"Ruffled Feathers":

The Lives of Five Difficult Women in Durban in the 20th Century.

A Study of the Lives and Contributions of Mabel Palmer, Killie Campbell, Sibusisiwe Makanya, Dr Goonam and Phyllis Naidoo.

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Contents

Acknowledgements.

Preface. *i*

Chapter One - Introduction. 1

Chapter Two - Durban in the 20th Century. 17

Chapter Three - Education and Professional Careers. 38

Chapter Four - Old Age and Retirement. 70

Epilogue. 86

Bibliography. 98

Appendices -
1: Interview with Dr Goonam. 105
2: Interview with Phyllis Naidoo. 138
3: Interview with Dr Hamish Campbell. 187

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Preface.

In this thesis I will explore the lives of five women who lived in Durban during the 20th century. They all lived in and around the city of Durban for most of their lives, and thus the impact of this city on their lives is enormous. A brief description of each of their lives will help to introduce these remarkable women before I undertake the analysis of their struggles and contributions. This has been done in the hope that they will acquire significance and meaning in the body of this thesis. Their lives demonstrate an interesting departure from what was generally perceived to be the status and roles of women in their societies especially at the beginning of the 20th century. They all had a strong belief in the importance of education, were all formally educated, and their life's work was aimed at educating others. They were all aware that through their struggle to become educated, they would create a space for other women to follow. While attempting to harmonise their lives in relationship to one another, at times their own contributions will be analysed individually as unique examples of great achievements. This study has been based primarily on life histories in the form of interviews and autobiographies, however, correspondence and secondary sources have also been used to construct a rich tapestry of each of their lives.

Mabel Palmer.

She was born in at Stockfield, Northumberland in England in 1876, the eldest daughter of Mr Atkinson, H.M. Inspector of Mines. Her mother was a fervent protagonist of women's rights and

insisted that Mabel gain a first rate education and a profession of her own. She was thus one of the first women to graduate from Glasgow University, with an outstanding academic record, where classes were segregated by sex. Mabel won a scholarship for post-graduate study at the London School of Economics and at Bryn Mawr College, USA. She started her career as a University Lecturer in London, first at London University and later at King's College for Women, but was also known for her work in adult education in the Worker's Educational Association (W.E.A.). Mabel married just before the First World War, but the marriage ended shortly afterwards. Mabel then came out to South

Africa in 1921, to a post connected with the W.E.A. in Durban, and later became a Lecturer in Economics in the Natal University College. She never married again, nor had any children. Following her "official retirement" in 1936 at the age of 60, Mabel undertook what was to be her greatest work - the founding of University education for blacks in Natal. Until her death in 1958, she espoused the issues of social justice and education as the key to social improvement. She was also actively involved in organisations such as the South African Institute of Race Relations, National Council of Women of South Africa, was the first National President of the South African Association of University Women, was involved in the Adult Education Association and served on the Senate of the Natal University College. She also published a number of journal and newspaper articles.

Killie Campbell.

On the 9th of September 1881, Killie was born, as the second child of four, to her parents Ellen and Marshall Campbell in Durban. She was born into an elite white upper class family. Her

father Marshall, was a wealthy sugar baron and Senator in the first Union Parliament. Killie shared her father's view that South Africa "was a land of infinite privilege and opportunity [and that they] should render willing service to all the people, black and white, in lasting gratitude for what they had been given". For this and many other reasons, Killie began collecting sources relating to Africa more generally, but Natal in particular, becoming one of the only women to establish a notable Africana library which she bequeathed to the University of Natal before her death in 1965. Her life's work entailed collecting and preserving what appeared to be worthless pieces of information, as well as books of great historical worth, to preserve a record of the past so that people's life histories would not be forgotten. She was also involved in other social and charitable work, including being a member of the Bachelor Girls Club, she did canteen work during both world wars, and was a member of the Black Sash who fought against amendments that went against human rights, such as the removal of Cape Coloureds from the voters role. Killie never married nor had children.

Sibusisiwe Makanya.

Sibusisiwe was born in 1894 to "progressive" Christian parents who farmed at Umbumbulu, in the heart of the Umlazi District, homeland of the Makanya people, a peri-urban area just outside

Durban. While being immersed in Zulu traditions, she soon transcended established gender roles in her community by shunning marriage and not having children, and embarking on a career in teaching and then social work. She crossed enormous boundaries, both literally and figuratively as the first Zulu woman to undertake studies in the USA and then establishing herself as a pioneer in social work amongst rural Africans in Umbumbulu, a society undergoing massive social changes due to encroaching urbanisation and industrialisation. Until her death in 1971, she gave selflessly to her community, establishing rural education programmes that were adapted to the communities needs, helped to build a community centre with the first secondary school, clinic, library and hall in the district. As a black woman suffering the triple oppression of gender, race and class discrimination, her work reveals a far sighted and talented woman who transcended established boundaries and challenged racial oppression by promoting inter-racial cooperation, while pioneering new territory in social work. However, it is not until recently that her work has been duly accorded its place in KwaZulu-Natal's history.

Dr. Goonam.

Dr Goonam was born in 1906 in Durban to parents who had come to South Africa as

"passenger" Indians to take advantage of the commercial opportunities presented by the mineral revolution. Her mother was also an inspirational force in her life, being well-educated and influenced by the suffragette movement and fought for Indian and women's rights. She thus encouraged her daughter to become educated and to have a profession, rather than marrying, to give something back to her community. Dr Goonam's life story represents a successful struggle, over-coming numerous sexual and racial obstacles which stood in her way, becoming the first Indian woman doctor in Durban. Her account is a tale of the difficulties

encountered by black professional people in the early part of the 20th century, and her rendering of invaluable services to her black community as a doctor. However, she is also remembered for her fights against segregation and racial discrimination, as an active member of the Natal Indian Congress and later the African National Congress. Her most notable achievement here, was her active campaigning and being imprisoned 18 times for her Passive Resistance activities. Her later years in South Africa were spent dodging the security police, and finally being forced into exile, settling first in London, Australia and finally Zimbabwe. In 1990 she returned to her home, Durban, where she now still lives, practicing medicine under a new democratically elected government. As a fiesty, independent and colourful personality, her life is a fascinating account of an unconventional woman, who defied long standing racist and sexist traditions to achieve her goals.

Phyllis Naidoo.

Phyllis was born in Estcourt in 1928 to Christian parents who were products of indentured Indian labourers. She was the eldest of 10 children. Because of their extreme poverty, her father

recognised the importance of education as the only means for social upliftment and betterment, and while working, educated himself and most of his children, including Phyllis, who then came to Durban. She started working as a social worker in Fosa TB settlement, but later began teaching for the social work was disheartening. While teaching she put herself through University and later embarked on a law degree, recognising that it was only through involvement in politics, helping to overthrow a discriminatory and oppressive racist government that she could help her community. Phyllis has led an extraordinary life, especially with regard to her struggles against apartheid, being imprisoned, as well as house arrested and banned. While she has been married twice, with three children, her marriages did not work out for many reasons, but also because of conflicting role demands in combining family and careers, creating strains due to her fighting for political freedom. A messy divorce and custody battle was the result, where Phyllis had to face being ostracised, for walking an "unacceptable" path. Given

the choice, she would not marry again. In 1977, due to her political activities, she was forced into exile in Lesotho and later Zimbabwe, where she continued to fight for the end of apartheid, and tragically lost two of her sons in the process. She also returned to Durban in 1990, working for Lawyers for Human Rights for a while, and is now writing the life story of Chris Hani and about her sons as political freedom fighters. Her enormous contribution was thus in her fight for human rights, and justice in South Africa, and I believe, speaking for oppressed people who could not speak for themselves.

Chapter One: Introduction.

A Cabinet Minister, addressing South Africa's first democratically elected Parliament, stated that,

> women hardly had anything to do with what has happened in our country in the past 45 years! [1]

This statement is an indication of how sweeping and deep-rooted assumptions about women's roles in South Africa are, even as we move into the 21st century. Part of the reason for this absence of knowledge is that history has generally been written by men and about men, and women have either been entirely ignored or dealt with only peripherally, inasmuch as their lives touched on men's world and men's concerns. Women have been portrayed in South African works as mostly subordinate to men, are trivialised for their activities, or are invisible. However, women's lives are much more complex and rich than suggested by the corpus of texts focusing on themes considered historically significant in mainstream and even revisionist history. To really understand the role of different women, and the history of gender relations in South Africa, historians need to examine the opposing and contradictory forces located both in the "domestic sphere", but also, as I will argue, in the public sphere. For in a radically transforming society, as the neat divide between private and public dissolves under careful scrutiny, the time is ripe for an examination of how a group of women laboured, together and alone, for decades of this century to fight for a space in and broaden the definition of, a predominantly white male public sphere.

[1] Paul Maylam and Iain Edwards. *The People's City: African Life in Twentieth-Century Durban.*

The absence of women's voices in the historical record, especially black women, has resulted in social historians of Southern Africa and the world, suggesting novel means of approaching silences in the record. Like many of these historians, in this thesis I will be relying heavily on life histories, as well as newspaper, archival and secondary sources to portray both a new public history of a group of women, and a history of an intimate world were women's voices can be heard, with new and complex themes of vital interest to historians of our society. In this thesis, a group of women and their achievements in South Africa are foregrounded and the deeds, acts and words of their male contemporaries recede into the background. Entitled *Ruffled Feathers: The Lives of Five Difficult Women in Durban in the 20th Century*, this project will focus on the lives and accomplishments of Mabel Palmer, Killie Campbell, Sibusisiwe Makanya, Dr Goonam and Phyllis Naidoo. Durban provides the political, economic, social and cultural backdrop for this study, as each of these women spent the greatest portion of their lives in this ever-changing and complex, yet vibrant city, and in the case of Sibusisiwe who lived in Umbumbulu, a peri-urban area surrounding Durban, its presence and influence was daily felt through urban migration. Thus the lives of these five women will be examined in relation to the specific historical context that had a huge impact on the course their lives took.

To a considerable extent, these women were among a vanguard - challenging an array of conservative, traditional, sexist and racist forces blocking their paths in their life courses. The term "*difficult*" has been reclaimed as a positive representation in this project. In the past, this adjective was used to denote women who were intelligent but ambitious, and who refused to accept recognised definitions of their station in life as mothers and wives. This thesis is indeed about women who deviated from conventional social roles. Most never married -- if they did it was only for a short time -- and for this and other reasons, their

(Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1996), p.136.

achievements in life and successes in their chosen fields were their own, and their lives can be examined without any link to men's achievements.[2] The lives of these women have then been able to shine through independently of men's. The fields that these women chose to dedicate their lives to were in accepted male-dominated professions, and, by forging their careers in the first half of the 20th century, they walked an unconventional path to career success in the public sphere. The standard for comparison of their lives, must be by their own standards, for they had no one to compare their efforts with - they stood at the beginning of a tradition. In the localised context of this study, the University of Natal provides a nexus which links these women in a variety of ways, but especially around their passion for education, bringing them into contact with each other's lives, and in turn influencing people's lives around them. None of these women retired, but continued to work until old age or death made it impossible for them to do so.

In a unique way, they were all formally educated, a remarkable feat in the first decades of the 20th century, when education for women, especially black women was difficult to obtain. They saw what few other women did, that the only way to challenge sexism and racial oppression was through education, which gave people the knowledge and skills to confront their oppressors and undermine established social norms and expectations. It was thus their passion for promoting the importance of education that brought them together, despite the differences of race, age, class and religion among them. Thus, they were shaped by their environment, but through education they shaped it too, and I believe that their remarkability lay in their ability to work creatively with the resources and avenues available to them, in the environment in which they found themselves.

[2] This is a unique and rare achievement, for most women hoped to gain their fulfilment and social recognition in the domestic sphere as mothers and wives. If women were able to achieve and succeed outside of this role, it was almost always linked to men's achievements, such as their husbands, fathers or brothers, with women's

For much of their lives, each of the women, though to differing degrees, had to deal with criticism from their communities for not accepting what was traditionally deemed an appropriate function for a woman in society. It will be shown that they *each "ruffled feathers*" in their communities, as their activities went against the grain. But by challenging expected norms of society, taking on professional careers and opening up new avenues for women, they were seen accused of losing their "feminine" and "womanly" qualities in their attempt to compete for a position in male dominated spheres. The threat that these women posed resonates with Carolyn Heilbrun's discussion on male reactions to women's movement into law, medicine, and other professions,

> there is nothing more ridiculous than a woman who imitates a male activity and is therefore no longer a woman ... [For] sex differentiation must be rigidly upheld by whatever means are available, *for men can only be men, if women are unambiguously women*[3].

By representing and letting the voices of "ambiguous" women shine requires that I take a particular theoretical approach, placing them in the wider historiographical debates around women's history and gender. Although recognising that there is a need for a more gender based analysis in the studying of South African history, I will argue that before historians can construct a sophisticated theory of gender, there needs to be a far better understanding of the dynamics of men's and women's position in society and cross-culturally. By decentring male subjectivity from the narrative, we are able to discover much more about women's contributions. Another vital by-product of this is that we will be able to tell the story of men too, in a new way -- through women's eyes, through their role in the domestic sphere -- and not just through the public and political. Yet, while focusing on women, I am still very aware that it is only by continually juxtaposing their lives to that of

individual contributions hidden behind men's.

[3] Carolyn G. Heilbrun. *Writing a Woman's Life.* (London: Women's Press Ltd, 1988), p.16. Italics - my emphasis added.

men's, that we are able to understand the shifting power relations that resulted in the suppression of women, but also their resistance and creativity in the face of these cultural, political and economic forces. I hope that the fruit of this project will be a complex historical tapestry.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. In Chapter One I attempt to position an analysis of these five women within the wider historiographical debates around women's history and gender studies, and deal with issues around the nature of biographical writing and the issue of representation. Chapter Two places these women in their historical period of 20th century Durban, providing a common context that links the different women together, but also allows for variations to show. Chapter 3 deals with the importance of education for each of these women, their struggles to become educated (both in South Africa and overseas), the difficulties they encountered in forging their careers, and how they gave back to their societies. Chapter Four deals with issues of age and retirement, and the long term meaning of work for these women. Finally, the Epilogue, draws together various themes discussed in the thesis and the importance of these women's contributions for Durban.

Themes in Women's History.

In all societies touched by the Industrial Revolution, Western modernity, Christianity and colonisation, men and women live in differently constructed worlds, based on a sexual division of labour, where the domestic/private rather than public world of politics/economy continues to be of primary importance in defining women's position in relation to men and is the site where "gender subordination is produced and reproduced" by the exploitation of women's labour by men[4]. This gendered division of labour extends to the work place where

[4] Cherryl Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview". *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945.* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), p.27.

men have more power than women, determining women's inferior status, jobs and wages. This situation ensures that women have a "double burden" of work. An important feature of South African history, as well as the history of women world-wide, is that they often find it difficult to identify with each other because of powerful race and class divisions. In South Africa, although white women are discriminated against as women, their membership of a privileged racial group has mediated the impact of gender discrimination, whereas black women suffered a form of "triple oppression"[5]. So, despite widespread congruence in the lives of women across regional and economic spheres, the category of "women" is not pregiven, natural or stable, and there does not exist any homogenous group of women. Women's subjectivity, as with men's, is socially and historically constructed, contested and represent different and sometimes competing interests.[6] The theme of female resistance or acquiescence to their position of subordination, in many world contexts, has emerged as a particular area of research interest. Women's resistance has to be traced by their active rejecting of their allotted gender roles and carving out of alternatives for themselves. But female acquiescence and defence of their subordination is also evident, which is less studied by historians, and more by anthropologists and psychologists. This work suggests that acceptance of their position is largely due to women's socialisation, the power of hegemonic androcentric ideology, limited available alternatives, as well as the dangers of rebellion and rewards of conformity.[7] In developing and elaborating the role of mother and homemaker, women have also carved out realms of meaning, and so satisfaction, which have given (and still do) women an identity and social prestige.[8] In fact it can be argued that women's most militant resistance has occurred in order to defend their domestic realm from threat. This theme needs further historical investigation in the future. Merely accepting female

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[5] Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview", p.2.
[6] Debbie Bonnin, Roger Deacon, Robert Morrell, and Jenny Robinson. "Identity and the Changing Politics of Gender in South Africa" in *South Africa in Transition: New Theoretical Perspectives.* (London: MacMillan, 1997), p.2.
[7] Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview", p.30.
[8] Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview", p.30. In fact it can be argued that

subordination and male domination as a pregiven, does little to explain the complexity of the relations between the sexes, the pervasiveness of women's conservatism, nor the role played by women in their own subordination. Moreover, these naturalisations do not explain why, despite changes in South African society, for example, female subordination to men persists.

Representations of Women in Historical Texts.

In the South African context, it is important to see why historians have generally lagged so far behind their peers in incorporating gender into their analysis of social change. An overconcern with the "correctness" of one's theoretical position within the main debates has led to a restrictive reluctance to question the authority of respected texts, even where these have little or nothing to say about gender. The system of Apartheid has played a large role here, to the extent to which historians of this era have sought to recover the pasts of black men -- to minimise unfavourable portrayals of black men, by focusing almost exclusively on black men and their racial/class exploitation by white men -- which has resulted in the writings on women and their oppression into history being given a low priority[9].

Belinda Bozzoli argues that the existence of no long-standing or definable historiographical tradition can be attributed to the absence of a significant feminist movement in South Africa.[10] Although feminist theory has played a large role in producing knowledge about women's experiences through gendered terms, has analysed the dynamic power relations resulting in the inequalities and domination of women by men, and works to ensure women are treated as equals, many problems and lacunae remain. This branch of

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women's most militant resistance has occurred in order to defend their domestic realm from threat.

[9] Helen Bradford. "Women in the Cape and its Frontier Zones, 1800-1870: A Critical Essay on Androcentric Historiography". (Paper presented at the Biannual South African Historical Society Conference, Grahamstown, July 1995), p.37.

[10] Belinda Bozzoli. "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies". *Journal of South African Studies,* Vol.9,

historiography has tended to be confined to "rectification" studies -- rectifying the imbalance in the writing of history -- making women visible in the existing historiographical framework at the expense of creating a new distinct methodology.[11] Gender relations and women's experiences have also not been analysed historically as changing over time. In the once marginal but now increasingly mainstream revisionist historiographical tradition, Marxist analyses of women's history has tended to be reduced to an examination of the requirements of capitalism ("functionality" of female oppression), while subsuming the dynamics of male domination over women into the broader struggle against capitalism.[12]

In a recent article, Joan Wallach Scott raises another concern. She has written that "The Problem of Invisibility" is at the centre of theoretical and methodological approaches that have emerged in the last 10 to 15 years. This is because historians have tried to explain why women were forgotten or "hidden from history" when vast amounts of material existed on their pasts. She argues, and I would agree, that women's history was not relevant to the concerns of "His-story", thus being excluded.[13] For the dominant/"official" history will be the one that bolsters an existing situation, and represents the interests of the dominant group. Thus the distribution of power decides what stories are told and which are not. Bradford, in the South African context, and Heilbrun for an international perspective, raise the issue of the extreme "insensitivity to issues of gender" by the androcentric focus of historical writing traditions.[14]

1993, p.139.

[11] Bozzoli. "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies", p.141.

[12] Bozzoli. "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies", p.141.

[13] Joan Wallach Scott. "The Problem of Invisibility" in S.J. Kleinberg (ed). *Retrieving Women's History: Changing Perceptions of the Role of Women in Politics and Society.* (Oxford and Paris: Berg/UNESCO, 1988), p.10.

[14] Bradford. "Women in the Cape and its Frontier Zones", p.2, and Carolyn G. Heilbrun. *Writing a Woman's Life.* (London: Women's Press Ltd, 1988), p.43.

A number of stereotypical representations of women in historical texts have to be overcome. Women are often neglected, trivialised, represented as men in universal claims, or treated as a "sub-adult" excluded from maturity by constantly being associated with children.[15] It has also been argued that the imposition of biological explanations for women's activities has been the anchor of this view,

> the reduction of the category of sex to their biological determination is no doubt the single factor that has, more than any other, prevented us from thinking about their existence or social functions.[16]

By defining women in relation to men (as widows, sisters, wives), women are not examined in their own right. Insignificant wives are a common feature who do "not figure largely in this story because their is no evidence that [they influenced] his actions", despite the fact that women's domestic work was central to male subsistence and was performed by almost all women.[17] Women's work was seen as trivial compared to the "productive" spheres of their men, and thus unless their absence impacted directly on men, it is still overwhelmingly ignored. There is also a reluctance to discuss women's reproductive capacity, but when people do, it is presented as part of the "natural increase" of historical change, or female reproductive labour is projected onto men - he produced his first child - if it is a topic worthy of discussion.[18] Absent too from many historical texts dealing with women as subjects are also the voices of dissident women, who did not conform to their expected roles in society.[19]

[15] Bradford. "Women in the Cape and its Frontier Zones", p.15.
[16] Michelle Perrot (ed). *Writing Women's History.* (London: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1992), p.7.
[17] Bradford. "Women in the Cape and its Frontier Zones", p.10.
[18] Bradford. "Women in the Cape and its Frontier Zones", p.19.

Biographies and Life Histories.

Besides histories of unusual or non-conformist women, studies taking any women's experience into account have been scanty. However, over the last 15 years, internationally and in South Africa, there has been an attempt made by social historians to map out the history of women, and remove the archival silences, through the use of life histories. Taking many forms, these sources provide rich evidence for historians by augmenting scanty written sources and provide fresh insights and address many of the gaps, biases and silences that "official" written accounts ignore. In some cases writing the history of black women, poor women, and elderly women has only been enabled by the use of these sources. It is here that people living ordinary or extraordinary lives weave from their memories and experiences meanings and truths.[20] Exploring and analysing personal narratives allows us to see people whose lives are simultaneously socially created and individually forged. With all of its problems of selectivity, openness to accretion over time, being hagiographies, and dependence on the interviewee/interviewer relationship, oral history remains one of the most powerful methods of creating new sources for studies of women.

This study makes extensive use of interviews conducted with two living subjects among the chosen group, as well as letters, official records, private archives, photographs, newspapers, corroborating interviews, secondary sources and biographies.[21] One risk is that through all this sifting and questioning, the historian gains particular power over an individual subject's life story. Furthermore, the reconstruction which involves adding to the

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[19] Bradford. "Women in the Cape and its Frontier Zones", p.11-12.

[20] Joy Webster Barbre et al. (Edited by the Personal Narratives Group). *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives.* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), p.262-264. The subjective experience is valued for it represents people in a real position, in a lived world of social relationships and its about people trying to make sense of and grapple with the confusion and complexity of their world. This book emphasises the multiple truths and identities a woman's life story reveals, depending on the interpreters choice of which to interpret and highlight.

[21] I was fortunate enough to have interviewed Dr Goonam and Phyllis Naidoo in October and November this year (1997). I also managed to get hold of Killie Campbell's second cousin, Dr Hamish Campbell, and interviewed him as he knew Killie in her later years well. All of these interviews were thus conducted and

oral material with other sources, and the analysis of and unpacking of the oral data, runs the risk of cauterising the rhythm of the narrative itself. As Nisa, an interviewee in her oral account said to her interviewer,

> I'll break open the story and tell you what there is. Then, like the wind, will take it away. [The interviewer wrote] I tried to keep the wind from taking its beauty away.[22]

One must also recognise that when reconstructing a life history, it is impossible to fully recreate the past, understand or experience it as the people who lived it did. Instead, the goal is to draw out a series of threads from among the competing versions of what happened and try to capture an aspect of that past.

Interviewer-Subject Relationship.

While recognising that life histories contain their own shapes and internal causal structures from within the experiences of the person who provides the evidence, the interpreter has to take responsibility for their interpretation and purposes, and their uses of the material. Stories do not simply "speak for them-selves", and those that claim this deny the properties of the text as something that is constructed, and thus does not take the author's role into account.[23] As Barbre et al argue, and I would agree, there is an active dialogue and interaction between the narrator and interviewer in the production of personal narratives and one needs to be sensitive to this and the motives both parties bring to the interview.[24] Both parties are also socially located within particular historical contexts, which shapes their perspectives and different ways of understanding the relationships and structures which

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transcribed by myself in Durban. All three transcripts have been included as appendices.

[22] Barbre et al. *Interpreting Women's Lives,* p.233. This interview was conducted with a !Kung San (bushmen) woman situated on the northern fringe of Africa's Kalahari Desert in northwestern Botswana, in 1969.

[23] Isabel Hofmeyr. *We Spend our Years as a Tale that is Told: Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chiefdom.* (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Press, 1993), p.1.

[24] Barbre et al. *Interpreting Women's Lives,* p.203. The interviewer is not neutral and cannot assume an

constitute their worlds. Thus while recognising that challenges of inter-subjectivity exist, oral sources are of vital importance, and by weaving together the words of the interviewee (oral evidence) with other more conventional sources, a much richer history can be created.

Representations, Subjectivity and the Writing of History.

The writing of women's history in South Africa today presents particular challenges over "representation". A large problem concerns the identity of the researchers who write history, most of whom are white, which is an explicit reflection of the racial and class oppression in this South Africa generally and in the academic discipline of history more particularly. In a recent article entitled "The Right to Self-Determination in Research", Nkululeko, a black South African women, argues that the "subjects of historical knowledge" are the one's who should be carrying out research and writing about themselves, since they have the most intimate knowledge of their experience, while the work of "outsiders" will always be flawed because of the "trappings of their own history, values, culture and ideology".[25] Arguing from the charge of subjectivity and bias, she also condemns the academic world of "outsiders" as part of the larger forces of oppression and exploitation whereby oppressed people are denied access to the resources that will empower them. Cherryl Walker, in her study of women in the region to 1945, argues that although recognising the importance of "those who are closer in terms of culture, language, class, race and gender to the lived experience", a researchers different history and values does not automatically invalidate their conclusions.[26] The subjective experience does not guarantee a researcher's analytical capacity, nor does it preclude the problem of bias. This study tries to bridge some of these chasms by attempting to draw into conversation and juxtaposition the

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objective stance. The interpreter is an active participant playing a large role in shaping the personal narrative.

[25] D. Nkululeko. "The Right to Self-Determination in Research: Azanian Women}, in C. Qunta (ed), *Women in Southern Africa.* (Johannesburg: Skotavilla, 1987), p.89.

[26] Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview", p.7.

lives of both white and black women in this region, while being conscious of my late 20th century perspectives, and am open about both the ties that bound and the forces that separated these women in the past.

The Way Forward?

At the moment there is no single theory or methodological approach that clears a path through these issues, and while their are fears that interdisciplinary research might lead to fragmentation, I think that the production of knowledge around women's history and gender relations through diverse methods and disciplines, will enrich the study, offering new and fresh insights from different perspectives. Also, while recognising that the Women's Movement is not a homogenous group with similar interests, the way forward may be a strength in "unity in diversity", uniting women of with different interests and identities around specific issues.[27] As James Quay so adequately put it (for a similar set of questions in American history), "we should not have to choose between a common legacy and cultural diversity, especially in a nation where diversity is a legacy".[28] We need to allow for overlapping narratives and this project attempts to do just that.

A gendered historical approach is what is needed now and in the future, to show how the history of South Africa was shaped by men and women in relationship with one another in specific historical contexts, as the category of gender cannot stand alone, it is "indissolubly linked" to class, race, ethnicity.[29] This is especially evident in Bozzoli's alternative approach to an explanation of gender relations through the Marxist-Feminist tradition and her analysis of the interrelationship of gender, race and class and their differential impact on women. While arguing for contradictory and opposing power relations between men and women

[27] Bonnin. "Identity and the Changing Politics of Gender in South Africa", p.12
[28] Vicki L. Ruiz et al (ed). *Unequal Sisters: A Multi-Cultural Reader in U.S. Women's History.* Second Edition. (New York and London: Routledge Inc., 1994), p.xiii.

located in the domestic sphere shaping events, she shows how struggles and forms of patriarchy in preindustrial South Africa were "sustained, modified and even entrenched" with capitalist development.[30] Thus women's subordination to men was carried over, but the struggles were now filtered through a net of racially informed class relations. But the incorporation of indigenous people into the new social order involved their active engagement with the invasive forces of domination, as women and men struggled to defend their own interests and wrest what they could from the new opportunities and constraints. History provides the means for understanding the process by which gendered knowledge is produced. It shows how the social construction of gender impinges on the individual (embedded within hierarchy of male power), but is also a dynamic interaction where human agency also shapes social power through struggle and contest.[31] However, while recognising the need for gender sensitive analyses of South African history, before historians can construct a sophisticated theory of gender, they need a far better understanding of the dynamics of men's and women's position in society.

Female "Ambiguity" and Resistance to their Subordinate Gender Roles.

Thus by decentring men, we are able to discover much more about women's contributions. The focus of this thesis will be on five women's active resistance and rejection of their allotted gender roles and carving out alternatives for themselves and other women to follow. These women's narratives can be seen as "counter-narratives" as they did not think, feel, or act in the way they were "supposed" to.[32] Images of rebelliousness shape these women's lives against power structures. This is a tricky history to write, for example: there is little in the secondary literature on white settler, Indian and African women, on how to write

[29] Joan Wallach Scott. *Gender and the Politics of History.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p.2-3.
[30] Bozzoli. "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies", p.149.
[31] Scott. *Gender and the Politics of History,* p.5.
[32] Barbre et al. *Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives,* p.7.

the lives of unmarried women. This is partly due to traditional biographical and autobiographical approaches whose narratives of women, based on themes of romantic love, usually lead to conventional marriage stories. This thesis therefore will attempt to explore the implications of unmarried women's marginality to marriage for its effect on their status and familial relationships. It also questions the extent to which South African women of the past could forge identities outside of marriage, and in other spheres (especially the public sphere). For the symbolic and material influences of marriage are strong, touching those furthest from it, and filtering how women view themselves. "Wifehood" is keyed into "womanhood", to socially stigmatise those who are unmarried as social anomalies and problems.[33]

This is the study of a number of women who have attempted to overcome the negative stereotypes around unmarried women and shows the huge contributions women can make in the public sphere when they do not have the expected domestic arrangements, constraints and relationships. It emerges from this study that alternative narratives to marriage tend to be structured around work, where women establish their identity through work, even at the cost of certain options in life, and are encouraged to present this choice in light of seeing work as an indispensable stage in their emancipation. But gaining access to this sphere took years of struggle to open the professions to women. It is here where men and women's worlds become more complex, overlapping, not confined to specific spheres, and where the border between the public and private was challenged by a crossing of boundaries. Work outside the home was (and is) a liberating and rewarding experience for these women too, allowing them to develop their intelligence, independence, and human potential. It is recognised that many working class women in South Africa were compelled to forgo traditional roles because of the difficulties of combining domestic responsibilities with work, and these professional women also had to fight this hypocrisy or slippage between "ideal" and "actual" all their

[33] John Chandler. *Women without Husbands: An Exploration of the Margins of Marriage.* (London: MacMillan

lives.[34] In the case of these women under review, work in the public sphere was rewarding, but also a long and difficult road to gain acceptance. Because of their unconventional career choices, they had no role models on which to model their lives, there were no set stories to follow. These women had to be courageous and not make men the centre of their lives, for to be "*ambiguous women*", forced them to spend much of their time opposing only narrative available to them - conventional marriage as the centre.[35] By rejecting their allotted roles and entering male dominated spheres, they were defined by their culture as unwomanly, acting like men, going beyond the accepted limits of female behaviour. Age, and the process of ageing was another challenge these women faced without a comfortable "script" to follow. They chose instead to never retire, giving all that they could to their societies until they passed on.

Thus despite the opposition, hostility and sometimes grudging recognition of family and community, these pioneering career women enlarged the world for their sex, as they pulled old barriers down to create an easier path for others to follow. They also, I will argue, left a particular mark and impression on the history of Durban. Unlike the views of many people, such as the Cabinet Minister who argued that women did not have anything to do with what happened in South Africa in the past 45 years, I will show that this group of women (just a handful amongst many), contributed a great deal, and if it had not been for their tremendous efforts, challenging accepted norms to establish a place for themselves, the consequences might not have been as desirous as they are for women, like myself, to achieve in the public sphere today.

Education Ltd, 1991), p.2.

[34] Eleanor S. Riemer and John C. Fout. *European Women: A Documentary History, 1789-1945.* (London: The Harvester Press Ltd, 1983), 164.

[35] Heilbrun. *Writing a Woman's Life,* p.31.

Chapter Two: Durban in the 20th Century.

Having placed this thesis in the wider historiographical tradition of the writing of women's history and gender studies, this chapter is concerned with placing Mabel Palmer, Killie Campbell, Sibusisiwe Makanya, Dr Goonam and Phyllis Naidoo, in their specific historical context of 20th century Durban. Their context provides a vital perspective from which to interpret these women's ways of "navigating the weave of relationships and structures which constitute their world" so that one can understand the larger and broader social, economic, political and cultural influences that often constrained but also gave meaning to their lives.[36] Only once this is done, can I begin to analyse the nuances and individuality of each of these women, to show how they were not only the changed, but changers of history too.

Women's Position in South Africa more Generally.

Before studying the lives of each of these five women, one has to understand something of the complex context of Durban in the 20th century in which they were embedded, but were also able to see beyond and stand in opposition to. The years spanned by these women's life times saw massive changes in the economic, political and social life in South Africa,

> from precapitalist to capitalist relations of production, from African political independence to subjugation, from rural to urban forms of social and spatial organisation, and from white co-existence with indigenous societies [and Indian settlers] to white supremacy within a new, racially structured state,

which had a huge impact, both directly and indirectly, on the position of women and the organisation of gender.[37] In South Africa generally, but in Natal particularly, three "sex-gender" systems came to function in a complex and changing milieu. Cherryl Walker argues that there was a "patchwork quilt of patriarchies", where in different degrees, women were subordinate to men in all societies within pre-industrial and industrial South Africa, and their "proper" place was seen as centred in the domestic sphere, stressing their reproductive rather than productive roles.[38] Crucial shifts were inflicted upon these "sex-gender" systems by the British penetration in the region in which pre-existing,

> forms of patriarchy were sustained, modified and even entrenched in a variety of ways depending on the internal characteristics of the system in the first instance.[39]

Jeff Guy's chapter on "Gender Oppression in South Africa's Pre-capitalist Societies" shows how in African societies, female oppression was not merely an aspect of these societies but,

> rather the central dynamic ... the appropriation and control of women's productive and reproductive capacity by men was the axis on which these societies turned.[40]

With the arrival of British settlers in the early 19th century, precapitalist gender relations were reorganised, influenced by their bringing of capitalist modes of production and pervasive ideas about female domesticity. For the British the ideology of female domesticity -

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[36] Barbre et al. *Interpreting Women's Lives,* p.19.
[37] Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview", p.1.
[38] Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview", 1. I have used Cherryl Walker's term "sex-gender" systems to describe the many varieties of gender relations between men and women in South African societies, but where she reduces the "patriarchal quilt of patriarchies" into two dominant systems - British settlers and precapitalist "Bantu-speaking" societies, I have also used it to explain the gender relations Indians brought with them to the region. An analysis of Afrikaner women is not in the scope of this essay.
[39] Bozzoli. "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies", p.149.
[40] Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview", p.7. Guy's chapter in this same volume entitled "Gender Oppression in Southern Africa's precapitalist societies", goes on to argue that marriage was the institution in which male control over women and over female fertility was found, and the social practice which legitimated marriage and the male transfer of rights over women was that of bridewealth, which most characteristically took the form of cattle.

- viewing women's proper place centred on the home/domestic/reproductive sphere, set apart from the public world and productive domain of men, and thus dependent on men economically, which had rigidified into separate spheres as a result of the development of Industrial capitalism -- was the central organisation of gender relations that was adapted to the particular conditions of colonial life. With women increasingly entering paid work, the gender ideology of women's inferiority channelled them into certain sex-stereotyped areas of work, valued less then men's, justifying their lower wages, but more importantly giving women a "double burden" (domestic and paid work demands).[41]

However, the British influence did not stop there. As an imperialist country (having colonies for labour to work in its industries) Britain brought in Indian indentured labourers to work on the growing sugar plantations in South Africa. "Passenger" Indians; those who paid their own way, also began to enter South Africa, because of the new economic opportunities.[42] Thus, its infusion of ideas about gender, and women were made more complex by the different cultural systems the Indians brought into the country, particularly to the South East African coast after 1860. Indian women, especially those indentured,

> were at the very bottom of the class-race-gender hierarchy in colonial Natal. As workers they were ultra-exploitable, being used for the most arduous tasks ... as Indians they were regarded as unwelcome additions to the already complex social make-up of the colony.[43]

The Indian family was an ambiguous institution that provided protection and support; it was a protective haven in a hostile environment, but also exploited and oppressed women.

[41] Scott. "The Problem of Invisibility", p.16-17.
[42] Bill Freund. *Insiders and Outsiders: The Indian Working Class of Durban, 1910-1990.* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995), p.1-10. However, while recognising that there were many new opportunities for people, living and working conditions for many Indians was very poor too. Until they established themselves, the standard of living was low, and poverty was rife.
[43] Jo Beall. "Women under Indentured Labour in Colonial Natal, 1860-1911", in Walker, C. *Women and Gender*

In this situation, the traditional male domination of women that was central to all three systems was in many respects reinforced by the encounter between the three, with sexist gender relations (specifically the exploitation of women's reproductive and productive labour by men) upheld, but with white domination, saw them become increasingly filtered through a net of racially informed class relations, elevating white women into positions of privilege and authority over blacks (both men and women).

However, it can also be argued that the incorporation of indigenous Africans and Indians into the new social order involved their active engagement with the invasive forces of domination, as women and men struggled to defend their own interests and wrest what they could from the new opportunities and constraints. This was especially evident in the rural to urban migration to the city of Durban; with its growth linking urban and rural societies on a continuum of development. Walker shows how African male control over women played a key role in shaping the migrant labour system, for it was capitalism's ability to maintain "elements of pre-existing relations", although in a restructured form (to reproduce the labour force cheaply), that determined that it was young, unmarried men who were the first recruits to the mines, and women who shouldered more of the burden of agricultural production in the rural areas.[44] While this opened up opportunities for personal autonomy and mobility at an individual level for women as heads of households, it also undermined the security that women used to experience in precolonial society and increased their burden of agricultural production.

Thus by the turn of the century, Durban was a unique and potentially explosive site in South Africa, where three powerful cultures and models of sex-gender systems collided with one another. By the time most of the women under discussion were born, Durban was a small

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in Southern Africa to 1945, p.147.

coastal port, a commercial centre involved in export/import activities and sugar plantations but as the years passed, it developed into a significant manufacturing and industrial centre by the 1950s. The changes that the city saw in the first half of the 20th century hugely influenced these three sex-gender systems and helped determine the places women forged for themselves within it.

Therefore, Durban provides the economic, political, social and cultural backdrop for this study, as each of the five women spent the greatest portion of their lives in (and around) this complex and vibrant city. A very brief analysis of Durban's first half century, is useful to gain a feel for what the atmosphere was like. From the beginning the city developed as a distinctly racial, but also class based society; a complex web of repression and control, wherein increasing racial polarisation of the city through segregation, and the banishment of the black underclasses to the periphery, promoted unequal access to resources and circumscribed their access to political, economic and residential space in the interest of the city's white middle class.[45]

Durban's growth occurred in spurts, centred primarily around the two World Wars, but particularly World War II, which saw social and economic change accelerate in Durban with increasing industrialisation, producing war goods to service the Allied troops and war traffic (especially in shipping).[46] From 1916 its municipality was known as the "Durban System" which enabled it to gain revenue derived from its municipal beer monopoly to provide a self-financing system for the segregation and control of its African population in city.[47] However, in the early years, despite attempts at influx control through passes, permit systems, controlled access to housing and employment (intensifying towards the late 1940s),

[44] Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview", p.18.
[45] Maylam and Edwards. *The People's City,* p.1.
[46] Tim Nuttall. Class, Race and Nation: African Politics in Durban, 1929-1949. Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Oxford, 1991, p.181.
[47] Maylam and Edwards. *The People's City,* p.33.

this was impossible at a time when growing industrialisation, unproductive conditions in the reserves, drought, depression, epidemics and capitalist farming were pushing blacks off the land into the urban areas.[48]

The first half of the 20th century, thus, saw increased urbanisation despite more oppressive laws and influx control measures. The women from all three sex-gender systems were involved in some sort of migration, and thus in differing degrees, all experienced some kind of disrupting of their lives, while migration to central city areas resulted in a clashing and mixing of cultures. Both women of British settler origin and Indian descent, had travelled (or migrated) long distances from their countries of origin to South Africa in the hope of finding better conditions and opportunities in which to live. White women, because of their superior political position, settled in the best urban areas, while Indian women settled increasingly in the peri-urban areas, but were proletarianised rapidly, relying heavily on urban wages, not having access to land. In comparison, indigenous African women who were protected from the harsh effects of urbanisation for longer (being tied to the land), experienced the greatest difficulties (both sexually and racially) in their massive urbanisation that blossomed in these years.

In many studies of the city of Durban, the distinct urban social culture that emerged because of female migration has not been sufficiently dealt with, or ignored. In the urban areas women were transferred from one system of subordination to another, where the state came to play a larger role in entrenching social and legal disabilities for African women, who were disadvantaged by both their race and sex, and were incorporated into the bottom layer of society.[49] However, although marginalised, these women (desperate for an income) were

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[48] Walker, C. "Gender and the Development of the Migrant Labour System", in Walker, C. *Women and Gender in Southern African to 1945",* p.187-192.
[49] Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview", p.10.

active participants, struggling to establish themselves in or and near the urban centres (growth informal settlements) challenging existing norms and relations of power, and finding ways to work within and manipulate restrictions. Excluded from formal employment, beer-brewing provided many women with the material means to assert a new though circumscribed independence in relation to both the state and to African men.[50] The response of African men to the beer brewers and female culture that went with it was complicated and often ambivalent: they were after all both patrons and rejected patriarchs. The breakdown of older codes of behaviour in the context of increasing mobility and independence among women, and women's refusal to submit to the demands of men, created new tensions between the sexes resulting in increased crime and sexual violence.[51] Thus the development of the urban domestic arena must be understood as one of struggle and conflict between men and women, whose roles were increasingly being subverted in female-centred family forms, where men were transitory figures and the maternal role took precedence.

It is also within this close geographical proximity of Indians, Africans and whites in relation to one another within the urban areas -- highlighting the great disparities between the races -- that caused explosive and violent clashes to occur. While male worker struggles and strikes were spread throughout these years, women (especially African women), were often at the centre of moments of resistance to the state's tighter regulation of their lives and threats to their livelihood. By becoming increasingly proletarianised African women were dependent on money earned in the urban areas, and struggled against their exclusion from the resources in a racially ordered city undergoing rapid change.[52] This is especially evident by the numerous beerhall boycotts and campaigns against passes, as well as the more specific

[50] Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview", p.20. Phil Bonner's chapter in this volume entitled "Desirable or undesirable Basotho Women to the Rand, 1920-1945" and Linda Chisholm's chapter on "Gender and Deviance in South African Industrial Schools and Reformatories for girls, 1911-1934" provide further discussion around the issue and impact of female migration to the urban areas.
[51] Walker. "Gender and the Development of the Migrant Labour System", p.193.
[52] Nuttall. Class, Race and Nation, p.3.

incident of the 1949 Durban riots, where Africans attacked Indians and their property, forcing them to flee or retaliate, and only when the riots threatened to spill over into a city-wide revolt, did the authorities intervene.[53] In their fight for their share of the city, Africans though blaming whites, increasingly targeted the materially privileged, but politically vulnerable Indian landowning and commercial class who were seen as their immediate oppressors, exploiters and competitors for scarce resources in Durban. It left a legacy of racial tension, suspicion and fear amongst Indian people, and damaged earlier efforts to promote multi-racial political alliances between Africans and Indians against their white oppressors.[54]

Lack of Gender-Consciousness in South Africa.

Taking into account all these inequalities experienced by women and unequal access to resources, it is not surprising that an important element in the history of South Africa has been how women of different races were prevented from identifying with each other because of race and class divisions with black women faced with triple forms of oppression. This race consciousness has determined political interests and loyalties, and sidelined gender consciousness, resulting in a slower emergence of organised challenges to women's subordinate status. For in South Africa middle class women, who have in most other countries been the educated and gender-conscious agitators, have been absent as the,

> socially ambitious or well-off are more likely to manipulate men in order to obtain superior access to resources, dropping their loyalty to women in the process [thus] ... women who have the organisational skills to promote gender-specific consciousness ... do not generally do so because it would threaten their male dependent access to resources as well as class position.[55]

This is especially evident in the suffrage campaign which was involved from the start with

[53] Nuttall. Class, Race and Nation, p.300-310.

[54] Nuttall. Class, Race and Nation, p.311. Nuttall shows how attempts by the ANC and NIC to forge multi-racial political alliances, such as the Doctor's Pact of 1947, was undermined by the riots, and took many years to overcome the suspicions that were created.

the battle to uphold white privilege, power and control of resources, with white women gaining the vote in the 1930s at the expense of blacks. Their conception of "women" was shaped by an overriding identity with their own race and class, and any experience of gender oppression that black women might share with white women was removed by their experiences as members of an oppressed racial group.[56] In black politics, gender relations were not considered because it was realised that women's rights could not be separated from black rights; they formed only one strand in a much larger campaign for equality. Also formal recognition of political equality did not radically restructure gender relations between men and women, but it did constitute a limitation of exclusive male power and enhancement of women's status.[57] It was only years later, with greater education and women's influx into professionalisation on a larger scale, that this fight for gender equality would begin in earnest. I will return to this theme later.

With all the inequalities in women's lives as well as the long tradition of an androcentric focus of South African history, excluding or trivialising women's lives and activities, I would like to argue that what may be needed is an alternative periodisation of women's lives, and that on the eve of Apartheid (which most people recognise and study for its immense negative impact on people's lives and freedom), is also ironically the eve of women's greatest struggles for emancipation and fights for their rights as women, and for a larger share of the city's resources. From then on, there are many examples of women being a force that has to be reckoned with, especially with greater access to education and their taking on of new career opportunities.

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[55] Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview", p.24.
[56] Walker. "The Women's Suffrage Movement: The Politics of Gender, Race and Class", *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, p.340. Jacklyn Cock's chapter on "Domestic Service and Education for Domesticity: The Incorporation of Xhosa Women into Colonial Society" and Sheila Meintjes chapter on "Family and Gender in the Christian Community of Edendale, Natal, in Colonial Times", provide useful information regarding the socialised subordination of black women within the missions and their schools, to provide domestic workers for white families.
[57] Walker. "The Women's Suffrage Movement: The Politics of Gender, Race and Class", p..344.

The decades from the 1950s have seen the growth of Durban into a sprawling metropolis today - the second largest industrial city in South Africa. In the 1950s Durban reached a turning point in its history with massive urbanisation, African violence and the threat of Indian "penetration", saw the city undergo massive restructuring and racial engineering for the political and economic interests of Durban's whites to be secured and entrenched.[58] Racial zoning and population removals were a major urban theme in the 1950s and 1960s. However, this spatial restructuring did not go ahead without militant resistance. In Durban, the Cato Manor Riots of 1959 against forced removals to townships was the highlight. The riots were initiated by women, particularly beer-brewers whose livelihoods were threatened, showing how women can be most militant when their family's survival was at threat.[59] However by the early 1960s 40,000 Indians and 120,000 Africans were forcibly removed, devastating the lives of thousands, as they were forced to leave their homes. These decades were also renown for the anti-pass campaigns, resulting in many Africans being killed at Sharpeville in 1960 when the Pan African Congress (P.A.C.) organised a pass burning campaign. In the 1960s, despite all its contradictions, Apartheid worked, keeping races apart, while the state helped to create a repressive but stimulating environment for economic boom, with the industrial centre of Durban growing faster than the national average.[60] There was also a lull in resistance to the State, because key leaders were banned, imprisoned or exiled, thus putting them out of the reach of their constituents. It was not until the 1970s, with its massive political and social pressures, due to forced removals and economic recession that resistance, militancy, trade unionism, and mass action was stimulated again, centred around workers wages. But this acted as a catalyst for actions and struggles on a wider scale in protest against an entire system of political and economic

[58] Nuttall. Class, Race and Nation, p.2. The population of Durban had increased from 169,000 in the 1920s to 480,000 in 1951, while 74 % of Indians were urbanised by 1951.
[59] Maylam and Edwards. *The People's City, p.128-136.*
[60] Bill Freund. The City of Durban: Towards a Structural Analysis of the Economic Growth and Character of a South African City. Paper given at the University of Natal, Durban's History Department, History and African Studies Seminar Series, 21 May 1997, p.14.

inequality.[61] The 1970s and 1980s thus saw massive economic and social devastation wrought by riots, emergency regulations, stayaways, boycotts, violence and political killings. Today, in terms of population size, Durban is considered to be the second fastest growing city in world behind Mexico City, placing enormous strain on the city's economy and infrastructure, neither of which is keeping pace with population growth, with half the population living in informal settlements, and the struggle for space taking on new proportions.[62]

Women and Education in South Africa.

The 1950s also saw a massive change in the education system, which directly impinged upon women. For years before, women began to realise with increasing force as the years progressed that the only way they could have their voices heard and compete equally in the public sphere was by being educated. However, gaining access to education in South Africa, especially higher education was difficult if not impossible to obtain, especially in the first few decades of the 20th century. By 1950 only 1/3rd of African children managed to go to school, and only then for 4 years (under 3% went beyond primary school).[63] Women's position within these statistics has been even worse, for there had been a long tradition of excluding women from education, especially black women (Indians and Africans), and gaining access to it went against and challenged all traditional beliefs and attitudes about women's behaviour and of the separate roles and functions in society. For African girls, work in the home and fields was of primary importance, while Indian girls had to contend with parental apathy, being unable to go to mixed schools, lack of women teachers, early marriage,

[61] Robert Morrell (ed). *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives.* (Durban: Indicator Press, 1996), p.153. The 1973 strikes came to be known as the "Durban Moment" - a rare time when Natal seemed regionally to be setting the political pace for the country.
[62] Maylam and Edwards. *The People's City,* p.26.
[63] Shula Marks. *Not Either an Experimental Doll: The Separate Worlds of Three South African Women.* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1987), p.9-10.

poverty and domestic claims.[64] Although it was possible for some women to go overseas to further their education (Britain and the U.S.A. held strong attractions, which many of the women under discussion managed to attain), most could not afford this, and against great odds struggled to get an education in South Africa. The Indian community was forced to build its own schools with their own funds to cater for their educational needs (but largely excluding girls). However problems of limited funds, discrimination, lack of resources, lack of qualified teachers plagued educational facilities for both Africans and Indians.[65]

Mission-based education was the first of its kind for African students in South Africa offering basic lessons in the three "Rs" and in religious instruction. Christian Indians, who were mostly indentured labourers (5%), were the first to start schools for Indian children in the 1860s, and for 30 years, were the only institutions that concerned themselves with the education and welfare of Indians.[66] However, mission education worked in complex, ambiguous and contradictory ways. While recognising that the extension of Christianity involved a process of interaction, compromise and synthesis of cultural practices, there is no doubt that it played an active role in reorganising gender relations and promoting European concepts of gender through the socialising institutions of the mission household, church and school. An ideology of, and skills for domesticity were promoted to place black women mainly in the domestic realm of either their own or white households, thus tying women to subordinate roles.[67]

However, threaded through the dominant ideology of female subservience was also a message of personal autonomy through spiritual equality, which offered women a possibility

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[64] B. Rambiritch. An Investigation into Some Aspects of the Education of Indian Girls in Natal. Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Master of Education, University of Natal, 1955, p.217-118.
[65] Ken Hartshorne. *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910-1990.* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.73.
[66] J.B. Brain. *Christian Indians in Natal 1860-191: An Historical and Statistical Study. (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1983),* p.193.

of escape from the oppressive relationships in African society, acting as places of refuge from unwanted marriages and witchcraft accusations. But, more importantly, for a small minority of women, mission education was a route to a membership of a small black elite in South African society. Higher education was only undertaken by missionaries in the early years, and was done to evangelise Africans through education, and in the process trained locally most of the personnel they required as teachers, preachers and community leaders. Adams, and later Inanda (both founded by the American Board of Missions in 1854 and 1869 respectively) were two of the only tertiary educational institutions in Natal until the establishment of the "Non-European" Section of the Natal University College in 1936 (offering B.A., commerce, social science, education and law courses), while Inanda was the first of its kind to accept African women students. They both catered for a national elite offering higher "academic" education, though promoting teaching for women as an "appropriate" occupation.[68] Although there were few careers open to black students by 1950s, the numbers who reached that stage were few and thus tended to go on to form part of a small but distinguished African intelligentsia and professional class of the 20th century.[69] Christian Indians were more Westernised and played an important role in bridging the gap between Eastern and Western cultures and provided the first clerks, educationalists, doctors, lawyers.

However, in the 1950s, the new Afrikaner Nationalist government, through the passing of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, took control of black education in mission schools and aimed to defuse growing African nationalism and political demands which missions provided a base for, now emphasising "ethnicity" and "training" to cultivate habits of cleanliness, obedience, self-restraint, chastity and industrial training.[70] The mission schools

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[67] Walker. "Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945: An Overview", p.13.
[68] Hughes, Heather. "A Lighthouse for African Womanhood: Inanda Seminary, 1869-1945", in Walker, C. *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, p.219.
[69] Marks, *Not Either an Experimental Doll*, p.20.
[70] Peter Kallaway (ed). *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans.* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984), p.148-149.

had raised black intellectual standards and trained teachers to impart knowledge. However, now schooling provided an essential way of bringing about Apartheid through ideological manipulation; separate and unequal schools to rigidify racist lines of division and prepare children for their subordinate roles in a dominant white society.[71] In rural areas the situation was far worse. The schools were ill-equipped, teachers were unqualified, understaffed and lacked resources. In 1959, the Extension of University Education Act closed white universities to black students, and began the establishment of separate tertiary institutions, where the state could control the black elite's curriculum and give then the skills to manage and administer their separate homelands.[72]

World War 2 - Women, Education and Professions.

World War II provided the turning point for women, education and their embarking on new spheres of work, especially in professional careers in the public sphere. Women began to realise that they needed a better education for themselves and if they wanted to help other women. In South Africa (as in Europe though more slowly and on a smaller scale), the economic role of women began to expand beyond the domestic sphere, with the development of commerce and secondary industry and services, which required redefinition roles and perceptions of the world. The war marked a major upswing in female employment outside the home, which in turn worked to soften prejudices against women's involvement in the public sphere.[73] However, while women gained more independence, the domestic rather than public world of careers continued to be of primary importance in defining women's position. This created tensions between reproductive and productive roles, forcing work to be subordinate to the needs of the family. But the expanding higher education for white women was huge, and although many graduates were destined for marriage or "womanly" professions, such as

[71] Kallaway. *Apartheid and Education,* p.160.
[72] Kallaway. *Apartheid and Education,* p.172.
[73] Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser. *A History of their Own: Women in Europe from Prehistory to the*

teaching, a small number began moving into previously men-only professions, such as medicine and law, pushing back the boundaries that previously limited women's life, and widening the career options for other women to follow.

Despite the educational and employment opportunities available to women after the war, there was still much hostility to female emancipation as it was seen as dangerous to the existing order of society, challenging views about female intellectual inferiority and dependence on men. Also, changes in clothing and behaviour (short hair, trousers, short skirts, use of cosmetics), freedom in sexual matters, dancing, dating, smoking, drinking in public and use of contraceptives was seen as an enormous threat of male control over women.[74] Thus, after the war, women found the traditional attitudes still firmly in place, and nothing diminished the prestige of motherhood for women nor its appropriateness as an ideal for all women.

By gaining greater access to education, women became emancipated and with greater independence and personal choice in their lives, marriage patterns began to change. With women working and taking on full time professional careers, many married later, or not at all, while those that had, saw marriages break apart as the conflicting role demands of work and domestic responsibilities put immense strains on the demands of marriage. As mentioned earlier, it was also the time of a greater gender-awareness of the oppressiveness and inequality of conventional sex/gender roles. As more women became educated, and thus through knowledge, aware of their oppression, and the enhancement of women's status by taking on professional jobs on a larger scale, the fight for gender equality could begin in earnest. Women were often encouraged to present this choice in the light of seeing work as an indispensable stage in their emancipation.

Present. Vol.II. (London: Penguin Books, 1988), p.197.

Women and Marriage.

Linked to increasing education, has been changing marriage patterns. In a very general sense, the last few years have witnessed growing numbers of women living outside of conventional marriage. To those who have never married or who are widowed, have been added, because of changing marriage patterns, increasing numbers of women who become separated or divorced, chose to co-habit, or have husband-absent marriages due largely to work demands, such as migration.[75] In all these cases, female-headed households are becoming more common. However, the study of the five women under review are unique for their time (in the early years of the 20th century) for many of them made a conscious choice not to marry, and if they did, it was only for a short time, and thus becoming single again through divorce. However, to show the uniqueness of their decisions and situations in the next chapter, it is important to analyse the pervasive power of conventional marriage and its hold on women, that these women had to have a great deal of courage, determination and strength to resist.

For all women, marriage influences the way they are defined (single, widowed, divorced), and thus they are categorised by their relationship with men, where women are seen as more or less marginal to marriage; more or less connected to men. The ideological influence of marriage as a social institution and linked to this, "the family", has had and continues to have, an enormous impact on women's identity, even to those furthest from experiencing marriage. Marriage is central to the wider reproduction of gender where the roles of wife/mother in the home are intertwined as the two central aspects of "womanhood" that are found in the private sphere and negatively influencing their access to the public sphere of men, who are the "breadwinners" with their wives dependent on them, thus

[74] Anderson and Zinsser. *A History of their Own,* p.202.
[75] Joan Chandler. *Women Without Husbands: An Exploration of the Margins of Marriage.* (London: MacMillan Education Ltd, 1991), p.14.

extending into wider society.[76] Women without husbands are seen as a problem group in society, as social anomalies, and are socially stigmatised, often becoming a focus of public concern and state interest (welfare benefits and intervention).[77] A single-parent family has been synonymous with moral breakdown and social disorder. However, the aim of this thesis is to redress the misrepresentations and omissions of women who never married, and to challenge their categorisation as "problem women". In this study we see that for this group of women, marginality to marriage brings real growth in personal autonomy, responsibility, independence, self-sufficiency and choice to forge their own identities.

In the case of many women, freedom from marriage constraints also provide greater control over resources, but also removes the conflicts of marriage with all its demands on women in the domestic sphere, to enable them to take on professional careers in the public sphere. For women who embarked on newly opened careers, the tasks were (and are) still segregated by sex in the households where women fulfilled domestic responsibilities resulting in working women bearing a disproportionate share of the work load ("a double burden").[78] The strains and pressures experienced by professional married women remain huge when faced with the challenge of competing with their male counterparts who are not burdened with the daily routine of homemaking and family. Careers are restricted and often curbed by marriage and family responsibilities. As a woman in medicine argued,

> lots of women have unrealistic expectations. Women who are successful are superwomen! Either they are single and behave like men, or they're superwomen and have combined family and career![79]

[76] Chandler. *Women Without Husbands*, p.2.
[77] Chandler. *Women Without Husbands*, p.13.
[78] Nophasika Maforah. "Black, Married, Professional and a Woman: Role Conflicts?" in *Agenda*. Vol 18, 1993, p.5-7.
[79] Isobel Allen. *Any Room at the Top? A Study of Doctors and their Careers.* (London: Policy Studies Institute Publications, 1988), p.17.

Women and the Professionalisation of Work.

However, increasingly well-educated and professional women are not accepting the restrictions and constraints which marriage and family impose, and view marriage and women's traditional roles negatively. Education has given women the knowledge and skills to analyse and reject traditions and oppression. That women are professional is itself a challenge to the traditional role of women as mother and wife. Thus, as in the case of most of the women I will analyse, alternative narratives to marriage were structured around their work, where the women established their identities through work. It is here where men and women's worlds become more complex, overlapping and not confined to specific spheres, where the border between the private and public is ever-changing and sinuous. This thesis will examine the lives of a group of largely unmarried women who laboured, together and alone, for decades of this century, to fight for a space in and broaden the definition of a predominantly white male public sphere.

The stimulation of professional work for women in South Africa -- and the Durban region was no exception to this -- was linked to the economic growth promoted by the wars, as increasing industrialisation and urbanisation called for the provision of services for payment, offering new employment opportunities in white collar jobs for women. Professions are based on the provision of skills based on theoretical knowledge provided through training and education, which women were only able to really get after the wars opened up educational opportunities for them.

For before then, few women had access to most of the professions nor the educational qualifications they depended on. For the word "profession" means an occupation that involves "institutional modes of controlling a sphere of work", and limiting the supply of

entrants in order to enhance its market value.[80] While some professions such as teaching and nursing were seen as more acceptable and "suitable" for women (an extension of their duties in the domestic sphere), other fields such as medicine, law, academics were plagued by enormous prejudice against women that had to be constantly fought for, for it to be overcome. In the professions, careers were shaped and channelled as a result of gender rather than their abilities, resulting in "gendered exclusionary strategies" adopted to maintain a male monopoly of their professions.[81] The rationale for their exclusion was centred on their inferior intellectual ability and fear that educating women would incapacitate them for their "biological" tasks, women were not seen as the primary breadwinners, they had divided interests, were too emotional and irrational.[82] When women eventually gained access to professions, they were often excluded from certain spheres of work and confined to others.[83] Prejudices against women based on sex, age, marital status, race were common. Women were also paid lower salaries, given fewer promotions or permanent positions, and excluded from networking, which entailed,

> information exchange, collaboration, career planning and strategising, professional support/encouragement and access to visibility and upward mobility.[84]

They often had to work harder and longer to compete with men on equal terms.

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[80] Witz, Anne. *Professions and Patriarchy.* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p.41.
[81] Witz. *Professions and Patriarchy,* p.25-26.
[82] Rand Jack, and Dana Crowley Jack. *Moral Vision and Professional Decisions: The Changing Values of Women and Men Lawyers.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). This book discusses the emergence of women into the law profession, and many of the arguments men used against them, were based on the assumption that women were not aggressive, they were too emotional and irrational.
[83] Elianne Riska and Katrina Weger (ed). *Gender, Work and Medicine: Women and the Medical Division of Labour.* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1993), p.13-26, and Johanna Trollope. *Britannia's Daughters: Women of the British Empire.* (London: Pimlico, 1983) discuss the way Indian women were accepted into the medical profession but only in certain specialties, dealing mainly with women and children. This was largely due to their strict Purdah system where Indian women were not allowed to consult male doctors.
[84] Suzanne Stiver Lie and Virginia E. O'Leary (ed). *Storming the Tower: Women in the Academic World.* (London: Kogan Page, 1990), p.58.

An added burden and stereotype often applied to educated and professional women, and one that applied to many of the women to be analysed within this thesis, was that they were "*difficult*" and "unwomanly". By being independent, going beyond the accepted limits of female behaviour and having opinions, many women put their sexual identities into question by acting in ways defined by their cultures as "womanly"; or not of a "woman's sphere".[85] For many, it remains unfeminine to have ambition or to succeed to male domains, and was a threat that many saw as possibly resulting in a sexual "inversion". For these women, by rejecting their traditional woman's roles, the price they had to pay was to be classified as an outcast, socially ostracised and condemned by men, but also to face rejection from most women who followed and unquestioningly accepted their conventional roles.

Thus, while recognising that the Durban women under discussion were shaped by broader influences within a specific historical context, I am also interested, more importantly, in their ability to work creatively with the resources and avenues available to them, in the environment in which they found themselves. Chapter Three is thus an analysis of the details, nuances and complexities of each of their lives, where women are as much agents and shapers of history, as influenced by it. It is only here that one can see how they were simultaneously ordinary women, but also extraordinary, as their lives demonstrate interesting departures from what was generally perceived to be the status and roles of women in their society, especially in the first half of the 20th century.

In a unique way, they were all formally educated, a remarkable feat in the first decades of the 20th century, when education for women, especially black women was difficult to obtain. They saw what few other women did, that the only way to challenge sexism and racial oppression was through education, which gave people the knowledge and

[85] Anderson and Zinsser. *A History of their Own*, p.xiii.

skills to confront their oppressors and undermine established social norms and expectations. It was thus their passion for promoting the importance of education that brought them together, despite the differences of race, age, class and religion, especially manifest in the South African city of Durban in the 20th century. Through the sources available to me, I will attempt to show what these independent and talented women had to do to gain recognition as women in specialised professions, creating a niche for themselves and a space for others to follow.

While these five women's lives did harmonise, and this is so especially in the interrelationships between them as they lived in the early- to mid-20th century Durban, there are also times when their voices need to be heard individually to let their very different contexts and contributions emerge. In this way, I hope to show a remarkable group of very different women, who against difficult conditions, were able to succeed in their work, leaving a lasting impression on their communities. Their lives, and the struggles each had to undergo, will be analysed thematically: their becoming educated, their forging of professional careers, and what each woman gave back to her community. The analysis will proceed by starting with the oldest woman in the group and ending with the youngest, to show how conditions for each changed as the century wore on, as each experienced different degrees of difficulties and challenges, and how each woman lived out her later years.

Chapter Three: Education and Professional Careers.

Having discussed something of the broader social, economic, political, and cultural influences that constrained as well as gave meaning to Mabel Palmer, Killie Campbell, Sibusisiwe Makanya, Dr Goonam and Phyllis Naidoo's lives, this chapter is concerned with what I feel to be more important, their ability to work creatively with the resources and avenues available to them in the environment in which they found themselves. This chapter, therefore, will analyse the personal stories of these five exceptional women as they struggled to become educated and create a space for themselves in their professional careers. In the process they each, though in varying degrees, continually had to battle against conservative, traditional, sexist and racist forces blocking their paths, and were constantly seen by their societies as "*difficult*" for refusing to submit to these forces which were trying to force them back into women's traditional spheres. However, despite all their difficulties and the constraints placed on their lives, and the differences between each of them in terms of race and class, they all fought for the same cause - to educate women to overcome oppression, especially the triple oppression of black women. Uniquely, for their time, they all recognised the importance of education for themselves personally; to better their positions, as well as more widely. They all realised that it was only by gaining an education; knowledge that gave them an awareness and the skills to overcome oppression, that enabled these women to give something back. Through their lives something of the differentiated meaning of the complex South African social order can be seen; a tapestry in which race and class are densely interwoven.

At the turn of the century, South Africa did not offer black women the possibility of an education (especially tertiary). However, many were so determined to achieve it, that they worked exceptionally hard, and did what was necessary, even if that involved going overseas. Most of them did, and one has to recognise that this was no small feat in a country which was not only racially segregated, but women faced sexual discrimination as well. Their achievements and fight to create a place for themselves, inevitably opening up spaces for other women to follow, was truly remarkable for women of their time. This chapter is concerned with analysing the complexities and difficulties each of these women had to undergo and experience to become educated, forge professional careers for themselves, and ultimately giving back to their communities. Their lives and struggles will be analysed in relationship with one another in an attempt to show in what ways their lives were similar and in what ways they were different and uniquely their own.

Becoming Educated.

Mabel Palmer, Killie Campbell, Sibusisiwe Makanya, Dr Goonam and Phyllis Naidoo each recognised the importance and power of education to transform their lives personally and to help their communities (and women especially), to overcome oppression and discrimination. Mabel Palmer's life story began in Britain in 1876, and her attempts to gain an education took a slightly different path from the other women in this study, as she started off being educated in her country of origin and only then came to South Africa. Mabel Palmer was one of the first women to graduate from Glasgow University at the turn of the century in Victorian Britain, where classes were segregated by sex. As she herself admits, she did very well at University, much to the annoyance of her male fellow students. As she herself recalls,

> it was a great blow to them when I came first in logic [she chuckled] and I got a first-class honours in Philosophy and a second-class honours in Classics.[86]

[86] *Natal Witness*, 4/7/47.

Because of her great academic ability, she was also awarded research fellowships in which followed two years of post-graduate studies at the London School of Economics, while a scholarship from Mrs Bernard Shaw took her to Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvannia, U.S.A.[87] Her sojourn to the USA was similar to the other women, who also had to leave their homes to study overseas to better their education. In comparison, Killie Campbell was born five years after Mabel, in 1881, in Natal into one of it's most prosperous families. Killie's family had emigrated from Britain (as Mabel was to do later) to South Africa in 1850 as part of the Byrne Settler Scheme, where they farmed and made their fortune from sugar.[88] While first being educated in private schools in Natal (St Anne's Diocesan College), she then also left her home and travelled to Britain to St. Leonard's School in Scotland. Established in 1877 as one of the pioneer schools for girls, St. Leonard's was marked by its revolutionary approach to girls' education, trying to reform educational facilities and improve the opportunities for women in a reluctantly yielding society.[89] It was here that Killie acquired her enthusiasm and love for history, while her teacher Miss Grant, inspired in her and helped her to gain a much greater knowledge about history and culture that was of inestimable value to her future life's work.

Thus for Mabel and Killie, because of their positions as members of white society, their access to education was slightly easier than the women to follow. However, for both of them, sexism and conservative traditional attitudes was what they continually had to fight against. As Mabel's case shows, being one of the first women to gain access to and educated at Glasgow University, only one year after it had been opened to women, she had to struggle to gain an education that forced women into segregated classes by sex. Both could be

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[87] Dr Mabel Palmer, Curriculum Vitae, Correspondence and Personal File, N.21/45/6, Pietermaritzburg Archives.
[88] Norman Herd. *Killie's Africa: The Achievements of Dr Killie Campbell.* (Pietermaritzburg: Blue Crane Books, 1982), p.2-3.
[89] Herd. *Killie's Africa,* p.33-34.

classified as Victorian women at the turn of the century, having to struggle to overcome the huge sexist constraints on their lives including being "cribbed, cabined and confined by constricting clothes and limited horizons", where access to where access to the public sphere, and thus education and professional careers, were seen as luxuries forbidden to women, with mainly exclusive access to men.[90]

In many ways, the life of Sibusisiwe Makanya, a Zulu woman in the rural community of Umbumbulu was very different to Mabel's and Killie's life stories, but in other ways, especially with regard to her passion for education, there were many similarities between them. She was born in 1894 to "progressive" Christian parents in Umbumbulu, the heart of the present day Umlazi district. It was here that her world was immersed in a community that combined both traditional beliefs and more modern Western ideas brought to the region by Christian missionaries. By the time Sibusisiwe was born, Umbumbulu was a "created system of tradition", being administered under the Shepstone system of indirect rule for the colonial government.[91] While providing continuity with their African past through the recognition of African customary law and institutions and employment of chiefs as government officers, they now had to pay taxes in order to sustain their administration. Increasingly it became difficult to sustain their families in the reserves and many migrated to the urban areas to embark on waged labour, which took its toll on African women and children, with an increased burden of agricultural work in the rural areas. The community that she was influenced by, was thus very different from Mabel and Killie's privileged world in white society, was in a subordinate position to the colonial state, and had a blending of Western colonial imperatives and aspects of Zulu traditional cultures.

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[90] Ruth E. Gordon (Compiler). *Petticoat Pioneers: Women of Distinction.* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter Ltd, 1988), p.95.
[91] Umehani Khan. A Critical Study of the Life of Sibusisiwe Makanya and Her Work as Educator and Social Worker in the Umbumbulu District of Natal 1894-1971. Thesis Submitted for Degree of Master of Arts (Women's Studies), University of Natal, Durban, 1995, p.22-23.

Sibusisiwe had a confident personality, a secure and nurturing parental background, a strong sense of community and coherence of her Zulu identity. However, although she was supported by her family in her educational and career decisions, attending mission schools and later Inanda and Adams for further training as a teacher, like Mabel and Killie she also experienced traditional and conservative sexist opposition from her community, who felt that she was abandoning her duties as a Zulu woman, whose work was valued in the domestic sphere and in agricultural work. However, she soon changed her decision from teaching to social work as a career option when she began working in the Bantu Purity League, an organisation that attempted to improve the "moral standards" and sexual purity of African women, and give direction to the lives of young people in a world rapidly undergoing changes brought on by evangelisation, colonialism, westernisation, and industrialisation. Her activities were soon recognised by the Phelps-Stokes Commission when they visited Natal in the 1920s and offered Sibusisiwe a scholarship to train in the U.S.A.[92]

Recognising the inadequacy of teacher training for social work and to help her community, she accepted their offer. Once again she had immense opposition from her community, for Sibusisiwe was breaking with her traditional role and going unaccompanied to a foreign country. She undertook study in the U.S.A. to learn techniques of how to help prepare her community for the encroachment of urbanisation and industrialisation, but found the social work training far below what she sought and irrelevant to her needs.[93] She therefore severed ties with the Phelps-Stokes Fund and made her way north ending up in Columbia University where she was helped by Mabel Carney a "pioneer in the field of black and rural education", who was an inspirational role model for Sibusisiwe.[94]

[92] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p.38-39.
[93] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p.49. Within a year Sibusisiwe recognised a subtle racism inherent in the "adaptation" educational system modelled on the black American South, emphasising ideals of continued white supremacy, and a black future in the countryside.
[94] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p.67-68. In her sojourn across the USA she was conscious of the complex and different racial contradictions between north and south America.

One has to stop a moment just to appreciate the magnitude of her studying overseas. Like Mabel and Killie, but more so for a black woman, by studying overseas, Sibusisiwe took an enormous and courageous step, from her rural community at Umbumbulu to cosmopolitan New York. Her sojourn to the U.S.A. represented both a physical and intellectual broadening of horizons. It was a unique opportunity for a black woman who was given the freedom to travel across America on a speaking tour, meeting students from all over the world, and creating networks of support to raise money for her projects. It was an experience she would never have been able to obtain in South Africa, and it changed her in many ways. Sibusisiwe was able to acquire the skills and confidence to deal with white people from a position of equality, as well as having an immense pride in her identity as a Zulu woman, which would later help her in her work in South Africa.

Dr Goonam, a contemporary of Mabel, Killie and Sibusisiwe, was also seen as a "*difficult*" woman for not accepting her Indian society's definitions of what her station in life should be as mother and wife. Dr Goonam argues that she was born in Durban in 1906 into an "Indian world of high domesticity and profound ritual", having to fight many battles at a time rife with racist discrimination, but also conservative, traditional and sexist barriers.[95] While spending most of her youth in the Greystreet complex where she was educated at privately run English and Tamil schools, and later St. Aidans, by 1926 she realised that she wanted to study further and become a doctor. Like Mabel's relationship with her mother who was also a suffrage, Goonam's mother was a huge influence on her life, for as a suffragette, she fought for women's rights and supported her daughter's ambitious ideas.[96] However, because of the lack of opportunities for black tertiary education in South Africa, especially for Indian girls, she like Sibusisiwe and the other women had to go overseas to Britain, to complete her education and attend medical school.

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[95] Dr Goonam. *Coolie Doctor: An Autobiography.* (Durban: Madiba Publishers, 1991), p.21.
[96] *The Asian.* 23/9/97.

Just as the other women had experienced sexist discrimination and the constraints of conservative and traditional beliefs, so too did Dr Goonam. Her father resisted her appeals as he was pressurised by the Indian community against sending her overseas because it flouted prevailing morals, she would be unprotected, exposed to strange cultures during the "full blossoming of her womanhood", and would disgrace the family by marrying a white man, while taking on a career that was not meant for women.[97] However, eventually her father changed his mind, but only with the promise that she would come back and work for her people. As Goonam argues,

> my mother was a very intelligent person to send me or to persuade my father to send me overseas. It was good of him also to let me go. We didn't know England very well. Thinking back, they were both quite brave.[98]

Thus, in 1928 at the age of 22 Dr Goonam left for Britain to study to become a doctor.

As Sibusisiwe had experienced, Dr Goonam encountered a whole new world,

> it was not the closed world of ... the Durban in which we lived ... we met all sorts of people from all over the world ... it was a new world opening for me.[99]

Aunt Mary Dewar, a close friend whom Goonam stayed with in Scotland was a great influence on her life. But also living in London and then Scotland, Dr Goonam experienced things that in South Africa were "reserved for whites only", making her determined to fight against discrimination. Dr Goonam maintains that,

> the winds of the world blew around me and ideas of justice, injustice, freedom and exploitation began to excite my imagination and awaken my political consciousness.[100]

[97] Goonam. *Coolie Doctor*, p. 25. Later he changed his mind for he came to see that it was none of the Indian community's business and as he said "if my daughter hitches her wagon to a star today, it is because I encouraged her to do so yesterday, and now I am going to help her to ride the skies", p.27.
[98] Janet Twine. "A Coolie Doctor": Exploring the Life History of a Remarkable Durban Woman. Third Year History Research Essay, University of Natal, Durban, 1996, p.5.
[99] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.
[100] Goonam. *A Coolie Doctor*, p.44.

Like Mabel who experienced sexual discrimination in University, Dr Goonam also experienced sexual prejudice while training to be a doctor and her male colleagues kept her away from networking with them until,

> she asserted myself in many ways and then they called me ... so they opened the door ... opened their eyes.[101]

Phyllis Naidoo, the youngest of the five women under discussion was born in Estcourt in 1928, to Christian parents who were products of indentured Indian labourers. Her life story has been included with the other older women (in Mabel's case some 40 years difference), for her life course and embarking on education a few decades later in the 20th century, shows the slight shift that had taken place where women, though still sexually discriminated against (also racially in Phyllis's case as a black woman), found gaining access to education in South Africa slightly easier. Due to this, as well as a very poor family background, she did not travel overseas to become educated, but struggled through with the opportunities she found in Natal.[102] Also by the time she was born, unlike Mabel, Killie, Sibusisiwe, and Goonam, more people saw the importance of education as a means for upliftment and to earn a better wage to support their families. Phyllis was largely inspired by her father who came from "low beginnings", worked extremely hard to educate himself (gaining a Teachers Diploma and B.A.Degree), while teaching, and on his small salary, supported his large family and put his children through school. He made Phyllis study past primary school, when the other girls had married or were working. From 1934-1945 Phyllis attended various Indian primary and secondary schools and came to Durban in 1946.[103] More attention will be paid to Phyllis's tertiary education later as it was carried out primarily whilst working and trying to forge professional careers for herself.

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[101] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.

[102] Biographical Subject File, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban Westville Documentation Centre.

Forging Professional Careers.

Thus, having analysed the difficulties each of these five women had to face to become educated, the following section is concerned with analysing the struggle that they each had in forging a place for themselves in the "professional" public sphere. My aim is to show how these women's lives were unique, especially in the first half of the 20th century, for in a radically changing society, this group of women laboured, together and alone, to fight for a space in and to broaden the definition of a predominantly white male public sphere. Thus, by deviating from their conventional social roles and promoting much opposition in the process, they walked an unconventional path to career success in the public sphere, challenging an array of conservative, traditional, sexist and racist forces standing in their way.

After studying, Mabel Palmer carved a place for herself as a pioneer of working class adult education, and held a University of London and Workers' Educational Association tutorship in Britain. She was also a member of the Fabian Society, promoting various educational projects directed chiefly at working class and less privileged adults.[104] Mabel experienced great sexual discrimination for studying Economics and found it difficult to secure a position to work on this subject, due to the prevalent prejudice against the employment of women, and it was only at King's College for Women in London that she could lecture on this subject. In 1920, Mabel emigrated to South Africa, accepting an appointment as lecturer in Economics at Durban Technical College, and later was transferred to the staff of Natal University College as lecturer in Economic History. Although she spent half her life amidst the intellectual and cultural richness of England, she quickly adapted to South Africa contributing what would be her life's work in adult education.

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[103] Biographical Subject File, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban Westville Documentation Centre.

[104] Gordon. *Petticoat Pioneers*, p.96. The Fabians tried to improve society by non-revolutionary means, and regarded education as playing a vital role.

However, it was only following her "official" retirement from lecturing in 1936, that Mabel undertook what was to be her greatest work and second career - the founding of University education for black students in Natal. She was directly responsible for much of the agitation and practical work involved in the setting up of a separate section of Natal University College for blacks.[105] Because the Council refused to allow mixed classes to be held on University premises, she organised her friends into running dual classes, initially in her own home, and later in Sastri Indian College, and after the second World War, the "non-European Section" was recognised institutionally, with Mabel Palmer as its official Organiser. The classes were held at,

> inconvenient places and times as Friday evenings, all day Saturday and Sunday morning at ... Sastri College, reached in all weather ... using her home as the office; giving her services free for the first 3 months, and for little more after that, submitting balance sheets ... lending her own books and forwarding the fees; subsidising the families so individual members might study, urging [anyone] wish[ing] to extend their knowledge to attend; urging to, any student ... to be in touch with her for possible help in way of books, tuition or advice. Africans and Indians, many of them from remote country areas, came by trains and taxis and slept in doorways ... to attend these classes.[106]

Many people have criticised Mabel for her "disservice" to black aspirations by what they saw as the limitations of white liberalism in the interwar period for,

> not step[ping] outside the assumptions of segregationism in this period [with many of the reforms advocated] intended to resolve the contradictions of segregation rather than challenge its premises.[107]

Others have argued that while recognising that her arrangement upheld rather than broke down segregationist assumptions, in her eyes it could be seen as a "second best" on the principle that "half a loaf is better than none", for what was in her view an impenetrable

[105] Sylvia Vietzen. "Mabel Palmer and Black Higher Education in Natal, 1936-1942", *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, Vol.VI, 1983, 99-106.
[106] Marks. *Not Either an Experimental Doll,* p.6. "Non-European" was the derogatory term used at the time to designate black population groups in South Africa.
[107] Vietzen. "Mabel Palmer and Black Higher Education in Natal, p.105.

white racial prejudice. Following her experience of admission of women at British Universities, she hoped that the staff would tire of repeating lectures and push for the admission of blacks to ordinary classes. And a year after she retired, when the Separate Universities Bill of 1957 was passed, sweeping total integration and partial segregation away. It was here that Mabel argued, defending her decision,

> I cannot help feeling that we chose rightly in 1936, and that the largest number of graduates that we have turned out who have profoundly affected education in Natal and the rest of Africa is proof of that view. Even if our efforts are destroyed, their influence will remain. We have had the largest number of non-European students of any university in the country.[108]

Another central occupation Mabel concerned herself with was in the fight for women's rights and liberation. Her suffrage work in Britain was inherited from her mother, who went to prison several times in her fight. Mabel spent her whole life fighting against the accepted superiority of men, and while a frequent speaker at suffragette meetings and participated in demonstrations, she continued to agitate for change in South Africa, which she saw as even more backward than Britain.[109] She found it an obstacle to be a woman, being barred from the public sphere, and when forcing her way in, was discriminated against, for being outside the domestic sphere. As an academic, she experienced being excluded from socialising with her male colleagues, was always seen as inferior to them, while self-supporting women like herself were seen as social anomalies.[110] One of the most important problems she had to deal with as an academic, was compulsory celibacy, ignoring and concealing her vital "natural instincts".[111] For she knew that she faced dismissal from her university job if she married, and would have been dismissed in disgrace had she been "living in sin", which many academic women were forced to do.

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[108] Vietzen. "Mabel Palmer and Black Higher Education in Natal, p.112.
[109] *Natal Witness*, 4/12/47.
[110] Mabel Palmer, "The Position of Women in South Africa", The Mabel Palmer Collection, File 18, The Campbell Collections.
[111] Mabel Palmer, "The Problem of the Celibate Woman by a University Woman. The Reality of the Problem",

A life interlinking the others was Killie Campbell. Like them she did not conform to the accepted role for women and was determined and dedicated. Among all the great Africana collectors she was the only woman to establish a notable Africana library. Many people influenced her, stimulating her interest in Africana collecting. She was inspired by her grand- father William's "reverence for the reforming power of education", while from her father Marshall (distinguished senator in the first Union Parliament and wealthy sugar baron), she learnt a deep respect for African people and felt that "no country could prosper when the largest section of the people had no say in the government of the country".[112] Killie often accompanied her father to parliamentary sessions in Cape Town (which was unusual for a woman of her time) and was able to meet men already noted for their private collections, and listened in on their enthusiastic and interesting discussions and seeing their collections.[113] Killie's pattern of life and her collecting of books was not one that was expected of a daughter of a wealthy and socially eminent family. She spent all her income on books, and for the 17 years that Killie accompanied her mother to London, she avoided the social rounds and instead focused on what the "old city, with its illimitable wealth of historical treasures" had to offer.[114] Her career as an Africana collector was greatest in the last 30 years of her life, as although she came from a wealthy family, in her earlier years she had limited funds to spend on books and it was only later, when her mother came to see the library with a surge of pride, and became reconciled with the strange occupation her daughter had chosen for herself, that she got generous financial support.

After her studying, Sibusisiwe returned from the U.S.A. in 1930 and re-established herself at Umbumbulu to help her rural community to cope by adapting to the fast encroaching urbanisation and industrialisation process which threatened traditional African

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The Mabel Palmer Collection, File 18, The Campbell Collections.
[112] Herd. *Killie's Africa*, p.15-16.
[113] *Daily News*, 3/10/52.

survival in both rural and urban areas.[115] However, in doing so, she was forced to walk a tight rope to prevent being accused of introducing alien/western ideas into a society whose male custodians disapproved of her initiatives and life choices. Her insider/outsider status with which she was privileged was the only safety net between her life's work and being ostracised and rejected by a community suspicious of new ideas. In improving conditions in a community not open to changes, she was forced to go against forces of traditionalism, conventionalism, sexism and racism, local opposition to her activities regarded as "unseemly" for a Zulu woman such as her beer brewing of *utshwala* as a "useful trade", her views against polygamy and large families, her career as a teacher and social worker, being unmarried and living on her own.[116] In all these aspects she was breaking with Zulu traditions pertaining to an African woman's sphere. In her work to help educate her community, she had a hard time motivating parents to send their children to school because the men felt it would weaken their tribal authority. Men were threatened by her,

> I think this because Sibusisiwe was not apologetic about who she was. You know, men expect women to be shy, timid and to withdraw from the centre - Sibusisiwe was the opposite of these words.[117]

Like Sibusisiwe, in 1936 Dr Goonam also returned to Durban to help her community 8 years after leaving, and set up her practice in the Grey Street Complex. In comparison to the other women under discussion, she too was discriminated against,

> the struggles we had to fight were numerous. As a young women doctor, I had two battles to fight - racism and sexism [and] the prejudice existed on three counts: I was female, Indian, and unmarried.... I was the first female Indian doctor in this country[118]

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[114] Herd, *Killie's Africa*, p.64.
[115] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life and Work of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p.82. As Brigilia Bam argues about Sibusisiwe's life, which is applicable to the other women, "for those of us who've gone abroad to study, there is a tendency for us not to return to rural areas, but Sibusisiwe Makanya returned. ... She *chose* to live and work in Umbumbulu".
[116] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life and Work of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p. 100,147,149,151
[117] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life and Work of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p.126.
[118] *The Asian*, 23/9/97.

In the beginning she suffered tremendous disadvantages being black, people were hesitant and suspicious of going to a black doctor. Goonam argued her attempts to get into a hospital to meet other doctors and exchange opinions and new knowledge was not possible, for the official reply to her application was,

> the policy of this country is that non-European doctors could not be admitted to Government hospitals as white nurses would not be prepared to take orders from black doctors![119]

She was even accused by a white matron in prison of being a witchdoctor to which Goonam indignantly snapped back "they don't teach witchcraft in Scotland".[120] There was also enormous prejudice against a woman doctor, as she claimed, "I was a novelty but professionally I was no draw", and had many doors shut in her face.[121] In the beginning, she mainly served the very poor patients, of all races, who had no choice but to go to her. Dr Goonam's social life did not include Indian women, because their life experiences were very different, with Dr Goonam repeatedly criticising their subservient status in the domestic sphere and the Indian community's conservative and superstitious restricting traditions.

Linked to the forging of her medical career, was also the forging of her political career. On her return from experiencing freedom granted to blacks overseas, Goonam on finding racial discrimination intensified in the 1930s was determined to fight for the rights of South African Indians and end oppression/segregation and later Apartheid, a process that was to occupy most of her life. The specifics of her involvement in various political movements and organisations is not in the scope of this essay, but has been covered in greater detail in Dr Goonam's own autobiography, *The Coolie Doctor.* Suffice to say her most active political

[119] Goonam. *The Coolie Doctor*, p.60.
[120] Goonam. *The Coolie Doctor*, p.114.

involvement came during the Passive Resistance Campaigns in the 1940s where she helped with extensive canvassing on injustices, recruited volunteers and went with them to jail (18 times).[122] This movement, very importantly helped to mobilised Indian women for the first time, bringing them out of seclusion to "save their homes and families". Disrupted and relocated 3 times in the 1940s and 1950s, and travelling to India and London in between (holding appointments at various hospitals), she returned to Durban each time, until the end of the 1970s when imprisonment was imminent because of her activism. Dr Goonam thus left South Africa to avoid arrest. She settled in London, Australia and finally took a job at a hospital in Harare, and continuing to fight for the end of Apartheid and for human rights. Her political involvement in the struggle for liberation has a positive effect on her medical practice, as she argued, her reputation grew and,

> I then became Dr Goonam for everybody ... it helped me quite a lot and in many ways ... it brought [me] forward. Everything grew with it. Somehow I felt that somebody had pushed me further forward.[123]

Professional Careers rather than Marriage - Difficult Women.

Besides the difficulties each woman had to struggle against to forge their careers, an important reason for their success, was their rejection of the allotted or conventional women's domestic sphere, for work in their communities in the public sphere. These women were among a vanguard, challenging the conservative sexist and racist forces blocking their paths. The term "*difficult*" has been reclaimed as a positive representation in this project, to denote women who were intelligent but ambitious and who refused to accept recognised definitions of their station in life as mothers and wives. Most of them never married, and if they did, it was only for a short time, and for this and other reasons their achievements in life and successes in their chosen professional fields were their own, not linked to men's

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[121] Goonam. *The Coolie Doctor*, p.58.

achievements.

All five of the women were seen, if not throughout their lives, than at certain stages of their lives as "*difficult*". None conformed, and they all refused to accept their society's definition of their station in life, often rebelling against their gender inequalities. When I asked Dr Goonam whether people in her life time had seen her as difficult she replied,

> I was treated as an outcast, and I was very difficult ... I could stand and talk to any man as his equal and they felt that was not quite an Indian way of doing things. ... I hesitated sometimes, but I was a rebel, and that helped me to overcome these difficulties.[124]

In very similar ways, all these women had distinct and striking personalities, were outspoken and their attitudes and behaviours were often controversial. Some of them, such as Sibusisiwe, Dr Goonam and Phyllis challenged the prevailing norms with their Western style of dress, smoking in public, wearing make-up and their forthright and carefree manner. As Brigalia Bam argued about Sibusisiwe and her approach to life,

> she had a loud voice [and] a facade of a hard woman ... Everyone was scared of her. No one had the guts to pick an argument with her ... She wore makeup, was growing her hair, when all other women wore a scarf when going out ... and she was in the middle of Umbumbulu ... she surprised patriarchy in Umbumbulu.[125]

In varying degrees, they were all independent, strong-willed, and intelligent, which intimidated many of their male acquaintances. Killie's interest in book buying and her "haunting" of second hand bookshops rather than performing her duties and social rounds, was often seen as the lack of her responsibilities as a member of an elite class and her interest in "dusty books and musty documents" was seen as an odd eccentricity, and as her mother

[122] Goonam. *The Coolie Doctor*, p.105-111.
[123] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.
[124] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B.

said, the "sheer madness of her daughters apparent extravagance".[126]

Other than Mabel (who was married only for a short time during the World War I), Killie, Sibusisiwe and Dr Goonam, all lived long and full lives and although receiving several marriage proposals, after serious and careful consideration, realising the criticisms that would come from their communities, refused them all, making a conscious choice not to marry, and rather spend their lives working for and helping their communities. Marriage would have wrought a change in their outlook, disposition, circumstances and almost certainly their goals, but it is unknown whether they could have successfully combined marriage and careers, and had the impact they did. Mabel Palmer was seen as "something of a stormy element" in the academic world, and after her divorce she had "not only a husband but also a family as an academic career".[127] She also constantly argued that "public life is compatible with domestic life" and that women should not think in terms of a marriage or a career, but in terms of marriage and a career". [128] Although having a child of her own and adopting her sister-in-law's two children after her marriage broke down in the 1940s, Dr Goonam still did not regard marriage as an option, and argued that marriage would have been a,

> hindrance to [my] activities ... I said if I'm going to get married, then I'll have children, then I'll have to stay at home. How can I [then] do what I wanted to do - that is self commitment for the good of the people. ... Marriage would have ended everything that I had in mind and I wanted that, I wanted to work for them, ... and I know that was the best thing to do.[129]

For Goonam and her family, the traditional female gods and icons were,

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[125] Umehani Khan's Interview with Brigalia Bam, 3/10/95, housed in the Campbell Collections.
[126] *Daily News*, 3/10/52.
[127] Talk given by Dr. S Vietzen, to the Durban Branch of the South African Association of University Women, in the Norwegian Hall, Mansfield Road, Durban, 19 February, 1980, Mabel Palmer Collection, Campbell Collections.
[128] *Natal Witness*, 4/12/47.
[129] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 2: Side A.

> women [who]never married ... They were spinsters, and they achieved a lot. So I think she took a lesson from them ... They looked upon me as another icon in the community.[130]

In terms of Sibusisiwe's unmarried life, H.M.S. Makanya had this comment to make in 1979,

> I know why she didn't get married. You know among our people a woman has got to be nice and humble. She wasn't. She was so outspoken. She would come here and talk to [older] men and women as she would to her friends and the younger men regarded her with fear ... I can't live with such a woman - she's a boss to me.[131]

A woman who was definitely a boss of her own life, despite her marrying was Phyllis Naidoo. Phyllis was younger, representing the generation of women after the other four, and by the fact that she did get married (twice) and remained so for longer than Mabel did, often saw her achievements being hidden behind the activities of her husband's (relationship with men is stronger). It's for this reason that her life will be analysed in comparison to the other four women. However, in many other ways, her life story runs parallel to the other women, in that she was also seen as "*difficult*" (although in a slightly different sense) and she took on a number of professional careers in the public sphere, experiencing sexual and racial discrimination, and challenging a number of conservative and traditional forces. However, her life departs from an easy equation with them again in relation to her careers, by the fact that she had to combine family and career responsibilities, with her marriage and children placing greater strains on her work, with the accompanying result of one or the other suffering because of conflicts.

In terms of Phyllis forging a professional career, her life choices differ from the other women in that she educated herself while working to support her family, studied in South Africa, and embarked on three career choices. Thus while starting out as a social worker at

[130] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.
[131] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life and Work of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p.125.

Fosa Settlement in 1946-47 helping T.B. patients to recover, she later (1951-63) took on teaching as a profession because with patients returning after being released because of poor living conditions, Phyllis did not feel that she was helping, and turned to teaching to try and help educate people to improve their lives.[132] While teaching she studied at night for her Teachers Diploma and later (1955-58) she put herself through the University of Natal, Durban, barely managing to survive, but became more politically conscious and involved in organisations (such as the Natal Indian Congress - N.I.C.) finding it difficult to remain politically neutral. The nature of her work as a social worker and teacher were socially acceptable roles for women.

Balancing Professional Careers and Family: Multiple Responsibilities.

Whilst becoming more politically conscious, through student politics at the end of the 1950s, Phyllis met her second husband M.D. Naidoo (first marriage had failed because they were too young) who was to have an enormous influence on her life. Their lives were constantly in tension between family demands and political activities. They had three children between 1961 and 1966, and through that period, Phyllis had to work, study, had domestic responsibilities, while M.D. was arrested in 1966 and imprisoned on Robben Island for 5 years.[133] From 1966-76 Phyllis was served with banning orders and house arrested because of her political activities. Her burden was huge, as unable to teach, forced to support her family and M.D., she worked as an articled clerk, had lone domestic responsibilities, studied, and helped in the political struggle,

> it was a hectic period ... I used to go to bed dead tired. I can't tell you what a whole day was packed up with ... [so] busy doing things ... I don't know how it happened.[134]

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[132] Correspondence Files, Box 2, 1978, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban Westville Documentation Centre.

[133] Biographical Subject File, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban Westville Documentation Centre.

[134] Phyllis Naidoo Interview, Appendix, Tape 2: Side B.

In 1967 she was arrested for 10 days. Yet, she did not see herself as a superwoman, for

> there's nothing exceptional in that - many wives do it everyday. Anyway I have no one to blame. I went into it with my eyes open.[135]

In comparison to the other women, her life shows that women were able to be married and professional, but it involved huge strains, that the husbands mostly did not feel.

It was from the mid-1940s onwards that Phyllis realised, I would argue, that the only way to address the problems facing black people was through politics and changes in the government, and coupled with the need to earn a living, Phyllis took up the study of law (completing it through correspondence when house arrested). Phyllis hoped to become a lawyer to help alleviate the oppressive conditions of the majority of South Africans, where most of their "crimes" were as a result of poverty. Recognising the inequalities in the law courts and system of justice (which were not representative of the majority), Phyllis chose to speak for those who could not. In 1973 after a long and bitter fight and third application to the Natal Law Society she was admitted into practice with A.J. Gumede, the first cross-cultural practice in South Africa until 1977, when she was forced to go into exile.[136] Her banning orders prevented her from attending court, giving legal services to the poor, and found difficulty establishing a practice as she was discriminated against as a woman, but also racially. Lecturers and male attorneys did not see law as an acceptable career for women, but later accepted her services as a lawyer against Apartheid, being a member of the A.N.C. fight for liberation.

[135] *New African*, January 1978, p.90.
[136] Correspondence, Box 2, File 54, 1983, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban Westville Documentation Centre.

Divorce: "Prostitute of the Revolution" - Socially Ostracised.

However, the strains of their political activities (being in exile, bannings, jail) placed a burden on their personal lives and marriage, making their marriage unstable. When M.D. was released from jail in June 1972, both were house arrested, and forced to live together. This was impossible and resulted in their separation and divorce in 1974, with M.D. gaining custody of their two sons, and Phyllis getting custody of their daughter. Divorce for Phyllis was difficult and lonely. She felt socially ostracised, and marginalised, which was made more difficult because she had been divorced before as her father told her not to "don't darken my doorstep". Many of her friends condemned her as selfish and a,

> cause of wreckage in the lives of others ...I do not believe that any help you can bring to those suffering politically can equal this destruction wrought in private lives.[137]

Phyllis felt like a social outcast in her Indian community, and lost her women friends,

> I have no friends, life is one unspeakable agony. I have to walk the streets with my head bent in shame. The Indian community is such a sanctimonious gang I am not sure I will be able to practice here.[138]

M.D. dragged her name through the mud. He used her extra-marital affair against her, accused her of embezzling A.N.C. funds, and the worst of all, called her an unfit mother,

> he cried in court, ... and softened up the judges and so he looks like the hero. [He argued] that while [he] went to struggle for freedom, she was 'prostituting' her body ... [and] because I was house arrested, I used to send the children out to the family [then] I was prepared to 'farm out' my children ... and he made out that I did that to 'prostitute' my body. I tell you it was vicious.[139]

[137] Correspondence, Box 1, File 17, 1972, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban Westville Documentation Centre.
[138] Correspondence, Box 1, File 17, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban Westville Documentation Centre.
[139] Phyllis Naidoo Interview, Tape 2: Side A.

Phyllis, when asked why she married M.D., said,

> he was political by which time I was political and we thought it was a good thing to do. Some people say that I wasn't in love with M.D. ... I think when I look back and I wonder if I've ever been in love... I don't know. He was attractive, politically, very attractive.[140]

Looking back with hindsight, Phyllis argued that she would not marry again,

> I think I've learnt that marriage isn't all its put out to be, I don't think I'll marry. ... No, no, no. I think its much nicer being just free and having the affairs that you want to have, not having a fixed marriage on your neck all the time.[141]

Thus while in terms of marriage and the difficulties of combining marriage and careers, Phyllis was different to the other women, her life story also runs parallel to theirs in that she was also seen as "*difficult*", through divorcing her husband, and thus challenging many conservative and traditional forces, but also through her life style and attitudes to life. She was independent, strong-willed and outspoken. When asked if she was seen as "*difficult*", she replied,

> its always been there, but its never bothered me ... I was not a pretty person, but I sort of made up for it by being this extremely outspoken person. [She also regarded herself as a bit of a rebel] ... people [said] its okay for you Phyll, but ... we can't do those things. I think they were a little jealous of me, what I did, and how I did it ... But I didn't think I was doing anything great.[142]

A male friend of Phyllis's commented on her outspoken personality and independence,

> you are such a beautiful person, not physically beautiful, but your skills and I mean I'm so proud when I hear you talking and all that, and argue, and ... you don't let anything go, everything is taken off the mind, and it is so refreshing, but God I wouldn't want you as a wife. ... No he says I'm too threatening. ... [So] while they admire you and all that, they don't want an equal ... partnership, they want a subservient partnership.[143]

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[140] Phyllis Naidoo Interview, Tape 2: Side A.
[141] Phyllis Naidoo Interview, Tape 2: Side A.
[142] Phyllis Naidoo Interview, Tape 1: Side B.
[143] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.

Giving Back to the Community.

Each of the five women contributed in their own unique way, through their professions and recognised the importance of education and thus promoted it to the oppressed people as their main aims. Mabel Palmer had a deep humanitarian concern for society, and her greatest work was the founding of University education for blacks in Natal. She supported the causes of those whom opportunities were denied or not easily available, and saw in education the key to social improvement. She placed her faith in education, a prerequisite for independent action (political or otherwise), who once equipped with it would be on their way as influential members of the society. She had a remarkable capacity for work, and a flair in acquiring and imparting knowledge, as well as inspiring loyalty and hard work in others.

Killie Campbell, like Mabel, also saw herself as an educator able to impart knowledge about people but in a different sense. In a privileged position in terms of race and class, she dedicated her life to the collection and preservation of other people's life histories which made her library such a rich source of knowledge on the experiences of people from South African and Natal in particular. To Killie the content of the record was of supreme importance, regardless of the form, collecting a wide assortment of sources - pictures, artefacts, scrapbooks, newspaper cuttings, essays to help recreate more complete version of past. But the strength of her library was derived from it's vast and varied accumulation of private letters, unpublished manuscripts, diaries, unassuming booklets, pamphlets unavailable elsewhere. She remains unequalled as a harvester of "unconsidered trifles" generally ignored by Africana collectors in their search for the "glittering prizes".[144] This attitude about history was unique for her time as she felt it was not so much in the blue books, "where officials write to please authority", but in the letters and diaries of private individuals where a "rich

store of information had scarcely been tapped", and was invaluable to overcoming biases by supplementing relevant material sources. For Killie, a woven tapestry of history was indispensable for a,

> reconstruction of the life of the times ... serving to correct the official view, [by] offering endless sidelights [into] the solemn histories of the day.[145]

Killie's other major contribution of a library, was developed in order to alleviate racial tensions in South Africa through a lack of knowledge. She hoped that a wide range of sources on black history, customs and traditions would "shine a clear light through the murk of ignorance and racial distrust".[146] She described her library as a "completely non-racial institution" housing a wealth of books and a variety historical material - everything relevant to Africa's past, its future and contemporary developments.[147] She foresaw blacks moving up in the social, political and economic arenas, and was convinced that their development, must be based on the indestructible foundations of past. As she argued,

> if we have any traditions at all, they must be based on mutual understanding and a sense of pride in the deeds and people of the past ... who built up this young South African nation.[148]

Sibusisiwe also saw education as the great liberator of the African people, and because of the lack of educational facilities, "flexi-time" schooling - winter schools for girls/women and night school for herd boys (around seasons) - was created.[149] She developed an education system to meet the needs of the community, retaining Zulu cultural practices and not alienating the rural society. Adult education was also her primary concern, especially for women who were more influential and cooperative. The education was aimed to offer

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[144] Herd. *Killie's Africa*, p.135.
[145] Herd. *Killie's Africa*, p.141.
[146] Herd. *Killie's Africa*, p.128.
[147] Herd. *Killie's Africa*, p.114.
[148] Jaff. *Women South Africa Remembers*, p.94.

alternative methods of approaching domestic and agricultural tasks and to help assert independence and a place for themselves, cookery, house management, gardening, sewing, knitting, and care of children.[150] In her spare time, she visited homes and tried to motivate parents to sent their children to school. She helped build the Lucy Johnston Hall, which was opened in April 1955, clinics, and a secondary school (first in district). Here workshops conducted on health, hygiene and nutrition were held in liaison with academics at the University of Natal, Medical School. She also helped to establish their first library. Through education she hoped to develop community leadership amongst rural women, to help people adjust to the social changes, and because the women were the ones left behind in reserves when men migrated, and became heads of their households. She was also concerned with interracial co-operation and community based projects, but not politics,

> she was more concerned about the welfare of her people ... but you could say that she was an activist. She taught women to grow vegetables, make gardens, eat a healthier diet and so on. This is another way of fighting the discriminatory laws that deprived us of basic needs ... she was an activist without saying she was one - her approach was very different - she cared for her people this is how she fought for them.[151]

Goonam gave back to her community by fighting for political rights, as a medical doctor and as an educator to help people uplift themselves. She promoted family planning measures, and particularly helped by being a doctor to Indian women who could not go to male doctors,

> I could see a [whole] section of the community ... most of them were Indian women who wanted help but who couldn't come to Indian [male] doctors. It was a great help to them.[152]

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[149] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life and Work of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p.85.
[150] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life and Work of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p.89-92.
[151] Umehani Khan's Interview with Ellen Kuzwayo, 3/10/95, housed at the Campbell Collection.

She also helped medically with feeding schemes, free clinics for poor, welfare programmes (Fosa, Red Cross, Child Care). Like Sibusisiwe she too went to many Indian homes to try and persuade the parents to send their daughters to school so that Indians could be liberated,

> to have an educated community, so that nobody could trample on us.[For] education makes you strong, able to think clearly and be an opposing factor to oppressors. It teaches us ... give[s] us strength, give[s] us courage, all these things come only through education, not money, ... then you can face anybody, anywhere, because that is a strength you have ... Don't just think of men coming into your life, think of education.[153]

Phyllis also recognised the power of education as a means of liberation and improvement in the community - a route to a better life for a community as it removes ignorance, creates awareness and promotes solutions. Education was important to help earn better wages to support their family too. As she argues,

> coming from the Indian community where we valued it ... because [we've] been an oppressed community and the way to get out of that is education ... because you know our history tells you how poor we were, awful poverty ... they've had to struggle... [and] I mean my dad's story and my story are not unique.[154]

Phyllis often gave informal lessons in English to domestic workers and Cubans in Lusaka. She also helped women to forge a place for themselves in their careers,

> I think I've done that always, I can't remember, specific instances ... but I do that for anybody, but for women mainly because they were usually having a harder time.[155]

She helped many domestic workers and cleaners get jobs and their matric certificates, and often her influence in helping to get other women educated impacted negatively on their family lives too as,

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[152] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.
[153] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B.
[154] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.

> [many] were divorced, and both of them stood on their feet and worked... Men can't take that. They like placid, quiet women, yes ma'm, no sir, yes sir, three bags full sir ... So I think I'm very proud about that.[156]

She was also renown for taking on "charity" cases as a lawyer, especially those that were rejected by other lawyers, and she fought for clients who other lawyers thought were lost causes.

Phyllis was known by some as "Mother of the Revolution" as she worked for the people.[157] Her home was always open to political refugees, as Chris Hani said,

> whenever we had our problems, Phyllis was able to provide a home for us, able to provide comfort for everybody. Phyllis was there to give support to everybody.[158]

"Aunt Phyll" as she was called, was seen by many as a generous, motherly, forthright friend who opened up her heart and her home to many exiles. Despite her own family problems, she managed to balance domestic and political responsibilities, caring for and raising money for families of political prisoners, including burying dead children, arranged visits for families to Robben island, and helped find jobs and homes. She went out of her way to rally and uplift the moral of families who were made victims through their struggle for liberation.

Interconnecting Lives.

In Shula Marks' book *Not Either an Experimental* Doll, the lives of Mabel and Sibusisiwe come together in a forceful way in the life story of Lily Moya, as Marks claimed "a remarkable record of three exceptional women".[159] In her attempt to help Lily (a Christian

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[155] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.
[156] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.
[157] Correspondence, Box 2, File 29, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban Westville Documentation Centre.
[158] Copy of transcript from Sahdhan Naidoo and Moss Mthunzi's Funeral, 22 April, 1989, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban Westville.
[159] Marks. *Not Either an Experimental Doll*, p.1.

Xhosa girl from the Transkei) become educated, Mabel went to great lengths to help her, and even lent Lily her own books and paid for her fees when she got her into Adams College. For Mabel, education set up a chain reaction and whoever received it should pass it on, as she argued,

> Mrs Bernard Shaw, long ago, gave me a scholarship which she paid out of her own pocket in order that I might go and study in America ... The way in which you must pay me back is the way in which I am paying Mrs Bernard Shaw, namely by extending help to another poor and ambitious student many years later when in a position to do so.[160]

In November 1950 Mabel began writing to Sibusisiwe (she probably met her through their involvements at Adams, both were concerned with education and community work but Mabel's was decidedly intellectual, Sibusisiwe's social) to help her with Lily, who was turning out to be more "*difficult*" than the older woman in her enthusiasm had anticipated. Mabel's inability to handle Lily's isolation and demands for emotional support resulted in her hope that Sibusisiwe would straddle the "separate worlds" of the white woman academic and the young Christian Xhosa girl as "completely cut off ... from her own people", Lily needed "some contact with Bantu friends outside Adams College".[161] As a "woman of her own race", Mabel thought Sibusisiwe might help Lily think to adjust to her new life and over the next few months, Lily spent her weekends at Umbumbulu. Later she ran away because "she was a human being with feelings, not either an experimental doll".[162] Sibusiswe wrote back "I shall not be sorry, Dr. Palmer, if you part with Lily. You gave her a splendid chance and she has abused it"[163]. Thus, here Mabel can be seen as helping black students, not only as a misguided "do-gooder". Mabel and Sibusisiwe's relationship was based on affection and mutual regard. Both were forceful and effective single women, Mabel's "assertive common-

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[160] Natal in Union 1931-1961: A Collection of Papers on Development in Natal, presented at a Workshop at the University of Natal, 29-30 October, 1980, Department of History and Political Studies, Pietermaritzburg, 1981.
[161] Marks. *Not Either an Experimental Doll*, p.39.
[162] Marks. *Not Either an Experimental Doll*, p.185-186.
[163] Marks. *Not Either an Experimental Doll*, p.190.

sense" was matched by Sibusisiwe's "outspokenness".

Killie is strongly linked to Mabel and Sibusisiwe, for it was when Shula Marks was working on Mabel Palmer's papers at the Killie Campbell Library that she discovered the letters of women's voices in a male world and attempt to address the problem of black education. Mabel and Killie were both members of the Durban branch of the South African Association of University Women, and Killie constantly helped Mabel raise funds, donating the funds herself for financially constrained students at U.N.D., while Mabel donated books to Killie's library. In 1959 Killie donated money to the memorial that was established in memory of Mabel Palmer, which became an award to the best black first year student in the B.A. degree. Killie argued,

> I very much hope your splendid effort will meet the necessary success to the memory of such a splendid citizen.[164]

Dr Goonam also knew Mabel and credited her for her good work,

> Mabel was a very good researcher indeed. She gave the Indians a peep into university education ... [a] gift to the Indian students. She opened the doors for education.[165]

Phyllis knew Mabel as a student, for Mabel helped her get her degree at U.N.D., delaying and by-passing the payment of funds when Phyllis was struggling, and helped to improve relations with her father who had disowned Phyllis after her first divorce. In exchange for Mabel helping Phyllis, Phyllis used to read to Mabel in her old age when she was blind and could not read for herself. As Phyllis said,

> when I write about myself, [I have to] speak about her, because she made it possible ... you know, pathetic as it was, stuck at the back of Sastri College ... you can be very critical of those things, but she made it possible.[166]

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[164] Correspondence, Killie Campbell Collection, File 41, January to May, 1959.
[165] Twine. "A Coolie Doctor": Exploring the Life History of a Remarkable Durban Woman, p.26.
[166] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 2: Side A.

Ironically, although not knowing Killie personally, Phyllis used her library to do research about Mabel Palmer's life,

> I went to the library, I spent the day there researching Mabel Palmer [laughter]. Yes, I spent the morning there ... I wanted to find out more about Mabel Palmer. [This was] maybe '91, '92. ... Because she featured in my father's life, she was very instrumental ... the fact that he got his degree and my degree. ... I mean if she never allowed me to study I wouldn't have, my story would have been a different story, you know, the confidence that a degree gives you, the understanding and so many things the degree did for me and I had to thank her.[167]

Phyllis, was even going to give all her papers to Killie Campbell, because it was renown as a safe and respected place, but because the A.N.C. felt there was nothing progressive about Killie Campbell, the papers are now held at the University of Durban, Westville Documentation Centre. Phyllis argued that U.D.W. is a,

> place that is so Indian we've got to break the mould and become South African and let, come on this place is so Indian we've got to break the mould and become South African.[168]

Dr Goonam and Phyllis had strong connection to each others lives, as they were both in exile in Zimbabwe, both fought for the political struggle, and both saw the importance of education as a means of liberation for the black oppressed. When Phyllis's son was killed, it was Dr Goonam who represented the A.N.C., to break the news to her. Phyllis recalls,

> we were in the A.N.C. together ... but I remember her best of all as our family doctor, she was always there for us, & she refused to charge us, she refused to charge us. She wouldn't.[169]

Their relationship "cooled off" because of her affair whilst married, as Goonam argued,

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[167] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 2: Side A.
[168] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 2: Side B.
[169] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 2: Side A.

> I wasn't too happy about that association, she should have known better. But anyway, that's her way life, so she was free for all, so I am told.[170]

Phyllis viewed Goonam's greatest contribution during the Passive Resistance campaigns of 1946,

> she worked very hard during the Passive Resistance, ... and she went into prison ... but I was just coming, I was young,... then [when] she was at her best, and then she seemed to fade out and she was doing child welfare work and doing a lot of that, out of the political scene and she comes in when the Group Areas is threatening. ... [She was] a good platform speaker ... yes, she was crude and she'd be offensive, so she was effective in that way. ... but she's got a harsh tongue too.[171]

But they both had a professional respect for each other. Both women fought in different ways for black liberation through their various professions.

Thus, the fields that each of these women chose to dedicate their lives to were in "professional" spheres. In the localised context of this study, the University of Natal often provides a nexus which links these women in a variety of ways, constantly bringing them into contact with each other's lives, and in turn influencing other people's lives around them, through their passion for education. Mabel Palmer fought for black rights and provided classes for "non-European" students at the University of Natal. It is in this position that she came into contact with Sibusisiwe, Killie, Dr Goonam and Phyllis Naidoo. Sibusisiwe, as a social worker tried to help Mabel with difficult students, while Mabel who helped in the establishment of the Medical school had an indirect impact on Sibusisiwe's community by providing medical care and nutritional aid. Mabel's provision of educational opportunities for black students allowed Phyllis to get her law degree and thus to fight for Indian and African rights, which directly led her to her association with Dr Goonam in their political struggles. Killie helped Mabel with financial aid for students experiencing financial difficulties, while

[170] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 2: Side B.

her library has in the past 6 years, enabled Phyllis to conduct research on a number of issues, including Mabel's life and contributions.

This chapter has thus been an analysis of a group of women who laboured, together and alone for decades of this century to fight for a space in and broaden the definition of a predominantly white male public sphere. It is a history of an intimate world where women's voices can be heard raising complex themes that could be of interest of historians. By forging their careers in the first half of the 20th century, they walked an unconventional path to career success in the public sphere. The standard for comparison of their lives must be by their own standards, for they had no one to compare their efforts with - they stood at the beginning of a South African tradition.

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[171] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Tape 2: Side B.

Chapter Four: Old Age and Retirement.

Having analysed in the previous chapter the lives of a group of women in the Durban area, who laboured, together and alone for decades of this century to broaden the definition of a predominantly male public sphere, this chapter is concerned with extending the analysis of women's work, to include Mabel, Killie, Sibusisiwe, Dr Goonam and Phyllis's later lives, and the fact that none of them "retired", together with the issues of ageing that people in general and women in particular have to confront. In facing older age in urban areas, these women reacted as they had throughout their lives. They once again evinced interesting departures from what was generally perceived to be the status and roles of women in Durban society. Again they also walked an unconventional path; they did not retire as such, but continued working, leading full and active lives until old age or death made it impossible for them to do so.

Many people have argued that old age is one of the greatest challenges humans face, and for women this is doubly so when facing sexist and ageist prejudices in their later lives. These women faced the challenges of old age with strength and courage. This chapter is an analysis of their ability to work creatively with the resources and avenues available to them, in the environment in which they found themselves, and wherein which they ultimately gained recognition and laid the foundations for a tradition upon which Durban women, and South African women, can build.

Theoretical Issues.

The particularities and details of each of the five women's contributions during their later years, their views on ageing, loneliness, and whether their life's work had been recognised or inspiring to other women provide rich insights in this relatively unexplored theme in South African history. To explore these themes, some international theoretical work on ageing and the socially constructed negative stereotypes, especially of women, provide a useful set of questions.

An enormous problem in the research of elderly people is that women are usually ignored, or studies of aged men are extended to cover women. Another concern is that age is treated as a homogenous category, not one that has enormous variations, in terms of actual age (with some people's life spans extending more than 30 years after official retirement at 60), with a wide range of activities, lifestyles, perceptions on life, and dependencies.[172] "Age" turns out to be less about biology and more about cultures and social traditions. There is no clear definition of old age separate from a context, with chronological and biological age being poor indicators of this. Rather "later life" will be used as it includes old age, but is not coterminous with it, and emphasises that old age is subjectively experienced, and is a socially and historically constructed category.[173] Arber and Ginn, amongst others, have recently argued that in most first world countries in the 20th century, demographic changes have resulted in an ageing population -- due to decreased birth rates and decreased mortality rates -- and an increasing gender imbalance as age advances, with women outnumbering and outliving their male counterparts.[174] Thus, because women form the majority of elderly people, prejudice is based on various forms of gender prejudice. Negative stereotypes

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[172] Janet Ford and Ruth Sinclair. *Sixty Years On: Women Talk about Old Age.* (London: The Women's Press Ltd, 1987), p.3,
[173] Sara Arber and Jay Ginn. *Gender and Later Life: A Sociological Analysis of Resources and Constraints.* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1991), p.2.
[174] Miriam Bernard and Kathy Meade. *Women Come of Age: Perspectives on the Lives of Older Women.*

including views of the elderly as unproductive, dependent, restricted, helpless, are all socially constructed and reinforced by cultures and institutions. Although in some cultures, age is valued for the authority, wisdom and knowledge gained, in Western societies over the past 50 years, in particular, have produced stereotypes of ageing which are prejudicial and discriminatory. In capitalist and highly industrialised cultures, preoccupation with production in the formal economy and the devaluation of other roles and leisure time, ensures that youth, individualism and competition are prized and the majority of older people are denied social power, resources and prestige.[175] It is for this reason that age-based retirement in the paid workforce is often a dreaded milestone for many. However, for women, this situation is compounded by gender inequalities. For the gendered division of labour -- where women's role is seen in the home, or working for "pin" money, or part-time, and thus having an interrupted record of paid employment -- directly influences their access to resources and pensions in old age, which are far lower than men's resulting in poverty and a poorer quality of life. Men's retirement has been analysed for its impact on status, financial resources and loss of meaning in life, while

> women's retirement has been neglected because ...[of] the assumption that retirement from work is a less significant event in a women's lives,

emphasising instead that their roles as mothers and wives give them a sense of continuity.[176] Historical research into later life, often only take the form of research based on statistics and medical data. It often ignores individuals and small groups of people and their qualitative

(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1993), p.2. This process is known as the "feminisation" of later life.

[175] Bernard and Kathy Meade. *Women Come of Age,* p.45-49. Add to this is the "double standard" of ageing, where male chronology hinges on employment whereas women's age status is defined in terms of events in the reproductive cycle. Whereas men's value and status enhances with age, women's value decreases, bringing social devaluation when menopause is reached, and the loss of physical attractiveness, youth and sexuality. There are thus enormous pressures on women to ward off the signs of ageing to comply with male standards of desirability (Arber and Ginn, *Gender and Later Life,* p41-43).

[176] Ford and Sinclair. *Sixty Years On,* p.2-3.

experiences. This lacunae, particularly with regard to women, needs to be redressed.[177]

The lives of five Durban area women were not one's based on dependency or helplessness, nor did they rely on husbands for support and status. Unlike women who became dependent on men for financial support all their lives, and have had to learn to cope with the loss of men who were central, after their deaths, these women, having lived most of their lives alone, benefited from a lifetime of coping socially and emotionally in a society which values coupledom and where parenthood and marriage are the norm.[178] However, they are affected more severely than married women at retirement, for like men, it means a loss of status and meaning in their lives. The women in my study, it appears did not experience this loss of purpose and meaning in life, for they did not retire, remaining productive and active in old age, maintaining independence, and a sense of worth from employment. It can even be argued that their work was necessary for their social and cultural well-being, because of their lack of personal and domestic responsibilities to keep them busy.[179] Their lives show that the boundaries of life stages are fluid, and that there should be less emphasis on age-specific role transfers. This approach also questions the view of the "wastage of financial resources" involved in training women who do not fulfil their potential, emphasising that we must,

> look at women's careers up to sixty and beyond, [and that] in this context the child-rearing years are a very small proportion.[180]

[177] Ford and Sinclair. *Sixty Years On,* p.4-5.
[178] Arber and Ginn. *Gender and Later Life,* p.35-41. Throughout history, men have feared and tried to control women who had power outside of men's control. Women who are autonomous, unmarried, independent and knowledgeable represented the greatest threat, which explains the pervasive and powerful socialising institution of marriage and the family to bring women under social control.
[179] Ford and Sinclair, *Sixty Years On,* p.150-151. For the majority of women who marry, caring for the family is an important source of fulfilment and is sometimes the only way of exercising power. For women who are single, other means have to be found for personal fulfilment, especially in later life. Work plays an important role here.
[180] Isobel Allen. *Any Room at the Top? A Study of Doctors and their Careers.* (London: Policy Studies Institute Publications, 1988), p.60.

However, it must be argued that ageism differs from sexism and racism -- powerfully inculcated since childhood -- in one crucial respect, we have no choice whether to age or not, we shall all be its victims if we survive into later life.[181] This anticipation should lead to a degree of empathy with what we are becoming, and a positive valuation of elderly people and their contributions, not a distancing and avoiding of it. In this study I analyse these five women's lives in later life as positive contributions of active people. It's an analysis of the awakening of new opportunities; an achievement that is in many cultures, uniquely feminine. For perhaps, as Carolyn Heilbrun argues, it is only in old age that women are released from the "business of being women" and fulfilling the needs of others and from being "female impersonators" and grasp opportunities to reverse the most "cherished principles of femininity".[182] For the,

> last third of life there remains only work. It alone is always stimulating, rejuvenating, exciting and satisfying. ... She may well for the first time be woman herself.[183]

Women's Contributions made during their "Retirement".

In Mabel Palmer's case, as discussed in the previous chapter, it was only following her "official" retirement in 1936 at age 60, that she undertook what was to be her greatest work - the founding of University education for blacks in Natal. Until her "second" retirement in 1955 (about 20 years later) due to ill-health and partial blindness, Mabel supported the causes and helped to educate many people to whom opportunities were denied or not easily available, and saw education as the key to social improvement. However, while relinquishing her duties as "organiser" of the "non-European" section of the University of Natal in 1955, she still performed the work of consultation with and advising of students as

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[181] Arber and Ginn. *Gender and Later Life,* p.30.
[182] Carolyn Heilbrun. *Writing a Women's Life.* (London: The Women's Press Ltd, 1988), p.126
[183] Heilbrun. *Writing a Women's Life,* p.127 and 131.

well as attending and participated in committees and fund raising.[184] Until her death in 1958, her knowledge, expertise and popularity with the students was of enormous help in the running of the "non-European" section, while her guidance and advice were invaluable. Mabel's contemporary, Killie Campbell, also made her greatest contribution to the people of Natal in the last 30 years of her life, when her book buying and organisation of her Africana library occurred in earnest, as she saw massive changes in society and strove to preserve the records of the past. Killie was truly remarkable and thrived on hard work, and continued to work right into her eighties, when her heart began to fail. As Norman Herd argues,

> indomitable was just about the perfect word to describe the stubborn, courageous, no-nonsense spirit of this rapidly ageing woman.[185]

She was anxious whatever the state of her health to press on with her library and its collections, before her death which occurred in 1965.

And like Mabel, few realised until her death, the marvellous gift Killie Campbell had left to the people of Durban and South Africa, in the form of her library -- an archive of life histories -- for researchers to use in generations to come, placing future generations of students very deeply in her debt. The last years of her life were consumed with the worry of the future of her library. Although promising it to the University of Natal, she was distressed with the government's interference with the autonomy of Universities from 1957, and worried that both whites and blacks would not be able to use the collection.[186] Eventually in 1962, just before his death, her brother William donated Muckleneuk to the University of Natal to house the Africana library, and museums so that all could have access and use it. In the *Daily News* it was written in 1965,

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[184] Mabel Palmer Personal File, N.21/45/6, University of Pietermaritzburg Archives.

[185] Norman Herd. *Killie's Africa: The Achievements of Dr Killie Campbell.* (Pietermaritzburg: Blue Crane Books, 1982), p.179

> but it is in the years to come that her name will be remembered, for it is in the years to come that the true value of her work will be appreciated. At the moment we are still a little too close to history for its full appreciation.[187]

Like Killie and Mabel, Sibusisiwe also continued working and never retired until she suddenly took ill in 1971 and died at McCord's Hospital. She was a woman who had,

> sacrificed the best in her life to become a humble yet significant servant of her people - endeavouring at all times to be serviceable to them in an untiring effort towards their upliftment and betterment socially, culturally, emotionally and morally.[188]

In comparison to Mabel, Killie and Sibusisiwe, Dr Goonam and Phyllis Naidoo have never retired and still continue to work in their particular spheres in Durban. Both women were forced into exile, leaving everything they held dear behind, because of the threat of imprisonment for their anti-Apartheid political activities and for more than 10 years, were "stateless" people, drifting to various countries around the world, and both finally settled in Zimbabwe, before returning to South African in the 1990s with the unbanning of the A.N.C.[189] They thus spent most of their official "retirement" age in exile; in foreign countries, but still undertaking activities that strove to end Apartheid in South Africa. Dr Goonam worked at the Pariyatiwa Hospital in the Geriatric Clinic until her return.[190] Whilst in Lesotho, Phyllis practised law in the High Court and later became Chief Legal Aid Counsel for the Government of Lesotho (1979-1983). When she was forced to leave, and thus settling in Zimbabwe, Phyllis was employed at the University in Harare in the Law

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[186] Jillian Anne Pim. A History of the Killie Campbell Africana Library. Honours Thesis: Pietermaritzburg University of Natal, 1990.
[187] *Daily News*, 28/9/65.
[188] Umehani Khan. A Critical Study of the Life of Sibusisiwe Makanya and her Work as Educator and Social Worker in the Umbumbulu District of Natal 1894-1971, Submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts (Women's Studies), University of Natal, Durban, 1995, p.146.
[189] *Sunday Tribune*, 20/4/81.
[190] *Daily News*, 21/9/86.

Department.[191] They both continued their work for the A.N.C, with Phyllis a member of Lawyers against Apartheid, and campaigned against the Death Penalty and was part of the A.N.C. Constitutional Team. They also both wrote books in exile; Dr Goonam wrote her autobiography, *A Coolie Doctor* and Phyllis wrote *Waiting to Die in Pretoria.*

Both Dr Goonam and Phyllis returned to South Africa in 1990. When asked why she returned, Dr Goonam said,

> I liked Australia, but South Africa is my country, I love South Africa. If you're born and brought up here, after a while when you go abroad you still have this anchoring to come home and to get back ... because I love you and I like this country and I want to do whatever I can to make it a better country for all of us, indeed for all of us.[192]

However, Dr Goonam found it difficult to get a job in hospitals in Durban, despite the shortage of doctors after being told that the posts had been frozen.[193] She managed to survive on locums. Phyllis worked as a Lawyer for Human Rights for a while, but had to stop because she could not deal with the tragic stories people had to tell her, after just losing her eldest son who was assassinated,

> when I came back, suddenly the loss of my son became insurmountable ... It was bad for me ... all his friends came to see me.[194]

In most of these women's cases, they continued working by choice, to maintain active and fulfilling lives, but also as single women who did not have husbands to rely on, and thus their financial difficulties forced them to do so. Thus while gaining independence and more control over their resources as single women, their resource base was reduced in some cases dramatically. Throughout the last years of their lives, one can constantly see the financial

[191] *Daily News,* 21/9/86.
[192] Janet Twine Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B.
[193] *Daily News,* 23/9/90.

need for these women to continue working to support themselves and to help others. In 1951 Mabel Palmer requested an increase in her salary, because she found herself in a "serious financial position".[195] Dr Hamish Campbell, Killie's doctor and second cousin felt that if Killie was having financial difficulties towards the end of her life, it was because of her overbudgeting and giving assistance to others.[196] Despite this, Dr Campbell only had positive things to say about Killie, as he argued,

> She wasn't good looking, but she had the most wonderful smile when I knew her, when she was an old lady ... and her smile was their for everybody. If I took people in and introduced them, they'd get almost knocked down by her smile ... she was really a lovely person.[197]

In comparison to the above women, only Sibusisiwe lived in poverty, and worked without a salary and juggled a shoestring budget to support herself and feed the children she educated. She worked for her community without material reward, it could be seen as a "labour of love".[198] Both Dr Goonam and Phyllis had to work when they returned to South Africa from exile because their financial resources were virtually exhausted from their travelling and expenses, and as Phyllis so adequately put it, she was "living off the smell of an oil rag. But not bad you know, managing".[199]

Meaning of Work for Women and Views on Forced Retirement.

When I asked Dr Goonam about her views on women retiring from paid work or whether they should continue working, she argued "I will continue working. I refuse to just

[194] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 3: Side B.
[195] Mabel Palmer Personal File, N.21/45/6, Pietermaritzburg University Archives.
[196] Interview with Dr Hamish Campbell, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B. For Hamish, Killie was the most loyal, generous and kind soul he had ever met. He knew of nobody who did not think the world of her. As far as he was concerned, her life "twinkled".
[197] Interview with Dr Hamish Campbell, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.
[198] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life and Work of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p.107.
[199] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B.

stay at home and grow old".[200] For her, retirement meant,

> signing your death warrant. You must try and help yourself to become as mentally active as you were when you were young. ... I wanted to still be able to talk to people and to meet them ... I still give them advice ... and I want to be able to do that for the rest of my days if I can. I don't want my brain to go awry, and then to look for somebody to help me out, not at all. I can still work, I can still drive a car ... so I can never really retire and sit back like most of the old people do.[201]

Dr Goonam, who is now 91 years old, felt that age was a socially constructed state of mind. Before her health deteriorated, Mabel also had no intention of retiring a moment before she had to. She constantly argued against women being forced to retire earlier then men because of being the "weaker" sex. As she argued,

> we live longer then men ... and we do not get senile any earlier. In fact, after the age of 50 a woman often feels revitalised and at 55 might well have reached the pitch of her power.[202]

She also maintained that women needed to work longer than men because their salary scales were lower than men's, and so their pensions too were comparatively lower. Killie too, could never retire, and was not prepared to sit back quietly to enjoy her books, because she had too much work to do in her library, and too many researchers to help, before she died.[203] Phyllis argued too for the importance of work to keep herself active, and felt that she would "drop dead first."[204] As Goonam so adequately put it, harmonising the views of all the women,

> I want you to please remember that you can be young all the time, and have your strength, yes, a state of mind is important.[205]

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[200] *Daily News,* 5/10/91.

[201] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B.

[202] *Daily News,* 16/11/53.

[203] Herd. *Killie's Africa*, p.179. As far as Dr Hamish Campbell was concerned (Appendix, Tape 1: Side A) Killie would never have retired and she even made work for herself.

[204] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B.

Ellen Kuzwayo felt that Sibusisiwe had left a legacy of how to handle the question of age. She reacted to age or the process of ageing with full confidence and poise. She argued,

> at my age now ... when I look at my community, I am concerned about how women today conceive age. They expect your age to show in your face, they feel you should look depressed. But Sibusisiwe handled age differently, she was confident and dressed that way and you saw it in her appearance. ... That is the role model she left to me.[206]

Loneliness.

I was very interested to see whether each of these women were lonely in their later lives, as although meeting many people over the years, I wanted to know if the sacrifices they made in their personal lives for their communities and professional careers was worth it in the long run, when left all alone with no one to depend on or support them in their old age. I wanted to know whether "great people are lonely in their greatness"[207]. For Sibusisiwe her days were extremely busy, and her nights were taken up by teaching herd boys as it provided company and an occupation for her in the evenings and simultaneously allowed her to teach them. It was her pet project and she became quite dependent on it in terms of companionship.[208] When Sibusisiwe lost her parents, there was an enormous gap in her life, and missed their support and constant encouragement. When I asked Dr Goonam whether she ever felt lonely she replied,

> I've lived all alone in my life ... there is so much to be done ... I was too busy writing, talking, addressing gatherings ... and of course maternity work, night and day ... my mind was too busy - what next, where shall I go, what can I say.[209]

Phyllis did feel lonely in exile,

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[205] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B.
[206] Umehani Khan's Interview with Ellen Kuzwayo, 1/11/95, housed at the Campbell Collections.
[207] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life and Work of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p.150.
[208] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life and Work of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p.150.
[209] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 2: Side A.

> this life is one big hell. I can't tell you how miserable I am here - removed from everything and everyone one holds dear ... the road to freedom is a long, hard and lonely road.[210]

When I asked her about how she feels now "no, I don't consider myself to be lonely ... there's no chance to think of yourself being alone, you've got to do that job".[211] As far as Killie's second cousin Hamish was concerned, Killie was not lonely, she too was also too busy to think about those things, though compensation for a lack of a happy domestic life may be discernible in her extreme devotion to her garden and her library. They also all had many friends which made up for a lack of family.

Recognition for their Contributions.

In terms of "official" recognitions conferred on people for their contributions, Mabel Palmer and Killie Campbell were honoured in this way: for her efforts, Mabel was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of South African in 1947.[212] Killie received an honorary Masters degree from the University of Natal in 1950 and an honorary Doctorate of Philosophy in 1954 from the University of the Witwatersrand for her valuable work of collecting and preserving historical and cultural items for posterity.[213] Just before her death in 1964 she was also awarded Honorary Fellowship of the South African Library Association in 1958 and awarded Durban Civic Honours in 1964. Sibusisiwe was not recognised officially by the majority of white society outside her community which is evident when in 1960 applications were made to the University of Natal to confer Honorary Doctorate on her, which was not carried through.[214] Sibusisiwe's work was however, recognised with the opening of the Lucy Johnston Community Hall in Umbumbulu in 1955 where she received

[210] Correspondence, Box 2, File 26, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban Westville Documentation Centre.
[211] Phyllis Naidoo Interview, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B.
[212] *Mercury,* 12/6/47.
[213] *Daily News,* 28/9/65.
[214] Khan. A Critical Study of the Life and Work of Sibusisiwe Makanya, p.124.

praise and attention for all her hard work. In an informal sense, much recognition came to the women too. Mabel had a University residence named after her, while in 1956 at her 80th birthday she was also sent some flowers from some of her students, and on the note it said,

> the Minister of Justice has banned us from attending all gatherings and therefore we very much regret we cannot join you all personally in expressing our thanks and appreciation to Doctor Mabel Palmer. No amount of banning order can however prevent our great admiration for one who will go down in the history of this country as an outstanding educationalist ... [and] for the great part she has played ... for higher education for the non-white people of Natal.[215]

Dr Goonam and Phyllis also received recognition and thanks for their work in many different ways. For Phyllis, one of her most rewarding experiences was when she was in Lesotho and before she was forced to leave to go to Zimbabwe, the people she had helped held a service for her, which she describes,

> I was so surprised to find so many of the women that I'd helped as a lawyer; divorce, maintenance, all those things, third party claims, accident claims and all of that. And they stood up ... as if somebody was testifying. It was funny for me seeing them say who will fill out our forms for us, who will take care of us, who will listen to us, ... I mean that was a reward ... and by the poorest of the poor.[216]

In 1987, after teaching Cubans English at Lusaka in her spare time, Phyllis was given thanks on Mother's Day, when she was surprised with a bunch of roses from her students and the card read,

> to our teacher Phyllis, from your students who loves her very much.[217]

While in India, Dr Goonam was awarded Woman of the Year from Africa for the Indian

[215] Natal in Union 1931-1961: A Collection of Papers on the Development in Natal presented at a workshop at the University of Natal, 29-30 October, 1980, Department of Historical and Political Studies, University of Natal Pietermaritzburg, 1981, p.12.
[216] Phyllis Naidoo Interview, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.
[217] Correspondence, Box 5, File 73, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban Westville Documentation Centre.

Cultural Group and everyone was impressed with what she had been through. For Dr Goonam she continually gained rewards from helping students to get an education, as many years afterwards,

> everywhere I go clients [say] ... to me thanks, my child was helped. One fellow came ... he said you know me doctor. I said I know a lot of Indians .. He said you delivered me, 50 years ago in Cathedral Road when my mother was in labour, and up until the time she died she prayed for you.[218]

So for Goonam, that was thanks enough.

Role Models for Other Women.

It is probably fitting to conclude this chapter by showing how these five women represented role models for other women to follow. The standard for comparison of their lives must be by their own standards, for they had no one to compare their efforts with, they walked an unconventional path to career success in the public domain, and thus undermined their "place" in the domestic sphere. However, for these women, a life outside the home represented new territory, as many of them stood at the beginning of a tradition, with no role models to base their activities and lives on. Many of them turned to male examples for inspiration. A discussed earlier, this often gave them the definition of being "unwomanly", and unfeminine to succeed in a male world.[219] In their living years, their work was a huge source of inspiration to other women, becoming role models to others whose work in the community was equally valuable, and dedicated to their own professions. They thus provided role models to many independent women who made informed choices about their own lives especially with regard to their careers, political convictions and actions. Decisions to embark on professional careers was a new enterprise in the history of South Africa and they had no

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[218] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 2: Side B.
[219] Heilbrun, *Writing a Women's Life*, p.20.

role model or peer to emulate, but interest and enthusiasm set in motion others who began to take an interest in the field. For women who wrote their lives beyond convention, living beyond conventional expectations, they had to be courageous to be "ambiguous women", with no role models to base their lives on, no stories to follow, only conventional narratives to place their lives against and in opposition to. Thus, although each of these women's contributions have (or will) come to an end through death or old age, their life's work and inspiration live on in the people they have inspired, who followed their mentors, and walked the unconventional path to career success.

Two instances will suffice, while recognising that all the women influenced a vast number other women around them. What Ellen Kuzwayo found striking about Sibusisiwe was as follows,

> I remember Sibusisiwe as being conscious of what could be done for the emancipation of black women when it was not even thought of at that time.[220]

Sibusisiwe thus inspired Ellen Kuzwayo to be aware and help in the struggle for the liberation of black South Africans, but especially black women. The other example concerns Phyllis and her experiences of being parcel bombed in Lesotho. After the incident, her brother wrote her a letter and told Phyllis that she was,

> indestructible ... he said you've been an example, you've helped us with our studies, you insisted on working, you know, you've been so much to us, that if you had been knocked out by that bomb it would have been devastating because you are indestructible.[221]

Thus, these women who worked outside the home found work a liberating and rewarding experience that allowed them to fully develop their intelligence and human

[220] Umehani Khan's Interview with Ellen Kuzwayo, 3/10/95, housed at the Campbell Collections.

potential. In the process their courage and strength was passed on to other women, who were able to create a space for themselves in their professional careers because of the niches carved out by these women before them. In this way, women helped other women to become liberated.

[221] Phyllis Naidoo Interview, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B.

Epilogue.

This thesis has attempted to show how much more complex and rich women's lives are than suggested by the corpus of South African texts focusing on women's historically insignificant identities. I have relied extensively on life histories as well as other sources to portray a new public history of a group of women, whose own voices can be heard raising new and complex themes affecting their lives, that may be of interest to historians of our society. In this thesis the achievements of Mabel Palmer, Killie Campbell, Sibusisiwe Makanya, Dr Goonam and Phyllis Naidoo are foregrounded and the deeds, acts and words of their male contemporaries recede into the background.

In this epilogue, I think that it is necessary to step back and appreciate what each of these women had to fight against and eventually succeeded to overcome. As an outsider looking into and analysing each of their lives, I cannot help but be amazed at the strength and courage of each of these women. In this thesis I have attempted to show their relationships to one another, but also their individuality and the unique contributions each made. My aim was to demonstrate what a remarkable group of women these were, who crossed paths in the city of Durban in the 20th century, and who against difficult conditions, were able to succeed in their work, leaving a lasting impressions on their communities. They were all far-sighted and talented women who transcended established gender boundaries as well as challenged racial oppression and thus pioneered uncharted territory for themselves and others to follow. In their own unique ways, they will each be remembered for their remarkable successes walking unsteady ground in a new terrain.

Each of these women's lives spanned one of the most dramatic periods in the history of South Africa. With most of them being born at the turn of the century, their lives were

embedded in a complex country that saw massive economic, social, cultural and political changes. With regard to Durban in particular, for many of these women, it was a city with its own unique and mixed personality and character. For with its picturesque landscape, sunny beaches and modern infrastructure, it welcomed and smiled on some, while being harsh and hostile to others. For Mabel and Killie being members of a privileged white society eased their burden, but did not lesson their sexual discrimination. For Sibusisiwe, Dr Goonam and Phyllis Naidoo, their lives were much more harsh, for, being black and women, exacerbated the odds against them. Despite the difficulties, they made the best of their situations and strove for what many women of their time did not have the foresight to see - education for upliftment and to alleviate oppression.

They each laboured to educate themselves and their communities. Mabel's role as a lecturer and later Organiser of the "non-European" Section of the University of Natal, located in central Durban, played a central role here, while her contemporary, Sibusisiwe, rallied this cause in her rural community of Umbumbulu, a peri-urban area just outside Durban. Killie, too, saw how important these changes in society would be for later years and because the situation was changing so fast, one can understand the urgency to which she strove to preserve the records of the South African past. It is unfortunate that these three women -- Mabel, Killie and Sibusisiwe died some years ago -- for they would have appreciated the positive changes that have occurred in South Africa in the 1990s, with the new democratically elected government, and the tremendous but no less difficult effort that has been undertaken (though fraught with struggles and conflicts) to provide education for all. However, their inspirational memories and contributions live on both in the legacies they left to their societies, but also in the many people they helped along the way.

The other two women -- Dr Goonam and Phyllis Naidoo -- are still alive and well. Dr Goonam, at age 91 has still not retired, and practices medicine, working at a clinic a couple of days a week. Phyllis, like Goonam, still lives in Durban, and is at the moment writing a book about the life and achievements of Chris Hani and another one about her sons as freedom fighters. These two women also recognised the power of education and spent their lives helping others. When I asked Goonam what she hoped to be remembered for, she said, "education, and whatever little I have done to promote education".[222] For these women lived by the maxim that "one is never to old to learn" and living is a life long experience that stands a person in good stead to face challenges and difficulties. For Phyllis, her yard stick in life had been whether she had done anything useful every day, "useful meaning, have I made it easier for some person to live".[223] This was her fulfilment and a legacy to be remembered by.

The two living women in this study, have both lived long and very interesting lives, and more importantly for the present, have seen the change over from a racist and oppressive minority government, to a democracy in 1994. When I interviewed them both this year, I asked them what their views were about the present situation in South Africa, and Durban in particular. Dr Goonam, though proud of her Indian heritage and of what her community has achieved, was very disappointed. As she herself argued,

> democracy is lacking. ... [because of] affirmative action, which excludes Indians ... [and] is hurting Indians. Our boys and girls are without jobs now. Do only Africans deserve jobs? If I knew this will come to pass, I wouldn't have worked so hard for South Africa. I gave up my home, my medical practice, my belongs - everything. I would have gone somewhere else. Indians are the pillars of this country even today. I'm proud of them. I love my people ... [why do we have to] be discriminated against? We have made an important contribution to South Africa.[224]

[222] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B.
[223] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.

When I asked Phyllis her views on the situation, her response was more positive, as she recognised that the government has huge problems to face with people complaining that things are not happening fast enough. She argues that there exists a "very schizophrenic lot of people" because they have been oppressed for so long, that they do not know what to do with their freedom.[225] Although she does voice some concern about the high crime rate and the many resources that the government is being forced to spend on crime prevention, she can still understand why its happening and is still proud that a democratic government exists. As Phyllis argues, with regard to the anti-Indian feeling,

> the Africans have come into their own now, after all these years, and you're going to see an ugly side of that, they have to establish their nationality, their right to be here and they have the greatest right to be here. ... But then we have been here by their generosity for so long and we've lived together, and why should we doubt them now. I think that we have to continue working ... and as long as we continue to give and give of the best part of us. ... I love this place enough, my children have died for it, to me its very special, you know, very special.[226]

For Phyllis, while optimistic in her belief that there will be a better South Africa in the future, she is also realistic and realises that change will be difficult,

> it's a difficult process, its very difficult, you know, its like child birth. It's a bloody difficult thing to do, have a beautiful baby, and society also. ... [But] you can't have some people having so much and others who don't have anything. ... So we've got a long way to go. [We also need to realise] that we are South Africans, and the sooner we get to terms with that, that will be success. ... Group Areas ... facilitated that everyone wants to look after his patch ... And that's the lesson that has to be taught that *we are all South Africans*.[227]

When I asked Dr Goonam about what she thought about the position of women in the city, while her thoughts were clouded with negative images about the anti-Indian feeling, she did admit that marginalised and oppressed black women's voices are becoming increasingly

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[224] *The Asian*, 23/9/97.
[225] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 3: Side A.
[226] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 1: Side A.

heard, especially through the writing of autobiographies.[228] Phyllis felt that for women, there are still going to be many difficulties to overcome, but of any people to cope with changes, she felt that women were in the strongest position. She described to me a scene that has never left her mind with regard to women's struggles in the city,

> when we used to go to the market on a Saturday morning ... I remember seeing ... this mass of women with baskets on their heads ... [and their] beautiful faces like this with the baskets, heavy baskets. But in that weight was this beautiful face and for me it was just something, you know, that despite whatever, they would hold on to this pride.... I called it the 'Basket Burden'.[229]

For Phyllis, women have the resources, and the strength to cope and build a better life for themselves. Her views on the future path of South African women demonstrate this,

> I think they're going to do it, and I think they've fought too hard, too long not to know what to do with their freedom. No and my experience with the ANC and of African women is that they're priceless, and I'm so proud that I've had the experience of working with them, really proud.[230]

In my interviews, I was also very interested to see their views, looking back with hindsight over the course of their long, difficult and complex lives, if they ever regretted being "difficult" and sacrificing so much personally for their "public" lives. Dr Goonam argued that while her struggles involved a lot of sacrifice, being placed in jail, forced into exile, and having to rebuild her life and work many times, she was not sorry, believing that it was the kind of sacrifice anybody would have made for their families and for the betterment of their communities. When asked if she had the chance, whether she would do anything differently, she replied,

[227] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B.
[228] Interview with Dr Goonam, Appendix, Tape 2: Side B.
[229] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 2: Side B.
[230] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 3: Side A.

> no, I'd do the same. I'll do it for the whites, I'd do it for anybody because it is an atrocity of the worst kind to send people away, here, there and everywhere.[231]

Not only would she do it all again, but she is very modest about her achievements as a doctor and a political freedom fighter, not believing that "I achieved so very much".[232]

When I asked Phyllis about her struggles against apartheid and whether she felt that by doing this she sacrificed her personal life, her answer was mixed but also deeply moving. Phyllis felt that generally there was "no sacrifice" as she knew when she became involved in politics that there would be certain penalties to pay. She was prepared for that, as it shows in many cases, when she was forced to leave her home and family to go into exile. As she argued,

> I think those things, like Nelson's 27 years you would never call it a sacrifice, he won't let you call it a sacrifice. It was necessary for the struggle.[233]

However, she was not prepared for the effect that it would have on her children. As a mother in the struggle, Phyllis questioned whether she had the right to impose on her children the consequences of her political decisions that they were not party too, such a being forced to watch their parents go to jail, being confined with her in house arrest and then later to watch her 13 year old daughter screaming when she was parcel bombed in Lesotho, "don't die Mum!".[234] All these things tore at Phyllis, as her children were the innocent party in this and were being violated. However, she constantly justified her struggle in that it was in their interests,

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[231] Janet Twine. "A Coolie Doctor": Exploring the Life History of a Remarkable Durban Woman. Third Year Research Essay for the History Department, University of Natal, Durban, 1996, p.30.
[232] Twine. "A Coolie Doctor", p.30.
[233] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 1: Side B.
[234] Copy of transcript from the Funeral Service for Sahdhan Naidoo and Moss Mthunzi, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban Westville Documentation Centre, p.2.

> for we can honour and defend our children only in the struggle to rid our country of the apartheid monster.[235]

She realised this, when her children asked her why they could not go to various places,

> and I said, what do you tell your child, because you're black, you can't go. What does that do for you? So ... it was a must, that we had to do something about the situation we were in ... we couldn't let this thing go on for [our] children.[236]

However, while Phyllis knew that her fight to end oppression would put a strain on her personal life, and was prepared to give up everything, she never realised that it would result in the loss of her sons, who never lived to see the outcome of a democratic South Africa that they had worked so long and hard for. For her, there is a lot of sadness, thinking back now, because she went into the struggle for them, and they were not here with her now, to enjoy what they had fought for. Sahdhan, her eldest was assassinated in Zambia on 15 April 1989, while she lost her second son on 19 March 1995, from complications during a surgical operation. Both were in their early thirties, and excellent scholars with a bright future, who used their skills and training abroad in the service of the people in South Africa, and gave their lives for the liberation struggle. Phyllis argued that,

> if [they] had made a difference, ... [and] bettered the life of at least one person - then indeed [they] led a good life. But we who went with [them] know that [they] led a great life.[237]

Phyllis remembered her son Sahdhan saying to her when he was a child, that "you have to be truthful Mom ... and its okay to die for the truth".[238]

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[235] Copy of transcript from the Funeral Service for Sahdhan Naidoo and Moss Mthunzi, p.2.
[236] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Side 1: Tape A.
[237] Pamphlet in Honour of Sha Naidoo, 1962-1995, The Phyllis Naidoo Collection, University of Durban

While these were difficult words for Phyllis to swallow, thinking back now they may possibly be a slight comfort to her, by knowing that her sons supported her activities and struggles, and that the sacrifices that they each had to make, were necessary ones to help liberate South Africa.

The story of these women's lives thus deals with the complexities and difficulties (that were often painful to bear) that each of these women had to face and ultimately overcome in their struggles to create a place for themselves in the public sphere. Throughout this thesis, I have argued that to really understand the role of different women and the history of gender relations in South Africa, historians need to examine the opposing, contradictory and often painful forces located in the domestic, but also, more importantly in the public sphere. For in a rapidly changing society, as the neat divide between the private and public sphere dissolves, it is necessary to examine how women laboured for decades of this century to fight for a space in and broaden the definition of a predominately white male public sphere, from which women were for years excluded. These women, that I have analysed "*ruffled feathers*" in their communities, as they were among a vanguard, challenging an array of conservative, traditional, sexist and racist forces blocking their paths. The term "difficult" has been reclaimed as a positive representation in this project, to describe women who were intelligent but ambitious and who refused to accept recognised definitions of their stations in life as merely mothers and wives.

A vital aspect that each of these women was and in the case of two of them, continues to be, their conscious or unconscious foresight, to collect and preserve most of the written records of their lives, in the hope that their stories and contributions to Durban would be recognised and appreciated by future generations. It is quite extraordinary to think, that as I

Westville Documentation Centre.

sit here analysing and writing about these women's lives, that I would never have been able to construct this thesis had it not been for these women's careful efforts to preserve their own life histories. These women kept letters, documents, photographs in their living years, and perhaps unwittingly and unconsciously, were saving for posterity a representation of themselves. When asked why she wrote her autobiography, Dr Goonam argued,

> it was important for me to tell the world about our [struggles] and that prompted me because I thought if I lose it now, children and posterity would not know the incidents which happened.[239]

They were thus kept to make the world aware of what was going on in South Africa at that particular time, and to show of their struggles, joys and hardships. Whether these were great or small, they were nonetheless courageous. Killie Campbell saw the importance of this in personal historical sources. Her role was even more unique, for she saw beyond the preservation of her own life story, and undertook the task of preserving the lives of both ordinary and extraordinary people in South Africa, but Natal in particular, to be kept hopefully, for all time, in her magnificent Africana library, and not be forgotten. For these were the people who made history and were worthy of study.

After Killie's death Barbara Tyrell said of her mentor,

> even today, I know that I, and I am sure many more, still hear the voice of her enthusiasm when we grow weary of our endeavour. She not only collected books, she inspired them.[240]

Killie Campbell chose to be an archivist to be left "free and unfettered" to make sources

[238] Interview with Phyllis Naidoo, Appendix, Tape 2: Side A.
[239] Twine. "A Coolie Doctor", p.7.
[240] Fay Jaff. *Women South Africa Remembers.* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1975), p.89.

available to researchers, and could never be a writer because the temptation to withhold information was too great. As a newspaper article claimed, "only a writer will realise the nobleness of this".[241] As a writer myself, over thirty years after her death, I am grateful for her enormous gift of an Africana library. For many of the sources that I have used were drawn from her library, enabling me and generations to come, to use, understand and analyse the contributions people, but particularly women, have made and the difficult challenges that they have had to face. Many books that have been published during and after Killie's life time, and carry a tribute to her for information yielded by her collection, with many of these works, possibly not having been written, or of such a high quality, had it not been for her foresight. However, the total sum of information extracted in the course of research represents only a tiny fraction of what the library has to give and constantly new fields of research are being discovered in her treasure house.[242] It is thus fitting to end this thesis with Killie's contributions, which like the other women, still have a profound influence today. In a *Daily News* article the importance of her library could be seen,

> there is a never ceasing stream of visitors ... pilgrims to a shrine of knowledge ... [and one] never comes away without being richer ... when you look up from your reading to see a man [and woman] working away steadily at a thesis or a book. I have often wondered how many degrees have been obtained through these resources; how many books have been written or completed there.[243]

Hopefully, this thesis will enable me to obtain my Honours degree.

Thus, to conclude, I cannot help but marvel at these five women's remarkable lives that spanned almost throughout the 20th century. The fields to which they dedicated their lives were in a male dominated professional sphere, and thus by forging their careers, as single women, in the first half of the 20th century, they walked an unconventional path to

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[241] *Daily News,* 28/9/65.

[242] Norman Herd. *Killie's Africa: The Achievements of Dr Killie Campbell.* (Pietermaritzburg: Blue Crane Books, 1982), p.183.

[243] *Daily News,* 26/1/61.

career success. The standard for comparison of their lives must be their own, for they had no one to compare their efforts with. They each stood at the beginning of a South African tradition in the public and professional world. This thesis has examined each of these women's lives and the struggles that they had to undergo around the central themes of becoming educated, forging their professional careers and giving back to their communities. Their foresight for the importance of education as a liberating and uplifting attribute often brought them into contact with each other's lives, which in turn influenced people's lives around them. None of these women retired, but continued working, until old age or death made it impossible for them to do so.

For much of their lives, each of these women, though in varying degrees, had to deal with criticism from their communities for not accepting what was traditionally deemed an appropriate function for a woman in society. Often they were accused of being "difficult" and even seen to have lost their "feminine" and "womanly" qualities in their attempt to compete for a position in male dominated spheres. For women who lived their lives beyond convention, their were no role models to base their lives on, no other stories to follow, only conventional narratives to place their lives against and in opposition to. They had to be courageous and strong to be "ambiguous women". But by challenging expected norms of society, and taking on professional careers they opened up new avenues for other women. It is ironic that today, in 1997, their achievements are not viewed as so unconventional but rather as enormous examples of foresight. As Norman Herd said about Killie's life work, but is applicable to the other women I have analysed, it is ironic that her time spent searching for an,

> illimitable wealth of historical treasures ... that made South African history and initially being criticised by family and peers, earn her thanks and gratitude in later years.[244]

[244] Herd. *Killie's Africa*, p.64.

However, it must be realised that if it was not for women like these studied who fought to forge a place for themselves in the public sphere where women could achieve, the consequences might not have been as desirous as they are for women, like myself, today.

This study was thus an attempt to gain a far better understanding of the dynamics of men and women's positions in society and cross-culturally. By decentring male subjectivity from the narrative, we are able to discover much more about women's contributions, as well as reversing the trend and seeing the story of men through women's eyes. I hope that the fruit of this project leads to a more complex historical tapestry of men and women's lives in relationship in a gender based analysis in the study of South African history.

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Appendices.

(The following interviews were conducted and transcribed by Vanessa Noble in Durban between October and November, 1997).

1: Interview with Dr Goonam.

2: Interview with Phyllis Naidoo.

3: Interview with Dr Hamish Campbell.

1: Interview with Dr Goonam.

Date: 13 October 1997.

Address: 21 Blue Jade, 50 Summit Drive, Sherwood, Durban, 4001.

Tape 1: Side A:

Education, Careers and Roles as Educators.

Becoming Educated.

(V): Could you tell me more about the difficult path you had to travel and the struggles you had to fight (both personally and professionally) to become educated overseas because of the lack of education facilities for women (especially black women) in South Africa, in the early part of this century?

(G): Well actually, Monty, you've heard of Monty ... Naicker, in the struggle, he and I travelled together. I didn't know that he was coming to the boat at all. I had a whole lot of people coming, you know in those days there was no air travel, so we went by ship, the *Edinburgh Castle,* and half way through ... a few days later I saw and said, Monty you're here, he said, I didn't know you'd come, but I knew a big crowd was here. ... First class I took, right next to me was, ... ah, what do you call them ... but they were very big people in England, um the Queen's something ... next door to me, they were very nice people. Anyway we travelled, and they said go around and feed the fishes, [laughter] but I had such nausea, you know, from here to Cape Town. After than it settled down, and it was nice. But separate tables. I said Monty, do you see this, he said yes. I said why do they do that. He says well, that is because they don't want us to mix with the whites. The whites mustn't mix with us because we're inferior. My first rub against this particular type of thinking. Anyway, I said it doesn't worry me. But I do feel sorry because they have been treating India , they've been living in India, took all the best things in India, and we are from India really, I mean our blood is from India, and ah, this is what they do, this is what they've been doing to us. I didn't know because we had been living on the farm, ... but he lived in town you see ... on the farm, it was nice there, free and easy and everyone coming to see us, so there was no such

thing as apartheid there, in England and Scotland. We went to school together ... and there we studied for a year. I had to take extra classes [to make up for her matric]. He had enough studies for himself, his father had somebody to teach him and he had access to Sastri College. ... So anyway teaching helped me, ah, and then we passed together and then we entered medicine ... for surgeons and doctors...

(V): What were the conditions like there for you as a woman?

(G): Nothing bad at all really, complete equality, ... yes, and it was nice, I felt happy, really joyous for having other people sort of talking, and coming with you for a cup of tea and so forth, you see. We met all sorts of people from all over the world, American Negroes to, you know. It was very nice, it was a new world opening for me, the vista of new world was there. I said this is what constitutes the world. God had made so many different people, like Siamese and Creole, um Americans of course, and a Chinese, and you know... Africanists from Africa and Maderia, all sorts and all kinds. There, a couple of years later, was Mr, ah, ... the great man Hitler. Now we heard, I was entering my medical studies, then they said Asham Gondec founded the pregnancy test, and you know where they were, hiding in Manchester, they had come overseas, and were hiding in Manchester. Asham Gondec, the greatest people, because at that time, there was no pregnancy, nothing at all, pregnancy tests, we were just stepping into the scientific way of living. And pregnancy tests to me was something very big and I would have like to have met them, but they were in hiding you see ... world famous ... and so we got to know quite a lot of people. Sitting next to me was an American woman. She said what made you come to this country, I said no schools there at all for black people. She said well shame, and she started talking you see, they too had some form of segregation, in America ... and we all got together and so forth and so forth, it was nice. That was medical studies.

(V): Coming from an Indian community, what difficulties and pressures did you experience in wanting to become educated as a woman? Did any people try to hold you back?

(G): No, they didn't quite get to me at all, because of my father and mother. I was still a youngster at the back of all of them. They didn't get to me, they were not able to talk to me. You see but most of them came over to see me off. Whether they liked me or not they came over because of a social call. We made history.

(V): What did becoming educated mean to you personally i.e. what did you see as the importance of education for yourself as a woman and its wider implications for your place in South Africa?

(G): Well, it first of all, gave me a very good idea and view of life, and the world and the people, the populations of this world, and God himself. I said how come all these people were created by God? That took me nearer God. And ... I used to go on a Sunday to the Catholic Church ... and one day Aunt Mary said, the lady I was living with, girlie you'd better come

with me today because Rev. Black has come, and he's travelled all over the world, so it will be interesting. I said right, Aunt Mary, I'll come, we'll go, so we went. He was very nice. He was talking and he said the only man who's a Christian in this world is Mahatma Gandhi, is Gandhi [surprise and laughter], everybody looked at me as if I was Gandhi, I didn't know what was happening to me. When I came out when the sermon was done, they all came and kissed me and shook hands with me and they said yes, you come from India, I said yes, [more laughter] and I didn't know anything about India at that time. Aunt Mary said yes, cause you're Indian. So it was a tremendous big thrill for me. I knew him, he came to our home and my father always talked about Gandhi, and mother too, so we were very close to Gandhi, and it was a great thing for me to know, from people, from this big man, talking from the diocese, talking about the only man who gives both cheeks, is Mahatma Gandhi ... So that was a great thrill, and the world was different for me then. It was not the closed world of my father's farm, or the Durban in which we lived, it was a wide vista, huge world for me, tremendous thrill I had when I met people from all over the world. (V):Were you aware at the time that through your struggles to become educated, you were creating a space for other women to manoeuvre in and follow?

(G): Yes, indeed I was, I felt that I would because on many occasions I wore a sari to let them know that I was still part of them and whenever I could talk, I spoke in my language for them to know that I still retained my culture ... and that they must follow me, if they like me they must follow me. So nurses went along, I used to knock on the door, my mother said, go and knock on this door and the other door, she was a great woman as I said. And I knocked and they said come inside, come and have tea. I said I would like to talk to you. They said sit down. Where are the girls I said. Oh, one is in the kitchen, the other one in the bedroom, I said call them I'd like to say hello to them. Right they were called. I said wouldn't you like to be educated and go and nurse people, nursing at St Aidan's hospital is there, they are crying for nurses. Oh we would like to go if only our parents would allow. I said why don't you Mrs Naidoo, why don't you Mrs Moodley. I know they were thinking of it but they are getting ready to marry. I said, no, no, no, they are still very young, let them get a little profession, something in their hands, the people will respect them, like they're trying to sort of get to know me, and they respect me now. They call me for meetings everywhere. So they said we'll think it over, and they came one or two. ... So in that way there was a great fill up there, that took about a year or two years.

(V): Were you aware from the outset, that by breaking with your allotted and traditionally expected roles of wife and mother, and unconventionally taking on professional careers, you would be seen as "difficult" and even treated as an outcast by your society?

(G): Yes, I was treated as an outcast, and I was very difficult. And they didn't like my wearing dresses, and makeup, and [laughter] more than that, was the cigarette smoking. I said they smoke cigarettes in India, they said yes, but not in South Africa. I said why can't I bring the practice here, it's not a very good practice but there it is. So I think later they got used to it. They still talk about the cigarette holder and everything, they still talk about it. So anyway, even at yesterday's reception, they said where's your holder, I said finished, *phelile*. So they laughed. So now I don't mind facing anybody, anybody. All that came through education,

stand up to them, and talk to them, then I read widely about India and about English message and what they've done at Oxford and Cambridge universities, and what the world was like for me. See, quite a lot of books I bought, and that helped me quite a lot in the evenings, until I got into medicine. I couldn't see my bed at all for days, delivery of children, hundreds and hundreds of them. Some of them didn't have children at all, until they came to me, it's sheer, sheer luck. One African woman, she was seen by many traditional African doctors and what not, then she says I believe you are quite good, I said I don't know about how good I am, anyway I did put her on pills and gave her a couple of injections, ... she got pregnant, then when I went home I home. I said where? I hadn't got out of my car yet, he said Cato Manor, your patient is very ill and she's in pain. I said all right, jump into the car. We went. You see at that time Africans are not allowed to go out after ten.

(V): What year or decade was this in?

(G): About 1940, 1942, about then. I said jump into the car. He said I've got to lie down, you're passing a police station, they'll catch you and me too. I said all right. That was the African curfew at 10 o'clock. So then she was in labour and I delivered the baby. Oh they said please have beer, we must celebrate, and this was at about 1 or 2 o'clock. I said, I don't drink, but thank you very much. I said thank you, now keep well and I'll come and see you tomorrow as a follow up you see. So that was a great thrill and of course many, many, many children after that. People got to know and they said we'd like Dr Goonam and then it [reputation] spread in so many different ways. I told them best how they can get on and also to limit their families, family planning came into force. I said you mustn't have too many because then you can't educate everybody, you can't clothe them, can't give them the food that they really need. Right so in a meeting I said how many children have you got Mrs Moodley, she said 8, and you, she says, I've got 7, the other one, 9, and I said why do you have so many, what can we do God comes and gives us. I said tell me what time God comes, I can come and talk to him. Then there was tremendous laughter. So they took it. Nowadays, you can't find anymore than 2 or 3.

(V): When training (becoming educated) what kind of sexual and racial prejudices (if any)did you have to face (gendered and racial division of labour)?

(G): Yes, the doctors objected I think because they went around telling people that woman doctor ... she's no good at all, she's still a young girl, she should be sent back, I told her mother to send her back. And that's something, and they didn't ask me to come to any of their meetings, they kept me away. I asserted myself in many ways and then they called me and I became a secretary of the doctors meetings, yes ... So they opened the doors as it were, opened their eyes, when they heard me talking in our language, they were quite surprised because some of them had forgotten. I am not very clear grammatically and so forth, but I was still very much a Tamilian, and I love my language and then they took me as their own, and wives called me for their dinners and what not.

(V): At about what point (decade) do you think, did it become slightly easier for black

women to become educated in South Africa?

(G): After 1946, this was a red letter day for us, when we told the women, you've got to come to jail with me, that was the beginning of passive resistance, satyraha, Gandhi's movement we are following, and that went down nicely. There was one woman who was with Gandhi, she led the way, she was very old but she led the way. So in that way I then, became Dr Goonam for everybody, and after that when I came out of jail, a number of calls I got, it helped me quite a lot and in many other ways. And whites, actually I had in Greyville, I had a surgery, you know who were my best patients, Afrikaners, my best patients. Not only did they ask me to come over and deliver their children in their home, they said you must have coffee before you go doctor. What are your fees, straight away they paid me [this was in the 1940s before the N.P. came into power in 1948]. ... So I enjoyed their friendship and enjoyed going to their homes to deliver dozens of children ... So that was a very, very good thing for me, good standing ... so there were lots of white patients who came to me afterwards. There was one police fellow, he came he said doctor, I've brought my wife, I want you to have a look at her, she's complaining of pain. She's an Indian woman. Yes, and I spoke to her in her language and she loved it, and so all those little thrills came to me, ... And then before this vista opened, I got a call, I went there, knocked on the door and this woman opened the door, she said who are you. I said I am the doctor, Mr so and so sent me over. Get, go, go, go away and get educated, what are you talking. She thought I was, you know, pretending. She thought I was playing the fool, and I went back to my surgery. The man rang me up and I said your wife chased me away Mr. Oh he says no, I said yes. He brought her back the following day, brought her into my surgery, I'm so sorry, I didn't recognise you were a doctor, I can't tell you the thrill that went down my spine ... then after that she became a very good [friend] and she introduced me to many, many of her friends from all over, Verulam, Tongaat, she'd bring them over to my surgery.

(V): When deciding to take on professional careers, did you realise the constraints and difficulties it would place on your personal life?

(G): I didn't think that way at all, I was bent on a career, and I wanted to do something. My father said, I'll only send you abroad if you come back and make a promise, I said what is it, he said you must work for the people. I said right Papa. If you don't than I will be in your way. I will disown you. He wanted me to be a community doctor, you see, for everybody, very interesting. ... Yes, so he was very good that way.

(V): Then added to this, in this situation of taking up professional careers it tended to be argued that to be successful women either had to remain single (often taking on men's values and their social roles to be a success) or becoming "superwomen" combining family and careers, but often with one aspect suffering because of the demands of the other. Where would you place yourself in this scenario?

(G): I wanted never ever to marry, because my mother said, once you marry, your career's gone. So don't marry now, mother said don't marry at all if you want to keep to your

profession. You see, amongst the Indian traditional thinking there are gods and many icons they have, the women never married ... they did not marry at all. They were spinsters, and they achieved such a lot. So I think she took a lesson from them, from the things she had heard or read. She was well read.

(V): And it wasn't a problem for you, you were quite keen.

(G): Well, I was quite happy when she said that. So she said you are my ... you're my educated child. So it was easy. My father never asked me either. It never occurred to them that I should marry. No, because they looked upon me as another icon in the community's world ... for the Indians.

(V): So you were almost seen as special?

(G): It was yes, for that time it was, and still is, and in many ways people said you know my daughter is going to become a doctor, my daughter's gone to school, because of you doctor, my daughter has done this social science because of you. So I get quite a thrill when they tell me that.

Forging Professional Careers.

(V): What difficulties and problems did you encounter both racially and sexually in trying to establish yourself and finding a place for yourself in your professional career choice of becoming a doctor in Durban?

(G): Actually, with the men not at all. I was given still preference by [?] and R.K Khan, trustees, they were in certain areas, and they opened a clinic, and I was there first, and ah, so in many ways the men ... still recognise me as someone they want to impart to their children ... this was in the Grey Street complex the clinic [own practice], but also they invited me to come to their clinics [to help out]. So there, quite a lot of women came, because of me.

(V): So did you work more at clinics then opening your own private practice?

(G): Yes, ... it was very good. Because then I could see a section of the community, a transection of the community. Most of them were Indian women who wanted help but who couldn't come to Indian [men] doctors. It was a great help for them.

(V): What were the rewards and achievements you gained being a doctor?

(G): A joy in my life, a tremendous joy, when I see the people, talking and hoping that there will be others to follow, we hope that there would be others to follow you, and this sort of thing gave me a tremendous feeling of achievement. That is the joy that I had. They call me everywhere after than and even at weddings they ask me to come and talk. Then gather all the respect they could for a person for dignity.

(V): Did you ever professionally or personally support other women who might have been seen as "difficult", and even ostracised from their societies as they tried to forge a place for themselves in their careers?

(G): Yes, there's a girl called Umbegail, who's a dancer, and I gave her a little bit of money, whatever I had to send her over to India, and then I spoke to a few people to go over to India to learn, they were keen on Indian ballet and also to learn Tamil, I said go. So I used to go to the parents and tell them, send them over. Its cheaper to live in India, so I sent them over to hostels there. So quite a few went as a result of my talk to their mothers assuring them that nobody would come along and sexually molest them, there's no such thing as rape there and so forth and so forth. And that helped quite a lot. And Umbegail the things she came along and gathered for me, I said don't do that to me, she said I can't help thinking of you ...

(V): And what about helping other young women doctors, nurses, or teachers?

(G): There were not many doctors that time, for me to help, but teachers, yes, yes. I'd go around and talk to the mothers and talk to their teachers to persuade them, and sort of keep an eye on them, help them out.

(V): Were you successful at all, with persuading stubborn families?

(G): Yes, quite successful and they used to think that it was a great day for them to have met me, and to speak to me. They gave me quite a lot of respect after that, after the first five years had gone ... [from] 1936. Oh, what a time that I had.

(V): Why do you think people in your societies (whether it be men or women) were so threatened by and disapproving of your education, career choice and overall lifestyle in the beginning?

(G): It was the doctors who really felt that way, it's not the men, men did not feel that way, they still gave me a lot of respect. Men thought I was a luxury coming into their midst. One of the icons, yes, but not the doctors. I never had any, any persuasion at all from the doctors or help from the doctors. No they stood away from me, because they knew that I was captivating the people you know, they knew I was doing something for myself and for the people. Word went round. They used to come from all over Durban, all over Joburg, Cape

Town to see me. Yes, so this is how it was. So word goes around you see. Its good for them to come around and have a chat and so forth or to chose a career for them.

Giving Back to Your Community - Your Role as Educator.

(V): Do you think other women at the time saw education as a means of liberation?

(G): No, they did not, they did not. They said that this is an exception to the rule. We've got to be married, that's our tradition. And the mothers used to say, they've got to marry, they can't remain single like you, you're different, you come from a different planet. Yes so the mothers insisted on the girls getting married. There were no divorces those days, but I now see the divorces coming through. Such a lot of them, because the men generally cannot accept this condition where a women also wants to go and work and bring in some money. Even the white people too. Sexism is there.

(V): So you were seen as an exception, being aware of education and the importance of it?

(G):Yes, yes.

Tape 1 - Side B:

(V): By being educated, did you feel that you were in a powerful position to help educate and thus liberate other people (especially women), and in what ways did you help in the establishment of educational facilities and opportunities to improve the lives of other women in South Africa (U.N.D. medical school)?

(G): I told them look, I brought in quite a lot of help to my mother, my father had gone to India to get some money because he was in trouble. I said look how she is now. The family is improving, I've educated all these children, and educated my sister too, sent her over to England, to the University. I was able to do it not because my father left any money or my mother had, I worked and got all this, why don't you do all that for your children Let them become independent, they can still marry after their career. I said, I don't say don't marry. I didn't want to marry because I wanted to work for you people, but those girls, your children they can work and marry later. Don't be in a hurry to get married. So that went down quite nicely, quite nicely. They accepted that because money was coming in. Where can we send our children. I said to be educated, you can send them to University. There was no Natal University in those days, otherwise send them to the garment traders, garment workers, they can get a job there and in the shoe and saddle shops, they can get a job there. Tell them I sent

you, by that time word went round. Mostly Indians, Indian people I used to ring up, ... can you get a job for this girl. What can she do? I said you can train her, she's an honest girl, she comes from an honest family. Give her a little chance. Right send her over. So I had enough sort of influence, to send these girls over and that helped quite a lot.

(V): Did you have any role to play in promoting the medical school here in Durban at all?

(G): Yes, they said is it difficult, I said everything is difficult in the world, but I said this is going to pay dividends for you, its going to give her a status in life, and give you the status too, for that matter and she is bent on doing some medical work, whatever it is, social work, whatever it is, nursing, and not just medical, but anything connected with medical, hospital and so forth. So they accepted and they did go and brought quite a lot of joy for themselves and for their parents ... So they said because of you even now two girls come, because of you we have educated our children, our children doctor. I said fine, very good. That is what we wanted. An educated community, so that nobody could trample on us. So the white man couldn't say oh you're illiterate, and the black man can't say oh you can't read. We're better than them. So this they accepted. I said always remember we've got a culture and we've got to promote that culture and have education and so on.

(V): As an outsider, examining your life individually, and analysing the spaces you created for yourself, I cannot help but link your life to the broader struggles of women around the world. You are an important role model to aspiring young women, for your struggles in breaking new ground in South Africa. Also through education, you are able to write, which is a powerful tool and position to be in to leave for posterity, your views on particular issues and your legacy. What would you consider your legacy to be?

(G): Education. Also I used to write for the papers, to quite a lot of Indian papers for the girls to read it and even give them menu to things that I've sort of had up my sleeve as it were ... and also tell them how useful it is to write to the papers, and tell them, give them your views. You can all read what I say and its all for your benefit, not for just mine, but your benefit. So they said yes. Show it to your parents, read it to your parents and show them what I have to say. Every week I used to contribute.

(V): Which news papers were these?

(G): This was the Indian Opinion, and Indian News, all sorts of papers ... and the people still come to me.

(V): And what issues did you address in the papers?

(G): Women's world. [Other issues include being proud to being Indian]. I don't want to be white and I don't want to be African. I'm just what I am, I'm proud to be an Indian. I've

contributed, and my forebearers have contributed to the beauty of this country, to the economy of the country, to the well-being of everybody. So I want to be proud. So one woman came to me, not very long ago, I was driving. She says stop, stop, stop doctor. I stop. She came to me and ran across the road. She says, I remember you talking at the Mayville Cinema long ago. You said you were proud to be an Indian. How do you feel now? I said prouder still, now that I've seen the world ... she says I feel so happy she says, we've contributed quite a lot to this country, our forebearers have, so she says yes. I never thought that way, I'm so happy. Yes, it gives you happiness now. For a long time I thought about it ... I'm proud to be an Indian, ... and we will never be in the ghettos ... So anyway, that's how it is. So I tell them, be proud of what you are, and don't forget your language, English is necessary, but don't forget your own language. It gives you dimension, tremendous dimension, because when I was in England, they said now we want to go around the world, what is your language, Chinese, right, what is yours, oh Vietnamese, what is yours Dr Goonam, I mean Miss Goonam, I said Tamil, oh fine, ... We were all happy. A cosmopolitan crowd it seems.

(V): And then just getting back to your legacy, you said education.

(G): Education and what ever little I have done to promote education. And whatever I have said to the people, to the mothers, and to the fathers about the value of education. They don't need money, they don't want your money, they want education. Send them to the temple of learning, that's all they want from you. Please do that. We haven't got any bursaries, send them over, whatever little you have. Whatever good you can do. They said fine. So ... many, many, many girls are educated as a result of what we had to say, not just me. I suppose they thought it over, now they know what was said to them is something of good to them, in the long run. It took us time, but not very long really considering, 20 years, and the satyagraha movement brought them further forward. Yes, everything grew with it. Somehow I felt that somebody had pushed me forward ... I said we are not going to go to the ghettos, we will not go to the ghettos, we will build something for ourselves. The white man was going to kill us, he never killed us, he killed himself by his thoughts, we didn't, we're a passive race ... we're even better than Muslims you know that.

Age and Retirement.

(V): A particularly interesting facet that I discovered while analysing each of your lives, is the fact that you never retired as such, but continue working, with active and full lives. What are you views on forced early retirement, age dependency and unproductivity for women who go into retirement?

(G): I feel that's just as well signing your death warrant. You must try and help yourself to become as mentally active as you were when you were young. You could, reading, talking to people, getting into any organisation, helping others, also helps you to keep young, and to be true and faithful to whatever education you have. For education teaches us to, give us

strength, give us courage, all these things come only through education, not money, education, then you can face anybody ... anywhere, because that is a strength you have. So they say yes, you know. Don't just think of men coming into your life, think of education, your books, if you haven't got books, go to the library, get it, and read, read as much as you can about our country and what women have achieved.

(V): Have you continued working as a personal choice (to maintain meaning and identity in life) or are you forced to because of financial difficulties?

(G): Yes, both actually. But I really wanted to continue, because I didn't want my mental condition to go. I wanted still to be able to talk to people and to meet them, whatever their conditions are. I still give them advice, they still ring me up, I still give them advice and I want to be able to do that for the rest of my days, if I can. I don't want my brain to just go awry and then to look for somebody to help me out, not at all. I can still work, I can still drive my car ... So its good and I feel happy, young people come to me and say you are not that old, I say I am, but never mind, tell me what's your troubles. So they come to me for advice, they ring me up and so forth and so forth. So I can never really retire and sit back like most of the old people do in the old people's home, oh my godfather.

(V): And tell me more about what you've actually been doing with yourself since the official age 60 retirement date.

(G): Well, actually I have addressed lots of senior citizens, they call me all over Maritzburg, Dundee, Newcastle and here and they pay my fairs or they come and pick me up and I go all over Mobeni, Chatsworth, Umgeni, everywhere, to talk to them. Life after Fifty, what comes, whose around the corner there, is it diabetes, is it nephritis, is it arthritis, what is around the corner, what have we done for ourselves to get this, where people say I can't walk doctor, why can't you walk, because red meat my dear, I've been telling you all your life, don't have red meat, you can do without it, I don't say vegetarianism, there's also fish and there's also chicken. I've lived on it so I can walk anywhere, so I say do that and also remember there are lovely vegetables growing in this country. Don't just say oh its just vegetables but you can make it palatable indeed. In India, everywhere you go its vegetables ... also don't just sit back and say oh my daughters are earning and my husbands bring in money or my son. No, you've got to also do something for yourself and for these children who come home. Let there be plenty at home. So they say yes, you are right. I say this is how we can keep ourselves going and interesting too and we can go to some of the gatherings here, and if you like go to the temple and talk and see how the people are.

(V): I also heard that you've continued (a couple of days a week) actually practising medicine?

(G): Yes, I do, yes I go to David Lando, today, Monday isn't it, I went to David Lando this

morning, Friday too … its a clinic [in Durban].

(V): And you've managed to support yourself by working like that?

(G): A yes, but not just support, I get very little there, but now and then I get a locum, leather workers, they pay very well, and I go to the Esplanade, Ulundi House, oh I go to Delbridge, there I get a few rand, so those are the … I go by my car. Yes, its okay, I can still see [laughter].

(V): I am interested to know your views on age/sex inequalities and prejudices (the double standard of ageing), where ageing is a positive aspect of men's lives, but not so for women.

(G): Yes, I think a woman has got this position on herself, she should have rebelled against it, she should have fought against it, but then that time when she was young she hadn't any clue at all how to go about it, but now with sexism now gone, and with equality given to us, in India too, I quite often have got to tell you about India and Gandhi …and also I worked there you know, in family planning. So I said I've come from India and I can tell you women are in the forefront … I once went, men were standing outside they said doctor, you're going inside, I said yes, please go and see Mrs Naidoo, she is the Trade Minister and Mr Naidoo, Trade Minister and we want to talk to him. I said right I will and I went and said, is there a Mr Naidoo, they said no, there's a Mrs Naidoo here. I said are you the Trade Minister, yes, she says yes. So I said men are waiting outside to speak to you, can you give them a few minutes. She said where do you come from, I said South Africa. Oh she says, yes, certainly. Are you going to be with them, I said really nobody would want to, but I will be with them, so I went to the men and told them to come over, and they were really happy, overjoyed. So they sat and spoke and told her about their difficulties. They didn't want to go on a strike but they wanted to talk with someone. So they were there for over a half hour, so I said bye-bye and you can still talk and I went away. So that was a surprise for me, there she was sitting there Mrs Naidoo. She was a Trade Minister, so women can achieve any position in India, anything, anything, anything. No sexism there, no restrictions, not at all. I was Assistant Director of Family Planning. Mr Nehru, are you aware of Mr Nehru, he was our first Prime Minister. He said, I see you have three children, I said yes, yes. Oh, your husbands here? I said no but can't I have three and more children without a husband. He said right you've got the job [laughter]. He had a sense of humour.

(V): What are your views on ageing and the treatment of the aged in South Africa?

(G): Ageing, I thing that people should be more acquainted with ageing and not let age get hold of them. This is where the trouble has been for a long time. We say after sixty years old, who makes us old, its the trade unions that make us old, if you can work why can't you work - 60, 65 to for that matter, so I said its because of the traditions that the men have got their minds into, where women are too old after 50. So you mustn't feel old at all, you must go around and show your strength like I do, and they say yes, you're old enough, I said yes, I'm

old (and this was before I was reaching 90), so I said yes, I want you to please remember that you can be young all the time, and have your strength, yes, a state of mind is important.

(V): And then, what about your views on the treatment of aged in South Africa?

(G): Yes, the state hasn't really got very much at all for them, not like England where there's a national health scheme, but not at all here, there is no such thing as national health, so its a very sad thing. I think Clinton, Clinton is introducing national health, which I'm very happy about ... well I well they are far behind time because England has had it for a long time, but here there is no such thing at all. We haven't even got decent clinics for them, you know only now they're beginning to think of clinics.

(V): And also, what do you think of the old age homes.

(G): Well, Indian people they've got Damlin Home, ... they have started them, but it isn't a well-established place, you know where there are nice things to go, its a lonely sort of place, weather-beaten and so forth, you know, not quite what I'd like them to have. So, they've got to go a very long way. Some benefactor must come and give ... something to this place, something to go by.

(V): Do you think age is a socially constructed category and do you see yourself as old (both physically or mentally)?

(G): I think age is a traditional category, yes, it's constructed. And because you're fifty or forty and complain about a bit of a backache, you're old, you know, you're old. That Indians have got that in their mind. The other day at the Civic Centre, I was sitting ...a lawyer fellow came up. There's a young lady sitting there, I said you don't have to tell me that and you don't have to tell the people that, you can say that there's a lady sitting there. Why do you have to put young and old? I said this is because you are not educated. He said well I'm a lawyer, I said not well educated. So he looked at me and I said this applies to all of you people. When I came in they said there's a young lady coming in and I said what the hell now, what is it you want to know, to get from me. Can I sort of give you a cheer for what you say about my age. If I'm old and cannot move, you can then talk about it. But here I am, I drove myself and came here. So what is this age, age, age. So they've got it in their head that when you're over fifty you're old and must stay at home sort of time. I think white people do feel that, isn't that so, oh she's too old, they don't regard you as their equal at anytime, so that's coming out, but in England its been sort of stalled because women take it upon themselves, they are divorced, I've been to the divorce courts too. Why are you divorcing your husband, because he doesn't think I'm his equal and I don't want to keep hearing that, that you're not equal enough for this job, so let him go along and prove it here, and I want to get out of this nonsense of age all the time. So I went to see what was happening there you know, I got quite a lot of information... I helped one girl to get a divorce, he was beating her up. I said this man is using his fists when it should be used in the boxing ring. And this is

what he is doing, threw a bottle on her the other day, I witnessed that and I locked the door against him, yet I was a visitor, so these are the things that happen. Men ... haven't reached the stage when they can regard you as their equal, their mental equal. Isn't that so. In many cases, but you see when the man reaches 40, or 45, 50, he wants a young girl, he wants a young girl. There's no such thing as love or fidelity, not at all but a young girl, whether its white, or Indian or African, but Africans of course don't talk about that. So Indians or white, they want young girls, I've seen, I've looked around. They bring the young girls to me, I said why, why do you want to leave her, because she's too old. I said, and do you think you're not too old.

(V): From what I've read about your life, you have met many 1000s of people, but despite this do you consider yourself to be lonely now in old age i.e. were the many sacrifices you had to make personally for your professional life worth while and thus justified in the long run?

(G): There was a lot of sacrifice, when I went to jail and came back, I had to rebuild my surgery, rebuild my life. Then of course, with my parents, and my sister and my brothers I had to refurnish their lives, really, if you wanted to, because their was a bond on the house and its now payable. And there was a lot of sacrifice I had to make. There was once I remember, one or two dresses only, I had for one year. It was so difficult. However, I am not sorry for it because I made them all happy, and the girls got profession and the boys are all right, they're now dead, but they were all right, and we had a home until Group Areas came and took it away, yes. But I'm not sorry, its the kind of sacrifice anybody could make for their family. Now as for the community, well I wanted them to live well. And that is why I fought against the Group Areas, and I even went to Ladysmith, and across the border to go to Joburg because we had to take a certificate to get, a clearance certificate that we are well, and pay R25 for it, you know that to go to Joburg. So all that was abolished for the sacrifice that we made. So you don't have to pay anything at all so you can just walk in, so that was march, march of Gandhi, Gandhi tried and I followed it.

"Difficult" Women.

(V): Did people in your life time classify/consider or see you as "difficult" (because of your progressive approach and outlook on life, your outspoken and forthright personality, Western style of dress and habits as your dissatisfaction with the more conservative and patriarchal attitudes of your community and its traditions), or is it something that you have only thought about now that I mention it (as an outsider looking in)?

(G): No, they made it difficult, they made it difficult.

(V): And they saw you as difficult?

(G): Yes, yes, at that time, and at any time, because I could stand and talk to any man as his equal, and they felt well that was not quite an Indian way of doing things. Some accepted it, others rebelled against it and talked about it. They didn't like my dress, they wanted me to be in a sari. How could I live in a sari going to the theatre, please tell me now, hmm, into the theatre, where we're operating, how can I do that. So all these things. I said they're not educated enough to accept this. The sari is all right, but it is not practical, not to a doctor or a nurse for that matter, so they've got to consider the professions that we've chosen. Those days there were no women doctors, no women nurses, there were no nurses at all for that matter, no hospitals. They died at home, if they were sick, they died at home. So I said they've got to adjust their minds to the present day needs of society. So it took them a long time, but their girls, and their daughters now days dress like I do. As a matter of fact, they are even more [laughter] with their very, very short dresses and what not, but its all right. I feel happy when I see them.

(V): And how did they treat you in relation to your style of dress, habits etc.?

(G): In those days they didn't like it at all, no and of cause I was a little bit of a rebel. I was. And I did not stop where a man was concerned, who was beating his wife and so forth. And I did not stop where he prevented his daughters from going to school, and to get our education. And if he had money, he should spend it on the children, not on drink and his friends, so I used to sit and talk to them, in that way. I said not only your sons but your daughters must be educated too. Then you bring equality in the home, you bring happiness to everybody, and you bring happiness to yourself for that matter. So they said yes, and what sort of education, whatever they want. Because today you can choose any thing really, social science, yes, oh nursing, yes, and work in a hospital, oh yes, anything you can choose, a girl can choose and still maintain her virginity, and still maintain her status and so forth. Yes, they said yes. I said we don't go out and get pregnant when we become doctors and nurses and what not; we look after ourselves. So this is what you've got to consider, we got educated and we use that education for our lives, in our lives and for others too, so you must give us that particular type of pleasure and joy that we want from you. You must recognise that. We don't do it for ourselves, but for the community and for you, and for my mother and for everybody concerned. So they realised, yes. I said look at the white people, they're now getting on in life, they're getting where they wanted to. They also had a fight, a rebel there, and the suffragette movement was very strong when I was young, so now equality, and the war brought more equality and they were able to drive ambulances and so forth. Look what they've given now, nobody can say no to them, or they can enter anything. ... Women can't just sit at home, they have to now help the community as much as they could.

(V): Do you think you were viewed as a "difficult" person because of the conditions you and other women had to face and thus respond unconventionally (diverge from allotted roles) to create spaces for yourselves, or were you a rebel? Or was it a combination of these two?

(G): I was both, I was both. It was difficult, it was difficult. I hesitated sometimes, but I was a rebel and that helped me, to overcome these difficulties, but it was difficult all the same. How

am I going to face that crowd, how am I going to talk, at men only meetings, and how am I convincing them , how can I convince them…

(V): Getting back to what you were saying about being a rebel?

(G): Yes, yes some liked me others didn't like me and they said that don't you think there is such a thing as modesty I said what modesty. What are you talking about? And I got, do I take off my clothes and stand and talk to them. What modesty are you talking about, do you understand modesty?

Tape 2 - Side A:

(G): cont. …. Keep us back now. What is it that you don't like about us, don't you think a wife will help you if she was going to work and give her an education. In India there is such a thing as education for the wives, I used to see them, hordes of them about 5 o'clock going, where are you going Ma? Oh we want to get educated. I was standing waiting to buy mangoes, lovely mangoes at this woman's table. I said I want a dozen please, she said wait Ma, there is something happening in the Parliament, I want to read that first, sit … she made me sit and wait there [laughter]. She gave me one extra because I waited. She said its very important because they are talking about women, and we want to send a deputation there for equal wages.

(V): And what year was this about?

(G): This was about 40, 50, equal wages, … yes, when I was in India, I was there then.

(V): So women were interested in women's rights and all that in India?

(G): Oh yes, very much so. And then I come home and a woman is sweeping. She says, Ma, what is the score, the test score [laughter], I don't know what the score is, …playing bloody test cricket, what am I worried about that [more laughter], she says what is the score, … and then there were two boys who were playing marbles. I said aren't you going to school today. They said no, I said why. Because my mothers gone to the hospital to tie up her bags so that she won't get babies. Aged 10 and 11. She was going to have legation. Tomorrow she'll come back home, then we'll go to school. They were looking after the house, two little boys, I was so surprised. Tying up the bags, the uterus. I had plenty of laughter there.

(V): Do you think other women saw you as a threat (being single and having a career)?

(G): Yes, they did, they did, because when the men started talking to me nicely, they felt I was a threat but they didn't say anything, but I could see from their faces. But I didn't pursue it, it didn't worry me at all. They were not quite my equal for me to be with them.

(V): And do you think they were threatened because of your better position, as a doctor?

(G): Yes, yes, and of course doctor, car and to drive a car and to be independent, you see, they felt that.

(V): Do you think there was a bit of jealousy as well?

(G): There was perhaps some there, yes, there was.

(V): And also the fact that you were single, you weren't married.

(G): Yes, yes … because they thought that I might sort of hang onto those men [laughter]. Little did they know that that was not my way of life at all.

(V): Do you think men saw you as a threat because you did not have to rely or depend on men's achievements and position (marriage) to define your lives?

(G): Yes, I think men did. I think men did. They didn't quite like me. Men were still a long way away from thinking on modern lines, and quite a lot of Muslim men felt that way, not so much Christians or Hindus but Muslims, felt that way.

(V): And why do you think that is?

(G): Because, they kept their women away, you see, that was the Islamic teaching, keep your women back. And they can go and get married to anybody, four or five wives which is allowed by Islamic law. Not so in India, no polygamy, not at all, no … not at all. That's the first thing Nehru decided to get rid of. So I was glad, but when I come here and see them all, sort of locked up, I said, well not quite locked up, but not allowed to go out anywhere. I didn't see one Muslim woman for a long, long time in the streets. You know, well they did come to me, they covered the ricksha … yes, and then came to me … all clothed so, for many, many years I saw that.

(V): Was it quite difficult for you to get trust built up amongst these Indian women … as an Indian woman doctor?

(G): Yes, it was difficult, it was difficult, because they thought that I came from a different planet, you know, talk about different things, cause I talk about family planning. That was on my cards all the time and I also talked about education. They didn't quite like it because they're not accustomed to having a good education. They can have that Islamic code that they go by, but not education itself. You see, it took a long time before they can come to schools here, to be educated. Mrs Morell rang me up, she says, you know I think we've got to close [?] Crescent, I said why. She says because there are no people coming, only one or two. So I had to go on a real sort of dash to home to people, to talk to them and all that during that time one women gets pregnant from her brother-in-law. They said look what you've done, I said I didn't do it. She had a baby after that. Yes, so this girl went on, you know, I gave a lot of babies away, a lot of children away, because the girls got pregnant, they did not know family planning, young girls, ... so that brought about quite a lot of disgrace to their family, so I gave them away, some I had in my house, took them to the hospital when they were in labour, got the baby, let them sign it away ... to a home that needed a child, you see, so these problems.

(V): Would you mind me asking you a very personal question? Could you tell me more about why you decided never to marry and whether it was this that contributed to the success of your career?

(G): Well, its not really personal, a lot of people were career girls felt that marriage was going to be sort of a hindrance to their activities and to their desire to do something for their people or for themselves. But with me it was for the people. I said if I'm going to get married, then I'll have children, then I'll have to stay at home. How can I possibly go along and do what I wanted to do, that is self commitment for the good of the people, to teach them what it is, to have an independent life and to be helpful to each other and to recognise the value of education, whether its in their own language or English, whatever it is, in their own language, its even better. She said don't be without education. Three thousand years ago, one of our poetess said that, and I still quote that to them. I said this is what has been said to us so we must now follow that, not just stay at home. So, that sort of helped me quite a lot, our own teaching and the teaching that took place in other parts of the world and the example in other ... well the war was a very good example where the women were on equal footing with the man, driving ambulances, and going to the camps and what not. That liberated England, really, the First World War, isn't that so. So in that way it was helpful really, to go and talk to them and to quote ... the teaching.

(V): So you were quite willing to give up marriage?

(G): Oh yes, oh yes. Marriage would have ended everything that I had in mind and I wanted that, I wanted to work for them, to show to my parents what it was to work for them. My father wanted it, and I know that was the best thing to do for him and for myself.

(V): When did the conditions in Durban change, so that you became more accepted and not

so classified as "difficult"?

(G): Well, after the Passive Resistance movement, that was the turning point in their lives as well as mine. They then recognised me as a person who they could depend on, and come and talk to and they knew then that I was following the great Mahatma's footsteps. So after that 1946 the whole world was open to me here in South Africa.

(V): And they accepted you even though even though you were slightly different?

(G): Yes, they accepted me, they accepted me yes. [laughter] Yes, even though I was slightly different. One thing, I did not drink ... I did not drink like the doctors do, like Indian doctors. They just swam in the bloody thing, yes, this is all they did -Dadoo did, Monty Naicker, all of them drinkers. I used to buy the drinks for them when they came to my home, but I did not drink. And that was a great help, I think. Quite a lot of women, Indian women drink now. They go to the bar.

(V): And why didn't you drink?

(G): I didn't, because I was too busy. I was busy writing, talking, addressing gatherings, ...and of course, maternity work, night and day. So I was a very busy person. So and it never occurred to me to drink at all. I drank, I tell you what, tea. My nurse used to make for me and themselves, but nothing else, nothing else. Not even wine, it never occurred to me. It was not a practice in our home.

Relationships with Other Women under Discussion.

(V): Can you tell me about your relationship, both professionally and personally, with other "difficult" women, such as Phyllis Naidoo, Mabel Palmer, Killie Campbell, and Sibusisiwe Makanya?

(G): Phyllis Naidoo was not quite my equal, really, but I tell you who greatly helped me, Margaret Robinson from England. She was a nurse at Addington. She came to bring somebody next door to me, a white person, when I was living in Fellows Road, and we became very good friends. She lived with me. She and I were great pals. People used said we were gays, I said I don't care what they said as I had a boyfriend and she had a boyfriend. But we were never anything more than just good friends, Margaret lived with me for over five or six years, then she died. Then a cousin of mine came to live with me. She was married. But I never was anything, but what I was. It never occurred to me. I was too busy really, my mind was too busy, what next, where shall I go, what can I say. I had to draw out my programme, you know people call me, here, there, everywhere, at the boys too, school, Sastri College as well, and the girls college to. So anywhere and everywhere. I suppose they had nobody to

come, I was there [laughter].

(V): As an outsider looking into their lives, what would you see as their greatest contributions? For example, Mabel Palmer, what could you say about her life and her contribution?

(G): Mabel Palmer was a very important person. She's the one who brought about higher education for people, by getting the University here and at Warwick Avenue. Until then our people, our people did not have University education at all, they were denied that by Parliament. She brought that, that was a tremendous contribution. Elizabeth Sneddon did quite a bit for art and culture. She had no such thing as petty prejudices, at all, not at all, Elizabeth Sneddon. Who else did you quote?

(V): Phyllis Naidoo?

(G): Well, she was just a, she was just a, first of all she was married and then after that she married M.D. Nothing special she did for the community, as such, but just being a wife there. I don't know what she's going to say but she didn't do very much no, not that I could see.

(V): With Phyllis Naidoo, you said you were her doctor and then did you have contact with her when you were in exile at all in Zimbabwe?

(G): Yes, yes, yes, in Zimbabwe, yes I did. I did.

(V): Personally, or professionally?

(G): Personally. Professionally no, she was a lawyer. She was at the University and I don't think her law work got her very far, and then she stayed at home and the ANC supported her because of the boys, the boys work. I think both went to ... communist ... Cuba and one came back, a very good gardener, and that's the man who was killed. I'm telling you something, he was killed that he was killed there, so when the word reached me and when the ANC asked somebody to ask me to go and break the news to her, I went with an ANC man. I didn't tell them how he was killed, but he told me, and we got word from the ANC, they said he was killed.

(V): And then, what did you think of Killie Campbell's contribution. Did you know her at all?

(G): I didn't know her very well, no I don't know her. What did she do?

(V): She was one of the first woman Africana collectors. She built up the Killie Campbell library in Durban … and she collected sources about African, Zulu, and Indian lives so that she could build a library so that black students could use the library within a racially indiscriminatory setting.

(G): This is what I heard. I met her once, but in a gathering.

(V): Did you meet Mabel Palmer at all?

(G): Yes, oh yes, on many occasions.

(V): What did you think of her?

(G): Yes, oh my God, [laughter] she is so funny, … but she had a good heart, a very good heart.

(V): She also lived a very long life?

(G): Yes, she did, she was right up in Ridge Road, you know. Yes, I used to think a lot of her.

(V): And then you didn't know Sibusisiwe Makanya?

(G): No, no.

(V): I am interested in the interconnecting contexts in which your life merged with the other women under discussion, to see which women had an impact on your life and career, and the impact of yours on theirs. Can you think of any kind of impact any of those women might have had on your life, and yours on theirs?

(G): No, … I don't think so. They knew that I was working as a person to be reckoned with a little because of the movement, of our political movement, politically they knew that I was an activist, but nothing further really.

(V): Because one thing in common of all these women, is that you all worked to fight for black liberation and for the struggle in your various ways and your various professions?

(G): Yes, yes I did. I used to work in Kwa Mashu and Cato Manor and I used to work with

the soup people there, doctors wives, you see, white doctors used to come and examine the patients first and then they could go and let them have their soup and whatever else is going. Yes, Cato Manor, once a week, Wednesdays. And then of course Lamontville hospitals. Got very little for it in so far as remuneration goes, but I gave me a lot of pleasure meeting these people, seeing them, talking to them. This is what I wanted, cause they're part of our community you see. I used to tell them and go around and tell them to get educated, educate your children.

(V): And what year was this about?

(G): Oh, in the 1940s.

(V): An important decade?

(G): Important, oh, very important. Then came the 50s and I went to India.

(V): In what context would your lives have met i.e. did academic institutions bring you into contact with one another (U.N.D.), was it in the political struggle for black liberation, or was it personal friendships?

(G): Political, political first, educational followed. Because they then knew that I was talking something for themselves, for the people. They then had confidence in me. Until then, they were not too sure who I was, what I was, I was just a doctor. But after that they knew that I was committing myself to the progress of our people ...

(V): It was quite interesting in the newspaper articles that I've read that when you came back to South Africa, after being in exile, in 1990, you actually found it quite difficult to get a job here.

(G): Yes, I couldn't find a job at all here.

(V): Why do you think that was ...?

(G): Because of the change over and it was all meant for Africans. Africans. So I was pushed out of a job, pushed out of a job. I went there and the girl said, doctor, I am sorry to say a resolution was passed that no Indian doctors must work here, it is given to the Africans. It was a young fellow, what does he know about older people's illness and so forth. So I went back to my car, I said is that what I worked for, ... so I was without a job until other doctors, young doctors, took pity on me and gave me a locum here and there. Thank goodness for that.

(V): Because I know that you applied for a job at St Aidans.

(G): No, they wouldn't give me, they wouldn't give me a job and I built up St Aidans, giving them beds and what not, you know, and surgical beds and so forth. No ... mostly they were Muslims and they didn't like me.

Context Questions: Durban in the 20th Century.

(V): The city of Durban in the 20th century, the century in which you have lived most of your very long and full life, has experienced an era of massive social, political, economic and racial changes that have affected all who live in it. This is especially so for black women who have had to fight against the triple oppression of race, class and gender.

(G): Well, that was the ... you're talking about Apartheid days, isn't that so?

(V): Yes, as well as segregation days.

(G): Segregation, do you know what they called it, please? The English language is very, very flexible. They called it separate development, separate development, if you please. We were going to buy a house in Florida Road, so the man came over and said I believe you couldn't buy because of separate development. I said to him, what, it was something new for me, you know, from England. Separate development? Yes, my mother said that this had been in vogue for a long time.

(V): Was this when the National Party came into power, or after that?

(G): No, before that, before. I am talking about the white man, the English man. Yes. The National Party came in and established Apartheid, '48, yes, they ruled. I was in Ladysmith jail when I heard about that, the following day. So that was a very, very bitter pill for us to swallow. But before that there was separate development.

(V): ... also in the fight for political rights for black people generally, women's rights tend to be subdued.

(G): Subdued, yes, that's right, yes. Women's rights did not matter so much because we thought it would come, but it did not come.

(V): So you were prepared to wait?

(G): Yes, because it was most important for the men to have some sort of recognition, particularly African men. We were thinking of African men who were without a job, anywhere, we were thinking of that and once we established that then we can turn to women. ...

(V): I am also trying to imagine the changes in Durban, before your eyes - the mood, the atmosphere, the feeling.

(G): Its 60 years you know, 60 years. A long, long time.

(V): Because you find there is so little in the books that you read, about women's changing views of the city over the years. Is it possible for you, having lived here for so many years to almost step back and have a look at the city and how its changed, and what do you think have been the most important changes or periods and events in this century, and what would you emphasise as the most important shaping influences of it?

(G): I don't know, I don't know. I am a disappointed woman, and I cannot talk very much about the disappointment that has come unto me. I did not think that this was going to be the outcome of our struggle. All our lives we struggled for equality, but I didn't think that this was going to turn out to be this way. I'm such a disappointed person ...

(V): Even though Apartheid's been abolished?

(G): Apartheid was bad enough, but we got a job everywhere. There was no affirmative action. No affirmative action, no being told you're not black enough, that's what happened to our children, to our Indian people who gave up their lives, their parents gave up their lives. This is a very bad thing to happen. This is what I wanted to tell the Prime Minister when he came from India, couldn't get near him. And we were also told a day before, if you don't mind, meet the Prime Minister but don't talk about politics of this country, but why, he had something there when he said that. Don't talk about politics, I was going to talk about politics. I was going to ask him did you hear about affirmative action which has killed our hopes for the country. This is no such thing as a democratic country, not at all, its nepotism here and I'll give you instances ... who did bugger all for the country. ... Is this what we fought for? ... There are quite a few people there, I can tell you, that had really nothing to do at all with the struggle, so I am disappointed.

(V): But other than say, the last, say since 1990, what years stand out for you as quite important to you?

(G): The jobs that I had and the satisfaction I had through the jobs, hospital appointments, King Edward, and subsequent appointments as a family planning expert, here. So these are things that I am very thankful for, but not after Mandela's reign, not at all, not at all. This is a sad thing. I knew him well, I knew him very well, in the '40s and so this is what happens ... but he's given us no chance at all. Do you see any Indians on the T.V., no, but we're fully equipped to answer and to talk and to read any news cast, but this is why he has kept us away. Its all right if we're going to train them but they are difficult to train you know, it takes time to train people, isn't that so and particularly if they are from the bush. Their culture is very different and they haven't got the same curtsey, civility, humility and all the other good things that go with people like us. If there was an African woman there, she wouldn't be asking me this question, she'd say how much are you making? Where do you get your money? This sort of thing. You can't talk to them. You know, I was in the Women's League here until Mrs Mandela came, and she threw me out. I'm not in the Women's League anymore, they don't want me. For years I've been a member of the Women's League, for years, even before I went into exile, we formed the Women's League. No more. They want to keep us away. Now if I was young, I wouldn't stay here. There would be no need for me to stay here at all, I don't know where I would choose to go. Certainly, they don't want me, they don't want me.

(V): With all you've done for them?

(G): Well that's how I feel, and yes, many other women. Everywhere I go they said how are you doctor, what are you doing now. Well I said, whatever comes my way, that is the locum that I get. They say that is a sad state of affairs. We expected you to be in Parliament. I said I didn't expect to be in Parliament but at least to have a decent job...

(V): Did you experience this situation anywhere else?

(G): No, nowhere, nowhere. England gave it to me straight away when they knew I was in exile and Zimbabwe gave it to me, Australia wanted to give me full status, but I had to leave. So nowhere did I experience disappointment and heart break. Its the heartbreak really, he doesn't know what he's done to the Indian community, he doesn't know.

(V): And is this quite a widely spread feeling?

(G): Yes, widely spread. They said ... who do you think we should vote for. Wait on and see. They said certainly not the ANC. I said no, I don't tell you to vote for the ANC. I used to, I used to go canvassing ...

(V): Because I was quite surprised when you came back from exile that you didn't actually get a position within the ANC?

(G): They didn't even ask me to come for the welcoming of Mandela, that's Mrs Meer and Mr Meer if you please. After being away so long, 10 years, so this is how it is. ... So when I rang up Fatima Meer I said how is it that I had no tickets at all to come to the welcome. Oh, I don't know. Ask Ismail, he'll come to the phone when you ring him up later. She's going now and he was going.

(V): And they forgot you?

(G): Yes, they didn't want me. That's how it is.

(V): All the women in this study's lives tend to overlap in the decades from the 1930s to late 1950s. What were these years like and what did they mean to you personally and for your professional life?

(G): Oh, it meant a lot. Very, very important. I was making myself known here or people got to know me, and quite a lot of people abroad knew me because according to Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, he said he knew you, you were a heroine for all of us.

Tape 2 - Side B:

(G): ... M.D. too, nobody came for the funeral, his funeral. Nobody came.

(V): When did he die?

(G): Last year. I looked around and not one soul from the ANC, and he did so much for the ANC.

(V): What did you think of M.D. Naidoo as a person?

(G): M.D., as I said I was at his funeral. Oh, as a person, oh he was very good. I knew him as little boy, on Riverside, we lived their, we all lived their, his father was a great friend of my mothers, we all went to school together ... So, yes, he was a good, good, wonderful fellow. A brain, oh a tremendous brain and he used to draw up all the things for us, what to do next. He was a secretary, you see of the N.I.C. - Natal Indian Congress, so he died and nobody came from the government, not one soul, we were shocked. He was an important person, he was working for the ANC in London too, for that matter, in London.

(V): Its shocking!

(G): Yes, it is, everybody said that. Ismal Meer was there. I am glad that they did not call him to talk. Other people spoke, I mean Africans and whites ... not one from the ANC, and he gave his life for the ANC, his life. M.D. was a thinker, M.D. was a very good thinker. Nelson Mandela could never come near him, when he spoke on the platform. You should hear him speak, his language was absolutely wonderful. He was the best speaker, after Dadoo. And not only that thinker, so I was very shocked, I was shocked. I said is this what you get, not one word from the ANC, not even a telegram. What sort of business is this. What bush, this is what I say.

(V):Yes, because I've read in the Naidoo collection, that he had a lot of problems, marriage wise as well as custody battles, and that kind of stuff. Did that affect his work at all?

(G): No, no, not really, no. He was above that. He put that aside. I used to meet him quite often. He came to my house too, gave him a nice dinner party and that sort of thing, but I didn't think he was going to die, and I didn't think this was the treatment ...How could they do this? But if he was an African, he would have got a welcome.

(V): Before you were in exile, did you used to go to the meetings at M.D.'s place?

(G): Yes, no they all came down to our place.

(V): So did Phyllis and M.D. used to come to ...

(G): Phyllis never came, Phyllis never came. She was not part of us. The fact that she married him was the only sort of licence that she had to come to us. But she was never part of us, not at all. When you talk to her she'll probably say differently.

(V):Yes, but that's why I'm interested to hear another perspective?

(G):Yes, she was not part of us.

(V): Not part of you, meaning?

(G): Not at all, not at all.

(V): Politically?

(G): No, no, she didn't come to jail either, for that matter. I mean if you must ask me. All of them came, I mean everybody. But not many Muslims, no. Mostly non-Muslims, Christians and Hindus … but not Muslims, one or two only, who were married to …But generally no Muslims, no. You see that's their code of life I suppose.

(V): Was Phyllis Muslim?

(G): No, she was Christian.

(V): Christian. And also, she was quite a lot younger than you, and her second M.D. as well.

(G): Yes, she had a first husband.

(V): Yes, that didn't work out too well.

(G): No, and then M.D. I think they lived all right, but towards the end, she didn't want to shake hands with him when he came out of jail, you know that, you heard that?

(V): Yes, and she had an affair with Basil, and her affair she had.

(G): [Laughter]. How do you know, did you know all these things. … Yes, Basil, a young fellow. I don't know how she could ever …

(V): The custody fights and court battles were shocking though, and it affected the kids so badly.

(G): Yes, it did, it did. … Yes, there was that tussle between the lot.

(V): Were you in contact with them in the last few years?

(G):Yes, I used to be over there quite often, in Zimbabwe, but here no. There's a cool attitude. She knows that she didn't do very much at all. She was not with us, she was not part of us at all.

(V):She was almost like an outsider?

(G):Yes, yes she was.

(V):Was it more M.D.'s involvement then hers?

(G):Yes, M.D., M.D., now you're talking. M.D. was a kingpin really. Oh yes, he could foresee what was coming.

(V): And your relationship with her children?

(G): Yes, well I was their doctor, when I was here because they couldn't call in other doctors - free of charge [laughter] ... so there I came in handy.

(V): So you had a personal and professional friendship with M.D.?

(G): Yes, yes, oh yes.

(V): And Phyllis too?

(G): Phyllis, says, I was, sort of but I cooled off because of Basil ... you know, I wasn't too happy about that association, she should have known better. But anyway, that's her way of life, so she was free for all, so I am told. So anyway, when you interview her you will see.

(V): Yes, I was just interested to see what the other version would be like. But also as I was saying earlier, it's quite difficult, as you choice to be single, whereas she choice to try and combine her career and marriage and as I've said, you probably find one aspect collapses because of the other. Do you know what I mean? Possibly her career took precedence over her marriage?

(G): Um, I don't know whether that was the case, or whether she had a wondering mind, I don't know. You know, not having been with her too long, so I don't know. I felt all along that she couldn't ever be my good friend. We didn't think alike. I was always politically conscious of what was going to happen to our people, how best can we defeat this Apartheid business and so forth. But this didn't bother her at all. You know who I met who was very interesting, the man next to her was a man who was a lawyer, attorney, he was blind. Did you know him? Oh he submitted his name, they wanted six names, he submitted his name. And of the six, four were chosen, and he was one of them, but he is not too sure yet. Completely

blind.

(V): Chosen for what, sorry?

(G): Oh, to be a judge. So his wife was with him, wife was with him. They've got two children. He's a tremendous thinker, this blind man, completely blind. He can't see, he can't see at all. … And accepting the hospitality of very kind people and their love, everywhere I go, clients were saying to me, thanks, my child was helped. One fellow came, almost falling over my car. So a couple of weeks ago, when I was putting petrol, he said you know me doctor, I said I know a lot of Indians, but I said I'm not too sure. He said you delivered me, 50 years ago in Cathedral Road when my mother was in labour, and up until the time she died she prayed for you. So that's nice to hear, now that's nice to hear. And my charges were very, very little, very small. If I could charge £10, it was a lot, you know that.

(V): And its nice to have come back, many years down the road and you see that you have helped people.

(G): Yes, yes that's right …

(V): Can you tell me what your life was like in exile in Zimbabwe?

(G): It was very good, everybody, every Indian who was living there gave me a welcome reception, and got to know that I was there.

(V): And you worked at that Geriatric hospital?

(G): Yes, and first when I was there, the ladies used to go the other alcove, where the white doctor was. So the white doctor was called to another place, then they had no choice but to come to me. So they used to stand there, and I said don't be frightened, you can come inside. They said you're aborigine aren't you? [laughter]. After a while, I gave up and said I am aborigine, if you please, I said yes.

(V): It's easier to say yes, hey?

(G): Yes, but later on they got to know me and they used to bring me all sorts of things, home-made buns, and cheese cake and knitted garments and what not. So nice, … they didn't want to leave me and I didn't want to leave them but then I had to come home.

(V): And did you feel safe there?

(G): Oh yes, all the time. I had a nice little cottage, all alone. I've lived all alone in my life.

(V): And you have never been lonely, at periods you might have been, without a husband?

(G): No, no, no. There was so much to be done, my book as you've seen, in the other room, full. Books. And if I haven't got enough books, go to the library, even in London. So you can't really feel ... then I had to write, for reporting, there quite a lot about me, report about South Africa, Apartheid, ... they asked me to come and speak at the girls school, very prestigious girls school. They said what is Apartheid. I said you want to know, they threw us away right into the gutters. They said no, I said yes. What did you do? I went to jail, protesting against it ...

(V): Stepping back now (and having been an exile - outsider looking in), having lived most of your life in Durban, what changes have occurred and what events or periods (decades) would you emphasise as the most important in shaping it?

(G): ... pretty bad, yes. ...

(V): So you don't think that there's anything positive now .... What do you think the future holds for this complex city? And you were quite negative about the position of women in Durban.

(G): I don't know that much at all. For any race, any race, whites, blacks, browns unless he goes and some other person with a thinking capacity comes in. The only person I can think of is Ceril Ramaphosa, but he's not there, he's in private business. So Thabo is hopeless, but he's hopeless, Thabo Mbeki. I can't think of anybody else.

(V): But what has been quite an interesting turn and change of events since 1990 had been that marginalised black women, mainly African women, who haven't had their voices heard have been having people write their autobiographies for them, or else they've been writing their own and its been coming onto the market. And therefore you tend to find women's voices are being heard more and more now. Don't you think that's a positive attribute?

(G): Yes, that is positive, yes, indeed, indeed it is.

(V): Looking back with hindsight over the course of your long, difficult and complex life, do you ever regret being "difficult" and sacrificing so much personally for your "public" life?

(G): Not at all, not at all. That was my aim. Not to be difficult, but to be absorbed with the

government, with the people and yet do whatever I wanted to do for them to improve there lot in life, for blacks as well as browns. The whites didn't want me. For the blacks I worked a lot. I was with the Women's League all the time, ... and for the browns I was always there for them, always.

(V): Is there anything that you would have done differently?

(G): I don't think so, there isn't anything I would have liked to have done. I've done whatever I wanted to do, you see, its not usual for people to talk like that, but I wanted to lead them, which I did and I wanted to be part of the political structure of this country. I couldn't, but I did whatever I could for the marginalised people. And then I wanted also to help them as a doctor. So these three things I think I've done, and can still do here and there. ... A long, long life isn't that so. 91. I don't feel that way at all ...I don't have a very long sleep, I go to bed and I think and write. I like writing. But I must find a publisher.

End of Interview.

2: Interview with Phyllis Naidoo.

Date: 14 October 1997.

Address: 4 Glenariff, 96 Umbilo Road, Durban, 4001.

Untaped Interview - Written Notes taken by Vanessa Noble (Interviewer).

Education, Careers and Roles as Educators.

Becoming Educated.

(V): Before I start with the questions, I just want to explain, what may appear to you to be a slightly strange focus, even excluding what you may consider to be the most important contribution in your life - the details of your political life. From what I've read about your life, I am astounded by the huge contributions you made in the political context, fighting for the liberation of black South Africans. While recognising the enormous work you did for the "cause", I am also interested in other aspects of your life and other difficulties you experienced that are mostly hidden because of this. However, these hidden aspects are also directly linked to your political career, for by focusing on your education, the path you took and the influences and obstacles in your life, I am able to understand how you got into the position of being able to fight for black and women's rights.

(V): Could you tell me more about the difficult path you had to travel and the struggles you had to fight (both personally and professionally) to become educated, in a racially and sexually discriminatory country, with a lack of education facilities especially for black women?

(P): Phyllis did social work first, because she wanted to help cure and improve the lives of sick black people, who were suffering from the terrible conditions that the South African government was forcing them to live under. T.B. was rife so she did volunteer work at the F.O.S.A. and Springfield clinics to try and help. But when cured people were let out back into their societies and returned not even a week later, worse then before, Phyllis realised that she was not helping and the only way to help these people was to change the government of the day. She then

became a teacher, her father was a teacher too, and she shared his conviction about helping to educate people. But it was difficult for her, as teachers had to be politically neutral. Becoming more politically conscious, her involvement in political organisations had to be kept secret and hidden and done on the side. She eventually gave up teaching when they realised she could no longer be politically neutral. In the mid-1960s she was also served with banning orders. She thus took up the study of law (as one of her only alternatives) to keep working and earning money for her family. She thus became directly involved in politics through law, but also recognised that this was the only way to change the government and participate fully in the struggle. Phyllis thus undertook the difficult path of teaching and putting herself through university, where she, like many other people barely managed to survive, feed her family, work and study.

(V): Coming from an Indian community with particular religious and cultural traditions, what difficulties and pressures did you experience in wanting to become educated as a woman?

(P): Getting an education, was not merely to gain a position of status and achievement personally. It was more than this. People, both men and women (including Phyllis) became educated so that they had the necessary qualifications to get good jobs and earn better wages, to support themselves and their families. Becoming educated was thus a practical, pragmatic and financially necessary activity, not just a personally fulfilling one. There was also an innate need and recognition of the power of education as a means to liberation and improvement in the Indian community - a route to gain a better life for themselves personally and for their community more generally. Because of the lack of educational facilities in the early part of the century, Indians helped raise money to build schools for their children and staffed their own schools. And although the education wasn't of the highest quality, at least it was something.

(V): Who were your inspirational role models to become educated, and stimulated you to take on careers in social work, teaching and law (family, friends, etc.)?

(P): There were no distinctive role models she could think of. Educationally, certain people and professors at U.N.D. were inspirational. Her father was a type of role model to Phyllis, for her father came from low beginnings, as the son of an indentured labourer. But he educated himself and worked hard to improve his lot in life. Phyllis doesn't know how, but on his small wage as a teacher he managed to put himself and all his children through school and still feed and clothe his family. It was his persistence and persevering nature that Phyllis admired and thought she might have inherited from him, that enabled her to get where she did, and to help her community when all things seemed to be against her. He was a strong, brave, honest man, but he was also difficult, stubborn, headstrong and had a foul temper. He brought her up to be a boy - he had a tough approach to Phyll, making her independent, strong-willed and outspoken. Her father also spoke the truth at all costs a trait Phyllis inherited, making her views appear hurtful and difficult in her later years.

(V): What did becoming educated mean to you personally, i.e. what did you see as the importance of education for yourself as a woman and its wider implications for your place in

South Africa?

(P): For Phyllis, education was not so much a personal thing of achievement/fulfilment. Although being a route to upliftment, it was also the need to get a piece of paper to allow her to work and earn enough money to survive. But for her, there was also a broader need for education, as a form of upliftment for the wider community. Being educated for her was not a selfish, individual need for personal self-gratification, but helped in the struggle for liberation, because by knowing what's happening around you allows you to see the problems and enables you to think of solutions to the problems.

(V): Were you aware at the time that through your struggles to become educated, you were creating a space for other women to manoeuvre in and follow?

(P): Phyllis felt that in her generation most women saw the importance of getting educated and worked hard to become educated.

(V): Were you aware from the outset, that by taking on professional careers, you would be seen as "difficult" and even treated as an outcast by your society?

(P): Phyllis was seen as difficult by her family and friends even before she started working because she flouted with cultural traditions. She wore pants - green corduroy pants bought from Ackermans. She said that this was a comfortable outfit for her, because of her not very attractive physical figure. Many people were disapproving of her style and modern outlook on life. Her father couldn't believe that she would wear pants in public, it was not the women's traditional way. Phyllis also started smoking - in public too - which her father did not approve of. Many people on the streets, both men and women looked at her strangely but didn't have the courage to say anything. Phyllis couldn't understand why they made such a fuss, it was her life and her choice. She also stuck to her ways despite the disapproval from her family and society. She remembers an incident when she went to the beach to swim, and had a bathing costume on. The women called her a bitch and ostracised her. She was seen as difficult and different.

(V): When training (becoming educated) what kind of sexual and racial prejudices (if any)did you have to fact (gendered and racial division of labour)? Did you experience this more so in some fields than others?

(P): Taking on professional careers she did, Phyllis did not really think that she was discriminated too much because of the nature of the work she undertook. Her work as a volunteer social worker and her position as a teacher were socially acceptable roles for women to embark on. But in law, it was more difficult to get accepted, as the lecturers and male attorneys did not see law as an acceptable career for women. But later, her work in terms of helping the

ANC in the struggle for liberation was not looked down upon or excluded because her work was linked to a broader struggle, she was one of the "men".

(V): At about what point (decade) do you think, it became slightly easier for black women to become educated in South Africa?

(P): It became slightly easier for black women (particularly African) to become educated in the 1950s (the years after World War II) which was a progressive and liberating time. In 1953 the Bantu Education Act was passed making it easier for more blacks (both Indian, Coloured and Africans) to become educated, though in separate institutions with a biased education syllabus. For those dissatisfied with formal Bantu Education, informal lessons were given too, where students could take subjects that were excluded from their formal syllabuses, such as mathematics.

(V): It has been argued that for women to be successful in careers, means either remaining single (often taking on men's values to achieve success) or becoming "superwomen" combining family and careers, but often with one aspect suffering because of the demands of the other. Having read many of your letters, this can be linked to the complexities and difficulties you experienced with your marriages and children. When deciding to take on professional careers, did you realise the constraints and difficulties it would place on your personal life?

(P): Phyllis never say herself as a superwoman - she just managed to survive somehow, balancing her family's needs and her career in the political struggle. In terms of one aspect - marriage or career suffering - Phyllis agreed that although both her and M.D. were in the same field, working for and fighting for political freedom, being in exile, in jail and bannings put a strain on their marriage. There were also huge financial difficulties and constraints, with Phyllis having to work all the time to support her family and her husband in Robben Island. Being made aware of the fact now, that she could be seen as a superwoman, Phyllis could still not see herself as such, she argued that she managed somehow and that many other women were also forced to live under such conditions and managed to survive their difficulties somehow. From the beginning she realised that politics would place a strain on her personal life and relationships, but she never realised that it would result in the loss of her sons. She was prepared to give her all and give up anything - going into exile, moving houses and jobs many times, being banned and lonely - for the struggle, but not the loss of her sons, who never lived to see the outcome of a democratic South Africa that they had worked so hard for and for so many years. She therefore was aware, conscious of the fact that life would be difficult, but a necessary difficulty in the struggle to help liberate South Africa.

(V): To what extent did you feel ostracised by your family and Indian community for getting divorced twice, for what appeared like professional interests getting in the way of personal?

(P): She was ostracised from her family by her divorces. Her father and family were angry at her for "darkening their doorstep". It took 7 years before better relations were re-established between Phyllis and her father. It was a bit easier for her with the rest of her family. She divorced her first husband because he was too much of a "joller", going to parties all the time. Phyllis wanted to settle down. She had married him to getaway from her conservative, traditional family norms, to become independent, start a new and exciting life at 21. However, she recognised that she was too young for marriage and divorced him. Though her father recognised this, he felt that she should have made her marriage work, it was the right thing to do, being a Christian woman. She then married M.D. and they were in the political struggle together, but they too went their different ways. She was ostracised by her family, friends, the ANC because M.D. was seen as a great political hero. Phyllis was seen as a loose woman, threatening to other women, especially married women who feared she would take their husband's away.

Second Interview with Phyllis Naidoo.

Date: 16 October 1997.

Address: 4 Glenariff, 96 Umbilo Road, Durban, 4001.

Tape 1 - Side A:

Forging Professional Careers.

(V): I would like to know what difficulties and problems you encountered both racially and sexually in trying to establish yourself and finding a place for yourself in your professional career choices of first social work, teaching and then becoming a lawyer in Durban?

(P): [Phyllis talks generally about how in social work and teaching it was easier to be accepted, (as the only profession other than nursing, really open to women) but in law things were harder for women and more expensive to study. As a lawyer, Phyllis had to deal with being banned, not being able to go into court, deal with the exorbitant expense of being an attorney, a poor person' attorney].We had a price to charge your clients for certain things, to draw up a will, to do so many pages and to interview clients suddenly became like R200 a time and you know, I couldn't do that. People I worked for were ordinary, you know domestic workers and all that.

(V): And they couldn't afford the fee.

(P): No, and then if you go and work for less it looks like you are "touting" you know, and I don't know, maybe I was just sick of law when I came back.

(V): Cause you seemed to get a lot of pleasure law lecturing in Zimbabwe and I've read some of the cards that your students have sent you and your commenting on their grammar [laughter], but they seemed to be very appreciative of what you taught them. So you didn't think of going into lecturing at all?

(P): I don't know. You see I've got a hearing problem with the bomb [house bomb that exploded in her home in Lesotho in the late 1970s] and I mean if you sit in my class you've got to be very still you can't be shouting about and I keep shouting you know, for goodness sake, and I thought you know that's not very good and I had to be thinking of something and I wanted to write also, you know.

(V): And you had to stop teaching because you weren't politically neutral anymore [the banning orders prevented you from teaching], and they knew that?

(P): Yes.

(V): I don't know whether to ask you in social work, teaching or law, did you find any rewards or achievements doing those various types of work for yourself and wider, more broadly?

(P): Well the sort of achievements for me, you know when we were kicked out of Lesotho in '83, I don't know who did but somebody organised a church service and I never went to one of those. But a lady stopped me on the road, and she said will I see you at the service you know. And I thought shit, you know, where are you coming from she yes, Mafakeng, and its quite some distance by bus going, and I thought I'd better go, you know. But I was so surprised to find so many of the women that I'd helped as a lawyer, divorce, maintenance, all those things, third party claims, accident claims and all of that. And they stood up, they said you know, as if somebody was testifying, it was so funny for me seeing them say who will fill out our forms for us, who will take care of us, who will listen to us, you know and it was so, I mean that was a reward.

(V): It was flattering, your work was recognised.

(P): Yes, yes, and by the poorest of the poor, you know.

(V): It was almost like they had nothing else to give you other than to verbally tell you how they felt.

(P): Ja, ja. You know, here at least I had clients who would bring me pumpkins and sweet potatoes and pay me in kind, but in Lesotho, they had nothing, you know, they had nothing, nothing.

(V): But they were still so appreciative.

(P): Ja, they were.

(V): And then, did you ever professionally or personally support other women who might have been seen as "difficult", and even ostracised from their societies as they tried to forge a place for themselves in their careers?

(P): I think I've done that always, I can't remember uh, specific instances, but I'm not, you know, if you're trying to say that I do that for women, I do that for anybody, you know but women mainly because they were usually having a harder time, you know. There used to be these ladies that worked for me ...

(V): In South Africa?

(P): Yes, here. The one Cynthia Phakathi, she's dead now, she died of cancer. When she came to me she didn't have her Matric, and I said you know its easy to come here and work, do a bit of typing and go off. Tomorrow if something happens to me ... you will get denied a job, a Phyllis Naidoo won't give you another job, so you'd better study and the messenger who was in Std 2 or something, both of them studied. Cynthia passed her Matric, did her B.A. and was employed by Bishop Hurley first and then by Gatsha Buthelezi, but she was earning very well when she died, and she even came to see me while in exile. She was working for Buthelezi and when I sent a fax when she died, somebody said it wasn't read at the funeral, but I saw it. And she came to see me in exile and then ... Rita I mean couldn't read and write, nothing, you know, she spent time showing her what she had to do, where she had to deliver it and all, and teaching her to read, she passed her Matric and she's got a lovely job with KwaZulu, the old KwaZulu, and she phones me from time to time and I said look here is your job keeping you away from me, you know, and she said, Phyllis, you ask some terrible questions.

(V): So does she work in the KwaZulu government ...

(P): Well, no the water works, I think, but you know its KwaZulu and what you call. Both of them were divorced, and both of them stood on their feet and worked, you know. So I think that I'm very proud about, you know. And in Zimbabwe, ... oh there's another one to, Keleng, in Lesotho. She used to scrub the floors, and when you got in, in the morning, wiping floors, dusting, and clearing windows and all the rest of it and one day I was busy and she was fiddling, you know, around, and I said Keleng, for the rest of your life you're going to be on your bloody knees, scrubbing and polishing. Instead of sitting there, you see when we went to lunch they came and did another lot of cleaning and then they went off. So in between the first lot of cleaning and second lot of cleaning, they sat chatting away, and sometimes they chattered and irritated. So I said instead of this, why don't you type, there's an old type writer here, learn to type, just pick up things and type them. She was typing so well, after a while the Minister asked me have you got a new typist, so I said no, why, and he says have you seen how lovely it is, no mistakes nothing. So I said I'm very glad, and I said that's the lady. Keleng, it was a shock you

know. Domestic woman, no, no, no, so I said no that's her. And you know women who had gone to Tech for two years couldn't type as well as she did. Right, and then I said you'd better study because the government won't employ you unless you have a J.C.M., or a Form 2 or Form 3 and she did, and her husband divorced her because she was studying [laughter].

(V): There seems to be a pattern running throughout here, hey.

(P): Well, you know, men can't take that, you know they can't take that. They like placid, quiet women you know, yes ma'am, no sir, yes sir, three bags full sir [laughter]. Keleng has now gone to the top in the Ministry. You know, when I went to Lesotho, she says Phyllis, I can't believe where I am, you know.

(V): Was she writing to you from South Africa?

(P): Yes, yes, she worked in the Legal Aid Department that we set up, and now she's working for Justice Department.

(V): And those two people you mentioned earlier that you helped, was that when you were working with A.J. Gumede?

(P): Yes, yes.

(V): Okay, I just wanted to get the context right. And then why do you think people in your society (whether it be men or women) were so threatened by and disapproving of your education, career choices and overall lifestyle?

(P): … I don't know about threatened.

(V): Do you think that that is too strong a word?

(P): No, I'm just wondering, um.

(V): Because you just said previously now, men couldn't take …

(P): No, they can't, no definitely, um, and you know in fact a friend of mine, wasn't a boyfriend, but he was a boy, um, said to me you know Phyll, you are such a beautiful person, not physically beautiful, but your skills and I mean I'm so proud when I hear you talking and all that, and argue and nothing, you don't let anything go, everything is taken off the mind, and it is so refreshing,

but God I wouldn't want you as a wife [laughter].

(V): Did you ever ask him why?

(P): No, he says I'm too threatening, I'm too threatening.

(V): So you have heard that and come across that before?

(P): Yes, ja, that um, while they admire you and all that, um, they don't want an equal, they don't want an equal partnership, they want a subservient partnership, you know. But I think that if I were married to my father, I would have turfed him out you know, but my mum, such a beautiful woman in some ways but she would have taken all the shit and nonsense that my dad gave her and bare it and smile, you know, I wouldn't have been able to do that, no, no, no, no.

(V): You're a different type of person.

(P): You know its funny, just a generation away.

(V): Do any other men or women for that matter see you as difficult and threatening. Did you come across it anywhere else?

(P): Well, I'll tell you, like you know in the practice of law, what used to happen. Um, you know when Chatsworth was established, then all the lawyers used to get people coming in and complaining about, like you know, if you put a Muslim next to a Hindu there'd be problems, and this one eats pork and that one doesn't eat pork, and this one eats meat, and all those sort of things, and I mean when things got really bad, you took a pigs head and went and put it in front of a Muslim. Oh, and there would be … And they came to us lawyers thinking that, you know, and most attorneys in town, most of them, would pay I think R45 you know, you'd pay them R45 for them to write a letter threatening that fellow with action. Right. I refused to, I refused to. That used to upset a lot of people, the fact that I was the poorest of the poor. Justice Boswa who's going to be a judge soon, a woman came around, she'd been a nurse and they were walking through a shop and picked up a belt for her child, put the belt in and she went on with her list. So when she went to the till, she didn't pay for the belt … and when the floor walker stopped her she immediately went back to pay and he said no and locked her up. And she was charged the next day and she thought she would tell the Magistrate and they fined her R50, she paid the R50 and didn't think about it, but then the nursing people wrote to say we can't have a criminal working here. So then she came around, it was very late and mounted an appeal. Now I wasn't a big lawyer, you wouldn't have heard my name in this town. I was just battling to live. She had gone around, all over and everybody said no, it's too late, you won't win this thing. So when she came to me, she said she had been to Justice and I phoned Justice, and I said, hey Just, what's the matter, … this woman is not going to work. From a nurse, she would probably have to

become a domestic worker and the pay is small, how is she going to bring up these kids, they have a car, you know, a certain amount of comfort came with this job. And he said, Phyll, there's no hope in heaven for that, don't bloody well touch it, I mean he said don't touch it, you're just starting and it won't be any advertisement when you lose a case. So, I said, okay thanks. Then I looked at this thing, I got the record, there was hardly any record. I sent it to Bristow, and I remember, Judge Bristow afterwards, Nicholas Bristow saying to me, Phyllis, I'm sick and tired of all your charitable cases [laughter], I've got to pay my bloody rent. I said look here, if we win this one, we'll get some money, I'll pay you and I might even get some money. And so he said all right and send it along, let me have a look. Then he phoned me and he says I think we've got a chance, I think we've got a chance, you prepare the papers to say why we are so late, I'll prepare the law part of it so we did. And I remember, he didn't phone me, he got somebody else to do the appeal, because he was busy ... he phones me and he says we've won and I said no, he says we've won. I said no, and this woman was sitting there, and she says what, what, I said we've won, and you've got no idea how crazy she went you know. And then I phoned Justice and I said Just we won, and he said I don't believe it.

(V): Defying all odds.

(P): Ja, [laughter]. Oh it was lovely, it was a lovely victory that was, very nice, and she paid us. It was the first time we had some money in the office [laughter].

(V): That was quite a rewarding experience.

Giving Back to your Community - Role as Educator.

(V): Do you think other women at the time saw education as a means of liberation?

(P): I think most women did, most women thought of education as a liberating thing, but for themselves, for the personal, you know ... very few thought of the community at large, you know, very few people. My dearest friends are amongst them too, um, work was for them, for their back pockets, their new houses, their beach cottages, you that, we were an oppressed people to have functioned as anything, male or female, you had to. You couldn't let this thing go on for your children. I mean you couldn't, as a parent you couldn't. I mean Sahdhan used to ask me such question, you know. Mom, why can't we go to the beach, why can't we go to those places? And I said, what do you tell your child, because you black, you can't go, what does that do for you, you know. So it just had for me, it just was a must, that we had to do something about the situation we were in, and in that regard, I felt very fulfilled in whatever I did. It might have been very little, and I remember counting up at the end of the day, what have you done today? And throughout my life that's been a yard stick, have I done anything useful today, you know, ... and useful meaning, have I made it easier for some person to live. Like yesterday somebody walked in here and said to me what do you think of Peter Mokaba talking about the SACI said these kids

just don't worry about them. The ANC is an organisation, it was established to uplift people, I mean mainly the poorest of the poor, and Mokaba is in there for big business, you know, so he is never going to win, and unless the ANC's lost its road and lost its direction, um, there's something to worry about. You just have to continue working. And then he says and what is this anti-Indian feeling. So I said what do you want to do about it? I said any situation, I said the Africans have come into their own now, after all these years, and you're going to see an ugly side of that, they have to establish their nationality, their right to be here and they have the greatest right to be here, and you find some people want to establish. But then we have been here by their generosity for so long and we've lived together, and why should we doubt them now. I think that we have to continue working, as long as we are not robbing, thieving from people and as long as we continue to give and give of the best part of us, whether its advice or affection, I don't know, I think I love this place enough, my children have died for it, to me its very special, you know, very special.

(V): By being educated yourself, did you feel that you were in a powerful position to help educate and thus liberate other people (especially women)?

(P): ... yes, oh yes, and you know coming from the Indian community where we valued it, its like the Jews, you know, um I mean all the scientists and all the great talents are Jewish simply because they've been an oppressed community and the way to get out of that is education, and I think Indians, Indians saw that between the white man and the black man, there they had to educate themselves to get out of the rut, because you know, our history tells you how poor we were, awful poverty. I mean the squatter camps now tell you where the Indians were, that they've had to struggle. I had in my house, I'll tell you that story ... about 4 Indian kids, ... and they were selling newspapers. They'd come in on a Friday and they'll sell *The Leader, The Graphic* and the newspapers, like the *Daily News,* and on a Saturday they'd sell some more *Graphic* and the Saturday newspaper and they'd get Sunday newspapers and they'll sell them. But on Saturday they would have made a few pence, so they would go and buy some vegetables at the market at about 11 o'clock when its cheap and they are throwing out. So they came to me and asked if they could leave their baskets in my flat while they sold on Sunday and they'd take their baskets away. I said okay, but their things stank, some of the vegetables were rotting. And I remember my children covering up the baskets with newspaper to sort of hold the stink down. And these kids were earning these few pence, to make sure that they go to school. One kid was in Std 6, one was, Kisten, was killed at the robot there, he was about in Std 2. But they were little kids and all studying too, ... so on Sunday when they finished selling newspapers I'll have breakfast for them, and for my kids, they'd all be sitting there, and one day Harold Strachen popped in to see us and he said who are these kids Sahdhan, he couldn't talk to me because I was banned, and he was banned. And Sahdhan said these are all our newspaper boys from the area. Oh, he says ... okay next Saturday I'll bring breakfast for them. So we took to sharing, you know such a fun thing to do. But there was a great emphasis on education. If you studied my dad's life, as a teacher, um, he went to teach with a Std. 6 and then he gave himself a junior certificate, he gave himself a Matric and he gave himself about 4 teaching qualifications, he gave himself a degree, he gave himself a teaching degree at U.N.D., right and he died at the end of all of it, but in one life time, and he worked, supported his large family and he studied. Now you can imagine what education meant for him, I mean my dad's story and my story are not unique, I think the

whole Indian community, you know. Traders get a lot of money in the Indian community, and for no other reason, I think for no other reason, like the fellow that fixed up my aerial … and he charged me R650 to fix it up, um, and I said where did you learn all this, so he says I went to Tech, I went to Tech, while I was working at M.NET. … So he went and studied there and he's making money hand over … you know.

(V): So there's almost an innate driving force?

(P): Ja, ja the merchants in our society, they were easy, more comfortable because they made a better living then most Indians and they sent their kids to university, they sent their children to Fort Hare, you see a lot of Muslims there, they sent their kids overseas, to get educated, you know, So you have one branch of merchants producing lawyers, doctors, dentists, and that sort of thing, the others through teaching and education producing teachers, because it was easier to go and teach after Matric 2 years, you know, they you can go and teach and then they did their degrees while they are teaching. It was very difficult to find many people, maybe now you have lots people going full time to university, but our time right up to '70 there were lots of degrees by correspondence. You know if you do a survey at the Unisa, you will see that, you know.

(V): But then, what did the Indian community feel also about the introduction of Bantu Education and all that stuff?

(P): They objected to it, they objected to it, but education, ah, but you see like if you look at Bantu Education, there is no Maths, there's one thing you could not take Maths away from the Indian community, because they've produced some great mathematicians, and we had teachers, in fact I in my office used to have maths classes for a whole lot of Africans on a Saturday afternoon and in fact the fellow who used to teach them has just died now, about 2 months ago, Pat Samuels, and he used to come and teach them and he taught them for nothing, you know.

(V): So there was an informal education around the mainstream?

(P): Oh yes. There was a lot of private lessons, some people charged for those, some people didn't, but I mean I took bunches of kids around us. Marsha, who has just come now from Canada and opened up business, I mean she was a beautiful girl and her mother and father worked in politics but she couldn't be bothered studying, you know, a pretty girl and … for 2 weeks or 3 weeks she stayed with me and there was no "faffing" around, there was just books, and Marsha says I hated you then but I love you now [laughter].

(V): In what ways (whether formally or informally) did you help in the establishment of educational facilities and opportunities to improve the lives of women or men in South Africa (or elsewhere - Zimbabwe) through education? Did you help any kind of schools, either to raise

money or help to get teachers employed there, or did you help to teach?

(P): Ja, you know there were lots of literacy things, after independence in Zimbabwe and I went and taught English at [the University of Zimbabwe] and Lusaka after school. Um, no I didn't do anything formally. Informally, teaching domestic workers English, I taught the Cubans English ...

(V): Especially with the Indian community being renown for building up its own schools, and did you help in any of those kinds of ways?

(P): No, more teaching. My dad did that, helped raising funds, you know. But by the time I started to think about it, I thought damn it all that's the job of the government, we shouldn't be getting our own schools, but I could afford to think like that now when schools were established, but they couldn't, there were no schools and they had to establish places.

(V): And also when you became aware of it, you almost wanted to change the wider, bigger system.

(P): Yes, ja. You know I would regard that as charity, and I've been taken to task about that. Like Govan said to me why aren't you all collecting for Rag, you know, our University Rag, and I said, oh that charity nonsense. And he says, yes it is, you should have these things as rights, but you don't. So what's going to happen to all your blind in your society because you refuse to do anything. Are you going to kill them all. So whenever you reach your zenith, you would have nobody there, all clean revolutionaries [laughter]. ...

(V): After hearing that, did you change your opinion?

(P): Yes [laughter].

Tape 1 - Side B:

(V): And then, as an outsider examining your life individually and analysing the spaces you created for yourself, I cannot help but link your life to the broader struggles of women around the world. You are an important role model to aspiring young women, for your struggles in breaking new ground in South Africa, both in terms of gender and race. Also through education, you are able to write, which is a powerful tool and position to be in to leave for posterity, your views on

particular issues and your legacy. What would you consider your legacy to be?

(P): [Much laughter]. ... I don't know, if they'd want to remember me. I think it would be nice to hear people say that I did something. You know, like hearing Archie say, I didn't realise that you were so responsible for so many articled clerks in this town, you brought me from Pietermaritzburg and found me this place in Pinetown, you know, ... and you did so much. And it is just nice hearing it, you know. I don't know, I think people remember me for the nasty temper that I have, like I'd tell you off if I think you're talking nonsense, I'm indiscreet ...

(V): Okay, well that's what you think people will think. What do you think and what do you hope to be remembered by and for? What do you think your greatest contribution was?

(P): Have I made a contribution [laughter]?

(V): Of course you did, everyone in the struggle made a contribution, look what's happened now [new South Africa].

(P): I think you know, to ask me now, I think it makes me very sad because we went into the struggle for our children and for me they are not here, you know. So its very difficult to think like that now. There's no pride, just a lot of sadness, so in a way that's a bad question for me.

(V): Funnily enough, Dr Goonam also said that she's very disappointed, even though she's happy about the fact that Apartheid is supposed to be abolished, but she's very disappointed.

(P): No, I'm not, I don't hold that view, no, no. No, I'm happy that we've had a change, um. I understand the problems that this new government is faced with and that you know those people who complain that things are not happening fast, things never happen fast. In the Soviet Union, had a right, as a Soviet citizen you had a right to a house, a home and... that was from 1917, I think the right was established in the '20s and when they went out of fashion in '89, everybody wasn't housed. And there you had a right, and you can take the government to task, to make sure you get a house and they couldn't satisfy. And we, we've got, I mean you can see what's happening now, we're not being allowed to make a better life for all, because the criminal thing is going on, and so more resources have to go into crime and attending to that, not as much resources going into housing, finding jobs, those things. I understand why it's happening, I'm very proud that we're a democratic society, yes, ... no I've got no problem. Goonam's got bugs about those things and she's really ... and in fact she goes public about them.

(V): Ja, she actually put it in the newspaper ... did you read her article in *The Asian*?

(P): Yes, horrible, horrible. But she was never, never an ANC person, she was never an ANC

person. She worked in the Child Welfare, its only going out, the only organisation outside was the ANC, that's when she joined, but she was always telling people how to do things, you know, lording it over them, and they were a bunch of idiots, and I couldn't take that, I couldn't take that.

(V): And what do you think about ... the whole Indian community and their situation in South Africa?

(P): No, no. There's no Indian community in this country. While I use the word Indian, you know, its because this is how it is, but we are South Africans, and the sooner we get to terms with that, that will be success.

(V): Because at the moment, it seems as if everyone is divided, Indians are divided from the Africans, whites divided from the Indians and Africans...

(P): Ja, yes. That's your Group Areas hey, your Group Areas facilitated that all the townships are there, the Indian townships here you know, and everyone wants to look after his patch. But I'm you see, I say to my pupils ... if I were born in Britain, what would I be? British. If I were born in Spain, what would I be? Spanish. If I were born in France, what would I be? French. If I were born in Indian, what would I be, Indian. If I were born in South Africa, what would I be? South African. Where were you born? South Africa. What are you? Indian [laughter]. You know, and that's the lesson that has to be taught, that we are all South Africans, we've got to knock these things out, Coloured, Indian, white, you know.

(V): And its a matter of a transition process.

(P): Yes. It's a difficult process, you know, its very difficult, you know, it's like child birth. It's a bloody difficult thing to do, have a beautiful baby, and society also, And you can see Nelson today is walking now as we speak in Cape Town looking at all the ravished areas there, and I'm sure that his heart must be bleeding because we didn't struggle for this, you know. But there are forces who want to keep the old society, you know, and that force is not only white. No no, no. There are Indians in that, there are Coloureds in that, and their are Africans. Your Gatsha Buthelezi belongs there, you know. So people want this and they are not interested in a better life for all, they're interested in a better life for themselves, you know. So we've got a long way to go. I mean you can see the joy with which waters being brought, water that commodity that you've never had to think about, I've never had to think about it in my life. But where the bulk of the people in this country have never had access to it. You know, we've lived our lives here, some of us, and never thought about that. It's terrible you know. You know, like I did a survey on a young boy who was executed and he came from Outshoorn. Now what do you know Outshoorn for? ... Kango Caves, its beautiful things. Its ostriches, because that's ostrich country. But this little town, of Outshoorn, there's about 100,000, maybe 150,000 people right, mainly while, all white nobody else at the time, there may be some changes now, and there was a little

location there, little in size but in numbers of people living there, it was double. That's like it was everywhere. And here there were two toilets, two waterholes, for all these people. So, about the time I was doing this thing, some whites came from South Africa to see the ANC. So I said look, this is what I'm studying at the moment. Supposing the ANC got into power, supposing. What would they do in respect of Outshoorn? They'd make sure the toilet facilities are there, right. Maybe there won't be any money to do the streets and the lights and all those things, and keep your gardens watered over here [Outshoorn], but will that matter if we've going to give ... you know what I mean. And that's our dilemma now, that's our dilemma now, to produce. And you see if we don't do that, we're going to have this situation we have now, where crime is rampant. You can't have some people having so much and others who don't have anything. You can't have a society like that. It's not Christian, no religion can tolerate that, you know, and certainly we atheists can't [laughter]. ...

Age and Retirement.

(V): A particularly interesting facet that I discovered while analysing each of your lives, is the fact that you never retired as such, but continue working, with full and active lives. What are your views on forced early retirement, age dependency (especially financially) and unproductivity for women?

(P): I've never had to think about retiring and all that, but I had to think very sharply when my brother took the package and he's about 50 I think, and he did it because it was the politically correct thing to do in the Cape, where there is a surplus of teachers, you know, and he thought the new order can't afford to have, so he took this package. But it was devastating for him, in the sense that he felt useless, what to do, and then the package also tells you what you can do, you can't work in any government departments and all those things. So I think that he had to look for what sort of things he can do, to create, like small business you know, and things like that, and buying fish and selling fish, and he thought what the hell. He's had a fairly lovely teaching career, headmaster um, was teaching kids about Bantu Education in all the Indian schools, long before it was thought of, had Coloured children and Xhosa children at his school, you know, he did some good things, and now there's no challenge, you know. Um, I think he's gone into dress making and selling things in the boot of his car, his family's doing that as well.

(V): And for you personally, you don't think you've experienced retirement, ... you haven't retired?

(P): No, no, no. I don't think I will, I'll drop dead first.

(V): Exactly, this is the point I'm trying to make. All the women I've chosen, including yourself, you haven't retired, you've almost defied the whole notion.

(P): No, every now and then, when somebody asks me why I'm not practising law, I say but I need to retire, you know, but that's not what I mean, because I get up in the mornings and sometimes I'm there at my computer at 5 o'clock in the morning and I go back to sleep at 8 o'clock in the morning because I'm tired [laughter]. Crazy!

(V): But there's also this issue that comes up with women especially, not so much with men, that women during their lifetimes have had to have children, and therefore when they've worked, they've worked for a certain period, they have to stop work either find new jobs or go back to that work, so their time has been interrupted, which means that their pension packages and all that have been less, they're much lower than men's. Which means when they're forced to retire, they have a much lower standard of living, especially single women, who have either been divorced or never chose to marry, making it very difficult for them, and this is one of the reasons why in many of the cases and examples I've chosen, women have continued to work because they couldn't afford to stop.

(P): No, I don't think I could afford to stop. No, I couldn't, I couldn't. I had no insurance or anything like that. You know, my thing was if Nelson and ... all of them have no insurance to come out of Robben Island, why should I, not that I had any to tuck away, you know, but you know, you could have made R1 a month sort of thing.

(V): And also being in exile for so many years, I mean you weren't actually practising and working in South Africa.

(P): Yes, that didn't help, no, no, that's true.

(V): So how have you managed to support yourself in the last say 10 years?

(P): Um, I worked for Lawyers for Human Rights for a little while, and it took me, took Lawyers for Human Rights to help me out, you know, as sick as I was with my son, because I couldn't deal with people when they came to me, I started crying with them. That was one of the reasons why I didn't go back to law ... And um, then I've been writing articles for newspapers and getting paid R150 a time, so if I do two, I used to be able to pay my rent, so living off the smell of an oil rag [laughter]. But not bad you know, managing, managing.

(V): Do you get a pension at all?

(P): Now, I've got a beautiful pension, first time in my life [laughter].

(V): You've got it this year, only this year [1997]?

(P): Ja, only this year, June, June I think, ja. The day I got mine ... Nelson bought a house for a million rand [laughter], do you know that. But I must tell you that I was offered a position in Parliament hey, oh, ja. But I refused.

(V): Why did you refuse?

(P): I think I was really bad when my son died.

(V): All right, it was just before you came out of exile ... so it was just a really bad time for you.

(P): Yes, yes.

(V): If that hadn't happened, would you probably have ...

(P): I might have gone. ...When we were coming back into the country, I was one of the few women, that were appointed to the Working Committee, coming back into the country. Its in the papers. ... So I must have been pretty good to get the N.E.C. to appoint me, you know. But when I came back, suddenly the loss of my son became insurmountable.

(V): I am interested to know your views on age/sex inequalities and prejudices (the double standard of ageing), where ageing is a positive aspect of men's lives, but not so for women. What are your views on ageing and the treatment of the aged in South Africa?

(P): Again, I have not thought about ageing as a factor in my life. Only I think, the rate I've thought about it was when I got up in the morning and I couldn't walk and I thought shit, something's happening to me [laughter]. Um, no I've suddenly begun to think about ageing and if I weren't writing, I'd be applying myself to the problems of the aged. As somebody went to Cuba, she brought back a picture of old women doing exercises, in the morning, you know, and I thought that's nice, that sort of thing to help you keep fit, and the mind and whatever. I've also been aware of the fact that women tend to have very little in their pensionable ages, as against men, and in drafting agreements with marriage and break up of marriage, I've been very careful about those things, to make sure that the woman wasn't disadvantaged by it, you know. ...

(V): And about the treatment of old age people in old age homes?

(P): Yes, I haven't done anything about it, but I'm becoming intensely aware of the problems of old age as, you know, my body starts cranking up.

(V): And also, you haven't had the time to think about those kinds of things, running, and trying to survive and being in exile ...

(P): Yes, there's that but um, I haven't. Sometimes I'm stopped on the road by old people and I help them with their parcels and things, but I've begun to be burdened with my own ... and I can't lift too many parcels and all that myself, so I don't know. But in fact I've wanted to, ah recently, I believe old age associations, I want to go and get involved in work like that. I think that there's a lot of work, but that work's been kept in the white community, and I think that it needs to be spread out. But you see I can't leave what I'm doing now to go and involve myself. I would if I finish what I have to do, I might. The only work I want to involve myself is old age and the problems. And I think while I can, while I have some energy, I can still do it, you know, and I'm hoping that if this is finished by the end of this year, and my story about my sons I've done by June next year, I'll definitely. That's the area of work I'm going.

(V): Do you think that age is a socially constructed category, and do you see yourself as old (physically, mentally)?

(P): Not yet, it's coming.

(V): I mean there are people in there 90's that don't feel themselves old.

(P): Ja, I'm getting letters from people overseas who are 90+ and who write with such authority. In fact I got a letter from Ray, you can see she's sick because it's really miserable writing, you know, and I have problems reading it. ...

(V): So you do think that age is a socially constructed category ...?

(P): Ja, ... but I think, you see people think when you say you're 60, God really, you know [laughter] and then it's the first time I think about it, you know. Um, but I say with the sugar and high blood pressure that's hit me recently, I'm beginning to find my body slowing down, you know. But not really, I can't walk, and that's becoming a nuisance now, ah, but other than that I can work a day, I mean these guys here [referring to younger roommates] they get tired and go to sleep and I continue working, you know. So I still have some energy.

(V): From what I've read about your life, you have met many 1000s of people, but despite this do you consider yourself to be lonely now in old age, i.e. were the many sacrifices you had to make personally for your professional life worth while and thus justified in the long run?

(P): No, I don't consider myself to be lonely. Sometimes I say it to irritate some people. I am too busy to be lonely. You know I've started reading Cathy's thesis, and I mean that is so absorbing, you know, how can you be lonely. And then looking at Chris's life, at the moment I'm taking him out into exile. That is such fascinating stuff, there's no chance to think of yourself being alone, you've got to do that job. You know you are not thinking of yourself. I don't know, I think I'm probably peculiar, I don't have these normal experiences [laughter].

(V): Okay, and then to just add to what you're saying now, obviously the many sacrifices you had to make personally were worth it in the long run?

(P): No, no sacrifice of mine my dear. ... No, no. Definitely not. I knew when I got involved in politics, there would be certain penalties. I was, I think prepared for that, but I don't think that I was prepared for the death of my children you know.

(V): I don't think anyone could be prepared for that.

(P): So, yes we did know that we'd have to ... I mean I left my home and walked out and went into exile. And when in exile I was kicked out within 24 hours and I had to move out of there, all those things. I don't think those are sacrifices. I think those things, like Nelson's 27 years you would never call it a sacrifice, he won't let you call it a sacrifice. It was necessary for the struggle, you know.

Difficult Women.

(V): ... Did people in your life time classify/consider/see you as "difficult" (progressive approach, outlook on life, outspoken and forthright personality ...

(P): Scandalous!!!

(V): [Laughter], um, or is it something that you've only thought about now, that I mention it?

(P): No, its always been there, but it's never bothered me. Like the time I wore a bathing costume and they called me a bitch, it didn't bother me at all. And I remember telling Neil Sykes, you know, I went into the sea with a bathing costume, and he says what else would you go into the sea with [laughter].

(V): ... And do you think it was more your personality as such, your outspoken, blunt, as you put it way or your physical appearance or ...

(P): All of those things. No I was not a pretty person, but I sort of made up for it by being this um, extremely outspoken person, I had no problem asking somebody some question, you know. And my dad used to say don't you realise it hurts. I said why should it if it's the truth? But he says the truth hurts you know.

(V): Do you think that you were viewed as a "difficult" person because of the conditions you and other women had to face and thus respond unconventionally to (to create spaces for yourselves), or were you a rebel?

(P): A rebel, no, ... I think both, I think both. Um, I think you know, people say it's okay for you Phyll, but, with that one saying you're a bitch, it doesn't matter to you, but we can't do those things. I think they were a little jealous of me, what I did, and how I did it and all that. But I didn't think I was doing anything great, you know. I think my dad brought us up in what he considered to be the truth, and that's all I was doing, I was being honest. Like you know, when I told Mrs Notgut that I'm at university only so that I could earn a better pay packet, and she was finished by it, but that was the truth, you know what I mean, no big deal for me, you know. So I didn't consider myself a rebel, and now when you put all these questions to me, I'm putting answers to them. But in fact I don't think, I think that I was going out of my rocker, that's why I had to study, you know, I didn't do it because I wanted to educated myself, I studied because I wanted a piece of paper that would tell me I could earn a better wage, you know. And those things, and I remember Mrs Notcutt saying to me, my God, you're so honest, they're going to knock you around, you know. Life is not going to be easy for you, you cannot sustain this honesty, you know [laughter]. And I didn't understand what the hell she was talking about, as if this was so bad. But I had begun to see it, ja.

(V): But you must have also come across many people, ... and almost brushing against them because of your views?

(P): Yes, of course.

(V): So it must have come across ... to you that my views might have been slightly different to other people's. Didn't that ever cross your mind?

(P): It did, of course. I can't remember any sort of incidents.

(V): I mean and also the fact that you mentioned earlier that you used to wear pants, I mean that was very different to what other people were doing at the same time?

(P): Pants, yes, yes, oh ja. ...

(V): So there might have been a bit of a rebel inside of you?

(P): Ja, possible, I didn't really ... you know, my brother, when I was bombed, ah he wrote me a letter saying you are indestructible, you know, and I couldn't understand what he was saying. But he said you've been our example, you've helped us with our studies, you insisted on working, you know, you've been so much to us, that if you had been knocked out by that bomb it would have been devastating because you are indestructible - this long word he used, indestructible.

(V): Do you think that other women saw you as a threat, with your status of being divorced and the fact that you had a career?

(P): Oh, yes, oh, yes, always. And most women, it's a great threat to most women. You don't have many women friends as a divorced woman and especially if they are married. They think that you are easy and lots of friendships went overboard because of that. Oh, ja. I mean you could be talking to, if you were married and you were talking in a crowd, that would be okay, but if you were divorced and talking, and um, women looked at you as if ... you know, and yet they'd ask you to come, you know, they'd invite you, so you wonder why they did that, you know ... ja, very contradictory.

(V): Because I read in some of your letters that your friends wrote to you, some of them were very supportive of your decision because they also traits of M.D. that outsiders didn't know, but then there were others that were also quite slating.

(P): Oh, yes, oh, yes, I mean the S.A.C.P. people in London said that if I sought to come to England, they would make sure through Barbara Castle that I didn't. ... And yet, you know, when I went to Lusaka, and nobody would talk to me, in the Women's Section, I didn't understand so I asked Ray what's going on, and even Mac, who I had assisted for so long, suddenly he's too busy to talk to me, and he says his house is in a secured area, and meanwhile I heard the German Ambassador was going to his house, so I said what security there. And ah, he didn't want me around. And then I found out that M.D. had gone to Lusaka and told them that I was having an affair with the Special Branch and that I couldn't be trusted and that I also had access to money that the ANC sent to me and that I had enriched myself on it. So then when I heard that I went to Oliver Tambo and he wouldn't see me for the whole bloody day ...

Tape 2 - Side A:

(P): ... um, and I said to Oliver Tambo, I just need a word, I want to tell you that I believe on the

basis of what was said to you by my ex-husband, you've decided to ignore me. I said I've worked in the country underground from 1961, and now in 1978 you'd think that's the whole host of experience the ANC needs to hear. But I said no matter, on the basis of what M.D. said to you, you've now decided that I should be ignored. That's fine with me, you have my resignation, and that's it, good bye. And I said from you as a lawyer, one rule in law is that you hear the other side. But if you have chosen not to do that, then I will have nothing to do with this whole organisation. He was so shattered. He's a wonderful, wonderful human being, ... I walked out. I cracked and I screamed and walked out. And a went out and Jack Simons was waiting for me, talking to his colleague and telling him what had happened. Oh he was so thrilled, I had come there and somebody tell them off and all the rest of it. Very nice man. We cooked supper together and we were chatting. Then at about 9 o'clock Oliver Tambo opens the door and comes in, and he says I want to talk to you. So I said no, I have nothing to say to you, I've said what I had to. And Jack [laughter] he just turned around and said, Phyllis you will talk to the President!!! [laughter]. Anyway, then we started talking, and we went until about 4 o'clock in the morning, we were out in the garden, and he said, I think the dews getting to us, we're going to be ill over here. But he was so apologetic ...

(V): And he listened to your side, I hope?

(P): Oh, ja, oh ja, oh ja. What moneys have you sent me? You have not sent me any money. I've worked my butt off for stamps for Robben Island, for ... stamps for putting on documents. I said all that R25 a time, you tell me you sent money that I've, out of my own pocket I've kept Robben Island going. He was so shocked and he was in tears. And he says, you know when people come out of Robben Island, we, no we, but I give them a greater status because I feel that no I should have been there myself.

(V): He was in a difficult situation?

(P): Yes, very difficult. But he said to me that he offered M.D. a position in Lusaka and M.D. didn't want it, he was going to London ... but he just went to London, put his kids into school, one went to Cuba and one went to Hungary. No but he behaved viciously to me, you know, viciously. I mean, however much I hurt him, and I did hurt him, I confessed to him that I had slept with somebody [Basil], yes, and that this is the confession I'm telling now, this is what I did. You don't hit me back with an action, with that which I told you, and that's what he did. And the divorce summons was built on that. But I mean you don't. Somebody tells you something like that, and don't forget the premise on which we married. He was a Communist, I wasn't when we married, and he said to me that, listen here, I know that you've been brought up in a something which maintains that marriages are made in heaven but I want to tell you that if for any reason that things don't work out for us, then we must just walk away from this and you will have to accept it if I walk out. I mean it didn't hit me at that time what was being said, I just thought what rubbish this is, what rubbish, you know. But when I chose to walk out, then it was all hell.

(V): It didn't apply to you?

(P): No, no, it would have applied to him. Isn't that awful hey? You know there is this old man, about 80 something, he comes and it would be nice for you to talk to him to find out about M.D., because he sought of saw through M.D. you know from day one, you know, and I didn't, I didn't.

(V): Do you think any men saw you as a threat because you did not have to rely or depend on men's achievements and position to define your life?

(P): All the time. I remember somebody coming to me saying look here, its Christmas time and attorneys usually give the messenger of the court a bottle of booze or something, you know, a fountain pen, but no such thing from me. And I could see them look at me you know. I said you know they are paid to do their work and I'll pay them to do their work. I'm not going to do this. Oh, but you might need things done in a hurry, I said then they can charge a bigger fee. If to do something in a hurry for me, a special favour, then I don't want it coming out of a bottle of booze. So they couldn't take that sort of fastidiousness away, they thought I was a woman and that I should be much softer in those days, but I won't, I won't, I won't allow that sort of bribery and corruption.

(V): And what about family, male members or ...

(P): They were, you know, some members of my family were studying but they were threatened by my studying as well.

(V): By competing with them?

(P): Competing with them, and then when I did very well, you know I got the highest mark in English in '57 and no Indian had got a mark like that. It was 20 out of 25 which was 80 %. The most, the best Indian student got at that time was 16 out of 25, so I got 20 out of 25. Ah, it was hysteria, you know, they could not believe that a black, a "coolie" like me could get this. And a lot of fellows were very threatened by that, very threatened.

(V): Do you think that was because you were almost showing them up, competing on their own ground?

(P): Some of them had been at University for five years and hadn't got their English, and I came in first year and [aced it].

(V): And M.D., did he ever feel threatened by your position and your work?

(P): No, I don't think so.

(V): And any other ANC members?

(P): No, they all used me, you know, they wanted something done, they'd get it done. So I didn't feel that.

(V): They weren't threatened by your position because you were just one of the Comrades helping, whether it be man or woman?

(P): No, easy no problem with that.

(V): Related to these questions of women being difficult is the fact that they spent most of their lives as single women (whether choosing never to marry or as yourself, getting divorced). For yourself and for these women, I am not taking marriage to be the expected natural thing to do. In your particular case, you may have appeared "difficult" because of your two divorces. Would you mind me asking you some personal questions related to this?

(P): You've been bloody personal all the time, I don't know why you're apologising, go on.

(V): When you look back now, can you recall why, at the time, you decided to get married the first time?

(P): No, easy [laughter]. Well I came from a very conservative home and I couldn't go to parties or even stand on the front verandah to watch the view. Oh ja. So marriage was a way out of that. That's why I got married.

(V): And when you first got married, how old were you?

(P): 20, and it was a hell of a mistake, and I knew it within a couple of months, that I'd made a mistake. But I wasn't going to live the mistake which my father expected me to.

(V): So marriage, your first time around, anyway, was a way to escape, to get out of a conservative ...

(P): Yes, I could live on my own, you know, I had a room for myself, go out. Funnily enough when I had a room for myself I never went out at all.

(V): [Laughter]. Oh but when you were in your family's home, you couldn't go out but you wanted to. Its probably a typical reaction. After your first marriage did not work out, you decided to get married again fairly soon after and it appeared to be a fresh start for you. What were you seeking in your second marriage?

(P): Hmm, about 10 years later. I don't know that I was searching for anything. But he was political, by which time he was political, by which time I was political and we thought it was a good thing to do. Some people say that I wasn't in love at all with M.D., you know that I was so busy patching up his shirts and things that I thought that was love.

(V): What do you think now?

(P): I don't know, I think when I look back and I wonder if I've ever been in love, you know, I wonder. But there were some parts of our marriage with M.D. which were very good.

(V): And bad?

(P): Yes, just the horrible part was the divorce, that's all. Other than that it was quite good.

(V): Because I just have to wonder, because earlier in the interview you mention that you saw, towards the end of the marriage, M.D. as a Stalinist figure, a Commissar, almost as a dictator. And I'm just interested to know what kind of attraction there was for you to him at the beginning. Were you also caught up by the aura around M.D., an attractive man, with an allure around him, as you say earlier, he was a political figure. Do you think that you were caught up in this by this whole politically powerful role model almost?

(P): I think so, I think that's possible. I don't know, I can't think you know, our marriage ended up so badly, that I can't think of a good period earlier. There must have been something ...

(V): Cause there must have been something that attracted you to him and him to you?

(P): Ja, there must have been something. Well, he ... when his sisters found that M.D. was interested in me, I mean the one said to me you're a divorcee and a Christian, you can't marry my brother, and I though fuck you [laughter], but I don't know. P. Sello said tome once, you were never in love with that fellow, I think you liked me more than you liked M.D., you know, and I said then why did I marry him. Then he says you felt sorry for him and you don't know the

difference between sympathy and love. But I don't know. He was very attractive, politically, very attractive, you know.

(V): Like a role model political fighter?

(P): Yes, yes, yes.

(V): There are many comments about that, what he was like, as a political fighter, but personally, you can see it from a different angle now.

(P): You know, Goonam, I don't know whether you discussed M.D. with her.

(G): She briefly said she knew him, not so personally, more in the political light, and in that way he was a wonderful man, she said, and that he fought for people's rights. So it was just quite interesting to hear your version of the personal side of the man, when most people only saw the political side of him.

(P): Ja, you see, for me it was a betrayal of a trust I placed in him. He said if you were in prison and I were out I wouldn't have done less than you had, which he sort of understood my position. But in fact he used that and in court he was so ugly about it. I mean he had me standing in the box for three days, oh I could never forgive him, no never. In fact when my son, the big one was killed, and Sukhuthi brought her father tome, and he put out his hand to pick me up from, I was sitting on a chair and I said don't touch me. I didn't realise until I said it, and Sha looked at me sort of in shock.

(V): So many years afterwards, still the hatred?

(P): Ja, ja.

(V): Having agreed that your second marriage didn't work out, did you ever come to see marriage as a constraint on your political or personal life?

(P): No, you see after the divorce I was so busy working I never thought about these things. I've never thought about it.

(V): I suppose also being married to a political figure you were working for the same line of work ...

(P): Ja, ja. And I continued to work, and after the divorce I just went on doing the things I had always done, writing letters to Robben Island, and getting ... and he tried to break into that, he told Robben Island that I was doing things, I was bad, he sent his sister to go and visit Mac. Mac was married to his sister, and tell him that I had eloped on the first night of the marriage. And somebody phones me and finds me at home, and they say hey, what you're doing there, you know, and she put the phone down after she said that. And I phoned her back and said if you don't tell me what that remark meant then there's going to be serious trouble. I'm coming to Joburg, I'll break my banning order, and if I get arrested its going to be trouble for you. Then she said, no I was visiting my son on Robben Island and I heard Tim say to her husband that you eloped from him. Ja, it was really harsh stuff that they treated me to.

(V): But you can also see though that I would have be a constraint to a certain extent on your marriage as although you were fighting for the same cause, the fact that you had to go into exile and your husband was arrested and placed in Robben Island for 5 years, I mean that means you were so far apart from each other and you had to take on the burden of a family, home, food. ... I mean that is a definite constraint on a marriage, a very physical constraint on a marriage.

(P): Ja, very. And we had drifted apart by then. By the time he had got out of Robben Island, we were so far apart. I didn't recognise this man, in was so funny, and having to share a home with him, never shared a bed.

(V): It was very strange. And also I was quite amazed to find that he lashed out at you so harshly especially after the fact that you put him through two diplomas/degrees at the university, and how you had to work to earn the money to be able to send it to him so that he could get his books and all that.

(P): Ja, ja.

(V): Did he ever say thank you or appreciate what you did for him?

(P): Not a thing, no and all the law reports, and there were lots of law reports, that I had bound up and all the rest of it, he gave to his brother. It was really harsh stuff. No I've kept little books for my children, Christmas cards, birthday cards, that sort of thing, you know, but that was there's, Sukhuthi had one, Sha, Suhdhan. And when we got to court one day, Judge Jacob was my council, he was blind, so he says, what's going on Phyll, what's going on there. I said I don't know, the judge seems to be busy. He says they've asked for an order, they've asked for an order. I said I don't know, you know I wasn't following the law part of it. So then I hear Judge Feetham saying in all my years at the bar, I have never met any parent who has done this for her child. And he says I cannot remove these away from her, these must go to her. And I didn't know what it was, when I looked up, then I see it was these scrap books. I was so shocked at the meanness of this bugger, I didn't want an order, he could have had those things you know.

(V): He sunk low just to try and get back at you in almost any way that he could.

(P): Oh, again and again, again and again.

(V): ... didn't people see, including the judge and lawyer, what you had done for your family, and for your children, that you were not a bad mother. How could they take your kids away from you?

(P): He cried in court, M.D. cried in court, and he softening up the judge and so he looks like the hero. And I wanted to kill him, man. He took my children to court, Sahdhan, Sha, Sukhuthi and said to the judge he wants an order that the children be given to him. And the judge said, send those children back to Durban immediately. And yet, you see, while I went to struggle for freedom, she was "prostituting" her body.

(V): And that's all they could think about and see? So was that his argument all the way through?

(P): Yes, more or less, more or less.

(V): And with your defence, they wouldn't even hear your side of it?

(P): No, they listened to us, but you see when I left the kids, the two boys with him, I had done wrong for myself. But I didn't want M.D. to be lonely without the kids when he was out of prison. That hit me badly, you know, that I was prepared to "farm out" your children, you know, sort of thing, and because I was house arrested, I used to send the children out to the family. And now he made out that I did that to "prostitute" my body. I tell you it was vicious hey. You know, the other day when you reminded me about all these things, and today, its not nice, I want to bury that.

(V): But its quite unusual that they split the custody giving the two sons to M.D. and giving your daughter to you.

(P): Ja, ja.

(V): And then there's that whole issue where she went to England with them and then fought her way to get back here with you and she had such a difficult time there in Lesotho trying to adapt again.

(P):Yes, yes, oh what a time she had.

(V):Yes, and what exile and divorce does to your children?

(P): Oh, yes, but that's a whole other story.

(V): Do you think they ever held it against you?

(P): The children, yes I think they did, the boys. The boys felt very sorry for their father, and it was Max Sisulu who talked to Sahdhan and Sha was away for 10 years in Cuba, but when he came back he came back to me. He would write one letter a year. And then M.D.'s family were very nasty to me. They said you know your mom's disgracing us and saying nasty things about us, so both Sha and Sahdhan write to me saying, mom unless you stop talking about my family we won't be writing to you. So I just pretended that I didn't get that letter and went on writing to them. And yet you know, throughout all the years, you'll see it was my letters to my children, you know, and even though they resented and were supportive of M.D., it was my letters to them that kept them going.

(V): And also you'd probably find that they were hurt and angry in the beginning but time is a great healer.

(P): Yes, yes. No, Sahdhan was wonderful. I mean I went to stay with him on the farm .. in '87.

(V): And he was fine.

(P): Hmm, no problem. We went for long walks early in the morning, had a lovely time. He wanted me to cut his hair, you know.

(V): Would you change anything you did, or approach life differently?

(P): No, I don't think ... I think I've learnt that marriage isn't all its put out to be, I don't think I'll marry.

(V): So if you had a choice again, you would never marry?

(P): No, no, no. I think its much nicer being just free and having the affairs that you want to have, not having a fixed marriage on your neck all the time. And of course my children, you know, if it were possible to live my life again, I want my sons with me. They were great human

beings those two, both of them, top of the class, 92 % Sha, Sahdhan a little lower down,

Sukhuthi couldn't hold a candle to them [laughter].

(V): And politically.

(P): Oh, wonderful kids ... and then I found a book, copy of a scrap book. School. I didn't think it was something to do for school. He was talking about Fidel Castro, and did some homework and when I found it, in fact Mogan was with me, another lawyer, and I said what is this, you don't write this. I said tomorrow if there's a search for people in your school, your teacher will tell the Special Branch, look Sahdhan. You don't tell them these things. And I remember him saying, but you have to be truthful mom.

(V): The second generation still carrying it through [from Phyllis's father] [laughter].

(P): Ja, to be truthful.

(V): So he said he wanted to be truthful and ...

(P): And I said, well if you go on like that, they'll pick you up and then you see people dying in detention, what happens then. He said, well, its okay to die for the truth ma.

(V): And then, in your political career, would you change anything?

(P): No.

(V): Nothing, nothing you regret?

(P): No. I think I would have liked to have been more effective. You see I'm not the platform type of person, standing on platforms and talking, I keep doing things and I'll still enjoy doing them over again because there is a lot of satisfaction in doing things.

(V): You tended to do the nitty-gritty, the underlying organisational work?

(P): Yes, that nobody wants to do.

(V): But without it ...

(P): It doesn't move. ...

Relationships with the Other Women under Discussion.

(V): Can you tell me more about your relationship both professionally and personally, with the other "difficult" women, such as Dr Goonam, Mabel Palmer, Killie Campbell and Sibusisiwe Makanya?

(P): I don't know, Killie Campbell, or Makanya. I do know Dr Goonam. She was my family doctor.

(V): For a long time?

(P): Yes, a long time, long time. I mean the day Sha had his first asthmatic attacked I rushed with him to her and she gave him his breath back.

(V): And was this in Durban?

(P): Durban, ja, and I also worked with Goonam in the Human Rights Committee. We were looking after the banished people in Natal.

(V): What did you do for this organisation, sorry?

(P): There were a number of people banished from different parts, you know the Bantu Authorities Act, people who objected to their cattle being culled or their land being taken away from them, who were taken out of say the Transkei and thrown into Northern Natal, Northern Transvaal was taken and thrown here, all over people were thrown out. So you came, supposing you went to an area where you were banished to, you didn't know the language, you didn't know the people, with about R4's or something they gave you, you were ... people died, lots of people died. Matthew Sekukune he died because he starved to death.

(V): So did you help people adapt [live/survive]?

(P): We got them more food, we got them reading material and we tried to get the orders changed, you know, legally. Ja, Helen Joseph did that work too, so I and Helen Joseph did the Natal work.

(V): Wasn't Dr Goonam also Suks's doctor when she was born?

(P): Yes, when she was born, she was. She came ... she had been, she took me to a hospital and then she left me there and baby was born soon after but she came in the morning. At 7 o'clock I phoned her and said come and take me out of here, and so she came and took me out.

(V): And then when you were in exile, did you keep in contact, in Lesotho and Zimbabwe? I know that you wrote to her a couple of times when she was in Australia and India.

(P): Ja, okay.

(V): And when you were in Zimbabwe, when she was practising at that Geriatric Hospital?

(P): Geriatric, yes, I used to see her then and then we were in the ANC together.

(V): Women's League?

(P): No, just the ANC, we didn't have a Women's League there. So ja, but I remember her best of all as our family doctor, she was always there for us, you know, and she refused to charge us, ja, she refused to charge us. She wouldn't.

(V): And then what kind of work did you do, or similarly for the ANC in Zimbabwe?

(P): We belonged to the ANC, I did work on the death penalty, propaganda, you know. Um worked on the pass laws for about 2 years.

(V): And then what did you see as Goonam's most important contribution?

Tape 2 - Side B:

(P): She worked very hard during the Passive Resistance, and that was the '46 Passive Resistance, and she went into prison I think once or twice, I'm not sure and I think she did six months or something, but I was just coming, I was young, yes very young then, and ja, she was at her best, and then she seemed to fade out and she was doing child welfare work and doing a lot of that, out of the political scene and she comes in when the Group Areas is threatening, and she made the silly mistake of listening to the Special Branch who said they were coming to

search her house and she packed up and left, you know. Did she tell you that?

(V): Yes, she said she had fled?

(P): So you can't examine people's fear, people are afraid.

(V): And she was a great platform speaker?

(P): Yes, she was.

(V): She had the nak of speaking and getting people's attention.

(P): Yes, and she was crude and she'd be offensive, so she was effective in that way.

(V): And personally?

(P): Personally, I'm not too fond of her.

(V): Probably because you are both such difficult people yourselves, maybe too similar in many respects.

(P): Yes, maybe, maybe, but um she's got a harsh tongue, you know, I have a harsh tongue too.

(V): She's quite outspoken, just like you are.

(P): Ja, ja [laughter].

(V): Okay, and then, what about Mabel Palmer, Catherine [my supervisor] was telling me that you knew a lot about her?

(P): Mabel Palmer, you know when I wanted to do the degree, I had that letter with me for a long time, ... no it's gone ... but I'm lucky to have what I have. But I wrote to her saying that I want to study because I'm really going off my rocker.

(V): And how old were you here about?

(P): About 21, right and she asked to see me and I went to see her. And then she said, you know, how much are you earning? I said 9 pounds, and she says, 3 pounds 8 shillings a month, you can't afford that, and I was paying 5 pounds rent already, so it was very difficult. She had every right to say go to hell you know, but she didn't and she said okay lets try you out. If you fail in the fees, if you don't do well at your studies, out you go, so I thought fair enough, and I accepted it. And then she wanted somebody to secure my loan or something?

(V): What, stand as a guarantor?

(P): For these fees, and she said let's send it to your father. And I said don't send it to him.

(V): Is this after the divorce now, to your first husband?

(P): Ja, first divorce, first divorce. And she sent it and of course my father sent it back saying I don't know this woman [laughter].

(V): Is this when there was still a lot of resentment with the family?

(P): Oh ja, ... not family resentment, it was only my dad.

(V): Your father, he was disappointed with you?

(P): No, the fact that marriage was something cosure in those days, you know, he didn't like it at all, and yet he knew why, he, better than anybody he knew why, so anyway ...

(V): So she sent this form to him to sign and he ...

(P): He refused. She was angry, you know. She wanted to know what the hell is this sort of thing, you know. Why would your father do a thing like this? I said no, do you want the truth? She said yes for Godsake, you know. So I said okay, and I said you know, I chose not to live with my husband and I've divorced him since and my father can't accept this. She says don't tell me we've produced an idiot like that at this University [laughter]. You said that I didn't. So, she was very shocked, she was very really upset, the old lady, and she said, okay then will you come and read for me now.

(V): Was this towards the end of her life?

(P): Ja.

(V): 1958, cause she died in 1958.

(P): 1958, ja. I was, ... this was '56, right.

(V): Cause her eyesight was going?

(P): Yes, so I used to go and read, usually some detective stories. I think once or twice a week I used to do that. ... She died in '58 hey, I got my degree in '58.

(V): And how did you manage to finance yourself in that last year when it was so difficult?

(P): I starved, 5 pounds rent, 3 pounds 8 shillings, that's 8,50 out of 9 pounds. And I think I used to got a little bit of extra money when I got my first year four subjects. Ja, so it went up to about 12 pounds.

(V): And you were still teaching at this time?

(P): Yes, throughout I taught and studied. I mean sometimes you work with your assignments until one or two in the morning and then you've got to be up, because we taught in platoon schools in those days, you know, you have to be out on the road at 6 o'clock in the morning. So it was tough days, it was tough and I remember getting asthma badly and not eating properly, having only water to drink over the weekends unless my mom sent some food for me.

(V): So when you father refused to stand as your guarantor, Palmer didn't kick you out.

(P): No, that is why I had to read to her.

(V): Oh, so it was almost like a compensation?

(P): Like a penalty. But I didn't do it for very long because I can't remember too much about it. She was wonderful, she'd get me to pronounce my words, you know, she helped me.

(V): What did you think of her towards the end of her life, she was quite an unusual woman don't you think?

(P): Yes.

(V): Can you remember clearly?

(P): No, I can't, but I liked her, I liked her, because she told you straight out, you know, no bullshitting with her.

(V): And do you know that she also got divorced?

(P): No, really.

(V): Yes, so that's maybe why she also sympathised with you, was able to understand the difficulties, because she was only married for a very short time as well.

(P): Yes, yes, really.

(V): Yes, it was for about 6 months.

(P): When you finish writing about her, I'd like to see it because um, in fact I have to, when I write about myself, speak about her, because she made it possible.

(V): She made it possible for you to get your law degree?

(V): Yes, yes, no my first degree and without her being there ... you know Prof. Sweeney didn't want me to do law, but she wanted me to study provided the money was there. I think she didn't want to embarrass me with money problems. Because once Mrs Kershaw who worked at the desk. We were all waiting to pay our fees, and she shouted, Phyllis Naidoo hasn't paid her fees. Oh I tell you I went wild. I tell you I walked straight to her and said sorry, I've been insulted and I want you to bring your books now, produce those books that show where Phyllis Naidoo has not paid. And she says, no, no you can't do this. I said I can do this and I will. Then Ian somebody, he was in charge he came out and says what's the matter Phyllis, I said this woman has just shouted now to all these people standing here that I have not paid my fees. I want her to bring her books out and prove it now, nobody gets, nobody goes beyond me, and I stood there and nobody could go beyond me. And they had to bring their books and she had to apologise. She was my best friend after that [laughter] ... oh but it hurt you know, it hurt. And you know I was very fussy about that because I was starving to be at University, you know...

(V): And then what would you see as Mabel Palmer's greatest contribution?

(P): Oh, her opening up education. You know, pathetic as it was, stuck at the back of Sastri College, and all those things, you can be very critical of those things, but she made it possible. In fact when I was due to graduate, there was a boycott of our graduation because seats for our parents were put in one corner, black seats, and we decided to boycott the graduation. We paid R1 or R2 to get our certificates and we went to Prof. Malherbe and Malherbe was saying, I don't understand what you're fighting for to sit next to white people. I said God forbid, you know, is that all you understand about protest. I said you know if you said nothing about where our parents should sit, they would probably go and sit with all the blacks because that's the place they're most comfortable. But when you tell us these 8 seats whatever are deserved for blacks, then you are insulting us and we don't want it. My father was pleading with me to graduate he says I want to see you graduate. An I said no dad, I can't do it, no.

(V): So you didn't go to your graduation ceremony?

(P): No I didn't ...

(V): And you were the eldest daughter hey, the first to graduate?

(P): First to graduate.

(V): But he must have understood why?

(P): He did, he did later. But he wasn't happy about it.

(V): You must have heard about Killie Campbell in your life time. She did in 1965.

(P): No, I didn't know her at all.

(V): Had you heard about the library?

(P): I went to the library, I spent the day there researching Mabel Palmer [laughter]. Yes, I spent the morning there, in fact I still have my notes somewhere here. And I wanted to find out more about Mabel Palmer.

(V): When was this?

(P): Maybe '91, '92. I spent a day there. In fact I was going to give all my papers to Killie Campbell and when I said that to the ANC they said ... there's nothing progressive about Killie

Campbell. I know, I said, I know that she has never been in the political movement, but I think the papers will be safe and respected there.

(V): Its a neutral place ...

(P): Yes. And then Narissa, who was at the ANC office kept telling me don't give it there, don't give it there, and then when she got this appointment [head archivist at U.D.W. Documentation Centre], she said, come on, this place is so Indian we've got to break the mould and become South African, everybody, and let's have your collection and we'll do that, that's why I submitted it to her. But I didn't say to Killie Campbell that I was going to put it there. I was just thinking about it and asked about it.

(V): So, why were you actually researching Mabel Palmer's life?

(P): Because she seemed to feature in my father's life, she was very instrumental ... the fact that he got his degree and my degree, not my brother ... yes you know, I mean if she never allowed me to study I wouldn't have, my story would have been a different story, you know, the confidence that a degree gives you, the understanding and so many things the degree did for me and I had to thank her. And people say I'm a silly arse thanking everybody but I do ...

(V): And was that just a personal research project for yourself?

(P): Yes, yes, in fact I'm going to use it when I write my story, ... and its going to be about my two sons coming and looking at them coming in as products of indentured labour on the one hand, no country, nothing, and these two fighting for their country in the end.

(V): And then when did your father get his degree at the University of Natal?

(P): '47.

(V): Yes, because the non-European section was opened in 1936 so he would have been one of the first generation to get his degree.

(P): Ja, ja, I don't know when he came, but he got his degree in 1947.

(V): And did he know Mabel Palmer too.

(P): Yes, they used to do speech contests together and she met him subsequently, and she told

him ...

(V): After the incident (ostracised because of divorce)

(P): Yes after the incident, and she said to him, we have a very bright student at the University, and he wanted to know who's this. And when she told him it was Phyllis, he said that's my daughter. And she said she felt like kicking him in the groin [laughter].

(V): For what he had done to you earlier (ostracising Phyllis).

(P): Ja, when he said that he didn't know me, you know.

(V): Did that play any part in helping to smooth over relations, hearing other people comment about your ability?

(P): Oh yes, oh yes, and there was another social worker Promada, she told my father, hey Phyll, man, he was worried then, you know. By then he was worried that things were working out so well for me and he wasn't talking to me, so he invited me to his 50th birthday party [laughter].

(V): So for how many years did he ostracise you?

(P): 7 years.

(V): 7 years he never said a word to you, and your mom?

(P): My mom was okay, she used to come and visit me, no it was only dad.

(V): Stubborn father, and then after that he [took you in]?

(P): But even throughout that you know, I think there was a jealous ... my dad brought me up as a boy you know, I wasn't allowed to wear dresses for a long time, only when I menstruated, and then I wanted to put dresses on, but I still wore shorts, pants up to my knees, and he used to call me Bill, ja, not Phyll!

(V): The son he never had?

(P): No, he had 5 sons.

(V): Well, his first "son" - his wishful thinking?

(P): [Laughter].

(V): And you said you don't know Sibusisiwe Makanya?

(P): No.

(V): Because I am quite interested in trying to interconnecting the contexts in which your life merged with the other women under discussion, because you were all very different people, you grew up in different generations, you were from different races, but you all contributed in different ways to improve the South African context and move away from Apartheid. And I'm quite interested to see which women had an impact on your life, and the impact of yours on theirs. And as you've just spoken about Mabel Palmer and Dr Goonam particularly, and the fact that in the long run now, in the 1990s, you are using Killie Campbell library. Her library was one of the first libraries where black students could go and do research there, yes, that's why her contribution was so great. And she collected and sources on black South Africans, where other libraries ... did not.

(P):Really, hey.

(V): And she tried to shine a light through the racial distrust and fear.

(P): I'd like to read your thing about her, I didn't know that about her ... sugar farming people. That's amazing hey, because they were very off, what's the term, I mean they practised Apartheid long before the Nats come into power, the sugar magnates, ... if you look at the housing and things, ... they were the elite.

(V): Killie was very different from her family. She was seen as a difficult woman because she never married either.

(P): Okay.

(V): And ... she used to spent every cent of her allowance [from her family] ... travelling[to

different parts of the world] to collect sources on African life. I know that in Natal particularly, I don't know about the rest of South Africa, she has the largest Africana collection and her library is worth [so much].

(P): Really, really. I knew about that, I knew about that, but I didn't know the background. Thank you for that, it's beautiful.

(V): So you see how everyone fits in and ... [importance] of using life stories, the life story of Sibusisiwe [housed in her library] and you used her library, and various other people information fits into her library, so everybody's lives seem to merge and come into contact in some way, even if its only in the contemporary period now, you can see the connections. So in what contexts would your particular lives have met? Do you think it was in academic institutions, the political struggle for black liberation or personal friendship?

(P): I think it was that [political struggle]. With Mabel Palmer, she was the person dealing with education, post-Matric.

(V): But she was also fighting for a larger cause?

(P): Yes, she was. And you know, she did some bitchy things, over the years, and she used to help somebody and then something went wrong and she told her off. ...

(V): Ja, I've heard that she was quite a fiesty woman.

(P): And there's a book on that one, ... but at first she gave me a rough time, but she was also very kind, hey, very kind.

(V): And maybe that was also just her way, making you stronger?

(P): Yes, very cranky, you know - yes, and she woddles to the door to let me in.

(V): But you can see now, almost stepping back how I'm approaching this, you can see that they all had something bigger in mind than just themselves, it was something [broader]fighting for a better South Africa.

(P): Yes, yes.

Context Questions: Durban in the 20th Century.

(V): The city of Durban in the 20th century has experienced an era of massive social, political, economic and racial changes that have affected all who live in it. This is especially so for black women who have had to fight against the triple oppression of race, class and gender (ironically with the fight for political freedom often subsuming women's needs). I am trying to imagine the changes in this city before your eyes - the mood, the atmosphere, the feeling - as so little of women's changing views of the city have been heard. Stepping back now (and having been in exile - outside looking in), having lived most of your life in Durban, what changes have occurred and what events or periods (decades) would you emphasise as the most important in shaping it?

(P): I think when we used to go to the market on a Saturday morning with our baskets with our R1 to buy vegetables ... I remember seeing ..., the Victoria bridge went over, I don't know if you know that bridge ... but if you stood at the bottom and waited for the ricksha like I did sometimes, you would see this mass of women with baskets on their heads and in fact I had a picture which I gave to the Durban museum ... in Old Fort Road, its beautiful faces like this with the baskets, heavy baskets. But in that weight was this beautiful face and for me it was just something, you know, that despite whatever, they would hold on to this pride you know.

(V): And what year was this about?

(P): This was about the '50s and late '40s. I called it the "Basket Burden", you don't see that now, that's gone ...

(V): And in the political struggle, which decades stand out for you?

(P): Oh, '59 when the women went on the rampage at the beerhall ...

(V): Have you read that story in the book, *People's City* by Iain Edwards and Paul Maylam.

(P): No, no.

(V): Excellent chapter ... you'll be so amazed, it actually gives you goose bumps about the Cato Manor 1959 riots and how these women fought to preserve what little space they had and how they rebelled against men.

(P): Yes, yes, really. I mean there's that lovely picture of the policemen hitting the women and it won an award in America. I've got that picture in my collection. ... And you know when I saw

Anna I said where's your *doek* because her hair was all wild and she says, the *doek* Phyllis, is not meant made only for the hair, it's meant to put into petrol tanks and burn buses [laughter].

(V): Because the most important thing I saw that came out of that story, ... was it shows how women became most militant and defiant when their families were threatened, it comes through so strongly.

(P): And also, in ... '49 we had a race riot, Indians and Africans.

(V): The Durban riots?

(P): Yes, right and then in '59, when things were really hotting up, it wasn't a race riot. It was going for the enemy, the state ...

(V): The forced removals?

(P): Yes, they devastated the buses, they killed policemen. I mean it was a hectic period you know, a hectic period.

(V): So you think that the 1950 and 1960 period stands out for you?

(P): Oh yes, the State of Emergency, everybody was locked up, ... all the trials started.

(V): The Defiance Campaign.

(P): Yes, yes. The late '50s the Freedom Charter, '56 Treason Trials.

(V): Sharpeville, 1960.

(P): Yes, very ... I mean I used to go to bed dead tired. I can't tell you what a whole day was packed up with. Going finding a child dead, kids starving, oh man and just busy doing things.

(V): And also in the 1950s I mean you were trying to teach to earn money, you were studying at night, you were somehow and in some way working for the ... organisation.

(P): [Laughter]. I don't know how it happened.

(V): And you were still conscious about all these other things happening?

(P): [More laughter]. I don't know how it happened. I don't know, I really don't know.

(V): And then when you were in exile in the '70s?

(P): I worked, things weren't too difficult because I had a job and that is a wonderful thing about being a lawyer, you can be employed.

(V): But also looking in from the outside, what did you see?

(P): Oh, you know, it was just a political watching, we were monitoring daily our own papers we read. I think we read more papers than you guys had, just to keep abreast of things and then I was in the propaganda unit of the ANC in Lesotho so we had to be drafting papers, drafting leaflets, keeping people aware ... attending to our people there in exile and people who came to see us, and people who came to see us over the weekend were tonnes of people. And some of them, I don't know how they managed to come, but they did.

(V): And it comes through in your letters too, that you feared for your life while in Lesotho, as you were surrounded by South African forces that kept threatening to invade.

(P): Yes, they used to walk past and you used to see the steel of their guns ...

(V): And then when you came back, what did the city feel like to you?

(P): Well, I was scared hey, I was scared coming back.

(V): What date did you come back?

(P): ... 24th June, 1990. I wanted them to hold my passport at the airport but I came in with a photocopy with permission to come in, Lesotho, Harare wanted it, and I flew in and my family was waiting for me at the airport and then the head of the airport ... and I got there and I thought they're going to arrest me, they're going to arrest me, and he said welcome home Mrs Naidoo and I felt like grabbing him and hugging him. But you know, it was funny coming home because the moment I turned I saw Brighton beach area, you know, and three of my comrades were killed there and it was as if they came for me here cause they had the last meal at my home before they

went in the country and were killed. So immediately, something happened to me, it was funny, coming home.

(V): And then when you came into the city?

(P): The highway was there, lots of people.

(V): Did the atmosphere feel different?

(P): No, as if I had not been away, you know, the beach on the side and then Grey Street was a one way, it was a two way when I was around and that was changed. The road system kept worrying me because I couldn't make out what was going where.

(V): And the people, how people treated you?

(P): It was wonderful, it was just warm, you know, it was just lovely. ... But it was very bad for me in one sense that I suddenly missed Sahdhan now, all his friends came to see me.

(V): And the fight he fought for, he never saw.

(P): He never saw.

(V): That's a good thing for you though, as you fought for this, and although its negative now, its a transition period that we'll be going through.

(P): Ja, ja.

(V): What do you think the future holds for this city? Positive or negative.

(P): I think that Durban is the fastest growing city next to Mexico city ... and when you go out you see how big it is, when you go out into the locations you can see how big it is. And in our calculations for Durban, ... we're only thinking of the central areas here. And then you see, I mean it hurt for me like somebody took me to the beach to show me how beautiful the beach was. And I said what rubbish, do you see that man watering the garden there, shall we go and ask him whether he's got water at his house, you know, and my friend said oh shut up Phyll, give up, give up. I said give up? And so I did go and ask the old man, I said where do you live ...

Tape 3 - Side A:

[The man told Phyll he lived in a township with a lack of running water facilities].

(V): Okay, getting back to what the future hold, so you can see that it has expanded in size. But what about the racial relations, and sexual relations in the city? Especially, since earlier you were mentioned that at the moment crime is overriding everything else and it doesn't seem very positive.

(P): No, have you been to the beach area. Its beautiful there, you can walk alone, you can take your evening walks there, you can get a car to take you home. So there are some areas. I think you see, what we're looking at in Durban especially is the lifting of the *dompas* which meant that Africans then could come into the area, urban areas, where they were kept out for so long. You couldn't keep them back, you can't throw them off the streets, because there's no way they're going to go, and your streets have become very littered as a result of this but that's as a result of our actions in having a *dompas*. So we are paying or that and the whole country is paying for it in some ways, and because we have strength through our economy, ... we've strangled black people educationally, economically, ... politically. Now that the gates have opened up, the backlash is terrible. And people who haven't struggled for freedom, who didn't know what it meant are now faced with the prospect. ... There are so many things that have happened to the African people, like you know, one of the things Ruth First described detention as a rock holding down fish and fish life and all of that, and when you lift the rock it is bloodless, crabs and things ... bloodless things. And I just feel the same sort of weight that has been lifted off their shoulders and some are going crazy. And its understandable because for so long and so much they've had to wait and suddenly its been lifted up and you know whereas people didn't kill when they stole, people have been stealing all their lives to live, but they didn't kill, but now they do it, and I think its part of that craziness that goes with freedom. ... They don't know what to do, how to do. I think I told you about this table that was set for breakfast for a family, this Black Sash family, that I went to visit because I had some work with the lady of the house, and the maid had set a table with cereal, milk, orange, things that you have, things that are necessary for body growth and what have you, and her little child was not well and they brought it here and she was going to take the little child to hospital. And he walked around this table and stuck his finger into the jam jar and she [hit] him, ... and I wrote a story then. What must this mother, the mother of that child feel when she lays table for this family and knows that whatever she puts on that table she's not able to afford for her own family. You know, what does that do to her ... So I think its a very schizophrenic lot of people that we have, you know, that she would work, and give her best face to a family and to the children of the family and yet having a terrible feeling for her own child - she must have that. That she couldn't do that for her child. ...

(V): And for women in the city, what do you see?

(P): I think its going to be difficult days for them hey, um, but I don't know, when I look out, I

sit here and I watch people going, and there's such a purpose in people, you know, they're not just "faffing" around the streets, walking around idling, they're about something, whatever it is, and I think women have the resources, the strength to cope and I think to build a better life. You know those women who were stuck outside Osman Street a couple of streets removed, they pitched their tents and they hung out there for along time. Well I saw them negotiating when they were talking about that area and they said we have lived here and we want a right to live in this area. So whatever you build you make sure you build some flats for us. Yes, really forthright. I think they're going to do it, and I think they've fought too hard, too long not to know what to do with their freedom. No, and my experience with the ANC and of African women is that they're priceless, and I'm so proud that I've had the experience of working with them. Really proud.

(V): So you see the future as a bright one?

(P): Oh yes, very bright. There's difficult days still but those have to be traversed but I think in another 50 years we're going to have beautiful things.

(V): Finally, looking back with hindsight over the course of your long, difficult and complex life, do you ever regret being "difficult" and sacrificing so much personally for your public life?

(P): No, never. No sacrifice, no sacrifice.

(V): Is there anything you would have done differently if you could?

(P): No, sometimes I have a scathing tongue and I wish I could just hold that back and not hurt people the way I have, but I haven't hurt people because I wanted to hurt them, you know, I thought it was necessary. And in the course of doing that I have hurt people, I don't like that.

End of Interview.

3: *Interview with Dr Hamish Campbell.*

Date: 19 November 1997.

Address: 145 Ridge Road, Durban, 4001.

Tape 1: Side A:

(V): Your relationship with Killie Campbell?

(C): Her father, Sir Marshall, was brother of my grandfather, Sam. My father George was Killie's first cousin. So I was the first cousin once removed downwards.

(V): What comes to mind, first of all, when you recall Killie Campbell, how would you describe her?

(C): Pleasure and merriment. She wasn't good looking, but she had the most wonderful smile when I knew her, when she was an old lady ... and her smile was their for everybody. If I took people in and introduced them, they'd get almost knocked down by her smile. ...She was really a lovely person. She used to crinkle up, beautifully, ah, she was just a lovely person. I wish I could remember more, and help you with more. See I don't know anything about her youth, who her friends were, I never knew of any young man ... I had never heard that there had been a lad in the offing. I knew that she was a lovely aunt to all her, to William's and ... Collin's children ... they both adored her.

(V): Killie was a single woman, and she did not marry. Why do you think this was?

(C): Because I think ... I don't know ... the impression is that her father sort of buckled her to his side, Sir Marshall, and expected her to be there like a Victorian father to fetch and carry, when he had more servants, I should think, than anyone else in Africa, Killie had to be sort of around

(V): But he was married ...

(C): Lady Campbell and Sir Marshall wanted Killie sort of about, you were expected to dance attendance on your parents, honestly, and I know nothing about her education. I do believe that after her father's death, she had quite a great deal of mental turmoil, so I've been told and that father gave her three books on Africa, Africana books, and that's where it all started from. ... Father told me something like that, whether its true or not you've got to work it out.

(V): You don't think that she decided also not to marry because of her work commitments?

(C): Absolutely not, absolutely not. I think that she would have liked to have married, but her sister Gladys ... married, one wonders if that was a marriage of convenience. Campbell heir being married off to the Hepburn heir ... You know these Victorian fathers if they were extraordinarily wealthy, wanted their daughters to make dynastic marriages. I don't think, old uncle Marshall used to frighten away boyfriends or anything like that, but I just think that Killie devoted herself to them, to Marshall and Ellen. I think ... this is what happened, but I can't be sure. ...

(V): Cause you tend to find she also had a lot of academic friends, male friends, it was just very strange that she decided not to marry ...

(C): Almost all Killie's friends in the end were married people, honestly I can't tell you. ...I would have thought that her troubles would have started at the end of the '90s and gone on through the 1910s. 1920 was taken up mostly by war. ...

(V): Because, also in her book by Norman Herd, he actually says that she had some kind of relationship in [East Africa] do you remember hearing about that, and then it broke off and then the family hushed it up and no one spoke about it again.

(C): They hushed it up? Because we are not a family to hush up anything. But I never heard anything ... I don't know ... Killie went with her parents every winter ... to London. ...

(V): Did people, men or women, what did they think about her not marrying, especially in the early part of the 20th century?

(C): I wouldn't know. You see by the time I started looking after her, father said he was tired and didn't want to do much more medicine, so would I take over Killie, so for the last 10 years of her life I did, and I enjoyed it so much. ... Those are the only years I do know....

(V): Did people in your family or society generally ever see her as an eccentric or a difficult woman especially with regard to her constant book buying and her "haunting" of second-hand bookshops?

(C): We thought this was, amounted to a kind of genius, we really worshipped her. Killie could do no wrong and she was the most warm hearted, lovely person I don't believe that she was ever difficult to anyone, she may have been when she was, I mean she should have been "crotchety" to me like all hell, when she was dying in heart failure, but she was always so gentle. I remember her, only as this gentle, long-suffering, dear person.

(V): Because in Norman Herd's book he said her mother, Lady Campbell, was quite distraught with her daughter's extravagant buying in the initial years, and then later on her attitude towards her changed because she realised the importance of the work she was doing.

(C): I didn't see anyone worrying about, in that family, worrying about money. I mean they were rich beyond their dreams ... they really were. I mean Muckleneuk was just the townhouse of the Campbell's. Mount Edgecombe house was huge estate house ... [description of the estate]. ... There was this women who appeared, she sort of took over Killie's care sort of last two months and wouldn't move from her bedside and gave a weird American religion to Killie, who was ... a straight forward Scot's Presbyterian, but Killie by then didn't have the energy to throw her off, she was not a Campbell, ...but she somehow got herself onto this programme [television programme made about Killie's life] and she told everybody what everybody what Killie's faith was, which washer's, not Killie's, never again. ... it was some sort of holly-roll-over-estates, I don't know, something that made me sit and boil.

(V): What did people in her society think about her progressive political approach, her outspoken nature, and her lifestyle as an Africana collector?

(C): ... Although we were relatives, which gave us a very strong position ... from her to us, if there had been anything, except deep regard for all her friends, nice good people, people who worried about what was going on in this country and could see things going go to hell and past. I don't know, people always, I have never had Killie's name in 70 years, what's that very nearly 32 years since she died, and before, her name was never taken except with a lovely, not

reverence, that sounds too desperate, because she was far to humorous ever to be revered. She was just enjoyed and she was loved by everybody. ... She attracted one or two oddballs to work in the library, Mignon Herring she worked there a long while, then she suddenly got the idea that she wanted to be on her own, and Killie offered her a large sum of money, but she wouldn't take it. I wouldn't have thought Lady Campbell worried about Killie buying books for seeing her through her nervous period ... We guess, there was this schism between her one side of the family and ours. I was very stupid, silly things, we're not a Scots family for nothing you know. And when Killie went down into her black depressions, she always used to say to her mother, you must get George, who was on the wrong side of the line. And father came in a gave her books, these three books, which started the whole thing. And they ended up ... used to go and see her as often as he could, she was going to die and leave this immense library to be sold up, nobody would take it on. Then father got hold of the Chancellor of the University of Natal and she said what a good idea to I'll leave it to the University.

(V): Tell me more about the depressions and that, why....

(C): I've only heard about them, when Sir Marshall died,

(V): Oh, that was the black period ...

(C): I think, I wasn't alive.

(V): So that's what you've heard?

(C): I wonder how much I heard, because father was just adored her, and would never say anything wrong against her, but I think I gathered, and I don't believe that it was Uncle, Uncle Marshall's fault or Aunt Ellen's ...

(V): You also probably find with this ... depression she had after her father died, it gave her... something to put all her energy into ...

(C): Absolutely, well the result was the library, the result was the library. She had no training because she was the daughter of *the* sugar baron of the country. She was never going to be hard up. So she was never trained for anything.

(V): Did William inherit all?

(C): William inherited, the were awfully goo. William inherited a great deal as eldest son, but Killie, Gladys and Collin all got a pretty good quarter ... of what was going, because he was going to be managing director. I don't even know which will it was, whether it was Uncle Marshall's or whether that was given to Aunt Ellen until she died in the 40s, I just don't know. ... Well it was split.

(V): By not accepting society's definition of her station in life, i.e., as an elite daughter and going to the social gatherings and chit-chatting and all that, that's the impression I get, would you think that she considered herself as a bit of a rebel at her time?

(C): Again, I only really got to know her in her 50s, 60s, at all well, and she got beyond rebellion, if she's considered a rebel ... [discussion of his Aunt Ethel].

(V): As a woman, do you think that she had any difficulties establishing her Africana library, because I mean she was the first woman Africana collector in Natal ...

(C): I would say that she would have no trouble at all because ... because of the family, I think as a Campbell, ... you're always expected to be a bit potty. But we usually end up doing good things. You look at Marshall, with the sugar industry. Grandfather founded the technical colleges and was there at the beginning of the University, the Child Welfares. ... People weren't surprised that Killie Campbell would do what she did. They would just be deeply envious, the so called society people, because she who should have been the main jewel in society couldn't be bothered ... but if her friends gave her, someone she loved, gave a tiny cocktail party, Killie would be quite happy to go it. What I think of Killie is loyalty, she was the most loyal person, she was the most family person. We've had some wonderful feuds in our family and Killie's lived to see almost all of them erased. Quite often the instrumental bits like calling in father.

(V): What was the schism in your family about?

(C): Oh, those are deep things ... old and far off things, battles long ago ... family loyalty rather closes my mine, because even though they're dead their children can be hurt, and I couldn't bare that. ... There was a time when I'd have, say 30 years ago, I'd have told you about the feuds ...

(V): Do you think also, you say that she was very loyal and family orientated, do you think that she missed having her own family?

(C): Oh, I'm sure she did, but she just found herself surrounded with so many grandnephews,

grandnieces, and odds and sods like us, the cousins children. We used to go there, mother used to go there once a week if she could, bearing gifts and always Lady Campbell would be having tea ... when we left we were each given an apple and a half crown, which was untold wealth in those days ...

(V): ... so you don't think that any men or women, family or society saw her activities and work as a threat?

(C): How many people would dare to say to Hamish Campbell, they think that she behaved sort of in a way. I might have said ... oh you bloody swine how dare you ... father would have killed him.

(V): All right, then going onto her old age and retirement, ... when you knew her better in that time, an important aspect of her life is that she never retired but continued working a full and active life until sickness and old age made it impossible.

(C): That is right. ... As her doctor, she still bluffed me that she was 70, 75. When I had to write her death certificate and saw that she was 84 I couldn't believe it. Now I was her doctor, why had I been so stupid, why had I not found out? The thing was Killie was like ... a smiling, generous 'rock of Gibraltar', who never changed, or complained or anything. Oh she was a lovely person.

(V): Why do you think she never retired? She could have sat back and enjoyed her ...

(C): She would no more have retired then ... I mean for instance, say I have to give up medicine, I'm going to find it very miserable. I'll go on until I drop. ... She did the same. Don't forget, I have my consulting rooms there, she had hers right next to her, and the house ... she potted in the last few years, she couldn't do much except direct, but her friends loved having and seeing her. I don't know what you have to say about that woman that took her over, wouldn't let anybody near her ... tried to filter her friends out. I don't know what her name was, I must have known once, because we also think that she got away with a huge silver tray and these beautiful great sterling silver coffee jugs, smaller hot milk jugs, and you know the whole beautiful great mass of silver ... she was an interloper... last 2, 3, 4 months, pushed away.

(V): I remember reading in the book that she only had a few very select visitors at the end.

(C): Killie had no defence. If people wanted to scrap acquaintance with her, there was no way

she couldn't ...

(V): ... she had so much to do, that's probably also one of the reasons why she didn't retire.

(C): No, she made work for herself. She just had to keep going, and she would buy more books, she would ... what was so pathetic, you know her mind she could remember every book ... [and] if she can't remember that, I'll find it. She'd go straight to the right place, and bring it out ... She'd know exactly where it was, until she started to drift a little. ... I sound too eulogistic, I'm making, but she was like that ... it was difficult not, because everybody else put her on a pedestal and she never ceased to roar with laughter with me. And you know, ... she saw through people quite well, and just towards the end, but she must have seen through this woman, but this woman was a leach. ...

(V): ... you said earlier that she came from a very wealthy family. How did she support herself, especially towards the end of her days, when it was mentioned that there were financial difficulties, is that true? ...

(C): I would say that sustained her [mother's financial aid] ... I didn't notice it, and I can't remember father saying ... father would just have said ... Killie's a bit hard up so we'll have to get rid of so and so ... I don't remember that. And a house that size must have cost a hell of a lot of money. ...[talks about housekeeper and the house]. ...

Tape 1: Side B:

I'm surprised that she had any financial problems, I'm surprised because they really were very, very well to do. Killie, I suppose might quite considerably sort of say to [people] ... here I will give you a hand, ... provided that you don't say a word. And then she wonders why she is short on her housekeeping. That's the kind of thing she could easily have done, but I never knew.

(V): And I also know that she was helping people, like Mabel Palmer and donating to the University and to help students who didn't have the finances.

(C): Right. Oh she was endless, she was endless. ...

(V): Do you think that she was lonely in her old age, with the sacrifices she made personally, i.e.

not having her own family and husband for a career, justified in the long run?

(C): I think that she had by that time, got over her own loneliness. William came to live with her for his declining years, and I am certain the moment William came all financial problems were healed. Wait they were not, William would have handed over everything to Urban ... his son, and so William may well have come and sponged on Killie. I don't know ... I just never thought of it before. I remember one particular amusing thing with Killie, there was a, I was asked to one of Killie's grandnephews, Anthony Lee's 21st birthday party at the Royal Natal, so I managed to get an Arab burnoose sort of head piece, a beautify one ... and I wanted a Muslim white frock. So I said to Killie has Wac got any night dresses, so she said don't be silly, he sleeps in nothing, so I said how do you know that, you're supposed to be a maiden lady, so she shrieked with laughter, and she said, I tell you what, I'll lend you one of my nighties. So I went in one of her nighties, embroided with little flowers, white nightie, and came down to just past my knees. I wore turned up Turkish slippers and I was quite a wow. But that's the kind of, oh, she was just adorable. ... [got into a fight at the party with gate crashers and the nightie got covered in blood]. I had to return it to her, she said it was the most exciting night that's had for a long while. Oh, she just twinkled, she twinkled. She was generous very knowledgeable, she was loyal ... once you were Killie's friend she would fight for you, she was very firm about injustice and the Afrikaner ...nationalist government she despised and she said Adolf Hitler has certainly got Germany a new colony in South Africa.

(V): Yes, because I know that she was very worried when she was going to give the library over to the University and then the government passed that law at the end of the 1950s [possibly] taking over the University, and she was so afraid that they would take over her library and not allow black students to use it.

(C): I didn't know that she had left the library to the University for certain until father said... what's his name got made Chancellor, and William, then got all his Zulu bits and pieces, and William must have paid, because the whole house is called the Campbell Collections. Have you ever that picture of William and Killie together, William about 19 and her about 17. Oh she was quite lovely and he was so good looking, but they were just guilded children, with guilded parents.

(V): So then you wouldn't really consider her lonely because she worked and she had all her friends?

(C): I know that my mother was terribly lonely from all her friends dying out. The last 10 years of her life she was just utterly miserable, playing patience with herself morning and night.

(V): And you don't think Killie was like that at all?

(C): Well Killie had the library.

(V): And do you know any of her friends, towards the end of her life?

(C): Lillian Grice was one she liked very much. I can't remember any ... Barbara Tyrell she adored. ... and that was a good, good friend, was Barbara. ... No, its awfully difficult, I am so sorry because things are now fading away, very rapidly, and all we get left with us is the sort of kernel, the absolute essence of Killie, she had a lovely sense of humour.... I'm not starry eyed, I think if there had been anything, ... loose in her behaviour or any reputation it would have come, but I don't suppose it would have because father was the source of all my knowledge about Killie in the past and father just worshipped her, so did mother, we just loved her ...

(V): And going to her library now, not so much herself personally, what do you see as her most important contribution to the city?

(H): I would have said herself. I mean think of all the other great sugar barons, they all had town houses. [large and impressive others] ... but the only one that has remained is Muckleneuk. The garden has remained, but how they could justify it ... I am so glad that the University is using it ... Killie would have been thrilled about that.

(V): It's very popular with the students as well, there are so many dissertations and theses that have come out of all the works that she collected.

(C): Well ... what she started ... that will go on forever ... God knows whether Roy's poetry will be remembered in a thousand years, however good it is, and its superb. Roy, Neil ...Bruce, they all absolutely worshipped her. If there had been anything, we would have found about it. I wonder if my Aunt Francis, she came out in the early 30's to marry from America, one of my uncles, ... whether she would know anything ... [abstract thoughts about who could help me]. ...

(V): So, she generally was a wonderful person?

(C): She was lovely. You'd have loved her, she'd have loved you. You know if I had comedown the corridor and said this is Vanessa, she's a student, she would have crinkled like a prune, taken you in and given you tea, and just flooded you with questions. She was a lovely person. Ceremony she could not abide. ... You know I used to love the way she would go upstairs and

she'd be running around Muckleneuk saying I can't find my glasses anywhere. We would put them down on her nose and give her a kiss and say you're going soft.

(V): And then as a non-racial institution (her library), Killie collected a great variety of sources on all races, all race groups, to help shine almost a light through the murk of ignorance and racial distrust.

(C): Right, right, right. She was one of the few people, she was the kind of Black Sash woman that really mattered. You know, someone whose life was determined that when these bastards were finally thrown out and the black people had their rights, that she would be ready to give them everything that she had collected in Muckleneuk, although they didn't. She knew, she knew I would end ... and that she had done something very great, but she was totally modest. If anyone congratulated her, you know, or said what a wonderful thing you have done, she would say now hush up and have some tea.

(V): Because I think that that must be her greatest legacy, she saw ahead what would happen and she collected all of these sources for people to use now as well as then ...

(C): I would indeed, I would indeed, that her loath of discrimination, yet she lived with servants, as we do. ... I like being asked about her, it brings back such lovely memories.

(V): Was her work and her library seen as threatening institution to the racist government of the day?

(C): Not in the slightest, not in the slightest.

(V): Even though she was collecting sources that they probably wouldn't have appreciated her collection.

(C): Absolutely, but they would have said that she was completely neutralised. You know, the Emperor Nero said that he wished the Roman nation had ... one neck that he might ring it. I think the Nats always thought well, if she just displeases us we can just ring her neck and take that away from her somehow, you know. But she was one of the things that Natal should really be really, very pleased with. ...

(V): And also, I suppose coming from a powerful family, the government ... wouldn't have stepped in so ...

(C): They would, uh, she uh, you see people like my mother was married into the Smut's house, so and my uncle was the governor general, Sir Patrick Duncan. So even under the Nat's, they wouldn't have dared ...

(V): I know that she was renown for letting black students in to use her library at a time when segregation and apartheid was at its height.

(C): She was so proud if they used it.

(V): And then, what would you think, having known her, what's the greatest lesson you have learnt from her?

(C): That ... two of the greatest things, loyalty and hers was to bigger things, things that nobody values nowadays, to the Monarchy, to the Empire, to the Church, though she wasn't the slight bit church going, but she honoured it, to her family in particular, to the country, long before the government, loyalty to the government, I would have thought disloyalty to the government would have been, if she had been younger, would have been an absolute talisman for her. Whatever you did against the Nat government, was justified ...

(V): And then you said earlier, you didn't really know whether she knew Mabel Palmer, Phyllis Naidoo or Dr Goonam.

(C): Oh, I wouldn't know, I wouldn't know. I would come in with my suitcase, Killie would be over with a whole room full of friends she'd be giving tea to, and she would say excuse me, and she'd come and give me a big kiss and say that's so-and-so and that's so-and-so, and I'd blow them all a kiss. And then I'd go and give her her injections, you see. ... She would probably say oh that one next to the window, she's done this and she's done that and she's a lovely person. ... [talks about Colenso collections]. ... I cannot think of one flaw in her character, now that's incredible for a general practitioner to be able to say that about anyone ...

End of Interview.