UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

Representational praxis of coloured identity in South Africa reified by discursive formations located across three different online spaces.

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements in respect of the Master‘s degree qualification Magister Artium in the Department of English, in the Faculty of Humanities, at the University of the Free State.

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Declarations:

i) I, Tammy Jane Fray, declare that the masters' research dissertation that I herewith submit for the masters' degree qualification Magister Artium (English/ Cultural Studies) at the University of the Free State, is my independent work and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.

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Abstract

This dissertation critically analyses contemporary representations of South African coloured self-styling that are located online. Social networking sites and online magazine-like media, are used by contemporary self-defined coloured South Africans to curate and publish content that postulates ideas about individual and collective performances of coloured identity. This involves publishing content from popular accounts located on social media applications as well as domains that enable editorial publication of small online magazines. In general, this dissertation aims to gauge the social, cultural and political significance of contemporary digitally curated performances of coloured identity. This study analyses present constructions of coloured identity made by those who claim the identity in different online contexts. The porous boundaries between the offline and online context and the mass production of visual technologies, means that the visual is central to popular culture (Rose, 2016: 35) and that meaning is produced and communicated through carefully constructed images. These visual constructions shape how the social world is understood and engaged. Social networking sites generate and circulate knowledge and ideas visually and technological attributes like hashtags and captions, influence the interpretation of the image. Understanding discursive formations (Rose, 2016: 212) located online is integral to establishing how knowledge and power ultimately circulate in the digital world and how this may impact representations of South African coloured identity online.

To this end, the study assesses five multimodal texts sourced from two social media accounts and one online womxn's magazine, respectively. The accounts, @being_ coloured and VannieKaap, are located on social media applications, Instagram and Facebook and the online magazine, *Swirl Magazine ZA,* is hosted on the domain MadMagz. Concerning the theoretical framework of this project, a number of theories—ranging from critical race theory, constructivist theories and the tenets discourse analysis as part of discursive psychology facilitate my interpretations of the texts I have selected to analyse. I selected texts found on three different online contexts as well as three digital forms, to compare and to account for the diverse expressions of coloured identity that exist and the possibilities for these expressions that different online contexts permit. The three respective online contexts analysed shape the form and

content of the multimodal messages shared from the accounts analysed and this is because the design, architecture, aesthetics and platform vernaculars of different online contexts play a role in the production, circulation and consumption of the multimodal messages. In looking at different online contexts, the study intends to cast a wide net across the digital space to reveal what those who self-define as coloured might be navigating politically, socially and culturally.

In order to select texts to analyse, criteria were developed in advance. The criteria include the following six imperatives:

1) Overt references to Coloured identity, either in the individual or collective sense.
2) Explicit references to assumed generally accepted styles of Coloured identity performance (hair, clothes, language, gender, accent, values, behaviours).
3) Explicit claims, presented as truth about the socio-political and economic position Coloured people occupy in contemporary South Africa.
4) Rigid policing that employs persuasion techniques (Rose, 2016: 210) to advocate for an 'essence' (1988: 521) that defines Coloured identity.
5) Explicit aims stated, using hashtags and text, behind certain representations of Coloured identity.

These imperatives determined which texts were ultimately selected for analysis. In addition to the above criteria, the ironclad rule with respect to maintaining research ethicality, restricted the texts chosen to only those published by public facing social media account holders and online magazine editors. According to Jang and Cullingham (2012), content posted/published in the public domain online, may be used in the course of desktop study research projects[1]. To this end, I successfully received ethical clearance from the University of the Free State's Ethics Committee.

The research is valuable as it assesses the multimodal formations of contemporary Coloured identity in the digital realm—a space that is designed for

[1] I recognise the ongoing contentious debate around this approach however, the perspectives of scholars such as Townsend and Wallace (2016: 7-8) affirm my understanding of public and private online space. Townsend and Wallace (2016: 7-8) argue that "risk of harm might not be present in all instances in which a researcher wishes to cite social media data, for example when such data is shared by public bodies or organisations, or when a social media user is clearly aiming for broad readership".

constructed identity performance. This research builds on the findings of scholars such as Adhikari (2009: 6), who has described the history of representations of self-defined coloured identity, as characterised by contradictions and influenced by the precarity of coloured marginality and the rigidity of an apartheid state built on racial capitalism. Considering the salience of digital realm in our contemporary context, this research observes and assesses the intersections between race, identity and the internet in order to arrive at conclusions regarding contemporary coloured representation.

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Introduction: The self-defined coloured subject represented in contemporary digital media

“How persistent this horror of the middling spot is,

this dread of the interim place!” (Smith, 2009: 136).

Method and Rationale

In this dissertation, I use the nomenclature, ‘coloured’, as opposed to the capitalised Coloured, in order to mark a difference from the term as it was institutionalised by the apartheid regime. This is not an extra-ordinary decision as in contemporary society, most people who self-identify with this racial classification as well as current critical literature, have popularized the use of ‘coloured’ and aligning with this linguistically situates the project in the contemporary. This is important because as will be demonstrated later in this work, variations on the nomenclature of coloured are telling in terms of the social, cultural and political climate that engenders the variation. The spelling of coloured here also stands in contrast to the American spelling of coloured, to serve as a linguistic marker of the context-specific nature of these terms, highlighting the unique experiences that subaltern communities across the world have with respect to unequal power dynamics. The identity of coloured in the South African context, implies a certain historical experience, and this continued impact of context is what this project aims to stress.

More importantly, the variations in nomenclature of coloured are indicative of the perpetually ongoing and eternally open-ended process of identity formation. Considering the constructivist work of thinkers such as Butler (1988) and Appiah (2016), this dissertation draws from perspectives that understand identity as anti-essentialist (van der Waal, 2008: 53). Essentialist understandings of identity prescribe a perspective of social identities as static typologies and classifications defined by a set of characteristics. Such identitarian characteristics are generalised and claim to be fixed and definitive of a person or a group (van der Waal, 2008: 53). This project disavows this interpretation of social identities and aims to stress throughout its chapters that not only is identity a continuous process, it is also contingent (van der Waal, 2008: 53). Butler’s (1988: 225) work on gender for instance reveals that the constructed nature of identity

is disguised through performative acts. These acts, through repetition and social censure, provide the illusion of natural essence thus legitimating the impression of stability that is typically afforded to constructs of identity. This research takes its cues from constructivist understandings of identity, recognising the ambiguities and fluidities that provoked a complex reaction to white supremacy on the part of the coloured community, one that encompassed resistance and collaboration as well as protest and accommodation (Adhikari, 2006: 99).

As a way to discuss the performance of coloured identity online, I use the phrase, self-styling and online self-styling interchangeably. This decision is informed by the use of these phrases in Katlego Disemelo's (2020: 220) discussion of online performances of queer identity. In my discussion of memes created by VannieKaap in chapter three, I use the word "memetic" (Milner, 2015: 3) to illustrate the transient, ever-expanding and tightly interconnected nature of memes as a form of multimodal media. A media extract is only classified as meme once it has been remixed and elicits several other new iterations of the original text. Milner explains that the term "memetic" indicates "the social processes existential to the creation, circulation and transformation of collective texts, regardless of the individual text itself" (Milner, 2015: 3). The memes under discussion in chapter three can all be described as memetic because they are interconnected, dense and are continuous iterations of an original.

The historiography of coloured identity is sparse, poorly researched, speculative and "in nearly all general histories of South Africa, coloured people have effectively been written out of the narrative and marginalised to a few throw-away comments scattered through a text" (Adhikari, 2009: 1). Adhikari suggests four distinct and competing approaches to writing about coloured identity and these are: essentialism, instrumentalism, social constructionism and creolisation (Adhikari, 2009: 7). I refer to these approaches here as reference to the different ways in which coloured identity has been explored and represented in texts by various authors since the early twentieth century. This is a testament to the preoccupation, albeit marginal at times, of grappling with coloured identity especially in relation to whatever time period a text on the identity, is emerging from. This project is guided by the same motive, in that what

undergirds the work presented here is an exploration of what it means to navigate the present as a self-defined coloured person.

In the early twentieth century, work produced on coloured people tended to regurgitate the colonial views of the time, which leant towards liberal non-racialism and multicultural non-racialism which will be unpacked in chapter three (Adhikari, 2006: 56). Adhikari refers to the work of this era as essentialist. This meant that these texts represented coloured people as the product of racial hybridity, and a "half-breed population that formed the nucleus of a new race that was emerging" (Adhikari, 2006: 58). Furthermore, coloured people were constructed as an initially uncivilised race who, through exposure to white middle-class society "gradually developed more and more homogeneity as they became subjected to the positive and constitutive forces of European society" (Adhikari, 2009: 59). This was reflected in the work of self-defined coloured writers of late 1930s such as Dorothy Hendricks and Christian Viljoen as well as Christian Ziervogel who wrote *Brown South Africa* in 1938. Ziervogel textually referred to himself and other self-defined coloured people as "brown hybrids" (Adhikari, 2006: 60) and stressed the assumed coloured community's relation to whiteness through supposed racial mixture.

The mid to late twentieth century in South Africa, for various reasons to be touched on in chapter three, led to changes in how social identities, such as racial categories were understood. During this period, the focus shifted to assessing how racial identities are used politically and thus, writings on coloured identity reflected an exploration of this. Adhikari terms these writings, instrumentalist (Adhikari, 2006: 68). The textual representations of coloured identity during this time challenged the political and social validity of coloured identity in an attempt to scaffold a unified non-white identity. Here Adhikari refers to the work of Maurice Hommel in 1981 who writes that coloured people are an "integral part of the black base on which white domination and privilege rests" (Adhikari, 2006: 68). The writers of this period were less preoccupied with the origins of coloured identity and instead chose to textually represent the identity in terms of its place in the social temporality.

Writing about coloured identity in the early years of post-apartheid South Africa, Adhikari describes his own writing approach as guided by social constructionism. In

applying social constructionism as a lens, Adhikari attempts to address oversimplified perceptions of coloured identity and by implication, of South African history in general. Social constructionism as described by Adhikari (2009: 14) recognises that like all social identities, the coloured identity is a historically specific social construction and to understand it requires considering how and why it came into existence, what are the intricate means by which it finds expression and what do these expressions intend and achieve in a certain context. Writings on coloured identity are identified as adhering to the social constructionist approach when coloured people are represented as agentic in shaping their own identity. This is integral to the work Adhikari produced and researched in the early 2000s because he viewed the transition into the post-apartheid era as pregnant with new possibilities of constructing coloured identity. Social constructionism as an approach to writing about coloured identity prioritises the understanding of coloured identity as, “an on-going dynamic process in which groups and individuals make and remake their perceived realities and thus also their personal and social identities” (Adhikari, 2009: 16). Thus, textual social constructionist representations of coloured identity intend to simply to acknowledge this process and to bring awareness to the relationality and contingency of identity.

The final approach Adhikari identifies, draws from creolisation, which is a theoretical perspective similar to social constructionism (Adhikari, 2009: 49) in that it is critical of simplistic paradigms of identity (Erasmus, 2017: 101) especially with respect to identities that emerge from contexts that have been shaped by unequal power dynamics. Writings that demonstrate this approach recognises that racial identities are historically located but advocates for more focus on the possibilities for subjecthood beyond racial classification. Adhikari identifies Zimitri Erasmus’ work in the early 2000s as displaying a budding sensibility of the application of creolisation as a lens for writing about coloured identity (Adhikari, 2009: 16). In the last 10-12 years as class inequalities have deepened in South Africa with race becoming a shorthand for more complex class-related chasms (Erasmus, 2010: 244), Erasmus’ interest in the application of creolisation as a lens through which to write and think about identity beyond race, has remained (Erasmus, 2017: 99). She describes creolisation as a theoretical perspective that refuses, “the order of knowledge and representation on which taxonomies are premised”

(Erasmus 2017: 101). This implies that creolisation recognises racial categories, their legacies and continued effects, but disavows their validity as socially significant markers of identity. Creolisation thus requires writing about coloured identity from a place of being fully aware and mindful of the continued legacy of the effects of racial categories in everyday life yet refusing to bow to the pressure of the logic that undergirds these effects.

I find it helpful to consider these varied approaches to writing about coloured identity because they have kept me mindful, throughout the research process, of remaining constantly aware of the contingency of identity. This has prompted me into continuously questioning the implications of what it might mean to exist as self-defined coloured person in this present moment, just as the writers I describe above, have done.

Socialization, in the private and public sense, encouraged me to think of myself primarily as coloured for most of my life. I understood the logic of racialisation that informed this, but from time to time, others would point out gaps or flaws in my performance of my racial identity, stirring intermittent periods of discomfort with the category. This was pronounced when I arrived at the University of the Free State and was repeatedly informed by others, that the language I spoke, my hair texture and other racially significant markers, did not align with the general impression of coloured people and coloured identity. My racial and ethnic identity was called into question often, by many different types of people, self-defined coloured people included, and I found myself often having to legitimise my claim to coloured identity. I had few other self-defined coloured friends at university as most shied away from me, fearing the English that came out of my mouth. A self-defined white female student took my English and my physical features to mean that I would not mind being conscripted into the role of token Black and she confided to me that she believed that in the residence in which we lived, young womxn of the same race only should be permitted to live together in a room. She felt safe confiding this to me based on the dissonances she picked up on in terms of my racial identity performance. Black students I encountered in the student leadership spaces I spent a great deal of time in, did not trust me and took my home language and physical characteristics as confirmation that I was too close to whiteness to empathize with the struggles black students were facing. In contrast, a self-defined black male

colleague I worked with at the UFS student media told me, in front of others, that my accent made him want to vomit.

These experiences, unfortunately, did not initially prompt me into questioning the validity of racial classifications altogether, but instead these anecdotes served only to make me defensive of my racial identity and this leaked into the performance of my identity. I leaned into the impulse to homogenise and spoke about myself in relation to an ephemeral we. This came to a head when I was asked to speak at a dialogue regarding coloured identity in 2018. This and subsequent dialogues, degenerated into a mess of racial tensions between black and coloured students, and every direction in which to engage on identity in that moment, seemed to me only to inflame these tensions. I noticed as well that the way in which we engaged with each other at the dialogue was in pithy catchphrases common to the memes and online narratives that circulate on social media applications dominated by the views, ideologies and values of American liberals. The debate seemed stilted and language seemed to be failing us and the more people spoke at each other, the more I became convinced that all I could hear was the sound of regurgitated snippets from popular culture online. During the dialogue, I recognised that at the nexus of race and social media use, South Africa's vision of itself as a non-racial society was rapidly disappearing, perhaps even faster than before.

I needed a new way to think through my connection to my racial identity and this MA is the product of this internal conversation with myself. It is my attempt to reconceive of my attachment to race as a marker of identity and to see myself as agentic and to trust in new possibilities for fashioning my performance of selfhood. I also intend for this dissertation to enable me to find new ways of engaging across racial divides.

Considering the approaches discussed earlier, my research draws from social constructionism in that the chapters are dedicated to analysing online contemporary expressions of coloured identity, what these achieve and how these expressions come to be. I am however inspired by Erasmus' (2017: 101) take on creolisation and I believe this comes through to a certain extent in the work presented here but my hope with respect to future projects, is to be able to write about race and coloured identity in ways that explores new possibilities for conceiving identity that is not defined by race.

As a Cultural Studies project, this study is concerned with the circulation and production of power. Cultural Studies displays a “commitment to examining cultural practices from the point of view of their intrication with, and within, relations of power” (Bennett, 1998: 33). Cultural Studies embraces a definition of culture that includes—in addition to conventional ‘texts’ such as books—television shows, music and advertising, and ways of life (in the sense of concrete practices such as shopping, eating, drinking fashion etc.) as well as more abstract structures such as language and beliefs. This definition of culture is what enables me to focus on online engagement and the impact this exhibits on the performance of racial identities. More importantly, Cultural Studies is a deeply political, intellectual and inherently leftist (Rodman, 2015: 40-44) and derides producing work for the sake of it. The purpose of work produced in Cultural Studies must necessarily be circulated “in public forums suitable to the tasks of pedagogy, provocation and political intervention” (Rodman, 2015: 40) implying that Cultural Studies projects tend to produce work that has actionable value and that challenges in the socio-political tensions that the work attempts to grapple with. The work I present in this project and its implications on how racial identities are navigated, aligns with this brief outline of the field and I conceive of this project as the start of my investigations into the sticky relationships between race, identity and technology in South Africa.

In keeping with the definition of culture provided above, this study analyses online material produced by self-defined coloured subjects as representations and expressions of contemporary coloured subjectivity. Following the trajectory mapped out by social constructionism is also helpful in the sense that social constructionism reminds researchers to be aware of the context in which the expressions of coloured identity are located. In his own research, Adhikari (2006: 101) continually affirms that as a result of the relative privilege granted by the racialised logic of white supremacist governance, coloured identity has been shaped by periods of accommodation and protest on one hand and assimilation and coloured separatism on the other. This means that for a racially marginal group such as coloured South Africans, navigating the quagmire of the white supremacist bureaucratic power, has meant living in a state of collective reactivity and cultivating a racial identity from this state. Thus, when considering coloured identity,

often the key to really understanding expressions of the identity is to be mindful of the context in which the expression is located.

A brief literature review

I have delimited my research to an analysis of five texts which have been sourced from two respective social media accounts and one online magazine. I have chosen to look at online expressions of a contemporary racial identity because of the imbrication between the online and offline spaces that has led to an intractable interpenetrating and continuous enmeshing of cyberspace and everyday space. The fluidity that exists between offline and online contexts (Leaver, 2020: 32) has allowed online digital contexts to become an important setting for identity development (Wangqvist & Frisen, 2016: 139). In the early years of the internet, it was touted as a frontier free of the socially significant markers of the offline world, but this perspective was undermined in the years that followed as spaces on the internet are charged with digital expressions of the social, cultural and political rifts that exist offline (Vaidhyanathan, 2014: 37). In the early 2000s, the internet was framed by marketers, academics and public figures, as the harbinger of amity and world peace, yet decades on, it is clear that the existing animosities of the world, “the bitter conflicts of values, beliefs and interests” (Curran, 2012: 13) that shape the relations between nations and within national borders, dominate the expressions of identity and representations of subjectivity online. Daniels (2012) writes that the internet’s origins entrenched whiteness as default into its features because it was designed in a specific geographical, institutional and historical context. This context, Silicone Valley, as described by Daniels (2012: 254), is white, heterosexual, male, English, Western and affluent and this privileged identity and its closed-off reality was coded into the design of the internet itself. Curran (2012: 18) writes that the whiteness entrenched into the internet served only to bring the same type of people into closer relation with each other and from these origins, permitted conditions in which racist websites proliferated, even from the early days of its user engagement (Curran, 2012: 17). Thus, the fractious reality of the world built on inequality aided by socially significant markers such as race, coalesces into a matrix of racism, globalisation and technoculture (Daniels, 2012: 267) that characterises contemporary culture whose offline and online boundaries are porous. The internet is described by Bosch (2008: 204)

as a theatre of performed identities and these identities are for the most part, computer- mediated extensions of existing socially significant identities.

A nation such as South Africa is riddled with historical chasms especially with respect to race (Erasmus, 2017: 101) and a digital landscape that enables these chasms to find expression will yield interesting effects on the ways in which subjects choose to represent their identity. Establishing one's identity in the context of South Africa has historically involved finding a category to slot oneself neatly into the essentialist arrangement of the social temporality, especially with respect to race. Apartheid rendered salient racial difference and this in turn meant that race, "sets the tone and provides the dominant discursive framework for discussions about identity," (Laden, 2008: 138). Though South Africa statutorily defines its self as a non-racial democratic nation, its administrative operations and subsequently, its citizens subjecthood, continues to be shaped primarily by racial classifications belonging to a fallen regime (Erasmus, 2012: 4). Race is integral to narratives of identity in South Africa and both group and individual identities are constituted through racial distinctions (Laden, 2008: 138) and reinforced as people are racialised in a multitude of ways every day (Erasmus, 2017: 51). Thus, race is a large part of the narrative subjects tell themselves about who they are and this narrative promotes a sense of coherence across time and place and in different social roles (Wangqvist & Frisen, 2016: 143). This therefore means that racial identity will act as the lens through which South African subjects interact with spaces online which in turn will shape their representation of their personhood. Scholars such as Daniels (2012: 254); Curran (2012: 31) and Lim (2020: 186) confirm that the context of certain spaces on the internet compels users to form communities around shared interests and hobbies but notably, also around offline socially significant markers, one of which is racial identity.

Research conducted by Brock (2009: 398) and Wangqvist and Frisen (2016: 144) reveal that the tendency to define subjectivity online along racial lines is strongest when individuals experience uncertainty offline with respect to their ethnic and racial identity, especially amongst minority groups, "individuals in ethnic minorities tended to emphasise cultural aspects in their online self-presentations" (Wangqvist & Frisen, 2016: 145). Bosch (2008: 194) affirms this finding, stating that communities who consider

themselves to be marginalised are more likely to turn to the digital space for fostering community and interrogating identity, believing that online contexts are safer than the offline reality that contributes to feelings of marginalisation. As demonstrated by the research and writings of thinkers such as Adhikari (2006: 117), Wicomb (1995: 119) Ruiters (2009: 104) and Brown (2000: 198), the assumed coloured community has historically been suspended in a state of racial vulnerability (Steele, 1990: 64) leading to heightened awareness of the dynamics of racialisation (Erasmus, 2017: 52) and the implications thereof on their own performance of racial identity and subsequent relative privilege. South Africa's landscape was shaped by the influence of locally convenient race (Erasmus, 2017: 32) which is a theoretical term inspired by Garuba (2008) but coined by Erasmus (2017) that describes the fusing of physical markers of racial identity such as skin colour with culture and social habit in order to imbue categories of race with connotations about the lived reality and everyday practice of the subject being racialised. The racialisation of people in this way legitimated gradations of material and social privilege and coloured people as a minority group were naturalised as a class of assumed brown skinned people with relative privilege, caught between black and white statutorily defined bodies and serving as the lynchpin securing in place the logic of locally convenient race. This has historically forced coloured people into ambivalent relations with locally convenient race, at different points assimilating into or decrying the logic by which they secured relative privilege. In an effort to ensure the community's survival, coloured people have had to be aware of the changing dynamics of power with respect to race in order to curate racial identity performance that ensures stability and security for individuals and for the assumed community. Coloured history is marked by performances of identity that are highly attuned to the dynamics of locally convenient race and this is amplified by the connotations attached to coloured bodies in the popular consciousness (Adhikari, 2006: 169) that communicate contempt, derision and disdain for coloured South African people. Racial vulnerability has survived into the post-apartheid era amongst coloured people and exists in the form of "feeling rules and deep truths" (Boler & Davis, 2018: 73) that communicate the community's feelings of marginalisation and disregard in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. These feeling rules and deep truths in addition to socialised attentiveness to the ephemeral

dynamics of racialisation, give rise to the anxiety within the community regarding racial identity and this is likely to be expressed in coloured self-representations online.

The central premise of Adhikari's seminal text, *Not white enough not black enough: Racial identity in the South African Coloured Community (2005)* is the idea that throughout the twentieth century, performances of coloured identity remained largely unchanged and that with the transition into democracy, more possibilities for coloured self-styling were made available. Research from scholars such as Bosch (2008: 192) and Schoon (2012: 690) prove that with respect to coloured self-styling in the early years of democracy, self-representing coloured internet users gravitated towards the digital realm as a space to negotiate and reimagine performances of coloured identity. Bosch (2008: 192) writes about the website Bruin-Ou.com as a virtual community in the early 2000s that intended to "forge and promote coloured culture" in the digital realm. The website was founded in 2005 and just a year later had grown into a virtual community of 6 000 subscribers. The founders of the website communicate in their mission statement that the website offers a portal to experiencing "first hand" digitally mediated assumed coloured culture, and exists "as a business vehicle through which the many stereotypes and question marks surrounding coloured identity can be dispelled, thus enabling the assumed coloured community at large to be included in this country's great cultural resurgence" (Bosch, 2008: 189). From her virtual ethnographic study of the website, Bosch concludes that in the early 2000s, self-defined coloured people on the website were negotiating their identity and asserting their identity as specifically, exclusively and proudly coloured. This was represented through distinctive Afrikaans vernacular, as well as valorising and claiming a specific style of dress and type of music as specific to the community. Bosch also found that users on the website display preoccupation with the tastes and values of the West and Europe as symbolic of middle-class success. Bosch also found that self-defined coloured website users preferred to think of their racial identity as a minority group without much social, cultural or political capital in the post-apartheid era. As a result, users demonstrated a stronger sense of alliance with people of colour outside of South Africa as opposed to black South Africans, especially with people of colour they identified as ethnic minorities. Bosch's (2008: 184) findings indicate that in

the early 2000s, virtual communities who organised around coloured ethnicity, were invested in versions of self-styling that affirmed in-group dynamics.

This stands in contrast to research conducted by Schoon (2012: 1) just a few years later about the coloured and Xhosa communities living in the Eastern Cape town of Hooggenoeg which was considered a coloured's only residential area during segregation (Schoon, 2012: 30). Here, mobile phones are an aspect of Information Communication Technology that form part of a co-constitutive process with the social context of Hooggenoeg in order to shape the social meanings that are important to the community. With the mobile phone at the centre of identity performance in Hooggenoeg, what emerges are technology mediated performances of identity that decry self-representation based on a single racial category. Community members disavow self-definitions as either coloured or black, they prefer to define themselves as, 'Mix' and this is reflected via the way they engage with their mobile phones. On community specific chat rooms, they communicate via a form of local vernacular that is a mixture of Afrikaans and Xhosa. Practices such as initiation and traditional healing that are considered specific to black Xhosa culture, are replicated amongst the coloured individuals living there and are given Afrikaans names, such as slimdokter for traditional healer. In contrast to Bosch's (2008: 192) findings, community members denounce adherence to a specific style of music as a testament to racial identity performance, instead it is a source of pride for residents to have media folders saved on their devices that showcase a range of music across genres and deliberately across genres that popular consciousness often associates with certain racial categories. As mobile phones have the capacity to access the internet, community members consider the web as a portal to new cultures, experiences and connections outside of race. In contrast to the motives that informed online engagement in Bosch's (2008) study, the community members in Hooggenoeg who own mobile phones, consider the internet to be a means to access more culturally and racially diverse content. On mobile phone applications such as MXit, community members claim they seek out contacts who speak different languages and self-present in racially diverse ways. Schoon (2012: 14) found that community members also make use of chat room sites such as Outoilet, to police other community members behaviour, slating the behaviour of others as either representative

of either civilised or uncivilised behaviour. Schoon found that racially charged words from the colonial lexicon, words such as Boesman and Khoisan, are repurposed by community members as a linguistic means of describing behaviour considered uncivilised (Schoon, 2012: 15). Those behaving contrary to the standards of behaviour acceptable for the community, are anonymously chastised on the chat rooms and referred to using derogatory words that refer to indigenous people of South Africa. From Schoon's (2012) research, we see that Information Communication Technology (ICT) devices such as mobile phones can be part of new ways representing personhood that moves beyond a single racial category.

Studies such as Bosch's (2008) and Schoon's (2012) affirm that the internet and its related digital devices play a role in the development of identity and self-presentation for coloured people, and that this process is not the same for everyone. Some self-defined coloured subjects may interact with the digital space through the lens of their identification with their racial category, while others may consider the internet and technology to present an opportunity for identity development and self-representation that extends outside of the category. As Adhikari (2007: 264) says at the closing of his text mentioned earlier, the post-apartheid era yields many more possibilities for self-styling amongst members of the coloured community than the apartheid era did, and so it is normal to see disparities in the ways that the coloured community chooses to represent and identify online. This research project is a contemporary addition to the tentative existence of this virtual ethnography of coloured self-representations online.

I believe that reconnaissance of coloured self-styling online is vital at this moment given the inextricable relationship between the capital interests of big tech companies and related stakeholders, and the effect of these interests on the design and contemporary user experience of spaces on the internet (Lanier, 2018: 15). Online contexts such as social media are a ubiquitous feature in everyday reality for many and Lanier (2010: 5) attests that the platform architectures of these digital platforms is constructed in such a way to promote behavioural change "the slightest change in something as trivial as the ease of a use of a button can sometimes completely alter behaviour patterns" (Lanier, 2010: 7). This occurs because of the user surveillance integral to the corporate success of social media and Silicon Valley in general. As users

engage with the social media and various other contexts on the Internet, they are being monitored and tracked by algorithms gorging on the data that users' internet interaction reveals. This data is used to make platforms adaptive to user tastes and interests in order to harvest the attention of internet users for interests related to advertising, marketing and consumerism. Lanier (2010: 9) argues that the targeted stream of individualised content intended to goad internet users into behaving in certain ways in order to be more susceptible to consumerism, normalises both pervasive surveillance on the internet and abuses the trust of users by coaxing them into performing in certain ways online. Social media applications are designed to be addictive and to ingratiate themselves firmly into the lives of users and for the purposes of everyday convenience, most applications perform real needs in the lives of users and become locked in (Lanier, 2010: 9) into our lives as they fulfil a certain function. The thesis of Lanier's (2018) text, *Ten Arguments for Deleting your social media accounts right now*, is that ICTs and the internet in general is not wholly negative and that the digital space and technology has provided great many benefits for individuals and societies in general. However, the way in which it is being used in service of converging corporate and capital interests with ICT's has allowed for the creation of spaces online that are irrevocably changing human behaviours online and offline and not for the better. Lanier (2018: 36) affirms that the current state of the internet has become so steeped in behavioural manipulation that exposure to social media platform architecture and other contexts online have been directly correlated to engendering extreme emotional reactions such as anger in order to provoke people into engaging more and more with the social media application, website or domain. Currently, most spaces on the internet have been reduced to contexts that provoke users into reactionary engagement with the platform and where the schisms of the offline reality can flourish freely online so that more data can be acquired. Understanding this about the contemporary reality of the internet is important because this digital environment may impact the decisions for self-representation that are available to online users. Bearing in mind that South African subjects tend to construct their self-styling based on the cues provided by racial categories, it is important to assess how this would manifest within a digital space that may provoke essentialised portrayals of identity in order to illicit reactionary content and engagement. As Lanier indicates, the

different design features of each platform will also impact engagement (Lanier, 2010: 4) and thus this research project stretches across three different online contexts.

Scope and Methodology

The two social media accounts I have decided to analyse are @being_coloured and VannieKaap situated on Instagram and Facebook respectively. Instagram, released in 2010 was initially an images-based application that encouraged users to document their lives via the editing and sharing of personal images, and has since has become a global phenomenon affecting things like design, tourism and even contemporary employment (Leaver, 2020: 2). Instagram encourages the conception of reality through curated and edited images and social affirmation on the platform is accorded through likes and comments on images. The account located on this platform, @being_coloured, positions itself as an account intended to educate, represent and advocate for coloured South Africans. Themes on the account reflect the account holders' belief that coloured people in South Africa are a marginalised ethnic minority who benefit little from South Africa's ostensibly non-racial and non-sexist democratic regime. From this account I have selected a text to analyse that is curated from carefully chosen stills of protest photography that appeared alongside news articles on the Westbury protests in late September of 2018. On Instagram, a single post can contain up to 10 images arranged in a panel and I have selected and analysed a post that contains four images. The significance of the style of the photographs is highlighted by the text that accompanies the panel of images in the caption below it. Themes of exclusion, marginalisation and dispossession are unpacked in these analyses.

Facebook is a giant in the big tech industry with the Facebook social media platform as representing a part of the larger network of digital spaces and contexts that it presides over. The Facebook platform, launched in the early 2000's, is designed to share, "what's on your mind," as a user either through text or images. Connections are made to others through "Friends" and "Groups" and "Community" features and all of this activity is tied together through the social aspects of likes, comments, reactions and shares. Social affirmation is the reward that retains users on the platform. The account selected for this study, VannieKaap, boasts a large virtual community with multiple networks that extend onto other platforms and into other forms of communication such

as podcasts, short videos and a radio station. The texts I have selected to analyse has received overwhelming engagement online with one of them garnering 286 comments, 338 shares and 1900 reactions. Engagement this high on a post is telling about the type of context that Facebook is and the type of content that tends to do well on the platform. The texts to be considered were published between 2019 and 2020 and are constructed with the use of memetic media and through colour, font and subject matter, the texts forms part of a networked narrative (Milner, 2015: 45) of coloured identity that VannieKaap has built on Facebook. The themes that emerge from this analysis relate to the essentialist nature of contemporary South African identity narratives and the complicated relationship that exists between racial self-representation and non-racialism as a principle in South Africa.

The final online context that I will be analysing is a self-defined online magazine called *Swirl Magazine ZA*. With the possibilities made available online, the form of the traditional magazine is stretching and taking on new shapes yet it retains its core characteristics as defined by magazine theory (Holmes, 2020: 2). Magazine-like media online continue to target a clearly defined audience, foster community based on the prescriptions of this audience, and develop a bond of trust and authority with this community. Holmes (2020: 17) formulates new terms to describe contemporary magazine-like media located mainly online: megazine and a metazine. These forms differ from traditional magazines but their emphasis on community and the role they play in communities have been retained. The magazine I have analysed in this project according to Holmes (2020: 14) would be classified as a magazine and it identifies South African coloured womxn[2] as its target readers. The magazine is located on a domain called MadMagz, for small magazines aiming to generate a profit. Holmes (2020) explains that this motivation behind the existence of magazine-like media will impact the content that appears, and this has been true of traditional womxns magazines that have published editorials and content coaxing womxn into buying products advertised in the magazine. This leads to contradictory relationships with magazines as many womxn find that magazines provide opportunities for reflecting on and developing identity and self-

[2] By avoiding the suffix -men or -man, people who use alternate spellings of women or woman aim to emphasise female independence from patriarchal linguistic norms. Through the spelling of womxn, I emphasise that man/men is not the norm

presentation, yet the majority of the content is intended to police performance of femininity. Surveillance, appraisal and social sanction from older coloured womxn are endemic to the way in which young coloured womxn are raised and this approach is expanded on in the content and approach of *Swirl Magazine ZA's*,

As demonstrated by previous studies focused on the virtual trajectory of coloured self-styling (Bosch, 2008: 192; Schoon, 2012: 2) the guiding objective of this study is to assess expressions self-representations of coloured identity online and infer the political, social and cultural tensions that those who self-define as coloured may be grappling with. Of significance to me as well, is the form these expressions take and the platforms on which they are shared. The form, or the mode, influences the content and this is in turn contingent on the context and thus, it would be disingenuous to assume that representations of coloured identity today, happen in a vacuum. These representations are affected by the limitations or possibilities of their very construction and by the context in which they are published. As Bosch (2016: 81) explains, "the medium shapes the message," and this means that encountering these texts in a particular context in a specific form, mediates their impact (Rose, 2016: 30). The source material for this project is critically considered with an eye on the social effects of the production, content, circulation and spectatorship of the texts (Rose, 2016: 64). In terms of production in the context of technology, this refers to how the text is made and the means through which it is able to travel and be displayed. The content refers to the compositional elements, the semiotic codes and conventions that result in the form or the mode (Milner, 2015: 53) that the text takes on. As a text circulates, it is engaged with in different contexts and engenders different effects and more importantly, where it circulates, who engages with it and what effect this produces are significant. Finally, spectators who engage with the text are not passive recipients and they will link the text to others like it and make sense of it in their own way, forming a kind of personal intertextuality in which they will grapple with the implications of the text. This process is important to critically consider as all these aspects have a bearing on the text as it is analysed in this project.

All the texts analysed in this research project are multimodal (Milner, 2015: 54) as the internet itself is able to carry different modes of communication, meaning that

the texts use more than one semiotic code to express themselves. In the case of the texts analysed in this project, the predominant semiotic codes are text and imagery (Milner, 2015: 54). I assessed online content regarding coloured identity by self-defined coloured account holders across a five-year period, from 2015 to 2020, as I felt that this five-year period represented the parameters of most recent online content regarding coloured identity. I spent a year online going through content spanning five years, to select excerpts that I considered interesting to engage with. Notably, I searched for content that was most explicitly self-referential, in that the content made explicitly sweeping claims about coloured self-styling. I selected texts that appealed to me and that I felt would be interesting to unpack.

The compositional elements and the conventions of the images (Rose, 2016: 64; Kress &van Leuween, 2006: 209) will be critically analysed using frameworks from visual culture studies (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 186; Lister & Wells, 2004: 65 ; Rose, 2016: 64). Text is an integral part of the source material for this project and to analyse this, discourse analysis as an extension of discursive psychology will be consulted. The four tenets of which discourse analysis is comprised, will be used as a guide to work through the textual elements of the source material (Augustinos et al., 2014: 55).

Chapter one- The digital contexts and the styles of multimodal messages that shape online coloured identity.

This chapter provides the contextual knowledge I drew guidance from in terms of interpreting and studying the source material. The chapter provides more insight into the different digital contexts that are examined in this project as well as the different forms that shape the source material. As mentioned in the introduction, the design of the platform influences the type of content that is published and with respect to representations of a racial identity, it is interesting to look at how different platforms shape different representations of this identity. The discussion to follow will reveal that these representations are shaped in part by the conventions of protest photography and the protest paradigm, by memetic media and by online megazine brands.

Instagram's grief aesthetic and the conscription of protest photography into a broader narrative about racial belonging

Visual technologies thrust before us images that provide us with views of the world, but these images are carefully curated. The culture from which images emerge, seep into the production of the images. Culture also influences where and how images are engaged with and the impact an image may have on the set of values, beliefs and perceptions that gave it life in the first place. The cathartic activity of image production is fuelled by platforms such as Instagram, which is currently used by 2.15% of South Africans (StatCounter, 2021). This is relatively low compared to the 48.89% of South Africans using Facebook and the 12% of South Africans using Twitter but studying expressions of assumed coloured identity constructed and published on Instagram is still worthwhile as the study's intention is to look at how the medium shapes the message.

Since its release in 2010, Instagram has developed into a massive social media application. Described by Leaver et al (2020: 20) as a "series of programs and algorithms… a gigantic database of images, videos, captions, comments, geolocative tags, likes, emojis….a collection of personal data, " Instagram is a mobile-based application that for the moment, is used by a small number of South Africans. It has become a conduit of visual cultural messages. With the inclusion of a range of retro filters, the application's architecture was the first to mainstream photo editing as a

necessary prerequisite for images before they are published. The inclusion of comments and likes operating as a rewards incentive for user engagement ensured the success of the platform.

There are a number of factors that determine the type of content posted on Instagram. These factors include the community guidelines of the platform that are administrative rules that determine what type of content is appropriate for posting, as well as the platform vernaculars which are styles and themes of content that are popular and receive the most social engagement. Users are coerced into posting the type of content that receives engagement and affirmation because the platform is designed to elicit this response "regardless of what users are sharing, what is posted to Instagram forms part of the visual culture of the platform and the visual cultures in which users are situated" (Frier, 2020: 57). This implies that although users theoretically have autonomy on the platform when it comes to how they choose to represent themselves or any subcultural community (Leaver et al., 2020: 167) they may identify with online, there are certain visual vernaculars on the platform that influence the multi-modal posts users release on their profiles.

The platform is awash with pictures of users engaged in experiences specific to consumer culture, from dining in restaurants to travelling aboard. The central visual culture of Instagram is tied to proving one's value through visual affirmation of class and taste. People who adhere to this visual aesthetic receive the most engagement and thus rewards and so users tend to "rinse and repeat" (Leaver et al, 2020: 223) this aesthetics.

Though most of the content follows the "Instagrammable" trope, Leaver et al (2020: 170) acknowledge that subcultural groups exist on the platform and these include, artists, photographers and social awareness groups amongst others. Though constrained somewhat by the larger visual culture of consumerist aspiration, these subcultures have their own multimodal vernaculars and these become frameworks for visual representations of social justice issues, amongst others. This is evidenced for instance by the grief aesthetic that emerged in mid-2014. The grief aesthetic is a set of visual and textual characteristics that over time stabilized into a template for responding to local and global social justice events (Leaver et al., 2020: 33). The grief aesthetic is used by Instagram users, to express either solidarity, disgust or dissent.

The grief aesthetic is made up of characteristics which include: “iconic images or scenes from the ground that capture the essence of the movement” and, “[s]creengrabs of event-related news updates, usually cross posted from other social media or mainstream news” (Leaver et al., 2020: 34). The grief aesthetic has become the template (Leaver et al., 2020: 227) that users follow when trying to draw awareness to a certain social justice issue, and this is most common for subcultural groups, “that use the platform to raise social awareness for various causes in a more accessible manner” (Leaver et al., 2020: 164). It was because of this template that political agents such as the Internet Research Agency (IRA) thrived undetected. The Internet Research Agency is a subversive media communications group who used platforms such as Instagram to exacerbate existing animosities between social groups in America in an attempt to derail political processes such as the American national election. The IRA integrate themselves into existing community content to plunge users into media mirages (Ganesh et al., 2020: 20) of targeted messaging. Integral to this though, was sticking to the existing social justice vernacular on the platform to give the content credibility:

“It is clear and undeniable that Instagram is a space for political discussion, political debate [T]he fact that the IRA went to so much effort to utilise Instagram shows their belief in the value of the social ties that exist between Instagram users. Targeting Instagram confirms that Instagram matters as a realm of taste, politics and cultural knowledge” (Leaver et al., 2020: 30).

The IRA’s reliance on the grief aesthetic is indicative of the credibility and authority this aesthetic enjoys on the platform. People understand online social justice movements through their adherence to this script, and so subcultural groups engaged in social awareness activity, are influenced by this script when it comes to curating and publishing their content in hopes that this adherence will give them rewards in the form of awareness and traction for their cause.

The second chapter of this project intends to analyse an Instagram account that identifies itself as @being_coloured and relies on the grief aesthetic in order to postulates itself as representative of South African coloured people. Furthermore, the account holders position themselves and the account and responsible for bringing awareness to social justice concerns specific to the assumed coloured community.

Integral to @being_coloured's content is the aspects of the grief aesthetic mentioned earlier, involving images of scenes "from the ground" (Leaver et al., 2020: 34) sourced from mainstream media. The type of images used on the platform are visuals from protests in formerly classified coloured communities in South Africa, screengrabbed from mainstream media sites, which is characteristic of adherence to the grief aesthetic. As Instagram is a platform for multi-modal texts, the caption accompanying the images will also be analysed as the text is intended to influence how we understand the visuals.

The images used by @being_coloured is sourced from mainstream media and these started off as photojournalism products. In the course of their circulation, particularly online, photojournalism images are used in different ways and often start new debates away from the original story in which they appeared (Veneti, 2017: 294). This is accurate in the case of the images on @being_coloured's account as the account relies on incorporating photojournalism images into a new narrative about racial exclusion and marginalisation. As the images depict protests in local communities, the photojournalists have captured these in accordance to the norms of the protest paradigm (Corrigall-Brown & Wilkes, 2012: 245) and this impacts the meaning generated by the images, especially when we consider the role the media has played thus far in cultivating public opinion of protests in South Africa (Duncan, 2016: 142). To better understand what informed @being_coloured's decision to use the photojournalism images as part of their digital representation of coloured identity, it is important to unpack what informs the production of these types of images.

Protests by their nature engender theatricality, which often translates into various violent, dangerous or even fatal acts (Perlmutter, 2004: 93). Reporters are more likely to fixate on the negative, violent, irrational and frenzied elements of protest and protestors whilst only directly quoting and referencing figures of authority (Perlmutter & Wagner, 2004: 92). This approach is termed the protest paradigm (Corrigall-Brown & Wilkes, 2012: 245) and its aim is to select and amplify only certain aspects of the protest.

Images of protests usually are far more emotive than textual accounts (Corrigall-Brown & Wilkes, 2012: 231), and in understanding this, press and citizen journalists are more likely to train cameras on highly-charged impetuous encounters between protestors and their environment or with officials (Corrigall-Brown & Wilkes, 2012: 230).

The tangible spectacle of protest action – in lieu of the weighty and complex nature of its abstract backstory, principles, mission or aim – is what is captured and comes to define understanding of the protest.

However, images do possess the potential for nuance that can be missed in textual accounts because of the rigidity of the hard news writing format (Bull, 2016: 32). With images, one can establish, “the legitimacy of various groups… communicated through messages about their relative power and the extent to which they behave rationally and in a way that is deserving of respect” (Corrigall-Brown, 2012: 348). Images have potential to either affirm or delegitimise the protestors or the authorities: “Images serve to create meaning about actors and events and convey messages about the extent to which actors and their claims matter” (Corrigall-Brown, 2012: 346). Both images and text within the media do not mirror events but rather refract them, focusing on narrow elements, selecting these elements and imbuing them with salience.

The images under consideration in chapter two, are protest images created by employing the conventions of photojournalism which is influenced by artistic conventions of photography (Veneti, 2017: 289). In a study on the influence of the photographer’s aesthetic criteria on protest imagery, Veneti (2017: 282) found that photographers used art photography techniques in order to create the affectively charged images that are “infused with subjective language” (Veneti, 2017: 279). Though photojournalism still carries the presumption of “recording reality” (Veneti, 2017: 282), the photojournalists in the study testify that their approach in determining what to photograph during a protest and how it should be portrayed is premised on a combination of the photographer’s intentions, the demands of news values and the techniques integral to art photography that aid in the creation of striking, nuanced images.

Art photography techniques come into play here because of their ability to create images laden with affective qualities. Photojournalists pay acute attention to bodily language, postures, gestures, facial expressions, lighting, visual metaphors, colour contrasts, varied frames and other symbolic elements to generate the images’ desired emotive effect as prescribed by the narrative the photographer aims to sketch through the images. The photojournalists that were consulted in the study conducted by Veneti

(2017: 286) attest that through applying the techniques of art photography, the final product of the image is nuanced in ways that may enable additional readings or signify broader ideas about the protest and its cause. Whatever the subject of the photograph, and in this case, protests by coloured people in predominantly formerly classified coloured communities, the material means and the medium that enabled its existence have bearing upon the qualities that are foregrounded.

Contemporary photojournalists confirm that most of the images they capture becomes co-opted by social media users to frame wider public discussions (Veneti, 2017: 283). In 2016 Twitter acted as an archive for an alternative narrative to the events of the student movement as #FeesMustFall activists retweeted images captured from within the protests by protesting students. Captured by those who are supportive and engaged in the protests, the images tended to reflect aspects of the protest that mainstream media's adherence to protest paradigm neglected. The protesting students understood that mainstream media is no longer the only terrain on which they need to fight for legitimacy. The student movement recognised that social media platforms presented opportunities for a visual counter-narrative that may influence public political discourse about the movement in ways that move beyond vilifying protestors. Similarly, in the act of re-working the protest paradigm to suit the partisan focus of the account, the @being_coloured account holders pieced together a visual counter-narrative that is paired with a textual caption that highlights the failings of formal democracy within the community of Westbury and similar communities defined along racial lines.

To end up with the visual narrative, @being_coloured engaged in an "exercise of power" (Lister&Wells, 2004: 65), to select images that would act as strong evidence for narrative about coloured identity they communicate. The images in the post amplify and supplement the narrative contained in the textual caption. What is also significant about @being_coloured's representation of coloured identity is that the account holders classify the subjects in the images as self-defined coloured people. This classification is possible through tools of racialisation such as the look (Erasmus, 2017: 52) which implies that race can be read from the skin and confirmed by markers of social and cultural habit including the geographic location of where one resides. In post- apartheid South Africa, the racial identity of others continues to be determined by these factors and Westbury,

which is a historically coloureds only residential area in Johannesburg, has largely remained this way and thus inferences regarding the racial identity of those who are from there, are made.

Racialisation is a multi-dimensional process that refers to thought, action and institutional processes in the quotidian that remake the idea of race and imbue it with cultural and political meaning (Erasmus, 2017: 51). 'The look' is integral to ensuring racialisation remains in flux because the look is a practice that operates from the assumption that race can be read from someone's skin. In South Africa, the look has historically depended on a range of other connotations in addition to physical appearance, these include gender, language, residential address and rituals practiced (Erasmus, 2017: 89). The multi-dimensional nature of racialisation implies that engaging in classification, whether for the self or other bodies, is not a straightforward act (Erasmus, 2017: 53). To classify does not mean to describe or explain. Instead, the act of classification is part of a web of socio-political, cultural and historical relations that relies on connotations like geography to entrench the validity of its logic within the racialised society. Assigning a subject to a racial category undermines the non-racial premise of South Africa's democracy, yet the look as a logical means to read one's identity and that of others, is so pervasive in South Africa that no one who engaged with the post on the @being_coloured account even picked up on this.

Through the connotations attached to race in South Africa, such as geography, @being_coloured accounts classified the subjects featured in the images as coloured without detailing explicitly if contact was made with any of the demonstrators to ascertain how these subjects self-define. This is underscored by the fact that within the visual narrative that is selected and published by @being_coloured, the final image shows a subject bearing a placard that identifies the protestors as the Westbury Community and not as members of a specific racial category. This also speaks to what Rapport (2020) terms ego-syntonism which critiques narratives that assume that the participants in the protest are spurred by the same motivations and in the case of the visual narrative, paired with the textual account put together by @being_coloured account holders, the protest and the protestors themselves are reduced to symbols in service of a specific styling of coloured identity on Instagram.

Facebook and the limitations of memetic construction of contemporary coloured identity

Memetic media, through their fundamental logics (Milner, 2015: 41), have the tendency to condense complex ideas into emotionally resonant snippets. This tendency allows memetic texts to acclimatise well to the affectively charged environment of the social media platform, Facebook. Social media platforms have usurped other means of public conversation in the ecology of participatory media (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 6) thus these platforms are home to expressions of "vernacular creativity" (Milner, 2015: 105), which are texts that combine novelty and fixity in a new expression that drives public conversation further. Public commentary is a tapestry that is woven together from individual threads that add something new while simultaneously establishing its connection to pre-existing threads. Public commentary is therefore under constant construction, as participants continue to add to what already exists. This process is active and constantly in flux, termed "memetic" (Milner, 2015: 12) because its logic is premised on creation, circulation and transformation of texts as a means of engagement.

Appropriated by internet subcultures in the early 2000's, theory relating to memetic texts or rather memes, have now come to refer collectively to quirky Joint Photographic Groups (JPG)'s from the internet. An individual text is not a meme; however, it becomes a meme through memetic process (Bertazzoli, 2019: 12). Viral texts, are texts that spread in their original state, but memetic media or memes, are texts whose spread is dependent on their alterability. The phrase "internet meme" has stuck in popular culture and is used in reference to "an individual image, a subcultural in-joke or a massive thread of collective commentary" (Milner, 2015: 62).

Internet memes are created using different semiotic codes and thus can be either linguistic, video, images or audio. Most memes are multimodal, implying that they are created by drawing from more than one of the aforementioned semiotic codes. In this way, memes can be a still image, an image with a phrase, a GIF (Graphic Interchange format), an animated image, video which may contain a catchphrase or a witty slogan or even just textual aphorism written in digital fonts against a specific background (Bertazzoli, 2019: 26). Milner (2015: 31) categorises memes into four different types: memetic phrases, memetic videos, memetic performances or memetic images. These

categories are not discrete as most memes are created by blurring the lines between these categories. The end result may be an image with a phrase or a video depicting a performance of some kind. Any creative vernacular expression online may be turned into a meme.

There are five fundamental logics specific to the creation, circulation and transformation of memes. These are multimodality, reappropriation, resonance, collectivism and spread (Milner, 2015: 40). These fundamental logics are central to meme creating, circulation and transformation. Memes are created through reappropriation because participants want their novel expression to be situated within and connected to the existing discourses. Reappropriation is generally evident in the form of the meme (Milner, 2015: 54) as memes intending to assert themselves as part of an existing discourse adhere to a specific arrangement of visuals or words that are present in the existing contributions. The phrase "image macros" (Milner, 2015: 41) refers to the deliberate arrangement of visuals or words that become the standard for public engagement via vernacular creative expression on a particular issue. An image macro facilitates a new iteration of an established expression so that this new iteration can be socially understood. Memes resonate when they can be socially understood and when they stir feelings that motivate action from those who see them. Milner (2015: 45) explains that it is vital for a meme to achieve resonance as this is necessary for new iterations of the meme to be brought to fruition. In addition, when memes resonate with people, they bring these people into connection with those for whom the meme also resonates; "memetic texts spread through collectives because they resonate with participants in those collectives" (Milner, 2015: 45). Thus, memes promote collectivism, as connection is at the core of memetic texts and participatory media in general. The relevance and resonance depend on factors closely tied to social identities, beliefs, values and ideas. Memes therefore connect likeminded people to each other and have historically, on sites such as Reddit and Tumblr, proven to be excellent for fostering populist sentiment amongst self-defined subcultural groups (Milner, 2015: 70). Finally, through remix and alteration, memes spread.

These fundamental logics are the foundation of the creation, circulation and transformation of memes in a contemporary media ecology. This context is necessary to

understand as memes continue to be the primary channel through which people creatively provide commentary on everything from jokes to politics. It is necessary for memetically made public discourse to be examined so that the affordances, limitations, shortcomings and potentials of a memetically made social world, can be ascertained. Milner writes, “the process of memetics for participation in public conversations has given shape and texture to contemporary public conversations, and will continue to do so in the future” (Milner, 2015: 69).

With fundamental logics that set its form apart from other texts, the meme must be considered through the lens of a grammar developed for its form (Milner, 2015: 52). This grammar includes content, form and stance. Content implies looking at what is said, form means looking at the composition of the meme itself by paying attention to the image macro’s it relies on, and finally stance, implies gathering “information about what the meme is communicating” (Milner, 2015: 52) by looking at the tone of the meme as well as the perspectives it amplifies and those it silences.

This context on the form of memes is necessary to establish in anticipation of the discussion that is the focus of the third chapter. Vannie Kaap, originally a social media page of memes on Facebook that started around 2013, has grown into an entrepreneurial venture that includes a store of branded merchandise at Canal Walk mall in Cape Town and a media presence that boasts a podcast and different web series initiatives focused on lifestyle topics related to self-defined coloured South African people. It maintains its social media presence and continues to post memes every day and sometimes multiple times a day in an established macro image format of teal-coloured squares on which white text is inscribed with the Vannie Kaap logo at the bottom of the image. In the biographical section, it defines the objective of its Facebook social media page to “celebrate Cape Coloured culture and educate other cultures about it. We do this through funny memes…” (vanniekaap, 2020: na). From this, it is clear that in order to fully engage with the content on the page, one must understand the implications of the meme as a format for communication. Through consistent publication of memes Vannie Kaap has created a dense tapestry projecting the account holders’ perspectives on coloured identity. Each individual meme is a square teal coloured thread which combines fixity and novelty in ways that connect the new meme

with the existing memes on the page to build onto the already established notions of coloured self-styling postulated by VannieKaap. The memes on the page also shift from emergent memes to full memes as followers share the individual memes to their own private pages qualifying this with new captions above the meme via Facebook's platform architecture, that contextualises the meme in a new way that is immediately relevant to the experiences or the projected performance of identity (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 45) of the participant sharing the meme.

In addition, Milner (2015: 72) confirms that in recent years, memes have facilitated the emergence and subsequent rivalries of subcultures on different social media platforms that distinguished themselves from each other based on their connection to a social media platform. As explained earlier, one of the fundamental logics of memetic media is the form's focus on connection with a likeminded collective and in the early 2010's, this resulted in the formation of groups on Reddit, 4chan and Imgur who called themselves Redditors, anons, and imgurians respectively, claiming the social media platforms themselves as the territory reserved for the creation, circulation and transformation of their respective group's memes (Milner, 2015: 76). These groups' claim to these social media platforms as their own speaks to the different platform aesthetics and vernaculars on each site. The platform may shape the message of the meme and in turn these memetic messages will shape the aesthetics, vernaculars and architecture of the platform. For this reason, it is important to consider the relationship between VannieKaaps meme's and Facebook as the platform where these are published.

Facebook is designed to favour content that has high emotional power, is decontextualised and quick to digest (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 43). The design of the application positions the posts like a scroll of framed photographs, divorced from the context in which they are created and therefore hindering "our ability to generate deep understanding of the content as it sits on our feed" (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 36). Discussing the use of Facebook to promote news articles for media houses, Vaidhyanathan (2018) explains that the textual captions above the images are not there to inform or to anchor the image into a specific context; instead, the captions are discursively structured to spark highly affective engagement "to tease and provoke" (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 36) in ways that deliberately obliterate deep and thoughtful

consideration of the post. Though Facebook does allow for users to post links to extensive articles and other webpages with more information about the content posted, the majority of the design elements of the platform encourages users to remain within the domain of Facebook (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 36). Facebook is designed in ways that spark affective reactions associated with social divisions and antagonisms between groups who are coaxed into validating and reinforcing in-group mentality so that emotional reactions sparked by these antagonisms can be monitored, captured and ultimately sold by Facebook, to powerful stakeholders who rely on personal data for capital gains (Stark, 2020: 309).

Facebook's platform aesthetics prioritises the formation of collectives in a way that aligns with the fourth fundamental logic of memes and so ultimately it is no coincidence that VannieKaap's Facebook page, promoting the account holders' ideas on coloured self-styling, is so popular and successful with shares, engagements and reactions frequently in the hundreds. This is because the aesthetic and the architecture of the platform, encourage this. In addition, through the fundamental logics of multimodality and resonance, memes tend to be visually heavy and light on text in adaption to our contemporary information appetite that favours images with minimal text leaving us with room to infer the gist of whatever is being conveyed (Milner, 2015: 50). As Milner phrases it, "images resonate because of culturally encoded ways of seeing" (2015: 51). This allows the meme to fit in with the decontextualised atmosphere of Facebook with its posts divorced from their more nuanced social contexts.

Contemporary megazines as a site for unpacking existing racial vulnerability and stereotype threat for self-defined coloured womxn

The history of magazine production is enmeshed in the development of industry, technology, commerce, advertising and branding (Holmes, 2020: 2). Magazine's construct reality in that they give's credence to what it means to be "feminine, masculine, Black, white, heterosexual, homosexual" and in this way, magazines reflect and perpetuate normalised discourses about what it means to exist as a person in relation to other people (Jacobs & Tyree, 2013: 5788). Lifestyle magazines are windows into the ideological terrain of a society and can provide "greater insight into the workings of a culture than overtly political publications" (Rauwerda, 2007: 394). Studies

like Ytre-Arne's (2011: 247) confirm that lifestyle magazines function as instrument of the process of socialisation and so people rely on and invest a great deal of authority and trust in them, affirming the lifestyle magazine's position as a "site of knowledge production" (Laden, 1997: 121).

In South Africa, we have had a number of print magazine's dedicated to womxn; from *Cosmopolitan South Africa*, to *True Love*, womxn in South Africa are familiar with media texts that aim to legitimise very specific performances of femininity. Gender in a patriarchal society is defined by power relations tilted in favour of a dominant male subject offset by an inferior female subject. This skewed power relation creates an inferiority complex in womxn that produces insecurities and anxieties about the female body, stirring up the lie that womxn's bodies are dirty, excessive and must be worked on, disciplined, monitored and hidden obsessively. These deep-seated anxieties are fecund for capitalistic exploitation and so magazines are filled with editorials, columns and spreads coercing womxn into purchasing products in service of the supposed rigorous maintenance that performing as a womxn requires. Research based on a three year analysis of South African magazines (Sanger, 2008: 275) confirm that lifestyle magazines tend to reproduce and reinforce the binaries of gender, race, class and sexuality

For white womxn, anti-aging and prioritising male sexual pleasure is the message ingrained throughout much of the editorial and advertising content in the South African magazines examined by Sanger (2008: 275), whereas for black womxn, advertising messages coaxing Black womxn into rigidly policing the texture and style of their hair is accompanied by images and discourse that position the black female body as immoderately sexual.

Black South African womxn (black used in its political sense to encompass non-white racial identities of coloured, Indian and African) are for the most part absent from editorials, columns and spreads in magazines aimed at white womxn but when they do appear therein, the context of their appearance is in images and advertisements that imbue the black female body with exoticised notions of sexuality tied to a supposed ossified African essence that informs an excessive and lascivious sexual appetite (Sanger, 2008: 280). In these magazines, black female bodies are more likely to be pictured naked and in submissive poses with the viewers gaze positioned from angles that range from

proprietorial to intrusively reminiscent of the exploitative harm enacted on the bodies of black womxn in service of colonial science (Sanger, 2008: 283). Naked black female bodies have been used in magazines such as *Femina* and *Fair Lady*, which in terms of their editorial content designate white womxn as their intended readership , to explain sexual positions and sexual empowerment, implicitly affirming the construction of black female sexuality as apparent and unrestrained (Sanger, 2009: 288).

In contrast, white womxn are not pictured naked or viewed from above or from compromising angles (Sanger, 2008: 288). Their bodies are not used as diagrams to explain patriarchal notions of sexual pleasure (Sanger, 2009: 144) and this absence is what solidifies the impression of white female bodies as normal. Sanger (2008: 285) explains that this hypervisiblises black female bodies as sexualised African other, "but simultaneously presents white heterofemininity as normative and empty through its apparent lack of culture, ethnicity and exoticism" (Sanger, 2008: 288).

Black womxn's bodies as inherently sexual is an established trope in the South African consciousness. Sexual violence was central to the architecture of the colonial empire. The history of slavocratic society in South Africa testifies to the use of rape as sexual warfare and social control at the Cape in the seventeenth century (Gqola, 2015: 42). Scully (1995: 334) writes that because of the heterogenous slave community at the Cape, made up of slavewomxn from Ceylon, Java and St Helena amongst other places, it was likely womxn who in the social temporality would be considered coloured. Sexual violence and rape were used to emphasise the gulf in social standing between female slaves and white male slaveholders. Rape was justified through myths of female slave insatiability and the act of miscegenation, as the shameful fault of the female slaves (Scully, 1995: 352). The constructions of slave womxn in this way not only enabled rampant sexual violence but also catalysed the stirrings of a constitutive relationship between class, gender and race that constructed coloured working class womxn at the Cape as excessively sexual, morally and socially inept and inherently degenerate even decades after slavery was abolished. These stereotypes were solidified as truth when the British colonial administration used these as basis to determine before the law, whether or not coloured working class womxn were credible rape victims (Scully, 1995: 352).

The British relied on the Dutch's constructions of colonised subjects, thus coloured womxn were understood as tragic figures: poor, working-class, uneducated, socially inferior, physically unattractive and sexually available (Scully, 1995: 357). This construction meant that even though rape was recognised as a crime at the Cape, the preconditions for who could be considered a legitimate rape survivor were slanted in favour of white European womxn who had settled at the Cape as opposed to the coloured working class womxn of the area who were viewed as rapeable or who at least, it was believed, would not suffer the same injury to social standing through rape as it was imagined their white upper-class counterparts would (Scully, 1995: 348).

The law of the time conceded to constructions of racially gendered and classed identity and then proceeded to endow these with credibility. This distortion is where the contemporary stereotypical portrayals of coloured working class womxn as goffels (Adhikari, 2006: 159) stem from, as a goffel is a derogatory term used in reference to a coloured womxn who is poor, has little education and social standing, is unattractive and is considered sexually available.

These stereotypes of coloured femininity survived into the early twentieth century where they were reproduced, circulated and legitimated as literary tropes (Mafe, 2013: 41) and scientific certainties (Abrahams, 1997: 34). Cultural workers and scientists displayed an obsession with blood as definitive of a character and coloured womxn were envisioned as figures constantly at loggerheads internally as a result of the impulses of their black and white blood supposedly drawing them in contradictory directions, a fight that was conflated as an internal struggle between desired respectability and inherent degeneracy (Mafe, 2013: 42). Coloured womxn were thought to possess monstrous sexual appetites that rendered particularly white men physically and morally debased if they found themselves the target of a coloured womxn's primitive sexual desire (Mafe, 2013: 45). They were also portrayed as mentally challenged and prone to suffer from neurosis, nervous breakdowns, deep depression and general disillusionment as a by-product of their racial composition (Mafe, 2013: 69).

As recently as 2019, a study published by researchers (Niewoudt et al., 2019) from the Stellenbosch University concluded that low cognitive functioning in a group of 60 self-identifying coloured womxn suggests that "being a coloured woman in itself is

related to low cognitive functioning" (Hendricks et al,.2019: 308) as the research cited ethnicity as an inherent determinant of cognitive abilities. The research results were not contrasted by another group and so using race as a variable in the process served no objective purpose except reproducing, perpetuating and circulating the stigma, racism and discrimination. Racist preconceptions that intersect with sexist prejudices with respect to coloured womxn is exacerbated by a substantial block of published research that conflates the lived realities of coloured womxn with promiscuity, disease, addiction and abuse (Steyn et al., 1996; Karg et al., 2008; Petersen, 2010). The sexually violent history of the Cape and the stereotypes it engendered have been reproduced through culture and science in the twentieth century. This history is what stands behind the two choices that continue to govern the limitations of a coloured South African womxn's life: shame or respectability (Mtenje, 2018: 15).

The above in-depth sketch of existing stereotypes surrounding coloured femininity continues to exist in the popular imagination aided by cultural institutions such as magazines. At the intersection of race and gender, the stereotypes perpetuated by magazines are especially vitriolic but for womxns magazines in general, the content prescribes an ideal performance of femininity that is constricting, reductive and encourages consumerism. The reproduction of this ideal performance communicates the illusion of an essence to gendered identity (Butler, 1988: 225) provoking readers into continuous assessment and reflection of their own performance of gendered identity. The reader may vacillate between affirmation of their performance of gendered identity or condemnation, yet research proves that readers still find value in womxns magazines especially as a space for community and reflection of identity performance.

Ytre-Arne (2012: 250) found that readers believe that the magazines contain meaningful repertoires that allow them to fantasize about and invest in the validity of an ideal self. These fantasies become aspirational and enter into the readers internal and on-going dialogue regarding their own identity. According to Ytre-Arne (2012: 250) this dialogue facilitates the building of bridges between reader's realities and the magazines aspirational representations of femininity. Readers situate themselves in relation to this ideal self and devise strategies to close the lacunae between their ideas of their gendered identity and the repertoires conveyed in the publication.

The pool of magazine readers is growing smaller now though as a result of the growing ecology of other forms of media. This has meant that magazines have had to define the existing readership pool along increasingly narrow socially significant markers of identity in order to stay in publication (Ytre-Arne, 2013: 86). This is coupled with market interests that aim to sell products and services for more groups of people. This has led to the creation of womxns magazines aimed at ethnic and racial minorities. In her study of two ethnic minority magazines in the United Kingdom and France respectively, Helcke (2003: 2) found that discourse and imagery around black pride was used in editorials and spreads in order to advance the interests of commercialism. The structural oppression that womxn of colour experience in white supremacist patriarchal heteronormative societies, cannot be unpacked and discussed as the magazine's survival depends on emphasising their ethnic and racially gendered target market, as consumers; "minority magazines develop out of a need to sell products targeted at an ethnic minority" (Helcke, 2003: 5).

Considering the history of minority ethnic and racial South African magazine publications during apartheid, these publications would communicate contradictory messages as the advertising featured in the magazines would undermine the editorial content dedicated to exposing or critiquing black marginalisation. Ruwerda (2007: 397) writes that in *Drum* Magazine the advertisements continued to promote hegemonic views of whiteness as the ideal by "transferring positive associations of whiteness onto commodities sold to blacks" (Ruwerda, 2007: 397). For black womxn this was especially severe as they were forced to see social and economic mobility and personal happiness, as outcomes that could only be achieved through skin lightening creams and hair texture altering creams. The advertisements for these products would use lighting, facial expressions and material indicators of class such as old clothing to take a picture of a model in a before shot, juxtaposed in an after shot with the same model positioned in a different angle with different lightening, smiling widely and bearing material evidence of the success her supposed lighter skin had brought her (Ruwerda, 2007: 398). This was not unique to *Drum*, as *Grassroots* the political periodical belonging to the Marxist movement in South Africa, was notorious for its repudiation of racialisation and racial

categories yet relied on advertising from skin lightening companies, to keep the publication afloat (Adhikari, 2006: 173). Inherent in South African magazines is a tension between critiquing black exploitation and oppression while enabling and performing white capitalism, more especially when it comes to the commodification of black female bodies.

As demonstrated in the above discussion, the architecture of the magazine has consistently proven to not only be at the centre of replicating the constructs that prop society up, but also, black womxn are especially maligned and the myths that originated in the colonial imagination with respect to black female bodies, have endured into the present—enabled by magazines.

Despite this, magazines aimed at racially defined womxn continue to exist in present day and these magazines now tend to take on new forms as a result of the influence of the development of digital systems and computing power. These new forms share the main characteristic of magazines but because of their slight differences to traditional print magazines, they can be classified as either megazines and metazines (Holmes, 2020: 13). The theory of magazines (Holmes, 2020: 4) prescribes that:

1. Magazines always target a precisely defined groups of readers.

2. Magazines base their content on the expressed and perceived needs, desires, hopes and fears of that defined group.

3. Magazines develop a bond of trust with their readerships.

4. Magazines foster community-like interactions between themselves and other readers, and among their readers.

5. Magazines respond quickly and flexibly to changes in the readership and changes in the wider society.

These five characteristics remain present within contemporary magazine-like media and the terms megazine and metazine affirm that contemporary magazine like media continues to resemble traditional print magazines through adherence to these characteristics. Megazines, describes a publication strategy that is not built around a print or online edition of content but instead aims to position the megazine as brand

(Holmes, 2020: 14). The term magazine content that is available is one of many elements that work together to entrench the brand of the magazine on many platforms. A megazine is about solidifying a publication's presence and ensuring that this presence is felt wherever potential readers are gathered. A metazine, is a term that refers to media content that bears little financial resemblance to a traditional magazine. Metazines are premised on "the principles of free access to freely shared knowledge and expertise" (Holmes, 2020: 16) and in this way, metazines resemble magazines in their characteristics but inherently resist commodifying their content.

Research by Egbeyemi (2020: 394) finds that contemporary magazine-like media targeted at racially gendered groups of readers, especially ethnic minority womxn, tend to establish themselves as megazines online—implying that they build a brand across networks like social media that is equally as important as the magazine they produce. The magazine itself follows the standard form of a traditional print media publication except that it is usually only available online. These megazines establish community with their readers through multiple channels of connectivity and engagement. Wangqvist and Frisen's (2016: 139) study confirms that online spaces present opportunities for people who identify as ethnic minorities and gender minorities for example, to establish relation and to build community. Contemporary magazines aimed at racially gendered target audiences are using the form of the megazine to establish a closer and more intimate community in the digital space.

Through noting the characteristics of a magazine as prescribed by the theory of magazines (Holmes, 2020: 2), I have been able to define the source material to be examined here as a megazine, because it uses multiple social media networks to build a brand around the content of its online magazine. *Swirl Magazine ZA* defines itself through its tagline as "the magazine for the coloured woman of South Africa" (*Swirl Magazine,* 2015), implying that according to the first tenet of magazine theory, the publication identifies its "precisely defined group of readers" (Holmes, 2020: 2) as self-identifying womxn who accept the racial classification of coloured as primordial to their sense of identity. On their accounts on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, *Swirl Magazine ZA* affirm that the purpose of the magazine is to "celebrate, elevate and inspire womxn of coloured heritage" (*Swirl Magazine*, 2020). In

2019, an Instagram story posted by @swirlmagza explained that the publication's title is inspired by a makeshift hair wrap made from old stockings, to keep the hair straight and prevent frizz after a process of straightening or blow-drying hair, and referred to amongst coloured people as a swirlkous. This item has symbolic resonance in the community because it represents the ways in which through rigorous policing of hair and hair texture, coloured womxn have been encouraged by the community and by white capitalist heterosexual patriarchal society, to approximate the styles and textures of white womxn's hair to garner acceptability (Erasmus, 2017: 45). Hair texture is also emblematic of the pain engendered by the racial classification processes of the 1950s that sought to define racial identity by way of several tests based on physical features. The one that has had an enduring legacy on the psyche of coloured people has been the pencil test, involving testing for hair texture by sliding a pencil through the hair—if the pencil passed through without too much effort the person would be classified coloured and if not, the person would receive the classification of Bantu, a term that operated as nomenclature for black South Africans at the time. Of the aftermath of this process Eskia Mphahlele writes that whole families were torn apart, physically and emotionally, as some members of the family would be reclassified as Bantu on the basis of hair texture, and thereby banished from their families, homes and communities. This title, *Swirl Magazine ZA,* is therefore significant as it emphasises the unique and socially constructed nature (Erasmus & Pieterse, 1996: 168) of coloured identity and the pain and trauma that encompasses the history of this identity.

According to the magazine's editorial team, the name of the magazine also inspired by the word swirl used in reference to coffee and is adopted by the publishers as a colour referent to describe their target audience, equating coloured womxn with brown skin. In the name, the biographical descriptions of the magazine on social media accounts and the tagline emblazoned on the cover, the intended audience is emphasised along the boundaries of gender and race.

Swirl Magazine ZA is housed on an online magazine platform called MadMagz which is an online domain for small magazines to store their editions, viewed by MadMagz as a means to "reinvent the magazine industry" (MadMagz, 2020) by giving space to groups or individuals to start small community-orientated magazines with the

intention of garnering a profit. This solidifies *Swirl Magazine ZA's* classification as a megazine as it is a for-profit venture that utilises a digital presence across multiple platforms and networks to drive viewers into engaging with its publication and its brand. This is significant as it will have an effect on the images and the discourse encountered in the magazine as historically, magazines divided along the lines of gender and race in pursuit of commercial outcomes, have had ambivalent relationships with their intended readers.

Racial vulnerability describes the state of anxiety that is engendered by the awareness that one's skin colour brings about into the consciousness of others, the recollection of stereotypes associated with that particular skin colour (Steele, 1990: 64) and so, "an individual may be diminished by his (sic) race before he has a chance to reveal a single aspect of his personality" (Steele, 1990: 64). This implies that constructs and estimations of personhood are attached to skin colour through tools of race such as the look (Erasmus, 2017: 50) and thus there are certain shades of skin colour that offer impunity and others that evoke constant states of anxiety and vulnerability—a condition that ends up shaping the self-styling of the latter. The look (Erasmus, 2017: 51) arouses racial vulnerability (Steele, 1990: 64) as certain connotations become coded into skin colour and these form the nucleus of stereotypes. Racial vulnerability also engenders stereotype threat (Steele & Anderson, 1995: 797) which describes an anxious preoccupation with policing behaviour amongst individuals who experience racial vulnerability, in order to avoid confirming stereotypes that exist about the racial category to which one belongs. Stereotype threat in this respect relates to performing coloured femininity in ways that will not confirm pejorative views of coloured womxn as socially, morally and intellectually degenerate. Steele (1990: 67) writes that racial vulnerability can force those who live under it, to deny and recompose their shame into narratives that express themselves as excessive pride or an inherent specialness. This is done as a means to put distance between acknowledging that within the popular imagination, one's body is viewed with contempt.

This relates to the earlier discussion regarding the stereotypes that exist about coloured womxn. The connotations of excessive sexuality, illiteracy, addiction, poverty and moral degeneracy engender a state of racial vulnerability for coloured womxn which

results in the looming presence of stereotype threat in terms of coloured performances of femininity. An awareness of this is demonstrated in *Swirl Magazine ZA* and is denied and recomposed through a narrative of excessive respectability. In the examination of *Swirl Magazine ZA'*s content, how racial vulnerability and stereotype threat is navigated by the magazine, will be observed and unpacked.

Conclusion

This chapter intended to provide an overview of the relationships between the online platforms and the formats of the source material to be discussed in this project. @being_coloured's content on Instagram relies on the vernaculars of the platform in a practice described as rinse and repeat, in order to curate a visual and textual narrative of coloured identity that ascribes to themes of marginalisation, violence and exclusion. VannieKaap creates memetic portrayals of coloured identity on Facebook that communicate through stance and content, a prescription to coloured exclusivism. Their memetic portrayals of exclusivist coloured identity are received with success on the platform because Facebook encourages content that affirms in-group performances. *Swirl Magazine ZA* uses MadMagz and the form of the megazine to build a brand around a specific assumed essence of coloured femininity. This supposed essence is positioned as the only route to respectability for coloured womxn. In the chapters to follow, these observations will be unpacked and explored.

Chapter two: Johannesburg-based coloured civic engagement and violence, trauma and representation on Instagram.

This chapter will assess what claims the account holders of @being_coloured make about coloured identity and about self-defined coloured people in general, through their multi-modal Instagram posts. Establishing these claims will lead to an understanding of the online representation the account holders sketch of coloured people in South Africa and the implications of this. As explained in chapter one, the vernaculars of Instagram as a platform have affected its visual culture. @being_coloured's account makes use of the characteristics of the popular grief aesthetic (Leaver et al., 2020: 77), in order to perform a style of digital civic engagement and mobilisation that the account holders define along racial lines. The grief aesthetic is understood by platform users as a template for digital activism and as a guide, how it is used by different accounts will not be identical as account holders have their own respective objectives. In the case of @being_coloured's content, their reliance on the hard news inverted pyramid structure for journalistic writing in the caption, is a slight twist on the grief aesthetic that the account holders employ as a means to simulate the credibility and authenticity afforded to journalism and mainstream media.

Since 2018, Instagram has evolved to allow for a single post to be made up of a sequence of up to ten images. Throughout this chapter, I will refer to the source material as a post in the singular sense because it is a single upload on the account that contains four images. The post shared by @being_coloured on 3 October 2018 will be assessed. This post is based on the Westbury protest which transpired on 1 October 2018 a few days immediately after the fatal shooting of Heather Petersen, a community resident, who was caught in the cross-fire of a turf war between rival gangs in the area (Kekana & Smit, 2018). Petersen's violent passing initiated a series of protests in communities around Westbury as well, but the images in the post under discussion here are from the protest that transpired on the afternoon of 1 October on the main road in Westbury, Johannesburg.

The reading of @being_coloureds Instagram post in this section touches on themes of marginalisation, frustration, violence and exclusion that are conflated as the

homogenous experience for all people who are officially classified [3]as coloured and those who self-define as coloured. The images are photojournalism images that, in the course of their circulation and consumption, have been used by the account holders in service of a new representation of the protests in the context of a larger debate regarding the livelihood of coloured people. In this way, the images have been reconfigured in accordance with the prescriptions of the grief aesthetic that is a vernacular on Instagram, especially amongst social awareness groups. As explained earlier, the accounts holders deviate slightly from this template by drawing inspiration in the writing style of the caption, from the format of hard news reporting. As the images are produced through the conventions of photojournalism, the frames of this profession and its proximity to journalistic values of objectivity, influence the curation of the images. This compliments the style of the textual account in the caption and together, the images and the caption adhere to a news framework for reporting on collective action, termed the "protest paradigm" (Perlmutter, 2004: 94). This framework tends to imbue the narratives of authority with power at the expense of the concerns and objectives of protesting groups. The relationship then between the text and the images in this post presents a tension that acts as a site for legitimising the account holders' performance of homogenous coloured identity.

The configuration of Instagram lends to a reading path of the posts that moves from the top containing the visual narrative, to the bottom that holds the text that accompanies the visuals. In this way, Instagram's architecture allows for users to represent their profiles using different semiotic codes. Presently Instagram's textual caption section is positioned to act as a guide for reading the visuals and in this way, the reading path of posts on Instagram move from the Ideal at the top, to the Real at the bottom (Kress & van Leuween, 2006: 209). This implies that the visual narrative of the posts contains the essence of the message that is further elaborated on through the discourse in the text (Kress &van Leeuwen, 2006: 209). This chapter therefore aims to investigate the message conveyed in the images by treating each image as autonomous,

[3] Though South Africa's Constitution indicates that the nation is a non-racial, non-sexist democratic republic, for the purposes of administrative processes such as the national census or for redress efforts, the previous dispensation's conception of four distinct racial categories is still relied on as definitive of identity.

with its own agency and breaking the compositions of the images down into smaller pieces to assess its larger narrative.

Questions that guide the following analysis are:

1) What do the images reveal to us about of the subjects through arrangement of composition?

2) What can we infer from the images about the messaging of the subject's and the protest's legitimacy?

3) How is this affirmed or contradicted in the textual caption?

4) What themes/socio-political concerns reveal themselves in these multimodal texts?

5) What do these themes imply about conclusions the account holders make about coloured people in general in South Africa?

6) How does Instagram as a platform affect how the account holders choose to represent coloured people in South Africa?

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section provides an overview of the themes present on the @being_coloured Instagram page as a whole, as well as the contextual account of the background that informs the source material under analysis here. Thereafter, the analysis of the source material starts with a study of the images which is then, in the third section, followed by a close reading of the text in the caption. The final section assess the relationship between the platform, Instagram, and its aesthetics and architecture, and the representation of coloured people put forward in the source material.

Description of the account, @being_coloured and the context behind the images under discussion

In 2019 @Saint_Sheri urged social media users to change their display pictures to the same shade of orange as her own, to express solidarity with the community on the Cape Flats whose livelihoods are at risk daily as a result of rampant gang activity. As the deaths of community members caught in the cross-fires of gang warfare escalated, outcry from the community attempted to gain purchase on social media in order to force the government to intervene.

The Cape Flats, and other historically segregated communities, were established after the demolition of District Six; the mixed communities – newly classified as Coloured—were relocated to the area of the Cape Flats and removed from the centre and western parts of Cape Town. The State's involvement in the community was only through the presence of stringent policing and surveillance. In the early years immediately after people were forcibly removed to the Cape Flats, including other racially segregated areas, they were not recipients of any kind of economic or social development from the state and most of the families living there were poor (Standing, 2003: 2). Scholars (Bowers & DuToit, 2014: 2) believe that the forced removals caused the rupturing of supportive communal ties, the severing of practices and traditions, and an overwhelming sense of bewilderedness and confusion (Bowers & DuToit, 2014: 2). These, including economic and social marginalisation, all coalesced into the perfect environment for the creation of a sophisticated criminal network, familiar to South Africa as gangsterism (Standing, 2003: 5).

Gangsterism is an overwhelmingly terrifying presence for the community, a presence that forces people to daily navigate the trauma and threat of violence, rape, victimisation, theft, exploitation, illegal trade and substance abuse. Gangsterism is so rooted, it defines how people live and how they die. Standing (2003: 4) believes that gangsterism has maintained its hold in the democratic dispensation because the activities of gangs and the criminal elite give rise to a concentrated illicit economy that not only creates its own forms of illegal employment, but also allows a criminal elite to play a pseudo-governance role in their communities through occasionally providing the social and economic support the State should be providing. Bouwers and Du Toit (2014:

5) cite the theory of cultural transmission that highlights the inevitable birth of gangs when social institutions and the justice system are viewed as powerless.

The social media campaign started by @Saint_sheri aimed to generate awareness around the deepening inequality and criminality unfolding in the Cape Flats, and its use of colour replicated the colour-encoded 2019 Sudan social crisis awareness campaign, that saw millions of social media users across the globe changing their display pictures to shades of blue to express solidarity for the socio-political upheaval and the nation-wide violence in Sudan in the wake of their fallen dictator.

'The Orange Movement' and the hashtag, #JusticeForTheCapeFlats trended nationally during the early stages of its creation and as a result, the South African National Defence Force was deployed to the area by the State as means to provide relief to the community (Eyoh, 2019). However, the movement quickly moved away from a central focus on gangsterism on the Cape Flats and instead snowballed into an awareness campaign aimed at vocalizing feelings of marginalisation, disillusionment and neglect in coloured communities across the country (Eyoh, 2019).

Mohamed Adhikari (2004: 171) writes that in the infancy of South Africa's democracy, that continued economic and material inequality in coloured communities would provide ample fodder for disillusionment with a democratic government. Working-class coloured communities suffer immensely under the strain of impoverished living environments, unemployment, and declining economic growth both nationally and within their communities. In 1955, a few years after the forced removals, to maintain the hierarchical illusion of race and to provide a buffer between the white minority and black majority, policies that allowed for the provision of state subsidies and employment preference to coloured working class womxn especially during the apartheid era, were scrapped in the spirit of transformation without a replacement that could continue to provide support to the coloured communities whose livelihoods depended on the relative privilege their secondary position in white supremacy had afforded them (Adhikari, 2004: 175). Most coloured people still living in areas instituted through segregationist spatial polices remain poverty-stricken and a conspicuously growing black middle class with the inclusion of high profile black political and public figures, solidifies

the view that opportunities for wealth are limited to Black South Africans and deliberately not extended to coloured people (Adhikari, 2004: 171).

The logic of a racialised society has caused coloured communities to reason that their penurious lived realities in the post-apartheid era are caused by the polices and decisions of a State that favours Black South Africans (Adhikari, 2004: 171). Thus, the movement presented itself as a visual and rhetorical social media campaign that conflated the orange colour with themes of marginality, exclusion, alienation and violence that threaded through the stories emerging from coloured communities.

Writing for cultural critic magazine *Bubblegum Club ZA*, Maliaka Eyoh (2019), expresses condemnation for the lukewarm support the movement received in comparison to the Sudan crisis, citing that the legitimate concerns of "marginalised groups" in South Africa are continuously relegated to the fringes of national concern: "The Orange Movement and #JusticefortheCapeFlats are [sic] utilizing social media to draw attention to a people and a place that this country often overlooks unless it's for a laugh at their expense" (Eyoh, 2019). The implication made here is that coloured people in South Africa are negatively stereotyped in the public imagination. Racialised pejorative jokes made at the expense of coloured people, exposes the contempt for coloured people that exists in the popular imagination. This will be unpacked further in chapter four.

Eyoh's (2018) statements and the aegis behind the initiative of the Orange Movement, resonated with the social media account holders who joined the movement in digital support, one of which was @being_coloured. Themes of marginalisation, violence, neglect, anger, poverty and shame inform the rhetoric behind the particular shade of orange utilised by the movement, and @being_coloured's decision to dedicate the space of their display picture to this colour of orange, signifies solidarity with the movement and affirmation of its rhetoric. Currently, the accounts display picture is still the shade of orange specific to the movement and their support in this way, compliments the content available on their account.

@being_coloured's support for The Orange Movement is a natural consequence of its own social media presence because the images and the textual narratives that are

published on the account are framed in ways that evoke the same themes presented by the Orange movement. Most of the posts are identical in content, depicting clashes between communities classified by the account holders through "the look" (Erasmus, 2017: 52) as coloured people and the police, in the midst of local protests. The remainder of the images are posts of prominent figures, most of them deceased, associated with the anti-apartheid struggle including, Dulcie September, Alex La Guma and Sophia Williams De Bruin. These people are visually and textually positioned by the account holders as heroes for coloured people in general in South Africa.

@being_coloured's biographical section carries the following description of the account: "An extension of the Kommunity Outreach Strategists (KOS) organisation. Empowering marginalised communities. Breaking negative stereotypes in ZA." A reading of the images and their accompanying discursive narrations reveals, though, that the phrase "marginalised communities" is conflated with the racial category of Coloured, and that the posts on the account are dedicated solely to textually guided visual narratives of what the account holders believe to be a general representation of the livelihood of coloured people in democratic south Africa.

The first section of the analysis that follows, is dedicated to a post dated 3 October 2018. This post captures one of the series of protests that ballooned within the coloured communities in Johannesburg in October 2018. The first protest in Westbury was catalysed by the fatal shooting of a woman caught in the cross-fire of gang warfare. In outrage, the community stormed the streets to demand justice for her execution (Kekana&Smit, 2018). A few days later, community members cordoned off the roads entering and exiting the area, with burning tyres and rubble. This was done, according to community spokespersons, to draw the State's attention to the rampant violence, substance abuse and crime happening in the community—with the tacit agreement from the police who community members accused of accepting payoffs from the criminal elite and petty gangsters in the area (Kekana&Smit, 2018). The community called for the intervention of increased security measures to ensure the protection of those not affiliated with gang-related activity. These demands were then expounded upon and amalgamated into broader themes, namely, the economic and socio-political

marginalisation of coloured people, as the surrounding communities of Ennerdale, Claremont, Eldorado park and Noordgesig joined in (Simelane, 2018).

Inter-community collective action led to the development of the Gauteng Shutdown Co-ordinating Committee, whose aegis lay in co-ordinating protest action between the communities in order to pressure the state into prioritizing the violence, substance abuse and general marginalisation of Coloured people. The police presence in the communities during these protests was intimately corrosive, as physical standoffs between the police and the community resulting in injuries to community members, are recorded in the press (Jordaan, 2018).

Analysis of the images

Image 1: Womxn, community resident walking across the street opposite the demonstration outside the police station in Sophiatown close to Westbury Johannesburg (@being_coloured, 2018)[4]

In the first image, the solitary figure of a womxn is pictured. She is situated slightly off centre, to emphasise that she is walking off towards a space outside of the frame. What takes up the centre of the image is the front of a police van and the smoke

[4] This is not the caption that accompanied the post, this is a caption I wrote after researching where the image is was taken and consulting the news site the image first appeared on.

from the blazing bonfire of tyres, that surrounds the row of vans that trail all the way out of the frame. Though the vans are not in the foreground of the image they are bigger in size compared to the womxn in the frame. She is smaller in scale and is also captured in a moment of solitude, with no one surrounding her whereas the vans are positioned in a convoy. Her gaze is not trained towards the camera and she seems to be unaware that she is being photographed implying that our gaze as viewers is voyeuristic (Lister&Wells, 2004: 65). The womxn is pictured with her back to the burning tyres in the left side of the frame and our gaze is positioned above the womxn as though we are looking down on her. The lighting in the image casts everything in stark relief and there are few shadows. Though she is close to smouldering tyres and a line of police vehicles, her facial expression is stoic and her stride is purposeful even though she is pictured alone.

In a *Mail and Guardian* online article about the protests, journalists Sarah Smit and Meshadi Kekana (2018), wrote about the protests as understood and experienced by the womxn who live there. Themes of violence, death, exploitation and fear shroud the lived experiences of these womxn. The article discloses that an image of the body of Heather Petersen, who was fatally shot in the crossfire between feuding gangs, lying in her own blood, was circulated amongst community members. The journalists directly quote the womxn as they share sentiments expressing that as womxn and mothers living in a community characterised by gang-related crimes and substance abuse, they feel as though they in particular, “are under siege” (Kekana & Smit, 2018). The womxn highlight the threat of sexual violence and assault that permeates their reality and that of their children. The article credits a womxn identified as Carol Sallie, for initiating the protest in Westbury. The article describes how, during the address to the community by the Police Chief, Bheki Cele, the womxn gathered around Sallie to receive directions on whether or not to continue the protest. When male figures are mentioned in the article, the men are quoted expressing sentiments that relate to the roles of gender in the community. Bishop Dalton Adams is mentioned attributing his aversion to the violence in the community when he was a young man, to the influence of a “praying mother” (Kekana&Smit, 2018).

The piece by Smit and Kekana and the image under analysis here position gender as imbricated in the phenomenon of gangsterism and the violence and fear it engenders.

Vetten (2000: 6) explains that too few studies on gangsterism have considered their analysis through the lens of gender. Most are premised on the application of socio-economic theories onto specific cases of gangsterism. These studies consistently position gender as a footnote, neglecting to realise that gangs and their individual members are formed by a gendered and generational understanding of themselves in relation to their communities and to the society beyond these communities. Gangs are not a straight forward answer to the challenges of capitalism; rather, they are the manifestation of the contradictions inherent in the matrix of race, class and gender.

Informed by a sense of paternalism, the apartheid state provided adult coloured womxn, on condition that they were wives and mothers, with housing and welfare grants (Salo, 2005: 334). Providing coloured womxn with material assistance turned these womxn into tenuous bridges between the state and the disenfranchised coloured community. This gave them authority which allowed them to influence the moral and socio-cultural values within their communities. One individual adult coloured womxn became a community-wide metonym for motherhood, fidelity, sacrifice, Christianity and domesticity (Salo, 2005: 334).

By the logic of patriarchy, masculinity can only be defined in opposition to femininity and so coloured men needed to define themselves in ways that were contrary to the economic and socio-cultural role played by the womxn. At the time, white supremacist ideology purported that masculinity was defined by a man's ability to perform the role of breadwinner and provider for his family. Through centuries of capitalist manipulation and exploitation, the only men who could comfortably achieve this were white men (Moolman, 2004: 111). Unable to be providers through systemic inequalities that pervaded schooling systems and low-skilled labour markets, working-class coloured men valorised patriarchal dogma premised on strength, emotional toughness, bravery and courage as a means to carve out an identity for themselves. This ideology of masculinity found expression in the archetype of the gangster. Gangs went about splitting up coloured townships and its people into 'territories' that were created, owned, controlled and policed by these gangs to render this masculinity spatial and social, informed by an awareness that it would only be in these areas that this masculinity would be legitimated (Salo, 2003: 14).

Gangsters embody the contradictions inherent in the matrix of gender, race and class; because though they are privileged through gender, this privilege does not translate into the existence of a patriarch as envisioned through white supremacy. These contradictions require negotiation and manoeuvring and Pinnock proposes that to understand this process, gangsterism should be considered as a "rite of passage" (Pinnock, 1997: 113).

Pinnock (1997: 118) focuses on phases characterised by activity that gives the gang shape and in turn contributes to the representation of masculinity that gangs perform. The first stage, separation (Pinnock, 1997: 119), entails developing a physical and cultural understanding of us and them. This describes the linguistic, visual, spatial and embodied cues that mark out one gang from another. Pinnock (1997: 119) attests that central to the language used by gangs, is the metaphors of guns. Gangs construct a view of themselves and their world as governed by the predator-prey dynamic which is premised on asserting dominance attained and maintained through violence.

Each gang has an insignia composed of specific colours, a unique name, different forms of slang and different rituals and practices that are imbued with meaning only known by those within the gang. But, for these symbols to have any purchase, the gang must claim territory over the surrounding community. Dismissing the official demarcations of the township made by authorities, gangs claim certain streets or sections as their territory and evidence this claim through visual signs that bear their colours, logo or any other signifiers written onto walls, homes, streets or public service buildings; they set up a presence at a certain spot within the community, such as a street corner, to entrench their visibility in the community. This is also done to easily police movement of community members and non-community members, non-community members being defined as people who do not live within the territory demarcated by the gang.

Salo (2003: 15) explains that through this spatial claim to territory, coloured men in gangs position their masculinity as one that polices boundaries of an area, gives a community a spatial reality, which in turn confines the socio-cultural influence exerted by the womxn, to the territory defined by the men. Therefore, this masculinity sets up perimeters, sectioning off the space through which the influence of the womxn matters.

Pinnock's second stage, liminality (1997: 119), details the practices and performances that gangs take part in as prescribed by understandings of masculinity that exalt exaggerated bravery, courage, emotional toughness, dominance and strength. Turf wars act as powerful bonding exercises because inherent in the enactment of the turf war is the performance of strength, fearlessness, recklessness, fearsomeness and courage. This performance is prompted when rivalry occurs between gangs over issues of ownership, relating to territory, markets or womxn. In this way, we infer that the gang's understanding of masculinity is premised on defending what they deem as their property, with property being everything from people to premises—in turn implying that femininity and by implication womxn, are objects in relation to the gang member's subjectivity.

With the advent of democracy, the apartheid era policies that imbued coloured womxn with moral authority were revoked and this ruptured the gendered dynamics of the community, resulting in a void that allowed gangsterism to develop into an all consuming power in coloured communities. This gendered imbalance has been entrenched through sexual violence.

South Africa's shift into democracy translated into a move from violence as a means of control in a racialised society, to violence as control in a patriarchal capitalist society. When this understanding of power and shame encounters existing social ills, it only intensifies. Gangsterism, as discussed earlier, was fashioned from values of dominance, power, control, conquest, achievement and competition (Moolman, 2004: 110), the same values that are encoded into acts of sexual violence. Rape is sexualised warfare, a type of violence that aligns with the values that already inform ganging practices.

Sexual violence becomes a definitive aspect of livelihood of communities that are home to gangs. The relationship between the bodies who are abused and those enacting the abuse, define the dispersal of power within the local context. Moolman (2004: 110) explains that gangs use rape and sexual violence – particularly gang rape – as a means to exercise control and accrue power.

Sexual violence for womxn living in coloured communities communicates to them and to others, that they are objects to be acquired through sexual force, as part of the "land" and "bodies" (Moolman, 2004: 114) that gangs must be able to bring under their control in order to signal their power and to solidify their masculinity in the presence of other gangs and the general community. The power and might of a gang are defined by the turfs and womxn they control, because the dominant archetype of masculinity is premised on proving ownership. Gangsterism's role in the national epidemic of sexual violence, is that it typifies the tensions between the rights womxn are supposed to enjoy publicly in democracy and the oppression they endure privately in intimate and domestic settings.

It is therefore significant that the first picture in this post, is an image of an older womxn a-solitary figure- and a convoy of police vans competing for the centre point of the image. During apartheid, the process of othering was achieved in the quotidian through the police as an extension of the state. The police van is a symbol in South Africa of the repression required to build a nation. Force as method for governance is an inheritance in post-apartheid South Africa and the womxn in the image's proximity to the centre, where the police van is positioned, calls this truth into reality. Both gangs and police are premised on othering in order to achieve this; police are defined through symbols and signifiers of authority that through law cannot be wielded by those who are not employed as police, creating an othering of ordinary citizens; whereas the masculinity that fuels gangsterism depends on the othering of womxn. The formal force in the public is bound up with force in the private sphere, a reality that directly impacts how womxn come to understand their subordination in intimate spaces.

The womxn is not looking directly at the camera, and distance is established between the viewer and the subject. In this way, the womxn is rendered an object for contemplation (Kress& van Lueween, 2006: 118). The violence that has become the rod through which femininity is realised in this community, is offered up impersonally to the viewer to consider from a safe distance. The oblique angle of the image solidifies the difference between the lived reality of the participant and the viewer. An oblique angle communicates to the viewer, "what you see here is not part of our world, it is their world, something we are not involved with," (Kress & van Leuween, 2006: 130). This

emphasis on detachment hones in on the belief that the racially gendered violence engendered by gangsterim, is abnormal and abhorrent and must stem from something inside the community and its members.

Image 2: Protestors gathered in the main road of Westbury, Johannesburg during the address by Police Chief Minister Bheki Cele (@being_coloured, 2018)

Predominantly womxn are positioned as participants in the last image in the sequence, gathered together in a clump, all--except one, the central figure--with their bodies and faces angled towards a point on the left, outside of the frame. This alludes to the journalist's interpretation of the protests as being driven by the womxn in the community (Kekana, 2018). The compositionality of the image is made up of moments of connection and disconnection between the Centre and the Margins (Kress & van Leuween, 2006: 195). Reading the message contained in an image is dependent on understanding the choices behind the compositionality of the elements that make up the image. This particular image uses lighting, frontal angle, distance and gaze in order to

position the only womxn bearing a placard, as the Centre of the image. The Centre is the element in the image around which the other elements are orientated.

The Centre—the placard-bearing womxn—is the nucleus of information for this image; the participants around her that make up the Margins, act as the ancillary elements for the information she conveys. Thus the message she conveys both through her gaze and her placard, to the viewer, is a testimony shared and supported by those around her. She is the pivot around which the other elements in the image are organised, and so the narrative she carries in her hands acts as the 'voice' of the protestors.

Captured through the frontal angle, the image, especially the information emanating from the Centre, embroils the viewer, declaring that, "what you see is part of [your] world, something [you] are involved in," (Kress & van Leuween, 2006: 136). In addition to this angle, the womxn's gaze glimpsed from the top of the placard 'demands' (Kress & van Leuween, 2006: 136) that the message she holds be acknowledged. The viewer is positioned as a witness to the collective's truth. As the scene is captured from the eye-level position, power relations between the viewer and the participant, unlike the first image, are equalised.

As explained before, the message of the Centre, introduces the viewer to the womxn's assessment of the dispersal of power in their domestic space. The Centre's message, written on a placard and supported by the Margins, reads, "Bheki Cele must come, Finch and Keenan must go with their drugs and guns. Westbury residence." This message communicates the womxn's understanding of the dispersal of power in the context of their community and their country. Through an appeal to the powerful force of the police, as a representative of the state, the womxn are aware that only through the official channels of the state, will their identity as equal citizens in a democracy gain purchase. As Frankel (1980, 490) writes, "[i]t is the police force, more than any other institution, that links central government to the local level, symbolizes political authority, and in so doing provides the ordinary citizen with a basis for orientation towards the political system" (Frankel, 1980: 490). The womxn understand that gender-based violence as an epidemic within the domestic space has decimated their authority and the only recourse is to circumvent local understandings of personhood, in order to draw

from larger archetypes that situate all members of a democracy, at least in rhetoric, as equal to others.

What is most significant about this, is that the textual message at the Centre carefully neglects to make direct references to the role that gender plays in entrenching power and shame into the community. Instead, the message is focused on juxtaposing androcentric forces of authority, at a national and local level, to obliquely foreground issues of gendered violence. Kress& van Leeuwen (2006: 203) explain that if an image's reading path is circular, then the central message will, "form the heart of the cultural universe" (Kress& van Leeuwen, 2006: 203). This implies that the message located at the Centre will communicate a poignant truth about the society from which the image originates. Considering this, it is not a coincidence that though the message on the placard may not directly reference gender, the presence of the womxn holding the placard and gazing directly at the viewer "demands" (Kress& van Leeuwen, 2006: 117) that it be recognised that despite the rhetoric of equality and inclusivity that is used to brand democratic South Africa; stratification policed through violence, is still primordial in the process of shaping gendered personhood; and this truth is distorted by the politics of race relations (Moffet, 2006: 140) as this is clear through the way this image is conscripted into narratives of race by the @being_coloured account holders.

The remaining two images in the panel (included below) express themes related to institutional violence and the role it plays in democracy with respect to disenfranchised communities. In both images, crowds, rocks and debris scattered in the road are the metonyms for community-based collective action. During apartheid, collective resistance in disenfranchised communities of colour was used as a strategy to render these areas ungovernable to disturb the homeostasis required for the functioning of a racialised society. Presently, these tactics are employed once more in these areas as an alternative to procedural democracy (Parcel, 2015: 108). South Africa grants various symbolic freedoms to its people whilst entrenching extreme poverty, inequality and exclusion amongst the majority (Parcet, 2015: 120). Substantive democracy is enjoyed by the few, and realising this, disenfranchised communities employ violence as a tool to seek a means of resource distribution. Mkhize (2015: 196) explains that collective resistance should not be understood only as an economic crisis but also as a

community's attempt to challenge local governance processes that hinder meaningful incorporation of community choices and aspirations into public services and governance decisions. Collective resistance in communities, highlights that procedural democratic spaces for participation fail to deliver the tangible fruits of substantive democracy in these areas (Mkhize, 2015: 196).

Violence, elite instability and democracy are then drawn into a thorny relationship; where the monopoly on the legitimacy of violence is co-opted by the state to delegitimise alternative collective action undertaken by communities (Parcet, 2015: 115). Collective resistance may involve a wide range of actions, from benign activities such as barricading roads to more extreme and potentially fatal methods such as destroying public service infrastructure. South African media, such as News24, IOL and *The Citizen*, categorizes these activities homogenously as violence, and refers to collective protest action generally as 'violent service delivery protests' (Duncan. 2016: 8). This is exploited by the political elite who then use this to delegitimise protestors' concerns while encouraging the use of militarized public order policing to quash the dissent (Parcet, 2015: 114). The violence police enacts in response to protestors, that often results in fatalities, is positioned, by the state and the media as legal and an inevitable aspect of governance (Parcet, 2015: 119) especially in disenfranchised communities.

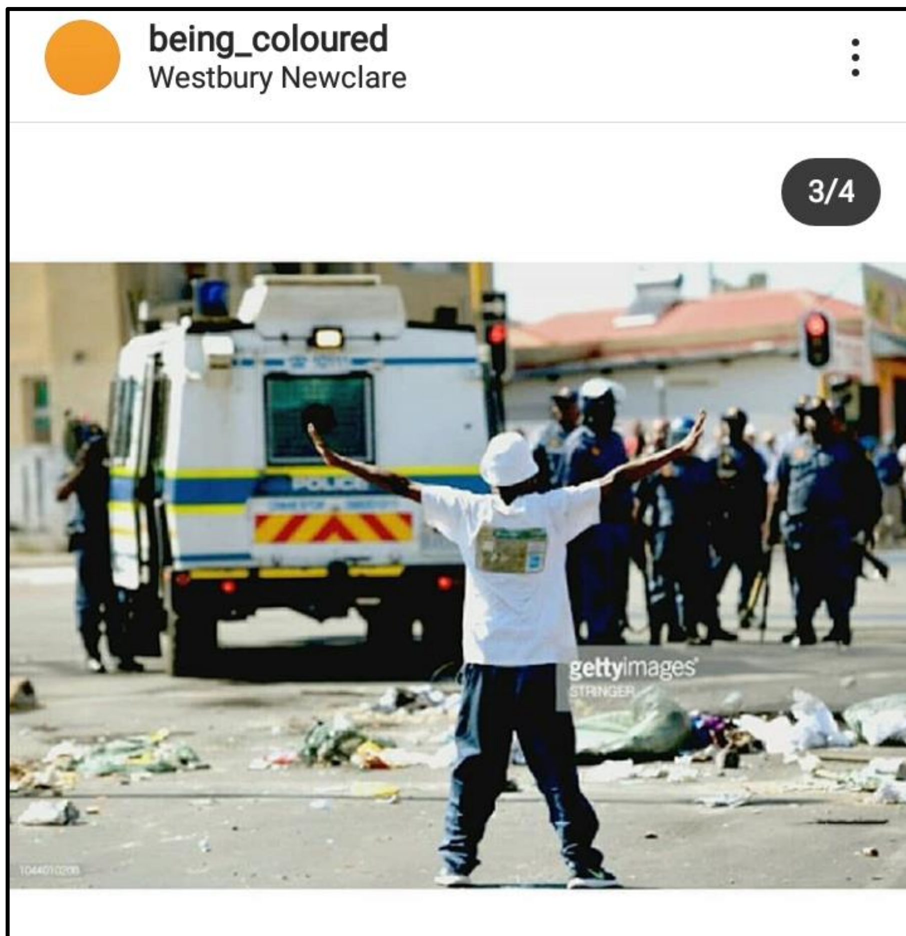

Image 3: Protestor holding arms up to indicate no threat on his part in front of the line of riot police in the main road in Westbury, Johannesburg (@being_coloured, 2018)

In the second last image in the panel, the viewer is afforded a perspective from the frontal angle (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 136), which serves to involve the viewer in what is depicted (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 136). This angle also represents the participant, the man, in the foreground and Centre, as equal in power relative to the viewer. Representing the participant with his back turned to the viewer imbues the participant with a sense of vulnerability from the viewer's perspective. To face one's back to someone is to leave one open to potential harm. Only where there is trust, may vulnerability find a safe space to manifest. This amplifies the producers' coding of equal power between viewer and participant into the image. In this way, the viewer is invited

to share the participant's intimate testimony of pain, vulnerability, emasculation and marginality.

The participant's arms are held high with his hands up, and through articulation and understanding of social cues, we read this as indicating to the police in the background, that he is not a threat. His obvious vulnerability is juxtaposed against the presence of riot gear adorned by the authorities. The integration of art techniques into photojournalism, means that the producer of this image was aware that social cues permitted a recognition of hands raised as the universal sign to establish oneself as non-threatening, and so strategically captured this moment as part of the narrative of the image (Veneti, 2017: 288). The story intended, is one that subverts dominant portrayals of protests as synonymous with direct violence and instead seeks to draw attention to the structural violence that delineates power in the quotidian, exemplified by the contrast between a line of police in riot gear staring down at the participant with his hands raised in submission.

This contrast is augmented by the compositional elements in the image that frame the spaces and the participants in the image in different ways (Kress& van Leeuwen, 2006: 203). The man is foregrounded and made more salient through the application of sharp focus on him and blur applied to the string of police people. In addition, a line of rocks and debris in the road separates the physical space between the foreground and the background, in turn marking the space between the community and the state; indicating the demarcation of the community's autonomy of their space in this act of collective resistance. In addition, much like the last image in the panel; this division between the positions of the state and the protestors highlights the history of the estrangement that the state and by extension the police, has always had with disenfranchised communities.

Historically, the role of the police in disenfranchised areas was to ensure that dissent from non-white areas was quashed and thus, the presence of police in these areas did not connote safety and protection for the people living there but rather repression and violence (Frankel, 1980: 35). The communities then established their own systems of governance, code of conduct and kangaroo courts for settling disputes. They created community systems they came to trust and depend on because of the state's

deliberate withdrawal of itself from these areas., When formal governance is not in place, a void is left for subversive or criminal elements to gain a stronghold and this is how gangsterism and criminal networks tied to illegal activity, gain control of areas such as Westbury. Post-apartheid South Africa's approach to policing in these types of areas, has been reminiscent of counter-insurgency strategies, tactics and terminology, with criminal networks such as gangs, Othered through militarized discourse as the enemy (Lamb, 2018: 944). Police have employed military tactics, sometimes in collaboration with the South African Defence Force in these areas, to violently wrestling control of the communities back from the gangs to the state (Lamb, 2018: 944). By virtue of this, their presence in these communities is one characterised by excessive force, reminiscent of combat situations against revolutionaries and mutineers and often the community is caught in the crossfire between the gangs and the police as war is waged on the material and psychological livelihoods of community members.

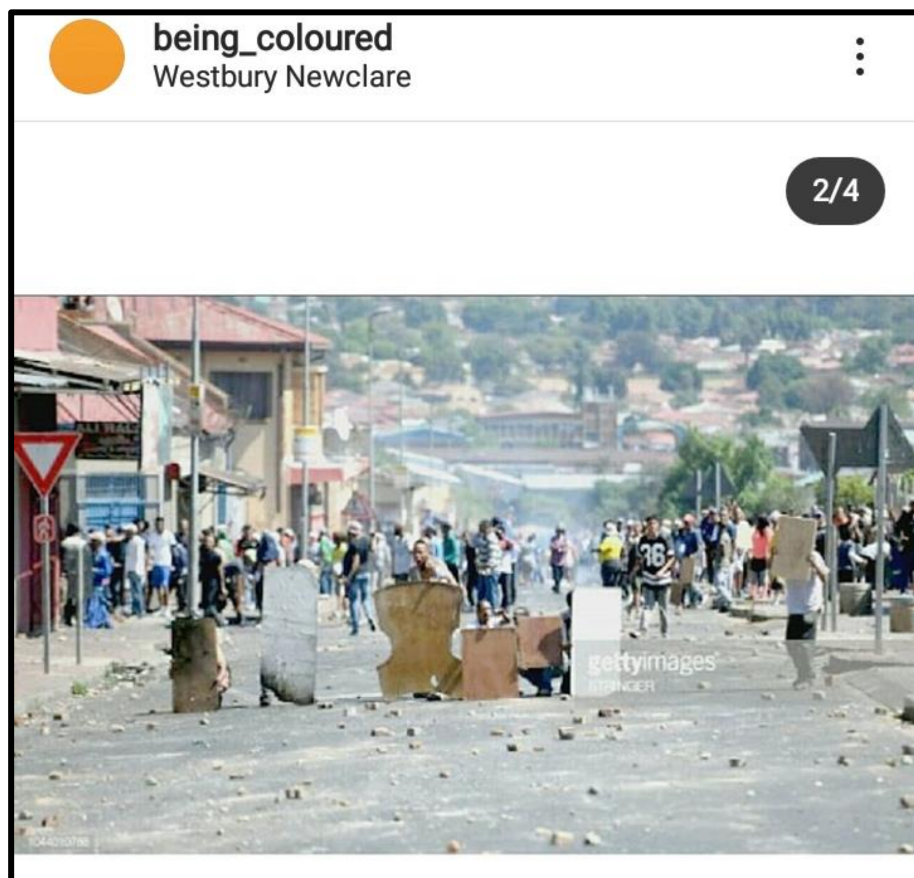

Image 4: Protestors crouching behind makeshift shields during scuffle with riot on the main road of Westbury Johannesburg (@being_coloured, 2018)

The final image speaks to this estrangement, as well as to the intensified militarization of the police during the period of democracy. Lamb (2018: 933) concludes that despite demilitarisation efforts to the South African police force at the start of democracy, SAPS not only remained militarised but became more so from the 1990's onwards. Government officials such as Fikile Mbalula, the former Minister of police and various ministers of the security cluster, presented mandates and reforms to further entrench militarisation under the guise of promoting professionalism and combating the "war on crime" (Lamb, 2018: 936). As collective resistance in townships areas continued to rise, this has been met with a greater focus on penal policing: "the types of policing utilised during protest action is reminiscent of apartheid policing practices" (Mkhize, 2015: 939).

The participants that make up the Centre of the final image are cowering, hunched over seeking cover behind makeshift cardboard shields. The viewer is positioned almost as the threat the participants are hiding from. The presence of the rocks that make up the foreground of the image are among the objects that have become symbolic of clashes with police in the lexicon of South African protest imagery. Veneti's (2017: 285) research confirms that photojournalists are influenced by existing requirements from the media industry with respect to the production of images, and so photojournalists pay attention to aspects of the protest that will encourage circulation of the image that is fuelled by the context of "South Africa's history of militant and powerful community-based movements," (Mkhize, 2015: 201).

It becomes necessary then, for the viewer to occupy the gaze of the unfeatured officials, because of the disparate experiences this country affords to its citizens. South Africa, one of the most unequal societies in the world, achieved this condition through the moments of death caused by repeated humiliations that people of colour continue to experience daily (Erasmus, 2017: 15). The constant assault left them bowed over and steeling themselves against the blows--as we see in this image--unceasingly meted out by systemic inequality. This violent legacy is what contributes to the haemorrhaging transpiring in disenfranchised communities all over the country.

Discourse analysis of the caption accompanying the images in the post

The recent Westbury Community Protest has once again brought to light the ills that we face in our Coloured communities. As usual, a life had to be lost to grab the attention of the media and government. Last week Friday, 46 year old Heather Peterson was shot dead and her niece was left wounded in a crossfire between gangs.
Against this background the Westbury community decided to take a stand for justice by peacefully protesting against the dealing of drugs and violent crimes, amongst other things which have infested the community over the years. The community protested on Monday morning (01 October 2018) but was met with teargas and rubber bullets from the police. According to Captain Kay Makhubele the teargas and rubber bullets were used to "push the crowd back and contain the situation." Members from the community said that they have called upon police, government officials and political parties numerous times to try and contain the drug trafficking and violence but their cries fell on deaf ears. The communty further claim that many of the police officers who are meant to protect the community are under the payroll of drug dealers.

The community has demanded for Police Minister Bheki Cele to address the unrest in the community. This demand was adhered to as the Minister attended to the community on Tuesday (2 October 2018). The community have however lost all faith in police services and feel that the police are causing more harm than containing the situation.
We @being_coloured are disturbed by the response from the police who are treating the protesters as criminals and the criminals as friends. If the police force used half of the energy that they're applying to the protesters on the crime in the community, Westbury would be a much better place. Many townships are being neglected by government officials, media and political parties. It takes a drastic and traumatising situation like this one to receive attention from the government. This is unacceptable and appalling and we therefore support the peaceful protest of the Westbury community.

Image 5: Textual caption that accompanies the images(@being_coloured, 2018)

Instagram is primarily a visual medium, but the platform's vernaculars (Adi et al., 2018: 320) allow for the images to be accompanied by a textual narrative in the caption. The caption is understood to be the information account holders attach to provoke specific readings of the image. Through the application of discourse analysis (Augustinos et al., 2014: 55) the caption that accompanies the visual narrative of the protests that transpired in Westbury by @being _coloured, will be analysed with the intention to understand the possibilities for representation that the post yields.

Discourse constructs the nature of the objects, events and phenomenon under discussion. Researchers who analyse discourse believe that the world is brought into being through how it is discussed. Words are chosen with careful deliberation dependent on the envisioned version of the world the speaker intends to build. This is similar to the process, or exercise of power, demonstrated by the act of selecting certain images to build a specific visual narrative (Lister&Wells, 2001: 66) Therefore, the visual

narrative of the Westbury protest is discussed textually in the caption to amplify the version of the events depicted in the images.

The style of writing in the caption of the post, approximates a version of hard news reporting. This is evidenced by the inverted triangle structure (Bull, 2016: 31) made use of as a means to order the information. The caption quotes official authorities by name and rank while referring to the protestors in the collective as "community members" (Corrigall-Brown &Wells, 2012: 245) privileging the voices and versions of events relayed by authorities as is typical of the protest paradigm. The opening and closing lines of the caption break with this prescription as a means to circumvent the limitations of the format. This indicates ambivalence about utilizing the protest paradigm within the caption and this is because its application results in a clash of values. Strict adherence to the protest paradigm may unintentionally malign and delegitimise the protestors, whereas the accumulated history behind the protest paradigm in journalism, enjoys the luxury of being interacted with from the premise of assumed truth, and is therefore validated by readers. To attempt to strike a balance between these demands, the protest paradigm is tweaked and repurposed to allow for subjectivity through the inclusion of words, phrases and signifiers that have partisan connotations. These include the use of descriptions of protest as peaceful and refraining from referring to participants as protestors, opting instead for words such as community members. The format of the inverted triangle is also reshaped through the inclusion of both an introduction and a conclusion.

The opening line reads: "The recent Westbury protest has once again brought to light the ills we face in our Coloured communities" (@being_coloured, 2018). This sentence is loaded with discursive information that immediately strikes at the marrow of the syntax created by the visual and verbal posts on the @being_coloured account. The use of a consensus warrants in this sentence are interpretive repertoires that aim to give the impression that how the protest is discussed is generally agreed upon to be true. The consensus warrant is an example of discursive resource or practice that is used to claim that there exists unanimous agreement on a particular issue in a way that suggests the view of this issue is common-sense amongst a vaguely alluded to majority (Augustinos et al., 2009: 57). The use of the discursive resource, "once again," implies that the protest

must be understood within the context of other expressions of discontent to emerge from similar communities. This undermines the traditional hard news structure's unintended proclivity to divorce a protest from the context that builds up to the spectacular moments of public disturbance or violence. This small phrase carries the weight of what is implied as accumulated discontent in areas such as Westbury. These areas are immediately identified in racial terms, through the reference to the South African specific racial category of "Coloured". Through application of "the look"(Erasmus, 2017: 51) as a tool of racialisation, the account holders identify the protesting participants in the images as belonging to a single racial category and juxtapose this category against a geographical location, revealing geography as a connotation in South Africa that has historically assisted the process of racial stratification and is therefore a key aspect of machinations of the look.

The use of the consensus warrant, "we face in our," in this opening sentence uses the look in service of a fictive homogeneity (Erasmus, 2017: 62) that racial self-classification provides. The account holders identify the protesting participants in the images as well as the protest itself, as being tied to their own reality through their self-identification with the category they have ascribed onto the bodies of the participants through the look and the racialised society's idea of race as hereditary (Erasmus, 2017: 90). Identification of race is important in South Africa because the redress efforts of democracy have been shaped through administrative practices that prioritise classification. The government's administrative categorization of its people, in turn provides the people with the box in which they identify themselves and others and thus the use of this consensus warrant emphasises this. The look as a tool for sense-making when engaging with the visual narrative in the post, implies that reading race from a body's skin colour is a common practice within the society, to the extent that the look finds expression in the everyday digitisation of personhood as well. @being_coloured account holders imply that the visual narrative of the protest must be understood as part of the process of racialisation and their own racial personhood in the offline context.

The second sentence, "As usual, a life had to be lost to grab the attention of the media and the government," critiques the relationships between the protest paradigm

perpetuated by the media and the exploitation of this by the state within the realm of the public imagination. The roles of the democratic media and the state as popularly envisioned by the people are critiqued in this sentence, implying that formal governance is in part responsible for the protest visually represented. This aligns with research findings presented by Duncan (2016: 6) and Mkhize (2015: 196) that prove the connections between ineffective public participation in formal governance, manipulative pre-emptive legislative measures to mitigate the virulence and effectivity of public demonstrations, and the construction of protestors as marauding mobs through the perpetuation of uncritical commercialised media, resulting in turn in the estrangement of disenfranchised communities from the state and from public empathy and support. The visual narrative in the post that communicates themes of violence and marginalisation, are attributed to the relationship between the state and the media as a causal factor.

In line 9 of the caption the word “peacefully” is used to contextualise the protestors’ approach to the demonstration. As explained earlier, descriptors such as this undermine the conventional use of the hard news format of reporting. News that positions itself as impartial and independent avoids words that may give a partisan impression, and the word peacefully connotes adherence to democratic legislation regarding public demonstration on the part of the protestors. The protest is constructed through the use of this word as lawful; and by extension the objectives of the protestors are imbued with legitimacy. The use of this word, in the context of the hard news format it finds itself in, is a critique of the limits of non-partisan reporting, tellingly emphasising the impression and thus the lack of support the public grants the concerns of disenfranchised communities once they are refracted through the lens of the media.

Immediately following the description of the community as peaceful, the clash between the community and police authorities is referenced in the following manner: “The community protested on Monday morning (01 October 2018) [sic] but was met with teargas and rubber bullets from the police” (@being_coloured, 2018). The reference to public order policing weapons is collocated with the earlier description of the protestors as peaceful and the intention here is to attribute the escalating tension to the police. The references to police’s arms in the service of public order policing is

contrasted with the omission in this account, of any weapons wielded by protestors. The imagery of public order policing weapons representing the state's monopoly on violence, juxtaposed against protestors previously described as peaceful, positions the protestors as vulnerable before the power of the state, helpless, as the right to collective demonstrations through procedural democracy is deliberately quashed by the authorities through pre-emptive repression or incitement to violence (Duncan, 2016: 5).

Vernaculars of the protest paradigm describe public demonstrators collectively as protestors but in this description, the paradigm is once again subverted in that the protestors are consistently referred to as "the community". This demonstrates an awareness of the words that have gained purchase in the public imagination about the legitimacy of dissent and collective action. The image of a violently repressive state, both textually and visually in this post, is juxtaposed against the connotations assigned to the word community, connotations that speak to intimacy, safety, privacy, autonomy, freedom and dialogue. In this sense, the authorities are then illustrated as the harbinger of the policing of old, policing intended to remind communities of colour in the intimate spaces of their livelihood, of their tenuous racialised citizenship. Created to restrain black resistance, public order policing has historically only been instituted through racialisation, for the containment of bodies considered slightly less than human. Policing was an activity that found expression mainly on these outskirts, and so the image of the police weapons used on the bodies of communities of colour, loaded with symbolism within the process of racialisation in South Africa.

During the COVID-19 lockdown period, executive mayor of the Matjhabeng Municipality in Welkom, was caught on camera encouraging members of the South African defence force, to use excessive force in the predominantly self-defined coloured community of Bronville (Malgas, 2020). The executive mayor referred to the residents as "Boesmans", a derogatory term with colonialist roots, used to describe people with indigenous heritage and to discuss coloured people in general; and he justified the use of excessive force by insinuating that community members were prone to substance abuse and would not adhere to lockdown regulations because of this. This view harkens back to colonial and apartheid tropes of mixed race people as inherently degenerate and dysfunctional, tropes that were constructed to serve as justification for the violence,

exclusion, marginalisation and derision that were heaped on the bodies of those classified coloured, in service of racialisation. The SANDF were encouraged to demonstrate a violent paternalism towards the community members within the intimate space of their residential area, under the guise of maintaining the stability of society. Collocating the might of the police with the vulnerability of the community of colour in this post, is a dense image that connects itself to the noxious history of policing in this country.

Following this, police authority, Captain Kay Makhubele is mentioned by name and rank and is quoted directly as saying that the teargas and rubber bullets were dispersed to “push back the crowd and contain the situation” (@being_coloured, 2018). Providing a space for the narratives from authority figures is typical of a hard news story adhering to the protest paradigm because of the assumed credibility to the story that directly quotes from authorities provide, as well as the accessibility of authority figures for journalists (Corrigall-Brown &Wells, 2012: 248). In this way, the authority figure and their narrative are imbued with power as they are permitted to have a voice in the story. Recognising that the format of hard news has been suffused with credibility and legitimacy in the public imagination, the account holders, in pursuit of the same outcome, concede to certain limitations. The social positioning of the reader of a text will affect whether or not the reader concedes to the author’s intended meaning which is the dominant meaning, or if the reader develops their own oppositional reading (Chandler, 2002: 194). Reading positions are dynamic, in that depending on the context where the material is encountered, a reader may not be receptive to the material in one context but when encountered with the same material in a different context, it may prompt the reader to be more receptive and to demonstrate more comprehension Duncan (2016: 150) confirms that the negative, decontextualised manner in which protests are reported in South African mainstream media has diminished support for demonstrators in the public imagination. The account holders demonstrate an awareness of this bias by using the reporting style of mainstream media to encourage a more favourable reading of the protest in the context of Instagram aesthetics as opposed to how the story would be received, and even written, were it to be encountered in the mainstream media. What is significant is that the protestors

continue to be referred to as the community and that any actions associated with collective demonstration on their part, violent or not, is negated from this narrative. It appears then, as though the police captain's explanation for the decision to disperse teargas and rubber bullets, was made without provocation from the community. The words "push" and "contain" imply a clash between the police and the community, yet the possibility of a scuffle is not referenced in this account. The police with their public order policing strategies and tactics, appear from this account to be the origin and the sole enactor of violently provocative behaviour. This undermines the media's tendency to obfuscate any aggressive behaviour on the part of the police (Parcet, 2015: 115). Protests are generally described as violent without any qualifier to this description; similarly, if the police kill or severely injure protesting civilians, this is euphemistically and ambiguously referred to as "loss of life" (Parcet, 2015: 116). Through a reversal of the privilege ascribed to authorities by the format of the protest paradigm, the account holders may be quoting the police figure directly, but the positioning of the quote in context with the narrative that has already been sketched, paints the authorities as excessive and merciless in their engagement with the demonstrators.

From lines 17-30, the discourse is dedicated towards a portrayal of the formal systems of procedural democratic governance to be ineffective for the community. Government ministers, political parties and the police are listed in their capacity as democratic structures that have failed to act on the needs articulated by the community. The police are described as being embroiled in the criminal activity transpiring in the community and the account holders conclude this section with the following: "the community has lost all faith in the police services" (@being_coloured, 2018). This section dedicated towards recording the community's ambivalence towards the state and its apparatus, takes up the bulk of the narrative in this caption. Mkhize (2015: 190) believes that protests have become an increasingly salient feature within South Africa's democracy, because of the state's paternalist attitude towards decision-making that affects the lived realities of the disenfranchised. Procedural democracy is isolated from communities, and protests provide marginalised communities with "invented spaces of participation" (2015: 190). Communities are looking for meaningful incorporation of their "choices and aspirations," and so public demonstration occurs because "public

participation and consultation has not yet reached a level that satisfies communities," (Mkhize, 2015: 117).

These findings reflect the construction in this post by the account holders, of the Westbury community as being disaffected with procedural governance. Our understanding of this protest is affirmed again as being part of a wave of discontent with the government's approach to public service in disenfranchised communities. Duncan (2016: 6) discloses that the avenues for the expression of this discontent, have become increasingly less effective as local governance has manipulated the legal concessions for protesting through the creation of additional bureaucratic steps for the Regulation of Gatherings Act, prescribing that protestors have to obtain permission from various offices before protesting, amongst other steps. This is illegal and is meant to prevent protests from spilling out into the streets as a searing indictment of the state's failure with respect to public service.

In the final section of the post, the account holders break from the vernacular of the protest paradigm and identify their position of solidarity, in keeping with the ambit in their biographical section, with the community. The use of the consensus warrant in the phrase, "many townships are neglected by the government, media and political parties" situates the failure of procedural governance within the lived experiences of people of colour. The word townships is not an empty descriptor, but forms part of the historical process of racialisation, implying that procedural democracy only fails for communities of colour.

The post concludes by berating the police service, the government officials, the media and the political parties, encouraging them to do more in the community, with an appeal to the police for increased force. The implication here is that intensified efforts in ensuring the effectivity of procedural governance will solve the community's concerns. Duncan (2016: 5) dispels this, claiming that as organic crises unfolds across the world amongst disenfranchised communities, states like South Africa will struggle to provide meaningful concessions to its citizenry within the confines of the existing systems.

Discourse assigns identities to speakers and those being spoken of, and this textual account of the Westbury protest constructs identities for the participants in the

narrative as well as for the account holders. The closing sentence of the post describes the protest once again as "peaceful" solidifying the impression of the demonstrators as rational, credible and law-abiding in an attempt to portray the purpose of the collective demonstration as legitimate. They are never referred to as protestors or demonstrators only as "the community", so that the legitimacy of their concerns, their narratives, and their 'peaceful' role in the event, is affirmed. This discourse also reflects a proclivity to ego-syntonism on the part of the account holders, as the textual narrative assumes that the participants in the protest are spurred by the same motivations. Ego-syntonism describes the tendency on the part of media and online commentators to paint those who participate in social movements, as mobilised by the same motivations (Kurzwelly et al., 2020: 70). Though a social movement may describe itself and its objectives in essentialist terms or prescribe to a specific ideology, this does not mean that those who participate in the movement do so on the basis of these objectives or ideology (Kurzwelly et al., 2020: 70).

The police, media, government and political parties are constructed as collaboratively responsible for the violence, silencing, marginalisation and exploitation the post details as threats to the community. In as much as the protest was spurred by the violent death of Heather Petersen as a result of gang activity, the gangs and the deceased are referenced obliquely, only as a means to illustrate a deeper contention with the bodies that form part of the structures of procedural democracy. In this sense, the police, the state, the media and to a lesser extent, political parties, are constructed as responsible for not only the protest, but for the discontent in Westbury and communities similar to it—similar in racial terms.

Instagram's architecture prioritises a reading path that moves from top to bottom, from the image to the text, positions described as the Ideal and the Real respectively (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 186). The Ideal is foregrounded and is the most salient aspect, because it is assumed to contain the generalised essence of the message. The Real serves to provide specific details about the essence in the Ideal and therefore acts in service of understanding the Ideal through elaborating on it. The visual narrative is made up from a compilation of photojournalism images, carefully selected and put together in a specific sequence. The images move from the first one to the

fourth and last one, building on each time with a focus on aspects in the images that are ubiquitous symbols in South Africa of unrest, dissent and marginalisation. The selection of these specific images positioned as the Ideal (Kress &van Leeuwen, 2006: 209) and the determined order in which they appear, is the account holders attempt at creating a reading path to guide the viewer to an intended outcome that is accentuated by the textual narrative in the Real.

Reading paths themselves are sources of meaning (Kress & van Leuween, 2006: 209) and if a reading path is horizontal or linear, moves from left to right, then this indicates progression. Linear texts do not leave readers with an option of the order in which to view the images, and this is true of this panel presented by @being_coloured; the order is compiled by the account holders and viewers engage with the images in the intended order by swiping. Thus, because the reading path progresses in the message as it moves towards the end in a linear fashion, viewers of the images are encouraged to interpret the protest as a failure of the state and not as the fault of criminal networks. The image of the placard-bearing womxn is the final participant in the panel of images, and so the message she wields contains the “essence” of the Ideal (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 186). Minister of Police, Bheki Cele is referenced by name in his capacity as a representative of the security cluster division of the state, juxtaposed against the people the community identify as the cause of their social concerns. This message implicates the state in the efforts to eradicate disempowering environments for communities of colour. It implies that a disengaged approach to policing, that does not incorporate the voices of the community, will not understand who and what the community has identified as their concerns. The state is portrayed in this linear and progressive compilation of images, as aggressively marginalising the community through militarised public order policing whilst neglecting to fulfil demands for protection, safety and security that are connotations of the words home and community.

The textual narrative makes use of interpretative repertoires, metaphors and imagery, in an attempt to contextualise the community’s lived reality within a discussion not centred around the criminality in the community, but more so on the tenuous presence of the state and its apparatus, such as the police, in the community’s reality. In this sense, the textual narrative elucidates the essence of the Ideal through an account

of the protest that attempts to strengthen the connections between the protest and structural inequality. The intention is to construct a representation of the protest and of the participants as legitimate in the public arena, with the awareness that the vernaculars of hard news reporting will not permit this. Curating a message around the impact of structural inequality and the failure of formal democracy is prioritised as a means to imbue the protest and the participants with legitimacy amongst the public.

Significantly though, the Real also roots the visual narrative within racial understandings through its use of the look in order to ascribe to the community a fictive wholeness. The look assumes that race can be read from skin colour and though this has been debunked, racialisation, spurred on through administration and redress, in South Africa still draws from pigment, in addition to other factors relating to personhood, in order to determine race. In the textual narrative then, the account holders classify the community members as Coloured by leaning on the co-option of geography into racial classifications. In this sense, the viewer of the images is encouraged to understand the visual narrative as a failure of formal democracy to deliver redress to and equal redistribution amongst the disenfranchised. The state has developed notions of redress that prioritise racial categories as a site of transformation, thus presenting it as the only means through which people may understand their increasingly deepening subjugation. Adolph Reed, amongst other scholars criticises the American liberal leftist preoccupation with identity politics and fixation on race in particular at the expense of class-based interrogation and reform (Powell, 2020). He and a small minority of others within American Socialist ranks, believe that a preoccupation with race and social movements organised on the basis of race, prevent progressive reform from taking place. According to Reed, collective action based on class interests could lead to reform that targets material and economic equality that affects people of colour, but also affects a great deal of working class poor white Americans. Reed affirms that powerful and truly transformational forms of redress are effective when they are fought for universally, such as mass job programs and the struggle for free public tertiary education. In short, Reed believes that in fixating on race, the powerful coalition that could be formed by class, will be sacrificed (Powell, 2020). This perspective is similar to the views advocated for by South African scholars such as the late Neville Alexander. Alexander was part of a

marginal group of scholars and activists who denounced racial classifications citing them as a barrier to class coalition and economic emancipation. In the years leading up to the demise of apartheid, the United Democratic Front relied on coalitions amongst the working class to strengthen revolt against the government. Those who formed part of these coalitions often identified as black in the political sense, denoting a shared experience of oppression. However, as explained earlier in this project, post-apartheid South Africa witnessed a greater identification with racial essentialist categories especially amongst coloured people (Adhikari, 2009: 52) and this has meant that grappling with material and economic inequalities has been done through the prism of race. The potential for class-based coalition was lost when the democratic state envisioned redress as primarily and indefinitely race-based and this loss slips further and further away as people are left to rationalise through their poverty and inequality in terms of their race.

In this sense then, ascribing to the community a racialised wholeness and implying that this wholeness can be witnessed in other communities where people live in former Coloured only housing settlements and are administratively classified as Coloured, provides the illusion of unity in lived experience implying that formal governance has marginalised all people administratively or self-defined as coloured. Therefore, because of the ways in which communication technologies are central to the construction of identity, classification as a means to wholeness finds expression on social media as well and so the textual narrative implies that all those classified as coloured understand their personhood[5] in terms of dispossession, violence and marginalisation. As mentioned in the introductory section of this project, the fissures of the offline world bleed into digital spaces such as Instagram and what can be surmised from ascribing racial wholeness as demonstrated in the discourse under analysis here, is that identity politics is firmly entrenched in contemporary society and that reducing people to a set of characteristics associated with a category is naturalised and encouraged because it offers freedom from having to grapple with inequality and disenfranchisement that

[5] In contextualising my understanding of personhood, I draw from Nyamnjoh's (2017: 256) argument that incompleteness in terms of identity is the norm. I find helpful his observation that "things, words, deeds, beings are always incomplete, not because of absences but because of their possibilities" (Nyamnoh, 2017: 256). Negotiating life as a human being inherently implies that one yields to a world constantly in flux. An ossified understanding of oneself in terms of identity is contrary to the nature of life.

seems inexplicable and immense. South Africa is plagued by inequality across colour lines, but holding onto the fiction of race as the reason for this inequality provides people with a means to make sense of circumstances that leave them feeling powerless. This proclivity towards essentialism and fundamentalism reveals the anxieties that are harboured offline, in the face of contemporary life's overwhelming complexities, especially amongst people who are disenfranchised by colonial and postcolonial inequalities, such as coloured South African people (Kurzwelly et al., 2020: 77).

The effect of Instagram vernaculars on @being_coloured's multi-modal representation of coloured people in South Africa

Social media platforms act as spaces rooted in the everyday that people are able to access in lieu of ineffective or exclusionary formal democratic participation structures (Adi et al., 2018: 315). Causes, protests and movements online have become increasingly popular as the power of bureaucracy in addressing the concerns of the dispossessed erodes ever further. Movements such as #MeToo are a testament to utilisation of social media as a space that forms part of a logic of connective action (Adi et al., 2018: 318), a more fluid, quotidian-orientated and expansive space for civic engagement. The logic of connective action prescribes that civic engagement develops online according to the specificity of the platform on which it occurs. As social media forms part of the everyday, personal and political boundaries to conventional collective action are blurred and so the political is made part of the personal as people interact with stories, images and accounts tailored towards solidarity around a specific issue or movement which they in turn may participant in directly should they choose to. Connective action allows participants to, "engage with issues on their own individual terms through easy to personalise action frames. Such frames allow members to understand, interpret and share in their own ways" (Adi et al., 2018: 319). This affirms Rapport's (2020) description of ego-syntonism as part of collective action because people are able to engage in a social issue and form part of connective action online, but their motivations for doing so may be different and this will reflect in how they engage with the aforementioned personalised frames. This is in contrast to traditional civic engagement that prescribes joining official structures or forming structures, such as a formal interest group or a

political organisation. Social media platforms as sites of connective action remove costs, energy, time and commitment as barriers to civic engagement. Adi et al (2018: 320) attest that connective action on social media can be recognised by its tendencies to identify established politicians, political parties, power structures and systems of governance as the problem without providing a tangible alternative. In this sense, civic engagement through connective action is not solution driven and tends to be short lived. The emphasis in this research finding is that connective action on spaces such as Instagram is tangential to other forms of collective action and that contemporary social movements are made of streams of demonstrations and collective action both offline and online (Adi et al., 2018: 321). Connective action on social media is best understood as an affective public (Adi et al., 2018: 321) that relies on collective and highly charged engagement without a focus on critical engagement with policies or alternative formal governance structures. In parts of the world, social media has been part of demonstrations and collective action to help overthrow dictatorships without replacing these regimes with visionary alternative systems of governance (Adi et al., 2018: 321).

Reed's critique of the viral #BlackLives Matter protest, is that social media has enabled the racialised branding of police brutality and allowed liberal forces to hijack the narrative to avoid deep interrogation into the phenomena, an interrogation that would reveal that police killings and police violence exist as a result of capitalist interests (Reed, 2016). The algorithms that co-ordinate social media platforms circulate existing narratives and so the opportunities for the visionary engagement that breaks away from these narratives are slim. Instagram, because of its platform architecture, encourages connective action around symbols and visual narratives and because of this, it is not a space for enduring activism around critical dialogue and debate. Instagram is visual, live, social and embedded in the everyday and so engagement around civic concerns on Instagram is more performative and emotionally charged and "less focused on a manifesto for the future" (Adi et al., 2018: 321).

Instagram as a space for highly charged engagement is effective to the extent that the platform's vernaculars suit our contemporary demands for reading information: "big image, not much text and capable of being understood thoroughly with minimal effort" (Albright et al., 2020: 51). This is what makes the circulation of memes so

effective, because they condense nuanced ideas into emotionally resonant snippets "that can be recontextualised and reshared and act as ingroup cultural signifiers" (Albright et al., 2020: 51). This means that in contemporary visual culture, images are the propaganda of the digital age and the architecture of Instagram fuels this reality. Instagram presents opportunities for image-centric warfare (Albright et al, 2020: 48) and this approach to influence campaigns will find more purchase and gain stronger foothold in the quotidian as our everyday practices entrench visuality as truth. Analysts (Albright et al., 2020: 14) believe that despite the media scrutiny that has befallen platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, attention should have been dedicated to Instagram as well, not only because there is conclusive evidence that influence campaigns unfold on this application as well, but also because its platform architecture makes it ripe for exploitation "our [sic] assessment is that Instagram is likely to be a key battleground on an ongoing basis" (Albright et al., 2020: 14).

The algorithms in addition to the image-centric nature of the platform, open its design up to manipulation through media mirages. A media mirage describes the process of creating an ecosystem of interlinked information that, through the algorithms, surround and immerse targeted audiences in specific messaging. Influence campaigns create accounts across a platform that operate as basis for their targeted messaging, and when a user interacts with the content on these accounts through liking, commenting or sharing, the algorithm will immediately propel the user in the direction of the other accounts as well, creating a dense web in which the user is continually fed the targeted messaging curated by the influence campaign. It is this tactic that has been used to exploit and further embed divisions in American society for example (Albright et al., 2020: 50), through the creation of messaging targeted to the groups people self-define with, groups that through the racialisation that happens offline, are based on racial, ethnic and cultural affiliation.

Influence campaigns in Western societies have exploited Black minority social concerns pertaining to police brutality, housing inequality, healthcare exclusion and employment marginalisation as well as white majority fears with respect to the erosion of national culture and the fear of change (Ganesh et al, 2019: 32). The campaigns operate with the existing narratives in society and amplify these in ways that propel

offline behaviour in certain directions. Black minority members were encouraged to boycott the national elections in 2016 in America whereas white majority members were inflamed to vote and to campaign aggressively in an effort to protect national culture which is largely sutured to whiteness. The same stories are posted across different accounts in the media mirage to give the user the impression that the themes and ideologies encoded in the stories are opinions that are widespread and therefore worthy of attention (Ganesh et. al., 2019: 37).

These influence campaigns embed themselves on platforms like Instagram through practices such as message laundering (inviting general users to contribute stories and opinion pieces to their platforms to embed the targeted messaging), human engagement, partnering with brands and influencers, offering jobs and opportunities, offering and encouraging people to join offline collective action (Ganesh et al, 2019: 32).

It is important to acknowledge that these political influence campaigns do not generate organic messaging. They play on social fractures that exist offline, that become manifest through our representation of personhood online. In racialised societies, personhood as understood through race provides the fictive wholeness of being that is encouraged, segmenting societies into categories. These fractures are then exposed online as people are forced to rely on affective publics in order to circumvent ineffective public participation in a formal governance structure. The ubiquity of social media for everyday life underscores its importance in society and the trust it widely enjoys. People turn naturally to social media as a site for civic engagement, but these grievances are then exploited and computed into information that can manipulate spaces like Instagram into tools for social control (Ganesh et al, 2019: 40). On Instagram, this exploitation enjoys maximised benefits because the platform is premised on affective symbols and visuals that prey on our widespread belief that seeing is believing, preventing the critical dialogue necessary to unpack what we are seeing and how the messages we see connect to the images we continue to see.

Though the visual narrative of the images posted by @being_coloured are absent of traces that indicate if the community members in the images self-define as coloured, with the placard that forms the Central (Kress & van Leuween, 2006: 209) message of the final image describing the participants involved in the protest as “Westbury

community" through using the look as a tool of racialisation, the account holders ascribe the category of coloured to the participants. The protest and the community are then drawn into a larger narrative built around the fracture of racial categories that continues to pervade individual sense of personhood in the country. What should have been critical civic engagement around the increasing collapse of formal governance and the inaccessibility of state support, instead is understood as a racially exclusive reality because of the ways in which Instagram now influences civic engagement before it even starts. The platform has been overrun with the efforts of embedded media mirages and so now, instead of being a space where collective grievances are expressed organically, the nature of existing civic engagement discourses reinforces connective action that coagulates around the segmented ways that personhood is developed offline.

The common-sense ascription of the participants in the images to the category of coloured, as well as the co-option into a narrative that highlights grievances with existing governance without providing tangible solutions beyond expressing support for the community, indicates the intention of the post was to entrench popular understandings of what it means to be coloured, representationally, on social media. This aligns with assessment of influence campaigns that prove the mission of targeted messaging in Western nations is to "create tribalism and reinforce in group camaraderie" (Albright et al., 2020: 10).

Similar to influence campaigns, the discourse in the caption of @being_coloured's post maligns the media while simultaneously making use of journalistic scripts to curate its message. Influence campaigns on social media are notorious for sowing distrust between their target group and mainstream media so that the targeted message of the mirage media networks becomes the only trusted source of information to the user (Albright et al., 2020: 43). In an effort to generate what may be genuine civic engagement, @being_coloured denounces the media as well, implying that the media is only fixated on the violence enacted on bodies racially understood to be coloured; again the framework for civic engagement on platforms like Instagram is being dictated by hijacking of the algorithms by influencing campaigns, and while the media's fixation with violence may be a genuine grievance, without a visionary dialogue that accompanies moving beyond grievance, users and the account holders themselves are

prevented from critical engagement that surpasses the highly charged feelings that arise when tribalism is inflamed.

Ultimately, the representation of coloured people posted on the @being_coloured account is one understood through the tools of racialisation that have been shaped historically through the incorporation of geography, and sharpened in contemporary South Africa through race-based administrative and redress efforts. Instagram's design and the accumulation of platform vernaculars that are steadily establishing a framework for civic engagement that prioritises ingroup affiliation compounds how personhood is performed and expressed online. This could be interpreted as a form of strategic essentialism, yet if this is the case, this framework might outlive its purpose and instead enable an online environment where essentialism and fundamentalism thrives.

Conclusion

Instagram has changed the world around us. In her book, *No filter* (2020), Sarah Frier describes the impact Instagram has had on the design of places such as a museums, parks, universities and national landmarks. Places like Beco do Batman in Brazil even offer services of a photographer for $40 per person for two hours simply to take high quality pictures of street gallery visitors for Instagram. The physical world is responding to the platform's vernaculars because there is an understanding that Instagram is a cultural touchstone. This power extends to governance systems as well.

The premise of the platform is to curate and perform representations of personhood through images. Because personhood is shaped through one's understanding of oneself in social space, this will impact how personhood is crafted online and one of these influences is one's understanding of oneself in relation to one's nation and its governance. Who you are in the eyes of the state provides you with the lines in which you make sense of yourself, and this process will transpire online as the digital world enmeshes with reality. Part of making sense of how one is governed is understanding the positions one holds in relation to governance and what systems of bureaucracy mean in the intimate contexts of livelihood, and so when it is felt that the arm of the state occupies a violatory, distant, discriminatory, militant or ineffective

position in one's reality, making sense of this becomes part of understanding personhood and thus these feelings may make themselves known in societies where individual censorship and social media surveillance are considered inhumane.

The fragmentations of social reality in South Africa affects how the people understand the state's role in their lives and thus how they understand the reality of the rights they are granted through democracy. For many people of colour, the inequality continues to yawn wider and wider and the state is forced to engage in pre-emptive repression tactics (Duncan, 2016: 142), in addition to militarised policing, in the absence of genuine concessions for the disenfranchised. Because the historical process of racialisation in the country depended on materiality for its tangible validity, redress, personhood and inequality are understood through the system of racial classification. Citizens process the conditions of their reality and their relationship to the state through racialisation and thus the articulation of personhood on a platform such as Instagram will be influenced by this. This is also inflamed by Instagram's vernaculars, like the grief aesthetic, that has been manipulated by the influence of unscrupulous political groups to indirectly legitimate the naturalisation of in-group mentality and tribalism.

Chapter three – Unpacking VannieKaap's online styling of coloured identity.

Description of VannieKaap's meme and Facebook

In the following chapter, memes sourced from VannieKaap Facebook page will be analysed. VannieKaap is a popular presence on social media within the South African context and has multiple media related channels through which they have built a community based on coloured identity. Their page of memes was the primary account through which their community was established and four of the memes that is a part of their dense memetic tapestry on coloured self-styling, will be considered here. I have chosen to base this section on the analysis of memes because, through applying memetic grammar (Milner, 2015: 52), and being mindful Facebook's architecture and platform vernaculars (Milner, 2015: 52) a complimentary relationship between the two is revealed. This relationship is integral to the form, content and stance of the memetic media produced and in return, this influences the platform culture of Facebook. The memes to be analysed here typify the difficulty in using memes and Facebook for performing complex identities such as race. The subsequent analysis of these memes reveals the complexities coloured self-identifying people are grappling with in terms of their racial identity. From the many likes, comments, reactions and shares that VannieKaap's memes receive, it is evident that self-identifying coloured Facebook users, resonate with the content and stance of these memes (Bertazzoli, 2019: 24). The following chapter will explore coloured exclusivism online and the resultant preoccupation with national belonging that this exclusivism reveals (Parcet, 2015: 120).

As mentioned in chapter one, memetic media condenses complex ideas into emotionally resonant snippets. Facebook thrives on this because the platform is designed to prompt affectively charged reactions from its users. The more reductive a memes message is about complex social identities such as race, the more engagement, circulation and new iterations thereof will occur enabled by Facebook's design and platform vernaculars (Adi et al., 2018: 328). As has been noted in a previous chapter, the increasing complexity of contemporary life makes essentialism and fundamentalism normative (Kurzwelly et al., 2020: 70) this bleeds onto social media platforms and

becomes especially virulent when the platform, like Facebook, enables this type of engagement (Stark, 2020: 298). Memes build online communities because they draw like-minded people together. The effect of memes is that they build clearly defined digital collectives comprised of people who agree on an idea, share an interest or associate with a specific socially significant identity. Imagining memes and Facebook as opposite ends of a Venn Diagram, the centre would contain the existence of online communities which are synonymous with clearly demarcated ingroups. Facebook as a medium and memetic media as the mode, fuel reductive performances and understandings of complex social identities such as racial categories. When memetically formed racial collectives are situated on Facebook, essentialist performances of this identity are encouraged.

This chapter is unpacked in the following order;

1) Meme one and the historical context of coloured self-styling and the relationality thereof
2) Exploring anxieties around national belonging and substantive democracy in memes two and three
3) Overview of Facebook as a platform
4) Unpacking the limitations for self-styling that exist as a result of the relationship between Facebook, memes and the complexity of socially significant identities.
5) Conclusion

Meme one and the historical context of coloured self-styling and the relationality thereof

Through the application of memetic grammar, we note that the meme below, establishes a stance in relation to an on-going debate on coloured self-styling. Limited through the form of the meme and the vernaculars of Facebook, the extensive history of coloured self-styling that this meme comments on, is not accounted for because memes and Facebook prioritize decontextualised narratives with fundamentalist leanings.

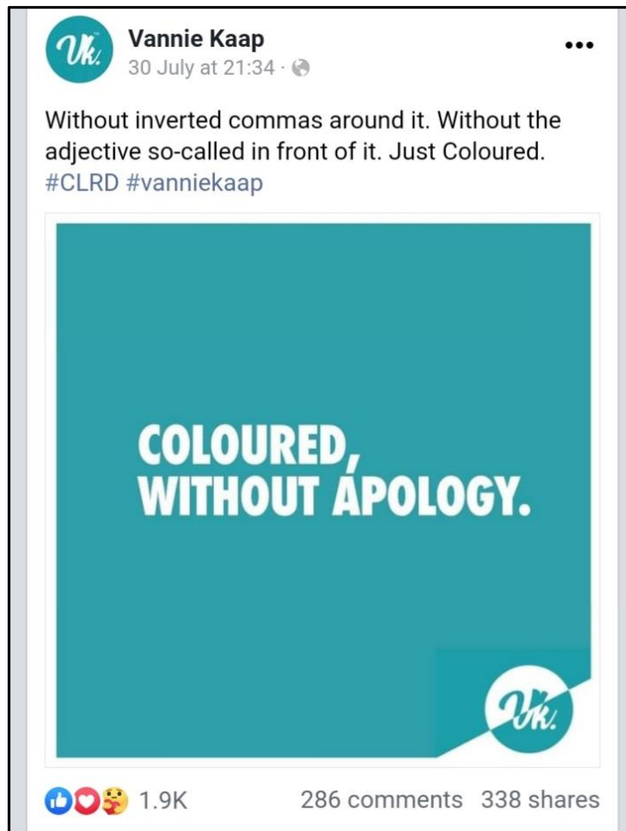

Image 1: Meme sourced from VannieKaap's platform profile on Facebook. This meme is part of a large tapestry of meme's that the account holders have posted over a number of years. (VannieKaap, 2020)

The form of memes coupled with the medium of Facebook, will present challenges in truly engaging with and understanding the declaration made in this post. This post passes fleeting commentary on the complex history that marks coloured self-styling with periods of protest and accommodation on one hand and assimilation and coloured separatism on the other (Adhikari, 2009: 31). The stance (Milner, 2015: 52) of this memetic media indicates that this meme communicates a declaration (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 129) of self-styling. A declaration in this sense, means a post that affirms equivocally, personal identification with a specific category, tribe or community (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 129) in a limited way that does not encourage conversation or deep deliberation.

The reading path from the caption to the image coheres vertically in a way that positions the arrangement of the text in the caption as ideologically salient and the image as auxiliary to the message in the text (Kress& van Leeuwen, 2006: 213). With this

in mind, we are led to understand that a disavowal of linguistic variations on the nomenclature of coloured is under scrutiny in the post and that this critique is emphasised by the compositional elements that make up the content of the memetic image below the caption. The post conflates linguistic variations of the category, described here as having “inverted commas” and “the adjective so-called in front of it” (@vanniekaap, 2020), with a performance of coloured identity that is distinct from the one subscribed to by the account holders who qualify their variation through the emphasis “just Coloured” (@vanniekaap, 2020). With the image positioned as ancillary to the text, the account holders further postulate that the performance(s) of coloured identity that lean on variations in nomenclature do so out of a sense of shame and this is implied in the arrangement of text in the centre of the meme that reads: “Coloured, without apology” (@vanniekaap, 2020). An indirect repudiation of different stylings of Coloured identity and a simultaneous valorization of a single performance as legitimate, reveals the account holders’ prescription to an essentialised view of identity. Here, through the conscription of shame and essentialism, the account holders imply that there exists a single legitimate script for behaviour for all people who self-define or are defined, as coloured.

The reading path itself can become coded as a source of meaning. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 222). In addition to a vertical reading path that ideologically foregrounds the text in the caption, the reading path of the memetic image itself is circular, making the text in the middle, the Centre. As discussed in the previous chapter, whatever is contained at the centre of an image is also the nucleus of the society or culture from which the image emerges, and so here we read that race and racial categories are at the centre or the root of the South African context. In the image, the centre is also supported by the elements contained in the margins and this implies that ideas about race are always in conversation with the current context from which they emerge. This is especially true with respect to coloured identity. As mentioned in the introduction to this project, performances of coloured identity have always remained attuned to the dispersal of power and shame in South Africa’s racialised society and have adapted racial identity performances accordingly. Thus, VannieKaap’s assertion of its performance of coloured identity as more valid than others, is a conclusion arrived at in conversation

with the contemporary context. Because memes are “snapshots of the immediate tendencies of culture and public discourses” (Bertazzoli, 2019: 14), it then becomes imperative to ascertain what exists in the current public discourse, that legitimises the idea of a racial essence while delegitimising racial self-stylings that call into question this essence. The context in this instance refers both to the medium where this post is located, and the culture in which this medium is used.

The text at the centre reveals that race is important in the South African context, and this truth may seem like a contradiction in a society that has legislatively enshrined non-racialism as a principle into its Constitution (Alexander, 2013: 37); but an examination of the history of resistance and protest in the face of white supremacy in South Africa will reveal various junctions at which non-racialism and racial exclusivism existed comfortably side by side, particularly for coloured people (Adhikari, 2005: 91). Negotiating group interests as a racial minority has meant that the principle of non-racialism has jumped between the foreground and the background in the subject formation of self-defined coloured people since the early twentieth century (Adhikari, 2006: 85) with a bearing on the nomenclature, and this meme under examination here, follows this trajectory through its proud assertion of the racial category of Coloured (once again leaving a mark on the nomenclature) against the backdrop of a non-racial democracy.

Erasmus (2017: 36) investigates South Africa’s responses to white supremacy arriving at four schools of thought, namely liberal/elite non-racialism, multiculturalism, radical anti-colonial non-racialism and Black Consciousness. These schools of thought are products of the different periods of history from which they emerged and range from essentialising to historicising or a combination of the two (Erasmus 2017: 36). What is significant to all, is that just as with the post by @vanniekaap under analysis here, their responses to race in South Africa would conceptualise, co-opt and incorporate non-racialism in different ways depending on the political climate at the time. Racial exclusivism and non-racialism have always been drawn into complex entanglements with one another defined by either protest or resistance, and this entanglement would find expression with every change to the nomenclature. Though the word does not appear anywhere in the post by @vanniekaap under discussion here, non-racialism stalks its

borders. One of the central tenets of Adhikari's *Not White enough, not Black enough: Racial identity in the South African Coloured community* (2006) is representing the history of self-defined coloured identity as characterised by continuous efforts to strike a balance between accommodation and protest on the one hand and assimilation and coloured separatism on the other in pursuit of context-bound collective objectives (Adhikari, 2006: 58). Alexander (2013: 4) echoes this as he writes, "the colonising process and…the penetration of capital led over a period of 250 years to a contradictory and uneven process of resistance, accommodation and collaboration on the part of indigenous people across the subcontinent" (Alexander, 2013: 4). A myopic view of history, as that valourised in contemporary South Africa today obscures the many compromises and accommodations non-white people conceded to in their pursuit of civil rights (Alexander, 2013: 3). These concessions impacted the self-styling of non-white people. Although scholarship has unearthed flaws in the concept of strategic essentialism, it remains a helpful means of "contextualising cases where essentialism is used strategically" (Kurzwelly et al.,2020: 74) and a look back into the history behind coloured self-styling in relation to non-racialism, will attest to periods where performances of the identity were integral to objectives of the community.

During the early twentieth century, coloured self-styling was shaped by the logic of liberal non-racialism as espoused by the British colonial bureaucracy (Erasmus, 2017: 33). Colonial bureaucratic measures sought to entrench the view of people in South Africa as belonging to separate racial groups or nations, namely white, black, coloured and Indian. Each group was ranked according to the level of assumed progression, with white people representing the most progressed and fullest version of the human while black people represented what was assumed to be the least evolved racial group (Adhikari, 2006: 82). The promise of progress was represented in the form of the proverbial carrot and stick, as non-white racial groups or nations, were coerced into assimilating into and emulating the values, tastes, views and beliefs of European white middle-class society, in order to obtain civil rights (Sandwith, 2011: 7). Some coloured people understood themselves to be a marginal group with relative privilege as a result of their assumed racial hybridity. Thus, these performances of coloured self-styling emphasised affinity and proximity with whiteness and stressed exclusivism from black

South Africans (Adhikari, 2006: 86). Coloured identity with a capitalised C stressed self-styling that emphasised speaking English and prioritising punctuality, frugality, cleanliness, temperance, moderation, dignity and respect for authority (Adhikari, 2006: 105). It was assumed that coloured exclusivism exemplified by the nomenclature of Coloured and accompanied with performances of self-styling that valourized middle-class respectability, would lead to incremental gain for the assumed coloured community in the form of acceptance into the white middle classes (Adhikari, 2006: 105).

In exchange for political rights, assimilation was demanded and this demand was white-washed by definitions of non-racialism that actually implied colour-blindness. This period of history entrenched the use of non-racialism as a means to imply working within the existing racial system to get incrementally closer to the citizenship rights and socio-economic privileges reserved for white people (Erasmus, 2017: 35). With this in mind, the logic that informed coloured identity performance with a capitalised C, becomes easier to understand. The socio-political environment was geared in a way that encouraged and even appeared to reward assimilation and aspiration towards European norms (Sandwith, 2011: 8). If one considers this through the lens of strategic essentialism, this can be pinpointed as a period where essentialist performance of coloured self-styling was calculatingly employed in pursuit of civil rights.

As the National Party grew in power towards the end of the early twentieth century, this shift in power from non-racialism as colour-blindness, to a heightened focus on South Africa as a multicultural society of four independent nations (Erasmus, 2017: 34), had a bearing on the nomenclature once again. Brown or Brown nation became synonymous with Coloured in its implication of racial exclusivism and more importantly, as an attempt to assert proximity to whiteness (Adhikari, 2006: 60). This appeared for example in the work of Christian Ziervogel's *Brown South Africa* and by self-defined coloured thinker and artist, Adam Small, who described himself as a Brown Afrikaner. Small stressed that Coloured and White Afrikaans speaking people in South Africa "have the same cultural origins and the same cultural destiny" (Small, 1973: 4) and that it was politics that kept them apart from one another. Through markers such as shared language, affinity with the dominant white society was sought in an attempt to secure

civil rights that were under siege as a result of destructive policies and bills of the apartheid state.

Around the late 1940s, the first stirrings of radical anti-colonial thought reared its head. Set against the backdrop of increasing poverty, malnutrition, exploitation and discrimination, civil rights groups such as Workers Party of South Africa (WPSA) and the New Era Fellowship (NEF) began to critique the strategies of appeasement (Sandwith, 2011: 7) favoured by the elite middle-class leadership amongst those separately classified as African, Coloured and Indian (Sandwith, 2011: 6). Alternative strategies were sought to replace these appeasement strategies. This led to political cleavages summed up in the neologism of 'Colouredism'. This neologism was created by radical non-racial anti-colonialists and defined as, "a state of chronic expectation in which people patiently wait to be declared fully human" (Sandwith, 2011: 26).

Unlike coloured self-stylings that prioritised incremental progress and assimilationism, the radicals were growing up in a historical period that saw the rapid repeal of non-white civil rights irrespective of a racial performance that prized middle class respectability. Their reality was shaped by an increasingly weakened political standing through the government's creation of platforms like the Department of Coloured Affairs, an institutional apparatus staffed with white state workers tasked with managing the affairs and interests of statutorily defined Coloured people (Sandwith, 2011: 29). The radicals understood these measures were empty concessions and they could see, in the light of increased poverty made possible through the exploitative Hertzog Bills (Sandwith, 2011: 29), that a gradualist and pacifist strategy to political reform would not provide the relief that was desperately needed immediately in the face of oppressive circumstances. The radicals construed that unrelenting dependence on a politics of appeasement and performances of exclusivist coloured identity orientated towards eventual middle-class assimilation would mean sacrificing the material livelihood of the working-class coloured people for the ephemeral promise of eventual acceptance within a social framework that will inherently always be exploitative. For the radicals, their political strategy was premised on a shift away from co-operation with the government in the hopes of piece-meal reform, and towards establishing political solidarity amongst all members of the oppressed, especially the

working classes. The radicals were greatly inspired by Pan-Africanism in that it affirmed the brand of class based and non-white unity they were seeking to establish.

Defying the gradualist strategies espoused in performances of coloured self-styling epitomised in the nomenclature of Coloured and Brown Nation, dissolving non-white separatism to replace it with black and working class unity, challenging the knowledge systems of Europe, being part of the growing international intolerance of racism and decrying political solidarity based on a sense of shared "origins" (Erasmus, 2017: 32) was developed into a period of radical non-racial anti-colonial subject formation that had a bearing once again on the nomenclature of coloured. The *Torch*, the newsletter of radicals from the Non-European Unity Movement demonstrated the development of a non-racial script (Adhikari, 2006: 117). It became a site that reflected the tussles the radicals were attempting to work through in their pursuit of a non-racial subject formation. The publication demonstrated a politically correct approach to race that developed into a recognisable trend picked up by other publications and organisations from the 1960s onwards as the Liberation Front became increasingly characterised by the principles of non-racial democracy. As part of tactical strategy (Adhikari, 2006: 125) towards subverting racialisation, in the early years the *Torch* would mention specific non-white racial categories and then qualify these immediately after with the phrase "section of the non-European population" (Adhikari, 2006: 125) to indicate that the racial identity mentioned, did not stand isolated and alone outside of the discursive context of unity between non-white South Africans. Racially charged words like Hotnot, were used "to attack racism or in polemical exchanges with opponents" (Adhikari, 2006: 125), and in the Afrikaans articles in the paper, Afrikaan and Afrikane were used to refer to black South Africans as a discursive means to assert their equality with white South Africans. The term racialistic was coined to describe the ways in which the use of racial categories was employed in service of negative judgements of people, discrimination or the promotion of racial sectarianism.

This paved the way for alterations to the nomenclature of official racial classifications, and from 1957 onwards, "terms such as Coloured, African, race, racial groups, Bantu, Kleurling and Herrenvolk were…placed in quotation marks, italicised, or prefaced with 'so-called' to distance the paper from their racist implication" (Adhikari,

2006: 132). This heralded the start of a new sensibility, an anti-colonial radical non-racialism, that advocated for: a complete rejection of the modern idea of race, non-collaboration with the colonial administration (of which the apartheid state was defined as the lackeys of), refusal to participate in institutions for Natives, radical transformation of the colonial order and its ways of knowing intended to be replaced with a socialist order of local design, and a refusal to organise communities on the basis of race (Erasmus, 2017: 38). The phrase, "so-called", quotation marks and italicised versions of racial nomenclature were created as linguistic markers to indicate a break in gradualist, assimilationist and appeasement strategies towards political reform that characterised the early twentieth century. Instead, this particular period of history called for the creation of non-white personhood that necessarily wrestled with racial sectarianism.

The emerging script for political correctness birthed small pockets of "Coloured rejectionism" (Adhikari, 2006: 150) which was popular amongst the better educated urbanised community members and politicised student population. In these quarters, words and phrases with racial connotations, especially the term coloured, were qualified through the use of quotation marks, italics and the phrases, "so-called, so classified, what is described as, and known as" (Adhikari, 2006: 151). One article in the *Education Journal,* which was the official publication of the majority self-defined coloured committee of the Teachers League of South Africa, advocated for coloured rejectionism, and even used the phrase, "the section of the oppressed people who have come to be known and classified as the Coloured people" (Adhikari, 2006: 151). Alterations to the nomenclature of coloured, by coloured rejectionists, implied a support for the belief of the view that Colouredness is, "a concept legislatively and socially created with the intent to divide rule and exploit" (Adhikari, 2006: 153). Behind the Coloured rejectionism's alteration of the nomenclature was an unmasking of the ways that race worked to re-make the legitimacy of coloured exclusivism. They conceded that the racialised social engineering of the everyday duped innocent statutorily defined coloured people into believing in a racialised essence.

Coloured rejectionism paved the way for disparate responses to Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement. Black Consciousness "valourises blackness and advocates for Black nationalism as a route to freedom" (Erasmus, 2017: 43) and it

believed in defying subservience to the apartheid state's use of race through asserting a Black identity that prioritised the fight towards attaining freedom for black people to act as agents and determine the course of their own lives. Coloured working-class writers like James Matthews, embraced the logic of BCM in that it helped him find a sense of personhood in the idea of black unity in the face of oppression. Erasmus (2017: 42) identifies BCM as both essentialist and historicising; essentialist in its tendency to romanticise the idea of a homogenous and pure African culture and historicising in that Biko recognised that race was a deliberate social and historical creation, but that for the particular point of history out of which BCM appeared, mobilising black people on the basis of race was viewed by Biko, as an appropriate strategy.

It was the work of anti-colonial radicals and Coloured rejectionists that provided the shape and support of mass non-racial democratic movements from within coloured circles during the better half of the 1980s towards the end of apartheid. This led to the creation of publications such as *Grassroots* and *South.* Both of these operated not only from a position of non-racialism, but avoided any mention of race entirely, choosing instead to only ever classify subjects and reporting along the lines of working-class identities in accordance with their self-defined Marxist orientation. These two publications intended to highlight the "everyday struggles" of the working-class in order to promote "people's power" as the basis for political organisation as opposed to affiliation based on a perceived shared descent, origin or phenotype.

The above discussion presented a brief overview of the tapestry of historical subject formation of coloured people as reflected by the variations made on the term itself. The discussion also revealed means by which people attempted to circumvent using the term at all, during certain periods of history. What is important about this overview is the attention given to context. Each of the performances of coloured identity, signalled by a change in the nomenclature or omittance of it entirely, emerged from within specific political conditions. It would be pointless to draw binaries of good or bad between each historical response, because they are each route's to racialised consciousness and subjectivity that from within their individual situatedness, appeared to be the most logical method for undermining modern racialised norms. History in this sense should be approached with questions of how and why (Erasmus, 2017: 44) so that

we might be led to understand the political circumstances that came to inform each route to coloured subjectivity. Pitting one against the other through a myopic view of history imbues the elusive search for a racial essence or an inherent legitimacy to identity, with validity.

These various historical routes to coloured subjectivity in South Africa also had varied uptake amongst the majority of coloured people themselves, as not all of them were widely accepted, with their popularity mainly confined to small groups of urbanised and educated young radicals (Adhikari, 2006: 121). Most working-class coloured people, outside of the sphere of the educated elite, only understood their lived reality within the limitations of their categorised livelihood. For many, the racialised quotidian confirmed the existence of an internal essence of racial categories. With respect to the Black Consciousness Movement for instance, there were self-defined coloured people who could not find comfort in embracing the nomenclature and self-styling of Black in its political sense. In a discussion of Bessie Heads 'The Cardinals' (1993), Pucherova (2011: 105) unpacks the isolation that Head came to feel within the BCM as the movement began to foreground black nationalism in ways that essentialised both gender and race. BCM rhetoric constructed miscegenation as a racial betrayal (Pucherova, 2011: 110) and as a result, shame was heaped on the bodies of coloured womxn in particular. Where Matthews, discussed earlier, found it easy to embrace the nomenclature and the self-styling of Black, Head became increasingly more ostracised by the realisation that at the heart of BCM lay a nationalist vat of steaming shame seeking female bodies on which to empty its contents.

Exploring anxieties around national belonging and substantive democracy in memes two and three.

The closing sentence of Adhikari's text, *Not white enough, not black enough: Racial identity in the South African Coloured community* (2006: 206), expresses the writer's belief that the post-apartheid period has witnessed a "degree of change unparalleled since…the late nineteenth century," of coloured self-styling and performances. This is attributed mainly to the ease with which ethnic and cultural identities have been galvanised since the demise of apartheid, particularly during the earliest period of the

transition from a segregationist state towards a democratic one. This can in part be attributed to Moffet's (2006: 129) astute observations of the effects of political restructuring on the development of subjecthood. As segregation was statutorily erased in South Africa at the end of apartheid, re-orientation of personhood was required and this opened up a wedge for the resurgence of markers of identity to hold on to, especially markers that inherently orientated the self in opposition to an "Other" (Moffet, 2006: 129). This was exacerbated as political parties contesting for presidency, divided constituencies up into racial groups and delivered targeted rhetoric based on these divisions, especially when it came to people defined as coloured (Adhikari, 2006: 204). This approach to politicking stems from the "feeling rules" (Boler & Davis, 2018: 78) that props up the sectarian social temporality. Feeling rules (Boler &Davis, 2018: 78) is the prescribed emotional behaviour specific to a certain social context and in the run up to the 1994 elections, mobilising support based on racial identities, especially amongst coloured people, highlighted the ways in which people were still being encouraged to conceptualise their political identity as tied to their racial category. This was especially true for coloured people, as political parties across the spectrum stressed the importance of a "Coloured ethnicity" as a political reality and therefore a determining voting bloc in the outcome of the election. As coloured people were concentrated in key provinces such as the Western Cape, appealing to the working-class majority on the basis of Coloured exclusivity, reified the salience of a racialised Coloured identity and overshadowed the non-racial stance developed in the years just before apartheid concluded. Appealing to working class coloured consciousness implied playing on the "deep stories" (Boler & Davis, 2018: 78) that holds this racialised consciousness together. Deep stories in this sense, refers to the stories that feelings tell, stories that do not prioritise objective facts as much as they emphasise appeals to subjective emotion and beliefs. The feeling rules determine then that in the process of politicking, with respect to the coloured community in particular, emphasis was placed on heightening the deep stories specific to the community, which in turn implies that politicking directed towards coloured people was not conceptualised on the basis of facts alone, but instead appealed directly to the community-specific truths that elicit the reactionary emotions that are useful for the purposes of politicking based on exclusivism.

This resulted in political rhetoric that emphasised the existence of an elusive Coloured or Brown essence, especially with respect to the tactics used by the National Party. Deep stories are described as thus not only because of their emotional resonance, but also because of the dense history on which they are based. This history informs and reinforces the emotional appeal of the story so that in the end, objective facts become more and more difficult to truly consider as they are just filtered through the funnel created by the deep story (Boler & Davis, 2018: 78). Recognising this, the National Party reached for the deep stories that have historically propped up Coloured exclusivism, namely: Coloured people as Brown Afrikaners with a closer affinity to white than black people through shared language, religion and food (Wicomb, 1995: 121); fear of African majority rule and its consequences of marginalisation for coloured people (Adhikari, 2006: 194); African chauvinism's derision and distrust of coloured people (Pucherova, 2011: 110); the belief that the ANC views coloured people as expendable because they do not have the business acumen stereotypically ascribed to Indian South Africans and neither do they have the generational wealth held by white South Africans (Brown, 2000: 204); and finally the belief that black majority government will enact policies that will break up the numeric stronghold that coloured people have in the Western Cape and separate people from their homes and their histories (Brown, 2000: 205). These deep stories and their use in political rhetoric, incited the fear and distrust that is necessary for the construction of in-group consciousness and in the end, these deep stories and their affective appeal, ensured that the Western Cape was claimed by the National Party in the 1994 elections.

Adhikari (2006: 204) explains that manipulation of fears specific to the coloured community has only intensified in successive elections by parties such as the Democratic Alliance who, "have openly played on fears of African domination" (Adhikari, 2006: 204). The coloured community's marginality in South Africa has heightened their awareness of racialisation as a process that impacts survival and so the deep stories specific to the community are clung to tightly as these have been employed in the past to maintain the community's relative status of privilege. Wicomb (1995: 121) is critical of this and accuses coloured people of clinging to the illusion of affinity to white Afrikaans-speaking people, as a form of collective amnesia that consistently absolves white Afrikaans-

speaking people from taking any responsibility for their exploitation, manipulation and oppression of coloured people.

Coloured exclusivism and its deep stories that are inheritances of gradualist assimilationist and Brown nation coloured self-stylings, were used during the transition into non-racial democracy for political reasons and in turn, this not only solidified these stories but opened them up to continued use by subsequent political actors. In his study of contemporary individual trade union members relationship towards the African National Congress, Beresford (2012: 863) found that central to the black majority's navigation of politics in South Africa, is a classification of different political parties into slots defining which racial groups' interests a particular party is said to represent: "the DA was widely associated as a whites party imbued with the values of the former regime and thus portrayed as illegitimate" (Beresford, 2012: 869). Reflected in Beresford's (2012: 863) study is an awareness of the major role that racial identities play in shaping voter attitudes in post-apartheid South Africa. This alludes to the feeling rules that govern the realm of politics in South Africa and the deep truths (Boler & Davis, 2018: 78) that are arrived at from the connection individuals have made between procedural democracy and racial identity and the impact that this relationship may have on the quality of substantive democracy (Parcet, 2015: 120).

This is communicated in the second meme below. Memetic grammar leads the reader to the understanding that anxieties about belonging, marginalisation and material exclusion will be resolved through representation of self-identified coloured leaders at the highest level of governance. This assumption here is that one's interests as a South African citizen can only be represented and guaranteed by those of the same racial category. This is further emphasised by the caption below the image that when translated, implies that both the apartheid state and the current majority black democratic state, have manipulated the state apparatus to guarantee material support for those who identify as white or black. The commentary here implies that only once a self-defined coloured person reaches presidency, will other self-defined coloured people be able to benefit materially either legally or illegally. This entrenches the early twentieth century conception of South Africa as defined by four separate nations, each responsible for their own path to an assumed progression. This is emphasised by the

insistence in this meme on coloured exclusivism through the nomenclature of Coloured, followed by a hashtag created by VannieKaap that acts as a current nomenclature of coloured self-styling specific to the online space of which VannieKaap is a part of. Memetic grammar reveals that their teal-coloured content emphasises coloured exclusivism online as thus, it is possible to infer that the hashtag, #CLRD is the online equivalent of a current variation of coloured exclusivist nomenclature.

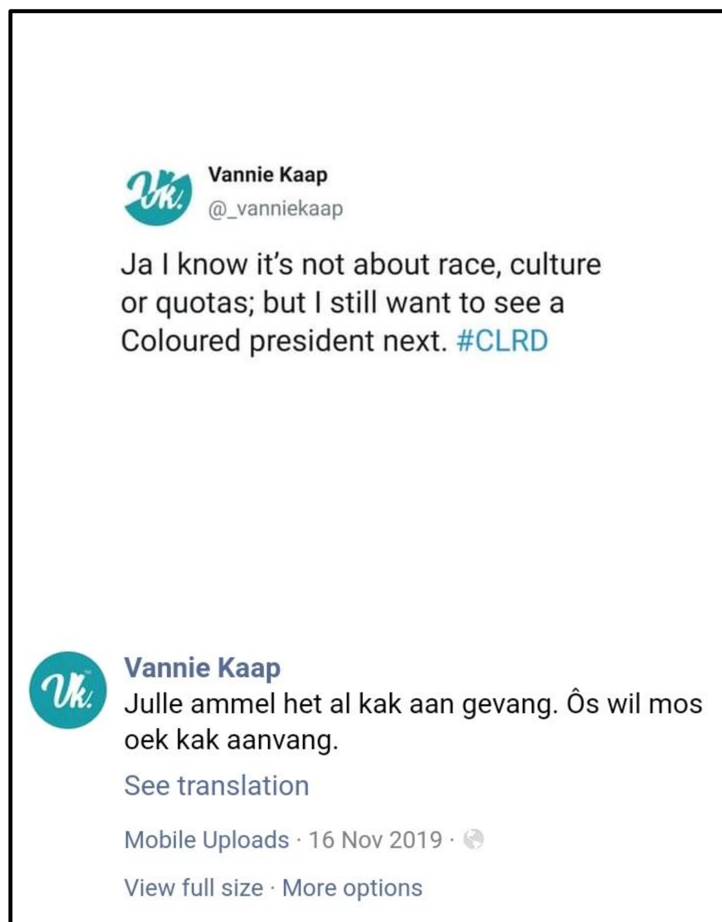

Image 2: This meme is sourced from the VannieKaap Facebook page. The meme itself is written in English and its stance and content is discussed above. The caption is written in Afrikaaps which is considered an Afrikaans dialect spoken by most coloured identifying people in the Western Cape in particular. (VannieKaap, 2019)

The post-apartheid state's creation of a national culture (Wicomb, 1991: 37) in the early period of political restructuring, involved ossifying pre-colonial representations

of black indigeneity, deliberately occluding the effects that colonialism and segregation have exerted on South Africa and individual South Africans. Valorising pre-colonial approximations of South Africa denies the tangible effects that colonialism and segregation has had on the expression of culture and traditions. Wicomb (1991: 40) importantly points out that pre-colonial representations of South Africa do not account for the inevitable ruptures that have occurred over time as cultures and traditions have been forced to find ways around colonialism and white supremacy, often through birthing new cultural expressions. There are whole periods of South African history that are not accounted for in a pre-colonial representation of the nation and as a result, groups of people who are South African, but are not considered indigenous and by implication are framed as lacking a totalising African-ness that is constructed as a precondition for national belonging. This commonly includes coloured, white and Indian people. Essentialist and totalising blackness conflated with African-ness are encoded into the national culture and becomes the foundation on which people understand their claim to civil rights. This is evidenced by the commonly held belief within the assumed coloured community, that contemporary policies and initiatives that relate to affirmative action or Broad Based Black economic empowerment, are not redistributive measures that benefit coloured people. The belief is that these measures are instituted for the benefit of black South Africans only (Adhikari, 2004: 171) and coloured people have indicated the growing black middle class as evidence of this (Alexander, 2013: 134). This narrative is rooted in the history of antagonism between black and coloured people and it fails to acknowledge that the rising black middle class that have benefitted from these policies have been a small number that have only further entrenched the majority of the black poor (Alexander, 2013: 134). The misconception amongst South African's, engendered by the insufficiencies of state redress efforts, is that measures such as BBEE and affirmative action, are the epitome of transformational efforts. In fact, these measures should be a small and temporary part of a broader strategy of transformation that includes emphasis on skills training amongst the disenfranchised. These measures can only be considered effective if they are extended beyond just the small group of non-white elites who already are suitably qualified or belong to trade unions (Alexander, 2013: 136). The state sells BBEE and affirmative action programs as evidence of incremental progress, but instead all these programs have done is solidify the existence

structures of economic and social inequality and prompt people into rationalising the conditions of their material and economic inequality through the prism of their racial category. Self-defined coloured people understand redress as processes that exclude them precisely because of these efforts are couched in racialisation.

The forging of a national culture has been accompanied by scientific projects that base genetic ancestry on claims to South African citizenship. In 1991, the Human Genome Diversity Project (HGDP) used DNA samples to determine genetic heritage in order to "inform debate about who is a settler and who not, and explore the emerging consensus that we are all of African origin" (Erasmus, 2017: 107). This is indicative of a public consciousness that in response to a totalising black African national culture, was finding ways to establish individual South African legitimacy and rights to post-apartheid democratic citizenship. In the same breath, the chair of the HGDP conceded that identity could not be defined by science and biology (Erasmus, 2017: 108), yet the project was being marketed as an objective contribution and the irrefutable answer to questions of national belonging. This preoccupation with roots and belonging and African-ness, from national culture to science, indicates the pervasive existential uncertainty that haunts post-apartheid South Africa: "Blackness, when performed and used as a fiction of sovereignty in opposition to whiteness, is produced by…anxiety about belonging" (Erasmus, 2017: 60). Essentialised African blackness employs the logic of racialisation to institute the myth of an authentic African subject and this logic continues to shape public consciousness. Generally speaking, people are confounded by the increasing complexity of the quotidian and this engenders an anxiety that encourages understandings of identity as totalising and fundamental (Kurzwelly et al., 2020: 77). This was evinced during #RhodesMustFall (Erasmus, 2017: 60). At the University of Cape Town, members of the #RhodesMustFall movement had barred entry to the dining hall for all students who were identified as not authentically black African. In a literal sense, those who were assumed to be descendants of settlers, were denied access to resources and services, in this case food and dining provisions (Erasmus, 2017: 51).

The meme below speaks to this anxiety amongst self-defined coloured people with respect to the totalising African-ness that exists in the public imagination. More importantly, it emphasises an earlier point raised with respect to fear of the erosion of

civil rights and exclusion from the substantiative aspects of democracy. As the meme contains both text and a small graphic of the African continent, the reading path of the meme situates self-identified coloured people into a wider discourse about identity and self-styling in Africa. As mentioned previously, whatever information is contained at the top of an image can be read as the Ideal and the bottom, as the Real. From this, we infer that the ideal would be to reach a national and continental understandings of African-ness that veers away from essentialism, and the Real, indicates that this understanding is most potent when it looks beyond the borders of just South Africa and considers what it means to live and to develop one's personhood on a continent that must grapple with deep colonial wounds. Asserting coloured self-styling as African in the meme, is accompanied by a textual caption written in Afrikaaps. The use of Afrikaaps here is an attempt to assert the dialect in the conversation of national belonging as well.

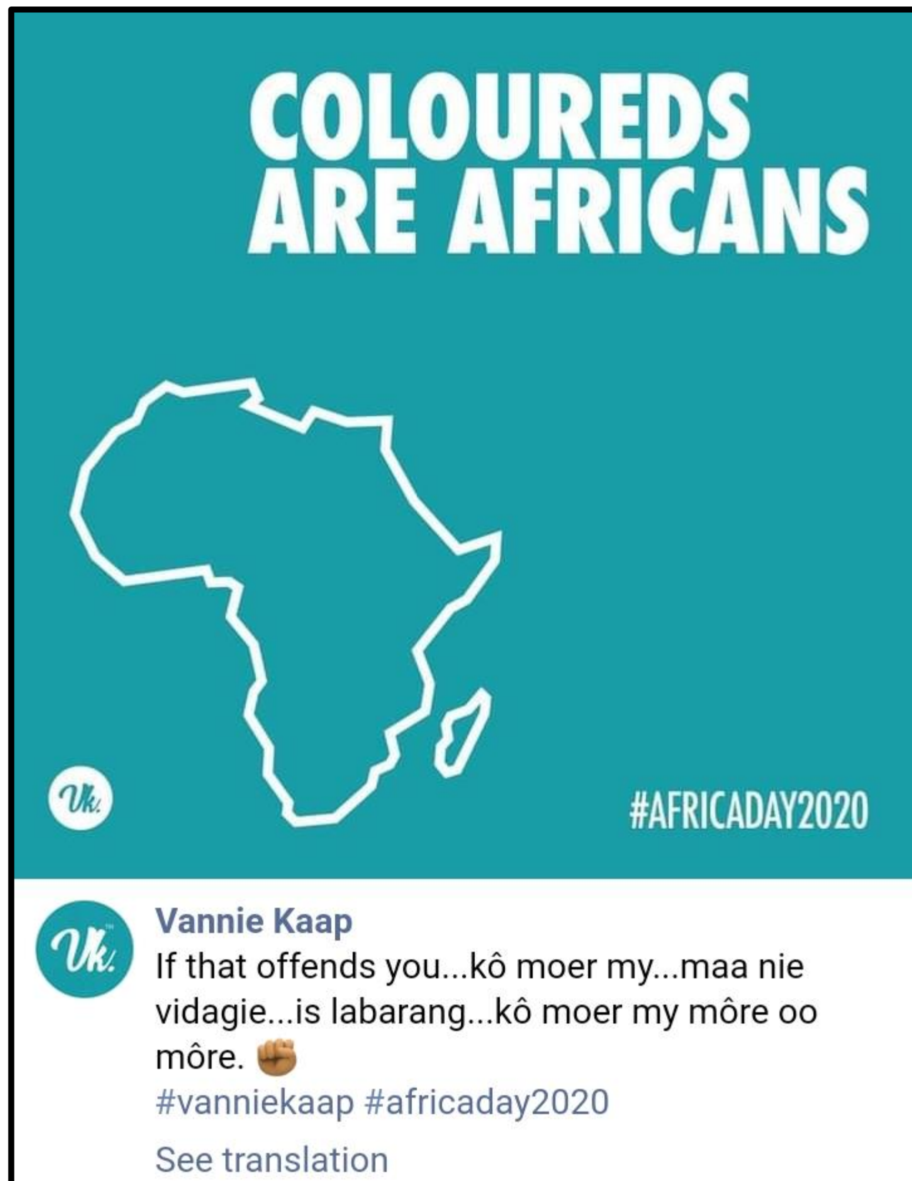

Image 3: This meme is sourced from the VannieKaap Facebook page. The meme itself is written in English and its stance and content is discussed above. The caption is written in Afrikaaps which is considered an Afrikaans dialect spoken by most coloured identifying people in the Western Cape in particular. (VannieKaap, 2020)

A by-product of essentialised black Africanness conflated with claims to legitimate indigeneity has resulted in African chauvinism that views coloured people with derision and distrust (Adhikari, 2006: 202). Rhoda Kadalie chastised the African National Congress for tendency amongst members to pigeonhole coloured people according to stereotypes and to use coloured people in service of a myopic

representation of history that pits non-white South Africans in rigid categories as oppressors or oppressed. The coloured community is touted as the only favoured non-whites of the apartheid state through the creation of the Tri-cameral parliament, but Kadalie (2016: 7) criticises this as a denial of the favourable status conferred on the black African elite and the traditional leaders who benefitted from the Bantustan policies (Kadalie, 2016: 3). The rigid oppressors versus oppressed dichotomy amongst non-whites is used by the ruling party to justify ignoring the community and dismissing the rationale behind the “deep stories” (Boler & Davis, 2018: 78) that have sustained the performance of coloured identity since the early twentieth century. Kadalie (2016: 4) accuses the ANC of approaching the coloured community as “co-optable,” in the sense that their worth is only recognised as a strategic voting bloc and not as a community made of flesh and blood individuals with a dense socially constructed historical background and a complex relationship with contemporary racial dynamics. This attitude towards coloured people amongst the ruling echelons, finds its roots in the historical animosity between coloured and black people that originates from the late nineteenth century (Brown, 2000: 198).

Prior to the apartheid laws, the coloured community had the right to vote and were able to participate in the political structure of South Africa, and this was never extended to black South Africans. The coloured community’s participation and inclusion in the political realm of the country juxtaposed against increasing alienation, exploitation and domination of black South Africans generated distrust between coloured and black people and this intensified as the apartheid state came into power and tightened the screws on black exploitation and oppression in harrowing ways while relieving some of this burden for coloured people through policies and bills that made it easier for coloured people to access housing, employment and welfare.

The frustration and anger this unfair system generated amongst black South Africans spilled into relations with coloured people as it was easier to vent to and situate coloured people as targets for black anger and pain as the expression of these feelings could not be directed at white minority through their social and geographical inaccessibility, as coloured people often lived close to and worked alongside black South Africans (Brown, 2000: 203). The laws that legitimated the separation of people into four official categories and later into homelands, fused together nation, tribe and race and

this exerted its own effect on the racial consciousness of the people as explained earlier in the logic behind four different nations. Legislatively instituting coloured people as a buffer was carried out at the same time that black South Africans were being driven into homelands through the logic of a racialised essence. This manipulation of the social structure engendered the creation of deep stories amongst black South Africans who slated all coloured people as beneficiaries of a racially capitalistic system as well as being a motley group without a true racial essence: "blacks perceived coloureds as not having a pure nationhood, identity, land or culture. This stereotype exists in contrast with the image of black people as proud pure breeds with a history, culture and identity going back centuries" (Brown, 2000: 201). In the meme below this is addressed

These deep stories amongst black South Africans with respect to coloured people have amounted to tense interactions governed by mistrust on both sides as the coloured community's deep stories reflect a fear of African chauvinism and triumphalism (Adhikari, 2006: 201). This has led to what Brown (2000: 204) terms "stereotype threat," which means that people cannot perform optimally when they are focused on debunking stereotypes about their group; instead, all efforts are then channelled into defending the group's legitimacy as opposed to focusing on other aspects of interaction. This translates practically into the inherent animosity that may govern coloured and black relations because coloured individuals feel forced to defend the legitimacy of their heritage and their access to civil rights in the face of black South Africans deep stories (Brown, 2000: 204).

Public consciousness shaped by claims of citizenship legitimacy, a preoccupation with roots, descent, race and dichotomies between oppressed and oppressor, has resulted in contemporary expressions of coloured identity that coagulate around defending the legitimacy of a coloured subject's heritage and claim to the Africanness in the new South Africa as represented through the romanticised pre-colonial South African national culture. This has led to contemporary performances of coloured identity that disavow the styling that embraces a connection to South Africa's first nation people, the Khoi-san (Erasmus, 2017: 114). In an attempt to assert indigeneity in the same way as an ossified and romanticised black Africanness, small groups of coloured people have tried to mobilise post-apartheid coloured self-styling through an identification with a

slave past and a Khoi-san ethnic identity. Attempts on the part of coloured people to assert an unbroken connection to the Khoi-san as the First Nation (Erasmus, 2017: 114) reflect the preoccupation with legitimacy, origins and descent that plagues post-apartheid South Africa: “the idea of First nations needs to be problematised because it suggests a hierarchy of nations—a construct itself formed by ideas of race—with corresponding hierarchy of access to rights” (Erasmus, 2017: 115). As the coloured community has historically, through their marginal status, had to remain hypersensitive and aware of the racial climate of the social temporality (Adhikari, 2006: 187), a performance of coloured identity that employs the nomenclature of First Nation is indicative of the state of South Africa’s relationship to anxieties about race, legitimacy and belonging.

Most coloured people do not consider their ancestral heritage to impact the performance of their present day-to-day personhood; “many coloured people believe strongly that their mixture occurred so far back in history that it does not feature in their contemporary consciousness” (Ruiters, 2009: 123). Through the state’s use of official racial categories for the purposes of redress and the national census, as well as our collective continued reliance on the look (Erasmus, 2017: 51), most coloured people unquestioningly accept the logic of their classification and think of themselves in all aspects of the quotidian, as coloured. This is reinforced by an institutional culture that meets those who defy the logic of classification with punitive censure as evinced through the case of Western Cape based teaching professional who was accused of committing fraud when he classified himself as African on a set of documents for the purposes of applying for a principle position at a local school (Jordan, 2020: na), which was found to be in contrast to the classification of ‘coloured’ that he had ticked on other non-related documents in the past. The teacher, Glen Snyman, had been brought before a disciplinary committee made up of representatives from the Western Cape Department of Education and accused of racially misrepresenting himself in order to secure the teaching post. In the process of the hearing the department representatives had accused Snyman of claiming a black African male identity, “instead of sticking with his official coloured identity” (Jordan, 2020: na). Unbeknownst to the department officials, Snyman is chair of an organisation called People Against Racial Classification, and has been

working for a number of years now to lobby the state to restructure its race-based approach to the bureaucracy of the everyday as well as racially-orientated redress efforts. His approach therefore to his own personal racial classifications is done from a place of defiance and non-conformism, thus his refusal to stick to a single category—especially the one to which he would commonly be categorised based on the racialised process of “the look” (Erasmus, 2017: 51). The charges against Snyman have since been dropped and top officials from the Western Cape Department of Education have condemned the case saying, “We will not tolerate victimisation of people who do not conform to an artificial and arbitrary classification of who they are deemed to be” (Jordan, 2020:na). Despite the outcome, the fact that in a non-racial democracy, refusing to accept the logic of racial classifications has the potential to prompt legal action pertaining to fraud charges, in response, is a testimony to the congenital logic that racial classification continues to occupy. It highlights the conflation of multiculturalism with non-racialism that governs contemporary South Africa (Alexander, 2013: 125) which in turn explains why racial personhood in South Africa is regarded as a common sense and necessary. This is emphasised in this particular case by the connection made between Snyman’s supposedly fraudulent African male classification with the perception that he did this to guarantee that his application for the position would be well received. Based on the deep stories (Boler & Davis, 2018: 78) discussed earlier, the conclusion that Snyman, perceived by department officials as Coloured, would misrepresent his race in pursuit of an employment opportunity is an assumption arrived at based on knowledge of the fears that act as deep stories amongst the coloured community, namely, of the loss of access to opportunities, resources and representation for coloured people that would herald the governance of a black majority government. Drawing from these deep stories as a way to ascertain motivations behind Snyman’s supposedly deviant classification, affirms that individuals are thought of as extensions of the homogenous racial category to which they belong and that the motivations behind their behaviour, beliefs, interests and values are tied to an essence they share with other members of their racial group.

A post-apartheid context preoccupied with anxieties about belonging, unable to work towards a realisation of non-racialism as a result of the feeling rules that inform

the deep stories that impact defensive relations between coloured and black people, and the continued use of official race categories that in turn provide the lines between which people make sense of their personhood, are variables that have worked together to assist the re-emergence of Coloured with a capitalised C as indicated in the meme under analysis here, as nomenclature behind which an exclusivist Coloured self-styling lies.

Brown (2000: 205) identified that the post-apartheid non-racial democratic South Africa would present coloured people with three avenues for self-expression and self-styling. Brown elaborates that as coloured identity is relational, the important variables for deciding which route to follow would have ordinarily depended on the politically, economically and socially dominant white minority but contemporary political restructuring implies that now, coloured self-styling must attempt to strike a balance between the economically powerful although less socially influential white minority and a black majority that is gaining control of South African institutions that directly impact the livelihood of coloured South Africans. The first of these three routes prescribe that coloured people can choose to align themselves with the white minority through shared language and religion amongst other factors. The second, is that coloured people can maintain Coloured exclusivism with clearly demarcated boundaries, and finally, coloured people can develop a non-racial identity that emphasises similarities with the black majority with the intention of bridging old hostilities and working beyond racial groups towards a transformed non-racial society (Brown, 2000: 205). Naturally, the final option is the one Brown advocates for throughout his paper and he concludes his list of avenues with the following caution: "how the coloured group chooses to relate to these forces will have lasting implications for the future of the country" (Brown, 2000: 205). Though the list may seem comprehensive, Brown failed to take into account the salience of racial classifications propped up by the ruling party's understanding of South Africa as a multicultural society. Multiculturalism acts as Baldwin's proverbial cage, against which humans are divided up into assumed essences, these being, ethnicity, religion, race, tribe and cultural group. Multiculturalism reifies the impression of people as fixed members of a specific racial category, religion, sect or tribe (Azeri, 2013: 59). Brown negates this and its evolution in contemporary South Africa into a tool that not only delineates racial classification but also sorts subjects into those who have a legitimate claim to the land

and to Africanness prescribed in the national culture, and those who do not and who are thus labelled as settlers (Erasmus, 2017: 60). Most importantly, Brown could not have predicted the effect that social media would have on entrenching racial exclusivism as a logical route to subject formation in South Africa.

Overview of Facebook as a platform

Social media is often touted as internet-related platforms that increase communication amongst people in ways that produce “social good” (Stark, 2020: 299), implying that greater connectivity between people would inherently lead to tangible positive effects on social, cultural and political concerns. As Stark (2020: 303) explicates, “over and over, new technologies have been presented by their founders as being a magic solution to the problems of human fragmentation, dissension and even armed conflict” (Stark, 2020: 303).Conflating technology with unassumed progress, benefit, democracy, good will, equality and human rights is an attitude that stems from techno-narcissism (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 85), an ethnocentric and imperialistic attitude that ignorantly believes that technologies and innovations out of their own, are able to better conditions around the world instantly. Public consciousness though, is often goaded into conflating technology with social good and so collective capacity to engage critically with a technological innovation is deadened in the face of a pervasive narrative that equates technology with goodwill.

From its inception, Facebook as a social media platform has demonstrated CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s ability to intuit and exploit the human desire for social affirmation, and in the years since the platform’s launch, Facebook has become an affective empire (Stark, 2020: 298), trading small bursts of user’s attention and resultant emotion for quantifiable data that is the lifeblood of the contemporary advertising sector (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 83). Facebook’s public-facing ideological mandate firmly binds increased communication and social change and good will together in public consciousness in order to distort the reality that Facebook is dependent on ever increasing engagement with the platform in order to collect as much data on its users as possible to ensure that it is an effective service for powerful stakeholders who use the platform in the course of marketing, advertising and even politicking (Stark, 2020: 309). This emotional currency can be explained by considering Ahmed’s (2014: 218)

observation that emotions are visceral forces that drive us toward movement. Emotions involve bodily processes of affecting and being affected and so govern how we operate within a space and in relation to others, as emotions can cause us to move towards or away from others. Emotions are thus not personal and individually experienced; emotions move between bodies and in the case of social media, in the absence of bodies, emotions bounce around between the acts of posting, sharing, liking, commenting and reacting. This provides a wellspring of information for Facebook as they are able to detect what excites us and motivate us into response, and this knowledge is turned into profitable data. Lim (2020: 186) explains that economising social relations in this way is a form of neoliberalisation that prioritises an intertwined relationship between emotions and economics so that they eventually come to shape and define one another. Emotions and their affective power have become important currency in the world today, and Facebook's platform architecture is created to keep the affective flows running, pushing people into subtly increased reactivity each time.

As users engage with Facebook, the platform is cataloguing their engagement and responding in kind with adaptations and features that continue to mine the range of emotional responses that can be monitored for the purposes of producing clear and unequivocal data about users. This was evidenced in 2016, when Facebook introduced reaction icons in addition to its like button in order to push users towards performing more emotionally complex kinds of expression, for the purposes of more refined data collection: "for the vast majority of [Facebook] users Reactions and heightened emotional surveillance and behavioural tracking they represent have become a part of their social routines—representing the fading of algorithmic psychometrics into the background of everyday life" (Stark, 2020: 310).

Due to the fact that Facebook deliberately rigs the platform in ways that prompt intense emotional reactions from users, most often the emotions that are instantly triggered are not those associated with happiness as happiness is difficult to measure with real accuracy, is highly subjective, and culturally determined (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 34). Therefore, it serves the interests of Facebook to create the platform in such a way to solicit content from users that are extreme and polarizing thus "Facebook…will parasitically encourage and exacerbate any of our intense human emotional

responses…whether or not these responses are bigoted, inflammatory or toxic to democratic civil society" (Stark, 2020: 308). An important feature of the platform's design that enables the smooth functioning affective flows, is the algorithm that regulates the content users are permitted to encounter on the platform. First encoded into the platform in 2009, the algorithm detects the content that provokes the most reactivity in the user and continues to show the said user more of the same content to prompt more and more emotional responses. As posts that are controversial; are either racist, homophobic, sexist, nationalist etc.; reflect the deep fissures that exist in the Western-influenced societies that are able to access these social media apps, content of this listed nature will be circulated rapidly and more frequently because they generate such extreme responses amongst users. This in turn shapes how people engage with the platform to the extent that the aesthetics (Highfield et al, 2020: 176) of the platform become clogged with posts and re-posts that continue to amplify tropes of exclusion, marginalisation, discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes. Facebook amplifies content that hits strong emotional registers and is explicitly engineered to promote the production, distribution and circulation of content that will blaze a trail of intense emotional responses as it is shared, commented on or reacted to.

This inevitably suggests that Facebook enables a fixation on socio-cultural issues such as race, to the extent that racialisation and racism become features of the platform itself (Lim, 2020: 199). This is why content that speaks to the historical fissures, tensions and animosities between nations and within national borders, does so well on Facebook. The topical issues and concerns pervading the offline realm that generate dichotomies between people, easily bleed onto Facebook and become overwhelming stains, because of their potential to produce the type of emotional engagement that Facebook needs in order to generate its revenue (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 7). This creates a platform environment that encourages Facebook users to represent the Self online in terms of in-group and out-group signifiers (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 47). In short, the environment of Facebook as its platform aesthetics and platform architecture encourages people to declare their cultural and tribal affiliations. As Vaidhyanathan (2018: 43) explains, we share images on Facebook not because of their truth value but because of what the image will communicate about our performance of our tribal membership. Facebook is a

platform where group affiliations are key. As Facebook is habit forming, the more time we spend curating an online self in line with group affiliation, the more this practice becomes commonplace in our offline realities as well. This creates what Lim (2020: 197) calls algorithmic enclaves. These are clusters that users form, informed by binary discourse of us vs. them (Lim, 2020: 197) that are, "arenas where enclave members produce and circulate positive affects with each other while projecting antagonistic feelings or negative affect for others" (Lim, 2020: 197). Algorithmic enclaves are a manifestation of the polarizing circulation of affect and emotions on Facebook but they do not originate as a result of Facebook and social media; they exist presently in society but their interaction with social media platforms, connects people in such a way that a natural inclination to lean towards those who share the same perspectives as us, becomes an entrenched habit that prioritises legitimating group affiliation based on dichotomies between us vs them. Lim (2020: 197) writes that enclaves become especially dominant on social media when formal actors such as the state and the media are seen as perpetrators of injustice towards the members that make up the enclave. Considering the previous chapter's focus on coloured-identifying individuals' criticism of procedural democracy, the success of coloured exclusivist platforms like VannieKaap, make sense. This becomes especially true in societies that have experienced fundamental political change and are plagued by economic and cultural insecurities. Facebook scrambles our social, commercial and political lives, and so "we find comfort in declaring our tribal membership" (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 43).

Unpacking the limitations for self-styling that exist as a result of the relationship between Facebook, memes and social significant identities.

The above overview of Facebook and its platform's architecture and aesthetics are important to bear in mind when considering the implications of the meme under analysis in this chapter. Noting Facebook's tendency to encourage the production and circulation of content relating to declaring group allegiances and affiliations, especially those that spark polarized reactions, it is no surprise then that at the Centre of the first meme lies the racial classification for Coloured, as the racial habitus of South Africa and the core of Facebook, pushes users to declaring a group affiliation that is most salient to them. In addition, this central positioning of Coloured nomenclature reveals that

declaring group affiliation has become an entrenched habit of both the platform and the broader society from which this meme emerges.

This is emphasised by the form of the meme as well. As memes are context-bound viral texts, the only way to guarantee that they will garner any traction on the platform where they are published, is to ensure that the commentary the meme delivers, compliments the environment of the platform (Du Preez & Lombard, 2014: 260). As Facebook is set up to coax users into aiming for the publication of content that will generate extreme reactions from their 'friends', users are forced to adapt to the aesthetics of the platform that have already set a standard for the type of content that receives engagement. The setting of where the meme is published and circulated exists before the meme itself and so during the production stage of the memetic image, the producer has to take the aesthetics of the platform into consideration. Judging from the 286 comments, 338 shares and 1 900 reactions, this meme has successfully conformed to the platform's standards for virality. The meme as a form of multimodal artifact, is perfectly suited to the dynamics of Facebook because it is a "light package" (Lim, 2020: 196) implying that its content can be engaged with and understood without too much time and deep reflection. Memes meet our appetite for information that can be condensed into a short attention span, through its tendency for one-liners as evinced in the post analysed in this chapter, and finally memes are suited to Facebook because they encourage "Trailer vision" (Lim, 2020: 196), which implies that content shared is an oversimplified representation of actual information.

This is why the first meme is not able to account for the socially constructed history of coloured identity, because content that requires deep engagement through extensive reading and deliberation, is not suited to the dynamics of the platform. The platform favours short and punchy emotion-soliciting one-liners and a comprehensive overview of the rich, contradictory and conflicting history that stands behind the variations of coloured nomenclature, will not receive traction or engagement.

Considering that discourse is functional (Augustino et al., 2014: 56) the textual assertion of "Coloured, without apology" (vanniekaap, 2020), demonstrates that in the context of Facebook, constructing racial classifications as a marker of pride compliments the existing logic of the platform. Emphasising group affiliation stakes the legitimacy of

the group online and condenses a larger debate transpiring offline, that questions this legitimacy. As discourse is constitutive and constructs identities, we read from the text in the post that the account holders affirm that racial classifications are salient to their understanding of their subjecthood. Through a refusal to contextualise the history behind various variations on the nomenclature of coloured, this post communicates the producers' view that there is a single legitimate way to perform a Coloured identity. This post also implies that performing one's racial affiliation with pride is a means to counter an existing stereotype threat in the offline realm and this is silently implied here through disavowals to any historically politically correct variations on nomenclature as well as the stress placed on performing a certain style of Coloured identity that may be questioned and derided by out-group members.

This derision is based on public discourse that casts self-identified coloured people as lacking cultural and ethnic legitimacy as discussed in the third meme and complicit with the oppression of the past and thus unqualified to benefit from efforts of redress explored in the second meme. Though Brown (2000: 198) may have believed that the future of South Africa's transformation lay with coloured individuals' self-fashioning, this belief failed to take into account the rapid transcendence of the attention economy, decline in satisfaction with procedural democracy, the African chauvinism and triumphalism of the ruling elite, the fear and anxiety prompted by questions of African legitimacy spurred by a myopic and exclusionary national culture, the continued use of racial categories in efforts of redress, and the punitive sanctions enacted against people who refuse to racially classify. All of these factors coalesce into variables that provoke most coloured-identifying people into re-claiming Coloured, with a capitalised C, as the foundation for their self-styling. The tendency of Coloured self-styling to invest in the belief of a racial essence occludes people from realising that the identity is consistently relational and that as per the history of social constructed identities, it will continue to remain reactive and sensitive to the dynamics that are foregrounded in society at any given point in history.

Conclusion

This chapter intended to assess the memes created and published by the VannieKaap account holders in the context of the dense green-blue tapestry of discourse

that the page has built up over the years on Facebook, about coloured self-styling in South Africa. The content, form and stance (Milner, 2015: 52) of the memes under discussion here was deeply revealing of the broader contemporary context, both online and offline, in which coloured South African people, are trying to carve out their subjectivity. My emphasis on the variables that affect self-styling is not to negate the agency of coloured people, but to bring awareness to the heightened sensitivity that pervades the assumed coloured community as the broader context's relationship to race and class shifts constantly. Scholars (Brown, 2000: 198) may have looked to the assumed coloured community to lead the way in terms of practically living out the principle of non-racialism in post-apartheid South Africa, but this ignorantly naïve perspective, a kind of memetic trope of the interim position as being free of racialised logic of the black and white ends of the hierarchy, affords to coloured people a superhuman perspective that transcends race—an affordance that cannot be true. Bi-racial people are widely assumed to possess some essence that somehow immunises their consciousness to racialised logic (Makalani, 2001: 83) and this is not true. Placing the onus for the performance of radical anti-colonial non-racial personhood on coloured individuals, absolves the broader social context from taking necessary steps to weed out the tools of racialisation (Erasmus, 2017: 51) that continue to shape the social temporality. Continued reliance on racialised tools for organising society, engenders racialised consciousness which is amplified in unprecedented ways through exposure to divisive platforms such as Facebook and the memetically constrained public discourse this platform engenders.

Chapter four- Analysing Swirl Magazine ZA as media tool for regulating the norms of coloured femininity.

Description of *Swirl Magazine ZA* and the form of the contemporary megazine

This chapter will analyse *Swirl Magazine ZA's* online magazine that can be categorised as a megazine because it has entrenched its presence as a brand across different social media platforms with its online magazine as being a part of this digital brand. In the biographical sections of their online media platforms, the account holders who are also the editorial team of the magazine, describe the megazine as "Packed with #ColouredGirlGlow" and invites platform followers to "Join us in celebrating, elevating and inspiring women of Coloured heritage" (*@SwirlMagZA*, 2019). From this, it is clear that the niche market that the megazine demarcates as its intended community is self-defined coloured womxn. Magazine theory (Holmes, 2020: 2) references the importance of a highly refined target market delineated according to socially significant identities as this becomes even more essential with online magazines that must contend with a digital environment that is highly segmented, as we have unpacked in earlier chapters.

Swirl Magazine ZA is hosted on a platform called MadMagz, and this platform explicitly identifies the magazines on its domain, as for-profit ventures. As established in chapter one, the commercial model of a magazine has a bearing on its content and this often results in editorial columns and articles that valourise a specific style of identity performance. The market pool for magazine subscribers has dwindled in recent years and a means to remedy this has been to section readers into even more refined groups according to socially significant markers, leading to the development of magazines targeted at womxn from ethnic minority groups. This has coincided with commercial attempts to sell products aimed at racially gendered identity categories. These developments enable the digital environment from which *Swirl Magazine ZA* emerges. Throughout womxn's magazines, whether racially profiled or not, is the impression of an essence to femininity and when coupled with racial categories, this fundamentalism is only heightened. Womxn who subscribe to magazines demonstrate ambivalent relationships towards them, with feelings of inadequacy and feelings of community and

support, experienced in equal measure. Womxn's magazines are an extension of existing cultural institutions and practices that enable the rigid policing of womxn, yet subscribers affirm that magazines are still valuable to them in the sense that it provides space for reflection and for the feeling of community created between the magazine and the reader and amongst the readers themselves.

Womxn's magazines in South Africa have demonstrated a reliance on and a tendency to perpetuate stereotypes about womxn of colour as discussed in chapter one. These stereotypes are rooted in colonial history that imbues black and brown bodies with myths of hypersexuality (Gqola, 2015: 63). With respect to coloured womxn, these stereotypes are particularly noxious (Scully, 1995: 348). Attached to the bodies of coloured womxn is assumed lasciviousness, degeneracy, immorality, addictive behaviours, neurosis and low cognitive functioning (Mafe, 2013: 45). Historically this has led to rigid policing of coloured womxn and forcing young coloured girls to adopt manners of dress and behaviour that reflect middle-class respectability (Mtenje, 2018: 15). This was done to deny and recompose the shame attached to the bodies of coloured womxn. The apartheid state also materially rewarded performances of respectable coloured femininity through economic measures that kept the community alive (Salo, 2003: 13). This made respectable coloured femininity all the more essential in coloured communities.

Though apartheid has dissolved and coloured womxn are no longer being rewarded for respectable performances of racially gendered identity, the racial anxiety prompted by contempt for coloured womxn, still exists in the popular imagination (Mtenje, 2018: 15). This racial anxiety engenders stereotype threat, that keeps contemporary representations of coloured femininity, fixated on the script for racially gendered respectability. The following analysis of *Swirl Magazine ZA's* content will reveal this to be true. The magazine's portrayal of contemporary coloured femininity draws from the old in service of new objectives. It constructs coloured femininity based on respectability as an antidote to existing contempt for coloured people and coloured womxn and, respectable coloured femininity continues to be essential to the material livelihood of coloured communities, albeit it a bit differently in the democratic era.

The source material to be analysed here is multimodal as magazines are made up of text and images as the predominant semiotic codes. I draw from visual culture theory and discourse analysis, to unpack the content. With respect to the methodology, I relied on when choosing the sections of the magazine to assess, I took cues from the list of criteria mentioned in the abstract of this project, most notably the first three imperatives. These include,

1) Overt references to coloured identity, either in the individual or collective sense
2) Explicit references to assumed generally accepted styles of coloured identity performance (hair styles, clothing styles, language, gender, accent, values and behaviours)
3) Explicit claims, presented as truth, about the socio-political and economic position coloured people occupy in contemporary South Africa.

On this basis, I selected passages from the magazine that implied and reinforced the idea of an essence to coloured femininity as expressed through styles of appearance, behaviours, values and socio-political and economic position.

The chapter unfolds in the following order:

1. Contextual account of the history behind performances of coloured respectability
2. Analysis of sections of Swirl Magazine ZA's content.

Contextual account of the history behind performances of coloured respectability

Most coloured communities have always lived under the constant state of racial vulnerability and stereotype threat, hoping that encouraging amongst themselves, carefully curated performances of respectability and middle-class tastes and values would distance associations of degeneracy away from bodies read via the look, as coloured (Adhikari, 2006: 104). Stereotype threat as indicated in an earlier section, is incited by the anxiety of racial vulnerability and refers to "the existence of a negative stereotype about a group to which one belongs," and, "that in situations where the stereotype is applicable, one is at risk of confirming it as a self-characterisation, both to oneself and to others who know the stereotype (Steele, 1995: 799). Community-specific

rigid policing of self-representations demonstrates an awareness of stereotype threat, limiting the ways in which one could express oneself for fear of deviance from the script for respectability, being construed as confirmation of the stereotypes surrounding coloured people.

In coloured communities caring for and guiding young people is viewed as a collective endeavour that ultimately positions adults as the gatekeepers and monitors of appropriate self-styling (Salo, 2005: 355). This paved the way for self-styling specific to adult coloured womxn that means they are considered as the community "moeders", imbued with the authority to institute and regulate norms for performance of coloured femininity of young coloured womxn and girls. As discussed in an earlier chapter, the economic role that coloured womxn played in their communities during apartheid, instituted them with authority in terms of policing the behaviours and morality of other community members. Salo (2005: 247) finds that this dynamic continues in coloured communities, though the older womxn's stronghold on coloured femininity has weakened somewhat in light of their diminished economic power.

With respect to the performance of femininity as a coloured womxn, the stereotypes loom over individual coloured womxn, threatening to trip them up in their performance and thus serve as confirmation of the non-human status conferred on their bodies during periods of exploitation and violence in South African history explained in chapter one. This results in an obsession with policing one's behaviour as a coloured womxn and vigilantly monitoring the behaviour of other coloured womxn, which is identified by Steele and Anderson (1995: 808) as stereotype threat's way of directing all of one's focus and energy towards avoiding confirming an existing stereotype. This is a reactive sense of self-styling, one that is informed mostly by shame (Steele, 1993: 51) but which attempts to subvert this shame through denial and recomposition (Steele, 1993: 66). It is normal to deny the shame aroused by racial vulnerability and stereotype threat, as admitting to it feels diminishing. This entails denying shame by recomposing shameful feelings into a sense of excessive pride or an illusory inherent specialness (Steele, 1993: 66) to feed into a narrative that informs an self-styling that tries to distance itself as much as possible from existing stereotypes. For coloured people, this has culminated in the community-wide pursuit of respectability informed by middle-class

values that has long since presented itself as the appropriate recourse for shame within the coloured community. This is an approach that has been employed by coloured womxn during periods of history when these womxn acted as important links to economic and social capital on behalf of the community (Salo, 2005: 345) and thereby established the rules for the performance of gendered coloured personhood.

As mentioned earlier, when the apartheid state instituted coloured womxn as the links between their community and state support, coloured womxn became the public face of the community. They were forced to embody performances of respectability, modesty and domesticity which the state and its institutions, expected of them. This meant that the established community wide neurosis with middle-class respectability discussed in chapter three, took on gendered dimensions that sanctioned only a specific type of coloured femininity performance, one rooted in modesty and domesticity, as valid and acceptable. Through their economic activity, adult coloured womxn were imbued with cultural and social power within their communities, which positioned them as the keepers of the moral code for their communities. Moeder, translated in English as Mother, became a metonym that communicated the values that coloured femininity should embody, these being: modesty, loyalty, mutual respect, self-sacrifice, interdependence and assistance (Salo, 2005: 334). In order to maintain economic and material connections to the state, coloured womxn understood that their performance of their gendered identity mattered, especially with respect to modesty, domesticity and respectability. Older coloured womxn recognised their economic and cultural value and sought to ensure that this gendered bridge between the state and the community remained intact and thus, created networks formed from intimacy, gossip and visible performance (Salo, 2005: 334), that would ensure for the moulding, surveillance and policing of the gendered identity performance of young coloured womxn and girls.

The networks that formed between older coloured womxn served as the structure within the community that provided support to households who needed it, amongst other acts of community care. It also served as a way to connect homes and families together in order to collectively monitor behaviour and punish the young, especially young girls, who neglected to behave in accordance to the standards defined by the values of domesticity, modesty and respectability (Salo, 2005: 352). Elaine Salo

(2005) references instances that involved young coloured girls engaging in behaviour considered by the network of older womxn as contrary to the standards of domesticity, modesty and respectability and threatened to withhold access to resources that the girls' families were in need of pending a change in behaviour and a return to acceptable gendered coloured performance. Relying on gossip, the network passed around opinions of young coloured womxn, solidifying the latter's reputation in the community and a negative review from the network could bar one from support, resources and respect within the community. The network formed between older coloured womxn within the confines of a neighbourhood or a street, operated as a unified front and thus reinforced performative acts (Butler, 1988: 225) of coloured femininity over and over again in a number of individual young coloured womxn and this contributed to the perception of an ossified essence to the performance of coloured femininity. The illusion of an essence is created by repeated acts that obscure gender as a performance and through a network, older coloured womxn propelled repetition of the performative acts considered appropriate to coloured femininity.

Young coloured girls were expected to confine themselves to the home, "completing domestic chores or caring for younger household members" (Salo, 2005: 225) and had limited mobility and freedom in that they could only move around within their communities if accompanied by a senior womxn or a male member of the family. Their restraint and respectability were also to reflect through their style of dress with clothes chosen in accordance to the standards of modesty as well as for practicality in the course of fulfilling domestic obligations. In coloured communities, the values of the Christian church and formal education often blended together to form community norms (Adhikari, 2006: 102) and thus, coloured womxn were expected to fashion themselves in accordance with the dictates of the Christian Church on heterosexual femininity. Colonial stereotypes relating to the excessive sexuality of coloured womxn meant that for performances of coloured identity, "being diligent in the pursuit of respectability also means denying sexual desire and restricting female agency" (Mtenje, 2018: 15). Young coloured womxn were not encouraged to understand themselves as sexual beings and this is emphasised in the stereotype of the Taxi Queen (Salo, 2003: 225) created by older coloured womxn to describe young coloured womxn who dress

contrary to the standards of modesty and are seen in male company with men they are not related to. Girls who displayed too much mobility and did not observe the script for respectability were shamed in ways that conflated their sense of freedom with assumed sexual promiscuity (Salo, 2003: 227). As opposed to young coloured boys, young coloured girls were initiated into the bureaucracy of the broader white supremacist society, learning early on from older coloured womxn how to navigate apartheid state institutions relevant to the political and economic survival of the coloured community. Mediating power is a role that older coloured womxn took on and modelled for younger womxn as they openly negotiated gang wars and provided protection from rival gangs for young men from homes in their neighbourhoods or streets. Younger adult coloured womxn were exposed to the performance of these roles as it was expected that they would grow to fulfil them one day.

Policing behaviour of community members is way that the coloured community arranges itself in relation to economic, political and social factors that determine the survival of community members. This is indicative of the community's ability to deny shame aroused by racial vulnerability and stereotype threat, and recompose this shame into styles of racial and gendered performance that attempt to thoroughly undermine any validity to the pejorative beliefs that prop up society. To achieve this, behaviour modification required harsh punishment of those who transgressed norms of identity performance and for young coloured womxn, this punishment entailed barring their households from accessing support from the community matriarchs and solidifying a negative impression of the character, and femininity of transgressors. Being cut off and shunned by the community in this way meant severely compromising the economic and material stability of their homes and curbing their social standing within the community. It was inculcated into young womxn that they would grow to become the providers of their families and that fulfilling this obligation depended on the performance of their femininity—compromising on this would not only mean personal failure, but affected the material livelihoods of families and community members as well. Denying shame and recomposing it into foundations for antithetical performances of identity aimed at achieving impressions of respectability is a strategy the coloured community employs to distance itself from associations with miscegenation. For coloured womxn, the specific

policing of their behaviour stems from the belief that, “they can become respectable through proper management of their bodies” (Mtenje, 2018: 10).

Analysis of sections of *Swirl magazine za’*s content.

Emblazoned across the cover of the magazine’s first edition, is the tagline “the magazine for the coloured women of South Africa” (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015: x). This tagline is indicative of the magazine’s target audience (Holmes, 2020: 2) and because discourse is constitutive, the tagline communicates that the magazine exists in a world and in a digital reality where the constructs of race and gender are primary avenues through which people understand their identity. Appealing directly to the intersection between race and gender communicates a version of reality where this is a logical connection for the expression of individual and collective identity. The plural of “women” communicates that aside just from demarcating the lines around a specific target audience, there exists a community of people who self-define as coloured womxn, implying that racially gendered markers of difference are normative in South African society and online. The tagline constructs a social temporality and digital context, where the boundaries of race and gender are salient enough to warrant the creation and tentative success of a for-profit magazine aimed at a racially gendered audience. This affirms Brown’s (2000: 198) observation that South Africa is more of a multicultural society than a non-racial one and as discussed in chapter three, the hallmarks of multicultural societies are the further entrenchment of markers of identity such as race, ethnicity, gender and religion amongst others. Appealing directly to racially gendered identity on the cover of the magazine, discursively constitutes South Africa as a multicultural society where difference is definitive.

Editor's Note

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Welcome to the Inaugural Edition of Swirl Magazine, ZA

I hope you find inspiration from the great women in the fields of Style & Beauty, Art & Design, Science & Technology, Society, Food & Entertainment and In Business who we feature in this our Inaugural,one-of -a-kind magazine.

In all of these diverse fields we aim to identify, highlight and celebrate the achievements of coloured women of South Africa.

So this is our mission: to celebrate the coloured woman in a way that moves us away from the stereotypical rhetoric surrounding us, and in doing so, provide role-models for the younger generation of coloured women. Our strategy is to provide a platform for coloured women of South Africa in all fields.

In showcasing our excellence and uniqueness, we aim to empower each other in a positive, nurturing way.

I hope you grow to love what we stand for as much as a the coloured women who contributed to the first issue this magazine. I hope you stick with us. We're going places.

Karin Love
Editor - In- Chief

Issue 1

Image one: Editor's note written by the editor-in-chief, Karin Love (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015)

On the first page of the magazine and, in figure one above, is the letter composed by the editor-in chief, titled, Editor's Note. The first paragraph details the sections that make up the magazine and these include, "style and beauty, art and design, science and technology, society, food and entertainment and in business (sic)" (Love,

2015: x). These sections are the typical structure of lifestyle magazines (Ytre-Arne, 2011: 247) confirming research findings that indicate that magazines that identify themselves as specific to a racially gendered community differ little from the existing magazines and this is a constraint presented by the commercial model of a magazine (Holmes, 2020: 17). The paragraph ends with the editor in chief describing the magazine as "one-of-a-kind". This stands in contradiction to the above account of lifestyle magazines and research confirms that magazines aimed at racially gendered minorities conflate this with genuine attempts at transformation (Helcke, 2002: 16). As discourse is functional, in the context of magazines as part of the media ecology, *Swirl Magazine ZA's* Editor-in-chief presents the magazine as distinctive purely on the basis of its target audience. Research confirms that provided a magazine depends on advertising as a commercial model, its content will not diverge in any significant ways from that of existing mainstream magazines (Helcke, 2002: 15).

In the second paragraph, the editor-in-chief indicates that the magazine intends to "highlight and celebrate the achievements of coloured womxn of South Africa" (Love, 2015: x). This implies that a performance of coloured femininity based on accruing achievements is foregrounded in the magazine. An accomplished self-defined coloured womxn is the idealised script for identity performance that the magazine intends to render salient. Helcke (2002: 14) confirms that in magazines aimed at racial minorities, mostly professional achievements tend to be emphasised as a counter narrative to pejorative views in the popular imagination that conflate racial and ethnic minorities with reductive and mostly negative perceptions. This is a tendency that *Swirl Magazine ZA* appears to adhere to as well. In addition, womxn's magazines in general present versions of the Ideal female subject (Ytre-Arne, 2012: 249). In some magazines the ideal female subject is aligned with class and wealth and in the case of *Swirl Magazine ZA*, the ideal coloured womxn is discursively constituted as someone who is able to point to professional and personal achievements as indicative of her femininity.

The reason for foregrounding achievements and success as integral to the ideal coloured female self, is the oblique reference to racial and sexist prejudice in the third paragraph. The editor-in-chief writes "so this is our mission: to celebrate the coloured woman in a way that moves us away from the stereotypical rhetoric surrounding us"

(Love, 2015: x). Here discursive resources and practices that include a common device called a consensus warrant, are used to create a version of South African reality in which coloured womxn are viewed with contempt (Augustinos, 2006: 55). A consensus warrant, as explained earlier in chapter two, is a phrase or metaphor that constructs whatever is being discussed as common knowledge. Here it is used to construct a version of reality that is shared as truth between the magazine and its target audience. This version implies that self-defined coloured womxn live in a state of racial vulnerability that engenders stereotype threat with respect to their performances of racially gendered identity. As unpacked in chapter one, racist and sexist prejudice originating from colonialism, continues to attach connotations of degeneracy, sexual immorality, poverty and low cognitive functioning onto the bodies of coloured womxn. The consensus warrant positions this state of racial vulnerability and stereotype threat as a widely believed truth and known fact by self-defined coloured womxn and by the South African context at large. Life as a coloured womxn is discursively framed as a targeted existence, the truth of which can be widely confirmed.

Furthermore, through the use of the pronoun "us", this experience of racial vulnerability and stereotype threat is positioned as a shared intimate reality between the editorial team and the readers, solidifying the impression of a common identity specific to the readers. The emphasis on 'us', indirectly references the existence of oppositional others who are different and as racially gendered personhood is at the forefront here, this discourse constructs those who are not coloured and not womxn-identifying, as the Other. This use of discourse implies that the magazine perpetuates the logic that undergirds essentialism, by staking an assumed homogenous "us" against an indirectly referenced other.

According to magazine theory, it is essential to establish this identity in order to ensure the success of the magazine (Holmes, 2020: 2). In short, the editor-in-chief invoking the reference to stereotypes that exist in the popular imagination about coloured womxn, draws the racially profiled reader's attention to the constantly precarious position that her performance of femininity is in and this clinches her dependency on the magazine as an authority and a guide on the correct self-styling to adopt in order to survive racial vulnerability and stereotype threat.

The second portion of the sentence in the third paragraph explains that the magazine wants to distance coloured femininity from existing stereotypes and “provide role models for the younger generation of coloured women” (Love, 2015: x). This implies that *Swirl Magazine ZA* and its related megazine networks, intend to operate in accordance to the gendered networks that characterised coloured communities during apartheid. By describing the magazine as an example to younger coloured womxn, the magazine communicates tacit disapproval of contemporary performances of coloured femininity that exist amongst young coloured womxn. Instead, the magazine essentialises apartheid-era performances and the relations that produced them by invoking reference to the long-held community tradition of policing the behaviour of the young. Discourse is also functional, implying that versions of reality are constituted in specific contexts to achieve a certain objective, and constructing the magazine as “an example to younger coloured women” positions it as important to the continuity of gendered relations between older and younger coloured womxn. It also places the magazine as the authority that determines and entrenches the appropriate forms of coloured femininity performances that young coloured womxn should embody.

This emphasis on a single valid script for behaviour amongst young coloured womxn is an apartheid era inheritance that once served as links to economic and material support. Constructing a version of the world where this performance is still considered important, implies that in the context of post-apartheid South Africa, the economic and material rewards, that this performance once came with, may still be accessible and necessary in contemporary South Africa. Research conducted by Adhikari (2006, 2009) confirms that the material and economic wellbeing of most coloured communities has been severely compromised as a result of the repeal of apartheid-era policies that enabled coloured womxn access to life-saving state support. Prejudice and economic hardship continue to abound and *Swirl Magazine ZA* relies on former community-specific strategies, like a coloured female archetype, to prescribe a means to overcome present day challenges. This is similar to Afrikaner nationalism’s creation of the Volksmoeder in the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer war (McClintock, 1991: 109). The creation of an Afrikaner nation required intensive cultural labour so as to give the appearance of an organic Afrikaner nationhood and Afrikaner womxn were instituted as

the keepers of the moral and cultural code. Through literary devices such as *Huisgenoot* magazine, Afrikaner womxn were able to dictate the foods, styles of furniture and tastes that defined Afrikanerdom. At the nexus of gender and the interests of community, cultural institutions such as magazines are invaluable in shaping the role that womxn play and South African history attests to this. This will be expanded on in a later section of this analysis.

Discursively constructing the magazine as an example to young self-defined coloured womxn, positions the magazine and the entire megazine of Swirl Magazine ZA as part of a historical network of gendered surveillance, modification and reinforcement. Policing behaviour in this way lends credibility to the impression of coloured femininity as possessing a stable essence. The megazine[6] employs discourse to build a reality in which a specific performance of racially gendered identity is ossified through repeated acts (Butler, 1988: 519). Through invoking apartheid era dynamics of coloured femininity, *Swirl* simultaneously denies that gender is a relational performance.

As the editor's note draws to a close, the writer explains that "our strategy is to provide a platform for coloured women of South Africa". Discursively, the editor-in-chief positions the magazine and the megazine of *Swirl Magazine ZA* as a space for the empowerment of coloured womxn. What this indirectly affirms is that in the offline space and in the digital context, *Swirl Magazine ZA* interprets coloured womxn as being disenfranchised in some way. This may be in terms of representation in popular media, or structural inequality but this is not made clear by the writer. This vague reference to exclusion discursively functions as means to persuade the reader of the importance of the magazine's existence. The functional aspect of discourse is that in a specific context, whatever is being said is done so persuasively and the clarity surrounding the extent of the power of this "platform" is meant to be persuasive so as to establish trust and necessity amongst members of the target audience.

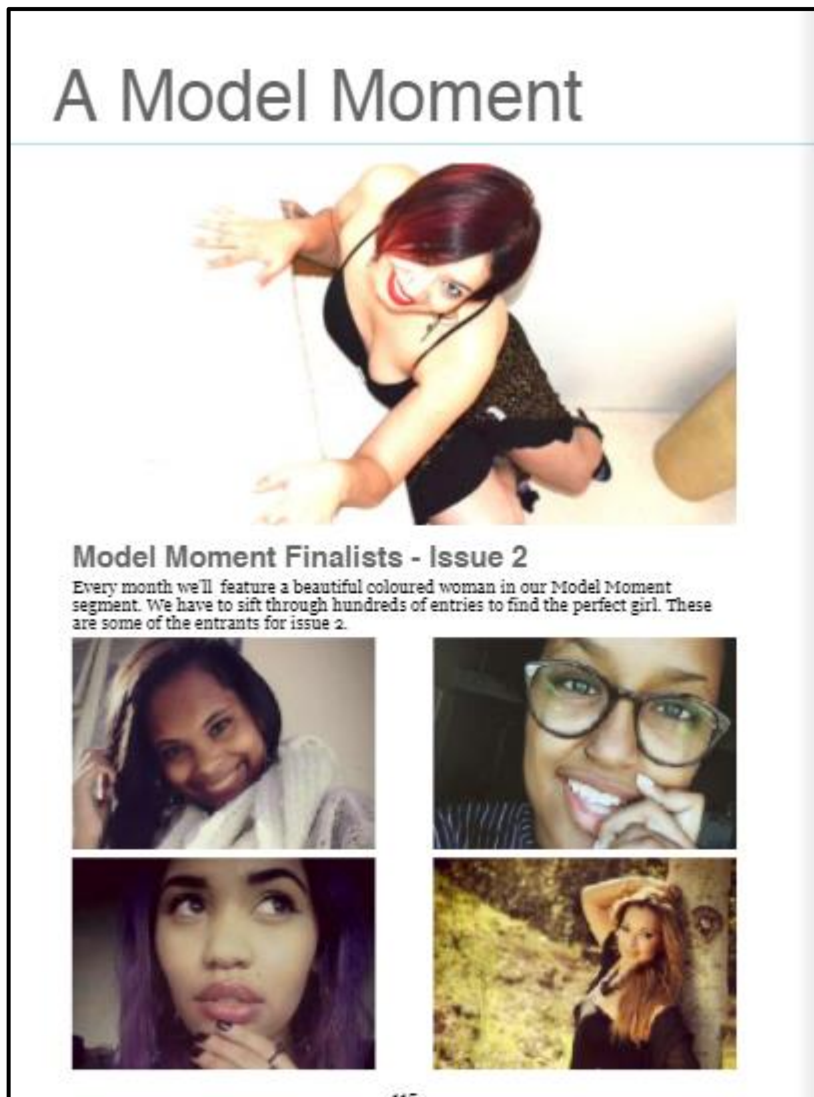
Just before the end, the editor-in-chief emphasises that the magazine will be "showcasing excellence and uniqueness" discursively constructed as a specific essence to

[6] I refer to the magazine and its broader megazine interchangeably as the rhetoric contained on the pages of the magazine is the same perspectives published across their networked social media presence.

coloured femininity. This is a tendency of multicultural societies such as South Africa, to prescribe innate essences to social identities. Steele (1990: 63) writes that emphasis on pride and a distinguished essence amongst racial minorities, denies and recomposes shame into a trope of excessive pride and "specialness" that is inherent in the specific social identity. This is emphasised by the continued references throughout the Editors note, to terms such as celebrate, excellence, greatness and related synonyms giving the reader the impression the essence of valid performances of coloured femininity are based on a certain uniqueness that is inaccessible to those who are not coloured.

Considering the conventions of layout, placing the image above the text implies that the text contains information that supports and acts as an anchor for what is depicted in the image. Discussed in the analysis so far is the use of discursive tools to foreground race and gender as the salient components of the magazine's editorial content This acts as anchors for interpreting the image above the text and thus readers are led to conclude that the subject depicted is a photographic representation of a coloured womxn. As race and gender are constructs validated by the connotations that prop up racialisation, what one is drawn to here is phenotypical features that validate the logic of the look: skin colour, hair texture and indications of class in materiality such as clothing (Erasmus, 2017: 52). The impression the reader is led to, is that the look is a common sense means of decoding the subject's position above the text, which in turn implies that one is to understand that the subject featured in this image, is the magazine's visual approximation of "the coloured woman" (*Swirl Magazine,* 2015: x).

The image is drawn into the text, specifically in relation to discursive tools that attempt to establish the impression of an intimate and distinctive community between the magazine and its readers. Readers are coaxed into concluding that the subject featured in the image above the text is a coloured womxn that represents all coloured womxn. The background is leached of any details and the subject is foregrounded in a way that gives the impression that she is the most salient aspect of the image. This undermines the allusion in the text to "excellence and uniqueness" (*Swirl Magazine,* 2015: x) as what is considered as important is reading racial and gendered identity from the body through the common-sense logic of essentialism. This implies that the magazine relies on the body as a primary site for classification.



A Model Moment

Model Moment Finalists - Issue 2

Every month we'll feature a beautiful coloured woman in our Model Moment segment. We have to sift through hundreds of entries to find the perfect girl. These are some of the entrants for issue 2.

115

Image two: A visual feature entitled model moment compiled from entries submitted to the magazine's editorial team (Swirl Magazine, 2015)

The magazine is scattered with images of womxn that readers are led to believe, are self-defined coloured womxn. No criteria is communicated as to how ethnicity was determined by the photographer or if the subjects themselves identify as coloured womxn. The reader is led to understand that the womxn featured represent, at least physically, the magazine's estimation of a coloured womxn. Towards the end, the section titled "a model moment" (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015: 115) features images of subjects in extreme close up, drawing attention to facial features and the imprints of social convention that can be traced on facial expressions, body language and gaze. The text that accompanies these images reads, "every month we'll feature a beautiful coloured woman in our Model Moment segment. We have to sift through hundreds of entries to

find the perfect girl" (*Swirl Magazine,* 2015: 115). The text is sandwiched between images above it and below, and thus this central positioning implies that the reading path of this page in the magazine revolves around the centre. The margins where the visual depictions are, act as support for the message contained at the Centre. Applying discourse analysis, we read that the womxn depicted in the images that surround the text are representative of the magazine's estimations of the "perfect" visual representations of the performance of coloured femininity. The magazine imbues itself with the power to determine the perfect visual approximation of coloured femininity. No criteria are disclosed to readers in order to shed light on how the images were selected; instead, the common-sense logic of racialisation and the look, is relied on as self-evident. Readers are expected to approach the magazine with a common-sense knowledge of race and gender to be able to understand how the images came to be chosen as representative of coloured femininity. Again, as noticed in the picture that accompanied the editor's letter, the backgrounds of these images are not considered important and thus, what is foregrounded and is most salient, are the features of the body. This is amplified in this section as the images selected by the magazine's editorial team are close-ups that draw attention to the body as a primary site of knowledge, validating the essentialist belief that race can be read off the body.

The text identifies the subjects featured in the images as "perfect," coloured womxn and what this implies is that the body is the primary site where perfection of racially gendered identity is achieved. Despite the magazine's injunction to undermine racial vulnerability and stereotype threat by focusing instead on the professional achievements and extra-curricular lives of coloured womxn as locations for gendered identity performance, these images affirm that the body remains a primary site of identity performance and that the social context in which coloured womxn find themselves, has not progressed beyond relying on the look, as the principle means to relate to someone. Preoccupation with physical features is reminiscent of the effects that racist state legislation exerted on the coloured community, resulting in paranoia about physical features either considered too African to access relative economic and material privilege or too European to abandon relative privilege in support of eventual

non-racial democracy. Anxiety about physical features is endemic to the coloured community and for womxn.

In most literary tropes relating to coloured people and miscegenation, the womb of the coloured female subject is viewed as monstrous because of the capability to perpetuate what was considered as inherently degenerate seed (Mafe, 2013: 74). In texts produced by eugenicists such as Sarah Gertrude Millin, the womb of the coloured womxn loses potency and monstrosity through rigorous adherence to procreation with white male subject's generations down the line, in order to squash out the bad blood. This perception is what informs preoccupation in the coloured community regarding hair texture, eye colour, skin colour, size and height amongst other physical markers. Physical features are conflated with material and economic survival and as a result, imbued into the body amongst coloured people, are all sorts of connotations about different body parts that are all meant to imply coded messages about the individual to whom these parts belong. The binary along which physical features are located positions features considered African at the negative end of the spectrum, while those considered European at the positive end. What is also significant is that the images chosen, depict subjects that are young confirming research findings that older people but especially older womxn are invisibilised in the media (Edstrom, 2018: 91). This implies that the visual representation of the perfect coloured womxn, does not include older self-defined coloured womxn. Though in the editor's letter, the editor-in-chief may have described the magazine as a "one-of-a-kind" publication, the norms that dictate acceptable standards of beauty are not absent from this publication despite the magazine's insistence that its racially gendered focus implies that the magazine is transformative. A magazine's decision to build community around a racially gendered identity that may be missing from mainstream media, does not equate to a dismantling of ideologies and practices that continue to subjugate womxn in general and the invisibilising of older coloured womxn in this section, confirms this.

Thus, these images meant to visually depict the perfect coloured womxn, only amplify existing anxiety about the body as the principle site for meaning making and the primary vehicle through which one achieves legitimacy as a coloured womxn. To self-define as a coloured womxn therefore means to recognise yourself through physical features.

Image three: Fashion related editorial that spans the middle section of the publication that offers fashion advice suitable for office-specific employment. (*Swirl Magazine ZA*, 2015)

A great deal of attention, both visually and in terms of text, is dedicated to clothing and the connotations of modesty and respectability attached to clothing. A spread that spans across five pages, features clothes arranged in what is described as "professionally modest" or, "appropriate for a conservative work environment" (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015: 33-37) and this is evocative of the initiation into the world of modesty, respectability and domesticity required of coloured womxn from relative privilege conferred by unequal apartheid state bureaucracy. One's survival and that of one's family and community was bound up for coloured womxn, in arbitrary choices such as styles of dress. This preoccupation with modest dressing serves as a means to close the gap between the tenuous achievement of respectability and the connotations of degeneracy and lasciviousness that are foisted on bodies read as coloured and female.

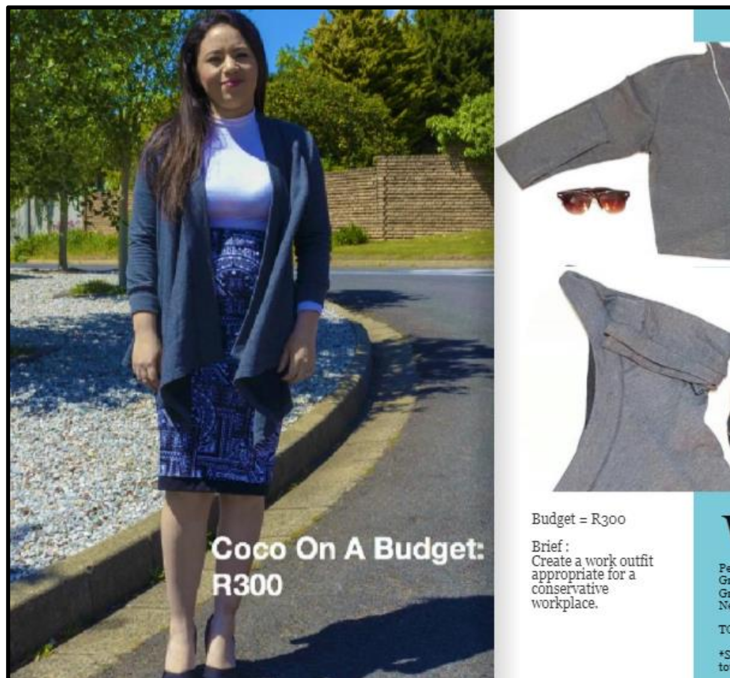


Image four: Excerpt from fashion editorial on dressing for the workplace (*Swirl Magazine ZA*, 2015)

The section of the magazine that focuses on fashion, emphasises the connection between clothes, coloured femininity and respectability and more poignantly, a certain sector of employment. The assumption communicated through an emphasis on clothes described as office appropriate, is that performances of contemporary coloured femininity is tied to spaces of employment in the formal sector. The clothing and the types of employment associated with this style of clothing, communicate middle-class aspirations, implying that performances of coloured femininity considered as valid by the magazine holders, are those that are aligned with middle-class tastes, values and spaces. Middle-class performances of identity are a long standing aspiration amongst self-defined coloured people. Adhikari (2006: 117) touches on this in his analysis of the coloured elite throughout the twentieth century. He confirms that educated coloured people, a category of people he defines as the coloured elites, spread throughout the assumed community, the impression that emulating middle-class values and aiming for middle-class aspirations was a sure route to a sense of individual and collective stability. In his essay for 'Breaking down the walls: Colonial legacies, Home and Heteronormativity' (2019), Jamil Khan writes that his upbringing in a self-defined

coloured family in a home in a community of people who self-defined as coloured, ingrained into him a discomfort with his sexual orientation because it contravened the doctrine of respectability that governed his household and his community. Khan writes that “I was surrounded by: heterosexual married couples with children, pets, gardens, paved driveways, garages and backyards” (Khan, 2019: 154). He describes these as the trappings of respectability and in addition to these, would be ties to forms of employment in the formal sector. Khan (2019: 155) remarks that emulating middle-class respectability provides a point to orientate towards for self-defined coloured people and this is communicated by the magazine’s emphasis on clothes for these spaces only.

In image four above, though the clothes are put together on a “budget” the final ensemble is a work specific look for a place of employment in the formal sector. This implies that middle-class tastes, values and spaces should be aspired to even when the means for it are not accessible. The emphasis placed on displaying thrift in pursuit of middle-class tastes is reminiscent of the code of behaviour policing that stems from coloured exclusivism’s aspiration towards to middle class tastes and values. The performance of coloured femininity approved of by *Swirl Magazine ZA* adheres to the longstanding belief in middle-class respectability that is important to self-defined coloured communities.

SM: Love that advice. Alot of women get it wrong. What style mistake do you see coloured women making over and over again?
MJO: Wearing clothes that are too tight and revealing! I'm all for body confidence and flaunting what you've got, but do it with finesse. I feel that coloured women have been conditioned to believe that"sexy" automatically equates with "tight and short".

"I alone am enough. Who I am is enough!"

"Many women don't dress for themselves
he thinks is sexy. That will not change ur
woman changes. When a little voice start
enough!".

SM: That's what we here a Swirl Magazine ,ZA are trying to achieve: to help colored women realise that they ARE enough. So , onto designers. Do you think local designers are on par with international ones?
MJO: I love what is happening in local fashion right now.

Image five: Excerpt from interview with fashion blogger, Melissa Joy Ohllson (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015)

The connection between respectability and coloured femininity is amplified in a column devoted to profiling self-defined coloured fashion blogger, Melissa Joy Ohllson (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015: 11-15), who is quoted saying that coloured womxn in general wear styles of dress that make them vulnerable to being sexualised and objectified. When asked by an editorial member from *Swirl Magazine*, to identify a fashion blunder made often by coloured womxn, Ohllson replies: “Wearing clothes that are too tight and revealing!... I feel that coloured women have been conditioned to think that sexy automatically equates with tight and short” (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015: 13). Ohllson goes on to say that coloured womxn dress for the validation of the heterosexual male gaze, and that this implies that most coloured womxn are unable to fathom fulfilment outside of being sexualised through exploitative patriarchal connections with heterosexual men. She equates a style of dress she personally finds objectionable, to an apparent general inability on the part of coloured womxn to affirm their own individuality: “That will not

change until the collective psyche of the coloured woman changes. When a little voice starts saying, I alone am enough. Who I am is enough!" (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015: 14).

Ohllson constructs (Augustinos, 2009: 55) a reality where a direct correlation between styles of dress, sexuality and self-esteem is common-sense. By conflating sexuality with being sexualised, Ohllson positions coloured womxn as disempowered in their social context to the extent that freedom in choices such as clothing styles, are not extended to them lest these choices confirm pejorative associations of sexual excessiveness with brown female bodies. Choosing to wear clothes described by Ohllson as "tight and short," is constructed as confirmation of a lack in the development of a full human. This lack is claimed to be found in "the collective psyche of the coloured woman" (*Swirl Magazine,* 2015: 14) and this claim draws from colonial constructions that attached to coloured, female working-class bodies, associations of sexual degeneracy and psychiatric disabilities. As explained earlier, these associations have survived for instance, in contemporary science and academia (Niewoudt et al., 2019) and have strengthened the corrosive environment that fuels racial vulnerability. This enables people from within the community even, to make sweeping connections between styles of dress and self-worth of individuals.

Though Ohllson is a self-defined coloured womxn, her statements with respect to what she views as a flawed performance of racially gendered identity on the part of other coloured womxn, emphasises the tendency within the community to police its own, especially amongst womxn. The magazine's reproduction and publication of Ohllson's comments as well as explicit approval from the interviewer in the column expressed in the statement, "That is what we here at *Swirl Magazine ZA* are trying to achieve: to help coloured women realise they ARE enough" (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015: 13) communicates they agree with the comments and the logic that underpins it. The editorial term of magazine agree with the connections that Ohllson has made between, on the one hand, self-worth, self-respect, cognitive development, sexual objectification and heterosexual power inequality; and on the other, clothing styles. It is assumed as common sense that clothing styles could be read as indicative of character and more especially for coloured womxn, that ways of dressing reveal the level of personal development. Excessive sexuality as a connotation attached to bodies read as coloured

has historically been accompanied by assumptions of low cognitive development and poverty (Scully, 1995: 348). This implies that styles of dress that confirm stereotypes of sexual excess amongst coloured womxn, become a catalyst for all the other pejorative connotations of coloured womxn that come with the assumption of sexual lasciviousness. This discursively sketches a world in which clothing choices for coloured womxn are a dichotomy between personal taste and the imperatives of historical performances of racially gendered identity.

Towards the end of the magazine, from pages 106 to 109, five blogs are identified and hailed as "authentic, positive, revolutionary (in that they address issues coloured women face)" (*Swirl Magazine,* 2015: 106). Following the established trend throughout the magazine so far, the discursive reference to these stereotypes is made using consensus warrants (Augustinos, 2009: 86) that frame the existence of the stereotypes as common knowledge to those reading the magazine. Thus, these blogs are presented to readers as valuable because of their potential to undermine existing stereotypes. The blogs are identified by their URL addresses and are numbered one through number five. Each blog is briefly described followed by an explanation of *Swirl Magazines* support for the blog. With respect to the second blog, identified as themandyexpedition.co.za, *Swirl Magazine ZA* identifies the blogger as a coloured womxn who is a proponent of wearing one's hair naturally without the application of product to change the texture.

Hair is loaded symbol amongst previously disadvantaged communities within Africa and across the diaspora (Omotoso, 2018: 7). Hair discourse represents the intersection between race and gender and this space is characterised by testimonies that speak to exclusion, marginalisation, discrimination and conformism (Honey, 2017). Non-white people across the world have had to capitulate towards certain styles of hair in order to garner respect and authority in their social contexts (Omotoso, 2018: 10). This especially true amongst coloured people as a result of traumatic bureaucratic experiences that premised the trajectory of whole livelihoods on the basis of hair texture (Mphahlele, 2006: 88). *Swirl Magazine ZA* speaks to this history by describing hair as "a very coloured issue" (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015: 107) drawing on discursive resources such as the consensus warrant, to invoke the perception that it is widely established amongst self-defined coloured communities and especially amongst womxn, that hair is a social,

political and cultural issue within the community. In the coloured community, historically, hair texture determined ones economic and social standing. Certain hair textures were valourised and others decried. The former guaranteed access to privileges, the latter was considered shameful, associated with barbaric past and encouraged to be treated as an aspect of one's aesthetic that must always be managed. Erasmus (2017:12) confirms that within the community she grew up in, she was considered undesirable by potential suitors with high social standing because she is "curly haired". Hair texture defines the relationship that a womxn of colour is able to establish with herself in terms of herself esteem and this is alluded to again through the use of discursive resources in the following excerpt describing that before she decided to wear her hair naturally and to blog about it, the blogger "regularly straightened her hair like many coloured women before her" (*Swirl Magazine ZA*, 2015: 107). The writer then proceeds to mention that one day, the blogger decided to "forgo the horrors of chemical straightening processes" (*Swirl Magazine ZA*, 2015: 107) and this process of extensive management of hair is affirmed by Omotoso (2018: 14) who explains that chemicals, colours and hair extensions are often used in situations when the performance of identity is dependent on access to opportunities.

The discourse thus far has situated hair and the politics thereof as important to the performance of coloured femininity and a loaded and difficult experience that is common to self-defined coloured womxn. The writers affirm that they encourage their readers to follow the blog because the blogger has embraced her natural hair texture and thus "embraces her colouredness". This sentence discursively constructs decisions that self-defined coloured womxn make about their hair, as definitive of their access to the self-definition of coloured. To engage in management of hair associated with straightening or even different styling of hair such as the decision to wear wigs or extensions, is conflated as a disavowal of what the writers define as "colouredness." Hair texture is conscripted into an essentialising narrative that although on the surface intends to be empowering, actually limits the ways in which self-defined coloured womxn choose to self-represent when it comes to their hair. This is reminiscent of the essentialising responses to white supremacism that locate a romanticised African essence as the only viable contrary. Decisions regarding what coloured womxn choose to

do with their hair are personal yet *Swirl Magazine ZA* chalks up continued styling of hair according to mainstream styles as conforming to "European ideals of beauty" (*Swirl Magazine ZA*, 2015: 107). By conflating one way of wearing one's hair with validity in terms of performing as a coloured womxn, *Swirl Magazine ZA* essentialises the performance of coloured femininity in relation to hair and interprets one blogger's experience of her relationship to her hair, as the standard for all who self-define as coloured womxn.

The fourth blogger, channichic.com, is hailed as authentically coloured because of the charity endeavours she does. This is aligns with *Swirl Magazines* preferred portrayal of coloured womxn as selfless, a trait that was important in the construction of the Moeder archetype during the apartheid era (Salo, 2005: 352). Yvette Abrahams (1997: 37) affirms this value placed on self-sacrifice as integral to performances of coloured femininity through her recollection of the maternal role that her grandmothers played in the social lives of their communities. She describes the roles they took on as the informal and unacknowledged social welfare positions that brown womxn have taken upon themselves for generations. *Swirl Magazine ZA's* affirmation of the fourth blogger's charity work, confirms that coloured femininity is considered authentic when it is able to reference points of individual selflessness in service of community. In addition to this, the blogger's respect and admiration for her late grandmother is praised and this earns her "serious points" with the editorial team and *Swirl Magazine ZA* and by implication, the magazine subscribers. This praise is extended to the blogger with the assumption that "the lady is inspired by her heritage" (*Swirl Magazine ZA*, 2015: 108). This discursively constructs authentic portrayals of coloured femininity as those that draw cues from their family and community history. This does create the impression, through repeated performative acts, that certain social practices that have come to be associated with coloured femininity, are the result of an ephemeral essence. Underscoring lineage as part of coloured femininity performance also speaks to the anxiety about belonging unpacked in an earlier chapter, that plagues contemporary performances of coloured identity. Social identities in general are experiencing a degree of anxiety in the face of contemporary complexity and in South Africa especially, being able to reference one's roots lends credibility to one's claim to civil rights and national

belonging. However, conflating embodying performances of coloured femininity that draw from one's lineage with authenticity, excludes a great deal of self-defined coloured womxn as many have been cut off from knowledge about their ancestors (Abrahams, 1997: 40) and for most self-defined coloured womxn, their history is not a source of preoccupation (Ruiters, 2009: 126). The emphasis on uncritically drawing from one's lineage in performance of coloured femininity obscures its reality as a social identity and not the essentialist one invested in by the magazine's editorial team.

The final blogger, fashionistact.wordpress.com, is selected as representative of authentic coloured femininity based on the professional success she has accrued. *Swirl Magazine ZA* identifies that the blogger is affiliated with businesses and cultural institutions such as Mercedes Benz and Elle Magazine. On the basis of her professional success *Swirl Magazine ZA* writes "she is a testament to something we hold dear *at Swirl Magazine*-hard work and commitment to improving ourselves and our stereotypical negative image in the media." Discursively, this blogger is constructed as the ideal performance of contemporary coloured womxn as through her achievements and affiliations with brands that signify middle-class respectability and wealth, the blogger has successfully, from what the magazine can surmise, undermined pejorative assumptions attached to coloured womxn in the popular imagination. This particular blogger's performance of her racially gendered identity embodies the ideal that the magazine's editor-in-chief alluded to at the beginning of the magazine—that the performance of coloured femininity most prized by Swirl Magazine ZA is one that foregrounds achievement. In addition, readers who self-define as coloured womxn are encouraged to understand the achievements of other self-defined coloured womxn as reflections on themselves and sources of pride. In this way, the complexity and contradictions that make up identity are obscured by yet more rigid policing that historically prized respectability, modesty and domesticity and now also expects of self-identifying coloured womxn to achieve not for her own sense of fulfilment but to elevate the perception of other coloured womxn in the popular imagination.

The Final Word

When you ask a pre - teen who their hero is, more often than not, the answer is ,"My mom". Ask why, and the answers range from ,"she takes care of me and my brothers and sisters", to "she believes in me and loves me unconditionally."

The moment this changes is difficult to pinpoint.

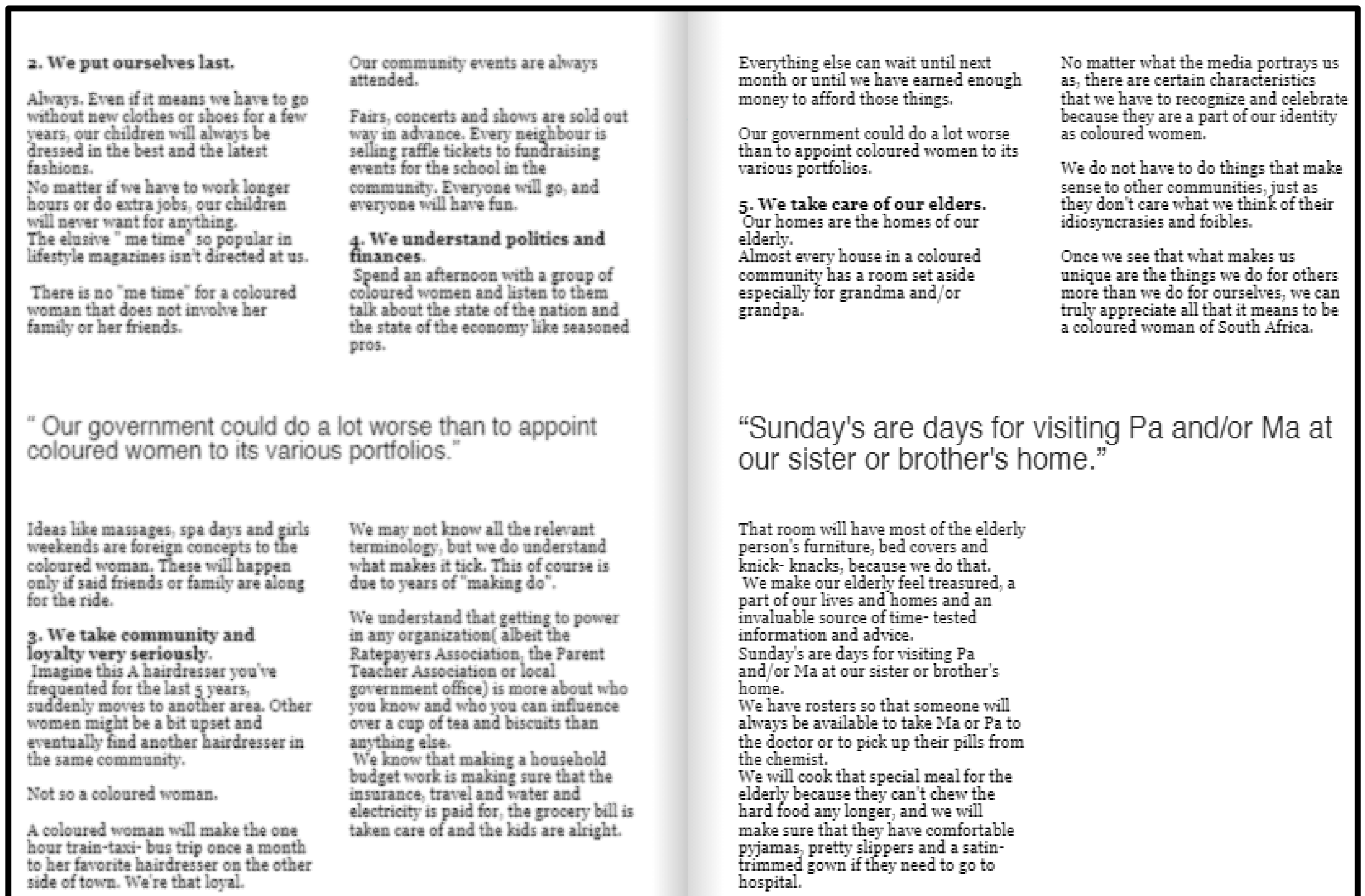
Perhaps the simple act of growing up and being a part of a world where women are negatively portrayed (as bitches, whores or hoes, sluts), removes the 'shine' from the mother figure. As a result, when those same children are young adults, they no longer revere their mothers and relationships with them have become fractured, and even distant.

But this is different for coloured women and their children. Ask any adult male and he'll quote his mother on any given topic. Ask any coloured adult female and she'll tell you her mother is her inspiration and the " wind beneath my wings".
We must be doing something right.

1. We love uncontrollably and unconditionally.

Picture this: A police car stops outside the gates of a typical Cape Flats home. The policeman walks up the driveway, knocks on the door, and asks the suspect' s mothers *that* question, and her answer will most likely be that, " No sir, I don't know where my son/ daughter is" (Clue: probably hiding in her bedroom closet).
Whatever you may think of the morality of this, or the long term consequences to society in general, to a coloured woman it simply means that she is protecting her child. It doesn't matter what the rights or wrongs of our child's actions are, to us our child deserves our love unconditionally and unreservedly.
Standing courtside in any court of law, shouting at the judge to leave her child alone? The coloured woman.
Her child loses his job, loses his home and needs to move back home, with his wife, kids and two dogs. The coloured woman will make a two bedroom house into a palace, and a loaf of bread, can of sardines and Ricoffy into a gastronomical feast.

Image six: Screenshot of the spread at the end of the magazine listing characteristics inherent to self-defined coloured womxn (*Swirl Magazine ZA*, 116-118: 2015)



2. We put ourselves last.

Always. Even if it means we have to go without new clothes or shoes for a few years, our children will always be dressed in the best and the latest fashions.
No matter if we have to work longer hours or do extra jobs, our children will never want for anything.
The elusive " me time" so popular in lifestyle magazines isn't directed at us.

There is no "me time" for a coloured woman that does not involve her family or her friends.

" Our government could do a lot worse than to appoint coloured women to its various portfolios."

Ideas like massages, spa days and girls weekends are foreign concepts to the coloured woman. These will happen only if said friends or family are along for the ride.

3. We take community and loyalty very seriously.
Imagine this A hairdresser you've frequented for the last 5 years, suddenly moves to another area. Other women might be a bit upset and eventually find another hairdresser in the same community.

Not so a coloured woman.

A coloured woman will make the one hour train-taxi- bus trip once a month to her favorite hairdresser on the other side of town. We're that loyal.

Our community events are always attended.

Fairs, concerts and shows are sold out way in advance. Every neighbour is selling raffle tickets to fundraising events for the school in the community. Everyone will go, and everyone will have fun.

4. We understand politics and finances.
Spend an afternoon with a group of coloured women and listen to them talk about the state of the nation and the state of the economy like seasoned pros.

We may not know all the relevant terminology, but we do understand what makes it tick. This of course is due to years of "making do".

We understand that getting to power in any organization(albeit the Ratepayers Association, the Parent Teacher Association or local government office) is more about who you know and who you can influence over a cup of tea and biscuits than anything else.
We know that making a household budget work is making sure that the insurance, travel and water and electricity is paid for, the grocery bill is taken care of and the kids are alright.

Everything else can wait until next month or until we have earned enough money to afford those things.

Our government could do a lot worse than to appoint coloured women to its various portfolios.

5. We take care of our elders.
Our homes are the homes of our elderly.
Almost every house in a coloured community has a room set aside especially for grandma and/or grandpa.

"Sunday's are days for visiting Pa and/or Ma at our sister or brother's home."

That room will have most of the elderly person's furniture, bed covers and knick- knacks, because we do that.
We make our elderly feel treasured, a part of our lives and homes and an invaluable source of time- tested information and advice.
Sunday's are days for visiting Pa and/or Ma at our sister or brother's home.
We have rosters so that someone will always be available to take Ma or Pa to the doctor or to pick up their pills from the chemist.
We will cook that special meal for the elderly because they can't chew the hard food any longer, and we will make sure that they have comfortable pyjamas, pretty slippers and a satin-trimmed gown if they need to go to hospital.

No matter what the media portrays us as, there are certain characteristics that we have to recognize and celebrate because they are a part of our identity as coloured women.

We do not have to do things that make sense to other communities, just as they don't care what we think of their idiosyncrasies and foibles.

Once we see that what makes us unique are the things we do for others more than we do for ourselves, we can truly appreciate all that it means to be a coloured woman of South Africa.

Image seven: Screenshot of the spread at the end of the magazine listing characteristics inherent to self-defined coloured womxn (*Swirl Magazine ZA*, 116-118: 2015)

The final section of the magazine spreads across three pages and details what the magazine's editorial team identifies as five characteristics inherent to coloured womxn. These five characteristics are,

1. We love uncontrollably and unconditionally
2. We put ourselves last
3. We take community seriously
4. We understand politics and finance
5. We take care of our elders

Through the use of discursive resources, readers are encouraged to agree with what is detailed on the list. These characteristics are constructed, as innate to coloured

womxn. This is evinced towards the end of the list as the reader is encouraged to receive the list as confirmation of individual character traits and to take pride in what is detailed in the list, to "celebrate because they are a part of our identity as coloured women" (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015: 118). Here, race-holding is relied on to make fluid the boundaries between individual and group identity (Steele, 1993: 43), encouraging the readers to view what the magazine constructs as their positive attributes and innate strengths, as a product of racially gendered group identity rather than individual personality. Race-holding implies that a subject "sees the locus of power in race rather than himself (sic) (Steele, 1993: 42) and in this instance, this means that the magazine's representation of coloured womxn gives the impression that race and gender determine the quality of one's character and that to be a coloured womxn automatically confers one with admirable traits. Steele (1993: 43) explains that these distortions and exaggerations regarding group identity such as race and gender, lend legitimacy to a subject's decision to assign all the strengths of their capabilities as a by-product of racial classification.

The discourse used in the list conveys Butler's (1988: 345) discussion of the illusion of a stable essence provided by performative acts. This reference to performative acts includes the use of a consensus warrant in this list, as implying that the list records widely known, accepted and intrinsic characteristics of coloured womxn, lends to the illusion of a stable essence of coloured femininity. The list validates Salo's (2005: 342) development of the archetype of the apartheid era coloured Moeder or Mother.

At the heart of this archetype is the bridge to resources it represents, whether these resources are material support from the state or personal resources that include time, talents and energy for playing an active role in community affairs in service of others or raising younger members of a household. The archetype of the coloured mother has served to consistently position coloured womxn as defined by the state of their household and their communities. Following the Anglo-Boer war, Afrikaner womxn seized on opportunities presented by the rapidly industrializing economy, earning money that could bestow them with a sense of independence, out from under the thumb of domesticity and servitude, however this was curbed as rhetoric regarding the Volksmoeder archetype was emphasised to prevent womxn from finding avenues for their labour and fulfilment outside of the domestic care for fathers, husbands and sons

(McClintock, 1991: 111). Unending service and unmitigated access to personal resources under the guise of love and selflessness is the foundation of the archetype of the Moeder figure which has effectively held entire coloured communities together—communities that have been, and continue to be, located on the physical and metaphorical fringes of the scope of the state's support. During apartheid, the Moeder figure was essential to the survival of community members and represented, at least locally, the interests that related to the wellbeing of community members similar to civic representation offered only to white South Africans at the time. In offering protection from and negotiating with gangs who operated, amongst other less helpful ways, as the local form of a kangaroo court as well as protecting dissenting community members from detection and abuse from police, the Moeder figure acted as her community's first genuine civic mediator, a role that in post-apartheid South Africa is embodied by local governance operative such as ward councillors. Encoded within the Moeder figure was a semblance of the type of supportive governance that coloured communities needed but could not count on from the state.

Looking at what is detailed below the first characteristic, "We love uncontrollably and unconditionally" it is clear that in contemporary South Africa, the mother figure still acts as a buffer between the community at the state apparatus. This is evinced by the sketch of the mother living in a coloured community, denying knowledge of her child's whereabouts to the police while hiding the child away in the house. Of this *Swirl Magazine* remarks "whatever you may think of the morality of this, or the long-term consequences to society in general, to a coloured woman, it simply means she is protecting her child." (*Swirl Magazine ZA*, 2015: 116). Here, a mother's love and care are conflated with choosing the community and her household over her obligations as a citizen. The state apparatus and especially the police is received with distrust in previously disenfranchised communities as unpacked in chapter two and community members conflate police presence with increased violence and tension in the community. Coloured womxn act as the bridges between apparatus of the state and members of their community in order to protect community members from historically violent and repressive interactions with the police.

In the fourth characteristic written as "we understand politics and finance" (*Swirl Magazine ZA*, 2015: 117), coloured womxn are constructed as power brokers within their communities as well. The description underneath the fourth characteristic gives the reader the impression that to be a coloured womxn means having an innate sense of how to engage with powerbrokers within and outside the community and how to influence the flow of power in the community in favour of obtaining access to spaces where decisions regarding the wellbeing of the community, is made. This is evinced in the following excerpt "we understand that getting to power in any organisation (albeit the Ratepayers association or local government office) is more about who you know and who you can influence over a cup of tea and biscuits." The mother figure makes a reappearance in post-apartheid South Africa, because of the growing marginalisation, inequality and powerlessness that characterises the lives of groups of South Africans of colour such as members of former coloureds-only communities who still reside in these areas and are still vulnerable to the same dynamics that characterised these communities during apartheid, namely violence, unemployment, substance abuse, poverty, hunger and isolation.

Though the magazine claims that the figure of the coloured Moeder provides a healthy antithesis to what the magazine defines as contemporary portrayals of femininity that are degrading, I believe that much of the appeal of this figure is its practical functionality in the communities and households in which coloured womxn find themselves. The description underneath the second trait defined as "we put ourselves last" portrays an image of coloured femininity that sacrifices personal comforts and wants for the sake of the happiness of dependents. Here, clothes and shoes and working longer hours and taking on extra forms of employment are discursively constructed as virtuous performances of self-sacrifice for the happiness of others. Self-care and replenishment are scorned "ideas like massages, spa days and girl's trips are foreign concepts to the coloured woman". The contrast between work and relaxation is split along the binary of selfless and selfish. Performances of coloured femininity are expected to willingly forgo opportunities for self-replenishment or for comfort if the pursuit of this detracts from the focus and labour that should be dedicated to others. In

this way, a coloured womxn's endless labour provides a wellspring from which dependents are guaranteed, for the foreseeable future, a drink.

The discursive construction of coloured femininity in the article is used to create the impression that selflessness underpins legitimate displays of coloured femininity. This is evinced in the following excerpt "what makes us unique are the things we do for others more than what we do for ourselves" (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015: 116). With respect to magazine theory, this discourse creates a frame of reference for reflection for the intended reader to conceive of their relations with others as opportunities to demonstrate selflessness and thus to confirm to others and to themselves, the legitimacy of their racially gendered identity.

The five characteristics are listed and at the start of each one is the reference to, "we" (*Swirl Magazine*, 2015: 115-116). This is done in order to entrench shared identity between the magazine and the readers as well as amongst the readers. This gives the impression that when compared against a collective of identical racially gendered performance, one feels pressured to align individual performance as much as possible to what is conveyed as standard behaviour of the collective. The pressure to place the power for one's internal ongoing narrative of identity into the hands of the racially gendered collective is strengthened by the impression given by the magazine, that the collective's performance is inherently legitimate.

Running through the discussion of the five characteristics is a focused on continued labour and service, within the home and the surrounding community. A coloured womxn's love and care are consistently defined by their capacity to provide for others mental, material and emotional resources, a series of responsibilities that should be the labour of formal governance and its related institutions. Coloured womxn, defined by the support they pour into others, is an idea expanded on in the fifth characteristic. In this characteristic the impression of coloured womxn as the personification of a government, is highlighted through roles they undertake in the form of local approximations of social welfare. *Swirl Magazine ZA* claims, through the use of the consensus warrant, claims that "almost every house in a coloured community has a room set aside especially for grandma and/or grandpa". The rest of the description leaves the reader with the impression that this room is manned by coloured womxn, in

that taking care of the wellbeing of elderly relatives is a specialised task that coloured womxn innately know how to manage and navigate. The implication here is that this inherent sense of knowing how to provide care for the elderly, a form of employment that others have to receive training for, comes naturally to coloured womxn.

Taking care of the elderly and playing an active role in procedural democracy and its spaces for civic participation are constructed by the magazine as qualities intrinsic to coloured womxn. Though the magazine tries to obscure this with allusions to an elusive essence, this is a direct inheritance of modelled behaviour carried over from the networks formed between adult coloured womxn during apartheid. As explained earlier, the activities of coloured womxn represented the only semblance of state support for communities of colour that existed. This list of characteristics confirms that now as then, coloured womxn are essential to their households and communities to fill in the yawning gap left by the state and its institutions.

In juxtaposing this archetype of the Moeder figure against what the magazine identifies as negative portrayals of femininity coded into the figures of womxn as "bitches, whores or hoes, sluts" (*Swirl Magazine ZA*, 2015: 115), the Moeder figure is presented to coloured-identifying womxn as a route to respectability that would enable them to escape contemporary definitions of womxn in sexualised and crass terms. There is no range of alternatives provided, simply the Moeder figure, and this implies that for coloured womxn, the only legitimate way to escape being objectified during the course of one's performance of identity, is to embody the Moeder figure and seeking personhood within the limitations of self-sacrifice, domesticity and service. Providing resources for others is presented as a pilgrimage that coloured womxn must seek out in order to achieve respectability and legitimacy in their racially gendered performance of identity.

The advertisements that appear within the magazine are tied to the beauty industry and are frequently for make-up service, clothing or beauty products. This indicates that *Swirl Magazine* is constrained in the depth and scope of its representation of coloured womxn, as ultimately it must play to the idea of coloured womxn as consumers in order to net more advertising for subsequent editions. This is what informed the article that appeared on pages 30 and 31, dedicated to reviewing products

targeted at lightening uneven skin tone caused by hyper-pigmentation and melasma. Under the guise of assumed objectivity and rationality of dermatological jargon, the article plays on fears about skin tone that is an inheritance of anxiety reserved for phenotypical characteristics in the coloured community discussed earlier. Mining this anxiety is profitable in the course of promoting consumerism and the history of skin lightening advertisements and editorials in magazines in South Africa attests to the comfortable existence that adverts for these products have enjoyed in publications that claim to be revolutionary, supportive and authentic in their orientation.

Conclusion

Magazines reveal more about culture and society than overtly political publications (Rauwerda, 2007: 393) and the above analysis of Swirl Magazine ZA's first issue yields a great deal of insight into the knot formed at the intersection between race and gender in South Africa. The medium of the magazine is evolving as a result of the changes in commerce, technology and business and as a result, magazines are turning into megazines or metazines, forming expansive networks across the digital space, carrying their brand and message across as many platforms as possible. This has also been influenced by greater segmentation of niche audiences for magazines and more and more, megazines and metazines are targeting more finely refined groups of people, splitting people off into narrower socially significant markers of identity. This results in megazine and metazine networks that rely on greater segmentation online in order to survive. The section of the digital media ecology that is home to magazines, becomes a highly charged sectarian site dependent on personhood based on the illusion of a stable essence to identity. Magazines provide grounding in this sense, especially in democracies where one feels isolated from the state. Magazines give the impression of community and the sense of belonging engendered by communities is necessary for a healthy democracy. Magazines become more salient when spaces for political and civic participation deteriorate as this degradation amplifies alienation a democratic subject may experience in relation to the state. This is what makes magazines such as *Swirl Magazine ZA* significant. It offers an invitation to a segmented community that provides a space of belonging and an opportunity for reflection. This space is important for marginalised communities who have historically felt rejected and maligned by the state,

and segmentation on which they rely, take on greater significance in the ongoing narrative of identity (Ytre-Arne, 2013: 247).

*Swirl Magazine ZA'*s conception of the Moeder archetype lays bare the coloured communities historical process for coping with alienation and neglect from the state. The Moeder figure as the embodiment of service has carried coloured communities through successive regimes that saw the political and economic erosion of coloured social standing; and it remains an archetype to aspire to as a result of racial vulnerability and stereotype threat that forces coloured womxn and the coloured community, to deny and recompose general pejorative and contemptable views of their personhood. The binary between shame and respectability forces coloured womxn into service for their households and communities and is a strategy employed for generations now. Coloured womxn have historically been policed into this role but with the advent of democracy and globalisation, young coloured womxn have been exposed to contrary forms of self-styling. The alienation, inequality, poverty and violence that characterised coloureds-only communities during apartheid, persists today. This has forced proponents of the Moeder figure to adapt to contemporary digital ecology of messaging in order to retain the support that coloured womxn pour into their households and communities. The womxn's lifestyle magazine or the contemporary equivalent of the megazine, is suited to this as its structure is informed by decades of policing the self-stylings of womxn, a tactic that the internal dynamics of the coloured community is already familiar with. Though contempt for coloured people abounds in South Africa, the harshest discipline and condemnation of the performance of identity has tended to come from within the community.

In South Africa, the legacy of how womxn of colour have been featured in magazines relies on the colonial imagination and thus in a local context coloured womxn have been reproduced in the media along the lines of the stereotypes created from the seventieth century onwards—stereotypes that enabled sexual violence and rape of womxn classified as coloured. With this history bleeding into the media, *Swirl Magazine ZA* was forced to reproduce and legitimate reactive constructions of coloured femininity and thus the angle from which much of the content is written, is preoccupied with undermining stereotypes.

Conclusion

This project intended to assess contemporary portrayals of coloured identity online, across three different digital spaces and mediated through different forms of texts. These texts are multimodal and rely on mainly images and text to communicate their specific representation. This study analysed present constructions of coloured identity made by those who claim the identity in different online contexts. The study analysed source material from different online contexts over a five-year span. The Instagram post published by @being_coloured, discussed in chapter two was posted on their platform in 2018. The memes produced and published by VannieKaap on their Facebook page and discussed in chapter three, were released in 2019 and 2020. The first issue of *Swirl Magazine ZA* explored and discussed in chapter four, was published on the MadMagz platform in 2015. I felt that this five-year time span represented an adequate chunk of time off which to base my conclusions about how these different self-defined coloured social media accounts and online magazine, are constructing digital representations of coloured identity. The time span and the digital breadth of the project was integral to a concise investigation of the political, social and cultural questions that contemporary representations of coloured identity are attempting to grapple with.

The digital space is highly curated and the aspects of our personhood that we choose to emphasise in certain internet spaces, are indicative of perhaps the primary means through which we negotiate our offline reality. As I have stressed throughout this project, the chasms that contour our offline reality bleed into the digital space and manifest in interesting ways. We perform these by drawing from the semiotic codes available, forms of media and the different internet platforms. This therefore implies that our self-styling online will be performed in relation to the avenues and tools available and an important part of the work I present here is highlighting that these avenues through which we express identity can be constrained by the semiotic codes, the form and the platforms. People present themselves differently depending on the context and on the basis of this alone, personhood as a state of constant incompleteness is underscored.

This stands in contrast to the essentialist understandings of race. Race and racial categories are interpreted as fixed parts of ones being especially in South Africa. Despite the robust non-racial and non-sexist democratic movement of the latter half of the anti-apartheid era, the spirit of new possibilities for conceiving personhood as been lost since then. Post-apartheid has seen a renewed dependence on racial categories as a primary means of understanding one's identity. This is solidified by narrow approaches to redress which in turn are exacerbated by conceptions of national identity based on multiculturalism and multiculturalism, often relies on assuming that races or ethnicities are "cultures", thus often reproducing some form of essentialism. This casts a thin veil of rainbowist rhetoric over increasingly deepening social and economic inequalities. In the face of these complex circumstances, essentialist understandings of oneself provides the semblance of an imaginary concreteness, a coherence of self and sense of certainty and my research findings affirm this.

The discussion of @being_coloured's representation of contemporary coloured self-styling on Instagram, confirmed that through platform vernaculars available on Instagram, space is opened up for those who feel neglected by procedural democracy, to present their narrative. @being_coloured used the grief aesthetic associated with social justice movements on Instagram, to curate a multimodal narrative that touches on themes such as exclusion, marginalisation, violence and inequality contained by the racial category of coloured. The grief aesthetic provides cues for curating the representation of the social justice issue at hand and these cues make up the characteristics of the grief aesthetic. Amongst these is use of images tied to mainstream media accounts of the particular social justice issue. As a result, @being_coloured sifted through mainstream media photojournalism accounts of the Westbury protest of 1 October 2018 and placed these in a sequence of four images to create a visual narrative. Below this, the visual narrative was anchored by the text in the caption. The grief aesthetic allowed the account holders to curate a contemporary representation of coloured identity that is characterised by exclusion, marginalisation, violence and contempt. Conscripted into this narrative was admonition for formal state apparatus and the mainstream media.

The grief aesthetic provided a space for procedural democracy to be contested and for mainstream media accounts of the protest in Westbury, to be challenged. This narrative though, equated demonstrators in the protest as motivated by the narrative of coloured identity sketched by the account holders. The images from the Westbury protests were used and turned the demonstrators into symbols of a larger discourse about coloured identity that the account holders were trying to make. In addition, the account holders also legitimated the presumption that racial categories can be gauged by the look, conflating all the demonstrators pictured as self-identifying coloured people.

@being_coloured presents here a totalising picture of how others who might self-identify as coloured, conceive of their identity. By placing a bigger narrative about race onto the demonstrators pictured and the protest itself, the account holders totalise what it means to self-define as coloured in contemporary South Africa.

The third chapter's focus on memetic texts as a means to self-represent coloured identity on Facebook, underscored the limitations thereof. Both memes and Facebook engender the creation of collectives and this creates a mutually reinforcing relationship between the two. Content that speaks to the existence of an in-group does well on Facebook, as in-groups define themselves in contrast to others, drawing vitriolic responses that work in favour for tracking user engagement on Facebook.

VannieKaap has built up a dense tapestry of memetic media on their Facebook platform and each stand's as a thread that provides commentary on the account holders conception of coloured identity. A community has built up and drawn together as a result of this tapestry and they form part of it when they use Facebook features such as like, share or reactions. They continue to build on to the representation started by Vannie Kaap. The concern with this representation is that as a result of the form of the meme and the nature of the platform, the version of coloured self-styling represented through the teal-coloured squares on Vannie Kaap's page, is a representation of coloured identity that promotes an essentialist understanding thereof. This trajectory of styling is then amplified through Facebook's design and platform features. The logic of the platform, heightened by the constraints of the form of the meme drives understanding of coloured identity as legitimated through an essence.

Memes favour minimal text and rely more on images and Facebook presents users with decontextualised snippets of other user's self-representations and this creates an environment in which unpacking the social nature of identity seems impossible. The form of the platform and the style of the meme entrench the fundamentalism of multicultural, rainbowist South Africa and push, especially self-defined coloured people, further away from contending with the reality that race and the category of coloured, is socially and historically located. In general, Facebook and memes as a means to self-represent does more harm in the context of South Africa because it entrenches binaries of national, ethnic and racial belonging in the popular imagination. Citizenship is construed along the dichotomy of those who are assumed to be colonial descendants and those who are assumed indigenous and who possess an inherent African essence. The longer Facebook and memes are relied on as a means to legitimate racial self-representation, the further away we push understandings of race as social identities.

The final chapter, analysed contemporary representations of coloured femininity as postulated by *Swirl Magazine ZA.* Inherently in womxns magazines there is an essentialised Ideal presented against which womxn are expected to compare, police and affirm their own representations of femininity. This has been the tradition for womxns magazines because of traditional magazines funding model. Policing womxn into consumption as ensured that magazines robust cultural institutions throughout the twentieth century. This has been derailed through technological and computing advancements and so magazines have to re-brand themselves by splitting readership markets into smaller pieces. This is how the media ecology arrives at magazines that can be targted towards racially gendered readers. In addition, wider range of products can be peddled to readers in this way. Segmentation along the lines of socially significant markers have kept magazines a viable part of the media ecology.

Magazines targeted at racially gendered minorities and ethnic groups brand themselves as transformative, but the essence of an Ideal remains. Touting a single version of femininity is central to magazines and in the present, magazines now have more intimate ties with their readers through brands that exist across a network of internet platforms building community around an Ideal version of racially defined

femininity. This is true of *Swirl Magazine ZA* as the magazine denied and recomposed the racial vulnerability coloured womxn experience, into a version of coloured femininity that touts the values that render coloured womxn into informal social service workers in their communities. The binary between shame and respectability forces coloured womxn into service for their households and communities and the magazine communicates to readers that selflessness, domesticity, middle-class tastes and values and respectability are the essences of coloured femininity. Care, sacrifice and abnegation is construed as the gendered essence of what it means to be a coloured womxn, reinforcing performances of coloured identity that keep coloured womxn locked in anxious preoccupation with whether or not their decisions, styles of dress, ways of behaving and talking, communicate the right amount of respectability.

As online spaces grow increasingly more vitriolic and polarizing, it becomes increasingly more difficult to conceive of identity outside of fundamentalism. As the class divide deepens in South Africa, it becomes important to move away from using race as the dominant and totalising category. We must find a way to step outside races' constraining hold on our capacity to identify in incomplete ways that are orientated towards structural transformation.

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