4.1 LIFE HISTORIES

4.1.1 Sipho Booi*

Sipho Booi says he was born during the Boer War. Looking extremely old and frail, he is touching, almost childlike in the way he relates his life history. He believes that he has had a good life, an easy life, for which he is grateful. His wife though, thinks differently. She's a very articulate, handsome woman, much younger than Sipho, in her early forties, a sad, bitter woman. She makes use of the interview to air quite a few grievances concerning not only life in general but life with Sipho in particular. Whenever she contradicts him, Sipho seems pained and disbelieving, blaming Kammaskraal for her bad temper. When asked why there is such a big age difference between them, Sipho proudly says that she married him for love and he married her for love. She shrugs however. She had to. She was forced to. He could pay lobola. He paid seven cows and her father was greedy for the seven cows. And so.... But Sipho denies it. Women have changed, he mutters. It is this place that isn't good for women. At first, when they got married, she said it was for love. Now that they are both old she says she had to. He says his life was good and he gave her a good life. It is only now, in this place. But his wife says life was always bad. It is worse now, but it has never been good.

Sipho was born in Pondoland, near Umtata, in the Transkei. There were three sons and two daughters in the family. His father worked in the mines in Bulawayo, so he didn't see much of him, nor did he see much of his mother. As a domestic worker she spent most, if not all daylight hours at her place of employment. She left home at 6 in the morning and usually did not come back before 6 or 7 o'clock. They did not mind that too much. They did not know her well and his eldest sister looked after them, cooked and cleaned the house. And there were many interesting games to play, the most popular of which was the Boer War game. Sipho said that unfortunately he always had to be the Boer because he was small and the other children thought he wasn't so very clever. Here his wife interrupts to tell us that he indeed is not all that clever and that that is the reason why he thinks he has had such a good life when it was in fact a miserable life. Sipho looks distressed and points out that he went to school and had passed Standard 3 - and in those days it was not possible to go beyond Standard 3. He was however very happy that times and circumstances had changed and that it was now possible for a black man to enjoy the same kind of education as a white man.

He then proceeds to tell us about a visit the councillor of the chief minister, Mr Xaba, paid Kammaskraal. He had heard that Mr Xaba was a very learned man and he believed that he would

---

* A pseudonym is used here, as in all the other life histories, for any identifying names.

help them. He himself spoke to Mr Xaba. He told him that they were hungry and that the children were dying of hunger, and Mr Xaba promised to help. Although this happened many months ago he trusts that Mr Xaba will indeed help them.

Sipho says that as a child he was never hungry. It is only now that he is old that he knows hunger. His wife however says that all her life she has felt that there never was enough food.

Sipho did not work when he was a child. His father thought that children should not work, that a black man's work took away his courage. He got his first job when he was sixteen, when the whole family moved to Wooldridge. Sipho explained that they moved to Wooldridge because his mother was from Umtata and a man and his sons should not be bound to a place when the mother is from that place. It creates strife with the mother's family and then a woman thinks she has the right to dominate her husband and sons. Thus they moved to Wooldridge where the whole family found employment on a pineapple farm called Barnaby. They had three huts and earned good money. He earned three pounds a month,* and by saving most of his money he eventually possessed five cows. Sipho says it was a good life. They had three acres of land and his father was happy and relaxed because he did not have to work in the mines any more. And he, Sipho, was happy and grateful that he did not have to work in the mines because he was scared of working underground. Thus even if the farmer was strict and perhaps not so very kind a man, he was still grateful for the good job and worked hard to show the farmer that he was grateful. His hard work paid off because eventually he was made foreman and then he earned R10 a month.

He got married when he was about sixty years old,and had six children. Life then became even better because the farmer gave him an additional two acres of land. When his mother and father died, his brothers left the farm but the farmer did not take away the three acres that originally belonged to the whole family, so that he then had five acres. He grew mealies, beans and watermelon and pumpkin on his farm. It was clear that Sipho dearly loved his watermelons. He tried to describe how big they were, eventually he drew a picture of an enormous watermelon in the sand, looked at it, and decided that his watermelons were perhaps even bigger. However, his wife said that they were not that big at all, they were just ordinary watermelons. On the farm there were dams, tanks, windmills. Their rations consisted of a bag of mealies and tea and coffee. His wife and daughters worked as domestic workers on the farm, and they earned R4 per month. Life was good then.

But his wife says life was unpleasant, harsh, painful. They, the women, were forced to work in the kitchen as well as on the land. Children had to work on the land from the day of their tenth birthday, and they were not paid anything before their thirteenth birthday. A child did not look forward to his tenth birthday on Mr Hamilton's farm.

Nor did she like the house they lived in. It was bare and old. They were not allowed to furnish it because the farmer did not like them to have furniture. He told them that only whites have furniture. She wanted cutlery, crockery, proper beds, chairs. Once she bought a bed from her sister's husband's father and the farmer was extremely angry. He said that only whites slept on beds. Sipho looked surprised and told his wife that those things did not matter. She should have been grateful that the farmer gave him a job, that he did not have to work in the mines, that they always had enough to eat. Not like now when there was never food, when they were always hungry. His wife however insisted that those things mattered, that things like that did matter a great deal.

Then the farmer sold the land to the Ciskei government and told them that they had to leave the farm. Sipho said they were worried and sad and they did not know where to go and that they loved the land. He did not want to leave his five acres. He knew there was no other place where he could grow such big pumpkins, such huge watermelons. They protested and refused to leave the farm. Then the headman of Wooldridge came to the farm and called a meeting. He told

---

* This was not his starting salary. This amount was probably earned after about 20 years' service.

them that everyone had to leave the farm the next day. Those who refused to leave would be chased off with guns and sjamboks. But he was an old man, and wanted to keep his dignity, so he decided to leave without further resistance.

The Monday morning they left for Wooldridge. They did not have any money. There were no dams in Wooldridge, no water and the spring was far away. If they left early in the morning for the spring they only came back at 5 pm. It was a long dusty journey to the spring. The cattle died. There wasn't any food in Wooldridge, no land to plant watermelons or pumpkins on.

Of the the seven families that lived on Barnaby, five went to Wooldridge. Two families went to other farms and found employment there. Sipho said that he felt old and tired then and didn't want to work with pineapples any more. He didn't want to start from scratch again. He had been a farmer for a long time and couldn't now imagine taking orders from another man, perhaps even one younger than he.

The headman told them not to build proper houses as they were not going to be allowed to stay on at Wooldridge. They lived in shacks. The little money Sipho had he spent on his children. They had to go to school, his son wanted to get married and he had to help him with the lobola, his daughter had to dress so that she could get a husband. His wife's brother had left his four children with them. They too had to be fed and dressed. Sipho said that for the next four years he and his wife were hungry every day and went to bed hungry every night. When given the choice of going to Kammaskraal, they imagined that life could not be worse there, it could only be better. Furthermore, they were promised land, and Sipho wanted land.

In May 1980 Sipho, his wife, his brother-in-law's four children, four of his daughters, and his daughter-in-law and her child set out for Kammaskraal. They had to walk there and the journey took a whole day. Sipho said he became very tired but when he thought of the watermelons he was going to plant he did not mind the long journey or the cold. The Ciskei government sent lorries to take their possessions to Kammaskraal. They sent their twelve goats, a pig and three cows with the lorry, but four of the goats, the pig and two of the cows died during the journey.

They arrived at Kammaskraal late at night. The tents were already pitched up, rows and rows of tents. All their possessions were dumped outside their tent and everything was soaked through with rain. The tent was wet and muddy inside, it was shaking in the wind and the rain came in. Sipho's wife says that that night she did not take any supper. She was too tired and she knew then that life was not going to become any better. They huddled together for warmth but in the early morning hours the wind blew the tent away. They were too tired to pitch it up again so they just waited in the rain for morning to come. Sipho's wife said she knew then that the old man was not going to plant his watermelons. She knew they were all going to die here, at this Kammaskraal.

4.1.2 Nombulelo Mpati

Nombulelo Mpati was born in 1926 in Alexandria. Both her parents were born there, so were her grandparents. They had lived for generations on a farm called Longdale, owned in Nombulelo's time by the Fine brothers. Nombulelo's father's father worked on this farm, so did his two sons.

Nombulelo's father did not have any formal education as a child, but later, when an adult already, his father sent him to the school on the neighbouring farm, Rock Spring. Nombulelo's father got married when he was twenty. He and his wife were married in the traditional way, with eight cows being paid as lobola. After the marriage, her parents left Longdale and went to work on Rock Spring where the eldest daughter was born. Shortly after the birth they returned to Longdale where the other five children, two sons and four daughters including Nombulelo, were born.

The family lived in a big hut that Nombulelo's father had built when he got married. They did not have any Western furniture. All the children attended the school at Rock Spring. Nombulelo passed Standard 4 and then left school.

Things had begun to turn sour when Nombulelo's 16-year-old sister had an argument with the farmer's wife. The sister apparently had a talent for needlework and the farmer's wife wanted her services as a seamstress on a full-time basis. The sister rejected the offer (or rather the demand) as the farmer's wife did not plan to pay her for her services. She considered it such a 'pleasant job' it did not justify payment in money. As three full meals a day would be provided, the demand for money was considered 'cheeky'. The sister did not agree, an argument ensued which resulted in the farmer giving her five lashes with the whip. As a result of this argument the whole family moved to Rock Spring. On Rock Spring, as on Longdale, Nombulelo's father got paid R2 per month, plus rations which included mealies, mealie meal, and brown flour. On both farms the workers were allowed to use the farmer's implements for ploughing. When married, a man had the right to two acres of land; if unmarried he only had a right to one acre. All the farmworkers had cattle and goats which they bought with money saved from their wages.

Before she got married, and for a while afterwards, she was fat and happy, Nombulelo said. Not yet an old woman, she now thinks of herself as old and useless. Pointing at her spindly limbs she described herself as old and shrivelled. She then pointed to the garden where the dusty sunflowers stood knee-high. 'Like them', she said.

She was married in 1946. The marriage was arranged by her parents and her husband's. She did not know her future husband at all but liked him well enough just before the marriage took place. He paid lobola, seven cows, which she considered a fair price. The ceremony took place at Endeavour farm where her husband had grown up and his parents then lived. After the marriage they moved in with her husband's brother and his family.

During the early years of the marriage, her husband worked for the municipal council as a road-worker. He worked a six-day week earning 20 cents a day for his labour. Nombulelo said that although those years were good in many ways - she gave birth to two healthy sons, she had a good relationship with her in-laws, she enjoyed the authority her new status as mother gave her - she was continually worried about her husband and this marred her happiness. His work entailed long hours and backbreaking labour, he looked frail and thin. He had never been a robust man, but his health declined to such an extent that she feared she would not have more children. His ill- health became a threat to her position as mother and so she persuaded him to go back to Longdale.

Her husband got a job at Longdale as general handyman. He received R5 a month and they owned two acres of land, plus ten cattle and five goats. Nombulelo said they were rich then. They had a zinc house and a big hut, two more children were born, they grew peas, beans, tomatoes and cabbage in their garden. For breakfast they had porridge with milk. For lunch and supper, mealies, samp with peas and beans and sometimes meat the farmer gave them. Their rations consisted of coffee, tea, sugar, mealie meal. They were never hungry and the money they earned was saved for the buying of clothes and cattle and goats.

Nombulelo said that the farmer was, on the whole, a kind man. At least he never spoke harshly to her or her children and he had given her husband a job. The children went to school at Rock Spring and her husband seemed much stronger and healthier. Those were happy years, good years.

Then the two Fine brothers died, one at the age of 77, one at the age of 75, and their brother-in-law took over the farm, running it with the aid of a foreman. From that time onwards, things went wrong. People were restless. There was a bleakness in their lives, they felt weary. The brother-in-law was a hard taskmaster. Nombulelo said they felt disaster coming. When she was pressed to explain this premonition, she thought about it for a long time. Then she simply said that they during that time felt that their lives were hard, whereas before they did not think about their lives.

At Christmas 1979 a meeting was called by the foreman and they were told to find another place to live because the farm had been bought by someone else. They couldn't understand his words. They had nowhere to go, and therefore they could not make plans. They didn't even discuss it among themselves, they did not ask the foreman any questions.

Early in 1980 a BAAB car arrived and they were all called together by the foreman. There were two men in the van. The one asked questions, the other wrote the answers down. They wanted to know the history of each family. They were counted, and were then told that they had to leave the farm as someone else had bought the land, a Mr Howe, the son of the Rock Spring farmer.

Nombulelo said they felt very sad while standing there, listening to this man. They knew it was 'all over'. They did not think of resistance. They just felt worried and frightened and said to each other that it was all over.

They were told that they were not wanted on the farm any more because their cattle were destroying the grass. Nombulelo said they could not understand this. They asked each other if the grass was then more important than they were.

The BAAB official gave them seven days to sell all their cattle and to leave. Before he left, they were given eviction orders. Nombulelo still had hers and went to fetch it. It read:

> On inspection it has come to notice that you have erected an unauthorized structure for residential purposes on Longdale land. Please note that this is a contravention of Section 3a of Act 52 of 1951.
>
> In order to obviate legal proceedings being instituted against you, you are requested within seven days from date hereof to demolish the shack referred to above failing which, action will be taken against you in terms of Section 3b of Act 52 of 1951.

The new owner then took possession of the land. Nombulelo, her brothers and sisters, friends, her husband and children, watched them move in. Nombulelo said they did not feel bitter toward them. She said africans had never owned land. Only whites had land.

The new owner ordered them to sell everything. They sold their cattle for very low prices. Some were sold for as little as R10. When they argued about the prices they were told to put their cows on their heads and walk away with them. Everything was sold, except the poultry. They kept their poultry because they felt they had to keep something.

The new owners told the children not to go to school any more. They said that africans did not need education and moreover they were leaving soon. They were not allowed to get water from the dam and one night when they felt sad and gathered together around the fires to sing, the new owner put his dogs on them. They did not feel bitter towards them, she said. That's the way it was, she explained. No-one could have changed it.

At first the people from Rock Spring and Longdale were not removed but the first Tuesday in June, early in the morning, just after breakfast, eight lorries came, one after the other. They stood in front of their houses and watched the lorries. Nombulelo was worried and she felt sad. Was she angry? No! Bitter? No! Africans were landless!

The lorries took their furniture, clothes, poultry. They sat in front of their empty huts and then two buses came and they left the farm. The new owner did not make an appearance. The journey took the whole day. They did not know where they were going and already they were missing the farm.

They arrived at Kammaskraal at 9 o'clock that night and were shown their houses. The houses were bare and damp. It was a dark, windy night, most of them did not have candles with them, nor food. They spent the night in darkness, slept on the floor, and that first night they thought the wind was going to blow the house away.

Nombulelo's husband died in August of that year. December of that year saw her youngest son die. In July 1980 her only daughter died. Nombulelo said that she was very alone. She asked other people for food and when they had, they shared it with her. When they did not have, she did not eat. She thought that perhaps she was entitled to a pension but she needed a card. In order to get a card, she had to go to Peddie and for that she needed R2. She did not have R2. All she had was a garden but it did not produce much.

Nombulelo does not think that the future will bring any changes. She once again pointed at the shrivelled sunflowers in her garden. 'They are dead, aren't they', she said. 'Nothing grows in this land.'

4.1.3 Michael Welile Ntlanjeni

Mike is still a young man, short and frail-looking, Afrikaans-speaking. The Sunday morning we met him, he was leaning on a not too sturdy gatepost, watching the steady stream of women on their way to church. It had rained the night before and his little garden was reduced to a uniform miniature mud valley. He came to help us across this mud, all the time mocking the pious women in an almost friendly tone of voice, stopping to ask them whether they really believed God would ship them across the mud back to Humansdorp. Because if they really believed it, it 'was stupid, man'.

He was born in Humansdorp in 1955. There were eight children in the family, three boys and five girls. He was the eldest. His father worked in the sawmill and earned very little but they did have land on which they grew potatoes and mealies. Mike said they had a big, 'grand' house, and they never went hungry. They did not have much money, however, and after he had completed Standard 5, his parents asked him to leave school and find a job. They reasoned that if he could find a job, the other children could be kept at school. Mike agreed with them but he said that he bitterly regretted leaving school. He knew that the moment he left school his childhood would be over. (He was then fourteen.) He found employment with a firm of building contractors, earning between R6 and R7 a week. This money was given to his parents, and at the end of every month he received R2 pocket money. After a year he left this firm to work for another firm where he was assistant to a plumber,earning R10 a week,and the increase in wages meant an increase in pocket money. He then received R5 a month pocket money, and his memories of those years consisted of colourful dances, music, women and his first introduction to the delights of liquor.

When he was twenty, he left for Plettenberg Bay with the plumber to whom he was assistant. During those years 1975-1977 work was scarce and many of his friends were unemployed, his father was unemployed. He earned R30 a week, however, and as he lived with his employer he could thus save a substantial part of his wages to send home. In 1977 his employer moved to Pretoria. He was asked to go with him, wanted to go, but his parents refused permission. They thought Pretoria was too far away from Humansdorp and much too close to Johannesburg. Although they had never been to Johannesburg they had heard stories of its decadence and danger, and thought Mike was far too young to resist the beerhalls, women and general atmosphere of evil. Mike thus went back to Humansdorp. At the time of the interview, Mike still thought that this decision of his parents marked the biggest disappointment of his life. If they had let him go, he felt his whole life would have taken a different course. He brooded about it endlessly, and more than once during the interview he compared the dashing young man he would have been in Pretoria with the man he was now, a man without a future.

For a few months after going back to Humansdorp Mike did not try to find employment. Although he denied it, it seemed from his conversation that he had remained in his room for a couple of months, sulking, only emerging at night to visit a woman he used to know. Even that he did not find very satisfactory. The women in Plettenberg Bay apparently were sophisticated and fun-

loving. Compared to them the Humansdorp women were just 'little girls'.

Eventually, he found employment as a plumber at Knysna Park. He lived at the park through the whole of 1977/78 and part of 1979, and went home at weekends. It was on one of these visits that he first heard of the threat of removal. He heard it from one of his friends but when he asked his father about it, both his parents dismissed it as a rumour without any substance. He did, however, get the impression that they were worried but they refused to discuss it with him. The rumours became more frequent, meetings followed, people spoke about little else. Still his parents did not discuss it with him. After a particularly heated meeting he confronted his parents and asked them what they were going to do. Both his parents said that they were not going to move. They could not leave their ancestors' graves. The land belonged to them. His mother had grown up in that house, her father had grown up in it. They could leave neither the house, the graves, nor the land.

Mike, though, understood what his parents did not. He said that he knew that they did not really have any kind of choice, that their time for making decisions about their lives was over. He said he did not tell them that because it is not the kind of knowledge old people can cope with.

One morning in 1977 he got a message from his parents that there was trouble and that he had to come home immediately. Mike said that he put down his tools and left. He did not try to give any kind of explanation because he knew he would not come back.

There was chaos in his town. Women were crying, children were crying. Some men had climbed on the roofs of their houses, refusing to leave or to come down and were shouting insults and threats from the roofs. 'Soldiers' were busy demolishing some houses, some women were dragging furniture out in an attempt to save some of the pieces, others were running in and out of houses in the process of being demolished. His father had resisted and was taken away, and his mother was piling up books and crockery and clothes on the opposite pavement. He helped his mother to drag out a few pieces of furniture before the house collapsed. His younger brothers and sisters were huddled amidst the furniture and books and clothes. He then went to look for his father but could not find him. He later found out that he was in jail.

Mike did not say much about the journey to Elukhanyweni. It was cold, the people were silent, the people were sad, they were worried about his father, his mother did not speak one word the whole trip, the crockery was broken, they had left the poultry behind, they could not sell the cattle, the sheep died. When he related the first sight of the house they were to live in, it was with anger, even outrage: 'It's not a house, man. It's not even a pigsty, it's just a thing. Two rooms. Two rooms for eleven people. What do they think we are, do they think we are animals? They won't even put eleven animals in two rooms. We need privacy too, man, even if we are black. It makes no difference. A man's skin colour makes no difference. Black or blue or white, a man needs privacy.' They asked the drivers of the lorries if they were supposed to live in these structures. The drivers did not say anything, did not answer any of their questions. They unloaded and drove away, and people slowly started moving their furniture into the houses, re-arranging furniture, trying to fit it into the two rooms. Mike said he thought his heart would break when he watched his mother that first night in that house. The house in Humansdorp was large and cool with wooden floors, and the kitchen was big and comfortable. His mother unpacked the crockery and everything was broken. She sat in front of the box with the broken crockery and then he left the house because 'then I wanted to smash things, man. I wanted to smash every whitey in the world.'

Mike stayed with his mother till his father came back. Then he found employment through the labour bureau in Cape Town, at the nuclear power station. He left for Cape Town in August 1979 and came back in September 1981. His contract was not renewed because he had had an accident in which his leg and arm were broken two months before the contract expired.

Everything was still the same when he came back, a bit worse. There was drought, the gardens

were shrivelled, his father was not speaking to anyone, his younger brother had died.

He found employment at the Ciskei Sawmills. He earned R80 a month and his father received a pension of R80 every second month. Two children were still at school, his married sister's husband then died and so she and her two children moved in with them. He supported all of them. He said that he was determined to put the children through matric but he did not know how because the money he earned went straight from his pocket to the shop. A bag of flour cost R21. That left R59. Mike said that he would never tell them to leave school. He maintained that a child needs school because it is an important part of childhood, perhaps the most important part. Children should not worry about money or the earning of money and he never discussed money problems with the children.

Mike started work at 7 am and came home at 6 pm. He then washed, had supper and worked in the garden for a while. Then he went to sleep. Saturdays he went to town, Sundays he visited his friends. They talked, played records, played cards. Mike said that Sunday was simply another day to pass. And then Monday again. He said that there were young women in Elukhanyweni but that he was not going to start a relationship. He could not get married because he had too many people to support. Moreover, he did not want his children to inherit his world.

When asked whether he wanted to go back to Humansdorp, he said: 'We were born at Humansdorp but we can't go back. But you can go anywhere you like. You can go to Humansdorp now and live there all your life if you want to. To hell with it, I don't understand it.'

When asked about the future he said: 'I will die in this place. I won't have a wife, I won't have children. Ag, to hell with it, man. You ask too many questions.'

4.1.4 Edith Faltein

Miss Edith Faltein is a huge, moon-faced woman in her early forties. She sits with folded hands, speaking in a calm monotone. It is February 1982 and the women of Elukhanyweni talk about the school fees and the money they have to pay for books and uniforms. These are compulsory and in all come to about R150. For people who seldom have enough to eat, this sum is astronomical but at the same time they are determined to keep their children at school. A steady flow of women come to discuss the problem with Miss Edith. It is clear that her role in the community is to reassure and console. Discussing each woman's problem in detail she points out ways and means of earning and saving money, always speaking in the same reassuring tone. This is her story.

'I was born and grew up in Snyklip. We had land - three morgen - and although we were eight children we always had enough to eat and we had money, not much but enough. We sold some of our produce and yes, I think life was good then. We had plenty of food and we all went to school and yes, I think we had a good childhood. How shall I put it... I don't remember sadness, it's not... the children here, in this place, I think they are different. They are hungry all the time and in winter they are always cold and ill and so many of them have died already. Ag miss, so many of them have died. In winter, every day almost there is another grave. I have stopped crying about the children now. I don't have any more tears left. But my childhood was different. I remember... oh I cannot remember that I was ever hungry or cold or frightened. I was just a child. I did not know about grown-up things. But these children... ask any of them, even the smallest and they would tell you what every article in the shop costs. It is not good for children to think about prices and money and food the whole time. You know miss, actually, I think there is not a child in this Elukhanyweni. There are just big grown-ups and little grown-ups.

'Well then, when I was fifteen, I got married. The man was, oh, I think... nineteen. Perhaps twenty. Yes, I wanted to get married. I loved the man but I wasn't happy. He wasn't a good

man. He had a relationship with his own sister and when I found out about it I said to him you must choose between me and your sister. This is wrong. He chose his sister. But still I did not leave. I was married to him, and ... how shall I put it... I wanted to be a good wife, I did not want to disappoint my parents. And of course there were children by then. I had two children by the time I found out about him and his sister. We were living with his parents and of course his sister. Actually they were all very strange people. No, I don't know, I can't describe them. They were all just very different from my people. Then his sister fell pregnant and of course he was the father. Then I couldn't go on. It was evil, it wasn't a good marriage. I went back to my parents. I found a job. I looked after a white farmer's children and my mother looked after mine. I earned R40 a month and I was quite happy. Not altogether happy though, how shall I put it... I felt hurt, miss. Even now I can still remember how hurt I felt then. Yes. And so, after a while, I decided to leave. I went to Cape Town but left my children with my mother.

'I lived and worked in Cape Town for twenty years. There was a man in Cape Town, I had three children with him. No, we weren't married. A woman needs a man, she needs to love a man, she needs to look after a man. You know, miss, most men are really just children. Not all of course, but with most men... there's really not all that much difference between a man and a child. And we women are made that way. We must love a man and look after him and we must have children and love them and we worry about them the whole time. But marriage, it's another thing altogether. But isn't it strange though, all my adult life, up to now, I had looked after other people's children, and my mother had looked after mine. Isn't it strange. As soon as a child of mine was born, I took the child to my mother. I would stay for a few months and then leave again. In Cape Town I looked after other people's children. There was one child, a little girl, I brought her up. Her parents were never at home. I lived in the house and she was my child really, more my child than my own children ever were. Because even with the first two... I was unhappy. But I don't know what has become of her.

'But even though I was happy the letters from home worried me. My mother was worried. In 1962 already she wrote that whites were often seen in Snyklip and that they asked strange questions like why their houses were not built in rows and why didn't everyone plant different kinds of vegetables so that they could buy from each other. Now, why would the whites want them to build their houses in rows and why should they buy vegetables from each other if they could produce them themselves. My mother was scared but my father said there was nothing to be scared about, he said the whites were only trying to be helpful and didn't know any better. Then my mother wrote that the whites had chosen a few men and had given them a year's supply of guano and land and instructions of what to sow. They were conducting some kind of experiment but she did not really know what it was all about. But she was worried. She said the people were willing because they thought they were all going to become very rich. But they did not like the land or the things they were told to do so they gave it up. Then my mother wrote that the whites wanted to build a clinic but the people did not want it. No, I don't know why the people did not want a clinic. My mother said many people did not like the whites and wanted them out of Snyklip. They did not trust them. My father never wrote but my mother said he wasn't against the clinic. She was, though.

'And then I became really worried because my mother wrote that they were told that they would be given other land. I couldn't understand it at first. Why should the whites want to give them other land, and what about our land? My mother was so vague about it. Isn't it strange, miss? She worried about the clinic but she did not worry about this thing. And it was this thing....

'Well, I couldn't understand it. I wrote to her, letter after letter but she did not answer my questions. She did not think it was important. Then she wrote that there was a meeting and that the whites had told them that they would have to go to another town. The whites said that they would be given land and that there was ample water and work in this town. You see how they had lied to us, miss. Well, my mother did not believe them. She wrote that she was not going to leave Snyklip. I wrote to my father, and I wrote to my mother and I wrote to our neighbours. I was so worried. But they all wrote back not to worry, that they were not going to leave Snyklip. But I worried, I worried.

'And then the letters stopped and I knew something terrible had happened. I wrote to everyone. I spent my nights writing letters but I did not receive any answers. Then, at last, a letter came. It was from my eldest son and he wrote that one morning when they were having breakfast, they saw lorries coming to their houses, one following the other. They were told to leave their houses immediately and he said they grabbed together as many of their possessions as possible and everything was thrown in the lorries and everything that could break broke. And you know miss, my son said that my mother did not once cry. But the plates and cups that broke, you know she inherited them from her mother and I remember when we were children we were never allowed to touch them. My father stayed behind to sell the cattle. The sheep went with but died on the way. All the sheep died. The poultry stayed behind. My son wrote that when they arrived here, there were no houses for them, it was raining and they were given tents to live in. For many weeks their furniture stood outside in the rain and it became warped and useless. The compensation money was used on food. And you know, the whites did not give us land. And my son wrote that the children and old people died from cold and hunger. At last they were given houses, two-roomed houses, the ones you see us living in now. But you know miss, our old house had rooms for guests and rooms for the children. We find it very difficult to live in these houses. And then they did not have any money left and they were not allowed to chop down trees for firewood and paraffin was so expensive that they could not afford to buy it.

'So miss, I decided to come here so that I could be with my parents and my children. I left Cape Town by bus. The bus brought me as far as Middledrift, and then a kombi brought me here.

'I arrived late one afternoon. It was then in December 1979. Oh miss, when I saw this place my heart wanted to break. There was drought and the food was scarce. There was no water. And my mother. My mother did not even recognise me. She doesn't talk to anyone, she doesn't even see this place.

'And the first winter I spent here in this place. So many children died. I don't cry about the children any more, I don't have any more tears left. My father died. And perhaps God will punish me for this, but I think it will be better if my mother should die. It hurts me to say this to you.

'But even in this place good things can happen. I met a man here. He is a schoolteacher and he is a good man. Not like other men, he is a good, kind man. But these are difficult, sad years. Three of my children are still at school, and my man's got four children still at school. I must buy all the books and uniforms and pay the school fees. I don't have any money left, all my savings are used up now. I must look at things the way they are: the children won't go to school next year.

'Please, tell your people to pray for us. Tell them they must pray for the children. I don't want to think about it but another winter is coming.'

4.1.5 Maria Zotwana

Maria Zotwana is a very old woman. She cannot read or write, she doesn't know how old she is, but thinks she was born during the Boer War. She has lived her whole life in the Tsitsikama area and has never ventured further than Humansdorp. She is frightened and alone and starving. She was far too confused to give a coherent account of her life and after the interview we were left with the barest minimum of facts but with a variety of impressions concerning her life. It has been decided to reproduce these impressions rather than to impose an artificial factual structure on an account which is in essence emotional.

It must be remembered that Maria has no education and that her life has been limited to the boundaries of a specific farm. Her story has been included to show what resettlement means to people who are old and confused, with no education and no intellectual means with which even to begin to understand their position. Maria simply does not know why she is in Elukhanyweni or how it all happened. To her it seems that one day her life was still whole and familiar, intact, and the very next day it was broken and she does not understand any of it.

Maria speaks an idiomatic rustic Afrikaans. When thus used the language has a powerful emotional impact. For those readers who understand Afrikaans, an Afrikaans copy is included. The English copy is more or less a direct translation of the Afrikaans.

In translation:

I was born in the Tsitsikama. Now see, if I must say how old I am it will be a lie. I was born, I was born there by the Boer War. We lived on a farm, on Schoemanswyk, my father worked the lands. We liked living there. We had our own land, our ancestors lived on this land. We planted vegetables, potatoes, mealies, beetroot we planted. Now see, I can tell you nothing about Humansdorp, the things about Humansdorp I can't tell you. Now when I am in Humansdorp I go to the shop and then I go home and then it is finished. I can say nothing about Humansdorp. When I was a child, I knew nothing. I am a child now, what do I know, I am small now I can't know. No, I did not go to school. I helped my mother in the kitchen, I washed the dishes and I swept the house. No, I was but one, yes, the only child. Yes, I married at Humansdorp, I stay around because I don't know places, places are not known to me. I was as old as the child here when I got married, yes fifteen, say fifteen when I got married. Yes, I loved my man, he was a good man. No, but my man has gone and died years ago. What did he do? No, he worked the lands. For a white man, yes. The white man was good to us. My man worked the lands and chopped wood for the white man. I worked in the house. Yes, I liked the work. I get four rand in the month for the work, the white man was good to us, it wasn't these people's fault that we had to go. Now when we hear this, that we must go away from this our place, then the white man he says to me, Old woman I hear you must go away, now you must be satisfied. No, the white man was good to us. From there then, my man got sick and then he gone and died. He was sick for long, here in this hospital in Humansdorp and then I lived here. Yes, we then left the farm with his sickness. It's been a long time we were married. Yes, I had children, I had two daughters, they had gone and died also. It is now only this one, she is my daughter's daughter.

No, this thing that we are here, this thing came so sudden upon us that I cannot tell you what happened, this thing came so sudden upon us, yes. We did not know that we are coming here, we did not know where we are going to. Because we like our place. We plant and we sow and we go on. Here we cannot plant and we cannot sow. No, we cannot. Here there is just a little place in front of your door, put here a thing and put there a thing, and that is all. More I do not know, the morning when we saw we were here. We don't know where we are. Yes, they did tell us but it took so long before they came to us. When they came to us, they stalked us. They stalked us because they did not say to us which day or which day.

When they came to us, they came with guns, with guns and police and with all sorts of things they came to us. And then we see that we are here. Then we had no choice, the guns were behind us. They did not say anything, they just threw our belongings in and they broke off as they went. There is nothing to say or the gun is through your head. If I just talk, the gun is through my head. Soldiers and everything were there. What can we say now we are not used to these things. Then we have to get in, what can we do. They shoot us dead, then we have to get in, what can we do. No, they did not say anything, they just said get in, just said get in so that we are here today. We did not know, we still do not know this place. Yes, we still do not know this place. And when we came here, they dumped our things, dumped our things so that we are still here. What can we do now, we can do nothing. We can do nothing. What can we do now?

Then they bring us to this sad place, this is now no place to live. Here we are at this place we do not know. They take us away from our place. No, how do I know who bring us here. I do not know. Now, when I saw, there were the guns, and get in, get in. It must be the Boers, or the Zoeloes it must be the Zoeloes, yes, well, I don't know, maybe the government. Maybe, I don't know. I just know that here we are away from our place. Here the land is like stone, one can't even try to maybe work this land. Here it is only death. Only death in this place and this place we do not know. Many people have died. We are used to the sea but here there is no sea. Chickens, cattle, sheep, today they are sick, tomorrow they are dead.

Here there is not enough food. No, I don't get a pension. Nights I go to bed without food. One got to go and die then. People get tired of you. You are still coming, then they say there she is coming again. I am hungry now, as I am sitting here.

Everybody has died. My man has gone and died and my daughters. They took my land away. The Lord has also gone, yes, I suppose He has also gone. He also has left old Maria. Yes, that is what I say because there is no food in this place, this place is just like stone, nothing lives here, there is just sand here. The animals too, yes, the animals too, they don't want this place, they rather die. The children die. The animals and the children, they just die. Just die. Today they are sick, tomorrow they are dead. No, I don't understand it, I understand nothing. In this place, a child wakes in the morning and he sits and he sits and he looks and tomorrow he is dead. No, the Lord is gone from this place. He is not here any more. Yes, in this place there is only death. Here I will also die in this strange land. Animals die, everything dies. Children. The children die. My daughters. Ag nee, how will I know, so many of them are dead. I don't know any more, they just died here.

In her own words:

Ek is gebore in die Tsitsikama. Nee, kyk, as ek moet sê hoe oud ek is, moet ek lieg. Ek is gebore, ek is gebore by die boereoorlog. Ons het gebly op Schoemanswyk, my pa het op die lande gewerk. Ons het lekker gebly daar. Ons het ons eie grond gehad, ons voorouers bly daarop. Ons het groente geplant, aartappels, mielies, beet het ons geplant. Kyk, ek kan jou niks vertel van Humansdorp nie, van Humansdorp se dinge nie. Ek kan jou niks vertel nie. Want as ek in Humansdorp is, gaan ek net winkel toe en ek gaan huis-toe en dan is ek klaar. Ek kan niks sê van Humansdorp nie. Toe ek 'n tjind gewees het, weet ek niks nie, want ek is mos 'n tjind, wat weet ek, ek is mos nou klein, ek weet mos niks nie. Nee, ek het nie skoolgegaan nie. Ek het my ma gehelp in die kombuis, skottelgoedjies gewas en die huis uitgevee. Nee, ek was maar net een, ja, die enigste kind. Ja, ek trou toe op Humansdorp, ek draai daar, want ek ken nie plekke nie, ek is die plekke onbekind. Ek was so oud soos die kind hier toe ek getroud is, ja vyftien, sê maar vyftien jaar toe ek getroud is. Ek was lief vir my man, hy was 'n goeie man. Nee, my man is mos jare al afgesterf. Wat het hy gedoen? Nee, hy het in die lande gewerk. Vir 'n witmens, ja. Die boer was goed vir ons. My man werk op die lande en kap hout vir die boer. Ek het in die huis gewerk. Ja, ek het van die werk gehou. Ek kry vier rand in die maand vir die werk, die boer was goed vir ons, dis nie die mense se skuld dat ons weg is nie. Toe ons nou hoor van die dat ons van onse plek moet weggaan, toe sê die boer vir my, he sê vir my ou aia, ek hoor julle moet weggaan, julle moet maar tevrede wees. Nee, die boer was goed vir ons. En toe daarvandaan toe word my man mos nou siek en toe sterf hy nou af. Hy was lank siek, hier in die hospitaal in Humansdorp en ek bly toe ook hier. Ja, ons is toe van die plaas af weg met sy siekte. Dis jare wat ons getroud was. Ja, ek het kinders gehad, ek het twee dogters gehad, hulle het ook afgesterf. Dis nog net hierdie een, sy is my dogter se dogter.

Nee, die ding van dat ons hier is, die ding het so skielik op ons gekom dat ek jou nie kan vertel wat gebeur het nie, die ding het so skielik op ons gekom, ja. Ons het nie geweet dat ons hiernatoe kom nie, ons weet ook nie waar gaan ons heen nie. Want ons bly lekker op onse plek. Ons plant en ons saai en ons gaan aan. Hier kan ons nie saai en plant nie. Glad nie. Dis net so 'n plekkie voor jou deur, sit maar hier 'n dingetjie en daar 'n dingetjie, dis al. Verder weet

ek nie, dis môre toe ons ons kry toe is ons hier. Ons weet g'n waar ons is nie. Hulle het voor-af gesê, ja, maar dit het so lank gedraai voordat hulle gekom het na ons toe. Toe hulle na ons toe kom het hulle ons bekruip. Hulle het ons bekruip want hulle het nie vir ons gesê watter dag of watter dag nie.

Toe hulle nou by ons kom, toe kom hulle met roers, met roers en polis en enige ding kom hulle by ons aan. En toe kry ons ons nou dat ons hier kom. Toe het ons nie keuse nie, die roers is agter ons. Hulle het niks gesê nie, hulle laai net. Hulle laai net en hulle breek af. Daar is niks te praat nie of die roer is deur jou kop. Soldate en als was daar. Wat kan ons sê, ons is mos nie gewoond die goete nie. Toe moet ons maar opklim, wat kan ons doen. Hulle skiet ons dood dan moet ons maar opklim, kan nie anderste nie. Nee, hulle het niks gesê nie, hulle het net gesê klim, net gesê klim dat ons hier is vandag. Ons was onbekind, ons is nou nog onbe-kind van hierdie plek. Ja, ons is nou nog onbekind. En toe ons hier kom, toe laai hulle onse goete af by elke huis, laai hulle onse goete af dat ons nou nog hier is. Wat kan ons nou doen, one kan mos nou niks doen nie. Ons kan mos nou niks doen nie. Wat kan ons nou doen.

Toe bring hulle ons na die treurige plek, dis mos g'n plek vir mense nie. Hier sit ons nou op die plek wat ons nie ken nie. Hulle vat ons weg van onse plek af. Nee, hoe weet ek wie ons hier gebring het. Ek weet nie, toe ek sien toe is dit net roers en klim klim. Dis seker die boere maar of die Zoeloes, dis seker die Zoeloes, ja, ek weet ook nie of die goewerment. Seker ek weet ook nie, ek weet net hier is ons weg van onse plek af. Hier lyk die grond mos net klip, mens hoef nie eers te probeer spit nie. Hier is dit net dood. Net dood in hierdie plek en die plek is vir ons onbekind. Baie mense het al doodgegaan. Ons is gewoond seelug, hier is nie see nie. Hoenders, beeste, skape, vandag is hulle siek, môre is hulle dood.

Hier is nie genoeg kos nie. Nee, ek kry nie 'n pension nie. Aande gaan slaap ek sonder kos. Mens moet dan mos doodgaan. Mense raak moeg vir jou. Jy kom nog aan dan sê hulle daar kom sy al weer. Ek is honger soos ek hier sit.

Almal is dood. My man het afgesterwe en my dogters. Hulle het my land weggevat. Die Here is seker ook noual weg, ja, He is seker ook noual weg, Hy het ook vir ou Maria gelos. Nee, ek sê so, want hier is g'n kos in die plek nie, die plek is soos klip, niks groei hier nie, dis net sand. Die diere ook, ja, die diere ook, hulle wil ook nie die plek hê nie, hulle gaan liewerste dood. Die kinders gaan dood. Die diere en die kinders, hulle gaan sommer net dood. Sommer net dood. Vandag siek, môre dood. Nee, ek verstaan dit nie, ek verstaan niks. In hierdie plek word 'n kind wakker in die oggend en hy sit en hy sit en hy kyk en môre is hy dood. Nee die Here is weg van die plek, Hy is nie meer hier nie. Ja, in die plek is dit net dood. Hier sal ek ook doodgaan in die vreemde plek. Diere gaan dood, alles vrek. Kinders. Die kinders gaan dood. My dogters. Ag nee, hoe moet ek weet, so baie is al dood, ek weet ook nie eers meer nie, hulle is sommer net dood hier.

4.1.6 Sakhiwo Shode

Sakhiwo Shode says he is twenty-eight but he looks at least forty-five. He is a man who has been completely demoralized by the forced removal to Elukhanyweni. He not only misses his land - 'aches for it', he says, but feels that by not resisting on the day they were moved, he had given up any claim to being a man. He admits that he was scared of the guns. He says: 'That day, with the guns pointing at me, I thought better be alive and in a strange place than dead and under the ground. Now I know I was wrong. I wasn't a man then, I wasn't even a woman because some women spat on the guns but I did nothing.' He is restless, sometimes he gets up and walks to the door, hits the door with his fist, turns back, circles the room. His mouth twitches and he looks at the ground during the whole of the conversation. He gives a

highly emotional account of the removals and his life at Elukhanyweni but gives little information of Humansdorp. It almost seems as if he cannot remember another existence. He seems obsessed by the fact that he did not resist, and during the course of the conversation he comes back to it again and again.

He was born and grew up in Humansdorp. There were fourteen children in the family and he says, although there were many of them, they lived well. They had their own land on which they cultivated mealies, beans, peas, potatoes, tomatoes. They had fruit trees and cattle, sheep, goats, pigs. They only had to buy paraffin and clothes, all their other needs were provided by the land. His father was a farmer with no education, and wanted his children to have education and his sons to have a profession. Sakhiwo Shode, however, wanted to be a farmer. He hated school and at first he thought he would simply fail every year so that his father would be forced to take him out of school. However, he failed once and got such a hiding that he couldn't sit or sleep for two days. Thereafter he worked hard in order to get the whole business over as quickly as possible. In the afternoons after school he worked on the land. He says he never really played with the other children, never participated in the games his brothers and sisters played. He liked working on the land best, planting things, seeing them grow.

In 1968, when he was fourteen, they were informed that there was a possibility that they would be removed from Humansdorp. Sakhiwo says that at first they thought it was a joke. But then they started talking, his parents talked to other people, there were meetings, people were worried. Nothing happened though. They waited for a long time, nothing happened and then again they thought it was a joke. But they did not forget about it. They remembered it. His father came to him when he was fifteen and told him that he had to learn a trade. When he protested that he wanted to farm, his father said that perhaps there wasn't going to be land to farm. He (his father) knew when he was a child that he was going to farm, so did his father and perhaps even his father's father. But now, for his children, it was different. His sons had to have training they could fall back on. Sakhiwo says his father was a hard man, one did not argue with him. He left school and became apprentice to a bricklayer. He stayed with this bricklayer for five years, during which time he earned very little money, learned a trade and worked on the lands after work. The hours after work were the hours that mattered. When he was twenty, his father conceded that he knew his trade well enough now to become a farmer. He became a farmer. Those years should have been happy years but they were not. Constant threats of removal made the family feel insecure about the future, no plans could really be made, no final decisions taken about anything. Sakhiwo says that every six months or so officials came round to ask questions. (What kind of questions? Just questions they did not want answers for - they just did it to terrorise us.) However when Sakhiwo and his father asked when they were going to be moved or why,they were told not to ask questions, just to answer them. 'We felt as though we were not people at all', Sakhiwo says. 'We were treated like animals. People know things about their lives, they make decisions and do things. We could do nothing, we knew nothing and we were nothing.'

But after all the years of insecurity and waiting, when the actual day on which they were to be removed arrived, they were totally unprepared for it. For more than a year people talked about little else than the impending removal. Every week there were meetings which the whole family attended. They even knew the precise date on which the lorries would come to their house. But they did not pack or prepare in any way for the move to Elukhanyweni. Sakhiwo says: 'The night before they came ... yes we knew about it, we knew about it. But what could we do? We couldn't pack our things. I can see you don't understand it, but then, I can't tell you how it was.'

The lorries came early in the morning when they were still asleep. They were woken up by the loud voices and the knocking on the door. He and his father went to open the door. They heard women crying and they saw the lorries. There were two soldiers on the stoep and the one said: 'You must go now, there are the lorries, get in now, get in.' They had guns and Sakhiwo and his father turned and got dressed and then they dragged their furniture out. The furniture was thrown on the lorries and even before they got moving quite a few pieces were broken. Some

people complained about it and they were told to take their complaints to court. Most of their furniture got broken on the way to Elukhanyweni, and all their crockery. The cattle were left behind. They were promised compensation but never received any. A few of the men resisted and they were put in jail. Their wives and children were taken to Elukhanyweni but were not given houses on their arrival. They moved in with other people and were only given houses when the men were let out of jail. Sakhiwo says that the wives of the men who were in jail were discriminated against in many ways and suffered more than anyone else during those first months.

Sakhiwo does not live with his parents any more. He says that the threat of removal had kept him a child for a very long time. Now that it has happened he is a man at last, but a man without land and without a wife and without children. And he is a man who has allowed the whites to treat him like an animal. He is not a man. The whites took away his childhood and now they have taken away his manhood. He cannot even marry. He says: 'How can I marry? I cannot support a wife. If a man cannot support a wife she will certainly leave him. How can one live with a woman if you know, you know in your heart of hearts that she does not respect you and she will leave you? It is better then to live alone.'

All Sakhiwo's brothers and sisters are in Elukhanyweni. Sakhiwo says he doesn't have much to do with them because it makes him feel sad to see them. 'They all live in their own little cages, just like animals in a zoo. When I look at them I think, this is my brother, he is an animal in a zoo, so I must be one as well.' His father, who is sixty-six, applied for a pension, but was told that he is too young. Sakhiwo works as a bricklayer at the irrigation scheme and receives R150 a month. He keeps R30 and the rest is given to his parents. Five of his younger brothers and sisters are still at school but he thinks they would have to leave at the end of the year.

When asked whether he has any plans or hopes for the future, Sakhiwo says that he does not have a future, that to him the future means death. 'I cannot talk about the future. To me the future means death. I don't have a future, you can see for yourself. When one says future you mean, you mean you have a job and it means children, you see your children growing up and everything, and then again their children, your grandchildren. So you see, I don't have a future. It's just death. Many people have died already, we must die as well now. People younger than me, my friends, my brother, two sisters, all dead. We cried. In the beginning we cried but now we have stopped crying. It doesn't help. No, this place isn't my life. I would have been better if I were an animal. You can send an animal here and there but you cannot do it to a human being. A man suffers when he is taken away from his land. In this place people die, sometimes three people die on a single day, in the winter there is a funeral every weekend, sometimes even two, three. Then after a while you stop crying and you think that God must take you as well. It will be better, yes.'

4.1.7 Mrs Y

Mrs Y was initially not prepared to talk to us at all. She said that she did not trust whites, nor did she like them. However, she changed her mind when we had already left and called us back. She was not prepared to give her name and she abruptly ended the conversation after only half an hour. This is her story as she told it to us.

I am fifty-two years old. I was born and grew up in Kareedorp. I did not have a father, or if I had one I never knew him. My mother had ten children. She did the washing for Dr Steyn in Kareedorp. I went to the school at Assegaaibos. When I was fifteen, we moved to Nuweplaas - my mother and all the children and the man she was living with then. I can't remember who he was, there were so many men. I don't remember much of my childhood, there were all the men and the children. Oh yes, yes I remember the eclipse of the sun, it was in Kareedorp. It wasn't dark but one could see the difference. I remember that.

Then I got married. I can't remember how old I was. We were married for twenty years, we were happily married for twenty years. When we got married we moved to Doriskraal, my husband worked on the roads. He was a bit older than I was, we married in church. I have nine children, the eldest is thirty-one, the youngest is twelve years. We were very happy in Doriskraal. The only thing that was not so very good was that my husband was ill most of the time. He suffered from asthma. All the years he suffered from it and he worked on the roads, he never gave in. He went to work every morning and some mornings he could hardly breathe. My husband was a good, brave man. A good man. He looked after us, he provided for us all those years in Doriskraal, he never gave in. Here, in this place, he gave in. That is why I don't want to talk to you because if you think about it, it is your people who did it. Here in Elukhanyweni he just gave in and stayed in bed the whole time and then he died - last year, in July, the 19th of July, early in the morning he died.

It happened like this. The white people from the government came to us in Doriskraal. There were meetings in which the white people from the government told us that we had to come here. Oh, they made big promises. They made big promises but we did not believe them. We had heard that this Elukhanyweni is a dry place, we did not want to move. They promised us land and houses but we did not believe them. Since when have the whites given africans land and big houses? It was all a pack of lies and we knew it from the beginning. At another meeting they said that Doriskraal belonged to the coloureds but when you look at it, when you look at history you can see that we africans were here first. We were bitter, yes, very bitter, and the fear was always with us. It took years. Some people gave in because of the fear and the threats but we thought we had not harmed anyone and we thought if you had to be killed simply because you wanted to stay on your own land then you had to be killed.

Some of our leaders stood up in these meetings and told the whites that we did not want to go. But then they came with soldiers and police and dogs and guns and lorries and people were put in jail and beaten up. The police packed our things and demolished our houses and we were pushed into the buses, guns in our backs. The people cried. They weren't even angry any more.

We came here late that afternoon. That was in 1977. Our things were off-loaded and each family was given the number of a house. We looked for a place to sleep because you see we were given houses which consisted of two rooms. We were eleven people and we had to sleep in two rooms. Now, I don't know what you people think of us. You lie to us, you cheat us, you make promises which you never fulfil, you take away our land, you murder our husbands and children, yes murder. I say murder because that is what you do and you treat us the same way you treat your animals. You put eleven people in two rooms, you put grown-up men with their grown-up sisters and then what do you expect? I can understand why my husband died. He died of shame and sorrow.

My husband couldn't find work here, and he was ill. My sons found jobs, but they got so little money. And that is another thing. You people told us that it will be easier for the children here, in Elukhanyweni. You said that the young people wouldn't suffer here because there are many opportunities and jobs for them. Well, they suffer, they suffer. There are no jobs, the children die.

Now I don't want to talk to you any more. Nothing can take me back to my land, nothing can bring my husband back. Leave the past now, it is over.

4.1.8 Kaalbeen Ngeju

Kaalbeen Ngeju is a man who is much concerned with freedom and with personal dignity. He has massive shoulders and a very calm, very beautiful face. He sits in a small, bare room, on an iron bed, and talks in a gentle monotone. His child crawls past him and he picks him up and strokes his hair, then puts him down again. Two of his children had died in Glenmore, this child is the youngest, and the last and perhaps the best loved. They live in fear that he too would die.

Kaalbeen was born near Port Alfred, the youngest son of a very big family. His father had three wives and they and their children, his father's brother and his two wives and their children, and his mother's brother and his wife and their children lived together on Cowley farm. Kaalbeen says it was a big family and they all lived together and that was good and proper. Now it is only he and his wife and their children and this is lonely because where can they now turn to for help. However, his children at least have a childhood while he never had one. At Cowley, when a boy turned twelve, he had to start working for the farmer, he had to become a 'headboy', and then his childhood was over. His day started at five in the morning when the cows had to be fetched and milked. At eight o'clock the cattle had to be taken back to the camps. They then worked on the fields till three in the afternoon and then the cattle were fetched from the camps, milked and taken back to the camps. Then the day was over. On Sundays they did not have to work on the fields, but they still had to fetch the cattle, milk the cows, take them back, fetch them again, milk them, take them back. Kaalbeen says that even as a child he 'lived to work'. There wasn't time left to go to school or to play or to dream or to do nothing. His children, although they don't have enough to eat, at least can go to school. They help on the chicory fields, but they do because they want to do it, no-one forces them to do it and the money they earn they can keep, they can save it or spend it, he does not ask them questions. In a sense his children are free in a way he never was. And in a way he is freer than his parents ever were because they had to watch their sons of twelve do a man's work and although they bitterly resented it they could do nothing about it. They couldn't leave the farm, they had nowhere to go to and the condition on which they were allowed to stay on the farm was that their sons worked for the farmer. Without payment, seven days a week. He is grateful that he doesn't have to watch his children get up at five, doing the kind of labour no child should do.

His father died just before he (Kaalbeen) was due to take a wife. His father's wives and unmarried daughters stayed on, and so did he. He doesn't know why he did not leave like his brothers did, but he is a man who finds it difficult to leave a place. Kaalbeen says the farmer was a cruel man who did not see them as human beings, and in all his years there he never received a kind word from the farmer, nor from his son. Even so, Cowley was his home. He was born there and he got married there and most of his children were born there. He got circumcised when he was about thirty-five and then he got married. His wife was fifteen when they got married, and he gave six cows for lobola, but now he thinks the lobola was too small because she has proved to be a good, faithful wife, the kind of wife all men want but few men have. There are two things he is grateful for. He is grateful for his wife and he is not unwilling to say that no man could have had a better wife and he is grateful that his children never had to work on the farm because even the children who grew up on the farm - he sent them away. His brothers went away to work on different farms and he sent his children to stay with them. And, Kaalbeen smiles, his sons never got circumcised, and never will. No boy and no man should go through that kind of pain, it is not necessary, it is unnecessary.

Life on the farm was hard, a black man 'lived to work'. Every day was the same so that there is not much he can tell about the almost sixty years he spent on the farm. His children were born there and that was good - ten children, two of whom died in Glenmore - and all of them wanted and much loved. The white child whom he had watched growing up, took over from his father and like his father he was a cruel man who 'drove the black men on his farm like they drove his cattle'. So that one day, after forty-five years of labour without dignity, Kaalbeen being struck through the face by the farmer, struck back. He then had to leave Cowley. He

doesn't like to talk about it. He was born and bred there, his relatives lived there. All the people he knew lived on Cowley, he did not know anyone who did not live on Cowley, except his brothers and sisters and their children. Only on Christmas Eve did they leave the farm to go to town for the day. As a child he went, but he never liked Port Alfred, it was too big and noisy. As a young man he did not go any more, but when he got married he went again for his wife's sake. But that day in the year he was uneasy, and every year he told his wife and children not to speak to the people in Port Alfred because one could not trust them. That day he missed his house and the land. He had never in his life been on holiday, he had never been further than Port Alfred. Cowley was his home. But then he had to leave and if we did not mind, he would prefer not to remember the day he left.

He left but he did not know where to go to. And then - they were walking and a man on a bicycle came past them and stopped and got off his bicycle and asked them where they were going to. Kaalbeen warned his wife and children not to talk to the man, but his wife had never been an obedient wife and she told the man that they did not know where to go to. It was the first time in all his life that he had sat down to talk to a man who had not lived with him on Cowley, and this man told him to go to Klipfontein because the people at Klipfontein would give them land. They went because they had nowhere else to go. At Klipfontein the coloured landowners gave them land and the land was free. He built his own house - he and his sons built their house. The coloured landowners did not employ them, they did not want money from them, they did not interfere with them in any way. Kaalbeen says that he still finds it difficult to believe that once upon a time he could live in his own house, on his own land, that he could live his own life. He says that for the first and last time in his life he was free. At Klipfontein he was a free man who could live his life the way a man should live his life.

The years at Klipfontein were good years but all the time he knew that it would never last. Then municipal officials came to knock on the door of his house and on the doors of the other houses and asked questions: where they were from, why did they come here, and, were they planning to stay on at this Klipfontein. They answered yes, they were planning to stay on because Klipfontein was their home now. Then they heard that they would be moved. The coloured people refused to order them to leave the land, so they knew it was the whites, not the coloureds, who took away their land. Kaalbeen says that he was full of anger when he heard about the removals, he was angry and sore and he cried out that once again he was going to be a man without freedom. At Klipfontein he knew freedom and dignity and he couldn't think that he would be without it again. And his wife cried and he wanted to go away from her because he was a man who could not give her the kind of life she deserved. Then the black people of Klipfontein elected two men who went to Port Elizabeth to get legal help. They went to a lawyer, a Mr Fischat, and this Mr Fischat told them that they had to leave their houses and all their belongings on the day the lorries came but that they had to take their clothes. They had to wait in the bushes and not go with the lorries, and when the lorries had left, they had to go back to their houses. This Mr Fischat said that they would be compensated for their furniture and that no-one would be able to force them to leave their land because they would not be there to force. They did not think much of this plan, but on the day the lorries came they hid in the bushes, but when they saw how their furniture was broken and how their houses were destroyed, they came out and went with the lorries and they came to this Glenmore.

He now grieves for the land and the house he had lost. He cannot see any hope for the future and he cannot see any hope for his life. There are no jobs anywhere to be found and the last time he received any pension was at Klipfontein. They now refuse to give him any pension but they do not give any reason for their refusal. Two of his sons work and they support the family. Two of his children died within the first few months at Glenmore. This baby is the last child he will ever have and he fears for him because in this Glenmore children die.

4.1.9 Jamangile Tsotsobe

Jamangile Tsotsobe is a small, neat man. Everything about him is tiny, neat, controlled. He sits with his tiny feet crossed. He answers questions but seldom offers any additional information. His grandchild of ten sits on the floor at his feet. Unathi Tsotsobe is very shy, with thin, stiff limbs, an epileptic. Jamangile Tsotsobe says many trucks came to fetch them at Colchester and brought them here but he cannot remember how many. Unathi Tsotsobe spreads her hands on her knees and says, 'Ten. The trucks and noise, much noise and then the flames and people.' We asked: 'What did the people do?' 'The people scream', she says and runs away. Jamangile Tsotsobe says she is a great sorrow to him because she is clever and can talk many languages, but she is different from other children, and that day when the trucks came, she ran between them and screamed and waved her arms and broke a leg. He tried to hold her but he is an old man and that day there was a devil inside her. There weren't any flames, we must not believe this child because she is so different. There weren't flames but she saw flames. Perhaps the flames were inside her head? He would like to know if such a thing is possible.

Jamangile Tsotsobe was born in 1911 in'Skenkelbos', a little village not far from Alexandria. His father worked on a farm near the village, milked cows and chopped wood. Jamangile Tsotsobe was the eldest son. He had three younger brothers who are here in Glenmore with him and two sisters. Jamangile never went to school. When he was twelve he became a 'headboy' on the farm. This was against his father's wishes but there was not much he or his father could do about it. For many months his father was angry and his parents talked about moving away. His father went to the farmer more than once and asked him if he couldn't do his son's work, work double-time because he did not want his son to work, he wanted him to play. But the farmer said that he could leave the farm if he wanted to be cheeky. Jamangile says life was bad. This man, this farmer was cruel, he did not see them as human beings. The children who worked on his farm did not get paid, they did not get time off for lunch and breakfast. Once his father went to the farmer and said to him that his son had to eat and that he would do his work while he was having lunch. But the farmer said that he could go if he was not satisfied with the arrangement. But they had nowhere to go to. So in the end they did not say anything more but his father always was full of anger against the white man.

Jamangile stayed on at the farm and eventually became a tractor driver. He got married when he was thirty-two, and, he says, then for him too there were no more thoughts of leaving the farm. The farmer's name was Dirk and he was a cruel man. He worked for Dirk for nineteen years, and till his sixteenth birthday Dirk did not pay him at all. Then, when he became sixteen, Dirk paid him ten shillings a month. After working ten years for ten shillings, he got a raise of another ten shillings. He now earned a pound a month. His wife worked in the dairy and got ten shillings a month. Dirk gave them a quarter bag of mealies a month but they had to supplement their diet by buying mealies from the farm. Then, when he was thirty-seven and still earning only a pound a month and had three children, he went to Dirk and asked him for a raise. Dirk like his father before him said he was cheeky and dismissed him.

He then found employment with a Mr Beale, at a farm called Hughenden. Mr Beale initially paid him four pound a month but every year he got a raise of one pound. His wife earned three pounds a month, so that he was happy and satisfied on this farm. His children were not forced to work on the fields at this farm but could go to school. At this farm he was allowed his own goats and cattle, and he had a big mud house, a cupboard and a table and chair for him and a chair for his wife. But then the owner died and his son took over the farm. This son did not like goats and they had to sell all their goats. He did not want the children to go to school, they had to work on the fields. So they had to leave. They left for Colchester. In Colchester they lived in the township with coloured people, there was no-one above them, they did not always have to be at their best, and thus they felt happy. They lived there for thirty years. Jamangile worked as a gardener. Life was fairly good, they had enough to eat, they were friends with the coloured people. When they arrived at Colchester they had six children, by the time they left they had twelve.

Then they were informed by the police and BAAB that they were going to be moved to a place called Glenmore. They were told that there was enough work at this place for everyone, many industries and good houses they could have for free. But they did not know this place, so they did not want to go there. They were happy enough where they were and they did not trust the police and they knew that the BAAB men would give no black man a decent house for free. But, while they were still discussing these things, they were given seven days' notice and suddenly they simply had to leave. It was so sudden, he still cannot believe it or understand it. Sometimes he wakes up at night and he thinks about it and he cannot understand it. He thinks about his life and he cannot understand how it is possible that a man is forced to leave his house and his work and his friends, that he is put in a truck, he and his wife and his children and his furniture and his pigs, and that his pigs die and his furniture gets broken. He can only understand it if he says to himself that he is not a man. But then what is he.

That day when they were taken to Glenmore the trucks came very early, when they were still asleep. They had to collect their pigs. Some people left all their belongings behind because they were so full of grief that they could not pack their belongings. The officials were loud, angry men who shouted at them to get out. There were buses for the women and children. There was so much confusion - the houses were demolished before they could get all their belongings out. The men had to ride on the back of the trucks. The furniture was broken. They left the place unhappy and came to this Glenmore. The houses in this Glenmore were bare, with plank walls and they had to secure the walls with mud.

Jamangile says that now there is no hope. When he was young, he wanted to give his children and grandchildren a different kind of life. Now he sees that there is no hope for his children and grandchildren. There is no hope for him and his wife and he doesn't understand why he had to live at all. He is now seventy-one and he cannot say: This is my life and I have given my sons an education and they are now wealthy men and my daughters are married to good men and my grandchildren are well looked after. He can say nothing.

4.1.10 Vukile Sephton Beyi

Vukile Sephton Beyi is twenty-four years old. He was born at Seven Fountains where his father worked as a labourer on the farm. He could not continue with his education after he had made Standard 5 because the high school was too far away and his parents had very little money. He thus became a labourer on the chicory fields, which he did not like, but it was better than having no job at all. He disliked the farmer but he really did not have any option because he and his parents lived on the farmer's property and he thus had to obey him. He very much would have liked to continue with school in order to get a better job, and at one time he had dreams of becoming a doctor because he wanted to help people and relieve them from pain.

He left the farm with his whole family in October 1981. His father had been very ill and the young farmer considered him redundant so he had to move. He moved with his family. He felt very helpless, but 'if a tree is uprooted then the branches must leave as well'. He hated the farmer for the treatment of his father but he had to accept it.

The whole family came to Grahamstown and Vukile consulted the ECAB officials about moving the furniture from the farm to Glenmore. An official organised a removal truck from Beaumont and Rice and that at least did not cost them anything.

Vukile feels that the farmer was milking his father dry and he and his family were unhappy on the farm. Even so he prefers Seven Fountains to Glenmore. At least they were all employed on the farms but in Glenmore no-one is employed. Vukile tried in vain to find work in Glenmore

and Grahamstown, and now he is simply waiting for the recruiting officers to come to Glenmore and offer them some work.

He is not certain who is specifically responsible for their present situation, but he sees ECAB as part of the government, and thus in part responsible.

He feels that the future offers very little hope - it seems that he has been in Glenmore for ever and the situation is hopeless. He knows he can't stay in Glenmore and starve but he does not know what to do. He thinks that he can perhaps find a job in Port Elizabeth but he is worried about not being able to take his wife and child with him because the government might not give them passes, and he feels that he cannot leave them in Glenmore.

Vukile thinks that even in Peddie conditions will be the same. Even so they will not resist if they are to be moved to Peddie because resistance won't change anything. They are people who cannot change their condition or control it.