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Exploring and exploding - using theatre as a medium to confront racial tensions between Indian and black South Africans

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University of the Witwatersrand
WITS SCHOOL OF ARTS
Department of Dramatic Art

Exploring and Exploding - Using theatre as a medium to confront racial tensions between Indian and black South Africans

MADA – Master of Arts in Dramatic Art by Coursework and Research Report
DRAA 7003: Research Report (by Creative Research Project and Written Research Report): Final Submission

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Date: 30thth August 2013

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Abstract:

> *"Even though members' of different races live alongside each other in schools, universities, workplaces and shopping malls, we still live lives apart. We are often disconnected, suspicious and threatened by each other. Our lives are profoundly unsettled by race"* (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011: 22)

The research investigates post-apartheid race relations between Indian and black South Africans through the writing and directing of a new South African play, titled *Race Trouble* (2012) that problematizes and thematically addresses this issue. Using an auto-ethnographic approach focusing on my identity and position as a South African Indian female and as a theatre artist in post-apartheid South Africa, this research highlights racial tensions and relationships between Indian and black South Africans, as I have observed it. Furthermore, as a starting point for possible future research, this project begins to explore post-apartheid playwriting and Indian experiences in contemporary South African theatre.

In examining the issues of race and racism, post-apartheid race relations and identity, the theory of *race trouble* has been a key component of the research. Theorists Kevin Durrheim, Xoliswa Mtose and Lyndsay Brown in their book *Race Trouble: Race, Identity and Inequality in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2011), define race trouble as, "a social psychological condition that emerges when the history of racism infiltrates the present to unsettle social order, arouse conflict of perspectives and create situations that are individually and collectively troubling" (2011: 27).

Over a period of ten months, I wrote, directed and staged *Race Trouble* (2012) on three occasions. However, while directing is a part of the practice of this research, the primary component of this creative research project is playwriting. Both the playwriting and the academic research have simultaneously informed and supported each other in my work. Therefore the final script of the play itself is intrinsically linked to the research report and is attached as an appendix to it. Specifically, *Race Trouble* (2012) is the lens through which I have interrogated race relations between Indian and black South Africans.

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Introduction: "Our lives are profoundly unsettled by race"

> *"Even though members' of different races live alongside each other in schools, universities, workplaces and shopping malls, we still live lives apart. We are often disconnected, suspicious and threatened by each other. Our lives are profoundly unsettled by race"* (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011: 22)

In post-apartheid South Africa, race and racism remain contentious issues. Racism and racial inequalities are critical problems for the country famously known as the rainbow nation. Furthermore, just as race relations are not simply about black versus white, the division between the racist and the anti-racist is also not a clear cut binary opposition in post-apartheid South Africa. There is much in between, in the so-called grey area that needs to be analysed. The theory of *race trouble* seeks to investigate this. Theorists Kevin Durrheim, a psychology professor, Xoliswa Mtose, a social activist and Lyndsay Brown, an English teacher with a PhD in psychology, in their book *Race Trouble: Race, Identity and Inequality in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2011), define race trouble as, "a social psychological condition that emerges when the history of racism infiltrates the present to unsettle social order, arouse conflict of perspectives and create situations that are individually and collectively troubling" (2011: 27). Durrheim and Brown are, like myself, from Durban and have also studied at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Mtose is the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Fort Hare.

The aim of this research is to investigate post-apartheid race relations between Indian and black[1] South Africans through writing and directing a new South African play, titled *Race Trouble*[2] (2012) that problematizes and thematically addresses this issue. Using an auto-

[1] A conscious choice has been made to capitalise references to 'Indian South Africans' and not to capitalise 'black South Africans'. To be Indian is a racial category in South Africa. However, it also refers to an entire cultural group whose ancestors descend from India. The term black or white, while having historical and cultural significance, still basically refers to skin colour and is not an acceptable ethnic or cultural term, considering that it covers a variety of people. Thus it is not, according to this author, a proper noun.

[2] The title of my play comes from the book *Race Trouble: Race, Identity and Inequality in post-apartheid South Africa* (2011) as the theory of *race trouble*, defined and discussed in this book, greatly influenced and

ethnographic approach focusing on my identity and position as a South African Indian female and as a theatre artist in post-apartheid South Africa, this research highlights racial tensions and relationships between Indian and black South Africans, as I have observed it. Furthermore, as a starting point for possible future research, this project begins to explore post-apartheid playwriting and Indian experiences in contemporary South African theatre.

Racial problems between Indian and black South Africans are a thorny issue that I find is not openly confronted in my community of Durban. Indian and black South Africans were both groups oppressed during apartheid, albeit in dissimilar ways and to different extents. Yet today, individuals from both these groups oppress each other.

The second aspect that inspires this research is that to my knowledge, there are very few Indian female playwrights and artists. Generally, I find the lack of post-apartheid plays being written and produced about my community disappointing. It is only the trend of rehashing stereotypes for commercial theatre that continues to be popular. There is a lack of South African Indian voices challenging issues within our community in post-apartheid theatre.

Yet there is such a rich history, culture and complexity to the Indian population and community in South Africa. I am by no means an all knowing expert on this but I believe I have the passion and capabilities necessary to use theatre as a means to explore it, starting in this research, with my experiences. Specifically, my identity is that I am a twenty-three year old Indian female born in an essentially free South Africa. When I matriculated in 2006, my year was known as Madiba's children as we were the first set of students to go through twelve years of schooling in a democratic South Africa. Yet my identity has also been informed by previous generations and elder family members who lived under apartheid. I have had a privileged upbringing. This is relative to my play, *Race Trouble* (2012) which is set in Durban, as both the characters are in their twenties and one of the characters Divya, is reflective of my identity. Thus my play is a middle class take on identity construction and race relations and my research is auto-ethnographic.

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supported the writing and ideas of my play. In this research, the play *Race Trouble* (2012) will be italicized and capitalised while Durrheim, Mtose & Brown's theory *race trouble* will be italicized and in small case letters.

Regarding post-apartheid theatre, the South African actress Janet Suzman in 2002 asked a profound question: "But when the enemy is gone, what do you write about?" (*The Independent*, 25 August). Theatre, a strong and vital form of protest during apartheid, is well placed to now, "expose the contradictions which threaten a projected national unity, while, at the same time, providing a way forward" (Homann, 2009: 2). Yet as renowned South African playwright Mike van Graan says, "our current theatre is generally so anaemic, so supportive of, so aligned to the political status quo, so unquestioning" (2006: 283).

With these challenges in mind, my rationale and enquiry for this research is twofold. Firstly and particularly, I have explored post-apartheid race relations between Indian and black South Africans through the medium of post-apartheid theatre and my identity as a South African Indian female. Over a period of ten months, I have written, directed and staged *Race Trouble* (2012) on three occasions, twice at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg in September 2012 and once at the Musho Theatre Festival in Durban at the Catalina theatre in January 2013. Both productions differed in terms of location, script and cast. While directing is a part of the practice of this research, the primary component of the creative research project is playwriting. Nonetheless, through directing *Race Trouble* (2012), I have edited, rewritten and developed the script based on editing advice, the rehearsals conducted and staged performances of the play. Therefore the final script of the play itself is intrinsically linked to the research report and is attached as an appendix to it. Secondly and lastly, broadly speaking, through this play and my research, I wish to question and discuss the place post-apartheid Indian experiences have in contemporary South African theatre.

This research, by confronting, challenging and talking about race relations between Indian and black South Africans, raises awareness of an issue that has either been secondary or entirely neglected in post-apartheid studies and society. Thus my research adds to existing knowledge on post-apartheid race relations and theatre as well as existing research on the Indian community in South Africa and its artistic endeavours. Since this research is specifically concerned with creating new work in post-apartheid theatre, this research will contribute towards studies on contemporary playwriting in South Africa.

Finally, using an auto-ethnographic approach, I have researched the social and political issue of race through a representation in theatre. Specifically, *Race Trouble* (2012) is the lens

through which I have interrogated race relations between Indian and black South Africans. Both the playwriting and the academic research have simultaneously informed and supported each other in my work. By this, I mean that *Race Trouble* (2012), as a play, has elucidated my understanding of race through my auto-ethnographic experience and research.

Research Questions:

Primary Research Questions:

A) What racial tensions, have I observed, that exist between Indian and black South Africans in post-apartheid South Africa?
B) What are some of the social, political and historical reasons behind such tensions?
C) From my observations, experiences and research on post-apartheid society, how does race and racism affect South Africans in their everyday lives and practices?
D) What are some of the parallels between violent crime and race as well as race relations in post-apartheid South Africa?
E) How have the above social, political and historical questions, combined with my experiences and identity, influenced the writing of my play *Race Trouble* (2012)?

Secondary Research Questions:

F) Briefly and broadly speaking, how are identity, race and racism being explored in post-apartheid South African theatre?
G) Briefly and generally, what place does theatre by South African Indians, especially Indian women, have in post-apartheid theatre?

The Process: Research and Content, Practice and Structure:

The literature used in this research report can be divided along two lines that, like the methodology of this research, are linked together. These two lines are that of research and content, as well as practice and structure.

By research and content, I am referring to the social and political issues that have been explored in this research. Broadly, this is the issue of post-apartheid race relations. More

specifically in relation to my play, other social issues that have been researched are that of race and its connection to trauma, violent crime and identity in post-apartheid South Africa. The reason these social issues are pertinent to the research is because in my play, the character Divya is a victim of a violent crime, trying to recover from this traumatic experience. *Race Trouble* (2012) and this written research report, by exploring the above issues, recognise the ways in which fear, violence and trauma combine to underpin racism in post-apartheid South Africa.

By practice and structure, I am referring to the theatrical research that was needed in order to effectively write and direct *Race Trouble* (2012). This includes the use of literature on post-apartheid plays and playwriting as well as analyses of several plays, both South African and international, that deal with race. The purpose of such investigations has been to assist me in my larger research and the choices I have made as a playwright. Furthermore, briefly investigating South African Indian theatre, particularly work by Indian women, has added to my research on post-apartheid playwriting and the auto-ethnographic approach of the project.

This is the theoretical framework of my research. The literature discussed in these two strands have influenced each other greatly and neither strand can exist in the research without the support of the other as its partner. In this regard, research conducted for the creative research project as well as the written report have gone hand in hand. Thus what the methodology of this research has explored is how a body of theory and my identity have influenced the practice of writing a play. The methodology used in this research has been flexible, and the four aspects of the methodology outlined below have worked together in writing both the play *Race Trouble* (2012) and the research report.

Aspect 1: Playwriting

Race Trouble (2012) has been written, edited, fleshed out and completed in this research. Playwriting, the main part of the creative practice, has been practiced in connection with directing and with the larger research into post-apartheid race relations and theatre. Furthermore, my identity and auto-ethnographic approach is deeply connected to both my practice of playwriting and the larger research questions.

Aspect 2: Directing

As stated previously, I have directed *Race Trouble* (2012) on three occasions and with regards to the research, it has been a secondary creative practice in service of the primary practice, playwriting and establishing a final script. Directing is, however, connected to my auto-ethnographic approach and identity as a South African Indian female playwright, director and researcher. Reflections on the creative process and my approach to it have been addressed in the research.

Aspect 3: Research

This aspect is intrinsic to and reliant upon aspects one and two because research into post-apartheid race relations and theatre, along with establishing and developing my craft as a post-apartheid artist, is the larger goal of this research report. My research into race and racism, post-apartheid race relations, identity, social issues such as crime, South African theatre, playwriting and directing has involved extensive reading and analysis of several ideologies, perceptions and existing plays that deal with race.

Aspect 4: Reflections

This last part of the methodology connects aspects one to three through journaling and reflection essays. I have employed, as part of my theatre directing course at the University of the Witwatersrand, the practice of writing production and reflection essays after the first run of *Race Trouble* (2012) in Johannesburg and for the second run in Durban, I employed the practice of journaling after each rehearsal. These personal writings have assisted me in my playwriting because, as relative to the auto-ethnographic direction of this research, my identity, experiences and capabilities have influenced *Race Trouble* (2012). However, in terms of this written research report, these reflections have not been a driving force of my analyses. Rather it has informed my academic writing indirectly. Nevertheless, I still considered these reflections and journal entries as significant and thus, they are included as appendixes to the research.

In understanding the relationship between the research and the creative practice and by extension, the relationship between the literature and methodology, one can think of this written research report as a somewhat intellectual interpretation of my understandings and experiences of race. The creative research project, the writing of *Race Trouble* (2012) is complimentary to and in conjunction with the written research, my lived, personal response

to my understandings and experience of race. Thus before proceeding further, a brief synopsis of my play *Race Trouble* (2012) must be given in order to understand the following analyses in the research report. *Race Trouble* (2012) is a play with two characters, an Indian female named Divya and a black male named Menzi. The synopsis of the play is the following:

> Divya is a victim of a violent crime. The number one question on her family, friends and community's mind is, "Were they black?" She seeks treatment from a trauma counsellor recommended to her. This counsellor, however, is Menzi, a black man. But growing up in a community and familial life where she strongly defied its racial prejudices, Divya begins counselling with him. Menzi, as a young, educated black man has also fought against racial stereotypes placed upon him. Through many sessions together, Divya and Menzi simultaneously confront their histories and face their futures. Thoughts and prejudices they denied they had, come to the surface for both of them. The harsh truth they realise is that they may be just as bad as the people whose ideas they've always hated.

Lastly, the following analyses in the research report are developed in an issue driven direction. Theories and concepts are discussed and directly related to the play *Race Trouble* (2012) and the auto-ethnographic approach of the research. For example, race in post-apartheid South Africa will be discussed in relation to the play and my identity. In this regard, the research and content, practice and structure and overall methodology of the research are woven together to create a detailed and complex analysis that answers the research questions set out in this introduction.

Auto-ethnography: "I'm not sure they are resting there"

Auto-ethnography, as a method, is necessary to consider in both practice and research when looking at race and racism because as Bulmer and Solomos state, "There has been a relevant dearth of reflection and debate on the range of methodological problems and dilemmas that confront those engaged in research in relation to the history and contemporary forms of racism and race relations" (2004: 1). In questioning how auto-ethnography extends

knowledge and affects theory and scholarship (taken to be formalized social scientific frameworks that seek to map out the real world and social actions in an objective fashion), Rahul Mitra states that in auto-ethnography, "doing is located within the ethnographer's very being since his or her standpoint shapes in intractable ways the methods and sites of study" (2010: 3). Mitra further states that auto-ethnography is, "a research framework that starts with lived experience and shared meaning between researcher and researched, mingling identity with practice" (2010: 7).

Secondly, auto-ethnography is widely used in performance studies which is aptly suited to this project and creative practice because, as Conquergood states, "performance studies struggles to open the space between analysis and action, and to pull the pin on the binary opposition between theory and practice" (2003: 311). Thus in opposition to the norms of the academy which is that of, "empirical observation and critical analysis from a distant perspective," performance studies, like auto-ethnography, is a way of investigating that is grounded in, "active, intimate, hands-on participation and personal connection" (Conquergood, 2003: 312). In my research, I have analysed the issue of race relations between Indian and black South Africans through my identity and by actively working through theatre.

Most significantly, auto-ethnography is a genre of writing and research that, "displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth…focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of personal experience; then looking inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract and resist cultural interpretations" (Alsop, 2002: 10). The character Divya in my play, is largely, but not entirely, based on myself. My process in the creative practice and written research was directly inspired by my identity and experiences. Thus my auto-ethnographic approach was a natural and organic step to take in the research. In my writing of *Race Trouble* (2012) and my broader research, what has played a prominent part whether consciously or inadvertently, are my experiences: my resistance and collusion with my identity, culture and community as well as my opinions and prejudices regarding race relations between Indian and black South Africans.

Therefore, the instinctive approach and process that I conducted in my work is what I identify as auto-ethnography. It has provided the intellectual framework of my research. My understanding of this method of social research is that it connects the researcher's experiences and identity to personally relevant broader political, social and cultural meanings and understandings. In brief, the researcher and his/her identity cannot be separated from the creative practice and research itself. Rather than limiting the researcher's subjectivity, auto-ethnography embraces it and draws connections between the individual and their society. As a result, with auto-ethnography deeply involving one's identity and experiences, this inevitably means that the experiences of others will be involved as we do not live our lives in isolation. In our families, workplaces, friendships and society, we are all connected and thus the concern of ethics arises when doing auto-ethnographic work. Even though different names and frames of reference are used, in *Race Trouble* (2012), it is readily apparent that this play is influenced by my experiences and the people who have surrounded these experiences. In *Race Trouble* (2012), my family, friends, community and I are all, whether abstractly or directly, subtlety judged in the play. Ethical concerns cannot be ignored by the practitioner or researcher. As Dee Heddon states, "Because our own lives never stand free of the lives of others, we are faced with our responsibility to those others whenever we write (perform) about ourselves" (2008: 1).

In my play and research, through auto-ethnography, I am addressing racial issues and the inequalities certain races experience as a consequence of apartheid. "Works tightly focused on inequality in relation to identity, though primarily *auto*biographical, are again often auto*bio*graphical, as the 'personal' is related to the wider cultural and social context, making reference to others almost inevitable – mothers, fathers, lovers, friends, enemies" (Heddon, 2008: 2). The question that ultimately arises from this ethical dilemma is whether or not it is morally worth it to use others, even indirectly, in your work? This is an impossible question to answer as how can one measure the political efficacy of a piece of theatre? (Heddon, 2008) In my play, Divya calls her eldest aunt a racist and anyone from my family who saw this would immediately recognise that in this instance, I am actually referring to my own paternal grandmother, a woman who, despite her faults, I dearly love. Some solace I could find to my ethical dilemma was the response of the artist Robbie McCauley when she was asked whether it was fair to stir her fathers in their graves in her performance dealing with the rape of her

great great grandmother. McCauley's answer was simply, "I'm not sure they are resting there" (Heddon, 2008: 2).

This profound answer sums up what I feel about my play, *Race Trouble* (2012). If I am troubled by race, then so are my family, friends and community. They may not realise it, they may reject it but we share similar experiences and histories that cannot be denied. The theory of *race trouble*, that inspired the title of this play and forms the crux of this research report, clearly indicates this by explaining that "race trouble draws attention to the social and material contexts in which we live our lives and which are socially constructed by conducting ourselves in racially orientated ways so that we start to feel, once again, 'raced' and at odds with each other" (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011: 26).

Race, racism and *race trouble*: The perception of the man on the street

As South Africa approaches twenty years of living as a democratic and free nation in 2014, it is clear that this country has undergone transformation in all sectors of society. Yet, the move away from institutional racism has not diminished the everyday significance of race, racial attitudes and prejudice between members of different race groups in South Africa. Race is an issue that, "persists in the form of racial suspicion, threat and conflict. We see evidence of race trouble in the news and the media, we feel it on the streets, and we live with it in our homes and places of work. All our lives are troubled by race most of the time" (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011: 1).

"In writing about race in South Africa, we have little choice but to use the racial classifications of the past…they acquired an experiential reality and people continue to see themselves as black, white, coloured or Indian" (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown: 2011: 31). Michael Benn, a trained psychologist who has done research into changes in racial perceptions in victims of violent crimes, further reiterates this point by stating that, "Racial stereotypes and categories have been part of South Africa society from the days of colonialism and apartheid and they continue to operate at present in post-apartheid South Africa" (2006: 3). Therefore in this research, the South African socio-historical categories of race such as black, white, Indian and coloured will be employed when analysing race and race relations in post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, the theory of *race trouble* will be

engaged to focus on the ways in which race as a socio-historical and political category affects people's everyday lives and practices in social situations. Thus race in this research is, "viewed as a social construct that draws our focus to the meanings that we are able to attach to either real or imagined biological or cultural markers and is powerfully operative in social constructs" (Benn, 2006: 3).

The pervasiveness of the social category of race in post-apartheid South African society results in a theatre that while challenging notions of race, also uses it as a way to define characters and tell stories. In offering insights into South Africa's emerging national identity, post-apartheid plays reflect, "the multitude of challenges, concerns, preoccupations and questions we as South Africans confront in our nascent, democratic state" (Homann, 2009: 1). Race and racial stereotypes are a preoccupation and concern in South African society. Racial stereotypes, for instance, are used in post-apartheid theatre not just for humour or to fit the context of the play. One hopes that through challenging stereotypes, an audience will recognise it as not real or tangible but rather as a perceived generalisation. In *At Her Feet* (Davids, 2006), for example the character Auntie Kariema, a Muslim Malay woman from Cape Town says, when talking to her niece about her father's family who are Indian, "You go there and you wear a sari with your stomach showing, and make a mess on your hands, and watch *Monsoon Wedding* and wave your arms about" (Davids, 2006: 32). Auntie Kariema, here, is not only critical of Indian people and what she perceives as their behaviour. She is also determined to point out her difference from such a stereotype and that in her everyday life, she does not behave this way.

Davids' play interrogates how stereotypes are used in the everyday lives of Muslim women from Cape Town. She is not asking whether these stereotypes are accurate or prejudiced. She is exploring how they affect the everyday actions of the characters in her play and what consequences these have on their lives. Similarly, Durrheim, Mtose and Brown are questioning, "how such discursive representations fit into and form part of the practical contexts of race trouble….Where does this happen (on what occasions)? How is the stereotype expressed? What functions does it serve?...We need to understand racial feelings and cognitions in the real-life contexts of their expression" (2011: 132-133). In *Race Trouble* (2012), I also question several stereotypes. For example, Divya questions Menzi's reading of

the *Post* newspaper and his hobby of surfing as these are stereotypically associated with Indian and white people respectively.

Now that race and racial stereotypes have been tabled within the context of this research, the concept of racism must be discussed. In explaining racism, French philosopher Tzvetan Todorov's racialist doctrine is useful. Todorov, a prolific writer on culture and history, states that "Racism is an ancient form of behaviour that is probably found worldwide" (Todorov, 2009: 68). Todorov presents classic racialist doctrine through a set of five coherent propositions: firstly, the existence of races, secondly, continuity between physical type and character, thirdly, the action of the group on the individual, fourthly, the unique hierarchy of values and fifthly, knowledge-based politics. For the purposes of this research, the first four propositions are necessary in explaining racism and its tenets as they deal with racism in terms of behaviour.[3]

Todorov states that while contemporary biology no longer uses the concept of race, the scientist's position has, "no influence on the perception of the man on the street, who can see perfectly well that the differences exist" (2009:69). Furthermore, the racialist believes that physical and moral characteristics are interdependent, that physical differences determine cultural differences and that an individual's behaviour is relative to the racial and cultural group to which they belong (Todorov, 2009). The racialist does not just feel that all races differ from each other but that some races are superior to others, physically and mentally. It is through this that the racialist develops a hierarchy of values with their race appearing at the top of this hierarchy.

Todorov's five propositions ultimately purports that race and racism are sociological constructions embedded in many people's minds as supposed 'facts,' that moral, physical, mental and emotional characteristics are determined by correlating the colour of someone's skin to their personality as well as identity and lastly, that certain races because of their

[3] Todorov differentiates between the terms racism and racialism, stating that the former designates behaviour while the latter is reserved for doctrines. Todorov's first four propositions deal with behaviour while the fifth, knowledge-based politics is connected to the four propositions and refers to doctrines because it is, "the need to embark upon a political course that brings the world into harmony with the description provided. Having established the 'facts,' the racialist draws from them a moral judgement and a political ideal. Here is where racialism rejoins racism: the theory is put into practice" (Todorov, 2009: 71).

supposed ‘characteristics’ are superior to other races. Todorov’s five propositions are the basis of the beliefs that my characters, Divya and Menzi, have been brought up on, in their families and communities. Having been raised on, so to speak, a racialist doctrine both Divya and Menzi have tried to defy this belief system. It is here that the theory of *race trouble* can be used to analyse the dilemma Divya and Menzi find themselves in.

In explaining the notions of *race trouble*, Durrheim, Mtose and Brown’s approach to racism, while not denying that it exists, purports that it is no longer sufficient to deal with South Africa’s legacy of racism, particularly in social, everyday interactions between people of different races (2011). When used as a tool for understanding the struggle against colonialism and apartheid, “The objective of the struggle was to unify the oppressed in the fight against white supremacy, and the concept of racism clearly identified the problem and demarcated the oppressors from the oppressed” (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011: 23). Now because South Africans live in a democracy with a majority rule, “it is unclear who is responsible for the persistence of racial segregation and inequality, the charge of racism no longer serves to separate oppressor and oppressed in a simple way. The boundaries delineating us from them have become blurred” (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011: 23).

Durrheim, Mtose and Brown’s solution to setting aside the fixed and polarising concept of racism is to propose that in post-apartheid South Africa, the investigation of race relations and social change, “can be informed by analyses of ongoing racial practices that are undertaken by people as they go about their ordinary lives: as people participate in forms of social life arranged around ideas about race, they are constituted as racial subjects in more complex and nuanced ways than can be captured by labels such as ‘racist’ or even ‘modern racist’” (2011: 2).

While the two characters in my play, Divya and Menzi, are not racist, they are conditioned by race and it affects their everyday lives. Divya and Menzi are troubled by this conditioning and try to defy it, especially Divya. The theory of *race trouble* is thus a starting point to explain Divya and Menzi’s states of mind and how through recognizing and openly dealing with their conditioning, they hope to transcend race in their relationship.

Durrheim, Mtose and Brown ask the following questions in their work:

> "How can it be that we remain stuck in the past in some way, with race still serving as the foundation for our relations with each other and the world in this fundamentally transformed society? How can racial distinction, inequality and segregation be perpetuated by our actions and interactions in a context where racism is illegal, counter-normative and shameful, and where massive efforts are being expended to eradicate it?" (2011: 23).

I agree with these sentiments and thus, it is for this reason that the theory of *race trouble* is used as the title of my play. Particularly, the question of racism as shameful is of interest to me. I find that most people, while in agreement that racism is reprehensible, deny that it exists within themselves. We, as South Africans, fail to recognise our racially motivated behaviour and even when we do acknowledge it, the reason of this being just the way things are in South Africa is often used. In my research, I intend to point out that such thinking is an excuse and must be confronted in South African society. Thus the questions Durrheim, Mtose and Brown seek to answer are also what I wish to answer when investigating race relations between Indian and black South Africans.

One of the first examples Durrheim, Mtose and Brown give regarding how race affects one's everyday lives and situations, can be seen in the stories of two women who work at the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper. Pearlie Joubert, a white journalist, recalls a situation at a dinner party at her house where a white acquaintance of hers complained about sitting next to fat people on planes and referred to a large woman who sat next to her as 'this mama.' This made Joubert immediately aware that her guest was referring to a black woman. Joubert stated afterwards that, "We keep those Friday-evening kitchen conversations private. But it's wrong. It makes me lie awake at night" (2011: 28). This is an example of everyday racism. "The history of racism infiltrated the present there as the word 'mama' was used to imply that fat black women are best avoided in planes. As the listeners colluded in this racist representation (by not speaking up) they were thus recruited as participants in this practice of race which was deeply troubling to Joubert" (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown 2011: 28-29). In *Race Trouble* (2012), the idea of keeping dinner conversations private is discussed by the characters. Divya says that in her family, "I bite my tongue when someone says, 'At the hospital today, this 14 year old girl gave birth. Of course she was black. Not surprising at all'" (2012: 73). Menzi also admits in the play that his mom has referred to Indians as

‘coolies’ (2012). While the expressions used in my play are blatantly prejudicial as opposed to being disguised through colloquial terms as they are in Joubert’s account, the issue of not speaking up and addressing racism is still the same.

An example of directly addressing racial prejudice can be seen in Mmanaledi Mataboge, a colleague of Joubert’s who discusses how she is treated by her white colleagues:

> “Many of you have somehow managed to forget me after working with me for a year. I failed to understand why only black people – from the cleaner right up to the chief executive – could remember me and you did not. I knew most of you by name but to you I was a total stranger…I feel that you do not see my talents and accomplishments; these are overshadowed by the colour of my skin” (Durrheim, Mtose and Brown, 2011: 29).

In my play, Menzi shares Mataboge’s feelings that he is not respected in his workplace when he admits angrily to Divya that, “I think, who are you fucking people to treat me like I’m not good enough? I have the qualifications” (2012: 85). The above statements by Joubert and Mataboge portray Joubert as racist on the one hand, and against anti-racism on the other. The same can be said for Mataboge who admits that, “she herself might be ‘operating from a racist position’” when she points out that she did not invite her white colleagues to a Women’s Day lunch at her house because she did not think they would come and instead invited only her black and coloured colleagues. Mataboge failed to reach out, and possibly Joubert may have felt that being excluded had something to do with her race (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 29). Menzi also admits he has racial prejudices of his own. Evidently then, what all the above statements show is that racial conditioning occurs at multiple levels in complex ways. Therefore, “everyone is troubled by race, regardless of their historical racial classification, and, in fact, these different troubles are interlinked” (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011: 30).

Durrheim, Mtose and Brown thus propose that, “An analysis of race trouble can be distinguished from an analysis of racism as a bottom-up, as opposed to a top-down approach” (2011: 30). This means that with racism, the concept or content is typically defined in advance and externally applied to everyday practices. Durrheim, Mtose and Brown disagree with this approach asking, “How, for example, does this approach help us to understand the

actions of Pearlie Joubert and Mmanaledi Mataboge? Are they racist or against racism?" (2011:30). They assert that placing complex everyday situations into the fixed framework of racism does not lend itself to the kinds of diversity present in social relations in post-apartheid South Africa (2011). Durrheim, Mtose and Brown thus believe that, "from our bottom-up perspective we are interested in studying the practices, acts of division and reactions that constitute race trouble" (2011: 30). They further claim that, "Pronouncing on the racism of one or other participant in social situations such as these effectively shuts down any further analysis…In our analysis of race trouble, racism is something that participants orient to and worry about, not a standard or measure that the analyst brings into the situation to pronounce on it" (2011: 30).

In the climax of my play *Race Trouble* (2012), Divya confronts Menzi because, after admitting her racial prejudices, she feels he has rejected her by referring Divya to another trauma counsellor. Divya admits to Menzi in the play that even before she was attacked, she has clutched her handbag closer to her when she has seen black men on the street. This is an example of everyday racism, a subconscious action that Divya eventually recognises as prejudiced. Divya says to Menzi of her admission, "I never should have said it out loud, not to anyone. Not even to you" (2012: 84). Menzi's actions here, in dealing with racism, is to shut down further contact with Divya, instead of working towards a solution. Divya's confrontation with Menzi and subsequent discussion results in these characters' acknowledging, as the theory of *race trouble* asserts, their racial conditioning and prejudices. In fact, at the end of the play, Menzi admits to Divya that he partly rejected her because he was also afraid to admit his own prejudices (2012).

Lastly, Durrheim, Mtose and Brown are not investigating why South Africans are constantly aware of race as the history of our country means that such thinking is inevitable. What is troubling to them is, "the persistent questioning of whether or not race is pertinent or has been applied in any particular context or activity" (2011: 24). These theorists further explore race relations between distinct races and its practical affects in our everyday lives. This will be referred to later in the research. In concluding here, it is necessary to understand Durrheim, Mtose and Brown's central argument which is that:

> "Transformation in South Africa has reshaped patterns and practices of encounter and exchange between historically defined race groups. We rub proverbial (and literal) shoulders with racially defined others who are our peers and bosses, our neighbours at home and in hospitals and bank queues; and yet we frequently maintain our distance. We manage to uphold our view of ourselves as egalitarian, unbigoted and fair minded while we participate in unequal relations and silently witness the violence and injustice that the racial underclass must endure. Race continues to feature prominently in these new forms of social interaction and, by participating in them, South Africans are cast once again as racial subjects, advantaged or disadvantaged, included or excluded, colonisers or colonised" (2011: 24).

Post-apartheid Theatre: How do we continue the story?

South African playwright Mike van Graan states that in the aftermath of apartheid the only interesting question was, how would the story end? Would there be a peaceful transition or more bloodshed? (2006). His answer to this is that actually, "While these latter questions have largely been answered, the story itself hasn't really ended. Rather, we have simply entered a new chapter" (2006: 276).

In embarking on writing a play within a post-apartheid context, I started in this research, to explore South African playwriting and how the story was being continued in theatre. Greg Homann explains that in the early 1990s, the period of transition in which South Africa became a democratic society, "Theatre makers were at a loss. The long-standing routine of creating protest-styled work was no longer relevant. Questions like: 'What now?', 'What are our stories?', and 'What is theatre's function in this new society?' emerged, leaving well-established playwrights and theatre-markers puzzled about what to reflect upon" (2009: 3).

A reinvention of theatre took place in which, instead of resistance and protest theatre, a more dialogical construction of character interaction was employed (Homann, 2009). This signalled, "the beginnings of a theatre that prioritised the personal, avoiding the solely

political circumstances of the characters. The monological mode of representing characters who shared a single point of view was slowly beginning to wane" (Homann, 2009: 5). Homann's anthology, *At This Stage: Plays from Post-apartheid South Africa* (2009), contain four plays, Lara Foot's *Reach*, Mike van Graan's *Some Mothers' Sons*, Craig Higginson's *Dream of the Dog* and Motshabi Tyelele's *Shwele Bawo!* (2009). Foot's and van Graan's plays are two-handers, Higginson's play has four characters and Tyelele's play has two women playing multiple characters. Each play is constructed dialogically and character interaction is an essential part of the story. Before writing *Race Trouble* (2012), I wanted dialogue and character interaction to be a vital part in telling Menzi and Divya's stories. In writing, I personally find that monologues can sometimes come off as self-righteous or too didactic. Thus I wanted to stay away from monological constructions in my writing. While my play does have some brief monologues, the primary interaction in *Race Trouble* (2012) is between the two characters and their conversations during Divya's counselling sessions. The work of the above playwrights and Homann's analysis assured me that the approach I wanted to take in my writing was valid and that there is, "a new confidence in writing plays in which the choice of form supports the plot and thematic concerns of the writer" (2009: 26).

With South Africa developing a new national identity after apartheid, as individuals we are also faced with the same challenges. One way in which an emerging national identity went hand in hand with personal identity is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in which victims and perpetrators of apartheid crimes came forward and spoke about the actions done by or taken against them. Homann explains the significance of the TRC by pointing out that it, "propelled us into a state that implored us to question who we are and, in asking this, the process validated our individualistic standpoint, our personal 'truth', thus seeking to challenge previously accepted notions of ourselves. As we strove, and continue to strive, to fashion our identity as a nation we also seek to affirm ourselves as individuals who hold differing and 'unique' points of view" (2009: 10). Upon reflecting on my play *Race Trouble* (2012) and especially the character Divya, I have come to recognise it as my individualistic standpoint and personal 'truth.'

In seeking to express my viewpoint on race relations between Indian and black South Africans, I looked to a playwright whose identity also directly influenced her work. Nadia Davids' play *At Her Feet* (2006) investigates Muslim female identity in post-apartheid South

Africa. Homann describes the play as, "among the best of a substantial group of one-person identity-specific shows made in this period that dealt with being South African, from very specific cultural standpoints" (2009: 13).

Firstly, Davids' play was influenced and inspired by her sister's thesis on Muslim women's identity in Cape Town. She states that, "My sister was my intellectual and emotional guide through the writing of this work…our work is inseparable, bound by familiarity" (2006: 16). My research and writing are also inseparable, my life and experiences have been my emotional guide and my research has been my intellectual guide. Davids' work was an assurance and example that it is possible to combine research, instinct, personal identity and experiences as well as theatre to create a play, which sums up and reflects one's unique standpoint in relation to their larger society.

Davids further states that while *At Her Feet* (2006) is not autobiographical in the traditional sense, it draws on composites of people she has known her whole life. This can be applied to *Race Trouble* (2012) in that, combinations of people, phrases and stories that I have seen and heard in my family, community and from my friends are evident in the play. Lastly, in working from a cultural standpoint, Davids represents one among many diverse groups in South Africa. She points to the distinctiveness of her work by saying that when exploring certain taboo issues, such as gender discrimination in the South African and global Muslim community, such work, "feels so specific because it is under-explored" (2006: 69). From my cultural and racial standpoint, the issue of race relations and tensions between Indian and black South Africans is specific and pressing, not just for myself but also the society in which I live, because it is a taboo issue that is under-explored.

Certain devices used by post-apartheid playwrights were helpful in my playwriting as it showed me ways in which I could express certain racial issues in a theatrical way. For example, in *At This Stage* (2009), "All four playwrights use names as a device to make their observations about the social interplay between South Africans. Apartheid constructed an entire discourse of undesirable language usage, whether it be the subservient use of names like '*baas*', 'sir', 'boss', or whether the discourse stemmed from a place of domination, with phrases like, 'garden boy' or 'the cleaning girl'" (2009: 24). In *Race Trouble* (2009), the character Divya speaks about her eldest aunt's racist behaviour and says that her aunt calls

her gardener 'boy' (2012: 80). Personally, I still find that black males, who are for instance petrol attendants, will refer to my father as '*baas*'. Furthermore, racially derogatory words like *coolies, honkies* and *kaffirs*, which describe Indian, white and black people respectively, are terms that I have been exposed to my whole life. This is reflected in the play where Menzi angrily says to Divya, "Coolies, Honkies. Kaffirs. Yes, I'm saying the words, you've said them too!" (2012: 86). The possible result of using such 'name games' is that they, "work as powerful strategies for a local audience, reminding us that if we are to reimagine ourselves we will need to redress not only how we share a country but how we speak to each other" (Homann, 2009: 25).

Adversely, sometimes using such undesirable language did not work in *Race Trouble* (2012) because it did not necessarily reflect my experiences, which I wanted to tell in the story. For example, Divya explains that people in her family say things like, "Oh at the mall today, this black cashier was so stupid, he couldn't even count properly" (2012: 73). A suggestion given to me was that instead of saying black cashier, I could change the gender of the cashier and refer to them as this 'mama' thus indicating in a less obvious and colloquial way that I am referring to a black female. While this use of disguised prejudice would have been effective, it is not reflective of my experience and thus did not work in telling Divya's story. I have heard blatant racial references to people such as the stupid 'black cashier.' Therefore, in my writing, while learning from other playwrights, I always had to go back and write from, as Davids says, my internal impulse (2006). I, like Davids, "am at a point in my life where I am trying in a very conscious way to address the issue of how it is that I relate to the outside world based on certain identities that have been prescribed" (2006: 68).

A play that didn't influence, in terms of specific devices, the writing of my play *Race Trouble* (2012) but rather the overall approach to the writing was David Mamet's *Race* (2010). To begin with, this excellent work by Mamet showed me that a play taking place in one room with very little action can be entertaining. In *Race* (2010), lawyers Jack, a white man, and Henry, a black man along with their assistant Susan, a black woman discuss the case of and with Charles, a white man who has been accused of raping a black woman. Very little action occurs during the play which is more a discussion of the case that is impacted, on occasion, by outside influences such as phone calls from opposing lawyers and policemen. In *Race Trouble* (2012), Divya's trauma and her attack are initially what is discussed. It is other

influences such as Divya's family, Menzi's past and the undeniable awareness of race that affect the lives of and relationship between Divya and Menzi. Secondly, Mamet's play, in dealing with race and racial tensions between black and white Americans, showed me that in playwriting, it is not always what is spoken that is important. Rather it is the subtext, what is not spoken, that is significant.

However, this proved to be the most challenging aspect of the writing: to not write didactically or in an obvious way that would take away the theatricality and effectiveness of the play. For example, Divya and Menzi argue about Menzi accidentally speaking to Divya's cousin and revealing that he is her trauma counsellor. Divya has kept this a secret because she feels that her family would disapprove of her counsellor being a black man. A confrontation results between the two characters and very little is spoken. Part of this conversation in *Race Trouble* is as follows (2012: 68-69):

> Divya: They just know that I come here. Not who I come to see.
>
> Menzi: I see
>
> Divya: I'm not ashamed.
>
> Menzi: Ashamed?
>
> Divya: You know…
>
> Menzi: I don't

In this conversation, Menzi knows exactly what Divya is trying to say but her fear to admit the truth and Menzi's anger that pushes for a confession result in a confrontation largely impacted by subtext.

In concluding the discussion of post-apartheid playwriting, plays that deal with race and how this has influenced my playwriting, Davids points out that the issues she deals with are, "not in any way endemic to Muslim communities. I believe I would have written about these

things through different stories had I been born into a different set of circumstances – I have just used the prism I have been given" (2006: 16-17). There are innumerable racial issues and problems in post-apartheid South Africa. In this research, through an auto-ethnographic approach, I am dealing with an issue that is specific to my identity and that I feel is neglected in the context of post-apartheid South Africa and theatre, two contexts that I exist and work within. Thus *Race Trouble* (2012), like *At Her Feet* (2006) are plays that offer diverse viewpoints and stories about post-apartheid South Africa. What playwrights can achieve with such work is explained by Homann who states that, "The action a playwright gives us is an 'object of speculation'. The words the characters speak proffer an idea to us. This idea may not be a shared position or one a majority may hold but that is the wonder of theatre; a play from the pen of a single person can offer multiple views or a singular dissident stance" (2009: 2).

The South African Indian Female Voice in Post-apartheid Theatre: Finding the universal in the unique experience

As my identity is directly located within this research and because I am a theatre studies student, the lack of plays by South African Indian women in post-apartheid South African theatre must be briefly explored. In her book *Reconsiderations: South African Indian fiction and the making of race in postcolonial culture* (2010: 5), Ronit Frenkel firstly asks, "What makes someone a South African Indian writer? What quantity of 'Indianness' is required? Can this label be applied on the basis of subject matter? Of parentage? Of ancestry?" Personally, my identity as a South African Indian fits all three of these categories. However, South African Indian culture is diverse and thus, while Frenkel's work addresses the gap in scholarship on South African Indian fiction, it also, "aims to problematize the idea of race on which the notion of Indianness rests" (2010: 1). Devarakshanam 'Betty' Govinden, in her book *Sister Outsiders* (2008), which explores the marginalisation of South African Indian women's writings, also states that in this field, "I simultaneously engage in a critical discussion of issues of identity and difference in relation to these writings and interrogate the very notion of 'South African Indian women'" (2008: 3)

While Frenkel and Govinden rightly recognise the problems associated with Indian identity, the purpose of their work in this research is to discuss why South African Indian literature has

been a neglected body of work (2010). As stated previously, this research employs the socio-historical categories of race such as white, black, Indian and coloured. Frenkel addresses this when stating that the neat racial taxonomies of apartheid logic resonate in contemporary South Africa because it, "has largely retained such categories of understanding" (2010: 2). Frenkel further states that, "As a body of literature, writing by South Africans of Indian descent has largely been excluded from the canon in post-apartheid South Africa" (2010: 6). When discussing Devarakshanam 'Betty' Govinden's book *Sister Outsiders* (2008), Frenkel points out the patterns of exclusion and inclusion that Govinden identifies when examining the major literary collections of the last decade:

> In *Perspectives on South African English Literature,* only two male writers of Indian descent are briefly mentioned. A similar trend is found in *Rethinking South African Literary History,* in which no writers of Indian descent feature, despite the text's attempt to shift into a more inclusive cultural history. In *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid and Democracy 1970-1995*, no writers of Indian descent are discussed" (2010: 23).

The Indian population in South Africa is one of the smallest minorities in the country and thus, this has perhaps played a part in literature from this community going unrecognised. However, such exclusion, "suggests that South Africans of Indian descent are marginal to culture to the extent that they almost did not exist during the time period examined" (Frenkel, 2010: 24).

Frenkel refers to Govinden once more when explaining that, "when inclusion occurs, it is usually a token few male writers who are acknowledged" (2010: 23). Thus the neglect of South African Indian fiction is not only a racial or cultural exclusion but also a gender based marginalization. Govinden indeed states that, "The exclusion of Indian women's writings in South Africa must be seen as a dimension of the larger exclusion of women's writings, white and black, from South African literature in general" (2008: 4). Another reason for such exclusion is that due to the history of apartheid and the separation of racial groups as well as the dominance of male writers, work by South African Indian women has been glossed over

by anthologists, publishers and researchers. Thus, “the literary achievements of Indian women have not been widely known by local Western audiences” (Govinden, 2008: 4).

Furthermore, Indian women have been marginalised in the field of South African literature because they are viewed as a minority within a minority (Govinden, 2008). South African Indian women are considered subgroups of the categories of non-white writers, secondary to, for example, black male and female writers, and within the category of South African Indian writers, women are seen as secondary to Indian male writers. Therefore, one must be crucially aware of, “the way in which a literary hierarchy tends to be patterned on the social hierarchy” (Govinden, 2008: 4-5). Frenkel reiterates this point when stating that, “In reading literature as a type of cultural history, I argue that a consideration of the seemingly marginal construction of South African Indian identity becomes central to understanding the ideological underpinnings of South African culture” (2010: 1-2).

My understanding here is that during apartheid, white writers, institutionally speaking, were at the top of the literary hierarchy. After apartheid, efforts to redress inequalities results in black writers being at the top. In both cases, Indian writers, especially Indian women, have been stuck in the middle and marginalised resulting in what Govinden calls a ‘cycle of neglect’ (2008: 4). “It has been detrimental, among other things, to the development of a more vigorous culture of writing and publishing, and to a fuller appreciation of the works that have already been produced” (Govinden, 2008: 4).

An example of existing work by Indian female playwrights being unappreciated is the work of Muthal Naidoo, a playwright that before reading Govinden’s book, I had never known. Naidoo has been involved in theatre since the 1950s and although this research is focused on post-apartheid theatre, the personal connections I have found with Naidoo’s approach and work is relevant to my auto-ethnographic process (Govinden, 2008). Furthermore, the marginalization of South African Indian playwrights in post-apartheid theatre is greatly influenced by the treatment South African Indian playwrights experienced during apartheid. Naidoo, “distinguishes three types of Indian theatre in South Africa – the dramatization of the great Indian epics, adaptation of classical European plays to a local context and works that draw on local apartheid realities” (Govinden, 2008: 111). Naidoo’s plays fall into this last category. Along with Indian male playwrights such as Ronnie Govender, she was a part of

developing indigenous theatre in South Africa. By working experimentally using protest theatre, Naidoo was, "the only women writer in this progressive group" (2008: 111).

Naidoo's plays, along with the works of several other Indian playwrights, felt and saw, "themselves in the main as South African writers rather than as 'Indian' writers. If their writing is about Indians, they contend, it is still about 'South African' life" (Govinden, 2008: 112). This inclusionary view is one I agree with and in writing *Race Trouble* (2012), while my Indian identity is significant, it is particularly my experiences as a South African that are important. Like Nadia Davids, I worked with the prism I have lived within, South African Indian culture and relative to this, race relations between Indian and black South Africans (2006). Therefore in this research I have investigated South African theatre, because like Muthal Naidoo, I want my work to be accepted in this context. However, such recognition is difficult to achieve as Ronnie Govender, who is probably South Africa's most prolific and popular Indian playwright, points out that even in post-apartheid South Africa, his work is still seen through the apartheid lens in which individuals and groups are viewed in terms of race and ethnicity (Govinden, 2008). Govender explains that, "I didn't write this because I wanted to do something on Indians but because it was my life and my world…I believe one has to find the universal in the unique experience. That is not ethnic, that is how art is made. Outside this country one appreciates this, but here we are invariably dubbed as Indians" (Govinden, 2008: 112). Upon reflection and in conjunction with the auto-ethnographic approach of my work, I, like Govender, wrote *Race Trouble* (2012) because it is a profound part of my life and my world. Just as Davids (2006) states that the themes she explores are not endemic to the South African Muslim community, I have, using the universal issue of race and racism, explored my unique experiences of race relations between Indian and black South Africans.

One of Naidoo's plays, *Coming Home*, first performed in Durban in 1982, is her critical response to living in a racially divided society. S'hlobo, a black stranger, arrives at the home of David and Sally Kane, a progressive white couple. "The couple's safe space is invaded and there is a gradual shift in the political positions between the two sides, with the liberal views of the white couple changing into suspicion and violence against the black man and the black man showing up their racial bigotry" (Govinden, 2008: 114). Even though *Coming Home* does not have Indian characters in it, it is still a relevant play as Naidoo has, in exploring the

nuances of racial relationships in the context of fear and suspicion, done what I set out to explore in *Race Trouble* (2012). Furthermore, although written in the 1980s, *Coming Home*, "has a particular relevance to the politics and social relations in South Africa in the present time, where issues surrounding the psychology of race and racism are still pertinent" (Govinden, 2008: 116). Thus Naidoo, it seems, has already explored the notions of *race trouble* in her work.

Regarding post-apartheid theatre, Govinden states that writing by South African Indian women in the 1990s is diverse with publications in different genres (2008). However, I find that specifically regarding plays, work by South African Indian women is limited and even where such work exists, it is marginalised. In my experience, as a theatre studies student at both the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and at the University of the Witwatersrand, the only play by a South African Indian playwright that I have studied is Krijay Govender's *Women in Brown* (1998). Govinden refers to other playwrights and plays such as Devi Sarinjeive's *Acts of God*, Rekha Nathoo's *Slices of the Curry Pie* and Candice Thaker who, in her work, revised Sarinjeive's script (2008).

While such work is significant to the development of post-apartheid playwriting by South African Indian women, it is worth noting that Nathoo and Thaker's work were a part of their studies as honours students in the University of Natal's Pietermaritzburg drama department. While Krijay Govender also wrote *Women in Brown* as part of her studies, this play has subsequently been published and performed at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival. It has thus received exposure in South African theatre. Adversely Sarinjeive's play *Acts of God*, will according to Govinden, be published in a collection entitled *Siyabola – Nine plays by South African Women Playwrights*, edited by Hazel Barnes and Lynn Chemaly (Govinden, 2008). Thus Sarinjeive, an English professor at Vista University in Sebokeng, an academic, has had to wait for over a decade for her work to be recognised and published. Such exclusion, however, is to be expected when Muthal Naidoo, considered by Govinden as one of the most significant women playwrights in South Africa, has plays that have not been widely circulated nor published and thus, "have suffered from the absence of serious critical consideration" (2008: 116).

In concluding my brief exploration into the South African Indian female voice in post-apartheid South African theatre, I wish to highlight two points. Firstly, it is clear that both during and after apartheid, "South African writers of Indian extraction seem to have been marginalised in the Black-White dichotomy that pervades the South African literary landscape" (Govinden, 2008: 112). Secondly, as a South African Indian female playwright, I write, like Naidoo, to feel liberated and although my work may not always concentrate on South African Indians, it will always focus, "resolutely on South Africa" (Govinden, 2008: 116).

I staged *Race Trouble* (2012) at the Musho Theatre Festival in order to showcase the play to a wider audience. Whether my play deserves recognition or not is up to the individual. However, what the history of marginalisation of South African Indian female playwrights evidently shows is that it is difficult to even get your foot in the door of South African theatre. Hopefully this research, like Frenkel and Govinden's work, will shed some light on the need to address such exclusion.

Race relations and tensions between Indian and black South Africans: The ways in which we are different to 'other blacks'

Race relations between Indian and black South African is the key aspect in this research and in my play *Race Trouble* (2012). The impetus to explore this is based on two things: shame and neglect. Personally, I have witnessed, in my family and community, racial hatred towards black South Africans. Yet, as Divya also says several times in the play, I have bitten my tongue and not confronted the issue because I have been afraid to speak out. Personally, the irony of the issue that today I believe my family would accept a white man as my husband far more than a black man and yet black and Indian South Africans were once united in the fight against apartheid, is not lost on me. As Divya says when discussing marriage in *Race Trouble* (2012), "Well, you know the rule with us. No BMW's…No Blacks, Muslims or Whites. In that order" (2012: 66). Thus, from my personal observations, I began to question the nature of the tensions that exist between Indian and black South Africans.

Furthermore, I find it frustrating that in dealing with race relations in post-apartheid South Africa, this is always mainly dealt with in terms of white versus black. Indeed, in this research, I have not encountered a single book that directly deals with race relations between Indian and black South Africans. Instead, such issues are either entirely neglected or are secondary or even minor additions to work dealing with racial tensions in post-apartheid South Africa. When I began this research and writing my play, the first step was to find out if others shared the observations I had about Indian South Africans, particularly their relations with black South Africans. Secondly, as I had very little knowledge about how black South Africans feel towards Indian South Africans, to gain insight, I had to conduct research in this area.

In her research, "*What is Black?": Black Racial Identity through Biography in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2003), Sandra Peterson investigates notions of an inclusive Black racial identity[4] and whether or not in post-apartheid South Africa, "Black South Africans have an inclusive understanding of a Black racial identity (inclusive of Indian, Coloured and African) as was advocated under the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)" (2003: 8). Peterson's intention was to, "examine the extent to which an awareness of a positive Black identity was prevalent in South Africa, based on the assumption that an inclusive definition is positive, progressive and desirable" (2003: 8). Peterson's research, in which she questioned Indian, coloured and black South Africans about their racial identity, found that the majority of respondents did not primarily see themselves as part of an inclusive identity. Furthermore, respondents actually distanced themselves from an inclusive Black racial identity (2003). Peterson states that, "Interestingly, respondents identify and describe themselves more by what they do not consider themselves to be, as opposed to what they think they are…respondents highlight more strongly the ways in which they are different to 'other blacks' and never really voice the ways in which they may indeed be similar" (2003: 56). Thus to be Indian is to not be black and vice versa. Therefore Peterson's question of whether a positive inclusive Black racial identity is prevalent in post-apartheid South Africa was answered in the negative. "Respondents speak about Black identity in a way that exaggerates

[4] The term 'Black' has been capitilised when discussing or quoting Peterson's work as this is how she refers to it in her research which investigates inclusive 'Black' racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa. Peterson defines the term 'Black' as including 'African', 'Coloured' and 'Indian' South Africans. My research separates this using the race categories of Indian and black South Africans.

the differences between the three groups (Indians, Coloureds and Africans) and sets up distinct boundaries" (Peterson, 2003: 85).

The point to be taken from Peterson's overall research, which is very briefly touched on here, is that the socio-historical categories of race in South Africa are not only significant forms of identity for non-white South Africans. They are also used, by individuals from one race group, to differentiate and separate themselves from people of other races. In *Race Trouble* (2012), both Divya and Menzi would like to pretend that race does not matter to them, that racial prejudice is a part of South African life that they try to ignore. However, what comes to light is that their racial conditioning and subsequent biased thoughts are inescapable, unless they confront it. This is the journey that they take in the play.

My journey in writing the script led me to seek reassurance or validation that my experiences and observations were not unique. Jonathan Jansen in his book, *Knowledge in the Blood* (2009), describes how he encountered racial tensions between Indian and black South Africans. He states that, "It was in this former university for South Africans of Indian descent (UDW) that I saw, for the first time, the real dilemmas of racial interaction, racial intolerance, and racial camaraderie among African and Indian staff and students. It was here that I found how race and ethnicity could be invoked by and among black people for very destructive political interests. For example, being 'African' could be cited to demand privilege against 'Indians'; being 'Indian' could be asserted to retain social distance from the 'African'" (2009: 2).

Jansen also helped validate and add new dimensions to certain personal experiences that I explored in *Race Trouble* (2012). For instance, the issue of Indians frequently becoming doctors is discussed by both Divya and Menzi. Divya speaks about her cousin who, despite getting eight distinctions in matric, did not get into UKZN's medical school. She says, "It really pissed my uncle off. He studied in Natal and is a doctor himself" (2012: 72). Menzi, whose mother is a nurse, talks about how it bothers his mother that so many of the doctors she works for are Indian (2012). My identity is significant here because I come from a family of doctors including my parents, sister and brother in-law. Furthermore, my sister who achieved six distinctions in matric did not get into UKZN's medical school and my parents are both alumni of this institution. She instead went to study at the University of the

Witwatersrand. My sister's story is one among many that I have heard, with blame usually being placed on racial quota systems at the university accepting more black students than Indian ones. I have observed a disdain in the Indian community, that black students are accepted with weaker results over Indian students who have excelled at school.

Menzi's response that Divya's uncle is a doctor is instinctively, "Of course he is" (2012: 72). This reveals the negative attitude Menzi perhaps has towards Indian doctors, that has been conditioned in him by his mother's beliefs. Before writing this part of the play, I thought that the stereotype of Indians becoming doctors was not a contentious issue for non-Indian South Africans. However, one of Jansen's observations changed this. He states that, "I often heard my colleagues making disparaging remarks about 'Asians' in the medical school and their disproportionate representation in the health sciences. It is a powerful stereotype of Muslim and Hindu South Africans that they are obsessed with becoming doctors, a profession that holds particularly high status in this community" (2009: 161). Jansen's comments here opened my eyes to the fact that discrimination is felt on both sides and that racial tensions do indeed exist between Indian and black South Africans in this regard.

In dealing with the stereotype of Indians and the medical profession, the combination of auto-ethnography working with my research is evident. My observations and experiences matched with my intellectual research worked together in developing my understanding of race relations between Indian and black South Africans and thus this assisted me in writing my play *Race Trouble* (2012). Another example of this working method is in my exploration into affirmative action in post-apartheid South Africa and the issue of Indians and coloureds receiving certain advantages during apartheid. Personally, while I believe that people should be employed on the basis of merit, not race, I am not naïve and recognise that in order to address present inequalities as a result of apartheid, affirmative action, as Divya views it in my play is, "a necessary evil" (2012: 72). As a history student in high school and university, the use of Bantu education, in which black South Africans were only given education that could get them working-class jobs, has always struck me as one of the most devastating acts of apartheid. It is, I believe, one of the reasons the majority of black South Africans continue to be economically disadvantaged after apartheid. Indian and coloured South Africans were not forced to endure Bantu education and while not receiving the best education in the country, still received better treatment than black South Africans in this regard.

I wished to explore the above issues in my play. Firstly, I looked for a reassurance that my observations were not unfounded. Durrheim, Mtose and Brown briefly explore these same issues in their work when they explain that Indian and coloured South Africans are caught in the middle when it comes to addressing the social, political and educational consequences of apartheid. On the one hand, "Under apartheid, coloureds and Indians perceived themselves as too black to enjoy the privileges of white advantage, and in the post-apartheid order many feel that they are viewed as too white to be beneficiaries of affirmative action, employment equity and other legislative policies designed to redress black disadvantage" (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011: 31-32). On the other hand, Indian and coloured South Africans are, "sometimes constructed as relatively privileged and are positioned, alongside whites, as beneficiaries of apartheid" (2011: 44-45). Therefore, during and after apartheid, "The conflicted status of Indian and coloured communities – sometimes aligned with white interests, sometimes with black interests – persists" (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011: 31-32).

This dilemma that Indian South Africans find themselves in is expressed in the play by Divya when she discusses the recent use of an anti-Indian song. The *Amandiya* song, performed in one of renowned South African playwright Mbongeni Ngema's play in 2002, was considered as inciting racial hatred towards Indians (Frenkel, 2010). The song "includes lines such as 'The Indians don't want change, even Mandela has failed to convince them' and 'I have never seen Dlamini immigrating to Bombay, India. Yet, Indians arrive in Durban everyday…'" (Frenkel, 2012: 21). In 2012, a decade since the song was ruled racially offensive by the South African Human Rights Commission, I came across a story in the *Post* newspaper about an Indian school principal at Khulabebhuka high school who was racially insulted and taunted by three black teachers in her school who sang the *Amandiya* song.

As the character Divya is a sub-editor at Natal newspapers, incorporating this story into my play *Race Trouble* (2012) worked in that it easily came up as a point of conversation as Divya says she worked on editing the article for the newspaper. Divya's anger speaks to certain negative stereotypes of Indian South Africans in the song, which Frenkel does not address, such as that Indians steal and bribe government leaders. Menzi, while understanding Divya's anger points out to her that, "These teachers are probably mad that an Indian woman

has a top job in a school and in an area that is probably 100% black" (2012: 71). Divya's response to this is, "So? Is that wrong? Are South African Indians considered foreigners now? Not white enough during apartheid, not black enough today?" (2012: 71). This last potent phrase I first heard from my mother.

Ngema's response to the controversy surrounding the *Amandiya* song was that it represented the feelings of the man on the street and that his play, "merely reflected a conversation that could be overheard at any bus stop in Durban" (Frenkel, 2010: 21). The above is an example of how I learnt, through research, about certain attitudes black South Africans have towards Indians. Another example of this can be found in Makhosazana Xaba's essay *Serene in My Skin* (2009). In this personal account, Xaba, recalls a conversation with a friend, also from Durban, who said that in KwaZulu-Natal, "Everyone owns a Coolie" (2009: 56). Xaba's friend then clarified his reasoning for this by explaining that, "In our home province economic power is still in the hands of the Indian population…That's why our people, read Zulus, are turning Indians into friends, so that they can have access to their money" (2009: 56). While Xaba's observations here were not directly used in my play, they informed my understanding of race relations between Indian and black South Africans.

Durrheim, Mtose and Brown conducted a study in 2008 where they asked 693 students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal to list positive and negative traits that 'come to mind' when thinking of people of different race groups (2011). There were six race groups in this category: Urban black Africans, Rural black Africans, Indians, Coloureds, English whites and Afrikaans whites. The results are listed in order of the most to the least popular views. Regarding Indians, they are seen firstly as traditional, secondly as religious, thirdly as insular, fourthly as racist and fifthly as intelligent (2011). It is important to note that only Indians, English whites and Afrikaans whites were seen as racist with Afrikaners seen as the most and English whites as the least racist (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011). Therefore, according to this study, Indians are considered to be more racist than English whites. As Durrheim, Mtose and Brown's book is concerned with people's everyday lives and practices, Indians, it seems, are engaging in their own racist practices. The above study quantified for me that the shame I feel regarding racism in my Indian community is not unfounded.

Finally, regarding Durrheim, Mtose and Brown's study, it is important to note that both rural and urban black Africans are viewed as criminal by other race groups (2011). The stereotype of black South Africans, especially black men, as violent criminals is the key view or cause of conflict between Divya and Menzi in *Race Trouble* (2012). Divya admits that although she cannot be sure of the race of her attackers, she has always seen them as black men. Menzi's struggle is in dealing with the prejudices placed upon him because he is a black man. Along with feeling that he is seen as uneducated and under qualified for his job as a trauma counsellor, Menzi finds that his black skin and gender will always be associated with violence and criminality. Michael Benn's research clearly shows that non-black South Africans live in fear of the black man (2006). How this stereotype operates in post-apartheid South Africa, particularly between Indian and black South Africans, and the effect it has on black masculinity will be discussed in the following sections of the research. In concluding this section on race relations between Indian and black South Africans, the power of such stereotypes on everyday life can be seen in Imraan Coovadia's essay *Midnight* (2009), when he states that, "The anxiety which saturates Indian life in Durban may not be exceptional amongst battered South Africans. Uncertainty is the major force in our lives: we don't know if our cars are going to be there the next morning, if our families are going to be there, if our country is going to be there" (2009: 47).

I live with this anxiety. I have woken up to find a car gone from my family's driveway. I constantly worry not because I am scared to have material items taken from me. I live in fear because I dread that one day I could be brutally attacked or lose a loved one to violent crime. What alarms me the most, however, is that my own racial conditioning and prejudices mean that these fears have a face that is racially based: the face of the black man.

Violent Crime and Racial Perceptions: Confronting my internal racism

In *Race Trouble* (2012) Divya says to Menzi that she has come to counselling because she wants to stop living in fear. Personally, many members of my family have been victims of violent crime. My mother was strangled in a smash and grab robbery. Furthermore, the nature of Divya's attack and robbery is based on an incident in which my uncle and two of my aunts were attacked and robbed in their home. Like one of my aunts, Divya was tied up and hit, "With the butt of his gun, on the left side of my face" (2012: 67). My uncle, in this incident,

was tortured with a hot iron. However, I chose not to make this a part of Divya's story. At the time of the incident, I was in matric, writing my trial exams, and the robbery made the front pages of Durban newspapers just like Divya's story does in the play. The point here is that whether directly or indirectly, the issue of violent crime is deeply personal to me and is therefore very significant to my research and my play. Furthermore, even though I have never been a victim of a violent crime, my loved ones have been. Thus I have been shaken by these incidents and am, as Coovadia says, constantly anxious and fearful (2009).

The effect of a traumatic incident on one's racial perceptions is investigated by Michael Benn in his research, *Perceived Alterations in Racial Perceptions of Victims of Violent Crimes* (2006). Benn worked for four years as a trauma counsellor at a suburban trauma counselling unit, linked to a local police station in Johannesburg, South Africa. It is here that Benn conducted his interviews and research (2006). Benn firstly states that the majority of the clients seen at the unit were, "victims of violent crime that had been perpetrated against them by black perpetrators" (2006: 2). He further observes that, "many traumatized clients developed antagonistic attitudes and mental schemas towards the race groups that their attackers represented" (2006: 2). However, Benn explains that some of these racial beliefs are held prior to the trauma and this is known as internal racism. However, now these feelings are more intense and the trauma provides a justification for one's racial beliefs (2006).

Prior to writing *Race Trouble* (2012), I had virtually no knowledge about trauma and its effect on individuals in their everyday lives. Furthermore, I needed to briefly explore the profession of trauma counselling. Therefore Benn's research, particularly its focus on racial perceptions, was ideal in helping me write my play and allowed me to understand and develop both my characters. With Divya, exploring Benn's notions of internal racism was extremely helpful. In my play, Divya and Menzi are not overtly racist. In fact, they consider themselves to be non-racial. However, like a racist person, they do not view their racism as existing internally but rather as part of the "outside world in which it is readily accessible and on view" (Benn, 2006: 60). Racism is thus externalised, disowned and, "almost always invisible for racists in their own internal world, and one often struggles to find people who think of themselves as racist, even if others think of them this way" (Benn, 2006: 60). Therefore, whether one's subtle or overt racism is deliberate or unconscious, an internal racism, especially considering the apartheid history of South Africa, exists in many

individuals who are either deliberately or subconsciously denying such prejudice. Divya and Menzi are at first, unaware of their internal racism but then come to the realisation that they have been living in denial.

One of the ways that internal racism subconsciously operates is physically. Benn states that many participants' anxiety resulted in the need, "to reduce physical contact with the perpetrators race group…The reported actions of the participants illustrate how they appear to be attempting to physically create a safe space because such a space cannot be achieved psychically or internally" (2006: 101). Divya does this on several occasions in which she instinctively flinches at Menzi's cordial and comforting touch. Her actions can be understood as an instinctive physiological response that reflects, "the loss of the ability to interpose thought between impulse and action" (Benn, 2006: 102). Divya who believes that she is non-racial, is actually behaving in racially motivated ways. At the end of the play, Divya becomes aware of this and she recognises that she is conditioned and troubled by race to the extent that it affects her everyday life at a physical, mental and emotional level.

An enduring image that sticks in my mind is of an Indian woman clutching her handbag closer to her as a black man walks past her on the street. Personally, when I was younger and in high school, I must shamefully admit that I have committed such an act. I have seen black men as dangerous. This incident is used in the climax of the play when Divya tells Menzi how she recently saw a black man on the street, clutched her handbag closer to her, panicked and went into a shop just to get away from him. Divya then explains that while she hasn't had a panic attack or run away before, she admits that, "I've clutched my handbag closer to me when I've seen a black man on the street before. Before I was attacked" (2012: 82). While some may consider such an action to be relatively harmless, highlighting only crude forms of direct racism, such as a racist attack, results in internal racism being seen as insignificant (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011). However, to live daily with racial prejudice and covert racist comments is as oppressive, at least emotionally and mentally, as direct forms of racism and racist attacks.

Three participants whose perpetrators were black men describe how they continually guard themselves against black men with Benn summarising, "If it is a white person, they are able to relax, while a black person signals to them the presence of threat and danger. They felt

there was no way of knowing which black people were violent and, therefore, all black people were seen as potentially harmful" (2006: 98). Furthermore, one of Benn's participants describes her automatic responses to black men as, "Totally primitive and totally physical and totally physiological…It did not make sense. It has made me realise how shaky I am about some of the things I think are my conviction" (2006: 103). Divya is affected in this way as well and is forced to question her conviction that she is not a racist person. Menzi, on the other hand, feels unfairly treated.

What prevents people from dealing with racial prejudice is, "the fact that being openly racist and acknowledging one's own racism is a social taboo" (Benn, 2006: 130). Moreover, it is easier to live with unconscious guilt. Divya's initial denial is her unconscious guilt and it is perpetuated in order to prevent further anxiety. Rather than being consciously experienced, unconscious guilt is suppressed (Benn, 2006). "The process thus becomes circular and self-reinforcing" (Benn, 2006: 61). Divya's choice to no longer repress her unconscious guilt is her first step in breaking the cycle of her internal racism. Menzi, as a counsellor, at first plays a part in repressing Divya's unconscious guilt for two reasons. Firstly, "One of the difficulties of working with negative racial perceptions is that, while they need to be confronted, the initial focus in trauma debriefing is often around serious trauma-related symptoms (intrusive thoughts, flashbacks and difficulties in functioning) as opposed to confronting racial prejudice. Another difficulty for counsellors is that of treading the balance between acknowledging the anger of victims related to their sense of injury and addressing their emerging, often hostile racial attitudes" (Benn, 2006: 2). Menzi focuses on Divya's trauma-related symptoms, such as her resistance to talk about her attack and her subsequent insomnia. Secondly, reasons Benn gives as to why therapists and counsellors may avoid discussing race with trauma victims is that they may fear losing empathy with their client or adversely, the trauma victim's story may evoke the internal racism and racial anxieties of the counsellor themselves (2006).

This unlocking of the counsellor's internal racism happens to Menzi. His anger at what he feels is a rejection by non-black South Africans in his workplace comes to the surface when Divya, after admitting her internal racism, feels rejected by Menzi. With racism being a social taboo, Divya says to Menzi that, "I never should have said it out loud. Not to anyone. Not even to you" (2012: 84). Menzi reacts to this and tells Divya that she is, in fact, repulsed

by him because of his black skin. He refers to Clive, a white colleague of his, as someone who is a more popular counsellor at the trauma centre. Menzi says to Divya that, "Even when their attacker is not a black man, they avoid me. Oh but Clive is always busy, always fully booked…Do you know how it feels to be judged at every turn, to never be free of prejudice?" (2012: 85). Menzi's admission of his internal racism comes when he tells Divya that, "After the handbag incident, I was this close to telling you how much I hated the non-black people who have come here and rejected my help because I'm black. How I've called them coolies and honkies quietly to myself…I was going to tell you how sometimes, I think that about Indian, white and coloured people I've never met, strangers in the street" (2012: 86).

To sum up, a brief exploration into how the influences of Menzi and Divya's families have affected their racial conditioning is necessary here in that such influences can be seen to have affected the characters in my play on a deeply emotional and psychological level. Benn states that, "The participants' previous political views and family history in regards to racism played some role in counteracting or increasing racial generalisations" (2006: 118). One of Benn's participants recalled how a previous crime that happened to his mother before he was born resulted in the incident being, "discussed within the family and almost passed down to the children as a lesson as to how dangerous black men are" (2006: 86). This recollection can be seen as an example of indirect knowledge (Jansen, 2009). Jonathan Jansen explains that this concept involves, "the transmission of historical knowledge about national, communal and familial events into the minds and hearts of second-generation children" (2009: 52). The two significant components of indirect knowledge is firstly that it is relational, meaning that, "there cannot be knowledge of a child without knowledge of an adult' (Jansen, 2009: 53-54). Secondly, there is the component of influence. "That there is an impact is not contestable…The question is, what does this knowledge do to the generation of children who come after? (Jansen, 2009: 53).

Divya and Menzi, regardless of their non-racial beliefs, are faced with the dilemma of loving family members whose racist attitudes and actions appal them. However, they also find that they have sometimes instinctively resorted to such racist thinking. For example, the robbers who attacked my uncle and aunts were black men and thus the notion of black men as dangerous has been passed down, from generation to generation, in our family. Without fail, every time someone is a victim of crime in my family, the assumption is that the criminals

were black men. The affirmation of this assumption is also always the first question that is asked when enquiring about the relevant crime. Thus for myself and by extension the character Divya, the constant assumption that all criminals are black men is ingrained. Divya finds that this stereotype is part of her internal racism. For Menzi, it is his grandfather whose hatred of non-blacks caused conflict in their relationship. Despite not agreeing with his grandfather's views, when prejudicially attacked, Menzi's grandfather's beliefs and stories are so ingrained in him that he admits to sometimes thinking that his grandfather was right all along. He says to Divya that, "I sometimes think, like my grandfather, that this rainbow nation is bullshit and you should all go back to wherever the hell you descended from!" (2012: 86).

In concluding my investigation into violent crime and racial perceptions, it is important to note that despite the evident connections between racial perceptions and trauma, Benn found that in counselling it, "had remained an unprocessed aspect that was never mentioned or spoken about" (2006:130). However, when discussing the issue with Benn, "All of the participants expressed having received therapeutic value from talking about the changes to their racial perceptions" (2006: 129). As a result, when racial perceptions are ignored in counselling, it is seen by participants as not being wholly effective and due to fear of what others will think and embarrassment, a counsellor may be one of the few people one can share and discuss their racial prejudice with (Benn, 2006). This cathartic process is experienced by both Divya and Menzi. By the end of *Race Trouble* (2012), through admitting and challenging their racist thoughts, Divya and Menzi begin to heal. Thus as a counsellor, Benn's conclusive approach to dealing with racial perceptions is to not ignore it. Rather it is necessary, "to understand that these racist ways of operating are part of symptomology, and therefore that it is part of the therapist's job to facilitate the healing process" (2006: 135).

Thus Benn's work, like the concept of *race trouble* deals with confronting people's daily racially motivated behaviour (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011). However, Benn looks at this through a specific lens. He explores how the combined issues of violent crime and racial perceptions impact the everyday lives of both victims and the race group of their respective perpetrators (2006). Benn has given me extensive insight into Divya and Menzi's relationship and generally how a deeply problematic issue in post-apartheid South Africa can affect race relations between Indian and black South Africans. Therefore Benn's research, the theory of

race trouble and my play aim to show that subtle racist behaviour and internal racism is actually very harmful, for both the perpetrators and victim. In order for any change to take place, the admission and challenging of such racism is essential.

Black Masculinity: 'Slave to my appearance'

Establishing the character Divya was easy in that I largely drew from my personal identity and experiences. Conversely, establishing the character Menzi was difficult in that in order to find his voice, I had to start from scratch. Initially, I simply knew that I wanted the character Menzi to love Indian food and to have a mother who was a nurse. However, just as I needed to conduct research to explore how black South Africans feel about their fellow Indian citizens, I also had to investigate notions of black masculinity. I then had to employ this research in creating this character. In some cases, my research was directly used. For example, Menzi's grandfather was constructed in my play as a representation of the view that Indian and coloured South Africans benefitted from apartheid in certain ways (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown). In some cases, my research was not directly used in establishing Menzi's character. For example, the stereotype of Indians as wealthy and good in business that Xaba discusses, was not addressed by Menzi and Divya (2009). Therefore, I had to work out whether an issue effectively progressed the story and character development before putting it into the play. Forcing an issue onto Menzi and Divya's lives that was not relevant would have resulted in the play having a contrived and didactic style, which I wanted to avoid.

Regarding the notions of black male identity, what does it mean to stereotype the black man, for instance, as a dangerous criminal? Frantz Fanon, the French-Algerian psychiatrist, philosopher and revolutionary who deeply explores black masculinity, addresses such categorizations in his first book, *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008). Originally written in 1952 and then later translated into English from French, Fanon passionately discusses the psychological effects of racism, partly based on his own experiences. Fanon discusses colour prejudice which he refers to as, "nothing more than the unreasoning hatred of one race for another…As colour is the most outward obvious manifestation of race it has been made the criterion by which men are judged, irrespective of their social or educational attainments" (2008: 97). He further states that this prejudice makes him, as a black man, hated and despised by an entire race. "I'm not given a second chance. I am overdetermined from the

outside. I am a slave not to the 'idea' others have of me, but to my appearance" (Fanon, 2008: 95). I constructed Menzi, to feel like Fanon, that no matter what he does, who he truly is will always be overshadowed by his black skin and the perceptions that are associated with it. He says angrily to Divya in the play that, "You see the robbers in me, you see it in every black man you see – you see violent criminals" (2012: 85).

Menzi and Divya are victims and perpetrators respectively of what Benn calls projective identification (2006). "The meanings around race almost all arise from definitions, mainly negative, that are projected onto another race group. These projections may then come to determine the meaning of being a member of a certain race group" (Benn, 2006: 49). Such projections are also implicated by, "who has control over these ascribed meanings" (Benn, 2006: 50). In focusing on how projective identification affects notions of blackness, Benn references the experiences of Fanon. In describing his reaction to being seen and referred to as a 'nigger', dangerous, ugly and a cannibal, Fanon speaks of his anger and confusion over an image of himself that he does not recognise and yet, it is projected onto him as his identity (Benn, 2006: 49). Benn further explains that, "Despite what Fanon thinks of himself and feels himself to be, he becomes reduced, through the projective identification of others, to the meanings that have been projected upon him" (2006: 49). Divya, although unintentionally, projects her ideas of black men as criminal, dangerous and violent onto Menzi. The unwarranted persecution that Menzi suffers is a key aspect of his character. Thus through Fanon's writing, I was able to find Menzi's voice in my play.

Peterson, in discussing Fanon, explains that she believes, "external or societal forces are key shapers of the subjectivities of individuals" (2003: 51). Such forces are, as Benn would say, projected onto black South Africans' identities. Peterson thus agrees with Fanon's assessment that black racial identity is determined from the outside. Peterson discusses superiority/inferiority associations, citing the example in South Africa of white children growing up with black servants and being socialized to the notion that white people are superior to black people (2003). This example is one of the ways in which racial identity is based on power relations (Peterson, 2003). Peterson frames Fanon's work in a post-apartheid context by emphasising that, "The social roles that are based on the associations of inferior versus superior clearly have an affect on the formation of a Black racial identity" (2003: 51).

This implies that the assertions made by Fanon regarding black identity are, "still relevant in 2003 and more so, that they are applicable to the South African context" (Peterson, 2003: 51). The effects of social roles and power relations on the formation of a black South African identity sometimes results in black people suffering from an inferiority complex, "although it would not be fair to say that this is a widely held view" (Peterson, 2003: 88). Menzi does suffer from an inferiority complex. This can be seen in his reference to his white colleague Clive who unlike Menzi, is always fully booked with patients. Menzi resents this and only refers Divya to Clive because as a counsellor he is wary of discussing Divya's racial prejudice towards black men. Menzi is also afraid that if they broach the subject, he might have to face his own racial prejudices. He says to Divya in *Race Trouble* (2012) that, "I haven't really helped you. I didn't want to discuss race with you. I was so happy that you chose me as your counsellor, that you gave me a chance" (2012: 86). Furthermore, Menzi illuminates his struggle by reciting the following Fanon quote: "When they like me, they tell me my colour has nothing to do with it. When they hate me, they add that it's not because of my colour. Either way, I am a prisoner of the vicious circle" (2008: 96). Divya recognizes this quote and says it is from Fanon's book, *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008). Menzi responds to this by saying, "I know where it's from, I'm educated. Remember?" (2012: 85). By saying 'remember' Menzi, angry and scathing, is acting on his inferiority complex and the feeling that he always has to remind people that he is educated because he is black. He, like Fanon, is a slave to his appearance, because of both the projective identification others place upon him and because he himself sometimes believes this identification to be true.

Lastly, just as Divya lives with her unconscious guilt, Menzi's inferiority complex operates, as Fanon says, on both the level of the unconscious and the conscious (Peterson, 2003). What is always at the back of Menzi's mind and when directly faced with racial prejudice, what always creeps to the front of his conscious thoughts is that, because of his black skin, he will never be good enough. Menzi feels, like Fanon, that he is poisoned by the stereotype that others have of him (2008). Therefore in order to begin to get rid of such negative intrusive thoughts, "the unconscious needs to be 'tapped into' for one to fully realize what is buried there" (Peterson, 2003: 88). Thus, perhaps Menzi, needs counselling just as much as his patient Divya does. By the end of the play, Menzi confronts his own internal racism and is only at the beginning of working to reject the projective identifications others have placed upon him. Menzi is only starting the journey Fanon describes in *Black Skin, White Masks*

(2008). Fanon proclaims in his work that, "I made up my mind, since it was impossible to rid myself of an *innate complex*, to assert myself as a BLACK MAN. Since the Other was reluctant to recognize me, there was only one answer: to make myself known" (2008: 95).

Reflections: Is there a solution?

Race Trouble (2012) and this research attempts to highlight and raise awareness of the issue of race relations and tensions between Indian and black South Africans. Along with the auto-ethnographic approach of this work, it is necessary to briefly reflect on my journey in this research. There are two aspects I wish to reflect on.

Firstly, my development as a playwright has been integral and worked hand in hand with researching and writing my play. Prior to writing *Race Trouble* (2012), I had only written one play titled *Breathing* (2010). One of my goals is to become a successful playwright in post-apartheid theatre, to be a South African Indian female artist whose voice is heard. Through this research and writing my play, I have begun the work necessary to achieve these goals. I believe that, as a playwright, I am working in the right direction. Furthermore, when reflecting over the past year in which I wrote, re-edited and completed my script, I believe that my approach of combining personal experience with intellectual research worked in writing *Race Trouble* (2012). I also feel that such an approach can be used in my other scriptwriting endeavours.

A possible problem of the above approach is that when writing a script, one must not look at it from an 'issue' point of view. What must always be at the forefront are the characters' points of view and the goal of telling their story. When this is not kept in mind, one's characters end up saying unnatural things in order to express a social point. This results in expository, didactic writing that does not work in performance and in the end, the issue the playwright wants to get across does not impact the audience. In writing, this is what I struggled with the most and, as stated previously, I sometimes had to step back from the research and only use it if it worked for the characters. I also needed editing advice from my supervisor and am learning, through his suggestions, how to effectively write for the theatre.

Understanding each of your characters core wants, I learnt, is an effective way to always remind yourself that telling the personal stories are important, not the socio-political issues. In the theatre, it is through the characters histories and the developing relationship between them that wider social, historical and political issues are highlighted. What I realised is that my character Divya, like myself, wants to stop living in fear while my character Menzi, wants to be free of prejudice. Once I understood these two simple yet profound needs, my script fell into place. To sum up, it must be noted that when it comes to playwriting no approach or theoretical framework can be considered as absolute. French playwright and philosopher Helene Cixous states that building a character is, "A work of ceaseless humility…No theory governs this work. One learns by knocking, hoping, and getting no answer" (McEvoy, 2009: 27). As I continue to write plays, I will continue to read many books, knock on many doors explore my identity and always, I will hope that my work can raise awareness and inspire change.

But can theatre ever truly inspire change? In revealing the *race trouble* and prejudice of Menzi and Divya in my play, the key question arises as to what solution can be offered to the audience, regarding how to overcome such conditioning. In the first staging of *Race Trouble* (2012) in Johannesburg, I purported the solution of friendship and in the last scene of the play, Menzi and Divya become friends and decide that through their relationship, they are going to actively try to get rid of their racial conditioning and become better people. Benn concludes in his work that, "The research strongly reinforces the fact that the more integrated a person is with the perpetrators' group, the less racial generalisations are made after a trauma" (Benn, 2006: 122). Such relationships reflect, "An awareness of the presence of the real other who is damaged by the racial stereotypes and projections" (Benn, 2006: 122). Thus a more liberal political awareness and more integrated relationships, "seemed to play a powerful role in reducing racial antagonism over time. Sadly, in most cases the number of interracial friendships was very small" (Benn, 2006: 129). Divya sees this real other in Menzi by the end of the play and she also recognizes that she is part of the racial damage that has been inflicted upon him.

However, despite the evident success of racial integration reducing racial prejudice, Benn recognises that, "Owing to South Africa's history of racial segregation there has tended to be a lack of interaction on a more intimate level (such as friendship) between members of

different racial groups…This lack of interaction between various race groups allows for the possibility of drawing racial stereotypes" (Benn, 2006: 119). These stereotypes are so embedded in South African society that even when we encounter people of different races, "a process of ongoing reinforcement seems to be in place instead. This reinforcement of race-related anxiety is counterproductive at both an individual and social level" (Benn, 2006: 100). Divya too speaks to this when she says of her family, "Every friendship or relationship I have, the first question is always about race" (2012: 86).

What seems to be inescapable then is that the, "fear of crime and the fear of racial integration have somehow become linked in many people's minds" (Benn, 2006: 12). Therefore, I reconsidered the ending of my play when staging it, for the second time in Durban. Jonathan Jansen in defining the phrase 'knowledge in the blood' refers to the original author of the term, Irish poet Macdara Woods and states the following:

> "The sum total of what we learn (or have to learn – from experience), of love, disappointment, age, loss, and how this knowledge can both make the necessary ongoing human reaffirmation of life and hope possible and at the same time hinder it…It is almost as though we are carrying psychological antibodies inside us. The knowledge in the blood, however it got there, is as ingrained as a disease - although at the same time it can be truly benign. In this sense the knowledge (which we have been gathering since childhood, as well as having it handed down from before) can be – even at its best – as pitilessly indifferent, as ultimately powerful, and as random in why it propels us in any particular direction, as microbe" (2009: 170-171).

Jansen's point here is that the knowledge in our blood only has as much meaning, value or affect as we want it to have. However, he also refers to it as a disease that is so ingrained in us that the battle to overcome it may be impossible. Thus, considering the overwhelming evidence, from my personal experiences and observations as well as my research that racial conditioning is virtually impossible to fully disown, I felt that the original ending in *Race Trouble* (2012) was too clean cut and unrealistic. It was a fake reconciliation. Personally, I have confronted my racial conditioning and while I actively try to abate it, often it creeps into my thoughts and I must once again, shamefully admit that I still sometimes view black men

as dangerous and criminal. Furthermore, I am one of the few members of my family who, firstly, has friendships with people of different races, secondly, who consider that everyday racism is wrong and thirdly, who admits to being racially prejudiced.

Thus I decided to end *Race Trouble* (2012) with Divya asking Menzi, "How do we make it not matter anymore?" (2012: 87). Menzi's response to this is truthfully, "I don't know" (2012: 87). Rather than indicating a solution, I chose to convey hope and emerging friendship in the ending of my play. I did this in a physical and visual rather than verbal way. At the end of the play, Divya and Menzi's hands instinctively touch. They stare deeply at each other, acknowledging each other's shared experiences and my message to the audience is that although it may seem impossible, there still may be a chance to get out of the racist hole South Africa continues to dig for itself.

Conclusions What Rainbow Nation?:

This research report has been a personal and intellectual response to my understanding of race relations between Indian and black South Africans in post-apartheid society. I have drawn upon several theories and concepts that have either validated my personal observations or provided further insight and analysis. These influences are primarily Durrheim, Mtose and Brown's theory of *race trouble* (2011), Benn's exploration into the connections between racial perceptions and violent crime (2006), Fanon's experience of black masculinity (2008) and Jansen's confrontation of the apartheid past in *Knowledge in the Blood* (2009). Regarding post-apartheid theatre, Greg Homann's *At This Stage* (2009) as well as the work of the playwright Nadia Davids' was useful. In terms of exploring the South African Indian female voice in post-apartheid theatre, the extensive work of Ronit Frenkel (2010) and Devarakshanam 'Betty' Govinden (2008) in this area was enlightening.

In concluding my research, a response to the research questions outlined in the introduction is required. I have observed that there are immense racial tensions between Indian and black South Africans. Indians, both during and after apartheid, have been caught in the middle and as a result, have been neglected in redressing the social, political and economic consequences of apartheid while black South Africans continue to remain economically disadvantaged. Any

hope for a non-racial society must start with addressing this issue (Peterson, 2003). Subsequently, a great deal of antagonism exists between these two race groups. Thus I must sadly conclude that racial hatred, from all sides, is a primary aspect of race relations between Indian and black South Africans.

While it is clear that South African plays in this context are dealing with the issue of racism, I find that it is primarily constructed as a black versus white issue. As a result, Indian and coloured experiences and issues are neglected. Thus, relative to my identity, sadly the South African Indian female voice has and continues to be unrecognised in our country's theatre landscape. This research hopes to begin to challenge such abandonment.

From my observations, experiences and research on post-apartheid society, I have concluded that race and racism deeply affects South Africans in their everyday lives and practices. Furthermore, rather than race being seen as a positive and multicultural aspect of South Africa, it is seen as negative and is used in divisive, sometimes destructive ways. Finally, therefore, I must conclude that South Africa is hardly a rainbow nation. Instead of embracing all colours, "People feel troubled by race. They feel attacked, undermined, threatened, and they respond with irritation, anger and hostility. Sometimes they withdraw or ignore the trouble, sometimes they harbour private resentment. But race trouble reaches beyond experience. It can determine our opportunities, prospects and interactions…In short race troubles us by structuring how we live and thus shapes our experiences" (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011: 27).

Therefore in present South African society, I have come to the conclusion that while an awareness of the concept and notions of *race trouble* are essential, this first step in combating racism is still gaining momentum. As a result, the second step of abating racial conditioning is not even at the starting block. Thus Divya, Menzi and *Race Trouble* (2012) are an example of hope and how we can start to make a change. I do not know how their story will play out and this is the difficulty that comes with ending post-apartheid plays. As Van Graan points out, the story hasn't ended. We are simply entering a new chapter (2006). Consequently I have no answer at this point and the value I take from my work is the hope that *Race Trouble* (2012) will provoke people into acknowledging and questioning their own conditioning and prejudices, their own *race trouble*.

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Appendix A: *Race Trouble* (2012) Script

Race Trouble

By

Devaksha Moodley

Characters:

Divya: A 25 year old Indian women from Durban, South Africa. She lives in Reservoir Hills. She is a sub editor at Independent Newspapers in Greyville.

Menzi: A 26 year old black man. He is a qualified trauma counsellor who works at the Berea Trauma Centre where Divya seeks treatment. He is originally from Empangeni.

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The set is Menzi's office at the trauma centre. It is shabby with minimal design. A simple wooden desk is upstage left and two chairs and a rectangular block are centre stage. Menzi is someone who works within organised chaos and there is much clutter around on the desk. Books, papers, stationary, pamphlets, office supplies etc. are abundant in the office. The two chairs are, at different stages of the play, in different places. The set is suggestive, rather than realistic with the two chairs being the primary focus.

SCENE 1

Menzi and Divya are sitting on the chairs

Divya: Tell me about you.

Menzi: That's not usually how this works.

Divya: That doesn't seem fair. If I have to divulge my deepest darkest secrets to you, I should at least know something about you.

Menzi: Okay. Menzi Thabethe. Trauma Counsellor at the Berea Trauma Centre. I live in North Beach. I'm originally from Empangeni.

Divya: I could get that all from your Facebook page. How long have you been in Durban?

Menzi: Eight years. Since I was eighteen and began studying at Howard College.

Divya: I studied there as well, I'm surprised we didn't run into each other.

Menzi: Can we discuss why you are here Divya?

Divya: A colleague of mine recommended me to you. She said you were great and helped her get through her situation.

Menzi: I try my best.

Divya: You asked why I'm here. I gave you a perfectly plausible answer.

Menzi: Semantics. My question was ambiguous, you're correct. I'll have to watch my words with you. Why have you come to get counselling?

Divya doesn't answer. Throughout the conversation she has been fiddling with her cellphone.

Divya: Sorry. It just takes me time to settle into new things, new environments.

Menzi: I see.

Menzi writes something down

Divya: What are you writing down?

Menzi: My observations. I'm not sure you understand what goes on here.

Divya: I understand. You come here because something traumatic happened to you. And when that happens, you get counselling. It's what you're supposed to do.

Menzi: You're not supposed to do anything.

Divya: You know what I did after it happened. While waiting for the police. I couldn't handle the silence. People were there but they were whispering, tiptoeing around me as if I might shatter at the slightest sound. I put a Cougar Town marathon on.

Menzi: Great show. Penny…

Divya: Can, I know. How long do people usually come here for? I mean, what happened to me happens to people in this country every day. I should be able to get over it.

Menzi: Most don't get over it Divya. They just learn to cope.

Divya: I'm not coping. I guess that's why I came here.

Menzi: Your statement to the police was very unclear. Perhaps, now that some time has passed…

Divya: Two weeks.

Menzi: You're starting to remember more about what happened. We can talk about it.

Divya: I can't fully remember what happened. It's all a blur.

Menzi: All right then, let's start with telling me what you want.

Divya: I want, I want…to stop living in fear.

Pause

Menzi: Samosa?

Divya: What?

Menzi: I always think it's best to forge new relationships with food, you know breaking bread together no longer makes us strangers

Divya: Uh okay.

They each eat for a bit. Divya eats carefully, nibbles and uses a tissue. Menzi just bites into the samosa.

Divya: I'm hiding.

Menzi: From?

Divya: Everyone. Family, friends, colleagues who keep asking me for updates on the case. My story is newsworthy and how often does a journalist get a story right from the cubicle next to theirs?

Menzi: I remember reading what happened.

Divya: Front page of the *Post* and the *Eastern Express*. My story. You read those papers?

Menzi: Yeah why?

Divya: Nothing it's just targeted towards…

Menzi: Indian people, I know.

Divya: Hmm

Menzi: What?

Divya: You read it for the recipes don't you?

Menzi: No! As a counsellor you need to know what is happening in the communities around you. I keep myself informed.

Divya: And you read it for the recipes. You like Indian food, I can tell. You just chowed a samosa and I saw a Kara Nichas packet in your dustbin.

Menzi (*sheepishly)*: Okay, I like the recipes. But I suck at cooking them, it's too difficult.

Divya: Maybe I'll bring you some food one day.

Menzi: You cook?

Divya: Yup and I'm pretty good at it too. Cooking…is a comfort for me. It makes me feel connected to my family, my home.

Menzi: Your family seems close.

Divya: Correct counsellor.

Menzi: They all gave comments in the articles. Some were quite vocal about what happened, about what happened to you. Why did you refuse to comment?

Divya: There was no point. Whatever I said, they would have twisted it to fit the angle they wanted.

Menzi: The angle?

Divya: Heck I help make the angle. Every story has something the paper wants to say, wants to get readers to respond to. It's very easy to take part of a comment someone made and turn it into something entirely different. Besides, lots of people wanted to speak for me.

Menzi: And you were comfortable with that?

Divya: With manipulating the angle? People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones so I let it be.

Menzi: No I meant with letting others speak for you?

Divya: You don't get it, do you? My robbery, my attack does not only make me a victim, it makes my whole community a victim. Everybody wants to add their 2c about what happened, everybody wants their anger to be heard.

Menzi (*quietly)*: Actually I do get it.

Divya: How so?

Menzi: It's not important. What you do remember?

Divya: Like I said, it's all a blur.

Menzi: You like details Divya. That's why you're a sub-editor. Maybe a little nit-picky, a bit obsessive compulsive?

Divya: Is that your professional diagnosis?

Menzi: It's a working theory.

Divya: Based on?

Menzi: I can tell certain things about you. You're formal. Your hair is pinned straight, you're neat and tidy. I'm betting you know where everything is in that big handbag of yours. You're meticulous. Nothing is out of place with you. And you have to be doing something with your hands all the time. You can't keep still.

Divya: You're good. Can I do you now?

Menzi: No, you're the patient, I'm the counsellor. Let's start with the details. Tell me everything you can about that day, even stuff you think isn't important.

Divya: Okay. I was home alone, it was about 11am. I was working the night shift at the paper so I slept in. I was eating Coco Pops and watching *Modern Family*. Then I heard a noise, like a door being banged open. I was home alone. My parents were at work. My younger brother was at varsity and my little sister was at school.

Menzi: So 5 of you live in the house?

Divya: Now. I have an older brother but he got married two years ago. Is that relevant?

Menzi: It's all relevant. Keep going Divya

Divya: I put the TV off. I listened for more noise. Our house is old, it creaks and makes its own sounds. But then I heard a loud thud, like heavy shoes hitting the ground. I grabbed a kitchen knife. It was so small, I don't know what I thought it would do. I walked slowly. I didn't have my silent alarm button on me. I left it in my room. I usually always have it. I keep it like you keep your cellphone, you know. Always by your side. But I forgot that day. I was so stupid.

Menzi: It happens. What did you do next?

Divya: I still didn't know what was going on for sure. I tried sneaking into my room to get the alarm. The sound seemed to be coming from my brother's room. I tiptoed. I thought I was going to make it but then there was a loud crash and three huge figures came towards me. I screamed.

Divya starts breathing heavily and cannot speak anymore.

Menzi: It's okay, you don't have to carry on right now. Just keep remembering the details.

Divya looks at Menzi, right in the eye and says

Divya: Three months. That's my deadline.

Menzi just nods

Blackout

SCENE 2

Divya enters. Menzi is not in the room. She sits in her usual spot, then hesitantly gets up and looks around Menzi's office. She works her way through the clutter on the desk, sighing at how untidy he is. Eventually she looks at the books he has. Menzi enters, Divya doesn't register his presence and is looking at the book Disgrace by J.M Coetzee.

Menzi: Bhajya?

Divya (*startled, screams)*: You scared me.

Menzi places his hands on Divya's shoulder, in an effort to calm and reassure her. But she instinctively stiffens and moves slightly away from him. Divya and Menzi both notice this.

Menzi: Sorry but you were the one snooping.

Divya: I wasn't…okay sorry. I didn't check any patient files or confidential stuff. You really need to clean this place up.

Menzi: Hey, it's organised chaos.

Divya: I make sure I'm neat and tidy for you.

Menzi: You don't have too. This is a trauma centre. Patients are expected to be a little dishevelled. You a J.M Coetzee fan?

Divya *(realises she's still holding the book)*: Yes, I reread this often.

Menzi: Really? *Disgrace* is pretty heavy stuff to read over and over again.

Divya: I keep hoping they'll be a happy ending.

Menzi: Well David's unhappy and miserable to begin with.

Divya: No, I mean for Lucy.

Menzi: Oh, you don't think she gets what she wants?

Divya: No she gets what she wants out of a horrible situation but I just, I just can't see why or how she could ever live happily, no not happily, peacefully with her decision. It's more about control I guess, having control over her life.

Menzi: Divya, are you not doing the same thing?

Divya: Excuse me? I'm not having my rapist's baby and letting said rapist live next door to me!

Menzi: That's not what I mean. You're trying to control what you will say: to your colleagues, to your family, to me and even to a hypothetical judge in a hypothetical court case. You want to remember for the wrong reasons. Not to understand or to get closure. You want to forget but you also want to be one step ahead.

Divya: I see what you're doing here, relating me to Lucy so I'll talk. Nice tactic. But what happened to her didn't happen to me. Still it doesn't stop people speculating.

Menzi: They assume you were sexually assaulted as well?

Divya: In a nutshell, yes. Gossip mongers go as far as to speculate rape and that I'm simply not pressing those charges to avoid public shame.

Menzi: That's ridiculous.

Divya: The way they see it, three bla…bulky guys cornering a young single woman, they think the worst.

Divya is shocked by this and tries to hide it. Menzi notices the slight.

Divya: Anyway like I was saying, I was raised to always make myself presentable for the doctor. Hair washed, nails cut, proper clothes.

Menzi: Me too. Had to clean out my ears as well. My mom's a nurse. But I'm not a doctor so feel free to come in sweatpants in the future. Divya, while I love our chats on food, literature and TV, you come here to avoid everyone outside and then in here, you avoid talking about what happened. The elephant in the room is getting so large now, we're going to be shoved out. And then where will you go?

Divya: I'm trying. I went to that trauma group therapy thing last week.

Menzi: That's good. How was it?

Divya: Fine, I mean, I could relate to them but I couldn't speak up.

Menzi: Why not?

Divya: Because talking about it makes it real, concrete. The more witnesses who hear what happened, the more people look at me with that face.

Menzi: What face?

Divya: You know that face, the face you give someone when you feel sorry for them but you really don't want to make it your problem kind of thing. You just want some gossip. Like this

Divya makes a face of superficial sympathy. *Menzi laughs*

Divya: You know it right? The head tilt, the frowning scrunched up face and eyes. "Oh I'm so sorry." Indian ladies and aunties are the best. "Oh I'm so sorry you'll got robbed. What was taken?"

Menzi: Very funny but once again avoidance. It's been in the papers Divya. People know, you can't change that.

Divya: They're better than people who don't look at me at all, who pretend they don't see me and walk away.

Menzi: Do they?

Divya: Sometimes. I get it. Who wants to talk about being tied up with a gun held to your face while you buying vegetables and muffins at Food Lovers Market?

Menzi: What happened to you is not your fault Divya, you understand that right? There was nothing you could have done.

Divya: I understand but people like to talk in abstracts, about robberies they read about in the papers. Knowing me hits too close to home for them.

Menzi: And how is everything at home?

Divya: Good. I mean, not a moment to breathe, everyone's naturally concerned and normally in my family, we're always in each other's business. I just want some space but they want me to get out more now, they think it will help me get back to normal. They're ready to start fixing me up again.

Menzi: An arranged marriage?

Divya: No, but my family love encouraging introductions. "Just have coffee with this boy. If you don't like him, that's fine but what's the harm in going?" My mom thinks I'm going to die a spinster. To be honest, I don't see myself marrying an Indian man anyway.

Menzi: And why not? This is Durban, they're everywhere.

Divya: Excuse me?

Menzi: I just meant, you have a lot of options here.

Divya: I just can't handle the typical ones who say, "Ey let's vie to Gateway" or whose speakers cost more than their actual car or who think it's okay to refer to me as their 'stekkie.'

Menzi: Hmm Judgemental much?

Divya: I have standards, sue me. And what about you? Intelligent, handsome man like you must be in demand with the ladies?

Menzi: Yes well, I'm in a little bit of a dry spell at the moment.

Divya: Are you against inter-racial relationships?

Menzi: No, not at all. It's just other women haven't ever really given me much attention.

Divya: Well you know the rule with us. No BMW's.

Menzi: What?

Divya: No Blacks, Muslims or Whites. In that order.

Menzi laughs

Menzi: Divya, have you always been a fan of American sitcoms?

Divya: Always

Menzi: Do you watch the shows when you can't sleep?

Divya: It helps me. Eventually I get exhausted and the glare from my laptop screen makes me sleep.

Menzi: The sleeping tablets don't help?

Divya: No, I'm not a fan of any medication making me do something that's supposed to be natural. Anyway, nothing stops you from thinking about it.

Menzi: You've mentioned *Cougar Town* and *Modern Family*. I know you say you want to be alone but these shows they're about big, close knit families and neighbours. Always in each other's business. Don't push the people you love too far, you may lose them. You need to confront what happened to you. It helps to talk, to tell me what happened.

Divya: I screamed. They covered my mouth. We live in a very cosy street and our house is not that big. People may have heard me, I don't know. They didn't come running if they did. Can't say I blame them. I'd have called the police and probably shut myself in my house too.

Menzi: No you wouldn't. You would have been obsessing with worry over your neighbours.

Divya: But my fear would have overpowered me.

Menzi: Go on.

Divya: I was grabbed and shoved on the floor. I think I was still screaming at this point. I shook, trying to wriggle my way out of the one guy's grasp but he was too strong. I don't know how much time past but he got irritated with me. He hit me.

Menzi: How?

Divya: With the butt of his gun, on the left side of my face. I started to bleed. I just wanted to pass out, let them get whatever they came for and leave. I tried to close my eyes. I made sure to avoid looking at them directly in case they thought I'd seen too much and decided to kill me.

Menzi: Considering what you did see, what did they look like?

Divya: Not much. This is when it starts to get blurry. Their bodies, head to toe, were covered in clothes. Black balaclavas and gloves. Their other clothes were colourful, I think they were trying to not look suspicious on the street. They must have covered themselves before they entered the house. Hollywood criminals always wear black.

Menzi: Any physical features you can recall?

Divya: I can't remember. They were huge, that's all, looming over me.

Menzi: Try, Divya, you can do it. Details, remember the details.

Divya: I said I don't know, okay! I wanted to close my eyes, pass out but they wouldn't let me. They had questions, lots of them.

Menzi: Such as?

Divya is once again, upset at reliving what happened.

Divya: I, I have to go back to work. It was a public holiday yesterday so double the amount of articles to sub today.

Menzi: Divya, it can wait. You're entitled to take leave.

Divya: How do you know I haven't taken leave?

Menzi: Your cousin. He dropped you off last week.

Divya: How could you talk to someone from my family? What did he say? What did you say?

Menzi: Nothing, we just started chatting, he didn't know I was your counsellor. When he realised, he told me who he was and said he was worried about you, that's all. Haven't you told your family you've been coming to me?

Divya: They just know that I come here. Not who I come to see.

Menzi: I see

He picks up his folder

Divya: I'm not ashamed. Don't write that.

Menzi: Ashamed?

Divya: You know…

Menzi: I don't

Divya: It's not you, it's me.

Menzi: Are you breaking up with me? *(sardonic, laughing)*

Divya: What? We're not together

Menzi: We're in a professional relationship together. What's the problem here Divya?

Divya: Nothing

Menzi: Really?

Divya: Stop it.

Menzi (*a bit angry)*: Why don't you tell them who I am Divya?

Divya: Because, because….Don't talk to anyone from my family again!

Divya storms out.

Blackout.

SCENE 3

Menzi is pacing in his office and is on the phone.

Menzi: Divya, its Menzi. Again. You've missed your last two sessions. I'm sorry about what happened. I never should have said…I mean it was wrong of me to question you like that. I just wanted…never mind. Anyway, I'm sorry I spoke to your cousin. I promise, I will not speak to any member of your family again. In fact, I've avoided contact with all Indian people that I don't know personally, in case they're related to you. Please come back to counselling. Although you don't like to hear it, you need it.

Menzi doesn't realize that Divya has entered the room and heard most of his message.

Divya: All Indian people are not related to each other. But avoiding Indians in Durban? That is a difficult task, I'm impressed.

Menzi: She lives.

Divya: Yes and I'm sorry. I should not have yelled at you and stormed out.

Menzi: It's all right. *(Pause)* Why did you come back?

Divya: I need counselling. I've also taken some leave from work. H.R. basically forced me to go on holiday.

Menzi: That's good.

Divya: I brought you something.

Divya hands Menzi a copy of the Post newspaper and a tiffin of curry and roti

Divya: New recipes for you to burn and some home cooked Indian food made by yours truly.

Menzi: Thanks. *(Menzi opens the tiffin and tastes the food a little)* Show me one of the stories you've subbed.

Divya: I did this week's headline story before I went on holiday. The one about the Indian school principal in Khulabebuka High School who was racially insulted and taunted by three teachers in her school. They sang the infamous "Amandiya" song.

Menzi: The anti…

Divya: Indian song. You know it?

Menzi: My grandfather mentioned it to me once. I see this story's made you angry.

Divya: Wouldn't you if there was a song about your race, your community saying you don't belong in South Africa, that your people take everything away and that you have bribed government leaders with roti?

Menzi (*jokingly)*: Well, this (certainly makes me like you more.) What angle did you guys give the story?

Divya: Oh it was very clear, get the reader fired up over Indians being discriminated against in the workplace.

Menzi: Discriminated by black people you mean. The story plus the angle it was given fuels racial hatred from both sides.

Divya: Exactly, you could have a career in the media.

Menzi: I'll pass thanks. These teachers are probably mad that an Indian woman has a top job in a school and in an area that is probably 100% black.

Divya: So? Is that wrong? Are South African Indians considered foreigners now? Not white enough during apartheid, not black enough today. We've been here 150 years.

Menzi: And we've been here for thousands and were told for hundreds of years that we don't belong here either. Now the problem is, politically free doesn't mean economically free.

Divya: I know, affirmative action and addressing imbalances. I've always seen it as a necessary evil. But my family thinks…

Menzi: It's about entitlement. Maybe but it's also like you have to prove yourself more to show people why you deserve the job.

Divya: Is that how you feel here?

Menzi *(hesitantly)*: Sometimes. So what does your family say about affirmative action?

Divya: Oh I'm sure you can imagine. Good, hard-working and smart Indians are not getting jobs here anymore. It's unfair. One of my cousins got 8 A's in matric and didn't get into UKZN Medical School. I thought it wasn't fair to overlook him. It really pissed my uncle off. He studied in Natal and is a doctor himself.

Menzi: Of course he is.

Divya: And what is that supposed to mean?

Menzi: My mom's a nurse and she always used to say all the doctors were Indian.

Divya: Did that bother her?

Menzi: Well she always wanted me or my brother to become a doctor. It never interested me, surgery or medicine. My older brother wanted to do it but he never got into medical school in Natal like your cousin. The school we went to wasn't so great in terms of education and resources so his matric results were not the best. He studied hard but it wasn't enough.

He eventually got into Wits for a BSC which could lead to medicine if he did well but my mom couldn't afford to send him there so he became a paramedic instead. That's always bothered her, that she works under so many Indian and white men and women. She says stuff sometimes that's disrespectful.

Divya: Like?

Menzi: Just some stuff, racial things. And you know, my love of Indian food comes from our neighbour in Empangeni. She was this old Indian lady, Aunty Pavi. She had no children and her husband had passed away. She hated cooking for one so she would always cook for us too. And I used to think how could my mom say stuff like, like "oh that coolie," about another Indian person when she loved Pavi. *(Menzi pauses)* I've never told anyone that before.

Divya: Well, we all keep the family dinner conversations private. I bite my tongue when someone says, "Oh at the mall today, this black cashier was so stupid, he couldn't even count properly," or "At the hospital today, this 14 year old girl gave birth. Of course she was black. Not surprising at all." Don't they realise not everything is about the colour of your skin? That it's more about poverty, about not having access to a good education and being denied stability and resources?

Menzi: Tell me about it. We shouldn't keep those things private though, we should speak up.

Divya: Yeah but sometimes it's like talking to a brick wall. You know what people kept asking me after I was robbed?

Menzi: What?

Divya: Were they black?

Menzi *(tentatively)*: Were they?

Divya: I, I don't remember. My point is that sometimes people would ask about race even before they could ask, "Are you okay?" And do you know what I kept thinking?

Menzi: What?

Divya: I got slapped in the face till my lip was split open and bleeding. Does it matter what the colour of that hand was? If they had raped me, does it matter what the colour of the penis was?

Blackout

SCENE 4

Menzi is attempting to clean his office. Divya enters

Divya: Cleaning, are we? What's the occasion?

Menzi: I'm trying to be neat and tidy for you.

Divya: Really?

Menzi: Okay confession: The Provincial Minister of Health is making a special trip to the centre so my boss ordered me to clean up a bit.

Divya: Will there be reporters?

Menzi: I think so, it would be good publicity for the centre. We need funding.

Divya: I shouldn't be here.

Menzi: Because you might run into your colleagues?

Divya: My counselling is private.

Menzi: Yet a colleague of yours recommended me to you? And if the robbers ever get arrested, you want to say in court, on public record, that you've been to counselling?

Divya: That's not the point. I'll tell people when I'm ready to tell them. I don't want to be interviewed about it.

Menzi: You're giving everyone else power but yourself Divya.

Divya: What?

Menzi: When you don't want people to know you're coming for counselling. When you let people speak for you in the papers, you are giving your family, colleagues and friends' privileges and power. They don't need that or deserve it. And when you don't talk about being attacked, when you avoid it, you are giving those men even more power over you!

Divya is quiet and goes to sit in her usual spot. Menzi goes to sit next to her on the block, not in his usual chair. This is as physically close as they have ever been to each other.

Menzi: I've been trying to help, I've even talked more about myself to you than I have to any patient I've had before, hoping you would start to talk more about what happened. But you haven't Divya. The elephant in the room is definitely overpowering us now.

Menzi puts his hands in Divya's but she immediately pulls her hands away, once again instinctively. Menzi notices. He gets up and carries on with his cleaning.

Divya: They wanted to know where everything was. My mom's jewellery, where my parents hid their cash. Where my brother and sister kept their pocket money. They wanted all the

electronic stuff too. Laptops, TVs, the stereo system. They wanted my jewellery. Lots of things, I'm trying to remember it all.

Menzi: Did you tell them straightaway?

Divya: In between sobbing, yes. I know the drill. Keep your head low, do whatever they want and hopefully they won't kill you. They dragged me all over the house, one guy pulled me by my hair, a different guy this time I think. One guy would look where I told them to. The other guy, the third one, he just started trashing every room, looking for stuff in case I was lying. One of them would only sneak outside to load the big stuff into their car. I think the getaway vehicle was at the back of the house.

Menzi: How long did this go on for?

Divya: I don't know, maybe thirty minutes. It felt like hours. When we went to my room, I looked for my alarm. I saw it. The guy let go of me. I keep jewellery in a locked suitcase under my bed. I remember now, I told him to get it. The other two guys were still in my parent's room, most of the stuff they wanted was there. They were getting scared, it was taking too long. He started looking under my bed and I quickly pressed the silent panic button on my alarm.

Menzi: You fought back.

Divya: I tried, I really did. But he saw me move. He didn't see what I did. He was shouting. He kicked me in the stomach, the same one who hit my head with the gun. The other guys came rushing in and stopped him. I thought he was going to shoot me. He raised his gun but the other guys stopped him, I don't know why. Then, then, a car came passed, it sounded like it was right by our house. Then all three of them started freaking out. They took what they had in their hands and left.

Menzi: What happened afterwards?

Divya: It wasn't even the police. It was the man who sometimes comes to sell veggies on the road. I was exhausted, my voice was coarse but I cried for help, I screamed. He came rushing in and helped me. Called the police. ADT came soon after, so much for immediate response huh? And then, while I waited to give my statement to the cops, I watched TV. I let everyone else make the necessary phone calls. Tea was made. The ambulance was still coming but my neighbours cleaned me and bandaged me up. It was nice, having them there actually. I don't like silence. I don't like it at all anymore.

Divya sighs with some relief

Menzi: You were brave, you had the courage to press that alarm. *(Pause)* Can I ask you a few more questions? I think you need to know as many details as possible to help you recover.

Divya doesn't answer.

Menzi: Did they only speak in English?

Divya: To me, yes. They silently communicated with each other. They had the whole thing planned.

Menzi: Did they have a specific accent?

Divya *(defensive)*: I don't know. Maybe, I'm not sure. I've told you every crappy detail I can recall. You sound just like the police. You want to know what race they were and you think a language or accent will help me figure it out. Well I don't remember okay? They were covered, their voices were muffled, I can't tell you anything more.

Menzi: I understand. It doesn't matter.

Divya: That's all I remember. That's all.

Blackout.

SCENE 5

Divya enters without even knocking. Menzi is eating but doesn't stop when he sees Divya.

Divya: I slept.

Menzi: You did?

Divya: Since last week, I've managed to fall asleep without my laptop still on.

Menzi: Since last week what?

Divya: Since last week when I finally told you, told someone all that I can remember about the robbery. The power is mine blah blah. You're beginning to sound like a motivational speaker. I will deny ever knowing you if you do become one.

Menzi: I won't.

Divya: You could make lots of money. You could have your own personal Indian chef.

Menzi: I'm getting better you know. Those spices really helped my cooking. Thank god you labelled them so I know what's what.

Divya: No problem. You know Indian food is very fattening, you should exercise.

Menzi: Are you saying I'm fat?

Divya: No, I'm saying you could get fat because you only seem to like foods filled with ghee or greasy fast foods.

Menzi: I do exercise. I run on the beach. I surf.

Divya: You surf?

Menzi: I live by North Beach. Why so shocked? I use the gym that's right on my doorstep.

Divya: Nothing, surfing is just normally a sport…

Menzi: For white people, I know. Black people can swim.

Divya: And so can Indian people. They just always tend to forget their costumes and swim in the ocean fully clothed.

Menzi: Divya, I have to tell you something. I wasn't totally honest before. I said I knew the *Amandiya song* because my grandfather mentioned it to me.

Divya: Yes.

Menzi: Well. He didn't just mention it to me. He used to sing it. My grandfather was a very aggressive activist during apartheid and isn't a big fan of the whole 'rainbow nation' thing. He hated whites, Indians and coloureds. He felt that Indians and Coloureds were given preferential treatment during apartheid like not being put through Bantu education. He didn't like my friends who were of other races and he never allowed them to come to our house. We used to fight about it sometimes but he was so set in his ways that I eventually gave up.

Divya: You didn't have to tell me that. You're my counsellor, I'm the one who has to share. It seems we both have more kitchen conversations to hide.

Menzi: Oh yeah, what?

Divya: My eldest aunt is, well, she's a racist.

Menzi: Do you not think you're being a bit harsh?

Divya: No, she treats all the domestic workers she's ever had like second class citizens. It infuriates me. I've seen it when I've been at her and my grandfather's house. She takes care of him. Horrible food, separate dishes to eat out of, giving them broken toys for their kids thinking she's being nice when really, it's just more degrading. Do you know how many people do that? My family is very close, our community always supports each other. I love being a part of it but it's like as soon as your skin colour is different, compassion goes out the door. I know tons of people in my community, my family who are like her. Maybe not as extreme but you can tell in their actions and comments that they think they're superior. Calling the gardener 'boy' or 'fellow' and shouting for every stupid thing. And like your grandfather, my aunt is so set in her ways that I don't think anything will ever change her. But still, I love her. I'm scared to confront her so I don't do anything. I bite my tongue.

Menzi: I know.

Divya: The worst part is that this kind of thinking has seeped into young people you know. Not that they treat people of other races badly but the stuff they say and think. It makes me so angry sometimes. My colleague's kid tells me the other day that at his school at break, it's so clear that the white people stay with the white people, the blacks with the blacks and the Indians with the Indians. And he was laughing about it, as if it was just a normal, acceptable occurrence. He's 16, never lived even a day under apartheid.

Pause

Divya: But I've realised, I'm also a bit hypocritically self-righteous.

Menzi: How so?

Menzi is a little uncomfortable now, it looks like he wants to say more but he stops himself from doing so.

Divya: Because I've done it too you know.

Menzi: Done what?

Divya: Acted differently because of the race of someone else. The other day, I was walking on the street and this black man walked past me. And I panicked, clutched my handbag closer to me and went into the next shop to get away from him. I was totally flustered. I couldn't breathe. I just reacted. It was like my body acted of its own accord.

Menzi: That was probably just a reaction after what happened to you Divya. Something about this man may have reminded you about the criminals. It's understandable.

Menzi hesitates as if he wants to say more but stops himself.

Divya: But I can't remember any specifics about them.

Menzi: I think you know what it is about.

Divya is looking away from Menzi. She knows he is right. She's about to speak but he cuts her off.

Menzi: But it's not important. Don't beat yourself up about this incident, it happens in a lot of trauma victims. They see features of their attackers in other people and react, even features they don't consciously remember. Don't read too much into it. In fact, it's probably a good sign. Perhaps you'll start remembering more about the robbers.

Divya: But…

Menzi: I said don't worry about it.

Long Silence

Divya: But I've done it before.

Menzi: Sorry?

Divya: I've done it before, not the whole panic attack thing. But I've clutched my handbag closer to me when I've seen a black man on the street before. Before I was attacked.

Divya sighs heavily, in a relieved way as if a weight has been lifted off her shoulders. She looks expectantly at Menzi.

Divya: I don't know what race the robbers were. But all this time, I didn't want to know their names not just because I didn't want to think about them. I didn't want to remember that part, I chose to not discuss it. I know what it was about the man on the street. Because even if I can't know for sure about the robbers, I've always pictured them as…black. I picture all criminals that way. That's what you were hinting at right? You must hate me. I have to admit it.

Menzi: I see.

Divya: You see?

Menzi looks at his watch and gets up

Menzi: Divya, I'll see you next week. You've made a lot of progress. I think your estimate of three months of counselling was correct.

Divya is confused.

Divya: But I just dropped a bombshell. I mean, it points to how awful I am as a person. You can help me with that, right?

Menzi *(quietly)*: By acknowledging how you feel makes you less, not more awful than the average man in the street. *(he looks at his watch)* I really have to go Divya.

Divya: Well, I thought I might…okay, see you next week.

Menzi leaves before Divya has left the room.
Blackout.

SCENE 6

Menzi is cleaning again. Divya enters. Menzi is surprised to see her and for much of this scene, avoids eye contact with her.

Menzi: Divya? Our session isn't till tomorrow.

Divya: Well if I had come here tomorrow, you wouldn't be here, would you? The receptionist called me to say you're going on leave and that you've arranged for me to continue my sessions with another counsellor. Is that true?

Menzi: Clive is excellent. He's been at the centre the longest.

Divya: I don't want to talk to Clive. I want to talk to you. They robbed me and beat the shit out of me. That's going to be with me forever. I need more counselling, more help.

Menzi: I've spoken to Clive, he will see you for as long as you need.

Divya: I don't give a fuck about Clive! What's going on? Did I do something?

Menzi: Divya please no, I just don't think I can help you anymore.

Divya: Why? I would still be a zombie watching comedy series after comedy series if it weren't for you. I thought we were working well together. You said you've shared more with me than you have with any other patient.

Menzi: That's the problem.

Divya: It's what I needed, I needed to trust you before I could talk. It's the handbag incident, isn't it?

Menzi: No. Yes. Partly. Divya, it would be best…

Divya: You're repulsed by me. You think what I did, how I felt was wrong. I never should have said it out loud, not to anyone. Not even to you.

Menzi: No Divya, you can say whatever you want, don't ever think you can't express what you feel to your counsellor. It's just that…

Divya: You hate me now. *(Divya is shouting now, tears streaming down her face)* Admit it! You think I'm a disgusting person, so do I but I'm here trying to change. But you hate me now. You're repulsed by me.

Menzi: I'm repulsed by you? Really?

Menzi goes up to Divya and strongly grabs her by the shoulders, she flinches, shouts out in shock and stumbles backwards, away from Menzi.

Menzi: I'm repulsed by you? You are repulsed my me Divya!

There is a deafening silence between Divya and Menzi, who stare at each other.

Divya: No, I, I'm not. How could you think that?

Menzi: Every time I've touched you Divya, simple gestures, you've flinched. When I patted your shoulders when I startled you in my office, when I held your hands to encourage you, you flinched each time. Because you see the robbers in me, you see it in every black man you see – you see violent criminals.

Divya: No, no I don't Menzi. Not you, I don't.

Menzi: You're not the first person. You say your whole community feels like a victim of your attack. Do you know how many Indian, white or coloured patients I've had Divya who have been robbed or attacked by black men? Guess, come on, guess.

Divya: Uh um

Menzi: You're the only one Divya, the only one. Even when their attacker is not a black man, they avoid me. Oh but Clive is always busy, always fully booked. I've been mugged twice you know, almost stabbed the second time. And yes they were both black men who attacked me. You think I didn't feel just as angry, just as ashamed as you feel right now? Do you know how it feels to be judged at every turn, because of who you are, to never be free of prejudice? "When they like me, they tell me my colour has nothing to do with it. When they hate me, they add that it's not because of my colour. Either way, I am a prisoner of the vicious circle."

Divya: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks.*

Menzi: I know where it's from, I'm educated. Remember? Sometimes I think, I think like my grandfather. I think, who are you fucking people to treat me like I'm not good enough? I have the qualifications.

Divya: I never meant to make you feel that way. I'm sure there are other reasons why people...

Menzi: Oh really! Divya, have you told your family your counsellor is black? Have you?

Divya: No, they wouldn't understand. They wouldn't be happy. They're narrow minded, every friendship or relationship I have, the first questions is always about race. I've never been able to get through to them.

Menzi: Why did you come to me when you knew I was black?

Divya: Because I'm not, I'm not racist. I believed you could help me and you have.

Menzi: But I haven't really helped you. I didn't want to discuss race with you. I was so happy that you chose me as your counsellor, that you gave me a chance. Counsellors tend to avoid race because they're afraid they could develop a negative attitude to their patients' racial beliefs or that they could reveal their own prejudices. I could tell race and racism was something that bothered you so I tried to deal with it. We talked in abstractions, Coetzee, about other people or we laughed at stereotypes. But when we talked about each other's families, I knew we were in dangerous territory. After the handbag incident, I was this close to telling you how much I hated the non-black people who have come here and rejected my help because I'm black. How I've called them coolies and honkies quietly to myself. *(Divya winces, Menzi, standing whispers and leans down towards her)*. Coolies. Honkies. Kaffirs. Yes I'm saying the words, you've said them too! I was going to tell you how sometimes, I think that about Indian, white and coloured people I've never met, strangers in the street. I sometimes think, like my grandfather, that this rainbow nation is bullshit and you should all go back to wherever the hell you descended from!

Divya is shocked. Menzi is distraught. They are silent, not looking at each other. Eventually, Divya speaks.

Divya: I don't have all my power back you know.

Menzi: I know because I didn't help you get to that point. I was scared to admit my own prejudices.

Divya: That's right. There's still an elephant in the room. It's not enough to say I was attacked by men. I have to add a little bit more.

Menzi looks at Divya and knows what she is about to say

Menzi: You don't have to, not for my sake.

Divya: I do, for both of us. Try as I might, colour does matter to me. I was robbed and attacked by men who I see as black.

Divya repeats herself twice.

Divya: I think I was robbed by black men. I imagine that I was attacked by black men and I'm just as racist as you think you are.

Menzi: And we're both probably just as racist…

Divya: As the racist fuckers we've always hated.

Pause. Menzi and Divya are now sitting on each side of the block, near the front of it. They are close to each other and in this last exchange, their hands naturally come together, not held together but subtly touching each other.

Divya: How do we make it not matter anymore?

Menzi: I don't know

Menzi and Divya stare at each other, acknowledging each other. Lights fade slowly

Blackout

Appendix B: Excerpts from reflection and production essays

Note: These excerpts are taken from reflection and production essays I wrote as part of my Theatre Studies Directing course in which I staged *Race Trouble* (2012) for the first time at the University of the Witwatersrand. Furthermore, as playwriting is the primary creative practice in this research, the following excerpts are reflections on my playwriting and not on my directorial conceptualisations and experiences.

1) What is my connection to the play, *Race Trouble* (2012)?

   The inspiration for this play is deeply personal. One of the characters in the play, Divya, is loosely based on me. *Race Trouble* (2012) looks at two main issues: that of violent crime in South Africa and the emotional, physical and psychological effect this can have on a person and secondly, that of race relations between Indian and Black South Africans. Many members of my family have been victims of violent crimes in South Africa and this has had a profound effect on me even though I have never directly been a victim. My mother was hijacked and strangled in a smash and grab incident but managed to escape. My uncle, his wife and another aunt of mine were attacked in their home. They were tied up, hit and my uncle was tortured with a hot iron. This incident, in particular, has had far reaching effects on not just me but my entire family. Being a victim of a violent crime or having one of my loved ones attacked is my biggest fear and because of this, I live in fear. I am constantly aware of my surroundings and I always worry about my family's safety. Divya, in *Race Trouble*, is a victim of a violent crime and is deeply affected by it.

   Along with violent crime is the issue of being conditioned by race and upbringing, regardless of the liberal beliefs you may have. I have always been a non-racial and liberal person but growing up in post-apartheid South Africa means that race and racial awareness is always a part of your life. In particular, young South Africans, face the difficulty of growing up in a democratic, non-racial South Africa while having parents and elders who suffered during apartheid and lived within a racist society.

This results in a conflict of ideals which I have experienced all my life and unfortunately, sometimes the bad ideals of the past seep into young minds. In my family, there are many people who are racist or who hold racial biases that I, while sometimes voicing my disagreement with such ideals, have most often, like Divya says in the play, bitten my tongue and not voiced my opinion. At the same time, I cannot deny that I have also been conditioned by my race in ways that, although I do not like, I cannot seem to fully shake off. Specifically, I find there is much racial tension between Indian and Black South Africans, two groups who were both oppressed, albeit in different ways and to different extents, during apartheid. Today, individuals, from both these groups oppress each other. I find that in my family and community, there is tension, dislike, anger and sometimes resentment between Indian and Black South Africans. In *Race Trouble* (2012), the characters Divya and Menzi battle to shake off the racial beliefs of their families and also struggle to admit their own internal racial biases.

2) The characters:

Divya

- 25 years old
- Sub-editor at Natal Newspapers in Greyville, Durban
- Lives in Reservoir Hills with her father, mother, little brother and sister. She has an older brother who got married two years ago and naturally, he does not live with them anymore.
- She attended a Model C school and English is her home language. She knows very little Hindi which her mom can speak.
- She qualified with a BA and BA Honours in English and Media at Howard College, UKZN.
- She is meticulous, always neat and tidy, a bit obsessive compulsive.
- Her dress style is classic and comfortable. She is pretty, a little conservative, does not wear a lot of make-up and is a little shy. However, when engaged in something she is passionate about, she is bold.
- She loves American sitcoms.

- She is intelligent, well read, liberal and sometimes vocal in her political and social standpoints. This sometimes places her at odds with elders in her family.
- She is very family orientated, is a loyal friend and while she is Hindu, there are patriarchal aspects of her religion that she is uncomfortable with.
- In some ways she is very Indian and in other ways, she is anti-Indian, stereotypically speaking. This is one reason why she doesn't see herself marrying an Indian man.
- She doesn't want to live with uncertainty and this stops her from experiencing life.

Menzi

- 26 years old
- Trauma counsellor at the Berea Trauma Centre
- Studied psychology at Howard College, UKZN.
- He is originally from Empangeni but now lives in North Beach, Durban. He has lived in Durban since he was eighteen and began university.
- He and his brother attended a government school that did not offer the best education nor had the best resources.
- His mother is a nurse. His mother and brother still live in Empangeni.
- His father died in a car crash when he was 14.
- He is the most educated person in his family. He comes from a working class family.
- He feels an obligation to look after his mother but she is fiercely independent.
- He clashes with his brother as his brother growing up was rebellious and gave their mom a lot of grief. He feels guilty that he had the opportunity of getting a tertiary education but his brother did not. Now being away from home, his brother has to be the man of the house. There is some resentment between the two brothers but they both love each other and at the end of the day, are supportive of each other. Menzi's mother and brother are very proud of him although he does not always realise this.

- He loves Indian food and is an untidy person.
- He wants to get married and have two children, a girl and a boy.
- He also likes American sitcoms. Of all the characters on *Friends*, he is most like Ross.
- He is very passionate about his work and wants to make a real difference in the lives of his patients.
- He is social and hangs out with his varsity friends regularly.
- He is polite and reserved but when challenged, angry or passionate, he is quite forthright, strong and powerful.
- He has been mugged twice, once walking to his flat and another time at the promenade by the Suncoast Hotel.

3) As the writer and director of *Race Trouble*, my first step was scriptwriting. I worked on this script for months but the final draft could not have been completed without the help of my lecturers. The mistake I made when writing this script was to look at it from an issue point of view and not from the characters point of view. This meant that I was making the characters say unnatural things in order to express a social point such as anti-racism. This resulted in expository writing that does not work in performance and in the end, the issue you want to get across does not impact the audience. When pushed in my directing class to say what core need each character wanted to have fulfilled, I became quite emotional. However, this was a necessary step in both my scriptwriting and directorial process. What I realised is that my character Divya, who is loosely based on myself, wants to stop living in fear while my character Menzi, wants to be free of prejudice. Once I understood these two simple yet profound needs, my script fell into place. This is perhaps what Stanislavsky would call a character's super-objective. Once I understood this, the story came to me more easily and the social or racial issues I wanted to bring up in the play became sincere and genuine.

4) Overall, one aspect of my production that I am quite proud of is my script. A goal of mine is also to become a successful playwright and a positive response I have

received from people is that they loved the story and felt that the writing was strong. There are still areas in which the script can be edited. A suggestion given to me from my lecturer was that some of the writing is still too expository and that the idea of racial prejudice and tension is clearly apparent in the text thus I can afford to edit the script a little. I think *Race Trouble* can be developed as a script more and I will certainly do this. A compliment I appreciated from my external examiner was that my script was written in a way, which although criticised my Indian community and family, still was insightful, humorous and heartfelt to this community. In the performances, I was surprised to find people, of all races, laughing at lines in the script that I did not necessarily think were humorous. I appreciated this because I feel that when dealing with dense and emotionally heavy subject matter, it is best to express this, at times, through laughter. Lastly, a fear of mine was that people would think my script was terrible thus it is a relief and great to know that people really enjoyed the story.

5) I am happy that *Race Trouble* (2012) was, all things considered, a fairly successful production. I plan on correcting my work, both textually and in production, using the constructive and generous feedback given to me by my lecturer, external examiner and public who watched my show.

Appendix C: Journal Entries

Note: The following are the journal entries I completed after each rehearsal during the second run of *Race Trouble* (2012) at the Musho Theatre Festival in January 2013. These entries are written in point form as well as in a personal, casual tone because they reflect my instinctive response to the process. They are not formal reflections, for instance, as seen in appendix B.

13 December 2012

- Introduction rehearsal with Kamini, who will be playing Divya and Chris, who will be playing Menzi
- A very casual rehearsal. Kamini and Chris are good friends of mine so chatting about the issues discussed in the play and my personal connection to it felt natural and easy.
- I invited them to share their experiences and they did which was helpful in starting this process.
- My cast seem keen to take on these parts and be in the play.
- I am anxious and nervous about staging this production again, especially after the directorial problems I encountered in the last run.

Re-editing based on supervisor's advice

- Before beginning rehearsals, I edit my script once more based on advice and critique that my supervisor has given me.
- This advice really helped shape my play.
- I followed up on most of my supervisor's suggestions.
- After editing the script, I feel more confident about my play.
- I have now shortened the play a little, from 10 scenes to 8.
- I am still a little apprehensive about my writing though.

Rehearsal 21 December 2012

- Read-through at Corner Café in Durban.
- Lovely atmosphere of the place made the read-through feel natural, like two people having a conversation. It was nice.
- I was anxious about what the cast would think but they responded to the script very well.
- As we are approaching Christmas and New Year, we will not rehearse but the cast has the script and must start thinking about how they are going to develop their characters and they must go over their lines in the holidays.

Rehearsal 2 January 2013

- Blocked scenes one to three which was good.
- Blocking, at this point, is just a framework for the cast to work with, not looking at character yet
- As I am unable to find a proper rehearsal space right now, I am rehearsing at a friend's house.
- I am not feeling it as a director, not fully enjoying it yet. I am tense, stressed and doubtful of my abilities.
- However, my cast seem to be at ease.

Rehearsal 3 January 2013

- Blocked scenes four and five.
- It feels a little like we are going through the motions of blocking but we have to get through this part.
- I, as a director, always have to get down and establish a solid ground before experimenting or playing. This relates to who I am (and by extension Divya in the play), but perhaps this is the wrong way to go about it.

Rehearsal 4 January 2013

- Blocked scenes six to eight.
- I am still doubting myself.

- The cast has not got into character yet but I have faith in them.

Rehearsal 6 January 2013

- Short rehearsal
- Just went over the blocking of the whole play.
- The cast need to remember their movements more accurately, especially in the parts where they are standing up.
- They need to listen to each other more.

Rehearsal 7 January 2013

- Worked in detail on scene one and two
- A good rehearsal in terms of understanding character.
- But as a group, we felt that we had hit a stagnant point so we decided to have some fun and play a bit with the characters. Kamini and Chris, for instance, played Divya and Menzi as characters from the comedy series *30 Rock*.
- This revived energy in the rehearsal.
- The cast still needs to pick up the pace.
- We are stressed because Rowin, my former lecturer and mentor for the show, is coming to rehearsal tomorrow.

Rehearsal 8 January 2013

- Rowin comes
- He critiques the script and the character.
- Rowin is quite critical, that is his nature but he is giving me constructive criticism which helps.
- Nevertheless, I feel terrible but recognise that the script does need more work in certain areas.
- As a result of changes needed, we do not rehearse. However, we do bond as cast and director.
- I am now in more doubt than ever about my scriptwriting and directing.

- This is a low point but I trust that Rowin believes in me.
- No rehearsal tomorrow as I need to edit, reflect and focus by myself.

Rehearsal 10 January 2013

- Edited the script more and cut it down to six scenes.
- I do a read-through with the cast and Rowin
- I am apprehensive at first but decide to believe in my script and stand up for my work.
- Rowin gives a few suggestions and good ideas for me to use. He is happy with the changes I have made thus far.
- The cast, however, reads with apathy.
- They need an energy boost.

Rehearsal 11 January 2013

- Give a few edits of the script to the cast. I accept that naturally, changes will occur here and there. A script is never final.
- We are now rehearsing at cast Chris's place. The lack of a proper theatre rehearsal space is becoming frustrating.
- We work on character and expression but still there is some lethargy in the rehearsal.
- Due to the time constraint of having the show only be 45min, I time the cast.
- We exceed this amount just a little but with picking up the pace, I think we can finish in 45min.

Rehearsal 13 January

- Not a productive rehearsal because we are all very tired.
- We begin working on music for the show
- I cut the script a little more, here and there.

Rehearsal 14 January

- We are finally in a proper rehearsal space!
- We find some set pieces for the show.
- As we are new space, we get used to it in rehearsal. However, it does feel a bit like going through the motions.
- We do have a good discussion at the end of rehearsal about the need for Kamini to internalise the robbery, to feel invaded, violated and traumatised.

Rehearsal 15 January 2013

- Rowin comes to watch.
- Kamini is nervous.
- Rowin gives me some blocking ideas.
- The cast is not getting the emotions right yet but I believe they will get there.
- We do scenes one to three twice over in detail and this helps.
- We work on the ideas Rowin gave us and after rehearsal, I finalise the music for the show with Chris

Rehearsal 16 January 2013

- Technical rehearsal at the Catalina Theatre.
- Unfortunately, Chris can't come due to work.
- We walk around and get acquainted with the space. We only have 15min to set up on the day of the show.
- I program the lighting cues with the technician. This is tricky but the technician is very helpful and the music on my CD luckily works.
- As I have administrative stuff for the show to do, I tell Chris and Kamini that they must meet on their own to rehearse later and do line runs. Not knowing their lines with confidence is becoming a problem.
- Being in the Catalina and seeing how it fits its audience of 160 people makes it all feel real. Getting very nervous now.

Rehearsal 17 January 2013

- The show is coming together but it needs more oomph or energy.
- Kamini and Chris really need to become Divya and Menzi now.
- We take a break and eat together.
- My concern is the cast not knowing their lines properly. This cast has learnt their lines much better than the cast in Johannesburg. However, because they are so preoccupied with remembering their lines, they are forgetting everything else that they are supposed to do.
- At the end of rehearsal, I give the cast lists of what to remember for the final dress rehearsal tomorrow such as their full costumes and props.

Rehearsal January 18

- Final Rehearsal! I am getting anxious
- First we do a line run
- Then we start rehearsing scene four to six.
- Rowin is now watching.
- He makes alter a few things such as blocking.
- We sort out the logistics of moving the set tomorrow.
- The cast are picking up their cues far too slowly. I cannot cut anymore of the script.
- We then do a full run with costumes etc.
- The run is terrible, dry, flat and slow. Rowin lectures and shouts at the cast.
- This works because the run afterwards is lovely, the best it has ever been. I needed Rowin to be the bad cop.
- I feel confident, nervous and excited for tomorrow.

Performance 19 January 2013

- Show Day! I wake up stressed; I have a headache and am a bit tired.
- The show is at 4pm. We meet at 1 to prepare.
- The cast is nervous and anxious. They do a line run and get dressed.
- We warm-up and then make our way to the Catalina. We do a minor focus before.

- The theatre is packed and we have to set up in front of the audience. I wanted to do a proper focus but there is no time. It is chaotic and we just have to go.
- The show goes well. However the projection was a problem and the show was not as polished as it should have been. Some audience members were restless and this was distracting. The cast basically remembered all their lines.
- The technical aspects of the show were awful and tough to deal with under the circumstances.
- I was certainly in a better place than I was for the first run. I was calm and felt better prepared.
- The cast was good but nervous. They needed more confidence.
- Upon reflection, I think we could have rehearsed more as the constant changes, so close to the show, did hamper the polish and precision the show required.
- I received the same compliment from the last time I staged the show: people loved the writing and the story.
- My family and friends enjoyed the show.
- I am happy that my professional debut went well and was successful. However, I have learnt that with my play *Race Trouble* (2012) and any future theatre endeavour I take, that I have a lot to learn and a long way to go. Nevertheless, I have moved from the starting block and am ready for the challenges ahead.