# THESIS

In fulfillment of a Master of Philosophy in Urban Studies

University of Cape Town

Department of Environmental and Geographical Sciences

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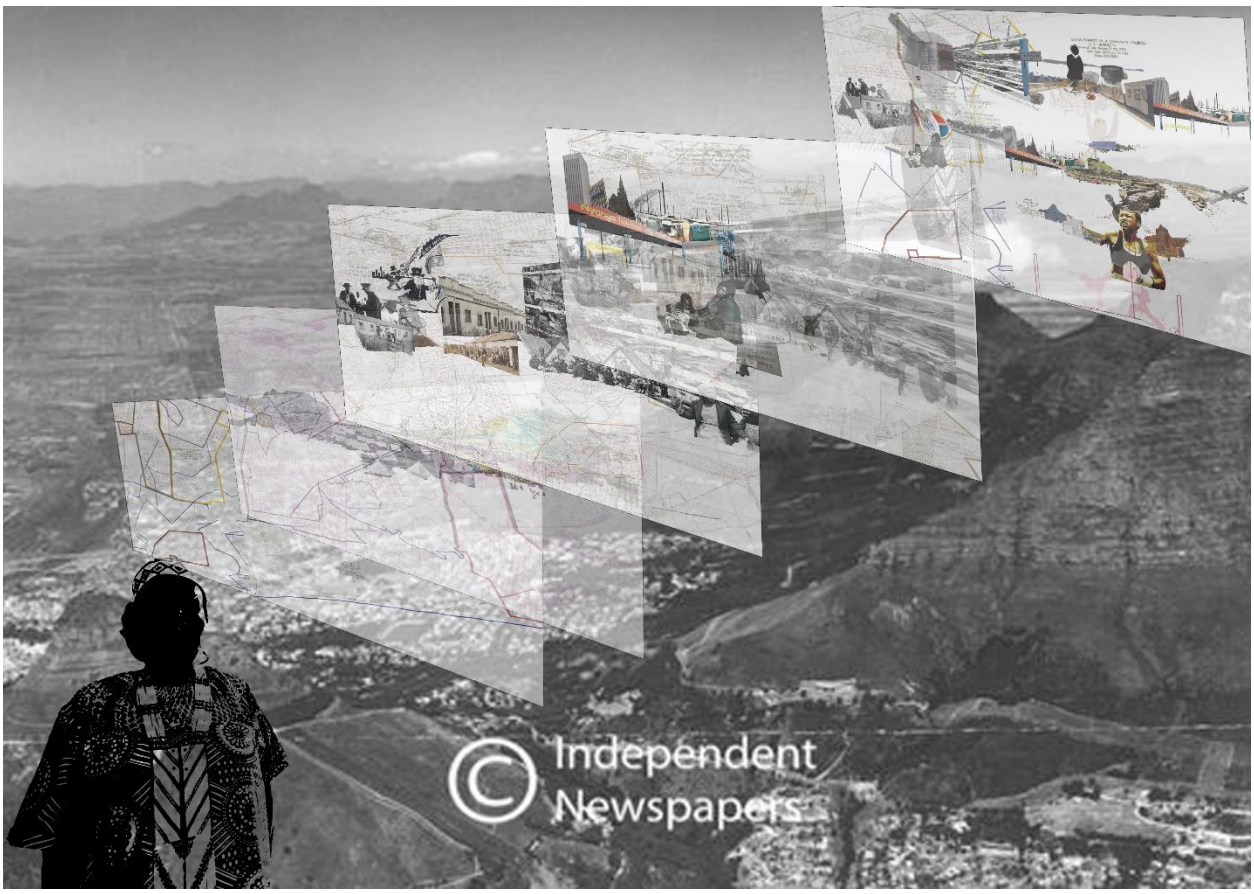
# Title

Memoryscapes of belonging: tracing Black Women's Bodies and interior lives in postcolonial city making



# DEDICATION

For

Joan Elizabeth Alida Prins and Minah Nowinile Solani

AND

Mvunyelwa Mvuyelwa Solani

In their names rest a thousand names and a thousand stories

# ABSTRACT

Belonging in the city of Cape Town is a contested and ambivalent terrain. The past spatial injustices of colonial and apartheid rule have left deep scars and practices embedded in the city. Much has been researched and written about the role of women in land and housing struggles in the Cape. However, there is a gap in the understanding of the interior worlds of black women and how they access resources within for navigating and negotiating belonging in their everyday lives. According to de Certeau's belonging refers to an "everyday ritualized use of space, an appropriation and territorialisation" (and) a "process of transformation of a place, which becomes a space of accumulated attachment and sentiments by means of everyday practices" (de Certeau, 1984: p96). Picking up on this notion of belonging, my research aims to recognize, identify and understand meaning and sense making, humour and the emotional lives of women. The thesis focuses on the lives of three women from one family: each representing a different generation (grandmother, daughter, granddaughter). The thesis explores memoryscapes as that intersection between memory, its tangible aspects such as place, objects and architecture, and that of story. Using narrative enquiry and creative methods of analysis as qualitative research method, the research asks how belonging is negotiated by black women in a postcolonial city.

The thesis starts by introducing four strands of literature that inform the research: 1) I engaged with urban studies theory, challenging developmental approaches to postcolonial city formation; Rodaway,2002, Middleton, 2017, Lefebvre, 1996, Jeannotte, 2007, ed. Schindel and Colombo, 2014. 2) I argue that what are missing in the theory are the everyday, ordinary, and interior lives of women. I therefore engaged with feminist scholars such as Hartman, 2019, Butler, 2016, Carby, 2019); 3) I introduce how interiority can enrich literature on belonging Hartman, 2019, Carby, 2019; and 4) I introduce why memory work is crucial to this kind of inquiry; (ed) Field, Meyer, Swanson,2007, Said, 2000, Stoler, 2013, Ricouer, 2004, McKittrick, 2007. The thesis then introduces the qualitative approach to the research, paying particular attention to how narrative forms of inquiry Bochner and Riggs, 2014, Rosenwald and Ochberg, 1992 and visual modes of analysis Elliott and Culhane ed, 2017 and Butler-Kisber, 2010 can enrich urban enquiry. The thesis turns to unpacking the findings through a series of three vignettes entitled 'I am cheeky you know', 'umnqusho, amagwinya and tea' and 'these acts of belonging'. The thesis ends with sharing four key aspects which come to light through the research. The first is that a rich interior life provides a resource for not only coping with life in the city in the everyday, but also strengthens resilience, identity and hence the ability to navigate belonging. The second finding was a set of key strategies deployed by the three women in their navigation of belonging. The third finding is that a process of intersecting story, archival and digital images into a series of collages presented a visual language through which to decode belonging and to make visible the invisible worlds which inform affective relationships, choices and decisions about the city. Finally, it is therefore critical for urban studies to engage more deeply and consistently with the ways in which interiority inform navigation and experiences of belonging in postcolonial cities.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Rike Sitas who has been incredible on this writing journey. Her passion for the arts and creative practices to engage issues of urbanization has been an inspiration. To the staff and team at the African Centre for Cities under the leadership of Dr. Edgar Pieterse for providing fertile ground with which to begin this journey of mine.

To Kevin Mutia, who patiently listened and brought to life the collages in digital form.

Most importantly, to ma K, N and A who each welcomed me so warmly into their lives and shared insights and their precious stories.

# Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

# 1. Introduction

The Black Body[1] in the city of Cape Town in particular, and South Africa more broadly, has been rendered invisible and erasable through colonial and apartheid measures which restricted movement and proscribed presence and place with measures such as the Eiselen line, pass system, forced removals and group areas act. In the context of exclusionary place making and gentrification, this legacy continues to reverberate in contemporary Cape Town. For women, and gender non-conforming residents, this has been even more precarious. The Black Body is used here in the poetic form: to describe and speak of the body that is marginalized and erased in physical or tangible ways as well as the agency present in interior worlds. Through narratives across three generations of women within the same family, this enquiry is aimed at illuminating the nuance and detail of an everyday navigation of belonging in the city.

This research asks: how can one render the Black Body visible, legible and 'seen' in navigating the city. How can memory landscapes and insight into the navigation of the everyday contribute to this visibility? What does storying navigation of the city suggest about post-colonial city making and boundaries of belonging? And what are the resources which Black Women have drawn on to traverse marginalization and exclusion to actively make a life in the city?

In order to engage with these questions, I explore the *memoryscapes* of three generations of Black Women in one family. They have individually and collectively experienced exclusion from the city and continue navigating a complex relationship with it. Memoryscapes explores the relationship between 'real' memory and 'symbolic' memory, where they intersect, contradict and obscure.

The experiential methodology of this study was designed to identify and see the ghosts and hauntings embodied in memory and stories across family journeys. These journeys traverse multiple spaces, family histories and bring together different temporalities of life in Cape Town. The notion of *belonging* is deliberately deployed to shift foci from the confines of spatial justice as 'giving access to', to a more nuanced notion of spatial justice as engendering meaning and purpose about a life well lived in the city.

[1] I had, still have great ambivalence in the use of this phrase or way of naming. Partly because I am conscious of my own levels of privilege as scholar, middle class, brown skinned woman in a city which has prescribed certain opportunities for me into its making. Aware of the entanglements and contestations around 'colourism', I would have preferred to use this term in the spirit of Black Consciousness and therefor inclusive of all. However, conscious of the deliberate exclusion of Black Women identified through the Apartheid system as 'black' and for whom levels of repression were brutal and intersecting with the Colored Preferential Act, I limit its use to its specificity. I also wish to foreground, celebrate, insist on making visible the complexity, vulnerability, power of being black in the city, hence the use of Black Body in capitals as descriptive and as tool for agency.

Belonging is used in de Certeau's (1984:96) sense of, "everyday ritualized use of space, an appropriation and territorialisation" and a "process of transformation of a place, which becomes a space of accumulated attachment and sentiments by means of everyday practices".

I argue that the relationship between memory and identity is inextricable. I wish to offer possibilities for how to make visible a language and practice for navigating journeys of belonging and place in urban studies and urban planning and to contribute to the existing body of research and work on documenting and making visible memoryscapes associated with (and beyond) urban sites and places. In particular, this work is aimed at finding ways with which to make the rich interior lives of the three Black Women I worked with, visible and legible. It is also aimed at exploring the design of methodological tools with which to document and assert the place of memory and story into decisions about significance and valuing in urban development projects.

'See-ing' the ghosts (Gordon, 2008: p.65-66) and 'wounded cities' (Till, 2012: p.6) contribute to longer term studies on the ways in which such invisibility may change and contribute to a re-orientation of the postcolonial city making. This study therefore contributes to broader initiatives for making a more just and equitable development agenda in southern urbanism and critical urbanism.

The first section is the literature review entitled 'the voices in my head'. I provide an overview of four broad themes in my theoretical enquiry that inform the research. 'Memoryscapes' explores the works of scholars engaged in understanding the broad spectrum of memory studies, but in particular that which addresses issues of identity and place. 'Interiority/intersectionality' presents some of the scholarly work underway in the area of interiority and intersectionality, especially of Black Women's lives. 'Belonging' engages with work which interrogates notions of belonging. 'Postcolonial city making' situates the study within urban studies.

The second section is the methodology chapter entitled 'finding ways of seeing'. I begin this section with a rationale for the use of a qualitative research approach. In order to provide context to this decision and next research steps, I introduce the three women with whom I worked in the section called, 'first encounters'. I then introduce and explore narrative research and writing as method. I conclude this section with an overview of visual research and collage as analytical practice.

The third section entitled 'storying belonging' engages the narratives of the three generation of women through three themes. The first theme in this section, 'I am cheeky' introduces the ways in which the three women construct themselves as 'cheeky', independent, assertive and having agency. The second theme,

‘Umnqusho, amagwinya and tea’ expresses ways of understanding and experiencing community and its place in identity formation. The third theme entitled ‘these acts of belonging’ demonstrate how they enact an interior world in order to manifest belonging. I conclude this section with ‘belonging is…’ which draws together threads which emerge through the narratives.

The fourth section entitled ‘collaging lives: re-inscribing Black Women into the postcolonial development agenda’ unpacks the insights and perspectives emerging from a creative analysis process. I navigate through six collages which have been generated as a part of the analysis. The first collage, titled ‘the Land between’, situates the research within the physical, topographical landscape. The second collage, titled ‘strikethrough’ are maps encountered in the archival research which are cut, pasted and rearranged. The title ‘strikethrough’ is a reference to the strangely intimate nature of the hand drawn, pen lines demarcating separation.

The third collage, titled ‘I was born here…’ experiments with the ways in which the materiality of the devastation of exclusion and forced removals co-exists with agency and resistance. The fourth collage titled ‘on steeples and patterns on repeat’ explores urban design as patterns on repeat. The fifth collage titled ‘hauntings’ foregrounds the contemporary and the ways in which the present and the future are inscribed onto pasts. The sixth collage titled ‘imagination as antidote’ mimics the storyboarding technique (square blocks following in sequence), mirroring the imaginings of a new and different future.

Finally, in my conclusion I argue three key points. The first is that a rich interior life provides a resource for coping with life in the city in the everyday and strengthens resilience, identity and the assertion of belonging. Second, I argue that there are a set of key strategies deployed by the three women in their navigation of belonging. Third, I argue that a process of intersecting story, archival and digital images into a series of collages presented a visual language through which to decode belonging and to make visible the invisible worlds which inform affective relationships, choices and decisions about the city. I conclude that it is critical for urban studies to engage more deeply and consistently with the ways in which interiority inform navigation and experiences of belonging in postcolonial cities.

# 2. Voices in my head

There are significant bodies of work which straddle the theoretical preoccupations of this research. I have chosen to focus on four strands of thought to draw on and weave a conversation with for the duration of this research journey. These authors traverse the interdisciplinary worlds the thesis evokes. For purposes of the writing, while four overarching strands are presented here, echoes of the literature are cited across the thesis as they made greater sense in context of the thinking, observations, analysis.

## 2.1. Memoryscapes

This section introduces a conversation with texts which speak to issues of memory and memory landscapes as embodied in storytelling and storymaking and the possibilities and challenges of working with these in urban research. Field, Meyer and Swanson (2007: 17-18) and Grunebaum (2001: p.4) problematize the mercurial nature of memory work within the context of making and remaking a city such as Cape Town. Sparked by circumstance, or materiality of space and or object, memory is not definitive nor stable. Collective remembering, particularly driven by the state often creates a sense of stability and occludes memories which do not fit a dominating narrative (Grunebaum, 2001: p.7). This thesis attempts to disrupt the dominant narratives through paying attention to the personal and the intimate and thinking through them as spaces which potentially could reveal complex relationships between belonging and the city.

Ricour (2000:42) speaks to the ways in which memory intersects space and place and that 'the act of inhabiting' constitutes the most memorable. The continual interaction, feedback, dialogue between the women engaged in the research and myself attempts to traverse the instability of memory whilst understanding how their memories intersect with place making. In doing so giving rise to not only new memories, but also reflections of those memories into the way narratives of their lives are constructed. The relationship between remembering and forgetting is therefore reciprocal. Ricour (2000: 445-446).

In her review of McKittrick and Woods, (2007: p.3), Sarah Smiley (2010: 94-96) argues that McKittrick's collection of essays demonstrate how people both shape and are shaped by geography. This becomes

apparent in this research, particularly through the collage work when the visual languaging of experience intersects with place situated within landscape.

Field (2007: 7-8, 30) has long explored and experimented with the instability and complexities of memory work: exploring triggers, absences, silence and story making. His work argues for greater care in understanding the silences and the absences and why they may exist. In this research undertaking, an awareness of triggers and trauma are necessary as silences and absences too contain stories. This has been invaluable in shaping the care needed to do this kind of research (see chapter 3).

Field, Meyer and Swanson (2007:7) and Grunebaum (2001:208) contest the representations of Cape Town which ignore the stories of ordinary peoples navigating the city in the everyday. What these works reveal are the ways in which the wealth of knowledge, experiences and stories speak to a resilience and rich cultural life available at the level of ordinary people, in spite of adversity. They make a strong case for the use of memory work through oral histories in gathering these stories of resilience for purposes of understanding place making. Working with memoryscapes therefore, takes and needs time. This thesis attempts to deepen their engagement with what stories can reveal. It attempts to pursue an inquiry about what is revealed of the interior lives of Black Women in the city and in so doing possibly reveal new layers to place making.

Jeannotte (2013: 40-41) presents exciting possibilities for how memory and land intersect through mapping memories and stories and in essence creating memoryscapes or landscapes of memory situated in place. The possibilities of making the invisible visible through an exploration of memoryscapes is demonstrated to be possible through studies such as hers.

## 2.2. Interiority/Intersectionality

The literary field has been expansive in its production of knowledge around interiority, particularly in the development of characters for novels, but also, recently in the biographical writings of and about Black Women writers in South Africa. Authors such as Boswell (2020: 65) have made deliberate their study of the interior lives of Black Women writers in apartheid South Africa. Their investigative writing reveals not only the wealth of resources within these interior worlds, but also the feminist and liberatory strategies which these writers employ in their lives and writing. The intersections of these writers' lives, class, race

and gender are carefully unraveled through their writings. The strategies which Black Women writers deployed in asserting freedoms have gone ignored and undervalued for a very long time. In part because of the denial of the worth of their interior lives.

My encounters with the work of Hartman (2019) reveals the wealth of knowledge which rests in an investigation of interior worlds of Black Women in the city. Hartman's book characters are all rendered invisible through state surveys, reports, the judicial and labor systems of the time. By drawing on what she learns about the women through archival research, she begins to speak their dreams, aspirations and imaginations, challenging the erasure of their lives by official discourses. I am particularly drawn by Hartman's introduction to the book which reads;

"this (conditions of young Black Women making an urban life in New York) upheaval or transformation of black intimate life was the consequence of economic exclusion, material deprivation, racial enclosure and social dispossession; yet it, too was fueled by the vision of a future world and what might be…young Black Women were radical thinkers who tirelessly imagined other ways to live and never failed to consider how the world might be otherwise." (Hartman, 2019: XV).

The richness of the interior lives of the young Black Women Hartman investigates and the ways in which their agency and imaginations are deployed to craft a different life echoes the stories in this thesis.

Urban studies at large has paid scant attention to the everyday, ordinary lives of Black Women and in particular to their interior worlds. Understanding interiority requires intimate inquiry and tapping into the lives of people, which in turn, requires memory work. This is what this thesis seeks to address in order to better understand how Black Women navigate belonging in postcolonial cities.

## 2.3. Belonging

Belonging as that "process of transformation of a place, which becomes a space of accumulated attachment and sentiments by means of everyday practices" (de Certeau, 1984: 96). This provocation of de Certeau's, where belonging is about agency, the ability and desire to shape place became a litmus test for me in understanding the ways in which 'belonging' was articulated by the three women in the study.

But it is Theaster Gates (2019:1) who articulates the relationship between belonging and place evocatively. He argues that thinking about the concept of the 'landscape of belonging' allows us to reflect on the way in which people live on land and the ways that make them feel more and more (or less and less) like they *belong* to a place'. His assertion resonates with my own critique of what constitutes a 'sense of belonging' pivotal to this study. He continues by saying 'the other part of belonging is that one usually doesn't belong by themselves. Belonging has the word "longing" in it. There's something about desire and togetherness' Gates (2019:2). This idea that belonging can be both individual and collective, with complexity and nuance in either one of them, is also invaluable to me in listening carefully to the ways in which community is spoken about in the stories of the three women.

Carby (2019:1-3) offered much food for thought around the ways in which belonging can be exterior and defined by state and bureaucratic systems which are then co-opted by families when negotiating power and place at an intimate level. She speaks not only about the resistance to such impositions of the state on families, but also the cognitive dissonance this engenders within families. This interplay between the public and private and the constant negotiation of belonging, speaks to the encounters between Black Women and the city of Cape Town.

Belonging is understood as more than a right to access. It is about interior lives and public actions, dreams and imaginations, and the right to be wrong. It is through understanding the lived nuance that is peopled and emplaced that better conversations about belonging in postcolonial cities can be had.

## 2.4. Postcolonial city making and learning to 'see' the ghost

There is a significant body of work which speaks to the nature, condition of and reverberations of the wounded or contested city in postcolonial times Roy (2011: 207-208) and Roy, (2014: 9-20). Literature in this field varies from urban planning and design (Boemer & Davies, 2015), and the making of cities post conflict or war (Stoler, 2013) and Schindel and Colombo (2014). A rich body of work already exists on the invention of memory and place and the complexity which emerges in postcolonial city narratives which bears the burden of the past, whilst attempting to cast a different future.

> "It is easy to see the fact of displacement in the colonial experience, which at bottom is the replacement of one geographical sovereignty, an imperialist one, by another, native force. More subtle and complex is the unending cultural struggle over territory, which necessarily involves over- lapping memories, narratives, and physical structure" (Said, 2000:182).

Stoler (2013: 1-29) explores the ruins of empire's bureaucracy as having a life of its own and hence inequities continue to exist beyond the fall of the empire. Colombo and Schindel (2014: 1-13) explore the interface between memory, trauma and space. Till (2012: 6) investigates wounded cities and notions of care. Lefebvre (1998) has been influential focusing on the importance of the everyday navigation of the urban.

The conundrum of urban development and redesign in a postcolonial society, is that the infrastructures of disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, geography, urban planning often mimic that of the colonial era. Applying these disciplines, without deconstruction of their colonial imperatives causes a 'blindness' which occludes the ways of life and being in the world which have sustained and rendered communities resilient. 'See-ing' as argued by Urry (2016: 395-396), Rodaway (1994: 172) are ways of making visible through acknowledging and understanding the sensual nature of human interactions with urban environments. The wounded city (Till, 2012:6) continues to wound unless the hauntings such as referred to by Avery Gordon (2008) are made visible and acknowledged.

Present urban development proposals in the city of Cape Town undergo what is called a 'Heritage Impact Assessment'. These assessments cannot and do not make visible what is present in its absence. For example, signs or signifiers of previous residents who were forcibly removed have often been erased by newer developments. There is also very little or no memories of the diversity of communities prior to forced removals in spaces which remain mono-cultural as in their apartheid days.

There is therefore a 'blindness' to the ways in which development in postcolonial cities takes place. This comes as a result of the ways in which postcolonial city making is conceived of and deployed in engines of economic development. And in so doing, largely privileges those who benefited and gained under colonial and apartheid rule. In addition, while made conscious of the need for social housing, the state and city do not have an understanding of the value of retaining and safeguarding living heritage when conditions of gentrification grafted onto the colonial city prevail. A text which speaks to the 'wounded city' and its' spectre in contemporary urban developments is that of Karen Till (2012:6). Jeannotte (2013) study on cultural mapping provides an excellent case study for the ways in which narratives and cultural mapping may make visible the intangible but are not often deployed in Heritage Impact Assessment processes.

The notion of the 'wounded city' is inadequate in its embrace of modes of coping and survival embedded in the rich living heritage of the everyday lives of the peoples of the city. This study aims to dislodge some of the discourse around 'woundedness' and the nature of 'victim' towards an understanding of agency and nuance and complexity of the power embedded in the interior lives of Black Women. In order to do this, I argue that imaginative methods be deployed.

# 3. Finding ways of seeing

In this chapter I explore the evolution of the research process I embarked on. The research methodology emerged from a desire to experiment with ways in which the interior lives of three Black Women can be made visible and legible in a landscape which has and continues to obfuscate, dehumanize and stereotype Black Women over centuries. Exploring interior worlds for understanding belonging and place in the city invites conversation into liminal spaces: the spaces in between spoken words, the imaginary and memory, and the materiality of place. These are not easy spaces to traverse and often remain opaque through the lens of bureaucratic processes of urban planning and design. Thus, this thesis is as much an experiment in methodology and exploration of how to make visible the liminal places as it is about the content generated through the research. The forms of enquiry and the process of analysis are intertwined with one another.

No quantitative research methodology convinced me of its ability to engage with the liminal spaces, nor the opaque. It became clear that a qualitative research approach was necessary with a particular emphasis

on embedding research within narratives, stories and images. This chapter therefore starts by introducing why qualitative research informed the methodology. I then investigate narrative inquiry as a consequence of this research design choice. It is followed by an examination of the use of creative analytical tools to understand what has been generated through the research.

## 3.1. 'More than a number[2]'

Nagar, (2013: 81) argues that methodological issues are carefully thought through, that positionality is interrogated and self-reflexivity remains an ongoing practice. She proposes co-creation of knowledge as a strategy and approach for moving beyond the trite and myopic notion of self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher and to actively work against the re-inscribing of colonial harm in languaging story.

Whereas certain kinds of generalizability and certainty are provided by quantitative research methods, my preoccupation was with specificity, context, nuance in difference and similarity. Memory work is a shifting landscape (Field et al.2007: 8) and so room for the undefined and unknowable, and making and maintaining space for the contradictions and contestations which emerge, was essential.

Authors such as Sarah Tracey (2010: 840) address the ways in which credible qualitative research can work. She raises a few key markers, arguing for "a worthy topic, there should be rich rigor (evidence of being reasonable and appropriate validity), sincerity, credibility, resonance, make significant contribution, ethics and meaningful coherence". These markers became touchstones for my approach and in my journaling, self-reflexivity. Was I sincere in my communications from inception to conclusion? How is this demonstrable to the family? Is there credibility in the approaches taken and the interweaving of the multiple creative methodologies? Is there resonance with broader work being undertaken on similar topics and questions? Would this work make a contribution to existing explorations of practices aimed at illuminating interiority/belonging/Black Women's lives?

The interrelationship between story sharing and memory of place leads to an opening of methodological opportunities such as the proposal for radical engagement of memory through walking the city and

[2] I could not think of a better way to name qualitative research than in the spirit of ma K. That though the Eiselen Line, pass laws, group areas act and even the anti-apartheid struggle cast Black Women in restrictive and stereotypical forms, once an understanding of the grit of their everyday existence and making do becomes visible, it is hard to fall prey to generalisations which obfuscate identity.

identifying her objects as reference such as explored and analysed by Moretti (2011:253). Rodaway's (1994: 4) understanding of affect and sensuous geographies opened a line of enquiry to understand affective memories more carefully. Hawkins (2018: 53) challenged me to think about memoryscapes within cityscapes through the ways in which she critiques creative mapping/counter mapping as a tool for creative research and analysis.

The specificity of the experiences of the three women who shared their stories with me needed to be examined within the context of the city of Cape Town, the Cape Flats and broadly, of South Africa. In seeking to 'see' more than the tropes which are marched out in nationalist narratives about Black Women in post-apartheid South Africa, the specificity of context and place mattered. The dominant narrative of post-apartheid South Africa carries the burden of heroism, individual triumph which belies the everyday hardship of city life. A city still starkly wounded by the colonial and apartheid legislation and practices which determined, policed and attributed 'belonging' through criteria defined by the state.

While colonization and apartheid systemic racism and violence touched on all facets of life within South Africa, I focused on urbanized Cape Town. In focusing on the geographically contained boundaries of what constitutes a place and the ways in which belonging are navigated, I was keen to explore what happens when the macro of politics and economics intersects with the micro – the daily, every day and ordinary life and the interiority of it all.

With time it became clear to me that a short-term engagement with the three women would not be sufficient. As a result, there were sets of contact, in-depth and in person interviews, followed by on-going interactions over a period of three years. There was a growing awareness that the conversations with each individual was particularly revealing and rich. Each one of the women I worked with told me in various ways that "they had many stories to tell". There was nuance and particularity, along with similarities across generations. The listening and the stories required a level of trust and reciprocity which would have been difficult to maintain across multiple parties.

A number of challenges were experienced along the research journey and I highlight them here. Firstly, I had envisaged a series of walkabouts and conversations at various sites as a methodology for gathering story within place. The first two sessions were held in person and in the home of ma K. ma K failing eyesight, followed by an operation to remove cataracts made her particularly vulnerable and felt most at ease within her home. The photographs on her walls, the bead work, the collection of wool and materials, her radio which she used as triggers to talk through her experiences.

My planned in-person creative methodologies for gathering stories were largely scuppered by a particularly traumatic and violent incident which took place in the location of ma K's home. This severed further physical interaction with ma K (introduced below). This incident brought home the safety and security issues faced every day. Ma K intimated that whilst there had not been such violence in a while, the threat of it was always present. Ma K also began to feel vulnerable, a feeling she recognized from previous experiences of sharing her story and so our sessions ground to a halt. She was particularly keen and encouraged me to speak with her daughter and granddaughter as she felt that their stories were important too.

The onset of COVID and the high levels of caution further distanced the storytelling process from one-on-one sessions to exchanges through phone messages and recorded voice messages. One contact session was held with the granddaughter in the Company Gardens and one contact session was held with the daughter at a coffee shop in St George's Square. This pivoting of research away from being in person all the time involved being responsive and responsible in the research process, and in some ways created even more intimate and immediate modes of exchange, sharing WhatsApp images and keeping in regular contact. The research process became iterative as we had to find imaginative ways of communicating and engaging through difficult circumstances.

## 3.2. 'Keep passing me the wood – I will keep the fires burning[3]'

> "It takes six or seven years to make a place and just as homes were being finished the police and bulldozers arrived" ma K, and African story of the mother city And, on reflecting on the fast in St George's Cathedral; "I noticed that on the third, fourth day that the milk was a little bit less…On the 17th day I felt a big change in my body. I was very weak, I couldn't lift up my baby to breastfeed her. I just sat. (The) sisters came and did (gave) me a little massage and (by) the afternoon I felt right again. After that I didn't have any more problems until the last day". (ma K, An African story of the Mother City, 2012:23)

And then, there was the image of ma K with her daughter in the same book.

[3] Ma K to me when I explained how inspiring her story of resistance was to me, at a time when the city of Cape Town's reaction to COVID was to coral people without homes into a camp, a repeat on the landscape of isolation and dehumanisation.

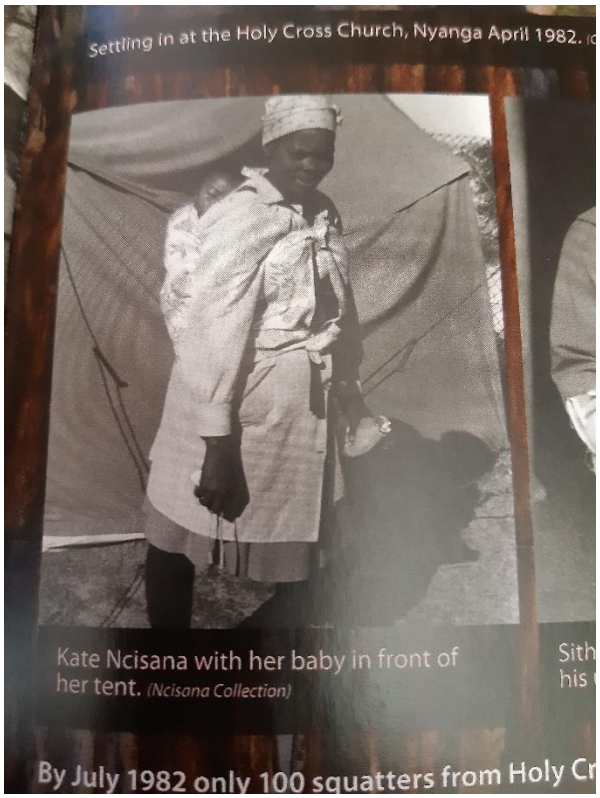



*Figure 1: Image of ma K with her daughter in the book*[4]

I first encountered ma K through her words and an image of her I could not erase from my head. The St George's cathedral[5] had co-curated an exhibition depicting the occupation and protest fast of a small group of women and men accompanied by some children in 1982. (Cole, 2013: 17) Beyond the exhibition text, I wished to understand her resoluteness, what it is, was which made her take such drastic steps in order to maintain her life and dignity in Cape Town. And beyond the resistance, who she is. Ma K eagerly agreed to meet with me.

On arrival at her home for our first meeting, after listening to the motivation for the research and the intent, she called her granddaughter and insisted that she becomes a part of the research. While waiting for A to arrive, ma K took me on an extensive journey of her family using the collage of images, cuttings from newspapers, photographs and copies of photographs on her lounge wall. She pointed out the

[4] Photo: Ncisana Collection

[5] St George's was place from which the research could leap. The cathedral served and continues to serve as a space of protest, in particular by marginalized and oppressed communities over decades. Access to housing and land were two of the issues with which the cathedral became associated as a place of refuge and of protest. An investigation into resistance, protest and an insistence on belonging in the city led me to the cathedral. As an organizing space, I knew I would find some way of identifying possible women I could engage with around my research.

photograph of her father while telling me that he had once been a political prisoner for his resistance to inhumane treatment on the docks. She continued to point out her son, her daughter and her granddaughter, all of whom she spoke of with deep pride in her voice.

Her lounge was a veritable museum, a collection of images, but also materials for her craft of beading and art making. The dining table which was at the entrance to the home, was filled with many colored beads, thread and tools to make beaded adornment. The display cabinet in the lounge had jewelry which she had prepared for a wedding on display. Beautiful blue and white head bands, long deliberately designed frayed beaded necklaces and belts were carefully laid out, awaiting the client's collection. She also had bags of wool and fabric stacked in the doorway between the lounge and the back of her home.

At the first visit, after waiting a time, ma K's granddaughter arrived. A tall strong young woman, dressed in a bright yellow kaftan warmly called out to her grandmother before entering. Ma K briefly introduced me in isiXhosa and I followed with an overview of the research purpose. A responded by saying, "I have many stories to tell. Yes".

It was at the first visit ma K initially discouraged me from attempting to make contact with any more of the original group of fasters from St George's Cathedral. Her wisdom revealed itself much later when she explained the extent to which the experience of fasting and loss of their homes had traumatized and left deep scars. Ma K herself, kept saying that talking about that experience would open wounds she could not deal with again. She said that the exhibition process led to her becoming quite ill. There were also friendships that became strained as a (housing) movement became drawn into party politics and other issues.

During the course of the interviews and the onset of COVID, ma K also lost a number of her friends to death. Any discussion of the past became triggers for her grief. We made a decision at some point to discontinue the interviews as it proved too painful for her and explored other methods of engaging with each other in the research process. It became infinitely clear just how deeply traumatizing and triggering the process of storytelling can be. Not necessarily in the moment of sharing, but in its aftermath. The need for practicing an ethics of care whilst embarking on the research became paramount. Regular telephonic and WhatsApp check-ins were made with all three of the women, especially following a session. These check-ins were not only about the research question or content checking (which did happen), but also checking in on how they were each coping with the COVID conditions and the impact on their lives. It became clearer to me how past traumas were triggered by experiences in the present which presented

themselves as completely new, and yet held some stark similarities. For example, the curfews and states of emergencies during apartheid, the isolation when one's home is targeted as that of an activist and isolation during first days of COVID. Ma K spent time each day listening to her favorite radio station, Umhlobo wenene, paying particular attention to death announcements. My calls were invaluable as it provided insight into how each of the women drew on inner resources to deal with this new crisis.

Ma K encouraged me to speak with her daughter, giving me her number and speaking to her before I called. In our first telephonic conversation, her daughter, N agreed to a first interview after a lengthy exchange filled with laughter and story. N, as so brilliantly and proudly introduced by her mother was a business woman, feisty, with dreams and a sense of humor which she was unafraid to turn onto her own life. This is the same daughter in the image above. The resonance of this was not lost on me.

I decided to pursue this avenue of enquiry girded by my understanding of qualitative research and the appropriateness of conducting in depth narrative inquiry with just three people.

Two things were certain as I embarked on the research design process. First, that a narrative inquiry approach was necessary which entailed a careful listening to stories. Second that a creative analytical process was needed in order to thread together the storytelling and writing, and then layering these stories with a visual language in order to 'make visible' the interior lives of the women who shared their stories with me. Making sense of the liminal spaces in which belonging is situated, could not only work with oral history interviews, neither could I rely solely on archival material. I needed to find a way of seeing, making visible and understanding the affective. It is for this reason that a multiplicity of creative approaches and tools were drawn on. An exploration emerged which drew on the thread of story and writing narratives into vignettes intersecting with the materiality and visuals found in archival collections and finally in the generation of a series of collages.

## 3.3. Narrative research and writing as method

*"I have many stories to tell". N, 2020*

Narrative writing allows for "unexpected, peripheral, and unorthodox ideas and connections to emerge, resulting in creative accounts of social and political life". (Elliott, 2017: 34). Elliott's argument for narrative writing which opens up rather than consolidates and shuts down the imagination is what I used as guide in writing my own journal notes, poems and in the writing up of the vignettes that constitute chapter 4.

"In thinking about one's self as a telling or story or narrative, the idea of a unified, fixed, and singular self ontologically prior to and apart from a person's living experience is replaced by the notion of a multiple, fluid, and negotiated identity that is continuously under narrative construction—a process that is never complete as long as we live and interact with others" (Bochner & Riggs, 2014: 196).

I wanted to make sure that the methodology used for sharing stories took the dialogical nature of storytelling into account. I wanted to explore how, in the analysis, an open -endedness could be held together with the "findings" of the research. This, almost contradictory purpose speaks to what Bochner and Riggs (2014: 196) refer to as the unstable and stable nature of identity as it is negotiated through the telling of stories.

"A storied life is a negotiated life collaboratively enacted and performed in dialogue with the other characters with whom we are connected. Thus, the stories we live out are a relational, co-authored production" (Bochner and Riggs, 2014: 196). Through the listening to and working with the narratives of the three women an interconnectedness began to emerge of their experiences, world views, and a continuity in the strategies they employ to negotiate belonging. In the same way, differences and nuance began to emerge. "It turns out that the stories we tell are not only *about* our lives; they are *part of* our lives" (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992, in Bochner and Riggs, 2014: 196)

The reflections above which places narrative and story at the core of humanness in the ways its multiplicity, dynamism, dialogical nature creates identity, provides much needed affirmation for the ways in which I chose to interact with all three participants. It helped in shifting the lens from purely archival material which speaks of a past obfuscation of nuance and complexity in its telling, to a present and possibly a future imagining of relations. The presence of the past which is experimented with in the collage making section of the research analysis is one way of revealing the 'ghost' (Avery Gordon, 2008: 65) which never recedes, and persists in ways that are not immediately visible or only visible on being sought out.

An ability to the see these ghosts require a different form of enquiry. The turn to narrative inquiry is widely viewed as an expression of "dissatisfaction with received views of knowledge, in particular a rejection of positivist and post-positivist social science" (Bochner & Riggs, 2014:198). My resistance to the constraints of the quantitative research methodology is borne out by the above reflection by Bochner and Riggs. Attempting to make visible forms of knowledge and ways of being in the world denied by scholarship driven by fact and science, narrative inquiry offered me one such opportunity.

Storytelling is the means by which we represent our experiences to ourselves and to others; it is how we communicate and make sense of our lives; it is how we fill our lives with meaning. From bedtime stories to life reviews—across the span of our lives—we listen to stories and tell stories of our own. Whilst ma K had shared her story through the St George's exhibition development process, the publication and in numerous media platforms, it felt that this was a story intimately interwoven with that of her daughter and granddaughter – somehow it made it a different story. There are numerous insights and "aha" moments reflected in the stories which confirm that telling stories in parallel, and with reflection offer up new insights and ways of storying a past and present existence (see chapter 4).

> "Narrative is as much about the possible as it is about the actual. Many of those drawn to narrative inquiry wanted to imagine, discover, or create new and better ways of living. We need to understand lives and indeed to live lives differently if we are to avoid further fragmentation, isolation, and disconnection from each other." Freeman 1998a:46 in Bochner & Riggs, (2014:198).

My motivation for seeking to make visible ways of navigating belonging in the city, is borne from experiences of witnessing policy and other activities of decision making for the peoples of the city, which fell short of actively recognizing and seeing the ways in which the past is circumscribed onto these very decisions.

I was particularly aware of my positionality and the ways in which situated and context based narrative making became collaborative, or the antithesis, ran the risk of being extractive. Richa Nagar's (2014: 66) insights were especially valuable for my self-reflexive practice.

> "Far from being the creation of a single individual, a life story results from a collaboration between two individuals. From the start, a life story embodies the agendas, purposes, and interests of the narrator and the interpreter, both of whom are socially and spatially positioned subjects whose positions influence not only their perspectives but also their relationship with each other." (Nagar,2014: 66).

This, together with a sense of an ethics of care led me to deliberately use specific creative means to continue a process of self- reflexivity throughout the interviews, but also in the writing.

Prior to the first session, all of the respondents were briefed on the broad research question and invited to share their insights to the question; "I wish to know about your relationship with this city, Cape Town? Where do you feel that you belong? What are the ways in which you have negotiated belonging?" Each member of the family was individually interviewed, through one-on-ones as well as through questions shared on WhatsApp and mobile apps. They chose their own starting point, points of entry and emphasis.

As researcher/listener I requested clarity at points to understand better, or to explore what if anything the story revealed to the teller. As I wanted the stories to pursue an emotive and visceral language, the stories were not about events only, they traversed, trigger memories, how the respondent remembers feeling, how they reflect on the past in the present and how they make meaning of their lives. On-going, current concerns and issues had a place in the storytelling as well.

### 3.3.1. Note-taking, journaling, and poetry

I largely took handwritten notes and after each session, wrote up the interviews in fuller form. These notes were photographed and sent via the phone to ascertain whether I had reflected the conversation accurately. Particular note was made of silences in the storytelling. At no time was any obligation placed on the respondents to explain their silences, or the obvious emotional responses to a particular story thread. Similarly, when respondents indicated that they wished to have a break, or not pursue a particular aspect of their story, I respected that. While this meant that there were pauses in the story or data collected, it was aimed at ensuring that the respondents understood that they too had power in this context.

After the interviews, in the write up process, I would contact respondents to clarify timelines as these were often blurred as experiences and stories and memories converged. A linear sense of time was not particularly easy to read.

| *Remembering has no chronology. Journal entry, Deirdre Prins-Solani 12 October 2020* |
|---|

The conversational measure of the interviews was marked by an exchange of similar or different stories between myself and the respondents. The conversational form of the storytelling also led to laughter punctuating the storytelling. In the sharing of the narrative write-ups with the family, some of the responses were; ”I want to meet this woman. Oh wow! That’s my story” ***(****followed by deep laughter****)*** and “A forgot to tell you about XYZ. Maybe you should ask her about it” (a reminder that A had met Laila Ali, the great women boxer and daughter of Mohamed Ali. Something she did not speak of at all).

I journaled and wrote poetry as mechanisms for working carefully through my own bias, the stories shared, and my responses to stories in an attempt to engage with the troubled nature of the interlocutor, respondent and researcher.

I am of mixed descent who experienced forced removals or group areas within a specific context and time, an education system which both discriminated against and privileged me, with beginnings in a lower

middle class family with two parents as professionals, teacher and priest. Through the coloured preferential act and in spite of the brutality of the removals and the impact on the psychological, social and economic well-being of my extended family, I needed to distinguish and differentiate between the subtleties and nuance of difference and sameness. I kept a journal and made notes through the process in order to discern and disentangle threads.

*One can do a certain kind of violence when using identities cast in the paradigm of a past cast in injustice...and what of illegibility? To whom? For whom? Why? Deirdre Prins-Solani, 7 April 2020*

The above written after a session with A, discussing her new relationship and the resistance from within the community because of xenophobia. And me thinking through the ways on naming in the thesis and the constraints of apartheid identities.

The Silence
Is so thick
Like mom's white baked bread
Fresh out of the oven
Deirdre Prins-Solani, 7 August 2020

Note to self as I re-read interview with ma K. And the scent of freshly baked bread which is fulsome, yeasty, filled with anticipation became inscribed as descriptive of the long pauses.

Writing poetry became catharsis for me and made visible some of the affective responses. Elliot (2017: 28) asks, "How might we think about ethnographic poetry? How is it different from other forms of poetry? To write an ethnographic poem is to convey our knowledge, our observations, and our theoretical analyses in poetic form". "Ethnographic poetry, or antropesia, is situated in social and cultural worlds; it is poetry that is centrally about the human condition". Rosaldo 2013:101 in Elliot and Culhane, ed. (2017: 28)

In analysing the interviews, my notes and transcripts, the journal entries and poetry I asked: how closely linked is this thread to understanding 'belonging'? How does this thread reveal agency in navigating the city and in what ways? What are the inner, internal resources which the women called upon in their contexts? How is their creativity and imaginations made visible in their personhood and enactment of life in the city? It was through this process of ongoing reflection that I was able to identify and craft the narratives and vignettes shared in chapter 4.

The narrative writing was aimed at emphasizing the agency which the women have in their own lives and in its telling. The narratives therefore could not only be a recount of events. They provided insight to the

women themselves as I mirrored back their stories, sometimes asked additional questions or simply wanting them to provide feedback on whether I had listened well. In the writing up of the narratives, efforts were made to capture the sense of being reflected through silence, laughter and tonality of voice. Interwoven with my own sense of place and knowledge of broader historical, contextual factors and reflections - the stories were created.

After many iterations of this writing process, the writing was shared with the three women who then commented, made additions and edits, which were incorporated. I did not wish to replicate the 180 degrees of separation between researcher and participant or obfuscate my own voice.

Each of the section headings were drawn from the interviews: one from each woman. In foregrounding 'in their own words', I wish to make visible and distinguish between my own writing and that of the participants. This style of quotations along with my own distinct writing continues for the duration of chapter 4.

## 3.4. Visual research and collage as analytical method

The logic of writing stories and layering them with existing images in an archive opened up creative analytical opportunities within my research. My process involved working *with* visuals from the archive and working *on* visuals in the form of collages.

Visual inquiry is used to yield insights and reconstruct data to understand, disrupt and reconstruct phenomena (Rose, 2001: 14). The idea that a visual process potentially has generative and iterative outcomes which could illuminate complexities and nuance is one which I experiment with in the analysis.

### 3.4.1. An approach to working with Collage

Given that memory work relies on using images as stimuli, I was interested in working with a wide range of images from historical archives and generated.

Working between photographs and the word required a consideration of why the selection of particular images, understanding the complexity of photography and its relationship with reality, representation and context.

“What if one considers the way photographs simultaneously recall the past while prefiguring the future? What if in encountering the past as it is depicted, one in turn is greeting the future that returns recursively?” Phindi Mnyaka in Ambivalence, (2021:209). Mnyaka’s observation struck home during my analysis process as the patterns and connections began to emerge. There appeared to be a way in which the past, captured in the archival photographs echoes across the present and suggests, the future. I encountered in myself an ambivalence when working with images from the archive. These images were taken at a particular time, within a context and for a specific purpose.

Images from three collections were sourced. The first collection which originates from the Cape Times media archive is the University of Cape Town digital images special collection. The second collection is from the South African National Library digital collection. The third, which are images of multiple hand drawn maps came from the City of Cape Town’s Heritage department. Mnyaka’s (2021:209) assertion about the recursive nature of the past into future permeated the process by which I studied and selected from the images. There are three categories or lenses through which I made the selection, these are; time boundedness, place and object threads or the emergent themes or metaphors within the stories.

Images taken during the years of colonization and apartheid were selected for their ways in which they contextualized the deeply personal experiences of the three women. The uniformed policemen, the bulldozers, flattened dwellings, triangular structures, tents and protest almost depersonalizes the nature of what is being done to the body and humaneness of people. Juxtaposing them with the digital images of objects, place, gathering places and mobility is one way to weave them closer, the interior and exterior worlds.

Visual inquiry approaches, such as collage making and concept mapping, are a means for formulating ideas and articulating relationships among these to help understand phenomena in their formative stages, work through emergent concepts, or to help represent them to others. Collage making and concept mapping, in particular, are useful ways for “listening visually” and getting into “liminal spaces” where “knowledge . . . never arrives . . . it is always on the brink” (Neilsen, 2002:208 in Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010:2).

“Drawing what we see and experience during fieldwork and research requires a different sort of attention to the world, one that is affective and sensorial in its demand to take notice of the subtle and not-so-subtle corporeality of everyday life” (Elliott, 2017:31). Belonging as a central focus of this thesis, is largely affective, sensorial and embodied. It would be hard to simply tell the story as narrative, there is a need for integrating images which can speak to, disrupt, and invite through imagination some of the affect and

sensorial responses necessary for a meaningful understanding of them. The movement from narrative enquiry to collage for this research is not just for purposes of providing thicker descriptions or illustrations, but to find ways which move beyond the one dimensional and binary nature of story which typically has a beginning and end and therefore finite. Collage provides space for interpretation, reaction and reciprocity in the telling of the story.

"Collage, as a form of inquiry has been attracting interest in qualitative circles because it allows the researcher to work in a non-linear and intuitive way by arranging image fragments that reveal unconscious connections and new understandings Davis, 2008 in Butler-Kisber, (2010:3). According to Robertson 2002:2 in Butler-Kisber, (2010:3) "collage reflects the very way we experience the world with objects given meaning not from something within themselves, but rather through the way we perceive they stand in relationship to one another". This is what drew me to working with collage: the desire to find new ways of 'seeing' what is present in disparate places in the city that include memory, memory landscapes, photographic archives and the archives of colonization and apartheid paraphernalia for control.

Using the key words and themes which emerge from the stories –'reading' the images became a generative process, crafting images with words in mind. Leaping from word to image holds an irresolvable tension which in my view generates insights and depth which is necessary in making visible and legible interiority. Consequently, crafting collages can tell stories in nuanced and complex ways.

Diving into the photographic archives allowed me to explore the relationship between the intimate-family-interior worlds and the external dynamics which had/have an impact on the personal. Influenced by the works of Hartman (2019:XV) and Carby's (2019:2) intersection of the archives with stories, I wanted to explore visually what it meant to have photographic images from the archives intersect or converse with digitally generated images[6] which spoke to the narratives shared.

Cutting up and recreating collages/narratives provided time to analyse, revisit stories see synergies and surface reflections which were not apparent during the narrative construction. In addition, collages as a visual narrative presents an opportunity for engaging with thoughts, ideas, dreams and hopes from within an interior world. The interpretative and representational nature of the collage sets up an interrogative relationship between creator and viewer.

[6] Under my artistic direction, all digital images were generated by Kevin Mutia, a fellow urbanist and scholar

### 3.4.2. Making the Collages

The first step towards collaging, was to identify key words or phrases which leapt out from the stories of each of the participants. These words and phrases were then overlaid onto draft digital renderings and documented. Time was taken to review words which were common between the three women, in contrast or which brought into view aspects of the stories to which I was not immediately aware. The collage building went through multiple iterations. A detailed analysis of what is made visible through the collages is done in chapter 5. Here follows a sequence of collages in process.

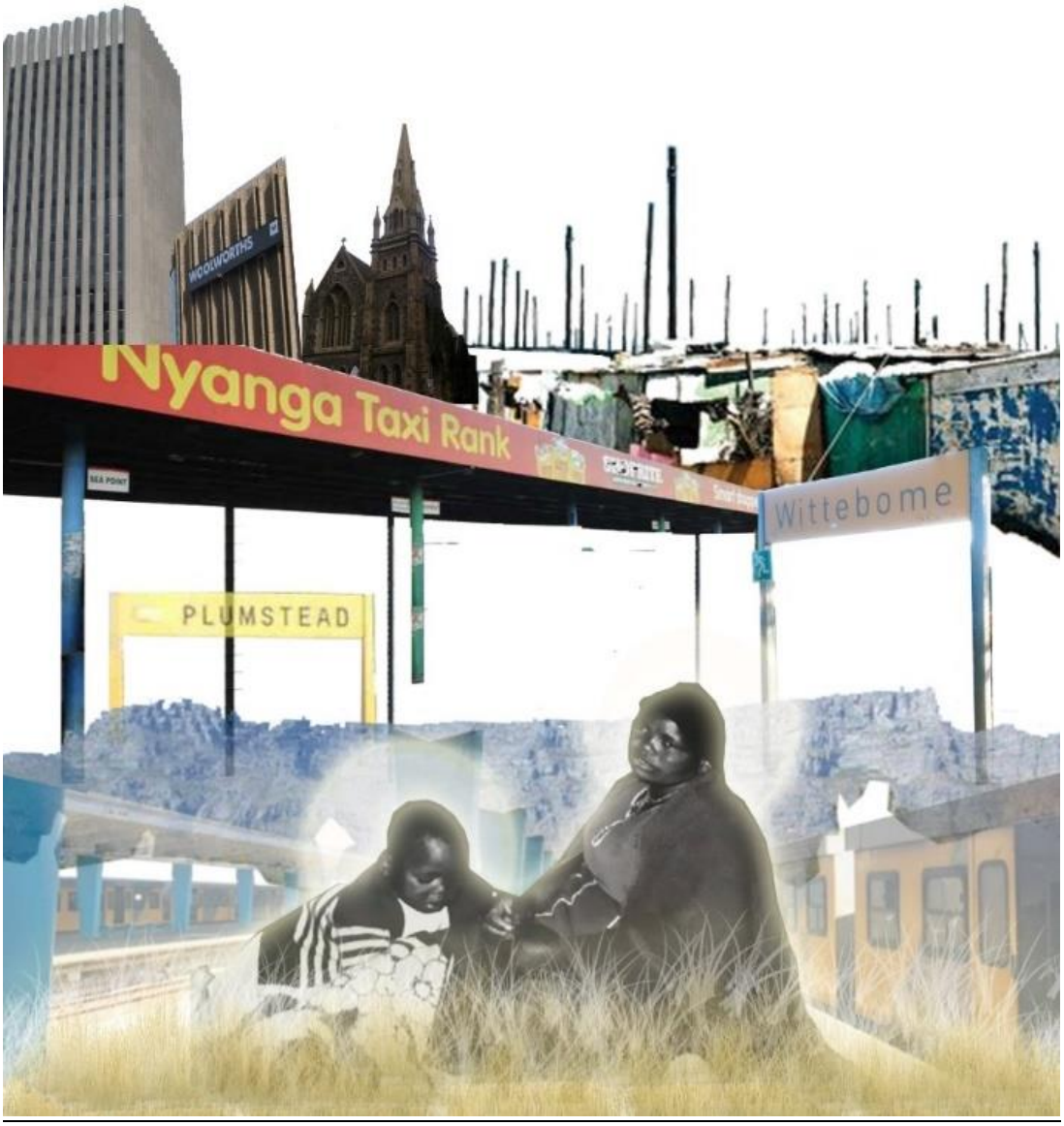



*Figure 2: First collage iteration integrating digital and photographs*

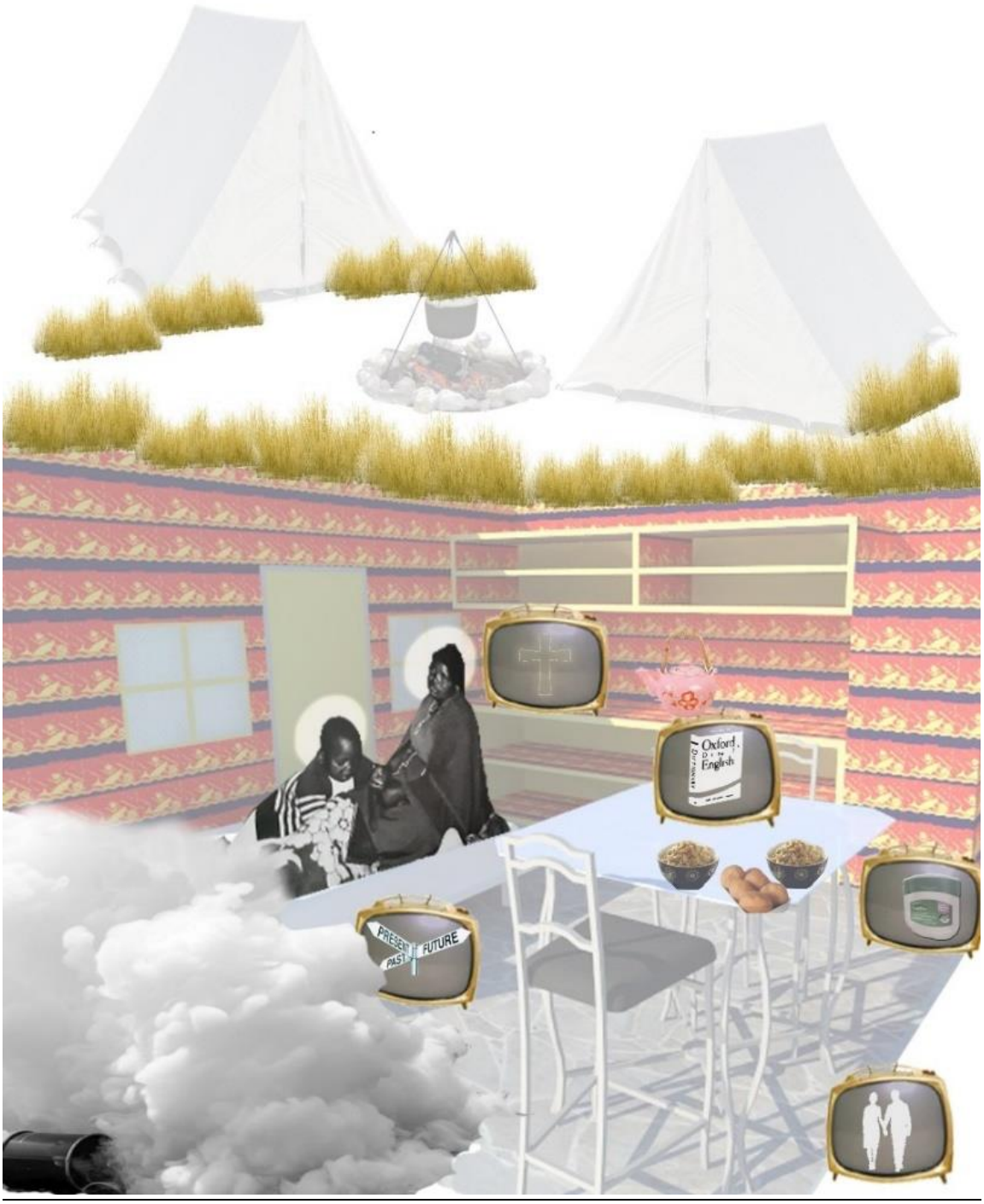



*Figure 3: Second collage iteration using digital images*

I was not satisfied. The images were far too literal and did not carry the nuance and complexities which the stories invited. They also did not convey the affect or the agency so present in the storytelling. And so I returned to the stories and the words which led to the generation of words and phrases overlapping images. The three initial collages with words are documented below.

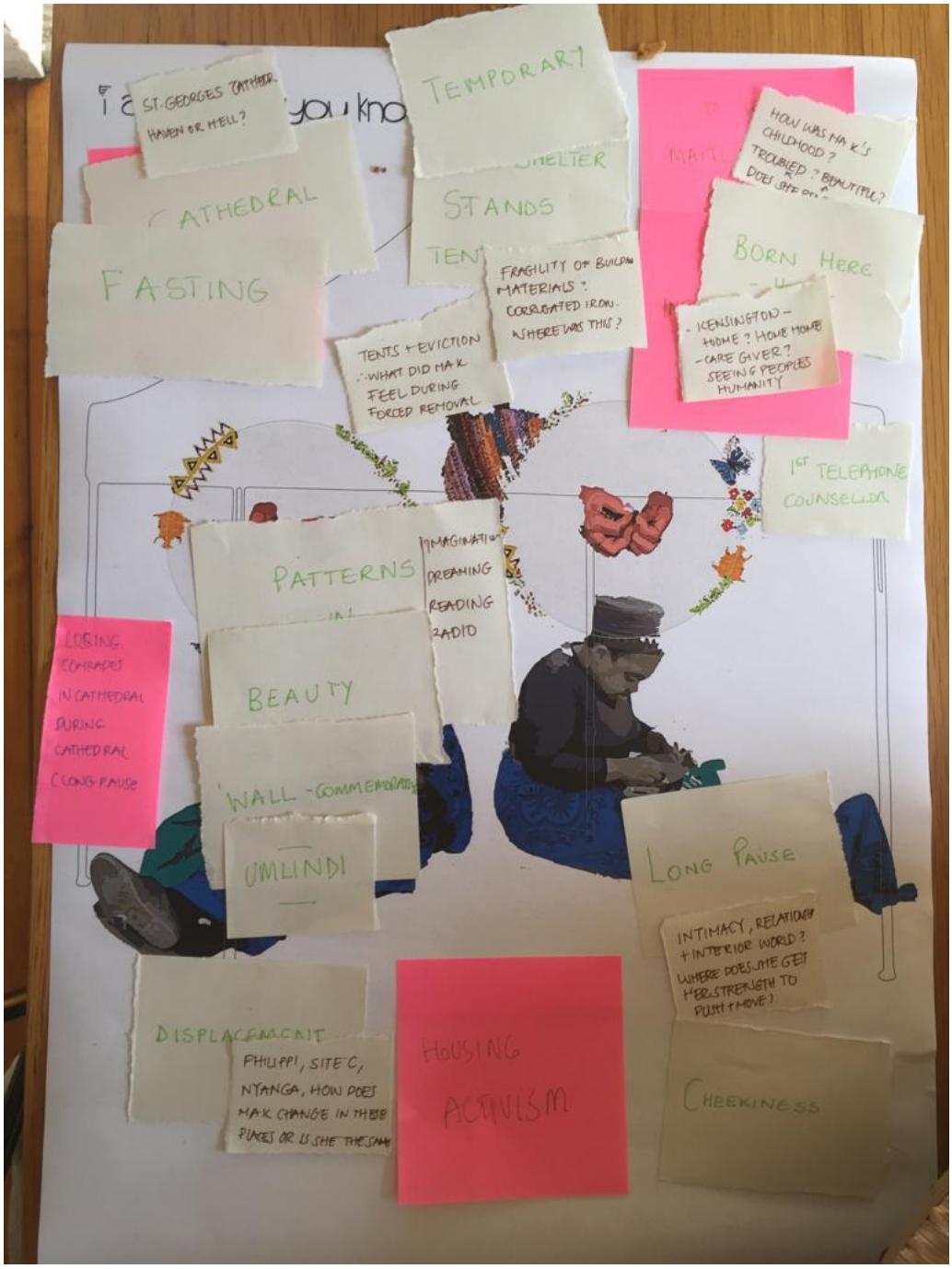



*Figure 4: Ma K: 2nd draft with words*


*Figure 5:N: 2nd draft with words*

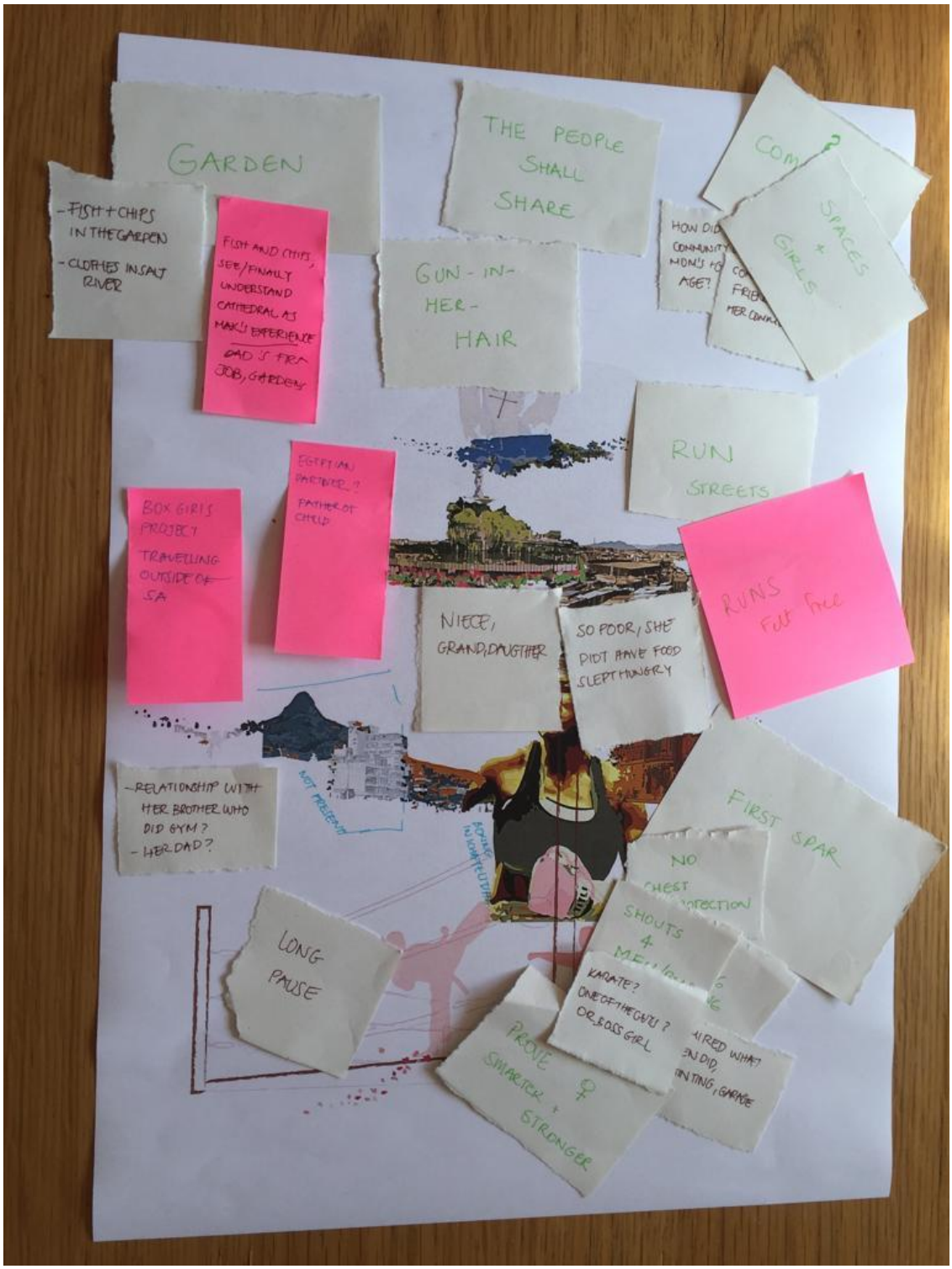



*Figure 6:A: 2nd draft with words*

An experimental stage began with the insertion of archival images from the three collections. The insertion of a portrait image taken by me marked a clear divergence from only archival images. The use of color began to seep into the collages. The echoes of lines and shapes through the generations also drew my attention. Then, I knew we were on the right track. Here is a sample of what began to emerge.


*Figure 7: Sample collage with archival images merged*

After a long period of experimentation and 'reading' the draft collages I could see where I had gone wrong. I began to rethink the approach to collage building and made a few creative decisions about juxtaposition, the inclusion of images of people tempered with buildings and shifting from the literal to the more figurative and metaphoric.

**In Summary**

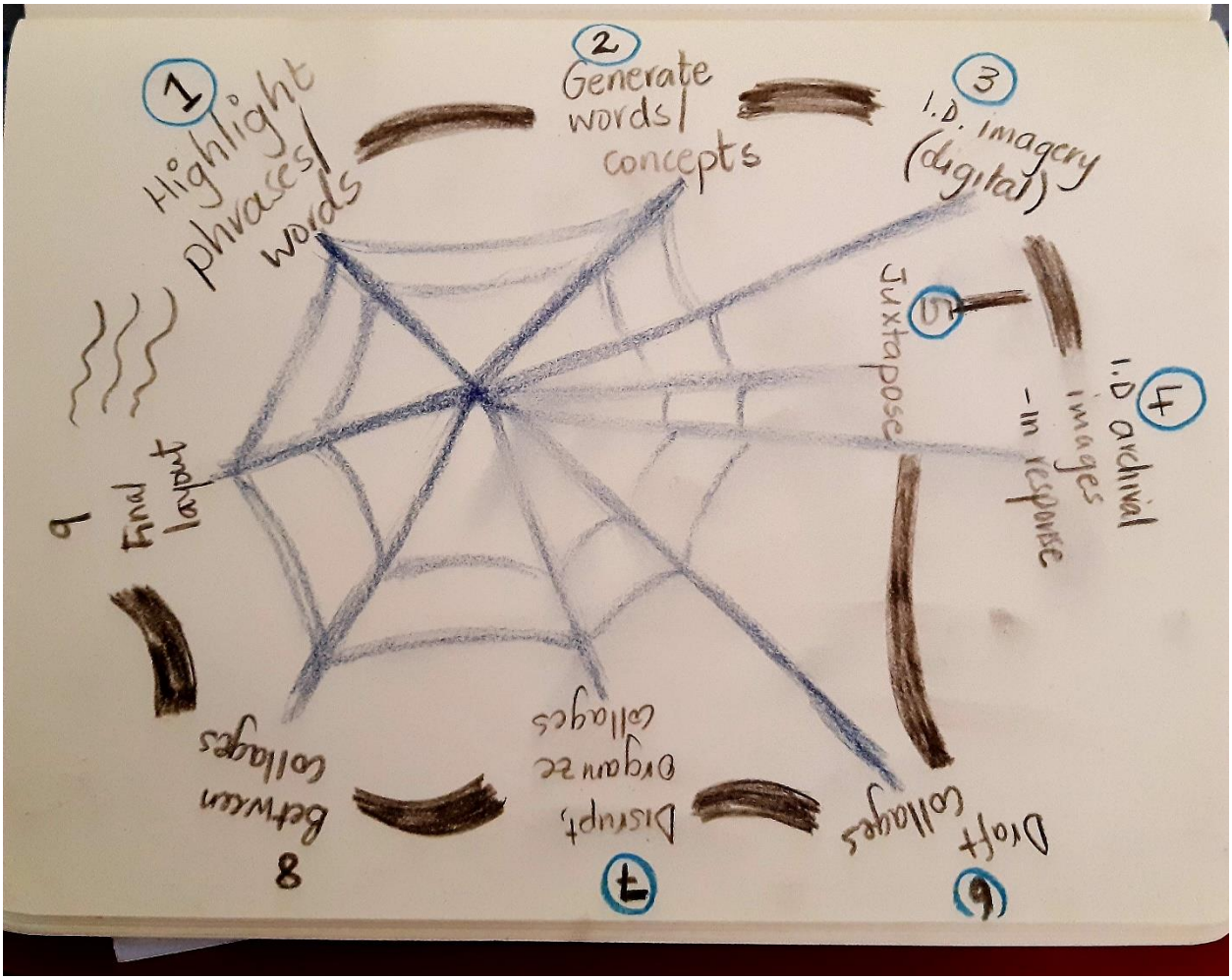



*Figure 8: Emergent collaging process*

There was a continuous revisiting of the layouts of the collages through the lens of the overarching questions related to belonging and interiority and the postcolonial city. Much like a spider web, the inter-relationships between the steps held the shape of the outcomes for the analysis.

# 4. Storying Belonging

Colonisation. Apartheid. One system of oppression replaced by another. Both marked by the brutality that sought to obliterate identity, dispossess, control and claim the Black Body as extension of the tools of production. And yet, despite the mental, financial, legislated, and weaponized machinery of both colonial and apartheid states, Black Women resisted confinement: confinement of the body and mobility and confinement of the spirit, to imagine, dream and nurture a rich interior life.

One of the spaces which remains most marked as a site of entanglement, is that of the urban, or city space. Pushing back against attempts at exclusion through legislation, divisive planning (or lack of planning) and psychological means of creating *laager*[7], Black Women resisted.

Through the vignettes of stories of three generations of women in a family, I witness their experience of dispossession, removal and resistance. Criss-crossing the city of Cape Town; the city center itself, Ndabeni, Kensington, Philippi, Site C, Plumstead, Langa with specters of the Eastern Cape hovering we are given sneak previews into lives lived across, between and inside faultlines and entanglements. While these are physical, geographically defined spaces, we traverse them through story and memory which conflates distance, perceived boundaries and imbues the fault lines with imagination. In these stories I share through snapshots of their narratives; our conversations, artistic representation and artefacts from their personal archive, their navigation of group areas, forced removals, gendering and contemporary forms of post-apartheid stigma.

I explore three threads in this section. While they appear distinct in the writing, they are in fact interwoven and interrelated.

This chapter is separated into three interconnected sections. First, '…being cheeky…' shares the ways in which all three generations of women move through and negotiate the city with a disposition, a boldness, a capacity to 'be cheeky,' to break stigmas, to challenge the gendered and racist nature of their exclusion from spaces. This cheekiness is not only harnessed within an external society, but internally for themselves first, in family and within the local community they call home. Yet, as their stories so poignantly share, this is challenging work, it is painful, fraught with trauma and comes at great personal cost. Insight into

[7] System devised by Afrikaner trekboers to sleep at night while criss crossing interior of South Africa. The laager is a circle of wagons or carts with guards protecting the inner circle

their interior worlds through the navigation of stories related to cheekiness illuminates the internal resources not often recognized or acknowledged within scholarly work addressing agency and urban identities.

Second, '…umnqusho, amagwinya and tea…' shares the experiences of the co-creation of 'communities of care'. Symbolically captured in the cooking pots of umnqusho in the tented camp of Philippi and amagwinya on the train journeys to school. The stories of food, cooking and the symmetry of cups of tea resonate with the sensuality and pliability of communities negotiating a hostile place. Understanding the ways in which the 'communities of care' are constructed, nurtured and the roles they play in the lives of the three women and their sense of agency reveals an ignored or under explored notion of how interior worlds are manifested in public spaces and used to navigate belonging. Whilst the food, umnqusho and amagwinya are a part of the stories told in this chapter, they also serve as a reminder that the navigation of city is a sensual one, an embodied experience. And while in the official versions about the city of Cape Town, these scents and food ways are often marginal, unplanned for, they pivot around the movements of people through place.

Third, in '…'these acts of belonging'…' I use the notion of 'listening to your own rhythm' shared by A to explore the ways in which the imagination is deployed by the three women in order to better navigate through space with financial and relationship precarity. How they create homes, in multiple places, in geographies of vulnerability and loss by recognizing their own power and agency through intuitive listening to the rhythms of their lives in the city. Through the conversations with all three women, this ability to shut out dissenting voices, go inward and draw on internal strength signifies a strategy for survival and resilience. Spatially, negotiating place and belonging is a sometimes dissonant, sometimes harmonising rhythm. An exploration of interiority requires a careful listening to the stories of rhythm and opacity which reveal place making strategies of belonging. These acts of belonging are often invisible. They rest in the imagination, as strategy for survival and nurturing hope, but also as laboratory for futures.

## 4.1. 'I am cheeky you know'

> *"One day the police came. I must have been about seven years old. They came to us where we were playing in the front yard. Demanded that we find our parents passbooks. They had been arrested for not carrying them. Because we could not find the passbooks we were taken to the police station and jailed. The lady who looked after us while our*

*parents worked came looking for us that night. But I had told them, I told those policemen, they could not keep us there. I was stubborn you know, I was cheeky" (Interview xx).*

ma K often used the word "cheeky" to describe herself and her character. In these stories to follow I read **'cheekiness'** as Hartmans' **'waywardness'.** For Hartman (2019: 227-228) "waywardness articulates the paradox of cramped creation, the entanglement of escape and confinement, flight and captivity. It is the practice of the social otherwise, the insurgent ground that enables new possibilities and new vocabularies; it is the lived experience of enclosure and segregation, assembling and huddling together…it is an improvisation with the terms of social existence, when the terms have already been dictated, when there is little room to breathe, when you have been sentenced to a life of servitude…it is the untiring practice of trying to live when you were never meant to survive." (Hartman, 2019: p. 227-228). This chapter introduces m K, The Elder, N, The Daughter, and finally A, The Granddaughter.

### 4.1.1. The Elder

*"I was born and grew up in Kensington. My father was a dock worker. He lived in Ndabeni first. And then moved to Kensington. He was an activist for so many years, (lots of laughter), think that's where I get it from. It was a mixed community. There were colored people, even white people who lived together with us in the same street. I remember my parents worked very long hours. But we were safe. We played in the streets with each other. We were cared for by a Colored lady. I learnt to speak Afrikaans. She looked after us, so well. And even though she called us kaffir, she would make sure we were protected and safe. So when the police came looking for the pass books (of her parents), I was cheeky with them you know. I knew they couldn't keep me at the police station. She (the caregiver) would come and look for me".*

Perpetually shadowed by city authorities, exclusionary practices of UnBelonging plagued making home in the city across generations. ma K's father was imprisoned on Robben Island for his activism. His photograph, in black and white, has pride of place in the front room of her home. Activism grew among dockworkers and under the leadership of Clements Kadalie, the Industrial Commercial Union was established. A particularly pivotal workers strike took place in 1919. This then was the milieu into which ma K was born.

Ndabeni was the first site from which massive forced removals took place in South Africa. Created as a camp after the outbreak of the bubonic plague, forced removals from Ndabeni began in 1926. It is not coincidence that historians note the increase or influx of African workers into Kensington/Windermere around the 1930s to 1950s, as many displaced families from Ndabeni settled there. In addition to the insecurity of place and making a home, life and movement was also controlled through a pass law system. This system controlled the movement of people of color through the city and its suburbs. 'Permission', granted by city authorities to be in the city, or within any of its white spaces was negotiated through *transactional* means: labor for permission to enter.

After moving to the Eastern Cape as a teenager, ma K returned to Cape Town in order to remain close to her husband. On speaking of her attempts to make a home once again, she says;

*"Cape Town is my home. I was born here. We found open land and just built our stands from materials we found. I had to leave my son[8] behind… (a very long pause)… We were not allowed to come with our children".*

State sponsored brutal removals from these homes reverberates in the reflection from an interview conducted with ma K for a commemorative publication; "it takes six or seven years to make a place and just as homes were finished the police and bulldozers arrived" (ma K in Cole 2012:11)

Ma K's "stubbornness" persists as she continues to attempt for the next two decades to make a home in the city of Cape Town. The brutality of the state continued unabated, with regular violent raids and destruction of homes in Crossroads, Nyanga bush, KTC and deportations from the city of Cape Town to places designated as Bantustans such as in the Eastern Cape. In 1982, ma K was one of the fasters who took residence in the St George's Cathedral of the Martyr in the middle of the city. Those were hard times. Ma K, says;

> *"I noticed that on the third, fourth day that the milk was getting a little bit less…On the 17th day I felt a big change in my body. I was very weak. I couldn't lift up my baby to breastfeed her. I just sat. (The) sisters came and did (gave) me a little massage and (by) the afternoon I felt right again. After that I didn't have any more problems until the last day". (Cole: 2012, p23)*

[8] He was born in 1965

At this stage ma K was raising the infant, N. After the fast ended, ma K, granted a permit moved to live in a tented camp along with her daughter, N. In 1984 permanent homes were built in what became known as Khayelitsha, Site C. ma K moved there.

*"But, the struggle was not over. I continued to fight for housing in various campaigns and people still used my house as an advice office…(more laughter)"*

Ma K was reluctant to continue speaking of her experiences as the talking raised too many wounds and "brought back too many painful memories". Instead, she encouraged me to speak with her daughter and granddaughter of their experiences. She was also wary of me speaking with her son with whom she felt there were too many unresolved issues of estrangement and wounds as a result of the forced separation which had never been reconciled.

### 4.1.2. The Daughter

*'I took part on the beauty pageant you know, because, people thought that in order to compete you had to look a certain way. That beauty looked like a type. I was doing it for all the girls you know. Show them. In order to be called beautiful, you had to be thin. And I wanted to show them that confidence and personality mattered more. That we are beautiful. And I knew that all those girls would want to be like the girl who won. I know I would not have done that anywhere else. Walked so confidently. I felt that I belonged there and so could make this statement.'*

Born in 1983, this is N. Born at a time when her mother continued to assert her right to the city and make a home. Born at a time which was both catalytic and particularly brutal in the context of apartheid South Africa. The 1980s ushered in a new fiery wave of resistance to apartheid. And in equal measure a brutal repressive state. The struggle for housing was just one of a myriad of sites of struggle. Two States of Emergency were declared restricting movement, curfews and a heavy presence of police and military in all spaces which were black. School boycotts, a nationwide consumer boycott, bus boycotts and strikes by labor unions left no area of life untouched for people of colour and their allies within white South Africa. Mass arrests and detention without trial were the norm. And often during these detentions, torture of both the physical and mental kind. Very black few families were left unscathed.

While through the punitive administration of the apartheid system, a brutalization of the Black Body was happening in public spaces, another more personal and intimate form of brutalization was taking place. The insidious forms of celebrating white bodies, white beauty in mass media, film, religious fervor and the erasure of traditional systems of power impacting Black Women's lives. Much has been written about the ways in which the bodies of Black Women were vilified, exoticised, erased and co-opted into a capitalist, first colonial system and later apartheid (and beyond).

While the 1970s had ushered in the radical work of the Black Consciousness Movement(BCM) which foregrounded celebrating blackness in its fullness. From upending colonial and apartheid notions of beauty, to celebrating black intellect and liberation of the mind, the 1980s, was a time of building mass movements against apartheid. Reverberations of the BCM continued though, some of these found in statements in the anti-skin bleaching campaigns that were run. However, in the public domain, much of the media material still celebrated whiteness or near whiteness as beauty.

This then, is the context into which N's story of the beauty pageant must be read. N's body positivity and self - assurance is beautifully captured in the photographs she shared of herself as a child. Some of the photographs shared include the annual family picnic at Sea Point on Boxing Day, the beauty pageant and her wedding. While the photograph of the child, N is testimony to the ways in which spaces in the city are ritually claimed and owned, it also shares an at-homeness in her own skin.

N has no memory of childhood before living in the tented camp. The image of her with her mother in St George's Cathedral is her only link. "I did not know how the cathedral was important to my mother. I knew she would go there every year. But one year, we were invited to sing there. And that is when I understood its significance to her".

She later recounts how as a teenager, she remained conscious of her effect on others in defiance of stereotypes and 'playing' with what it was;

> *"I used to perform hip hop at Angels in Sea Point and at McSweeney's. I didn't quite belong. I was from the location. Mostly kids from the area would hang out there. But **I** liked living on the edge. My street smart was clearly something the audience liked. And their responses gave me such confidence and energy. The audience was always mixed. Black kids who were adopted into white families were so keen to understand us from the*

*kasi*[9]*. So we would meet at the clubs and share stories. But these meetings never went outside the club."*

At some stage I reflect on ma K's "cheekiness" and N replied; "I have inherited that".

The ease with which N experienced "belonging" through her primary school years, soon fades to levels of complexity and nuance. Her awareness of straddling two worlds is acute and goes on to describe her encounters at a particularly privileged private school;

*"You see, I arrived at this school with very little English. It was such a culture shock to enter the school. Not because I was uncomfortable with white people, but because they had no idea how to deal with me. There was one girl, Jessica who tried to get the other girls to say nasty things about me, isolate me. And they had a nickname for me, 'Nando's chicken'. To be honest, I did not understand half of what they said to me because of my English (Laughs). The family I stayed with in Plumstead supported me. Jonathan and the twins. I chose to spend time with people who made me feel welcome. From an early age I decided to focus on the positive you see. I wanted to make a point at that school. So,* ***I*** *swallowed the English dictionary. I wanted to be perfect, exceptional and show that I was good enough. Because I could sing, this gave me confidence and so I participated in the annual school play. I could teach others the gumboot dance. Going home to the kasi over the weekends became difficult for me. I was very different, or seen to be different. But mom wanted a better education and opportunities for me, and I wanted to make her proud, so I needed to make the sacrifice."*

As N reflected on her life, she speaks about the ways in which her mother's encouragement and belief in her led her to be adventurous.

*"I thought I could be an artist. I loved photography. In Standard Six I was part of a project called 'Landmarks of a new generation'. Zwelethu Mthetwa was my mentor. We photographed places all around the city of Cape Town which had some meaning for us. There were so many places. I loved this. I also believed I could be a singer and so performed hip hop. I believed I would make a good business woman. And that is what I do now. There were no limitations to my dreams".*

[9] Location

While revealing a deeply circumspect view on her life and a keen self - awareness which emerges in all of our engagements, N also displays a sensitivity to circumstances of others. In all of her storying, she encourages me to speak with A, her niece. “Her story is so very different to mine. It will be so good to hear from her side”.

### 4.1.3. The Granddaughter

> *“My gentle, kind and shy mother, wore a gun in her afro. Those were dangerous times you know. You needed to defend yourself. It was inevitable hey? Between my father, my late brother and my mum and my granny, I am like this”.*

With the grace of a dancer, A enters the lounge after ma K had summoned her for an introduction. After I explain the research project to her, she replies “yes, I have lots to say. I have my own story”. This openness and generosity continues long into the research, as there are questions of clarity for me, or just checking in.

> *“I was banned from the first pre-school I went to. You know? Because I said that **the people shall share** (a direct quote from the Freedom Charter of the exiled African National Congress, at that time a banned anti-apartheid organization). I thought everyone knew that. But the school said they did not want politics there. So I had to leave”.*

This is the first experience A shares with me. She contemplates on being a child of a politically aware family and realizing how different the world was compared to her home world. As her stories unfold, it becomes clear that this marked the beginnings of A adventuring on many ‘different’ and new paths throughout her life.

A, was an aspiring karateka. She clearly loved the sport as she beams when recounting her introduction and advancement into it. She did really well and was selected as a South African representative to an international competition. Sadly, her sensei/trainer, used the monies her father had received from his employer, along with other funds raised by the family to support her participation in the overseas competition. This not only left her banned from the karateka world for ten years, but left behind very painful memories. There was a heavy cloud around A as she explained the gossip and the suspicions which

people had of her and her family. It was rumored that they had spent the monies. For three months, she did not go anywhere except school and home.

> *"I felt like my world had ended. My dream destroyed. I learnt that people are not always supportive of your dreams. As if they are waiting for you to fail".*

After some time of this self- isolation, her now late brother, who had been boxing invited her to join his gym. Her first entry into this world, left her feeling inadequate and helpless.

*"I was the only girl there. There were no bathrooms or change rooms for women. And the men who trained there did not welcome me. They thought boxing was not for girls. They would say; we don't want any chickens here. Walk around naked. It was a very lonely time".*

After one of her runs with the club, she stopped halfway and walked home. She remembers her father asking;" are you someone who likes defeat? Or do you see a challenge? Outsmart them". After one more searing experience at the all-male gym, she recalls a conversation with her brother

> *"he said to me - are you a chicken or are you a strong iron lady? This is not how we are. See you tomorrow at the gym. I asked myself, who am I? I have chosen to be this strong lady and so I went back. I decided to give it my all"*

In a much later conversation, reflecting on this decision to go back and 'be the iron lady', A recalls the story of how her gentle, shy and unassuming mother used to wear a gun in her afro.

Going back to the male boxing club, A is taken under the wing of a coach. He told her, "I can see you are determined to fight. I will help you learn". After three months of hard training, A's coach told her she was ready for her first spar.

> *"There was no chest protection for sparring. The first round was the hardest. The guy punished me for four rounds. Every time I fell, I would catch a glimpse of people in the gym. When the guy I was fighting hit me, everyone would say "yes". When I hit him they were disappointed. Then I learned that there was a difference between men and women. I wanted to prove that women were smarter and stronger. No one expected me back after that first sparring match. For a whole month no one noticed how hard I was training."*

This desire to break out of prescribed gender norms is also reflected in a later conversation when A says "I became fascinated with the work guys did. So I asked my dad to teach me about painting, tiling and handywork".

Her sense of right and wrong and to speak out against injustice continues. At the very first curtain raiser for a national boxing competition in Khayelitsha, it is A, who calls out inconsistencies and irregularities with scoring and judging for the women's matches. She recalls;

> *"the coach of my opponent used terrible language to encourage his daughter. He said terrible things about me and egged her on, saying that there was no way a kaffir could defeat her. I closed my ears to that, said to myself that I would show him".*

After birthing her first child, A decided to use her boxing skills and knowledge to work with empowering young girls. This very quickly became more than boxing. She identified;

> *"there is so much abuse, so much confidence lacking in girls. I wanted to show them, through boxing that they could be someone big. So I introduced lifeskills into the workshops as well".*

She joined Box Girls in 2009 in Germany. In 2010 she began to work in primary schools and a gym.

*"(but) it was not safe for the girls to go to the gym. Especially in Winter. I asked for a room at schools and started an after schools program. It was around this time that I really began to see my community. You see, older women had spaces in which they could speak and discuss. But not girls. And girls between 10-12 years, they had so much responsibility in their own homes and families".*

A recounts how while trying to negotiate access to space for the boxing sessions, she encountered opposition from leaders within the community. There was not one woman in the room when she went to meet with the councilors. She was asked "where are the men? We are not interested in speaking with a woman. I told them, then and there, one day I will meet you again". And then, in 2012;"I was invited to a women's event. The councilors wanted Box Girls to be represented at the event. One of the men from that meeting was present. He said to me afterwards **"**I am learning from you". And he would tell others he met 'she proved us wrong'.

> *"I suppose I am more like my granny than I thought"*

“Cheekiness” articulates a state of self, agency and a taking power when conditions at an external level appear to be overwhelming. For ma K, is also about speaking back into an overwhelmingly oppressive system, asserting a sense of being and identity. Similarly, both N and A reflect the same in the ways in which they have deconstructed gender identities for themselves at a time when South Africa was transitioning from an apartheid legislated system to a democracy.

## 4.2. “Umnqusho, tea and amagwinya”

> *“Everyone cooked umnqusho. So all the time, we would run in between tents and stir pots. Didn’t matter whose tent or pot it was. Living in the camp, was so exciting as a child. I didn’t think there was anything wrong. We played until late. Felt quite safe. Though we knew as children that some strange things happened, they did not affect us. Like a man beating his wife. We could hear everything through the tent material. We played between tents. It felt like camping.”*

Umnqusho, is also known as isitambu in isiZulu or samp and beans. Samp is an extract from the corn or maize kernel. It is cooked most often with sugar beans or peas. It requires a good overnight soak before at least 6 hours of cooking. Cooked over a fire it has a deep smoky firewood flavor. It is not a pot of food which can be left unattended for long. So though it may appear to be a simple one pot dish, the timely stirs mentioned by N is key. The magic to a good pot of samp and beans is in its maintaining the samp and bean shape and yet cooked through. Simply spiced with salt and pepper, sometimes with vegetable or chicken stock, it would ordinarily be served with umlekwa or wild chicken. Its duration of cooking led to the development of the wonderbox (earliest documented instructions on how to make a wonder box is dated at 1970s) and later wonderbag. This low energy cooking had homemakers start the food, set off for long hours of a commute to work and have food ready for children on their return from school.

Food provides an intimate diary into the everyday. Sensorially, there are memories entangled with taste, smells and textures and with care. In addition, these stories of food, in their telling reveal the reality of socio-economic impact of apartheid spatial planning on this, one family.

It is not difficult conjuring up the image which N sketched through her story. The rows of tents with its tin shared ablution facilities suggest the temporary nature of a holding camp. Neither can one easily dismiss

the scent of air thick with smoke and cooking fires and the earthy aroma of water slow cooking with samp and beans. Dusk bringing home those who had ventured to work, or find work and in the evenings, the sounds of beatings an undertow to everyday making do. The personal and the public blurred.

The rows and rows of army issue camouflage tents, seen in image below (Figure 9) are reminiscent of refugee camps, after/during a war. The uniformed tents offer a mantle of anonymity which N alludes to above. For a period, that time, can only be described as a 'waiting' time. Uncertainty ruled the everyday as inhabitants of the camp awaited news of their status from the national government. Daily routines of cooking, washing, ablutions, seeking work and working were navigated in a hostile landscape. 'Undocumented' citizens waited to hear whether the temporary stay of execution (temporary permissions were granted for inhabitants to remain in Cape Town) or whether terms had changed which would mean immediate deportation to a part of the country removed from their chosen home. The regime of temporary in Cape Town mirrored the imposition of what became known as Bantustans in various parts of South Africa. Underpinned by fractured and disemboweled notions of belonging through the land, led to the assignation of place to reductive and alienating, simplistic ethnic identities. Bantustans, declared 'independent' states by the apartheid regime, were identified as places for peoples with specific ethnic identities. Bophuthatswana, Transkei, Venda, Ciskei, Gazanakulu, kaNgwane, KwaNdebele, KwaZulu, Lebowa and QwaQwa. Completely surrounded by territory named South Africa, these Bantustans gave birth to administrative heads who caretakered what essentially became labour camps for the cities, mines and other industrialised aspects of the life of South Africa.

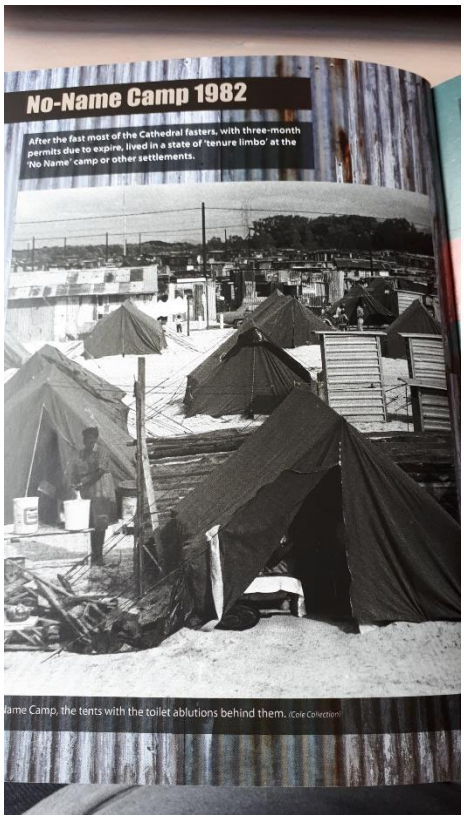



*Figure 9: Image drawn from 'An African story of the Mother City' p.34*

The violence of 'UnBelonging' was visceral as the Black Body came under unrelenting siege. Aside from raids on homes and dwellings to arrest persons suspected of being an anti-apartheid activist, the threat of forced removals, and navigating the everyday within the confines of punitive laws, there was orchestrated physical violence. In addition to the regular raids by armed police, there were those contrived to look like "black-on-black" violence. One such was that perpetrated in the KTC/Crossroads camp led by the state army and the witdoeke 1986. The deliberate and planned attacks on human beings led to people dying, houses burned with no traces of carefully collected household goods, identity documents and more. These attacks reverberated long after, as living with the threat of violence became almost normalized. The temporary nature of the tented camps, plywood, and tin dwellings a metaphor for the paper thin, fragile nature of life in the Cape.

The image of the tents evokes some of the temporality with which the hostility of the landscape held its people. Stripped bare of its indigenous vegetation through decades of colonial rule, inhabitants were fully exposed to the sandblown driving winds, the long persistent soaking rains of Winter and the glaring sun

of the Cape Summer. The Cape Flats a metaphor for abandonment and marginalization. In one of our conversations, N observes;

> *"I noticed that the seasons changed while walking through the Company Gardens to school every day. It was not as visible in the township. Even mom had a beautiful garden. I remember it so well. And the way in which she cared for it. Now nothing remains but sand"*

In other parts of the Cape at the time, the almost final stages of forced removals of people of mixed descent, declared 'coloured' by the apartheid administration, was continuing at an alarming rate. The area known as the Cape Flats became home to people upended from places as far flung as Simonstown, Protea Village in Constantia, Vasco and Oudekraal. The upheaval of lives became synonymous with families leaving behind furniture too heavy and large for the one or two roomed homes on the flats. For many, especially the elderly, leaving behind their sanity. The double lie of Cape Town becoming a 'coloured labor preferential area' obscured by the 'Slum Act' (Slum Act No.53, 1934). The deliberate efforts to divide and rule and forment conflict between peoples of colour erasing the long (and intertwined) histories of forced removals from places such as BoKaap, Ndabeni and Kensington of black families.

Within this milieu of abject violence and brutality, which could so easily erase or obfuscate the powerful individual and collective efforts at resistance, exists a far more subtle force, a counter space which is made visible through the act of making and sharing food. The absence of African cuisine in the contemporary cityscape, one more obfuscation of black presence in the city.

The architexture[10] of the often one roomed homes built during the apartheid era, as afterthought, rudimentary and barely functional for a family comes into view as N describes the intimacy of personal spaces as public. Gathering spaces were mediated with copious cups of tea.

In our very first conversation, N speaks about her love of tea. Her love for tea and its ritual is palpable in her ordering a pot, brewing and checking if it is steeped enough, sniffing the freshly poured cup of tea before slowly sipping, sighing and leaning back in her chair to speak.

> *"Our home in Philippi was like an advice office. I would be told to go and prepare tea while mama was in the lounge with the women and sometimes the men who dropped*

[10] This is a word I conjured up as it speaks to the combinations of design as in architecture, whilst communicating the inter-relationship between design and textures and sensual nature of the object, in this case, the home

*in. We also had the first telephone line and so people would come to use the telephone to call to different places. I became fascinated by the conversations and so would eavesdrop. The words, facial expressions when they were speaking with family in the Eastern Cape, especially when they spoke the deep Xhosa which I did not know. Sometimes I would learn new words. Write them on my thigh and practice them. This got me into trouble. I remember the word 'umgqakhwe' (in this context, translated into English it meant, bastard – a child born outside of a marriage) and the shock on my mother's face when I said it. I loved this job of mine, making tea at home. If I stood quietly in the background, I could hear all sorts of stories, some of them very naughty with bursts of laughter from the women gathered there."*

N, in her telling also shares her keen sense of listening. Being able to 'read' conversation threads onto the reactions or facial expressions of those she is eavesdropping into. Listening keenly invites discovery of new words, a vocabulary a lens for a geography and a landscape (of the Eastern Cape) she is only to first experience in her twenties.

Making a life between places for many of the women who gathered there, required a kind of strength, innovation and daily energy. Maintaining links with children, siblings and family were made harder by the lack of freedom of movement and association. Learning to live with long periods of silence, where communication is a luxury and largely limited to crisis of birth, health or death. The story of gathering, and tea reveals the minutiae of this constant navigation.

Tea punctuates much of N's conversation about community, care and time alone. There is deliberation, ritual in the association between the act of brewing and drinking tea and her daily life.

*"When I was living with the family in P***, we had an afternoon ritual of sitting around the dining room table, drinking tea and catching up with our day before we began our homework. So even though school was very hard and I was living away from my mom, I didn't feel as lonely. Now, when there is a problem and I need to think, I first make a pot of tea."*

The ritual of gathering for tea and homework around the family dining room table becomes a space of support and belonging for N. A refuge from the sometimes hostile school environment and growing isolation from her childhood friends at her mother's home. It is some of these comforts which she refers to in her love and valuing of tea.

During the times which N commuted to school, she recalls the smells and taste of freshly made amagwinya.

> *"The train would be full of women working as domestic workers in the southern suburbs. We would meet on the train before the sun was up. And have far distances to travel. Sometimes there would be a new woman who has just arrived in Cape Town and the older and more experienced women would give advice, tell her which routes to use, safest places, what to watch out for. They did the same for us youngsters traveling to school. They woke us up if we were still sleeping when the train reached our station. Some of the women made fresh amagwinya and would sell it on the train. I can taste it. I missed it when I stopped commuting and stayed in P****. When I traveled home on a Friday, I remember there were women who had done the daily morning ride with me. They were so relieved to see me. They said they had been worried about me and wondered why they no longer saw me on the train".*

Amagwinya, otherwise known as vetkoek, another favorite food on the Cape Flats. It is made with leftover bread dough and deep fried in balls. When ready, the balls are sliced open halfway and filled with minced meat. The mince is often cooked in sweet curry sauce and peas to 'stretch' the meat if there was too little. Its portability meant that it was a good food for eating on the go, or for freezing and later reheating.

> *"There was a time, when there was no work. My mother and father really struggled. There was no food. I remember we coming home from school and mom telling us that the food was not ready. Every time we asked. The food was not ready. But there was a pot on the stove. And so we thought it was being cooked. She convinced us to go to sleep by telling us that when we woke, the food would be ready… We went to sleep and woke the next morning without having eaten...(long pause)…it was only sometime after that I realized that it was only water in the pot…(long pause)… Life was so hard then. I remember, unlike other Christmases when we would be taken to Salt River (to the factory shops there) to get new clothes, mama would come home exhausted from work and sew new clothes for us. Our family was treated so badly. It was made to seem that it was because my father was lazy or difficult that he could not find work."*

A and I visited the Company Gardens together. We spoke at length about the taste of fish and chips smothered in vinegar and wrapped in newspaper, the sun beating down on their heads and the shade of the trees in the company garden.

> *"After many years, my father got work again. To celebrate, we went to the gardens in town, and ate fish and chips. That place will always bring back those good memories after years of such a hard time".*

Eating out or takeaways were a rare treat, and in this story, a reminder of the effects of her dad's very long unemployment and the burden of being the sole breadwinner on her mom. The alienation and isolation within the community was brought into sharp contrast with the 'advice office/home' of her grandmother in Philippi. Political prisoners and detainees found it very hard to find and maintain employment. A reality which had huge consequences for so many families in the city as much of the economy was driven by the monetary system. When A described this deeply painful time in the life of her family, I could not help hear echoes of ma K's fast in St George's Cathedral.

'Communities of care' deconstructs the notion of bounded communities and rather suggests the fluidity and mobility of people within and between communities constructed around need, purpose and intention. These relationships are often diverse in nature, mobile and traverses geographical or gender and racial distinction. Particularly significant in the mobilization of Black Women's rights and power within the anti-apartheid struggle, they were often informal, ways of being in the world rather than only organizationally constituted. ma K's, home was a haven for stories and activism criss-crossing between land issues and marital problems, demonstrating acutely the 'personal being political'. For ma Katie 'communities of care' were forms of solidarity and spaces for collective action. For N and A, these spaces were both nurturing and challenging, fraught as they were with racial and class issues. The story related about journeying on the train and amagwinya and the 'checking in' and the concern about N's absence from the morning commute signifies a care beyond geographies of place.

## 4.3. "These acts of belonging"

> *…"sometimes to walk the street, to exercise that small freedom, poses a challenge to a certain regime, a minor performative disruption enacted by a kind of motion that is at*

*once a movement in that double sense, bodily and political". (Judith Butler 2014:p97-119)*

The journeys undertaken by ma K, N and A when marked on a map reveal footprints crisscrossing the city of Cape Town landscape. In the years of ma K's youth and young adulthood her footprints are marked by physical spaces of denial. For N, a somewhat transformed landscape but which continued to require a resistance and resilience to find belonging. For A, the landscape shifts and changes but also needing resilience and cheekiness to transgress.

ma Katie's stories are immersed in a negotiation for belonging during an excruciating period of apartheid law and each of her acts to assert belonging become transgressive and is potentially criminalised. Her refusal to accept an identity and by default a 'place' of belonging segued her life into one of direct acts of resistance, defiance, organizing and waiting.

N and A navigate belonging in a period which is largely transitional, where the continuities of apartheid spatial planning and the more invisible inscription of racism onto the urban landscape is obfuscated by a constitution and a democratically elected government. Mirrored by their right of passage from childhood to womanhood, their issues are slightly different, yet reverberate and demand acts of resistance and defiance, albeit in different ways. *They act their sense of belonging*.

Butler's, (2014: 97-119) words however, not only resonate with the physical act of walking and exercising tangible freedoms, it speaks to a much deeper level of transgression – the transgression of dreams and for this, this third section attempts to articulate some of the stories providing a lens into the internal 'walks'. A powerful form of resistance – that of the imagination.

*"You know what gives me ideas for my beading? The clouds in the sky, a hairy worm, a leaf of a plant. The hairy worm has so many legs and hairy body, so I thought about how that would look in a beaded necklace. So then I think about how to make it. The pattern is in my head."*

Ma K is an expert beader. She represented South Africa at international shows and sells her work at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront and to individual clients. She makes bespoke pieces for wedding ceremonies; bangles, necklaces, head gear too. On stepping into her home you first encounter the large trestle table laid out with an assortment of beads, to the table on the left of the entrance which displays some of her completed exquisite work, to the small table she works at while listening to the radio. On this

table; beads, radio, cell phone and one of her favorite books are carefully laid out as if laid out according to a plan and with precision.


*Figure 10: maK's work table in the lounge*

There is no written pattern or design, it rests in her mind.  She reminds me of the Kumasi kente cloth weavers who sing the patterns for the kente strips while shuttling threads on their looms. In the same way, ma K's acute vivid recall of detail translates into not only exquisite patterns but carries stories. We spend much time studying and asking questions about each of the beaded items scattered about her lounge. Some of them are destined as bespoke adornment for a wedding celebration, others for clients at the V&A Waterfront. The conversations about beading excites me as I see, so vividly, the ways in which ma K deploys her imagination, combined with great skill into craft making. She in an almost visceral manner brings my attention to the ways in which she deeply observes life around her. Her struggles against injustice and for housing, not only for herself, but many who share her story. Her hints at the vagaries of post-1994 politics of power and resource acquisition all reveal her close scrutiny. The hours

spent listening over tea in her living room undergirded by her observation of living beings and her desire to make things of beauty.


*Figure 11: ma K proudly wearing a beaded necklace and head band she had made as part of a wedding attire commission*

In what was to become our last in person conversation, ma K devotes a significant amount of time telling us about her favorite book featured in the photograph above. She says she has read and re-read the book so many times. So familiar is the story to her, she is able to retell it in such detail, I am quickly taken in by its complexity and depth of analysis of navigating familial relationships during a time of oppression. There is something about the heart ache and loss which the story emulates which hints at some of ma K's own story. The broken pieces she has shared, hinted at in our conversations appears to weave in and out of her telling.

> *"Its better you speak with my daughter. My son, I had to leave him in the Eastern Cape to work here in Cape Town. He came to live with me when he was eighteen. It is very hard" (long pause)*

*"My husband, chose to find himself a shack and live in Khayelitsha when he retired. He did not come to live in this house" (long pause)*

I remember thinking to myself, while listening, that sometimes the hardest stories can only be told through fiction. Sometimes what appears to be an escape into an imagined world with imaginary characters, bears traces of our own story, perhaps not in the content, but in the emotional landscapes they evoke.

A violent crime committed in close proximity to ma K's home led her to fear for my life and safety. She called me to dissuade me from driving there for our conversations. She felt that as a lighter skinned person, I could become a target for violent crime as well. We continued a stop-start conversation via cell phone. However, during the period of field work, COVID struck. She lost neighbors and close comrades who had been a part of the St George's Cathedral fast. She was devastated and in mourning. In our conversations about her life as an activist, I could not help but hear a sadness and loss at the ways in which the easy and meaningful friendships and comradeship had been whittled away in post-apartheid South Africa. The loss through death was yet another blow or severance from a period of her life which was so significant and formative in the making of herself and belonging in the city. It is in these painful circumstances that ma K informs me that she can no longer participate. She finds the stories are too hard and are bringing up painful memories. We concluded our time together and I proceeded to continue conversations with N and A.

For N, her imagination became a strategy for building a life and future.

*"When I was a teenager, I was quite dreamy and lost inside a world I created for myself. I learned how to create the world I wanted to live in from the inside and manifest it into my physical world. St George's Cathedral became a castle in my imagination. I was the Princess who married royalty. I created stories in my head, especially on walking to and from high school." (N)*

N's reflects on her goal directedness and motivation as having one of its sources, this ability to dream. Her achievements are visible on the walls of her mother's home. Newspaper clippings reporting on her work life successes and entrepreneurial adventures are on display. And ma K makes reference to them in all of our in-person interactions. This ability to imagine and make a life in no way distracts N from the realities of her life and navigating prejudice as an adult. On briefly visiting her at her company headquarters in the city centre, she explains that they once had offices in a "swanky office block", also in the city. As her

company recruited staff for security and cleaning services, their office was frequented by persons who were interpreted by other leaseholders as less befitting in their context. In order to alleviate the anxiety and humiliation for staff, she and her husband moved their headquarters to an older, more derelict building closer to the taxi rank and station.

When articulating her love of hip-hop and poetry, N refers to the ways in which they both allowed her both to 'see' and 'name' her world, but also to claim a space for herself through an imagined identity. "When I was on stage, I could be this girl from the hood – making it. Even if I was not only her anymore". (here she is raising the complexity of having lived in the Southern suburbs during her primary years and stays with her father in the city where he worked). This performance of identity which N owns and displays with great confidence, even in her teen years points once again to a resilience and resistance strategy deployed.

> *"There was no chest protection for sparring. The first round was the hardest. The guy punished me for four rounds. Every time I fell, I would catch a glimpse of people in the gym. When the guy I was fighting hit me, everyone would say "yes". When I hit him they were disappointed. Then I learned that there was a difference between men and women". (A)*
>
> This is a familiar story as it appears in Section 1 of this chapter. However, it's what follows that is immensely insightful here.
>
> *"I began to listen to my own rhythm. Had a song playing in my head. Cancelled out everything else around me. It was just me and my opponent."(A)*

Retreating into herself, this is not the first time that A shares this as a strategy for dealing with a difficult situation. She refers to it again when reflecting on the women's curtain raiser bouts for the men's boxing contest.

> *"There was this boxer. Her father was one of the promoters. He couldn't believe that a black woman could fight like I did. So her encouraged his daughter, but used derogatory language. He said; 'you can't let a kaffir beat you'. I switched his voice off in my head. Used what he had said as encouragement to fight even better."*

Starting out BoxGirls and interactions with civic association. A spoke at length about the experience she had as BoxGirls facilitator. Her interaction with community leaders who refused to listen to her as she was; firstly, a woman and secondly, young.

> *"They asked me where the men were. The ones who would explain the project to them. They told me that unless I came back with the men, they would not listen to me". "In my head, I said to myself, 'I will meet you again. And you will listen to me'".*

A sense of aloneness pervaded much of A's stories about the choices she had made in life. She spoke of her courtship and marriage to an Egyptian man who had had a store in the Township. "I was told many times that I should not become friends with the foreigner". The xenophobia and religious prejudice within the community reared its head. At the time of completing the research, A's husband was back in Egypt. They communicated daily via telephone and she had had many conversations, with language difficulties, with his mother.

The snapshots of stories shared in this chapter suggests that at an intimate level, a rhythm exists which contradicts at times, and at others in harmony with circumstances and contexts. There is a heightened awareness of place and the twin navigation of their identities and their right to Belong. Underlying their stories of Belonging is a sense that it does not come with ease. They recognize that Belonging is not static, neither is it a given.

## 4.4. Belonging is…

This section returns to the concept of belonging and draws reflective threads across the previous three sections.

### 4.4.1. Being cheeky as a tactic/act of belonging

In all of the three stories the notion of 'being cheeky' resonated. For each of the women cheekiness was interpreted and applied within different contexts. The ability to speak back, to engage in what may be called subversive behavior is an important aspect of their assertion of a right to place. All three of the women felt a level of confidence in knowing just when an encounter required them to be cheeky and how

'safe' they could feel when doing so. Some of the threads within the vignettes in previous chapter include; Ma K talking about knowing that her childhood caregiver would make sure that she did not spend a night in jail after the pass police hauled her away for questioning. In N's narrative she speaks about participating in a children's beauty pageant as a plump child, wanting to defy notions of beauty and giving a middle finger to the establishment about what constitutes black beauty. N also indicates a sense of being street wise when engaging with peers who have grown up differently, at the clubs and in the hip hop scene of Sea Point. N again demonstrates this 'cheekiness' in her narrative about the unwelcoming attitude and ostracism from her classmates at the Model C school and 'swallowing a dictionary' in response. And A, in retrospect, being acutely aware of the consequences of being 'cheeky' when calling out the selfishness of a child in her class and the ramifications for her place at the school.

A acknowledged her quiet mom as being rebellious in her own way. In her sharing of the stories of her mom carrying a gun in her afro, her taking on family responsibilities alone while her father was unemployed and in defying the stories and rumors which abounded in the neighborhood during this time, she traced a backbone and a strength which she feels she has inherited. In some ways what A articulates is that for her cheekiness is not only direct or visibly antagonistic actions or words, but rather a subtle deployment of agency and power and this resonates through all three women's stories.

While speaking about their 'cheekiness' there was always an underlying humor which belied some of the more serious encounters which they experienced. The wry smiles, the giggles and laughter which followed some of the stories appeared as a confidence in knowing their power and agency without minimizing or erasing the real danger or risks they were taking. After this happened a number of times, I realized that humor or laughing was a part of the 'cheeky' strategy where the onus or reactions to cheekiness are dependent on the recipient's behavior. The maturity and ability to 'read' people and situations and to know their worth in the encounters relayed illustrated the extent to which their interior worlds both facilitated their navigation in the world, but also their impact on the worlds they traversed.

A's ability to sink into herself and her interior world without too much outward defiance, challenge injustice is best illustrated through her experience of pursuing her dream of boxing in a man's world by quietly continuing her running regime and sparring with a private coach before the launch spar in the boxing club.

A necessary part of knowing when and how to act cheeky, comes as a part of a deep awareness of the hauntings in the city. There is movement between township and suburb, township and city

centre/waterfront, across provinces and internationally and between worlds; the homes of white privileged people, business environments, political movements, community organisations and sports movements. All three of the women navigate multiple worlds and have a sharp awareness of their place in each of these. They are unafraid to venture into spaces which were unfamiliar or alienating. Their 'cheekiness' is used to sustain their identity and sense of self and belonging. This is clear from ma K's sustained acts of defiance and building a home for her family in the Cape to navigating the business world as she grew her beading business until becoming one of South Africa's iconic beaders and representing the country at international fairs. Similarly, N's navigation between township and suburb and being able to continue to know herself in all of the subtle and not so subtle cultural nuances of these spaces. These are mirrored in A's defiance of male municipal leaders refusal to listen to her proposal for a girls boxing program because of her gender and her leaving the meeting knowing that she would see them again, convinced things would change.

In her chapter called; 'gendering social science: ukubuyiswa of maternal legacies of knowledge,' Babalwa Magoqwana in Bam and Muthien ed, (2021: 87-88) makes a case for thinking about the ways in which we language experiences, archives and knowledge. This work of hers, continues to inspire me to think carefully about what we see, identify as legacies and how knowledge is formed, shared and named. In the intimate stories by the three women in my research, this knowledge of their worlds and their naming of a way of life and coping in the everyday is carefully threaded through their telling of 'cheekiness'.

Hartman (2019: XV) explores the co-existence between the documents and photographs of lives investigated and documented 'officially', and through archival counter narrative, speculates on the narratives from the perspectives of the ones she is investigating. Reading between the discourse of 'other' and what nuance and complexity is lost through such a narrow gaze, she casts her eyes towards Black Women's lives within the frame of 'agency', Hartman (2019) presents an alternate reading of Black Women's lives and interiority. She is able to identify the strategies, tactics used by Black Women to survive, make a life under repressive conditions within an urban city constructed to exclude black bodies, permeated with daily practices to belittle and erase the Black Body from its presence in space.

She calls this; "waywardness". Her construction of the concept of "waywardness" resonates very much with the notion of "cheeky" which emerged in the interviews I conducted across three generations of women. She presents the notion of waywardness and articulates how this serves as strategy for survival, making a life in spite of control, restrictions and oppression in the intimate and personal domain, as well as within the public sphere. 'Waywardness' and the politics of refusal it embodies, becomes an exciting

lens through which I begin to recognize, understand and explore the 'cheekiness' which presents itself and recurs through the conversations I have with the three women. In her exploration of 'waywardness', Saadiyah Hartman carefully unlocks the potential of what 'belonging' means and the contestation of it for Black Women in urban USA. This reading of 'waywardness' by Hartman (2021: XIII-XIV), has particular relevance in my seeing the layers, nuance and complexities of how cheekiness is deployed by all three women.

### 4.4.2. The Janus face of belonging/Communities of Care and Aloneness

A second aspect which became clear in the stories about belonging, is that community has a Janus face On the one hand one finds in the stories an acute awareness of being a part of community, being active in and for community and on the other, the loneliness of responsibilities and when difference and fractures appear in a community. While these may appear to be binary opposites, in the telling of the stories, they are reflected as one whole experience and that living with the complexities of this is what nurtures belonging. In ma K's telling of the resistance and land movement community, in N's telling of the care and concern of older women travelers on the trains and the ways in which as a child she experienced their family home as a place of gathering to A's stories of the isolation and rejection from community as a child, then during her adolescence and later in life as she sought a partner outside of the cultural norm of her community.

The sense of belonging within and a part of community is recognized through active participation in community issues. Ma K engaged in housing and land issues, N with the church community she ministers to, and A in her work with young girls. The sense of responsibility for the collective does not waiver as a result of rejection or isolation for any of them.

In articulating their ideas of 'community' and belonging, all three women speak to the ways in which community is constructed, and in turn, how they could potentially become communities of care. The stories of the women traveling on trains at dawn serving as guides to younger, newer arrivals to the city as told by N is an example of this. The being taken care of or looked out for in a situation which was dangerous all speak to a taking control of a difficult and vulnerable making of a life by constructing spaces of safety. Though these bonds are tenuous (as illustrated by the older women commenting on not having seen N on the train, but not having the means to follow up and know where she may be), they are present nevertheless.

The sense of community is understood and expressed by each woman as being multi-layered and continuously shifting between centre and periphery of their lives. N gently and powerfully dispelled my stereotypical idea that she had had some kind of relationship with the Eastern Cape as home because of her mother and brother's relationship with that province under apartheid. She articulated her anxiety and trepidation of accompanying her now husband to the Eastern Cape for his recovery from an accident as being her first experience of being in a rural area. She positioned herself as someone from the 'kasi[11]', knowing only the city life and that the rural home or Eastern Cape as a part of the family history existed and continues to exist peripherally. One of her examples of 'cheekiness' which intersects with this sense of community are her experiences of learning deep rural Xhosa through eavesdropping into conversations in the family lounge. This subtle and nuanced understanding of who and what constitutes community is well articulated by all three women. The shift in the sense of temporality which older generations may have had in relation to city life while straddling multiple spaces of belonging which included rural areas, is evident in both A and N's narratives.

In thinking about the complexity with which ma K articulated the relationship between her 'coloured' caregiver and her family, I found Sean Field's (1999: 228) work on Windermere helpful. He introduces the concept of 'ambiguous belonging' when speaking of the construction of Windemere as a coloured township. Similarly, Field, Meyer & Swanson (2007:4) present ways of thinking through belonging across time and space in the city. Firstly, when ma K speaks about the ways in which her caregiver addresses her, the language appears to be derogatory, but ma K does not interpret it as such. She trusts that her caregiver will fight to have her released from the police cells. Field (1999:232) speaks about the ways in which language is used and the complex relationships between 'coloured' and 'black' people who co-existed and made community, consciously together. A sentiment echoed by ma K. Fields also refers to the ambiguities which are imbued in the apartheid constructions of identity and the consequences on who belongs and who doesn't as even in the ideation of an exclusively 'coloured' township, dismisses the repression and control of all that is intimate and familial in multi-cultural homes, families and communities.

Field argues for an understanding of the dilemmas navigated by what was once a community through the forced removals and separation with ramifications for said communities. The belonging in community which is diverse is abruptly disrupted and notions of identity are imposed. These fissures and fractures continue to reverberate in Cape Town. The notion of 'ambiguous belonging' is one which permeates conversations about relationship with the city, in the city, between the city of Cape Town and Eastern

[11] Kasi is slang for location which was previously Black only, high density settlements in the Western Cape

Cape. There is something of value in this argument for an 'ambiguous belonging', as it precludes the inaccuracy of prescribed ideas and formulations which are ineffective in a past era of forced removals and displacement ('people are always from somewhere else') and a present era driven by economic circumstances and increased migration.

### 4.4.3. Finding your own rhythm/acts of belonging

Going inward and drawing on internal resources is something which resonates across all three women stories. A speaks about 'finding her own rhythm', a boxing strategy which she uses across her life. At no time does she imply that that requires isolation or a denial of others, but rather that an awareness of her own sense of embodied movement through space is necessary to deal with difficult situations. This ability to move within one's own rhythm appears as a strategy for asserting belonging and the right to place.ma K in her resoluteness past and present, N in her business acumen and carving a space for herself as a business woman and church leader. In the section on 'cheekiness', I speak of the deployment of the imagination as a part of a strategy. Through the narratives the imagination, being able to either dislocate oneself from a particularly harsh or difficult situation, also becomes a space for dreaming of a victory (in the boxing ring for A) or in shaping a future and not living a hard life (in her business for N).

Financial precarity and the scuppering of dreams are all too familiar to A, but defying her fears, she continues to listen to her own rhythm. She is aware of the consequences and that not all of them may be good for her.

N, in her exquisite rendering of her tea making ritual, suggests a rhythm of her own. She speaks about the process of heating the water, just so, steeping the tea for just as long as is necessary, the wait and then the first sip. The sensuality of her story struck me and reverberated across much of what she spoke of in terms of her life in the present day. This, what I would call, 'living on her own terms', is marked throughout N's story.

Deploying the imagination as a part of their resilience strategies appeared in all three women's narratives. Markedly so in ma K and N. ma K spoke about her ways of seeing the natural world and her environment and translating that into beaded patterns which are all held in her head. She mentions that her imagination is fed through being an avid reader, listening to the radio and in engaging in conversation too. Her home, littered with raw materials for artistic creations speaks to this desire for creating. For A too, reading became a resource during her teens.

N speaks eloquently of how she transformed the St George's cathedral and the Company Gardens into a castle of her dreams, with her as princess. She acknowledges the role of Mills and Boones love stories as being a catalyst for much of these imaginings. She transports herself into another world, at a time when she is undergoing much change. Living at that time between her mother's home and her father's work living quarters in town after living in a white suburb for primary school. Whilst the imaginings on the surface appear to be an 'escape', they also appear to give N sustenance for her own dreaming herself into adulthood. So she speaks about the adolescent self and the hip-hop performances and poetry writing, photography and art as ways in which she could explore her imagination and her creative side. She traverses multiple creative spaces, experiments with ideas of herself through these expressive arts.

Thinking through African feminism and the interiority of Black Women in post-apartheid SA had me exploring the presence of silence in the narratives. The potency and the weight of the silences, particularly when painful stories were shared and marked by long pauses had me turning to the chapter by Panashe Chigumadzi, in Baderoon and Lewis, (2021:228-229).

Chigumadzi's challenge to 'hearing the silence', (albeit in a different context, but resonating with generational storytelling choices), has been helpful for me in thinking through silence in the narratives and between the narratives and the archival documentation. "Silences have frequency…Are we interested in hearing, and feeling our way through, the language worlds inhabited by those different from us?" Chigumadzi (2021:232). While Chigumadzi (2021) is especially interested in wording what those silences are not saying, I am interested in the weight borne in the silence. Silence as a strategy for self-preservation as so keenly articulated by ma K when she finally decides to exit the research process. Reading 'affect' requires a listening to these silences and an understanding for what they are representative of and possibly the dilemma of never fully knowing as researcher.

# 5. Re-inscribing Black Women into postcolonial citymaking

In the previous chapter I detailed the everyday, interior, political and emplaced lives and in this chapter I re-articulate these in spatialised forms that both render the postcolonial experience of Black Women visible and offer a new reading for city making that takes the everyday into account.

The rich materiality of the lives of all three women, so beautifully described in their stories and in ma K's home needed to find some form within the narrative making in the thesis. The photographs hung in ma K's home and all of the objects richly storied, N's conversation about her tea ritual with tea pot, and milk jug and a cup with saucer has a specificity to it which imbues the objects with meaning, and in turn a relationship between story and object. Similarly, A's story about a pot of water boiling on the stove while going to bed hungry, all of these hold a kind of sensuality, has a visceral nature which in its telling shifts the idea of hunger to an almost experience of the absence of food. By bringing these into the analysis process visually through collage, they attempt to render a story whole rather than fractured or one dimensional in nature.

There would be multiple collages and that the collages would begin with a story of the Land, illustrating the ways in which the topography, ecology and geographical layout of the land between mountains known as the Cape Flats was drawn onto the layering of colonial and apartheid spatial planning. Second, I would include the introduction of a map collage with extracts from hand drawn maps generated during the apartheid era. Third, a series of selected and digitally generated images which speak specifically to ma K's, A and N story. Fourth, that a collage which brings together ma K, N and A's stories in conversation with each other is what was necessary to generate an analysis. All of the collages merge onto the final art work with some fading or less visible while others take precedence. This a nod to the notion of 'hauntology' Gordon, (2008:66) which persisted in the work.

The graphically generated images allowed me to shift metaphors and stories across the pages and in their mobility, began to see patterns, connections and threads broken and woven as I began to examine the stories more closely.

> *"What if one considers the way photographs simultaneously recall the past while prefiguring the future? What if in encountering the past as it is depicted, one in turn is greeting the future that returns recursively?" Phindi Mnyaka in Ambivalence, 2021, p.209.*

The short essays by Elliott and Culhane (2016) contributed substantially in opening up possibilities for creative methodological approaches experimented with in my research. The book supported my embryonic ideas of integrating very different artistic approaches into one study so as to overlay and overlap data with a view to 'seeing' anew. The participatory approach used by each of the contributors in

the book, excited me to think about the ways in which my methodology *in itself* could be an experiment in seeing new things and a different way of knowing.

My experiment in creative analysis through drawing together story, photographs and maps into collage making is aimed at finding a language for making visible what is ignored or hard to interpret, interior worlds.

> *"Process writing can also free the writer to challenge disciplinary and institutional regimes of writing, which can constrain or even prevent us from telling the types of stories that matter to our interlocutors. It involves slowing things down, cultivating a careful awareness and attention to both the minutia and larger forces of power, and nurturing a sensitivity to seeing, knowing and representing the intimacies and rhythms of lives that sometimes slip by in everyday moments of chaos" Elliott and Culhane, (2017:34)*

Or as I argue in the thesis, not necessarily moments of chaos, but in the grand narratives about Black Women's lives in the city which linger in stereotypes or dichotomy. The challenge to hold both the minutia (such as the detail of making tea, or boiling a pot of water as diversion from hunger, or the cloud which informs ma K's beading) and the larger forces of power (such as the Group Areas Act, or the St George's cathedral fast or the male dominated sport of boxing) is a process I needed to hold with care. Working between the narratives and the photographic archives and digital images in the creation of the collages assisted me with this.

Hartman (2019: XV) inspires me to re-think the material manifestations, such as archival documents, photographs, maps of narratives about Black Women. Her exploration of what these very material texts reveal, erase, suggest or refuse is what I explore in my research. Intersecting the layers between archival materials with stories from three women who have direct or indirect relationship with what the archive represents, are strategies which I employ and explore in my methodology for analysis. Her work troubles the linear or homogenous writing of Black Women's lives, either as downtrodden, or oppressed or as angry. Resonant with post-1994 narratives of women as resistance fighter, the exotic, or the nurturing mother symbol. Instead, I was driven by a desire to reveal the interior worlds as complex, rich and the strategies for resilience and place making diverse. Unlike Hartman's (2019) work though, I gather key words or recurring themes through the first person narrative, investigating a lexicon and metaphor which intersects with material and visual texts such as photographs and maps.

> *"When using collage reflectively, the researcher focuses on a question, dilemma, or the like, and then selects pictures that metaphorically reflect aspects of this thinking. Then operating intuitively, she creates a collage producing a visual composition with the selected fragments. This collage process breaks away from the linearity of written thoughts by working first from feelings about something to the ideas they evoke, instead of the reverse. The resulting visual juxtapositions frequently reveal new connections and understandings that have previously remained tacit" Butler-Kisber, (2010:3).*

This chapter introduces how the analytical collage work through its various iterations presented me with different ways of seeing and understanding what I was seeing in the stories. The interplay between the stories of the individuals and the contexts in which their stories live became something dynamic. The selection of images too became a journey into reinterpreting in some sense what became poster images for a national struggle, but which often forgotten, represented a huge burden on individual lives. The graphically generated images allowed me to shift metaphors and stories across the pages and in their mobility, began to see patterns, connections and threads broken and woven as I began to examine the stories more closely.

## 5.1. Collage One

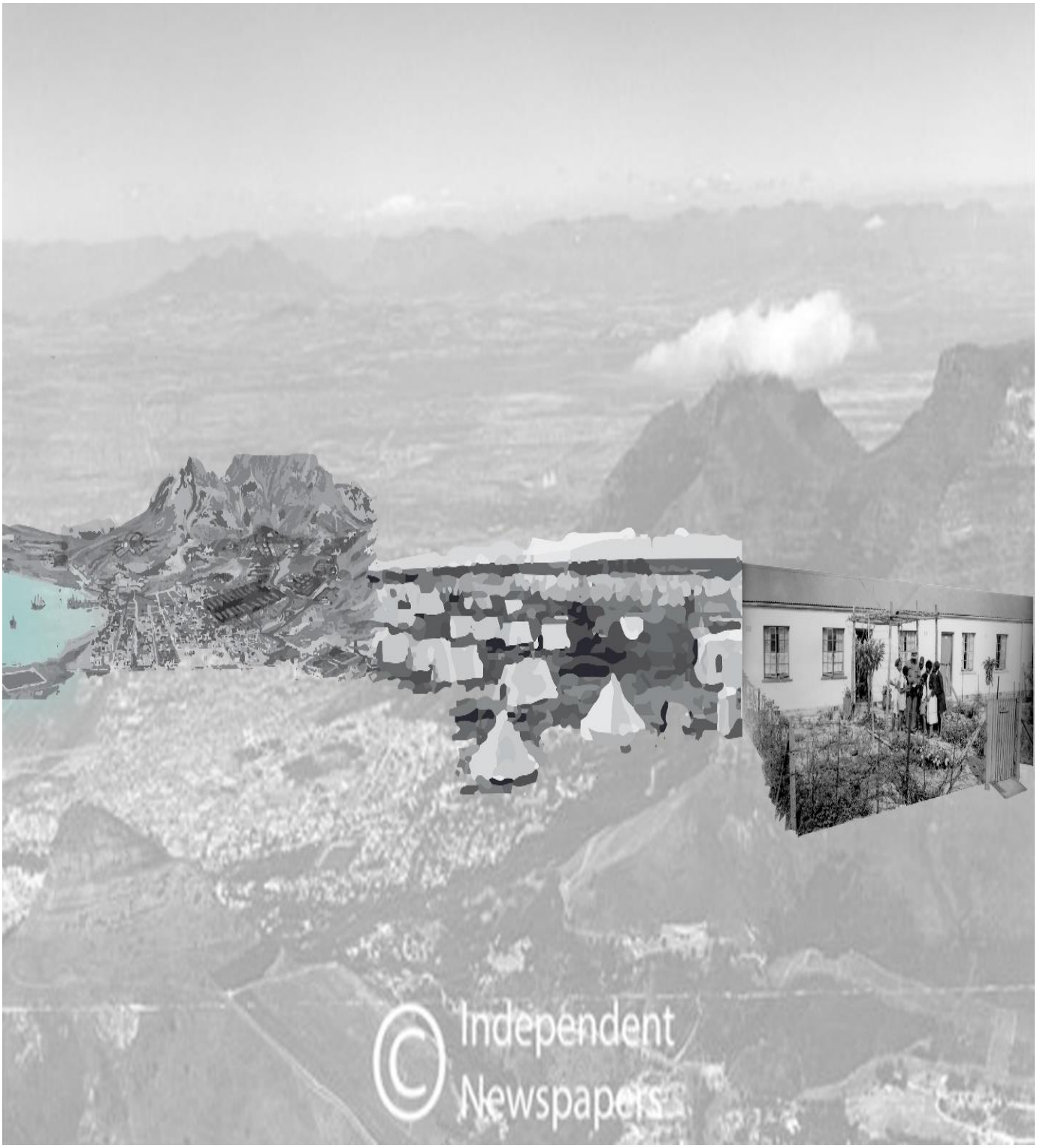



*Figure 12: The Land between, (ocean and mountains)*

In the narratives of the three women, and with my visits to their places, I had a desire to visually see how the Land shaped the decisions for where people of color would be located. This collage became a starting point for me. It was critical that I could envisage the Land as topographical, rather than a navigation map. Notions of center and margins, periphery and heart became poignant in the implications of what distance, spatial and mental, would have on ideas of belonging. N and A spoke of the long distances and early hour departures needed to arrive in the heart of the city, or the outings to the beach at Sea Point. These journeys were undertaken with care. Attention needed to be paid to costs of transport, safety and arrivals in places which were not designed to embrace or welcome them. Knowing how to navigate and traverse these distances was a part of the acts of belonging mentioned in the previous chapter.

The insertion of the harbor and waterfront area in this collage is an acknowledgement of the role the docks played in attracting people such as ma K's father from the Eastern Cape for work. The juxtaposition with images of the temporary dwellings or shelters of Ndabeni where he was most likely a resident of on arrival, an intentional insertion into the landscape a conversation between spaces that have largely erased and obfuscated this history of a people, with recent developments aimed at middle and higher income groups. These tented structures reverberate across all of the collages as it appears that a shape or design can live on as an indicator of impermanence even under different circumstances. This idea of structures indicative of impermanence alone struck me very deeply in finding resonance across the three generations, just how familiar the architexture of the temporary or ephemeral is within a landscape for particular peoples who have experienced marginalization. Ma K's story was not complete without the story of her father, dock worker, union member, political prisoner. He was present in his absence.

Aleida Assman in Schindel and Colombo (2014: 135) speak of the ways in which every place is a memorial, where memories of trauma, erasure and forgetting and remembering co-exist intrinsically in the present navigation of the city of Berlin. The same could be said about the city of Cape Town.

In this first collage I begin the process of inserting within the landscape, some of the signs which are missing which point to the spaces and memories of violence. These include images of temporary accommodation such as tents, the presence of policemen outside a home and checking pass books.

## 5.2. Collage Two

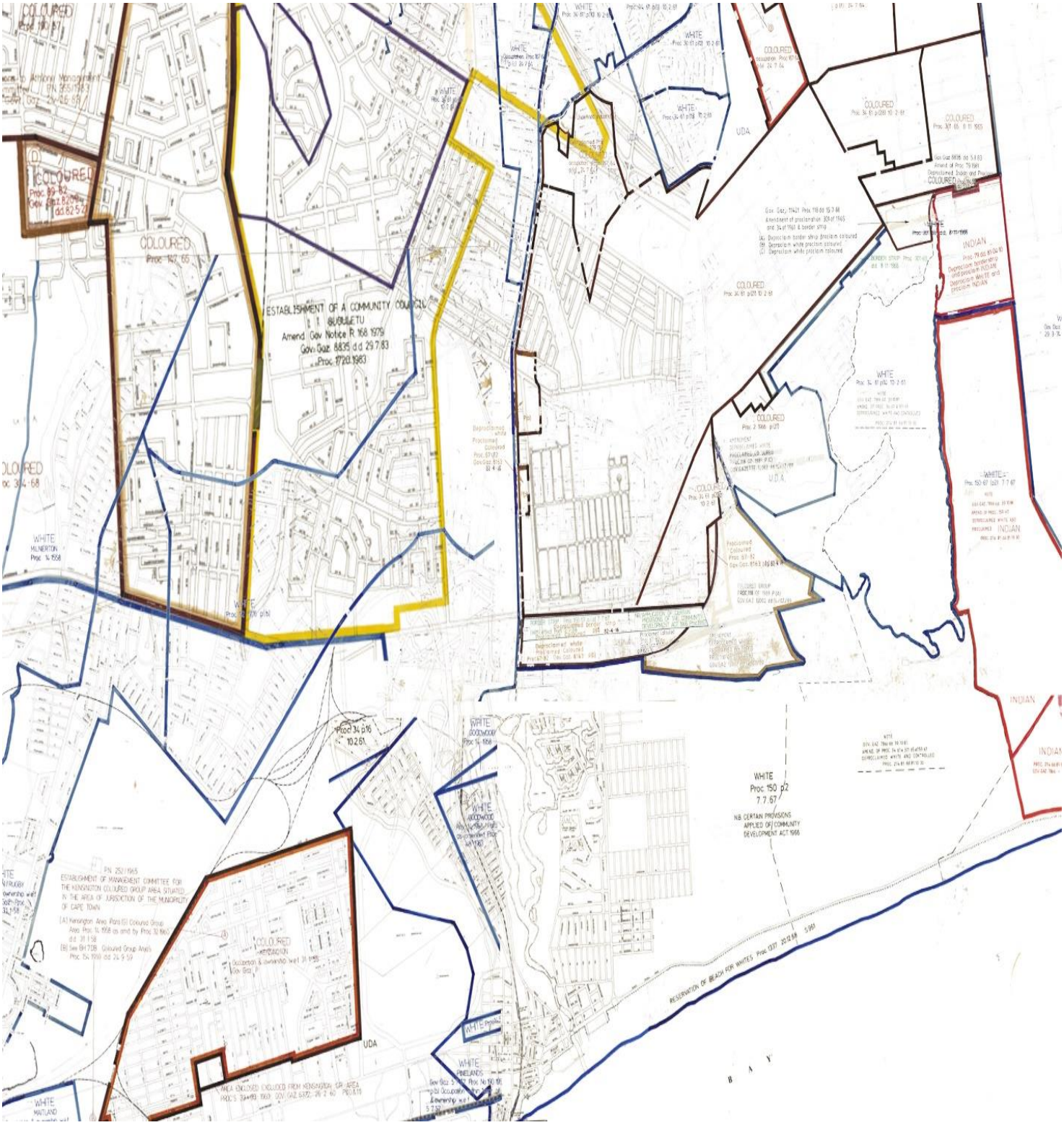



*Figure 13: Strikethrough*

This collage contains cuttings from five original archival maps spanning the periods from 1940-1980. On the originals, hand drawn lines indicate the boundaries of places. A stencil is used to hand write who, according to the apartheid population act, the settlement is for: 'coloured', 'white', 'black'. Sometimes the apartheid legislated boundaries shifted, and the relevant proclamations are struck through by hand, with reasons given by referring to the newest legislation. The maps indicate the largest allocations of land to white people, followed by coloured and to a far lesser degree, black. In the collage a cutting is added from the segregated beach maps.

Through this collage, I wish to mirror a similar trajectory to Hartman (2019) and Carby (2019) who both investigate what stories arise or emerge when sources from life histories, official and unofficial archives are brought together with personal memories and experiences. Carby (2019: 3) explores the ways in which one can see the intimate effects and entanglements between state proclamations, public opinions and campaigns and its impact on family life and relationships. Carby's (2019) stories are deeply personal and follow a disentangling of her own family histories adjacent to state imperatives and declarations. Deeply embedded in notions of mixed race families, Carby's (2019) careful unraveling of the entanglements of colonial UK and its impact on her family provides me with an approach with which to think through the interweaving of the personal narrative and the archive and how to read the spaces in between them. Her reading of archive, memory landscapes and place have been a guide in bringing together the tangible aspects of the narratives (such as place and meaning) shared through the research and the intangible (memories of place/association/emotional responses to place) which inform 'belonging'. While Carby's (2019:2) book explores two geographically, separate entities which converge and are entangled in the UK, my research explores the entanglements within one city.

The maps and the hand drawn lines with the accompanying legal promulgations in stenciled ink, blurs the space between bureaucracy and in the intimacy of lives in the everyday. While they offer up a visual image of the spatial divisions of apartheid planning, they also erase the detailed impact of what these lines could mean in terms of community, sense of belonging and place. The labels of apartheid, colored, black and white on the collaged maps above visibly elucidates the inequity and the levels and kinds of belonging imposed by the state. The size of the lots of land, the proximity and density are clearly demarcated through the maps. The labeling, which is done by hand, using stencils, with changes made over time made with handmade strikethroughs which appear to be arbitrary and yet so devastating on a personal and community level. I chose to cut and paste specific maps from across the Cape Town landscape. In some

ways it almost did not matter, whether it was southern or northern suburbs, the markings follow the same trajectory, Cape Flats for people of colour, very few spaces for people declared Bantu or Black, some for people declared coloured and large swathes of land for people declared white.

The absurdity of state control over people cannot be more potently visible than in the policing of recreation and leisure spaces. The apportioning of beaches to designated groups[12], one snippet of which is on the above collage. In this same original map I discovered that people designated Chinese were apportioned a very small beach along the False Bay area, alongside Indian, Colored and Whites. The stretches of beach on the maps do not reflect the levels of danger often in the strips designated to people of color. The control of movement, the policing of the body for home, work and recreation through legislation and municipal promulgation is the larger power enacted on the lives of all three women, either in their direct experience or indirectly through the ways in which the boundaries are reiterated in the present.

Working through the maps in the collection gave me time to review the ways in which, once again topography played a role in boundary making and how, inserted into the landscape, major road networks, bridges and empty lots of land made for seemingly impenetrable borders between people. Along with policing, pass laws and curfews these divisionary infrastructural impositions onto the landscape fomented an alienation of communities from each other.

[12] Designations on the Population Register and indicated through specific numbers on one's birth and identity documents speak volumes about the petite politics of Apartheid. There were rankings and ranking orders; first class citizens, second class, special classes. The classifications had direct impact on access to education, resources, housing and so on.

## 5.3. Collage Three


*Figure 14: 'I was born here'*

In this collage I foreground images from the UCT and National Library archives.

I wish to make visible the materiality which accompanies the devastation of people through the destruction of dwellings by authorities. Note the juxtaposition of the image of a woman bearing a hammer as her measure of protest to say that all she wishes to do is to build a home (and hearing ma K's narrative echo of how long it took to build such a structure), with the image of the women and men standing hopeless watching the destruction while uniformed police observe the undertaking. The brick-and-mortar dwellings with what appears to limestone wash are of Kensington and Maitland dwellings about the time of ma K's childhood.

Images of people converging outdoors in the neighborhood are placed in proximity to policemen searching at a home for pass books. Aimed at revealing the systemic violence of apartheid in how it collapses the personal or intimate into very public domains of Black Women's lives. The boundaries and borders of the maps recede as these images become visible. Yet, the image of the bulldozers is disrupted to mimic the lines of the maps demonstrating the culpability of the apartheid machinery in destroying and creating erroneous boundaries. All of these images - the lines on maps, bulldozers on dwellings – are all tenuous acts of power. The assertion of the right to belong by ma K, appears to be powerless at first in the face of such machinery. And yet, the collage undoes that: it belies the lie of an apartheid system which sought to erase and control belonging in its juxtaposition of the ever changing boundaries reminding a viewer of their impermanence. The collage also shows the ways in which informal housing persists into the present day. From the debris of what remains, new structures are built, resolve is strengthened and as cited earlier, 'the fire will keep burning'.

## 5.4. Collage Four


*Figure 15: On steeples and patters on repeat*

The collage begins a slow process of 'ghosting' the past. Images from Cape Town's apartheid past recede and remain as 'debris' (Schindel and Colombo, 2014).

In this collage I wish to elucidate the ways in which the city truncates when traversed for work and school. The stories of how ma K and N in particular navigated transport across the various parts of the city needed visualisation. An everyday occurrence for many Black Women, it was too easy to simply write this as an aside given that this thesis is not about mobility in the city, and yet, mobility is required to be able to unlock resources needed for achieving ones dreams. N'S stories of waking up early in order to catch a train at an obscene hour, traversing taxi rides in order to achieve or meet goals they had set for themselves and the creation of 'communities of care', in order to be safe and survive attest to this. Movement and mobility remain a part of a continuous history and the collage presents shadows of longer stories of movement of people between various parts of the Cape to Cape Town for work. The control and policing of such movement for employment still lurk as a reminder of what freedom of movement means, or does not mean, in the city.

The triangular shapes of the dwellings in Ndabeni, and the tents which proliferate as acts of occupation have a military origin, reference both a militarized, controlled and censured life in the city and the inverting of that imposed condition of living in the city through acts of resistance and asserting a right to belong.

I became fascinated by the shapes which began to emerge of the built environment in the archival images I found. There was something dialogic about the presence of steepled structures from the city center to the poles in the high-density clusters of the buildings and structures on the Cape Flats. I wanted to play with them on a symbolic level, asking how they foreground class and race across the city. In flattening the proximity to each other, I wished to debunk the notion of periphery and center and to visually interrogate the idea that periphery means distance or disconnection from the center, or vice versa for that matter. It doesn't help therefore to perpetuate the idea of a binary city as two worlds - one city. I wish to suggest that the proposal of rethinking and centering the periphery with its imaginative and problem solving ethos would be a far more helpful approach and set of logics (Phelps, Maginn & Keil , 2022: 11)

In many ways the challenge emerged to give visual language to the thoughts on periphery and centre from within urban studies. Caldeira (2017: 5) argues that peripheral urbanization is an ongoing practice, synonomous with urbanization in the global south. The continuous acts of auto-construction have always been present in the making of a southern city and Cape Town is no different. The long histories of 'auto-

construction' in the city, can be seen both as shadow and foregrounded as still present in today's cityscape in the contemporary in the collage. The making of the city has always held one narrative pre-empted by the arrival of the colonists and in her making, the construction of roadways and 'grachts[13]' in the centre. And yet, this is the lie, as the collage makes visible in its juxtaposition of steeples of cathedrals and high-rise buildings to the dwellings on the flats. The stories which A, N and ma K shared all speak to their place in the *making* of the city. Ma K's insistence on building a dwelling using found materials when she returned to Cape Town from the Eastern Cape or N's 'swallowing a dictionary' and traversing spaces as disparate as the location and Sea Point and A's insistence on breaking boxing gender boundaries and that it finally happens in Cape Town.

These acts, I insist are a part of city making and once again asserts the right to Belong.

[13] Waterways for channeling water from the mountain to key locations in the city centre

## 5.5. Collage Five

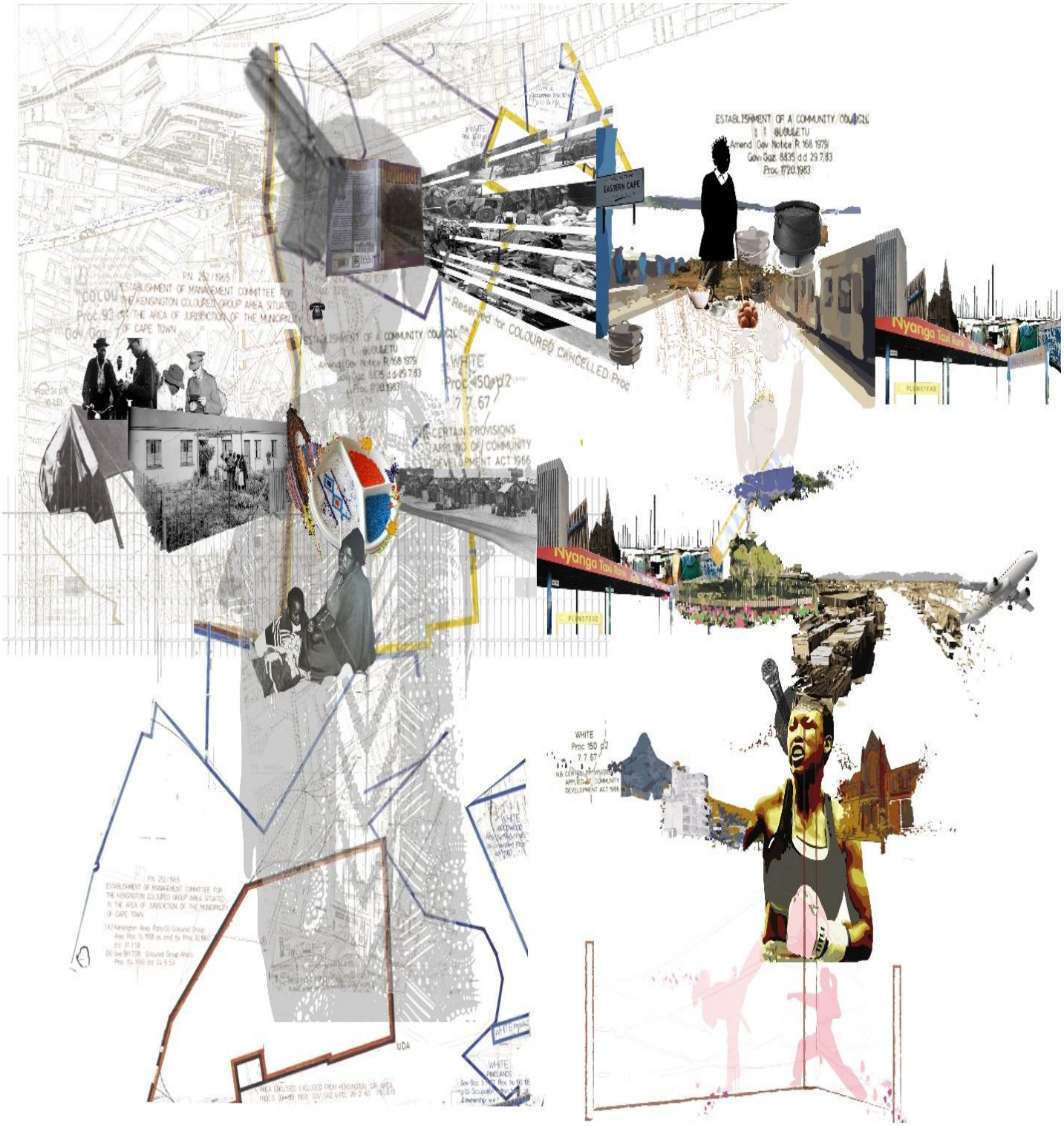



*Figure 16: Hauntings*

While much of the archival images are recessed and in shadow in my rendering, lines from the maps are heightened to mirror the lines of the various forms of infrastructure represented. The lines of the tall steepled buildings, lines of the dwellings in the informal settlements and the lines from the taxi rank waiting station. I introduce new digitally generated images into conversation with the archival representations.

More than anything, this collage speaks to the presence of stories in the making of Belonging for each woman. The objects are vehicles which have their own materiality, but which also serve as placeholders for assertions about Belonging. The plate of beads in full color is emblematic of 'imagination'. It calls to mind the ways in which ma K makes sense of her world through her imaginings: cloud becomes hairy worm becomes beaded necklace pattern. The school girl in uniform in proximity to the dining room table and tea pot a representation of the discernment, as a teenager about whom she can call on to enhance and support her dreams of becoming in a hostile world. And the karatika girl, boxing and running woman suggest an embodiment of belonging and 'taking up space' (in the language of the younger generation). The spectre of the Elder is left to loom in size across the page. More than the buildings or even the objects, the return of 'people' to the stories of the city is what I wish to assert in this collage.

Empty white spaces are deliberate, giving space for new stories about pasts. Once again, the landscape is inserted as in Collage 1, drawing the viewer's eye back to the ways in which Land forms people and people form Land. Lines and markings from the maps mirror lines of infrastructure such as housing, city centre, transportation hubs, all infrastructural issues which mediate Belonging, and which persist as challenges in present Cape Town.

The sprawling line of the collage from left to right hand side of the page, with the introduction of color into the contemporary begins to fade the past somewhat. The collage is meant to be provocative. It is meant to provoke the viewer into thinking about seeing the city with different a lens and inscribing their own sense of place and (un)Belonging onto the work. The mapped inscriptions of place names are not present on the right-hand side, signalling that a different kind of city is possible.

## 5.6. Collage Six


*Figure 17: Imagination as antidote*

Styled as a storyboard with many screens simultaneously opened, this collage has the landscape collage image as backdrop and superimposed to its left is the shadow of ma K wearing one of her exquisitely beaded necklaces. Collages 2-5 appear in sequence as opened screens with collage 5 in the top right-hand corner. The almost sci-fi nature of this final collage is in form and content a call for an imaginative approach to ways of shaking loose the ghosts (Gordon A, 2008: 66) of the colonial and apartheid past inscribed in the postcolonial city.

The appearance of the screens serves multiple purposes. First, they appear as writing over the mountains and land. This is meant to be indicative of the ways in which public spaces allocated as parks and natural landscapes have different meanings and values attached to them. Second, they reinforce the idea of the land shaping a people and people shaping the land. A call for greater attention to be paid to this in urban planning and design as the reciprocity of this relationship lies buried in a set of different and very deep-seated logics. Lastly, belonging in the city is not only about housing, belonging as defined in the stories is also about leisure, spaces to create, to be fully oneself and this requires movement and mobility.

Spatial planning and urban design often ignore the layers which rest beneath the obvious and what is immediately visible, including whom to consult on proposed developments. There are always histories of prior ownership, place and belonging in the city. The ability to uncover these will not only mitigate re-wounding decisions on an already deeply harmed Black community in the city, but potentially 'seeing of the ghosts' could pre-empt a different course of action and understanding of what kinds of development needs to take place. In so doing, a just and fairer planning process could be made possible. A present-day consultation with communities as constituted by physical boundaries without understanding its pre-history, creation and change leaves the planning bereft of potential knowledge and information which could enrich it. I wonder if spatial planning considering people like ma K's experience of a neighbourhood, could plan differently and more imaginatively.

The collages surfaced and made visible perspectives which I had not really thought of or thought through with respect to the relationship between Belonging in the postcolonial city and the interior worlds of Black Women. First, that the city has always, largely been auto-constructed. That since colonialisation exclusion and control served as governing mechanism of all people of color only ever tightening until the legislated group areas act under apartheid. In order to make a life in the city, homes and dwellings were built from found and temporary materials. A second perspective which began to emerge for me was the ways in which the Land shapes the people and people shape the Land. The

geographical and topographical shape of the city has to be taken into the consideration of the re-making of the city. I also began to see how the 'hauntings', once made visible, not only highlight the trauma and the pain, it gives space for the resilience stories to emerge. Embedded in these stories rest diverse ways and strategies for asserting Belonging, starting from an internal resource, the imagination. In reading 'stories' into the collages, they reveal interior worlds and resources that are powerful and invaluable in understanding how Belonging is understood and navigated.

# 6. Conclusion

This research explored aspects of the memoryscapes and interior lives of three Black Women in Cape Town. The thesis started with situating the study within scholarship around specific themes. The first being memoryscapes engaging with scholars such as Ricour (2000) on memory and its instability, Grunebaum (2001)on erasure and silencing of memory in citymaking and Field, Meyer and Swanson (2017) on memory and making the city by ordinary people. The second area of study was belonging, working with notions of belonging crafted by de Certeau (1984) and Gates (2019). The third aspect was exploring notions of interiority and intersectionality through authors such as Boswell (2020), and Hartman (2019). The fourth and final aspect was located within scholarship around postcolonial city making such as; Roy (2014), Caldeira (2017), Stoler (2013), Till (2012) as well as Colombo and Schindel (2014).

Through the stories of the three women I engaged with, three key themes emerged around the nature of belonging in the postcolonial city that can enrich urban studies and strengthen spatial design practices.

First, belonging requires a kind of 'cheekiness' that engenders a space safe enough to be 'cheeky', 'wayward' (Hartman, 2019), to make mistakes, and to stretch the parameters of one's own dreams. Struck by A's ability to rekindle her passion for sport as an intervention in addressing societal problems, I saw some synchrony here with how her own dreams of competing in karate world champs scuppered, and needing respite from the hard world of boxing, led her to find other avenues for combining her dreams of a sporting life with that of community building. Cheekiness is one way in which agency is asserted when the context and situation is dire. Urban studies can better recognize these 'wayward' ways instead of representing people as victims who remain haunted/wounded or traumatized. Cheekiness is a useful way to think about agency as it inserts into the discourse about power, the ways in which Black working class

women challenge the impositions of authoritative power on their lives. In doing so, cheekiness articulates resistance as both subtle and direct, as protest march and as resolutely living and fulfilling dreams.

Second, the desire to create 'communities of care' as a means to Belong remains a part of the city landscape. Therefore, one of the questions which should inform urban planning, is how spaces are designed to activate, support and engender such communities of care. The relationship between individual and communities is a complex and dynamic one which for planning and consultative purposes have to be born in mind. Decision-makers need to seek out the points of convergence within communities (perhaps understanding how nodes of activism or issues-based collectivism is more marked within specific communities). The points of divergence are equally important in understanding the nuance and contestations within community groupings. Planners need to be more astute at seeing and paying attention to existing coalitions and their transience in their design and planning approach to local development. Third, there is a call for the imagination to be surfaced, understood and catalyzed when thinking about urban studies and planning practice. ma K nudges us in this direction through the ways in which she beautifully demonstrates her interpretation and details her creative process which mirrors her activism. Similarly, there are invitations to imagine in the stories of N exploring her creative impulses and A in defeating a mental or psychological barrier as a boxer. Imagination is important in everyday strategies for survival. It is therefore important for urban studies research to employ creative methods for engaging communities in research, planning and development to understand and amplify existing civic imagination. As evidenced in this study, this requires time and deeper engagements with communities than many current research undertakings plan for and implement. The place of grounded academic research is therefore critical in supporting planning and development processes.

To begin to conceive of belonging as cheekiness, communities of care, and *acts* of belonging is to begin to make visible the depth of interior worlds of Black Women. The power that rests in our interior worlds and its potential to transform academia, practice, and everyday life is uncontainable.

**'To be someone, you have to *show* people who you are' A**

**'You must create the world you want to live in, *from the inside'* N**

**'keep giving me the wood, and I will keep the fire burning' ma K**

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