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School of Architecture & Planning, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Ph.D. 2023

Urban Scripting

Audio-visual Forms of Storytelling in Urban Design and Planning: The Case of Two Activity Streets in Johannesburg

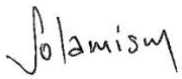
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Supervisor Prof. Paul Jenkins

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted to the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other University.



Solam Mkhabela

17 May 2023

Abstract

South African cities reflect spaces based on Euro-American theories and norms, mapping methods, and design imperatives. At a local level, this imposition's tool of static diagrams, plans, sections, elevation, and aerials; broader spatial plans with localized frameworks; regulatory plans controlling land use results in spaces hindering socio-economic development, especially for the marginalized, which comprises a predominantly black African and poor cohort. Consequently, current practice must significantly improve a city's engagement with everyday users. Based on the indicated need, this thesis argues that the first step to effective urban design is accurately ascertaining spatial needs. In responding to current city-making practices that create ineffective spatial outputs, the study introduces *Urban Scripting* as a novel transdisciplinary and practice-based approach for assessing inhabitable urban locations. Its methodology in city-making processes strategically inserts social narrative to enhance understanding of daily user experiences.

In creating accessible ways of exposing urban layer details, the procedures combine Nguni oral tradition (local expertise) with audio-visual (disciplinary knowledge) as a hybrid narrative technique that simultaneously analyzes and produces. Here narrative suggests using story to amplify an evolving discourse unit that writes and communicates spatial imagination. More so, storytelling, framed in and through interaction, finds people and information often missed by conventional mapping and assessment tools, specifically the voices in the 'twilight zone,' the space between legal and illegal on-the-ground operations. Transdisciplinary methods structure more critical and empirically on-ground evidence that inductively leads to new ways of thinking and analyzing. Practice-based casework turns space into place, builds an anthology of empirical knowledge to inform city-making methodologies, and shapes appropriate policies supporting subaltern communities. Programmatically and polemically, it explores how a cinematic frame is an inclusive tool within a specific set of urban processes. Ultimately, its enframing application calibrates an empathetic narrative, potentially transforming lives better for an African city in motion. This approach is valuable for practitioners as a firm departure from convention and thrusts Black African knowledge to the forefront, thus acting as a decolonization tool.

Tested at two different sites in Johannesburg, Alexandra (formerly a Black dormitory 'township') and Orange Grove (once a whites-only area), the approach effectively engaged with spatial users, specifically, the microentrepreneurs whose urban insurgency practiced on the side of the street serves the broader public yet remains unnoticed by spatial practice. *Urban Scripting*'s methodology better understood the urban spatial challenges and needs at the Johannesburg study sites. For spatial practice site assessment, theory building, and

practical application, it is an approach that is likely to prove equally effective in communicating bottom-up needs to help imagine and design a fair and democratic city in hundreds of other similar environments in South Africa and indeed, across Africa, where parallel realities exist.

Dedication

Dedicated to the lives of Gerald Chungu, David Goldblatt, Michael Sorkin, George Zarkalis, Klaus-Dieter Dörmann, and Thando Mkhabela.

Mild men, intensely present and steadfastly insistent on remaining invisible.

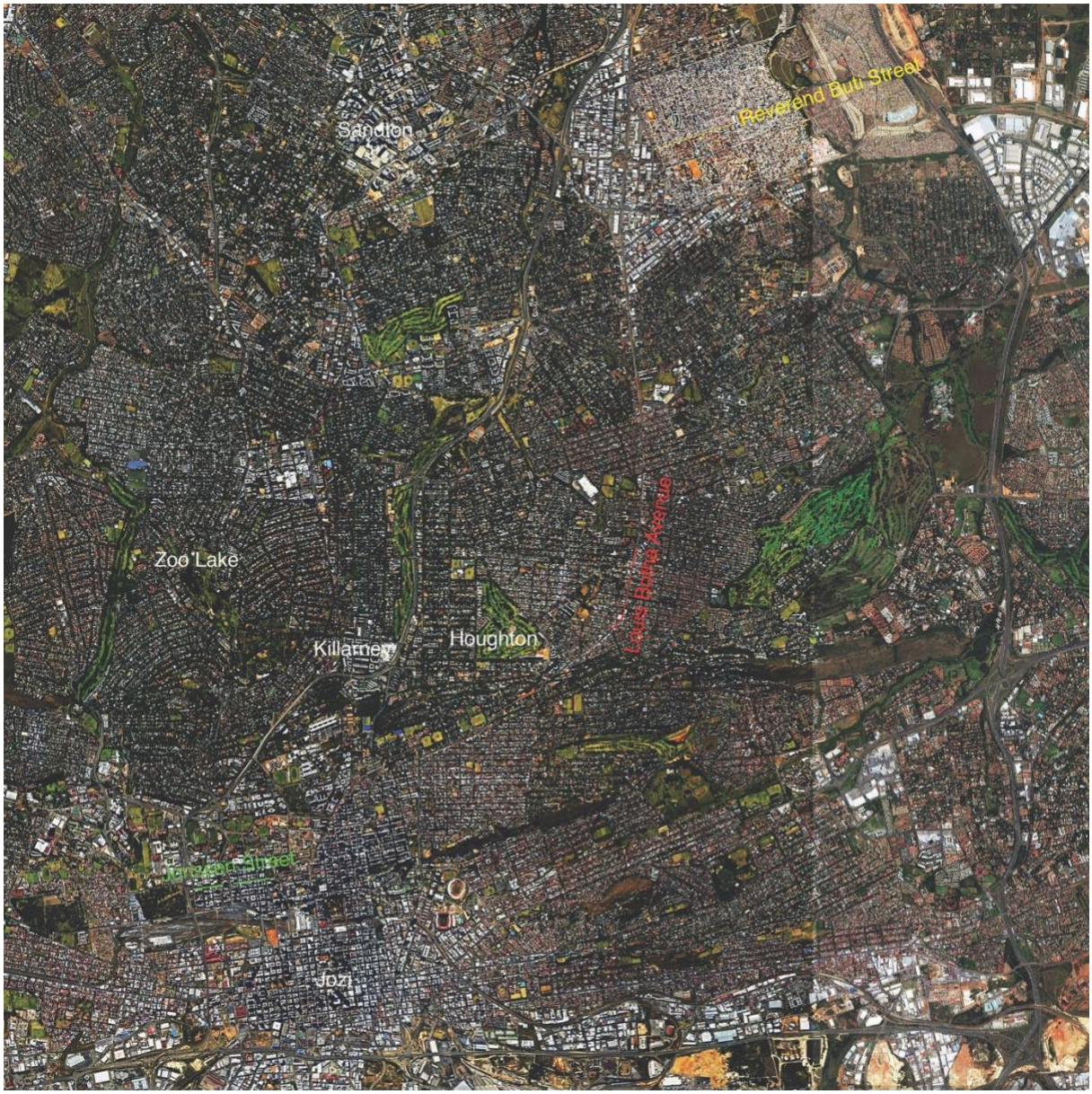
Acknowledgments

Urban Scripting has been the product of many voices, eyes, hands, hearts, and histories. It's been a long journey that we, the visible and invisible, have been part of. It is about places with cruel, violent, and murderous past and present. It's also the story of Nguni people whose narratives tend to be told by others. In the retelling, we hope to change this. In no particular order, we thank the following people and everyone in the credits for playing their part: Paul Jenkins for encouraging the beginning and being there till the end. Jessica Hallenbeck for opening my academic world to storytelling. Stephen Kirker for working with me on editing chapters into a telling tale. Band A Part, Hiten Bawa, Shorai Kaseke, Aviwe Mandyanda, Leigh Maurtin, Nthabiseng Moela, Khazimuliswa Ndlovu, and Reg for calibrating content, Fred Swart for more than a visual identity, and Jennifer van den Bussche for workshop support and good energy. To my superheroes, Dean "the Falcon" Falconer and Felix "the Bandit" Beresford, for rendering urban space into life for those who cannot see it. Siphokazi Makhaye's continued guidance and unrelenting ability to support with kindness, Batseba Qwabe, Bongi Mphuti, Pitso Marema, Mabore Seshebe, Lerato Nkosi and Vasentha Naidu for simply being there when we needed them most. My appreciation goes to Mphethi Morojele, Martin Mzumara, and Nnamdi Elleh for giving me the resources and time to complete the work. Finally, this project would not have come to fruition without the welcome it was warmly granted by Alexandra and Orange Grove micro-entrepreneurs and residents. A special thanks to Thando Hopa, Bra Niky, Bra Sam, Sipho, Leigh, Tumelo, Mangaliso, S'phiwe, Konke, Zela, Langa, Vuka, Kuhle, Sibusiso, Vuyo, Lesedi, Mandla, Fungai, Mduduzi, Rachel, Vimal, Joyce, Paddy, Vivien, Nomvula, Tasneem, MD, Iris, Tumi, Elsa, Jabu, Fish, Sophie, Kind, Summer, Maya, Sechaba, and Futhi. I also would like to thank the examiners for their valuable contributions.

Thank you to my family, Audrey, Ronnie, Ngo, Knox, Lala, GQ, theDZL, Sula, Thalia, and Ilm, for being there. Thando for all memories without which getting through would have been impossible or worthwhile. Most importantly, Malwande and KiKi for believing in superpowers and keeping on. Thank you.

A grant from the Nation Research Foundation has supported this research.

Study Sites Location Map



Johannesburg metropolitan area with the two study sites in relation to the inner city (reproduced from Google Earth). Alexandra lies 12 kilometers from the city center and is a neighbor to Sandton, one of Africa's wealthiest business precincts. Orange Grove forms a midpoint between Alexandra and Johannesburg's city center.

Table of Contents

DECLARATION ..... **II**

ABSTRACT ..... **III**

DEDICATION ..... **V**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ..... **VI**

1 LOCATING A NGUNI VOICE **1**

1.1 SITUATING: THE SCOPE 1

1.1.1 What is the Problem Statement? *1*

1.1.2 Addressing the Problem Statement *3*

1.1.3 Activity Street: A Democratic Palimpsest *4*

1.2 DEVELOPING: A STUDY 5

1.2.1 Core + Sub-Questions *5*

1.2.2 Conceptual Framework *6*

1.2.3 Assemblage: Narrative Montage *7*

1.3 DESIGNING: THE PROJECT 10

1.3.1 Background, Midground, Foreground *10*

1.3.2 Sensing the City *11*

1.3.3 Rewriting Johannesburg *12*

1.4 RECOGNIZING: RELATIONAL CONCEPTS 13

1.4.1 Argument *13*

1.4.2 Aim + Objective *14*

1.4.3 How to read this Research *16*

1.4.4 Purpose *17*

1.5 EDITING: ABSTRACT THEMES 19

1.5.1 Frames *19*

1.5.2 Producing *20*

1.5.3 The Twilight Zone *22*

1.6 PRESENTING: FIELD CONTRIBUTION 23

1.6.1 Urban Scripting *23*

1.6.2 Limitations *24*

1.6.3 Overview *25*

2 DEVELOPING: FRAMING **28**

2.1 URBAN DESIGN: THE PRIMACY OF STREETS 28

2.1.1 Local *28*

2.1.2 Context *29*

2.1.3 Everyday *31*

2.2 CONTEXTUALIZING THE CITY 34

2.2.1 Colonialism *34*
2.2.2 Capitalism *37*
2.2.3 Apartheid *39*
2.3 READING THE STREET 41
2.3.1 Top-Down + Bottom-Up *41*
2.3.2 Domination *43*
2.4 LOCATING THE CASE STUDY AREAS 45
2.4.1 Opposites in a Perpetual Dance *45*
2.4.2 Building Up a City Image *47*
2.4.3 Inside *49*
2.4.4 Alexandra: Reverend Sam Buti Street *51*
2.4.5 Orange Grove: Louis Botha Avenue *53*
2.5 GATHERING THE EVIDENCE 57
2.5.1 Observing *57*
2.5.2 Reading *59*
2.5.3 Framing *62*
3 DESIGNING: SHIFTING 65
3.1 STORYTELLING: PUSHING BACK AGAINST EURO-AMERICAN PLANNING 65
3.1.1 Kwesukesukela, Once Upon a Time *65*
3.1.2 Other Knowledge Cultures *67*
3.1.3 Frame of Reference *69*
3.2 LISTENING: A FORM OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING 73
3.2.1 Listening to the Everyday *73*
3.2.2 A Sensory Approach *75*
3.2.3 A Transformative Paradigm *76*
3.3 READING: MERGING EUROCENTRIC PLANNING CULTURE AND NGUNI STORYTELLING TRADITIONS 80
3.3.1 Reading the Everyday *80*
3.3.2 Locating Voices *82*
3.3.3 New Languages *85*
3.3.4 Bantfu neTindzawo: People and Places *87*
3.3.5 A Making of *90*
3.4 SHIFTS IN THE NARRATIVE TO A LOCAL CONTEXT 92
3.4.1 Collaborating *92*
3.4.2 Story as Voice *94*
3.4.3 Story as Image *96*
3.4.4 Contextual Folder *99*
3.5 DESIGNING THE SETTING 101
3.5.1 Listening *101*
3.5.2 Testing *101*
3.5.3 Designing Methods and Positions through Walking as Practice *102*

3.5.4 Shifting *105*

4 RECOGNIZING: POSITIONING **108**

4.1 BUILDING A LIBRARY 108

4.1.1 Reading Realities *108*

4.1.2 Narrative Documentary *110*

4.1.3 Storytelling Methodologies *112*

4.2 FRAMING: TIME 114

4.2.1 Stories *114*

4.2.2 Expressions *119*

4.2.3 Narrations *122*

4.3 SHIFTING: CONTEXT 124

4.3.1 Listening to People *124*

4.3.2 Reading Places through Narrative *126*

4.3.3 Writing Other Knowledge Cultures *128*

4.4 POSITIONING: ACTIVITIES 131

4.4.1 Time: Foregrounding Stories *131*

4.4.2 Context: Constructing Hybrid Narratives *132*

4.4.3 Activities: Reaching Understanding *133*

4.5 COUNTERING: RETELLING EGOLI TOOLKIT 135

4.5.1 Counter-Story *135*

4.5.2 Counter-Narrative *137*

4.5.3 Urban Scripting *138*

5 EDITING: CALIBRATING **141**

5.1 SITUATING 141

5.1.1 Africa *141*

5.1.2 South Africa *143*

5.1.3 Johannesburg *145*

5.2 FRAMING *WHAT IF*…? 150

5.2.1 Continent *150*

5.2.2 Country *155*

5.2.3 City *160*

5.3 SHIFTING 165

5.3.1 Country *165*

5.3.2 City *171*

5.3.3 Metro *174*

5.4 POSITIONING 174

5.4.1 City *174*

5.4.2 Metro *176*

5.4.3 Street *178*

5.5 EDITING POINTS OF VIEW 182
5.5.1 Two Screenings [Multiple Audiences] *182*
5.5.2 Alexandra *184*
5.5.3 Newtown *187*
5.5.4 Rewinding to Fast-forward *189*

6 RE-PRESENTING: NGUNI VOICES TO MAKE STREETS ACTIVE FOR ALL 193

6.1 [RE] SITUATING VIEWS 193
6.2 [RE] DEVELOPING: FRAMING A STUDY PARADIGM 194
6.2.1 Whose Frame: Revisiting the Problem Statement *194*
6.2.2 [Re] Assessing the Core Question *196*
6.2.3 [Re] Structuring the Conceptual Framework *201*
6.3 [RE] DESIGNING: SHIFTING URBAN SCRIPTING 203
6.3.1 From Background to Midground to Foreground *203*
6.3.2 Sensing the City from the Ground Up *204*
6.3.3 Rewriting Johannesburg *204*
6.4 [RE] RECOGNIZING: POSITIONING THE SCRIPT 205
6.4.1 Interrogating the Purpose *205*
6.4.2 Situating the Purpose through Telling *205*
6.5 [RE] EDITING: CALIBRATING THROUGH PRODUCTION 206
6.5.1 The Drawn Frame: Establishing the Why *206*
6.5.2 The Still Frame: Setting What is *211*
6.5.3 The Movement Frame: Asking What if? *213*
6.6 [RE] PRESENTING KNOWLEDGE IN THEORY, ACADEMIA, AND PRACTICE 215
6.6.1 From Foreground to Background *215*
6.6.2 The Twilight Zone of Knowledges *216*
6.6.3 Whose Knowledge Anyway? *217*
6.6.4 Framing New Knowledge *219*
6.7 [RE] PRESENTING URBAN SCRIPTING: MISE EN SCÈNE 219

CREDITS 221

BIBLIOGRAPHY 227

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Narrative Structure 9
Figure 1.2 Field Casework Process 27
Figure 2.1 Scale Matrix 31
Figure 2.2 Fragmented City 36
Figure 2.3 Twilight Sidewalk Bay 37
Figure 2.4 Urban Scripting Scales 46
Figure 2.5 Alexandra's Small Grain Texture of Built and Unbuilt Urban Form 52
Figure 2.6 Orange Grove's Texture 55
Figure 2.7 Sidewalk Bay 57
Figure 2.8 Johannesburg's morphology [1900—2019] 61
Figure 2.9 Framing Time (timeframing) 64
Figure 3.1 Locating Fungai 66
Figure 3.2 Inside Storytellers 71
Figure 3.3 Shifting Characters (see Credits) 84
Figure 3.4 Framing Fungai 89
Figure 4.1 Animation Storyboard 116
Figure 4.2 Panelization & Timeframing 118
Figure 4.3 Alexandra Taxi Signal 120
Figure 4.4 Positioning Activity 137
Figure 5.1 Street Lines: Main Axis 148
Figure 5.2 Wide, Long, Full, Close-up 148
Figure 5.3 3-Thirds Rule and 2.4:1 Aspect Ratio 152
Figure 5.4 Ground Team Notebook 155
Figure 5.5 Viewing Inventory 155
Figure 5.6 Large-Format-Map at Office and Home 156
Figure 5.7 Page Panel Layout and Panelization 159
Figure 5.8 Recording Animation Voice-Over 161
Figure 5.9 Johannesburg Metropolitan: Study Sites 165
Figure 5.10 Framing Joyce 166
Figure 5.11 Framing Rachel 168
Figure 5.12 Paddy's Morning Routine 170
Figure 5.13 Church Impression 171
Figure 5.14 Aerials and Collages 173
Figure 6.1 Bantfu Netindzawo 195
Figure 6.2 Framing Johannesburg's Migrant Workers 208
Figure 6.3 Johannesburg Composite 210
Figure 6.4 Sidewalk Bay 211
Figure 6.5 Aerial view of Reverend Sam Buti Street (Still from I'm a Streetwalker) 213
Figure 6.6 Bra Niky and the Tree 214

1 Locating a Nguni Voice

> "The widespread slogan in factual and 'alternative' realms may claim 'the larger the grain, the better the politics,' but what exclusively circulates in mass media culture is undoubtedly the money image. Money as money and money as capital [is] often spoken of as one, not two. The financial constraints are, however, not only a problem of money but also one of control and standardization of images and sounds. Which truth? Whose truth? How true?"
>
> *When the Moon Waxes Red*, (Trinh T. Minh-Ha 1991:32)

1.1 Situating: The Scope

1.1.1 What is the Problem Statement?

This research project took form from a growing awareness that many spaces created by spatial practice conventions needed to be better suited for their users and were appropriated for uses without a design template. Furthermore, it was clear that there needed to be more consistency between the norms and best practice principles defined by academia and what was best for the user. Its genesis is based on a public response to previous fieldwork presenting an urban design framework and shaped on conventional urban practice through an urban design vision.[1] A design team presented this vision that the scriptor[2] (author) was part of as agents representing the city to Alexandra (Alex) residents, a high-density residential suburb of Johannesburg.

The author realized that the ideal image between practice and user of space differs. Therefore, academia and practice could learn and develop standards more attuned to the user by capturing the users' image of space. In making an image that reflects the city as it is, this study establishes how historical gaps between different knowledge sets related to spatial practice. It argues that these knowledge gaps hamper contemporary urban operations and

[1] In the Urban Design Guidance, Cowan outlines the steps needed for 'Vision,' stating, "This section comes at the start of the document as a concise statement of its main idea, with illustrations where appropriate. Creating the vision, though, will not be the first step in preparing the guidance. Appraising the site and context, for one, will precede it" (Cowan, 2002:28)

[2] A slight modification of Barthes's term, "scriptor" (Barthes, 1977:145).

poorly reflect the city's image. To respond to this weakness, it investigates ways of making site assessment practices, procedures, and processes more relevant.

Johannesburg is the metropolis it is today entirely due to money – its rich bounty of gold-bearing rock formations and the hunger for wealth, power, and survival created it. Alexandra is now located in a prime residential area. It has evolved, with barely any formal intervention, from being a pre-liberation worker dormitory to a chaotic and bustling hub in its own right. From the outset, many residents were skeptical about the urban design team's presence and their survey methods. Some were confused by the term UDF, thinking it was a political party,[3] others were openly hostile, assuming the team represented the city's attempts to impose further limiting regulation and development in the area. Perhaps the group members were perceived as state agents who sought to *instill control and standardization* of a reality that was not theirs, as the apartheid authorities once did. The team was there to enable a conventional public participation process to introduce the urban design framework to multiple community stakeholders. Part of the task was establishing dates and venues for Ward Based workshops with Ward Councilors to get the design's buy-in from the community.

This skepticism may have been exacerbated by most of the team being whites who are seldom seen, let alone live in Alex. Also, when engaging those willing to participate, conventional methods were hampered by language and literacy barriers and by some willing participants' apparent desire to 'say the right thing.' This was specifically in response to a local spatial framework that indicated priorities for development and policies and plans to shape the detail of neighborhood physical development using various tools and statutes, some of which included apartheid-era regulatory plans controlling land use. As a result, the fieldwork engagement had little value. Additionally, it was profoundly flawed by its conventional communication practice that relied on form-making methods through static plans, sections, elevations, and aerial drawings, which most community members had difficulty accessing. The simple conclusion from this experience led to this problem statement:

> *Conventional urban practice methods of site assessment and participatory data gathering are ineffective and of little use in imagining and designing a fair and democratic city in environments like Alexandra. There are hundreds of these in South*

[3] The United Democratic Front (UDF) was a South African anti-apartheid body that existed from 1983 to 1991 and comprised of numerous public organizations including trade unions, students' unions, women's and parachurch organizations (SAHO, 2023).

Africa and many similar across the African continent whose occupants deserve better. Unfortunately, this subaltern (Black African) is restricted by impositions – especially on activity streets – that are exclusionary, unidimensional, and based on colonial rationale and thinking. Hence, the discipline should create methods that appropriately engage those currently underserved to provide them with better spaces.

Based on the failed communication between the design team's vision and the community's inability to comprehend the objective informs the inquiry's core aim. The aim also extends Trinh T. Minh-Ha's questions (see epigraph) with a vision of turning space into place – to locate appropriate methods of making different images and sounds that imagine and design a 'true,' fair, democratic city.

1.1.2 Addressing the Problem Statement

To answer the problem statement, this thesis introduces a site assessment method that fuses elements of modern artistic expression and reclaimed Nguni knowledge into a hybrid tool for urban professionals and academics. Although pitched at spatial practice, other disciplines will also find value in much of this transdisciplinary approach since it provides access to a largely underserved and absent knowledge base. At his inaugural lecture, Professor Mfaniseni Sihlongonyane identified some possible reasons for the author and the team's experience: although the South Africa of today is much changed in almost every aspect of its human existence and needs, its urban practice approach remains too firmly burdened by a European canon (Sihlongonyane, 2022). There has been little integration of Nguni thinking or knowledge into urban practice because it remains stigmatized, formally excluded, untaught, and challenging to access. After all, institutional libraries are still full of predominantly European word texts. The roots of this divergence lie in "reconstruction thinking" (Bremner, 2010:10) and thinking based on the Congrès Internationale d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) design ideas. (1933), it shaped a South African city misaligned with the microentrepreneurs operating along activity streets.

Therefore, textual knowledge "is far privileged over oral, sign, image, tacit, etc. . . . (while African) . . . concepts are embedded in the knowledge of the African language" (Sihlongonyane, 2022). In *Narrating Urban Landscapes,* Havik et al. write, "The context in which (landscape) architects and urban designers work today poses new challenges for which conventional planning instruments seem to be unfit" (Havik, 2017:1). These arguments indicate that there is a clash between spatial practice design and end-user needs, which is a result of a gap in the knowledge that defines them These arguments echo the study's

problem statement and call for academia and practice to find appropriate engagement methods to understand and make urban life better.

1.1.3 Activity Street: A Democratic Palimpsest

To align conflicting realities pointed out in *What is the Problem Statement*, engagement strategies must look to a city's shared foundation for answers. Advancing this thread, Peter Carl argues that this common ground is "an ethical concept that invokes the one thing a city ought to grant – a depth that accommodates with dignity the diversity of its peoples and their histories" (Carl, 2011:38). Hence, Johannesburg's activity streets provide historiographical perceptions of micro-architectures, space, and use. On their online page, Law Insider defines an *activity street* as a "major public street that incorporates an existing or planned public transport route, and adjacent land up to one block wide on both sides, used or intended for mixed-use development" (Law Insider, 2022). Activity streets [re]present this common ground which is, for many, a fundamental element of access to opportunity (Mehta, 2014). These streets represent common ground because many urban dwellers use them for travel, sourcing services, and purchasing essential and recreational supplies. This study addresses the problem statement using two Johannesburg activity streets – one in Alexandra and one in Orange Grove – that reveal the everyday life needed to create the city's new and inclusive urban landscape, one fit for the subaltern/ Black African's economic practices.

The everyday is revealed through building up an image. This image imagines the city differently from its present state. Displayed in making the image is the project's expression and agency and the argument, aim, objective, and purpose as themes encompassing inquiry's visual discourse. Its findings, presented in two documentary texts that complement each other, should be read together. One is primarily a word format that reviews the historical and theoretical arguments that define the study and outline the methodology of its response (exegesis). The other is an image composite demonstrating the application of the creative practice methodology (audio-visual storywork). The case study's production elements and outputs include site analysis and re-imagination. Both documentary outputs retell the history of Johannesburg – then and now: its genesis, evolution, and how it is today – through the lived experience of Black Africans. Examples of this are in the perspective of a

tree on a sidewalk or a fortuitous sidewalk extension – they examine causality[4] and reveal African/Nguni ingenuity.

1.2 Developing: A Study

1.2.1 Core + Sub-Questions

Against this backdrop, and with the concerns raised in the film *I'm a Streetwalker* (2017),[5] the study looks to street voices, especially those surviving at the city's interstices, to design a just city and shape a dialogue that responds to the research question:

- How can local knowledge about activity streets be captured and communicated to enhance social, economic, and cultural inclusion in Johannesburg's urban planning and design processes?

The following sub-questions, with an emphasis on the preliminary site appraisal phase, then aid in creating a new understanding:

1) What is the role of the activity street in South Africa, and how has it transitioned from the colonial era, through apartheid, to the present day? (Role, meaning, and representation: What happens on today's activity streets, and why).
2) What processes, practices, and knowledge should contribute to the evolution of the activity street as an urban place in South Africa? (Unpacking the planning process as is).
3) What mistakes have arisen from omitting *Othered* knowledge in the design and representation of streets? (What do official bodies and institutions not understand, and what are the lessons?).
4) How can *Othered* forms of knowledge be engaged and developed into a 'shared' language for diverse stakeholders through audio-visual documentation to better

[4] The Contextual Voices Folder (CVF) (see attached 001_URBAN SCRIPTING_CONTEXTUAL FOLDER) contains all the project's production outputs. It is recommended that these outputs be read and viewed before and in conjunction with the text. This folder will be made publicly accessible after examination.

[5] The film's voicer concludes with: *Walking interacts with the desires and the wills of those who cross my path. People who share and fill the space between buildings with their presence and performance. These are single moments. They can occur every morning at the same time. Or surprising déjà vu. Instilling a sense of wonder. I have reinvented myself on the sidewalk, and I am still walking. But, as an urbanist in South Africa, I am concerned.*

understand their value systems, desires, and needs? (How to close the knowledge gaps?).

In this study, the *Others* are people whose culture, intelligence, knowledge, gender, and right to exist have been historically considered of lesser importance and deviant in all ways by the politics of a colonial, racist, misogynistic, homophobic, right-wing, straight-male gaze and, therefore, never assimilated into mainstream life. However, despite a newly (relatively) liberated South Africa, according to the 2011 City of Johannesburg Local Municipality census, this group, encompassing the vulnerable and poor, continues to comprise most of the city's inhabitants.[6]

The above questions situate a dialogue between three linked but poorly connected groups in Johannesburg. The first *protagonists* in the conversation are primarily the voices of the many actors who make their livelihood through microenterprises. Second, the city agents deployed to design the spaces that harbor the microentrepreneurs' means of support. Third is the state which shapes policies and represents the city. This three-way discourse between actors (microentrepreneurs), agents, and State organizes hybrid forms (Harrison, 2006; Pieterse, 2013; 2021) to *challenge* the status quo by blurring top-down/bottom-up, local/settler, professional practice/end-user binaries manifested as knowledge gaps expressed by ineffective urban planning and design realities. Therefore, observing everyday practices addresses the sub-questions that respond to the study's main research question.

1.2.2 Conceptual Framework

In South Africa, the term 'informal' is a contentious composite that means different things to different people. To a substantial extent, 'informality' in Johannesburg is socially accepted despite nuances of negativity. It can be considered a conflict between an idealized vision of Euro-western norms reflecting a perceived educated modernity versus an uneducated, unfashionable Nguni tradition (see **2.1.3 Everyday).** Street entrepreneurs are the actors who epitomize the essential survival nature of economic activities in the colonial city of Johannesburg. Commonly, problematically, and erroneously[7] referred to as *informal* traders, these actors straddle *a yet undefined area* since they are unregulated by the state and work

[6] https://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/johannesburg-population; https://www.joburg.org.za/about_/Pages/About%20the%20City/About%20Joburg/Population-and-People.aspx

[7] For a richer discussion, see Jenkins's argument that "there is no true binary, but perhaps more of a sliding scale of levels of formality" in *Urbanization, Urbanism, and Urbanity in an African City* (2013:227—231).

in spaces not designed for trading. Their work invents ways of operating and surviving in "gray spaces . . . [which are] . . . partially outside the gaze of state authorities and city plans" (Yiftachel, 2011:153). In this study, these spaces, often overlooked by conventional city planning and urban design processes, are dubbed 'the twilight zone' and form the surface of its investigation's focal point.

Like Roy (2009), this study defines 'informality' as a *twilight sector* that covers a spectrum of production modes, social conditions, and constantly adapting entrepreneurship. Furthermore, this 'informality' engages economic opportunities in constant flux, continually pivoting, and not necessarily regulated, documented, or determined by the state. Accordingly, this 'twilight zone' aligns with Yiftachel's "gray space" concept:

> "The identification of 'gray spacing' as a ceaseless process of 'producing' social relations by-passes the false modernist dichotomy between 'legal' and 'criminal,' 'oppressed' and 'subordinated,' 'fixed' and 'temporary.' As such, it can provide a more accurate and critical lens … to analyze the making of urban space in today's globalizing environment, marked by growing mobility, ethnic mixing, and political uncertainty" (Yiftachel, 2011:153).

For this study, this is a sector that can be seen "as a mode of production of space defined by the territorial logic of deregulation" (Roy, 2009:8), one that "refers to developments, enclaves, populations, and transactions positioned between the 'lightness' of legality/approval/safety and the 'darkness' of eviction/destruction/death. Gray spaces are neither integrated nor eliminated.…" (Yiftachel, 2011:153). These practices occur in *the twilight zone* and are home to an overlooked "urban intelligence" (Amin & Thrift, 2017:17) expressing "Black Ingenuity" (Sanders, 2022:206) that brings into being "places of the possible" (Lefebvre, 1996:156) and offers opportunities for a new spatial [re]description (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Simone & Pieterse, 2017).

1.2.3 Assemblage: Narrative Montage

In providing better descriptions of Johannesburg's twilight activities, the study works at the intersection of culture, language, and semiotics to produce signs, sounds, symbols, and words, which operate through conceptual and material artistic frames as a communication practice. The communication style interweaves Nguni orality and Euro-American-based practice thinking. Composing montage is a hybrid language that paints pictures with various texts using a conceptual, artistic, and creative *assemblage* to collect and mix words and images into spatial grammar, and through this, unmasking the city's palimpsest.

Pragmatically configured to engage wider and non-specialist audiences, this model provides a communicating approach and narrative structure salient to the telling of a story, collages Saussure's (1959) [post]structuralist linguistics, Barthes's (1972) semiotics, Chatman's (1982), Genette's (1983), Webster and Mertova's (2007) narrative theories with Nguni storytelling traditions. The narrative structure has two threads, further consolidated in Chapters 2—4. First, it divides Egoli into the 'what' of the narrative (story). Next, it considers the 'way' (discourse). Combined, it gathers word-image (**Fig. 1.1**) as a way of "knowledge production . . . (by) thinking in, through and with art" (Borgdorff, 2010:44). Narrative operates a three-concept lens, **framing**, **shifting**, and **positioning**, calibrating an audio-visual storytelling process as the methodology tested in the study's casework.

The need for this type of approach is unrestricted to urban practice. However, its value as an assessment tool was first recognized in the later stages of the previous millennium:

> "Profound social changes and perceived problems with traditional social research practices combined in the 1980s to produce what is now called the 'narrative turn,' the increasing interest in professionals inside and outside academia in understanding the centrality of stories in the activities and processes of meaning-making" (Loseke, 2022:xiii).

Producing an image underpinned by *assemblage* that links to Loseke's theory, three actions inspire this writing process. First, explored in Chapter 2, *framing* (time) presents *itolo* (yesterday) - how and what strategies brought on the Johannesburg of today (*namuhla*). *Framing* time uses history (such as the gold discovery) and laws (like the Land Act of 1913) to read, reimagine (Sandercock, 2003b; Havik & Sioli, 2021), and recreate hybrid urban spaces (Harrison, 2006; Pieterse, 2021) within timeframes defined by relevance. And next, examined in Chapter 3, *shifting* (context) stages *namuhla* (today) because of *itolo's* (yesterday) influences.

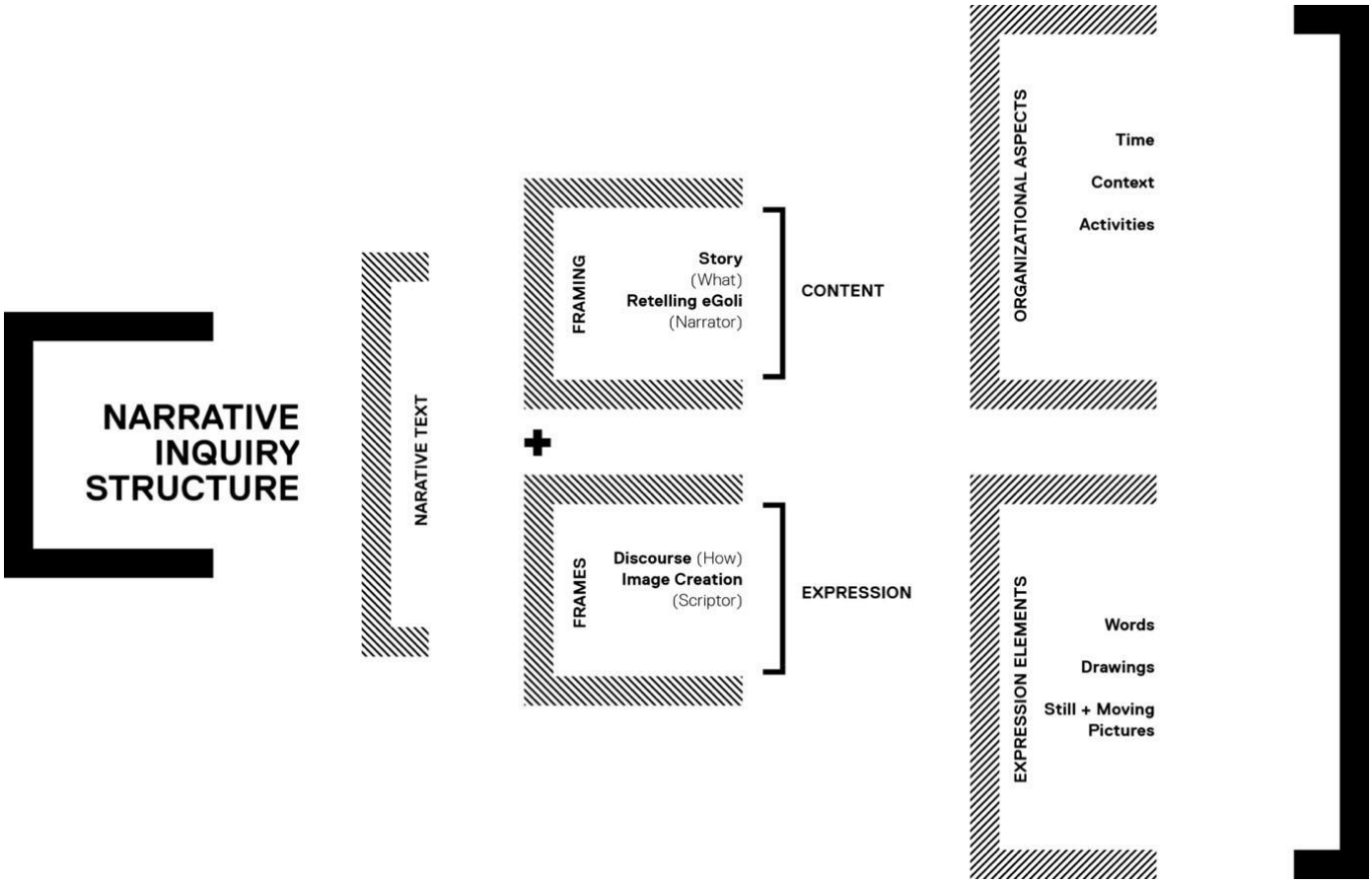


Figure 1.1 Narrative Structure

Shifting context showcases portions of the city as they are through forensic casework documentation of the street (such as *Alexandra* and *Orange Grove Fieldwork Notes* (2017)) from multiple scales and mediums. In this way, *shifting* listens to the subaltern, assesses situations, and re-centers their identity (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1993; Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008). Finally, considered in Chapter 4, *positioning* (activities) looks to the possibilities of *kusasa* (tomorrow) informed by today (*namhlanje*). *Positioning* activities uses collages like in *Calibrating Stories* (2022) to write multiple perspectives from the *framing* and *shifting* processes and constructs through film trajectories that fulfill user activity needs (Pieterse, 2013; Amin & Thrift, 2017). Collectively these movements constitute a *calibrating* framework to compose nonlinear sequences of events that have, are, and might occur. Materially putting things together aids Africans to see themselves, speak again, and find their way back. Therefore, ***calibrating*** describes and speaks through building up an **image** of street spaces, using drawing, photography, and other survey work.

An anthology of Johannesburg expresses this image story termed *Retelling Egoli* (see **Table_1**). Image creation is discovering local knowledge of "*what is*" and *what local people think about this*. With the intent for proactive change, this image-creation process must

engage with the **imagination** of *what can* "*become*." An art-based practice-led making process signifies the research aims, values, and content. Consequently, as projects in their own right, compositions reflect contextual realities and seek a communicative expression that speaks and writes with greater fluency, persuasiveness, and accessibility. For improved engagement, the image moves into storytelling to understand and disseminate the existing dynamics and considers how these might develop. It is a reflection that means both understanding what those with the local knowledge (and right to express this) already imagine can happen – and also means stimulating this with exposure to other possible imagined "realities" – that is, urban planning and design "visions." Most importantly, the objective here is to express and reinforce other **imaginaries**.

1.3 Designing: The Project

1.3.1 Background, Midground, Foreground

Sandercock argues that:

> "In order to imagine the ultimately unrepresentable space, life and languages of the city, to make them legible, we translate them into narratives. … Let's liberate and celebrate and think about the power of story. And let's appreciate its importance to the 21st-century multicultural planning project, as a way of bringing people together to learn about each other through the telling and sharing of stories" (Sandercock, 2003b:182-183).

Building on Sandercock's (2003b) observations above, this study develops a storytelling approach consisting of framing, shifting, and positioning, which is applied to imagine and describe a city more appropriate for the future needs of its residents. The tripartite model embraces the argument put forward by Borgdorff (2010:61) that to understand and discover city life is "more directed at a not-knowing, or not-yet knowing, creating room for that which is unthought, that which is unexpected – the idea that all things could be different." Its approach advances Borgdorff's argument to craft a communication practice for a site assessment's introductory phase. As previously mentioned, street application manifests a clash between prospects of the top-down form of *what should be* and the *actual* bottom-up *user realities* in Johannesburg. In other words, specialist perspectives overwhelm grounded experience and hamper the current planning/design process when revealing urban contexts. Working in complex environments like Johannesburg – where historical residues remain embedded on the landscape – engages the argument that:

> "This kind of planning work, involving dialogue and negotiation across the gulf of cultural difference, requires its practitioners to be fluent in a range of ways of knowing and communicating, from storytelling to listening to interpreting visual and body language" (Sandercock, 2000:25—26).

It is also an entirely appropriate template for Johannesburg, as it is:

> "…very relevant to the new complexities of nation-building and community development in multicultural societies. It is perhaps the *best* model in situations where direct, fac[e]-to-face meetings are unthinkable or unmanageable due to prior histories of conflict and/or marginalization. In such cases, the use of narrative, of people telling their own stories about how they perceive the situation, becomes a potential consensus-building tool for unearthing issues unapproachable in a solely rational manner" (Sandercock, 2000:25—26).

Sandercock's theories and recommendations present a consensus-building tool that provides the shift this study needs to progress from a restricting modernist apartheid-influenced process to an inclusive, reformist methodology. Specifically, and crucially, it seeks a city user's spatial performance appraisal. It focuses on marginalized voices and imaginaries to, at various scales, shift these from the city and frame background to the midground and finally place these in the foreground. Structuring a mise en scène, these layers trigger new temporal and spatial realities. As a frame's layer, subaltern voices are compressed. They are simultaneously positioned and presented as a single background, midground, and foreground layer. Seen from establishing shots, contextual drawings, and audio points of view to a camera's depth-of-field and extreme close-up, this ensemble, statistically the largest group of city users by demographic, social, economic, cultural, and political definitions, asks 'who,' 'how,' and 'what' defines a city: answering these questions is central to this study.

1.3.2 Sensing the City

Young defines "city life as the being together of strangers" (Young, 1990:237), which Hallenbeck echoes with: "Cities are an assemblage of differences: places of overlapping dialogues, narratives, and identities . . . people can only engage in the city if they [can] exercise their rights to participation and appropriation" (Hallenbeck, 2010:134). As a site of difference (Sandercock, 2000; Hallenbeck, 2010), Johannesburg provides a window to frame the question: "What kinds of knowledge do planners need in a post-modern age in which cities are characterized by fragmentation, polarization, and 'difference' in its many guises?"

(Sandercock, 1999:533). The question particularly applies to the South African context, which still struggles with colonial and apartheid legacies. In Johannesburg, apartheid spatial divisions appear impossible to mitigate or erase and continue, across multiple scales, to construct “conflicting realities” (Watson, 2003:403).

These lines of thought develop a relational research design based on composition (*assemblage* and *calibrating*). Above all, what is most important in this construction or creation process, is its task of building a common yet relative world. Sensing the city’s foundational argument is that audio-visual storytelling fosters shared understandings between residents and planners, especially concerning the marginalized daily operations occurring in the city’s interstices (its grey spaces). Sandercock’s question informs this thesis’ departure point from convention – it also mandates and structures a way to contextualize interlaced characteristics by first untangling them. Composing starts with contextualizing the city. Founded solely for economic gain in 1886, Johannesburg, also known as Joburg, Jozi, and Egoli, the city of gold, has socially, economically, culturally, and legally, permanently excluded the second aspect, the *Others*, or subaltern from all considerations. Yet, ironically, the *Others* are the single most crucial component of the city and constitute the same human ‘resource’ upon which Egoli emerged and still depends for its existence and growth. In such a conception, to be transformative and relevant to the city’s democracy, spatial practice must connect to marginalization and deploy all its latent skills in creatively opening possibilities of change (Amin & Thrift, 2002). This project aims to provide appropriate, accurate, and empathetic tools to create innovative and equitable realities in spatial production.

1.3.3 Rewriting Johannesburg

With soaring populations and mounting levels of urbanization, Havik and Sioli call for creative foresight to responsibly “shape our cities and society” (Havik & Sioli, 2021:160). Rewriting Egoli (the city of Gold) initiates an ontological and epistemological imagining to creatively open possibilities for change. Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence, and reality (Mautner, 2005). Epistemology concerns the theory, nature, and the possibility of knowledge, especially regarding its methods, validity, and scope in investigating related notions such as proof, evidence, perception, belief, certainty, and memory (Mautner, 2005). Pressing for responsible design capacity, Anne-Marie Willis argues for an ontological design basis informed by “a radically different understanding of design as practice and object than those generally available” (Willis, 2006:80). Thus, *streets* and *storytelling* (see Chapters 2 and 3) test Willis’s (2006) concept in multiple ontological and

epistemological ways: rewriting the city using narrative plot, setting, style, and themes as part of a composite structure to present its imaginary stories/discourses.

Compositional elements also engage with what Appadurai describes as a condition of "temporariness" faced by the subaltern, which for the marginalized means "things in life have a temporary quality—not only "physical and spatial resources" but also "housing, … social, political, and moral relations and relations to the sources of power" (Appadurai 2003:47). Once the city's past has been rewritten, it becomes possible to reimagine and therefore redesign its future. To imagine and revise anew links to the rapid population growth characterizing major African cities because of accelerated economic urbanization and emergency demand caused by social, political, and environmental instability. To respond to these changes, urban professionals must create "careful designs attuned to the specificities of place" (Havik & Sioli, 2021:160). Furthermore, practice must responsibly contribute to "diverse social communities" to meet this requirement (Havik & Sioli, 2021:160). Achieving imaginative prudence involves an ontological and epistemological procedure that embraces "different ways of understanding how we, as modern subjects, 'are' and how we come to be who/what we are in the modern world" (Willis, 2006:80).

For Johannesburg, which faces uncertainty and elevated levels of unemployment and inequality, this method designs a city that grants the marginalized agency to empower an altered urban experience from its current situation. However, the transformation of the apartheid footprint is not easy because "the link between planning and social transformation has . . . been complex and elusive, tempting many planners to fall back into largely technocratic practice" (Harrison et al., 2007:135). The validity of this observation underlines the need to modify existing approaches to transform a racialized city founded exclusively on keeping people apart and bent on maximizing profit for the few while restricting access to resources for the majority.

1.4 Recognizing: Relational Concepts

1.4.1 Argument

To alter contemporary methodologies, the study disassembles its founding question, *what tools are required for imagining and designing a fair and democratic city*, into three inquiries targeting the activity streets that delineate its scope. First, What city-making tools are suitable? Second, What constitutes conceiving and creating a city? Third, What is a just city? Together, the questions respond to the urban ecology of streets. From their role in urban life, their design, and architecture to their performance, this thesis structures, using actual activity streets, a demonstration project. In total, street exploration questions who has rights to the

city and how history and institutionalized knowledge gaps significantly influence Johannesburg's urban planning process, particularly in site appraisal.

This incompatibility manifests in underperforming spaces magnified "between material expressions of urbanity and personhood; between urban form and urban citizenship" (Roque et al., 2020:333). Fractured at the foundation phase, the cracks widen during the design/making phase, creating spaces that impede users instead of enabling them, resulting in a highly unequal urban environment with poor street quality (Harber & Parker, 2018). Linked to who has claims to the city, due to dominant historical narratives, the knowledge gap in street utilization, compounded by narrow values and worldviews, is countered by exposing its contributory capacity to the city. An example can be found in mobility and how it is imagined – is it premised on mass transit, pedestrian, and non-motorized transport, or an exclusionary "engineered emphasis on the car" (Harber & Parker, 2018:6)? Johannesburg's setting falls into the latter category and is particularly hard on pedestrians, street traders or microentrepreneurs. Recognizing this microentrepreneurial setting to unlock its potential requires collaboration between different protagonist groupings. Pieterse's rhetorical device defines the protagonists in this team, with the city as "the subversive bureaucrat," agents as "the artist and designer," and the actors as "the sentinel" (Pieterse, 2021:193).

Collaboration fosters the necessary ingredients to address 'the condition of temporariness' by 'producing locality.' "The production of locality is an effort to work against the constant corrosion of the present, both by change and by uncertainty" (Appadurai, 2003:47). In so doing, for the marginalized, it reveals possibilities of permanence, which ties to values and belonging, and contributes to unleashing the city's potential. In Dagger's thinking on civic memory, this is a measure that can "be the true home of citizenship" (Dagger, 1981:715).

1.4.2 Aim + Objective

Compelled by the above argument, this study aims to improve Johannesburg's spatial performance by providing enhanced urban assessment through an image-making process that empowers subaltern economic politics. Forced into the *twilight zone* by colonial, capitalist, and apartheid ideologies, subaltern practices take on forms of insurgency that the study aims to visualize and [re]present as necessary for the professional field to recognize. Acquiring this image involves connecting with knowledge sets outside specialist (and elitist) boundaries and applying Aristotle's three knowledge types**:** epistēmē, **scientific knowledge;** technē, **knowledge of the craft; and** phronēsis, **ethical knowledge** (Aristotle, 1999)**.** This epistemological design compels interactive communication between the knowledge types to provide the expertise required to tackle situations efficiently. The dialogue generates a

twilight composite that reflects its proper identity and form, which Levitas (1986) argues are cultural artifacts essential for the city fabric. In Funny Weather: Art in an Emergency, Olivia Laing notes:

> "We're so often told that art can't change anything. But I think it can. It shapes our ethical landscapes; it opens us up to the interior lives of others. It is a training ground for possibility. It makes plain inequalities, and it offers other ways of living" (Laing, 2020:8).

Laing's argument supports the study objective of establishing a practice-based/practice-led approach that formulates spatial narrative content voicing the *twilight zone*. Inquiry through a *narrative* offers radical and innovative methods of connecting with the microenterprises encompassing much of Johannesburg's subaltern livelihood. Besides, these narratives provide rich pickings for the urban designer. "Stories about the past have power and bestow power. The impulse to tell new stories about the past shows us that time itself is a perspective in the construction of histories" (Sandercock, 1998:1). This argument calls for critical storytelling to rewrite history and as an appropriate method to understand current life. However, for the study to succeed, it must negotiate and incorporate a vastly diverse range of lived realities, perspectives, and expertise. Such "complexity can be approached only through transdisciplinarity" (Ramadier, 2004:425). Hence, its approach combines street-level intelligence and aesthetics with anthropology, literary studies, and social science. This grouping conceives a communicative strategy as cognitive art (Tufte, 1990; Gibson, 2008) that configures and showcases *the twilight zone* in various storytelling modes (**Table_1**).

The objective explores how narrative constructs values and identity and social, economic, political, and cultural intersubjectivity relations. Joburg is aesthetically calibrated and retold as *Retelling Egoli* in the artistry of the graphic novel, fieldwork notes, and other edited material. In urban initiatives, the producer applies a conceptual and theoretical framework that inserts social narrative (**Fig. 1.1**), [re]writes the city, and permits it to speak. Reinforced by critical transdisciplinary, empirically based, and knowledge exchange ideas, this approach is what defines *Urban Scripting* – the name given to this study and the urban practice modalities it proposes. The author coined the term '*Urban Scripting*' to describe a Nguni-rooted form of reading and listening to write creatively about a city's conditions. The methodology may be of equal value in any city of the world since it employs very human and commonly accessible and familiar tools and communication practices. It does this by calibrating an artistic storytelling process with deep cultural insights to unearth *the twilight zone*, address people's needs, and help close the knowledge gap.

1.4.3 How to read this Research

This two-textual thesis provides curated material that underpin the conceptual and theoretical framework and audio-visual casework as practice research. The link between the word text ("exegesis") and the practice casework text is summarized in **Table_1** below. Three rows arrange the principal structuring devices: 'framing,' 'shifting,' and 'positioning.' These are related to the scales of epistemological engagement, 'macro,' 'meso,' and 'micro,' and, in turn, connect to themes and specific casework formats with their relevant titles. The table's final column illustrates the temporal nature of the study productions, indicating the year of core engagement with each practice-based output. It is important to emphasize again here, as at the beginning of this document, that the study comprises two "documentary" texts that need to be "read" and "engaged" with in parallel. These are the word thesis (a conceptual and theoretical exegesis) and the casework outputs – mostly audio-visual story-work in the Contextual Voices Folder (CVF).

Table_1: *Retelling* Formats (See CVF)

Modality	**Scale**	**Theme**	**Format**	**Title**	**Year**
Framing	Macro	Historicizing	Film	I'm a Streetwalker	2017
			Animation	the block, the plot, the house, the tree	2019
				Alexandra: A Backstory	2019
			Graphic Novel	Alexandra: A Backstory	2022
Shifting	Meso	Fieldwork	Booklet	Street Images	2017
				Street Drawings	2017
				Block Measurements	2017
				Large Format Plan	2018
				2-D Mapping	2018
				Fieldwork Notes: Alexandra	2018
				Fieldwork Notes: Orange Grove	2018
			Booklet + Animation	Hand Sections	2017
				Hand Drawn Collages	2017
				Animation Shot List	2018
				Electronic Renders	2018
Positioning	Micro		Electronic Drawing	Focus Blocks Modelling	2018
			Booklet	Technical Sections	2018
			Animation	Drawn Sections	2018
				Flythroughs	2018
				Orange Grove Church wall Collage	2018

Modality	Scale	Theme	Format	Title	Year
			Booklet	Place Sketches	2018
				Manual Drawings	2018
				Storyboards	2018
			Film	Joyce	2018
			Film + Animation	From Tap to Tap	2018
			Film	David Goldblatt	2017
				Driving through Rev Sam Buti Street	2018
				Wednesday Rev Sam Buti Street	2018
				there's a tree Trailer	2018
				Sidewalk Braai I	2018
				Sidewalk Braai II	2021
		Storytelling	Audio	Alex Soundscape	2019
			Films	there's a tree on the sidewalk	2018
				Who is the Landlord	2019
				Bhani's Cycles	2019
			Book	Calibrating Stories	2022

The two texts [re]present a uniting movement to develop ***Urban Scripting*** as an idea, an emerging practice, and a fundamental ontological and epistemological approach. Though presented as a single body of work, this project is divided into two integral components to reach a more diverse audience. It also lays out the practical methodologies devised and employed for the field casework and assesses their efficacy in reviewing it.

The audio-visual text constitutes the practice-based and practice-led approach to fieldwork examples that elucidate ethics, spatiality, temporality, memory, meaning, "and the poetics of making" (Havik & Sioli, 2021:160). Elevating spatial practice, the image "mak[es] the ordinary special and the special more widely accessible – expanding the boundaries of understanding and possibility with vision and common sense … and disturbing the order of things in the interests of change" (Hamdi, 2004:xix). Guided by historicized understandings of the continent, country, city, street, and person, this radical storytelling offers a hybrid imaginary.

1.4.4 Purpose

The core purpose of this study is to formulate a strategic storytelling application to improve city life. A prime objective in succeeding is redefining space as a place and, more profoundly, understanding public space inhabitation through grasping subaltern *survival practices* (Bayat, 1997). This understanding requires strong anti-colonizing and anti-racist measures (Miraftab, 2009; Mbembe, 2015) underpinned by a threefold-fold purpose:

- To apply time and movement using Deleuze's (1992) lens as assemblage and give material depth and visual voice to the subaltern (Lefebvre, 1996; Bhabha, 2004).
- To introduce different concerns connected to marginalized city life into local practice spheres and reinforce the role of other urban imaginaries (Young, 2011; Mbembe, 2015).
- To magnify spatial practice ability and language to study places and the relationships between people and their environments and, in doing so, disrupt elite power dominance and groups by making knowledge accessible to broader audiences (Harris et al., 2000; Sandercock, 2003b).

Consequently, the purpose is to formulate an image (**Table_1**, **Fig. 1.1**) that provides – from policy to regulation and design – a better definition of the twilight zone as a cultural artifact. In so doing, the image enables spatial discipline to acquire a better vocabulary that deals with previously unfamiliar issues of this nature. Next, local activities emerge through the immersive observation of street use through selected character *stories*. These assemble retelling *Egoli* formats to address the study questions and meet the project's objective of imagining and creating South African city spaces that reflect user needs. Finally, as stated earlier, a sensory framework developed from the theories generates a composite overview of site and its potential, which the study refers to as *calibrating*. *Calibrating* comprises all tripartite steps over time, based on the practice of storytelling:

- *Framing* emphasizes transdisciplinary measures - it looks at past events and why, and asks what city-making tools suit the purpose.
- *Shifting* underscores the need for more critical and empirical-based exploration that inductively leads to novel ways of thinking and analyzing - it looks at what happens in the present and why, and probes what constitutes conceiving and creating a city.
- *Positioning* highlights the validity of knowledge exchange, looks at what could happen if frames change in the (near) future - it explores what a just city is.

Calibrating is a partly non-linear process that incorporates all three inquiry actions, is complex, and requires focused situational reading, listening, and writing to assess the case's context appropriately. Also, in bridging the knowledge gap, this process disseminates the information gathered and the immersive observation of streets through selected character *stories. Retelling Egoli*, enables local activities to emerge (see *Calibrating Stories* (2022+).

1.5 Editing: Abstract Themes

1.5.1 Frames

When building up the image, the 'frame' first defines a data field or surface. These are thoughts, imaginations, and knowledges. Such is the influence of these frames that they distinguish "the world in which we live from a world that only *appears* to be real" (Berlatsky, 2009:163). Schapiro echoes this sentiment arguing that frames have a semantic value belonging to and bringing things closer to the observer's space (1972-1973). For Henri Bergson, images bring sharper focus to memory. Bergson emphasizes the link between the body and action; what we see and feel constructs memory through an aggregate of images. He argues, "And by 'image' we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist calls a *thing*; – an existence placed half-way between the 'thing' and the 'representation'" (Bergson, 1911:vii). Schapiro and Bergson's assertions underpin the 'who,' 'how,' and 'what' of defining a city introduced in **1.2.1 Background, Midground, Foreground**.

A more accurate Johannesburg premised on merging the imaginary and the real, art and life, is reflected in the casework[8] outputs. Formed by narrative compositionality (Rose, 2016), Egoli's retelling fuses framing, shifting, and positioning modalities, extends Heidegger's merging of art (work) and artist (producer), and constructs a "sensuous apprehension of lived experience" (aesthetics) (Heidegger, 2011:133). Merging art and life (work and aesthetics) symbolizes and allegorizes, in effect, recreating the experience. Heidegger argues that this makes "public something other than itself" and "manifest[s] something other" (Heidegger, 2011:91). This manifestation represents subaltern survival practices and other [in]visibilities that are part of and take place in *the twilight zone*; effectively, they are manifestations of an "emergence of new urban colonial relations" (Heidegger, 2011:152). Envisioned in frames, [framing] the "slow encroachment of the ordinary" (Bayat, 1997:57) aesthetically displays "a silent, patient, protracted, and pervasive advancement of ordinary people on the propertied and powerful to survive hardships and better their lives" (Bayat, 1997:57). In totality, frames

[8] This study uses the term casework due to the nature of the interface at which field research was conducted. Oxford Language defines *casework* as "social work directly concerned with individuals, especially that involving a study of a person's family history and personal circumstances." https://www.google.com/search?q=casework&oq=cas&aqs=chrome.0.69i59j69i57j46i131i199i433i465i512l3j69i61l2j69i60.3690j1j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

are a “reflective interval” (Minh-ha, 1991:48) between what is imagined and what is real; they require (and help) the viewer to make sense of *what is* and *what they think of what is.*

Minh-ha also underscores “meaning” in the frame that “can neither be” emphasized, “nor denied.” Its enclosing boundary and field stress “the interval between apertures and creating a space in which meaning remains fascinated by what escapes and exceeds it” (Minh-ha, 1991:49). Simone and Pieterse reaffirm Minh-ha’s claim that “details ‘leak’ from the frame. Urban life is replete with secretion – things overflowing their boundaries and things being hidden away, kept from use or made secret” (Simone & Pieterse, 2017:94). As seen in *Retelling Formats*, storytelling unfolds and leaks through-composed frames by a collaboration between inside-outside ‘scriptors.’ Inside are the actors who live the twilight phenomena referred to by Pieterse as “sentinels.” Outside are spatial experts as well as “artist” and “designer” specialists (Pieterse, 2021:194-5). Without rejecting their metaphoric amplification, frames [re]present *the making of…* mise en scène and discourse to enable novel spatial, temporal realities and consequences. To be read interpretively, mise en scène signifies the scriptor’s expertise in what happens in the frame (Bordwell et al., 2020).

1.5.2 Producing

Urban Scripting’s theoretical foundation makes artistic provocation that interlaces the tripartite modalities. Merging tradition and technology as fieldwork practice, the researcher/scriptor/producer’s use of *calibrating* and *assemblage* techniques visualizes lived experiences. This city life, or social, “refers to the range of economic, social and political relations, institutions and practices that surround an image and through which it is seen and used” (Rose, 2016:26). For Mbembe, ‘“the social’ is less a matter of order and contract than a matter of *composition* and experiment; that what ultimately binds societies might be some kind of artifice they have come to believe in” (Mbembe, 2010:655). This study targets the social range Rose refers to by employing contemporary audio-visual storytelling in synergetic ways to bring the producer closer to *capturing* street-level realities, who then [re]produces the image by narrating the lived experience, recounting events, and summarizing complex understandings and perspectives (Kurtz, 2014). Producing encompasses budgeting and guiding “the project from start to finish” (Austen, 2019:13). Here, *Urban Scripting* assigns Austen’s (2019:9) producer’s role to:

- ‘Develop film ideas’ (*Retelling Egoli*).
- ‘Work closely with the writers’ (assembling inside and outside scriptors).
- ‘Find the right team to work and partner with’ (collaboration being a critical factor).

- ‘Raise the finance to make the project happen’ (the National Research Fund (NRF) Thuthuka Grant significantly assisted with the production budget and logistics).
- ‘Produce the film’ (securing the twilight zone’s insurgent designs throughout the production).
- ‘Supervise the post-production’ (covered in Chapters 5 and 6).
- ‘Deliver the finished work’ (submitting the project’s two components: storywork material and exegesis).
- ‘Be involved in distribution, screening, marketing, and transmission’: (see **3.4.4 *Contextual Voices Folder*** (CVF) and **5.5 Points of View**).

Austen argues that the producer turns a story idea into a finished film … and, most importantly, “must always be looking for creative solutions to any problem” (Austen, 2019:13). In *Retelling Egoli*, producing extends Tufte’s (1990) methods of envisioning information. South African visual artist Sam Nhlengethwa, African American filmmaker Spike Lee, late Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Kieślowski*,* and British data journalist Mona Chalabi provide the inspiration to present the casework’s visual thinking and data readings as static and motion pictures. Casework examples, especially *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022), draw further insight from Shawn Tan’s *The Arrival* (2006), Jimenez Lai’s *Citizens of No Place: An Architectural Graphic Novel* (2012), Lewis et al., *March: Book One*, (2013), *March: Book Two* (2015), and *March: Book Three* (2016), Trevor Getz and Liz Clarke’s *Abina and the Important Men: A Graphic History* (2016), and Will McPhail’s *In.* (2021). Storytelling frames, explained in greater detail later in the thesis, illustrate Chapter 5’s fieldwork.

Producing introduces the concept of hybridity formed by meshing the colonizer with the colonized, as a person of mixed national or cultural identity, referred to as “*halfies*” (Abu-Lughod, 2008:51). Access, identity, ownership, and belonging form key themes underpinning hybridity and provide a departure point to address Sandercock’s question about what knowledge planning requires. Themes historicize the subject (plot) and production site (setting). Both documentary texts *Retelling Egoli* and the exegesis simultaneously act as a “metaphor and an emergent assemblage” (Pieterse, 2021:192). Hence, *Urban Scripting*’s starting theory hypothesizes the frame as a hybrid language that uses critical transdisciplinary ideas (Minh-ha, 1991, Ramadier, 2004) for a relational emergence to situate and receive data. Its surface intermingles past, present, and future. Layering a direct palimpsest of the perceptible world, frames construct a narrative that exposes twilight intelligence (Amin & Thrift, 2017). Their production permits a mode of seeing, scripting and

memorializing the creativity, ingenuity, and adaptive strategies of marginalized urbanite *halfies*.

1.5.3 The Twilight Zone

According to Hou, "Understanding the significance and characteristics of unsanctioned and unscripted spatial practices is an important step in comprehending the full complexity of . . . a wide variety of actors and processes – some formal, some not" (Hou, 2020:123). As previously observed, many of these actors and their processes operate without formal recognition or support. They are in *the twilight zone*. Acknowledging the practices identified by Hou and drawing on subaltern knowledge is a call that responds to the challenges encountered when measuring and understanding the twilight zones' vibrant insurgency (Sandercock, 1998; Miraftab, 2011; Jenkins, 2013; Pieterse, 2013; Huang et al.). A sign of the knowledge gap that separates *the twilight zone* from elite institutions (the academy and practice) is Mbembe and Nuttall describing Johannesburg as the *Elusive Metropolis* by pointing "to the gap between the way things actually are and the way they appear in theory and discourse" (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008:25).

Closing the gap through the art of making – memorializing – is an acknowledgment, amongst many other things, of urban marginality, ingenuity, and the aesthetic of liminal spaces. Premised on the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary" (Bayat, 1997:57) being critical to the street and, by extension, the city's ecosystem, *the twilight zone* operates in interstitial, liminal, *Othered* arenas that need recognition. Creating new local landscapes that Hou argues "reflect the respective social settings and issues" must represent local forms characterized by guerrilla urbanism' (Hou, 2010:2) and thought of as "spaces of insurgent citizenship" (Holston, 1998:37), 'invented spaces of citizenship' (Miraftab, 2004), and previously introduced "gray spaces" (Yiftachel, 2011). For Miraftab "'Invented' spaces are defined as those collective actions by the poor that directly confront the authorities and challenge the status quo" (Miraftab, 2009:38—39). In the contemporary city, *the twilight zone* conveys systems of 'tactical urbanism' (Lydon & Garcia, 2015), expresses 'practices of resistance' (Hou, 2020), and if "the potentialities of our moment are to be seized in full" (Pieterse, 2021:193) calls for new and unorthodox assessment methods. Due to a lack of capital and property rights, *twilight zone* microentrepreneurs are flexible, adaptable, and innovative in their work and are good at maximizing the potential they can access. This elastic strength is bricolage:

> "a process whereby entrepreneurs with local knowledge and access to local resources are best able to create enterprises using the materials at hand, rather than

overextending their efforts with externally directed attributes requiring unattainable resources. As such, entrepreneurial process elements may be emulated from successful social bricolage examples, recognizing that each context, community, and circumstances will require their own unique solutions" (Preece, 2014:23).

The scriptor/producer/researcher aims to develop 'their own' creative and operational bricolage potential and respond to changing engagement and environmental conditions by optimizing the story/image gathering process.

1.6 Presenting: Field Contribution

1.6.1 Urban Scripting

This study extends Preece's argument to enable better design by looking for ways to write about people and places. Writing with people and places (ngeSiswati *bantfu netindzawo*) from the margins of Alexandra and Orange Grove gives the city (Johannesburg) life and forms *Urban Scripting*. Understanding twilight intelligence from the margins challenges historical approaches to architecture, the city, and urbanism, as well as political perspectives which rely on 'rear-view mirror' conventional 'top-down' methods. Although devised with honorable intent, these procedures are normative, insidious and continue to:

- Promote a blanket of universal characteristics that supposedly apply and are desirable in all urban environments.
- Assert a vision of balanced orderly development to facilitate administrative bureaucracy and control.
- Define urban design primarily by designing stand-alone objects (three-dimensional form, mass, volume) and how they relate to other buildings.

To construct other identities of becoming, being, and belonging, the casework is where the urban designer integrates *Othered* voices as a spatial producer to assemble and disassemble an image engaging its conceptual and intellectual framework. Each calibrating action operates as critical redundancy to mitigate the so-called "developmentalist solutions" intended to fix "the known ills of African cities" through conventional predictive tools[9] by

[9] For a more in-depth illustration, see Edgar Pieterse's Differential African Urbanization section in his essay *Grasping the Unknowable: Coming to Grips with African Urbanism* in *Rogue Urbanism: Emergent African Cities* (2013:24), describing how most scholarship on African cities seeks to explain "structural economic reasons for this state of affairs, and/or focused on specific sectoral or governance policy solutions."

choosing instead an approach that seeks to understand the “microscopic details” of the African city’s everyday lived experience (Pieterse, 2013:24—27). The core research question frames dialogue-based audio-visual forms to establish and understand ‘microscopic’ twilight practices. This foundation and the comprehension it garners operate as a ‘transformative priority’ that combines the protagonist’s relational perspectives to structure collaborations that unlock Johannesburg’s social, economic, and cultural possibilities (Pieterse, 2021).

In reviewing micro-scale inputs, the approach adopts Sandercock’s (1998), Kihato’s (2007), Miraftab’s (2009), Jenkins’s (2013), Pieterse’s (2013), and Sihlongonyane’s (2022) argument – that the understanding of African cities requires empirically based study and insurgent designs with new grammar that introduce different vocabularies – triggers novel knowledge systems and methods. Better yet, positioned as a critical insurgent practice, *Urban Scripting* uses this argument to develop a language through hybrid techniques that locate, conceptualize, theorize, describe, and analyze.

1.6.2 Limitations

Irrespective of context, real-time and resource factors restrict doctoral study engagement levels. This limits the exploration to two activity streets in Johannesburg: one in an apartheid-classified township and the other in a previously white-zoned neighborhood. Neither street may necessarily fully represent streets in different ‘similarly classified’ contexts. However, the most significant limitation was the size of the teams which undertook the field and casework. The project assembled a film production ensemble that may not be available to others wishing to attempt a similar study. In addition, the specialized skill sets used within teams may not be accessible for all research projects of this nature, and if they are, they may lack adequate time and technological resources. For example, the ability to access audio-visual equipment, infrastructure (filming, editing), and expertise determine the levels of engagement possible. Additionally, the nature of the chosen sites, focus areas, choice of participants, and production talent all impact attainable access. Lastly, fieldwork of this nature cannot record all possible content co-creators (participant) views, nor can it engage in detail the micro-levels of an entire street length. However, the study provides access to a deep, rich, comprehensive, and unique source of alternative knowledge that arguably has validity that far exceeds its limitations.

Furthermore, it pushes the boundaries of traditional research methodologies by giving all protagonists an embodiment of the experience – thereby creating a more collective imaginary through socialization (Sandercock, 1999; Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008; Pieterse, 2013). Through this access, the study connects the more traditional urban planning/design

site appraisal approaches with an innovative storytelling method based on extended audio-visual work that eliminates the knowledge gap and transcends the abovementioned limitations.

1.6.3 Overview

Chapter 1 **situates the study's scope** by presenting a vision of applying storytelling in spatial practice investigations to make an image that shows the city differently from its current state.

Chapter 2 **develops framing's** narrative structure (**Fig. 1.1**) to explore suitable city-making tools. Drawings, photographs, shots, panels, and animation frames historicize the landscape and use time to *read* the city.[10] **Framing**, to describe causality, looks back to yesterday and recomposes Johannesburg's plot using words, drawing lines, plans, counts, and inventories to uncover spatial practice's complicity in normalizing African marginality or *Othering.* Next, it extends the narrative style, setting, and action as part of a composite structure presenting imaginary stories/discourses. The accompanying story-work for ***Alexandra: A Backstory*** (2022), ***the block, the plot, the house, the tree*** (2019), and ***I'm a streetwalker*** (2017) focus on the continent (macroscale), country (mesoscale), and the city/street (microscale). Story making establishes the project's communicating structure, based on cinema's mise en scène, which is "the representation of a scene by a specific organization of its virtual but figurative elements such as decor, props, and characters" (Lefèvre, 2012:71). Mbembe and Nuttall's (2008) theories on transformation in practice compose the discussion of the role of the activity street in Johannesburg (South Africa) and how it has transitioned since its creation during the colonial era. This dialogue sculpts the mise en scène primary layer.

Chapter 3 **designs mechanisms to shift the frame** highlighting causal effects by examining what constitutes conceiving and creating a city. Drawings, recordings, and films fuse urban design mapping cultures with Nguni oral storytelling traditions to *listen* to voices in marginal contexts. Listening argues for the **shifting** of prevailing narratives based on casework results that emerge during the image-making process, which not only come to grips with localized realities but produce a different image using Nguni pedagogies. From the casework, ***Alexandra: A Backstory*** (2022), ***the block, the plot, the house, the tree*** (2019), and ***I'm a***

[10] It is recommended that the reader engages with the audio-visual material in "real-time" while reading this thesis.

streetwalker (2017) revealed yesterday, ***Fieldwork Notes*** (2017+) exposed today, and ***Calibrating Stories*** (2022+) examines thoughts for tomorrow's reimaging. The context is adjusted to focus on the mesoscale. ***Fieldwork Notes*** (2017+) investigate the country, city, and metro to highlight present-day capitalist manifestations. ***I'm a Streetwalker*** (2017) reconfigures the street into representative segments containing focus blocks with full-to-medium-shots/panels depicting characters. Informed by interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary insights, Chapter 3 examines what processes, practices, and knowledge should contribute to the evolution of activity streets as urban places in Johannesburg into "spaces of invented citizenship" (Miraftab, 2009:33). Shifting unpacks the planning process as it should be and is mise en scène secondary layer. Again, the reader is encouraged to engage with the casework material (CVF) parallel to the thesis text.

Chapter 4 **recognizes** the practical methods to imagine the future by making and telling *Othered* stories about what a just city is. This understanding outlines how a 'shared' language that links diverse stakeholders through the rigor of audio-visual documentation develops an intertextual discourse composite that bridges the real and imaginary gaps. The casework's application of **positioning** presents three films, ***there's a tree on the sidewalk*** (2019), ***Who is the Landlord*** (2019), and ***Vimal Bhani Cycles*** (2019) (CVF). The film's movement-image composites illustrate the focus block's specific activity points and position possibilities of what can become by using close-ups to express details, gestures, and emotions. Positioning addresses what mistakes have arisen from the omission (what is not understood by official bodies and institutions and lessons) of *Othered* knowledge values in themes covering Johannesburg's streets' social practices, design, and representation, and is mise en scène final layer.

Chapter 5, rooted in Kurtz's *Working with Stories* (2014) and Haw & Hadfield's *Video in Social Science Research* (2011) practical guides **edits** empirical fieldwork examples. Whether restricted or celebrated, ***Calibrating Stories*** (2022+) artistic story-work examines the city from 1834 to 2017+ as site study (**Fig. 1.2**). Onsite and offsite outputs form composites produced by layering organizational and expression elements as visually 'thick descriptions.' The descriptions focus on and showcase twilight forms of appropriation that the state and its agents must recognize and engage with the street's physical expression and social attributes. Finally, **calibrating sequences** showcasing *Retelling Egoli* demonstrate how to better engage *Othered* forms of knowledge and wholly understand embedded value systems, desires, and needs. The arrangements communicate social, economic, and cultural experiences (contextual realities) using specific field casework examples as a practice method.

Chapter 6 **presents** the use of the casework methodology. It reviews the framework as a contribution to a vital understanding of the human experience needed to shift the gaze (Rose, 2016) from the dominant epistemic and ontological frames (Minh-ha, 1991) to an inclusive one. Presenting extends the language of urban planning/design (Sandercock, 1999; Amin & Thrift, 2017; Pieterse, 2021) by incorporating new voices and communication tools. Its prime goal is to provide permanence to the twilight zone. Doing this unearths the street as a historical palimpsest and shows how the protagonists can actively participate in this interval/hybrid discourse (Minh-ha, 1991). Re-presenting critical components recommends this project's contribution to the more extensive discussion on city-making processes. In a city of difference, this contribution applies to professionals in various disciplines and creative spheres, all of whom have a role in *making a city*.

In summary, *Urban Scripting* initiates storytelling to give voice to marginalized emergence. As such, engaging Johannesburg's development across time (**Fig. 1.2**) establishes inclusionary measures that draw attention to the imbalanced nature of spatial practice and unravel threads of identity, ownership, and belonging. In the approach, site appraisal presents the imperative to include *Othered* knowledge by deploying measures for shifting dominant frames and strengthening the discipline. *Urban Scripting* offers this knowledge as valid perspectives between urban planning specialist sources and grounded experience through different formats of audio-visual narratives, as illustrated in the casework's various accompanying outputs.

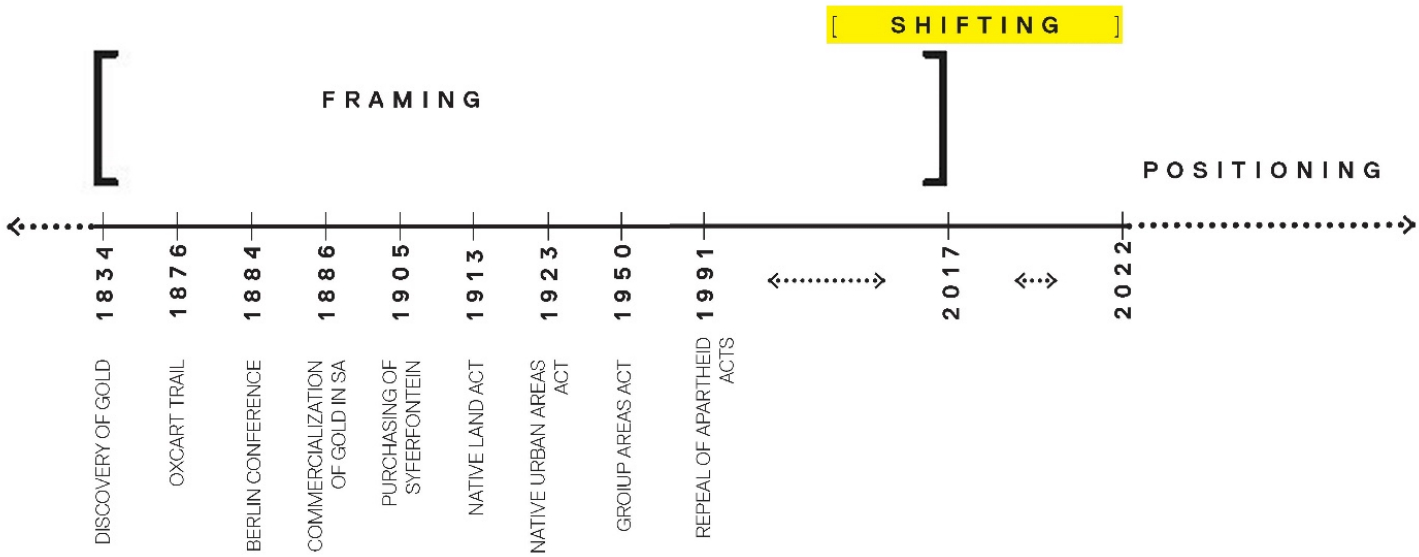


Figure 1.2 Field Casework Process

2 Developing: Framing

> "Hans Muller, a white estate agent who did business with Mr Sidelsky, would engage me in discussion. He was the prototypical businessman who saw the world through the prism of supply and demand. One day, Mr Muller pointed out of the window. 'Look out there, Nelson,' he said. 'Do you see those men and women scurrying up and down the street? What is it that they are pursuing? What is it they are working for so feverishly? I'll tell you: all of them, without exception, are after wealth and money. Because wealth and money equal happiness. That is what you must struggle for: money, and nothing but money. Once you have enough cash, there is nothing else you will want in life.'"
>
> *Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela (1995:100).

2.1 Urban Design: The Primacy of Streets

2.1.1 Local

In addressing the role, meaning, and representation of what happens on today's activity streets, much of it in the pursuit of wealth (or subsistence) as described above Chapter 2 develops framing, which outlines basic site reconnaissance (reading themes) as calibrating's primary mode to secure solid transdisciplinary fieldwork. History is integral to this procedure; therefore, the core narrative aspect is blending chronological and nonchronological sequencing – *timeframing* (this study introduces the term). In the casework, Johannesburg's *timeframing* outputs are in an introductory film, *I'm a streetwalker* (2017), an experimental animation, *the block, the plot, the house, the tree* (2019), and a historicizing graphic novel *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022). As outlined in the previous chapter, investigatory actions to understand sites are reading and observing. These movements create informants/results as actions/outputs that make up the two-way factfinding step required to examine the next stage of the process: shifting (explored in Chapter 3). Applying artistic audio-visual techniques as new fieldwork protocols at this stage provides context. Gathered by walking, talking to people, photographing, drawing, plans, counts, inventories, and words express initial site inspection informants. These actions-outputs generate a base map, from which all the following steps flow, constantly updated as further information comes to hand. The media forms dialogue, actions, and outputs that structure the critical, innovative casework process of *Retelling Egoli*.

The mindset Nelson Mandela describes above in the chapter's epigraph is the philosophy that dictatorially designed Johannesburg's development. Illustrated in the text's visual component, a graphic novel, *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022), documents Egoli's growth and

solidifies a relational concern historicizing spatial conditions explored in *I'm a Streetwalker* (2017). The assumption that Joburg's inhabitants would be part of this capitalist machine defined the city's evolution. Formalizing racial inequality sharpened, sanitized, and strengthened this unilateral approach, further extending the imbalance. The complete lack of equilibrium has been compounded by quantum demographic and socio-economic changes in Egoli's population, leaving the 21st-century city in constant conflict with itself and the genesis of its blueprint.

Starting Johannesburg's story in the 2017 present is discomforting. The uneasiness stems from locating semiotic work within a limited context and giving readers a partial perspective of why things are the way they are. The concern is, if solely configured by the 2017—19 field casework (**Fig. 1.2**), this incomplete portrayal may result in audiences reading things in isolation, causing a skewed understanding of the conditions faced by some contributors, including Bra Niky, Rachel, Paddy, Fish, Fungai, Vimal, and others (see **Table_2**). Explored in the following chapter, contributors were selected based on their locations, the nature of their enterprises or links to the study area, and potential value to the casework. When making meaning, it is ethically questionable and disingenuous to portray only a particular slice of participants' lives without contextualizing their politics of identity, access, and place. In a sense, by putting participant activities into play, framing establishes coherence through the *why*? According to Dimitri Waltritsch, "Starting an 'architectural project' requires the *definition of the premises* and the *specification* of the *questions* that the project will involve" (Waltritsch, 1999:64). Framing applies Waltritsch's thinking, which suggests a straightforward and sensible approach to reading contextual realities.

2.1.2 Context

As the constant flow of cause to effect, time plays a role in detecting current issues. Setting up the specifications of the problems concerned in the study (Waltritsch, 1999), *timeframing* outlines its premises, establishing *what is*. A reading of geographical space across timescales examines Egoli's socio-spatial issues in "exquisite detail" (Tufte, 1990:37). Hence, time articulates micro-macro connections explaining *why things are the way they are* and not *what they should be* (Jenkins, 2013). In historicizing Africa's macro, meso, and micro scales, *timeframing* reveals detailed descriptions of forces, rhythms, textures, and configurations (de Certeau, 1984; Tufte, 1990; Koeck, 2013; Lefebvre, 2014). At the micro-scale, South Africa's planning tiers, National, Provincial, and Local, structure the review scale examining causes and consequences. When relevant, the range extends to include the global macro. Micro-macro compositions frame the urban via stories. Understanding is gained through a matrix

applied for observing activities from a tree to a person, street, neighborhood, city, province, country, continent, and globe (**Fig. 2.1**).

These observations narrate local issues and trace systematizing forces that acted as hegemonic tools of social control. Tracing, illustrated through human labor processes producing the daily art and aesthetic material (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008), offers opportunities for *shifting* dominant narrative discourses, introduced in Chapter 1 and explored in Chapter 3. This modification is *positioned* in Chapter 4 and applied in Chapter 5. In total, these design calibrating actions to meet Mbembe and Nuttall's call that "we need a more complex anthropology of things, forms, and signs in order to account for the life of the city in Africa" (2008:8). As critical outputs, *I'm a Streetwalker* (2017), *the block, the plot, the house, the tree* (2019), and *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022) contribute to this anthropology. They frame the city's history and identity at a level that is both granular and broad. Unlike conventional modes, these productions are accessible and of value to both the practice and the end user. The argument here is that historic knowledge gaps influence spatial practice and that specialist sources of knowledge have dominated grounded experience to the detriment of city planning and urban design. Hence, specialist sources need more insight in defining user needs in designed spaces. In response to limited specialist proficiency, *Urban Scripting* provides the platform to rectify this lack of understanding by examining 'activity street-making' processes.

Focusing on the urban's daily making places the African body centrally in spatial discourse. The body is the story content. The discourse is its expression. As a way of speaking and a way of seeing, its hybrid language joins frames and streets as units of analysis, which are structured by this city discourse. Streets convey a setting. Frames organize a critical, analytical, and decolonial discourse (Mistry & Sakota, 2017; Sendra, 2020). Together, story [organizational aspects] and discourse [expression elements] engage *Othered* voices to create experiential knowledge related to spaces operating as self-driven microenterprises shared between the public spheres. Such activity streets are necessary because "we need a variety of social [textures] as well as intellectual experiences they can uniquely offer" (Levitas, 1986:239). They enable people in relative precarity to access opportunities and connections otherwise unavailable and are windows to a city's multiplicity and difference (Rykwert, 1986; Sandercock, 2000; Scott & Storper, 2014). Streets are common ground for all dwellers, regardless of their perceived status. Therefore, recreating Egoli's history through subaltern stories redefines how the marginalized survival measures apply resilience and local dynamics to appropriate city spaces.

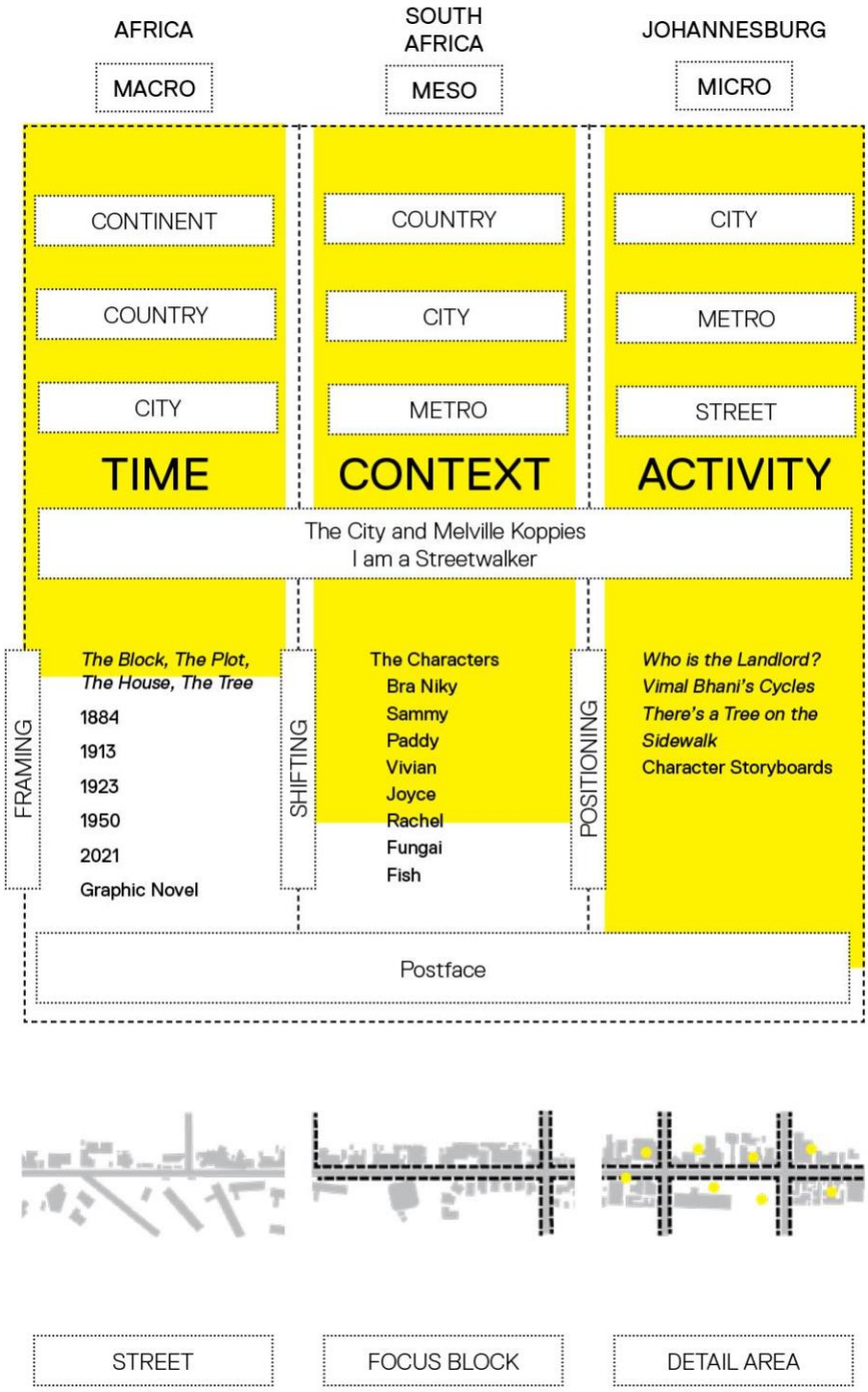


Figure 2.1 Scale Matrix

2.1.3 Everyday

Urban design is often criticized for being technicist and still influenced by modernist architectural and planning diagrams (McGrath, 2013). In South Africa, this influence is pronounced, where, before 1994, spatial practice was mandated to serve the apartheid

agenda (Findley & Ogbu, 2011). Consequently, “ways of thinking and forms of knowledge were subalternized by colonialism” (Harrison, 2006:320). Watson argues that this way of being can only be reversed by “planning beyond technocratic, corporatist notions, grounded in instrumental rationalism and often insensitive to context” (Watson, 2002:42). The scholars referenced above all point to the contestation of “Occidental rationality” and its “claim to a privileged access and truth” (Harrison, 2006:322). Therefore, the everyday can be considered a conflict between perceived modernity (bourgeois ideology) and outmoded tradition conflict (collaborative thinking). This Eurocentric logic, as seen in the Urban Design Institute of South Africa’s (UDISA) masterplan designs, which imposes order and favors a neoliberalist agenda. Furthermore, its rationality caters to developers of “luxury projects and upmarket areas” and *other implementers* such as the state (Schoulund & Landman, 2018:3). Cooke makes the point that while:

> “…the outskirts, the uncared-for interstices and the weak centres of our cities have changed drastically … By contrast, the situation at the top end of the market is [] healthy, where both government and private sector have cottoned onto the idea that good design is [a] good investment” (Cooke, 2008:1).

Since Cook made these observations, ‘the outskirts’ have grown significantly, thus deepening the local government’s struggles to keep up. Besides, the government has not been helped by private developers or designers who have “little to show in areas of real need – in low-income housing or in informal settlement upgrading” (Cooke, 2008:1). Even where there has been a collaboration between the state and private developers, the focus has been on luxury projects, which Southworth attributes to complex urban processes: “urban design undertaken in a context where the conscious design and management of the public realm does not feature on the agendas of cash-strapped, basic needs-focused local government” (Southworth, 2002:119). In pursuing a market-orientated agenda, this nature of practice fosters a corporate aesthetic primarily concerned with maximizing return for investors. It cannot deal with the *production of locality* (Appadurai, 2003), difference, and diversity (Watson, 2003). Disturbingly, current urban planning/design practice operates through a predominantly profit-driven agenda as “a contextually contingent *articulation* of free-market governmental practices with varied and often . . . illiberal forms of social and political rule” (Sparke, 2006:153). Witnessing the city’s present state, this approach favors forms displaying wealth and gentrification – in the Eurocentric gaze they symbolize progress. Regardless of the differentials in investment, these forms perpetuate the status quo’s imbalance.

According to Miraftab:

> "Critical to a discussion of citizen participation in the neoliberal era is the recognition of how neoliberalism, as a strongly ideological project, relies on legitimation and citizens' perception of inclusion to achieve hegemonic power. … Legitimation is central to hegemonic relations of power. … [and] seeks legitimation through governance that promotes political inclusion but avoids translating it into redistributive equity. Rather, neoliberalism's structures of inclusion and participation contain citizens' collective action into sanctioned spaces of invited citizenship" (Miraftab, 2009:33).

This neoliberal approach is a root cause of the continued production of space that is sanctioned by authorities, referred to Miraftab as 'invited spaces.' Contrary to 'invented spaces,' 'invited spaces' are designed by the city's agents and are unfit for a predominantly 'uninvited' subaltern. Based on an economic and ideological system of masculinity, private ownership, consumerism, and capitalism, the colonial thinking linked to Johannesburg's founding and apartheid amplification compounds matters (Beavon, 2004; Miraftab, 2009). Plus, the economic system's continuing pursuit of profit despite extreme and growing inequality further intensifies the problem faced by Johannesburg. Since its inception, the city has been shaped based on competition and an assumption that personal wealth is the center of social processes, coordination, and reality. The result of this vision is that the city is now one of the most unequal in the world. Against this backdrop, *I'm a Streetwalker* (2017) initiates concerns expounded in the graphic novel and the animation. All three, and the following formats, operate as an investigatory lens that speaks to the mediation materiality and ability to transform field engagement practice and, in so doing, decolonize the discipline.

Johannesburg simultaneously has some of the world's wealthiest and poorest individuals. Addressing this socio-economic disparity requires solutions prioritizing collective benefits and not individual monetary gains based on design unfit for purpose. Therefore, it necessitates a reframing ideology to guide the city on a different path and stimulate "…creative engagement with new ways of living together within the limited resources of an urbanized planet" (McGrath, 2013:9). By employing a transformative doctrine that is flexible in process embraces socio-economic and cultural community building and ecological inclusion, with multiple iterations, is required to reimagine and reorganize society (such as creating the animation and graphic novel – see CVF). Transformation and decolonization start with an alternative and radical vocabulary to understand and retell the everyday experience lived and

conveyed through story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Sandercock, 2000; Sandercock, 2003a; Sandercock, 2003b).

2.2 Contextualizing the City

> "The native should only be allowed to enter the urban areas, which are essentially the white man's creation, when he is willing to enter and to minister to the needs of the white man, and should depart therefrom when he ceases so to minister."
>
> Report of the Transvaal Local Government, 1921 (Chairman: Stallard) p13

2.2.1 Colonialism

Due to a legacy of segregation and inequality, the South African story is one of ideological imposition. In socially constructing the city to ensure access to beauty and resources for a minority group, colonial thinking caused dominant physical urban forms formalized by apartheid and geared towards capitalist profitability. Johannesburg's racist discourse emphasized settlement layouts that maximized profit based on 'a coercive labor system' (Lacey, 1981). In addition, spatial legislative bodies reinforced disparities by imposing perceived rationality from the early 20th century (Findley & Ogbu, 2011). Formulated in Britain, imported town planning schemes (Harrison et al., 2007) were supported by architecture's modernist reconstructionist thinking that sourced its ideology from the *Charte d'Athènes* (*Athens* Charter) manifesto published in 1939. The country's modernist patterns can be traced back to post-World War I "reconstruction thinking" (Bremner, 2010:10) and the import of Congrès Internationale d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) design ideas (1933), whose original visions cannot be further removed from the racial separation environment created in South Africa.

From the early 20th century, an ideological framework expressed by the Stallard Commission (1921) above created urban spaces with high degrees of separation between people of different races. With further limits, this ideology dictated where the respective races lived, worshiped, worked, learned, played, loved, and died. *Retelling Egoli* mitigates Johannesburg's founding discourse by operating at the social level to challenge more conventional expressions of urban spaces. Zooming in on the macro-meso-micro scale builds an understanding of the street's spatial logic and temporal realities (**Fig 2.2)**. As expressed in *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022:13), the Afrikaner-dominated National Party, which came into power in 1948, modified the modernist approach to implement its policies of racial segregation.

Consequently, “modern planning of South African cities was, from the start, divided against itself, foreclosing the possibility of single cities emerging” (Bremner, 2010:11). To social engineer life by manipulating land allocation and use countrywide, South Africa’s governing powers promulgated three legislative instruments. The tools were the *Natives Land Act* of 1913, *the Natives (Urban Areas) Act* of 1923, and the *Group Areas Act* of 1950, illustrated in *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022:6;8;15). After 1950, planners used these frameworks to make the city. Plus, their application resulted in planning that, on the one hand, was intended to enhance efficient urban management and, on the other, was an “… instrument for racial restructuring” (Bremner, 2010:11). Consequently, the modernist, rational, and technical model produced space, much of which still exists, that was color-coded, exclusive, highly regulated and controlled. Apartheid applied a programmatic approach based on modernist spatial theory to fulfill its reductionist social engineering agenda of separatism between servers and served (Todeschini & Dewar, 2013). Subsequently, South African cities developed a typical twin racialized form of white (‘boss’ and served) and black (‘servant’ and serving) (Thompson, 2001:200). The granting of full rights and access to whites and not to other population groups led to the development of cities, public spaces, and buildings with the “characteristic dual form” uniquely exaggerated in South Africa (Thompson, 2001:170).

As a result, cities developed through the above ideological framework consisted of artificially uneven spaces for *the served* and *the serving* races. This lop-sidedness expressed itself in many details of urban life, particularly in the layout and design of streets, using different imperatives and parameters defined by skin color. The ‘whites-only’ parts of the city, based mainly on the principle of a grid’s open access, were “a tool used to democratize land distribution” and define “the boundaries between private and public ownership” (Warah, 2013:3). Soweto’s – ***So***uth ***We***st ***To***wnships, (ranked 66 out of 250 things an architect should know (Sorkin, 2021)) – relation to the city is a prime example of this dual manifestation.



Figure 2.2 Fragmented City

Intentionally designed solely as a labor dormitory to house Johannesburg's black workforce, Soweto remains an isolated entity, separated by natural and lawfully manufactured barriers (referred to by the state as buffer zones) from its immediate and larger context. Its layout, optimized by a radial street pattern connected to a series of vacant hubs for policing, was planned as an outdoor panopticon for maximum surveillance to ensure swift, efficient, and controlling military operations. The legacy of Apartheid's morphological footprint, seen in *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022:23) 1991 timeframe, illustrates the relative population density between Alexandra (one of the poorest townships in South Africa), Soweto (the most significant black dormitory, serving as a workforce for Johannesburg), and Sandton (one of the wealthiest suburbs in Africa). Fig 2.2 shows how Alexandra's physical blueprint is situated as a racialized and classed geography at the edge of the city.

2.2.2 Capitalism



Figure 2.3 Twilight Sidewalk Bay

The development of South Africa's cities throughout the 20th century mirrored the extreme inequality imposed on its 'native' population. For example, many streets in the townships lack sidewalks, which in previously white-zoned areas are now used in multiple ways (**Fig. 2.3**).

As mentioned earlier, the Transvaal Republic set up structures to subjugate and force Black people into systems of cheap labor by deploying a pass system in 1866: “Any Black person found outside the allowed residential area without a Pass from an employer, a magistrate, missionary, field cornet or principal chief could be arrested” (SAHO, 2019). The government further deepened Nguni’s indignity and servitude to whiteness with the 1899 Regulations for Towns in the South African Republic (Transvaal). It “states that persons of colour were prohibited from walking on the side-walks (pavements) or stoeps serving as a side-walk on the streets of its towns” (SAHO, 2016). With so much of Johannesburg’s development based on these discriminatory laws, conditions continue to hinder African life on the city streets to this day. Unsurprisingly, streets display racially and politically distorted modernist diagrams favoring mechanized traffic over pedestrians. However, far from changing this, the South African democratic processes of urbanization ignore this aberration:

> “a pivotal element of this perverse continuation of a general settlement-making practice, which is entirely at odds with the clearly stated social policy shift towards democracy, is the reliance on a very questionable conceptualization of urban space. This is particularly the case in relation to movement channels” (Todeschini & Dewar (2004:1).

Todeschini and Dewar’s argument formulates the question: *what does democracy mean for city majorities*? The answer draws on Lefebvre’s (1996) concept of *the right to the city* to broaden the design process beyond the requirement for access by portraying a city that fully reflects its citizenry (Dagger, 1981; Abu-Lughod, 2008). First, it is a city made by the collective. Second, it allows inhabitants to participate centrally in the production of space with the right to appropriate spaces of their making (Lefebvre, 1991; 1996). Ultimately, gaining collective participation in city creation provides meaningful freedom to inhabitants and creates an ethical framework that is “common-to-all” (Carl, 2011:40). Contrary to Carl’s argument, the colonial pursuit of wealth exploited Africa and, in so doing, underdeveloped its potential (Rodney, 2018). Imperial extraction invented forms of subjugating Africans, and the legacy of other apartheid directives continues to be a yoke that restricts African potential. For example, the *Bantu Education Act* of 1953 (*Alexandra: A Backstory,* 2022:16) deliberately created detrimental disparity along racial lines by limiting formal education among Africans. Conceived by apartheid’s architect, Hendrik Verwoerd, Bantu Education prepared ‘native’ children for a future to serve the state’s manual labor system. The Act explicitly instructed Nguni people to accept being subservient to white people. Despite advances, Africans are still the racial group that has the weakest access to quality education. Apartheid legislation denied South Africa’s majority access to ethics and the right to make any claims to the city.

Here, ethics designates having a common purpose for the greater good of humanity and the planet with a moral dimension that applies Young's call for an:

> "…engagement in sympathy with the particular parties in a situation: it requires not principles that apply to all people in the same way, but a nuanced understanding of the particularities of the social context, and the needs particular people have and express within it" (Young, 2011:96).

In the South African case, this understanding is needed explicitly when victims of segregationist ideologies lack high levels of formal education. As expected, they form the bulk of the co-creator cohort in casework. And they are further marginalized by existing apartheid spatial divisions, which placed *bantfu* (co-scripters) in areas far removed from work opportunities. Subsequently, the marginalized have difficulty accessing and participating in 'formal' state employment structures. For them, street appropriation or sidewalk entrepreneurship acts as an entry point to (nonformal) income generation and is a means to keep extreme poverty at bay. On streets, these spaces express "Black Ingenuity" and agency, which Ernest Cole photographed to "examine the possibilities for Black cultural production while also mourning Apartheid's suffocation of such spaces" (Sanders, 2022:206). In this study, appropriated street spaces form socio-economic, cultural, and political production sites.

Portrayed in *I'm a Streetwalker* (2017), a local street representing many others across the city is used to critique the current city planning/design processes. Aesthetically, this street form answers Perec's (1974) call not to be too hasty in defining the city as it is much too big. Most likely, the definition offered will be wrong. Hence, examining citizens' socio-economic participation, appropriation, and improvisation aids in observing and performing to re-conceptualize the city's political and street ballet (Jacobs, 1961). As such, activity streets craft an articulate instrumentality shaping this study's visual discourse. Effectively, they create an ontological and epistemological argument visualizing this project's content with aim, objective, and purpose. Its subsequent claim ends in a plural spatial logic that fosters an "unstructured awareness of others" (Hillier & Hanson, 1984:23).

2.2.3 Apartheid

Globally, architecture and planning's complicity in the manifestation of social constructs has resulted in the inclusion and exclusion of people based on race (Cruz, 2009; Findley & Ogbu, 2011). However, as previously stated, this design practice built a vastly more imbalanced city landscape in South Africa due to the formalized exclusion of the majority. In portraying the

world, extending particular 'truths,' meaning is socially constructed (Lacey, 2009; Hall, 2013). And so, media abets the systemic perpetuation of white supremacy, guiding social constructions, which "by constantly using the white racial frame to interpret social relations and integrating new bits, whites reinscribe the frame ever deeper" (DiAngelo, 2018:34). This supremacy manifests as a political, legal, economic, and cultural system where whites hold material resources, maintain spatial domination, and retain authority (Ansley, 1989; Feagin, 2013; DiAngelo, 2018). Although South Africa is politically free of the previous regime's white supremacy, and legally its dominance has been diluted, white supremacy remains firmly established in material and spatial terms.

Besides, structurally, South Africa continues to apportion more opportunities to some merely because they are globally considered *better people* (Said, 1979; Biko, 2017; DiAngelo, 2018:34) and possess supposedly superior values, culture, and literary texts (Lacey, 2009). Egoli's spatial logic illustrates how South African mindsets, which, like in America, still "regards whites as superior in terms of culture and achievement and views people of color as generally of less socio-economic, and political consequence" (DiAngelo, 2018:34) dominate design imperatives. At the same time, and as illustrated in the graphic novel panels, the city is an agglomeration of production, wealth, and population – a "center of technical, cultural, and social innovation" (Storper & Scott, 2016:3). However, Egoli's means of production and ownership are still skewed and reflect the apartheid framework intention: that of engaging Africans as labor supplying largely white-owned production sites. Likewise, the apartheid project, with no consideration for the Nguni way of life, splintered contexts and favored car-centric streets to impose order, thereby denying other dwelling forms (Todeschini & Dewar, 2013). One result of this bias is a disjuncture between how epistēmē (scientific knowledge) and technē (knowledge of craft) understand urban space, compared to phronēsis (ethical knowledge) and its actual use within the city.

As to the South African context, Pieterse links phronēsis to "ideas rooted in a language and sensibility for ethical judgment" (Pieterse, 2021:194). Extending Pieterse's claims implies the inclusion of user voices in Johannesburg, South Africa, and wider sub-Saharan Africa. Unfortunately, South Africa's post-independence context continues to display elite power dominance associated with top-down approaches to urban change, further cementing the white racial frame of privilege. On the one hand, intensifying phronēsis mitigates rising levels of urban unemployment by prompting the state to promote self-driven entrepreneurship. On the other hand, it asks what urban spatial practice can contribute to citizen activism. Both call for fostering an enabling environment to offer sites of urban imbrication (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008), strengthening micro businesses, and a sense of identity and belonging. This requires

“the full participation and inclusion of everyone in a society’s major institutions, and the socially supported substantive opportunity for all to develop and exercise their capacities and realize their choices” (Young, 1990:173).

Fieldwork Notes (2018) describe the actions and actors Young (2011) alludes to above, and *Calibrating Stories* (2022+) collages zoom into their illustrative contexts. In effect, shifting and positioning use the research questions to frame the proposition’s call to include *Othered* voices, and panels and frames engage the viewer’s curiosity. Involving marginalized actors stimulates different urban dialogues and enhances what Harrison posits is a “recovery of subalternised knowledge . . . [that] . . . is potentially critical to the construction of other ways of thinking” (Harrison, 2006:324). Given this, integrating the people who live and perform the actions begins to tackle the current challenges of widening inequality and increasing poverty. Currently, reducing high unemployment is essential in addressing unequal societies like South Africa. Hall (2012:13) argues that “policy formations regarding social, economic and cultural forms of belonging” are elementary to any solution. Dewar and Uytenbogaardt support this by noting:

> “The primary way in which a plan should” allow otherness “is to ensure sufficient intensity to generate a vibrant local market; provide a clear, easily readable spatial structure which unambiguously suggests major movement channels and places of gathering (and thus patterns of accessibility); and allow entrepreneurs to respond to these” (Dewar & Uytenbogaardt, 1995:52).

If these arguments are valid, South Africa’s mounting unemployment levels indicate that government policy is ill-suited to the country’s socio-economic and cultural realities or that policy is not being appropriately instituted. Additionally, the arguments firmly push the protagonists to find methods of mitigating apartheid formations, contest neoliberalism, and foster places of non-racialism. This is a call to open tomorrow’s city to all its inhabitants.

2.3 Reading the Street

2.3.1 Top-Down + Bottom-Up

With several elements, an activity street, beyond its role as a transport or access route, enables work and dwelling opportunities. Its terrain provides a solid platform to explore planning’s communicative practice. For this reason, Johannesburg’s streets are a fertile palimpsest for examining everyday life. Likewise, the city’s “African metropolis” (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008:1) offers a rich resource to uncover case studies to challenge apartheid’s segregationist footprint. Where its surfaces, textures, imprints, sounds, and flows can be

analyzed to expose the fractures between professional expertise and user know-how rooted in a range of features expressed by street-level operations. These ground procedures relate to scanning ecological functions determined and measured by the performance of dominant activities (Whyte, 1980; Moughtin, 2003). Reading highlights causes and consequences concerning marginalized realities and positions these as practical and essential knowledge when considering the "spatiality of the city" (Pieterse, 2013:27).

Studying the city requires characterizing the last five decades of urban planning as two critical trends of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up,' which are "at odds with one another" (Pissourios, 2014:84). Pissourios notes that although there have been changes to planning processes, these have yet to address the polar rationalities of the top-down/bottom-up binary model. He argues that one favors a "tendency towards centralism and de-politicizing decision-making as well as increasing the role and power of technical experts" (Pissourios, 2014:84). By contrast, the other demands "more participation in decision-making, a call for more accountability on the part of local politicians and officials and increasing criticism of technical expertise" (Pissourios, 2014:84). Continuing with this line of thought, Johannesburg's state power, administered by its agents, envisions *what should be* and reflects a top-down imposition contrasted by an individual bottom-up agency, extracted from street work (Lindell, 2019) and represents *what is* (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008; Jenkins, 2013). A new planning approach is required to address this binary by combining the often-contradictory perspectives. To create a shared understanding, this methodology must potentiate urban space design that fulfills the needs and desires of those who use it and makes more efficient use of financial and other government resources. The merging of ***down/should*** and ***up/is*** perspectives engage Cullen's (1973) serial vision as an analytical method to evaluate current experiences and to inform alternative images of ***what could be*** depicted in *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) and *Calibrating Stories* (2022+) collages.

Based on *what is*, this compositing is achieved by extending Rose's compositional argument that "refers to the specific material qualities of an image . . . it draws on . . . formal strategies: content, colour and spatial organization" (Rose, 2016:25). It counters colonial and apartheid storylines that constructed social realities and shaped urban knowledge influencing the imagining and production of the current context. Nature, labor, and instruments (technology and expertise) constitute forces of production (Lefebvre, 1991) which in South Africa remain defined mainly by a Eurocentric capitalist agenda that pursues wealth for some by exploiting ***Others***. A modernist-influenced lens fashioned a particular image of the city, reflecting some (minority) and not others (majority), thereby promoting land control (Sihlongonyane, 2015; Snell, 2016). Inevitably, its ideology created spaces ill-suited to the city's needs. Exploring

this reading of the street, *Retelling Egoli* argues that spaces ought to be the product of user-driven needs. To investigate this concept of creative reimaging, Mehta proposes a different picture of the city. *Retelling Egoli'*s image has primarily linguistic origins and allows current and future users to supersede the state and its agents' imagination. And it starts with metaphors on the politics of a situated being and belonging, discussed through forensic and empirical exploration.

Saying several things simultaneously (**Fig. 2.4**) validates its existence based on assessing and interpreting field observations vis-à-vis human needs, preferences, and behavior (Mehta, 2006). Political debate is critical to this study because it concerns divergent urban dwellers whose rationalities exceed modernist diagrams of control. This wisdom, according to Scott and Storper, extends "…far beyond the domain of the city in the strict sense, for it reaches down into the very core of social life where the basic mechanisms of injustice, inequality, political oppression and other major causes of inequality and unrest reside" (Scott & Storper, 2014:13). In 'post'-colonial and 'post'-apartheid Johannesburg, this observation is a pillar for the argument regarding *what should be* versus *what is* and *can be*. And so, *Retelling Egoli* semiotically provokes a potential future. Inasmuch as its mise en scène mitigates the top-down/ bottom-up disjunction and enables "for dynamic and unstable interpretations to emerge, which connect with the broader discussion regarding the decolonization of images and image-making" (Mistry & Sakota, 2017:118). This approach is central to this study and identifies the discordance between what the state thinks *should be* and *what is* on the ground.

2.3.2 Domination

Simone and Pieterse (2017) highlight the gap's discord as the deep friction accompanying a period when dissonance prevails. Understanding lived realities to inform better image creation requires engagement with different languages (Sandercock, 2003b; Sihlongonyane, 2022), connecting with other ways of being with varied social norms. Mehta argues that to do this takes scholarship that "categorically addresses the street as a setting for social behavior, covering in detail the typology of social behaviors [providing] detailed tools to create sociable streets based on grounded empirical research" (Mehta, 2014:3). This argument opposes forms of representation drawn from a legacy of colonialism and apartheid (Sihlongonyane, 2015). Critically, these observations indicate the magnitude of the rift between institutional understanding and street reality addressed through calibrating an educational (epistēmē), practical (technē), and ethical (phronēsis) foundation to break the structures that contribute to a knowledge disjuncture. Accepting that the colonial legacy endures, it requires little to

justify that a rethink of approaches is needed to *come to grips* with “the chain of upheavals and tribulations, instabilities, fluctuations and ruptures of all sorts that make up the fundamental experiences of African societies” (Mbembe and Roitman,1995:324).

Framing this claim against the Nguni condition, it is essential to return to Pieterse’s caution against an “over-reliance on Western-derived theoretical frameworks” and heed his call for “a much more layered theoretical [and practical] framework that can foreground the specificity of spatial practices in our diverse cities and towns” (Pieterse, 2013:28). This appeal disrupts Euro-American narratives that perpetuate worldviews that are incongruent with and seek to erase local practices. It positions measures to fend off Eurocentric canons that continue ignoring required knowledges, values, and agency, pushing back against what Squire et al. (2014) argue are master narratives that see life through lenses that promote specific ways of relating to the world and ‘fixing problems’ through storytelling directives. Likewise, DiAngelo asserts that dominant viewpoints structure a “white racial frame” (DiAngelo, 2018:34), a term coined by sociologist Joe Feagin (2013) to describe the positioning of privilege, superiority, and supremacy, along with the circulation and reinforcement of racial messages by whites (DiAngelo, 2018:34) (Feagin, 2013). According to DiAngelo, “bits,” which are “pieces of cultural information – images, stories, interpretations, omissions, silences…” (DiAngelo, 2018:34) – that inform communication lines traversing time and space, structure the white racial frame. In South Africa, the *frame*’s *bits* are rooted in the social constructs of the apartheid era and continue to shape realities. These *bits* influence narratives from the academy to the profession to mainstream culture and back to the academy, forming an insular and self-perpetuating cyclical loop.

Affecting spatial practice, these *bits* create languages that rely on *recognized and approved* knowledge sets with residues of control (Sihlongonyane, 2015). As argued in the problem statement, mitigating this discord with existing research prerogatives and analytical tools is unlikely to be effective. Therefore, the embedded technical knowledge is particularly complex and estranged from most of the street’s inhabitants. According to Janz: “To use the tools of recovery that the West has used may not be all that useful when dealing with a tradition that draws on other versions of the refrain, more overtly related to the auditory” (Janz, 2002:15). Consequently, *Urban Scripting* uses different engagement techniques. Rather than using legacies dictated by outside values, its aural and visual refrains propagate the right to narrate (Bhabha, 1994) from the inside. Telling from the inside intermeshes knowledge of identity and belonging and how they express ancestry, tradition and modernity, song and language, images and signs.

Such an approach to seeing and making the urban intersects ideas of place, housing, employment, subsistence requirements, and political voice with the importance of language and culture (Hall et al., 2013). Constructing meaning through procedures from within, new languages examine other claims to the city; they interrogate the dominant legal and narrative tools which fail to acknowledge the voices and interests of the *Others* who inhabit the city (Mitchell, 2003). Its vocabulary emphasizes that the best way to see is to listen as a necessary action to recognize the city's practical large-scale/micro development dynamics. Conceptually, this frames the study's core, arguing that active listening leads to *rethinking processes for imagining and understanding the socio-spatial functionality of the street.* Due to the restrictions explained above, the successful creation of streets encounters many challenges, to the extent that the 'activity' envisioned by designers often clashes with or is directly opposed to what users want and need. The harmonious appropriation of space must be encouraged, and users' current and historical needs must be understood if the activity street of the future is to succeed.

2.4 Locating the Case Study Areas

2.4.1 Opposites in a Perpetual Dance

As a crucial societal structuring element (Lynch, 1975; Kostof, 1991; Jacobs, 1995) promoting socio-economic and cultural exchange (Jacobs, 1961; Hall, 2012; Mehta, 2014), streets can create 'better' public space. Streets emphasize the importance of vital urban qualities such as space, a sense of place, choice, convenience, and opportunity (Dewar & Uytenbogaardt, 1995; Fyfe, 1998; Dover & Massengale, 2014). Activity streets are essential public spaces for all residents' vibrant lives, whether economic, social, or cultural (Gehl & Gemzoe, 1996; Moughtin, 2003; Lindell, 2019). Therefore, across multiple scales, streets are the city's heartbeat. In cities like Johannesburg, activity streets have even greater importance, as they are the lifeblood that sustains a high proportion of the majority, both providers and consumers. However, assessing this dynamic appropriation and its influence on space using conventional mapping methods such as traffic counts and other quantitative data fails to capture the nuances necessary to design for it, especially in the marginalized areas that have significantly transformed the city.



Figure 2.4 Urban Scripting Scales

As a metaphorical and literal representation of the right to a city, the street is “a pluralistic cultural, social, economic and political space – ambiguous, ever-changing, interactive, full of complexities and contradictions, and with diverse meanings for all” (Mehta, 2014:1). It is essential to memory, imagining, and reimagining, and to reflect plurality (Mehta, 2014). The street is a space that visualizes daily phenomena, where the divergent relational rationalities of the individual and community, state and citizens, private and public, can be observed. To detect, the project maps street relations from the continent, country, city, and suburb to the person and the tree on the sidewalk (**Fig. 2.4**). Being a site of social and political encounters, the street portrayed in *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) is both the result of and a source of epistemic learning and exchange; a site of and for dreams, pain, fantasies, sustainable obsessions, myths, and requirements (Bhabha, 1983). *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) examine its micro-architecture’s capacity to instill ownership and amplify belonging.

Representing the city, streets construct spatial and temporal realities where all essential drivers of urbanism, location, land uses, and human interactions are on open display (but sometimes unseen). Rapid urbanization, escalating inequality, and high levels of unemployment have seen streets utilized for dynamic forms of occupancy. With marginal groups capitalizing on high pedestrian flows, activity streets have become self-driven entrepreneurial spaces, displaying various types of work and constantly transforming the city (Lindell, 2019). On this account, to gauge street performance, casework builds up an image rooted in empathy and ethics along three axes:

- One – indicates spatial activities as vibrancy that adds value to and is a product of social, cultural, and economic exchange.
- Two – examines a set of opposites in a perpetual dance of people and space, word and image, photograph and drawing, still and moving picture, inertia and movement, inside and outside, surface and activity, street and vibrancy, which combine into audio-visual texts.
- Three – forge alliances with inside knowledge and outside expertise to bring subaltern voices to the fore.

These axes shift the perspective of the hitherto marginalized from one that is *Othered* to one that is integrated and belongs by giving *Other* reality agency. Critically, the objective is to stimulate a move towards an active co-production of more efficient (effective) symbolic or material street realities. This practice method is *Urban Scripting.*

2.4.2 Building Up a City Image

According to Hillier and Hanson, “Spatial order is one of the most striking means by which we recognize […] the cultural differences between one social formation and another, that is, differences in the ways in which members of those societies live out and reproduce their social existence” (Hillier & Hanson, 1984:27). Cities are spatial phenomena with geometries that facilitate access, encounters, and knowledge transfer. As Hillier and Hanson argue, strong ties exist between people, space, and culture. Hence streets play two seminal roles at any given time and place: as a form, they structure the city, and as a space, they represent distinctive social relations. Two locations provide insight into a city’s daily making and offer opportunities to learn from entrepreneurs who respond to space and movement. Under redevelopment, linked to the (Transport) Corridors of Freedom or Inner-City Managed

Lanes[11] project, they offer an excellent prospect to relate ongoing planning/design processes to actual realities.

The 'Corridors of Freedom' project is a strategic series of transport arteries linked to mixed-use development nodes with higher-density accommodation and supposedly geared to inclusion and equity. At the time of the casework, the City of Joburg's official website stated that in a move to provide high-quality, safe, accessible, affordable, and environmentally friendly public transport, the city would conduct a feasibility study on managed lanes in several inner-city streets. Managed lanes were to prioritize public transport and pedestrians. According to the Mayoral Committee Member for Transport, Councilor Christine Walters, ease of movement for residents was a crucial part of the City's Growth and Development Strategy 2040 (GDS 2040). She said this prompted the development of the Corridors of Freedom, multimillion-rand investments in cycling and pedestrian lanes, and the Rea Vaya bus rapid transit (BRT) system extension. Also, the City's Transport Department noted some of the advantages of managed lanes are higher travel speeds, which reduces time spent on the road; greater access to work and leisure centers; efficient use of resources; on-time performance and reliability and improved air quality and decreased greenhouse gas emissions associated with traffic congestion. So, the two portions along the corridor provide access to different activities representing typical city extremes. Fittingly, Reverend Sam Buti Street in Alexandra Township was ultimately allowed to become a disordered and squalid dormitory for Africans during the dying years of apartheid. By contrast, Louis Botha Avenue is in the previously white-only middle-class suburb of Orange Grove. It has been subject to significant city investment and change, much of which postdates apartheid.

Image creation requires hearing to adjust tone and timbre, silence and noise, and resonance and vibration. Serving to entertain, educate, and inform, street "Stories contain knowledge readily put to use in the world …" and "do not simply contain knowledge; they are … the knowledge …" (Webster & Mertova, 2007:20). In storytelling, the conjunction of 'story' and 'telling' demonstrates various associations between story as a medium for telling and the telling of story as a medium. And so, storytelling merges knowledge types based on analytical *scientific reasoning (epist*ēmē), *practical craft know-how* (technē), and *ethical wisdom* (phronēsis) (Aristotle, 1999) to interpret and disseminate existing street dynamics.

[11] http://www.joburg.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10163:call-for-public-comment-on-inner-city-managed-lanes&catid=88:news-update&Itemid=266

Also, storytelling offers an understanding of visible and invisible networks and how their underlying forces might develop.

2.4.3 Inside

'Narrating from the inside' reveals personal descriptions and meanings jointly made with the people living the activities (Geertz, 1973). Merging technologies create critical accounts that recognize the importance and relevance of an expanded understanding of a knowledge-making process. Field procedures embody knowing through immersion. Experiential learning (Sandercock, 2003a; Pieterse, 2021) starts with walking and talking to establish the politics of *kwatingekulalela* (knowing by listening) and/or *kwati ngekululekwa*, which one is not merely listening but willing to take advice, examined in greater detail in Chapter 5. Speaking from the inside enables locals to directly inform state-led urban planning/design initiatives. Turning to narrative, these stories reveal truths about human experience so the three protagonists can look, listen, see, and hear subaltern voices.[12] NgeSiswati, *kuva* means to hear. *Kuva* signifies feeling, as in *kuva buhlungu* (feeling or experiencing pain). Although the project emphasizes 'hearing' as one of its pillars, 'listening' is just as necessary, if not more so. To hear begins the journey of decolonizing the mind and seeing spaces anew because the existing street type, structured by strict land-use zoning, appears diverse and displays a seemingly ordered but engaging form of street life. Although the street-type principles are noble, they fail to align with local African understandings and 21st century realities, which clash with predetermined activity and impose fixed behavior codes (Janz, 2002). As a result, a Euro-American perspective supported by modernist design continues to prevail in South Africa:

> "Starkly, since 1994, with the transition to democracy, the operative paradigm informing settlement making in the 'New South Africa hardly changed from the modernist, mechanistic, reductionist and functionalist town planning conception. Which apartheid ideology found so suited to its ends in the 'old South Africa.'" (Todeschini & Dewar, 2013:94).

Much of the planned/designed public space provision in South African cities since 1994 – while explicitly focused on remembrance of apartheid and its demise – has often been implicitly inflected with 'world city' aspirations, if not as political imagination, at least in design

[12] A composite inspired by Stimela's *Look, Listen and Decide* (1986) album.

terms (Noble, 2011). For Johannesburg, the desire for 'world-class city' status fails to create a sustainable environment, let alone a dignified spaces program that places people at its center. Likewise, it fails to cater to the needs of the African majority looking for opportunities in Egoli, the City of Gold (Friedmann, 2011). Absent in the design process are the inputs that provide for "a much-needed African perspective on urban form" (Laburn-Peart, 2002:268). Hence, narrowing the gap between top-down and bottom-up realities requires mutual understanding (Soja, 2010), achieved by marginalized voices telling their experiences and a sincere emphasis on listening to them. Subsequently, *Urban Scripting* connects the state and the user by contextualizing the activity street and presenting its inherent knowledge using the communication tools most effective for the subject.

Sharon argues that attentive listening to stories is a "quality that seems … important for considering ethical relations across difference, and ultimately for relations of justice" (Sharon, 2002:405). Thus, listening to *Others*, identifying with their realities, and comprehending their strains, predicaments, and needs necessitates active and empathetic listening. This understanding of human experiences is especially so in a context such as Johannesburg, where the role of the majority was (and largely remains) to serve as cheap, silent labor, simply a tool, "that *thing that is, but only insofar as it is nothing*" (Mbembe, 2015: vii). *Retelling Egoli* turns to the street to hear the voices, which "are the most immediate and ubiquitous public spaces that support myriad cultural, economic, political and social activities . . . Looking at the street, then is also looking at the city . . . from the viewpoint of the pedestrian" (Mehta, 2014:1). Seeing the city this way reflects and re-conceptualizes it from the inside and allows for "reflexive interpretation" (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2007:238). This reflexive interpretation indicates "the open play of reflection across various levels of interpretation" (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2007:248). It is perceived using Clegg and Hardy's (1996:4) definition of "ways of seeing which act back on and reflect existing ways of seeing" (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2007:248) and achieved by formulating a composite along various points during the making process. An example of this reflexive interpretation occurs on the street and in multiple screenings (see **5.5 Points of View**). As a deduction, intuitive interpretation emphasizes the development of the shared language and its potentialities and capacities of understanding.

Cullen's (1973) and Mehta's (2014) argument of looking at the city from the pedestrian viewpoint is extended by applying Alvesson and Sköldberg's (2007) reflexive concepts, beginning from a relational aspect of the inside and reflecting by pointing out the local context. To make informed decisions concerning interventions that sustain dynamic life, urban practitioners must first see through listening to effectively communicate everyday

challenges. A different picture must reflect ALL global South urbanity to be fully represented. Diverse languages need to be considered, heard, and interpreted by the state to make meaning, promoting a sense of belonging (Soja, 2010). Creating a sense of being redresses the physical imprints of the apartheid regime and initiates ways of addressing complexity and including *Other* values when making urban form.

2.4.4 Alexandra: Reverend Sam Buti Street

Alexandra (Alex) Township and its relationship to Joburg is critical to this research study, and the data collected on the two streets illustrates the connection. Louis Botha Avenue links Alex (one of the oldest townships in South Africa) with the Johannesburg CBD, and Orange Grove forms a mid-point. The township streets are numerical, with 'streets' bearing east-west and 'avenues' south-north. Sam Buti Street's east-west axis ("*the line*") (Brown, 2016:79) splits the township into two north and south portions (**Fig. 2.5**). Its perpendicular streets form a west-to-east sequence between 1st and 20th Avenue, which starts at its intersection with Old Johannesburg Road (now Louis Botha Avenue) at Pan Africa Mall and ends at the Jukskei River, which measures 1906 meters. Casework examines a 1090-meter portion, starting from 1st Avenue at Pan Africa Mall and ending at 12th Avenue, the Alexan Kopano Educational Trust, and the public square. After the terrain's gold mining potential was recognized, the burgeoning settlement's dusty *veld* grassland landscape slowly transformed into an urban forest. In 1905 Herbert Papenfus bought the Cyferfontein 2 farmland. His initial plan was to sell pieces of the land and set up a 'European' suburb. 1910 brought into being the Union of South Africa, despite the strong objections of the Black community excluded from constitutional proceedings.

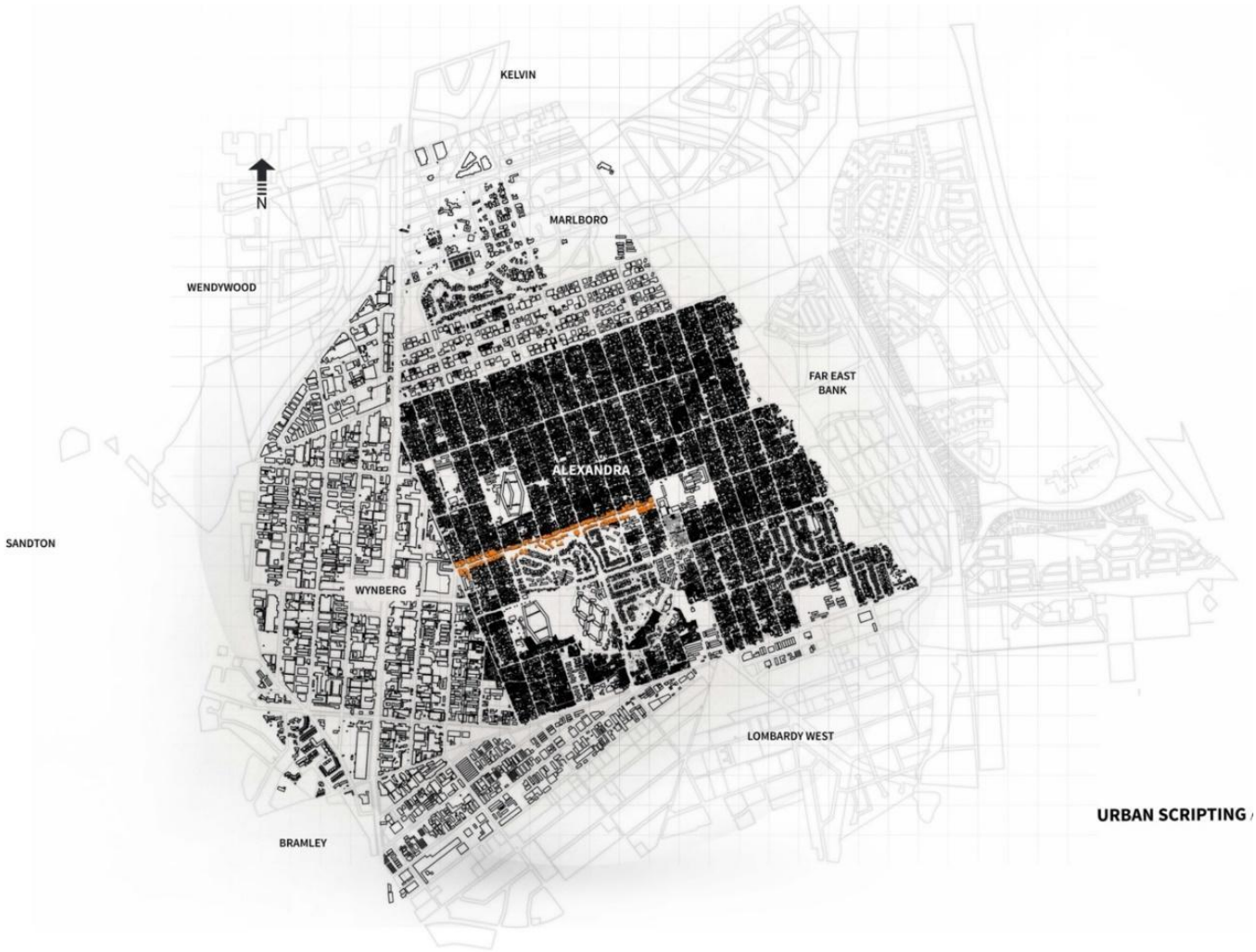


Figure 2.5 Alexandra's Small Grain Texture of Built and Unbuilt Urban Form

With minimal demand for the land by white buyers, Papenfus resurveyed the ground in 1911 and subdivided it into blocks measuring 304,2m by 91m – this resulted in a total of 2,308 plots measuring 46,5m by 25,5m (1185,75sqm). Each Alexandra block is slightly bigger than those in Orange Grove and consists of two rows of eleven properties. Using a relative, Stephanus Papenfus, as an agent, he sold plots of land to Africans and Coloreds under freehold title (Bonner & Nieftagodien, 2016). *Alexandra: A Backstory*'s panels represent these elements of Alexandra's foundation. Alexandra and Orange Grove were laid out when motorized transport became more widely available in the early 20th century as families from all over South Africa, seeking work in Johannesburg, moved into the area. Housing development accelerated after the Land Act of 1913 came into force: it caused an exodus of Africans, dispossessed of their mainly arable and pastoral land, to industrial areas. Known as the Free State law – the new statute was a system "to destroy of African traditionalism" (Lacey, 1981:19 referencing Welsh, 1972:37) – which Sol Plaatje wrote "makes it illegal for

Natives to live on farms except as servants in the employ of Europeans" (Lacey, 1981:18). Alexandra's genesis during this period makes it one of Johannesburg's oldest 'Black Townships.' Situated 12 kilometers from the Johannesburg city center, Alexandra is a neighbor to Sandton City – now one of Africa's wealthiest business precincts. Consequently, the land which it occupies holds high potential monetary value yet is occupied by some of the city's poorest. Selbourne Street was officially renamed Reverend Sam Buti Street on 25 October 2008 (news24, 25 October 2008). Ordained ironically by the Dutch Reformed Church, Buti was an anti-apartheid activist and founder of the successful Save Alex Campaign who was controversially elected Mayor of Alexandra in the 1980s (CoJ, 2022).

A crucial connection, the street is a diverse, vibrant, and lively mixed-use area embodying a typical manifestation of the continuous daily space-making in South Africa. These are spaces of unremitting fluidity and visible 'messiness' continuously transformed into multiple expressions of unanticipated forms and uses by street users. This fluidity conflicts with the street as a space due to its flawed design and imposed structural limitations. The colossal pressures of everyday life give rise to the myriad of street uses, and voices of the street, in *Urban Scripting* casework, are heard from the perspective of users engaging in unregulated enterprises. Utilizing Third Cinema and Cinéma verité theories and processes makes these voices audible in various fieldnotes, in *Alex Soundscape* (2019) and *a tree trailer* (2019). Plagued by the high unemployment rate and limited options, people in Alexandra occupy sidewalk spaces for economic survival. Since Papenfus's sub-divisions and the Land Act of 1913, Sam Buti Street has experienced various innovative, responsive, and pragmatic actions that have generated, defined, and granted agency to Alex. Practicing citizen insurgency, activists defy state regulation and declare their right to the city (Holston, 1998; Sandercock, 1998; Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 2009; Miraftab, 2009).

2.4.5 Orange Grove: Louis Botha Avenue

Orange Grove, a suburb of Johannesburg, straddles one of Johannesburg's oldest roads, Louis Botha Avenue (Chipkin et al., 2016). As a transport route, the Louis Botha corridor predates the city of Johannesburg. In 1876 it was a wagon track linking the farms south of the Witwatersrand ridge with the Transvaal Republic's capital, Pretoria, in the north (Thompson, 2001; Chipkin et al., 2016). According to Smith (1971), Lemoen *Plass* (Orange Farm) was formally established as Orange Grove in 1889, when the traffic flow between the burgeoning mining town and the capital had increased substantially. Around 1904 the area may have been briefly known as Alexandra or Alexandria Estate (Smith, 1971; Chipkin et al., 2016). In 1917 it was named after General Louis Botha, an ally of Jan Smuts, the first Prime

Minister of the Union of South Africa (Smith, 1971). The corridor now links Hillbrow (high-density 'flatland' apartments) and Alex (high-density shack land). It neither penetrates the old city center of downtown Johannesburg nor the new center of Sandton City. Also, the area became a well-known rest point for those who traveled between the two centers, with a supporting hotel named Orange Grove. It provided middle-class residents a residential area offering a hybrid town and country lifestyle.

In April 1904, the African Realty Trust took over the land, and in October of the same year, the site was surveyed and laid out as 89 blocks measuring 62,96m x 188m, which contained 450 plots measuring 31,48mx15,74m. It was named 'Orange Grove' after the local hotel (Chipkin et al., 2016). Because of the avenue's slightly different alignment 'line,' compared to the area's other north-south avenues, its blocks show a 62,96m frontage to Louis Botha with varying plot sizes. The more standard inner residential blocks, conforming to parallel streets and perpendicular avenues, have a length of 188,89m and fit two rows of 10 plots. Orange Grove's plots conform to the design layout devised for Johannesburg's Randjeslaagte village between 19th October and 9th November 1886 (Shorten, 1970; Beavon, 2004). According to Shorten (1970), de Villiers suggested that plots have a frontage of 60 (Cape) feet[13] (18,89m), a depth of 100 to 120 (Cape) feet (31,48—37,78m) accompanied by a major or minor road reserve ranging between 70 and 75 (Cape) feet (22,04—23,61m). However, instead of the 60 by 100 (Cape) feet envisaged by de Villiers, the government ordered that sub-divisions or plots measure 50 by 50 (Cape) feet (15,74m by 15,74m) (Shorten, 1970:87). Much of Johannesburg and the surrounding areas stands laid out in the late 19th and early 20th century (such as Orange Grove) have a similar 15,74—18,89m frontage with a 31,48m depth. Now reduced to a transport corridor, the route has changed from multifunctional to monofunctional use as part of the Corridor of Freedom Project (CoF).

[13] A Cape foot is a length equal to 0.3148584 meters.



Figure 2.6 Orange Grove's Texture

The above figure shows Orange Grove's medium grain texture of built and unbuilt urban form. Before being monofunctional, Louis Botha was a microcosm of Johannesburg – a linear 'high-street' strip for car-fixated Johannesburg – with spaces of serendipity, uncertainty, and surprises such as bars, movie houses, department stores, and the roadside eatery 'Doll House.' From high-density inner-city living in Berea/Hillbrow to the pubs and clubs off-the-street in Orange Grove to the hardware and light industry in Balfour Park and the industrial area of Wynberg, the avenue accommodates a range of building scales and typologies. These range from high-density flats to suburban bungalows, street shopfronts, shopping centers, and retail sheds. Consequently, the street creates opportunities for diverse urban lifestyles and economies, such as bars and clubland, street life and nightlife, fried chicken shops, and now too, informal traders around the Balfour Park area. The casework illustrates this in the Macro Mapping Fieldwork Notes (2017+), where Louis Botha threads its way from the inner city to the northern periphery.

Linking two peripheries, the Louis Botha Avenue of today comprises hustlers, streetwalkers, and traders; it is forever the street of invisible and illicit economies. This texture is captured in

the *Orange Grove* images in *Fieldwork Notes* Booklet (2017+), *Sidewalk Braai I* (2018), and *Sidewalk Braai II* (2021). The roads of Orange Grove are numerical – the 'streets' bear east-west, and 'avenues' lie south-north. This pattern splits the suburb into two portions on either side of Louis Botha's south-north axis, "*the line*" (Brown, 2016:79) (**Fig. 2.6**). Its boundary identifies the 'street blocks' in Louis Botha. The perpendiculars to Louis Botha start at 1st Street and end at 17th Street, measuring 1289 meters. The suburb has 17 blocks on the east side of Louis Botha and ten on the west. The section selected for the case study is between 7th Street and Garden Road, which measures 1050 meters. The street's top-down projection of '*what should be*' manifests in the state-driven condition expressed in Louis Botha's re-realization as a transport corridor. Its conception and design as a mobility corridor promote spatial processes that are removed from what the street was and mainly cater to urban neoliberalism (Parnell & Robinson, 2012). This renewed city vision has detrimental local micro-level consequences, such as Fish's Chicken Dust outlet capitalizing on a sidewalk bay (see **Fig. 2.3** and **Fig. 2.7**). This detriment is also evident in an example of the study's casework by Bhanis Cycles[14] in Orange Grove; crippled by the masterplan, the local merchants cannot actively appropriate the sidewalk due to the rigidness of *what should be.*

Louis Botha's role is duplicitous in its current condition. On the one hand, it shows significant state investment to construct a particular image. On the other hand, it is an image of everyday ordinariness. However, crucially, even though the pictures exist side by side, they are at odds with each other due to a conflict caused by the divergence between *what should be* and *what is*.





[14] Bhanis Cycles (2019) tells the story of Vimal and his family, who owns a Louis Botha Avenue bicycle shop. Unfortunately, their business suffered due to the City's initiative because what was once pedestrian-friendly has shifted to favor vehicular mobility.

Figure 2.7 Sidewalk Bay

2.5 Gathering the Evidence

2.5.1 Observing

According to Harrison, “Johannesburg’s planners and city authorities have struggled … to deal with the complex, largely hidden, network of informal rules, rationalities and desires that structure the lives of ordinary citizens in the city” (Harrison, 2006:322). His argument underscores this project’s aim of establishing a common language between the city, its agents, and end-user actors. Contrary to normative methods, by nature technicist and rational, the language’s foundation for reading sites uses audio-visual storytelling forms as an alternate approach. To mitigate the struggles Harrison alludes to, site readings imagine to then create South African urban spaces that meet their users’ real needs. Legitimate stories, or lessons, combine traditional and contemporary narrative methods to define and express user reality. These narrations go beyond the individual body to convey the conditions under which those who occupy the ‘twilight zone’ in the South African urban context live and work to avoid complete poverty. These stories focus on street entrepreneurs whose small enterprises serve an organic, ever-changing marketplace. Rooted in anti-colonial and anti-racist discourse, the study argues that historical gaps between different frames of perception and knowledge significantly and negatively influence the city-making process in South Africa.

Applying a storytelling-led approach to shift the dominant focus frame and contribute to bridging that gap between the urban design profession and the user is reflected in ineffective urban planning and design realities. For framing purposes, the story’s non-human protagonists are represented in the casework by a tree whose existence is now threatened by those who were once denied its presence in Alexandra, and a change in a street’s direction that increases its standardized width and permits different kinds of appropriation in Orange Grove. Giving prominence to “. . . *making* allows designers to think about methods’ material and semiotic properties in a very enabling way” (Lury, 2020:33). This project puts Lury’s theory into practice. It does so by deploying various ‘making’ structures that engage the narrative inquiry’s interdisciplinary methods. *Retelling Egoli*’s piece collection is the *making of…* the City of Gold’s story through a newly applied lens. Making *Retelling Egoli* is an accumulation of stories that assemble diverse organizational aspects and expression elements. Assembling explores methods and themes to center *Othered* planning knowledge sensibilities through people and space relationships in the African city. Enhancing streets as communication zones and centers of identity by engaging the marginalized who occupy them

is a making of an image that represents them. The starting point is establishing the link between socioeconomic realities (primarily race-based) and space.

Historical processes that created the current and continuing structures inform ideas to read the ground, such as the points representing the twilight zone formed on the street line captured in the casework's *Images*, *Hand Sections*, and *Collages* sections in *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+), *Audio-visual Fieldnotes Notes* (2018), and *Calibrating Stories* (2022+). Reading and seeking understanding responds to the argument that literature on streets "is often engaged with the evolution of new creative methods to analyze form and space, rather than understanding issues of use and meaning for everyday users of these spaces" (Mehta, 2006:16). Although understanding streets requires understanding the metropolitan area, the South African apartheid legislative context also requires reviewing on a country scale. In this study, to contextualize the city's boundary, the totality of all its area and district site boundaries, which are "the medium-to-large sections of the city" (Lynch, 1975:47), is done at three levels: country, city, street, or respectively, macro, meso, and micro-scales (**Fig. 2.1** and **2.4**). Contextualization extends at the metropolitan level, macro (district), meso (suburb), and micro (street) scale to examine the city's solids and voids forms (**Fig. 2.8**). This figure-ground tissue expresses the relationship between built-form and public-accessible space (streets, squares, parks) (Desimini & Waldheim, 2016), which the urban design profession engages in promoting city life (Moughtin, 2003).

Cliff Moughtin's analytical framework for public participation covers nine "spatial units:" (1) Room; (2) Home; (3) Street; (4) Neighborhood; (5) District Quarter; (6) Town; (7) City; (8) Region; (9) Nation (Moughtin, 2003:16). Ideally, what constitutes an urban design 'site' with 'effective community action' happens between Neighborhood (4) and Home (2) levels and can extend to encompass planning strategies at other unit levels, such as District, Town, City, Region, and Nation. Moughtin's nine units cover Johannesburg's morphological footprint and contextualize a history of 136 years, drawn and understood through a Lynchian analysis of elements perceived at city, suburb, and street scales. Panerai et al. (2009:158) argue for the city block as an essential "tissue" component in making the city and define it using three logical systems:

- "The logic of roads [streets] in their double roles of movement and distribution,
- the logic of plot subdivisions, where built-up landholdings, private and public initiatives take place, and
- the logic of buildings that contain different activities."

This logic system is applied as an investigatory tool for the city and the sum of its parts at three scales. Initially, in its metropolitan form, the city is designated by a "figure-ground … urban fabric" (Desimini & Waldheim, 2016:136—137) formed by a landmass with natural geological systems containing a collection of blocks and streets. This metro tissue not only structures a framing action of the animation film, *the block, the plot, the house, the tree* (2019) but correlates to a comics page layout (frames, panels, and gutters), something given additional detail in Chapter 5.

2.5.2 Reading

Arguing for different ways of reading, in *The Lived Image,* Juhani Pallasmaa writes:

> "In addition to cinema's impact on the other arts, it has fundamentally changed how we experience place and time, sequence and causation as well as past, present and future. The difference between reality and fiction, document and artistic representation has been decisively blurred" (Pallasmaa, 2006:1).

Pallasmaa identifies how interactions between the real and the imagined have changed at a fundamental level – this is essential for urban practice to realize and, as *Urban Scripting* proposes, engage with and adapt to. As a result of the digital explosion and other technological advances – which facilitate platforms like social media and the Internet of things, accessed from smartphones, now ubiquitous in the city – it is difficult for the urban dweller of the 21st century not to interact with the medium of film (video). Consequently, this makes retrieving information – real or imagined, true or false, constructed or found, genuine or fake – more accessible. Film media, be it fiction or documentary, shares what can be imagined, what is representative, and what can be classified as identity and meaning. Much power resides in the image. MacDougal argues that thoughts traverse language as they are a construct of an amalgamation of "ideas, emotions, sensory responses, and the pictures of our imagination, and that the mental encounter with visual images demands more from us than the mental facility that language has given us" (MacDougal, 2006:2). Audio-visual texts, therefore, have more significant value as research tools and formulate a spatial practice that creates meaning and new memories and disassembles others.

Sandercock's (1998; 1999; 2000; 2003a; 2003b; 2010) and Clandinin & Connelly's (2000) theories guide the inquiry's argument for using people's experiences and stories to structure a communicative and sense-making approach. Such stories present valuable end-user insights. Organized and presented as a project, the methodology emphasizes practice and theoretical *processes*. Its components thus form a duo of creative practice casework

(material produced during *the making of…*) and critical theorizing (exegesis). Both examine causality by retelling Johannesburg's then and now: its genesis, evolution, and today viewed from the tree on a sidewalk and a fortuitous sidewalk's extension**.** As an approach, *Urban Scripting* responds to Sandercock's call to find "ways of co-existing in [shared] spaces, from the next-door neighbor to the street, neighborhood, city, region" (Sandercock, 2000:13; 2003a). However, achieving harmonious co-existence needs acceptance of the assertion that South Africa's modernist patterns of city-making and current development instruments for urban transformation are largely shaped "from traditional town planning practice and neoliberal urbanism" (Sihlongonyane, 2015:39).

As "a spatial, economic and social configuration of global and local interplays, with forms and textures that are particular to place" (Hall, 2012:127), rewriting the street echoes other critiques of the fragmented city, shaped only by architectural elements that neglect the void as a social space and emphasize form over function. For Levitas (1986) streets are cultural artifacts essential for the city fabric, while Krier's argument that "five thousand years of urban history show that the complex structures of streets and squares are necessary as communication zones and centers of identity" (Krier, 1982:5) informs this study's relevance. At a basic level, the study argues for spatial practice to use tools that bridge cultural differences, broadening "a range of ways of knowing and communicating from storytelling to listening to interpreting visual and body language" (Sandercock, 2000:25;26). Also, practitioners need to find a delicate perspective balance of examining activity street as a marketplace (Nguni) to counter the street as a retail space (Eurocentric).

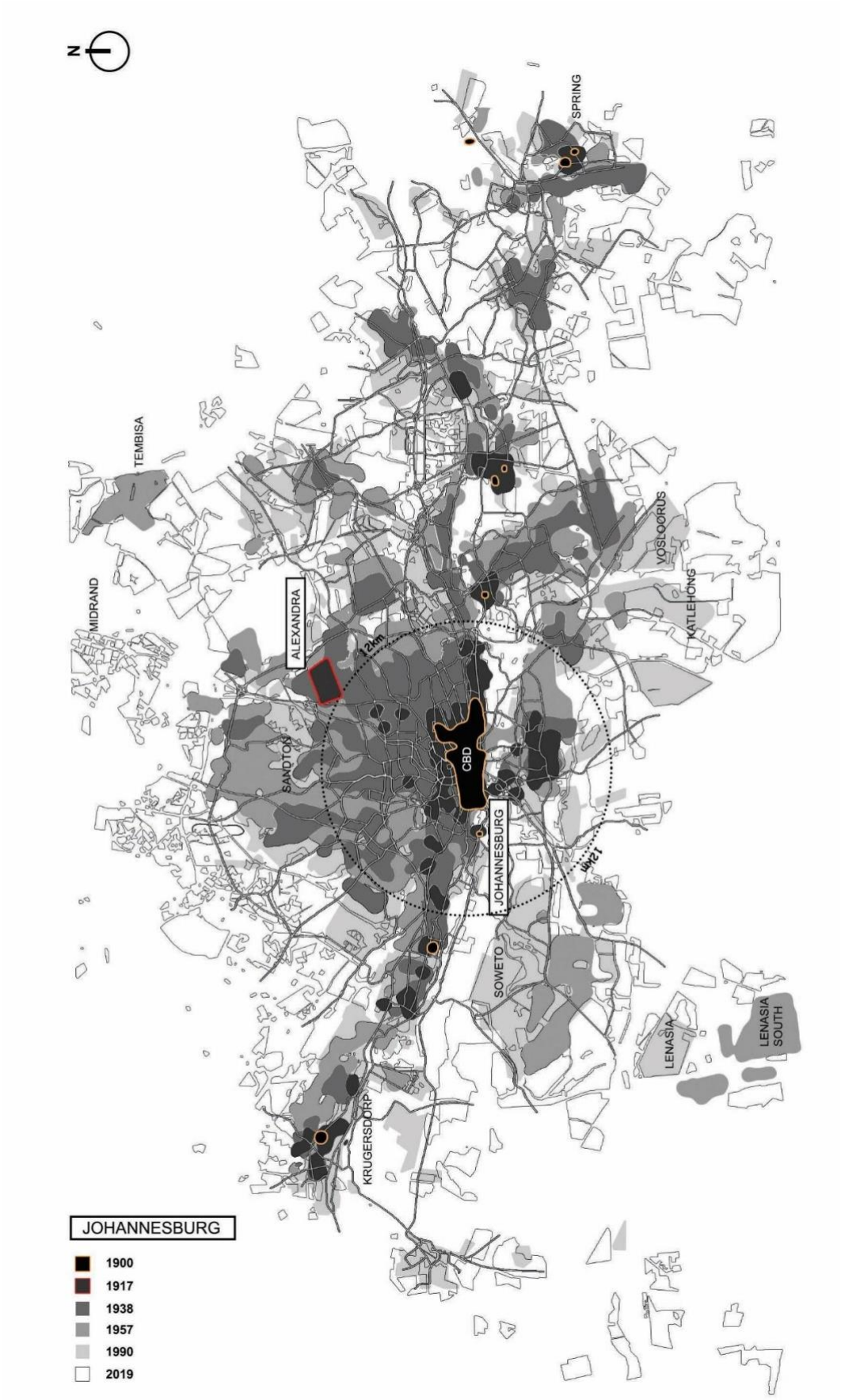


Figure 2.8 Johannesburg's morphology [1900—2019]

Offsetting the street against Eurocentric canons initiates ways of reframing current realities as part of an empirically based site analysis to advance a new democratic 'African' streetscape. For this, its proposed casework recovers what Lorena Rizzo refers to as "people, places, and times lost to the physical and social ruination brought about by colonialism, segregation, and apartheid" (Rizzo, 2019:ix). Hence, calibrating's opening step traces how Johannesburg's racial and capital malpractices enabled by 'legal frameworks' 'ruined' Nguni people from the onset and across historical, political, socio-economic, and cultural scales.

Reading reveals how discriminatory 'divide and rule' spatial administration led to *a* single *tree*'s survival *on the sidewalk* of Sam Buti Street in Alexandra. Simultaneously, it uncovers a *sidewalk bay*, there because of a change in street direction, and the entrepreneurial activities it enables along Louis Botha Avenue in Orange Grove. These infrastructural anomalies create protagonists that historicize Joburg. Tracing critical moments, the historical traverse takes in the 1934 gold panning in the Jukskei River, the 1884 Berlin Conference slicing/carving Africa, and the 1886 Witwatersrand gold discovery, to South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. The story culminates in 2022 with a growing need-based insurgent population occupying the remnants of a city established with one aim: to extract as much gold as possible. Although the gold is mainly gone, the city pushes on.

2.5.3 Framing

According to Genette, "the narrative (the narrated discourse) can only be such to the extent that it tells a story . . . uttered by someone" (Genette, 1983:29). Genette's theories inform a transformative documentary image-making platform for social and spatial change (Mertens, 2007; Soja, 2010; Mickwitz, 2016). In *Frames and Framing in Documentary Comics* (2021), Schmid argues that framing describes two critical actions. One is "the strategic use of communicative resources to encourage a particular interpretation of a scenario." Two is "the process of structuring a representation (or portions thereof) by situating it within certain boundaries—for example, a panel" (Schmid, 2021:1). To produce broad-subtle conceptual and intellectual definitions of a city, Schmid's interpretive measures focus on activities that give the street its texture. Concentrating on behaviors is inspired by Perec's warning against being "... too hasty in trying to find a definition of the [city]; it [i]s far too big and there [i]s every chance of getting it wrong" (Perec, 1974:60). To avoid error, he calls for a systematic approach: "the first step is making an inventory and drawing what is seen" (Perec, 1974:60).

Because of its immensity, the city is defined as an arbitrary formation yet one that is the result of specific geographical influences (water bodies, minerals, location, etcetera)

phenomena, where large numbers of people dwell and engage in diverse social, economic, and cultural activities (Saunders, 1986; Scott & Storper, 2014). In narrating Egoli, the arrangement of panels/frames and in-between gutter visual absences resembles an abstracted version of city blocks and streets (**Fig. 2.9)**. According to McCloud, gutters "play host to much of the magic and mystery that are at the very heart of comics" (McCloud, 1994:66) and implore readers to fill in things, actions, and movements instigated by the juxtaposed two panels (Berlatsky, 2009). *Retelling Egoli* makes a similar claim. It declares that the city's magic lies within the (void) space between opposite (solid) built forms and shows how the utilization of the void relates to its bounding structures or buildings. Forming a data set, the dialog amongst solid and void structures the city's conventional figure-ground binary used to describe the urban fabric, texture, elements, blocks, and urban morphology over time (Desimini & Waldheim, 2016). Solids and voids give form to the city forming strategies of connections and tactics of lines.

Similarly, panels and gutters within and between frames operate as documentary tools by structuring knowledge and advancing it to readers (Mickwitz, 2016). In so doing, they establish relational aspects between external expertise and internal understandings. More importantly, they guide external expertise in connecting to the self through ethical reflexivity. Emphasizing outside-inside and outside-outside positionality acknowledges the production of situated knowledge. The solid and void, frame and panel interplay shape a language – described in **2.5.1 Observing** – expressed in this writing's **Figures**, such as **Fig. 2.9**. The scriptor/producer deploys the frame's tripartite mechanisms to bridge the knowledge gap by engaging in a relational dialogue between multimodal audio, visual, words, and image texts (Davies, 2019; Grennan, 2019). Forensically examining the real and imagined gap grasps causes and consequences (why it is the way it is) and sets up practices to [re]calibrate the city's image. The awareness of this need to understand is foundational to this project. It is premised on the concept that if spatial practice cannot see or name the problem, it can neither study nor address it. Reading the ground and listening to people initiates a sense of *buntfu* underpinned by an onto-epistemology reiteration that "every view is a view from somewhere and every act of speaking a speaking from somewhere" (Abu-Lughod, 2008:53).

Cullen's (1973) *serial vision* is applied to express this thinking by forming a sequencing language, or multimodal semiotic texts, as a Deleuzian *movement-image*'s mise en scène (Deleuze, 1992). Uncovering understudied knowledges, this composite highlights social experience and tests methodologies that centralize African consciousness and cultural heritage. Consequently, *framing* begins the preliminary imaginary movements, developing new patterns of looking and envisioning what is seen. Primarily it initiates transdisciplinary

ways of understanding the complex and intricate relation of the person and space, the street and the city, and the country and the globe. For example, borders territorializing Africa dissolve into the contemporary Alexandra building footprint map of Sam Buti Street. Continent, city, and street relations suggest a timeframe tracing a colonized Africa carved in the 19th century, a segregated Johannesburg planned in the 20th century, to a contemporary street's daily morphing.

Within this scalar range, information is assembled and [re]presented in a cinematic frame or comic panel, enabling "viewers to select, to narrate, to recast and personalize data for their own uses" (Tufte, 1990:50). Chapter 2 argues that in a context of complexity, instead of reacting in a post-structural way, a relook at the concepts that make the city using evidence-based empirical knowledge more than an anecdotal form of evidence. Thus, the tree is a focal point asserting that reading is the best way to hear (time).

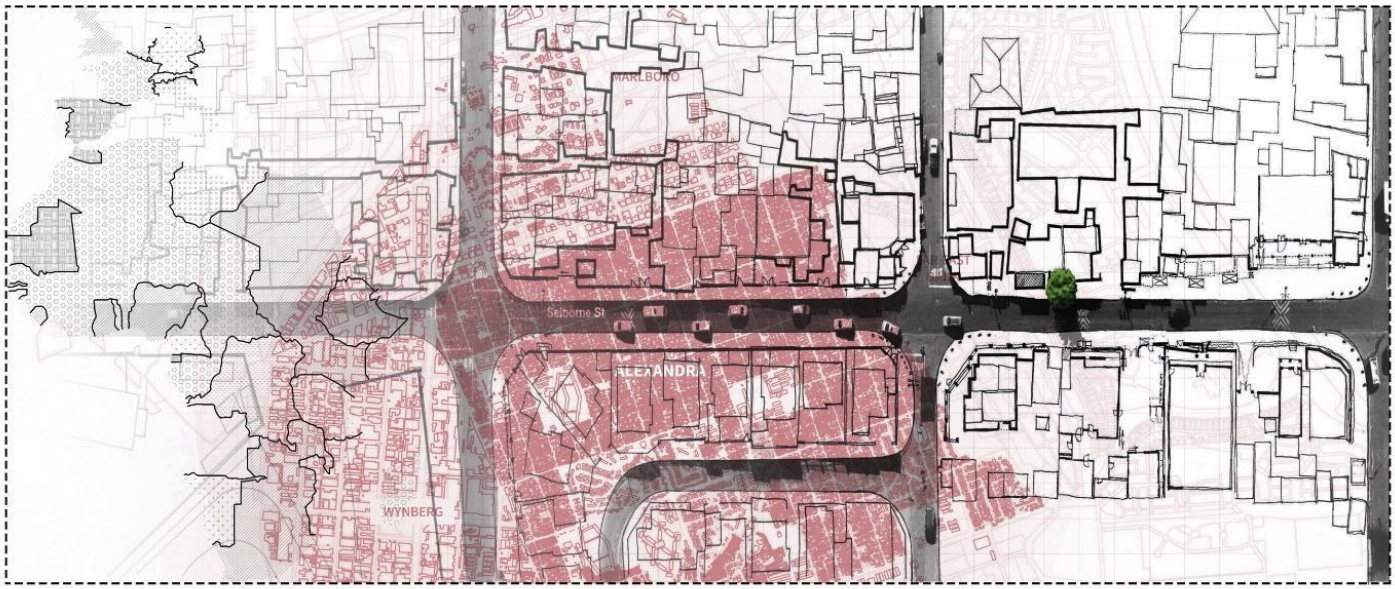


Figure 2.9 Framing Time (timeframing)

3 Designing: Shifting

Growing up in rural Eswatini meant listening to tinganekwane. In summer, we would sit around the open fire under the summer night stars when the captivating stories began. In winter, we huddled around the wood-burning stove in ugogo's (grandmother's) kitchen. The stories were primarily recounted after dinner when the household completed the daily chores. Tinganekwane deeply impressed me and left an imprint on me that I carry to the present.

3.1 Storytelling: Pushing Back Against Euro-American Planning

3.1.1 Kwesukesukela, Once Upon a Time

Chapter 3 designs the second calibrating action, shifting (the context), which involves finding new methodologies that answer the project's questions and confront its contextual realities. This shifting process formulates ideas around the need for a more empirically based inquiry, which leads to the use of specific experiences and observations for new ways of thinking and evaluating. Critical exploration includes *Othered* voices, perspectives, and truths in practice casework. It is a way to "bring geographical knowledge beyond academic boundaries to engage… [Johannesburg's marginal communities] …. In a process of spatial thinking" (Peterle, 2021:23). The shift focuses on the subaltern's physical, mental, and metaphorical contexts. These insights can be seen in collages whose fragments are collected during casework and construct *Calibrating Stories* (2022+). Anne-Marie Willis argues that "we design the world, . . . and [it] designs us . . . (as a) . . . double movement" (Willis, 2006:80) of ontological design. In reshaping ways of knowing, shifting engages the African knowledge-sharing tradition through storytelling to diminish dominant narratives and imagine possible new worlds. This action merges theory, practice, intuition, and improvisation to redefine spaces as places, connect the macro-micro scales, and conceptualize an understanding of/for a different urban-making approach.

Others in spatial practice identify this need for a change in perspectives due to changing urban dynamics. For Waltritsch, "Making architecture is … a question of creating new forms [that] will build up the site according to the *context* and … the *potential of the programme*" (Waltritsch, 1999:64). This form of spatial production supports the need for a nuanced reading of context, which "is a product of nature, topography, and culture, and therefore embraces an accumulation of traces" (Waltritsch, 1999:64). By applying shifting's pragmatic approach, the street palimpsest exposes a more representative reflection of the city's history and urban environment. Shifting, performed by listening to marginalized people, fosters local

agency and activism by interpreting micro “spatiality” (Pieterse, 2013:27), “rhythms” of the city (Lefebvre, 2013:86), and positions subaltern understandings of urbanism (Sandercock, 2003a; Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008; Jenkins, 2013). This form of storytelling enables knowledge sharing and uses a cross-cultural hybrid of Nguni oral traditions and orthodox planning methods to contest inherited conventional languages and shift Eurocentric realities. Examples of this storytelling and its constructive perspective can be seen/heard in the audio-visual casework material of the fieldwork and research casework in practice.

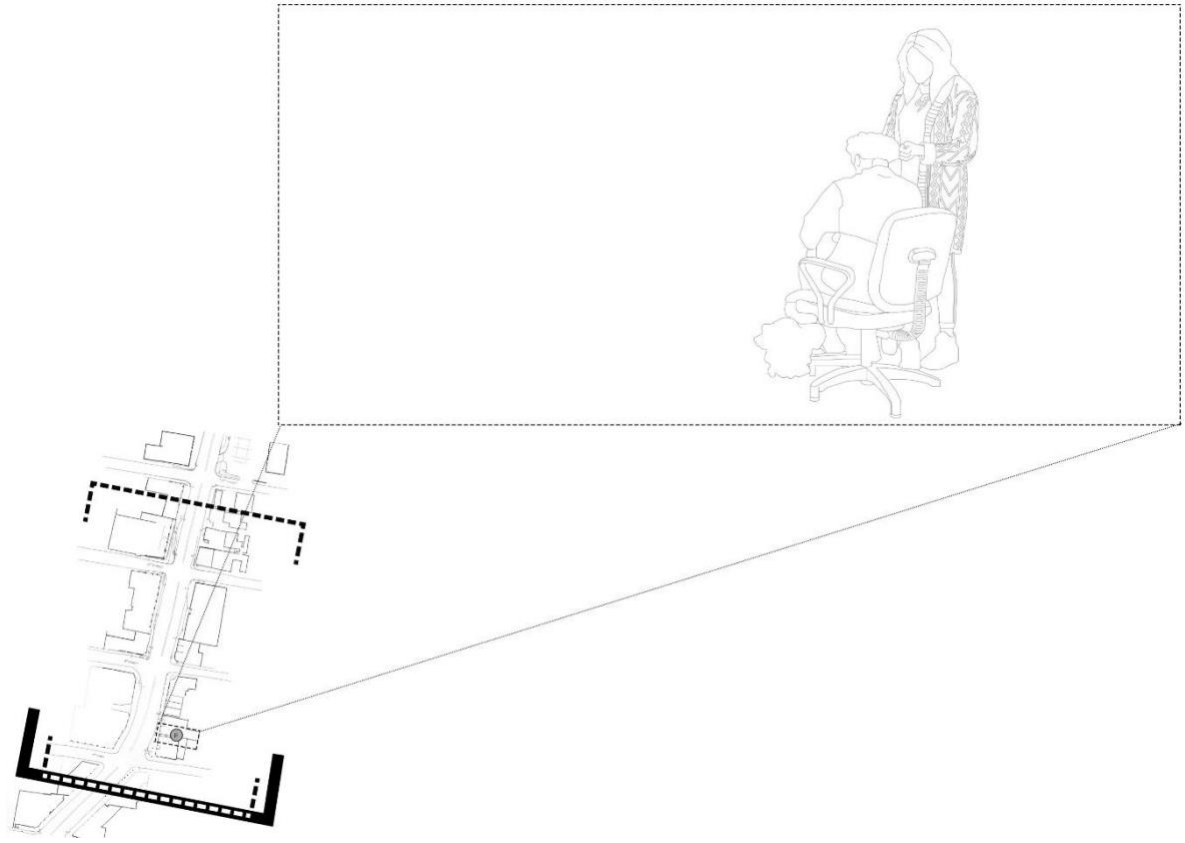


Figure 3.1 Locating Fungai

Through this process, storytelling unearths marginalized histories and local onto-epistemological styles and creates a library of street realities as everyday social practices that contributes to the local archive. **Fig. 3.1** is the street and its relation to the space where Fungai operates. Her expression in *shifting* is not visible. However, it is visible in *positioning,* whereby her body is a close-up. In addition to examining the core question, Chapter 3 explores the sub-question:

What mistakes have arisen from omitting Othered knowledge in the design and representation of streets? (What is not understood by official bodies and institutions, and what are the lessons?

Such is the power and content of Africa's oral knowledge-sharing tradition that it can provide urban practice with deeper insight into the production of urban space. As Sandercock argues, stories reveal more about the human situation and translate into a richer understanding of the urban condition than traditional social science. And because of this, stories "…deserve more attention" (Sandercock, 2003b:182). Chapter 3 shifts the perspective from the city to the individual. Consequent to framing, which [re]presents broad and specific uses of how [a] story operates in various forms of telling, shifting functions as the research paradigm's memory and meaning-making principles that examine the questions. If memory is "just the intersection between mind and matter" (Bergson, 1911:xii) and is critical to citizenship, its construction is paramount in fostering identity, ownership, and belonging. This foundation leads to two departure points. One pushes for a more critical and empirical-based research, which leads spatial practice inductively to new ways of thinking and analyzing. The second produces locality (Appadurai, 2003) by making collective memory (Dagger, 1981) and situating a research paradigm that is interpretive, transformative, and valorizes *Other* knowledge (Amin & Thrift, 2017). Expressing this paradigm is the producer's responsibility, who turns an idea into an intent and a realized project and "must always be looking for creative solutions to any problem" (Austen, 2019:13).

3.1.2 *Other* Knowledge Cultures

According to Madlala (2001), for the Nguni, lisiko (isiko, emasiko) is described as a way of life. NgeSiswati, lisiko refers more specifically to *imihambo yalesosive*, a nation, community, or society's way of life. Lisiko defines how things are understood, conducted, and carried through by the people. In Africa, knowledge, wisdom, educational and artistic idioms, history, and experience are transmitted through the performance of lisiko (cultural traditions) (Madlala, 2001). Storytelling is fundamental to lisiko as it validates local epistemologies and is the keeper of African history (Achebe, 2001; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1982; Madlala, 2001). In addition, lisiko strongly influences social and human morals and instills a community's sense of place and purpose (Madlala, 2001). Tuwe (2016) argues that stories assist in exercising people's emotional and intellectual understandings, influencing individual behaviors, and improving and perfecting their creativity and imagination. Tuwe highlights Achebe's (2001) argument of the impossibility of studying African literature without looking into lisiko, which African writers draw on for artistic and ethical principles.

This study, grounded in spoken and visual discourses, draws on the oral storytelling traditions in image creation used as pedagogical techniques for communicating histories, wisdom, and knowledge. The narrative structure in *shifting the frame* applies critical

storytelling to construct multiple interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary understandings. Mbembe's (2016) notion of belonging guides image creation and, in so doing, makes the city respond to and reflect the local social and morphological realities (Laburn-Peart, 2002; Jenkins, 2013). Shifting works to nullify spatial legacies skewed by colonialist and imperialist thinking and to rethink modernist ideology to city-making. Shifting to reveal current history situates the three ethical and fundamental principles concluding the previous chapter: reading, listening, and writing.

Kwesukesukela is a traditional Nguni call to announce the commencing of *inganekwane* (a tale) and predates the colonial era (Madlala, 2001). *Kwesukesukela* calls everyone in the immediate vicinity to gather around, sit, and pay attention because a story is about to be told. It is an invitation to let the mind wander through the infinite possibilities of imagination (Rooney et al., 2016). Loosely translated, *kwesukesukela* equates to the opening line *once upon a time* in Eurocentric parlance (Madlala, 2001) or, *let me tell you a story* (Konnikova, 2012; de Leeuw et al., 2017). The exact content of the story or its characters is of little importance to the listener in *kwesukesukela*, and the storyline may be indistinct, foreign, or mysterious. Nevertheless, those who heed the *kwesukesukela* call prepare to accept all mysteries, uncertainties, and vagueness and surrender to the imaginative world of the story (Konnikova, 2012). By harnessing *kwesukesukela*'s power, the scriptor/producer/researcher gains unprecedented access to *Othered* intelligence. Telling *tinganekwane* (many folktales) to transmit information, wisdom, and knowledge across generations is among the oldest rituals in Nguni culture (Madlala, 2001). As such, *tinganekwane* preserves history, shares cultural values, educates moral lessons, teaches traditional beliefs, and communicates acceptable behavioral codes (Tuwe, 2016). In *Things Fall Apart,* Achebe writes:

> "Having spoken plainly so far, Okoye said the next half a dozen sentences in proverbs. Among the Ibo, the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten. Okoye was a great talker and he spoke for a long time, skirting around the subject and then hitting it finally. In short, he was asking Unoka to return the two hundred cowries he had borrowed from him more than two years before" (Achebe, 2001:5).

As is evident from the above, conversation in parts of Africa is more than an art form. Exchanges often rely on metaphor, allegory, and axiom rather than directly broaching a subject. Listeners respond to melody, harmony, and rhythm and perceive movement in how they are addressed. Through indirect means, the speaker's orality and actions, awareness of time, and rhythmic beat give enough clues to the receiver to translate what is transmitted and

understand the communication's essence. In listening, the receiver decodes the teller's expressions – the listener 'reads' the speaker's transmission. Hence, listening extends to reading, which according to Eisner, "can be thought of as a form of perceptual activity" (Eisner, 1985:8). Nguni storytelling is more than just words – physical gestures and notes in temporal succession synchronized with motions in relative lengths are also essential to storytelling and add another layer to interpretation. Through movement and rhythm, the storyteller conveys imagery and inspires the receiver to link and relate to culture and history (Madlala, 2001; Gadamer, 2006). The teller's forms of instruction are directly and indirectly enacted via spoken or linguistic communication, implicitly aiding the reader's mental making of a series of actions (Andrews et al., 2009).

Like the storyteller, the study asks for a joint and more open approach to urban space creation rather than a rigid silo departure point. This openness extends to perspectives, values, theoretical frameworks, and methodological techniques. Regardless of whether the audience has mutual vocabularies and conceptual frames, the teller asks them to be open-minded about possibilities (Rony, 2001). *Urban Scripting* argues that the urban designer needs to access this level of communication and understanding to be effective. A lack of direct and indirect interaction contributes to the barriers that even the most progressive urban practitioners may have failed to appreciate, thus impeding their planning/design work. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical aim to extend spatial practice analytical and communication methods by contributing a critical empirical approach to site assessment focusing on image-making.

3.1.3 Frame of Reference

The perception of reality is characterized here as a *Frame,* and in South Africa, the dominant frame or master narrative portrays the colonial perspective. In master narratives, this frame proclaims and describes whiteness as "a sign of purity" and blackness as a mark of "immorality" (Eberhardt, 2019:166;167). The master narrative assumes the privilege of whiteness as an ideal, a norm, and common sense promoted through stories advocating deficit and racialized beliefs of blackness (Solórzano & Yoswso, 2002). Stories promote white entitlement and direct access to resources and portray Blacks as inferior, poverty-stricken, and victims of their own doing (DiAngelo, 2018). The dominant frame structures (and imposes) worldviews, perceptions, and daily exchanges (Squire et al., 2014). The *frame* is a positioning device that includes some and excludes others. In the South African context, the exclusion is acute, and as such, *Others*, if historically not entirely erased, have been

placed out of focus at the margins. Thus, the current frame that defines and typecasts requires expansion.

Narrative methodology critically extends framing to identify interest in and include marginalized voices to understand their lived experience and social characteristics. The broadened frame serves as an observation, analysis, and operating system (Bunschoten et al., 2001) that offers a counter-narrative to position different realities. The frame is a physical and metaphorical mechanism, a demarcating boundary, and an experiential interpreter (Goffman, 1986) for absorbing information and knowledge (Troiani & Kahn, 2016). State-sanctioned city planners/designers often have predetermined understandings of what activities *should occur* in spaces that have no relation to what *happens* at the local level. Reconfiguring mindsets, spaces, and movement not only permits an adjustment of the frame but uncovers new, emerging, and different "conditions of possibility" (Rony, 2001:6) (**Fig. 3.2**).



Figure 3.2 Inside Storytellers[15]

Users' lived understandings of space – the realm of people's daily lives – produce multiple readings and constructions (Lefebvre, 1991; Sletto, 2002), which may be at odds with state regulators. Lefebvre views space through visual impressions, lived experiences, and historical contexts. Because of the variances in spatial understandings identified by Lefebvre, Johannesburg's city planners and users experience space differently. The recalibrated frame is a transformative inclusionary method that records actions, events, and movements to create alternative categories and tell different stories. These stories ". . . can be used as theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical tools . . . (to contest) . . . racism, sexism, classism, . . . (gender and sexual equality) . . . in working towards social justice" (Solórzano & Yoswso, 2002:23). Shifting the engagement using Nguni orality applies other forms of intertextual expression as frames of reference to understand the city from a different knowledge base. This grounded knowledge reflects and extends Loseke's argument that "practical experiences, common sense and understandings of how the world operates and how the world should work" (Loseke, 2022:xiv). In rethinking city-making strategies moving the frame is a process that examines the relationship between conversation, reading, listening, writing, storytelling, and pedagogy. Themes intersect opportunities for reflection, city (scanning), story (hearing), and dialogue (composing).

In framing the story as a research process/product, the 'journaling, observing, listening, writing and rigor' (Koch, 1998) established in Chapter 2 extends to include 'conversation' (Kovach, 2010; Chimakonam, 2017; Janz, 2018) to broaden local theoretical concepts. Iterative and reflexive practice concepts are reworked as 'reading, listening, and writing' principles for engagement, understanding, and interpreting reality. In practice, the three principles form a loop that encourages multiple visits and, in so doing, creates a more profound experience. Bremner (2010) stresses that understanding Johannesburg's multiplicity and mysterious nature needs numerous returns. This varying perception of space underpins the essence of this study and frames the *how* of its core question. The answer is to shift top-down perspectives to meet bottom-up realities by overlaying African storytelling with contemporary urban design methods. This cross-pollination acts as both an inclusionary and a transformative measure. Shifting reconfigures aspects of site analysis and description practice to create a methodology that uses Deleuze's (1992) 'movement-image.' Movement-

[15] Expressed are the silhouettes of the storytellers from within the area under investigation, as a group of people with authority and agency through their detailed knowledge of the workings of the everyday.

image tools include collage and montage. These composites layer the storyteller's gestures as representations of socially grounded program, action, and event (Tschumi, 1994) with spatial practice conventions such as plan, section, and elevation (Ackerman, 2002) to simulate movement and create a more experiential and relatable reading.

In this way, the image shifts the frame. It forms a composite of different languages to produce a reimagined documentary storyworld that reflects the reality of and is identifiable to the local. Storyworlds are mental models that imaginatively aid interpreters in situating, translating, and making sense of everyday narratives by asking "who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what fashion…" (Herman et al., 2008:570). This 'movement-image' instigates familiar visual cues and permits a broader discussion of local issues. Due to each reader's unique individual experiences, these "stories will receive different … audiences evaluations depending upon where, when, why, by whom, and to whom they are told" (Loseke, 2022:4). Roemer van Toorn believes citizens can experience democracy through moving images, broader accessibility, and pedagogic nature. Van Toorn argues that films "not only provide a narrative for specific discourses, [but] they [also] provide a shared experience, a common starting point from which diverse audiences can discuss the issues" (Van Toorn, 1999:87). A unifying factor or common thread in this story is how Johannesburg came to be. The backdrop is the city, and *Others* tell its story.

This study's compositing blends past, present, and future in creating a common starting point based on Roemer's thinking. It superimposes memory and experience to portray possibilities of everyday hybrid living associated with a futurist "notion of the simultaneity of states of mind" (Moszynska, 1990:29). Here, the 'simultaneity of mind states' refers to colonial subjects identifying with imposed Euro-American ideals, which African storytelling pushes back against. This pushback moves away from colonizer-colonized binary relations and constructs "new, mutual forms of dialogue, research, theory, and action" (Kovach, 2010:12). Chapter 5 presents detailed tools for transformative action that permits radical change, better social foundations, inclusivity, and rethinking of the performance of activity streets. Construction of these 'new mutual forms' draws from several artistic sources. Nhlengethwa's retrospective art and work as a set designer inspire "visual distortions of space made by camera angles, the proportions of the actors within it, and the demand of creating atmosphere, either of walled space or an outdoor environment" (Gordimer, 2006:28). Nhlengethwa's collages provide precedent to create the social attribute's atmosphere overlaid with other expressions to galvanize static representations. These include dynamic techniques in Marcel Duchamp's cubist repetition for his *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*

(1912), Eadweard Muybridge's chronophotography, and social ideals purported by future projects from Russian Constructivism, especially the work of El Lissitzky.

3.2 Listening: A Form of Knowledge Sharing

3.2.1 Listening to the Everyday

Audio-visual storytelling acts as a mediator reflecting their continuous design and iterative entanglements (Barad, 2007), bridging the knowledge gap by granting an immersive involvement for insurgent innovation and practices to all stakeholders. Writing about urban insurgency and making the invisible visible, Sandercock finds inspiration in Moira Kenney: "And like Holston, she reminds us that what may appear today as marginal activity is more than likely evidence of a transformation that will openly shape our cities tomorrow" (Sandercock, 1998;23). These forms of describing and imagining occur through critical street storytelling, engaging diverse urban dwellers in dialogue over their right 'to see things clearly' (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1993; Mbembe, 2016). Seeing imagines a different city by situating critical local voices to be heard. It does so by harnessing the potential of audio-visual storytelling as a new and shared language to create mutual experience and understanding and bridge this knowledge gap by focusing on the urban making of the two activity streets in Johannesburg.

In this approach, *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) and *Calibrating Stories* (2022+) read, listen, and write omitted voices to explore, analyze, record, interpret, and transmit lived experience. Using the street palimpsest, critical listening, grounded in empirical inquiry, sets out to challenge cultural expressions and the "assumed visions of "urban" and normative approaches" (Jenkins, 2013:22). Challenging modernist assumptions means looking beyond traditional mapping techniques or "cartographies" (Sandercock, 2010:xix) for a different listening approach to hear correctly and engage contextual realities (Sandercock, 1999; Jenkins, 2013; Fincher et al., 2014). In this context, the activity street serves as a ubiquitous setting to find the voices of the omitted and turn them into usable knowledge. On the street, everyday invisibility is made visible. Moreover, listening to the activities and occurrences of different actors and agents affords a base to hear and begin to understand the city. *Kuva*, to hear, counterpoints the skewed apartheid planning realities, which saw some as lesser than others. Le Grange (1994) argues that the apartheid regime used space as an instrument to divide people through a capitalist and exploitative agenda, which denied commonality:

> "Through such manipulation, we have not been able, as citizens, to share a common world, which is our city. We have not been able to publicly share our common

> concerns or differences. With such manipulation we have not been able to be tolerant of each other" (Le Grange, 1994:23).

The answering themes of tolerance, especially *other* ways of being, normalizes those considered degenerate and disorderly through shared spaces and their knowledge (Bhabha, 1994). Listening allows for communal observation of social and economic behavior and provides analytical insights into urban narratives, daily rhythms, sidewalk economies, and street politics. The street is a set (location) for listening. Hearing is a priori to listening in the construction of narratives. Analyzing the street using everyday urban narratives and rhythms is "the process as well as the end product of story-telling and mental activity that organizes data into patterns or cause-and-effect chains of events" (Sardar & Loon, 2013:47). Therefore, narrative composition is an instrument of spatial communication (Koeck, 2013). This viewing process is the core of the study's methodology, which uses audio-visual production to include the multiple aspirations and desires needed in the design, representation, and street-making process. In Johannesburg, urban planning/design professionals often reflect 'top-down' power, exacerbated by typical professional attitudes toward urban change as needing primarily specialist knowledge. These attitudes are associated with different conceptions of space highlighted by Lefebvre, who refers to "the gap between the theoretical (epistemological) realm and the practical one, […] between the space of the philosophers, [professionals] and the space of people who deal with material things" (Lefebvre, 1991:4). This space is especially apparent in the twilight zone and in the bricolage of its microentrepreneurs, whose malleable insurgency creates self-driven opportunities.

Creating compelling and inclusive activity streets entails navigating many challenges in this milieu, as the 'activity' envisioned often does not match what urban space users want, need, or engage with. This difference in perception is the gap separating specialist knowledge assumptions of *what it should be* and user knowledge of *what it is*. Listening is the first step toward understanding. Storytelling uses a hybrid approach that fuses digital and sensory ethnography elements to make an image. Digital ethnography is, Attili argues, a method to "embody a possible knowledge path that is made of *imaginations*, *poetical gestures*, and *aesthetic experiences*" (Attili, 2010:51). In a study of the world and its inhabitants, Pink underscores "harnessing the senses in ethnographic work, as a basis of understanding, through engaging *other's sensory perception*, activities, and environments in inspiring, directing and being part of the process of intervention and change" (Pink, 2015:194). Likewise, listening utilizes digital and sensory ethnographic factors as sensory research to achieve alternate ways of knowledge production by recognizing the interrelatedness of sensory experience (Pink, 2013).

3.2.2 A Sensory Approach

A sensory approach makes the story's image. The constructed images represent the reality of users' experiences and create a context for shared understandings using social action themes. These themes act as a trigger by stimulating imagination and communication through the storyworld. The image expresses concepts relating to creativity, poetic gestures, and aesthetic experiences (Attili, 2010) and is an 'engagement of other's sensory perception.' (Pink, 2015). The sensory approach uses audio-visual tools for in-depth and contextualized collaborative observations and forges new understandings by re-describing and re-interpreting environments, situations, and shared differences. Constructing the image intends "to assist in knowledge exchange from residents to the [state's policy-makers]" (Jenkins, 2013:10) and goes beyond the local to the global.

Guided by local perceptions, multimedia elements assemble an image in the practice-based research casework, including drawing, photography, animation, and film. The picture is a radical space for research and dialogue into claims to the city, not only in its making but in accessing procedures and processes of identity, belonging, appropriation, participation, and marginalization. The image represents space usage. It is based on Cullen's (1973) serial vision and employs the human body, users, communities, and movement to uncover *what is* and *what it may become.* This sensory research enables an appreciation of specific settings and exposes uninterrupted connections with other things (Sandercock, 2003a; Hallenbeck, 2010; Pink, 2015) and networks (Simone, 2013). Stories make sense of existence because they "are a universal language loaded with symbolism and significance which allow us to unravel the mysteries of the world in which we live" (Rooney et al., 2016:147). The oral art form of language is seminal in transmitting concepts (Senf, 2006). The storyteller's power lies in the language used to construct images through a subconscious sphere of allegory, narrative, and the sublime (Madlala, 2001; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 2005). The storyteller weaves concepts that connect the invisible with the observed, myth with fact. The story's strength lies in the teller's ability to use language to paint a picture and strengthen essential cultural principles and moralities. The story's language addresses philosophical and spiritual concepts through entertainment, instruction, and information (Achebe, 1988). Storytelling is a traditional way of passing wisdom to the larger community (Madlala, 2001; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 2005; Tuwe, 2016).

This study uses stories as a modified conventional practice to transmit local information and knowledge (Sandercock, 2003a). In addition, it enables marginalized voices to have a say in urban discourses (Smith, 2012). It also contributes to African scholarship (Mbembe, 2016) as

an alternative city form rooted in socio-cultural and political-economic realities (Jenkins, 2013). The approach links people to place and place back to people by reconstructing images, which builds up an idea for understanding the city based on listening as practiced in Nguni storytelling traditions. Understanding begins by hearing the storyteller. Learning applies a phenomenological approach to incorporate other people's experiences, heighten possibilities of serendipity, and allow opportunities for wisdom to be shared. The sensory learning process activates participation and engagement by locating voices from the margins of complex, multi-ethnic cities and turning them into individual urban narratives. *Urban Scripting's* primary aim is to use stories to give voice to the marginalized people who exist 'outside' formal state structures (Sandercock, 2003a) and to recognize and understand everyday socio-economic and cultural practices so that they can be assisted and piloted to increase their performance (Jenkins, 2013). In addition, story use reduces the possibility of error, which Smith notes is a result of the conflicting rationalities:

> "The role of researchers committed to producing research knowledge that documents social injustice, that recovers subjugated knowledges, that helps create spaces for the voices of the silenced to be expressed and 'listened to,' and that challenge racism, colonialism and oppression is a risky business" (Smith, 2012:198)

As a phenomenological mapping action, the case study shifts the frame of reference by selecting the margins (Smith, 2012) to address colonialism's enduring effects. The chosen case study is a cultural economy site that produces meaning (du Gay, 1997) and connects identity, belonging, struggle, and resistance (Smith, 2012). Furthermore, the mapping experiences the material environment and movement from *the margin* instead of a flattened locality mapping (Pink, 2011) perspective. Reading, listening, and writing principles enable us to move through, experience, and record the environment, its settings, materiality, sounds, and sights. This motion captures the city's constant change, renewal, and remaking, especially the urban conditions in a state of perpetual construction (Massey, 2005). Urban inhabitants define and express their own identity in feeling spaces. Just as there are relational links between the teller and listener, the approach is of immersive hermeneutics initiated by moving through "[space] as a simultaneity of stories-so-far" (Massey, 2005:9).

3.2.3 A Transformative Paradigm

The digital revolution has made the practice of sensory research possible. Digital innovations enable access to equipment (smartphones, video cameras, audio recorders) and through the internet to multiple media sharing options such as Vimeo, YouTube, social media platforms,

and live streaming. In mediated communities,[16] digital formats offer new communication (and transmission) strategies that allow many more voices to speak and be heard. These voices underpin the study's analysis of the city. Listening to the voices establishes awareness. According to Dilthey (1996), understanding requires contextual and cultural familiarity. It is a familiarity extending to social and cultural practices in a specific context. Furthermore, and significantly, familiarity with essential human processes revolving around urban performance increases human comfort in the context of this study. In addition, Dilthey asserts that understanding necessitates an almost sympathetic identification with another person and culture's psyche, intellectual cognizance, and viewpoint. Recognition transcends the physical to enter the nearly mystical realm.

Others refer to this understanding as walking in another person's shoes or inhabiting their skin. This project extends the empathetic principles of *buntfu* and links to Anne-Marie Willis's "double movement of ontological designing" (Willis, 2006:80), which is that we design our world. In turn, our world designs us. Therefore, empathetic storytelling looks to the past to analyze current people and their actions and so imagine a future, better-reflected city. So, storytelling provides an understanding of the everyday street realities in the contemporary South African city. Storytelling presents experiences required to imagine a better-performing human environment. Moreover, storytelling is enhanced using modern communication tools: "Multimedia offers the latest technologies in the service of the oldest of human devices for understanding and inspiring: that is, stories" (Sandercock, 2010:35). Drawing on Sandercock's observation of the epistemological importance of insurgent stories as a relevant way of creatively expanding planning practice, the project uses audio-visual storytelling as a language to achieve three things:

- Expand the profession's practical communicative tools (Sandercock, 2003a; Sandercock & Attili, 2010; Pink, 2015).
- Critically reflect on its methodology through making as practice (Sandercock, 2003a; Hallenbeck, 2010; Charleson, 2019).
- Open different areas of scholarship (Sandercock, 2003a; Pieterse, 2013; Lury et al., 2020).

[16] Communities where face-to-face communication occurs alongside information technology networks, such as WhatsApp groups, social media platforms, and films screened in public spaces like minibus taxis traveling between Alexandra Johannesburg's metro area.

Based on these goals, in this project, storytelling/making operates "as a process, … in explanation and critique … as a catalyst for change" to recover erased and marginalized voices (Sandercock, 2003a:12). Thus, understanding focuses on intersectional insurgent practice-oriented research and its possibility of addressing the disparities in knowledge production that contribute to inequitable outcomes in urban development contexts. By changing its approach, Miraftab argues, "insurgent planning scholarship values the oral histories of marginalized people as both a significant form and an emancipatory methodology" (Miraftab, 2009:45). *Urban Scripting* acknowledges resident knowledges, local identity, memory, and belonging principles of being in the city. The project's transformative methodology positions "memory at its center" (Miraftab, 2009:45) and considers a reality mostly disregarded in conventional knowledge-making structures' shaping of the city. Its narrative inquiry draws on Goffman, who discusses how people view the world, the images they form, and the belief systems informing their conjectures and understanding:

> "…the primary frameworks of a particular social group constitute a central element of its culture, especially insofar as understandings emerge concerning principal classes of schemata, the relations of these classes to one another, and the total of forces and agents that these interpretive designs acknowledge [being] loose in the world" (Goffman, 1986:27).

Orthodox knowledge-making structures apply primary and social frameworks informed by politics of ways of knowing, interpreting, and representing from the Eurocentric sphere (Goffman, 1986). *Urban Scripting* offers different ways of reading space for two main reasons:

- To conceptualize and design better streets that enable better socio-economic performance.
- To equip policymakers and planners/designers with the realities that mitigate their lack of knowledge (the knowledge gap) and assist them in their work.

The inquiry discusses transformative research in planning and design environments imprinted with Eurocentric planning and apartheid legacies. Its story is about finding different ways of thinking and knowing about *othered* ways of thinking and knowing. Its purpose is to make research meaningful and articulate various forms of meaning and knowledge. It is, therefore, a story of the multiplicity of the city and the plurality of its space (Massey, 2005).

This study project did not set out to challenge Euro-American epistemic planning processes. On the contrary, it began as a traditional academic exploration initiated by a research

question and conventional investigative procedures. What soon became apparent was the inadequacy of existing orthodox methodologies to operate successfully in the given context and the prevailing status quo mentioned in Chapter 2. Moreover, the research output fulfills a larger public agenda by reaching the margins and the people planned for. Telling stories allows for semiotic reflection and relates to the research question *why*? And for what audience? Finally, what does 'shifting the frame to include the '*Other*' mean? Shifting the frame questions epistemologies, ethics, narratives, and meanings by focusing on urban inhabitants and their claims to the city, and this provides the empowerment tools necessary to change it (Lefebvre, 1996). Transformative tools insert themselves into the city not merely to represent it but to transform and reconstruct it, in their making, from the ground up (Davies, 2019). The everyday platforms of the digital age, such as smartphones, ubiquitous even on the margins, are tools "of rapid, open knowledge transfer and information exchange…. [being part of everyday] …public culture of digital knowledge transfer that needs to reposition itself but also academic scholarship itself" (Troiani & Kahn, 2016:53).

Just as Mistry and Sakota (2017) advocate for film as a mode of creative practice and research, Troiani and Kahn offer new methods for gathering and communicating data. As such, artistic practice challenges normative epistemic canons and presents a transformative digital paradigm that develops an experimental framework linking empathy to real-life stories through audio-visual applications and insurgent design. Audio-visual storytelling engages life and urban resistance in confronting the two leading communicative failures of spatial practice:

- An inability to engage in a meaningful and effective 'bottom-up' approach (Jenkins, 2013; Pieterse, 2013).
- A reliance on imposed frameworks and masterplans conceived and executed by Euro-American trained 'technical experts' (Harrison et al., 2007; Sihlongonyane, 2015).

The paradigm promotes inclusionary knowledge gathering by implementing new languages to expand analysis of the everyday (Sandercock, 1999; Sandercock & Attili, 2010). Audio-visual storytelling as urban readings extends everyday understandings.

3.3 Reading: Merging Eurocentric Planning Culture and Nguni Storytelling Traditions

3.3.1 Reading the Everyday

According to the National Storytelling Network website (2022), “Storytelling is the interactive art of using words and actions to reveal a story’s elements and images while encouraging the listener’s imagination.” Reading the everyday combines Nguni storytelling with Eurocentric planning visual cultures to access more expansive imaginations and enhance urban understandings. As such, in the casework, *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+), a precursor to the cinematic texts of *Calibrating Stories* (2022+), operates as a primary interactive data-gathering instrument to uncover relevant story components and imageries. *Fieldwork Notes* emphasize a transformative frame to supplement orthodox planning/design methods. These methods position socio-spatial justice theories in a storytelling case study and offer theoretical schemes to analyze complex social, cultural, economic, and political city terrains. The union of planning culture and Nguni orality into overlays contests dominant master narratives to initiate a transdisciplinary discourse in motivating new understandings and representations of the city and its rights to reach wider networks (Sandercock, 2003a).

As established in Chapter 2, knowledge gaps exist in South African professional urban practice because of a reliance on conventional Eurocentric methods and a failure to communicate and understand local contexts (Sihlongonyane, 2015). The planning/design profession continues to impose colonial practices and knowledge values. It often uses ill-fitting methods focusing more on explaining contexts than building shared languages or understandings (Sihlongonyane: 2015). The text-based regulatory policies, masterplans, and ‘top-down’ orthodox communicating structures are inadequate mediums for reaching many urban residents (Haferburg & Huchzermeyer, 2015), especially communities on the margins. Forensically scanning the everyday rethinks understanding of the city by exploring the study’s second proposition – storytelling to include *Othered* knowledges. Reading the street situates audio-visual storytelling as a mechanism of knowledge production, but this form of reading needs a shift toward more localized theory and methods (Janz, 2002; Parnell & Robinson, 2012; Roy, 2015; Watson, 2016).

Sensory artistic techniques (O’Neill et al., 2002; Pink, 2015) supplement orthodox planning/design methods to document and assess current urban form. As a framing procedure, storytelling exchanges the information needed for future space imagining by refining practitioners’ critical perceptiveness (Sandercock, 2003a; 2003b). Reading begins with precisely re-representing the city’s palimpsest as a base map. Achieving the detail

necessary draws on *Learning From Las Vegas* Yale Studio (1968) and Jones's argument that: "The plan . . . imagined as a spatial communicator . . . framed by the boundary . . . is understood as . . . moments of egress and spatial flow" (Jones, 2019:69). This form of reading overlays traditional mapping cultures with storytelling to understand what is and create a consciousness of everything *that is* as *it is*. The making becomes its own story because it taps into, contends with, and validates human knowledge and ethical values. Presenting storytelling as a tactile, sensory, and culturally appropriate form of wisdom demonstrates its epistemic, ontological, and axiological importance alongside Euro-American approaches to planning and design and contributes through three concepts:

- Mitigating knowledge gaps (Sandercock, 1999; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).
- Envisioning public space policy informants (Hallenbeck, 2010; Loseke, 2022).
- Planning for diversity and equity (Sandercock, 2000; Sandercock, 2003b).

Concepts are addressed by shifting the focus to the local street context and returning to *whose reality represents Johannesburg street spaces*. [Re]presenting reality underpins three questions:

- First, what is the image of the city?
- Second, who is producing the image?
- Third, what is the image's audience?

South Africa's current urban conditions reflect acute inequality and rising levels of unemployment, and most people live in precarity (Mbeki, 2009). Much of this is caused by enduring impositions of apartheid which make access to basic needs such as shelter, food, and security for many inadequate (Mbeki, 2009). In 2019 widespread protests called for improved living standards for the disenfranchised (SAHO, 2014; Stats SA, 2019). The structural imbalance and its impact on the urban user are uncovered through reading. *Reading the city* creates visual interest in *what is* and *what can be* related to social desires. *Reading spaces* affords insight into the friction between private and public forces and imagines ways to mitigate this conflict. *Reading the local* provides granular level detail to "seek the complexity of social life as it is lived…. (and)…make visible social phenomenon in a form in which they could never possibly lived, never otherwise manifest" (Brown, 2012:69).

Reading employs counter-marginalization measures and explores alternative types of social participation to reconfigure prevailing perspectives and challenge conventional planning procedures. Social participation collaborates with people omitted from orthodox empowerment and financial measurements. Existing neoliberal thinking in practice is

restrictive as it sees people as underprivileged, vulnerable, and poor, with ‘fixable solutions’ (Sandercock, 1998; Miraftab, 2009; Jenkins, 2013). This view excludes these people from participating in planning their local. To the contrary, *Urban Scripting* argues that any reading must embrace a local directive, seek those left out of planning and design processes, and sees this as a pathway to understanding from the city’s fringes. This approach responds to Yiftachel’s observation of “gray spacing” (Yiftachel, 2011:153), specifically people making, innovating, and capitalizing on these ‘informal’ processes. These are processes driven by self-empowering insurgent practices; however, Yiftachel argues:

> “Yet, communities subject to “gray spacing” are far from powerless recipients of urban policies,” with “. . . power relations . . . heavily skewed in favor of the state, developers, or middle classes. Yet the “invisible” population of [the] informal settlement is . . . an important actor in shaping cities and regions” (Yiftachel, 2011:153).

Site readings place the urban designer in a position to mitigate colonial racist inequality structures and modernist ‘problem fixing’ methods (Sandercock, 1998). In reading, the urban designer is compelled to structure a more fitting framework for Nguni-Euro-American hybrid storytelling with a higher chance of being accessible to Aristotle’s (1999) craft, scientific, and ethical knowledge spheres.

3.3.2 Locating Voices

In locating the voice, *Urban Scripting* looks at where the action takes place to read, listen, and better write the city. Acknowledging the local superimposes a Nguni sensibility onto Eurocentric planning culture, which does two things. Firstly, it shifts norms and customs and transforms them into a hybrid. The juxtaposition between Eurocentric planning culture and Nguni orality is the beginning of making a new language needed to read space, a language with its form of expression, and a language that leaves room for possibility and critical reflection. Secondly, it advances lived experience by interpreting concepts between writing (producing) and reading (audience) sounds and sights of the city (LeBlanc, 1993). Filmic instruments overlaid with conventional visual planning and interlaced with local storytelling traditions form a hybrid that locates the voice. This combination forms ‘audio and visual texts’ that produce shared meaning.

Reading, listening, and writing take the form of empirical observation with meticulous viewing and recording to communicate perspectives of urban life. Street voices imbue aesthetics, agency, emotion, experience, culture, and politics (Pink, 2012). The voices’ mere presence in

the city is an act of resistance. Rich in contradiction, the voices displace the subordination dictated by *othering* and reject typecasting by re-appropriating marginal spaces extended by foreign thoughts of reduction (LeBlanc, 1993) that seek to erase them. Participatory forms of reading, listening, and writing understand the drama visible on the street's theatrical stage and are sourced from *lisiko's* values of communication. These are codes from the storyteller's expressive medium of speech and body gestures.



Figure 3.3 Shifting Characters (see **Credits**)[17]

Finding the voice situates the storyteller. Just as the traditional storyteller introduces the audience to their world through narrative, the *Urban Scripting* narrator employs similar language skills, metaphors, idioms, tone, textures, and movement to paint pictures. Locating the voices links to the research's methodology application of *the making of…*extended to intersect with *the telling of…* The voices, speaking various languages, format audio-visual stories that express imagination. The voices tell first-person accounts of the (many) people located in the city's margins. The stories give insight into emergent phenomena and complex and creative street use. Archibald (2008) refers to this as *Indigenous storywork* and argues it is a meaningful education and research engagement process. *Indigenous storywork* engages collective and mutual learning by storytellers, listeners, learners, and researchers through an enhanced consideration of local (indigenous) stories (Archibald, 2008).

Kurtz (2014) applies storywork (among other tools) to find things out, catch emerging trends, make decisions, generate new ideas, resolve conflicts, connect people, help people learn, and to enlighten them. She writes:

> "Through a more generous sharing of knowledge, and through learning to use what is best in both traditional and modern ways of story work, people everywhere will develop a kinder, more sensible approach to caring for their stories—for their narrative health, and each other" (Kurtz, 2014:7).

Urban Scripting extends Archibald's (2008) storywork and Kurtz's (2014) story work concepts through audio recordings of local voices to create *audio-visual story-work as story-work*. This approach challenges oppressive theory with a local research methodology that contests the colonial view of the African body. It confronts the imperial structures that have informed, shaped, and distributed literature critical of the colonized subject. Audio-visual *story-work* critically engages with empathy as a transformative conceptual tool to achieve a reductionism counterpoint. S*tory-work* and locating the voice position people in the city relating to situations, ownership, belonging, inherent knowledge, and their own stories. Ethically the stories contextualize the teller's cultural history and temporality. The teller is a community representative operating within a relational world, connecting people – seen and

[17] Illustration of characters who borrowed their voices, knowledge and skills to various phases of the Urban Scripting process.

unseen – with spirituality, the cosmos, animals, nature, and ecology (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 2005; Mbembe, 2016).

Through oral stories, people are tied to each other and acquire knowledge about the present and the past, which affords a connective footing with future generations (Kovach, 2009). Shifting reference frames perceives the city from the storyteller's and listener's points of view and consider the space for an interpretive, transformative dialogue between the two. The narrator is the creator and scriptor, and the hearer is the viewer and reader. They are connected by the interdisciplinary producer/scriptor/researcher. Reading, listening, and writing set up narrative structures to collectively understand things, make meaning, and produce knowledge and different ways of being. Essentially, story production assists Africans in seeing again and finding their way back.

3.3.3 New Languages

Frames (including panels) are modes of analysis and data collection; they examine plots (Johannesburg's cause-and-effect backstory), spatial settings (time, context, activities), communication styles (onto-epistemologies), and themes (everyday social practices). Here, the body, and its movement in cartesian space, serve as a unit for investigation and a data source. Data gathering capitalizes on technological advancements and easy access to affordable and superior-quality equipment (cameras, audio recorders, editing software, etcetera) (Troiani & Kahn, 2016). Advancements that have granted audio-visual media access to a broader audience of users can be the basis for engaging with the diversity of context and developing different theories of social transformation. In addition, the advances provide tools to better engage with each other and avoid the pitfalls of seeing through a single lens:

> "Our lives, our cultures are composed of many overlapping stories. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice – and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding" (Adichie, 2009: TEDGlobal's intro).

Digital readings and recordings, as formats of shared media, are experimental audio-visual inquiries that have been used since the beginning of the 20th century in expanding spheres of "democratic discourse" (Sandercock, 2003a:11). There are several examples. William White's hugely influential *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980) used a 16-mm film camera to perceive social activities in public spaces. Katerina Cizek's *Highrise (2020)* is an experimental multimedia collaborative documentary that understands the human experience

in vertical residential skyscrapers. Another is Frantz and Hallenbeck's *Carrall Street Participatory Video Project* (2006), which highlights the use of film as an avant-garde participatory action research method. It illustrates the role of video in achieving social justice in an urban planning development process and using other ways of obtaining information, just as Attili and Sandercock's *Where strangers become neighbors* (2007) is a community film about people from different backgrounds dwelling in Vancouver's Collingwood Neighborhood House (CNH). It reveals people's journeys through their voices as immigrants, from isolation to becoming valued, engaged, and enriched, substituting hostility and fear with an intercultural community (CNH, 2020).

Based on the abovementioned examples, it is evident that a language of audio-visual techniques forges better human connections and understanding of peoples' voices. Consequently, as a digital media tool, audio-visual storytelling is valuable as an engagement apparatus within a qualitative research paradigm. Its practical efficiency is because everyday language takes on a non-literal art form that solicits readers' collaboration. The language asks the reader, as co-creator, to reflexively question their position, opinion, and viewpoint, thus challenging their inherent normative beliefs. The stories are audio-visual texts assembled and layered into composite images. In their making, the texts are fragmented, and the gaps, in reflection, ask the reader to fill and create multiple meanings rather than focus on a specific story or single significance (LeBlanc, 1993). As a practice and process, the story is an "implicit epistemology of the city" (Sandercock, 2003a:11) created by a collaboration between tellers and readers.

Stories are formed, told, and retold on the street. The common language of the story is employed to recognize and share different types of knowledge and experiences. This language is a method to map and understand dynamic exchanges of everyday social processes. The making of the story invites critical reflection and consideration of the transformative potential of empathetic listening and talking (dialogue) about people's everyday lived experiences. Locating new languages for the everyday looks to advance a methodology for recording the dynamism, based on Jenkins's argument of rectifying planning/design practice by

> "…not only studying what is where and how it is changing, but the political economic contexts and socio-cultural agency in which multiple everyday acts of dwelling, and their associated aspirations, build the de facto African city of today, and create future changes" (Jenkins, 2013:11).

In identifying “what is where and how it is changing,” constructions of static and moving street images reveal local and emerging phenomena. Four image creators’ methods inform the casework-making process. Firstly, Sam Nhlengethwa’s static intertextual collages/montages tell a shared recollection of South Africa’s, in this instance, Johannesburg’s recent history. Secondly, situating the ordinariness of the everyday draws from Krzysztof Kieślowski’s cinematography in *Dekalog* (1989), loosely based on the Ten Commandments and presented as a series of ten one-hour episodes about life in a large housing estate consisting of various skyrise apartment blocks. Thirdly, it employs Mona Chalabi’s graphics in visualizing and communicating data. Finally, as an everyday language, the layering of voices and words in frames reflects contextual realities. Compositing assimilates Nhlengethwa’s “pictures-within-pictures” (Smith, 2006:11), Kieślowski’s documentary aesthetic, Chalabi’s data engagement strategies, and Archigram’s mixed media collaging as a way of connecting *tinganekwane* tebantfu netindzawo (stories of people to places). In addition, formal aspects of narrative production consider the organization of frames in single and multi-panel pages, matters of word-image collaboration, and aesthetic design issues (Baetens & Frey, 2015).

Collage (Crompton et al., 2018) techniques superimposed with storywork (Archibald, 2008; Kurtz, 2014) combine the four styles above to establish a communication practice, expand urban design language, and create meaning. Effectively, applying new languages affords opportunities to shift the frame of reference. Moving the frame provides for and places different inflections to ‘reading, listening, and writing’ to stimulate de-colonial interactive urban dialogue around shared understandings of the city and its claims. The principles are a call to action, establishing a position to act, and connecting things appropriately. This approach emphasizes the everyday as a practical archive from which urban planning/design practice links theories and processes as a new form of praxis. It is a form of praxis structuring a new language that emanates from an exceptionally accurate “transcription of reality” (Kieślowski, 2016:3).

3.3.4 Bantfu neTindzawo: People and Places

Stories about people, places, and their interrelationships best address the *what is* and *what can become* aspects of the research question. To establish *what should be* means that people and places must be shown as they currently are and *how they perceive* them, thus illustrating *what is* and eliminating erasure; making things visible in this way contradicts modernistic planning/design diagrams concerned with a particular *‘city order,’* systems of control and the implementation of violent interventions which struggle to keep pace with

existing and changing on ground realities. This failure of physical urban development studies is recognized by Jenkins, who argues that “the understanding of the majority of urban residents has been subordinated to abstractions that usually bear little relevance to them in conceptual or real terms” (Jenkins, 2013:11).

Consulting the subaltern and placing them front and center as a counterpoint fosters fully inclusive imaginaries and offers a counterpoint to current praxis. Simone states, “it is clear that much of what takes place in African cities is fairly invisible . . . Throughout urban Africa, residents experience new forms of solidarity through their participation in makeshift, ephemeral ways of being social” (Simone, 2013:181). *Urban Scripting* makes the urban designer part of this evolving social fabric and, through this immersion, allows them to understand user experiences and perspectives. *Urban Scripting* argues that this invisibility is easily visible if one looks for it. Complex dynamic social networks and economic practices that are difficult to assess and quantify using conventional means can become visible if time is taken to look at them differently. The invisibility or visibility of things also depends on what the viewer chooses to see or not to see. Moreover, there is resistance to new ways of seeing (**Fig. 3.4**).

Lindell notes that unfixed and adaptable practices are “increasingly problematized as a threat to an envisaged socio-spatial order” (Lindell, 2019:3) by institutional colonial mindsets, which make fluid conditions invisible because they do not ‘fit’ an agenda operating on fixity (Bhabha, 1994; Simone, 2019). The city hosts a multitude of everyday human encounters, static and fleeting, observable and unobservable phenomena, and emergent experiences. This study aligns with Suhr and Willerslev’s (2013) argument of invisibility relating to vision, ideas, economy, and other structures central to human life. These are ‘invisible’ daily makings of the city positioned beyond the view of current professional perception and frame (Suhr & Willerslev, 2013). Penz (2018) poses a fundamental question: how can professional practice grasp the complex daily dynamism of human activity? *The making of…* in *Urban Scripting* is a direct response to Penz’s (2018) question because it exposes city reality in all conditions, full of vibrancy, colors, sound, rhythms, and textures and through all the senses. *Urban Scripting*’s methodology visualizes subaltern architectures (Tayob, 2018), foregrounds unseen phenomena and emergent ephemera (Simone & Pieterse, 2017), and illustrates makeshift permanency (Simone, 2019).

“Reality has always been interpreted through the reports given by images” (Sontag, 2002:153), and *Urban Scripting* provides a platform to present the hidden, rejected, and

forgotten images. The point is that photography, as opposed to experience, is a form of information acquisition (Sontag, 2002:153).

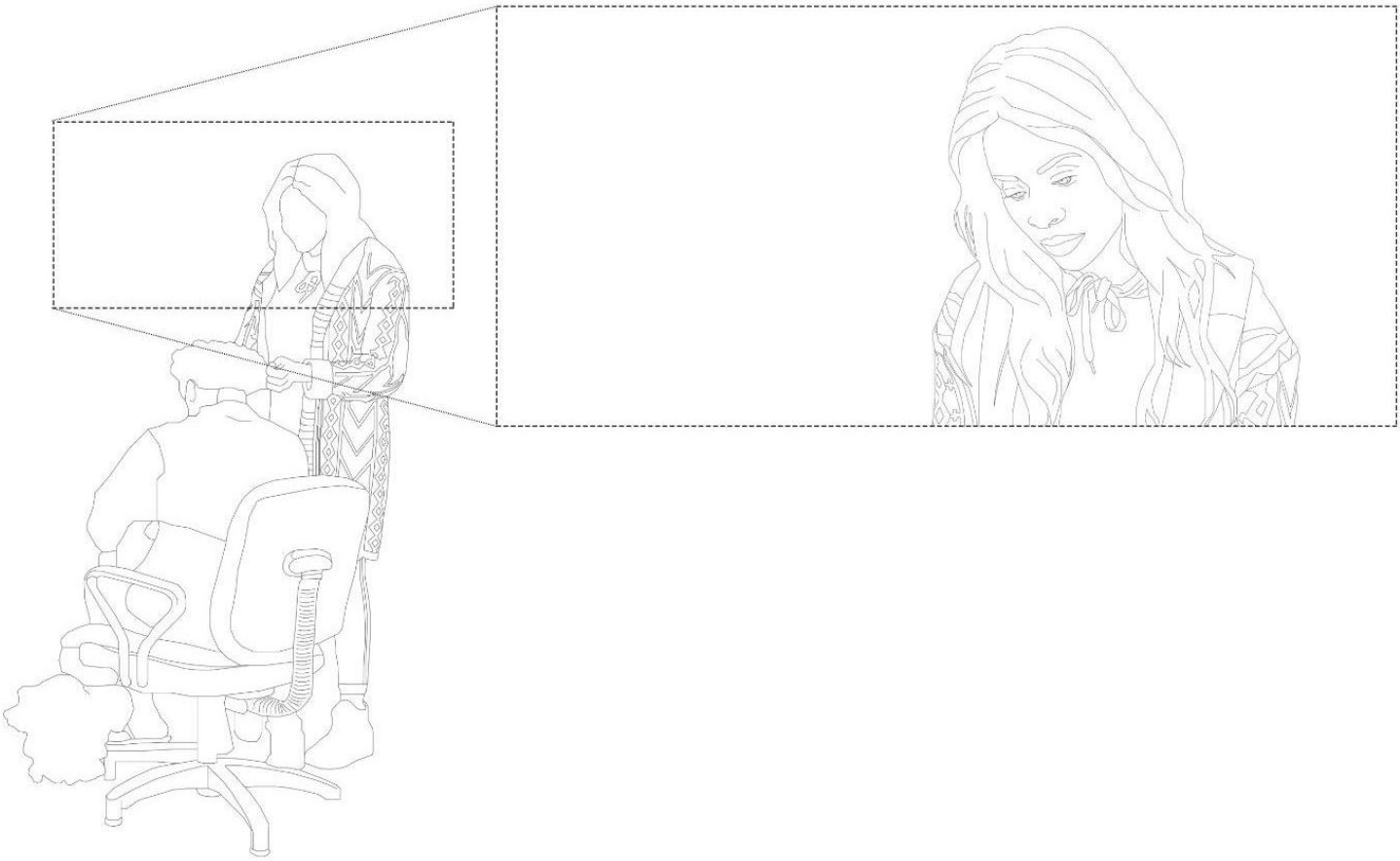


Figure 3.4 Framing Fungai

Hence, in the *Urban Scripting* step *writing the everyday*, the procedures of making the image consider practices of the production of space and its appropriation. And the image relays the inherent information relating to both rights: participation and appropriation. The picture is a transmitter of acquired data and, when used to assess open space dynamics, reveals them as they are without any impositions or modifications. The question is, who defines open space, and what are urban totality's imperatives? Honest imagery answers the question, *whose reality is real*? A vision formulated by collaboration between practice and end-users formed through shared reading and listening dialogues accurately reflects *all truths*. In this nexus of citizen and civility, this study situates people and place relationships, illustrates social and spatial justice, and lodges claim to the city. Subsequently, Lefebvre argues that the right to the city:

> "…should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizens as urban dwellers and users of multiple services. It would affirm, on the one hand, the

> right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the 'marginal,' the 'other' and even for the 'privileged')" Lefebvre (1991 # 2342, translated in Kofman and Lebas, 1996:34).

From the above, two essential democratic city claims can be gleaned: the right to actively contribute to the production of space and the right to appropriate space (Purcell, 2002). People's right to participate in the production of space 'by making their ideas known' and their right to 'make use of street space' are provided for. The actioning proportions and understanding principles examine production and appropriation rights. These actions answer McGrath's call for discipline:

> "…to broadly engage politics, art, design and media practices … is new ways of design thinking through sensing, archiving, tagging, mapping, communicating and networking technologies that have the greatest potential of moving urban design into the 21st century" (McGrath, 2013:14).

The actions and principles visually explore multimedia formats ranging from words, sound, analog, and digital drawings to still and moving photography in urban site assessment.

3.3.5 A Making of . . .

Urban Scripting extends Lefebvre's (1996) right to the city to include King's call for a rethink of participation and appropriation by cross-examining "the ways that dominant legal tools and narratives exclude the voices and interests of a great many of those who occupy urban spaces" (King, 2018:2). Claims to the city form a fundamental part of a broader political discussion concerning conflicts and acknowledgment of local insurgency. In other words, locality entails the right to participate and appropriate in urban life. In this dynamic street life relation, a practical everyday interpersonal use between people and spaces generates site-specific stories and larger urban narratives. Steven Holl, in Pallasmaa's *The Eyes of the Skin* (2012), argues for an all-body experience and notes, "The way spaces feel, the sound and smell of these places, has equal weight to the way things look" (2012:7). Pallasmaa (2012) elaborates on the five senses of human experience in architectural space and simultaneously critiques design methods that privilege only the sense of sight. It is a view supported by Rose's (2016:3) reference to "ocularcentrism," a term describing the visible significance "of the visual to contemporary Western life" (Rose, 2016:3).

In *The Rise of Hermeneutics and the Crisis of Ocularcentrism*, Martin Jay argues that light and color influenced this 'western life' (Rose, 2016), suggesting rationality as a way to the truth of the third eye, a reality based on "the empirical observation of the actual two human eyes" (Jay, 1988:314). This is contrary to Nguni culture, which believes in more than what can be seen; this includes spirits, the unseen yet present, such as ancestors, whose influence continues after their *crossing*. *Urban Scripting* links Lefebvre's (1996) fundamental rights to the research question by the project's protagonists: *people and places*. Multimedia expressions examine the rights to the city through the protagonists' views: a casting inventory of people juxtaposed with spaces understood through compositions, composites, and collages of place.

People and places are characters engaged in a perpetual dance and are expressed in bodies moving through static space. From the outset, ethics underpin calibrating actions and principles. Ethics, regarding dignity, respect, and representation, tell the visual stories, rooting thinking and making processes. Instead of privileging a (conventional) single-sense visible view of 'western life,' *Urban Scripting* foregrounds contemporary Nguni life by inserting audio, movement, and rhythm in visual research to appropriately address stories from the margins and express people and places. Its approach foregrounds erased voices and heeds the assertion that "This is our home. We are not foreigners. We belong here" (Mbembe, 2016:30). *Urban Scripting* looks to film studies (Balázs, 1952; Buckland, 1998; Shiel & Fitzmaurice, 2003; MacDougall, 2006; Cousins, 2011; Cousins, 2017; Penz & Koeck, 2017) as a basis for its emergence as an experimental method to present new languages of multiplicity. Primarily because of people's familiarity with the audio-visual medium, this action is considered a "kind-of shared, lay literacy" (Schmertz, 2008:2).

The *Urban Scripting methodology* expands planning tools with cinematic processes. *The making of…* is an experimental practice that facilitates a "listen[ing] to the city murmurs, to catch stories, to read signs and spatial poetics" (Sandercock, 2010:117). Combined with orthodox planning cultures, Nguni storytelling and cinematic procedures create contextual representational expertise beyond what is possible using conventional and often Eurocentric measures (Hall, 2017). The study uses cinema and moving images to investigate and construct stories to understand the city (Penz & Koeck, 2017). Filmic structures and audio-visual media are communicative tools that augment mutual city understandings and link reality, the academy, and the profession.

Koeck examines how "properties and methods traditionally situated in the sphere of film have influenced spatial practices in contemporary architecture and urban design" (Koeck, 2013: xi)

and is extended through a sensory experience of sight, sound, movement, and rhythm. In this case, moving images investigate local activities, and rhythm shapes aural and picture compositions, stitching in other elements of seeing and realigning memory (Rogers, 2010). The sound is the 'yin' to the image's 'yang.' Sound expands the image's shared literacy sphere (Schmertz, 2008) since "music is almost always social" (Viskontas, 2019:87). The shifting of the frame from the hegemony of ocularcentrism to audio-visual is acknowledged by MacKeith (2012;104), who asserts that "… a belief in the bodily experience of architecture upholds 'the tactile over the visual' and acknowledges emphasis on the totality of design at all scales …." Here MacKeith emphasizes the importance of immersive and embodied experience over architectural form. This immersion aligns with this study's approach to people (visible and invisible) and places. It accommodates a range of social behaviors experienced with all the empirical and spiritual senses across multiple scales. *The Eyes of the Skin* final page's paratext states,

> "Juhani Pallasmaa argues that the suppression of the other four sensory realms has led to the overall impoverishment of our environment, often diminishing the emphasis on the spatial experience of a building and architecture's ability to inspire, engage and be wholly life enhancing" (MacKeith, 2012:129).

This study's audio-visual storytelling goes beyond the eyes by employing cinematic methods to engage the aural experience and 'receive' the street by hearing it. The intersection between urban space and film applies Koeck's thinking to "demonstrate that film and cinema, either as mental or physical constructs, can provide a meaningful context and frame of reference for spatial phenomena found in contemporary architecture and urban spaces" (Koeck, 2013:3). Juxtaposing contemporary urban planning with filmmaking processes, *the making of…* methodology structures stories set around the same street and focuses on the complexities of social relations that ordinary people face daily.

3.4 Shifts in the Narrative to a Local Context

3.4.1 Collaborating

Storytelling links different analytical units. For the producer/scriptor/researcher, storytelling informs thinking and making and contains information from the makers that stimulates the audience's sensory 'relations to the world' (MacDougall, 2006). According to Schmid, "by structuring the text through frames and framings, the author embeds an interpretation of the represented events and cultivates a specific state of mind for their reception" (Schmid, 2021:1). The producer develops this information acquisition of/from social practices to create and improve collective site analysis. This understanding comes from positions nested in

qualitative research applying interpretive, transformative, and valorizing actions to other research dialogue paradigms, the city, and realities. In creating meaning rooted in shared experience, Nguni orality, concerning moral truths and lessons, frames the interpretation theory and practice. Storytelling's onto-epistemology locates this hermeneutic sphere. Referencing Euro-American-defined and nuanced paradigms, Kovach asserts that "qualitative research is interpretive, the stories of both the researcher and the research participants are reflected in the meanings being made" (Kovach, 2009:26).

This study develops a local interpretive paradigm as a transformative Nguni methodology. Stories expose the tensions of people's experiences systematized through temporality, internal and geographical context, and activities. Collaborative telling initiates the journey of understanding that captures experience and interactions on location. It demonstrates local practices, thus enabling policy and spatial lawmakers, as well as end users to make strategic decisions and take purposeful collective actions. This manner of site analysis is endowed with the makings of an enhanced instrumentality for spatial practice to radicalize city-making processes and effectively mitigate extreme inequality. In casework, shifting the narrative happens through Bra Niky, who plays the role of the central narrator, one described by Pieterse as a:

> "sentinel," who "step[s] into the frame," and as a character, is a "contemporary griot who [is] able to make philosophical sense of our confusing times by offering a long view of history and ideas rooted in a language and sensibility for ethical judgment—phronesis" (Pieterse, 2021:194).

Bra Niky's narration acts as a relational dialogue and collaboration between inside (sentinels) and outside (artists/designers) knowledge-making spheres. His story weaves historicized strands into the everyday spectacle and stimulate reflexive reflection between content makers and audience/spectator. Collaboratory observation and recording inform the visual strategy for shifting the frame. As principles, the modalities push for a more accurate understanding of *what is* and *can become* using story – a new language for the everyday – not to externalize others (Lury, 2020) but to integrate them. In structuring participatory action research, principles are applied to engage, act, and connect things. Collaborating relies on an empirical praxis of learning 'how to look, listen and speak' as engagement and communicative methods to augment mutual understanding of socially constituted reality.

Writing is translating the urban complexity needed to "plan more contextually, sensitively, intelligently and effectively within the African context" (Harrison et al., 2007:251). Writing counterpoints colonial narratives that depict Africa as a lost cause, a site of dilapidation,

poverty, and hopelessness. The writing process understands the city through all the senses. Writing engages the city through words, drawings, sounds, still, and moving images to access a more sensory feel of the lived experience. Writing the everyday consults transformative, emancipatory, queer theory, feminist, and post-colonial thought to challenge social science research's predominantly Euro-American masculine gaze (O'Neill et al., 2002). The challenge is twofold:

- To neutralize the research position (academically trained within a particular system) to tell a realist story of the *self* within *Others* – a story of *"Ubuntu"* (Chilisa, 2012: 21—23; 108—109) by *Abantu* ([US/WE] the people).
- To push the demand boundaries "for experimentation in the representation of ethnographic data, especially in relation to gender and race" (O'Neill *et al*. 2002: 71).

Kihato articulates the gulf in the urban design knowledge system and calls for a change in the value systems used as the reference point and new ways of understanding:

> "Planners and analysts need to stop considering African cities as spaces that are not yet fully evolved, but as important sights for theorization and understanding Africa as part of the world. This involves reversing their marginalization in urban discourses and asserting them at the center of analysis and theorization. The challenge for African urbanists is to find new languages, methodologies, and conceptual tools for understanding African cities as an analytical category, not just as a deviant form of existence. This would require breaking free of the tradition that uses [Eurocentric] western cities as reference points" (Kihato, 2007:217).

Urban Scripting is the answer to that call. It creates tools that draw together diverse sources of intellectual capital and presents their knowledge and insights to urban design professionals and communities.

3.4.2 Story as Voice

Chapter 1 referenced the call for "the need to develop a different social imagination" in planning and architecture (Holston, 2009:39). Holston argues that the source of this new imaginary lies in the development of theory in both fields as an investigation into "the spaces of insurgent citizenship" (Holston, 2009:39). *Calibrating's* practices are a response to the call; they establish new languages for the everyday. Sandercock (1999), Kihato (2007), and Jenkins (2013) also call for new ways of understanding in spatial practice, something which "developing a new social imagination" (Holston, 1998:53) can meet. In response, *Urban*

Scripting identifies and zooms in to focus on people and their urban experiences. Frame adjustment installs positive settings for people with an adverse history (Biko, 2017) that sees themselves as a deviation from the norm of whiteness (DiAngelo, 2018). *Shifting* as insurgency considers Kihato's (2007) call to reverse local context marginalization in contemporary urban theorizations by locating an authentic Nguni voice (see **Shifting Characters 5.3**). Using story as voice instigates an emancipatory approach, which, from this point onwards, expresses an urban social imaginary communicated through empathy.

The third sub-question (*What mistakes have arisen from omitting Othered knowledge*…) is addressed from the argument that "stories are central to planning practice: to the knowledge, it draws on from the social sciences and humanities; to the knowledge, it produces about the city; and to ways of acting in the city" (Sandercock, 2003a:12). Evidence of the practice knowledge gap can be seen in its understanding of Johannesburg's local ways of being in the city. The city's top-down planning paradigm informs the Louis Botha Corridor master plan that compromises livelihoods. *Bhani's Cycles* (2019) reflects the impact of the city's initiative on a family business along Louis Botha Avenue. In his words, Vimal Bhani notes:

> Louis Botha is a famous main arterial route known to most people. It is a popular bustling road. It has got a life of its own, just the road itself. [The shop] is a family business we have been running for the past 30-odd years. I'm the second generation. My dad started it when we needed a shop, and there was a cycle shop for sale. So we bought the cycling shop—not expecting to use it as a cycling store because my family only knew tailoring or clothing. But generally, I've taught myself cycling. It wasn't a passion that I grew up with it and then took it forward. It was a learned trade.
>
> Before we used to display all our goods on the pavement,[18] so, one day, the Metro [Police] pitched up in this big truck and started confiscating all my goods that were on the pavement. So, I was like, what's the story? Why are you confiscating? They say, "Oh no, because you're trading on the pavement." Okay, so I took all the goods from the pavement's surface and hung them on my burglar-proof [gate]. They still had an issue with that. Like you know, customers will drive past and say, where are you? I'm on Louis Botha Avenue. No, I drove past. I can't find you. That was a big thing

[18] In South Africa, pavement is synonymous with the sidewalk.

> because it affected our business in a big way after that. Man, there are no customers today. (Bhani, 2019: personal communication).

Vimal highlights how the city's image of fast, efficient mobility has come at a detrimental cost to businesses that do not fit in with *what* the municipality considers *should be.* It is an example of what is not understood by official bodies. Suppose official, institutional, and professional bodies heard Vimal's story. It might spark other ways of managing (and imagining) the street to encourage local economies and small-scale enterprises that alleviate the high unemployment rate. Vimal tells his story on his own terms, in the space he works in, thus ensuring authenticity. We learn about him, his local knowledge, and the city through *the power of* his story (Sandercock, 2003b). Sandercock argues, "The idea of core story as methodology draws on work in psychology which suggests that each of us has a core story: that we do not merely tell stories but are active in creating them with our lives. We become our stories" (Sandercock, 2003b:188). In 'becoming our stories,' storytelling further anchors the participatory action research referred to above. Its bodily and interactive method engages vocalization and movement between the storyteller and the audience.

Story as voice is an expression of values, views, impressions, thoughts, instructions, and reactions to the past, present, and future lived experiences within a particular city setting (Tuwe, 2016). The tellers' stories are completed in the listeners' (audiences) minds and aim to inspire agency, imagination, and reflection (National Storytelling Network, 2020). Chapter 3 shifts the frame by examining the city's representation through relational calibrating [reading, listening, and writing] concepts turned into narrative actions and principles that, along with dialogue, tell the city's story.

3.4.3 Story as Image

Chapter 2 introduced the role of the block's urban tissue as an intermediary between the city and the street. Inherently the block is representative of both, and as Panerai et al. argue:

> "Building the city today could mean the wish to find again, perhaps with different forms, the qualities of proximity, mixture and the unexpected, i.e., a public space accessible to all, a variety of mixed activities, a built-up area that keeps adapting and transforming itself in unplanned neighborhoods" (Panerai et al, 2009:159).

In responding to the call to create an alternative image, *Urban Scripting* applies Nguni storytelling as a basis to inform planning/design knowledge. By accessing local stories, a 'fusion of the unanticipated and unpredicted' scripts, a different view of the street's interstitial

zones. This approach is not dissimilar to Lefebvre's project in search of changing the everyday. Furthermore, in this context, applying an ontological approach to design creates spaces in the user's image, thereby advancing their claims and rights to urban life. According to Escobar, "Ontological design stems from a seemingly simple observation: that in designing tools (objects, structures, policies, expert systems, discourses, even narratives), we are creating ways of being" (Escobar, 2017:4). Here, designing through storytelling fulfills an inclusive, transformative agenda.

Accessing stories of interstitial occupation presents an opportunity to see and get to grips with the daily making of the city. This approach responds to the call for alternative scholarly endeavors and methodologies to begin to address and understand "the elusive essence of African cities" (Pieterse, 2013:21). In responding with an onsite and offsite production process, *making mise en scène* (character, location, activities) structures knowledge gathering through a collaborative story-making methodology. This collaboration also meets Kihato's call (2007:217) to acknowledge and, more specifically, use *Urban Scripting's* process to read, write, and transmit the making and shaping of African city spaces and forms (the block's urban tissue) based on local identity, and "history and agency" narratives.

Narrative production fuses urban design methods with oral storytelling formats to create a colonial/African documentary genre. Using images as story establishes a genre that is founded on Bhabha's (2004), Harrison's (2006), and Herman et al.'s (2010) pluralist and hybrid theory. Bhabha (2004) uses Nadine Gordimer's *My Son's Story* to illustrate an apartheid classification term: the condition of being 'colored,' a classification that included not only those of 'pure' Malay or Khoisan origin but also people of mixed race, such as those with a mixture of African and European blood. These classifications created a mental psyche or sphere that is a "halfway house of racial and cultural origins" as an 'in-betweenness' of "temporality that takes the measure of dwelling at home, while producing an image of the world of history" (Bhabha, 2004:19). In the *Urban Scripting* case study, the 'in-between' is a conflicting mélange of Nguni culture and Euro-American impositions. Harrison argues that a different critique of South African cities is called for:

> "Rather than seeing Africa as an incomplete or deteriorated example of modernity, we might focus on how Africa, and its many different parts, is—through the resourceful responses of its residents to conditions of vulnerability—in the process of becoming something new that is both part of and separate from Western modernity" (Harrison, 2006:323).

What Harrison argues for is an African imaginary hybrid. This thinking parallels Herman et al.'s (2010) argument that alterity, pluralism, and hybrid ideals allow ethnicities and cultures to merge, adopt the other's features dynamically, and coexist in multicultural harmony. Herman's mixed documentary genre explores and draws on the strengths of Nguni and Euro-American methodologies and emphasizes the importance of making a "respectful and responsive" (Davidson, 2019:37) alterity image. It focuses on the centrality of local narrative production and creates a more fitting reflection of the city that depends on storytelling. The delivery medium deploys the frame to present urban life forms and activities. Essentially, principles of framing and shifting mold study concepts of practice-based and practice-led fieldwork. This empirical fieldwork establishes site engagement protocol which borrows from the practicalities of African orality, literary, film, and comics studies. These studies use voice, words, frames, and panels as storytelling procedures in observing, examining, and analyzing emergent street phenomena. In the *Urban Scripting* casework, framing dialogues reflect Johannesburg's racial evolution and represent current on-ground realities in the *Retelling of Egoli* story to shift perception frames. This thinking extends to developing frames of "hybrid thought and practice" (Harrison, 2006:326), which establish local pedagogy, onto-epistemology, and axiology.

These storytelling frames are applied to think about and interpret the world as a hybrid method to reclaim control over memory, ways of knowing and being. Hybridity produces valuable local knowledge and an alternative way of rethinking city-making processes. Plus, the story-frame aids in mitigating dominance to arrive at different planning/design methodologies and outcomes. Shifting is an engagement of Nguni orality and intertextuality as frames of reference used to understand other ways of city occupancy and to trigger different approaches to making spaces. Architecture, urban planning/design, literature, music, film, comics, and cultural studies combine to form the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary intersection that frames the hybrid process of *Urban Scripting*. Its strategy answers the call "for a shift in research methodology" (Troiani & Kahn, 2016:51) to one that is a collaboration between the city, academy and practice, and citizen audience.

In accessing and constructing memory, this project's onto-epistemological image fuses fact-based comics and the documentary moving image. Its frame expresses "border thinking or transversal rationality" and "assumes a capacity to reconcile, or at least engage with, alternative ways of seeing, and thinking, and producing new and creative fusions" (Harrison, 2006:332). As a hybrid documentary genre, frame application brings different idioms of expression to storytelling in this study and its casework. It taps into drawing, painting, collage, photography, music, film, montage, and sculpture art forms to represent life. In the

following chapter, a narrative inquiry expresses storytelling's epistemological and ontological foundations. Its premise and positioning to make shared memory, meaning, and understanding of lived experiences, start a collaborative process of telling stories.

3.4.4 Contextual Folder

> "As a result of technological innovations and pressures . . ., epistemic reconfigurations, or shifts, are underway in various disciplines and sub-disciplines. They are harnessing new kinds of data and reshaping what constitutes units of analysis. New bodies of thought are involved in rethinking the nature of knowledge itself, the nature of being, of matter, how degrees of agency are distributed across human and non-human agents. Contrary to various discourses on the crisis of the humanities, the age is characterized by heightened curiosity and accompanying experimentation.
>
> Some of these shifts are paving the way for the emergence of entirely new cognitive assemblages, if not new knowledge formations" (Mbembe, 2019:244).

Mbembe's argument above is powerful and supports the foundation of this thesis, and its push to narrate the street answers Sandercock's (2003a) call to get things out of the closet and employ the power of story. Here, story and street act as units of analysis that harness twilight intelligence. Users' stories inject critical reflection, which encourages a rethink by planners and designers of how they understand the street's subsequent design as a site to observe success and failure, wealth and poverty, and the daily construction of the city. In this way, the developing archive of story material re-examines the current limitations of urban design practice to reach, understand, and incorporate the everyday needs of ordinary people. In essence, stories enhance multicultural communication to understand the city from multiple story angles, a process that mirrors the traditional way of passing messages of wisdom to the larger community (Madlala, 2001; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 2005; Tuwe, 2016).

This passing of knowledge as transformative nation-building addresses continuing histories, difference, conflicts, and *othering*. As Sandercock puts it, "in such cases, … people telling their own stories about how they perceive the situation, becomes a potential consensus-building tool for unearthing issues unapproachable in a solely rational manner" (Sandercock, 2000:26). Stories transmit local issues and embedded information which enables marginalized voices to have a say in urban discourses. Having a say builds and adds to the archive of African knowledge that emerges from the range of voices included in the *Contextual Voices Folder* (CVF). This data bank constructs different onto-epistemologies,

which artistically present plural ways of being that form understandings and knowledge about urban 'problems' faced in African cities. This expertise offers a broader and more deeply contextualized range of 'learning, noticing, and understanding tools' that are more specific and appropriate to the context. It also introduces audiences – urban and other social practitioners as well as a broader public – to an African hybrid way of making.

Street dynamics are layered in hybrid montages that illustrate temporariness shifting to something else (see *Calibrating Stories* (2022+)). These shifts create "medial space[s] of in-betweenness" (Grosser, 2013) while traversing border thinking (Harrison, 2006), a modification that highlights creative exchanges and situates adaptive ways. The folder also introduces the audience to artistic practices of city-making by showcasing the lessons learned from Sam Nhlengethwa, Spike Lee, Krzysztof Kieślowski, Mona Chalabi, and the other image-makers referenced when thinking about the city as mentioned in **1.4.2 Producing.** Miraftab (2009:45) argues that urban practitioners should reconsider spatial design "by taking a fresh look at subaltern cities to understand them by their own rules of the game and values rather than by the planning prescriptions and fantasies of the West." In this writing of new and artistic "cognitive assemblages" (Mbembe, 2019:244), the subaltern deals with historical experiences of hegemonic exclusion and deploys insurgent citizenship as a mitigating factor. For this, the documentation of story-making/telling highlights subaltern conceptualization and manifestation.

Essentially the African archive is deployed through storytelling to imagine a city very different from that envisioned by elitist desires and the 'prescriptions' of professional bodies and institutional power. Its documentary expressions, which come from various conflicting or harmonious voices, are packaged in different discourse formats, which adds to the African archive. This contribution to the library helps make knowledge previously hidden accessible to all stakeholders at all levels. Mbembe (2016:42) refers to this resource network as how Africans "will maximize the benefits of brain circulation." The narrative discourse expressions found in the *Contextual Voices Folder* (CVF) serve to inform a wider audience, from the local community to the mayor, the city dweller, and beyond. Mixing old (history) and new (contemporary) storytelling techniques creates a data bank of transformative insurgent ideas that can be used for local site appraisal in a way previously unavailable. The data bank's content looks to the past in shaping the future because "the return of deep history [is] the best way to elucidate the conditions under which the new emerges" (Mbembe, 2019:246).

3.5 Designing the Setting

3.5.1 Listening

Residues of colonialism, capitalism, and apartheid continue to structure Johannesburg's ways of moving and being. This *control* lens perceives streets as channels and is more concerned with streetscape beautification that has exciting and attractive frontages. The definition of beauty or desirability, like the ingrained hegemonic planning positions, is based on a value system with little relevance to the current context. This perception finds, for example, expression in the questionable inclusivity of the *Corridors of Freedom Project* (CoF) (Harrison et al., 2019) and its renderings that code space using a lens that mostly lacks an African identity. To counter this and identify the refrains Africans use to create territories, Janz highlights two themes:

- Kaphagawani's questioning of Arendt's polis as a model for the public realm that a "Greek model for human interaction may not apply to African life" (Janz, 2002:13).
- "…a new theory of tradition, one that does not rely on identification and recovery, but rather on recognizing the habits that have lived on" (Janz, 2002:13).

These comments imply that a Euro-American ideal of what Africa should be cannot reduce the Nguni approach to being. Being Nguni (African) is far too complex to be governed and dictated by abstract lines drawn on paper. Instead, Janz suggests "a new theory of tradition, one that does not rely on identification and recovery, but rather on recognizing the habits that have lived on" (Janz, 2002:13).

3.5.2 Testing

In mitigation, Koch's five 'interrelated areas' of storytelling – "journaling, observing, listening, writing and rigor" (1998:1182) extend to include 'conversation' (Kovach, 2009; Chimakonam, 2017; Janz, 2018) as a communication device. Inserting conversation enables 'co-production' in the reflexive research process (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2007) and broadens African concepts using dialogue to expand the reason and rationality range in African philosophy (Chimakonam, 2017; Janz, 2018). Furthermore, strategic conversation initiates a process to transform site engagement strategies and tactics to alter the city's image (Pieterse, 2021). Koch's (1998) storytelling concepts are central to understanding experience and interpreting reality: 'reading, listening, and writing.' They form the basis for the research techniques employed for *Urban Scripting*'s operational and reflexive engagement frame with the here and now interwoven with the past. Thus, reading, listening, and writing give rise to

two things: the significance of storytelling assembly, and the other establishes a ‘library of realities.’

In site appraisal, storytelling and the library express the importance of spatial imagination. Using the Nguni storytelling tradition is an alternative method of reading the African city. It goes beyond ocular-centric paradigms to engage the aural experience by listening to and hearing the locals. This approach allows a focus on the lived vitalities embodied in the everyday auditory and visual textures of the street identity. The emphasis on lived vitalities in the design process requires professionals to engage with ‘difference’ (Sandercock) at local levels and foster “a range of active and passive social behaviors” (Mehta, 2014:1). In addition, the process must allow urban residents to appropriate, confront and manage complex networking scopes of everyday life (Simone & Pieterse, 2018). In engaging with the difference (otherness) of residents across cultural and normative divides, urban planners/designers must not only apply a ‘therapeutic’ approach but must “be fluent in a range of ways of knowing and communicating: from storytelling to listening to interpreting visual and body language” (Sandercock, 2000:25—26).

Narrating from the inside allows for an appropriate imagining of citizens’ rights in the city (Relph, 2008; Hall et al., 2013). It is a practice that responds to the call for an “unmistakable art … of bringing an issue into the public sphere and transforming it into a shared concern that can produce agonistic debate about what needs to be done” (Pieterse, 2021:198). Once a crack has materialized, only a proactive, collaborative strategy involving the three protagonists can repair it, and this requires “reflective learning” (Pieterse, 2021:198). The issue is that multiple perspectives and realities do not accompany many inherent knowledge values around space and cultural appropriation. Furthermore, they do not form part of conventionally built environment academic curricula. Instead, dominant ideologies and spatial representation underpin the academy and practice’s concepts and theories informed by literature and global north perspectives (Parnell & Robinson, 2012; Smith, 2012; Roy, 2014: Sihlongonyane, 2022). These are markedly different from *Othered* realities in the South African (and African) context and exacerbated by typical professional attitudes to urban change that primarily promote specialist knowledge only and weaken phronēsis.

3.5.3 Designing Methods and Positions through Walking as Practice

During data gathering walks, both streets’ visual and acoustic strengths and differences were noticeable but required tools capable of engaging the senses. A three-step format locates the representative image during these walks. The first is walking. Photographing comes next, followed by sketching. Identified moments are photographed and drawn as instrumental

viewpoints establishing mise en scène; these create composites and collages (see ***Fieldwork Notes*** (2017+) and ***Calibrating Stories*** (2022+)). Photographs play a vital role during the various design stages as they allow for specific location identification and direct where things happen or certain situations occur. Finally, courtroom-style sketches document activities and emotions to provide an immediacy that informs the teams about the nature and tenor of the site. The sketching and production process has another advantage; it creates a buzz/spectacle with onlookers who may come to see what is 'going on' and who add value through their conversation (**Fig. 3.5.**).

- Conversations

Talking to people reveals three things:

- First, people are primary to space.
- Second, their stories say more about design than drawings.
- Third, identifies protagonists for the sidewalk stories.

Saturday, 18 November 2017, from 09:00 to 15:00, is a hot day in Alexandra. Since the street runs east-west, the north-facing façade (southern edge) is in direct sunlight, while the walls shield the south-facing façade (northern boundary). Between 11:00 and 15:00, the sun is high in the sky, and there are very few places of shelter from the sun on the northern façade, so hardly any street trading or idling occurs along this edge, with people opting to seek shade on the south-facing edge to sell, stand and talk. The limited sidewalk trading along the southern border happens in less contested spaces. The trading spaces are under self-created shelters and beneath the few trees on the south side of the street.

During the walks, Alexandra and Orange Grove agree and express a similar struggle. People as the primary constituents of space is a concept that is contrary to the Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) 2017 mandate. The JRA Strategic Frameworks for Roads (2017:3;25;6) vision is "A people-centered transport system that is transformed." Its mission states, "We commit to provide quality roads that are accessible, safe and livable for all our communities," and "Ubuntu is one of five values that define the culture and ethos of the sector."



Figure 3.3 Understanding Site from Within

However, while the JRA's goals and objectives are succinct when describing vehicular and infrastructure commitments, they are vague regarding people, the very heart of Ubuntu. The framework states, "It seeks to transform the human settlement patterns of the past, ensuring inclusive and mixed housing solutions while also promoting economic activities within communities" (2017:4).

This point indicates how the JRA aligns itself with the City's Growth and Development Strategy (GDS) 2040 Sustainable Human Settlements, which is not directly linked to the JRA. The vagueness of this approach and its impact on a pedestrian (sidewalk) culture is underscored by Cabaret's (2012) *Back to the Streets: Exploratory research on pedestrian life and walking spaces in* [the] *Greater Johannesburg area* study. The study concludes that it "underlined a critical tension in terms of spatial change in Johannesburg" (Cabaret, 2012:50) and points to the omission of pedestrian consideration at the visioning and design stages. Out of its 141 pages, the *CoJ Complete Streets Design Guideline* (City of Johannesburg, 2013:49) has only the following about street trade/vendors:

> “4.5.5 Street Vendors
>
> On many commercial streets, business owners want to use the space outside their premises to place tables, chairs, display wares, or temporary signs. Informal trading is also commonplace in CBD areas. The minimum width of walkways on commercial streets must be at least 4m to provide sufficient space for private streetscape amenities, public utilities and to ensure a clear and safe path of travel.”

*Retelling Egoli’*s conversations in both streets illuminate two main themes: one, there is a lack of subaltern representation in planning, and street voices say more than street standards; two, there are many similarities in street-level lived experiences. Stories told at Reverend Sam Buti and Louis Botha Avenue share common themes concerning police harassment, systemic marginalization, abandonment by the city, difficulties in making ends meet, appropriation, participation, and survival measures. A triangulation of both sites establishes the common themes and combines the two areas into a single exploration, albeit with some differences. The standout difference is the considerable investment made by CoJ in developing Louis Botha Avenue as a transit corridor. By contrast, Reverend Sam Buti operates ‘more’ outside of state regulation, effectively as a ‘local self-governing’ space, because bylaws are not enforced as strictly.

The elements (observations and conversations) collected from the walks generate a map with different data layers that reveal inscriptions of other palimpsests on the street’s surface and reconstruct the city’s history traces and narratives. This process of walking engages all the senses and captures a street’s emotional texture, impression climate, and specifics of a particular detail by using photography, sketch, audio, and visual recording. It is a powerful investigatory tool. In conclusion, the *Urban Scripting* theory applied in *Retelling Egoli* argues that the semantic structure of documenting visual material by drawing or recording things defined by spatiality in a frame “constitutes a language in its own right” Schmid, 2021:124).

3.5.4 Shifting

Framing demonstrates how imported spatial regulations are out of sync with current realities and inherently exclude the ‘unsuitable types’ that do not conform to authorities’ ideal city image (Shaw & Hudson, 2009). Especially true in South African urban spaces, these settlement perversions manifested in complex spatial dynamics. For example, cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town, where deep structural continuities of colonialism, capitalism, and apartheid endure, are havens for social inequality and reinforce pre-existing separation conditions by perpetuating segregationist and isolationist patterning. Collisions and conflicts

between institutionalized views based on archaic perceptions and actual realities are blatantly exposed in *Othered* and *fragile* areas such as the townships and informal settlements of South Africa.

The apartheid project utilized a planning blueprint prioritizing rational appeal over practical use. This uneven standardization led to a uniform and controlled space where most of the country's individuals could not engage or contribute (Shaw & Hudson, 2009) and manifested further conflict. These confrontations created boundaries on the landscape based on fear, and while these are no longer mandated, they remain, for many, a lived reality. Additionally, through laws that fail to acknowledge their presence, the deepened imposition of other regulatory measures in public spaces further relegates marginal groups (Shaw & Hudson, 2009). These regulations assume that all individuals in the public space are for mobility reasons or to consume. Those who fall outside these categories are not recognized or are deemed undesirable. The error in this assumption lies in its narrow view of public space use which ignores complex socio-economic realities; there is a contradictory understanding and polarization of space. The imagination of the marginalized user, who dominates most public spaces in creative and usually unregulated ways, differs vastly from the elite, whose experience defines structure, order, and rigidity. Shaw and Hudson (2009) argue that these dichotomous understandings should merge so that urban space shapes a balanced relationship between professionals and users. It is a relationship founded on establishing coherence through transdisciplinary measures. *Retelling Egoli* expresses artistic thinking through spatial conventions – instead of narrating about reality, it narrates with reality – forming a two-way connection between writer and audience.

Shifting builds on Escobar's (2017) ontological design arguments that apply criticality to environmental, experiential, and political issues and the resulting social challenges while centering on the human experiential construction grounded in *buntfu*. Compressing time and space determined by rhythms and history organize the intersubjective memorializing (Ahmed & Crucifix, 2018), designing common ground. Because today's problems cannot be solved tomorrow using yesterday's conventions or technology transdisciplinary measures turn diverse perspectives into mutual understandings with the prime objective of collectively rethinking the city. Taken from the casework, the tree reappears in this frame (**Fig. 3.6**) as a contextual reference to demonstrate *shifting*. As a point of anchorage, it negotiates a shift between plan and elevation, where seasoned versions of the tree offer a nuanced view of the context, enabling storytelling. The tree represented from an eye-level perspective is where one may gauge the experiential qualities of place. Bra Niky makes his first appearance alongside the tree with his story and many others waiting to be told. Thus, Chapter 3 argues

for more empirically based investigations – that inductively guide different ways of thinking and analyzing – and that the best way to see is to critically listen (to the context).

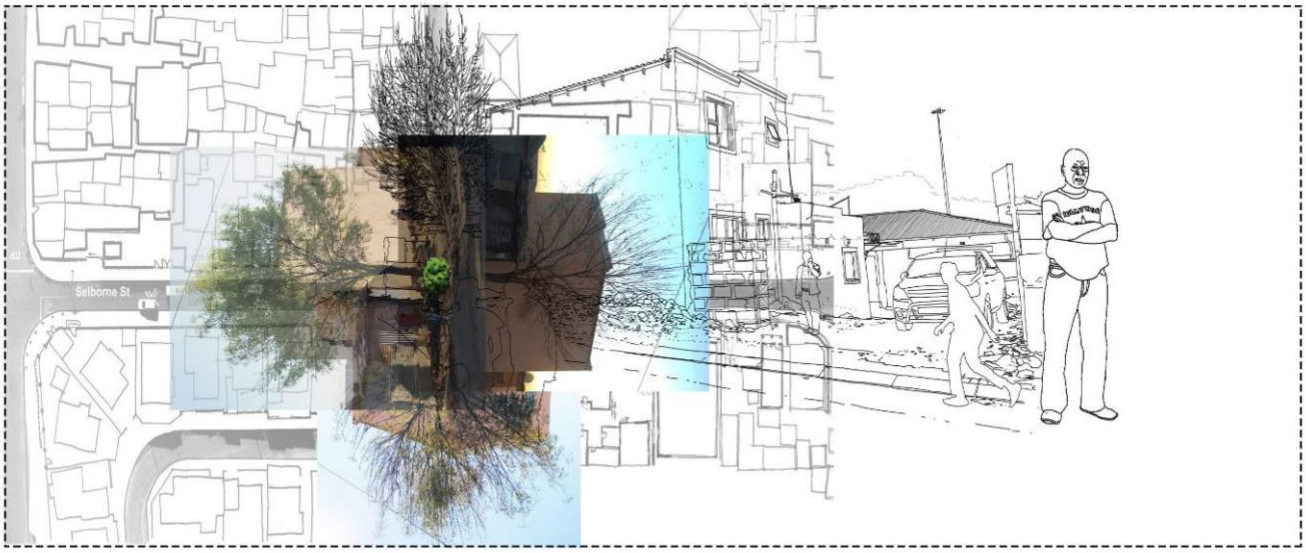


Figure 3.6 Shifting Context

4 Recognizing: Positioning

> "Critics generally don't associate black people with ideas. [Instead], they see marginal people . . . sociologically interesting people perhaps but very parochial…. We are people, not aliens. We live, we love, and we die.
>
> Black people have a story, and that story has to be heard. There was articulate literature before there was print. There were griots. They memorized it. People heard it. It is important that there is sound in my books—you can hear it, I can hear it."
>
> *Conversations with Toni Morrison*, Toni Morrison 1994 (Guthrie, 1994: back cover (1994).

4.1 Building a Library

4.1.1 Reading Realities

Taking its cue from Morrison's words above, this chapter presents the methodology's writing aspect, communicating specific activities, their different manifestations, and time-related linked causalities as casework findings. Accordingly, based on the observation that "narrative is an event-driven tool of research" (Webster & Mertova, 2007:71), an action-driven approach is used to visualize memory and critical activities as "key determinants in how we recall our life experiences" (Webster & Mertova, 2007:71). Detailed in Chapter 2, *timeframing* explored Johannesburg's landscape to *read* and identify spatial issues. Chapter 3 examined ways of shifting the context's dominant knowledge and focused on accessing the different forms of learning by listening to the marginalized people needed to describe an alternative environment.

Chapter 4 records activities that tell the street-level lived experiences so all the protagonists and the wider public can hear them (Morrison, 1994). Scripting is a way of writing and redefining space as place by positioning local activities to establish the final tripartite stage. Following the reading and listening processes, writing narrates micro-level street stories. Writing subaltern stories relevant to rethinking the city in relation to space and movement completes a transformative framework that constructs representations of reality that recognize alterity as a condition of identity. Chapter 4 discusses the activities needed to respond, unleash, and maximize the context's potential and intellectual validity. It explains how making audio-visual texts interprets the street as a palimpsest. This process offers a way to see, read, listen, and situate an inclusive perspective. Therefore, interpretation writes

a story more pertinent to accurate site assessment from multiple aspects. Its methodology deploys an insurgent documentary-making style that:

- Interweaves urban actions to present different perspectives and adjust conventional viewpoints.
- Deploys cinematic procedures to analyze, illustrate and describe contexts by engaging the close-up to decrease the distance between the scriptors/producers/researchers and the audience.
- Increases the intensity, expresses emotion, and brings in the detail of people as a necessary textural layer to stimulate a visceral response connecting the image to the reader.

As an art form, positioning combines traditional planning cultures with Nguni storytelling traditions to mitigate the knowledge gap through three themes:

- Reporting back to conventional practice and research methodologies by enunciating and elucidating the importance of life at the 'fringes.'
- Extending traditional discourses to include voices from the margins.
- Creating platforms that shift policymaking to consider other ways of being in the city.

Positioning simulates oral exchanges that sometimes rely on indirect interactions between the teller and receiver. Aligning mindsets is premised on a context of learning, knowing, and understanding composed in and through rituals, praxes, activities, and collaborations. Collectively building the street engages metaphors, allegory, axiom, and memory to create spaces for interpretation, which positions "readers as accomplices" (McCloud, 1994:68). Physical and social elements form interpretational themes to examine the street's primary functions. These employ the street as a space to create and support life (Sadik-Khan & Solomonow, 2017). Another exploration is the street's significance regarding claims to the city that form meanings of what expressions are on the ground and why. Lastly, a review of planning/design processes reveals what official bodies and institutions do not understand about the lived experience of city residents and what the street teaches them.

Making stimulates an expanded street image-making process in conjunction with characters who express local feelings and perceptions. These represent the agency of contemporary street life in Johannesburg and interweave collaborative contributions from various sources and disciplines to form a richer exchange of ideas and knowledge (Lawrence, 2010). Hence,

positioning is a documentary-making process translating the study's theoretical concepts to shape and arrange the practice-based/practice-led approach of *Urban Scripting*.

4.1.2 Narrative Documentary

Chapter 2 established 'journaling, observing, listening, writing and rigor' (Koch, 1998) as themes to situate storytelling as a research process and product. Extended to 'conversation' (Kovach, 2010; Chimakonam, 2017; Janz, 2018), the pieces broadened theoretical concepts further to form iterative, reflective, and reflexive re-descriptions of 'reading, listening, and writing.' Re-descriptions are applied to shape better city understandings conceptualized from multiple viewpoints. *Retelling Egoli* interweaves narrative concepts (words, drawings, images) with social scientific study elements (film and anthropology) to make the street talk and bring the city into being (Mbembe Nuttall 2008:30). To examine lived realities, the collaborative nature of the writing strategy thus seeks unity and consistency from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Citing Ramadier (2004), Lawrence (2010:114) argues for "a shift from disciplinary divisions (which search for the unity of knowledge) to collaborative deconstruction (which seeks coherence)." He further explains how Ramadier (2004) illustrates concepts and methods from these disciplines to study people in specific environments:

> ". . . transdisciplinary contributions by some environmental psychologists have led to the formulation and validation of innovative concepts, such as place identity. Since the 1970s, the concept of place-identity has provided important contributions to the field of architecture, human geography, psychology, and sociology by showing the influence of the physical environment on identity and self-perception . . . transdisciplinarity is a way of achieving innovative goals, enriched understanding, and a synergy of new methods" (Lawrence, 2010:114).

Lawrence's argument above grounds the *Urban Scripting* approach to voicing the street and its push for a more accurate urban understanding of *what is* and *what can become.* Its methods perceive the city from the storyteller and listener's points of view. Positioning equates to writing. And writing the street's image by engaging *what is*, *what it needs,* and *what it can become* instead of *what it should be* establishes understanding processes based on looking at and using symbols, gestures, and movement. In short, this process manifests in scripts alongside plots, actors, recitals, locations, and real-life situations. Likewise, accurate calibration is vital in cinematography to produce good-quality images with the desired meanings. Therefore, camera calibration techniques that 'correct' slight faults in the sensor and optical system focus on and zoom in on the subaltern twilight zone to accurately reflect

what is and *what can become*. Calibrating makes use of urban design techniques that read the existing context and plan possible futures. Practice defines what represents a 'good quality image' of the street, which can be used to investigate and 'tune' the realities exposed through accessing neglected knowledge stores. The selected activities *write* stories that ground a broader, comprehensive experience that [re]presents residents' voices.

Retelling Egoli uses space to position an interpretive and transformative dialogue between the teller (narrator) and listener (reader) and, in so doing, place different inflections on 'reading, listening, and writing.' Audio and visual collaboration stimulate an interactive decolonial dialogue around claims and shared city understandings. Whatever the complexities existing on the street, reading (observation), listening (recording), and writing (communicating) form the visual strategy's continuous loop to shift the frame. Each term [re]presents a singular yet interconnected action to grasp *bantfu netindzawo* (people and places) and enhance understanding of the city. Premised on Nguni orality and *buntfu* principles, the approach claims that meaningful conversation enriches knowledge and requires committed listening.

The expression elements are more attentive and aid the strategy's looped format**.** So, enhanced readings lead to improved recordings, enabling better communication and forming augmented writings. Deepened writings result in meaningful and critical conversations. Richer conversations foster a more accurate translation of the city and, in this way, achieve the study objective by creating more room to absorb and implement more fitting spatial enablers. This methodology addresses the central research question of how *local understandings and knowledge about activity streets can be captured and communicated to enhance social, economic, and cultural inclusion in city planning and design processes.* As a response, the approach builds a library of vital street realities and argues that these demonstrate alternate interpretations of Johannesburg's everyday life that bridge the knowledge gap between academic, professional understanding, and user experience. As a communication practice and source of empirical data, this information data bank is of great value to urban practitioners.

Intellectually, the urban designer imagines and makes the city using a storytelling framework that deploys the actions which insert social narrative and center *Othered* knowledge. This framework calibrates new mindsets by opposing normative theories that reduce the lived experience. As such, embracing difference and subaltern marginality stimulates an active transformative approach to challenge dominant knowledge forms. In doing this, it constructs a hybrid worldview that bridges the gap vis-à-vis the politics of people and urban design.

Additionally, the deconstruction of normative street knowledge standards interrogates what reality frames are the background and should foreground compositions drawn from a transformative shift in urban design professional practice. It also extends two interlaced procedures to assess context/site appraisal forming:

- A collaborative engagement; and
- On and offsite communicative methods.

The framework uses the two as organizational tools to structure historical and geographical elements ranging from the country, and city, to the street. Moving from idea to actuality involves the urban designer at all scale levels, including conversations with community stakeholders, external experts, and creative co-producers. Story creation is a method of accessing new possibilities informed by pluralist hybrid theories (Bhabha, 2004; Herman et al., Harrison, 2006; 2010; Escobar, 2017). Stories align perception by focusing on elements shaping, interpreting, and creating a more fitting city reflection. Understanding the colonial/Nguni hybrid city requires context-specific theoretical frames and practice methods that address emergent complexity. Understanding the readapted use of imposed forms requires a different skill set, applied at different scales rather than one of prescriptive and static solutions. Observations are collectively recorded, processed, edited, and presented in a manner that communicates emergent and innovative practices better. The awareness by urban designers of these emergent practices and their critical role invariably informs better design and city-making.

Here, the argument is that understanding starts with nuanced reading and hearing what people on the ground are saying, which provides access to their knowledge. This knowledge writes a script of specific moments across space and time and gives access to the fundamental elements necessary for and in site appraisal.

4.1.3 Storytelling Methodologies

Urban Scripting draws on Stuart Hall's (2013) theories of representation, which aim to recognize and hear the margins and begin with listening. Recognizing happens through recording the everyday. Documentaries communicate cognitive viewpoints, give insight into personal experiences, and make meaning. During the making process, what is clear is the need for methods that respond to and address 'post-colonial' and 'post-apartheid' realities. For many, these experiences relate to the uncertain occupancy and a densifying urban condition caused by unprecedented developmental problems and diminishing resources. A

fundamental question is how does the spatial discipline effectively engage in these complex and multilayered contexts?

Storytelling methodologies provide a way to address the question above and provide a story-based/led case study in response. *Retelling Egoli* highlights gaps in the existing range of tools applied to understanding the city and demonstrates the efficacy and applicability of interpreting street realities in this way. Linking life drama (genre) to the story (narrative) is "a deeply historical phenomenon, one that both expresses a particular set of historical conditions and helps to shape individual and social beliefs, hopes, ideas, and expectations at a given moment in time" (Puckett, 2016:14). Extending this argument through story, scripting constructs maps of the experienced city spaces, and this helps make better action decisions. Gaining this access is pivotal since "The edges of experience are particularly important to map, because it is at the edges that exceptional things happen for which we may not be prepared" (Kurtz, 2014:32). In essence, these stories bring to the fore activities which may be considered unusual by convention. Expressed as daily narratives, stories have the stability to provide a fixed point to assess the everyday, historical, ideological, and cultural movements (Puckett, 2016). Translating applies Serlio's tragic, comic, and satiric scenes as image perspectives to depict daily life (Tice, 2003).

Moreover, information gathering places narrative at the center as a carrier that links the genres or dramas of everyday life. Rimmon-Kenan (2002) defines narrative as having three aspects: 'story,' 'text,' and 'narration,' which have implications for the role of storytelling in urban planning/design and provide the roots of *Urban Scripting's* thinking. According to Rimmon-Kenan (2002:3), 'story' signifies a sequence of activities expressed using 'text.' 'Text' designates what is 'read' and takes on telling the movement either by the teller, audience, or both. It is the verbal (spoken) or written representation (discourse) dialogue that carries out the telling of the actions and movements (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). The third aspect, 'narrating,' is telling or writing (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Hence, the reading or writing of its text implies a process of production described as the act of 'narration.' Uniting the three aspects aims to produce an allegorical interpretive story using counter-narrative techniques. In setting up a counter-story, *Othered* knowledge bases fuse 'story,' 'text,' and 'narrative' elements. 'Story' expresses street realities with a value system (and worldview) that underpins and informs individual agency and culture.

The reading of Johannesburg's context as a colonial and apartheid site uses Nguni (native) orality and Eurocentric (western) writing traditions as 'hybrid texts' (Bhabha, 2004; Harrison, 2006; Herman et al., 2010). The superimposition of native and western thoughts expresses

spatial composites as an integrated Nguni-colonial hybrid. Inserting difference enables an insurgency to counter elitist dominance dictations and fosters emancipatory power overlays that oppose the current urban planning/design model. More than ever, the choice of methods that express local experience demonstrates a nuanced reading inspired by everyday phenomena and establishes appropriate forms of narration with a distinctive onto-epistemology. In an inherited imperial context, locating the continuously mutating everyday and giving the subaltern voice requires constant learning and improvisation in establishing ways to hear and express life. Extending traditional mapping cultures to incorporate narrative tools and cinematographic techniques forms a new artistic method that invites reflection.

It is, furthermore, a practice that "enhances our awareness of the pre-reflective nearness of things as well as our epistemological distance from them" (Borgdorff, 2010:45). By listening to subaltern voices, audio-visual storytelling allows intimate engagement with and learning from. It is an intimacy that, in turn, permits hybrid expressions and understandings in relation to identity, place, and the world to emerge. Narration brings the protagonists together and places narrators centrally within the conversation and in a position to relate their sensory experiences of self and others. Storytelling affords improvisational opportunities that adapt and respond to the urban's daily making. Improvisation reveals innovative survival measures performed in spaces, not of users' making. Because life constantly changes, storytelling reacts to twilight uncertainties and sometimes chaotic novelties. When in the field, casework-recorded material responds to fluid site conditions and allows the study to always be in a zone of constant learning.

Storytelling's ability to capture fluidity makes this form of engagement "an open undertaking, seeking the deliberate articulation of unfinished thinking in and through art" (Borgdorff, 2010:45). Moreover, it presents opportunities to redefine things in perpetual making and a process that uses an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methodology conceptualized as *the making of* … many things. This narrative thinking connects the phenomenological and hermeneutic meanings of lived experience.

4.2 Framing: Time

4.2.1 Stories

Stories told using filmic methods foster interactions with others, let people talk about their experiences, make inside and outside connections, and produce information through six-story stages. The process involves a reflective iterative phase to situate an idea, develop a subject, design a setting, recognize a method, edit a narrative, and present its outcomes. In contrast to conventional methods that silence the unseen, the process brings the street into

being and focus by letting the unnoticed speak. Marginal recognition gives local knowledge a platform to respond to prevailing histories and geographies. These responses form relational stories (**Fig. 4.1**), told by people placed in subjugated predicaments through imperialistic, colonial, apartheid, and capitalist ideologies (Stam & Spence, 1982; Mbembe, 2015; Roy, 2015). As such, these are explored in *Retelling Egoli's* anthology, expressed by audio and visual montage and assemblage, that triggers the viewer to engage with the material from multiple points of view. The storyboard for example, that positions various viewpoints, temporal seepages, action distance, and spatial configurations to the expressed material. Stories give visibility and voice merging *itolo* (yesterday), *namuhla* (today, and *kusasa* (tomorrow).

Time provides the chronological order (succession) of activities, context (metaphorical and physical site) constitutes an array of environments that are "epistemological fields and methodological fields" (Harris, 2016:27), and activities signify human occurrences in spaces. Narrative organizational aspects contextualize the story's language, epistemology, and ontology, as *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) and *Calibrating Stories* (2022+) cinematic texts. Artistic practice methods structure "pathway[s] through which new insights, understandings, and products come into being" (Borgdorff, 2010:46). Extending Borgdorff's theories, filmic artistic aesthetics enable audiences (readers) to engage with emotions, identify with the characters, and want them to achieve better lives. In this way, the analytical and practical techniques used in *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+): aerial overview, linear site drive, and ground point investigation, give relatable human dimensions. Aerial overview and site provide context from two perspectives – fixed camera positions with vertical and horizontal tracking – and the ground point investigation introduces the lived experience through multiple fixed and roving camera positions. Photographic streetscape inventories superimpose plans, sections, elevations, and perspectives.

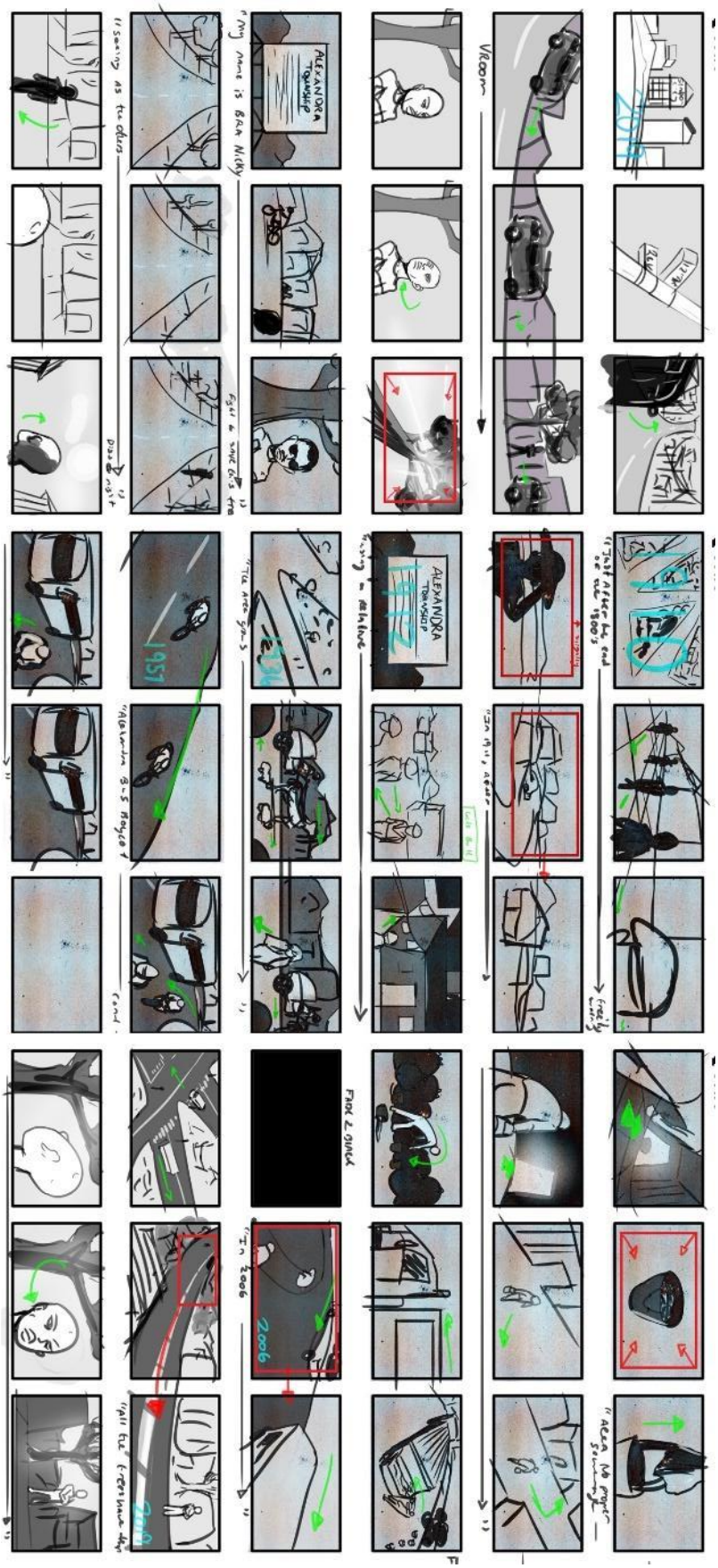


Figure 4.1 Animation Storyboard

As with conventional drawing, aerial tracking shots in the casework provide an overview of the study area coupled with aural texture and movement. Site drive-throughs cover the length of the case study area (distances between 1050–1070 meters) and display elevation and perspective, with consistency, texture, movement, and sound included. The camera zooming applied in on-ground shots presents a radical expansion of orthodox mapping techniques, presenting an on-ground dynamic that gives a scale, sound, visual quality, and movement to production sites that no drawing can fully reproduce. The investigation also introduces the people (actors) who operate the income-generating sites and responds to their lived experiences and environment, thereby setting up the structures needed for listening, recording, and expressing feelings. As a last step, and in preparation for the collection of sidewalk stories, *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) construct the image (different types of visual texts) required for an empirical inventory of the street and explore its economic and cultural intersections to conceptualize the relationship between the two in present-day city spaces (du Gay, 1997).

Shifting to cinematic texts, timeframing determines spatial issues – frame designates the boundary edges that contain an image's materiality, situate an activity, construct a narrative, and tell a story. "Narrative is the principal way […] our species organizes its understanding of time" (Abbott, 2002:3), so mechanisms expressing the passage of time and the shaping of human stories structure narrative. Activities prompt sequences and memories through time, make meaning, and construct reality (Thomas, 2016). A social constructionist framework links narrative production and human experience (Squire et al., 2014). In other words, we know what we know about ourselves in the world and universe through the language we use to communicate our stories – a common language. Stories are told through carefully created and curated frames and direct readers to reach "particular interpretive conclusions" (Berlatsky, 2009:175). Chapters 5 and 6, examine in greater detail the space between panels, called 'gutters,' which allows readers to actively interpret and find "closure" (McCloud, 1994:65) in everyday life. For this, gutters simulate time and motion, and readers apply the closure. This space between the frames conveys information collaborating with a reader's participation to permit the awareness of time and movement. For example, in *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022), the six panels on page 2 engage a timeline from 1834 to 2017 (**Fig 4.2**). Bra Niky, beneath the tree on the sidewalk, begins his story in 2017 and backtracks in time to show how Johannesburg went from being unspoiled *veld* with hardly any trees to the metropolis it is today with a significant urban forest that comprises mostly alien species planted by the colonizer.

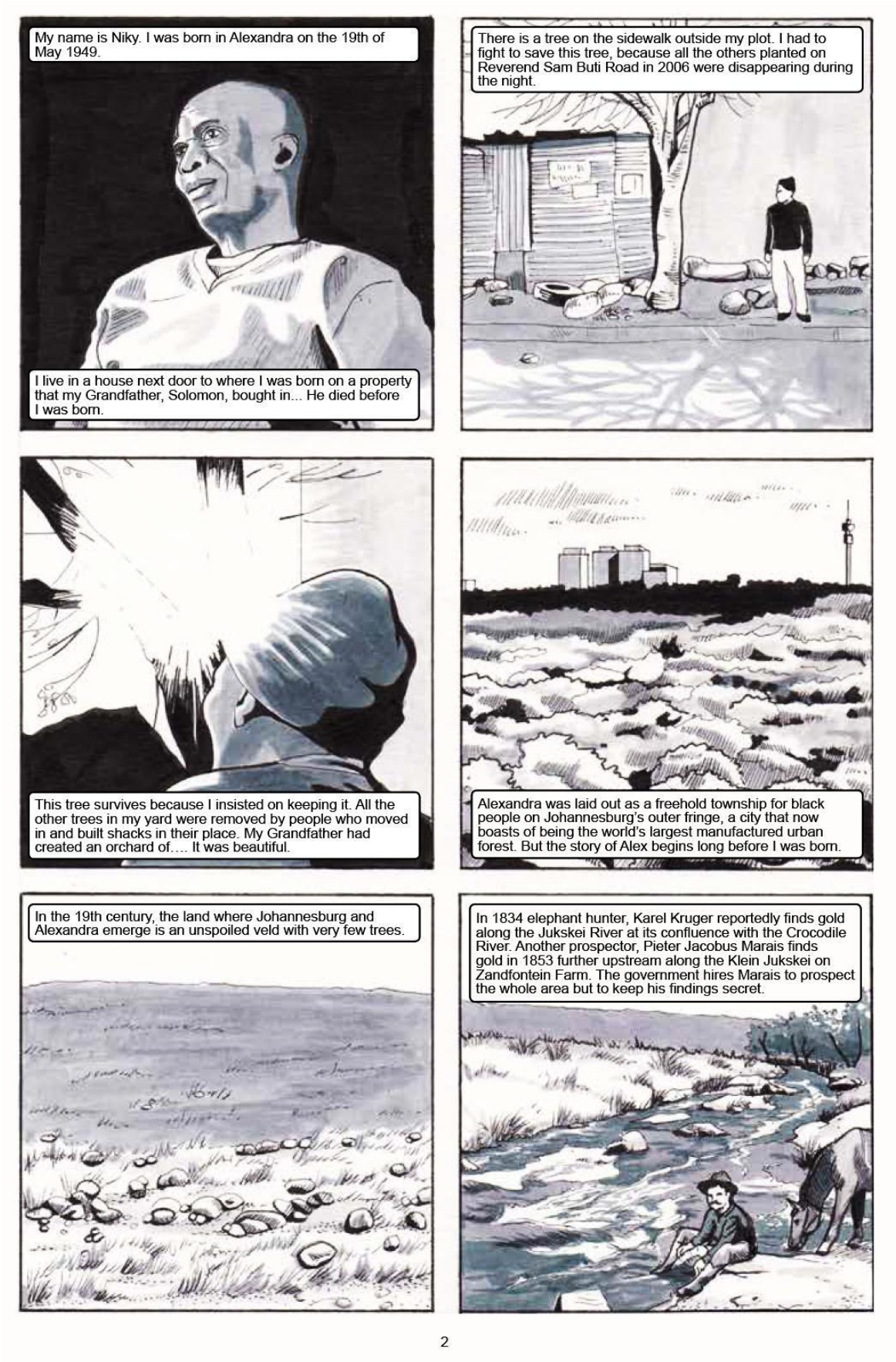


Figure 4.2 Panelization & Timeframing

Just as the storyteller uses axiom, gestures, and metaphor to convey meaning, the scriptor/producer/researcher's use of different types of panel-to-gutter-to-panel transitions narrates a particular sequence that, even though the reader draws their own conclusions, significantly influences their deductions. Consequently, achieving diversity and difference highlights the need for empathetic listening. When writing the life experiences, knowledge construction comes from human interactions. Therefore, scripting a future city may improve the present if city makers act ethically with a similar level of nuance, empathy, and compassionate reading. Scripting begins with Barthes's (1975) assertion that story and narrative have a universal role in human history and that narratives are present everywhere, in oral or visual texts, still or moving pictures, gestures, and mixtures of them (Barthes, 1975). *Retelling Egoli* describes everyday activities as 'happenings' that carry content and meaning (Hall et al., 2013). From this resource, urban professionals can gain the insights necessary to plan effectively and learn.

Activities, as movement sequences, show participants in their actual setting, expressed in ways they deem appropriate, which is an expression that neutralizes the erasure of prevailing spatial discourse. Time or chronology is the starting point for the story because the context and activities that range from macro to micro scales all change with time. At a macro-level is the globe, the African continent, South Africa, Johannesburg, the township of Alexandra, the suburb of Orange Grove, Reverend Sam Buti Street, and Louis Botha Avenue. At the micro-level are the specific places of interest (pavements, retail outlets, holes in walls shops, outdoor trade spaces) and the people who occupy them.

4.2.2 Expressions

Aural and visual expressions illustrate time causality that counters prevailing constructivist worldviews by presenting a new visual reference point that is locally and culturally in tune with the society it serves. An example is **Fig. 4.3**, which represents a local way of communicating based on need, in this case, an Alexandra taxi hand signal reflecting "an evolving, well-functioning, gestural language for sighted commuters" (Woolf, 2013). The hand signals indicate to a taxi driver what destination a traveler wants to reach – where they are going and whether it is on their allocated route. **Fig 4.3** the destination is Alexandra. Story expressions imagine the city as different from what it currently is. Signs imagining a just city and expression nullify colonial reductionism that eliminated any depiction of local context, exploited people and resources, and introduced racial classifications. Moreover, colonial texts generated damaging stereotypes reflecting an elitist worldview that objectifies *others* who do not fit a standardized Euro-American-centric model.



Figure 4.3 Alexandra Taxi Signal[19]

The elements in *Retelling Egoli* counter the still dominant imperialist slant that emphasizes tropes such as savagery and depicts Africans as uncivilized beasts in need of saving. Instead, they are spoken from and drawn by the margins in ways that more honestly reflect

[19] A variety of hand signals are used along all minibus taxi routes in South Africa to indicate to the driver the potential passenger's destination.

them. Expressions make multiple scriptors agents of making and communicating (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). In this way, the urban designer's role shifts to encompass content production, assembling and producing local stories, thereby fostering alternative ways to make meaning and create the city (Hallenbeck, 2010).

In creating other imaginaries, Clandinin & Connelly (2000), Rimmon-Kenan (2002), and Lury et al. (2020) argue that knowledge in the story's objective text is acquired both in its making and telling process. Simply put, the story's narration contains and communicates knowledge. Clandinin & Connelly refer to an ongoing relationship between makers and tellers in which "the stories being lived and told—shapes the nature of field texts that may be composed" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:92). Knowledge construction is "the integration of information dispersed in the text and thus also the filling-in of gaps is effected by reference to models of coherence, or frames" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:128). Method activation is part of a larger "assemblage or ecology in which methods are put to work" (Lury, 2020:41). Subsequently, the field recorder is an operator rather than just a spectating observer. In speculative design, research, and thinking, things are:

> ". . . . continually being in process, or continually being revised, … with prototyping there are moments when speculation is halted, pauses to collectively assemble and observe the outcome of an intervention or the making of something" (Lury et al., 2020:46).

So, in sharing knowledge, the production of the text is seminal to storytelling.

Emphasized above is the story's narration, specifically the "telling" of the story, which "… is a presentation mediated by the narrator who, instead of directly and dramatically exhibiting events and conversation, talks about them, sums them up, etc" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:108). *Urban Scripting*'s telling draws on multiple sources and ties in Aristotle's (1999) three types of knowledge, loosely scientific, artisanal, and ethical knowledge. Foundational to the project's communicative practice is *cinema verité*, or "truth cinema," which arose in the French film movement of the 1960s. Its filmic texts express authentic actions and dialogue of local everyday situations. Cinéma verité breaks the mold by recording real situations, conversations, interviews, and people's opinions as 'authentic audio' source material to generate the visuals. Another source is Third (World) Cinema's post-colonial theory and perspectives, which defined a cinema of resistance to colonial renderings of the '*Other'* and radicalized new forms of social documentary expression. Finally, Third Cinema is rooted in an ideological consciousness of national liberation that opposes imperialistic bourgeois class oppression (Solanas & Getino, 1970-71). The two formats conceptualize and structure a

Kieślowski-type stylistic design, a self-liberation documentary realism shaped by the community voices propelling the visuals. Narrating from the inside incorporates principles of Third Cinema's corrective measure to counter colonialist distortions. Contrary to conventional practice research's examination of social and physical issues from the outside, *Urban Scripting*'s expressions illustrate knowledge from within a study area by uniting local co-creators with readers and audiences as contributors "in the coproduction of the text's meanings" (Page & Thomas, 2011:8). Speaking and writing from a more personal viewpoint creates immersion and absorption and institutes a collective process of visualizing local socio-economic and cultural production systems through the experiences of people who live the realities.

Telling is collaborative and presented in a language accessible beyond academia and not only to the elite power groups of academic and professional institutions. It attempts to understand better the different ways of being in the city by establishing a conceptual, theoretical, and analytical fieldwork appraisal framework to enhance collaboration processes, make meaning, and reinforce the role of urban imaginaries. Accurately depicting a site and its relationship with those who occupy it requires an image that genuinely reflects it and is of the local users' own making. Calibrating this image for reading by broader audiences happens through interlinked frames and framing processes of the still photograph, the artist's 'storyboard' and panel, and the cinematographer's 'shot.' Framing methods are preferred because technological advancements grant access to audio-visual media and establish the basis for a *shared, 'lay' literacy* (Schmertz, 2008:2).

4.2.3 Narrations

The third aspect, narration, is the act or process of producing text, with the 'scriptors' (speakers and writers) accountable for its assembly and communication (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). The validation of *Other*, unconsidered but valuable knowledge bases is at the heart of the study's *raison d'être*, defines its power, and speaks through its methods as epistemic texts (Lury et al., 2020). Narration combines two dimensions:

- It details a deconstruction of (street) palimpsest knowledge bases and their realities.
- It reviews the role of the urban design profession in addressing society's inequality and injustice.

By deconstructing street knowledge bases and their multiple realities over time, from planned 'top-down' structures of white politics to integrating 'bottom-up' realities of black people, the urban design profession can confront its role and effectiveness within that spectrum — again

over time. Narration calibrates and recalibrates activities. It recognizes alterity as a condition of identity with different perspectives on understanding street realities. As alternate writing, the purpose of narration is to adjust normative perceptions to the viewpoint of the *Other* and imbue valuable meaning to that viewpoint. In this way, it renders an alterity-hybrid counter-narrative by producing and communicating other forms of reality and different ways of being in the city. In addition, narrations write the image by collaborating with 'inside' and 'outside' infrastructures.

Infrastructures, understood in multiple ways, designate the built form of the actual investigated space, such as streets, bordering buildings and their services, and the people operating within them. Soft and hard infrastructures include "people as infrastructure" (Simone, 2013:175) to emphasize forms of collaboration and fluid expressions of (socio-economic) cultural activities that are adaptive and responsive to context and necessities. 'Inside' describes local characters with specific knowledge of the appraised context. 'Outside' refers to professional expertise (planning/design practitioners, filmmakers, artists). Inside and outside perspectives examine spaces' street boundaries and thresholds and their role in social, economic, and cultural operations. In contrast to conventional studies organized from the outside (researcher) looking in (to the research context), here, the narrative shapes activities with common themes emerging from the inside (local location) and looking out (to prevailing academic discourses).

With Johannesburg being a colonial site, narration incorporates specific themes of ownership and belonging to close the knowledge gap created by colonial imposition. These themes give the stories, texts, and narratives their foundation. Narration is descriptive audio-visual text production that explores the *what*, *how*, *who*, *where*, and how they are connected (Puckett, 2016; Loseke, 2022). The narration constructs social narratives that identify the different ideas and practices needed to shape the form procedures for a more inclusive city. Uncovering the palimpsest formulates a counter-story, giving voice to the subaltern and delinking a knowledge system reliant on the assumption of colonial power. Giving voice to the subaltern addresses the core study question vis-à-vis representation, which was expanded upon in the concepts and literature discussed. The study's theoretical proposition is developed into a practical framework and methodology to create a counter-story narrative structured by time, context, and activity.

The productions (texts) created explore relational meanings between people, spatial contexts, and activities informed by social, economic, cultural, and political conditions. In the casework, the narration produces audio-visual texts that describe actions from 1834 to 2021

at country, city, and street levels, give them meaning, and, most importantly, make them accessible. The stories narrated about the major influential events in the imposition of apartheid laws from this period expose and allow assessment of experiential reality and recognize the knowledge bases that evolved with changing social, economic, cultural, and political contexts. Johannesburg realities directly link race, structural inequality, and dominant power values in determining privilege in spatial-making processes. Applying Puckett's (2016) theory, that time, context, and activities establish narratives. Based on the relational aspects between *bantfu netindzawo* and selected activities, cinematic procedures create content with a wider reach and broader readership. The content chosen for inclusion, be it visual, textural, or aural, is selected through critical reflection by the scriptor/producer/researcher during the making. At this level, understanding involves speaking and writing. In many cultures with solid oral traditions speaking relates to life as a series of conversations (Kovach, 2010). Writing (and drawing the written word) creates an image, which in its reading, tells a story (Fleckenstein, 1996).

Telling contributes to a local (spatial) scholarship guided by Afrocentric concepts from Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1993; 2005) and Mbembe (2015; 2016). Africans need "to free themselves from limiting angles of vision" (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1993:86) and "to see ourselves clearly in relationship to ourselves and to other-selves in the universe" (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 2005:87). Africans should go through "… an ongoing process of 'seeing ourselves clearly;' emerging out of a state of either blindness or dizziness" (Mbembe, 2016:34) as a decolonial process and to possibly find themselves for the first time. *Retelling Egoli* responds to these calls and, through its methodology, shifts from the blindness of colonial alterity to fully sighted inclusivity.

4.3 Shifting: Context

4.3.1 Listening to People

As argued above, context is the locational 'where' and implies the ground, space, place, temporal, spatial setting, or relates to the person(s). Shifting the *context* and perception to the *Other* by listening identifies people and spaces that describe a new or alternative environment. City planning this way is a "performed story" with storytelling central to its narrative (Sandercock,2003a:26; 2003b:186). However, since the first Europeans settled, Johannesburg's story has been one of continued capitalist exploitation, marginalization, and racial domination; it has "been shaped in the crucible of colonialism and by the labor of race" (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008:1). This challenges the Johannesburg story of continued capitalist exploitation, marginalization, and racial domination that has dominated it since the first

European arrival; it has “been shaped in the crucible of colonialism and by the labor of race” (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008:1).

Shifting identifies the people and places, telling relevant stories. Listening involves absorbing site dynamics by observing people, places, and activities, having conversations, and critically listening to and *hearing* people. With many different languages, cultures, and literacy levels in Johannesburg, visually presenting everyday life allows a broader understanding of *what is there* and *what it may become*. The site appraisal broadens through overlays of visual mapping cultures with *lisiko’s* orality. These overlays enhance current conventions, foster inclusionary practice, and allow a broader audience to access and read data. Overlays happen as stories and suggest the sharing of social and cultural activities. Informed by calibrating actions, telling stories covers historical activities, political interpretation, personal realities, and Johannesburg's changing social, economic, and cultural patterns. Dialogue animates and enhances storytelling. Conversations consist of listening and speaking, and most people begin to learn and understand simply by listening. From the insight and experiences relating to issues of complexity found in conditions between practices of use, spatial form, and social values, local voices can communicate information of fundamental significance to the urban design professional. Listening to stories is seminal to *Urban Scripting*’s site appraisal practice. Context assessment is continuous and engaged through storytelling, with listening being critical. Site engagement is structured around and carried out through conversation. Conversation leads to dialogue and story-sharing.

At the micro-level, the context is the street, which offers spaces and opportunities for activities. These sites (places) are where production happens, and people can assess activities to understand better the relational aspect between three-dimensional space and how people use it. Actions performed at various street scales offer the urban practitioner a richer local spatial performance measure. Storytelling assists in understanding spatial performance, informed by local people’s serial vision and surroundings. Essentially, storytelling links spatial narratives to grounded perspectives and narrates the lived experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Sandercock, 2003a; Squire et al., 2014) so crucial to understanding needs and, therefore, design imperatives particular to each site. Listening happens specifically at the sites of production identified by context and activities. These production sites, by nature very busy, are microcosms of the greater area and, in their scrutiny, reveal complex processes. The rich insights available at these sites are gained through conversation, especially listening, which is central to the thrust of this research. This is because, when heard, the expressions permit the capacity to assess performance and shape theories of social, economic, and cultural realities (Burawoy, 2009). The bidirectional,

participative, and immersive process allows for intimate activity participation. Burawoy (2009) describes participation as an 'extension into the community over time and space.' In extending themselves, the specialist scriptor/producer/researcher 'communicates' by listening to people as they go about their daily lives. In the casework context, active community members like Fish, Fungai, Rachel, Bra Sam, Vivian, Joyce, and Paddy, who are key to the successful site assessment, are listened to as they engage in production.

In foregrounding stories, the street locations are the casework sites for detailed observation and to test the project's *making of* procedures; these apply methods as a practice to the study's research questions (Lury, 2020). The practical application of methods affords opportunities to develop content emphasizing Ubuntu's[20] philosophical relationships, thereby ingraining decolonized ethics into the methodology. While Ubuntu has become part of the modern South African lexicon and its principles integrated into corporate, government, and academic spheres to a greater or lesser extent, it is still very much an outsider in urban practice (Sihlongonyane, 2022). Ubuntu***'s*** prominence secures empathy and ethics in its methods (Lury, 2020). Thus, content-informing procedures and onsite conversations with participants (residents, workers, visitors, and passersby) ethically impart data about people's positions and secure insights into them as co-creators. Through dialogue, the spoken discourse forms the initial onsite social data that is reflected upon, assimilated, and then integrated into the *Urban Scripting* project. Listening to people uncovers evidence specific and unique to the contexts of both Alexandra and Orange Grove. This dialogue provides valuable and comprehensive local information on participation and appropriation (Lefebvre, 1996).

4.3.2 Reading Places through Narrative

The creation of shared understandings of conceived, perceived, and lived space (Lefebvre,1991; Sletto, 2002) draws on the narrative 'frame' concept to translate the variances associated with spatial understanding. The frame outlines the image and illustrates place. Its construction structures explorations of mutual insights that lead to establishing common ground. Creating common ground combines two linked themes: *examining* by *visually translating* emergent phenomena. Together these review theoretical thoughts and debates to address the use of audio-visual as a language of shared understanding. Reading

[20] The Nguni have a saying, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, a humanist philosophical term that translates to a person being a person because of their connection to other people (Tutu, 2013). So put differently, it means ***I*** *am because* ***we*** *are*.

happens through critical geometric and social mapping, identifying conflicts and politics of access and the right to appropriation. Lefebvre (1996) broadens the scope of appropriation beyond the right to inhabit already produced space to include the right to make city space that fits in with and accommodates the requirements of the occupants (Purcell, 2002). Appropriation reconstructs the city in an image that reflects the inhabitants and in which everyday life sequences grant the right to "complete usage" (Lefebvre, 1996:179). Narrative readings deploy critical observation and display movement lines to confront the appropriateness of modernist diagrams (Stierli, 2013).

Reading from a local viewpoint measures spatial performance through the social, economic, and cultural production required to redefine space as place. It also provides a better understanding of production processes and access to where meaning is made and circulated. "The economic is a crucial domain of existence in modern societies, and it too is thoroughly saturated with culture" (du Gay, 1997:3). Therefore, grasping economic life, its characteristics, and behavioral patterns in terms of *what is* on the ground links to the cultural constituents (language, representation, and meaning) recited to inform *Retelling Egoli*'s narrative. On the concept of narrative, Webster and Mertova argue:

> "Narrative records human experience through the construction and reconstruction of personal stories; it is well suited to addressing issues of complexity and cultural and human centeredness because of its capacity to record and retell those events that have […] most influence on us" (Webster & Mertova, 2007:1).

Reading using narration extends user and viewer experience beyond the lens into an immersive, participatory realm, now popularly referred to as augmented reality based on material and human experience (Herman, 2010). It affords an immersive and embodied understanding "uniquely suited to capturing what the world is like from the situated perspective of an experiencing mind" (Alber & Fludernik, 2010:17). Like griots, humans communicate and learn through metaphors and stories. Nguni storytelling has always been instructional (Chilisa, 2012). Ngũgĩ (2005) argues that through story images, allegories, symbols, and language, we value words, meaning, and nuance as we construct our reality and view of the world. As an action research project, the *Urban Scripting* methodology foregrounds a telling process with outputs read (and readable) by a diverse audience. Hence, as a critical, creative practice, its methods promote dialogue, teachings, and moral imagination as a move towards constructing other stories with different conversations, more straightforward instructions, and wider imaginings.

According to Chilisa (2012), stories build community; they provide a relational ontology that connects the past, present, future, the living, and the non-living and aid in communicating thoughts, belief systems, philosophies, and worldviews. Hence, understanding the inherent dynamism of economic and cultural sites (*spaces*) requires new ways of reading and transmitting knowledge between city planners and urban dwellers. As previously described, readings implement cinematic procedures as a basis for 'lay' literacy and shared language (Schmertz, 2008). Thus, to read the street, from imagination to realization, involves producing an image that extends conventional site appraisal techniques: text, line, drawing (plan, section, and elevation), using cinematic concepts: frame, shot, scene, and sequence. Unfortunately, Colonial and apartheid legacies have also created South African image-making processes influenced by Euro-American conventions that dictate what is beautiful, in vogue, photographed, how it is photographed, and by whom. A picture-based methodology that moves its starting point to where spaces are continuously created and empowers those who inhabit it to control its expression is applied to escape this inappropriately skewed approach. Empowerment is achieved through narration using a descriptive audio-visual system.

To analyze and illustrate, story, text, and narration are applied to emphasize a reflexive and collaborative undertaking and place control of the image being created squarely in the hands of the people narrating the story. Its descriptive and representative process focuses on interlinked social and spatial dynamics involving how image-makers collaborate with their instruments through improvisation. Furthermore, by concentrating on the act or process of producing the image, reading weaves in social, economic, and cultural themes to address identity, ownership, and belonging. Significantly, the narration and subsequent absorption of the created image contribute to the collective making of knowledge and meaning. Cinematic procedures transmit sense in spoken and visual narratives to better understand places and disseminate this knowledge through artistic filmmaking: frame, shot, scene, and sequence.

4.3.3 Writing Other Knowledge Cultures

Retelling Egoli's story-making approaches spatial writings as an insurgent practice (Sandercock, 1998; Miraftab, 2009) that celebrates African knowledge in a way that can "generate new mobilizations and insurgent identities, employ innovative tactics of survival, and use gray spaces as bases for self-organization, negotiation, and empowerment" (Yiftachel, 2011:153). Curiosity prompts the journey to unearth the manners and ways of the local context. It incites moments of significance that illustrate innovative adjustments to urban spaces imposed on and not 'written' by those who survive in them. The listening modality is

vital to urban form-making processes where large portions of a population are poorly served by imposed spatial structure. Supplemented by calibrating methods, listening encourages new understandings of city rights by observing unplanned/designed and unconsidered initiatives that reflect local perspectives and track and frame time across space.

Looking beyond the *informal* and the *formal*, or the *visible* and *invisible* binary, Mbembe and Nuttall make a strong argument that "to account for the life of the African city, we need a more complex anthropology of things, forms, and signs" (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008:8). *Retelling Egoli* postulates, as a response, that listening draws on specific essential pedagogies and that at the micro-level this invigorates the city. To express Johannesburg as it is, and in preparation for its future, necessitate ways of listening to and writing about *Othered* knowledge cultures. Edward Relph (2008) argues that writing from place assigns a strong link between the person and their physical location. It is writing from an experiential inside and allows intimate access to knowledge. Hence, redefining space to place requires a close and empathetic point of view, which the writing of other knowledge cultures addresses. Providing this level of intimacy and knowledge includes voices from within to extend city-making structures and languages. Using voices within site-specific communities provides unprecedented intimate access and grounded expertise to develop city-making compositions, signs, and vocabularies.

The subaltern voices also assist the scriptor/producer/researcher in structuring viable ways of telling their stories. Such collaborative storytelling expresses emergent socio-economic initiatives by illustrating how people participate and operate in substantially limited and frequently indeterminate settings (Simone and Pieterse, 2017). These illustrations bring richer understanding and create opportunities for dialogue that breach the limitations inherent in an existing system where a dominant 'top-down' chorus imposes its stories (and values). In effect, calibrating engages the *Others'* sense of the world from an experiential and everyday perspective associated with the ontology inspired by local situations and activities. Writing other knowledge cultures is achieved through calibrating an insurgent sensory strategy structured by three pillars:

- 'Interpreting' how *Others* perceive the world through their bodies enables richer understanding [framing].
- Applying 'transformative' methodology to create empathy at a local level [shifting].
- 'Valorizing' different conversations to hear historically omitted and silenced voices [positioning].

Having the ability to listen as a critical exercise underpins the success of all three, which intersect in writing a narrative that conveys what has been seen, read, and informed. The writing presents a view of *what is* and draws on Purcell's observation of Lefebvre's (1996) imagination of appropriation, that writing the image requires a "much broader and a more structural meaning" (Purcell, 2002:103). Writing to serve people's desires and communicate these successfully is achieved through walking, observing, listening, and talking to people.

Johannesburg is a city with "actual bodies, images, forms, footprints, and memories" (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008:8). It requires novel ways of recording its continuously evolving artistic and aesthetic memories and footprints. Moreover, African people have a history of colonial imposition and restrictions founded on exploitation and steeped in a dominant imperial system inflicting 'its truth' (Sandercock, 1998; Feagin, 2013; Mbembe, 2016). Even the subsequent renaming of streets in the post-colonial era is an empty signifier as it does not erase the racial divide based on humiliation and worthlessness normalized by apartheid and colonialism (Sihlongonyane, 2015). Thus, the task is to find ways to express life in motion better that reflect historical processes and contextualize a divisive spatial ecosystem's spatial, temporal, and ideological boundaries and their impact on the margins. The ecosystem's embedded ideas, stories, and experiences of a changing epistemological landscape give material and form to understanding the local. An approach to writing other knowledge asks: How do we grasp complex engagement processes shaped by history within and beyond community territories? Also, what may be beneficial or harmful in following the complex procedures? Furthermore, how do we meaningfully and respectfully engage? Appropriately addressing the questions means engaging with the philosophical underpinnings of *buntfu* to ensure meaningful and respectful interactions. Put differently, ethics, empathy, and a focus on "WE" (as opposed to I/you/me) are natural processes of participation and collaboration.

As in storytelling, understanding requires active, respectful, and appropriate attention. Hence, frame calibration needs a nuanced ear to hear the community telling local stories correctly. In essence, interrogating today's realities happens through listening. Once active listening establishes an understanding, the storytelling process can demystify and decolonize the Euro-American canon that writes imperialist inscriptions across temporal and cultural boundaries. In summary, writing appropriately and respectfully can only be done in collaboration with local voices, and this writing from within is considerate and courteous storytelling. It collaboratively presents multiple valid viewpoints, experiences, and information concerning people and places for the reader to gain a holistic picture of local activities and how they are affected by the space in which they occur.

4.4 Positioning: Activities

4.4.1 Time: Foregrounding Stories

Positioning local *activities* and *writing* selected stories structured by time, context, and actions creates a framework for site assessment. The framework provides the composition with the ability to inform, observe, and analyze the social, economic, and cultural processes that shape the themes of ownership and belonging in city retelling. Foregrounding relevant stories requires consideration and selecting the ones which offer the most significant value in their narration. Finally, the structure organizes how the chronological sequence of activities inspires the narrative – the how, where, and when activities unfold. Since *Retelling Egoli* spans one hundred and eighty-nine years, its telling is, by necessity, a translation of other and more problematic iterations and translations. Selected stories, compiled from multiple historical accounts, and merged with direct observations and memories, are used primarily to view and expound on the chronological elements that shape today's reality.

Three apartheid laws, enacted at different times and scales, are the chronological cornerstones that read the landscape and illuminate the plots in *Retelling Egoli.* Time defines the critical terms in narrative construction vis-à-vis the study question: story, text, narration. And within the story are plots and characters, *bantfu netindzawo* in spoken and written discourses, which all form part of the narrative. In Johannesburg's timeline, which provides overviews and close-up views, frames portray the most significant points, scales, and distances. However, city-making processes also evolve. These developments/impositions are questioned by the calibrating actions that link the macro to the micro, with stories ranging from global to individual imperatives. Field casework for this research project began in 2017, with the various teams involved in an iterative process that used scriptwriting for primary data collection purposes to generate a narrative inquiry that tracks back in time and uncovers what needs to be understood. Graphic traces frame the past, *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) record the present, and audio-visual forms imply a possible future. In the casework's analog and electronic drawings, still and moving pictures perform as alternative 'writing' formats that document the city through memory, bodies, and contexts that tell a story about an urban system with values, attitudes, beliefs, institutions, and social, economic, and cultural constructions. Storytelling situates temporality, which envelops the inner and outer personal landscape (context) and historical causes and effects (activities).

In *Urban Scripting,* the macro and past frames rely predominantly on long-distance establishing shots and drawings, with the meso looking to today and bridging the gap to the micro close-up of an implied future. The empirical fieldwork, importantly, also operates at the

micro-level and applies storytelling's intellectual and practical base to produce the static and movement-image as a composite. The composite interfaces the street's physical and social attributes and collects data using a two-character-lens strategy to frame spaces and people. In other words, casework involves *space as a character*, the spatial geometry of the street, *people as characters*, and the *movement character* their interface creates. The composite specifically articulates the formal aspects of narrative production detailed in previous chapters. Composites of/from organizational aspects and expression elements tell a story through characters' sequences "reconstructed in their chronological order" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:3).

4.4.2 Context: Constructing Hybrid Narratives

Hybrid narratives employ a production approach and style appropriate to local themes (socio-economic practices), situations, and political circumstances. The stories in *Retelling Egoli* are a transformative measure that, when accepted, give the social and development system new foundations and stability to rectify the faults of current spatial processes. For example, city by-laws currently limit certain forms of being in the city. Specifically, informal entrepreneurship that aligns differently with neo-liberal norms, and the Metropolitan police sporadically enforce these laws. The voices of *Retelling Egoli* explain how these restrictions interfere with their daily existence and how they negotiate these and other imposed challenges.

Retelling Egoli opens 23 years after South Africa's first democratic elections. Bra Niky sits, in 2017, beneath a tree on the sidewalk on Reverend Sam Buti Street in Alexandra and starts telling a story. Returning to 1834, the story tells how hunter Karel Kruger reportedly finds gold along the Jukskei River. The European gold discovery sets in motion the founding of Johannesburg. Its subsequent development, based on capital, labor, and skin color, leaves a racially imbalanced imprint on the human experience that links everything from the globe to the individual. *Retelling Egoli's* storyworld defines the geometric scales, from the country (macroscale) to the city (mesoscale) and the street (microscale). The street's production, context, politics, and practicalities as a social space and setting for life are investigated at the micro-level. Context is described, drawn, and outlined by its reading on three scales to identify *what is* on the ground and locate the voices of Johannesburg. Illustrating a set, scene, and location where everyday life takes place (Webster & Mertova, 2007), hermeneutic techniques afford insights that link the site to viewer and viewer to site. The hermeneutical strategy provides a framework to assess context through multiple immersive and experiential senses. The story's hermeneutics position the self as being in the world (ontology) and

presents a theory of the nature of knowledge, its limits, and validity (epistemology) relating to multiple realities (pluralism) of a place. Narratives look to context and its disposition to shape multiple viewpoints and readings and present different modes of being. The pluralist nature of the context opposes reductionism (Kellert et al., 2006), allowing for various ways of knowing things.

An interpretive and transformative paradigm guides the framework that centers on transect walking, intimate observations, and talking to people rather than imposing current orthodox forms of colonial communication, structural power, and imaginaries. The purpose is to establish counter formats and diminish prevailing knowledge hierarchies. Acknowledging the local's validity weakens the knowledge hierarchies that define existing sites instigated and propagated by colonized academic and professional practice. Instead, shared cultural rules and codes establish a community engagement and collaborative study. Interpretive codes found an information network that addresses concepts of pluralism vis-à-vis multiple lived realities across different scales in how others understand the world through context and experience. The transformative application critiques dominant research methodologies by proposing alternative study designs geared to knowledge translation (and celebration) that empower communities at local levels. These dialogues with *Others* create platforms to hear omitted and silenced voices respectfully, ethically, and empathically, thus acting as an antidote to the disempowerment of lasting colonial imposition.

Fusing conventional mapping with Nguni orality and current technologies offers the approach, template, and tools necessary to create spaces reflecting the actual needs of the people who occupy them. The paradigms introduce narratives based on local political values, social viewpoints, principles, and cultural codes that intersect with the viewers' histories and subjectivities to create collective meaning. The associative meaning drawn from local production processes aids in redefining spaces into places (du Gay, 1997; Relph, 2008; Hall et al., 2013).

4.4.3 Activities: Reaching Understanding

Local street dynamics and activities emerge through walking and talking, leading to immersive city observations and curated character *stories that l*ocate the everyday life needed to design the urban in Johannesburg. Identified voices and actions draw from the larger character pool, representing inhabitants who make and produce the city's visible daily activities (see **3.3.2 Locating Voices** and **5.3.1 Country)**. Bra Niky, Vivian, Paddy, Joyce, Bra Sam, Rachel, Vimal, Fungai, Fish, Thomas, and Pastor Theo express spatial and temporal realities by voicing the local situation and the way their bricolage has enabled their

microentrepreneurial enterprises (see **Credits**). These expressions give understanding and contextualization to professional practice and regulatory bodies. As a result, their stories bridge the gap between how things are and how spatial practice rationalizes them. This alternative mapping practice rethinks and improves 'street work' (Lindell, 2019) and acknowledges street entrepreneurs' politics, knowledge, and aesthetical awareness.

As a street work surface, its rethinking and remaking start with its people. The rethinking and remaking (*resurfacing*)of a street's work surface begin with its people. To build understanding, Friedman proposes that a diagnostic layer of the city, or "the smallest social entity, and the protoplasm of the social order" (Friedman, 1987:341), is human agency. People's activities are vital in this narrative as they provide context and content from multiple viewpoints. These are positions from the temporal context covered above, which describe 'place' as a spatial context and the context of others (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Activities afford an interpretation of events/actions to reflect ownership and belonging, creating storylines. *Othered* stories counter the modernist problem-solution standards and the scientific search for rational 'truths' (Sandercock, 1998). Narrative inquiry breaks with this norm and provides "'well grounded' and 'supportable' findings, retaining an emphasis on the linguistic reality of human experience" (Webster & Mertova, 2007:4). Its elements present and structure a storytelling framework looking at the past to enable the transformation of today and prepare for a better tomorrow. Activities happen at specific times, communicate social processes and movement, and form narrative plots (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Across space, activities link people to spaces and express the dynamics of culture, which in this context have been portrayed negatively (Biko, 2017) or *othered*. These activities show that "the social relevance and formal invention of architecture cannot be disassociated from the events . . . in it" (Tschumi, 1996:139). Events denote the program determined by the architecture, relating to uses, functions, situations, and actions within spaces. Therefore, events occurring in spaces and the relationship between the bodies moving in spaces are an event's foundation. At the intersection of places and people are events, each with subtly unique experiences that contribute to cultural meaning. The production and exchange of culture and economy also happen at the interface of people and place. Formulated by the core research question, the inquiry, through everyday actions, engages and depicts socio-economic issues, cultural performance, and city life at the interface of people and place. People's daily movements and engagements, whether physical or oral, are influenced by the space they are in, so they can therefore provide a useful measure of spatial performance. People also affect their spaces: "Bodies not only move in but generate spaces produced by and through their movements" (Tschumi, 1996:112). Hence, life is measured by examining

the street's anatomy and assessing its performance with regard to space and program and the structures that produce space. Measuring equates to observations that give rise to a translation of emergent forms. Here formations closely tie society, culture, socio-economic and political systems together.

The quality of urban existence is tied to urban performance and understanding of the people-space connection, given that existing social and economic structures make for better imagining and beneficial spaces. Activities unfold and occur on a timescale, which is essential in explaining the story plot's step-by-step temporality (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Context is a primary feature illustrated by times, places, and people. Dynamic sequences inspire movement activities in static spaces (Tschumi, 2001), and these activities occur at specific times and places and connect social, cultural, and economic production themes (du Gay, 1997). Movement and the intersection with practical aspects of use and usefulness of space measure street performance. The effectiveness of space is viewed at individual and collective engagement levels to formulate an impression of activity as defined by *Urban Scripting*. Individual and collective experiences shape the story material and position the activities selected for writing the places and peoples' stories necessary for shifting and engaging the urban designer as a producer/scriptor.

4.5 Countering: Retelling Egoli Toolkit

4.5.1 Counter-Story

Stories root *Retelling Egoli's* ontology and epistemology, "Thus any reading we make of a text is likely to be constructed by our social upbringing and the context of the reading" (Lacey, 2009:96). This project seeks to access internal and external knowledge systems to learn and imbue its findings internally since knowledge only truly becomes knowledge when internalized. This diligence is supported by Willis's (2006) and Barad's (2007) theories of being and is a diffractive practice because "knowing is a material practice of engagement as part of the world in its differential becoming" (Barad, 2007:90). Constructing a counter-story begins by accessing some of the multiple manifestations of human ontology, of which urban settlements like Johannesburg have many. City residents are in a constant state of 'becoming,' moving from a state of being 'now' to another, which frequently impacts their external environment (as well as internal physical, mental, and spiritual manifestations). This is especially true of the microentrepreneurs who service/exploit the opportunities this ever-changing dynamism provides, no matter how small. Knowledge significantly influences this process of 'becoming,' and Retelling Egoli's epistemological position is that knowledge is constructed socially; there is no singularly 'true' knowledge set. Some knowledge sets

manifest more obvious power than others. However, the idea that there is no 'one true' knowledge does not mean that 'other' knowledge sources are not essential or should have lesser power.

As argued in this thesis, street knowledge accessed through *Urban Scripting* is invaluable to urban practice. An example of this knowledge and its power is illustrated in the interstitial places making up the twilight zone explored in the following chapters. This scriptor/producer/researcher argues that to change the urban proactively requires engaging broader knowledge sets. If the validity of these arguments is accepted, then for practice to be proactive in changing the urban, it needs to engage more comprehensive knowledge sets. Here, knowledge from outside professional and academic domains is as essential as those exercised in formal peer-validated institutional constructs. By adopting a decolonial strategy, this study probes how we engage with *Othered* knowledge foundations, including knowing how these are validated and how knowledge engagement can be structured ethically. In constructing knowledge, this concern frames the question: *"Who is supposed to be learning from whom, how, and what exactly?"* Mkhabela & Doermann (2015:21).

Indigenous Canadian scholar Margaret Kovach queries the political nature of knowledge construction and asks three essential questions: 1) "what qualifies as knowledge;" 2) "what is its source;" and 3) "how does new knowledge emerge" (Kovach, 2009:79)? These questions resonate with *Urban Scripting* and guide it in framing an approach relevant to this context. To answer the questions under the *Urban Scripting* framework requires engagement and inclusion at a local level. The collaborative approach promotes participation by demonstrating the following:

- Attention to practices that reveal socio-economic and cultural initiatives.
- Ways to innovatively engage that modify, readapt, and suit existing and changing conditions.
- Supporting the communication of such practices to enable their ongoing transformation.

The answers initiate a process to engage relevant active knowledge production in South Africa. Hence, storytelling links the theory of knowledge (epistemology) and being (ontology). Methods of mutual understanding, knowledge production, and making meaning are acquired, created, and established through storytelling. We learn by telling each other stories and constructing what we know as reality. People are situated in a place to demonstrate action. Different overlaid representations of Bra Niky suggest a dynamic engagement with him, as

represented cinematically. To *position*, stories unfold under the intimate setting of the frame, where one sequentially sees Bra Niky and may read gestures and expressions (**Fig. 4.4**).



Figure 4.4 Positioning Activity

4.5.2 Counter-Narrative

> "Making knowledge is not simply about making facts but about making worlds, or rather, it is about making specific worldly configurations—not in the sense of making them up ex nihilo, or out of language, beliefs, or ideas, but in [a] sense of materially engaging as part of the world in giving it specific material form" (Barad, 2007:91).

Using this argument, story scriptors hold their methods accountable to the specific materializations and representations across scales: "methodology is attentive to, and responsive/ responsible to, the specificity of material entanglements in their agential becoming" (Barad, 2007:91). By placing different transdisciplinary generated understandings in collaborative conversations with each other, inside phronēsis and outside technē, applying epistēmē, ensures a more accurate city depiction based on experiences from multiple time periods and across different geographical scales. Conversations and an iterative production process generate multiple outcomes, thereby exploring and illuminating different ways of being. As a line and surface, a street location, considered in terms of a palimpsest, operates at strategically selected sites (points) of economic and cultural

production and connected macro-micro processes. Engagement with these is effective given the following considerations:

- An ethical-empathy framework to present authenticity: a telling from within.
- Critical thinking for transformative activism: an inclusionary process.
- Valorizing *Buntfu* to promote participation and appropriation: achieving justice across city spheres.

Combined, dynamically engaging each aspect and relationality to one another structures methods of 'storytelling from within as an inclusionary process to achieve justice across the city.' In storytelling, *lisiko* makes meaning from listening (sound), seeing (perception), remembering (memory), and imaging (optics). Counter-narratives use storytelling to foster meaningful, positive, and productive knowledge, making partnerships proficient in creating constructive and transformative change. From an ethical standpoint, this form of engagement nullifies reductionism and erasure, making what exists on the ground impossible to ignore. Collective making builds on ontologically oriented design, which "Recognizes that all design creates a 'world-within-the-world' in which we are designed by what we design as subjects. We are all designers, and we are all designed" (Escobar, 2017:133). *Urban Scripting* applies this to grasp local desires and ambitions better, narrate the landscape through multiple time scales, and highlight causes and consequences.

Street-level needs and dreams demonstrate subaltern definitions and, if assimilated into practice, produce space better suited to their desires. Ultimately, narrating *what is* addresses the epistemology and ontology for *Retelling Egoli's* narrative and, in so doing, answers the core study question. Chapter 6 reflects how *Urban Scripting* has succeeded in localizing the context in its case study and thus created a blended methodology for a democratic design that imagines and creates a more inclusive city through compositing. The layered scenes illuminate urban dwellers' lived realities and movements. Besides, these sequences give insights into the city's critical socio-economic, political, and cultural expressions. Additionally, streets rendered from the pedestrian movement perspective (Cullen, 1973) offer all-access passes to the city and its inhabitants (Gehl & Svarre, 2013) and are, therefore, integral to urban design. Effectively, compositing establishes graphic narratives and audio-visual storytelling.

4.5.3 Urban Scripting

> "Stories are like communicative suitcases: wrappings that protect experiences, feelings, and beliefs so that they can connect people through time and space."

Working with Stories, Cynthia F. Kurtz (2014:33).

Urban Scripting asserts that it is time to recalibrate the frame, rethink how society is shaped, center on shifting values, and develop new ways of retelling old stories. Colonial dominance alters normative storylines in official planning and design narratives to create inflicted imaginaries. *Urban Scripting* applies visual narratives as a communication system concerned more with wholly presenting rather than selectively representing local realities (Thrift, 2008). Therefore, this system does not seek to impose itself but allows *others* to choose its agenda and write its script. Its methodology deploys filmic procedures to insert social narration into city-making processes. Highly visual narratives, invaluable to urban creators in multiple disciplines, expose social agendas and perspectives [re]presenting the local context. Moving through the space unblinkered ensures the accuracy and completeness of the image captured and allows the possibility "of encounter and exchange to life rhythms and time uses" (Lefebvre, 1996:179). Story narratives act as data-collecting platforms that reveal opportunities and stimulate debates for imagining and "making a more correct city democracy" (Purcell, 2002:106).

Narrating the city through listening to see aids in understanding the intricacies of race, culture, identity, and need, subsequently leading to making the urban in a way that reflects those intricacies. The *Urban Scripting* process is a radical investigation into creating an actual image of the city and its characters by extending conventional urban design techniques to incorporate all city readers and dwellers. Alternative procedures discover local knowledge, the contribution this knowledge can make to future urban imagining, as well as what local people think of the space they occupy and the manner of its imposition. Also vital for any process that seeks proactive change and improvement is engaging with local imagination on what can become. *Urban Scripting,* then, uses storytelling to read, listen, understand, and disseminate the existing dynamics and consider what and how these dynamics might develop and be improved. That means understanding what those with the local knowledge (and right to express this) already imagine can happen – and stimulating this with exposure to other imagined 'realities' – urban planning and design 'visions.'

The story about Johannesburg (*Retelling Egoli*) is about the marginalized striving to survive through creative means in some of the most challenging urban conditions, often along the street and in its adjacent spaces. Professionally designed city spaces threaten subaltern survival by being hostile to their need-driven dynamism. Building maps of space through the subaltern's story is a continuous process because participants' "lives do not begin the day we arrive nor do they end as we leave" (Clandinin, Connelly, 2000:64), a continuum that Trouillot

also identifies: “since the overlap between history as a social process and history as knowledge is fluid, participants in any event may enter into the production of a narrative about that event before the historian as such reaches the scene” (Trouillot, 1995:26). With temporality as a critical structuring device, calibrating methods systematize fieldwork protocols, and produce content (the *what*) through narration (the *how*) to communicate emerging dynamism. Fieldwork’s methods create in various narrations the ‘movement-image,’ composites, and mise en scène. Sequentially, the first phase establishes macro causality. A meso-level second phase identifies people affected by causes. The final step at the micro-level communicates consequences. Chapter 4 argues that the best way to speak is to write (activity), and knowledge exchange is a valid activity that is as important as academic institutional pedagogy.

The following chapter investigates methods in which audio-visual elements work together to understand the complex entanglements of physical spaces and human activity, create meaning, and express new possibilities. It does this by describing how the theoretical base was put to the test in the field-based casework and off-site processing.

5 Editing: Calibrating

"'Begin at the beginning,' the King said gravely, 'and go on till you come to the end: then stop.'"

Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll (2007:143).

5.1 Situating

5.1.1 Africa

Just as Alice did in following the King's instruction above, Chapter 5 uses an art-based practice-led framework with a beginning and an end to uncover *the twilight zone*. Its opening situates Johannesburg's foundation, the *then*, and accepts the inevitability of the *now's* constant change. A continuously evolving practice-based/theory-infused approach engages an iterative timeline to respond to the core question by rooting yesterday, establishing today, and considering tomorrow. It unearths the twilight zone through this transdisciplinary approach, and the urban designer (as scriptor/producer) uses frames as a critical methodology to access *bantfu netindzawo*. Informed and inspired by *kwatingekulalela* (acquiring knowledge by listening), *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022) examines the past, *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) scans the present, and *Calibrating Stories* (2022+) thinks about the future. These are all part of *Retelling Egoli,* and each component uses a specific set of qualitative methods to access people and the *spaces* they occupy. Reading the city makes *the twilight zone* visible by framing history, shifting dominance, and positioning *what could be*.

Looking toward tomorrow is a decolonizing and transformative way of locating "a politicized historical memory" (Miraftab, 2009:45). Built around Bra Niky in the casework, *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022) makes his voice both 'ours' and 'theirs' and narrates insurgent citizenship (Holston, 1998). Speaking for "us/we" in this context, Bra Niky represents the subaltern, which was the main driver of the colonial project's means to higher capital yield accrual (see *Alexandra: A Backstory*, 2022:10). Bra Niky's narration unites three spheres; the story, how it is told, and the production logistics. Moreover, his memories document "the very heart of a liberating practice" (Miraftab, 2009:45). Additionally, two *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) observations weave into and structure Bra Niky's narrative direction: a solitary, protected tree on a sidewalk in Alexandra and a geometrically fortuitous sidewalk extension in Orange Grove. Both form pivotal elements in *Retelling Egoli*. Until now, Bra Niky's view, buried in the shadows of the twilight zone, was not accessible to spatial practice due to a lack of adequate engagement/research tools. However, his story demonstrates methods that specifically

respond to the central question, "*How can knowledge be captured and communicated….*" Walking, observing, and talking to people answer the core and sub-questions and arrange techniques to show *how* to *capture* and *communicate*. The methods combine conventional planning language with vernacular languages and knowledge banks to create a hybrid communication practice of storytelling.

Demarcated in two street sections, the elements Bra Niky reflects on establish a research study for a new casework protocol that can visualize the decolonized future. Its scales, addressed in Chapter 2, function similarly to a fractal's recursively never-ending pattern, linking the macro to the micro, the African continent to the individual, and highlighting collaborations between storyteller and audience. Five Iterative sections respond to the study question's "*How….*"

- **Situating** introduces a conversational strategy as an initial step to thinking about a methodology that *captures* and *communicates* insurgent knowledge banks.
- **Framing** illustrates how broader or macro-level influences affect all levels, from the continent to the city, the street, and each person. These influences transition through the meso-level to focus on the micro-level Alexandra and Orange Grove study area. Understanding effects at all scales is a fundamental requirement for making better spaces.
- **Shifting** presents a way to identify and listen to essential realities using long, full, and medium shots to place and center the required city-building expressions. In this mode, *collating individual fragments* as actual textures and aesthetics allow *for* assembling *stories* that create a different and representative urban whole. Here, a specific emphasis is on the focus blocks.
- **Positioning** involves forms of writing using specialized image-capturing techniques such as close-ups of facial expressions, objects from different perspectives, and unnoticed city details. These fragments make it possible to *compose a new whole* and story. At street and block levels, positioning examines movement and points of contact in conflict or harmony, emphasizing the activities that inform them.
- **Calibrating** presents a strategy shaped by an idea, theme, and concept. The image reviews the project's methods through an internal and external screening process with the core question as its register. This review reflects at multiple scales to identify the methodology's strengths and weaknesses in

addressing the handicap of the reactive ‘rear-view outlook’ identified in **1.5.1** and to aid in proactive policy shaping.

The concluding topic, *calibrating*, presented in Chapter 5, focuses on **Presenting**. Locating *physical* and *social mapping* techniques emphasize empirical and critical audio-visual writing on multiple temporal and geographical scales, creates ways of closing the identified gap, and is the essence of the *Urban Scripting* method. Particularly in cities of the South, combining ideas of transdisciplinarityy with ideas around the need for more critically empirically based research, leads inductively to new ways of thinking and analyzing, with knowledge exchange being a valid activity as important as institutional pedagogy, is expanded and unpacked in more detail in this chapter.

5.1.2 South Africa

Retelling Egoli builds an analytical image using creative frames and panels to read the city (Johannesburg). Used interchangeably, frames and panels offer semantic subtlety to the visual information contained and the way this is facilitated (Schmid, 2021). Reading in this way allows a range of problems that require more detailed analysis to be assessed and permits differences to be seen, heard, and recognized. Frames reveal emergent phenomena from multiple viewpoints in two ways that describe why things are the way they are. First, they reconfigure history from macro to micro chronological activities to tell a specific South African story. Second, they interpret the micro’s social and geographic point of view across multiple timelines to locate local-settler dynamics. Both aspects provide background for Bra Niky’s narrative to bring Johannesburg into being. His story is an assemblage of stories that links people to a tree on a township’s sidewalk and a fortuitous residential sidewalk bay in a mixed-use suburb. An isolated infrastructure moment and a semi-natural anomaly unbreakably connect a person to the community, country, continent, and globe. From beneath the solitary tree on a sidewalk, Bra Niky’s story connects yesterday’s apartheid ruination to today’s moments and demonstrates how this impacts tomorrow’s identity and place.

Delineated by 2017’s fieldwork, mapping individual and collective experiences contextualizes colonial manifestations and spatial influences. Parts of the intellectual and conceptual reply mentioned above exist in *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022). However, the novel is not the limit of the response. In totality, there are response hints in the multiple conversations embedded in the various media formats. At varying scales and using different timelines, Bra Niky’s story contextualizes South Africa using these formats (**Table_1**), which focus primarily on six interconnected audiovisual casework productions:

- *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022), a graphic novel.
- *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+), Alexandra and Orange Grove macro, meso, and micro audio-visual texts.
- *the block, the plot, the house, the tree* (2019), an animation.
- *there's a tree on the sidewalk* (2018) in Alexandra, with *Vimal Bhani Cycles* (2019) and *Who is the Landlord* (2019) in Orange Grove films.
- *Alexandra Soundscape,* an audio montage of sounds collected in Reverend Sam Buti Street and mixed off-site.
- *Calibrating Stories* (2022+), a montage.

Multiple sources support the media outputs above in providing storytelling information/material and establishing mise en scène (see Chapter 1):

- Collages examine entrepreneurial spaces at the microscale.
- Composite drawings explore a range of scales from the continent to the person and provide specific close-up detail.
- Photographs engage the immediate vicinity, with some playing a historizing role in creating and integrating composite material for all the above sources.

Intellectually and conceptually, assembling *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022) structures specific components of field casework research practice. Its vignettes integrate macro-micro scales [unpacked in detail in **5.2.2**] to illustrate fragments that tell a parallel *story of a story in a story*. Themes assembled chronologically from a priori documents and records craft compositions of a history of structural violence to maximize capital profits. This assemblage defined the goals of the 2017 casework – to historicize the city and show how its connective tissue, the continuity, and temporality of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), ties the continent, country, city, street, sidewalk, and tree together. Bra Niky's lived experience is a sub-theme to explain the various mapping techniques used to achieve the study purpose described in Chapter 1.

Effectively, field-based casework makes knowledge accessible to broader audiences, thereby disrupting elite power dominance and groups (Harris et al., 2000; Sandercock, 2003); it reinforces the role of other urban imaginaries (Young, 2011; Mbembe, 2015); and gives voice to the subaltern (Lefebvre, 1996; Bhabha, 2004). Two mutually inclusive street/sidewalk investigatory phases shaped work in the field. Firstly, data collection achieved through on-site observation makes up the content of *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+). Secondly, data categorizing done through editing structures the findings in *Calibrating Stories* (2022+). The initial courtroom-style on-site sketches led to arranging site protocol,

ironing out what needed to be done, by whom, when, in what order, and how best to compile a 'ground' inventory. Then, during collection, an editing process selected different story material. Both methods curated specific storyline fragments, forms, and material and, in so doing, fulfilled the overall objective of extending traditional mapping cultures. It is a process of composing "because [field texts] are created, neither found nor discovered, by participants and researchers in order to represent aspects of field experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:92).

Conceptually and visually, Clandinin & Connelly (2000) argue that intertextual material connects shared meanings, creating, in both phases, an archive, which in *Retelling Egoli* expresses causality, local agency, and relationships between the *what* and the *how*. Specifically, the field's systematic and compositional strategies create texts that shape and reference other formal and informal texts, practice-based/led or lay, written, spoken, or illustrated, to produce more successful collaboration and inclusive meanings. Cognitive intertextuality, fragments of story texts, and cultural memory function as signposts that carry echoes of other interpretations, allowing readers to fill in the gaps and create their own understandings. Interpretation as a form of closure (Barthes, 1977; McCloud, 1994) leaves room for cultural expressions to contest reductionist impositions and oppose rigid meanings by relying on readers to create coherency.

A primary objective for these relational frames is creating signage, mainly mise en scène collages, which convey experiences and speak not only to the practice and academy but directly to the local and greater community. For this, artistic modes go outside formal scales and linguistic norms to embrace the collaborative audio-visual text that is core to this chapter's exploration and the tools it offers.

5.1.3 Johannesburg

Shifting from the country to the city scale requires access to voices that reveal Johannesburg. The voices need to offer value and must "be chosen for what they can bring to the study as opposed to random sampling" (Kovach, 2010:51). *Retelling Egoli* examines Johannesburg through the voices of people with intimate knowledge. These voices, referred to in SiSwati as *umsumpe*[21] (plural *imisumpe*), are people born in or who have lived in an

[21] An example of *umsumpe* would be Doc and Chick in William F. Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1993). He followed Italian gangs in Boston's North End, and the Nortons were Doc's gang, and Chick led the Community Club team. In *Sidewalk* (1999), Duneier's *Umsumpe* is Hakim, who incidentally proclaimed himself as a public character, borrowed from Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961). According to Jacobs, *the*

area for a significant time and are reliable and knowledgeable community resources. *Imisumpe* form collaboration between 'inside' and 'outside' expertise and grant a detailed awareness unavailable from and to others. In *Retelling Egoli's* case, two locals, Ronnie in Alexandra and Zimvo in Orange Grove, facilitated two critical procedures: walking and talking. Walking allowed unfettered access to specific, empirical knowledge insights and instituted an "iterative exploration and observation" phase to "enhance local literacy" (Pierce & Lawhon, 2015:1). Moreover, walking provided unabridged listening, *kwatingekulalela,* opportunities. As established in Chapter 3, Nguni culture is ontologically oral, reconstructing history in oral narratives. Moreover, talking is a seminal way of knowledge transfer which "is another plausible way to philosophize in and beyond Africa" (Chimakonam, 2017:14).[22]

Guided through the study areas by *imisumpe,* advanced access to a richer discernment of pace, rhythms, textures, and sounds was considered a 'pre-fieldwork' phase at the time. Walking took place at various times of day and night, from Workers Day, Monday, 1 May 2017, to Sunday, 20 May 2017, and served to:

- Better understand the rhythms of the locations before the proposal defense on 22 May 2017.
- Get a better sense of flight paths required for aerial filming.
- Address concerns such as internal-external expertise collaboration, meeting and parking logistics, and safety of people and equipment for the forthcoming fieldwork.

Pre-fieldwork also introduced *imisumpe* to the study, design, and goals. It highlighted strategic routes, internal expertise, and points of interest along Louis Botha Avenue and Sam Buti Street, which Ronnie refers to as *Selbourne*.[23] Walking set up what became *I'm a*

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social structure of the sidewalk life hangs partly on what can be called self-appointed public characters. A public character is anyone who is in frequent contact with a wide circle of people and who is sufficiently interested to make himself a public character. A public character need have no special talents or wisdom to fulfill his function – although he often does. He just needs to be present, and there need to be enough of his counterparts. His main qualification is that he is public, and that he talks to lots of different people. In this way, news travels that is of sidewalk interest (Jacobs, 1961:68). Ronnie and Zimvo's transect walks identify public characters, granting insight into the street's social and economic dynamics.

[22] Chimakonam's model *http://dx.doi. org/10.18820/24150479/ aa49i2.1* provides richer insight and forms profound insights, especially when read in conjunction with Janz's piece *Dialogue and listening* (2018) https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820618780568

[23] Ronnie claims that the genuine Alexandra people have lived there for a significant time, and are attached to the place, refer to Reverend Sam Buti Street as Selbourne. Initially named Selbourne, it was renamed under the leadership of the ANC at the Alexandra stadium by the Presidency representative, Ms. Baleka Mbete, on 25 October 2008.

Streetwalker (2017), an aerial sequence combined with personal and professional reflections. Filming on three different occasions on specific days, from Monday, 8 to Sunday, May 20, 2017, gave multiple visual perspectives and supplemented *imisumpe's* highlights. Aerial views present a comparable scale, aesthetic, form, movement, and texture cross-section that reflects Johannesburg's three settings: township, suburb, and city (see *Calibrating Stories*, 2022+:14-15). In addition, the overhead views create site provocations inviting audiences to traverse the neighborhood types and experience the "complex blends of cognitive and imaginative response" (Herman et al. 2008:570).

Contextually, filming introduces Reverend Sam Buti Street and Louis Botha Avenue as potential focal sections. Aerial filming also establishes the street axis as a prominent "*line*" along with its accompanying perpendiculars (Brown, 2016:79). Illustratively, the *line* communicates and represents the actual street space and the supporting perpendicular secondary axis of cross streets that defines each study site (**Fig. 5.1)**. Setting or location extends from the void of 'in-between' space. It includes the plots immediately adjacent to either side of the 'main' axis. The line determines the frame. More specifically, it defines visual framing, which gives the audience access to the activities represented. Optical access is achieved through a matrix of qualities, including composition, balance, viewing direction, and orientation of what is seen, heard, read, recorded, mapped, and written.

A static example is the cover of *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022) or any of the visuals in *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) and *Calibrating Stories* (2022+). In the frame, anything along the line can be "nearer or farther, higher or lower through varying the lens focal length…" (Brown, 2016:79).

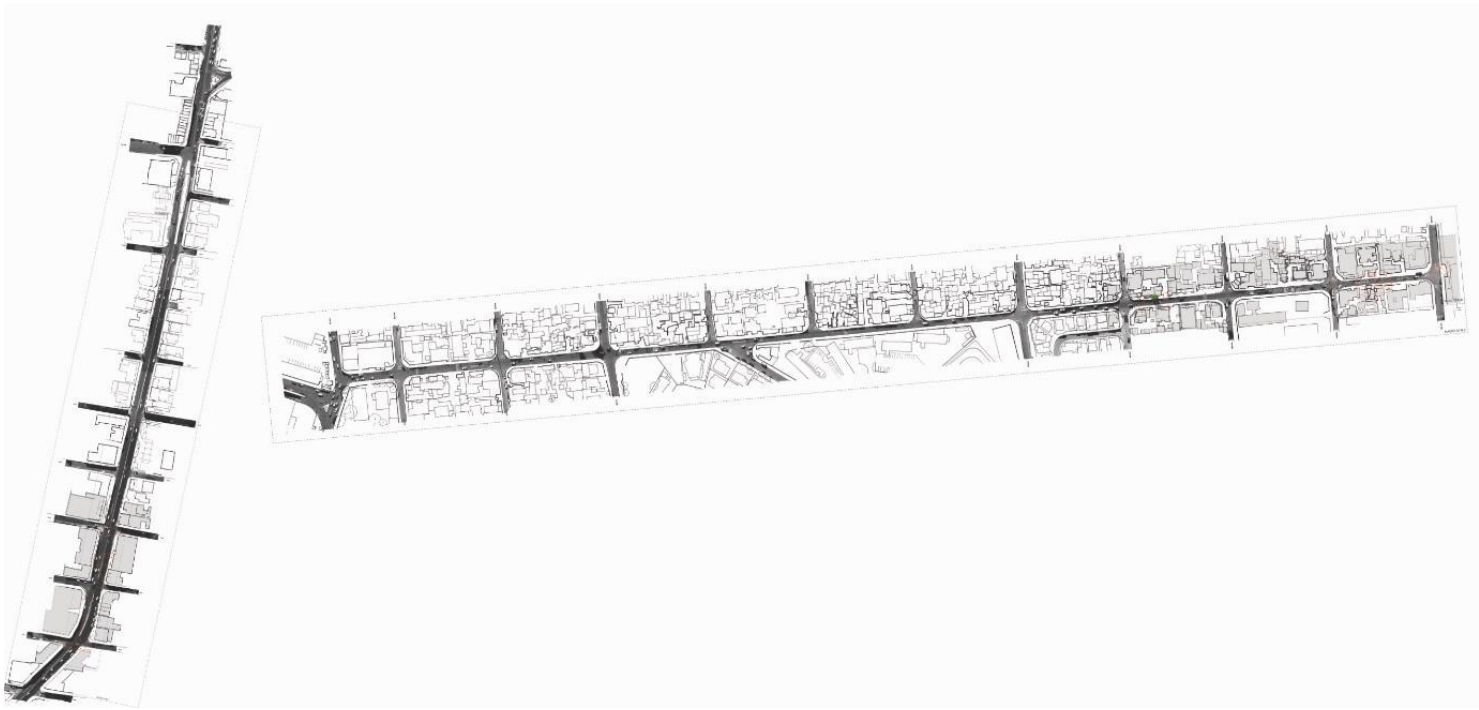


Figure 5.1 Street Lines: Main Axis

Framing distances establish (but are not limited) by using wide, long, full, and extreme close-ups (**Fig. 5.2)**.

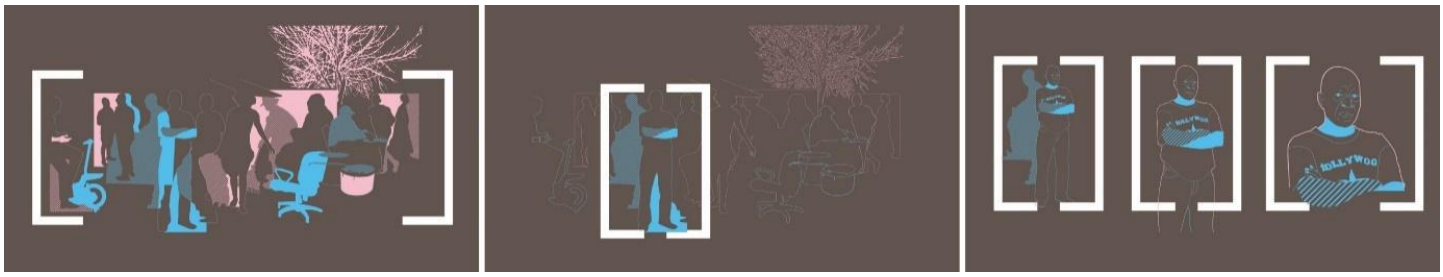


Figure 5.2 Wide, Long, Full, Close-up

In *I'm a Streetwalker's* (2017) opening shot (see **Fig. 6.4**), the camera tracks north to south along 12th Avenue at its intersection with Reverend Sami Buti Street, which forms a T-junction. Next, the camera moves north of the T-junction, and the shot ends on the southern edge of the junction's boundary plot. This shot traverses Sam Buti's axis (east-west) and defines the limit of the study area on either side of it. Next, it transitions to an east-to-west tracking shot from 12th Avenue along Reverend Sam Buti's line with a time-lapse compressing the period between dawn and night. At this point, the film transitions to a night shot in Orange Grove, which tracks north and tilts, descending to the intersection of Louis Road and Louis Botha Avenue. Time now reverses, transitioning to an afternoon shot

tracking south, which changes to morning, and then night. Next, it crossfades to an aerial view of the intersection of Jorissen and Biccard Streets in Braamfontein, which transitions to an image like the one used in the opening sequence in Alex. However, this time the camera tracks north-south on Biccard Street, framing the east-west axial line of Jorissen Street. It then tracks west before shifting to an alley between Jorissen Street plots. Finally, it transitions to a reversal tracking shot of the Jorissen Street line and fades to black. The Jorissen Street footage is included in the film as an example of Johannesburg's cityscape activity street. It provides context that helps illustrate the differences in the urban fabric between township, suburb, and city spaces.

As a critical planning instrument, 'the street' fills the void delineated by two opposite-facing blocks, their vertical and horizontal planes and edges. As the primary site or location, 'the street' and its 'thresholds' range from inside the block to the road reserve centerline and comprise the following features:

- Block boundary plots designate the visible (property stand perimeter defining elements such as walls, fences, hedges, etcetera) or invisible demarcations.
- Structures inside plots describe the buildings, permanent or temporary forms, outhouses, flora, etcetera.
- Elements outside plots define municipal infrastructure (trees, lights, trash bins, signposts, bus stops, benches, below-ground access points, etcetera), driveways, sidewalks, curbs, parking bays, crosswalks, and the road reserve.

I'm a Streetwalker (2017) identifies, categorizes, and defines street elements. It also determines which composition and analytical units should be examined and at what scale. As with *Do the Right Thing's* (1989) forensic location study, aerial filming establishes a base for identifying physical and social attributes. First-person voice-over[24] situates a personal

[24] *I'm a streetwalker* and an urbanist. Ever since I left the rural area where I was born 50 years ago, I have been fascinated by the city. Whether Mbabane, Manzini, Ermelo, Piet Retief, or Barberton did not matter. It was the allure of places and the pace of the city's arena. The energy of the thriving streets. The multiple lives on the sidewalk. The orchestra of sounds produced an untenable desire to seek more. So, when I came for the first time to Johannesburg, it felt like I had arrived at something difficult to describe in words. Even though instructed to allow white people the right of way on the sidewalk, it did not deter me from being captivated by the buildings and streets. The different glimpses of – in my case, at the time – unaffordable, diverse wares displayed on the windows were intoxicating. The street and its sidewalks allowed inexplicable difference, otherness, alternative realities, and serendipity. It was a possibility to metamorphosis. Years later, I was sold a brick in a camera box on the sidewalk of an East Village Street in Manhattan. The streets of the city have many faces. A sidewalk in Brooklyn stretched 13 meters; on other streets, it was non-existent. I have my best ideas and my loneliest moments as I walk on the side of the road. Walking affords an interaction with the desires and the wills of those who cross my path. People who share and fill the space between buildings with their presence and performance. These are single moments. They can occur every morning at the same time. Or surprising déjà vu. Instilling a

account and combines a ‘scriptor,’ street user, urban designer, producer, and viewer. Aerial shots, spoken text, and soundtrack[25] demonstrate documentary mise en scène. Based on experience, specific historical issues are purposefully interweaved with a chronological record of apartheid’s historical context and its continuing influence.

With different views presented in various ways, multiple narrators show the efficacy of cross-media formats in site analysis. During editing, recordings experiment with texts and layers of melody, harmony, timing, and rhythm. This multi-layered process initiates alternate forms of mapping, narrating, and dramatizing thoughts by arranging and layering voices, words, and pictures. Through this, *I‘m a Streetwalker* (2017) becomes a then-and-now register that delivers physicality back to its viewers and, in return, invites them to decode their cognitive experience and make sense of sequences.

5.2 Framing *What if*…?

5.2.1 Continent

“Professions (like nations) keep their shape by molding their members’ (citizens’) understanding of the past, causing them to forget those events that do not accord with a righteous image while keeping alive those memories that do” (Sandercock,1998:1). This observation is arguably valid in every profession or practice and, as significant events of the 21st century illustrate, in broader society. Framing is one tool that *Urban Scripting* adapted and developed to address this practice flaw by reawakening and reconstructing new stories to grant the subaltern power by airing and accepting (buried) memories. It forges new identifies by “revisit[ing], . . . re-present[ing]” history and “investing it with contemporary meaning” (Sandercock,1998:1). Johannesburg is rooted in a narrative that is divided and misrepresented by omissions, erasures, and exploitation.

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sense of wonder. I have reinvented myself on the sidewalk, and I am still walking. But, as an urbanist in South Africa, I am concerned.

[25] Sung by Mary Twala, Hamba Afrika is from Gibson Kente’s musical play How Long – a Musical Tragedy (1973). Mary, singing in isiXhosa laments, Hamba, hamba kahle, Hamba Afrika, Hamba kubuhlungu, Ma uy'ejele, Noma ngithandaza, Ngeze ngikhohlwe, Laph’uhlezi khona sana, Hamba, hamba Afrika, Noma kubuhlungu kum, Inkosi ibenawe, Hamba sana, Hamba, hamba Afrika, Noma kubuhlungu kum, Inkosi ibenawe, Hamba sana. The lyrics translate to Go well Afrika. Though it is painful to me when you go to jail, and as I pray, I will not forget where you are child. May God be with you as you go child.

Framing reverses this imbalance by engaging lived reality via social, economic, and cultural spectrums and [re]presents them through newly liberated lenses. As a result, Bra Niky accesses omitted memory that ties Africa, South Africa, Johannesburg, and the street together, a process that is strengthened by Sandercock's (1998) argument. New understanding comes from depictions of overlooked details and probing the purposes of drawn lines, thus highlighting and documenting the shaping moments that created the current reality. In the frame, lines are a linguistic style that translates phenomena and insinuates possibility. For example, in *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022:1), Africa is depicted not as a natural continental outline with nature's divides but as defined by the Berlin Conference (1884) colonizing lines, which still essentially separate the continent and its people today (Griffiths, 1986). Here, the lack of lines represents an imagination of *what if*?

Drawn lines evoke and negotiate an implied thought or documented form. Forensic mapping inspires two full-frame drawings of the African continent. Maps of the African continent are almost always drawn in a state of tension between colonial and independence relations—borders either meander along naturally occurring relief features or cut through negotiated imperial territories. As mentioned above, one contextualizes Johannesburg in *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022:1) and shows the continent's outline as the line where land meets water. Invisible in the other drawing is the African coastline. Instead, it illustrates the territorial borders of Africa as defined at the Berlin Conference of 1884. The erasure of the coastline does not compromise the recognizability and reading of Africa, which suggests our normative perception of the continent relies on the political landscape imposed on it rather than its natural terrain (Ajala, 1983; Griffiths, 1986; Ikome, 2012). Africa, drawn as a single geographical area, shows rivers and lakes. Madagascar, southern Europe, Anatolia (Asia Minor), and the Middle East are visible. Its purpose is to illustrate Africa and its natural lines (escarpments & rivers) contrasted with the artificial, greed-driven lines drawn by imperial forces, which continue to construct reality today. This depiction lays bare "The meaningless of borders" (Sorkin, 2021).

Frames build thoughts through static pictures, such as continental Africa described above, or in a Deleuzian 'movement-image' (1992) as expressed in the collages of *Calibrating Stories* (2022+) arranged in square or portrait formats. The horizontal and vertical lines, influenced by widescreen cinemascope aspect ratios (see Chapter 6 **Editing Views**), delineate an area of composition. This defined space contains scenes appearing and reappearing in a camera's viewfinder, storyboard, panel, computer screen, paper space, or at several frames-per-second on digital film projection screens. Its analysis or descriptive process consists of the following:

- Explanatory photographs.
- On/off-site sketches.
- Drawn diagrams in rectangular boxes on sheets of paper or napkins, collages.
- Forming a rectangular area using two thumbs and index fingers of an enframed image, etcetera.

During editing, a cinemascope standard 2.4:1 aspect ratio creates the frames with a three-thirds composition guideline. Compositionally, this draws focus to specific elements by placing them in the left or right third of an image's horizontal and vertical portions, with the other two-thirds left more open (**Fig. 5.3**) 3-thirds rule. This composition style uses one vertical and two horizontal lines to create a grid and divide the frame into six equal subdivisions. Critical elements are positioned along the gridlines using their intersections and the centers of the nine subdivisions as crucial focus points to strengthen composition balance and dynamic movement.

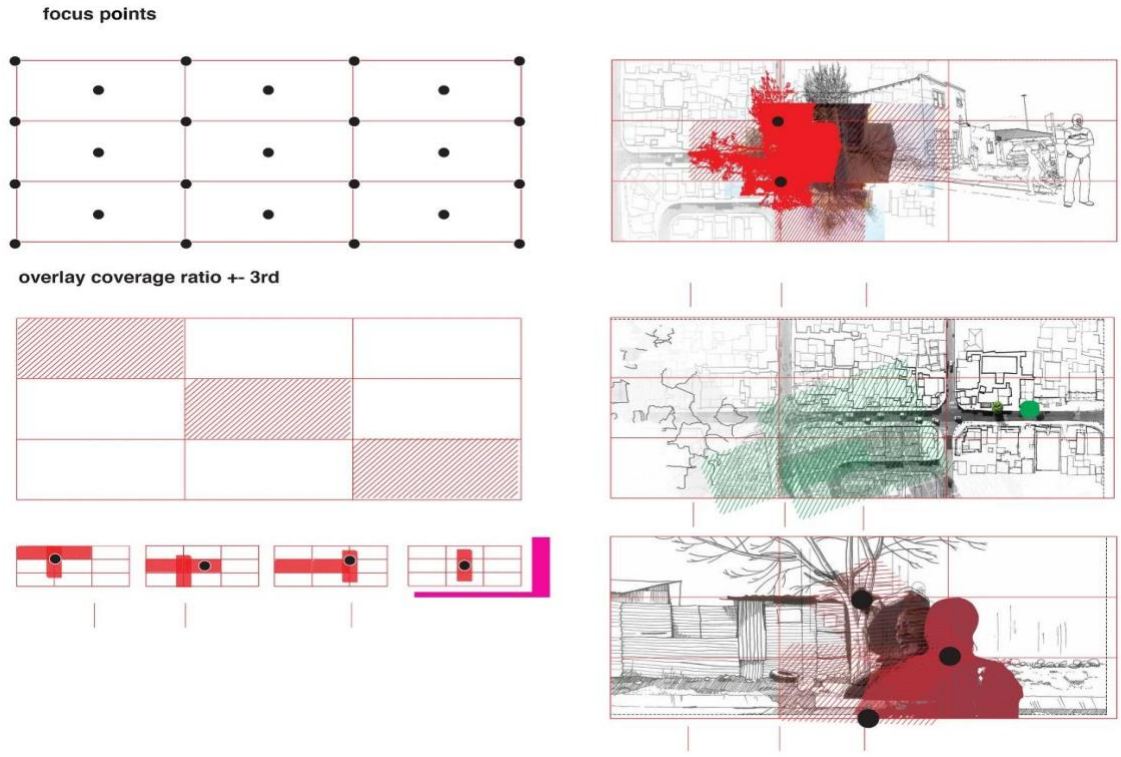


Figure 5.3 3-Thirds Rule and 2.4:1 Aspect Ratio

As a framing process, mapping the continent's causality uses points and lines to make shapes supplemented by architectural drawing conventions, plans, sections, and elevations (Ackerman, 2002). Points and lines become datascapes highlighting critical elements. As a mapping technique, this framing process aligns with the purpose presented in Chapter 1 and,

through the image-making process, shows the links in causality, manifestations of the knowledge gap, and continuing historical legacies at various scales. At a local level, different drawing scales and camera distance/zoom levels unearth traces of palimpsests long buried and add locally informed emphasis to each setting or city block. The multiple layers necessary to achieve this level of immersion and insight require 'scripting' teams with specialist scanning, hearing, and composing skills who can craft a narrative that extends across time.

These teams[26] draw on the fieldwork, which contends primarily with reading the city micro and street during a fixed 2017—2019 timeline. To cover *Retelling Egoli's* audio-visual spectrum, the urban designer/scriptor/producer assembles the necessary engagement pillars, data collection capacity (teams), and data collection formats (expressions). The producer/reasearcher/scriptor is integral to each task and musters the specialist teams responsible for:

- **Ground** - for access and logistics.
- **Impression** - collects off-site and on-site physical and social activity observations.
- **2-D + 3-Dimension** (2-D + 3-D) - physical geometric capture and representation.
- **Audio-Visual** (A-V) - record sounds, still, and moving pictures.
- **Calibrating** - collates, edits, and produces audio-visual texts for narrative and spatial coherence.
- **Identifying Graphics -** that create the project's identity.

The Ground Team links 'inside' and 'outside' expertise and, aside from access, facilitates ground operation matters such as security, equipment, storage, parking, and other fieldwork logistics. Equipped with notebooks (**Fig 5.4**), logbooks, maps, and mobile phones, the team lays the groundwork for the specialist teams' community engagement. It works to ensure ethical collaboration between internal members and outside experts. For example, when the Impression Team was relatively new to the study area, female scriptors who were collecting data were 'harassed' by seemingly 'intoxicated' males; *imisumpe* were called on to intervene, and once familiarity and trust grew, the same team members expressed a feeling of being 'looked after' by the community. Developed from *I'm a Streetwalker* (2017), the ground mapping process conducted intensive fieldwork three times a day (early morning, midday,

[26] See **Table_2:** End Credit for team members.

and early evening) Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and weekends. Respective teams zoomed in if they needed additional scrutiny of an identified phenomenon.

The Impression Team – comprised of professionals with expertise in architecture, planning, urban design, project management, photography, finance, graphic design, film, and television fields[27] – was guided by *imisumpe,* who directed the ground mapping process. The process encompassed everyone, some of whom formed specialized 2-D + 3-D, A-V, Calibrating, and Identity (sub)teams. The teams were large enough to ensure simultaneous data collection at the study sites, which are more than a kilometer long and lie seven kilometers apart. The Reverend Sam Buti Street site measures 1070m, and the Louis Botha Avenue site 1050m. Sub-teams engaged in different aspects of the fieldwork and conducted observations, interviews, surveys, and audio-visual mapping.



[27] Linda Sokhulu, an actor known for her appearance on television screens across South Africa, who was part of the team, made access more fluid.

Figure 5.4 Ground Team Notebook

During the making phase, the producer/researcher/scriptor would invite numerous people from various applicable professional practices (art, architecture, film, photography, planning, urban design), academic and city institutions (the University of Cape Town, University of Johannesburg, Wits, City of Joburg) to input data collecting methods and representation formats. Electronically projected or hardcopy printed material facilitates these conversations. See **Fig 5.5** for a photographic inventory of different viewings.

5.2.2 Country

At this scale, fieldwork linked current spatial conditions to Johannesburg's genesis. Off-site, the 2-D + 3-D Team constructed a visual backstory. On-site, the 2-D + 3-D Team operated independently yet, when required, drifted in and out of the core Impression Team and accompanied other groups to zoom into and capture precise details of their observations. Information gathered in this way shapes the graphic novel, animation, and *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+). For example, to visualize the street, the 2D + 3-D Team captured phenomena in quick courtroom-style sketches on-site and then constructed meticulous analog and digital drawings off-site.



Figure 5.5 Viewing Inventory

Carefully constructed 2-D + 3-D drawings, mapped time, built a visual inventory of activities, and created a visual narrative relating to people, street spaces, and use. These specific readings were the foundation for a large-format-plan/base map with an extended legend that noted all possible observations.

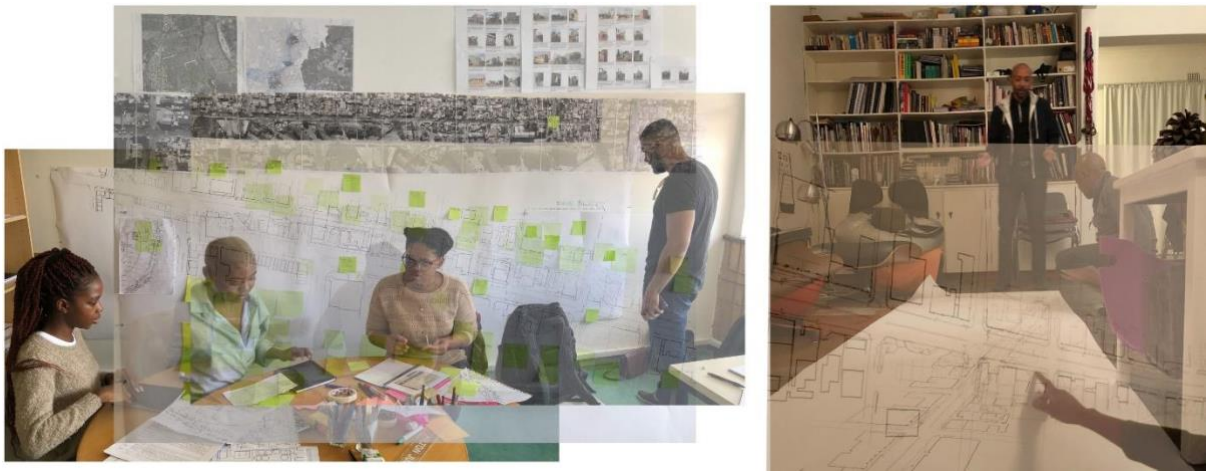


Figure 5.6 Large-Format-Map at Office and Home

Pinned up at two key locations: 1) on the university office wall; 2) at the producer/ researcher/scriptor's home – teams used the base map to enrich off-site team planning and discussions about improving the detail captured in the field (**Fig 5.6**). Teams also used it in conversations with others not directly involved in the project. Framing built on the learnings in *I'm a Streetwalker* (2017) by introducing and extending fieldwork mapping and making possibilities to recontextualize a metro overview. The techniques used in the three-minute *I'm a Streetwalker* (2017) film aimed to identify a representative street segment. In addition, the film conceptualizes, stages, and tests the following:

- The formation of a creative team consisting of a scriptor/producer/researcher, *imisumpe,* drone pilot, and editor as collaborators.
- The use of scripts and storyboards to provide a narrative outline and logistics recording schedule to maximize resources and time.
- The efficacy of an aspect ratio of 2.4:1 to offer a cinemascope widescreen immersive picture to give audiences a representative true-to-life format.
- Mise en scène, framing, and shot sizes to 'reconstruct the world' using the study's communicative essence, which is frame composition. Composition consists of all elements placed within the frame and the camera takes (length of shot and movement), linking characters (people and places) to the environment.

- Tracking and matching shots to reveal space, context, spatial relationships, and consistency between camera, action, and framing positions (Parkinson, 2019).
- How the use of fade transitions compresses time and space.
- How point-of-view shots emphasize immediacy and draw the reader/audience into the storyworld.
- How continuity editing for narrative linearity fixes the axis of action for a continuous watching experience.
- The use of Cinéma verité's framed and edited 'versions of real-life' activities for narrative storytelling.
- How Third Cinema principles reference a cultural response to colonial worldviews and give a transformative and insurgent spin to the documentary genre.
- How sound prioritizes dialogue to reinforce visual meaning and "compositional hegemony by focusing the viewer's attention on specific details within the frame" (Parkinson, 2019:93).
- How voice-over (first-person narration) supplements the visuals and soundtrack and the purposeful use of female voice-overs, challenge conventional male-gaze 'voice-of-god' norms and incorporate the marginalized.

I'm a Streetwalker (2017) simulates a 'coming soon…' type trailer and is a template for a 'forthcoming narration.…' which uses audio-visual storytelling to explore current socio-economic and cultural conditions captured as familiar themes of daily lived experience. The identified street elements listed above and the recording techniques used are the narrative's primary building blocks and provide a location and framing toolkit. The sub-questions underpin the politics in recording the city's current image and making procedures and are set against a settler-colonial-colonized backdrop. The recovery of omitted voices allows a different look at the past, the present, and an implied future (Sandercock, 1998). Seeing the world through subaltern points of view shapes an *insurgent practice* and uses the graphic novel *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022) and the animation, *the block, the plot, the house, the tree* (2018) to look back in time. *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022) is a historical timeline narrated by Bra Niky under 'his' tree.

Bra Niky and Thando Hopa narrate the two-minute animation that summarizes a hundred and thirty-three years of history. The Historicizing and contextualizing of space using graphic traces and composites articulates the study area's general overview. It prepares and arranges the groundwork and works intersubjectively to memorialize experience (Sandercock, 1998; Miraftab, 2009; Ahmed & Crucifix, 2018). By contrast, *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) records and collates material that demonstrates what *can be* and 're-presents' the

present (*what is*) in preparation for *Calibrating*. *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) link the body to the street to the continent and guide the mechanics of the telling protocol. The notes also ask what the city's image is, who produces it, and what is its intended audience. These questions address the study's three-fold purpose established in Chapter 1 and concern professional practice's meaning, significance, and purpose.

Justification comes in words and pictures as separate but interrelated semiotic structures that configure two storytelling frames: the total page with panels and the panel's layout (**Fig. 5.7**). The graphic novel's use of panelization (Eisner, 1985) is critical to its presentation and communication through three-page layout variations. Implicit panelization is the primary tool, with image and text enclosures collaborating to construct knowledge and meaning (Eisner, 1985; McCloud, 1994; Davies, 2019). Panelization uses the frame to give distance and depth to the subject matter, as in the four-shot descriptions used: long (establishing), full, medium, and close-up (**Fig. 5.7**). The panelization thus forms a "visual dialogue" (Eisner, 1985:42) between the scriptor and the reader.

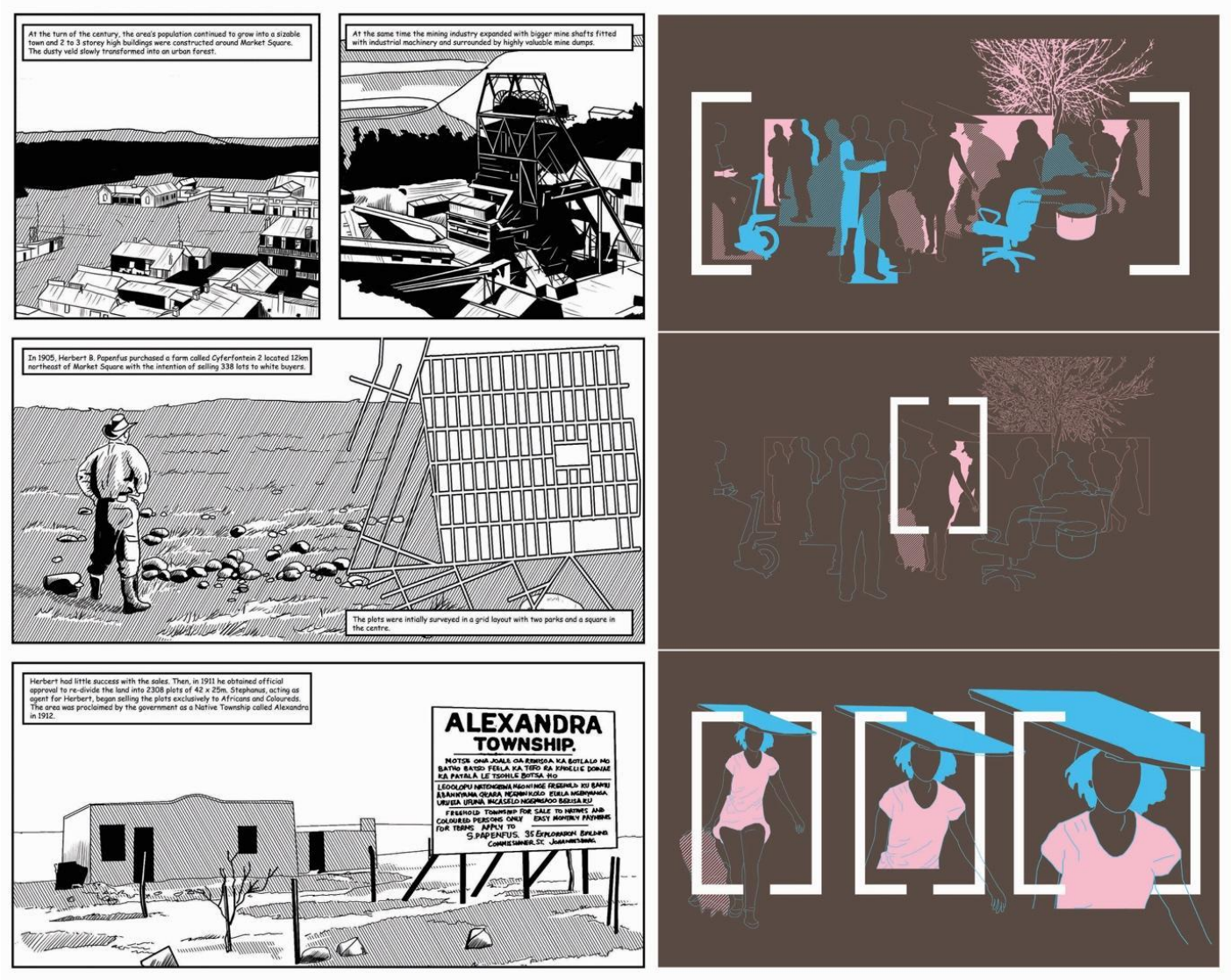


Figure 5.7 Page Panel Layout and Panelization

The panels give an establishing – from background to foreground, full to close-up – drawing distances in the page layout (**Fig. 5.7**). The panelization demonstrates the visual process of shifting the frame to the *Other*. For example, Vivian is shown in a distinct context; framing identifies her and zooms in from full to mid and finally to a close-up (**Fig 5.2**).

In *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022), the opening page is a single panel that acts as a temporal marker: the *then*. The next frame is a grid that introduces some of the characters and history that make up the novel. The next full-page panel contextualizes Johannesburg and Alexandra and links them to the country and the continent: surrounding water bodies define the continent. The following transitions are temporal markers. First is the reported or documented gold discoveries of 1834, 1852, 1853, and 1886. Second is the 1876 ox-wagon link (Old Pretoria Road) between the Transvaal Republic's farms and capital. Third are legal

frameworks. The Native Land Act of 1913 is the first of four panels, followed by the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 and the Group Areas Act of 1950. Finally, 1991's full-page panel [re]presents repealing segregationist laws, followed by the Constitution's promulgation in 1996.

The second variation is the most basic. It is an A4 portrait page frame with six square panels arranged into two columns of three rows. **Fig. 5.7** demonstrates a typical graphic novel layout. Left to right, top to bottom, reading conventions base the configuration. The third is the two-column, three-row panels, where an omitted gutter between two-row square panels creates a single rectangular horizontal panel. These rectangular panels take on a cinemascope aspect ratio, and by doing this, Eisner argues they are "contributing to the [page's narrative] atmosphere" (1985:46). Moreover, they establish a communicative practice where things work together to make the street talk. McCloud stresses that this combination of words, pictures, and other icons forms a "vocabulary of a language called comics" (1994:47). *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022) provides a more comprehensive read. Square and rectangular panels work together to provide a historical overview and intimate details such as smallpox immunization.

5.2.3 City

The block, the plot, the house, the tree (2019) is an animation that summarizes Johannesburg's meta city and reveals the who, the what, and the why that Herman et al. call for (Herman et al., 2008). Conceptually and intellectually, combined with the graphic novel, the animation renders movement for the storyworld's surrounding context (Herman et al., 2008). It also summarizes a specific aspect of Johannesburg, the 110-year history of Alexandra. The animation, created in collaboration between Wits University and Tshimologong Animation Academy,[28] equips young African talent with skills to be competitive internationally. It instills an un-clichéd but authentic African identity that sheds light on the continent's cultures (Academy, 2022). Supplied to the academy were a script (see *the block, the plot, the house, the tree script*) and the audio and visual material gathered in the field. Its studio director assembled a 6-strong bigender team, and the scriptor gave an in-depth briefing on what was required, with particular attention on what to achieve from Bra Niky's

[28] https://tshimologong.joburg/skills-development/animation-academy/

point of view. The Audio-Visual team recorded Bra Niky during *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+). In addition, a radio broadcaster recorded Thando Hopa's voice-over at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) studios in Auckland Park, Johannesburg (**Fig 5.8**).



Figure 5.8 Recording Animation Voice-Over

As a last step, Berlin-based electronic music composer and performer, Hainbach[29] scored some of the audio for *there's a tree on the sidewalk* (2018). Serendipitously, the author met Hainbach on Friday, 22 March 2019, in Berlin, two years into the fieldwork. Over dinner, he agreed to score *the block, the plot, the house, the tree* (2019).

The block, the house, the plot, the tree (2019) covers physical and social attributes at global, continental, country, city, and neighborhood scales and gathers data for producing a detailed base map. Mapping the city took place from 2017 onwards. For this story, [pre]production began by working on the study proposal's written text and the three-minute film *I'm a Streetwalker* (2017). Reverend Sam Buti Street in Alexandra and Louis Botha Avenue in Orange Grove were chosen to (re)present two of Johannesburg's three typologies: 'township'

[29] His website states, "Hainbach creates shifting audio landscapes THE WIRE called "One hell of a trip." He has been fascinated with electronic sounds since he discovered the dial on the radio. Never losing his childhood wonder, he still searches for the sounds in between on modular synths, tape and test equipment, making even the unmusical "music." Through his YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeovElJP0n0i8ADaPsRSd8g) Hainbach "brings experimental music techniques to a wider audience" (Hainbach, 2022)

and ‘suburb.’ The different spheres illustrate the development of activity streets at varying levels of vision, scale, and intensity. The township case (Alexandra), characterized by extreme hunger, poverty, and high unemployment, displays’ informality with minimal state regulation.’ The suburban environment (Orange Grove) presents a mix of state-regulated and non-regulated livelihoods subject to demographic shifts. Jorissen Street (Braamfontein), briefly included as a comparison, is a highly state-regulated ‘city’ area comprising high-rise corporate buildings reminiscent of modern American cities. It is far removed from the twilight zones of Alexandra or Orange Grove, and, in fact, twilight zone activities are actively prevented.

Contrasted with Soweto’s panopticon street layout (see **2.2.1 Colonialism**), a grid street network structures all three settings designed for easy access instead of surveillance. In each of the three models, the identified street segment serves as a location to connect all scales representing *the line’s* physical and social attributes. These establish the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings, which state that:

- Today’s multiple urban participants are co-authors of tomorrow’s everyday heritage.
- The discussion about urban street space and its inhabitation/utilization has a political, cultural, and economic nature.
- Levels of urban circulation and infrastructure access reflect a country’s understanding of freedom and justice.
- Film (audio-visual communication) can implant, record, and re-imagine new and necessary knowledge about urban interventions and education.

These propositions deal with the politics of identity and access. They link **everyday** characters, the **street** as a site, and the power of **audio-visual** narrative: the three keywords, **everyday**, **street**, and **film**, structure *Retelling Egoli*. The street is a frequently altered and constantly evolving palimpsest. The application of frames and framing uncovers and forefronts people. Applying lessons from Spike Lee’s *Do the Right Thing*, *Urban Scripting* places street segments “under a microscope to reveal the multiple thresholds and spatial claims that support their inhabitation” (Strickland, 2006:45). Lee’s film “portrays the manners in which hierarchies of public and private space, laid upon its street system through architecture, landscape, and human activity, can give a city an extremely fine grain” (Strickland, 2006:46). Lee’s cinematic methods are applied in *Urban Scripting* and provide valuable analytical information about the case study sites. In addition, geometrical aspects and movement over time uncover the fine grain that Strickland references.

Using traditional qualitative methods, the Impression Team examined the entire segment of the identified street to detail blocks for data collection and conducted surveys, unstructured interviews, spatial measurements, traffic, pedestrian counts, ground-floor observations, and numerous drawings. The surveys created an understanding of the street's spatial, social, and economic dimensions. Five teams of three surveyed the different areas. Each team member had a notebook, a base map of the street area, and sheets of interview questionnaires. The surveys were physical and social forensic mappings of buildings, their use, the space between the buildings, and what happens in them (see **Fieldwork Notes Building Inventory**). This work was formative in constructing the detailed large-format plan as a base map with a fertile level of activity layer detail that addresses numerous facets of people, spaces, and activities.

Additionally, the readings facilitated the creation of an analog and digital representation of the street line as a 'detailed location or set' for the story. The Impression Team's drawings (see **5.2 Framing *What if*…?** for a detailed explanation) tracked two things, with each, when being drawn, beginning to tell its own story. First is Johannesburg's chronological morphology. Its macro-scale provides a historical overview of Johannesburg's growth from 1900 to 2019. The northern section of the drawing extends to the Midrand, the eastern one to Springs, the western one to Krugersdorp, and the southern picture covers Katlehong and Lenasia (**Fig. 2.7**). Second is the sketches collected during encounters on walks, which capture particular and pertinent moments, people, and spaces. These sketches were converted to more practice-based drawings, and some of the pictures, in turn, were animated and collaged. The illustrations also located the metropolitan area of Johannesburg as bounded by the N1 and N3 national routes and contextualized the two case study sites (**Fig. 5.9**).

In *Retelling Egoli,* the experimental combination of physical and social measurement and observation proved to be an effective fieldwork protocol. As used in *I'm a Streetwalker*, the following two formats and their inherent variations constitute audio-visual storytelling that examines the street's attributes:

- Drawings: conceive at different scales global, local, and human elements of the past and present, which demonstrate *what is* and *what could be* through aerial, plan, section, elevation, and perspective (**Fig. 2.2**).
- Photographs: offer an intimate look and feel of the city as they place the viewer in the frame. Their compositional value focuses on lighting and texture, shadows, and

shading. In addition, aerial, elevation, and angle viewpoints show the geometry of space and usage and give the viewer a relatable perspective of *what is*.

The framing highlights racial inequality and stimulates a discussion about subaltern insurgency. Effectively, framing discusses new ways of reading spaces based so as not “to be blind to the racist and classist as well as sexist effects of contemporary planning practices” (Sandercock, 1998:12).

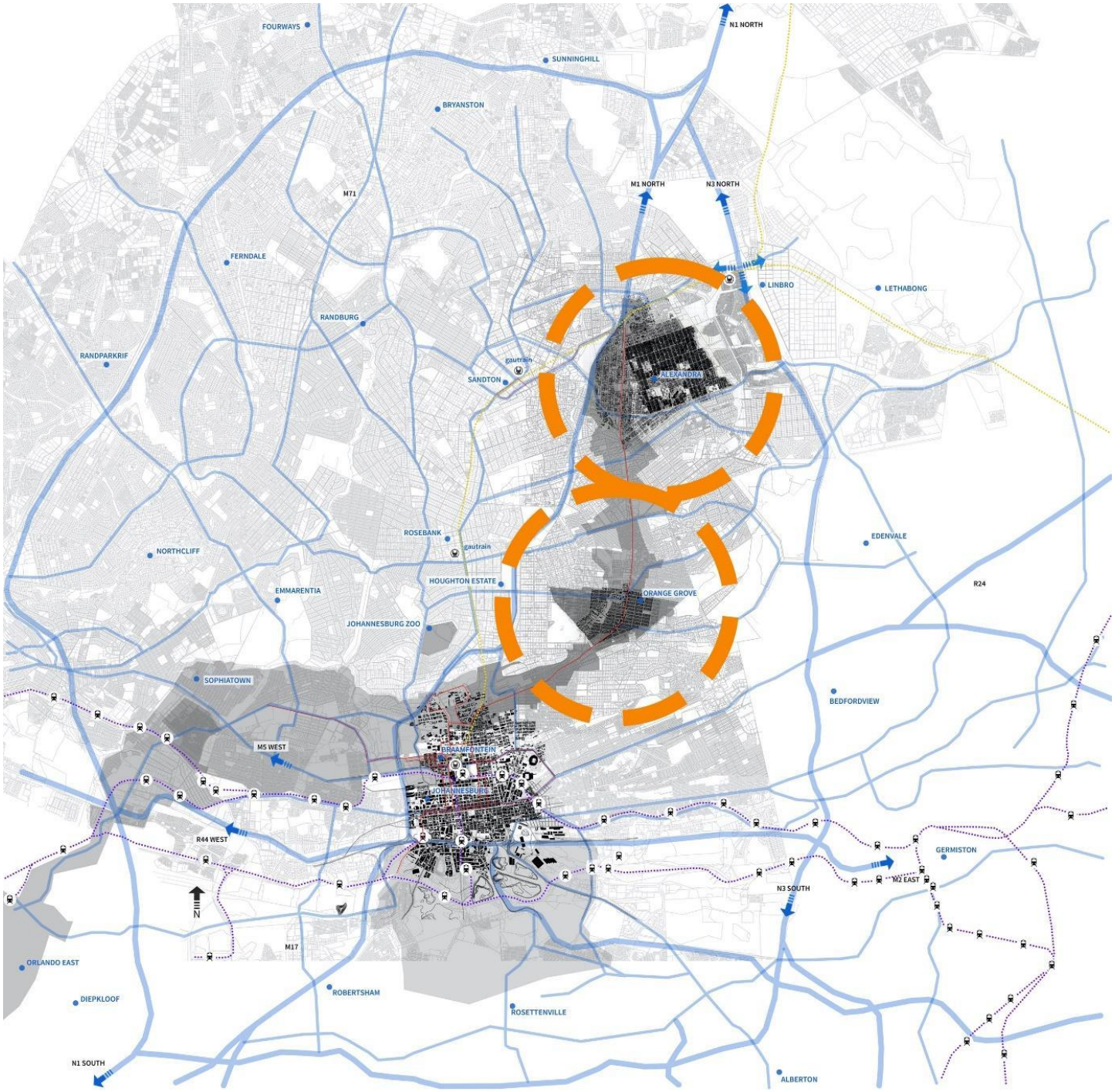


Figure 5.9 Johannesburg Metropolitan: Study Sites

5.3 Shifting

5.3.1 Country

Influenced by the readings taken from framing, shifting listens to street voices (Sandercock & Franz, 2010). After receiving ethics clearance, the perspective shifted from the country to the individual, revealing *what the city is*. However, before that could take place, the following needed to be ascertained:

- *What* is the story: content production (scriptwriting).
- *How* is it told: discourse production (teams).
- *Production* logistics: project overview (time and budget).

For the case study, the preparation walks resumed in October 2017, and teams undertook mapping from November 2017 to January 2018. Field engagement began on Wednesday, 1 November 2017, by meeting *imisumpe* Ronnie and Zimvo. Walking with *imisumpe* identified the constituent structures, blocks, plots, and critical infrastructure. *Imisumpe's* 'inner knowledge' assisted in selecting representative street samples and was a step towards identifying the factors needed to guide external expertise. Most important was meeting the characters (street users) to which the frame shifts and brings their marginalized urban experience into focus (**Fig. 5.10**).

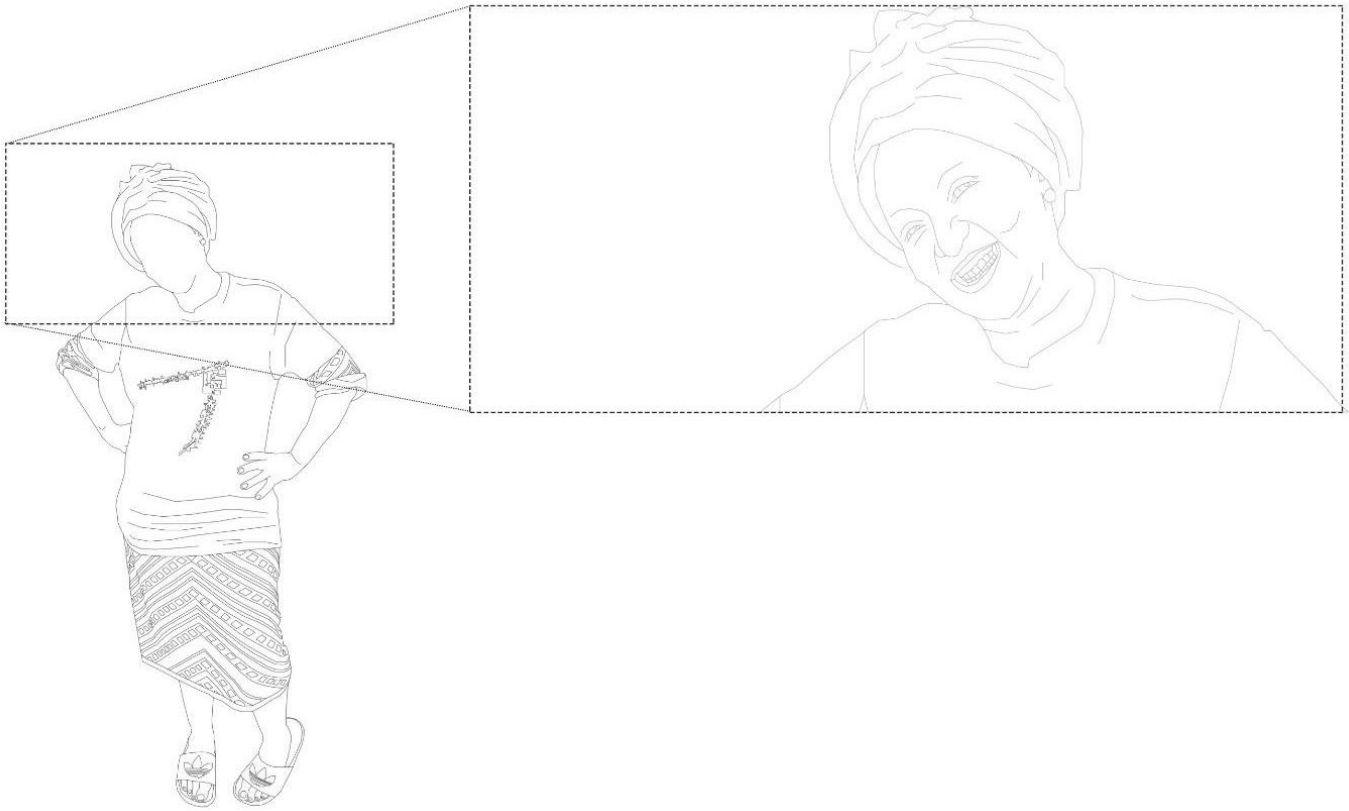


Figure 5.10 Framing Joyce

Walking revealed things previously unnoticed, such as the Chinaman's collection point on Reverend Sam Buti Street and the subtle shifts in space use by *Chicken Dust* on Louis Botha Avenue. Since the story tells the street and the street tells the story, mapping physical and social aspects represents both. Based on the aerial flights and theoretical framework of *I'm a Streetwalker* (2017), the three project spheres, *walking*, *observing*, and *conversing* (see **5.3.3 Metro**), triggered an investigatory plan to focus on social and physical dimensions. During transect walks, *imisumpe* introduced the characters who are the foundation of the project, and this guided the methods of reading the ground and listening to them. Their stories brought the street to life and life to the street. The producer/researcher/scriptor then modeled the graphic novel characters on the real-life people encountered on the street. Engaging with this internal expertise introduced locally situated knowledge sources used to build the various story forms. As such, local movement and the proximity of people framed from head to toe with full and medium shots (**Fig. 5.11** & **Fig. 3.3**) provide a kinesthetic situational experience with the audio-visuals presenting immersive experiences.

Bra Niky is the narrator of *Retelling Egoli.* Born and raised in Alex, it is thanks to his vigilance that the solitary tree on Reverend Sam Buti Street survives. Next, the frame shifts to highlight

Bra Sam, a welder and owner of SGM Company (named from his initials) who fabricated and repaired metal and has been operating since 1990 off Reverend Sam Buti. In addition, Bra Sam contributed financially to Rachel's business start-up. In many ways, Bra Sam epitomizes the very best qualities of urban insurgency in Johannesburg – ubuntu flows through him, as demonstrated by his assistance and largesse to Rachel (the little he can spare) and his constant adaptions to whatever space or situation he must work in – he was a bricoleur in every sense. Sadly, Bra Sam passed away in July 2019. To bring focus to and enhance the 'local literacy' of the larger metropolitan character texture pool, frames bring into being some of the characters encountered during fieldwork. Sipho, a religious believer in the power of prayer, has lived in Alex since she was nine years old. 34 at the time, she is a seamstress and organizes community events to empower women when she is not at choir practice. Tumelo is a domestic worker with a sharp fashion sense who plans to open a fabric printmaking business. S'phiwe cleans Alexandra's streets. She protects herself from the dirt and grime with hand-made gloves, and yellow plastic bags cover her shoes. Konke knows everyone and gets you anything you need. She intends to open an accessory shop soon.

Zela appears with Winnie and Nelson Mandela in a full-page graphic novel frame. She looks after her elderly mother, brothers, and sister and does most household chores, especially washing and ironing their clothes. She hopes to go to university and study law. Langa loves Kwaito music. He moves through Alex with Kwaito playing in his headphones. Kuhle's goal is to finish school and open a jewelry and clothes business to support her family.

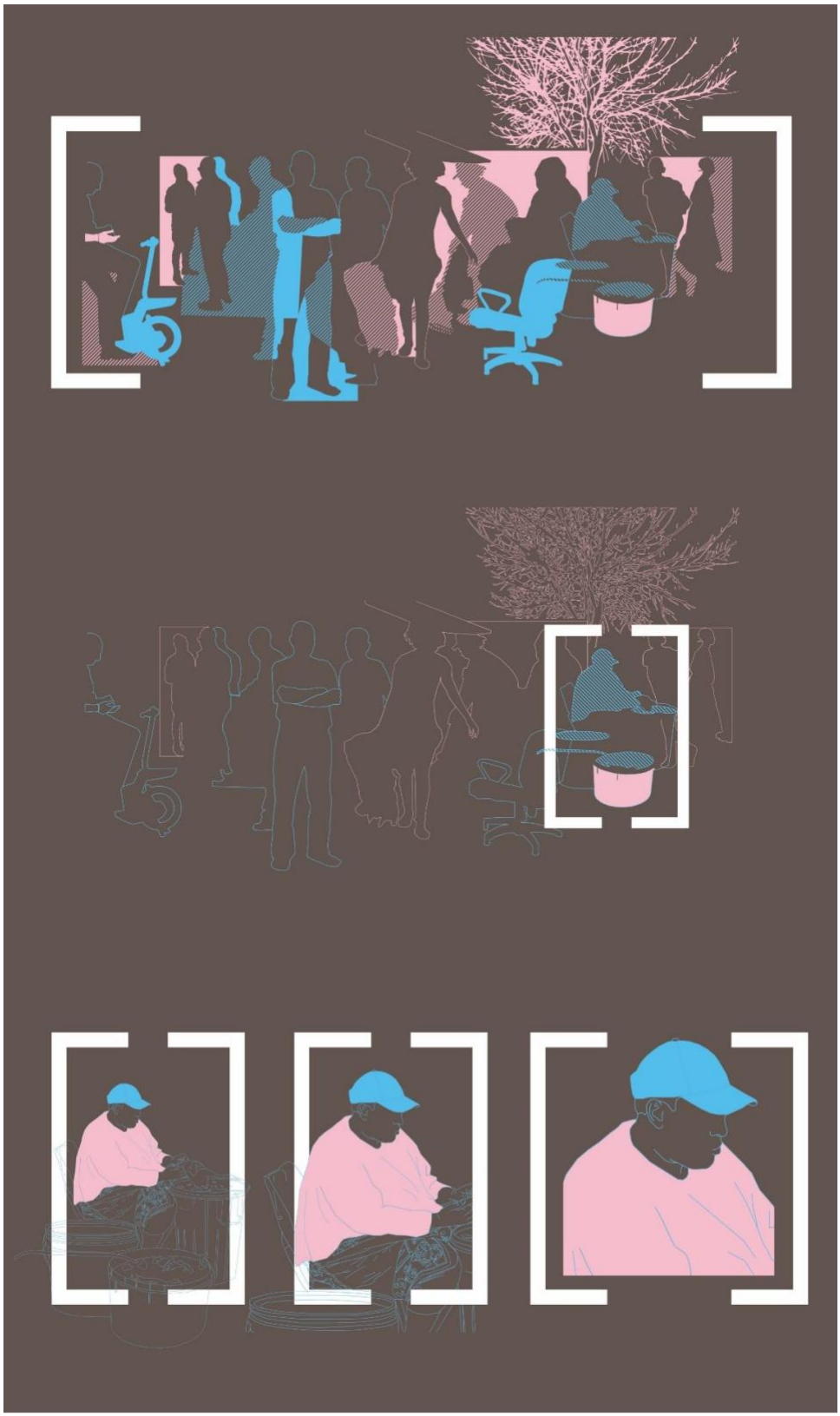


Figure 5.11 Framing Rachel

Vuyo is Lesedi's ever-present companion. They have known each other for some time. Vuyo helps Lesedi, injured at an early age, negotiate the steeper gradients in Alexandra. For most

of his life, Lesedi has been in a wheelchair. He is studying to become a teacher. Rachel runs the *Fresh Chicken and Bones* outlet on Reverend Sam Buti, which Bra Sam helped her start. Her business has been steadily growing. Joyce shares an informal stand on the sidewalk and fence outside Ithute Primary School with Vivian; Joyce takes the morning and Vivian the mid-morning and afternoon shifts (see ***Joyce*** (2018). Paddy runs *Paddy Power* and repairs electrical equipment, home appliances, and power tools, including Bra Sam's, when he was alive. Born in Alex, Paddy is fluent in Sesotho, isiZulu, Venda, Tsonga, Afrikaans, and Setswana. Depending on whom he is speaking to, Paddy adapts – he can communicate in most South African languages. His morning chores include cleaning the area adjacent to the crosswalk where the children are dropped off for school (**Fig. 5.12**).

Fish owns and operates *Chicken Dust* in Orange Grove. The sidewalk bay on Louis Botha Avenue gives him additional room to 'extend' his outdoor eatery, especially in the evenings. Fungai rents a mirror at the salon where she works. Her clients come from far and wide. She is grateful for Fish's establishment, which feeds her waiting clients on busy month-end evenings when there is greater demand for the salon's services. Mduduzi lives in Hillbrow. His passion is working with his hands, and he works for Vimal. Vimal runs *Bhanis Cycle* off Louis Botha. He took the business over from his father, who occasionally comes in to help. Vuka uses a wheelchair to move through Orange Grove and works as a parking attendant. His main gripe with Louis Botha Avenue is disrespectful, speeding motorists. Sibusiso helps coordinate minibus taxi logistics in Braamfontein. Nomvula recently graduated from the Graduate School of Architecture at the University of Johannesburg. She is interested in exploring how the post-colonial city assists in reorienting marginalized communities, and she hopes to shape new ideas regarding identity and belonging. Tasneem is an architect, and her work focuses on sustainability.

MD is a visual artist at the University of the Witwatersrand Film and Television School. He is in his third year. Iris is an urbanist and image-maker working at the intersection of pedagogy, urban design, and film. Tumi is an architect whose work focuses on enhancing the black experience. Elsa is an influencer with a solid affinity for fashion. Her motto: *I am a Statement*. Leigh is a professional architect and training in urban design. Her wish is to help create a more representative post-colonial city.



Figure 5.12 Paddy's Morning Routine

Sibusiso helps coordinate taxi logistics in Alexandra. His aim is to one day own a taxi. Mangaliso is an informal recycler. When we first met, secured to his trolley was a gift for his granddaughter, a big brown teddy bear. Jabu is a proud gay Zulu. His chosen mandate is to make township communities more tolerant of LGBTQIA+ and reduce the stigma the group faces. Mandla works as a barista at a golf club in Joburg. He wants to open a coffee bar in Alex. These characters, like Sam Nhlengethwa's collages, give the city color, form, voice, visuality, memory, imagination, texture, vibrancy, and possibility. Trusting their instincts, they take risks, embrace the unconventional, and live.

5.3.2 City

Sound imbues settings. It provides different tones, colors, and nuances to form and voice. For example, the track *Alexandra* (1975) (archive, n.d.) by Isaac Zacks Nkosi adds texture to the film *there's a tree on the sidewalk* (2018). Popularly known as 'Bra Zacks,' he was born, raised, and died in Alexandra (SAHO, 2011). Detailed analog and electronic drawings and photographs record spaces using an aerial overview, linear site drive, and ground-point investigation toolkit, supplemented with direct in situ observations, desktop GIS explorations, Google Earth Pro, City Council, and academic institution databases. Analog drawings are a standard practice for visual data description. Electronic drawings display the city at different scales: land use, movement systems, major road networks, public transport routes, and local area contexts (open spaces, schools, shopping centers, and neighboring precincts). Drawing and curating data give a clearer picture of *what is out there*. The gathered information produces an archive of 'on-the-ground material,' which is valuable for future research and practice applications.

An iterative relationship between analog and electronic drawings generates a continuous information loop. Analog sketches explore spatial and temporal realities. For reflexive purposes, stenciled off/from the real, they capture moments, create traces, form inscriptions, and structure the physical and the material interpretations. On-site drawings and impressionistic sketches compose data measurements and log any information overlooked during previous site visits. First impressions, as a translation of 'real' tensions, conflicts, and performance, form information data sets through visual texts: sketches, collages, plans, elevations, sections, and perspectives (**Fig. 5.13**).



Figure 5.13 Church Impression

Impromptu and detailed drawings add value for the on-site teams by forming a communicative practice that discusses collected data to strengthen fieldwork engagement. As well they permit experimentation with movement, textures, and aesthetics. For example,

composite, layered hand-drawn sections (drawn at the beginning, mid, and end of the block) create an animated sequence that grants readers a pedestrian motion-like experiential view of the street, very much like Cullen's (1961) serial vision proclamation (see **US_LOUIS BOTHA ANIMATION SECTION** in **CVF**).

The data is valuable for constructing a 3D electronic model of the focus blocks. The electronic model is helpful in two ways: it accurately represents the spatial environment and explores activities and movement as animated flythroughs. In addition, the electronic drawing permits an easier framing of "two- and three-dimensional imaging, allowing for visualization of forms and spaces" (Ackerman, 2002:305). Animations investigate not only space but also its manifestation with flythroughs testing movement for sequential timing and pace simulations. Electronic drawings permit opportunities to test the "choreographies of unfolding sequences of cinematic experience" (Rahim, 2001:19). In other words, the electronic drawing phase is concerned with simulating dynamic horizontal and vertical movement sequences within an arrangement of the inert street and its architectural spaces (Tschumi, 2001). Animations allow preparatory groundwork that illustrates developments 'from concept to actuality' and frame movement using storyboards and static images:

> "Not only does each representation seek to convey a particular message with the means best adapted to it, but each observation is the product of an individual's way of perceiving, and of [a] way of conveying what [they] perceive. The latter involves individual rendering [traits] comparable to handwriting and the style of the time and place of making. Therefore the "accuracy" of a depiction is entirely idiosyncratic; there are many potential 'accuracies'" (Ackerman, 2002:299).

Analog and electronic drawings, sketches, plans, and photographs are collaged to give a sensation of seeing and experiencing the streetscape from multiple perspectives. Different overlaid composites simulate movement and time.

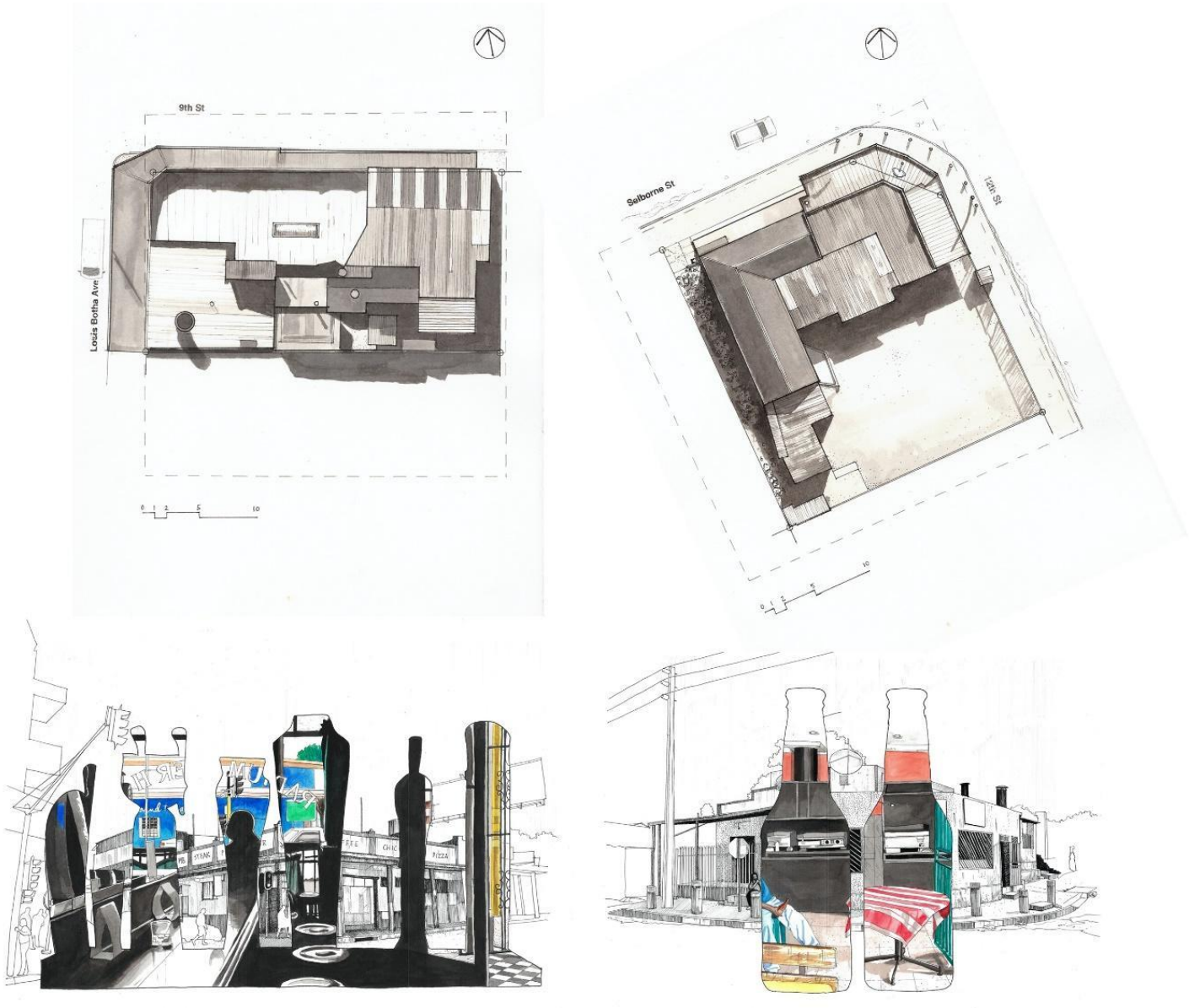


Figure 5.14 Aerials and Collages

Aerial views and inside-outside collages (**Fig. 5.14**) explore the *Corner Meat Supply* store in Alexandra and the *Radium Beer Hall* in Orange Grove as anchoring points. Both are situated in the focus blocks and are places of consumption and entertainment, allowing, for example, a comparable cost analysis. Combined, drawings, collages, and photographs create composites; they offer an impressionist contextual platform to describe and emphasize a particular aesthetic of what exists. This function is “the rhetoric of drawing” and a “rhetorical exposition” (Ackerman, 2002:299;310). The collage composites adopt a portrayal aesthetic so that the drawings ‘speak’ with the audience and convey information relating to the plot or action seen in ‘shifting characters’ (see **3.3.2 Locating Voices**). These drawings develop

narratives containing characters, settings, activities, and environmental, ecological, and historical data.

5.3.3 Metro

Linked to **5.3.1 Country**, walking and conversations work together. Merged, they move with the people to get a sense of moving through city spaces. Pierce & Lawhon (2015) and Kowalewski & Bartłomiejski (2020) argue that walking is a practical mapping methodology, and *Retelling Egoli* illustrates the argument's veracity. Walking helps discover features. Guided by the Ground Team, the Impression Team accessed the site by walking. It used ground-gathered information from all the teams to produce the base map as a critical communication tool/ instrument to reflect on *why*.

- Transect Walks

Walks in Alexandra began on the eastern side at the T-junction of Rev Sam Buti Street and 12th Avenue and headed west to Pan Africa Mall. Teams walked on the south or northern sidewalk, depending on the time of day, weather, or according to a pre-determined plan. At times walks zigzagged from side to side since crossing the street was easy, which may not always be the case at other sites, such as in Orange Grove. Walks in Orange Grove began and ended at the 13th Street and Louis Botha Avenue intersection and advanced in opposite directions. The clockwise one walked north on the avenue's western sidewalk to Orchard Road, crossing the avenue to the other side. Once on the eastern sidewalk, the direction turned southwards, heading towards Johannesburg, crossing the avenue at 6th Street, and walking north until the Orange Grove Library on 13th Street. An opposite anticlockwise route walked south to 6th Street, crossed over to the east sidewalk, walked north to Orchard Road, crossed over to the western sidewalk, and completed the loop by walking south to 13th Street. Compared to Reverend Sam Buti Street's width of seven meters**,** this undertaking was not as simple. At twenty-three meters (remnants of Jos de Villiers 70 and 75 Cape feet), Louis Botha Avenue's reserve is much broader, with higher vehicle speeds (and numbers).

5.4 Positioning

5.4.1 City

Positioning at the microscale builds a base map that directs the production stages and provides an observation checklist. It configures a ground inventory for other teams to overlay with additional information. The 2D team continuously updates the two maps as evolving observation layers (**Fig. 5.1**). Once data is incorporated, teams check the map for accuracy

and consistency and use the updated version until another revised one replaces it. Teams support each other, basing the street assessment on the following criteria: human scale, green spaces; permeability; flexibility; vibrancy; threshold, safety, robustness, legibility, activities, density, and gender responsiveness. Informed by a deep dive into urban design literature, the criteria selected interweave physical and social aspects. As an extension of traditional mapping cultures, the physical attributes proved less of a challenge during casework. For example, lines drawn by teams show detail such as all materiality: solid, glass, fence, or other mediums. Capturing entrances, window openings, and different apertures, such as holes in walls, gave a 'more accurate' legend than when the plans and frontages were drawn using current two-dimensional conventions (Ackerman, 2002) in the early fieldwork. The extended code includes the following:

- Streetlight (Rea Vaya upgrade) with pedestrian module
- Wall with palisade fence above
- Sliding gate (steel palisade style)
- Solid edge (no access or visual contact)
- Solid edge (access as shown)
- Glazed façade with access (as denoted by door symbols)
- Glazed façade (no entry)
- Palisade fence with solid piers
- Trees + shrubbery; meter boxes, Telkom & other services
- Street-facing retail with roller shutters behind glazing

Recording the social dimension was more challenging. During map update discussions, it soon became apparent that Reverend Sam Buti Street and Louis Botha Avenue are constantly in flux and need different tools to capture their emerging dynamism. Revisiting conversations on the street helped identify points that solidified the plan and anchored the storytelling. In Alexandra, the solitary tree on the northern edge of Reverend Sam Buti between 9th and 10th Avenues (**Fig. 6.5**: *Bra Niky looking at the tree*) formed a focal point. This tree grounds the characters, people, and spaces associated with the street and positions Alexandra as a township in relation to Orange Grove, Johannesburg, South Africa, and the greater African continent. In Orange Grove, the anchor point is a slight shift in the road direction where Louis Botha changes from a north-south to a northeast-southwest axis. To accommodate this change in direction at 8th street, the sidewalk along Louis Botha' bays out'. At this point, the sidewalk's extra width affords additional space for appropriation opportunities. It also supports the argument of a disjuncture between spatial practice's idea of the city versus user experience. Its claim stresses that city planners/designers not only

design spaces with unforeseen spatial use potential but have pre-determined understandings of what activities *should* be occurring in spaces that do not relate to *what is* happening. *Urban Scripting's* exploration is grounded in this emergent, unplanned dynamism and can absorb its ever-pivoting intelligence and learn from it.

Fieldwork Notes (2017+) as casework prepared the foundation for drawing distances and live-action shots to zoom in and provided an opportunity to test the *Urban Scripting* theoretical component and framework across all scales in *Retelling Egoli*. Positioning gives the chance to write, collaborate with internal expertise, and, as Mbembe and Nuttall (2008:30) argue, bring the city into being by making the street talk. Effectively, writing tells a story using a semantic structure and a language of frames. *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) examine the study blocks to prepare story material and synthesize production-generated material to establish specific micro-study points. Deeper probing at these points using the methods described established the micro-study points. Here camera zoom levels and drawing distance perspective combinations identify the micro consequences of macro causes; they connect the global/continent overview to the human/close-up perspective. Compositions from the aerial overview, linear site drive, and ground-point investigation toolkit illustrate the consequences. Aerial photography uses a drone, a linear site drive (as used in *Learning From Las Vegas*, Yale Studio, 1968), a stationary mounted camera, and a handheld one to give a composite vision of activities for the ground-point investigation.

Placing the viewer in the frame offers an intimate look at the city and a sense of its feel. Drawing and photographic frames focus on lighting, texture, shadows, and shading. Composition angles and viewpoints, at times, show the geometry of space and, at other times, activity. Purposeful mise en scène framing provides relatable perspectives by placing a camera at eye level to simulate a pedestrian point of view (POV). Mise en scène investigates the street's anatomy by including everything within the frame to realize impressions and form a spatial inventory (Koeck, 2013). Analyzing the recorded material in finer detail identifies points to situate sidewalk stories.

5.4.2 Metro

Locating points constitutes a non-linear iterative process that connects the macrolevel to what, *where,* and *when* at the microlevel with the street's axial *line* subdivided into three segments: macroscale 'street blocks,' mesoscale 'focus blocks,' and microscale 'detail blocks.' These subdivisions establish data collection sites and potential story locations. Reverend Sam Buti's *line* comprises two consecutive end plots that make up the block's width or short side (**Fig. 5.1** and **Fig. 5.16**). Blocks are 304,2 meters long and 91 meters

wide, and the sidewalk includes distances from mid-avenue to mid-avenue of approximately 95m. Before 1985 the blocks were laid out on the 'Old Alexandra' system; twenty-two plots measuring 25,5m x 46,5m and making up 185,75 sqm plots. The avenues align with the short side of the plots, and the streets align with the long sides (see *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022:22)). The street point of view of Reverend Sam Buti begins at 1st Avenue and ends at the 12th Avenue T-junction. The T-junction denotes a node, an orientation location, a beginning-endpoint for walks, and one limit of the study's line bounded by plots on either side.

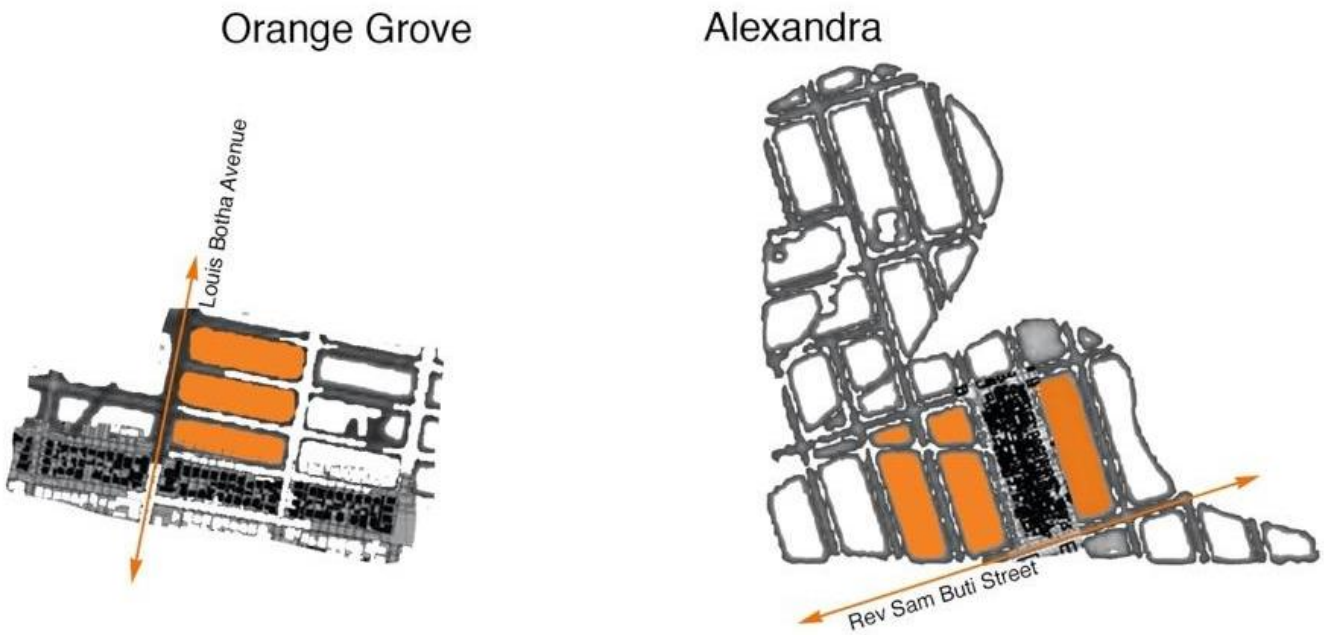


Figure 5.15 Study Blocks Orientation

Similarly, Louis Botha's *line* comprises an average block measuring 62,96m wide along a north-south central axis and 188,89m along the east-west secondary axis (**Fig. 5.1** and **Fig. 5.15**). Because the area is commercially zoned, the plots along the avenue here are 31,48m in depth and have a street width frontage of 15,74m. The other properties edging Louis Botha differ in size and orientation; however, the average plot size is 495,5 sqm. Louis Botha's orienting point is the T-junction of Louis Road and Louis Botha Avenue.

Underpinned by historical growth, the macrolevel constitutes a selected number of 'street blocks' that are wholly representative of the study areas. The mesolevel investigation uncovers the illustrative story-work samples used for positioning. It assembles selected characteristic 'focus blocks' where preliminary social observations provide a broader context to the 'detail blocks.' For example, Alexandra's focus blocks (**Fig. 5.16**) incorporate two key

protagonists, the tree on the sidewalk and Bra Niky's Tavern. Both are located between 9th and 10th Avenue and, therefore, outside the actual 'focus blocks.' These 'focus blocks' constitute the 210 meters of street space between 10th and 12th Avenues. In Orange Grove, the Louis Botha Avenue' focus blocks' measure 210 meters between 8th and 10th Streets (**Fig 5.17**). At the micro-level, the street investigation establishes deeper focus points on the 'detail blocks' for particularized social study. These points, designating specific trading areas, constitute the twilight zone and serve as a location for sidewalk stories. As 'spaces of insurgent citizenship' (Holston, 1998), 'spaces of difference' (Sandercock, 1998), or 'gray spaces' (Yiftchatel, 2011), they characterize levels of socio-economic activity with complex and invisible organizing terms of who trades what, where, when, and how? Stories tell of specific socio-economic practices, trading methods, marketing and service schemes, and daily exchanges between providers and consumers (du Gay, 1997).

As such, they portray insurgent practices such as those revealed at Fish's *Chicken Dust*, *Bhani's Cycles*, Fungai's Hair Salon, Pastor Theo's Church, Joyce and Vivian's Sidewalk Enterprise, *Paddy's Power Tools*, Rachel's *Fresh Meaty Bones and Chicken*, Bra Sam's *SGM Gates*, and Bra Niky's Tavern. These sites, as focus points, produce and circulate meaning through customary procedures, daily exchanges, advertising boards, legibility or illegibility of location, and the way wares and services are displayed. Moreover, these economic enclaves[30] create stories told by the people engaging in activist-resistant practices in the 'gray spaces of insurgent citizenship' or twilight zone. Audiences can draw parallels between these spaces and those of gay and lesbian validation and visibility in Greenwich Village, New York: "The mapping of this activism reveals connections between place and collective identity that are at the heart of the [marginalized] experience in the city" (Kenney, 1998:130).

5.4.3 Street

The mapping process uses aerial perspectives and on-the-ground meanderings to construct the site base map. Aerial filming establishes shots, and street roving gives detail to places of interest: specifically, the twilight zone. As a palimpsest surface, the base-map records all visible physical information. It measures things such as a sidewalk, road reserve, and center-island dimensions, distances between streetlights, street furniture, traffic lights, municipal

[30] A term sourced from du Gay's *Production of Culture/ Cultures of Production* (1997) borrowed from John Allen refers to meaning and values held, connected, and gained from the cultural dimensions of economic activities practiced by people

infrastructure (e.g., utility holes, utility boxes, bins, benches), hard, soft, and transparent walls, trees, greenery, canopies, ramps, bus stops, taxi stops, etcetera. In addition, the mapping identifies visible and invisible social aspects, such as sex-worker pick-up points, illegal substance 'scoring' sites, gambling spaces, etcetera. This information constitutes a ground-floor inventory of what is 'inside' and 'outside.' Inside is anything beyond the street frontage plane of the edge's framing walls (shopfronts, built-to-lines, etcetera) that falls outside the broader public realm, where access is restricted. Outside is anything in the public realm between the opposite frontage plane of the built edges, including openings, transparencies, hole-in-the-wall, level changes, textures, material, colors, etcetera. The collected, curated, and collated material establishes the street's anatomy, with the tree as the main protagonist in Sam Buti Street and the sidewalk bay playing the role in Louis Botha Avenue. Building stories sources material from the base map's superimposition of surveys and its classification of dimensions vis-à-vis geometry, social, economic, activity, cultural, and human narratives.

The geometrical assessment is a detailed study of the physical space that extends to the initial bounding plot. Segments are assessed as horizontal and vertical surfaces from edge to edge. Reductively speaking, the horizontal plane is under municipal control and contains city infrastructure. Apart from public schools and other governmental facilities, the vertical surface is a private domain. The social study casework examines visible spaces, whether designed for the purpose or not, where people meet or interact – the information is gathered by on-site observation. The economic research explores the various forms of commercial and enterprise activity, the goods and services offered, and their production, distribution, trade, and consumption. The study of activity concerns the diversity of socio-economic activities and the spaces that enable people to perform multiple actions. The measurement lens determines whether people are officially permitted to engage in the things they do and how the space they occupy affects their activities. Narratives are stories told in conversations during walks. This approach highlights the importance of sidewalk culture and casual and social interaction for personal agency and urban initiatives. Moreover, it underscores how street life contributes to innovation and creativity and is vital for social construction. Furthermore, the approach illustrates that street vibrancy is fundamental for city life.

Active vibrancy and dynamism are essential to redescribe spaces as places. Informed by the map, the Audio-Visual Team zeroes into the dynamic points the Ground and Impression Teams identify to record and edit material. In detail, the A-V Team captures the 'focus blocks' texture. In addition, recording audio on location allows for creating soundscapes such as the sound montage used in the Alex trailer. Soundscapes prioritize dialogue to reinforce visual

meaning and “compositional hegemony by focusing the viewer’s attention on specific details within the frame” (Parkinson, 2019:93).



Figure 5.16 Alexandra Focus Blocks

Based on the information in *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+), in Alexandra, the producer/researcher/scriptor directed the film team to focus on 5) White Feather Chicken Outlet (*Rachel*); 6) SGM Gates (*Bra Sam*); the trees inside 9) Ithute Primary School (*Joyce* and *Vivian*); 11) Paddy Power (*Paddy*); 19) Bra Niky and the Tree (*Bra Niky*) (**Fig 5.16**). The tree on the sidewalk was chosen as the central entry point for the storytelling.

In Orange Grove, the focus was on the intersection between Louis Botha Avenue and 8th Street (**Fig. 5.17**). The *sidewalk bay* is critical to structuring the stories in Orange Grove. For richer access, the mandate calls for the medium used to be an art form with its language and aesthetic. It also requires that the story be told sequentially using picture frames rather than spoken words.



Figure 5.17 Orange Grove Focus Blocks

5.5 Editing Points of View

5.5.1 Two Screenings [Multiple Audiences]

As stated in Chapter 1, public screenings promoted reflection and reflexive analysis of the core study concepts, methodology process, and ontological and epistemological positions. Furthermore, they provided an opportunity to engage diverse voices and writing practices to expand and enhance conventional mapping techniques. Public screenings also serve two other key functions: they reinforce the roles of other urban imaginaries and make knowledge accessible to wider audiences beyond elite power groups. An added benefit of the content created is that it captures new stories that contribute to the *Contextual Voices Folder's* (CVF) African history archive (Maynes et al., 2008). These outputs have a broad-ranging positive impact because "People live stories, and in the telling of these stories, reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones. Stories lived and told educate the self and others, including the young and those such as researchers who are new to their communities" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: xxvi).

Storytelling makes its way into this argument founded on an ontological hypothesis of being in the world, emphasizing human existence as an activity more than a state or condition (Cajete, 1994; Koch, 1998). Storytelling constructs individual and community beliefs in relation to cosmology, culture, and language. It provides a rich resource for urban design professionals and anyone who works (or lives) within a community. Furthermore, epistemologically, storytelling is a source of personal and collective knowledge (Maynes et al., 2008; Chilisa, 2012). Therefore, part of *Urban Scripting's* methodology is to showcase produced and in-production field material to an audience. This showcasing serves two purposes: to review the evidence-gathering process with Placecheck methods[31] to mitigate gaps, enhance communication, and practice the study's mandate of reaching broader audiences. Hence, storytelling has an inherent visual ontology expressed in calibrated frames and mise en scène. Rooted in a local outlook, point of view, and ground-based perspective, the audience is invited to collaborate in reflecting on reconstructions of experience through various frames (**Fig. 5.18**).

[31] A Placecheck method concerns a stakeholder collaboration geared to achieving required results regarding identified urban improvements and assessing the qualities of a place. Placecheck can cover a whole city at a macro-scale, part of a district or town center at a meso-scale, and a neighborhood, an entire or component of a street at a micro-scale (Cowan, 2002). During this phase, site scouting considers the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) concerning the performance of place and space through surveys, interviews, site photographs, etcetera.

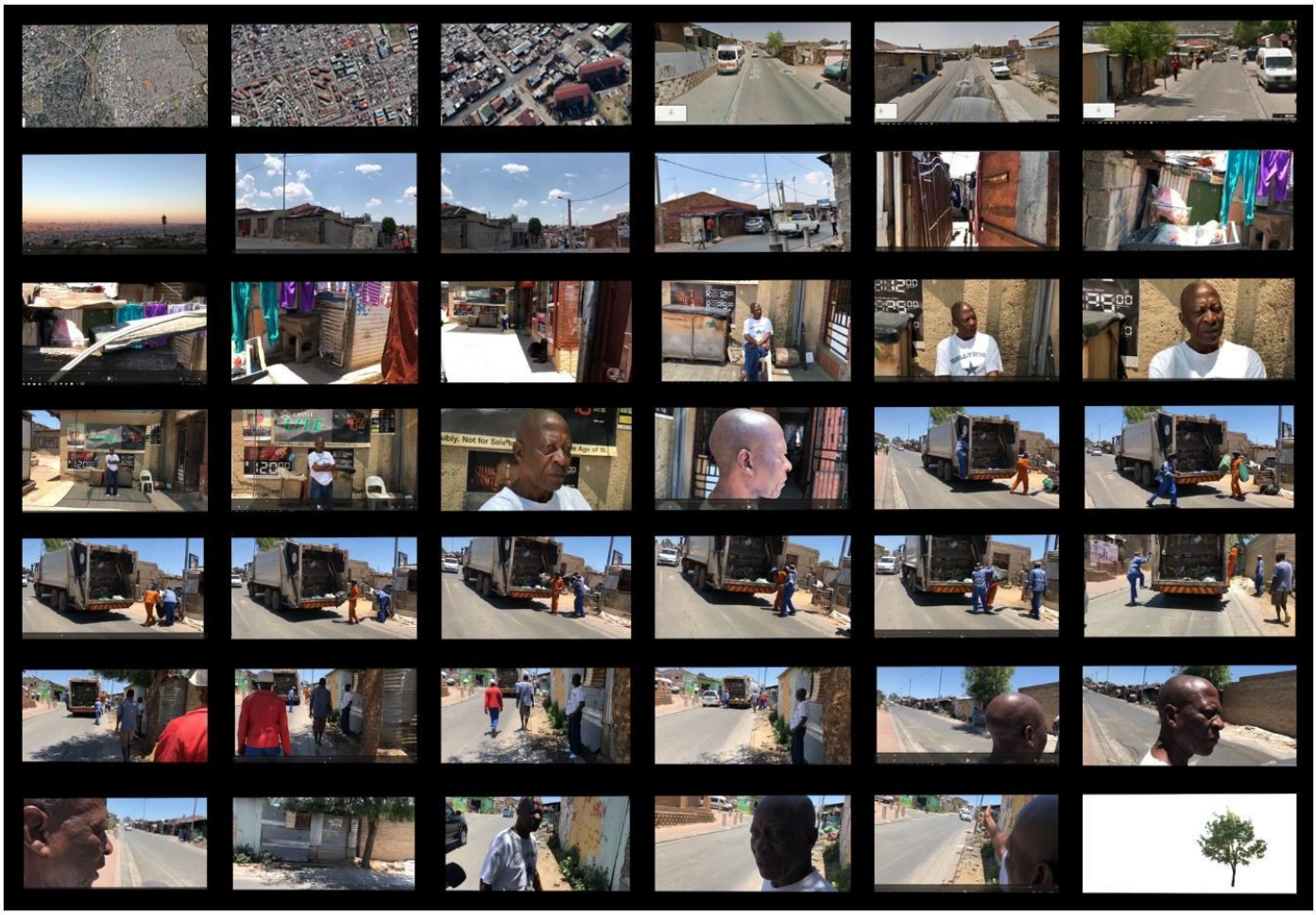


Figure 5.18 Framing Details

Story presentation reflects and analyzes the ongoing fieldwork process and builds on these experiences to confirm or reject their validity and transform them into new ones (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Charleson, 2019). Voices at the screenings fulfill anti-colonial and feminist claims by diversifying societal representation. They also reflect the three knowledge spheres, academy, practice, and lived experience. These diverse knowledge pools present an opportunity to get to the bottom of the research question based on Anne-Marie Willis's (2006) ontological argument that we design the world, and it designs us. Each voice offers access to a broader, finer, and contextualized range to recalibrate the frame appropriate to the various texts.

Most significantly, it increases the range of voices and validates hidden, discarded, and marginalized stories. These stories have much to offer the practice as a research tool because "the power of analyses results from bringing new voices and previously untold stories into conversations on topics about which these voices provide valuable witness,

critique, and alternative narratives" (Maynes et al. 2008:7). As a result, the Alex screening participants were mainly those from 'inside' the community, their families, friends, and extended acquaintances. However, there were various 'onlookers' too; some encountered during fieldwork, and others who happened to be walking by the outdoor screening area and were curious about what was happening outside Bra Niky's Tavern. In Newtown, there were voices from the City of Johannesburg (CoJ): City Transformation and Spatial Planning, City Parks, Wits University School of Art, Architecture and Planning, Film and Television, Architects, Planners, and Urban Design professions, as well as some from artistic fields, social activists, radio broadcasters and DJs. The core research question and themes introduced in Chapter 1 call for the centering of local experience, worldviews, and knowledge sources concerning space usage in Johannesburg to be communicated in a new language. The language contends with the mundane, resident expression and politics of identity and access. Its themes use frames to address everyday issues related to life, education, safety, and, most importantly, work.

Hence, in considering the everyday, screenings promote an analysis of mise en scène through collaboration. And audience participation is an opportunity to collectively reflect on an image of the city and imagine a different, more desirable one. This links to Chapter 1's premise that creating shared practice fosters an understanding that assists in developing a better description of the city. This account facilitates the production of a locality and unlocks the city's true potential. Effectively, this potential new image reflects local traditions and culture and affirms the theory that streets of this nature are cultural artifacts essential to the city fabric. Multi-audience screenings in this research project showcased *the making of*… aspects of the study instead of the exegesis component. Screenings are of complete audio-visual texts or fragments that connect the plot (backstory), setting (context of time, geographic location, activities), style (onto epistemologies), and themes (social practices). Screenings embedded in the telling process permit a reflexive, reflective review of the audio-visual story-work and approach developed as *Urban Scripting*.

5.5.2 Alexandra

The Alexandra case study screening took place early on 12 June 2019, a cold Wednesday evening in Bra Niky's yard (**Fig. 5.19**). It was a community event woven into the neighborhood fabric, and the producer, aided by internal expertise, had shared it by word of mouth, either face-to-face or by cellphone. Unfortunately, there was a lengthy power outage on the day of the event, and it was in doubt until the last minute. Nevertheless, the community cleaned the yard until it was spotless, neatly arranged plastic chairs, set up a

projector, and hung up a white bed sheet to serve as the screen. The local attendees were primarily local teenagers and young adults, family members, friends, and neighbors. Some young girls and boys were already dressed in nightgowns, and others were still in school uniforms. Babies were in their mother's arms or standing beside their parents, ready to go to bed after 'the movie.' Outside experts either attended alone, with friends, or with family members. People came and went during the event, with, at any moment, around 30 to 40 attending. The author introduced the event in ngeSiswati with the greeting, "*sanibonani*," which translates as "we see you," but has a deeper meaning in thanking those who are present and those absent and the unseen. Although the power went off at the beginning of the event, the interruption was brief. A backup generator was started, power was rerouted, and the screening resumed.

Just a little after 18:11, a mise en scène was screened as an introduction to *there's a tree on the sidewalk* (2018). Created from still photographs configured during site visits, it rewinds through time but places the Alex audience in a familiar setting. The 9-minute mise en scène was followed immediately by the 13-minute film. From the reactions observed, it was noticeable how the soundscape (montage, sculpting, and mixing) intensified the visual experience by stimulating tempo, rhythms, responses, arousing concepts, and provoking emotional sensations. In addition, the realistic street-life location and style triggered memories. Projections initiated hushed whispering in the audience and finger-pointing at the screen (bedsheet) to identify specific things to fellow viewers. Throughout, the audience paid rapt attention. The interest in seeing their everyday life on a big screen was intense, with people watching a carefully composed portrait of their streets, businesses, and characters.

The screening presented a respectful insight into participant roles as sidewalk entrepreneurs and in the yards of Alexandra. During the screening, not for one second was there a sense of insecurity among the visitors, who were far outside the comfort of their own suburban existences. Afterward, the discussion was less about the choking space Alex residents occupy but about the successful local businesspeople portrayed in the movies who serve as role models for the unemployed youth of the area. Those who watched the screening expressed the wish for a longer documentary along similar lines to be made and, in the future, for further visits with the community. Another request was for a follow-up documentary to track the development and success of the business enterprises featured. The portrayal of local commercial initiatives as successful inspired the youth to discuss alternative income-generating avenues, how to become self-sustainable, and the kinds of economic structures needed to alleviate unemployment and help the community. The need to seek and somehow self-finance alternative income-generating mechanisms respond to the lack of government

support for micro-entrepreneurship initiatives and the non-delivery of education and other essential services. Case study participants expressed a sense of honor to have been part of the project and wished to extend the collaboration.

Several young people approached the film's creators to say how their attitude to street work was changed by viewing it. The presentation of the street workers in an aesthetically dignified manner dispelled the stigma that street trading is inferior to other employment opportunities. Overall, the reception to the film could not have been warmer or more rewarding on a chilly Alexandra evening.



Figure 5.19 Alexandra Screening

On reflection, the Alex screening confirmed the power of visual and auditory modalities, and the response was vastly different from previous community engagements. The producer was a member of the urban design team appointed by the JDA in 2016 and tasked with teasing out issues to inform a purported design framework for Alexandra. A planned community participation meeting that year never materialized because community members consistently and incorrectly insisted that the team was there to present a blueprint masterplan without having done the necessary contextual fieldwork. Community members accused the design team of misbehaving and asserted that the group was ignorant of local issues. They pointed out that the designers comprised 'outside' individuals who did not speak the local language. The community insisted on an inside-outside collaboration to gain insight into local knowledge stores. Given the age of community members, the mistrust was palpable and understandable because apartheid regulation had been, and still was, due to imposed

structural realities, a lived experience. At the end of the engagement, the community stated that the (predominately white) design team had failed to translate their professional thoughts into something understandable, meaningful, or valuable to the community.

A painful parting word was when members noted that a previous workshop on Thursday, 7 April 2016, needed to be revised and had failed to respect the correct community informing process. Community elders felt insulted by the planning and design team because of this (unknowing) oversight. Further investigation found that community meetings must always begin with an opening ritual to acknowledge the space, the people present, and the ancestors, who silently guide and oversee the process. These are nuances that the design team missed, primarily because the local norms are subtly nuanced, and the information remains esoteric. Shared experiences happen through common access to language. The lesson here is the centrality of language in creating shared meaning, values, imaginaries, and culture (Hall, 1997).

5.5.3 Newtown

Staged as a workshop, the Newtown event aimed to complete the collaborative analytical loop and assess the effectiveness of the project's methodology at a practice level. Whereas the Alex screening and fieldwork engagement was a 'bottom-up' engagement, Newtown was where the 'top-down' expertise was engaged to critique, adjust, and help calibrate the spatial knowledge taken from the community. The first part of the workshop, which was a full day, consisted of a presentation of the fieldwork and its learnings and was followed by other facilitated discussions broken up into two sessions and two different themes:

- Understanding the urban street and engaging with international experience.
- Professional practice, local context, and the urban imaginary.

The presentation and discussions were more formal and closer to practice norms to benefit the broad pool of experts that attended, which included practice professionals and city officials (**Fig 5.20**).

Below is an outline of the program:

- Short introduction, context, and screenings of *there's a tree on a sidewalk* trailer, *From Tap to Tap,* and linear site drive. Copies of *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) were available for delegates.

- International context and discussion led by Dr. Jessica Hallenbeck (RPP; Producer, Lantern Films; SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow, School of Interactive Arts and Technology, SFU; Hot Docs and DOC Board Member).
- Short film screening session of Driving through Rev Sam Buti, Sidewalk Braai, and Wednesday Rev Sam Buti.
- Continued discussion.
- Short introduction, context, and screening of *there's a tree on a sidewalk.*
- Local context and discussion led by Professor Paul Jenkins (Emeritus Professor of Architecture Research, Edinburgh School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture, Edinburgh College of Art, The University of Edinburgh).



Figure 5.20 Newtown Day Screening

The second part of the workshop was an opportunity to further engage with practice professionals about *Urban Scripting* and reflect on it. The evening event allowed for less formal and individual interactions (**Fig. 5.21**). The program was as follows:

- Back story presentation by the scriptor/producer/researcher.
- Screening of *the Graphic Novel* animation.

- Screening of the animation *the block, the plot, the house, the tree*
- Presentation of the soundscape – firstly as audio-only and then as an overlay to *Wednesday in Alex.*
- Screening of *there's a tree on the sidewalk*.
- Screening of *Who's the Landlord?*
- In-depth discussions.



Figure 5.21 Newtown Night Screening

5.5.4 Rewinding to Fast-forward

Chapter 6 summarizes the feedback received from workshop attendees and highlights the three conceptual provocations occupying the same relative spaces as calibrating actions that shaped the chapters to this point. By and large, there was consensus that *Urban Scripting* had successfully created a modern framework for urban site analysis. In its totality, Chapter 5 characterizes *Urban Scripting*'s core.

Chapter 5 discusses the **practical** side of empirically based work site analysis. The discussion centres on using audio-visual techniques to provide a voice to the residents and users of urban streets in Johannesburg and by expansion in South Africa and wider Sub-Saharan Africa. It not only revisits history from the perspective of the palimpsest but also takes urban design lessons from it and condenses the tripartite conceptual and practical framework explored by the preceding chapters. One is framing which pushed for transdisciplinary knowledge that looks at past events and why, asking what city-making tools suit the purpose. Two is shifting, which underscored a need for more critically empirically based research in cities of the South, which inductively led to new ways of thinking, examining, and communicating. It looks at what happens in the present and why, and probes what constitutes conceiving and creating a city. And three is positioning, which emphasizes that knowledge exchange is a valid activity as important as teaching in an academic environment, looks at what could happen if frames change in the (near) future, and explores what a just city is. To bring into being "places of the possible" (Lefebvre, 1996:156) engaged narrative montage to imagine and make legible "the ultimately unrepresentable space, life and languages of the city" (Sandercock, 2003b:182-183).

In so doing, artistic storytelling was applied to shape Johannesburg's "ethical landscape" and offer other ways of being (Laing, 2020:8) by bringing its protagonists together to learn about each other. In addition, audio-visual storytelling recognized that the long-overlooked twilight zone's bricolage provided unimagined insight and presented opportunities for new spatial redescriptions. As an ethical practice to achieve belonging and avoid absolute extremism, the *Urban Scripting* case study created an anthology of the best-on-ground evidence expressed as *Retelling Egoli* to turn space into place. Its empirical knowledge informs city-making methodologies to shape appropriate policies that support subaltern communities and mitigate escalating inequality, unemployment, and poverty levels. In these instances, recognizing microenterprises can trigger the state to "focus its limited capacities on priority issues with which it can effectively act" (Jenkins, 2013:231). There is much to be gained in improving city performance by enabling those who can create their own sustainability – it not only eases the burden directly carried by the state but contributes to social conscience and wellbeing through its services.

Subsequently, using *Urban Scripting*'s concepts, framing, shifting, and positioning the previously unseen (**Fig 5.22**) achieves a more critical and fitting translation of history. Hence, Chapter 5 argues that composing an image is the best way to understand the often overlooked. So the objective here is not only to apply the local knowledges and imagined futures in the specific case study contexts of Reverend Sam Buti Street and Louis Botha.

Instead, it is to reinforce the role of other **imaginaries**. That means creating space for other knowledge to be celebrated and manifest more power vis-à-vis the top-down political, economic, and professional knowledges in more comprehensive ways beyond any case study or research.

To sum up, this storytelling methodology can be taken forward through critical pedagogy and by establishing more institutional space for and acceptance of local knowledges. Also, at various scales, this form of site analysis can be applied in other disciplines that, in whatever form, imagine and make the city. Most importantly, this calibrating approach stimulates new ways of imagining and becoming in urban places and city streets.



Figure 5.22 Previously Unseen

6 Re-Presenting: Nguni Voices to Make Streets Active for All

> "A city must be so constructed that it makes its citizens at once secure and happy" (Sitte, 2013:1).

6.1 [Re] Situating Views

In attempting to answer the question: "What kinds of knowledge do planners need in a post-modern age . . ." (Sandercock, 1999:533), this project conceptualized a practice-led art-based field engagement process that focused on bringing omitted people, places, and activities to the foreground. Its core aim is to contribute to site assessment protocol and, by doing this, improve future urban planning/design. Additionally, to enrich the African archive by exploring audio-visual storytelling as a methodology that unearths, foregrounds, and centers African voices. Calibrating's conceptual framework, theoretical base, and practical implementation shape innovative narrative constructions, positioned here as *Retelling Egoli*, inform urban development through casework focused on two activity streets. For this, the urban designer, positioned as an audio, visual, and spatial producer, [re]calibrates the story of Johannesburg by inductively examining *Other* perceptions as valid forms of knowledge.

The preceding chapters highlighted the urban designer's role as a social narrative producer who applies a solid moral and ethical compass to refocus on people and their spaces, specifically those failed by Eurocentric, colonial, and apartheid spatial processes. By documenting the daily experiences of overlooked people using audio-visual techniques, hitherto hidden or forgotten perceptions, commentaries, and insights were revealed in *Retelling Egoli*. In doing this, *Retelling Egoli* combines Nguni storytelling with conventional site mapping techniques to respond to criticism of the historical and contemporary biases that created actual local spaces and streets in Johannesburg. The principal motivation for narrating Johannesburg's lived experiences is to help define urban planning/design's role and develop appropriate city forms that facilitate a range of urban economies/activities. Exploring subaltern activities with critical storytelling accesses the voices needed to reveal other urban conditions and rationalities. This is presented as a foundation for urban planning/design in Johannesburg, South Africa – and by extension, the sub-Saharan region – embracing Nguni oral knowledge stores to reveal how audio-visual storytelling can engage *Othered*, discarded, or discounted knowledge expertise.

Consequently, storymaking in urban planning/design practice highlighted a need for the involvement of art and aesthetics to celebrate the value in unnoticed people and emphasize the need to capture inclusive imaginaries and life tapestries. This approach also realizes

Sitte's (2013:1) call that city building must be both technical and aesthetic. Therefore, the *Urban Scripting* process entailed testing appropriate themes and technical and aesthetic techniques as communication methods. This testing led to a storytelling approach that used mise en scène frame compositions to structure an engagement process. In these frames, *bantfu netindzawo* addressed conflicts between everyday citizen/actor needs and the idealized imagining of a functional, regulated, and ordered city created by professional spatial practice agents (**Fig. 6.1**).

6.2 [Re] Developing: Framing a Study Paradigm

6.2.1 Whose Frame: Revisiting the Problem Statement

The problem statement asserts that, in the post-modern age, city-making processes and procedures that rely on conventional urban practice methods of site assessment and participatory data gathering are ineffective and of little use in imagining and designing a fair and democratic city in environments like Alexandra, of which there are hundreds in South Africa and many similar across the African continent. The dissonance lies in a complex entanglement of history, language, culture, worldviews, forms of knowledge, and ways of being. For the urban designer to disentangle these complexities and address the identified gaps, an activity street in Alexandra and another in Orange Grove served as a base for casework to explore and narrate the disjuncture between an idealized image and the experience it delivers for the subaltern.

Here, as Sandercock (2003) advocates, storytelling affords a platform to locate and present a more dynamic, multidimensional, and suitable image. Moreover, she argues that storytelling can amplify "democratic discourse, and shifting participants in such discourses out of their entrenched positions and into more receptive or open frames of mind" (Sandercock, 2003: 26). Likewise, at a different scale, Lefebvre (1996) argues that visible and invisible social practices are needed and interlaced when constructing the city, to produce complex and, sometimes, conflicting programs, senses, ideals, and consequences. Additionally, Bruyns and Read (2006:57) claim that people filter underlying and historical layers, "vectors and forces" that build the particularity of language, logic, place, individuality, and values when naming the socially constructed world. Mise en scène functions as a window to witness the built domain (see **Table_1:** *Retelling* Formats).

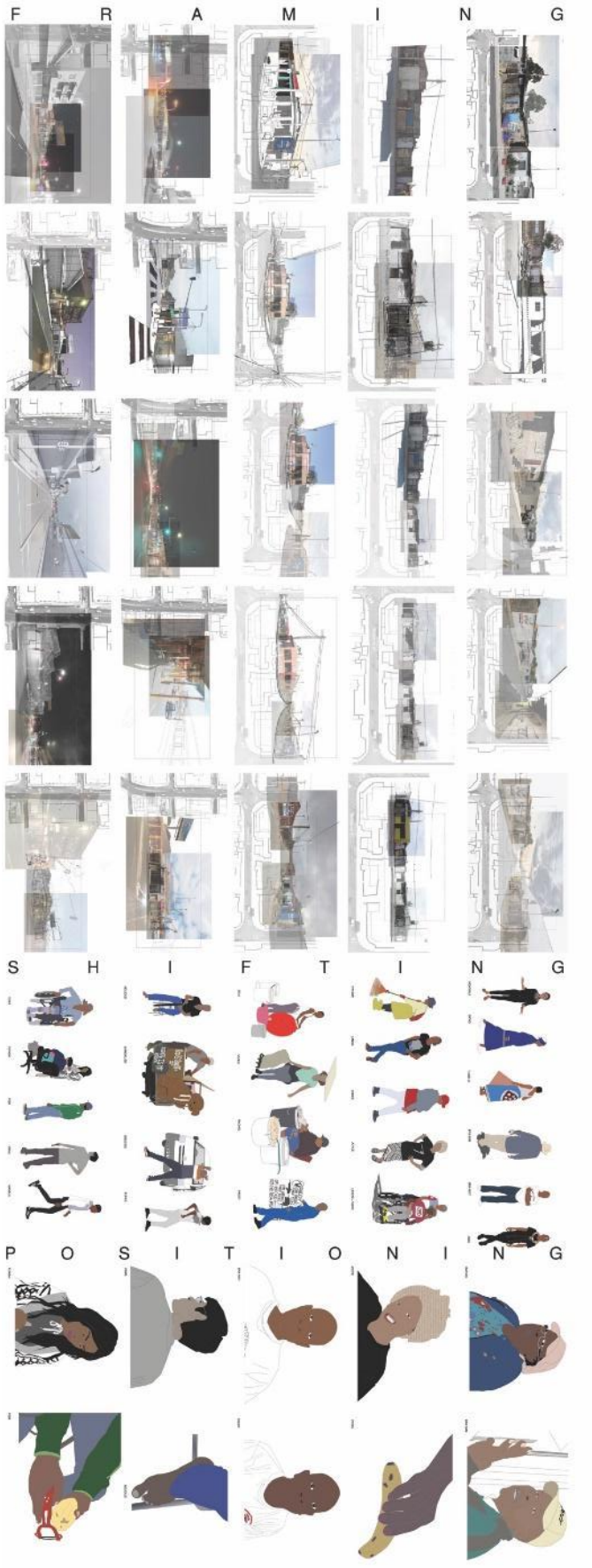


Figure 6.1 Bantfu Netindzawo

Urban Scripting's storytelling extends these theories to engage *people and places* as a reflexive stratagem to assess appropriated street spaces (**Fig. 6.1**). Its mise en scène assembles the fundamental and chronological layers as data sets to read, listen, and write about lives on the boundary. Recorded observations discovered during transect walks and talking to people compose *Retelling Egoli's* empirical findings as evidence-based groundwork. These observations form sequences that stimulate further discussions by inviting the audience to traverse real and imaginary spaces and get a more intimate feel of people's everyday street experiences. These arrangements, composed in frames and panels, offer movement, spatial and temporal immediacy, and effectively express the study's essence, establishing how a project's elements work together (on-site and off-site) in social, economic, and cultural analysis to produce a body of texts that create shared meaning.

Moreover, tracing spatial occupancy utilizing this framework contributes to the African archive presented as essential narrative constructions for a local area's continued study. The project introduced the process of calibrating a framework to harness individual and collective imaginations. Its methodology operates as an immersive, experiential sensory strategy suitable for multidimensional engagement to incorporate critical realities as key actions of/for re-making city processes by:

- *Framing* practical experience through transdisciplinary measures.
- *Shifting* the frame to the *Other* through more critically empirically based research, which leads inductively to new ways of thinking and analyzing.
- *Positioning* the focus on what we do not see and know through knowledge exchange as a valid activity and equally important as academic institutional instruction.

Essentially, street narratives reveal varied perceptions of reality, differing relationships between actual and imagined, and a gap that spatial practice needs to address in planning the future. Deploying the urban designer as a scriptor/producer adds a new and critical dimension to the more extensive city-making discussion that goes beyond the 'post-colonial' and into a new imaginary. As such, storytelling modes build sets of knowledge informed by social dimensions telling a continuous physical making of shared public space. In addition, the findings suggest ways of updating future Johannesburg studies for all specializations.

6.2.2 [Re] Assessing the Core Question

Constructing the urban encompasses sequential stages. To assist in closing the identified knowledge gap, *Retelling Egoli* focused on the initial site appraisal stage as an entry point. Addressing differential temporal and spatial awareness entailed an understanding that

Johannesburg's streets, as a necessary cultural and socio-economic arena, require political recognition by elitist power. Against this background, as stated above, the objective asks *how local understandings and knowledge about activity streets can be captured and communicated to enhance social, economic, and cultural inclusion in Johannesburg's urban planning and design processes.* An initial move to engage the research question established an ensemble of relations, history, orality, and memory, as different forms of archives, incorporating both the metaphorical housing structure and the documentary texts unfolding and validating life (Mbembe, 2002). Sandercock's theories on expanding spatial language guided the art-based, practice-led research project.

Across multiple scales, calibrating aimed to broaden the discipline's eloquence to speak and know, with the power to reach audiences outside the – at times – closed circle of professional practice. Utilizing *Retelling Egoli* as a vehicle to transmit and reflect on local issues enabled a range of voices to participate in urban discourses adding to the *Contextual Voices Folder's* (CVF) collection. As discussed in Chapter 3, the CVF is an information bank constructed from different onto-epistemologies that present plural ways of being and permit contributions from the various publics related to 'problems' faced mainly by the subaltern in African cities. Consequently, this identifies who tells the city's story and for whom it is told and configures different ways of revisiting, reforming, and responding to the question(s).

- Unfolding the Sub-Questions

The research questions in Chapter 1 define the research project and are the basis for the calibrating framework that they lead to. They provide intersecting linear and non-linear, nonsequential yet consequential narrative markers formulated as themes, phases, formats, modes, organizational aspects, expression elements, historical scales, actions, and concepts. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4, the theoretical elements of the framework were established. Fieldwork puts these to the test in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, then reviews the efficacy of the methodology and the casework outcomes. The chapters found an approach to exploring city life based on situating (1), framing (2), shifting (3), positioning (4), calibrating (5), and communicating (6). In addition, each chapter laid out methods for interpreting and making sense, at different scales, of the phenomena's identity, complexity, and character through storytelling concepts (reading, listening, and writing) and actions (defining, observing, testing, recording, communicating, and disseminating). In so doing, the storytelling process generated appropriate layers of study.

To respond to anti-racist structures, the (post)structuralist ideas and narrative theories outlined presented story and discourse texts as semiotic devices and operational frameworks

(**Fig. 6.1**). They retold, from the margins, Johannesburg's historical development. For example, Bra Niky's narration, as a method of interpretation and analysis, provided an awareness of Egoli's lived situation. Cognitively, he gave the sub-questions thematic scope, sustained by a spatial-temporal axis, which focused on the relationship between organizing aspects and expression elements. Themes of hybrid identity, attachment, ownership, belonging, ancestry, *Ubuntu,* and language configured the past, present, and future to shape a series of audio-visual productions exploring the project's core concepts. First, *framing* gazed into yesterday utilizing *I'm a Streetwalker* (2017) to situate Johannesburg's issues, and *the block, the plot, the house, the tree* (2019), and *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022) provided a reading of macroscale matters. Next, *shifting* in *Fieldwork Notes* (2017+) reflected the mesoscale and listened to causal effects to change today's context. Finally, *positioning* in *Calibrating Stories* (2022+) zoomed into the microscale to write tomorrow's possibilities.

- Framing

As an initial modality, *framing* situated the research process's themes and developed the intent and subject. Next, time at a macro-scale looked at yesterday to organize its narrative aspects using words placed over images. Finally, Observing read and defined phenomena. These designs addressed the first sub-question and formed the basis for a critical engagement strategy in and beyond site appraisal:

- What is the role of the activity street in South Africa, and how has it transitioned from the colonial era, through apartheid, to the present day? Its position, meaning, and representation: Why and what happens on today's activity streets?

To respond, the design of the urban calls for a critical need to understand people and spaces. Understanding those historically excluded from Johannesburg's spatial and social planning required refocusing on questions of meaning and value and defining ways to close historical gaps that continue to hamper contemporary urban social and physical operations. According to Lefebvre (1996), when making the urban, notions of *what the city is* cannot separate the social from the material. However, linking social aspects to urban morphology when making Johannesburg poses a challenge for planners/designers. As such, apartheid legacies have created landscapes afflicted by inequality and widespread socio-economic marginalization, thus compounding a conflict between actor reality and agent desire that is rife in South Africa. Other scholarly works that share similar global examples guided ways to understand Johannesburg's role in the South African and international contexts and explored the next sub-question:

- What processes, practices, and knowledge should contribute to the evolution of the activity street as an urban place in South Africa? Unpacking the current planning process is primed as *framing*.

The first mode responds by involving historically excluded views. These perspectives inform an inclusive mandate to structure a process that suggests measures to update spatial regulation and influence the governing discourses and conceptual and practical *making*. Most significantly, its intent draws attention to how dominant Euro-American forms of modernity fail to reflect the Nguni urban image appropriately. Situating responds to this failure and offers a transdisciplinary analytical descriptive storytelling mixture to untangle complexity. The model provides a broad historical overview that defines the preliminary steps required for *shifting*. Its process emphasizes areas where agents can gain meaningful local knowledge. Framing highlights how divergent realities and desires aggravate the lives of already tenuous marginalized dwellers instead of making suitable urban sites for their needs.

- Shifting

As *framing's* subsequent step, the *shifting* themes design and recognize the physical and metaphorical setting, thereby conceptualizing practical engagement methods. For this context, viewed at a mesoscale, organized narrative aspects combine words and drawings to shift perspectives and look at how yesterday's causes influence today. Finally, testing and recording critical voices with the wealthiest knowledge structures led to an active listening process required to address the third sub-question:

- What mistakes have arisen from omitting *Othered* knowledge values in the design and representation of streets? What needs to be understood by official bodies and institutions, and what lessons set the *shifting* process in motion?

Utilizing the same recording tools as *framing* but at a much more targeted and granular level, *shifting* verifies ways to obtain, over time, valuable knowledge embedded in occupancy. In addition, on-site procedures deploy *buntfu* principles, empathy, and ethics to learn from those 'who do not exist' nor have a voice. It is, therefore, a much more specific and detailed listening process that initiates, in turn, the *positioning* process.

- Positioning

In the final mode, *positioning* edits and presents narrative outcomes. Its content addresses causality by communicating and advancing microscale activities directly involving the body

and its relation to space. In writing a future relationship between *bantfu netindzawo,* the process extends still and motion pictures and disseminates narrative content to address the final sub-question.

- How can *Othered* forms of knowledge be integrated into a shared language amongst diverse stakeholders through audio-visual documentation to better understand their value systems, desires, and needs? (How to close the knowledge gap).

Positioning focuses on writing and communicating the knowledge gained from extensive casework. Again, the presentation tools are the same, but the outputs complete the tripartite model and have the highest level of detail relevant to urban planners/designers. In addition, the process concludes the final editing stage to redefine potential planning requirements for site appraisal. Essentially, the research questions structure an engagement methodology. Finally, producing is a writing process that begins with the urban designer situating an idea and seeing it to the actual outcome. Ideally, this develops a new way of considering and presenting the street and, through this, creates a new city.

Two assertions ground storytelling as a lay language. Havik and Sioli's argument (see Chapter 1) that "addressing stories and telling, . . . explore[s]" how "stories accommodate the multiple voices of communities, allowing for empathetic views that include the perspectives of users or inhabitants" (2021:161) established the first. The other (see Chapter 3) was Sandercock's argument that stories reveal more about the human situation and translate into a richer understanding of the urban condition than traditional social science. Because of this, "stories deserve more attention" (Sandercock, 2003a:12). These claims are utilized in story production and lead to a more extensive discussion around site assessment procedures. These texts, conceived through multiple layers and frames (**Fig. 6.1**), establish a transformative ideological plane in street-making processes embedded in *whose* and *what* knowledge, values, and power are pertinent to site evaluation. Foremost, the text's baseline negates colonial representation, which Mbembe describes as made for "a particular strategy of persuasion, even violence," by presenting a counter-image that identifies with *lisiko* (a way of life) and tradition (2015:142).

Chapter 1 established the research intent and defined the initial narrative marker. Chapter 2 presented the subject matter and methodology required for observing. Between them, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 established the forms of *reading* necessary for *Urban Scripting*. Chapter 3 outlined the *listening* process and provided the setting to test theoretical and practical aspects. Chapter 4 explained the methods of recording phenomena. Chapter 5 laid

out the field study casework, the narrative that emerged from it, and its communication methods. Chapter 6 reviews the outcomes and disseminating procedures as the final narrative marker. Chapters 5 and 6 conclude the tripartite forms of *writing* for the thesis and casework. Collectively, the chapters are sequential layers and narrative tags signposting the intersection between history, lived experience, and spatial practice. They present a novel communication practice to:

- Conceptualize issues.
- *Identify* and introduce voices.
- *Shift* the frame.
- Calibrate other realities.
- Reposition the focus on what we don't know.
- *Communicate* that not knowing as a planning device coined *the twilight zone*.

From its intent to its conclusion, the engagement process is a methodology for bringing content to a broader audience by disseminating collected material and reassessing how the producer/researcher/scriptor conceptualizes critical steps.

6.2.3 [Re] Structuring the Conceptual Framework

This project concerns histories, movements, and encounters like any street phenomena study. However, a novel approach to site assessment brings identity and language politics into play. The framework deploys the research questions as an artistic strategy to obtain and produce meanings and knowledge from social life stories told by various voices. In addition, narrative inquiry intersects with the main underlying study aspects: the dynamic relationship between time, context, and activity relations. (Post)structuralist theories, specifically Chatman's (1975; 1982) and Genette's (1983: 1997), arrange the *what* and *how* – the subject of investigation and method – to realize the hybrid nature of *the twilight zones*. The *What?* is a story, the signified content, chain of events, actions, happenings, characters, and locations they occupy. The *How?* is the expression of the discourse or the means of content communication. A conceptual framework resulted from the interrogation, from which a methodological research strand evolved to define *how to look* and *what is observed*.

First, *how* engages the team's physical immersion, participation, and panelization to capture the detail of the depicted world in a drawing and picture frame (Eisner, 1985). Panelization instills a reflexive and reflective mode that generates macro, meso, and micro-city insights by immersion and participation. These processes give teams a depth-of-field lens to bring things in and out of focus and analyze and filter the movement images drawn and sequences

recorded. Dynamic *time*, *context*, and *activity* aspects then organize content. Words, still, and moving picture elements (drawn and captured) express its discourse. Both content and discourse examine the ties between the agents' intentions and the actors' recreated space. Calibrating's tripartite concepts split the questions into three streams and discuss current city-making processes. This discussion leads to proposed actions for inside narrators and outside specialists to apply when designing the mise en scène layers and collages. Inside-outside collaboration model composites that combine physical and social attributes to retell the urban.

Based on understanding objects and things, the subsequent sequences initiate a pre-assembly of the conceptual and intellectual methodology to shape the project design's language. Effectively, the image produced operates as a semiotic practice and explains the study's *why* – to expand an understanding of city planning/design across a broader citizenry and its response to current conditions. Moreover, to locate and hold the profession accountable to the more extensive social, economic, cultural, and political praxes executed by various actors, agents, sentinels, artists, and designers. For teams to identify the street's social and physical dynamics, content, and discourse expressions, arrange the following tripartite structure:

- First, ***framing*** serves a broad-spectrum-*looking* role, using timelines to read, re-imagine, and recreate hybrid South African urban spaces, *framing* these to understand by observing street phenomena and engaging causality for in-depth study.
- Second, ***shifting*** specifies situations by *listening* to the local context, recenter Nguni identity, and recording causal effects to challenge existing norms, traditions, and power structures.
- Third, ***positioning*** details multiple local perspectives, *writing* activities that reflect users' needs, and communicates these to others.

Collectively, the applied conceptual and physical frames of the documentary approach used in *Retelling Egoli* showcase fieldwork examples (**Table_1**) and draw attention to the imbalanced nature of the urban planning/design process. This method adjusts dialectics between temporality, immersion, and depth of field. From 1834 to today, a chronological body of evidence takes readers back to Johannesburg's raison d'être - an unrestrained aspiration for substantial capital (Beavon, 2004). Its development, portrayed in *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022), is a nexus to understanding that material wealth desire activities are both cause and effect (Schmid, 2021). Over time, the city's gold production framework (and was

shaped by) apartheid governance structures. The analytical reading of memory, space, and time formed the study's core, thrust, and framework.

To situate this intent, inside and outside scriptors/producers examine the twilight zone by questioning spatial impositions, conventional mappings, and formal/informal dialectics. Walking, observing inhabitation patterns, listening to the rhythms recurring in redesigned spaces, and talking to people structures the methodology to write the socio-economic configurations and microarchitectures. Its key objective is to record places that generate meaning and cultural value for the local community.

6.3 [Re] Designing: Shifting Urban Scripting

6.3.1 From Background to Midground to Foreground

An urban project about an existing street is designed to look at how the street functions over time. Background, midground, and foreground imaging are compositional tools to make or read situations along the street in terms of activities and spatial arrangements or layouts. These compositional distinctions, applied as analytical frames, resemble setting up and creating a photograph or a painting and are used thus:

- *Background* offers a place to observe yesterday's causes and today's urban dynamic's consequences: on the street.
- *Midground* presents today's clashes amongst prospects of *what should be* and *what actual use* is. In other words, when evaluating urban contexts, specialist foundations overwhelm grounded experience and hamper the current planning/design process. Midground presents today's daily clashes between *actual use* and *what should be*. This evaluates how specialist foundations overwhelm grounded experience urban contexts and hamper the current planning/design process.
- *Foreground* stages the study's core aim: a critical understanding of *bantfu netindzawo* and an ethical [re]presentation of their daily lives for tomorrow's imaginaries.

Understanding the street starts with Lefebvre's concept (1996) of the street as *a place of possibility* that, in the local context, has a grounded power of assembly; this is demonstrated in the casework by Fish, Fungai, Rachel, Bra Sam, Vivian, Joyce, and Paddy. It must be stressed that the way they use the street in the study lacks regulatory acknowledgment. The second is accepting Amin and Thrift's (2017) notion that urban intelligence falls outside civic frameworks and projects. For example, how people appropriate spaces not designed for their use in Alexandra and Orange Grove demonstrates *the twilight zone*. This line of thought creates a transformative research project with a solid anti-colonizing and anti-racist strategy

that imagines and can then produce spaces that enhance memory, contribute to empowerment, and define locality at multiple scales.

6.3.2 Sensing the City from the Ground Up

Johannesburg, being a site of difference, with underlying apartheid spatial divisions continuing to construct conflicting realities and enforce knowledge gaps across multiple scales, is valuable as a case study to test how its spatial practice understands people and spaces. As illustrated in **Fig. 1.1** and **Fig. 2.3,** the gap in understanding can appear impossible to mitigate and eliminate using existing practice methods. The knowledge needed to make change possible exists in the conflicting space between bottom-up actors' desires and top-down decision-makers, played out on the street and sidewalk adapted by informal economies. Here the voices of the many whose survival measures require street activity establish *what is.* Their stories allow the inquiry to shift focus from *what should be*, dictated by a top-down vision, to an equitable and sustainable *what could be*. The existing knowledge polarity between street users and professional experts engenders spatial practices that render deterministic and reductive services based on rational, reformist policies and designs instead of techniques that enable ambiguity and pluralist approaches based on grounded knowledge. The literature review shows that the lack of a common language in city-making initiatives contributes to contrasting perceptions and compounds the knowledge gap.

6.3.3 Rewriting Johannesburg

The process of *rewriting Johannesburg* consisted of envisioning and planning/ designing/ making a city that reflects its inhabitants. Responding appropriately to a valid image necessitated introducing storytelling as a knowledge and meaning-making method that pushes back against white hegemony, capitalist exploitation, and apartheid reductionism. Ontological and analytical documentary texts resist conventional spatial practice and are artistic forms that counter the literacy barriers, which are barriers to imagining and designing a fair city. Imagining Johannesburg and, more broadly, South Africa's future created openings for writing a history composed of memory, images, and stories. Moreover, the city presented opportunities for an ontological design developed in collaboration with *Others* who face an uncertain hope of what tomorrow brings. Hope is found in stories of shared identity, ownership, and belonging and is premised on a transformative standpoint that *if we write the city differently, the city will write us differently*.

This ontological design, instituted in *Retelling Egoli,* experiences Johannesburg from the early seventies to the present day and uses Alexandra and a Nguni spatial practitioner to

share first-hand feelings of apartheid's violence across multiple scales ranging from policy to individual. The superimposing of subjective impressions and collective memory shaped the project's purpose and argued that carefully constructed urban readings turn spatial narratives into forms of urban practice. Storytelling by building knowledge accessible to wider audiences serves three core functions: voicing the marginalized, strengthening other imaginaries, and disrupting privileged power. In addition, storytelling creates shared understandings of urban spaces and their potential value through people's daily use and experiences.

6.4 [Re] Recognizing: Positioning the Script

6.4.1 Interrogating the Purpose

Retelling Egoli applied a street-making process to present a theoretical and practical storytelling framework, illustrated in **Fig. 6.1***,* as an observational documentary to understand city life and public space occupation and re-think site appraisal processes. Its documentary work located ways to include Nguni voices when making the city by considering:

- What constitutes the conception and creation of a city?
- What tools are suitable for making the city?
- What is a just city?

Seeking the answers to these questions revealed spatial practice's capacity, and the city's performance, at a local level.

The questions also shaped a process to engage the main research question and produce an alternative approach to understanding social life. For example, the researcher/scriptor/producer chose the daily making of two streets because they present a false binary of conflicting socio-economic and cultural tropes and anchored social practices that illustrate oppositional knowledge values. One is that the state and its agents aim to modernize the city by providing an efficient transport corridor for *civil society* (Bayat, 1997). Contrastingly, the other displays end-user realities in bottom-up self-generating informal practices, sometimes expressed as *rogue urbanism* (Pieterse & Simone, 2013).

6.4.2 Situating the Purpose through Telling

The project's themes examined the sub-questions in relation to the strategies applied in the subsequent chapters. The content of these chapters formulated a discussion of the lessons gleaned from the topics, theories, concepts, and practices to shape an image creation

process. Frames, to focus attention, provided the necessary investigative rigor that portrayed past, current, and future conditions; time, context, and activity were the vehicles of meaning. As a strategic communication device, the frame granted a cognitive path to knowledge and a method for making meaning. It went beyond just yielding a catalog of objects and motions (Kozloff, 2019). Instead, it engaged multiple media forms to historicize Johannesburg and activate sequences in today's site appraisal. As a mode of depiction to enhance future city life, this process advanced claims for the city to:

- Be fully inclusive of all urban users.
- Employ collaborative practices that acknowledge and reveal local expression.
- Recognize socio-economic and cultural differences, challenge racism, embrace diversity, address urban complexity, and advance the claims of all city occupants.

Applying these principles, the following section explains in more detail how frames of narrative production in various formats, media, and styles, linking content and expression, word, and image for the research's alternate site assessment, were deployed. Conceptually, materially, and symbolically, the actions produced an aesthetic and incited thoughts leading to potential actions. In addition, they provoked a series of contingencies, improbabilities, hindrances, and serendipities. In doing this, they linked analytical storytelling to the material conditions for texts and the intrinsic materiality of the city. Finally, in the making and telling, the frame established the criticality of form to direct thought and organize observation.

Framing influenced awareness, stimulated meaning, and made the viewer enter and interpret a temporal and spatial imaginary. Frames offered perspectives that let audiences explore new worlds, maintain coherence, and build individual and collective identities. In this manner, and through improvisation, the approach placed storytellers, artists, and designers in dialogue with their interdisciplinary tools. On and off-site, it permitted possibilities to interrupt and deviate from an ongoing model without a predetermined but desired outcome to create a new and different storyworld. Consequently, frames allow options and opportunities to transform space by meaning into place.

6.5 [Re] Editing: Calibrating through Production

6.5.1 The Drawn Frame: Establishing the *Why*

Building on Nguni *lisiko* oral traditions, the drawn line operates as a form of witnessing, memory-making, and realizing collective expression. Lines capture history with specific details interlacing time, context, and activities. Drawing provides temporal context to visualize a scene, such as the one after Johannesburg was proclaimed a city in 1928, when "many

jobless Africans living in overcrowded homelands migrated to the city to find work in the mines or as domestic workers for wealthy whites" (*Alexandra: A Backstory*, 2022:10).

A full-page drawing (**Figure 6.2**) covers the timeline from 1929 to 1931, during which rural black laborers migrated to Johannesburg to work in the mines and factories and constantly supply the *cheap native labor* needed for wealth extraction on the reef. This migration was abetted by an efficient rail network that connected the hinterland and territories beyond South Africa's borders. The drawing is a composite image from several reference photos, a map of Witwatersrand and its morphology, the people and their attire, and the train. These items assist in depicting the timeframe.

- Shifting

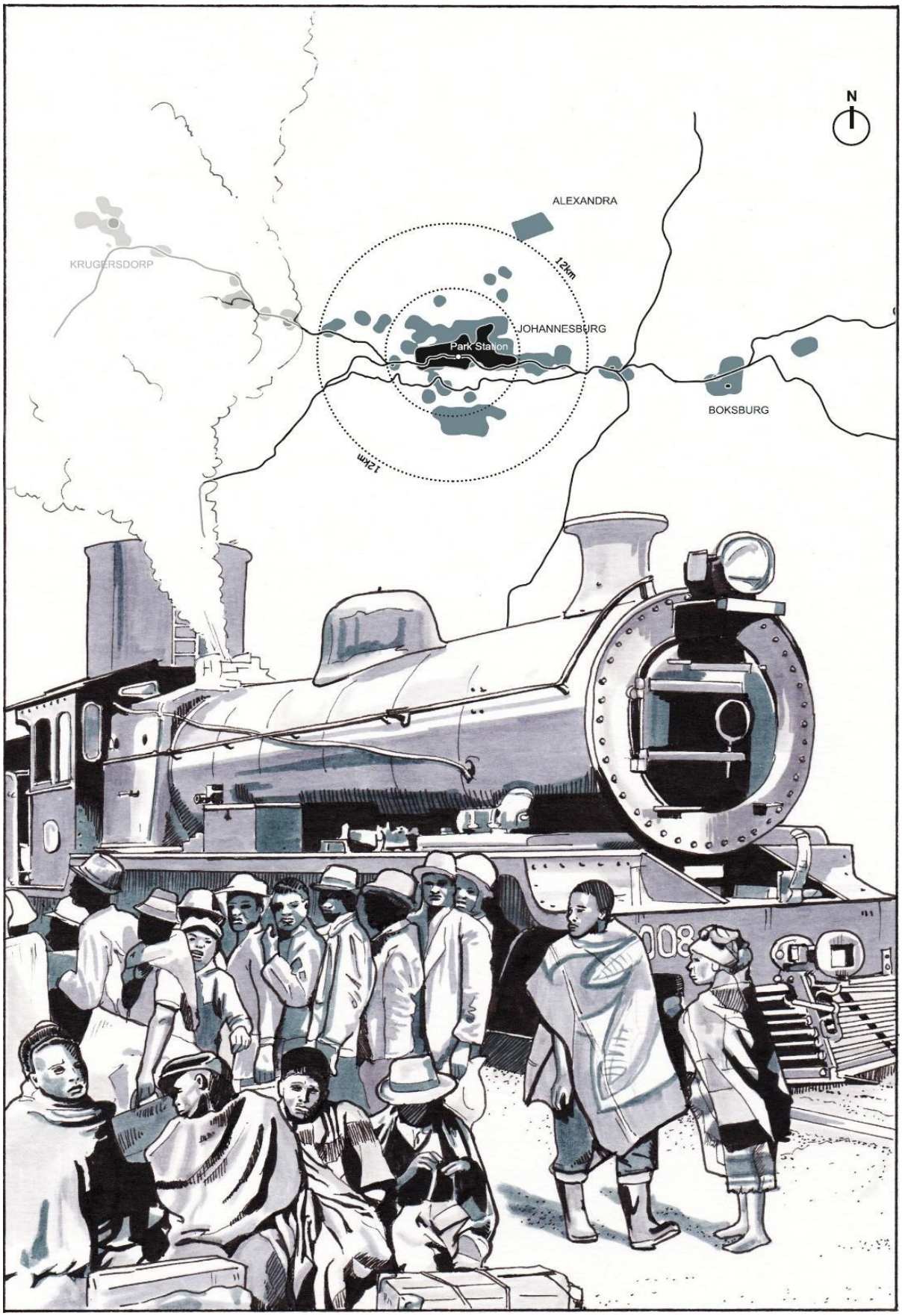


Figure 6.2 Framing Johannesburg's Migrant Workers

Figure 6.2, taken from *Alexandra: A Backstory* (2022:1), illustrates the relationship between territory and people as a principal focus at different scales: Africa (macro), South Africa (meso), and Johannesburg (micro) (*Alexandra: A Backstory*, 2022:1). Overlaid images from different periods create a visual representation (story) of the migration with complex information simplified.

Johannesburg's distinctive morphology evolved in relation to the rail network during the 1930s, so the drawing used to illustrate this is supplemented with the existing railway lines. Johannesburg and the greater Transvaal area's historical maps accurately reference the rail network. Layering the image creates the story's temporal and spatial sequences that voice the present and all the defining moments before and after. Here the drawing to imagine the foreground illustrates and brings characters' faces and personal details into a political, historical, and urban context. Politics link people and the train equally as required for wealth extraction.

- Positioning

Various sources are included in the composite (**Figure 6.3**). Positioning the frame as a summary of a collective experience (bottom-up) and part of focused infrastructural planning (top-down) translates the technicalities of layering and pays particular attention to detail. Overlaid images from different periods visually present the migration story with complex information simplified.

Overlays of African commuters waiting by the railway tracks (**C**) and David Goldblatt's photo of migrant workers huddling together while waiting for a train at Mayfair station in Johannesburg (**D**)[32] situate an African experience. A railway network map from 1906 shows how Johannesburg had become a central hub within just ten years (**B**). In addition, the people queueing, waiting, observing, and wearing Xhosa and Sotho blankets add a distinct Nguni texture (**F**). The background layer (**A**)[33] is an image of a steam locomotive used between 1928 and 1932. This specific train narrates the story of technology, gold production, and exploitation. South African Railways (SAR) operated railway routes around the Transvaal and Orange Free State in the 1930s.

[32] https://art21.org/gallery/david-goldblatt-artwork-survey-1950s/

[33] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_Class_16_4-6-2

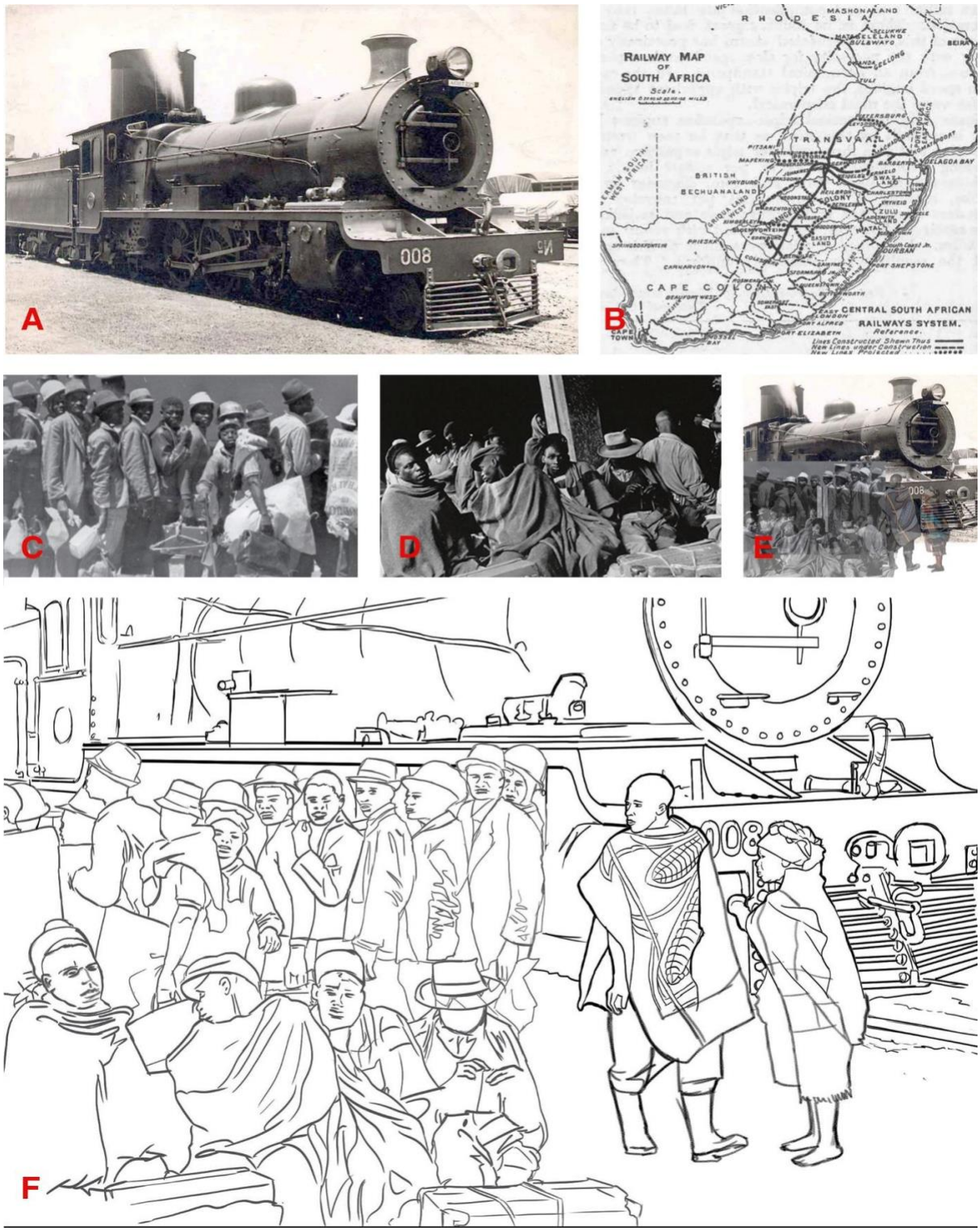


Figure 6.3 Johannesburg Composite

Consequently, the choice narrowed to a SAR Class 16 4-6-2 no. 800 model developed by South African Railways and photographed at Braamfontein station circa 1930. Collectively, the reference sources arranged the migration scene, oscillating between the real and the imagined, permitting readers to shift from 1834 to the present and position themselves

through the images and stories inherent to the panels, frames, and pages of the narrator's spatial context. Strategically, activities are compressed into space-timeframes specific to moments that incorporate concepts, bodies, and expressions.

6.5.2 The Still Frame: Setting *What is*



Figure 6.4 Sidewalk Bay

- Framing the sidewalk bay with Exclusive Hair Saloon, Chicken Dust, and Family Needs Supermarket Louis Botha Avenue and 8th Street intersection.

Barthes (1981) argues that still photographs make us spectators and ask that we look at them and see something. In *Retelling Egoli*, the pictures used form a comic series, and while they rarely stand alone, some have substantial illustrative value by themselves. **Figure 6.4**, for example, shows the bay created by the change in street direction that locates Fish's *Chicken Dust* sidewalk restaurant in Orange Grove. The view from this vantage point illuminates the street, time, and its recalcitrant reality as a freeze-frame. The Simultaneous inscription and preservation of objects and people at a specific moment in time in this way reveals the street's past and exposes its everyday.

Compared to drawings, photographs demonstrate the capacity to access a reality that proves otherwise challenging to pinpoint. Its frame contains explicitly grounded reality, such as color, texture, and architectural details. The number of vehicle lanes, center island, traffic direction, street furniture, and tactile material are visible in the road reserve, which would be challenging to capture in an instant drawing or sketch. Framed to resemble a panoramic view looking south towards Johannesburg, the picture shows how Louis Botha divides Orange Grove into two segments, effectively stating that this is *what it is*.

- Shifting

Upon closer scrutiny and applying *Urban Scripting*'s tools, **Figure 6.4** demonstrates a shift in use and reveals the micro-scale *intelligence* that enabled it. Four people sit around a table located between two columns. A person steps in the frame, onto the sidewalk, from one of the store interiors. A personalized sign advertising African braiding services is visible above the sidewalk and reads, *Exclusive Saloon, 100% Human Hair, Brazilians & Hair Pieces, Nails, Pedicure, Manicure, Plaiting Dread Locks*; it includes pictures of two musicians, Rihanna and Lauryn Hill and proclaims a *Special Offer*. As spectators, we witness the transformation of the street in a still frame. We see its metamorphosis against a backdrop of political and ideological separation, shifting from what once was legislated as a white residential area to something more natural and representative. Here the frame presents a scene that is becoming, moving to a different time and place.

- Positioning

Ushering a detailed viewpoint in close-up, visual signs such as texture, light, and possibility breathe life into the twilight mise en scène of **Figure 6.4**. Its frame locates all the case study's Orange Grove protagonists (scriptor/narrators), Mduduzi, Vimal, Fungai, Fish, and Pastor Theo. From the foreground to the background are *Bhanis Cycles*, *M.P. Mirror & Glass*, *Exclusive Hair Saloon*, *Chicken Dust & Family Needs Restaurant*, which highlight the sidewalk extension caused by the avenue's change of direction. Positioning an observation point, this scene asks, *what if we respond to the call and work with what we have right here, right now?* The frame merges the past, present, and future; the history speaks to how South African life, means of production, and ownership structures still reflect the apartheid framework.

Here, aesthetics and narrative compositions work together as mediating modalities to rethink space-time assemblages. The frame shows how people engage in activities that accommodate their needs and desires despite the lasting imposition of the apartheid

blueprint and a lack of assistance from current planning powers. And by doing so, they create the twilight zone.

6.5.3 The Movement Frame: Asking *What if*?

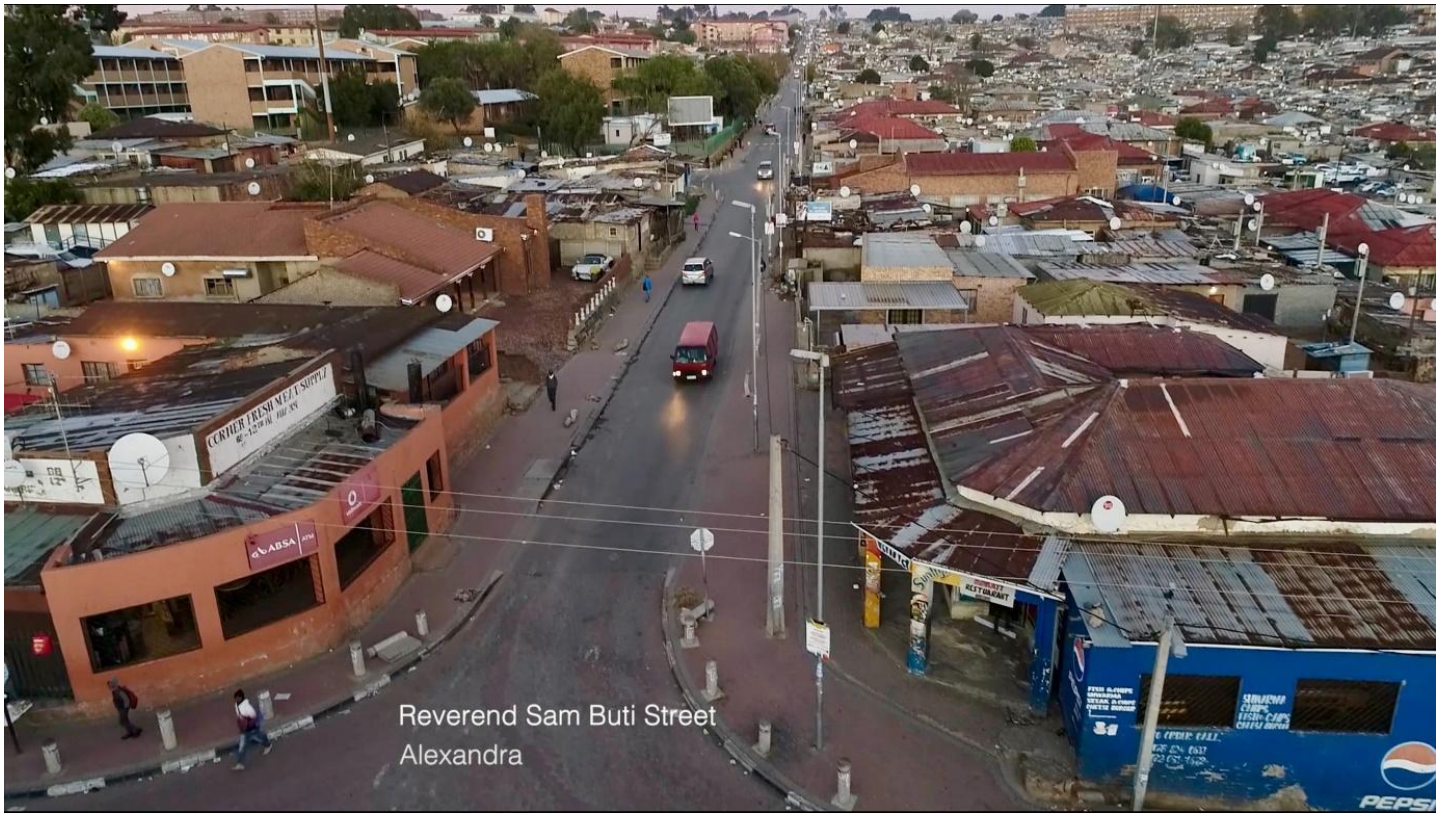


Figure 6.5 Aerial view of Reverend Sam Buti Street (Still from *I'm a Streetwalker*)

- Framing I'm a Streetwalker

On a constructed plane, the **Figure 6.5** aerial view *from I'm a Streetwalker* (2017) situates an establishing shot that offers a critical scene to observe time, space, and movement of everyday conditions in a satellite-dish city from the view of a drone. As an establishing shot, it favors a privileged relation to temporal and spatial realities with the extraordinary authenticity that recording the flight from the top-down permits. By blending traditional mapping cultures with new technology, the street is presented as an examined indexical sign. Modern technology offers altitude to view the case study as an unbroken line stretching into the horizon. In the sequence, the movement simulation presents the specifics of the investigated phenomenon, its morphology, and the elements which make up the streetscape to provide understanding, meaning, and knowledge.

- Shifting

As a still frame taken from a continuous segment, the aerial view in **Figure 6.5** establishes richer detail of where things happen. Compared to the still photographic frame, such as **Figure 6.4**, the image showing Reverend Buti street is fixed into a sequence.



Figure 6.6 Bra Niky and the Tree

The motion picture from which it is captured exists in a familiar steadiness of uninterrupted space-time configurations that permit a reading of the street's axis in Alexandra as part of a much larger context. However, because of its intrinsic relation to narrative duration, it cannot free itself from the elements which created it. The movement of presented architectural spaces containing lived life is constructed from an ensemble of imagined temporal and spatial realities. Visible in the foreground are Rachel and Bra Sam's locations. Behind are Vivian, Joyce, and Paddy.

Further in the background is Bra Niky and the tree on the sidewalk. When experienced at eye level in the other short films of the *Urban Scripting* research project, scenes are located where readers move in and out, drawing closer or further away in viewing how others experience life. In this example, the movement-image zooms closer to give readers a linear progression of a specific context and provides an orientation to place themselves in narrative space and timeframe.

- Positioning

The motion frame **Figure 6.6** *An observation clip of Bra Niky* affords the viewer a more intimate experience than the still frame (**Figure 6.5**). Fixed like a spectator in the proscenium, the close-up brings the eye to the subject. Unlike the drawn picture based on an imaginary composition, **Figure 6.2** *Short-term migrant labor*, the filmic close-up expands space into a more detailed simulacrum that focuses on hidden details of familiar objects, introduces unconscious optics, and extends simple comprehension. Furthermore, moving closer allows thoughts to break free and percolate beyond the frame into plurality. The objective here was to not only apply the local knowledge value systems and imagined futures of the specific case study contexts of Rev Sam Buti Street and Louis Botha Avenue.

It was also to reinforce the role of other imaginaries by zooming into details of the everyday. In the process, these details might play a different role than those assumed by convention. Recognizing differences advanced through critical pedagogy establishes more institutional space for and acceptance of the value store held in local knowledge. Most importantly, it stimulates new ways of thinking and becoming in urban streets.

6.6 [Re] Presenting Knowledge in Theory, Academia, and Practice

6.6.1 From Foreground to Background

In review, *situating* established a dialogue between three linked but poorly connected groups in Johannesburg. First and foremost, it [re]presented the voices of many people (actors) who make their livelihood through street-based microenterprises. Second, the people who shape policies and represent the city (state). Third, those (agents) the city deploys to design and construct the spaces that harbor the actors' means of support. These three groups represent the protagonists. Their discourse organized hybrid forms (Harrison, 2006; Pieterse, 2013; 2021) to bridge the formal/informal, top-down/bottom-up, local/settler, and professional practice/end-user binaries resulting in the knowledge gaps expressed as ineffective urban planning and design realities.

Hybrid forms incorporate *local street knowledge* value as a storytelling practice that offers "a notion of the *interval* that neither separates nor assimilates" (Minh-ha, 1991:226) between binaries. As a dialectic process built from conflict, questioning, and critical discussion, and operating through frames and improvised storytelling frames, binaries were dismantled, and new possibilities of what can become exposed. This *storytelling* is a fundamental, ethical, and inclusionary fieldwork convention covering South Africa's complex spectrum of realities. In its application, selected information layers acknowledge the knowledge legitimacy of the often excluded, specifically *Other* urban microentrepreneurs. This acknowledgment especially applies to validating the micro-architectures they operate from.

These layers of information are presented as current frames of inquiry in layouts that are accessible, aesthetic, respectful, and appropriate for broader consensus and consumption. This examination method revealed the twilight zone's complex, mercurial yet innovative character and presented it as an emergent, valid, intelligent city form. These imagination practices are essential for establishing and developing the creative competencies and schemes required for imagining and making urban spaces: they can (and should) become an accepted measure of city-making processes.

6.6.2 The Twilight Zone of Knowledges

The thesis argued that for the city's agents to be effective, they must widen their methodological repertoire when conducting site assessments. This broadening of city-making refers explicitly to how spatial practice can hear and incorporate resident and user voices into planning. In addition, given the rapidly increasing city populations, *Retelling Egoli* makes a case to primarily target and influence the two groups most influential in making the city. The first group comprises academia, spatial practice, and the city agents directly responsible for space. The second group includes all those across all scales who imagine or influence city-making in one way or another, for example, those who write using other forms of expression that currently exist beyond academic and conventional practice domains.

Combined, the groups cover a spectrum of people who operate outside of but include spatial practice to narrate or tell city-centric stories. These are informed by, but not limited to, non-academic and non-conventional discipline writing practitioners such as journalists, creative writers, artists, audio and visual documentary makers, dancers, poets, rappers, musicians, etcetera. These multiple voices and writing forms unlock the range of influencers who, in various ways, imagine and make the city. For example, in the *Urban Scripting* case study, they brought Jozi "as a metropolis into being [by making] it talk" (Mbembe Nuttall 2008:30). The objective of harnessing this disparate collective was to introduce a novel way of knowing and creating awareness of urban issues typically reserved for spatial practice's technical and jargon domain. This awareness-creation aims to assist narrators and makers in enhancing communication structures, premised on bridging the knowledge gaps, and result in better techniques of capturing and [re]presenting imaginaries and the real.

The blend of the imaginary and the real is dependent on the individual's position within larger governing structures and world view. These techniques seek to create and foster a better fit between the person and the city they occupy and serve. Besides, they provide the urban dweller with a broader spectrum to better express local imaginaries and meet the study's core aim: to better describe local needs and aspirations. Artistic literacy and technical

aesthetics work together and express socio-economic participation, and cultural identity, therefore satisfying the politics of belonging. Deployed during *Retelling Egoli*'s engagement with the twilight zone, the technical and aesthetic approach advances communication between two relational and equal points of view. One influences technical expertise to have a more open system of listening, and the second stimulates the broader storyteller to new ways of looking and [re]presenting.

Polemically, writing twilight intelligence as a Nguni epistemological zone contributes to the African archive's multilingualism with alternative thinking and makes micro-architectures related to streets. Programmatically too, *Retelling Egoli*'s mise en scène forms a way of speaking to help urban practitioners think with pictures and initiate a path to a reflective making of a Nguni-colonial city. Effectively, the objective is to stimulate a move towards the co-production of more practical and efficient (effective) symbolic or material street realities. This practice method is *Urban Scripting.*

6.6.3 Whose Knowledge Anyway?

The touchstone of this thesis was sparked by the processes that produced today's Johannesburg and established a counterpoint that, through audio-visual storytelling, filled the gaps between different frames of perception and knowledge in city-making processes. *Urban Scripting* is a profoundly political, racial, and socio-cultural discourse that shifts the frame to the *Other* by using their story as a foundation for site assessment. The research focused on activity streets as these are a common denominator of the public majority. Different audio-visual framing formats were explored as assessment and analytical tools and as forms of production. The investigation of *making* and *telling* legitimate stories combined traditional and contemporary narrative methods to define user realities and express the conditions under which those who occupy *the twilight zones* in Johannesburg's urban areas live and work.

Editing site appraisal views presented an opportunity to include Johannesburg's *Othered* knowledge as new, valid perspectives that negotiate between urban planning specialist sources and grounded experiences. Production process work explored the application and efficacy of popular arrangement frames (comic/graphic novel, animations, films, and book formats) for analysis and production. An initial photographic and impression drawing inventory defined a reference point to systematize a methodology for all fieldwork outputs. Its process and results designed procedures for extending photographic and drawing work. Six production phases were applied to produce *Retelling Egoli* and unfold a city (in this case, Johannesburg) at multiple scales. These formed relational aspects of:

- ***Situating*** located the *why*, giving background context for bringing the story into being. It situated the problem statement, sensed the city, and rewrote Egoli.
- ***Developing*** defined the *what*, establishing story scope, background, midground, and foreground roles explored to respond to the research questions and translate a conceptual framework.
- ***Designing*** established the *how,* providing the argument, aim, and purpose.
- ***Recognizing*** revisited to look at the *why* and addressed the *what* by applying abstract and material frames to acknowledge *the twilight zone* in Johannesburg.
- ***Editing*** described the storytelling process.
- ***Presenting*** assessed contribution to the spatial profession and other disciplines and practices.

Forming a non-linear sequence, these phases applied audio-visual methods to conceptualize and visualize on-site and off-site understandings in producing *Retelling Egoli*. Artistic arrangements [re]present and disseminate emergent phenomena within and beyond the city planning/design profession. Subsequently, *Retelling Egoli* engaged particular expression elements needed to reach a broader audience and provide proximity and intimacy to the everyday urban experience of *Others*. As a social, cultural, and political act, inclusive narration involves a spectrum of narrators and storytellers invited to engage with the material. Documentary storytelling as a field engagement process addressed three issues; firstly, ontological, which considered how on and off-site framing differs from other methods of site appraisal; secondly, epistemological, which relates to approaches of shifting the frame to comprehend and acknowledge the relations of required different knowledge; thirdly, methodological, which aligns, as a positioning action, with the working practices appropriate to storytelling.

Returning to the argument that Johannesburg should be reimagined from an African futurist standpoint, these issues reflect how and why the collected material might aid stakeholder communication. Three core concepts, framing, shifting, and positioning, structured the storytelling process. When considered in making the urban, particularly the role of spatial practice, calibrating forcefully proclaims that actors and agents benefit from its common language at all scales. These scales cover those who write national policy, provincial and city spatial frameworks, (landscape) architects, and engineering visions to the person who constructs an urban street sidewalk and can apply elements of *Urban Scripting*. In addition, every street user can easily access parts of the body of work created thanks to its common language and value alignment, which has the added benefit of fostering positive relations between practice and people.

For the city and its activity streets to succeed, there is a need to understand current (and future) user interests and also understand ways to encourage the necessary appropriation of space. That requires appropriate visions, coming through appropriate techniques of understanding, and appropriate ways of engaging and producing the spaces. All of that means generically a form of praxis, which is not seen as specialist, albeit specific, and based on the co-production of knowledge.

6.6.4 Framing New Knowledge

Urban Scripting contributes to new knowledge by locating its sources and capturing it in novel ways that bridge academia with other forms of (unconsidered) knowledge. It does this in three ways. First, it emphasizes *framing* as transdisciplinary knowledge that forms a research foundation base. *Framing* considers urban issues using the vernacular/ Siswati/ Nguni as a tool of analysis. In underscoring transdisciplinary methods, it incorporates a multidisciplinary, multi-modal, and multimedia approach. Second, it highlights *shifting* which underscores a need for more critically empirically based research in cities of the South, which leads inductively to new ways of thinking and analyzing, Third, it stresses *positioning* knowledge exchange as a valid learning activity, one as important as teaching in a university environment.

6.7 [Re] Presenting Urban Scripting: Mise En Scène

In conclusion, *Urban Scripting* engaged storytelling as an inclusionary measure that drew attention to the imbalanced nature of existing spatial practice and confronted themes of identity, ownership, and belonging. It argued that, because of the importance of urban framing, it is time to recalibrate the frame of urban knowledge, develop alternate ways of telling *Other* stories, and use the wisdom in the stories to build functional urban spaces. Storytelling relooked at aspects of *real* life that are often ignored, revealed what is considered inhabitable for the many on the streets of Johannesburg and elsewhere, and contributed to imagining and making better cities for tomorrow. Furthermore, the twilight zone allows us to see insurgent intelligence and its adaptive strategies. Conceptually and methodologically, the storytelling process (and its narrative products) allow calibrated versions of an on-site context to be assessed off-site and potentially return as effective on-site strategy, action, or circulate as new readings of what was, what is, and what can become given the right approach. Creating new readings should be investigated further for the processes' value as an assessment or research tool for other spheres of professional development or to stimulate further creative practice.

Urban Scripting's aim and objective were to emphasize that the frame's field is a critical remapping tool that shifts perspective to mitigate tensions between the imagined and the real. Rather than favoring the completed outcome as the *only* sought-after goal, it positions the permeability of the informal and formal, the border of illegal and legal. It memorizes the intersection and atmosphere of these binaries. Effectively, its production process must allow improvisation and possibilities for leakage and secretions. Moreover, because dialogue predominates and is supported by imagery and empathy, it evokes cultural terrains, situates ways of knowing, transforms knowledge production, and gives new life to meaning-making. When creating content to refashion our ability to reimagine and remake the city, the producer/scriptor (and in this paper's case researcher) composes the intersection between the frame surface, the street palimpsest, and the storytelling aesthetic to create spaces of cultural intimacy latent with value.

Here the frame becomes cinema, and cinema becomes the frame producing new spatial and art forms. In this sense, the intersection establishes scenes of the street as a site of evocative exchange and relational montage, highlighting the twilight zone's potentiality. Key this is the act of framing – which this research has argued needs the typical methods to be disrupted and new innovative approaches to be engaged with – the focus of the study in practice. Johannesburg was founded solely for the pursuit of monetary wealth. Based on desire and aggression, its imperial legacy has left the city rooted in fractured capitalism. However, this splintered nature also allows it to become a place of totalizing possibilities and a melting pot of ideas for all —a hybrid proving ground underpinned by *Ubuntu*, where we can see, hear, and understand each other better than before. This unintended consequence of its evolution should be interrogated and nourished for the future potential it can unleash.

In summary, *Urban Scripting* relocates perspectives within practice, academy, and city by valorizing street-level knowledge and intelligence. *Urban Scripting*'s methodology, as shown in this thesis, can positively contribute to realizing the true treasure of the city, not the gold upon which it was created, but the hearts and minds of its insurgent citizenry. Subsequently, Chapter 6 argued that the best way to communicate is by scripting (the urban).

Credits

Table_2: End Credit

Modality	Format	Title	Production Talent
Framing	Film	I'm a Streetwalker	▪ **Script:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ Access + Logistics: Ronny Ndhlovu ▪ **Drone Pilot:** Ross Maxwell ▪ **Voice-Over:** Andrea Rolfes ▪ Voice Recording: Jurgen Meekel ▪ **Editor:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ **Final Mix:** Jurgen Meekel
	Animation	the block, the plot, the house, the tree	▪ **Script:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ Internal Expert: Bra Niky ▪ **Voice-Over:** Bra Niky, Thando Hopa ▪ Studio Recording: Stephen Kirker ▪ **Field Audio:** Solam Mkhabela, Band A Part ▪ **Visualization:** Tshimologong Mollo Animation Academy & Studio
		Alexandra: A Backstory	▪ **Story:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ **Drawings:** Hiten Bawa ▪ **Animation:** Jurgen Meekel
	Graphic Novel	Alexandra: A Backstory	▪ **Story:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ **Historical Archive:** Bra Niky, Stephen Kirker ▪ **Drawings:** Hiten Bawa ▪ **Text Editor:** Stephen Kirker ▪ **Photography:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ Graphic Design: Fred Swart

Modality	Format	Title	Production Talent
Shifting	Booklet	Street Images	▪ **Location Scout:** Solam Mkhabela
		Street Drawings	▪ **Visualization:** Shorai Kaseke, Hiten Bawa
		Block Measurements	▪ **Field Casework:** Muzi Makatini, Simphiwe Malinga, Ronny Ndhlovu, Nkosilenhle Mavuso, Shorai Kaseke, Nobuhle Ngulube, Aviwe Mandyanda, Matimba Ngobeni, James Wafula, Cindi Sekhoto, Nompumelelo Majola, Mbali Mngomezulu, Itumeleng Morule, Stephen Kirker, Zimvo Makaula, Khazimuliswa Ndlovu, Nthabiseng Moela, Skhumbuzo Mtshali, Dean (the Falcon) Falconer, Beki Ntini, Maryclare Gatome, Linda Sokhulu, Loyiso Oldjohn, Heather Hart, Solam Mkhabela
		Large Format Plan	▪ **Visualization:** Shorai Kaseke, Dean (the Falcon) Falconer, Felix (the Bandit) Beresford, Hiten Bawa
		2-D Mapping	▪ **Visualization:** Shorai Kaseke, Dean (the Falcon) Falconer, Felix (the Bandit) Beresford, Hiten Bawa, Cindy Sekhoto
		Fieldwork Notes: Alexandra	▪ **Editor:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ Graphic Design: Fred Swart
		Fieldwork Notes: Orange Grove	▪ **Editor:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ Graphic Design: Fred Swart

Modality	Format	Title	Production Talent
	Booklet + Animation	Hand Sections	▪ **Visualization:** Cindy Sekhoto, Shorai Kaseke
		Hand Drawn Collages	▪ **Drawings:** Shorai Kaseke, ▪ **Visualization:** Felix (the Bandit) Beresford
		Animation Shot List	▪ **Visualization:** Tshimologong Mollo Animation Academy & Studio
		Electronic Renders	▪ **Visualization:** Dean (the Falcon) Falconer
Positioning	Electronic Drawing	Focus Blocks Modelling	▪ **Visualization:** Dean (the Falcon) Falconer
	Booklet	Technical Sections	▪ **Visualization:** Dean (the Falcon) Falconer
	Animation	Drawn Sections	▪ **Visualization:** Felix (the Bandit) Beresford
		Flythroughs	▪ **Visualization:** Dean (the Falcon) Falconer
		Orange Grove Church Wall Collage	▪ **Visualization:** Solam Mkhabela
	Booklet	Place Sketches	▪ **Visualization:** Hiten Bawa, Shorai Kaseke,
		Manual Drawings	▪ Visualization: Hiten Bawa
		Storyboards	▪ Visualization: Hiten Bawa
	Film	Joyce	▪ Internal Expert: Joyce ▪ External Expert: Band A Part

Modality	Format	Title	Production Talent
	Film + Animation	From Tap to Tap	▪ **Umsumpe:** Ronny Ndhlovu ▪ Aerial Photography: Band A Part ▪ Ground Photography: Solam Mkhabela ▪ **Animation:** Dean (the Falcon) Falconer ▪ **Editors:** Solam Mkhabela, Jonathan Pinkham
	Film	David Goldblatt	▪ Internal Expert: David Goldblatt ▪ **Audio:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ **Visuals:** Jurgen Meekel ▪ **Editors:** Jurgen Meekel, Jonathan Pinkham ▪ Identify Graphics: Fred Swart
		Driving through Rev Sam Buti Street	▪ **Umsumpe:** Ronny Ndhlovu ▪ **Audio + Visual:** Malwande Mkhabela, ▪ **Driver:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ **Editor:** Jonathan Pinkham ▪ Identify Graphics: Fred Swart
		Wednesday Rev Sam Buti Street	▪ **Umsumpe:** Ronny Ndhlovu ▪ **Audio + Visual:** Mofana Morojele, Solam Mkhabela ▪ **Editor:** Jonathan Pinkham ▪ Identify Graphics: Fred Swart
		there's a tree Trailer	▪ Visualization: Band A Part
		Sidewalk Braai I	▪ **Umsumpe:** Shorai Kaseke ▪ Audio + Visual: Solam Mkhabela, ▪ **Editor:** Jonathan Pinkham ▪ Identify Graphics: Fred Swart

Modality	Format	Title	Production Talent
		Sidewalk Braai II	▪ **Umsumpe:** Shorai Kaseke ▪ Audio + Visual: Solam Mkhabela, ▪ **Editor:** Jonathan Pinkham, Solam Mkhabela ▪ Identify Graphics: Fred Swart
	Audio	Alex Soundscape	▪ **Audio Sourcing:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ **Mixer:** Robert (Reg) Grenoble
	Films	there's a tree on the sidewalk	▪ **Story:** Bra Niky, Solam Mkhabela ▪ **Location:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ **Internal Experts:** Bra Niky, Bra Sam, Rachel, Joyce, Paddy, Vivian ▪ **Audio:** Hainbach, Isaac (Bra Zacks) Nkosi ▪ Visualization: Band A Part
		Who is the Landlord	▪ **Location:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ **Internal Experts:** Fungai, Fish, Thomas, Pastor Theo ▪ Visualization: Band A Part
		Bhani's Cycles	▪ **Location:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ Internal Experts: Vimal, Mduduzi ▪ Visualization: Band A Part
	Book	Calibrating Stories	▪ **Internal Experts:** Bra Niky, Bra Sam, Sipho, Tumelo, Mangaliso, S'Phiwe, Konke, Zela, Langa, Vuka, Kuhle, Sibusiso, Vuyo, Lesedi, Mandla, Fungai, Mduduzi, Rachel, Vimal, Joyce, Paddy, Vivian, Nomvula, Tasneem, MD, Iris, Tumi, Elsa, Leigh, Jabu, Fish ▪ **Concept + Text:** Solam Mkhabela

Modality	Format	Title	Production Talent
			▪ **Collages:** Leigh Maurtin ▪ **Additional Drawings:** Joshil Naran, Hashim Tarmahomed ▪ **Text Editor:** Stephen Kirker ▪ **Layout + Assembly:** Joshil Naran, Hashim Tarmahomed, Solam Mkhabela ▪ Identity Graphics: Fred Swart
Urban Scripting	Posters	Retelling Egoli	▪ **Photography:** Solam Mkhabela ▪ Graphic Design: Fred Swart

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