first century she still has this mentality of my mother she has this mentality of "I know my gender you know it says that I should basically stay at home" ja.

SIYANDA: That's very interesting how often do you get to see your dad?

TASMIN: Actually I can see he's very I went to see him last year and I was meant to see him in December during the holiday break but then he was in Saudi Arabia during The Hajj thing

SIYANDA: The?

TASMIN: The Hajj the pilgrim so I couldn't see him so hopefully this time I see him I don't see him as often as I went through ten years without not seeing him.

SIYANDA: Really?

TASMIN: Ja I didn't go

SIYANDA: For 10 years?

TASMIN: For 10 years ja.

SIYANDA: Did you speak to him at all in this 10 years?

TASMIN: I did he the beginning was very (brief pause) twice three times a week phone calls you know very regular very writing letters sending pictures those kinda things but then I then it changed for a while for I think when 5 years into coming here it was (brief pause) he I don't know the things I think I don't know we I'm sure but I think it's to do with he married someone else I think I don't know maybe it's because he want to but then in my mind I always tell myself it's because he married someone else but yeah he married someone else and I think he was maybe moving his life and then ja (brief pause) I didn't speak to him for a long time for I think 2 two we didn't have contact but then cause my mother already has family there he I mean we always knew of him we always knew "he is fine he is nothing major is going on you know" and he has cousins here who, who always let us know that he's okay you know ja.

PAUSE

SIYANDA: I mean I suppose for me you really have an interesting kind of heritage and I am still trying to get my head around it because you were born in Yemen but you consider Somalia your home and that's your people ...

TASMIN: My people yeah I'm confused when it comes to being home but home to me it's Kenya it's (pause) I mean in Yemen it's not where I was born it's (pause) because my you know obviously they're Arabs they are different to me in a way so but my grandfather he's Arab so I have the link with him but at the same time because I have you could say I don't know three quarters of me more, MORE Somali in me than Arab I feel

...

SIYANDA: You are like me I am three quarters Zulu and a quarter Shangaan

TASMIN: Yeah so I don't see Yemen as my home because of that because (brief pause) because you know I although I have family who, who are Arabs who they also say that Somalis are have a mixture in Arab even though you might be full Somali Somalis if you go back go back there's an Arab mix in there somewhere I just don't feel Arab and its not, it's not because you know I had a bad experience or anything like that no I definitely didn't I don't really remember but I feel African I feel and I don't think Somalia is my country it's my country in a way but if I was to choose somewhere to go back I would not choose Somalia, Somalia to go back not in terms of war or anything just in terms of if I went there I mean who would I go to? Where? Who? I mean what is there for me? I mean I speak the language not very good but you know I speak the language definitely I speak

the language I, I'm very into my culture you know I am a Somali I dress like a Somali not now...

BOTH: laughing

TASMIN: But yeah I do you know I listen to the music I am I eat their food you know everything but at the same time I would not go there because I feel like I won't, I won't fit in there I won't but if I was to go back to Kenya now even though Kenya is not my country I wasn't born there I have no ties to Kenya I feel like that's where I can go that's where I can even try and you know live my life in Kenya kinda thing you know but not in Somalia no.

SIYANDA: And England East London here what is this place for you to you?

TASMIN: Well (chuckles) London, London is where I feel home in a way of because it's the longest I've been anywhere it's where I think I'm gonna be (brief pause) at sort of thing although I would love to work in other places in Africa those kinda places I would love to work in future but I think I will always come back to London as (brief pause) you know where my mother is and that's very important to me where my mother is, is definitely home so London is very you know is very important very (brief pause) it shapes me as I am I think a lot of ways I used to be shy (?) because I've had this I've come here and I've lived here and I've sort of taken their way of thinking and put it into me kinda thing.

SIYANDA: Do you think I'm gonna ask you a question whether you can answer it but do you think that not knowing where you are at is the same thing for your brothers and sisters or even your mother?

TASMIN: My mother she (brief pause) she loves London I mean she although at the beginning I remember her the first year the first second year was very hard very hard for her I remember her crying and saying "I'm really going back tomorrow I'm going back" but my uncles were like "you know just sit it out all this will pass all this thing it will go" but my mother her home I think again her home I would say lies in Kenya because she brought a lot of her family from Somalia to Kenya but sadly her mother died in Kenya we were here so she wasn't ... she's never been back to Kenya since we came but she's been everywhere else but she won't go because she says I don't know she says "I left my mother there" kinda thing and I mean going back and she's not there so she doesn't go when I went over myself she didn't wanna go with me. So in terms of my brothers and sisters they are very well my brother is very (brief pause) two they are very different they are very different one is very into the religion one is very traditional very into their religion although only 16 he (brief pause) I think is he's (brief pause) he's seeing maybe what the media portrays of the religion and that has Muslim and that has very has affected him deeply you know and he is very proud and very you know "first and foremost I'm a Muslim you know I'm nothing I'm not Somali I'm not black I'm not anything this is what this is my identity kinda thing" and my other brother is very westernized he's very, he's very I don't think he will see Kenya as his home no I don't think I think the UK he'll probably see as his home.

SIYANDA: He's a Londoner

TASMIN: I would say ja and he I mean he's never I mean he he's never been back to Kenya I mean he does go to Africa he my grandmother moved to Egypt so I mean my father wants to have his own well they do say "boys must you know have this ties with their father kinda thing" so my father does encourage wants them to come and spend the summer with him so and I think he wants him to change a little and really go back to his roots and not fall over and become too westernized in a way you know you lose who you are kinda thing so they don't want that to happen to him so they try to take him back you know (chuckles) at times they tried to marry him to this lady (chuckles)

SIYANDA: Have they?

TASMIN: A long story but yeah...

SIYANDA: (laughing) I want to hear the story

TASMIN: (laughing) No. No but with him there's always been I think they're that he although he doesn't do I don't know he doesn't really (brief pause) he's westernized in his thinking in his way of life his approach of life but he doesn't really do the bad things you know of religion he doesn't drink you know those kinda things that you could say Oh yeah he lost his God-charged (?) religion because he his faith because he's doing this these things you understand? So with him he's I think he's a good boy he's in his early twenties at the moment and he doesn't it's just the way he is you know I think it's to do with age as well so when he did go back the last, LAST year father introduced him to a friend of ours a friend of ours she's a distant cousin I think our third cousin or something so yeah they wanted him to settle down and maybe you know once his dedication here or whatever he could go back to Egypt and he could live there and but he was like "No" I it's his family although she was very distant he's and in my culture they do marry and even in yours first cousins so it's nothing new to them but with him he's like "No way it's I don't know her" ja we have different you know ways so they think that marrying him off to someone will maybe calm his down and she could maybe shape him (laughs) to coming back which I think is madness I don't agree but yeah

SIYANDA: And has your father tried to set you up with somebody and if not why him and not you?

TASMIN: Well that's quite interesting because in my culture the girls marry very ...

SIYANDA: ...young

TASMIN: Very young my mother married I think she was 15 when she married so with me I'm a bit old but no he didn't I thought he would but no he actually my sisters when they did marry I remember my oldest sister the one who came here when she was ...

BOTH: Twelve

TASMIN: And she married very, very early she married when I think 18 she was still in college she and then she married out off the culture as well so I think that affected him deeply kinda thing you know although great man you know he although not Somali my father was really shocked he was like "why did I send them kinda thing" and he and that's the time we lost contact with him as well cause I think that really (brief pause) I don't think he blamed my mother because you know these things happen in life but he I

don't know maybe blamed himself that he sent us or he wasn't here to try and stop the marriage kinda thing.

SIYANDA: Was it because your brother-in-law is not...

TASMIN: Definitely

SIYANDA: Muslim or...?

TASMIN: No, no he's Muslim

SIYANDA: He's Muslim?

TASMIN: He's Muslim which is GREAT, which is ... but at the same time he wasn't, he's American and he is HIMSELF he is culture mixed he's mixed race he's Mexican and he's white so like when you hear that and he had a shock and I think that's why and then my other sister now she got married to a Somali man he was very happy about that but at the same time it didn't work out so with me he's always I mean we don't really discuss like I said in our family we don't really discuss these kinda things no I mean I do with my mother but not with him.

SIYANDA: Okay that's very interesting I'm gonna ask us to stop for like 5 minutes

BREAK for coffee

SIYANDA: The question I wanted to ask you is you sort of said that your younger brother is so into his religion and that's quite important for him and you also said when you came here you didn't you sort of belonged to these two three groups and you didn't know so you were black Muslim and Somali and so how do you sort of move in between these different spaces of belonging? How do you negotiate them?

TASMIN: Well I mean (brief pause) religion is a very important thing for me even though I don't obviously cover my hair I don't maybe do that in that sense and at times I don't pray my 5 times a day prayer I think is very so when like I'm walking down the streets and I think people do judge me because of that but they don't see they don't talk to me they don't know what's in my heart, religion is very important, it's very ... just because I don't do these things doesn't mean I'm less, less Muslim or maybe less Islamic you know compared to them kinda thing so in terms of religion I when (brief pause) my little brother is very religious my older sister the one who got married out you know someone different Somali she's very religious so my mom she's always a bit you know she's okay you know she's does what she has to do and then I do as well when on a Friday if I'm not at Uni or if I'm not working and have the opportunity to go to a mosque I do still go I, I mean I pray when I have I mean at times it's very difficult 5 times a day I'm always around at the times of prayer but then at the same time I don't have I don't an excuse because there's a Muslim there's a prayer room in the campus you know and I have this boy in my class he's very into the religion and me and him we talk and he tells me things like you know "you know some much you know you can read" I can read Arabic I speak Arabic so he tells me "you know when I first met you I looked at you" he's quite religious as well so he tells me "when I first saw you and I looked at you I just thought you were just this" you know when you see on the street you don't think you know so he just tells me "you know if you just do this things" by the same time he's very

cool because he says you know time will give it time and maybe with age and with time you would ...

SIYANDA: ...become a proper Muslim?

TASMIN: You will become he doesn't really say proper because he does think I, I mean I believe what he believes definitely but at the same time sometimes it's hard for myself because I will sit at home and I will I mean I have a lot of respect for women who wear the Hijab the head scarf I have a lot of respect for my mother for my all the females in my family for outsiders for the friends that I've made cause I went to this my secondary school was a lot of Asians I will say maybe 70% were Asians and out of the 70% 50% were Muslims you know so growing up with em girls, growing up with em girls I mean they wore their head scarves to school that's the thing I didn't I my dad has never been you know enforce that you know that you have to like my cousins' fathers their father would from when they were like six or seven that's you know that's the age you supposed to wear you start wearing it I remember them having must wearing it but with my household it wasn't, it wasn't really a big issue. I mean it was an issue to on weekends I had to go to these Islamic schools I had to learn my religion I had to learn the Qur'an I had to do everything that was definitely I have to do that but by the same time when I am going to school I think they sort of mixed me up from that age and my mother when she tells me now you know she tells me things like "you're very old now or you are the age where you know you should have shame and you should cover your hair" and I stop and think and I think you know "maybe if you brought me up covering my hair it would not mean a big issue you know" so but then at the same time I still pray and I still myself I have this maybe demons in my head saying to me "what's wrong with you why can't you, you like your religion why can't you cover up I mean what's I mean I" (struggling to find words) I mean I sometimes when I am going places and I'm going I will cover up maybe it's the mood I am feeling but I feel guilty ...

SIYANDA: When do you cover up? Going to what places?

TASMIN: Definitely the mosque definitely and definitely when I am picking up my nieces from this my nieces they are six and seven now and that age you know you take them to this weekend schools after ...the evening classes so when I have to pick them up I you know you have to dress the way to, to be sort of not feel outside or don't feel I don't know you just don't feel you just don't feel you don't feel like you belong there kinda thing so when I'm doing that definitely but then I, I think I should cover up for myself I that's how I put it in my head at times I'm very I mean very guilty I feel very and at times when I especially when I read or when I watch the TV and there's a talk on another talk on the veil issue or the headscarf being banned in places like France and Turkey which Turkey is a Muslim country and when I and I see these women protesting and I'm thinking "Oh my god you know you have a freedom in London and you don't do it what's wrong with you know?" You feel very guilty at times like that but then I, I just I don't know I just maybe hope and pray to be maybe stronger or, or I do think I am strong in terms of my religion I do I don't do the things most boys do I don't eat pork I don't drink but I do (laughing) but I do do other things which I'm supposed not to do I'm not perfect definitely not but then the major things I don't know I just I don't do so, so in terms of religion in that I would say it's just I don't know it's not about negotiating with

me it's about (thinking: finding the words) it's like an issue in my head and days I feel very low and days where I feel you know, you know you might not cover up but then you're better than the girl who covers up in sense because I know girls who cover up and em girls are (brief pause) to say worse than me in many situations you know so I mean I don't know I think and I think religion definitely does play a BIG factor in my identity and what I am and what I believe in what choices I make it's definitely to do with religion and it's definitely to do with how I was brought up but at the same time I just can maybe for me to be 100% as I should ja maybe, maybe, maybe soon I don't know.

SIYANDA: It's an interesting personal struggle I suppose...

TASMIN: Ja

SIYANDA: But then over and above that you then have as you said that you and some of your friends from like Nigeria and other African countries have arguments about cause over and above you being a Muslim you are also Somali and....

TASMIN: I'm black and African ja.

SIYANDA: So how then do you sort of negotiate on top of that these other spaces of belonging?

TASMIN: Well I mean growing up that has never really been I don't know I think I was in this bubble maybe throughout primary school and secondary school, secondary school for me was very easy I didn't have the (brief pause) I mean I did have you know every, every person growing up has these problems has these struggles has these you know anger whatever I mean in a sense I did I mean everyone does but with me I'm a kinda person who who's grateful for what they have and who is who when they have a problem they sort of break it down and they sort of I do it like I don't know in my head and I, I know how maybe I don't know maybe approach the problem maybe to I analyze the problem and I most of the time it's really minor things that when I was growing up in secondary school I didn't have the whole issue of race I really did I don't know why but I didn't I had a lot of Asian friends and in that Asian friends there were Muslims there were Sheikhs there were Hindus there were Buddhists there were all you know different religions but we I remember we there was a set of girls us which most of them I still talk to today so we were very close there's never been obviously we are different I mean just like they are Asian they are different one is from Bangladesh one is from India one is from Pakistan so they I think because they are like that they also knew in terms of Africa there is Ivory Coast there is South Africa there is this in terms of that they knew so they didn't really put me in a box they didn't and but for my white friends it was very, very different they I mean they I don't think they haven't been taught about this they haven't experienced this you know for Asians I think that's the thing they have in common they (brief pause) I don't know they understand because you come from the same continent you not the same kinda thing so that's how I think it is in secondary school but then with my white friends they're very eager to learn they're very you know very wanna experience things they wanna come to your house they wanna eat your food they wanna experience 'wow' you know "you're so different I don't have that at home" you know although they do have their culture don't get me wrong they don't have the colourful clothes you know do you know what I mean? Those kinda things they don't so times at

secondary school that was fine coming down to college now it was different because also in secondary school there wasn't a lot of black people there were the Somalis the Somali black and there were little bit of African but like I say I think there's definitely where you grew up and what school you went to because our friends who went to a different school now full of black people they experienced it most you know so with me I didn't experience it coming down to college it was fine university now was very different cause in my class a lot of people from everywhere especially Africa there's a person from every country and when we do sit and we do discuss this over lunch or whatever they would say you know they don't consider Somali people to be black I consider them to be African but at the same time I don't and I'll be like "why I mean we (brief pause) I mean it depends on how you define black but for them it's like we I would be like you know we have the same skin you know the colour of the skin we come from African definitely all of us so what's wrong and they'll be like "No I see you lot as black and at times I don't you know you definitely your religion plays a factor" and I'll be like you know "in Ghana Nigeria there a lot of Muslims you know I so why how come you are not calling them Ghanaians you're not saying they are black or whatever" they'll be like "No that's different: and then they'll comment on maybe facial characteristics you know facial things and facial differences and okay that's true and I my argument would be like well people from Nigeria people from South Africa I mean I can never tell but some other friends who could tell who's who (chuckles)

SIYANDA: I had a friend recently at dinner and she claimed that she could tell and I said "ABSOLUTELY not" you cannot tell I mean I don't think you can you can't tell okay you know you're from South Africa you from Ghana and you can guess and perhaps you could be right but I don't think...

TASMIN: No I have a friend who believes she can tell and she's always right because she looks at someone and then she would be like 'yeah he's from so-and-so' and I would be like 'no' and then when you, you know ask him or ask her they will be like 'yeah'. I can't tell so she says so my argument would be like you (brief pause) and they're like 'yeah you can just' maybe it's to do with your face but every country has a different face you know every country has Somali they used to say have a big forehead and or the men are very tall and skinny you know that's what they say so it's like ...

SIYANDA: Oh come one....

TASMIN: (laughs) You know what I mean but that's what they say maybe I don't know what they say for South Africans or what you think I really don't but so yeah and then (brief pause) they will go down and talk about slavery and things I know nothing about but also now I'm a little bit informed and they will say you know, you know we went through slavery and all these things and Somali people didn't experience that and I'll be like "I'm sure you know one or two Somali I'm sure you know it's happened to people you know I'm definitely sure that it happened you know" and they would be like you know silly things like you know how your hair is and how I don't know the way you look things like that and at times they would like yeah you're one of us but then at times things would happen and they would just make a small comment like now I'm kinda used to it, it doesn't really bother me you know.

SIYANDA: Can you think and tell me about the times when they say “you are one of us” and times when they say “ah maybe you’re not”

TASMIN: (Brief pause) Not would be (brief pause) definitely when I have this Jamaican friend it’s definitely and most of the ‘you’re not one of us’ comes from her the African people they accept me as African we, we maybe that’s a one thing we have in common amongst other things is definitely because we from Africa and but with the Jamaican girl she and it’s not even just her you know it’s West Indian people I think in general they separate me from them because she will say things like (brief pause) things like an example would be like the other day she saw an African woman she was listening to some thing and she was she had a like you she was researching she was listening to what her participants had said and she wanted peace and quiet and an African lady came and she was making she was on the phone she was making a lot of noise and she had a strong accent with me everyone has an accent you know so she is very she was like “Oh my God” she is very she wasn’t rude but she just made a comment I’m used to her you know that’s how she is so she is like “Oh God this Africa woman you know she’s making so much noise with her big accent” and I turned and I said “you know I mean why do you have to say Africa woman? Why can’t you say this woman is making so much noise?” And then she would be like “SHE IS you know she is making so much” and I would be like “Ja I know she is making noise but you can just say this LADY this woman whatever is making noise why do you have to say African?” And then I will say thing like cause me and her are very close you know she’s one of my closet friends but she says “Oh you’re not like them” and I would be like “What do you mean? I mean I’m you know that I, I’m African you know Somalia is in Africa” and they will be like “yeah it’s in Africa just like maybe Egypt is in Africa or Algeria is in Africa but they are not Africans are they?” That’s how she would say to me and I would be like “well that is true bit I’m African” but that I can’t say when things go wrong or when maybe someone would take her job or something she would be like “Oh yeah your people one of your people took a job that I applied for” and I would be like “who’s my people?” and she’s like “Oh African” you know so it’s in it’s different I think with Africans they accept you of African but with West Indians they I think they have problems themselves cause they don’t think that they don’t have any African in them sort of thing so they have that problem themselves and then they sort of they don’t know nothing about Africa I don’t think they are not informed like us so that’s where it comes from I think (Pause) but we, we had this module last year of race and ethnicity...

SIYANDA: ...and ethnicity with by Lorraine Jones?

TASMIN: Yeah and how do you know about that (chuckles)? You’ve done it?

SIYANDA: Because I’m giving a guest lecture in two weeks time.

TASMIN: Alright okay yeah that really opened my eyes that is again I didn’t know much about race about things like that so doing that module it really opened up a lot of what Africans went through and things like cause I’ve never really been (brief pause) not interested but I’ve never really sort of (brief pause) race has never been really a big factor in my life no nev... no not really so that module really sort of makes you think definitely.

SIYANDA: So was doing that module the time that you think that race become this important thing cause before that growing up it was

TASMIN: No I mean I hear people saying you know I didn't get a job and they'd use black as, as an excuse and I always think it's an excuse I've I mean I'm convinced that you've got a job because of this you know the colour I know it happens but I, I don't know I tend not to think like that you know I didn't get a job it's because maybe I didn't have experience I didn't have the qualifications whatever but I now I know people who strongly believe this and I mean (brief pause) I don't know and yet the module yeah definitely made me think about who I am how I see myself race it's here it's I mean although I'm not exposed to it although I haven't experienced it it's happening it's definitely that sort of thing so yeah.

SIYANDA: Ja let's talk about your studying and what you know you hoping to do with it you said as a child you wanted to be a teacher in secondary school you changed you wanted to be a writer and you indicated that you would like to work with migrants and asylum communities how did that transition happen for you?

TASMIN: I mean with growing with being in Kenya I think the teacher I think it has to do with I wanna be just like her you know she was she had that attention of the class she's very wise I used to think exactly yeah you know and I used to think she was very, very kind very honest very supportive I wanted to be just like her I remember and then coming here I think it was to do with the secondary school I with me I, I do talk whenever I have a problem I do talk but then I also like to write I write a lot I mean at that age eleven to sixteen I used to write quite a I used to write tons and tons of things and I remember I used to be whenever we had English I always knew that I'm gonna (chuckles) get top marks because I would write I remember and I don't know it's always been a hobby it started as a hobby I write poems whatever so yeah I wanted to be a writer I remember and my that's when my sister got married her husband he writes as well so he I would read some of his work and you know very good so he, he sort of I don't know he sort encouraged me to write and me I although I do speak about my emotions my feelings whatever I am going through I prefer to write it down I think I deal with it writing down so it was (brief pause) my hobby career-wise and then growing up at college I still wrote I still college is very difficult for me in my mind cause I didn't know what I wanted to do I at times I thought I wanted to go into IT but I done a course and I mean it didn't stimulate me it didn't do nothing for me you know it was very boring so I changed and I done something to do with social work with dealing with people with health and things like that now coming here doing Psycho-Social at the beginning I, I don't know with me I think it changes I'm probably gonna be something very in my you know some people know exactly what they want me it's not like that I always change every couple of years or so I thought I wanted to do something with mental health at the beginning of this course so I'd done three modules in mental health I worked in mental health but that's when it really put me off working in a way it was very (brief pause) very demanding very, very hard I think I used to just come home and I would just tired you know like seriously tired cause you know you've just don't have the energy and I after working there for the summer I realized this is not where I can't see myself doing this on a daily basis kinda thing no way so I changed and the module I remember doing Lorraine's module and although I was never interested on the you know she talks a lot about black civil rights and like that but I have never really been ...

SIYANDA: ...interested

TASMIN: No, no I remember the questions she gave us and I immediately chose to do a question on globalization cause you know you had a chance to talk about where you came from and how you ended up being here things like that so I that led me to do what I'm doing now my dissertation and I am like...

SIYANDA: Which is on ...

TASMIN: Which is on refugees and how they perceive themselves and their identity and how their identity has changed or not changed since coming here.

SIYANDA: And you said that you are looking particular at Somali...

TASMIN: Yeah

SIYANDA: ...refugees.

TASMIN: Yep so I think and that's very interesting for me I think that's a so...

SIYANDA: I find that interesting cause I mean you sort of say that you yourself are Somali and that's where you come from and that's what your dissertation is on and yet you consider Kenya to be home I find that very, very interesting ...

TASMIN: But I like I think with Somali people they are very I think it's such a it's such a really shame they don't have a place to go home because they are scattered all over the world it's I think it's very it's very sad not for me or particular not for people my age but for our parents for our grandparents you know who are here who hate the cold who (brief pause) can't watch TV cause they don't understand do you know what I mean? They don't they are not in I mean for us it's easy we came young we had to adapt they can't adapt as easy they can't adjust so with them it's just basically staying at home and you know home, home here and home there is very different home there it's a it's a lot of relatives a lot of sunshine a lot of going out so in here they just you know confined to this small house and they I mean they have got no jobs you know they're old you know they are just staying in the house and there

SIYANDA: ... and a street of people they...

TASMIN: ...ja they don't know your neighbour can be this side coming from Bangladesh upstairs can be from Japan you know what I mean it's just multicultural but for me that's very good that's very interesting but for them it's like I, I, you know being raised somewhere where you're all the same where you can just you know go to the shop and just speak to the man for an hour do you know what I mean? They are not used to that so it's a shame for Somali people but I, I don't think a lot of people would say especially raised in this country they maybe my age the second generation the third whatever I don't think they would say "Somalia is my home" ja they wouldn't maybe that's maybe I'll find out but I with me I think it's because I haven't been there

SIYANDA: So you have never been to Somalia at all

TASMIN: Never, never so I've never been none of my immediate family I don't think have been my dad's family it's around you know it's a now they, they moved from

Yemen to they live in Egypt now a lot of his family so I mean home and I don't think it's just for me it's always for my mother or my father they have a different we all have different feelings and different ideas of where home is you know so ja (brief pause) but yeah (laughing) I'm doing this research and I don't see ja (Pause)

SIYANDA: Fascinating I really think your story is interesting alright I was gonna (laughing) say love interests but I think that kinda question there's no link from the previous question

TASMIN: (laughing) LOVE INTERESTS what's that got to do with your research?

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: (laughing) you never know

TASMIN: Okay (brief pause) from what age?

SIYANDA: OH OKAY

TASMIN: No, not but from (brief pause) I don't know I think my life is kinda boring there's no nothing interesting nothing...

SIYANDA: I don't think so

TASMIN: Nothing

SIYANDA: I don't think so I mean you are the first person I've ever spoken to that I know that has such a fantastic mixed complicated kind of heritage

TASMIN: Yeah it's complicated but it's not nice it's a we have this pros and cons I guess but love interests well at the moment I'm single and happy (laughs) and happy I should add

SIYANDA: Ja join the club very happy

TASMIN: (laughs) No (brief pause) there's, there's only been I think two or three people that have really made I don't know who are serious in my life I would say the first (brief pause) long term relationship (brief pause) he was a long time four or five years another time we were together from I think the age of seventeen I mean I remember at school when we are all kind fifteen and all of my friends cause we had this big can (?) girls and all of them had a had a boyfriend and all them were really into boys at the time and I mean there was boy in the school that I liked an he liked me and it was very (brief pause) it was very real it was very we felt the same way you know both of us felt them same way but I think I'm different to very different to each and very one of these girls because they actually (brief pause) they whoever the boy I remember me and the boy we felt this way for I think quite a long time I would say between six months and to a year and nothing happened kinda thing we were friends cause we both boys and girls we both had like a group where we hang around or whatever but the girls I remember they acted on their feelings and whoever they liked they would or whoever they liked or the boys that even they do nothing they boys that asked them out to be their girlfriend or to go out on a date they would jump ...

SIYANDA: Sleep with them?

TASMIN: No not sleep with them but they would jump at the chance to go with them ...

SIYANDA: (chuckles) Oh my head is thinking some thing else

TASMIN: Yeah but me on the other hand I had a boy that I liked really liked and I remember he felt the same way and he would ask me out on a number of occasions and I would say 'No' I don't know why and I think I mean I saw the boy (chuckles) a few months ago now and he said to me you know now nearly ten years ago he says to me "oh you I cant believe you didn't give me a chance" so in that sense I didn't give the boy a chance I said no I've always been that kinda girl who like I said I sit down and I analyze things and maybe I should just live life I wish I would just be free like these other girls but I'm not and I, I won't say it's to do with how I was raised definitely not because I see my sisters they are they are different I think it's just to do with me so nothing happened with the boy that I really liked and come to the end of secondary school we went different ways. At seventeen I met a boy who I knew first were friends we become friends and then we started dating for maybe four to five years so that was my first and proper relationship but we always had this on and off kind thing we would be on for about a year and a half and off for three months so it wasn't like the whole time we were together it was on and off and he I remember he wanted he wanted marriage and children and for my young age I think when we were about nine... cause he was two years older than me which is really nothing but he to me it's like you know you've had your life you've had fun....

SIYANDA: (laughs)

TASMIN: You know it really was...

SIYANDA: (continues laughing) In two years

TASMIN: (laughing) In two years although I know but it is so and for me it was like it's like the only person I've ever been with and he wanted me he wanted marriage and he was very serious and I didn't I didn't want this I did want it eventually but not at the time not at the time so I mean I don't think that was the end that was the relationship ended because of that but there was a lot of other problems but yeah he (brief pause) nice guy no problems he was actually my friends loved him my you know seriously he was a nice person you know but it didn't work out because he was selfish in a lot of ways he was (brief pause) ways that he I wasn't at Uni at this point he was and he got offered a job to live in to work in Ireland and he wanted obviously in my culture you just can't sort of live with a guy that can't never happen especially in my family so in order for you to actually go with a guy you have to marry him so maybe if I came from another culture I would have just gone with him and stayed there even if it didn't work out I can always ja I always know I can come home but with me being Somali and him being Somali it had to be marriage for us to live together and go away together so when he got this job I mean he as much as he wanted he job he wanted you know to go there he wanted me to marry him he wanted me to leave what I know and then I was like you know so I said no and so actually he actually didn't even ask me which I was real angry about he assumed that I would just automatically go with him which was really a big no for me so we went our separate ways but then with him remember we did go our separate ways then and our part of relationship between he has always been coming back into my life not anymore now

cause he's married (chuckles) but then I had other people and not long no I mean not bad experiences really not bad just normal you know it didn't work out (brief pause)

SIYANDA: I mean I suppose to answer your question about what your love interests have to do with what I'm researching

BOTH: laughing

SIYANDA: I'm not prying

TASMIN: (giggles) No

SIYANDA: But I mean I suppose that when we choose relationships personal relationship whether with friends I suppose or even romantic partners I suppose we do tend to choose from our position of where we are whether be it obviously gender class it could be class it could be other people's preferences it has to be about race as well maybe around culture and so all those kinds of things influence...

TASMIN: Yeah I get I get what you mean I mean I've seen first hand what happens when you marry into a different culture

SIYANDA: With your sister

TASMIN: With my sister and I've seen I remember when she, she said to my mother that "I've found a person you know I love him and I'm getting married to him sort of thing" and she (brief pause) she wasn't happy because of who he was you know he and I think back then because it was in the 90's it was I think it was 1997 or something there was a lot of ignorance a lot of people don't know anything I think today if I was to bring back a guy who was different to me they wouldn't have reacted the way they did but back then I remember my father not being here but my the men my cousins my brothers and all these all these people I remember they were really upset and they were like you know "You've brought shame to us and you know this type of things that they, they actually said "No" you know they said No and you know in our religion you have to have the permission from your parents or from your guardian to marry or you know so my sister had this dilemma of not having any my father said No my mother as usual she feels something but because of I don't know because of the way people feel she just likes to please everybody which I think you know YOU CAN'T you know so she, she was very influenced by her brother and you know so it wasn't a very good experience I remember them coming and I remember my mom saying you know "you're not part of this family anymore you know these kinda things" so but in the end you know because I think sometimes religion and culture mix and that's where their problems come from and the misunderstanding and all these things so in the end my sister married him with the permission cause she was in fact in our religion it says the man is Muslim the man is a good man you shouldn't refuse me that kinda thing so anyway she ended up marrying him but after a year or so everything sort of come down and my sister went away she went to live in America for four years so (brief pause) I've seen that it's not good but at the same time I know if I know I don't choose people because of who they are I really don't I mean in my past relationship I've a lot of Somalis but then I don't think it's I chose them because of that they are Somali maybe in a way maybe but maybe it's because is of how they are how (brief pause) how they are and I mean I've I used to date an Italian guy he I didn't (brief pause) I don't know that was different you know, you know I've never dated anyone forget not even

black but actually going out and it was something else this was in college and I mean he was just like any other guy I mean the fact that he the colour was the difference maybe the culture and things like that which were not really a factor for me but no I don't choose people because of who they are but definitely I think the religion does play a BIG role in my life and I know that he I know that I want my children to grow up knowing their religion and I don't want them to be sort of mixed in a way so I would when I'm choosing a partner these things are important but at the same time I don't know life is not perfect and you know you don't choose that person so I'm sort of I don't know sort of (brief pause) it's sort of I don't know I mean my mother always says to me "If you like a Chinese man if you like an Indian man whatever black sheep it is black" so she says "Bring him home as long as he's Muslim bring him home"

SIYANDA: laughing

TASMIN: So I'm like okay (laughs) just as long so I know the religion is really a big factor

SIYANDA: Yeah it sounds like one of the most important ...

TASMIN: YES, yeah, yeah the most important thing yes yeah so in terms of choosing a suitable partner definitely he ...

SIYANDA: ...has to

TASMIN: He has to ja, ja (chuckles)

SIYANDA: Can you I mean I suppose it's a very strange question to ask but I just gonna throw it out there what have been the most significant challenges in your life that you can tell me about

TASMIN: (Pause) Challenges...

SIYANDA: Even whether growing up or now that this moment what would you consider to be one of the most significant challenges that you faced or that you are currently facing

TASMIN: (brief pause) I mean I will say I think coming here itself was definitely crazy definitely different hard but (brief pause) I would say I will say it's one of the most I don't know one of the most difficult things maybe I have been through and being separated from my dad that was definitely a big thing for all of us and (pause) currently, currently it's what I'm gonna do with my life (laughs) OH (drops the Voice Recorder)

SIYANDA: it's okay

TASMIN: I'm gonna end up breaking this

SIYANDA: The nice thing about this I think they are quite cool

TASMIN: Okay

SIYANDA: Tasmin I still want to go back to that issue because you know I don't think that we explored it enough or rather I didn't get the sense ukuthi [Zulu word for 'that'] we explore it to (brief pause) deeply enough. When you first came to England I mean I suppose I'm asking this question for my sort of point of view when I came here I sid "Oh

my God' when I first came here in 2004 for two weeks and I thought I'm never ever, ever coming back to England I was absolutely shocked everything was just so different and not what I had thought....

TASMIN: Expected ja

SIYANDA: So I can sort of imagine as I think you were eight you were eight or around eight nine when you first came

TASMIN: Ja

SIYANDA: Surely there was as you said some excitement you didn't think you were going for this long then you were in this strange place ...

TASMIN: Ja being enrolled to this school and not having anybody at the school cause I remember my sisters they went to...

SIYANDA: A different school?

TASMIN: They went to secondary school

SIYANDA: Oh cause they were obviously older than....

TASMIN: Yeah yes so it was just me and my brother and he was like (brief pause)...

SIYANDA: Four five

TASMIN: Yeah he was really like you know very into cause I think he was in year one or something you know in the first year but I that was definitely hard it was (brief pause) you know going into a place where you don't know anybody you don't speak right you don't speak the way they do although you understand them and everything you just don't maybe it's to do with the accent you just don't see them and that time there wasn't this big I think now it's much easier because there is so much people from everywhere

SIYANDA: All over the world

TASMIN: Especially Somalia yeah so back then it was one or two people you know I remember so it was very hard very different very (brief pause) very cause in Kenya we were all the same the class teacher we were all the same, same ...

SIYANDA: And by same you mean....

TASMIN: Colour

SIYANDA: Racially speaking?

TASMIN: Yeah the same although it didn't really maybe click in my mind you know although I didn't really used to think in terms of race and things like but it was this natural you know it was just like school the teacher is the same as you the pupils ...

SIYANDA: Everybody else in the country and then you come to this place

TASMIN: Yeah and then you, you

SIYANDA: Where's everybody gone to

TASMIN: (chuckles) Exactly and you see you see white people you see Chinese people you see you know things you haven't seen before although you've seen a few you know white people in Kenya but it's not really the same as interacting with them on a daily them teaching you so that was definitely hard

SIYANDA: How was that experience for you to be in the same class and remember that you are coming from outside not sure of where you belong so you are put in this class and you've been taught by somebody who's that visibly different from you?

TASMIN: Ja I remember I used to maybe not stare at her

SIYANDA: laughs

TASMIN: I used to I don't know I just used to look and I remember when we first before we enrolled in the school we me and my sisters we used to look at the window in my uncle's house and where we used to live it was a Jew[ish] area so (brief pause) it was very different because he used to lived in the Jew community he lived I don't understand why but he if you just look at the window you would just see them with a beard and with the shew and the and you know they would dress their children the same they would go cause they have own little Jew[ish] school Jew[ish] hospital everything so I used to think "Oh my God this England you know like before coming to East London cause I remember we used to look at the window and on a Sunday or on a Saturday on a Sunday they used to go to one of the services so I remember the women had the same hairstyle like the bob and the thing and I was told that it's a wig I am not sure but yeah someone told me recently that it's a wig cause I remember the women were all the same the men were all the same and the children weren't wearing any jeans or just causal clothes or like formal clothes everyday of the week so I was like we were really you know very intrigued very thinking oh my God what's this asking my mother and she obviously she doesn't know anything about Jews about anything you know so I was being taught by someone maybe racially different to you was you know different to being taught in Kenya let's say in the sense that you know they had the whole attention of the class but what I found here was the pupils had how they behaved is very different I mean in Kenya we I mean when the teacher spoke we used to shut up

BOTH: Exactly and we over here was very I mean the children can do what they want to do they had all these rights and ...

BOTH: laugh

TASMIN: So I used to just like come to my mom you know so-and-so was very rude to the teacher and the teacher didn't do anything because like in Kenya I mean the school there but then I knew there were schools that actually hit children who misbehaved so over here I used to like I see the punishment was face the wall like facing the wall for five minutes or time out I used to think "that's really not gonna do much" and it doesn't do much because half an hour later they doing the same thing

BOTH: laugh

TASMIN: So I used to go home I used to tell my mother this and my mom just used to laugh she you know but it was a very I don't know very funny very different very I don't know very obviously different in the sense that the kids I think were much more behaved

in the (brief pause) in the school I think I was maybe in terms of being black or the colour of the skin there was maybe a few of us in the class there wasn't a lot I remember I saw there a Japanese girl who used to teach us swimming so I used to I don't know I'd never seen I never saw someone who's I'd never seen a Japanese before and I remember that was very different and I used to come home and I used to say someone with small eyes you know I'd never seen that ever even on TV so (brief pause) school (pause) wasn't... it was different but not really different I don't know if you get what I mean?

SIYANDA: I think so I hope I do

BOTH: laugh

SIYANDA: Okay and then okay so I've asked you a little bit about the challenges you've faced what have been the opportunities you think that you had?

TASMIN: Definitely education but saying that I had education back in Kenya and I believe to this day that (brief pause) I mean my father had, had the means to educate us you know he, he wasn't he wasn't this you know wealthy, wealthy multimillionaire kinda thing no but he did have the means to send you to a private school to maybe fund you through to university so I do think even if I did stay there maybe I wouldn't have gone to university but I think I would have the opportunity to go maybe it would have been up to me kinda thing but over here definitely education definitely (brief pause) getting to know the world (brief pause) people in from everywhere you know that's why I like London I think so much it's because I mean you can find ...

SIYANDA: Everyone from everywhere

TASMIN: Everything you can find all these shops like I went to Germany last June my auntie lives there and then Oh my God like that was very (brief pause) you think when you are in Africa and then you think about Europe and America or anything you will that's exactly how Germany is especially where she lives

SIYANDA: What do you mean?

TASMIN: In terms of the big houses the children like happy little children running around...

SIYANDA: laughs hysterically

TASMIN: And the shops being owned by the Germans or the English like London now the you know it's like everywhere you go you can find people, people that you identify with people that you say "okay you know if I go into this shop I won't I won't feel anything" I don't know but in Germany it's where I really felt different very different I went there for two weeks and then oh wow it was

SIYANDA: What was that difference about?

TASMIN: Cause I didn't see any people any person except my auntie and her children who are mixed race who are the same as me I didn't and especially where she lives she lives I don't know if Berlin or any of these major cities are the same I don't think they are but where she lives she lives in a little village kinda thing so I think it's to do with where

she lives definitely but I remember I went to the shop and I said to her “how could you live there?” I couldn’t she’s lived there for thirty years I couldn’t because...

SIYANDA: Did it scare you or that people were looking at you?

TASMIN: People were looking I felt exposed I felt like oh my God I remember I went with me and I remember cause I went with my mother my mother was getting some medical things that’s the reason we went there and I remember it was me and my mother and my cousin went and me and my cousin decided to check out the nightclub so we went and just two of us and my auntie has a friend who’s a Somalian she’s Kenyan so she said “Okay I’ll show you around” so she took us and I ended up going in there and I’ve never felt so different in my entire life I just felt like everyone is just staring at me I felt like I was in a zoo seriously you know like I really I’ve never felt like that ever in my life and it’s such a bad feeling anyway we went into the night we went into the club and we just stood around I mean I don’t really drink so maybe if you drink you are helped the lady she drinks so she was like proper like drunk she doesn’t know what the hell is going on so me and my cousin are standing there and they are just looking at us like until maybe I think we were uncomfortable for the first hour second hour maybe third hour it was a little bit different but ohh it was a horrible feeling although they are very (brief pause) friendly some of them are really friendly you know they came up to you and you know whatever but I just felt and the shops and when I went to the shops as well they are just looking at you.

SIYANDA: I had a similar experience and I was still in the UK

TASMIN: Oh

SIYANDA: In Scotland in Edinburgh and I was walking around and I’m thinking “something is odd I just started feeling strange” everyone who went past I thought they were looking at me “what’s going on” and then I realized my God I have seen a single black body in a long time and when I looked around I could see anybody and when I went to the club that very same night I did feel completely out of place and like that like a zoo like everybody is looking at you and for me it’s worse cause they would come up to me and say nice hair and I was yeah, yeah I don’t like that it was very interesting

TASMIN: Ja it’s such a bad feeling and I remember coming back to London I was like so glad especially cause I live in an area where it’s everybody you know I can just get a bus and I can just go and buy the Somali food or there’s a Kenyan shop down the road where I can buy the Kenyan food so in Germany it was ahhh wow it’s very it’s crazy and I, I mean I will say to my auntie “how can you live there?” and she’s like although she’s been there for I think twenty eight years now they have never really accepted her because although they came to her house they you know they associate with her or whatever I don’t she’s not happy she’s really is not and she even says “I should have moved to Lond...” cause her husband is German so she said you know “I wish you know you guys are really lucky in a sense where you live” she and I remember my cousins they get especially the young one he’s a little bit dark skinned the rest are not dark skinned you know there’s really a lot of white in them but the third born he says “ja I face a lot of problems at school because of this and that” so it’s really sad but yeah in the UK I’ve

never felt like that never although I don't really come out of London as much maybe (chuckles) I should try and go to Scotland

SIYANDA: I love Scotland I love the old buildings there and that's the only reason I keep going back alright thank you we are gonna sort of finish perhaps we have sort of spoke a little bit about your past where you have been where you are at the moment what you're doing let's speak about where the future where do you see yourself at in a few years times?

TASMIN: Hopefully finished my education in a sense maybe

SIYANDA: Are you planning to do your MA?

TASMIN: I am I'm concentrating I'm in between two minds at the moment but I would love to do it but I mean it doesn't ... I don't know it doesn't ... just like the same way this just like the same way as this degree I'm doing at the moment doesn't guarantee me a job you know the MA people say you should an MA cause you have you know these qualifications and blah, blah, blah but yeah I would love to do an MA but at times when I look at my age and I think Oh God you know

SIYANDA: You twenty four

TASMIN: I'm twenty five I turned twenty five last week

SIYANDA: So that's okay I'm turning twenty six I have a real crisis

TASMIN: Wow but you've finished your PhD so

SIYANDA: No I'm doing it

TASMIN: Yeah so you're gonna be finishing.

SIYANDA: In two years time it I'm getting old I'm running out time

TASMIN: Well they say it's different for men, men have all the time in the world (chuckles)

SIYANDA: Maybe

TASMIN: I think that's really good that you're finishing you're twenty-six now?

SIYANDA: I'm turning twenty-six next month actually

TASMIN: So yeah it's not too bad I mean you started early

SIYANDA: I did start early and I mean I finished high school and I went straight to Uni

TASMIN: Oh no college?

SIYANDA: Sorry?

TASMIN: You didn't go college?

SIYANDA: No we don't have the same system like when you finish high school your five years of high school then you go to Uni or ... you do your three degrees which is a Bachelors then you do your Honours then you do Masters and then your PhD so it's a different route that's I ...

TASMIN: But in terms of the future I really (brief pause) I think I will be done with Uni or further education in a year or so hopefully God willing and then after that it's really finding a job that I'm (brief pause) working I know everyone has this idea but for me I think a perfect job would be (brief pause) I would be working but at the same time I would enjoy what I'm doing I would love what I'm doing...

SIYANDA: And do you have an idea what that would be?

TASMIN: At the moment, at the moment it would be (brief pause) it would be something I would love to work in Africa somewhere in Africa doing work with maybe refugees or migrants or one of these NGO's things you know that's would be maybe a dream job for me but it would be basically helping people maybe in a similar (brief pause) over here it would be working similar position but I was when I came here and I didn't have this networks or these communities organizations whatever you might call them to maybe make the path a little bit easier especially also I wanna work with not just the young people especially the older people you know so that would be my goal my hopefully.

SIYANDA: Now seeing that you've been a nomad for most of your life where would you like to be placed or where do you see yourself staying living?

TASMIN: I mean I think can adapt any where now

BOTH: laughing

TASMIN: But I don't know London is (brief pause) London is it's my heart is here I feel that I can you know walk down the street at night I don't feel different I don't feel that I don't belong here or you know I feel like that but at the same time I feel like (brief pause) it's getting worse it's (brief pause) I don't know I feel like with time with years it wouldn't be the same as it is now like it wasn't the same let's say five years ago things are getting worse and blah blah blah but

SIYANDA: Why do you think things are getting worse?

TASMIN: I, I, (brief pause) I think it's at times I think it's how (brief pause) it's like taking my example as my community to begin with they came here as refugees they came here you know because of the civil war and you know these things and they were accepted and they were given these opportunities you know the housing the money the educational system you know everything was free to say and (brief pause) you would think that having these opportunities would maybe shape a person better it would make them and them coming from somewhere like that and coming here you would think that they would wanna grab these opportunities and I don't know and maybe take something out of it and take it back home which would be you know a while but (brief pause) a lot of them are into the gangs the crime the, the white people saying "Too much refugees" "Too much Somalis taking over" you know if you read article after article you know especially now you read when I read so much things "The Somali boy stabbed this so-and so" and I feel sick you know I feel like (brief pause) maybe you are not giving us a bad name it's not about giving us a bad name it's just about I mean how could you do that kinda thing you know and there's so much negativity towards Somali people I think at first a lot of them at the moment I don't know if you follow this but they are granted stay

in European countries like Holland like Denmark like Norway these countries but they now wanted to come to the UK because the UK is very (brief pause) into the religion and very into (brief pause) I don't know the UK I think it's they say that it's the best place in Europe if you are Muslim to raise your family or whatever I think they and then I mean at times I think you know it's not my country why should I say why should I care that these people are coming and they are coming because of you know the right reasons you know I don't think that's a bad time but at the same time they're coming and they are they are not making things worse but at the same they are sort of given opportunities there and they wanna come here and already here I think it's fu... not full up but I think there's a ...

SIYANDA: No space for anybody else?

TASMIN: Well there's I think there's space for everyone but I don't know I think there's space for those who are really in need I mean they (brief pause) they don't need it as much as those ones who are rejected because you know because the government said "It's too much of you here already kinda thing" you know I don't know if that makes sense but yeah and when I say things are gonna change I definitely mean in terms of in terms of (brief pause) well the media actually does influence us all in good or bad or whatever so in terms of your you're being your faith and the all this Islamphobic you might wanna call it it's a it's you know directed at Somalis it's directed at Pakistanis whatever but you could say does makes things worse because they say now that being black is not really you don't really get marginalized or discriminated because you're black nowadays it's okay to be black but it's not okay to be Muslim kinda thing you know they hate you more than they hate the black because they see you as a threat and fear and all these things so I would not wanna live somewhere who (brief pause) where I feel like I don't know I, I get treated differently cause I don't think I could live somewhere where on daily basis I feel different or because I don't have the freedom to put a scarf on my head if I may choose to do so kinda thing so I don't know I don't know where my future is at the moment it's the UK but I mean Kenya now is a mess (chuckles)

SIYANDA: Kenya is so depressing it's such a mess

TASMIN: Yeah so maybe I'll find somewhere else to go so ja

PAUSE

SIYANDA: I think that for now I think we can stop there thank you very much

TASMIN: That's alright

Interview ends

Second Interview: Tasmin

Siyanda	Alright, maybe we can start about if there's anything you think you'd like to add or change from your first interview.
Tasmin	I can't even remember...
Siyanda	You don't remember?
Tasmin	Yeah, I would like that. But, I'm trying to think, I think I emphasised on religion at times...
Siyanda	Yes, you did, that's fantastic.
Tasmin	I did, so, I mean, religion I think is a very important, I mean very important with me, but, I don't know I think you were more looking for race...
Siyanda	Yeah, but I mean it's important to you and it's what really came out in the first interview.
Tasmin	And I think it's not because it's important, it's because it's what I've... I don't know I've sort of, I've never experienced... I mean I have, you know being my race is an issue everyday. But it's never been an issue. I think religion is more... especially the way I was brought up, so the people around me, it's always about religion, it's never been about colour.
Siyanda	And also, especially now, with what's going on in the Middle East, and the war on terror, I suppose religion is gonna be more important.
Tasmin	Yeah, I think it's much more. It's... I don't know, I think because you live in a society, it's kind of like you have to pinch yourself and think "oh, I'm an outsider" and at the moment I think there's a lot war on terror, but then I think there's a war on Islam, that's how I feel, and when I watch these images and I read these things I feel I need to be more... I don't know... I need to be... it needs to be more important. Like maybe it wasn't before the whole 9/11 thing, but now I think it's sort of... I have to be assertive, I have to be proud of who I am, what I am, and show them that it's not how it is in the media.
Siyanda	You make sense perfectly. Let me just jump here to the thing I wanted to ask, to speak about. It was very clear in your first interview that religion is the most important and certainly a recurring part of your story or in your story and religion seems to be much more important, even more important than race. There's a nice part in your interview towards the end, I mean right at the end, you said something like being black is not really what gets you marginalised or discriminated because nowadays it's

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>okay to be black, but it's not okay to be Muslim. They hate you more than they hate you if you're black because they see you as a threat, and when I read that I really really... I loved it because I think it illustrates very powerfully that religion is more important for you and even more important than race, cause you also say, and you've said now that race has never been an important factor in your life. So, can you maybe elaborate on that and maybe give me instances where being Muslim, Muslim woman, sort of overrides everything else that you are.</p>
<p>Tasmin</p>	<p>I mean, I think it goes back to where I come from, where I was brought up, different cultures, different culture in Yemen, the Arabic culture, coming into Kenya now, it was a..., Kenya has a lot of different tribes, always the Christian, it's the whole Christian culture, and then coming here, women in terms of race, I have never, and I say this honestly, I have never experienced anything bad because I'm black, because I'm a woman. No, I haven't. It sounds strange because I've lived here for, is it coming to seventeen years now, and I say this to people and get like "oh so you've never been turned down for a job or because you're black" and I say, honestly, maybe yeah I've been turned down for a job, yes of course, but I never take it upon myself to think it was because of me.</p> <p>Yes, and I'll give you an example. I went to make an appointment with my auntie, who her English is not very good, so I took her to the dentist to make an appointment for her, and the woman was a white woman. She was very rude because my auntie, cause I sort of stood back and let my auntie speak for herself, and try to make an appointment. The woman was very rude like, I think when they see, and the woman was dressed, her head was covered up, my auntie, her head was covered and she was wearing the black, we call it the abayo. A-B-A-Y-O, abayo yeah, so she was wearing that and the head scarf, and the woman was, and cause we came in together but then I was just dressed the way I am, and my auntie, here English is pretty good, although she's got a heavy accent, and the way she was dressed you can tell she's a minority and she's new or whatever. So the woman was very rude, she said things like you know. I mean "we're fully booked" and "we don't take any new patients" kind of things, so I said to her :when are you, you know" and she said "our next appointments are in April" and I said "I mean she's got a really bad</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>toothache, I mean April is two weeks away, what can she do?” And the woman was like “oh go to...” very rude and very defensive, and she was receptionist, and I’m thinking “she hasn’t got people skills. Why has she got the job in the first place?” So I came up, we made the appointment anyway for next week because I insisted that, you know, she is allowed to see her dentist you know, two weeks is a long time to wait. So, I mean I walked away from that situation, I mean we came back because my sister was waiting in the car outside. So, we came in and my aunt was like “oh she was very rude”, my aunt said “is it because of the way I look, the way I’m dressed?”, and I automatically said no. I think it’s to do with who...how you think. I never think being black is a problem, I never think “I got turned down here or that woman rude to me, or whatever because of my colour”, but then my aunt, automatically, that’s what she thought.</p>
Siyanda	<p>But, did she think because she was black, or because she was...</p>
Tasmin	<p>No, it was to do with the way she was dressed, yeah, and I mean, and me, I dressed like that sometimes, I mean, yeah, when I go to the mosque, I dress like that although I’ve never really travelled on public transport, and things like that dressed like that. So maybe in terms of that, I would get...I don’t know, maybe I would feel it or something. But I do dress like that, it’s always being driven to A and B and coming home and, you know. But, in terms of being... my race being an issue in certain situations, I never think that it is, and the reality is, it must be but I never feel it and I never use it as an excuse.</p>
Siyanda	<p>That makes sense. I supposed I’m also interested in the fact that okay, you’re Muslim (a), and which I suppose socially there’s a lot of stigma, then you’re black, historically it’s a minority, you’re a woman socially you almost have these three elements stacked up against you, but yet for you being Muslim is more important?</p>
Tasmin	<p>I mean, it’s funny because I really don’t come necessarily from a religious family, I mean I’ve never been,... my parents have never brought me up, you know, you must wear a head scarf, you must pray five times a day, I was free, and I’m still free, I mean my mother was very understanding, I can do what you do, in terms of, you know, being different faiths, but then I choose not to. I choose live my life in this... I know it’s very boring but it’s important, but I don’t know, race doesn’t... race has never been, I don’t know, a big deal for me, and I don’t know,</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>people don't understand it. I mean, being a woman now, you know, it's a men's world. I mean, I never feel that too. I really don't. I mean, I... in terms of ...I don't know jobs or coming to University, you know, I'm very ambitious, I wanna do things, I wanna help people, but I never when applying for a job or I don't know, anything in life, I never thing "because you're woman, you'll get turned down, because you're black, you'll be the same case, because you're Muslim it'll be the same thing. But I think, it's changing now, like I said, I think being Muslim now is terrible, especially when you're in the West but for me, when they do that, that's when I really, you know, read about my faith, I try to think, and I said that my faith does not support suicide bombers, it does not support killing innocent people. It doesn't. So, when I see these people, I just, I feel sorry for them because you read about young boys, you know, being, blowing themselves up, and I think "that young boy did not know what his faith was". It's just...I don't know, I just...what was the question again?</p>
Siyanda	<p>It's very interesting and I suppose where we are as humanity now, being Muslim does seem to be, I would say, renewed underdog, if I can use such terms, but it does seem that that's one identity that's under threat, cause you could see that you said in the first interview it's a threat cause you see you're gonna to do these terrible things onto innocent people. It doesn't make sense for me that there's a Muslim woman that becomes the most important part of your life.</p>
Tasmin	<p>Oh, you don't understand that?</p>
Siyanda	<p>I do, it makes perfect sense for me.</p>
Tasmin	<p>Because, I mean, I don't know if I...I hope you're understanding what I'm saying. I think you are but, even though I, I mean I don't pray 5 times a day, I don't cover my hair, I still feel, I see all these woman with a veil and with their heads scarf and I feel really... I have a lot of respect for them, I think it's a lot for them to dress like that and then come out against of these things and I'm envious, and I'm like" what's wrong with me kind of thing, how come I can't do that?". But at the same time I feel... I don't feel like they're better than me, I don't feel they're stronger than me, in terms of faith, no. So...</p>
Siyanda	<p>Okay and it makes sense. So, let's pick up on something else that's connected to religion, about being a woman in Muslim family.</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>What I find interesting in your interview is that it sort of does illustrate the changing positions that women, sort of, occupying, they occupy now in Islam. For instance, in your family, you being able to get educated and that being encouraged by your family, whereas as you said, that your Mom's family didn't believe in educating her, educating girls, and you not wearing the Punjab, you know, it's not a big issue for your family, whereas your uncle enforces it on your cousins, right? Although the veil is still a personal struggle for you, it's not something you still feel guilty for not wearing it but you've got the ability to not wear it if you don't want to, and you don't. And also, it was very interesting, I thought, the arranged marriage aspect, that you said that your father doesn't expect you to have an arranged marriage. So you seem to have all these, sort of, different paths and possibilities open to you. But at the same time, there seem to be very interesting, sort of, limitations as well. For instance, they do not want you to marry outside. So, I mean, I don't know how you want to comment on that?</p>
<p>Tasmin</p>	<p>I mean, I don't think you its good to limit yourself in terms of finding a suitable partner, I mean he could be anything, you know. But in a perfect world, for me personally, I think it'll make...I'm for an easy life. I'm not one of those people who like to complicate life. If it has to be done, it has to be done, kind of thing. But, then in terms of marrying someone, I would prefer that someone to be of the same faith, not... he doesn't have to be a Somalian, he doesn't have to be black. I don't know, I have... sometimes I feel like you must be different... you must be the same colour as me kind of thing. But, yeah, I would be prefer him to be the same... the same religion as me. I think that's a big thing, especially within my family, for me, for him to be accepted and for us, you know, to be together. But, I don't know, I've seen with my sister, with my cousins, sometimes it doesn't happen, you know. I mean, I have a good friend of mine who married outside the faith, but who had a lot of, I don't know, difficulties. I mean, her parents disowned her and, you know, it's very sad to see, but now the marriage has broken down, and it's very hard putting two cultures together, especially...not even two cultures but two religions together, kind of thing. So, I would prefer him to be, but I mean, sometimes life doesn't work like that. Maybe I'll find someone who is not and I'll say to hell with my faith. But no, I wouldn't do that.</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

Siyanda	But, why is it that I suppose your family seems to be more open to the possibilities for you to sort of, create a different path as a Muslim woman, whereas your other kind of family, you know, your uncle sort of enforces certain aspects of the religion on his children and your parents don't on you?
Tasmin	I mean, my uncle now, if I had to go to his house, which I do sometimes, I feel that I can't wear anything too tight or I can't wear a t-shirt or a top that is like... is just up to my waist. I feel like I have to cover up, kind of thing, yeah. Although I don't cover my head, but I still wear loose-fitting clothes because it's his house, he... I know what he's like. He's very, he's very deeply into his religion but in my house, it's very free. I mean, I wear what I want to wear, but my parents, yeah, they're very...my father...he's very... he's educated so he's very , you know, into education is the key to life kind of thing. That's his motto, I think, you know, parents. But, my mother now, wants us to have the same opportunities she didn't have, yeah, she wants us to do things she didn't do. She wants us to see the world, she wants us to do things but deep down, she would love for me to marry someone and settle down. I mean, she has three girls, and I'm...
Siyanda	The youngest one...
Tasmin	Yes, to be married, so in our culture it's very hard to keep hold of a girl, in terms of, I don't know, for them to think the girl is not being too promiscuous or the girl...we don't want the girl to get pregnant out of wedlock, kind of thing, so that's why they're very worried about girls and they want them to be married as soon as...
Siyanda	Possible...
Tasmin	ASAP. But my mom, she knows what I'm like, she knows...it's just finding that person, and I mean, if I found him today, wow, how brilliant for her, but she, I mean, sometimes she does joke, you know, time is ticking, whatever, but the thing is cause she was married at 16 you see, and now nearly 10 years later I'm not married, so...
Siyanda	I mean, I suppose for me it's also the same. I'm 26, my parents are... and I'm the first born, they're worried-like "where is she?" and I'm not gonna get married and it's tough for them, and I'm not even gonna have kids. This is not what I'm gonna do with my life. It's not. I'm not doing that.
Tasmin	You don't wanna get married?

Second Interview: Tasmin

Siyanda	No no no!
Tasmin	I mean, if you found the perfect person, I think you'd probably change your mind?
Siyanda	No, no, no, no. No, thank you.
Tasmin	I think you would?
Siyanda	No, thank you. No, I can't think of anything worse.
Tasmin	Really?!
Siyanda	Yes, sharing your space with this person and these kids, that are noisy and ...
Tasmin	Yeah, well. It's your kids, kind of thing.
Siyanda	Still, this is not what I'm doing with my life, no. but, it's different strokes for different folks.
Tasmin	Yeah, you're right, yeah, you know. I think I would love to. I think it's different for girls. They always think about the day and what not.
Siyanda	And how they will appear in their wedding?
Tasmin	Well, not really. Yeah, they do that. But, I think it's to do with parents. They expect you to get married, that's their entitlement, and have all these kids for them. So, sometimes I feel there's pressure they put in. Nowadays, I see women who, in my culture, and they're like over 30 and they're still...
Siyanda	Unmarried...
Tasmin	Yeah, and I think, you know, "good for you", and there's always this stigma or whatever, seriously about older women, you know... they're there for a reason, they're not married for a reason, kind of thing. I'm like "whatever, you know. They don't want, you know, someone to complicate their life."
Siyanda	Okay. Now, I'm gonna go back to a question I planned to ask before. It's great that you've sort of, worked your way around. Actually, no. Let me just continue this way. I want us to speak about your nationality. I find this aspect of the interview...okay sorry, the first interview very, very interesting. Cause, actually, as you said outside, the story you told me is not about race. It's not about being black, which is great. It's actually about being Somali, in a lot of places but also but then Muslim, but also about being Somali. So, I find this fascinating for me, as I said before. You have never been Somali, and yet, you know, you are yourself Somalis, you accept Somali and it seems to be important to you and this

Second Interview: Tasmin

	came out in your first interview quite strongly. So, I thought we could talk about that some more. You're attached to Somalia?
Tasmin	No, my nationality at the moment, I'm British.
Siyanda	Really?!!
Tasmin	Yeah, I'm a citizen there. Oh, I didn't say that in my...
Siyanda	No! No!
	Oh, okay. But I... Maybe I didn't say that because I don't see myself as British. I mean, I have their passport, I have been a citizen for quite a while now, I would say for maybe six years. But, um... look at your face!
Siyanda	I'm shocked!!
Tasmin	Really? Because it doesn't...I mean, I never take the British...
Siyanda	I know! I mean, it sound strange though. Suddenly, I'm gonna think of you as British now. It's very strange.
Tasmin	No, I don't really like to put myself in the British box because I don't feel British, although I've been here for most of my life. I eat their food, I listen to their music, I wear their clothes, you know, in terms of adapting to their culture. Yeah, I've taken some of their cultures, I've taken in, but I've also left the ones I don't like, I have been... I haven't really...
Siyanda	Can you think about the things that you've taken in that are British, and the things that you've sort of... and I'm sure it's a strange question, but can you sort of think about what have you sort of embraced and what have you sort of, not embraced as part of you.
Tasmin	Mmmm. I'm thinking now. I mean I love London. I think London is very diverse, very different. If you go anywhere in Europe, it's never the same as here. So, I love London for its people, although I wouldn't really necessarily say for its British people, but for the people. I have British friends who I love, but I also have Ghanaians, you know, born here, whatever, who... they are the same. But I eat fish and chips...that you don't like...
Siyanda	Do not tell me about baked beans.
Tasmin	Oh, I love baked beans!
Siyanda	What is it about baked beans?!
Tasmin	Oh, you don't like baked beans? Beans on toast, they say.
Siyanda	I think, back home, I perhaps eat baked beans once a year. But here, it goes on everything. It's everywhere, I hate it.
Tasmin	They do. With chips, with curry...

Second Interview: Tasmin

Siyanda	Oh God!
Tasmin	Yeah, when I go away, I miss baked beans!
Siyanda	My dear, you <i>are</i> really British!
Tasmin	I'm not! I don't even speak it, although people say I do but I don't. I don't feel I do, but yeah, I eat their food, I listen to their music or just music in general, but I just...I...I don't like how they're very... what's the word? unfriendly, yeah. But, with that I would say it's just different people, I wouldn't generalise...I wouldn't generalise at all. But what I've taken in it's... I don't know what I've taken in, what I've left out. Maybe... I don't know, maybe it's...I think when you live somewhere it shapes you and it shapes the way you think and how you maybe turn out in later life. I know in Psychology that's what the...
Siyanda	I mean... and I suppose it's very hard cause, I also, if you were to ask me this question I wouldn't... I don't know, cause it's very intangible, they way that being in a place sort of shapes you, and cause it does, and in time you think, you know, I'm this way but what it actually is, is not really tangible, yeah. But you still don't tick the British box, and certainly you didn't this... you didn't say in your first interview that you're British. You said you're Somali. So, maybe you carry the British passport but yet you don't.
Tasmin	I don't... No, I would never stand there and I would say with my passport that I'm British unless I, you know...
Siyanda	You're trying to?
Tasmin	I mean, I have a British life, I go there, to make things quicker.
Siyanda	So, you carry the British passport with you?
Tasmin	But, I feel like for you to be British... I mean I have black friends who say...who were born here and they say "I'm English" and I really don't understand them saying "I'm English". Maybe if they said "I'm British", I'd be like "okay you're British" but English? I think for you to claim you're English, I think you have to be white, you have to be from English descent, kind of thing, you know, you have to be from ... I don't understand, and I have friends who say, "yeah I'm English". "Why are you English?" "My parents were born here, I was born here, but if you trace us back, I come from the Caribbean", things like that. I don't really think that way but if they say "yeah I'm British", I say yeah. But I don't feel British because I am not from England, I wasn't born here. Even if I

Second Interview: Tasmin

	was, I don't think... I was born in Yemen, and I really don't feel Yemeni, no. I don't.
Siyanda	And, you spent your travel in Kenya, never in Somalia but you feel Somali?
Tasmin	Uh, yeah. Yeah, I feel very much Somali, I don't know, growing up in Somalia...growing up in Kenya and then here. But I think it's here that my Somali really came into... I don't know, effect? Because, early in the 90's, you know when the Civil broke, when the Civil War was happening, a lot of Somali refugees were coming to the UK, so I think it's to do with, again where I lived, people around me were very much Somali people, coming in and telling me, you know "you're Somali, you look Somali but you don't speak Somali, what's wrong with you?", and also what's your tribe?. That's the rule. And you're like "I don't know my tribe, I've never been told my tribe. It's not important in my household". So, I mean, being with people, you just wanna learn more and you have learn more in order to survive, you know. Yeah. So, by learning more, I love what I learned, I've been learning at home and with friends, learning the language, and just looking at myself. I look at myself in the mirror, what do I see? I don't see a British girl standing there, I see a Somalian girl. Yeah. So, I don't know, people have to sort of, look in the mirror, and...
Siyanda	I mean, I sort of, personally think, back home, with that idea, I mean, I suppose I still have a very geographical sort of, understanding of what home is, given who I am and where I come from, and I did sort of find your interview challenging for me to actually understanding that you need to break away from just locating home and what it means to you into a place, you know. It can be more than a place, or even though you've never been to the place Somalia, you still have some ties to Somalia but though they're not tying the ties?
Tasmin	I mean, I've never been to Somalia, and I really cannot see myself living in Somalia, I really cannot, you know. The thought of me being in a country, I mean in the area they used to get on my nerves, don't get me wrong. You know when there's a lot of you, and they're very, very much into your business and very much into, you know "I saw your daughter walking on the street with a boy holding hands", very much like that, coming to my mother, so...

Second Interview: Tasmin

Siyanda	I miss that!
Tasmin	I don't!
Siyanda	I miss that!
Tasmin	And then getting a picking from your Mom! Oh no. No, thank you!
Siyanda	I miss that! They'll be so demure. Caught smoking!.
Tasmin	Oh, you were smoking? With me it was "yes, she was walking up here with a guy and" yeah. So I cannot see myself living in Somalia, I really cannot, because I was having this conversation. One of my friends went to stay there for six months, being here for, I think 16 years, then gone back for six months. It was very strange for her, but she's telling me "I didn't like it", and I said to her "I would not like it." Everywhere I go, the shops, the hospital, everywhere I go, and it's just Somalis. I would love to go and see, but I can't see myself, long term, living there. Yeah. I think with me, I like different people around me.
Siyanda	You did say that actually, in your first interview that London is multi-cultural, which is great for you, but you also sort of said, well maybe for the older generation that multi-culturalism is not nice for them, they want to know everybody in the street, and everybody to know your business.
Tasmin	Yeah. Very nosy.
Siyanda	I miss that, there's always drama, it's only because I stayed in Leyton. I mean, I suppose also, this is not just only in Britain, it's, I suppose...I suppose I could also say, within the white community in South Africa as well. So I stay in and the owner of the house has lived in that house for 20 years and to this day he doesn't know his neighbours. He doesn't know who stays next door.
Tasmin	Wow! And that's a white community?
Siyanda	Yes, and I couldn't believe he doesn't know who stays next door. Back home, you're in touch. If you want sugar, you just go across, you don't have to go the shop, and you just go across. So, that's very interesting for me. Very strange. Um, connected to Somalia, another big element about your story was being African, and I suppose, the link between being black and being African, is it the same thing or not, and you friends-your African friends and your Jamaican friends, sometimes deny you your blackness and your Africanness. So, I thought it would be nice for us to talk about what it means to be African, first of all, outside of Africa?.
Tasmin	I think, I mean being African here, it's the same as being black. I would

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>not say... actually I would say...it's different actually because, I think in Britain, because of the whole...I mean, I think that the first migrants came here, I think it was the slaves from, I think they brought them from Jamaica and West Indies, the Caribbean, to come here and work for their mines and all these things. So they have been here for a very long time, so with them, I think they're okay. But, when an African comes in, who is new, although if you go back into wherever you come from, I'm sure you'd find, you know, your nationality was here, but being African, it's very different to being black, West Indian, you know. You're African but, again, I've never...I mean...I mean...myself, I don't really...I don't think of myself...yeah I'm African, I know I'm African, but it doesn't really come into question. "You're African, you know, it's either you're black or your religion is different or you're woman" and things like that. But being African, no, I don't think it...I mean, no.</p>
Siyanda	<p>So, do think there is a link between being black and being African? Are those two things the same things? are they necessarily the same things?, are they different things?</p>
Tasmin	<p>Of course I would say they're the same to a certain, I don't know, certain extent or certain limit, but like I said before, being African and being black, it's different to the person you are. If you asked an African now, they would say "yes, it's the same thing" but if you asked somebody from the Caribbean, they would say "no, it's different" kind of thing.</p>
Siyanda	<p>What do you say?</p>
Tasmin	<p>I say it's the same. No, I wouldn't say that, cause Africa, I mean Africa is a big continent with different people, with white people, with Arabs, with everybody, but you cannot classify, I don't know, a white person in South Africa as African, can you?</p>
Siyanda	<p>That's the question, I mean, that's the question. I mean in South Africa today, I can only speak for South Africa; there is a huge debate, a lot of talk about who is African and what it means to be African.</p>
Tasmin	<p>Yes, because people you know, think African, yes and the first thing that comes to mind is a black person. You don't think, you know, Arab African in North Africa and I think, themselves, they don't see themselves as African Arabs. They just, you know, "I'm Arab."</p>
Siyanda	<p>Really?</p>
Tasmin	<p>I think so. Now I'm not sure. But I really think so. I mean, because they</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	say, sometimes, you know, I would really think, I mean, because they do say that Somali people, they come from an umbrella of cushites people.
Siyanda	Of? Another word I need to write down.
Tasmin	C-U-S-H-I-T-E-S
Siyanda	How do you say it?
Tasmin	Cushites.
Siyanda	Cushites.
Tasmin	Yeah, so they do say Somalis are, you know their ancestors were cushites or whatever, and sometimes people say yes, Somalis are African, but at the same time they've got a bit of Arab in them and some Africa Arab. That's what they always say. But, no, being African, I think it should be, I don't know, I think it... I don't know, maybe it should be applied to black people only, or? Because, white people, even though they live in Africa, they're not Africans, they are white, aren't they? I mean, I'm thinking now, they shouldn't be, and I think <i>they</i> don't see themselves as African.
Siyanda	I mean, I know, with some white friends in South Africa, they were torn, no, I can't say they were torn cause they're still alive, they hate the idea of them being thought of as European, they could say "I am not European, I am African" and they're very proud, actually of that part of themselves, you know. Because when they come and visit Europe, they actually do feel different, whatever the different is, they wanna say "I'm African," and I suppose with me I do want to grant them, that they are African. I don't know, I mean I spoke to a fantastic man from Tunisia and he sort of said to me, which has sort of stayed with me, that Africa comes in many colours, and I like that cause I suppose if you go North Africa, people are not... they don't look black, does that make sense? And many of them don't consider themselves to be black, but yet African, so, sort of, this African, being African comes in different colours. What makes one African? That's the question. Is being born there what makes you African. Your brother was, you know... I mean, is being born in a place, so if, God forbid, if I had a child born here...
Tasmin	God forbid...
Siyanda	Would that child be British?
Tasmin	That's my...what I really don't have difficulties dealing with, cause I don't think being born somewhere makes you where you were born, kind

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>of thing, no. I think it's for you to, I don't know, look at your parents and look at your..., I don't know, your back..., your family tree and saying, you know, this is where I really... hopefully you're not mixed. I don't know it makes things difficult when you come from, you know, mixed parent, but...</p>
Siyanda	<p>But then, and then you're in trouble then, cause if you go back, you did say that you have an Arab touch in you, so then...</p>
Tasmin	<p>Yeah, I mean I have some Somali friends who say...some of them are very ignorant. They say "Oh yes, I'm not black, and I'm Somali," and I always say what the race is, white, black, Indian? Where...where would you put yourself? And they'll be like "I would not put myself in the black" and I'll be like "you're very...," I mean it's their opinion, but I really don't feel...I mean my mother, my own mother sometimes, she will say "I'm African, but I'm not black" and I'll be standing there and I'll be like "what are you?" and she's like "you know, I'm Somali," and I don't know who is that sort of thing, you know. I don't understand. A lot of people say... because you, I don't know, I think you're limited to these three things, you sort of put yourself, which is... for the mixed people it must be very difficult for them to put yourself in this category that they don't necessarily think they are, but you're pushed to, kind of thing. Being African, it's... I think it's a beautiful thing, and I think we should be all proud to be African. I know I am, and being black, again it's the same, but I think it's how you've experienced your blackness. A lot of people, you know, bad experiences would wanna change and things like that, but thank God I haven't had any of that, you know. I think even if I did, I think you are who you are, you cannot change that.</p>
Siyanda	<p>Well, unless you're Michael Jackson.</p>
Tasmin	<p>Oh, Michael's got his own problems.</p>
Siyanda	<p>Alright, I'll ask two more questions from your first interview, and then we'll take a break and then do the second part of the interview. Right. These are the two questions I was gonna begin with, cause I thought they were more specific and less abstract but we sort of went the other way round, which is something that's fascinating for me. I want to speak to you about, you know, about your life with your mother when you first came here and moved to your own place, cause you did sort of, speak about that a little bit in your first interview, that you and your mother</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>really were in a foreign place, your Mom didn't speak English, she was separated from her family and what she knows, and suddenly now she has 5 kids to deal with. You even said she had help, you know, to take you to school, but now suddenly she got 5 kids under the age of 12 to deal with by herself, and I suppose, when I think about that, when I sort of, was reading your story, I thought that could have not been easy for you, for your Mom, particularly, but also for you as kids. So, I want to... maybe you could speak to me about that, your life with your Mom, and your own when you came here, your struggles, your challenges that you faced as a family in a new country.</p>
Tasmin	<p>I mean, yeah, it was very difficult, very challenging, but not in terms of getting enough attention or love, cause my mother is the sort of woman who, you know, now I'm 25, and she'll still want to kiss me and hug me. She's like that, you know, one those people. So in terms of attention or love, there was plenty to go around, that wasn't, that was not...nothing to... But in ... for myself I would say it's... it's just having my mother there, you know. I've always had people, my father especially, there, my grandmother, you know, it's been family who've always been there, and...</p>
Siyanda	<p>And know your business...</p>
Tasmin	<p>Yeah. At that age I didn't do too much. I didn't. Yeah, so it was very...very difficult having only one person to, let's say lean on. But, that person herself, she...I mean, I couldn't go home with questions about this country to my Mom cause she was as new as me, you know. She didn't do her homework before we came here, she just came. I mean, what I found difficult was the house, I mean, and I mean...we weren't gonna...we didn't live in poverty, it was absolutely fine. But when I was in Kenya, I mean, in Kenya when you father is...has money, has, I don't know, respect, has... he has some sort of power, he... My father was, my father is, I would say, he's very... I don't know I really don't want to use the word wealthy or rich...</p>
Siyanda	<p>Well-off, comfortable...</p>
Tasmin	<p>Yes, comfortable. Yeah, I would say my father was very comfortable, and we had a very comfortable lifestyle back then, we had a big house, it's still there, I mean, we were the sort of kids who, (my mother was there in the house), were taken to school, we were picked up from school, you</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>see, me and my two sisters. So it was very comfortable, very... You don't do anything; you have people to do things for you. You have people to wash your clothes, to... I mean, the only thing I used to do was go to school and come back and the food was on the table, kind of thing, you know, I think...</p>
Siyanda	<p>That sounds (awesome) to me...</p>
Tasmin	<p>No, I think it's Africa. Yeah, Africa, even if...even if you've got a little bit, you still have this maid and things like that. So, coming here now, was very... very different, the houses... I remember we... the first house. It was...it was a three bedroom house, so we, the boys shared, the girls shared, my mother had her space, and it was very DIY, do everything for yourself. You had to, I don't know, help with the chores, help with the cooking, although I didn't really do that.</p>
Siyanda	<p>Apparently you're a bad cook, that's what you said in your first interview.</p>
Tasmin	<p>Yeah, I am. I don't know, I would say I am. But some people don't. My brothers would say I am. When I cook, they don't eat. They're very rude, they have takeaway. So, they're very spoiled, I would say. But, yeah, we had to... I think everyone coming... it's not just me. But, I think everyone coming to, from Africa to England, they have to adjust to these things, cause in Africa you always have help, you always have, I don't know your niece or someone staying with you so you can, you know, help around. But here, you're just...it's all about you, it's... you know you have to do everything, so we had to do a lot. I know my mother would...my sister...my sister was their I don't know, interpreter kind of person, so she took our places, so it was only me and my three siblings and the last one was very young. So, me and my older sister who was I think 11 at the time or 10, she was very much changing nappies, so I think he was like a little doll to us, my little brother who was six months and we used to just, I don't know, play with him, we'd sort of look after him cause my mother wasn't around, we had to do that. We were told to...not speak to anyone, don't open the doors, those sorts of things, cause in Africa the door is always open, you know. There's no danger of stealing kids, you know. Who wants a child? But here you do have to. My Mom was very scared-don't talk to strangers, you know them kind of things. But, I think those were the challenges, although they're very trivial, you, some people</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	would think, for me they were different, I did not know how to do these things.
Siyanda	No, that's not trivial at all.
Tasmin	Yeah, but I had to learn, I mean, I had to learn quick, and you had to do a lot of growing up and there was not playing outside anymore, I remember we did play outside, it was very long time.
Siyanda	That's the thing I've lost. I don't see any kids playing.
Tasmin	Yeah, no. I mean we... we were just... I mean the TV was just there. The only thing entertaining the children is the telly, nothing else.
Siyanda	And the computers these days.
Tasmin	Yeah, nowadays yeah.
Siyanda	I mean, I remember growing up, just...the streets were just filled with kids playing like 10 different games. It was fantastic.
Tasmin	Yeah, and I really feel sorry for my brother because he didn't have the childhood that we did. He was just, you know, school, TV and bed and in the summer you have the garden, the little bit, to run around.
Siyanda	I also cannot get over the city zoo. I've never found anything so depressing.
Tasmin	Wow. The garden?
Siyanda	What they have here? I think they call it the zoo, but in the city, where they keep the animals inside.
Tasmin	Oh, the London Zoo? You've been there?
Siyanda	And then there's the City Farm.
Tasmin	Yeah.
Siyanda	And then they all go to see cows. I'm surprised.
Tasmin	Why do you wanna see cows? They've never see cows
Siyanda	Haven't you ever been...like I've been in Hackney and there are also these city farms.
Tasmin	I think my sister took my niece there cause they're never seen cows, they were born here.
Siyanda	I know. So when I came, I said "I'm not gonna go see a cow, I know cows," you know?
Tasmin	Yeah, it's very, I don't know, I wouldn't like to bring a child here. I think it's better to bring them up in Africa. There's a lot more freedom, you learn so much, and maybe bring them here when they're a little bit older. Cows!

Second Interview: Tasmin

<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>It would be interesting, I'm thinking now, that brother, since your little brother was born here, do you think he has a different understanding of who he is, and does he feel more British, for instance?</p>
<p>Tasmin</p>	<p>No, no. He...no, although I would not say he feels Somalian, he does not feel Somalian, I think, at all, because, what happened...we ...his first holiday, we took him to see a cow in Kenya. I wanna say...I don't wanna say...he loved Kenya, you know. But, my Mom...my mom took him to the villages where we have a lot of relatives there. She didn't want him to just experience the city life. So, I remember he was very...he was very...he was very stupid. He was very much like... I remember, we went to a place where there was a lot of scorpions and he had his legs on the table, like that, you know like this and he hated it because he's never been in the wild. He's always been in a house, you know, where he's safe. The only thing we have a cat, that's the closest he's got to an animal. So, going there and seeing camels and giraffes, in the market, he's like "oh my God!" but no he, I wouldn't say he feels British. He came here when he was, I think less than six months, but he...</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>He doesn't feel British; he doesn't feel Somalian as well.</p>
<p>Tasmin</p>	<p>No, he's very much...I mean, he for the last two years he's very much been into his religion, very much so. But not nowadays. Nowadays, he's been naughty. I even tell him "you know the last time you prayed?" I think he's growing up, but I think the reason he turned to religion was because, like I said, we live like, I think a minute away from the Mosque, and like, here, you can't really...there's nowhere for him to play, so you know, from school to home to the PlayStation to maybe the computer for a while, but for him going to the Mosque was interacting with people and he met friends through the Mosque and through the community that way. So the reason he turned, I think he turned to religion was because that way he had the get out the house, kind of thing and yeah, he's really, he's been good, he... and himself, he's very...he's very much influenced by the media, I would say, when he watches...Like myself, when I watch Al Jazeera, it's very much into the Muslim world and what's happening and what's not happening, and then, I don't know, you watch something, for example, from Palestine and I mean, I will just sit there, and I... it does affect me, a lot</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>It's completely depressing. It's just... it's long and I see no resolution.</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	It's just like, it's depressing.
Tasmin	No, no. It's the worst thing. And for him, when he sees that, he's very...I mean at times I have to be... I have to tell him, you know...he's very young, he's very into, he goes to this community where they have a lot of Muslims, you know, Pakistanis and all these people from different places, and I mean, I get worried because I don't want him to be told something that's not correct, you know.
Siyanda	You sort of, fear that he might get recruited...
Tasmin	Yeah, yeah and I always tell him, you know, "you know what, this..." when we see something on the TV, which I don't agree with, that happens a lot, I always tell him, "you know this is not the right way." And he'll say something like "you know, I'm not stupid, I know what's right and what's not right." But I always feel like I have to tell him because I don't want these people...I don't know, he'd just fall into wrong hands and he could be changed like that, kind of thing. So, yeah, I love for him to be religious and rather than him get into a gang, as you've seen in London now, it's so ripe, that's what all the teenagers are doing, nowadays, just getting into different gangs and stabbing people. So, I love for him to be doing something positive, I say it's better than him, you know, wandering the streets and doing these things. I also get worried, yeah. You must be careful, yeah.
Siyanda	Yeah, very interesting. Okay, one last question. It's also... oh no, it's not one last question, but it's also about family. On your first interview again, family came out to be what is also a very strong part of your life and story, and yet what I find interesting is scattered around the world. Your aunt, you have your aunt in Germany, some of your Mom's family back in Kenya, your Dad's family, some of them in Egypt, some of them here, some in Canada, I think you said. So, it's scattered around, and I was wondering though, cause it did seem as if your life and your story, family's important. Do all these fragments ever come together for events or family get-togethers? Do you see them, how often do you see them? how do you arrange that?
Tasmin	Okay, I mean, family is...family's family, but what's important to me is my immediate family, you know. My mother and my four siblings, and now I've got two beautiful nieces. So, I don't know, sometimes my father is out of the picture in my head, although he's never really done anything

Second Interview: Tasmin

	wrong or he's never done anything for me to feel like that way. I do feel that way. I feel when I picture my family now it's just my mother there, my two brothers, my two sisters and my two nieces. I think it's because it's brought us closer, coming to the UK, as not being separated and going through these hardships and, I don't know, changes in our lives together. But, in terms of other people, I mean, my father now, he's married now, so I think that's why he's out of my picture of my family. So, there're days where, yeah he's included, but not so much. And other people, yeah, I have my uncle, his children live in Canada. I'm actually planning to go and see them when I finish in June, hopefully, for two weeks, my break.
Siyanda	It's very cold.
Tasmin	Yeah, very cold. But I think June should be okay.
Siyanda	Oh, yeah. True, true, true, true.
Tasmin	They told me to come in December and I said, "no thank you."
Siyanda	Canada, it seems to be much colder than everywhere else.
Tasmin	It's very cold, yeah. So, I haven't seen them for for a long time. For, I think... cause they left, I think before we did, so they've been there for like 20 years, and some of them are born there. But, yeah, I still speak to them, over the phone and Facebook and all these things are happening now. I would love to go to them. I know my Grandma now, she's very much part of the family, I went to see her 2 years ago...
Siyanda	In Kenya.
Tasmin	In Egypt.
Siyanda	Oh, that's your Grandma on father's side, cause your Mom's side she passed away...
Tasmin	Yeah she passed... yeah, she... so I went to see her, I think it was...although my sisters have never been to see her, I think for me it's...I think I'm one of those people who think they're obligated to do something, because... I don't know why, I just feel like that way, I feel like, you know, she's my grandmother, she... I don't know, she deserves for me to go and, I don't know, see her before... she's very old.
Siyanda	Before the end...
Tasmin	Yeah, even it could be the end for me or for her, so I think it was important for me to see her, just like it was important for me to go there and sort of, connect with my father, and sort of, I don't know, make our

Second Interview: Tasmin

	relationship be better. But...
Siyanda	Is it a little bit better now?
Tasmin	I don't know. I just... there's a... there is... I mean he's a bonus. He's not very much, a talking kind of guy. He's very... very private, very closed kind of guy, so you don't really know what's... and my mother is the complete opposite, while my father, he'll tell you he loves you, he cares for you, but at the same time, I don't know, sometimes he won't show it, you know and they say actions speak louder. So is it better? I would have to say it is, but in reality I don't think it's better, it's the same. I speak to...we're not very clo... I mean...
Siyanda	But you were at one time?
Tasmin	Very close, at one time.
Siyanda	Yeah, you were quite clear actually, ukuthi, your father seemed important until... and yeah.
Tasmin	Yeah, yeah. I think, yeah he was very important before we came here. I think that's one thing I...I don't know, I, sometimes I blame my mother for it, cause she's the one who uprooted us and brought us here, because I mean, I didn't ask to come here. She...she didn't ask, she didn't even tell us we were all coming here. It was just, you know, off. So, I... I mean... I don't blame her, I really don't, but I just feel if it wasn't for her bringing us here, things would've been different, yeah. But now, with him, I...I mean I...I...he's not... like I said he doesn't speak much on the phone. He's a letters person, he writes kind of thing. In 2008, who wants to write? I mean, before...
Siyanda	Send a text!
Tasmin	Yeah. Or an email. He's very much, you know, into these writings, he does write letters and things, but it's not very...it's not how I would like to be, I would like for things to be better. But, over the years I've realised, I've come to know what he's like, what his character's like, his personality. So, when he does these things, I just know, I just say "that's just him" you know. But, um...and another thing, which I hate is, I think boys should have a very, I don't know, I think should have like a male role in their life, especially in a country like this. So I would love for him to be involved with my brothers a bit more, cause I think the girls don't need him, I think that we...
Siyanda	Got your Mom.

Second Interview: Tasmin

Tasmin	It's so...yeah. Not even with my Mom. I think girls are much more...I don't know, once you grow up, you're grown up, you know. I think with boys, especially with my brothers. They're teenagers, so it would be nice for them to have his good...
Siyanda	Yeah
Tasmin	Yeah, in their life, and he... he's never really done that, especially with my younger brother, you know. He doesn't... at six months, what do you really know? And I think he should have tried harder with his child, and that's the thing I hate sometimes.
Siyanda	Alright. Okay.
Tasmin	Sorry, I think I...
Siyanda	No, no, you did not. One last question, and then we can take the break. But... the most significant people in your life, and the impact they've had. What was quite clear in your first interview was that you... there are two people, I'm sure there's many, that's why I'm asking you about other people, two people who've had a good impact on your life, your two teachers, one in Kenya and Mrs Clarke. And also, I want to know about who are other people who have had an impact on your life and what that impact has been?
Tasmin	Apart from those two? Um, definitely, my mother, definitely. Even my mother's very strong, very, very... I think you have to be a very strong woman for to migrate to another country and to be surviving and being a single mother. I think it's the whole wow, it's something which I don't wish on anybody. In fact, I think it's very hard, so in terms of... she's a very good role model, I try to be, aspire to be like her, you know. And I...I think I...I wanna do my...I wanna, I don't know, I wanna further my career, further myself in terms of career or opportunities for her. These things she never got do, I wanna do, and I wanna...I want her to...to very much say, you know, "my daughter has done this, you know, I never got the chance, but she has and it's changed her life" kind of thing. And someone else who's inspired me, I would say it's...it's a girl I met at school, and she...she was... I mean...I mean...I'm a Somalian and she's a Somalian but at the same time she came here as a refugee, she came from the war, and I never experienced that, you know, I really don't know how it feels, to...to... you know, for war to break out suddenly, you know, and I feel, I mean, that's why I think I really wanna, the work with refugees in

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>the future, it's because, I really cannot imagine being a child and you know, every child should have a safe environment, regardless of what colour you are, who you are. I think every child, you know, should have that. So, she, again, she was very...with me at school and I think she's the one who taught me the Somali that I know. She said to me, "you don't know who you are." She was very strong and very much...she...and I...you know these people who come from the same situation, same problem, but we have one who...who maybe uses that problem as an excuse, when life doesn't go his way or whatever, and she...she wasn't like that, she was very strong, very...and I mean what... her life was very...very different to mine, very much...she wasn't pampered as much, you know, she was...had to grow up faster than... she really didn't have a childhood. When I think about it, what she told me, you would not think she had a childhood, in terms of children being allowed to have no responsibility, just...just you know, just being free, yeah, you know being a child. So, when you...when she tells me how it was and now, her life is very much...she didn't use that refugee thing as an excuse, she furthered...she furthered herself, she's done...she's very strong, very um...I mean I... she went through so much, I think and for her to be still standing, it's, you know, it's...it's amazing. In terms...she was very... I don't know if you want me to all the way on the war or what went on in her life or not.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>It's up to you.</p>
<p>Tasmin</p>	<p>But, she...she had to, you know, see and experience war, you know, people being killed around you, having, again, having the whole. So, I...I...she would tell me things and I mean...I ... I don't remember if I told you in my first interview that I wanted to be a writer at some point and I mean, I used to, I don't know, sometimes I think in my desperation to write, so when I used to speak to her, or not even speak to her in a formal way, just, you know, friends speak, so when you come away from her and, you know, you come into your house or whatever, and you look back and you think about what happened, I think she very much...she very much...what I used to write then, the emotions I used to feel was...I remember I used to write a lot when she was around. She moved to London and she's a very, very amazing girl. But, yeah, she went through a longer life, and she's still... you know, her head is high. She's okay.</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

Siyanda	She sounds amazing.
Tasmin	But I think...I think...I don't know, I think sometimes you don't have to know a person for them to be an inspiration. I think you can just have...I don't know, sometimes I...I am very much...I'm not...I'm not a very political, I'm very much...I'll watch the news for 5 minutes, and I will see someone, whether it be a British person dealing with cancer, or a child, you know, caught up in the conflict in the Middle East, I think both of them, it ranges from, you know from all these stories. I think...I come away thinking, you know, thank God or I thank God and I'm very much thankful to what I have. Sometimes, I'll be like, "yes I don't have the latest shoe" or things like that, and then by watching, and you think, "Oh God, at least I have what I have" kind of thing, and I'm very much like that. When I do watch something or read something, I ...it puts my life into...I don't know, whatever thing I'm dealing with at the moment, seems so stupid, so small compared to what I've read, or what I've seen or what I've heard and you just have to, I don't know, be thankful to what you have, which I know I am. I don't know, sometimes, I mean, we all have them days where we want more and whatever, but yeah. I think it's everywhere.
Siyanda	I think on that inspirational note, we'll take a break. Thank you.
Siyanda	Now it is recording. Okay...I had a pen... Right, I would like you to sort of take some time, and I want you to think about your life, and think about all the moments in your life where the colour of your skin or being black has mattered the most, and share those moments with me. If not, that's also interesting for me, just think and think about the moments in your life where being black has mattered the most, and perhaps share those stories with me.
Tasmin	I mean, mattered in a good way or whichever?
Siyanda	Whichever.
Tasmin	I think growing up, especially, I'd say, secondary school, my secondary school was very mixed, very... although, we live in England, the majority of... actually the minority in my school. There was a lot of Asians, I think; again it's the area of my school. So there was a lot of Asians who, perhaps, dominated the school, so being black mattered then, to a lot of people because, you know how, um... not myself, but then you know how after school you have these fights or whatever, and you meet at the gate

Second Interview: Tasmin

	and things like that
Siyanda	Oh you do that here?! You meet after school?
Tasmin	Yeah, so, being black, you know, you had this support of your black peers, you know. It doesn't matter if they were black from, I don't know, anywhere in Africa, or the Caribbean or whatever, who have been born and bred in the UK, you still had... you know you could still count on my black friend to back me up on this even though I'm in the wrong or whatever
Siyanda	Yes.
Tasmin	<p>It mattered in school, to be...and also to be accepted in this black and you feel you're a part of something, you know, we have a common, you know, what's the word, common interest or we have something in common, although we might not have anything in common once we speak, but the colour of our skin will put us... you smile at each other because or whatever because you know that person is just like you.</p> <p>So, yeah, it mattered when, I don't know, when you get into... I don't know, difficulties or ... I think, that's when I think it matters most for people, when they, they sort of, when they're going through, it's like a bad period of their life or a bad day or whatever, in school, then...then...and especially, as the Asians were the majority in my school, being black was you know, you had the black boys on that corner, the Asian boys there, and with us, the girls...the girls were much more mixed but the boys were very much, you know, "you're black coming to my group," and whenever they had these things on a black person, they would, you know, fight your corner. But I...</p>
Siyanda	They would fight your corner?
Tasmin	They would fight...yeah; it'd be, yeah, they would fight your corner. They would...you know they would always be there if anything went wrong. But, again, for me then, because they were Asians and anything Asian, there's a lot of resistance with being black, there's a lot of difference in between Asians, so I must say I was very much close to... I mean I did have (Seik) friends, one of my best friends was a Seik, but I was very...I had a lot of Pakistani friends, I remember, and a lot of... although there was not a lot of them going in my school. It was in like a predominantly Pakistani area, so I...we had a (tryst) as well, because again, I would go

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>back to the village when... because I did use to see them when you have these Islam things-meetings, seminars-whatever. I did use to see them with their Moms, and my mother always use to encourage me to, sort of, hang around with them. So...but I will always, you know, he was very much... I would not support the black people, I would not support the Asians, but I would...I'm sort of leaning against the black...I don't know why, towards the black, yeah. But, I mean I'm not a very confrontational kind of girl, so I never really had that experience, but I think it mattered in school, who you are? I mean, what you are? I didn't necessarily feel it mattered to me but I know it mattered to a lot of people, yeah. And it did matter in terms of, you know, this boy likes you, that girl likes you, it only comes from your race. You know, you don't get an Asian boy fancying a black girl. That was very...very, it didn't happen so much. So, you know, in terms of, you know, finding a boyfriend, he has to come from your group, you know, I think. Although, I did...I did like an Asian boy, and he did like me, and...But nothing came out of it. We were very close, but I saw him a few years ago, and he did tell me, he was like a few years too late. Yeah, it doesn't...it doesn't happen.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Now, in what ways do you think your life, as a black, Somali woman in Britain today is different...is different or is the same as life for your either parents or your grandparents or your other older family members in Britain?</p>
<p>Tasmin</p>	<p>Mmm...Okay. What is different, I would say, I mean...I... I mean, I will applaud those older generation living in the UK, because, they... they didn't have a difference in their country, it was...you're all the same, you know. Wherever you turned, it's the same colour. The only thing...the only difference was clanship, you know, it was different. That's how they identified themselves, so being a Somali, being...I don't really think, even I, I think speaking to people who are, like my mother's era, my grandmother's age, I don't think they knew there was...and then again it comes to education you know, a lot of them were illiterate, a lot of people very illiterate, very...they didn't go to school, didn't further their minds, so you... in Somalia, it was all the same. The only way...the only difference in identifying yourself was clanship, you know. What are you, who are you? It was "I am so-and-so," it was never "I am black, I am white, I am," for example, I am... like I have a clan, my mother has a</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	clan, so that's...me and my mother are a different...you follow your Dad's clan, so my mother and my Dad, they were from two different clans...
Siyanda	Different clans. Which are?
Tasmin	<p>It's like...I don't think it's an umbrella, because you have, I think it's four umbrellas, and then under these umbrellas, they come down. My mother and my father...my...my father himself, he's a Yemeni, half Yemeni, so he's very different. But then, I think it's different to those people, answering your question, different between me and them. Them, was coming out of Somalia where, there's no one but Somali people, you've never seen a...a black person and I would say black using this thing.</p> <p>I'm not saying it's something, how they...they look at things and how their perspective is. They didn't see white people, I mean they must have been, maybe they saw one or two aid work workers, or whatever, people who work there, so they...and they did see Africans. But then coming to the UK, especially London, and you just...every morning, every day, you just see the different people, I think it's...it must have been very difficult. Whereas I, myself personally, I grew up being different from the word go, um not being different but having different people around me-in Yemen, different people around me again, and Spain, same applies for Kenya, same applies for here.</p> <p>So, with my mother, she didn't have any white friends, she didn't have any black friends; she only had her own kind of friends, of family, of associates, or whatever. So, I mean, what's interesting is, cause I'm...like I said, I'm doing something similar to what you just asked me and there's a guy who done a study on Somali migrants who come from Somalia and-he done it in North America- who wanted to know how they identified themselves or how they...how they see themselves, being in a country where it's very much about being black or being white and they don't know nothing about that, and it was very interesting to read and what the conclusion was it's... I mean those people are very... I mean I laugh now but it's... thinking about them, it's like thinking of my mother cause she'd probably say exactly the same thing, coming to the UK where you don't know any different, you really don't. You... it sound funny or it sounds, I don't know, crazy to think of like that but, they just didn't...</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>they've never seen. You know, an example, you've seen white, black, in South Africa, and here it's the same and then coming away from that , being forced, actually it's not even, it's...somewhat...it's not a voluntary thing, you know. I think it's just being forced to flee your country and how do they see themselves. I mean, a lot of them, they more... I think they stick to the black... I know in American study, a lot of them, I was laughing because I've used it for my dissertation, they were laughing and saying, "they'll say black people are dirty and they say white people are", you know, "are clean" and things like that and they were almost like "I don't understand."</p> <p>So, I think, they've never had... imagine...it's very hard to imagine but they don't understand what the bit fuss is about, you know. They have...they've never heard of, I don't know, I hope I'm not generalising here, but most of them, they don't know anything about the whole slaves and you know... I know... I know my mother, she knows, but then my grandmother, she never thought anything like that happened, and you know, the whole how the black civil rights and how black people now, you know are still trying to, I think they've done it now, but then...trying to... what's the right word, I don't know, they're trying to make a name for themselves, you know. I am just like you, you're not...you're not superior to me or whatever, so I think we're not gonna do that, but I think Somali people didn't know that.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Now, I'm wondering, coming from a country like Somalia, that doesn't know difference, as you say, especially black, white; how is it that you've come to identify yourself as black, where you mother, she does not identify herself as such?</p>
<p>Tasmin</p>	<p>Um, I mean, I... I think it's to do with, I don't know, it's just how you feel, you know. I think you can't, you can't say, you know, I...from that day on I felt more black than I...than I ever did, or things like that, no. It's not like that for me; it's...I...um... I mean, being...for me I think, I really don't see, cause with me again it's to do with what you are, you can't change what you are, so I've looked at my history, I've looked at my...I've looked at how my, maybe my mother sees herself and she's very...I won't say she's confused, no, she's not confused, I'm not confused. The reason I say I'm black is because I <i>am</i> black. I mean, I'm</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	very much black but then, black is not just what I am, I am more than black, black is just... is just...is just something you have to not say, you don't have to say you're black, but it's something which society makes you, I don't know, acknowledge. I mean I...I... being black is not a major thing in my life, really it's not. I'm more than black, I'm...I mean, yeah that's the...it's not even the...it's not even the colour of my skin. I mean, yeah, sometimes I'll look and I was like "why...why would they...that comes in all..." you know being black now...
Siyanda	Yeah.
Tasmin	Yeah, because, like, my little niece, she was saying "that little boy"
Siyanda	Your?
Tasmin	My little niece, she's 6 and she's saying you know, "so-and-so, oh he's dark brown," and I'm like "when I was your age, I never knew the difference between light brown or dark brown or white or green or whatever in people." That's not how I used to describe people. I would describe people, firstly, by their names, and secondly how they act or whatever, but never be because of the colour of their skin.
Siyanda	And I'm completely the opposite of you.
Tasmin	Huh?
Siyanda	I'm completely the opposite of you.
Tasmin	Really?
Siyanda	I mean, and I suppose it makes sense, coming from South Africa with that particular history. For me it's the first thing I see, wherever I go-on the train, in a restaurant, in a crowd, that's what I see, that's all I see, actually. I really see... it's just...it's there in front of me.
Tasmin	Yeah, and it's the first thing you notice about someone.
Siyanda	First thing. Like you asked me who I was talking to, "oh they were black," that's the first thing I said.
Tasmin	You say?
Siyanda	Mmmm, that's the first thing I say.
Tasmin	Mmm-hmm, no, with me it wasn't. So, I think sometimes...I would love...I would love to say that race doesn't matter, but we all know that it does. But, you know in a perfect world race would not matter, it wouldn't matter what colour you are, you know. But...
Siyanda	Let's speak about that. Like, why would you say race doesn't matter, and why do you think it does?

Second Interview: Tasmin

Tasmin	I mean, the thing that was very...it's...I think I've lived in a bubble for far too long.
Siyanda	I don't think so.
Tasmin	Huh?
Siyanda	I don't think you've lived in a bubble.
Tasmin	Because I have never... I think no...when I speak to people, and I hear their experiences and whatever, I'll be like, "wow, you know, you...you actually, you know, know more about black than myself" and sometimes I will say okay it's just maybe her situations made her, you know, I don't know, learn more about black or what it means to be black in society. It doesn't matter where you are in the world, but... did you say what... I forgot what you said. Did you say that what matters, how does it matter?
Siyanda	Well, you sort of said two things. That, you know, ideally it would be nice if race didn't matter. So, I'll just ask, when should race not matter?
Tasmin	I think, you know, in a perfect world, it should just be the last thing you notice about someone, you know. I think there's more to you and there's more to me than being black. There's personality, I don't know, interest, whatever. But it shouldn't matter, I think, in... full stop. It shouldn't matter in where you go to school, who you marry, you know, what sort of job you get at the end of your degree or whatever, because of your colour. It should just matter on your skills and, I don't know, qualifications. But in life, of course it matters, you know? It matters a lot and I mean, I'm hoping that I'm gonna find out whenever I apply for I don't know, for jobs or further education or whatever, I don't know, but right now, yeah, it matters. It matters to, an example, marriage. I think it matters if you, if you, I don't know, wanna have a child with someone. It matters because...it shouldn't matter, but then, I think deep down, it does matter, and you know, there's implications for the child and I mean, I...I know someone who feels very confused, because of, you know, being into a ...you know their parents went into this, you know, interrelation marriage, you know, being...coming from a black father and a white mother. So she had a lot of difficulties because she wasn't accepted into both, but yeah, I don't think it should matter, I really don't.
Siyanda	Following from that, I'm gonna ask you a question, maybe that you're gonna think it's strange. But, I'd be interested to see what you think. What challenges do you think that black people face, in particular, in

Second Interview: Tasmin

	Britain?
Tasmin	I think a lot. I think we face a lot of challenges, and not just being black I think, in Britain, being migrants, you know, being refugees, being immigrants, I think it's all the same thing because, they look at you and you're different, and they, I think the first thing they think is "there're a lot of you around or..."
Siyanda	"What are you doing here?"
Tasmin	Exactly, you know, "what do you want? You're just here to take our jobs, our homes, our..." you know, "you're just here to just take and take and take." But, I think being black and being... it affects... I think it affects way... I would say it affects what... what career...your career... you know I think, if you're black and you're in another country, for example, I would say a black country, and you had the same skills, the same qualifications, whatever, I think you'd be in a higher position than...I mean sometimes I think like that, sometimes I don't, like I said. I think things happen for a reason, I think, but yeah, they face...I think they face challenges every day, every single day. I mean from being, you know...from the races towards at school, to you know, into your teens, into your...into your, you know, early adulthood, where you're trying to sort yourself out, trying to get a job, trying to get a house, whatever, it does...it does affect you.
Siyanda	And then, what do you think are the opportunities that black people have in Britain?
Tasmin	None. I'm joking. Again, the opportunities, personally speaking, this country has...has given...has given me a free education, I mean, that's one thing.
Siyanda	Really?
Tasmin	Yeah. I mean, I haven't had to pay for my education, which I think is such a nice thing for them to do. Look at you!!
Siyanda	My dear, as much as this interview is about you, my dear, Britain owes a lot of money to a lot of people...to a lot of people. It's not a nice thing for them to do.
Tasmin	I know. I hear... I hear...I hear people say "oh they went to Africa and they've stolen gold and they have diamonds," and I'm like "oh!"
Siyanda	That's exactly how I feel whenever I walk around Britain. Ours, all ours. All of it. All of it. All of it. All of it is ours, ours. It belongs there.

Second Interview: Tasmin

Tasmin	Really? You think so?
Siyanda	They stole it!
Tasmin	I don't. That's what people say, but
Siyanda	They absolutely stole it!
Tasmin	I... I don't know, I really...I don't think like that. I just feel... I don't know, sometimes you walk around and you feel odd, especially when you go to these white communities, white areas, you think, "oh my God", what am I doing here?" and sometimes, one of my friends, she just walks, and she's like "I don't care, they came to my country and they took, you know, blah blah blah, and I'm here to do the same."
Siyanda	That's how I actually feel.
Tasmin	Really?
Siyanda	Yes but, yeah.
Tasmin	Oh! No.
Siyanda	Like, I mean, I'm here on a scholarship they gave me. They didn't give it to me; it's my money, its African money.
Tasmin	Of course they gave it to you! You think so? No, I don't agree. No, I mean they gave it to you because they wanted to. I mean, well I think, the way I think it's the people who stole it were people who have been dead for centuries now, you know what I mean, you know what I'm saying? So, now the person who gave you a scholarship now, he or she gave it to you out the goodness of their heart or because of...oh look at you! No!
Siyanda	I think we will have to agree to disagree on that.
Tasmin	Oh no! Yeah, maybe.
Siyanda	Right, um in what ways do you say that Britain or England is racially divided or is it not?
Tasmin	Oh it is. Well, not...not...not as...not as much as maybe as South Africa or...or North America. I would say Britain is...it's again where you live. If you go to, you know, where there's, you know, the white area, sort of thing, then you feel it as much, but I think England is divided, of course it's divided. I would like to think it's not but it is.
Siyanda	Cause, I mean, you still have, as you say, a white area.
Tasmin	And no. You've been there?
Siyanda	Love it!
Tasmin	You do?
Siyanda	Love it! They're my people, it's very strange. And I'm not really, but

Second Interview: Tasmin

	they're good people. Yeah.
Tasmin	Yeah. Cause like, I went to college, just outside Branford, Essex.
Siyanda	Branford?
Tasmin	Essex. Branford, yeah, Essex. So, the first day, getting off the train-this was a few years ago-getting off the train, actually on the train, cause it started on the train, as I'm going further up-field, I see black people coming off the train, and you know, going to the stops, whatever. So, I'm the only one in the carriage, just me and they were just staring at you like, you know, "where are you going?" That's exactly how I felt. And then coming out of the station was just, oh wow...
Siyanda	"I'm misplaced."
Tasmin	And I just felt horrible, I remember. And I actually went to that college for a year, I still...I had the looks, I had everything. I was like, "you know what, I'm here to, and you know, do what I got to do." Yeah, yeah. Does that answer you?
Siyanda	Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. I'm looking at this question, and I don't know how I'm gonna ask it. I suppose, keeping with the question, whether Britain is racially divided, what do you make of, for instance, okay, I'll take one thing, which is quite strong here, crime and as you said, what do you make of, sort of ...those sort of racialised representations of crime, in crime?
Tasmin	And black people? I mean it's...it's there. You mean, they say that, you know, black people, they do this and they do that, and you know, you see every day and you read about it every day and they say...Yeah they do say black people are very much into crime, yeah, very...they do say that black...they do say that black males are very violent, "it's just the way you guys, you know, you are." It's in you. That's what they say. But, yeah, it's the way it's represented, of course, they say black people, they're much worse than white people, in terms of reporting it, yeah. If a black kid now, does something, it's all over tomorrow's, you know, page. Whereas, if a white boy does it, or if a white boy got stabbed now by a black boy, you know, that's the end of it, you know. We'll hear about it for the next year or so. But then, if things...if things were, you know, then it wouldn't make so much, you know, if a white boy killing a black boy, no. No.
Siyanda	I mean, I know, like when I'm on the train, and I'm reading the

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>newspaper the latest crime, you know who's done what, at the time, I mean I get scared and I think "Oh God," and I sort of pray, "don't be black, don't be black, don't be black," and then I think, "oh, no black. Yes" Every time it's not a black person that commits the crime, I feel that it's a vindication on behalf of black people...</p>
Tasmin	<p>It is, yeah.</p>
Siyanda	<p>It's a very strange thing.</p>
Tasmin	<p>It really is, because...</p>
Siyanda	<p>And staying in South Africa, every time there's a crime...a horrendous crime, there's a double suicide...homicide, whatever, and the perpetrator is not black, I think "ok, great," it sort of vindicates black people, that it's not that you're black cause you're violent, kind of thing.</p>
Tasmin	<p>No, it's the same, and now they do say, again, sorry to do this, but then I'm going back to the Somalia thing, but then now, when you read the newspaper you hear a lot about Somali young boys who are doing this and that and I just feel...yeah, again when I hear the name, the name rings, it's very...it's our name, but then also, you also get them in Asian or whatever. It's a Muslim name, full stop. So when I hear the name before seeing the picture first, I feel like "oh god, please, I hope it's not a Somali boy."</p>
Siyanda	<p>Yeah!</p>
Tasmin	<p>Yeah, yeah. That's exactly how I feel, and then, yes it's them, and then you think, you know "God, you know, you stupid idiot," you know, and I mean, nowadays, I mean in (Wollage), which is again, a Somali area, they've taken over the area, but then, what they've done to the area, they've created two gangs, again, from different clans, they're bringing the clan into UK, which is really horrible and I mean, it's very stupid of the Somali people, because, I asked them, I mean, what happened to your country, I mean, why did you know, that happen, used to do with clans, so for you to actually, you know, 10 years or 15 years later, to still be proud of my...you know, and to say, you know, "I'm so-and-so, and I don't talk to so-and-so because he's that," it's very stupid, very ignorant. So, yeah, when you hear that of your own people, it's very, very disgusting. But then, again, if, I mean, you...there's also a difference, because, you've seen the whole Shannon thing missing in the TV, I don't know if you've seen the little nine-year-old...</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

Siyanda	Don't get me started, but I'm actually thinking of what you're thinking.
Tasmin	Yeah, because I think it's not only to do with black and white, I think it's to do with which class you fall into, because you remember the poor little girl Madeleine, who... and I mean, the way they portray those two stories, it's totally different.
Siyanda	We did not forget about Shannon, it was in the news constantly.
Tasmin	No, and then, I mean, my heart goes out to the parents of Madeleine, and I don't blame them. I think the way the media is in general, or the way people are. If you're from a working class, there's very much, you know, who cares about you, they push you down, but with the McCann's, you know, the middle class, you know, two doctors who...and you know, they had the opportunity to go to all these countries, look for their little girl and in the media, they become, like, celebrities, in a way, every day, and where's this poor mother, who's going through the same thing, her daughter's been missing for a while and just because she's on benefits and she lives in a council place, and she's got is it 5 children by, I don't know, she's got I think, is it 7 children with 5 different men, or something. So, people are like, "oh no, she's an unfit mother," sort of thing, so it's also to...I mean, it's a lot to do with colour, but also to do with...
Siyanda	Class.
Tasmin	Yes, definitely. It's terrible.
Siyanda	Right, we're now reaching the end. But, I'm now gonna ask you to do something... I mean, you know in the second part of the interview, I think you struggled a little bit to say what you think, cause I do think that these questions are very abstract, so it's not that you're answering the question, cause I really, I find that it's really abstract to talk about race and how it links up to other kinds of...other kinds of things. But, now, I want you to sort of, reflect on being black, in conjunction with the other parts of you. So, like you said, ukuthi, there's more to blackness, there's more. So, how being black links up with other kinds of your stories, if you like, and try and give me as many personal instances as you possibly can. So, let's start with gender. Okay, so I'd like you to think about your life as a black woman in particular or even if Somalian woman. How different you think your life is or how similar is your life from black men.
Tasmin	Black men?

Second Interview: Tasmin

Siyanda	Mmm. I mean, how similar, how different, the challenges
Tasmin	I think for a black woman it's not as hard as a black man, I think because being a woman, you're seen to be, although black, seen to be not as big a threat as a black male in... I think in every aspect of life. From the simplest thing to, you know, walking behind someone or you know, queuing up for the bus or the train or whatever. I think, yeah they look at you; yeah you're black, but you're a woman. Although, they will look at a black man very, very different, you know. He's wide and he's strong and he's very...he can't control his feelings;
Siyanda	He's gonna hurt you.
Tasmin	Yeah, he can do, you know, whatever he...he's capable of doing everything, that's what I think they think of a black man.
Siyanda	He's a danger.
Tasmin	Yeah, which I think is disgusting, oh God, it's disgusting. But being a black woman now, you're just...yeah, you're black, you're different, but at the same time, you're harmless. Yeah, I think.
Siyanda	It's very interesting, I've never thought of it in that way actually. Very interesting. And, in terms of other challenges, do you think you, as a black woman; do you think that you face similar or different kinds of struggles, from me, a black man, or your brother?
Tasmin	Sorry, I'm just trying to think of the difference between me and my brother. There're a lot of differences. But, I think being black, being a black woman, being a black male, it's... it depends where in the world No. I where you're living, cause you... in a black country it is...it's not as bad, obviously. But in a white country... I can't think of any... there must be, there must be millions of differences. Sorry.
Siyanda	No, it's alright. So, we could come back to gender. Let's go to class. Again, if you think of...I hate this part cause apparently I'm now middle class, I don't know. My dear, I think it's so.
Tasmin	No, no. I'm not there yet.
Siyanda	Okay, so your life, as a black...
Tasmin	Working class...
Siyanda	Middle class woman, how different/similar is your life from black working class?
Tasmin	Oh, I think, not to say I'm any of those, I think it's very different. I mean, I really feel for the black, working class woman. You know, to put up

Second Interview: Tasmin

	with the jobs that they do, because, I think whenever you see a cleaner, it always happens to be a black person doing those manual jobs. But, I think in the UK, it's not so bad because it's the migrants or immigrants, they say, get to do those jobs. So for the black woman it's...
Siyanda	From Eastern Europe. I was very, when I was still staying on campus, I sort of, woke up, go to the kitchen, and there was a white woman cleaning. I was like...cause I come from South Africa, and when you see cleaner, you see somebody who works and sweeps the floor, whatever, they're usually, mostly, black. So, to sort of, having this white woman cleaning for me, I felt very strange. I mean, I almost wanted to help her. That's what I wanted to do, you know. It's very strange.
Tasmin	It is, yeah. But, it's again with...women in the UK, English women, (are very similar to Eastern European women), whether being, you know, Polish or Romanian or whatever, they're just, I don't know, they're white, they're all, you know, if you put them together and as me who's who, I wouldn't know the difference, but they do think they are much...very much superior to Eastern European, West Indies cleaning jobs. But, coming to your question, yeah, it's a bit...the black middle class woman has...has I don't know, respect or power in society, but then, I really hate to see a black woman in authority, it's very much, they look down on the other black women or black person in general who isn't part of them. I don't know if you've experienced this, if you've ever gone to anywhere, or office or whatever, and you have to deal with a black woman who's just sitting there and she's very... I mean, I know I have, she very much looks at you like, you know, I don't know if she's doing this to impress other people around her or whatever, but she doesn't deal with you as the white woman would deal with you. The white woman...
Siyanda	You mean that she almost even worse.
Tasmin	She's worse, as the white woman, because she would be like you know, "I have this job," even if this job is nothing big, nothing good, it's just some maybe a secretary, or whatever, she will look at you like, you know, "I've got a little bit of power and..." and I would think, you know, why, and though... and they'll... You go and a white girl comes or whatever, she'll much...much better to the white woman...
Siyanda	I know exactly what you mean. For me it happens a lot in South Africa, in Pick 'n Pay, which is a big supermarket, like a Tesco. (In a situation)

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>and if the cashier is a black person, but usually a black woman, and it has happened to me many times, when you sort of, you arrive at the till, and there is a white person in front of you, she's all smiles, talking, she does the groceries, it's all nice. And then you come, she doesn't acknowledge you, she doesn't look at you, she doesn't say hey, she just...</p>
<p>Tasmin</p>	<p>Yeah, I mean, I had an experience, here back when I started this, when I started my course. I mean, I came in to enrol, it was my first time here and there was a black woman in charge of the whole processing, everything. So, she asked me for my passport and, I mean, I'd brought my passport, just in case, but then, you know, it wasn't..., you know, she didn't ask the...cause I came with my friend. She didn't ask my friend, it's a white girl, so she never asked the girl for the passport. So, I mean, I went to her with all my documents, whatever, and then she said, "can I see your passport?" and I actually questioned her, I said to her, you know, I mean, "why do you have to see my passport?" cause you don't have to see...I mean it's not like I'm, you know... and she asked me, "are you a home student?" I said "yeah, I'm a home student" and she goes "can I look at your passport?" and I'm like, " why do you need my passport?" because the woman in front... the girl in front of me, she didn't ask her and I was with her, she didn't ask her for her passport. I think she looked at me and you know, "you being black, and you must be a migrant, you can't possibly...yeah you cannot." So, I was like this definitely the first time in my life where I've actually, sort of, looked at someone and, you know... I knew I was in the right, you know, she didn't have to see my passport, I did have it. and a white woman came who was working with her, and she said something like, I don't know, you know, "you don't have to see her passport, it's okay if she hasn't got a passport" and I took out my passport, you know, my British passport, so I showed...I was like "you know what, I have my passport, in case, but then what I don't understand is, you didn't ask my friend for a passport, and you..." yeah, I told her "I'm a home student, I don't...I don't know why you don't believe me," and she's like, "oh I've got to be careful, I've got to be..." and I'm like "careful of what? If someone is a home student, she's a home student." So, yeah, black women in middle class, they do look... they look down upon other blacks working class, or whatever. Like, you know, "I'm up here and you're down there," kind of thing, which</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>is...instead of uniting and, I don't know, helping each other. It sort of, I don't know, separating and creating more problems, which we don't need. We have enough to deal with.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Of course not. Alright, two more questions and then we finish. Just picking up from your British passport story, let's talk about being black and...I mean, I think we have actually touched about this a little bit in your first interview and a little bit in the morning, in the first part of the interview, but thinking about being black and being of different nationalities, and I use nationalities very broadly here, yeah so, sort of the...how life is different or similar, and challenges as well, between black British, black Caribbean, black African. To the extent, what similar stories, what's different, what are the struggles... yeah.</p>
<p>Tasmin</p>	<p>No, I wouldn't say... I would say that black British, very much, they do have their own, you know, struggles, challenges, whatever. But, not as much as the black... I think black Africans get it worse than of all the three you've mentioned, because black British is like, "you were born here, you have a generation who was born here, although maybe, you were brought here as slaves," or whatever you might want to call it. They still worked, some of them, you know, went to war here and things like that. So, they feel and I think a lot of people feel...see them as, you know, sort of belong here, not fully, not 100% belong here. But I think they feel that they, I don't know, they have a place here, kind of thing. And again, it's the same with the black Caribbeans, because they, again they've been here...I would think they belong here than the Africans. And then, Africans now, I think they're faced...they get it a lot more worse because, especially now, with the youth. I think when my Jamaican friends say it's cool to be Jamaican, everybody wants to be Jamaican, but I would disagree, like I always disagree with her. You know, she says that the young black children, regardless whether being from...born here or Africa, they all aspire to be Jamaicans; they all want to act Jamaican, you know what I'm...you must know what I mean. So, so I think she's...she said it's cool to be Jamaican now, in this day and age, but it's not cool to be African. It's not, I think they face the most because, I think Africa comes with a lot of nationalities, a lot of cultures, a lot of different languages, so once you've got all these things happening, although it happens in Jamaicans or Caribbean's, but not so much cause they already</p>

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>have the whole, I mean, there they speak broken English, it's still English, so Africans, although a lot of Africans, they speak English, I mean, I was taught English at school, so I won't say language is a challenge for them. But, in terms of being new, it's the new thing and being here, now it's the Eastern European people hate. Five years ago or so, or six years ago, people used to hate Somalians and before Somalians, I think it was the Ngoli and the Kurdish. I think every 5 or so years, people, you get sick of migrants. I know, some people who came here as refugees, they look at the Polish and they will say, "oh, I have so much Polish living in my area, they're taking over," and I'll be like, "hang on a minute, you know, you yourself were in this situation, so you have to have a little sympathy, and... you know for the Polish, cause, I know I have. I really do." I'm saying, "you must do, because they're all feeling exactly how you felt, 5, 6 years ago, and now I think the situation is much worse. So, black British, they...they have it easy, black Caribbean, they're in the middle, but the black African..."</p>
Siyanda	At the bottom of the pile.
Tasmin	Yeah.
Siyanda	<p>Well, I don't know if you saw the advert that almost...a lot people were angry about it, but I thought it was quite clever. I mean, I think it was a clever political kind of statement. It was published by the BNP, sort of, they sort of, show Britain before and after kind of thing, and that before, I think, you sort of saw, like, I think they're trying to portray that who's the object of hate today. That's how I read it. I thought exactly.... That's what they tried to show, the shift. I saw, in the before picture, it was people of colour, black people, sort of, standing in long queues and stuff, and then in the after shot it was Muslim women, sort of, it sort of carried that idea, yokuthi, it has, sort of, I won't say changed completely, but, sort of shifted focus. Before, you know, the object of hate was...you know, black, but now it's more and more Muslim people.</p>
Tasmin	<p>But, I mean, the BNP, we all know about the BNP, and I think it's crazy to think that they have some sort of group or whatever, in 2008, saying what they say and people still... I think it's absurd that they're still running. I really do.</p>
Siyanda	I really wanna do... sort of, read more and find more out about the BNP.
Tasmin	The BNP? I mean, they're just... I think they have a...what do they call

Second Interview: Tasmin

	<p>them...like a party, or a seat or I don't know. I know they have one in Buckingham. Buckingham is not far from here, I mean, I have to go to Buckingham next week.</p>
Siyanda	<p>I go to Buckingham too, cause that's where my branch is.</p>
Tasmin	<p>Yeah, okay. But they have a seat, I think it's like a party, they do, in Buckingham. And I'm like Buckingham is full of... I don't know if you watched something the other day, my friend text me, it was on BBC2. It was actually in Bucking, it was really funny because I caught the 20 minutes of it. There was a white man who has been living in Bucking all his life, he's very old he's about...he's in his early, I think 60's or something. Anyway, so he had his walking stick outside and he was pointing at the houses in the road. So, he was saying, "This house here, it's got Russians, then this house has got Nigerians," and there was like, 5 houses from people all over the world, and he's like, "I can't take it." He was so funny, I was laughing. He was like, "I have to, I'm selling," he was selling his house, he was selling his house and he really did and the program was, it was to do with the BNP. I think, this man...it was something to do with white...something is happening that has to do with white heritage, or whatever. So every week, I think on BBC2, there's something on about white or black, or whatever. So, the man was so funny and he moved, and he moved to, I think, Cornwall, just somewhere outside London, a white little village, and at the end, he was standing next to the sea, just feeding the birds, or whatever, and the man asked him, "what'll happened when the refugees or the migrants move," cause they will eventually. London is getting too...it's too much, it's too populated. So, he asked him what happens if they come to this side, and then he pointed at the sea, and he's like, "I'm gonna jump in there," and I think he meant it. Oh, he was so funny, he's like, "I'm going in there," and he was like, " this is not a joke, I'm really gonna go in there, cause there's nowhere else to go." Oh, the way he was just pointing at the houses, oh. But, sometimes, you look at them and you think, I mean, "What happens if this was my country and you see all these people coming in, how would you feel?" Do you know what I mean? Don't you? I don't know, I just...</p>
Siyanda	<p>They're making a lot of money out of it.</p>
Tasmin	<p>Of course they are.</p>

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Siyanda	A lot of money out of it is of world economy.
Tasmin	But at the end of the day, it also...Mmmm. But that's not how they portray it, is it? It's all about, they take, take, take. But, that man was very...very racist, very like, he couldn't even stand the Russians and they were the same colour as him, and it was a very funny program. Sorry, I think I went off track there.
Siyanda	No, no, no. This is actually fantastic. I mean, I'm gonna...oh, actually, it's the last question and it's really, it's a very open-ended. I'm gonna go to the bathroom, and then I'll leave you to think. Now, if there's anything else at all that you'd, you know, like to add, either it's your first story or anything that came up in your second interview; and then we'll end. I'm gonna pause this....
Siyanda	If there's anything else...
Tasmin	That I'd like to add.
Siyanda	Exactly, yeah, whether it's your first story or any...
Tasmin	Part of my first story. My memory is very bad. But, um...no, not really. I mean, I'd just like to say that being black should not be, I don't know, for everybody, I think being black or...should not, I don't know, limit you or enhance you or...to what you want to achieve. I think, being the race that you are, it should not...it shouldn't be all you are. Of course, it's what...it's very important, and it's what people see, it's the first thing people see about you., but I don't know, I don't think people should think, you know, "I'm black, you know, I'm supposed to act this way," or "I'm black, I'm the bottom of the food chain." No way, I think it's time that we changed that as black people, and you know, white people should not be higher than us, you know. I think, people should not judge you, especially, judge you in terms of the colour you are. I think it's such a terrible thing. I mean, I go through life, you know, thinking, so-and-so cannot judge me, you know. I...No human can judge me regardless of what they are, kind of thing. So...
Siyanda	Oh!
Tasmin	Listen to you.
Siyanda	Being black is?
Tasmin	No, I think...yeah, of course. Yeah, it's very interesting to...I think every black person needs to know about the difficulties that they're, I don't know, grandfather or great-grandfather had to go through, in order for

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	<p>them to be in this position today. I think that's... I think a lot of these black youths are running up and down, I think they need a lesson in that, but at the same time, they shouldn't feel, I don't know, I don't think they should feel any less than a black...than a white person, no, no way. And again, black is just, you know, a part of you, there's so much to a person than their colour. Yeah, so...I mean I've never been really interested the whole race thing, really I haven't. but, I think as you grow, you find, you know, you find that you cannot do that, you're restricted because of the colour of your skin, and yeah, it shouldn't happen but it does. You just have to deal with it. Yeah.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Just on that part that you just said, now, that you think that at least, maybe every black person should sort of know about their history, essentially. I remember, I read... there was an autobiography I read, by a man called Fred Khumalo in South Africa, he's a journalist there. A fantastic book. The book was called "Touch my Blood" and it's funny and it's witty and it's funny, sort of, laugh until you cry. He writes in a very...he uses humour for everything, cause he tells a very dark, sad, sad, brutal, traumatic story, so he tries to soften the blow with humour, kind of thing. And, I mean, it was when I read that book, and I mean, essentially, he tells a story about his life, earlier on, as a child growing up, so it's a story about his Mom and Dad, his great...grandparents and great-grandparents. So, it's...and it's essentially a story of how their land was taken from them, just one day they woke up, they had a farm and one day they were told, off you go, out of this land. It's a story about the kinds of different things that happened to him as a child when South Africa was still under apartheid. So, he's a child seeing his father, he's a boy, actually, standing, seeing his father being humiliated in different ways. I remember reading that book, it was only when reading that book that I began to think... I mean, that the history matters a great deal. I think, I suppose it does, sort of shape a big part of...at least, of who I am</p>
<p>Tasmin</p>	<p>And the way you think.</p>
<p>Siyanda</p>	<p>Yeah. But that's only half the question, and it's what I do with that history, and now, god forbid, my future generations. But it certainly, sort of does play a critical role. It was only reading that book, I remember, I was very depressed with the book, and-god, can I say this on a tape?- so I started having some wine, to sort of relax me, cause it was quite</p>

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	<p>traumatic, and I ended up saying, “I need to go out and see some people,” so I went out and I couldn’t stop thinking about the book, so I was out and everybody was dancing, but I couldn’t stop thinking about that book, and I went, I remember, to the bathroom and I called my supervisor, Professor Joe Bradbury, and I said, “Joe,” I mean, I had been drinking quite a bit. So, I was like, “Joe,” you know, after reading this book, and I said, “I now know that Mugabe,” Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, “has a point,” and sort of hang up like that. So, she then texts me, and she said, “Siyanda, I think that you should come in and talk. I’m your supervisor.” So, of course, the next day I come</p>
Tasmin	<p>Oh, Mugabe’s evil!</p>
Siyanda	<p>So, the next day, I come, so I’m all kind of shy. She goes like, “Tell me, you know, tell me what you called me for last night,” and I’m like, “I can’t repeat it anymore,” kind of thing, so she...we then sort of talk about it. But I mean, land was taken from people. So, how he’s done...how he’s gone about doing it...I don’t wanna talk about Zimbabwe. But I suppose what I’m trying to say, the history of a people seems to be very, very important, to a degree, but certainly only half the story of their lives.</p>
Tasmin	<p>Yeah, and it’s, I don’t know, it’s by you reading the book or it’s by me finding out about these things that happened to black people. That’s when you really, I don’t know, you appreciate going through the...be appreciative to how you live. I mean, in terms of maybe you’ve faced these things, but it...different people... by reading these books, and you realise, you know being black, yeah it’s a factor, it does play a role in different situations. But then, you read about being black, and not being able to with a white person on the bus and you think, you know, it’s not that, things have moved on from then. Definitely. It’s much... and if us, maybe our generation can sort of, move it further, hopefully. Yeah.</p>
Siyanda	<p>I mean, I think that’s also why I sometimes worry about the Middle East, especially in Iraq, what’s happening there right now. Especially when you see those images of kids, leaving this war-zone torn country that’s absolutely... You begin to think, well, what kind of...cause in a few years time, this is going to be their history and to me, it seems like it’s going to be an ongoing thing, that there’s always going to be that sort of clash.</p>
Tasmin	<p>I mean, yeah, you’re right. I mean, we talk about the Middle East thing, and like you said the history. I think the reason why, I think my primary</p>

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	<p>is identity now, it's, before anything else, it's a Muslim. I think it's...definitely, I think because when I was younger, yeah, I knew who I was, but it wasn't portrayed in a negative aspect, back then. So, now that it's everywhere, you read about it and there's all these terror attacks going on about Muslim women and people in general, then you think to yourself, "hey, I really need to go back and read books on this, and find out who I am. Yeah. So the Middle East thing, it's terrible. But, like you said, that it's just an on-going thing that, I can't see it changing.</p>
Siyanda	<p>I just thought of a quote, which I have on my computer. I, sort of, like it and I might get it wrong, even though I've seen it today. Something like, we exist in the identity that's under threat. I suppose for me, coming from South Africa and that particular history, I sort of resist, and sort of become more conscious of my blackness and what that means, and I suppose for you, in the light of so much...all that's happening around Islam and being Muslim, then it sort of makes sense that that identity of yours becomes more fore grounded, over and above the other parts of yourself.</p>
Tasmin	<p>Yeah, I mean, it's the first thing people see now, if you wear a head-scarf. You know, "you're not black, you're not white; you're in a head-scarf." That's what it is, and although I don't wear the head-scarf, I mean, it's quite...I don't know, if you can tell but then I think it's quite...you can tell who's who, especially in East London, where, you know how the physical appearance of people, how they look; so you can sort of, put them in different boxes and stuff. But yeah, I think when you're...whatever you are comes through whatever you do- you do go into this thing, and you want to preserve it and protect it, and show people that it's not, what they say is not true. Yeah, definitely.</p>
Siyanda	<p>And I just thought of one other thing now. Seeing that you do not wear the scarf, the veil. So, you not visibly Muslim. So, do you think that... what's the question, is it unlike somebody, a woman who's veiled, who sort of, whenever she goes, I mean, who comes into, whether into a train or a plane, whether you are or not, you know how people get nervous, "what's she carrying, what is she carrying," kind of thing. But, you sort of, don't have to embody that, cause you're not covered.</p>
Tasmin	<p>Yeah, but then I feel a need to...you know when that's happening... I mean, I remember after the whole London bombing thing, and the failed</p>

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	buses, I remember people were very, like you said, they were very much- if you see a Muslim person, you wanna cross the road, kind of thing, and if you're in a carriage in a train, you don't want to be in that carriage because you see a man with a hat, with a small beard, and you think, "oh, god..."
Siyanda	"What is he gonna do to the train?"
Tasmin	Yes, with a backpack, you think, you know... Yeah, it does, but I really hate that, I feel, I mean, when someone... do you know. Sorry; I'll give you another example. Right here, in the University, I had done a module, last year, a counselling module, and we used to do it on a Friday afternoon. Because, it was in the Main Hall, just downstairs, it was very big, because, mostly, I mean we pray 5 times a day, but on Fridays-it's call Juma- the Friday, it's very important,
Siyanda	Juma?
Tasmin	J-U-M-A.
Siyanda	Oh, okay.
Tasmin	So, yeah, Friday prayer, it's very important and although there's...there's prayer rooms in the campus, it's quite small. So, what the boys do, I think they have a Muslim, I don't know, union or, society-yeah, they do- so the boys, an hour before a lecture, cause the room is really big, and they really wanna fit in there, so an hour before a lecture, they go in there, and there was...the lecture was sort of in, now- spring time- and you know how you take off your shoes before you enter the room, and they've got the mats down, everything. And then with me, I remember, Fridays, you know when I'm going past a Muslim guy, I feel very self-conscious, I feel...sometimes I feel that they might think, you know, "look at this girl," you know. I think they look down on me and think, "she's become very Westernised," and that is not the case. I mean, they have never spoken to me, but yeah, I feel like that. At the same time, I know some of them who I talk to and then they'll be like, "you know, in time, hopefully, you'll change." But then, coming back to that room, you see when you...there's like, 30 guys, even more, sometimes, they will take off their shoes right at the door, and you'll have every shoe, you know boys-not even boys, I would say boys- but girls, the shoe smells and it's right at the door. And then, coming in now, when, maybe I don't know 30, 40 boys coming out, it's not even the boys; it's like every lecture room. Once the

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	people come in, when you come in, if you don't open the windows, there's like...you smell them, you know. There's like-it's warm, it's everything, there's a funny smell...
Siyanda	It's humid, sweaty.
Tasmin	Exactly. Yeah, it's not a nice smell. But then, what happened was, yeah, we used to go through that every Friday, and people use to complain. But then, I never used to complain, because, I know they just finished praying and how that's very much important, and I feel guilty because I didn't pray; not with them but I didn't pray with the women, you know. So, I really don't say anything. But one day, I remember, I went to the lecturer, about some sort of problems, or whatever; in her room. It was me, and my friend, an Asian girl who actually wears the head-scarf. So, the lecturer, we were just talking about something, and she said, "Oh, those Muslims!" and I was sitting there and my...
Siyanda	Who said this, the lecturer?
Tasmin	The lecturer. Yeah, the lecturer, she said that. We were just talking and she...I think we were just talking... we were talking about an essay, but then...
Siyanda	Was this in a lecture hall?
Tasmin	No, in her room. We went to see her, I think on a different, I don't know, occasion or something. But, she... we were just talking about the room and how the room was in...it wasn't very nice and you know, in a perfect world we all prefer to go in a room which is open, which is, you know, air is coming in, whatever. But, that's not the case. But then, she said, those Muslims. And me and my friend, we looked at each other and then she, she looked at us and then she saw my friend who, like you said, visibly dressed. You can know that she is a Muslim. And she's like, "Oh I'm sorry, I didn't mean that, "and I...my friend, we were very shocked. But, my friend was sort of, very shocked, but I sort of, looked at her and I said to her, you know, "What do you mean?" and then she said, "Oh, I just meant the room smells. And I said, "yeah, well, with all due respect, you know, the room smells, I don't know why you had to use the term Muslims," and things like that. I mean, I was very upset, and I think it was her, and she's a white woman, so I think, she was... if that room smelled of a previous lecturer, she wouldn't have said the room smells of law students. No way. It was very much, "those Muslims", and I... and

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	<p>she's like, "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend anyone," and she tried explaining herself, and I was like, "You know, I think what you've just said is really, really wrong," and we just came out thinking... and she's like, "Oh please don't tell anyone," yeah, that's what she actually said, she said, "I didn't mean any harm, it's just an expression," and I said, "It's not an expression, you know." I used the example, the law students. I said, "You would not have said that. You would have said the previous lecturer," whatever. "They couldn't bother to open the door." You chose to use those words. And she's like, "It's a slip of the tongue, this and that," and I was like, I just came out and said, "No, no."</p>
Siyanda	You didn't report her?
Tasmin	No.
Siyanda	Oh my god!
Tasmin	Should I have done?
Siyanda	Yes.
Tasmin	She spent, like 10 minutes, trying to convince us that it's just a slip of the tongue. Oh, whatever!
Siyanda	Me, you'd be trying to convince me all the way to me reporting you, kind of thing.
Tasmin	Yeah, it's disgusting. But, yeah, they are scared and like you said I don't cover up so, I'm not...they don't know I am.. But at the same time, when they do that to people who cover up, I feel I have the need to say something.
Siyanda	Oh!
Tasmin	Of course. Especially when it's older women. Regardless of who they are, they could be Pakistani, Somali, whatever, black, whatever, and on the bus or on the train, you know they're getting stick because of how they're dressed, you know. You do need to say, "There's no need for that. You don't have to speak to them like that." So, yeah, it's really bad.
Siyanda	Fantastic! Fantastic. Thank you very much. I mean, it's nice, I think when I sort of, thought of this study through and started designing it, I never, ever imagined that I would have a story that was told from a religious angle. Really, I did not. I thought I'd have one told politically, told from sexual orientation, from the gender angle, from...I mean, I didn't...I didn't make provision for religion at all. It's quite nice to actually have a story like this, so that's been very helpful. Thank you.

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Tasmin	Oh, my pleasure.
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APPENDIX TWO

NARRATIVE PORTRAITS

APPENDIX TWO: NARRATIVE PORTRAITS

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2. Narrative Portrait of Dina
3. Narrative Portrait of Musa
4. Narrative Portrait of Daisy

Narrative Portrait: BILI

Biographical Information

Female, age mid-20's (when first interviewed in 2008)

Born: rural Serowe and Orapa Mining Town, Botswana

Racial Heritage: black

Family: Born into a big family of five children and a middle class liberal Christian¹ family, where both parents are teachers. Her father is a very important moral figure in her life; he has also inculcated his politics in her.

Education: Schooling in Botswana: Primary; Secondary School, which is an International School: University in South Africa: the former University of Natal that become the University of KwaZulu-Natal, where is currently completing her Masters in Clinical Psychology

Has been in South Africa for 5 yrs

Bili comes from Botswana in Southern Africa. The question “where you are from?” has particular meaning for any Mtswana, Bili says, as this question implicates belonging, origins and roots. In accounting for the place of her origin and beginnings, Bili makes an interesting conceptual distinction between two different kinds of places of where a person can come from: the first place is Serowe, which is a rural place and this place is ‘home’ because that is where Bili’s roots, as a Mtswana, are. The second place is Orapa, which is an urban space which is the context of where the rest of life happens - childhood, school and work. Put differently, Bili comes from Serowe (which is rural) and grew up in Orapa (which is urban) as she indicates below:

Siyanda: Bili alright let’s start with our childhood so tell me a little about where you were born and about your family.

¹ Bili comes from a Christian family where faith rather than religion was very important. In this view, Christianity was a lifestyle for the family and God as central to their lives whose genesis are her grandparents, who in turn then passed it down to their children. When she was 14/15 years old she herself took up the Christian faith as part of her own lifestyle that she says provides her with ‘a worldview’ and a ‘perspective’.

Bili: Okay well I come from Botswana and I spent a great deal of my life I grew up in Orapa it's a small mining town diamond mining town and towards the central of Botswana I [brief pause] like everyone in Botswana has a rural place that they call home like when you ask me "Where you from?" as a Mtswana I'd say Serowe which is like the rural place where we're from so everyone identifies themselves by their rural roots if I may say so ...

Siyanda: ... Okay!

Bili: ... Ja we do have an urban area that you attach yourself to as well but when you ask a person "where you from?" they will say like their rural area and that's where you get your funerals and your weddings taking place ja but I spent most of my time in Orapa cause that's where my parents worked that's where I went to school and ja [pause].

Bili spends considerable time talking about, locating herself and her life in a place: in Serowe her rural home village² as well as in Orapa, the diamond mining town in Botswana, where most of her life happens. Bili is the middle child out of the five in her nuclear family with two brothers and two sisters. Both her parents are teachers and have for a while lived separately because they have worked in different parts of the country. Bili also recalls an experience of being looked after by her father and him fulfilling domestic shores that are traditionally feminized – this is when her mother lived and worked away from home. Even though she comes from a relatively big family, Bili and her siblings have a close and good relationship with their parents. Bili suggests that her parents did a very good job in raising five very different children and this is evident in that all five children thought that they were their parents' favourite at Bili time or the other. Further, all five different siblings are "independent", "content" and have "high self-worth" because their parents did "a very, very good job bringing up all five of us

² Her description of her rural setting reveals a very different notion of rural space than the one that other South African participants describe and live in. Certainly rural Serowe is different to most rural settings in South Africa, and is quite similar to what is describes as country in Britain. This difference has to do with the kinds of services and amenities provided: such as roads, electricity, garbage removal services and the biggest hospital in the country.

[equally]”. Bili’s childhood was a strict yet happy and nurtured Bili. She recounts lessons from her father, who was a moral figure for her: about sexuality and safeguarding her virginity.

Though Bili has never thought her family in terms of class, she recognizes that her family is middle class. She then tells the history of Orapa, the town and the diamond mines, DeBeers, which interestingly reveals how classed Orapa was as a place. Orapa was set up by the mine to cater for the lives and needs of its employees. The mine provides a range of facilities and services such as education, housing, health care, water and electricity. Bili describes Orapa as, what we would call in South Africa a gated community³, having ‘neat streets’; as ‘clean’, as ‘clearly labeled’; as ‘the safest place in Southern Africa’ because ‘people need permits to gain access to it’. As a consequence of her mother working in Orapa meant that her parents did not have to struggle for her education as it was paid for by the mine. Bili was therefore offered “affordable good quality English education” and access to a middle-class life in Orapa:

... so ja [my parents] didn’t have to struggle so much and then what I am trying to get to is that even if their life was not like middle-class life but the services they were avail to within Orapa was middle class you know very good standard ...

Bili also reveals that *Orapa* was a classed town in that the higher the salaries the bigger and better the amenities. In her showing how classed Orapa was, Bili tells me about the secondary school that she attended, Maruapula, which was the most expensive boarding school in the country as well an international school with over 43 nationalities represented in the student body. This multiracial and multicultural school had ties with Harvard and other universities in the US and the UK. Again, she explains how she got to go to school there: “I went there not because my parents could pay for it but because the mine paid for my education”. For Bili her secondary school was formative and influential

³ Gated communities are racialized and classed institutions constructed in response to (racialized) crime in South Africa. However, Bili explains that Orapa is fenced and gated for different reasons than in South Africa and that is ‘to keep the wild life out’.

in how she thought about or rather outside of race (unlike the experience she was to have in South Africa). Here, she would interact with difference – racially, culturally and religiously because her school was international and therefore mixed. She was also to learn to make friends across a range of social difference/formations: she had a mixed group of friends⁴: Indian, Pakistani; Scandinavian (unlike in South Africa generally and unlike in KwaZulu-Natal specifically where it is still racially segregated – with ‘white’, ‘black’, ‘Indian’ not integrating with each other. Bili suggests that the friendships she made at this time transcended race and colour (unlike in South Africa):

OS: Yes and coming from that like that’s how we were in class and people were friends they were not friends because of their colouring they were friends because of ...

SN: ... who they are

OS: ... ja personality how people used to do things together and what interested them the things that they in common not, not race other than race and we to tell the hBilist truth we were very, very mixed up class like you had your Muslims you had your Hindus⁵ you had your and ...

Bili then tells of *the hi(story) of the school*: founded in 1972 as the first international school in Botswana (the first school to call itself interracial). It was precisely calling itself interracial that the school created political problems and problematic relations with apartheid South Africa. Bili suggests that the apartheid South African government] was against the school as it was against Botswana’s first president’s marriage to a white British woman. Some of the problems that the school faced as a result of the South

⁴ Interestingly she defines all her friends by their ethnic and/or national identities and NOT by their personality traits (which she says are more important than race) – in one way ethnic and national identities take over (from) racial ones (as she constructs herself as transcending racialization): and it seems less problematic to speak in the terms of culture and nation than it is in race terms. Race still seems and remains ideologically charged; as something to be avoided – the focus is on non-racialism and different kinds of identifications that move and go beyond race.

⁵ I wonder if this reference to people in cultural, ethnic and even national terms does not function (in part) in the very essentialist terms as ‘race’ is often guilty of. The move to culture (new racisms as it has been termed in the academy) may in fact be problematic on the very same grounds that race or racial terms is guilty of.

African opposition include: bomb threats and spies posing as teachers. Coming from a multiracial context as provided by her school, Bili suggests that race generally and blackness particularly were not fore-grounded:

... it was a very mixed school there was no “I’m black” I promise you being black and being whatever was the LAST thing in our minds the VERY, very last thing we were very used to interracial marriages I was it was like cool you know ...

In secondary school, Bili came into her own and the school nurtured personal development. She describes the school as a “good” and productive context without any external system of regulation such as there were no prefect systems or award systems. The philosophy of the school was in “molding, cultivating the person from within” and developing character. For Bili, the most significant feature of the school was its commitment and orientation to community service. She tells a *long story about a variety of community service projects* she participated in at school and enriched her experiences of going to school. As a result of the kind of education she received, Bili has always wanted to effect change and make a difference in the world: as evident in her earlier dreams of working for UNICEF in order to specifically deal with all forms of violence in the world. Bili, however, decided on a career in Psychology and she had planned to study in the UK (but this was not to be as there was a disruption in her life, signaling a turning point). During her A-levels she got an ear infection as well as Bili of her friends passed. Further, in the same year she could not fulfill all the requirements of to study in the UK. She describes this year as a “very terrible year”. And it was during this year that her teacher suggested she applies for study at the University of Natal in South Africa. She then enrolled for Politics and Psychology in South Africa, however, she would face another disruption in her career path in the second year of study when due to political pressures the University of Natal (a previously white institution under apartheid) was forced to merge with the University of Durban-Westville (a previously non-white institution). This Merger meant that she could not continue with both her majors in Psychology and Politics due to timetable constraints. Bili decided to replace Politics with

Sociology, though a disruption this would turn out to be a great opportunity and complementary combination of Psychology and Sociology. She is currently completing her Clinical Masters in Psychology, but this is not what she wants to be doing for the rest of her life. She intends to pursue Politics again because:

you can't escape from like the racial past of South Africa it's bringing its ugly head all over the place whether it's people trying to account for their failures or you know people wanting to do something not being able to because of their past that you know that's hindering them".

Politics and political awareness of what was happening in the world around was also a crucial part of her family's consciousness: from the very big politics like her father's involvement in the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), the ruling political party, to his standing election for member of Parliament to small political conscientious through reading and following the news. Growing up and influenced by her father, Bili was familiar and followed the South African political story of brutal violence during apartheid through print media, in particular *The Citizen*, and television. And through reading Bili became more politically minded, like both her parents but more particularly her father. Bili suggests that she was raised to be aware and mindful of the world around her. She not only followed the South African story but also discovered other political contentious stories through reading – the Bili story she names is the Zimbabwean story and in particular the often overlooked issue of the Lancaster Agreement when debating contemporary Zimbabwe and Robert Mugabe. Reading, therefore, gave her “understanding ... [and] insight into [such political issues] it just made me very politically-minded”. Reading; her father's influence and her own inquisitiveness led her to specifically follow the South African narrative of race, apartheid and racism. This is when and where she started thinking about *race* and *racialization*:

I'm very inquisitive that I want to know why is this happening in a particular way and that's when actually I think race started to be something that I started thinking about because I used to I used to watch

the news and they used to report that the BLACKS or the whites and for me cause I was in a country where that was not, not of an issue I used to say to myself “Surely this is making things worse than they should be because if you start looking at people in ways that differentiate them and then people will start going to think of themselves in those ways” that’s what I used to think I am telling you and I was very, very young then it used to bother me how people were differentiated especially according to race cause it was something that was very FOREIGN to me in Botswana and I just used to think “That is so wrong why do you need to have people identify themselves by their skin colour what’s the difference?” it’s like [brief pause] okay I was, was very naïve it’s like it’s like I went for a programme where they’d say this is a group for like divorced ahm parents of I mean kids of divorced parents and I used to say to myself “Surely they are making problems where there are no problems ...

BOTH: laugh

Bili: ... who said divorced kids have problems

BOTH: laugh

Bili: ... you know ...

Siyanda: yes

Bili: ... so they are just attracting they are just attracting problems cause that’s what I thought of the differentiation between black and white cause I first saw it on TV when they are reporting news and they say “The blacks this and the whites that” and I said “Surely they are attracting problems now they are trying to separate people into these categories and they are telling people they have problems but they DON’T ...

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... you know that’s why I used to say to people that you know when I grow up I used to think I’m you know I’m going to change the world and I realized that I had these really tainted glasses and then I took them off ...

BOTH: laugh

Bili: ... and then I started to see the world for what it was ...

The above interview exchange demonstrates Bili's first encounters with South Africa and its racialization. Her first encounters with racialization are in watching racialized media reports on South Africa. And this particularly foreign for Bili because she is in Botswana, a country that is NOT racialized (well maybe not in the same ways). Bili is bothered by racial categorization and differentiation – as dividing people and as racial categorization is foreign to her in Botswana. For Bili “it is (conceptually or even morally??) wrong” to have identification to and by skin colour. Bili presents a theoretical insight in terms of classification and categorization - between categories and ‘things’ to which those categories refer⁶

What follows next is an interesting co-construction between Bili and myself in terms of our blackness and how my blackness is fore-grounded as a consequence of living in a racialized space like South Africa and where Bili's blackness has been back-grounded in Botswana and only fore-grounded in South Africa (the intersectionalities of race and other identity formations):

Siyanda: Well I suppose what could be different for me is not identifying yourself by race ...

Bili: ... EXACTLY

Siyanda: ... especially in this ...

Bili: ... ja I know, I know I know what you mean ...

Siyanda: ... I don't what it would mean to live in a country like any other country in Africa besides out of South Africa so I don't know what life would be like in Botswana ...

Bili: ... without people calling you black ...

Siyanda: ... ja and without knowing *ukuthi*⁷ so [sighs] like I just can't understand it do are you conscious of it ah [brief pause]

⁶ Ian Hacking's idea in the *Social Construction of What?*, of interactive kinds – where classifications create, construct and constitute subjects and where subjects come to be affected and to affect how they are classified and categorized.

⁷ 'Ukuthi' is a Zulu word meaning 'that' in English

Bili: ... of my skin colour?

Siyanda: Yeah like I mean ah *ngoba mina*⁸ here I am completely and utterly conscious of it and I can't imagine not being [brief pause] ...

Bili: ... black

Siyanda: ... ja or knowing and feeling that I am

Bili: I guess that's what, that's what ahmm [brief pause] how can I put this? [brief pause] gives meaning to your existence you're black before everything else you know that's, that's what makes you remember that "I do exist I'm black" [brief pause] that was such a foreign concept for me that was SO foreign when I was at home [brief pause] being black I know I am this skin colour but it doesn't come into my definition of how I am like if somebody was to ask me you know "Describe Bili" black wouldn't necessarily come into it being female maybe and my personality traits you know I am a ah ...

Siyanda: ...extrovert

Bili: exact...

BOTH: laugh

Bili: ... I thought I was an introvert.

BOTH: laugh

Bili: ... you know and you know that I'm, I'm [brief pause] I'm I've got a very strong character you know [lowering her voice as if she is whispering] I'm very forceful in nature ...

Siyanda: chuckles

Bili: ... and you know those sort of things and maybe where I come from the family and stuff like that but being black in Botswana would have not come up as an issue not at all

Siyanda: And, and does it come up now or is it just a ...

Bili: ... and then I came to South Africa ...

Siyanda: prolonged laughter

Bili: ... and then I got a rude awakening ...

⁸ 'Ngoba mina' is a Zulu phrase meaning 'because I'

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... it was, it was you know it was very, very interesting coming to South Africa [brief pause] where if you are not black decide on how you are because ...

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... you can't fit into the society if you are not of a particular race choose a category where you are going to fit into ...

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... so it was I was, I was and I am more of a person where I don't like being categorized I don't like people think that they can predict how I'm going to do things just because ...

Siyanda: ... just because you are X...

Bili: ... just because I'm, I'm a female or just because I'm black I don't like people thinking "Okay she's black she is going to do this or she's going to ...

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... so it was very, very difficult and imagine Bili individual trying to stand against something that has been embedded for ...

Siyanda: ... years

Bili: ... more than fifty years so that was, that was, that was plus coming to South Africa post ahmm 94 you would think that you are now coming to an integrated society but phew it was, it was, it was something different I've always come to South Africa like to visit not to stay ...

This exchange demonstrates Bili's resistance to being conceived primarily as a racialized (blackened) subject in a highly racialized post-apartheid South Africa. Bili positions my blackness as existentialism and as fore-grounded above all my other identities as captured in this rework of Descartes' maxim "I am black, there I am". For Bili thinking of herself in terms of her blackness is a foreign concept. She knows that she is "this skin colour but it doesn't come into my definition". She would not foreground her blackness rather, if she had to, she might define herself in terms of her gender, her personality traits, 'where she

comes from' (nationality?) and her family. However, as she lived in South Africa (for at least 5 years) her blackness has been foregrounded *for her* by others. "And then I came to South Africa ... and then I got a rude awakening...". It was only in coming to South Africa that she has been forced to think of and construct herself primarily as black (first) and then all else can follow. Bili suggests that coming to South Africa was a turning point in her racialization and thinking of herself primarily as a racialized (blackened) subject. In South Africa, Bili was 'rudely awoken' to how race continues to be a major part of individuals' lives and individuals' identity. She was awoken to how much South Africa remains a highly and *rigidly* racialized society, where 'you have to decide what race you and where you fit in' because as she rightfully observe, I think, "you cannot fit into South African society if you are not neatly categorized into Bili the available, yet limited, pre-determined racial categories.

Coming to South Africa, for Bili, was a turning point for her specifically in terms of thinking of herself as black. Her impressions of post-apartheid South Africa were that it was still a racially divided society and she was intrigued by the ways in which South Africans construct who they are:

... then I started I realized seeing how people constructed meaning and how they started you know how they constructed identity and other people's identity it was very, it was very interesting when I first came to South Africa⁹...

Bili's coming to South Africa disrupts or disrupted that which she valued about Botswana and that is non-racialism. Coming to South Africa meant that she had to define herself as black and meant that she had to say that she was in fact black:

... [interracial relationships] was it was okay and then you come to South Africa "Hhaah [gasps and takes on a different tBili of voice] she's walking

⁹ This is an instance of the use of theoretical concepts and understandings of how people construct meanings and their identities – afforded by her psychological and sociological training and education.

with a white guy there's something wrong with her" and coming here and having to you know who you are having to resort to saying "I'm black" was I was like no there's more to me than what you see on the outside you know I wanted I was used to having my personality attributes ...

Siyanda: ... being the thing

Bili: ... out there rather my being black so coming here and it was very hard because it was not only other race groupings saying "who are you?" it was also the blacks saying to me "who ...

BOTH: ...are you?"

Bili: ... because [brief pause] when you start taking a particular racial category you are also taking things that are attributed to it there's a culture that goes with every, every race so when I say I'm black I'm, I'm [brief pause] putting a cloak that says I'm black and I'm going to behave black I didn't behave black for a lot of people

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... so that was a problem because I didn't behave black and I don't think I behave white ...

BOTH: laugh

As illustrated in the above interview exchange, for the first time in her life, Bili 'was forced' to think of herself in racial terms, in terms of her blackness. She (disapprovingly) gazed upon when she 'transgressed racial territory'. At the same time Bili protests that there's *more* to her than her blackness, *more* to her than being black. Having come from Botswana, Bili was not used to being identified (primarily) by the colour of her skin but rather, as Martin Luther King once proclaimed "by the content of [her] character", or by her personality traits as she puts it. Coming to South Africa has been hard for her as she's defined first and foremost by being black and paradoxically it was other black people that identified her as black, and not necessarily the other 'races'¹⁰. Part of Bili's objection of being assigned to Bili racial category is the implication of such classification. She

¹⁰ This is certainly the difference between Dina and Bili as for Dina, it was the white gaze that constructed and reminded her that she was in fact black; for Bili, it is the converse, she is constructed as black not by the racial Other but by other black people.

suggests that by taking on a particular racial category, you are invariably taking on certain attributes that are associated to that ‘race’ or as she puts “the culture that goes with [that] ‘race’”. Identifying as black, for Bili, means ‘behaving black’ and in her case she has always questioned about who she is because she did not behave black (enough) for many black South Africans. Bili was written¹¹, in an academic journal, about her dis/identifications with blackness and she eloquently captures this below:

I supposedly I don’t know what behaving black is you know because I’m doing things that I know how to do from my family and my family is BLACK you know... so being told that “you are not black the music that you listen to, how you do things you know” I was very like okay so “what do you want me to do?” you know “how do you want me to do it? And then knowing that I’m also NOT of a different skin colour it was very, was very it was very interesting cause I know I have written somewhere that *I have never felt so black and yet not so black at the same time as I have in South Africa because I have been, I have been called because “You are black behave black but then you don’t behave black” so I have been qualified as black but then disqualified at the same time* which you know at first it used to infuriate me it used to make me really mad but now it’s just like you know what it’s fine it’s the way the society works it’s you know it’s HOW unfortunately it’s how the society has been molded.

The phrase “*I have never felt so black and yet not so black at the same time as I have in South Africa*” ... *I have been qualified as black but then disqualified at the same time*”¹² is a powerfully demonstrates the changing nature of (racial) identifications. Rather than thinking of them as essentialised identity, it is more instructive to see these identifications as moving, changing, evolving and mutating over a variety of social difference/formations [And I think what is at play here is her nationality – the fact that though she is black (*she is like them*) she is nonetheless ‘the foreigner’, ‘the Other’, ‘the

¹¹ I assume she is referring to an article she published in ‘Undressing Durban’.

¹² A powerful illustration of the idea of shifting improvised identifications (that I am trying to develop).

outsider’- she is precisely not like them and ‘eternally locked’, it would seem, to being the Other – especially given South Africa’s tenuous and fragile Pan-national identity and its relation to the rest of Africa].

As a direct consequence of living in South Africa for the last five years, Bili has now become more conscious of race both her own and that of others (even though she says she is not too race conscious¹³). She tells interesting stories how now she notices the race of others (like how many black and white people they are in her Masters class. She also traces how noticing race has evolved for her as before she would sit next to any person in a lecture and not necessarily noticing what race they were but now this has changed: “but now when I go into class and I looked around I’m like okay there’s so many black people there’s so many white people and you know because my, my *I’ve been, I’ve been awoken to, to looking at race* but I went to this party part of my Masters group and there were only two black people there it was me and ...): *the story of the Psychology Masters class’ party* of being the only two “blacks at the party” and the assumption was that she and him were a couple “just because he’s black” and in that situation is felt different; she felt ‘black’. The context of the story is that they are Masters students at a party. They are all white students who have also brought friends and partners expect for Bili and Bili male student. And two hours into the party Bili realizes she is being stared at:

... [A]fter a while after like two hours of talking I realized they were like people looking [at] me funny and, and then it clicked “I’m black” like I was very unaware of my being black I was just these are people that I’m having fun with you know we are sitting here celebrating Bili of my classmates birthday party and then you know somebody just had to find out “You’re black you don’t quite fit in” and it was just I found it very

¹³ Her answer to the question whether she is more race conscious now is interesting as it beautifully captures a contradiction or paradox in her being race and not race conscious at the same time. Here, contradiction is not used in the lexicon linguistic way as something ‘negative’ but rather philosophically as something nuanced; as about human life – contradiction in this sense is about being human!

interesting it's hard to be A PERSON even not classified according to your colour people have to always remind you that you're black ...

Siyanda: ... so that they could put you in your place

Bili: ... exactly, exactly I think I am starting to, to, to get out of my place and they had to bring me back in...

BOTH: laugh

Bili: ... so it sort of like dampened the whole evening cause now I was I had to constantly think I'm black ...

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... I'm black

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... I'm black

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... I'm black so ja

Siyanda: [laughing] ... and don't you forget it...

BOTH: laugh

Bili: I bet I guess ja it's a, it's a very interesting society that we are in.

What Bili experiences is what I now refer to as the Fanonian moment of race consciousness, that moment when you are completely marked and inscribed by your (racialized) body and there is no escape. It is a moment at which you feel completely 'your race' (whatever it may be and whatever historical and political meaning is imbued in and by your body).

In responding to a question about her experiences of leaving Botswana and moving to a new country, Bili reveals other layers of her dis/identifications around race and nationality, that is around being a black 'foreigner' in South Africa. For Bili coming to study in KwaZulu-Natal province has been more problematic for her as opposed to coming to South Africa. She suggests that she was not (psychologically) prepared for coming to KwaZulu-Natal and she was not particularly prepared for a foreign language and for a foreign culture:

Bili: ... ja because I used to come here and I was not prepared for coming to KwaZulu cause I DID NOT KNOW ...

BOTH: laugh

Bili: ... I DID NOT KNOW KwaZulu I promise you I was not prepared for a foreign language to start off with I was not prepared for a foreign culture so when I came here you know like it felt like I was in a vortex it felt so strange being in an environment where you can't understand what's happening around you, you know people talking you can hear people talking but you can't hear what they are saying ...

Siyanda: ... and everybody assumes that you are Zulu

Bili: Of course, of course there's that as well ...

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... there's that as well everybody assumes you are Zulu they'll come "*Sawubona sisi*"¹⁴ and you are like "hi" and they are like "How come you not speak isiZulu" "I'm not Zulu" [takes on a forceful tBili of voice] "Well you have to speak isiZulu because you are in KwaZulu" and I'm like "But I just have only came" [adopts the same forceful tBili] "Well you have to learn what are you doing here if you are going to learn isiZulu, isiZulu is the most important language in Africa you have to be African"¹⁵ "Well I speak seTswana can we do can you speak seTswana ..."

Siyanda: laughs

Bili: ... "No isiZulu is the most important" isiZulu is Bili out of twelve languages in South Africa and South Africa is Bili out of fifth-two countries in Africa so I don't know what the importance is ...

In KwaZulu-Natal, Bili is confronted with the hegemony of isiZulu and her attempts at resistance (to it). This foreign language and culture relegates to the margins and the

¹⁴ A Zulu greeting "Hello sister"

¹⁵ Questions of Africa and who is African or what makes one African and not.

position of ‘the Other’, of ‘the foreigner’. As a result of now speaking the language, her blackness and Africanness are questioned. What is particularly upsetting and alienating for Bili is that her identity is questioned by the older Zulu generation: “and then I started encountering people [sighs] and for me this is really strange coming from elderly people because back home elderly people are supposed to be respected and they act in a particular way you know ... that they should be respected so when I started encountering people who would come like elderly people who’d come down to my level as a young person and start shouting at me that’s sort of like [giggles] okay what culture is this ...”. Bili decides that she has had “enough of this Zulu nation” and decides to resist by refusing to learn isiZulu. Although Bili can understand more of isiZulu than she can actually speak, she suggests that it is precisely at those moments when she cannot understand the language when she becomes and is rendered “a foreigner again”. This markedly demonstrates the tenuous processes of identifications and (dis)identification across, in this case, language and ethnicity. This is about “ties that bind and lines that divide” – the process of identification shifts, breaks and mutates in relation to other forms of difference between people.

Bili then tells of being a foreigner in South Africa and feelings of isolation, loneliness and alienation. She suggests that foreigners are a target of violent crime. Bili then reflects on the xenophobic attacks that happened in South Africa recently:

... you become you begin to feel very foreigner you begin to feel very alone within South Africa and the recent xenophobic attacks it didn’t help a lot you know I thought I had accepted my being in South Africa and my being PART of South Africa and then when that happened I FELT VERY FOREIGN I felt very out of this place it didn’t happen in [brief pause] on campus like we didn’t I didn’t personally experience it I just see it happening on TV and the newspapers but every person that I talked to that was a foreigner it was we felt very out of place we felt threatened we were all shaken up and [brief pause] it amazed me because we did not confront it we but because we are foreigners we just felt it I felt for those guys that

were being burnt and you know their homes being burnt down and I was it was like me you know but it was not me I think it's a fact that we are all foreigners just you know.

Bili then offers a range of different explanations for the xenophobic attacks:

- How first it was easy to put it down to the fact that South Africa as a violent place;
- But by talking to others, she started to understand the attacks rationally, as historically and politically rooted particularly in relation to South Africa's poor service delivery
- She then she explains the outcome of this poor service delivery using the typical psychological theory: Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis
- Drawing parallels to Zimbabwe, she suggests that government is failing its people, however, maintaining that she would never understand how easy it to take human life.
- She suggests that South Africans are angry as they have been left out and marginalized even in the so-called new South Africa¹⁶: the average South African is not acknowledged for their fight in the struggle, for their contribution, for laying down their lives – the average man is forgotten and left to fend for himself in poverty; the average man is not benefiting in South Africa as in Zimbabwe. This is the post-apartheid narrative that has been closed down or silence or backgrounded by the master post-apartheid narrative – which is seen as more legitimate politically, as the story that all (black) South Africans should be telling - that is, the story of the TRC, the story of Forgiveness and the BEE story, the new better story of the black elite, the story of meritocracy.

¹⁶ **A very insightful analysis she gives here: I need to refer to Maphela Ramphela's *Laying Ghosts to Rest!!***

The interview draws to a close as Bili reflects on her life in terms of the challenges and opportunities she has faced. Bili lists the following as her challenges:

- (i) Study and education: trying to figure out what she wants to study and how to bring her different interests together.
- (ii) Gender – being a woman: especially in religious settings – “you’re a woman you’re not doing what women are supposed to do you are transcending where women are supposed to be.” Bili suggests that her gender has also been challenged in South Africa as she is seen transgressing the boundaries of womanhood. She suggests that in Botswana she can do whatever she wants as the society is more tolerant unlike in South Africa where she is told that because she is a woman she needs to behave like Bili. Conflated with gender, her Africanness is questioned as she apparently does not behave as an African woman. Bili questions this idea of (one) ‘Africa’ and (an essentialised) African: “and then I came here and I found people like “you’re in Africa [chuckles] we don’t do things like that” and it got me thinking “Which part of African am I from” [laughs] you know and it really it used to irritate me when people say ‘in Africa’ because Africa is fifty-two countries and Nigeria alone has more than a hundred cultures and they do things differently you know so what more about the different countries and I’m, I’m African but I don’t ascribe to the same cultural beliefs that other people do who say they’re African and when they say an African and ja and I consider myself to be very rooted in my culture you know¹⁷”. Bili’s identity is constantly questioned, her identity as a woman, as an African, and even as black, is questioned in South Africa and she suggests it is because she is grounded differently from a different cultural/national background.
- (iii) Race or ‘the racial challenge’, as she calls it: Bili struggles with being rendered foreigner and at the same time with being fixed into a racial category

¹⁷ Mudimbe’s argument to think of *Africas* as opposed to Africa: the idea of a fractured multiple Africa is not what Asante’s Afrocentrism would have us believe – different ways of being black, of being Africa – there is no one black, no one African – no essential identity.

and determined by it¹⁸ “who are you racially?” you know “get a category and stick to it if you are a coconut say you are a coconut so that we can look down on you be a coconut if you are black say you are black and starting behaving black so that I can rejoice with you but at the centre remember that you’re a black foreigner so you’re not quite part of us you do things differently and you are here to take our opportunities so you know and remain in that, in that unbalance we don’t want you to get too comfortable in our country” ja so I think that are some of the challenges [brief pause] which ja I mean especially the race Bili and BEING woman it’s just that [lowers her voice] being woman is a challenge that sounds silly ...”¹⁹.

Paradoxically, Bili positions her Otherness in South Africa as also an opportunity and as agentic position from which to speak and challenge. Bili thinks of herself as ‘a foreigner woman’ and as such is able to get away with things that other people cannot. This is simply because she is a foreigner and she is different²⁰. Bili can challenge ‘the system’ and say things that other South Africans cannot in relation to race – “I can talk about the racial past and how things are today because people won’t say to me “well you’re being racist or you’re being against whites or whatever” because I’m a foreigner and it’s very hard for other people to do it because they are South African²¹”.

Bili’s future story is about finishing her studies; returning to Politics in order to affect change and to speak for others; and return to Botswana so that she can contribute to its development and people.

¹⁸ I think the speaking voice here is a BLACK voice

¹⁹ This is a powerful quote that demonstrates different kinds of shift identities and identification – where she part of but at the same time she is rendered different, the Other – fluid and multiple intersectionalities of race, nation and gender

²⁰ Her positioning herself in this way though marginal it is also agentic (has to do with agency) – a productive political space to do certain things.

²¹ This is the advantage of being an outsider (being the Other can be quite powerful)

Narrative Portrait: DINA

Biographical Information

Female, age 35 (when first interviewed in 2007)

Born: Manchester, England (**first generation black British**)

Racial Heritage: Black, West Indian

Raised by her West Indian maternal grandparents (including her mother) – her grandmother played a huge role in raising her.

Absent father that she has a very ambivalent relationship with

Origins: grandparents came to the UK with the Windrush from the **West Indies** seeking for a better life in the UK

Education: Nursery, Primary, GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education); Secondary, University (did not finish university first time round)

Work: Medical Rep for a big pharmaceutical company but now has gone back to University to obtain a degree.

Marriage: she was married for a number of years, but is now separated awaiting filing for a divorce

Children: One son

Dina was born into a West Indian family now living in Britain. Her maternal grandparents had come to the UK in the historic Windrush to seek for a better life for themselves and their children. It was for this reason that her mother's pregnancy with her was not supported by her grandmother (as she was young). This was further complicated by the fact that her father was Jamaican and in Dina's own words "Jamaica is to the West Indies [as] Nigeria is to Africa". Her maternal grandmother as the matriarch in the family did not approve of Dina's parents relationship and of Dina's father in particular. In respecting her mother's wishes and her mother's goal for a better life in the UK, Dina's mother broke the relationship with Dina's father. Dina was then raised by her maternal grandparents in their home in Manchester within a larger and closely knit West Indian

community. The family three-bedroom home was somewhat a full house as it also sheltered extended family relations: her maternal grandparents, her mother, her aunt, her grandmother's brother and herself.

Dina's father was an absent figure in most of her life. Dina knew 'who her father was' (as he lived nearby) but did not have a relationship with him until later on in her life and this would be an ambivalent relationship throughout her adulthood. Her relationship with her father was complicated, conflictual, unreliable and characterized by great angst that is brilliantly captured in Dina's own words about how she felt about her father and kind of relationship they had later in her life: 'he treats her like a girlfriend'

Dina's relationship with her father is one that is characterized by different breaks and points of contention:

First, her father was not in her life. Although Dina is aware of the fact that her father was actively pushed out of her life by her grandmother, she herself even admits that it must have been hard on her father, she nonetheless feels effectively abandoned by him. This is a multi-blow for Dina:

- Her father marries a white woman and has a new interracial family. She calls this "his little nuclear family". She characterizes a lot of men, like her father, as suffering from what she terms 'start-again syndrome'. Her father has left her and her other two (black) half sisters and started a new family. Dina even suggests that she and her half sisters are (his) mistakes that he would rather forget and move on from.
- Dina also struggles with the fact that her father is married to a white woman and is concerned about the effects of this on her father's sense of blackness and his mixed race children— because where he comes from and his lifestyle, as Dina puts it, is NOT represented in this new, foreign, 'white' world that he now inhabits and now must navigate. Dina cannot imagine dating someone who is white and yet her father has married a white woman. Dina struggles with issues of race and identity with reference to her father's new mixed race family. Dina constructs mixed race and interracial

relationships as a (potential) threat to identity – particularly blackness because it tries to take something from blackness or tries to erase blackness.

Second, Dina and her father tried to forge a father-daughter relationship later on in Dina's life. Dina, for the first time met her father and her paternal side of the family. However, this meeting was not to be a sweet one as there were deep-seated historical family problems – (there lots of conflict, jealousy and competition) especially with her half sister. Further, after Dina eventually decides to let her father in her life “he messed it up”. Her father did not know how to be a father to her and Dina suggests that he tended to treat like a girlfriend rather than a daughter – his love and availability was subject and conditional to her behaving ‘well’. After she had allowed her father in her life, they fell out (again) and spent many years NOT speaking to each other. The silence was so grave that Dina did not tell (or did not want) to tell her father that she was getting married. Dina only made contact with her father after she received news that her paternal grandmother was dying of cancer. This event provided Dina with the impetus to make contact with her father and his side of the family. Though Dina invited her father and her paternal side of the family to her wedding, she insisted that her maternal grandfather give her away as he had been more of a father to her than her own father. It was after this event that her father began trying mending their relationship. His efforts now extend beyond Dina to her son – her father has always wanted a son as he only has five daughters and Dina was the one person to give him the things the most wants.

Dina characterizes school as a ‘white environment’ [read multi-racial, multicultural] where she also took part in different kinds of activities with dance taking more priority, specifically ballet. School, for Dina, was her point of *racialization* – where she felt isolated and had her blackness negatively ‘made a point of’ and thus she began to forcefully and militantly, a word she uses, assert her blackness. She recounts two early childhood experiences with two different white girls that made her very conscious of her skin colour and what she can and cannot do because she was black. As a result of these experiences, Dina had to become militant from a very young age in terms of asserting who she is as a black person and where she comes from. In primary school Dina was a ballerina and in secondary school she was a model. Her experiences in dance school as

well as the modeling industry are struggles with her blackness. Ballet, for Dina, is “a classically English white” form of dance where she could never progress in because she is black. She suggests that even though she was very good at ballet, she was never given a solo performance. This is mirrored with her experiences in the modeling industry where she was seen as either ‘too black’ because of her dark skin or having far refined features to be cast as a black model.

It is in the midst of these struggles with race and identity that we learn of Dina’s own racial/ethnic self-definition. Up to this point, Dina has spoken of herself as being *black* but as the interview unfolds she reveals that she, in fact, is *mixed race*. From the beginning of the interview Dina starts off with her West Indian origins/heritage then she refers to herself as *first generation black British* then in talking about the different struggles that different black communities face – that is black African and black Caribbean – she refers to herself as *West Indian black British* and then in talking about her rejection by other black (African) communities as not ‘really black’ she then reveals that she is mixed race: *part Sri Lankan and part Indian or black with an Indian mix*.

In accounting for how race became a significant issue in her life, Dina makes two important moves: (i) she provides a cross-generational analysis that her generation, unlike the generation of her parents and grandparents, were born in the UK, a context she characterizes a white environment and they faced everyday racism that made her generation angry, militant unlike the grateful older generation. (ii) she reveals her turning points with reference to what it means to be black. And these turning points have to do with education as a tool for emancipation and political conscientious. For Dina watching the film *Roots* revolutionized what it means to be black – and this kind of black is strategically singular and universal across time and space – all black people! The other turning point is connected to, I suppose, Asante’s Afrocentrism – learning about black history and black pride – from her tutor. Dina, however, feels pride particularly of West Indian people as they were once slaves and have a different history to other black communities and it is here where she speaks of her West Indian heritage and the struggles

that West Indians have gone through that Dina fractures what it means to be black – not singular and not universal but a particular experience of black West Indian.

By the time Dina was in secondary school she suggests that being black, especially being Jamaican was celebrated as ‘cool’ and as the ‘in thing’. Dina also had a group of friends both black and white. What Dina respects the most is being authentic and rooted in one’s identity. One of her white friends, Lindsay, was precisely that. Lindsay did not pretend ‘to be black’ and did not apologize for being white and Dina respected her for that. However, Eve, the other white girlfriend in the group of friends was what Dina calls a ‘wannabe’ and Dina does not respect ‘wannabes’ as Eve tried ‘to be black’.

Dina dedicates a lot of time and space in the interview to her (failed and often conflictual) relationships with men: from her first boyfriend, Sam, with a rough past whose father was an alcoholic and mother schizophrenic. Sam had also spent time in jail. It turned out that Sam was a liar and addicted to hardcore, Class-A drugs. Her second boyfriend, Martin, who she describes as the worse person she ever met in her entire life. Martin was in a gang, dealt drugs (and even got her to drive him around when he was dealing), and was verbally, physically and psychologically abusive. She had to leave Manchester and move to London where she met her third boyfriend, Craig, who turned out to be possessive and controlling.

Dina goes to university in London. She hated the experience of university first time round. She found university very white and very isolating as she had nothing in common with her white counterparts – who had never met or interact with black people before coming to university. Even though she herself was middle-class, she had nothing in common with the rest of the middle-class whites at university. She struggled with the issue of race at university once again. She could not relate to the other white students and was irritated by white men who were interested in black female body ‘for sheer novelty purposes’. She sought out different (black) partying scenes as she was isolated when she went out to ‘white clubs or pubs’. She also confronted other challenges at university as she was dyslexic and was ultimately thrown out of the course.

Soon after leaving university, she meets her fourth boyfriend, Alan, who was to become her husband. Dina characterizes Alan as a good man and together they lived a comfortable middle class life that was financially secure. Together, they invested in the property market, drove luxurious cars and went on wonderful holidays. However, Dina was never in love with him and with time she wanted to leave the marriage. Dina charges Alan for not being emotionally available for and to her and realized that they both wanted very different things in life. After Dina has her son and decides to leave work and stay at home raising her son, Dina has another turning point: she realizes that she has always defined herself in relation to all the men in her life. She decides to leave but after an unfortunate event where she had an affair. She constructs this moment as her liberation from a lie she has been living and characterizes this new stage in her life as a (potential) divorcee “finding me again”. Now, Dina is living and enjoying a single life again. She has also decided to finish what she started a few years ago, that is, going back to university and obtaining a qualification. She has also met another man, Darren that she constructs as her soul mate. This is someone from her childhood. Dina uses a kind of precognitive and supernatural device in her story to do certain things: (i) to justify her divorce and to almost explain away the affair; to give herself permission to be with this new man who is her soul mate and they are met to be together: Darren knew when her when she was 14 years old and he said then that he would marry her; Darren still has the watch she lent him many years before; Darren lives behind her grandmother’s church and Darren has kept a picture of hers from her modelling days that he bought online.

Dina ends her story at two different moments in the interview and, I think, those these endings capture the two most dominant and important things in her life story: first she ends with *her father* who had dominated her story (and influence her life and her relationships with men) and second she ends with a note on *authenticity* and identity—another dominate theme in her life story.

Narrative Portrait: MUSA

Biographical Information

Male, age 41 (when first interviewed in 2006)

Born: rural Manguzi, South Africa

Racial Heritage: black South African

Family: Born into a big family of seven children and a very poor working-class family, where his mother was unemployed and his father a migrant labourer. His elder sister played a critical role in his life both as a parental figure and financial provider for the entire family (especially after the father died).

Context: grew up and went to school and university in apartheid South Africa

Education: Primary, High School, Owen Sithole College for Agricultural Studies, University of Natal (through the TTT Access Programme)

Work: worked for a year in the field of Animal Health; Teacher (1995); Acting Deputy Principal (1998); Deputy Principal (1999); Principal (2001). In addition, he is a community/political leader - ANC Chairperson in the Municipal Ward Council

Marriage: got married in 2000

Children: Two sons (both sons are from previous relationships and one of which he got when he was still at school and his mother had to raise his son for him).

Musa comes from an extremely poor rural South African family (living under apartheid). Musa begins his story with the poverty that characterizes his childhood and some of his adult life. From the very beginning of his interview, responding to the question I had pose of “how many they were at home”, Musa immediately sets up the socio-economic position of his family. At this point he does not explicitly say that his family was very poor (this comes later on) he does, however hints at poverty in subtle ways. In the following interview exchange, we can see how he sets up his family’s economic position. The bolded material points to the subtle way at which he hints at familial poverty and the underlined material point to connected ideas characteristic of a typical working class black South African family:

Siyanda: ... (interrupts) okay the first question [that] I can start with is how many are you at home?

Musa: Okay I am born in a family that, the children are seven one girl and six boys I'm the second boy at home eh **the person that was of great help**¹ and my role model at the same time was my sister...

Siyanda: ... (interrupts) This only one [sister]?

Musa: The one, the eldest I mean she was exemplary in many ways like [she was] the person that motivated me that I go to school at one time I was, **I was twenty** by then [and] I did not want to go to school the other thing that created that was that we used to travel long distances from home to school so and **my father passed away I decided to go to Joburg**² **to seek work** and I gave her an ultimatum I said to her "There is only one thing that can make me go back to school if I stayed at boarding school but **if I am going to continue walking on foot traveling from home to school cause you're traveling close to eight or so single trip K's**³ **from home to school daily** so and I was sure that she wasn't going to agree *I had caught her there*⁴ you see...

The bolded material above together point to a poor family background: (i) where a child, in this case his sister, takes on the role of parent in the family; (ii) for Musa to be twenty and still be going to school, I think, points to a number of difficulties he might have faced in his life and an array of social realities that hold back children's educational progress and development; (iii) for Musa to consider going to Johannesburg in search for employment before he had completed school as a result of a deceased father and (iv) the

¹ This bolded phrase in the original Zulu better captures Musa's family's poverty in that his sister was "*umuntu obewusizo kakhulu*". For a child to be "*usizo*" [help] necessarily indicates where a child assumes traditionally parental roles in the family/household. By his sister being "*usizo*" [help], suggests that she provided financial support to this struggling poor family. Musa's sister also played other roles in the family, which are underlined in the interview material above and below.

² Johannesburg

³ Kilometres

⁴ This phrase is translated from "*Ngimbambile lapho*" – and it is difficult to translate directly but in suggests that he "catch her", or rather, it is the idea of 'backing someone into a corner'.

fact that he walked long distances from and to school also point to a typical feature of black rural life in South Africa (both during and after apartheid). The underlined material taken together also suggests that his elder sister not only provided financial support for the family but actually played the fundamental role of parent (which is something that Musa explicitly states later on that his sister was **“like Christ [and that she] is everything she was my father she was my mother until today”**). Musa’s sister played the role of parent: of ‘role model’ and she was the one that refused for him to become a migrant labourer, insisted that he complete his schooling and financially provided for his education.

It was in asking him to tell me about the experience of coming from such a big family as his where Musa explicitly tells of the poverty at home. Interestingly, he suggests that they did not know or think of themselves as poor, it is only now, later in life when he retrospectively sees that his family was: ‘poor’; ‘struggling’, ‘tough growing environment’; severe material lack – he remembers times when they went without food, ‘being rugged’, using motor oil for body lotion, using indigenous herbs for toothpaste, walking, even when wet, long distances to and from school.

Despite poverty, Musa comes from a close, loving and supportive family. As a result of Musa’s father being a migrant worker, which meant that he was away from home most of the time (came home only during Christmas holidays) and he died when Musa was age 20 (the same age when Musa himself became a father for the first time. However, having a child out of wedlock is something that he says he regrets). Musa tells a rather sad story: of how he did not know his father nor have the opportunity to have a relationship with him. Musa’s mother was very close and supportive of *all* her children. His mother also has her own long painful story of suffering and poverty (that whenever she tells today she gets very emotional). The role that Musa’s sister plays in his life dominates Musa’s entire life story. As already indicated, Musa’s sister plays a crucial role in his life and education. She is actually the one that told Musa about the TTT Access Programme to study at the University of Natal, without which Musa would have never had the opportunity to go to university and change his life. His sister is also an example to/for

him and he looks up to her, and as a result of his role model sister, Musa has also become a role model to and for others in the family (such to his younger siblings; his wife) and the community (as he is a community/political leader). Musa and the rest of his siblings enjoy a good and supportive relationship (for instance, as siblings they financially support each other especially when one sibling is getting married).

Musa has been married now for 9 years now, I hope (he got married in 2000) and has two sons from previous relationships. Musa and his wife have been trying to get pregnant but have been unsuccessful (she actually miscarried once). Having a child with his wife is one of Musa's dreams. Musa does not speak too much about his wife. Musa suggests that as his sister was a role model to him and forced him to finish school; he too has become a role model to his younger siblings and especially his wife. He suggests when he met his wife she did not have a profession and he motivated her to go to university, which she then did and has now qualified as a nurse. So, Musa has contributed to his wife's personal/professional development, just as his sister once did for him. As a result of his own (and his wife's) education, they both now enjoy and live a better (material) life that is radically different from the life of his childhood and family, he puts it like this:

... it's so nice and even we see ourselves developing at home and the things we didn't have in the beginning we have got a car we were poor traveling with zeros (?) and now we have got our own car we have got our own house and just things [like] appliances that we did not have you see so life is starting to be easy and nice you see ja though there are other things that we do not have you see ja, ja, ja.

Musa was born and bred in rural Manguzu in South Africa. He then did all his schooling (from 1971) in the very same place and now lives there with his own family. Musa suggests that the place has changed dramatically since his childhood and youth: when growing up, there were no roads and no cars at all, just lots of cows grazing. One of the most visible changes both in the country and the place he comes from is de-racialized allocation of resources unlike under apartheid where resources were allocated along racial lines. He tells an interesting story of electricity and how it was only reserved for

white homes and communities, and this has changed in the new South Africa. His home place has seen a lot of positive development: there is now electricity for all; roads; cars (and the ownership of cars seems to be a clue for great success); and better salaries. Musa also identifies challenges that South Africa faces particularly unemployment, poverty and crime. This development is radically different from the kind of life he led as a child. Most of his early life was characterized by walking long distances to school and to the shops. Musa tells a fascinating story about bread: they could only get bread once a week on Saturdays and there were long queues of people waiting to buy bread. The *bread story* is also connected to his migrant father who when he returned from Johannesburg would bring “lots of bread” and they would have a ‘party’ with lots of people in the neighbourhood coming together to enjoy bread (without any fillings) with *umbhubhudlo*⁵. Musa suggests again that in the context of such parties they did not feel poor and that it is only retrospectively that he recognizes how poor they were:

You see but it was so nice [to] eat as masses⁶ ja but we like I stated earlier on we didn’t feel that we are poor you see ja, ja it was revealed later on when we were comparing life that “Phew” ja “No we were not striving⁷” you see ja so it was tough during our time ...

Musa characterizes school as a very harsh environment during his childhood and his school-going-days because of having to walk long distances while battling the elements along the way and specifically because of corporal punishment in schools. As a direct result of the harsh schooling environment a lot of people, school children in fact, ended up leaving school and seeking migrant employment in Johannesburg (as he also tried but his sister instated he complete school). In such an environment, migrant labour is constructed as: (i) a form of escaping the harsh schooling environment, (ii) a source for a better material life and consequently (iii) a source of respect by others afforded by the ‘new’ economic position that work and money allows.

⁵ ‘*Umbhubhudlo*’ is simply sugar water and it is a typical ‘cool drink’ for working-class families.

⁶ The Zulu original was ‘*nidle nibaningi*’ directly translate to ‘eating as many’ – a lot of people eating together.

⁷ ‘Striving’ is translated from the Zulu original ‘*sasingaphili kahle*’, directing is means “we were not living well”

Musa's educational story dominates his telling of the story of his life. Musa explicitly admits that because he comes from a poor family, he simply did not have money to study further after he completed high school. He had to, therefore, look for alternative ways to study further or get employment. Musa found an opportunity to apply through the Department of Agriculture to study at Owen Sithole College where his education would be paid for and employment guaranteed by the Department. Musa then completed his two-year diploma in Animal Health and started work straight after graduation. It was at this point when his sister told about the University of Natal's alternative Access Programme called Teach-Test-Teach (TTT). Musa applied and was successful to enter university through this Access Programme. TTT gave Musa the opportunity to study at a university (and quite interesting a 'white' university then under apartheid) despite his poor educational background (as a result of the legacy of Bantu Education in apartheid South Africa). Musa was then able to complete his 4-year Bachelor of Social Science degree (typically it is a 3-year degree plus the one extra first 'bridging' year). He then studied further in his fifth year for an ITD diploma which he completed in 1994 (which coincides with the first democratic elections in South Africa) and started his first job as a qualified teacher in 1995.

Musa describes his first experience of coming to the city and university as a culture-shock. He juxtaposes 2 different worlds and lives, the city and the rural: the city as 'fancy,' has electricity, double storeys as opposed to the rural with no electricity and having to study by candlelight and fire. It is at this moment in his life, that is, at university where Musa speaks about and of **racialization and his encounter of racial difference**. This moment is particularly interesting because though South Africa is highly racialized and has a racist past (and especially at this time when Musa was at university), Musa only encounters this later on in his life, at a university, liberal space for emancipation, and it would be here where he would personally experience and tell of racism. Perhaps this is a sign that apartheid as a powerful system worked well in keeping different 'races' separate. This seems to be the case for Musa. He encounters racial difference for the first time in a very intimate and personal way. He meets 'white' people

for the first time (standing in front of him, teaching him) and has general fascination with white people in terms of ‘what kinds of people they’ and ‘the different lives they live’. Musa stares at and is fascinated by this visual difference of inscribed on and marked by the white body.

Race aside; the university also posed another struggles and challenges for Musa in particular around pedagogy (differences between university education and school; difficulties in lectures and with lecture note-taking; difficulties around navigating a new space and world - getting lost on campus and learning the balance between self-discipline and freedom at university) and language. Musa, using humour, tells a lot of different stories about the language barrier and difficulties in using and understanding English: the *‘little’ story* (about different ways of pronouncing English words); the *soap story* (about failing to locate a joke while watching daily soaps on television with other white students). Musa also speaks of the tensions around diversity and him always being at disadvantage given his history. Musa characterizes university in a dual way: as nice (in terms of freedom) and as dangerous (losing focus as a result of the freedom)

Musa then precludes to the idea of race and racism at the university. It is here where I then ask him directly on the experience of being black and coming to study at a white university. Musa found it confusing particularly the bringing together of two different (racial) worlds of black and white that do not know anything about each other and how each lives. Musa suggests that it is when these two different worlds converge where white people *should* learn about the black people (and not the other way round) and the kind of life they live (in this way black people represent, not themselves, but the whole group of a people). Musa then shares two *stories of racism*: Story 1 is the one with a white student who says “these blacks ... it’s typical of them” this leads Musa to suggest that white people do not understand the black life. Story 2 is the one of a racist lecturer who links blackness and underachievement.

At university Musa was aware of the politics in South Africa of the time in particular he was aware of the black-on-black violence in the townships between the Inkatha Freedom

Party (IFP) and the African National Congress (ANC). Though he does not explicitly account for what precisely his political activities were, Musa does say that he was involved in politics at university. And he is still very much active even today as he high up in the ANC political hierarchy as a Chairperson in the Party within his Municipal Ward. He was even a candidate-elect in the Municipal elections, however, the party was beaten by its political rival, the IFP. Musa's education has also enlightened his political views and given him greater understanding of what's happening in the country politically and socially. Musa is very proud of where he is today and how well the people he went to university through TTT with are doing for themselves. He has been extremely successful in terms of his teaching career, which is marked by a progressive and upward mobility with lots of progress and promotions in a relatively short space of time: Teacher in 1995 to Acting Deputy Principal in 1998, which is the same year he ascribes as his turning point⁸, to Deputy Principal in 1999 and to Principal in 2001. He feels that they have "reaped what they sowed" and, I think, have succeeded against all odds.

I think Musa's story is essentially a 'rags-to-riches' kind of a story or 'beating the odds' story given where he comes from and the success he has achieved – this is evident in how he reflects on his life. Musa thinks of his life now as 'a surprise' and as 'blessed' as it is fundamentally different from the life he lived as a child from a very poor family. He never thought that he could be where he is now and that his family would be so highly regarded in community given where the family comes from. Musa attributes the success in his life in three ways: first, to an intervention by a superpower/God. Musa explicitly states that it was not through his own efforts and that he could have never thought that he could lead the kind of life he's living today. Second, to TTT that has enabled him to create a different life for himself and his family (and that broke racial stereotypes by educating black students from weak and poor backgrounds) and finally, and not surprisingly, to his sister who has played such a vital role in his life and education.

⁸ Musa identifies at least two turning points in his life: the first happens in 1998 where he decided to turn his life around by quitting drinking and smoking; by becoming more self-sufficient and by taking more responsibility at home. Interestingly, this is the same year that he got promoted to Acting Deputy Principal. The second turning point, Qinisani identifies is the opportunity to go to university afforded him by TTT.

Musa has two kinds of dreams and aspirations: first for himself, he would like to study further and obtain a PhD and he says that this would “complete his life” and could then “die happy”. Second, all his dreams in his life are for his children: education for his boys; taking care of his home, ensuring that his boys are fulfilled; raising his children well; to have his own children with his wife; and providing them with a better life that he never had (and this means ensuring that they go to university; become computer literate; are able to express themselves (I think language is implicated here); study with different people from different cultures).

To end, I then ask Musa if he has anything else to add. Musa wants it on record and he even charges me to make sure that I tell the relevant people that TTT and TTT team in particular, have contributed immensely to his life. Suggesting that, I think, access to university and higher education has enabled him to live and have a life he never thought was possible, a life completely different from the one of his early days and childhood. Though he still lives in the same place, he lives a fundamentally different life and all this was afforded to him by his education and going university (which was made possible by TTT):

... [M]aybe I did not emphasize [this] in the beginning [that] the work that Jill did the work that Anita did the work that Thami did maybe for them they did not realize how much they have contributed in our lives but they contributed so immensely such that if it wasn't for them we wouldn't be where we are today you see because and it was them that came with this programme that allowed that we get accepted at university definitely that we would have not been accepted if they did not come ...so they are people who did a lot in our lives we cannot forget about them ... tell them that we cannot forget about them even though maybe we cannot have said it but then they must hear [it] it is something that they must stay with that there is a lot work they did they actually did quite a lot in our lives in particular.

Daisy

Narrative Structure¹

Key:

- Narrative structure; form of the telling
- ⇒ Content of the story
- ❖ Signals 'race' or racialisation of any kind

- Begins her life story with her name proper, '*Karabo Dasiy Moloi*' (this as a kind of owning of the story as hers even before the actual point of narration. "My name is" signals not only who she is but that what is to come, what is about to be told and narrated is her and hers.
 - "that's gonna come" – points to the nature of narration – alluding to what is yet to come. It is an almost knowing the whole before it's narrated. Our narrators are usually invested in the telling of their stories (Mishler) in their own way, in their own timing (temporal ordering).
- ⇒ Born in a rural space; born out of wedlock in her grandfather's house
- absent fathers
 - family and family structure
 - stepfather – preface to what is yet to happen. So, we, the audience get a preview (before the actual telling of her stepfather's story – so we know that she has a stepfather)
- ❖ "in African terms²" as a signal for 'race' but narrated and configured in culture terms.

¹ Alongside and throughout Daisy's narration of her life story, I, the researcher and immediate audience, am implicated in her story, in how she tells her story. There are a number of examples and illustrates in how I am implicated in storying – co-construction or co-narration evident in:

- **my laughter** throughout the interview (p. 1: laughter about the car and father story)
- my interruptions and 'putting words in her mouth' (this could be viewed in the negative but it could be better thought of as a sign for my active listening that nonetheless has an impact on how she tells her story as she uses the 'words'/'concepts'/'terms' I offer to her (for example, p.1: 'he came').

² This continental insertion is a cue for 'culture' and given the racialisation of culture, it in fact serves as an indicator or it "stands in place for" 'race' and here for blackness.

⇒ Normative childhood! She refers to her childhood as being ‘relatively normal’ though it is not the traditional nuclear family (grandfather, mother, siblings, extended family networks and a step father).

⇒ *Memory-STORY 1*: about ‘cars and fathers’

- “... you must tell me when I am rambling” – this is an interesting assertion from Daisy as she tells her story. It is almost like she is asking me “Is this the story you are looking for or looking to me to tell (you)”?. Again this has something to do with participants’ relationship with the researcher.