The Everlasting Plague of Settler Colonialism in South Africa:

An Autoethnographic Study on the Settler Logic of Eliminations' Assimilative Projects and its Impact Upon Understandings of Identity and the Self.

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. ach significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signed by candidate

Signature:_____ **Date**: 16/01/2023

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ABSTRACT

Focusing specifically upon the South African settler colony, this thesis examines the creation of the settler logic of elimination, the assimilative processes it birthed as well as the impact it has had upon my understanding of the Coloured self/identity. Within the context of colonisation, those who hold power inevitably become the makers of meaning and value for the *Other*. In the eyes of racism the body and the mind of the targeted other exists with the absence of self and identity as our physical body is reduced to nothing more than skin, constructed to support the accepted societal culture. In attempts towards re-discovering liberated notions of my-self and identity as a Coloured South African women, unassociated with the negative connotations attached to my ascribed racial identity, I have placed myself and my family as the subject of analysis throughout this research. By situating myself at the core of this thesis I aim to disrupt and humanise modernist theories of settler colonialism through displaying the lived experiences of its consequences upon the identities targeted into silence.

Chapter One: Introduction

"As black people, we speak because we dare to look in the mirror and see what we are not; we speak because blackness has come to represent negativity and nothingness; we speak because we seek to name ourselves, define ourselves and re-invent ourselves – and we speak because we want to free ourselves."

(More, 2017:11)

1.1. Understanding Identity and the Self

Up until very recently, I have always struggled with the concept of self in relation to my inner understandings of who I am and my outer perceivable self, which I recognise as being my ascribed identity. Upon intense self-reflection, I have come to acknowledge that my identity and self-have always been diametrically opposed never existing in harmony with one another. With such stark differences and connotations between the two, I have only ever possessed the ability to house and perform one version of myself at a time. However, noting how uncomfortable I have been of late sitting in the skin of my current self and Coloured identity, has led me on this journey of rediscovery. By drawing on my family's history alongside authors versed within the discourse of identity construction, the Self and the Other, I aim to shed light on the complex factors that have both positively and negatively influenced the essence of my being in the form I have termed the *Other-self*. Thus, to successfully understand the historical factors and powers that constructed the Coloured identity, inevitably causing the rise of a false sense of self, this research deems settler colonialism and its logic of elimination as the purposeful pioneers.

Throughout the academic sphere, the imaginings of the western consciousness have dominated the narratives and the understandings of the other and the self. As such, to elaborate upon the tensions between my Coloured identity and inner self, the following research is conducted within the specific context of settler colonial South Africa. Countries that have been conquered by settler colonialism and its logic of elimination, continue to exist in a reality plagued by the devastation left in its wake. Subsequently, this logic of elimination within South Africa resulted in a myriad of gross devastations such as; the annihilation of the indigenous communities as well as establishing the infamous South African Apartheid regime. Despite the dynamic and highly complex identities which resided within the country, as a result of the slave trade, the South African nation was reduced to four simple identifying categories namely; White, Black, Coloured and Indian/Asian. By stripping my family of their historic indigeneity and replacing

it with the forged South African *Colouredness,* has inexorably ensured that the only conceptions of the self and identity I have come to recognise is that of the ascribed Coloured self and identity. Consequently, in attempt to justify settler superiority and occupancy, indigenous and non-European bodies became an inevitable target by the logic of elimination. Therefore, settlers introduced the mythology of 'white purity' focusing upon the 'uncontaminated' supremacy of settler genetics. This imagined notion of a powerful 'pure-blood' white race, socialised misconceptions of racial hybridity as the consequence of sexual relations and the procreation between races. As such, in light of this the Apartheid South African segregationist specifically focused upon the Coloured identity as the subjects needed to undergo various assimilative projects. Through, tactically imposing racist ideologies and values on the bodies of the oppressed, ensured that they were viewed as characterless beings, who are inept to think, reason or reflect. The colonial ontology of racializing identities not only haunts the political movement and freedoms of non-white bodies but continues to silence the histories and cultural identities of oppressed communities. For example, within the context of Apartheid South Africa, the Coloured identity was described by first lady Marike de Klerk as:

> "... they [Coloureds] are a negative group. The definition of a coloured in the population register is someone that is not black, and is not white and is also not an Indian, in other words a no-person. They are the leftovers. They are the people that were left after the nations were sorted out. They are the rest."
>
> (Adhikari, 2006: 162)

Significantly, from the onset of one's birth the self and identity, which we recognise as our own, is inevitably the mirror image of our parents understandings that have been drastically influenced by their specific historical, environmental and societal factors. Theories of recognition predominately utilise the Hegelian master/slave dialectic to illustrate the notion that the identity of the oppressed are constructed within interpersonal, rather than independent terms (Nakata, 2020: 341). Thus, a self-consciousness is established to assists us towards understanding who we are, through comparing what we are not. As the bodies of the oppressed were viewed as nothing more than an empty canvas, settlers unjustly imposed imperial values and ideologies upon the population which unescapably reconstructed their notions of existence. When looking into the mirror of racism our bodies are merely a reflection of the racialised identity constructions, influenced by the imaginings of the settler culture. However, it is imperative to note the ominous and lasting impact settler colonialism has had upon the creation and erasure of the identity of the other. Within settler colonial South Africa, the existence of

a hybrid race otherwise known as Coloureds was fundamentally problematic as it went against white supremacist ideologies. In the eyes of racism, the physical body is simplified to nothing more than objects with skin produced by the accepted societal culture, ensuring that Black and white identities only exist by virtue of their relationship with one another. Moreover, colonisation ensures that those who hold power are the makers of meaning and values for the oppressed (Oliver, 2001: 29). Even after being free from the shackles of slavery we are not free to create our own values nor the ability to define our lives and identities.

In light of the above, the term Coloured alludes to a phenotypically and culturally diverse social group with various geographic origins (Adhikari, 2005: 2). Historians note that the racial formation of the Coloured community can be traced to the "miscegenation" between slave owners – white men and slave women, and the racial intercourse between slaves and the Khoikhoi women as well as miscegenation between Khoikhoi women and Trekboers. Coloured people are a minority group within South Africa with majority of the population residing in the Western Cape. Subsequently, in the 1970's during the rise of the Black Consciousness movement, this ideology became highly popularised within the Coloured community causing the nature of the Coloured identity to become an contentious issue (Ibid, 2005: 7). During this period the Coloured community was divided between those who rejected the identity entirely, namely the politicized and educated members and those who reclaimed and redefined the identity as a form of liberation. However, Colouredness was increasingly viewed as an artificial categorization imposed on society by the ruling white minority (Ibid, 2005: 7). The Western Cape was an inevitable epicenter of resistance against the Apartheid Coloured identity with any form of recognition being repudiated as a concession to Apartheid thinking. Contrastingly, despite the various change in attitude towards the given identity, in the current post-Apartheid South Africa there has been a complete retreat of Coloured rejectionism towards a collective acceptance of the reclaimed identity.

However, despite the above I still found myself pondering the way in which to define identity. As such, this thesis draws on Rummens (2001:3) conceptualization of identity describing it as:

> *"The distinctive character belonging to any given individual or shared by all members of a particular social category or group."*

For some individuals the process of identity formation is an unconscious event formed over long periods of time by an identity schema. This process of self-schemata is made up of

categories of knowledge which reflect how we expect ourselves to think based upon cognitive generalizations about the self, derived from past experiences (Markus, 1977: 64). These experiences guide and organize how we process self-related information contained within individuals' social experiences. As such, an identity is something that develops over time as a result of social experiences involving other people as well as the societal norms and powers at play. Significantly however, the most vital space where we begin to form our identity is within our homes surrounded by family, which is what I am to illustrate by conducting majority of this research within the confines of my own childhood home.

Subsequently, from the onset of traditional methods of researching indigenous and othered communities, evidence illustrate that those scientific findings were established and institutionalized within the confines of western consciousness. Consequently, this has allowed for the continuation of coloniality and the epistemic silencing of the *Other.* Thus, majority of existing academic literature pertaining to issues of the constructed socialized *Self* experienced by the *Other* have been theorized by voices belonging to the oppressor. The choice to situate my-self and my experience with *Colouredness* at the forefront of this analysis, is to ensure that I do not continue oppressive forms of research by speaking on behalf of my community. Moreover, I believe that it is not enough to merely give meaning and value to ourselves through self-determinisation. However, by including the retelling of our truth through retracing existing ancestral histories from both the maternal and paternal sides, provides us with the foundation needed to liberate targeted identities from the never ending fragmented understanding of the self, caused by settler logic of elimination's acts and politics of recognition. Upon utilizing an autoethnographic form of research, allows for the reader to witness how transforming my reality into detailed memos of representation, and its impact upon my lived experiences, will assist efforts towards the rediscovery of the *Self.* As such, the purpose of this research is to create a space for researchers and readers to collectively establish a new *deviant* form of sense-making by rebelling against the institutionalized narcissistic colonial enterprise.

1.2. Conceptual Framework

1.2.1. Settler Colonialism

When attempting settler colonial research, authors such as Patrick Wolfe argue for the importance of differentiating classic colonialism from settler colonialism, due to the unique

devastations left in its wake. As such, classic colonialism has been commonly understood as a colonial project focused solely upon exploiting the resources of the colony, for the benefit of the metropole (Glenn, 2015: 57). Contrastingly, scholars have accepted the notion of settler colonialism presented by Patrick Wolfe (2006) in his work "*Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native"*. Wolfe defines it as a land-centered project driven by the settler desire for territorially, where colonial powers invade expropriated land with the intent to stay and forge a new society in their image (Wolfe, 2006: 386). Inevitably, the presence of indigenous populations posed as a grave obstruction towards settler efforts to transform the newfound colony into an acceptable "home". Thus, to successfully gain control over foreign land and its resources indigenous populations were sought out by the settler colonist and targeted for elimination. Colonial invasion is inherently a violent occurrence; however, it does not predominantly result in genocide. As "land is necessary for life" (Wolfe, 2006; 387) battles over the occupancy of land should be acknowledged as battles for life, achieved through both literal and figurative forms of death. Subsequently, Wolfe (2006) elaborates further, noting that settler colonialism should not be understood as a single event in history but rather a structure that continuously perpetuates the assimilation, oppression, and demise of targeted communities. Even after the collapse of the settler metropole the constructed society which remains does not stop being colonial. Significantly, to ensure the continuation of the complete annihilation of indigenous communities' identities and histories, settlers utilised both literal and figurative modes of death pioneered by settler logic of elimination and the assimilative processes it birthed. As such, it is this specific theorisation of settler colonialism that forms the foundation of this research.

1.2.2. The settler logic of elimination

Unlike the permanent loss of human bodies caused by literal modes of death, settlers recognised the benefits for operationalising the logic of elimination through figurative assimilative methods. Not only would it successfully transform societal structures, norms, and behaviours to mirror the accepted settler ideologies, but it dissolved all traces of indigenous identities and cultures into the settler polity, whilst keeping the population alive for exploitation. To ensure that the desire for settler domination was achieved, the logic of elimination had been purposefully percolated throughout all facets of state structures, discourses, and modalities. As such, the logic of elimination is the foundation upon which settlers constructed the oppressive schematizing doctrine which continues to rule over liberated

settler colonies such as South Africa. Consequently, in addition to ensuring the erasure of indigenous existence the logic of elimination and the assimilative colonial projects it champions inevitably transformed the true understandings of the self and identity into the accepted colonial imaginings of the lesser, inferior *other*. It is imperative to understand that the fundamental reason behind the ongoing success of the settler logic of elimination is owed to the fact that it is an unconscious rationality that is deeply rooted within the psyche of the oppressed. This never ending hold settlers have maintained over the oppressed, is largely due to the success of their assimilative projects such as acts of recognition and misrecognition.

1.2.3. The assimilative act of recognition and misrecognition

Evidently, acts of recognition permeate vital aspects of our lives, the way in which we are recognised and recognise others inevitably shape our quality of life. Theories of recognition predominately utilise the Hegelian master/slave dialectic to illustrate the notion that the identity of the oppressed are constructed within interpersonal, rather than independent terms (Nakata, 2020: 341). Thus, a self-consciousness is established to assists us towards understanding who we are, through comparing what we are not. As the bodies of the oppressed were viewed as nothing more than an empty canvas, settlers unjustly imposed imperial values and ideologies upon the population which unescapably reconstructed their notions of existence. When looking into the mirror of racism our bodies are merely a reflection of the racialised identity constructions, influenced by the imaginings of the settler culture. As such, within the political and philosophical sphere the act of recognition is rendered as a means of respecting and valuing another individual, whilst simultaneously being fundamental to understanding oneself. Social theorists of recognition move beyond this, asserting that the process of recognition can shape or define our sense of self and the value bestowed to us as individual. A common characteristic of recognition evident in studies, is that it requires one to be recognised by another (McQueen, n.d.). The person who is being recognised realises that the recogniser is adept to be conferring recognition. Thus, significant value is placed upon the recogniser by society in order for their attitudes towards those being recognised to count as recognitive. Berlant (2012) argues that "recognition is the misrecognition you can bear" referencing the belief that as you exist as a constructed self you will never truly be recognised as your true self, but rather the mirror image forged by the settler polity. According to settler logic, the body and mind of the targeted other exists with the absence of a self, as their notion of the self is a construct of misrecognition. As such the act of recognition and misrecognition assists individuals with a greater understanding

of their existence, thus its absence can have detrimental effects upon the psyche of targeted identities.

Assimilation embodies a myriad of guises all of which aids settler efforts towards achieving territoriality and thus the elimination of targeted communities. Authors such as Charles Taylor (1994: 26), have noted the significant demand for recognition within contemporary politics, due to the influence it wields over ones identity and how it is perceived within society. Significantly, acts of recognition and misrecognition are a product of the pathology of oppression (Oliver, 2001: 28-30) as it purposefully imprisons us within the confines of an imagined and reduced mode of being (McQueen, n.d,). In the eyes of racism the physical body is simplified to nothing more than skin produced by the accepted societal culture, ensuring that Black and white identities only exist by virtue of their relationship with one another. Moreover, within settler contexts these racist ideologies and values are imposed upon the bodies of the oppressed ensuring that they are recognised as characterless beings who are inept to think, reason or reflect for themselves. Colonisation ensures that those who hold power are the makers of meaning and values for the oppressed (Oliver, 2001: 29). Even after being free from the shackles of slavery we are not free to create our own values or meanings of our lives and identities. As these ideologies continue to operate within the foundations of our societal structures, the process of recognition and misrecognition has arguably left certain groups within the South African Coloured community with a fragmented sense of self. As such, this specific theorization of the assimilative act of recognition and misrecognition will play a fundamental role In further demonstrate the lasting consequences assimilation has had upon my notion of self and identity.

1.3. Research questions

My research aims to provide clarity and attempt to answer the specific question posed:

"*What is a true self within the polluted and imagined bodies of the marginalized?"*

However, to answer the above question I will be implementing guiding questions to ensure the findings remain within the scope of the research. The questions are as followed:

"How has the settler logic of elimination impacted the understanding of targeted identities?"

"As a process of assimilation, why has the act of recognition and misrecognition maintained the capability to induce a fragmented sense of self for those who embody a targeted identity?".

1.4. Research Method

In the attempt towards understanding the epistemological foundations of the specific factors that influence my understanding of the socialized *Self* I have been ascribed, I will be utilizing post-positivist methods for conducting qualitative research. Although qualitative research cannot be easily defined, for the purpose of this thesis it can be simply understood as the study of the social body and the accompanying practices which form the foundation of societal institutions (Creswell, 2007). Prasad (2018) notes, that qualitative research is predominantly associated with images of diverse techniques, perspectives, and methods of presentation. Interviews, ethnography, participant observation, focus groups and narrative analysis are a few examples of the plethora of methods which have been subsumed as qualitative modes of research (Prasad, 2018).

However, despite embracing the lived experiences of marginilised identities which are habitually excluded within large-scale scientific research (Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2013), qualitative research has been historically weaponized as an oppressive tool, commonly in the form of qualitative positivism. Significantly, upon noting that traditional methods of researching indigenous communities have been established and institutionalized within the confines of western consciousness, it has allowed for the continuation of coloniality and the epistemic silencing of the *Other.* Accordingly, qualitative positivism espouses a realist and commonsensical approach assuming that the reality of the researched is finite and separate from the researcher which can be understood through an objective method of data collection (Prasad, 2018). As such, to disrupt imperialistic methods of knowledge production this thesis practices epistemic disobedience through utilizing decolonial qualitative methods that promote greater research reflexivity and acknowledges the researchers' power, subjectivity, and influence upon their research (Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2013). Thus, as majority of academic literature pertaining to issues of the constructed socialized *Self* experienced by the *Other* have been theorized by voices belonging to the oppressor, I have decided to utilize autoethnography as my preferred method of research. Additionally, family photographs, historical documentation, and a research journal will be used to assist the autoethnographic process as it

houses the ability to transform the world into detailed memos of representation which assists efforts towards the discovery of the *Self*.

1.4.1. Autoethnography

Autoethnography emerged in the late 1970's as a descriptor for researchers who wanted to conduct research on their "own people" as well as include their personal accounts within their observations (Marr, 2014). As a method, autoethnography combines specific characteristics of ethnography and autobiography in a way which defies canonical means of conducting research (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). Predominantly, ethnographers' study the cultural practices and beliefs of "native" communities through various means such as embodying the roles of participant observers, conducting interviews, taking fieldnotes, examining ways of speaking as well as analyzing cultural artifacts, photographs, and books (Tedlock, 1991). However, authors such as Tedlock (1991) criticize the voyeuristic tendencies of ethnographers asserting that they commonly appropriate cultural behaviors through their fieldwork experiences and reinforce colonial dynamics of power by viewing research participants as mere subjects. Contrastingly, autobiographers selectively write about past experiences which are eloquently assembled with the use of hindsight (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). Similar to that of ethnographers, autobiographers may use interviews, photographs, recordings or journals to assist them with correctly recalling their memories (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). Additionally, such authors predominantly write about epiphanous experiences such as; moments of existential crises that compel individuals to reflect and analyze their lived experiences (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). Despite being a self-proclaimed phenomenon, epiphanies disclose the various approaches individuals employ to navigate such penetrating experiences and the inevitable lingering of overwhelming sentiments and memories (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011).

Thus, considering the above explanation autoethnographic research expands/disrupts normative understandings of social phenomena, as it allows researchers to write about their specific epiphanies which stem from belonging to a culture that has been *othered* or possessing a cultural identity that has been historically (and continues to be) subjected to colonial oppression. Subsequently, autoethnographic inquiry provides researchers with the unique opportunity to implicate their silenced, *taboo-ised* stories with western forms of scholarship through using personal experiences as primary data (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). However, as a result of the above autoethnographers have been criticised as being self-absorbed narcissists, who utilise biased data to conduct a form of "me-research" that is atheoretical and

ungeneralizable (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). In addition to this, critics voice the belief that such researchers do not conduct enough fieldwork to support their findings and do not engage with different *others* (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). Opposingly Boylorn & Orbe (2014) argue, that such criticism stems from traditional western assumptions of what is recognised as acceptable scientific scholarship and production of knowledge.

Autoethnography as a method expands far beyond the borders of mere storytelling. Through embodying both researcher and researched, autoethnographers allow for not only themselves but also the literature and reader to witness the discovery of how the colonial political and historical impact personal experiences of the *Other* (Marr, 2014). Furthermore, autoethnography embodies various forms of analysis which creates a space for researchers and readers to collectively establish a new *deviant* form of sense-making premised upon the intended interactions formed between them (Marr, 2014). Accordingly, autoethnographers utilise various tools and academic literature to not only analyse personal experiences, but also interrogate the influencing factors which produce differing experiences of comparable events (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). As such, for the purpose of this research my own personal experiences will be employed as the primary data alongside primary sources such as; my families historical documents, photographs and the progression of identity documents assigned during Apartheid. Furthermore, various literature and academic publications pertaining to the issues and effects of politically ascribed identities upon the *Self* will be used as a means to reflect, compare and contrast the experiences presented within personal lived realities and academic scholarship. Although I use field notes in the traditional sense, the way in which I conduct my fieldwork differs to that of ethnographers as it takes place in familiar locations such as my home where I am able to re-encounter memories, people and objects (Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2013). Given the personal nature of this research I utilize a research journal throughout this process not only to reflect on my role and power as the researcher, but also to critically analyze the emotions and thoughts evoked whilst writing and listening to my family's stories of marginalization.

Before I continue, it is important to note that the decision to situate myself as the subject of this study is not to deny or generalise the valid opinions and experiences of the greater oppressed communities. Instead, this method allows me to freely examine and critique the cultural phenomena and its influencing factors within my community from an insider-outsider perspective, rooted in my own lived experiences as a Cape Malay/Coloured Muslim women.

In essence, autoethnography as a method provides an alternative means towards understanding societal interactions with and between *Othered* communities through the *Self* and "allows us to lay claim to the "scientific-ness" of our innate inner-selves" (Crawley, 2014). As Ellis (2004) suggests, in order to sensitize and deepen readers understandings of issues of identity and complexities towards the re-discovery of the *Self,* I lay myself bare and embrace vulnerability through evocative writing and telling the stories of my family's journey into South African *"Colouredness"*. Thus, in attempts to contribute towards broadening theories of social phenomena this thesis practices critical analytical methods of autoethnography through storytelling and critically reflecting and examining the role of settler colonialism's logic of elimination upon the consciousness of non-white bodies in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Upon further elaboration, Boylorn & Orbe (2014) describe critical autoethnography as an ethical responsibility to shed light upon the colonial processes of inequality and injustice which unfairly target a specific *Self,* as well as form the foundation of normative societal interactions. In a similar vein to the above, Crawley (2011) views critical autoethnography as an act of emancipation through providing methods for culturally muted communities to scientifically challenge the confines of societal notions and understandings of the *Self*. Moreover, this methods relationship with critical race theory allows this research to unequivocally center the ways in which power intersects with the personal experiences presented, as well as illustrate the structural forces which ensured the existence of such experiences (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). Accordingly, this specific method prioritizes the politics of intersectional positionality which ensures that researchers continuously recognize their privileges in conjunction with their experiences of marginalization (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). In addition to this, critical autoethnography holds us accountable for the influences our subjective lenses have upon our research through practicing research reflexivity in the form of journals and fieldnotes. Thus, allowing us to *"...write as an other and for an other"* (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014: 237).

1.5. Research Limitations

As I began my research process, COVID-19 had just breached the South African boarder sending our country into one of the worlds strictest Lockdowns. Accordingly, to successfully continue this work various adaptations were made, such as utilizing an autoethnographic research method. Despite its benefits, by specifically focusing on my family's lived experiences will limit the scope of this analysis. However, this is due to the inability to find

research participants and conduct interviews. Significantly, as majority of the primary evidence discussed consists of my family's re-telling of history, makes it difficult at times to remove my biasness. Additionally, noting that these narrations of history rely upon how my family remembers it, the various conflicting versions expressed makes it difficult to decipher which version is accurate.

1.6. Research Ethics

Autoethnographic research methods are commonly utilised for research projects of a more personal nature, it inevitably includes the participation and voices of other individuals. As such, it is highly imperative that ethical research is conducted and maintained throughout the entire process. Accordingly, Schmid (2019: 272) suggests that autoethnographic researchers consciously reflect on their own participation within the narrative being told as well as which other voices are intentionally or unintentionally highlighted. Whilst acknowledging our own vulnerabilities, autoethnographers need to be keenly aware of our connectiveness to a range of networks to realize the inherently relational aspects of this specific research method. Those individuals who are unconsciously exposed are those with close intersections with the researcher, such as my family members the community I belong to (Ibid, 2019: 272). As my research places my family's history as the subject of this thesis maintaining anonymity was not possible. However, to ensure that my research upheld the required ethical standards only certain aspects of our history that was approved by all members of my immediate family was included and analysed. Significantly, as my research relies upon the re-telling of stories, my family was heavily involved in all facets of this research process. Maintaining conscious awareness of my role as the researcher was easy to uphold due to being constantly surrounded by the space and people who are the focus of this study.

1.7. Chapter Outline

1.7.1. Chapter Two

Drawing on authors such as Patterson (1982), Wolfe (2006) and Card (2003), chapter two will critically asses how the logic of elimination was able to successfully assimilate the history and identity of my mother's family. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the ideological foundations as well as the purpose towards establishing this eliminatory logic and its

assimilative processes within the context of Apartheid South Africa. The purpose of this aims to demonstrate the many guises the logic of elimination embodies as well as highlight the depths of its influence. Various theorizations of settler logic of elimination will be assessed to illustrate how the specific foundation was established to successfully erect the South African Apartheid regime and its racist laws. This aims to demonstrate how the logic of elimination strategically weaponized race and identity to divide communities, conquer their behaviour and movement as well as secure the presence of white domination without fear of rebellion. Additionally, this chapter is of the belief that the Apartheid regime employed assimilative projects focused towards indoctrinating and re-educating the colony, into believing that all non-white identities were so inferior that their sole existence was to serve the white man. Settlers created a hierarchy of races by awarding those closest to whiteness with better privileges. Not only did this reinforce a divide between the nation but it inevitably increased the desirability to assimilate oneself and support whiteness. This will be proven through a critical analysis of various Apartheid laws such as the Bantu Education Act, the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act and many more. However, to shed light on the dire implications this logic has had upon identity and the self, the remembered history of my mother's family will be discussed alongside this analysis. These lived experiences and existing historical photographs of my family will act as justifiable evidence for the arguments made throughout this research. Thus, within this chapter I argue that my great grandfathers' choice to assimilate into the Cape Malay identity is premised upon the socialised desire for whiteness, racial superiority as well as to evade extreme hardship and oppression. As the fundamental aim of the settler logic is to achieve elimination, the death of targeted life, identity and cultural history is not mourned or grieved but rather celebrated.

1.7.2. Chapter Three

Following the findings discussed in the previous chapter, chapter three situates my father's linage as the primary focus of the analysis, alongside the implications acts of recognition and misrecognition have on targeted identities. This chapter begins by assessing various authors theorisations of recognition and misrecognition to understand how it can be weaponised as a tool of oppression. Drawing on the works from authors such as Mbembe (2017), this chapter argues that acts of recognition further reinforces the oppression of the other as it teaches us to recognise ourselves in relation to the similarities or differences of the identities we encounter. To talk to the other is to point out the absence of similarities which constantly reproduces

negative constructions of blackness (Mbembe, 2017: 17). As such this chapter makes a point to acknowledge that the environments in which we reside, have been founded upon the unequal distribution of power. Inevitably, ensuring that our individual experiences of loss, oppression and privilege will differ in accordance to how our respective societies recognise our ascribed identities. Upon critically assessing the complex powers at play throughout my family's remembered history, I will contemplate the realisation that one's identity is shaped through our relations with others. The emotions of self-worth, self-esteem and self-respect are only deemed possible once they have been positively recognised for their individuality and intersectional differences. The purpose of this is to illuminate its assimilative foundation and the existential, psychoanalytical, political and intersectional consequences it has had upon conceptions of the self and identity. Subsequently, due to the intergenerational psychological split produced by the narcissistic settler colonial enterprise, this chapter ponders the question of whether it is possible to recognise my "true" self. The interruption of white onlookers not only produces a loss of one's body and the disillusionment of the physiological self, but fixes onto it white supremacist historicity. This is made obvious in my continuous journey towards uncovering my true history in order to understand and find comfort in the otherness of my forbidden self.

Chapter Two:

Settler Colonialism: The Everlasting Plague

"Man acts as a function of what he thinks, and while he has up to a certain point the ability to arrange his own thoughts in his own way, to construct new categories, he does so starting from the categories which are given by society"

(Louis Dumont, Homo Hierarchicus 1970:6)

2.1. Introduction

In my attempts towards reimagining liberated notions of the self and identity, unassociated with my ascribed racial classification, the following analysis conducted throughout this chapter focuses upon the logic of eliminations successful assimilation of my mother's family, the Nordien's. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the ideological foundations as well as the purpose towards establishing this eliminatory logic and its assimilative processes. Furthermore, the remembered history and photographic documentations of my mother's family will be placed at the center of this analysis to effectively illustrate the dire implications this logic has had upon my notions of the self and my identity. In line with the above, various theorisations of this logic published by authors such as Patrick Wolfe (2006) and Claudia Card (2003) will be assessed alongside the journey of my family's assimilation, to demonstrate the many guises it embodies as well as highlight the depths of its influence. The concluding observations of this chapter will critically discuss the implications the following findings have upon my notions and understandings of the self and identity. Significantly however, I must clarify that the purpose of this chapter is not to undermine the legitimacy, history nor the existence of the South African Coloured community. Rather, by placing myself and my family at the core of this research I aim to disrupt and humanize modernist theories of settler colonialism through displaying the lived experiences of its consequences upon the identities targeted into silence. Thus, considering this the following chapter hopes to contribute towards the radical efforts for the liberation of African identities/self, which have been contaminated by the fictitious imaginings of the colonist.

2.2. The Assimilation of the Nordien Family

From the onset of one's birth the self and identity, which we recognise as our own, is inevitably the mirror image of our parents understandings that have been influenced by their specific environmental and societal factors . Those of us born in the year 1995, a year after the collapse

of the South African Apartheid regime, were hailed by the nation as the first "born free" generation. Unlike our parents and grandparents, we were born into the first democratically elected government of South Africa. Therefore, with the optimistic notion of a new "rainbow nation" plaguing the country our parents were led to believe that the future generations would live free from the shackle's they were once forced to endure. However, despite possessing the basic human rights previously denied to people of colour, majority of the eliminatory ideologies and oppressive strategies implemented by the settler population where left intact. This included the highly politicised, simplistic racial categories used during Apartheid as well as their associated stigmas. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission focused solely upon ensuring that the settler population confessed to and unveiled the truth behind the extent of the gross human rights violations committed. Consequently, other issues such as; the tension between races, the assimilation of identities, bantu education, forgotten histories of indigenous and foreign cultures as well as the inhumane forced removals of all non-white individuals remain unresolved. Interestingly, prior to attending university and conducting research on myself and my family's history I was blissfully ignorant and unaware of the depths of assimilation we had undergone. Growing up I never thought to question what it meant to be categorised as Coloured and accepted it not only as my race but also my culture based on the knowledge I obtained from my parents. Previously, with the trauma of Apartheid still fresh in the minds and memories of my parents and grandparents discussions of race and identity were complex and difficult to navigate. I was greatly unprepared for the emotions and epiphanies experienced whilst listening to my elders tell the stories of our history for the first time and, witnessing them bravely relive moments of trauma. Although both my mother and fathers family experienced varying degrees of assimilation, this section focuses solely upon the complex history of my mother's family, the Nordien's, and their assimilation into Colouredness.

Premised upon the imperial fixation of eugenics, settlers grossly exploited indigenous populations and legitimised white supremacy through the unequal constructions of racialised identities, between settlers and indigenous populations (Wolfe, 2006; 389). Considering that Islamophobia, Negrophobia and anti-Semitism existed prior to the constructions of race, one cannot assume that the logic of elimination was established to target a particular race. Instead, race is created in the action of targeting a population (Ibid, 2006; 287-389). This is clearly evident within the South African Apartheid government, as it forced racialised eliminatory ideologies, laws and practices upon the nation from 1948 till 1994. As non-white communities

made up the majority of the South African population, they were the Apartheid regimes primary target. Evidently, race and identity were strategically weaponized as a means to divide communities and conquer their behaviour and movement with ease, as well as to secure the presence of white domination without fear of rebellion. As such, the hematic hypothesis was the foundation upon which racist settler colonial regimes, such as the South African Apartheid were established with the aim to replicate and encode societal structures to reproduce unequal relationships of power between settlers and non-white communities. Significantly however, it was the logic of elimination which ensured that targeted populations would be successfully absorbed into the settler polity. With this logic deeply embedded within the foundations of the Apartheid regime the intricate assimilative projects utilised came in the form of official laws and policies. With this assimilative eliminatory logic controlling the nations legal framework, settlers were awarded the power to create a façade of legality justifying the inhumane oppression of Black, Coloured, Indian and Asian communities. These assimilative projects focused upon indoctrinating and re-educating the colony into believing that all non-white identities were inferior and not worthy of existence other than to serve the white man. Moreover, the Apartheid laws which targeted the psyche, memory, economy, and collective identity of non-white communities continues to operate throughout contemporary South Africa. The power of the settler logic of elimination is evident in all spheres of the nation such as the culture of corruption that thrives in our democracy, the never ending femicide, the increasing wealth divide between white and non-white communities as well as the increasing curiosity by other races as to whether Coloured identity and culture exists.

Thus, as my interest in our ascribed identity grew, so did my curiosity towards why only specific parts of our history were remembered as well as why so little information was kept. Subsequently, following plentiful conversations with my mother and her three brothers, it was evident that they possessed limited knowledge about the history of the Nordien family beyond that of my great grandparents. Even more interestingly, the specific legacies which my mother and her siblings proudly remember are those of their white settler grandparents, with little knowledge of our slave/non-white ancestry. When I questioned them as to why this was the case they explained that it was not a purposeful conscious decision, but rather the consequence of the ideologies embedded within the settler polity during this time. They further explained that the only histories that were verbally told to them continuously where the memories of their white grandparents. This realisation is in line with the argument presented by Card (2003; 64-68, who states that once targeted communities have been successfully assimilated, the

fundamental intergenerational relationships needed to pass down cultural heritage, legacy and history are permanently severed and thus unsalvageable. Significantly, this violent experience of loss and destruction can be recognised as the erasure of one's social vitality, whose purpose is to provide members of a community with a sense of identity and give meaning to one's existence (Ibid, 2003: 67-70).

Intriguingly, during one of the earlier discussions I had with my mother and her closest brother I decided to ask them what they currently racially identity as, to which they responded with Cape Malay Coloured. Despite being an assumably straight forward answer, it is highly complex and often contested. During my childhood the term Coloured was explained to me as the collective name given to the "leftovers", those who could not be placed into the obvious available racial categories. My older cousins expressed the origins of the Coloured race as being similar to a veil, created to conceal the existence of a mixed-race population born out of interracial relationships between settlers and various native and foreign populations. However, as a result of the Population Registration Act adopted in 1950, Coloured not only referred to all mixed-race persons but also includes the Griqua, and Nama population, political rebels and Muslim leaders exiled from the East as well as the Cape Malay's who are the descendants from South and Southeast Asian slaves, Madagascar and other native African populations. Despite being the minority within South Africa, the Coloured population is genetically and culturally diverse. However, with this newly imagined Coloured identity ascribed upon the bodies of individuals belonging to communities uniquely different from one another, inevitably assisted the settler colonial efforts towards ensuring the successful assimilation of the above targeted communities into the accepted Coloured racial category.

In his work *"Slavery and Social Death*", Patterson (1982) introduces the notion of natal alienation uniquely experienced by those born socially dead, which he specifically identifies as the enslaved persons. Those who are natally alienated are denied the freedom to incorporate the lived experiences of their ancestors into their lives, denied the opportunity to create informed understandings of one's social reality that are premised upon inherited ancestral definitions, nor do they possess the ability to secure their present experiences within any conscious community of memory (Patterson, 1982; 5). To be natally alienated requires one to be born into a community targeted by colonisation and its logic of elimination which is clearly evident in the above experiences expressed by my family. Upon possessing absolute power

over a nation, the Apartheid government was able to utilise overwhelming levels of force to deny individuals the right to obtain vital knowledge of our ancestral histories. Furthermore, assimilative projects ensured that from the onset of our lives the only understandings of our histories we possessed were forged by the oppressor. Consequently, not only has this transformed the meaning of identity and the self within targeted communities, but it legitimised the oppressive colonial images of the other as our true identities.

Figure 1: Picture of my great grandmother Kathleen & my grandfather Joseph.

Upon asking my mother and her family to unpack in detail our family's historical origins and racial identities, it became increasingly evident that the normalised current understanding of the Coloured identity did not do justice to the vast multifarious ancestry it possesses. Significantly, at the end of this discussion I proceeded to re-ask my family what they would racially categorise themselves as, which surprisingly could not be answered with the same level of certainty as before. Having witnessed my family experience similar destabilising realisations as I, with regards to the self and our ascribed identity, was justifiable evidence of the unconscious success the logic of elimination and its assimilative projects achieved. However, before I continue it is imperative to note that as a result of our complex racialised history within South Africa, the assimilative processes implemented were not homogenous. Experiences of assimilation are uniquely different for each individual with some communities having not undergone any form of intentional erasure.

Figure 2: Picture of my great grandfather Achmad Nordien.

As previously mentioned, my mother had explained that the knowledge and documentation of our family's ancestry extends only as far back as her grandparents. Subsequently, the photograph depicted in Figure 1 captures my great grandmother, Kathleen Veenendaal, lovingly embracing my late grandfather Joseph Nordien. According to my family, Kathleen was born from British and German parents in 1910 and died at the age of 90 in the year

2000. In 1928, at the age of 18 Kathleen married my great grandfather Achmad Nordien. Captured in the photograph depicted in Figure 2, Achmad Nordien was 10 years older than his wife Kathleen, born in 1900 and tragically passed away in 1977 at the age of 77 as a result of a car accident. Unfortunately, further knowledge regarding my great grandfathers ancestral history is non-existent. However, my mother and her brothers were certain that he was of South and Southeast Asian decent and the first of his family to be born in the Western Cape of South Africa. Thus, Achmad was identified by my family as a Cape Malay. A memory expressed by my mother that I found to be particularly interesting, was that despite verbally communicating in English and Afrikaans, Achmad could only read and write in Arabic. Noting that he was fruit and vegetable vender by profession, my mother recalls herself and the family having to assist him with writing down things needed for his business which he would verbally communicate. It is obvious that the Arabic language is well recognised and spoken globally, however in my family specifically Arabic is considered as a foreign language. Those of us born into the Islamic faith usually attended classes once a week from a very young age where we were taught Arabic in order to read the Quran. As such, prior to learning that my great grandfathers mother tongue was Arabic, I had previously associated it solely with religious practices.

In a similar vein to the sentiments expressed by Patterson (1982), Card (2003; 63-71) asserts that individuals which are indefinitely hindered from freely participating within their communities and thus separated from their ancestral traditions and cultures, do not possess a sense of social vitality but rather the mere conscious memory of its existence. As settlers recreate societies in their image one's social vitality is inescapably forged amidst the colonial legacy of inequality and oppression. To further elaborate on this point, I will briefly direct the focus towards Islam in South Africa but more specifically my experiences of Islam and the Cape Malay/Coloured identity. Accordingly, it is understood that one's religious beliefs are separate from identity and culture, however one's culture will inevitably influence the way in which a religion is practiced. Significantly, as a result of Apartheid and its assimilative processes communities stripped from their heritage and left with only their memories, began the search towards discovering an authentic self in connection to their place of origin. Within the broader Coloured identity, sub-categories began to emerge creating hierarchies fractured upon class, fairness of skin and religious divides. With my mother's family identifying themselves as Cape Malay my personal experience as a member of the community is that the Islamic religion is inextricable with our identity and culture. Moreover, the Cape Malay

identity is reserved solely for those who are most importantly a Muslim and descendants predominantly from Indonesia, Malaysia, and other parts of Asia. Residing within the unique socio-political circumstances caused by the Apartheid regime, minority groups such as the Cape Malays do not regard themselves as being part of their current residential community, and thus do not express a substantial national identity (da Costa, 1994; 243). In attempts to rebel against the assimilative and eliminatory nature of the Apartheid Coloured categorisation, the diasporic Cape Malay identity was arguably created as a separating indicator (Gqola, 2010; 137). By greeting one another in Arabic and strictly utilising Arabic and Persian names the Cape Malay community segregated themselves from all other and indigenous communities within the same geographical colonial space. Therefore, the purpose of the above aims to illustrate the ongoing success of assimilation and the impact it has had upon my identity. Even within the attempts to reestablish a sense of social vitality, by creating the singular Cape Malay identity encompassing the idea of being "Muslims from the homeland", has inapplicably perpetuated assimilative processes by denouncing and erasing the South African dimensions of our identity. Continuing with the discussion of my great grandparents, even though they did not belong to the same racial category their marriage was legally recognised by the government of that era. According to Act No. 5 of the Immorality Act, passed in 1927 by Barry Hertzog a member of the colonial South African Pact Government, stipulated that extramarital sex only between a white person and a Black person was prohibited (Immorality Act of 1927, 1927). However, in 1950 two years after the rise of the Apartheid regime, the Act was eventually amended to include the prohibition of sex between white and all non-white people. Thus, as depicted in Figure 3; my great grandparents later had three mixed race children together, who would eventually be categorized as Cape Malay and Coloured from the onset of the Apartheid era. As such, despite being genetically and historically diverse the logic of elimination and the assimilative processes implemented ensured the acceptance of a problematic attempt towards reclaiming the community's identity. The ideological processes attached to the term Malay

Figure 3: Picture of Kathleen with her three children, with my grandfather standing closest to her.

insinuates that all Cape Malays are descendants specifically from Malaysia rejecting all other formations of creolized identities (Gqola, 2010; 141).

Significantly, at the start of my research it was explained to me that my mother's maiden surname Nordien had originally been spelt Noordien/Noorddin but was changed by my great grandfather before he got married. Interestingly, as the surname Noordien is highly common within certain South African communities I questioned the need as to why it was changed, which I was lead to believe was due to it being previously misspelt. However, still sceptical of this response I brought it up during conversation with my father whilst discussion his family history, to which he revealed to me that my mother's grandfather was in fact Indian. Confused by this revelation, I did find out that the Noordien surname was prevalent within India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Initially I was unsure of what to make with this new vital piece of information as it obliterated my families ties to the new found Cape Malay identity during that time. Contrastingly however, my great grandfathers choice to denounce with ease the continuation of our Indian identity and assimilate into a Cape Malay is a poignant example of the overwhelming power and success achieved by the settler logic of elimination. Elimination can be achieved through the use of countless assimilative projects as well as those which target the psyche and mentalities of targeted communities. As such, by awarding the settler race the freedom and privileges denied to others, reinforced a sense of inferiority as well as ignited a desire to obtain whiteness. During Apartheid, the levels of oppression communities endured were dependent upon the fairness of one's skin creating tension between and within races. Subsequently, the logic of elimination normalised the belief that non-white communities were not human but rather objects needed to be disposed of, thus rendering the literal and figurative loss of their lives as un-grievable (Park, 2015; 274). During events such as Apartheid, where targeted communities experienced the derealisation of their humanhood into lose-able objects, the conscious choice to assimilate oneself would have been seen as a viable solution to their suffering. However, as seen throughout history the degree of suffering and precariousness experienced by individuals are not equal nor are they mere coincidences. The Apartheid state actors and the oppressive structural conditions it established, influenced the specific hardships each race was unjustly subjected to. However, the Black South African population endured the worst of the socioeconomic oppression and faced sever racist treatment from all races including other targeted identities as well as the Coloured and Cape Malays. Settlers created a hierarchy of races by awarding those closest to whiteness with better privileges. Not only did this reinforce a divide between the nation but it inevitably increased the desirability to assimilate oneself and support whiteness. In light of the above, I argue that my great grandfathers' choice to assimilate

into the Cape Malay identity is premised upon the socialised desire for whiteness, racial superiority as well as to evade extreme hardship and oppression. Thus, as the fundamental aim of the settler logic is to achieve elimination, the death of targeted life, identity and cultural history is not mourned or grieved but rather celebrated.

On the 13th of July 1930, my grandfather Joseph Nordien was born in Cape Town South Africa passing away in 2019 at the age of 89. With the Apartheid government yet to begin its rule, and my grandfather being white passing he possessed the privileged to attend local government schools. Even during this period, the Black community was prohibited from receiving an education from all schools besides those run by missionaries. Accordingly, while it is unknow as to whether my grandfather completed all twelve years of schooling, he received a good enough education to become a highly skilled mechanic, fluent in isiXhosa, the owner of a cartage contracting company as well as an employee of the Wynberg Council. Captured in Figure 4 above, in 1953 at the age of 23 Joseph married his childhood sweetheart and next door neighbour 19 year old Sukayna Jamie which would last for 63 happy years. Interestingly, despite having blue eyes, fair skin as well as Caucasian hair and facial features my grandfather was classified as a Coloured under the Apartheid regime . Consequently however, the clear fluidity of my family's identity and its instability has made it increasingly difficult to understand and accept our ascribed identity and whether the self can exist after undergoing such depths of assimilation. To further elaborate upon the fragmented sense of self I possess resulting from the settler logic of elimination, I will discuss my grandmothers equally complex historical lineage.

Figure 4: My grandfather of grandmother on their wedding day.

The photograph depicted in Figure 5 below captures my grandfather and his mother Katheen, standing behind my grandmother seated in the middle between her two cousins. Similar to my grandfather's history discussed above, less knowledge and documentation of my grandmothers ancestry exists. Subsequently, Sukayna Jamie was born on the 28th of March 1934 in Cape Town sadly passing away in 2016 due to complications caused by diabetes. Although she was mixed race, the Apartheid government classified her Cape Malay based on her distinct Asian facial features as well as both her parents belonging to the Islamic faith. According to my mother, Sukanya's father was Omar Jamie who self-identified as Javanese, a descendant of the enslaved from the Java Island in Indonesia. Historically recognised as skilled labourers, Omar made his livelihood as an expert leatherworker specifically crafting horse saddles for the settler population. Unfortunately, my family has no photographic evidence of his existence in their possession, however we did manage to find a single photograph of his wife. Evident in the image depicted within Figure 6 to the right below, standing in between Kathleen Nordien (my great grandmother) and her daughter Sukayna (my grandmother) is my great grandmother Diane Heldsinger. From what my mother and her brother remembered, Diane was a Caucasian women specifically of German and Afrikaaner decent. Diane and Omar had four children together which I was completely unaware of as I had not met any of my grandmothers family growing up. Moreover, my grandmother and grandfather grew up in a small community of around 300 families known as Black River/Swart Rivier situated in Rondebosch Cape Town. However, as a result of the 1950 Group Areas Act my mother's family were forcefully removed from their ancestral homes by the Apartheid government, as it had been reclassified as a non-white area. Consequently, by enforcing the spatial separation of races my mother's family

Figure 5: Picture of my great gran and my grandfather at the back , with my grandmother seated between her cousins.

Figure 6: Picture of my grandmother on the right, with her mother in the middle and ger mother in law to the left.

was recollected to a designated Coloured area known as Penlyn Estate in the Cape Flats. Significantly, the forced removals of families from their homes assisted settler efforts towards assimilating and erasing the identities and histories of targeted communities.

As previously mentioned, elimination is achieved through a multitude of assimilative processes including those intertwined with space and the freedom of movement. Upon recognising that the settler logic of elimination is situated throughout the foundation of the Apartheid government, it is inevitable that official laws and policies were utilised as mechanisms for incarceration. Accordingly, within settler contexts incarceration embodies the power to control the movement of targeted communities through space (Woolford & Gacek, 2016).After being triumphant during the South African elections, the Apartheid National Party (NP) amplified the existing racial divisions by amending their systems of spatial elimination. Thus in 1950 the Group Areas Act was legalised, which began the process of dividing the nation into their specific racially demarcated areas (The Group Areas Act of 1950, 1950). In order for the settler to achieve their desire towards territoriality, the Group Areas Act allowed them to easily confine and monitor the movements of non-white bodies within the space settlers had expropriated as their own. Additionally, by spatially separating the nation into their ascribed racial communities settlers were able to pre-emptively obstruct threats of mass riots from the oppressed population aimed at overthrowing white supremacist domination. Furthermore, the Population Registration Act adopted in 1950 further assisted settler efforts, as this Act made it compulsory for the entire country to carry a passbook which held all necessary identifying information (The Population Registration Act of 1950, 1950). Those who were caught moving freely throughout white areas without their passbooks or after curfew were imprisoned and subject to sever brutality and death by injury by the Apartheid police force. Despite allegedly establishing semi-urban settlements for all races the Black population were severely affected by the Group Areas Act with the consequences on full display within the current South African context. Settlers deliberately sought out dilapidated spaces such as wastelands for the Black population and rendered it as a suitable enough environment for their existence. As these spaces were unliveable and thus unable to sustain life, poverty, disease, death and overcrowding was normalised as an inevitable experience of Black life. Significantly, this assimilative process of creating a physical divide of racial hierarchy had cataclysmic consequences upon the psyches of targeted identities (Reddy, 2015; 67-68, 95-104). Whilst inhumanly reinforcing the disposability and inferiority of Black life it simultaneously provided further supporting evidence of the benefits associated with assimilation. Therefore, not only did this law erase

the histories, social vitality and identities founded upon community but it arguably influenced the choice to denounce all forms of identity association with the Black African population which is evident in the above actions of my family.

Significantly, with the above realisations in mind my grandparents eventually had four children together as depicted within Figure 7 in the image to the left. Despite possessing a complex identity, the Apartheid regime considered all individuals with similar identities as anomaly's and thus classifying them as Coloured. However, although my mother and her siblings were forced to accept the racialised identity ascribed upon them, it is important to acknowledge the advantages they possessed in contrast to darker skinned Coloured individuals due to being white passing. On the 21st of August in 1961 my mother Nazlie Nordien was born, the product of the complex racial and historical legacies discussed above. Interested to further understand the reality of being born under Apartheid, I asked my mother to share any profound memory she had of her childhood. Subsequently, my mother expressed that growing up she was completely unaware that both her grandmothers were white. She further explained that as a result of the Group Areas Act, within the designated Coloured area her family was forcefully moved into everyone looked the same. Thus, the presence of whiteness within the Coloured/Cape Malay identity went unquestioned and assumed to be an inherent characteristic of the community.

Figure 7: Picture of my grandmother and ger four children with my mother standing on the right.

Figure 8: Picture of my mother during her younger years.

Growing up within a society dominated by oppressive western ideologies and governed by racial divide, ensured that opportunities for educational and economic advancement were not freely available to all South Africans. As such, in 1953 the Apartheid government passed the Bantu Education Act which created separate education systems for each race (Bantu Education Act of 1953, 1953). Unsurprisingly, the Black youth received the worst education out of the entire country, equipping them only with the necessary skills needed to serve the demands of the settler (Bantu Education Act of 1953, 1953). The Bantu Education Act aimed at impeding the socioeconomic advancement of targeted communities beyond a specific point. The logic of elimination targeted the minds of Black children to guarantee inter-generational oppression throughout their communities. These schooling systems were produced as a means to indoctrinate the youth with ideologies of racial superiority in order to ensure the absence of dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the Buntu Education Act psychologically imprisoned the minds of the Black population to dominate and control their societal progression. This is clearly evident within the below quote made by the architect of the Apartheid regime himself, Hendrik Verwoerd :

> "There is no place for the Bantu in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze" –
>
> (Verwoerd 1953. In Bantu Education Act of 1953, 1953).

However, among the privileges settlers awarded to the Coloured/ Cape Malay communities, receiving a quality education in comparison to the Black population was one of them. Upon graduating from the Alexander Sinton High School with distinction, a designated Coloureds only high school within the Cape Flats, my mother hoped to continue her education at a tertiary level. As my grandmother was a recognised seamstress within the Cape Malay/Coloured community, my mother was inspired to peruse a career within the fashion design industry. Accordingly, with assistance from my grandmother my mother applied for a permit which from the Apartheid government which would grant her permission to enrol in the School of

Figure 9: Picture of my mom accepting her scholarship award from Pick 'n Pay for best overall student.

Fashion Design at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), a previously whites only institution. Noting that the permit system was conducted on a case-by-case basis by a fundamentally racist Minister, a significant amount of Black applicants would be denied. White passing or fair skinner Coloured and Indian applicants would be granted ministerial permission with greater ease. This is not to denounce or diminish my mother's success and undeniable talent, but rather the purpose of the above aims to illustrate how the logic of elimination and structural assimilative process continuously rewarded the presence of whiteness, whilst simultaneously reiterating the inferiority of the Black identity. Upon strategically utilizing assimilative practices such as the above, the logic of elimination was able to successfully target the psyches of oppressed identities, especially within Coloured families with white ancestry such as my own. Significantly, my mother noted that attending a white university as a Coloured women during the 80's did not come without the fear of targeted threats of violence. However, as a result of her diverse interracial genetics my mother was able to keep her Colourdness hidden from her white peers who assumed she was merely a Caucasian or Latina. Upon graduating top of her class my mother's Coloured identity was later revealed and her success within the fashion industry would as a women of colour would make her an icon within the community. Watching my mother relive happy moments of her past, surrounded by newspaper articles, documents and photographs of her glamourous fashion shows, made me wonder what life might have been like had our ancestry been slightly different. I find it difficult being educated and Coloured during these proud and celebratory moments of my family's history, as I cannot stop the mental confrontation which occurs, forcing me to reflect upon the assimilative foundations upon which they were achieved. My specific understanding of the Coloured identity might not be widely accepted within the community and some might argue that I lean towards the Coloured rejectionism school of thought. I believe that one can be proudly Coloured whilst acknowledging the levels of privilege we possess in relation to Black South Africans, and confront the privileges awarded to white passing Coloureds. I argue that to be proudly Coloured, one needs to accept and embody all facets of our complex identity, reject

Figure 10: My mother and grandmother at my mothers 21st birthday.

the denunciation of our Blackness as well as highlighting the role South Africa played within the construction of our identity and the self.

Adhikari (2006: 475) argues, that a core characteristic of the Coloured identity is assimilation premised upon the desire to be worthy of recognition from the dominate settler society. Subsequently, purposeful assimilation was promoted by Coloured leaders as a necessity for the prosperity of future civilisations. Thus, throughout the twentieth century assimilating oneself into settler societal norms was a requirement if settler acceptance was to be achieved. However, it is important to mention the minority of radicals within the Coloured population during the 1930's who rejected the assimilative ideologies supported by Coloured leaders. (Adhikari, 2006: 475). Interestingly, even once the Apartheid segregation laws were intensified, furthering the divide and racial superiority between settlers and all othered races, the Coloured elite continued to nurture an assimilative mindset within the community. As the Apartheid regime began implementing more draconian racialised policies to effectively govern the South African colony, it inevitably strengthened resentment towards the settler population within the Coloured community. However, in the attempts to keep the community calm Coloured leaders were guilty of rationalising these laws as merely temporary setbacks as well as an opportunity for the community to earn settler acceptance through hard work (Ibid, 2006: 476).

During the Apartheid rule, and arguably within contemporary South Africa, Coloured is situated directly between Black and white. Due to the accepted settler notion that colouredness is closer to whiteness, all members of the Coloured racial identity possessed substantial privileges in relation to the Black South African population. Ironically, despite publicly expressing their willingness to assimilate into the dominate society, settlers forbade all persons with a single drop of non-European blood from assimilating into whiteness. After being met with rejection from the settler population leaders were increasingly concerned over the lack of power the Coloured minority possessed. As such, fearful of being demoted to the same social status as Black South Africans, politicised Coloureds mobilised to defend their position of relative privilege (Ibid, 2006: 478). Founded upon the political ideology of separatism, Coloured leaders during this period advocated towards the exclusivity of the Coloured identity thus ensuring a complete separation from the larger Black majority population. An example of this is evident within various historical accounts of the black consciousness movement. The notion of blackness within black consciousness does not specifically refer to one's biological racial affiliations. Instead it is utilised as a tool to unify all non-white South African's,

psychologically and physically divided by settler colonialism, as a means to rebel against political oppression (More, 2017: 49). Within the South African Students Organisation's (SASO) Policy Manifesto of 1971, point two stipulates that Black people are defined as "those who are by law or tradition, politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a group in the South African society and identifying themselves as a unit in the struggle towards the realisation of their aspirations" (South African Students organization, 1971). As such, the purpose for employing the notion of a political blackness was to assist attempts towards cultivating a sense of solidarity amongst Africans, Coloureds and Indians. However, as a consequence of targeted assimilation discussed throughout this chapter a significant amount of Indian and Coloured individuals refused to be associated with any form of blackness and the negative characteristics associated with the identity (More, 2017: 52). In light of the above, it is important to note that although historical accounts focus heavily upon the Coloured and Indian desires to remain completely separate from the Black identity, it was not the accepted mindset of the entire population. Subsequently, upon utilising my own personal experience as an example discussed below I argue that this assimilative mindset fuelled by the desire for acceptance still dominates the lives of the Coloured youth.

Growing up under the Apartheid rule, my father made a promise to himself that when the regime collapsed he would do whatever was necessary to ensure that his children attended the best schools in the Western Cape. One of those schools in particular was an all-girls private convent school, founded in 1871 by Irish Cabra Dominican Sisters. In 2002 my father fulfilled these dreams as I was accepted into the grade one pool for that year, which began my nine year journey within the convent walls. Significantly, although the legalisation of Apartheid had come to an end the societal structures founded upon racism were still very much intact and thriving. Throughout most of my junior school years (grades one to seven), I was merely one of five girls of colour in the grade none of who were Black. Subsequently, despite the inclusion of two Black students in our final years of junior school the convent did not employ one Black person as a member of the teaching staff. Unsurprisingly, even our isiXhosa lessons were taught by a cultural appropriating white women who embodied and performed the most derogatory and racist stereotypes of the imagined Black identity. Only eight years old at the time, I was ill-equipped and unprepared to handle such moments where I was consciously uncomfortable but unable to understand why or to speak up about my discomfort. Being racially outnumbered, from a very early age I was forced by my teachers and peers to understand that I was an Other, not solely based on the fact that I was Coloured but also because

I was a Muslim amongst Catholics. Thus, the racial, class and religious differences associated to my identity inevitably made me an easy target for non-stop bullying, resulting in my choice towards voluntarily assimilating myself into the preferred dominate school culture. As a means to survive my time within the convent walls, I fully rejected my Colouredness, despised my Islamic roots and became hyper focused upon being accepted and liked by my white peers. Fearful of being mocked and teased, there were many times I would cry to my mother, and beg her not to pack any Islamic or "ethnic" foods in my lunchbox, especially not the '*Halaal red viennas*'. As my parents were only aware of minor issues at school, they would encourage me to ignore the negativity, blend in and remember the future opportunities that await me after attending a prestigious private school. However, this mindset began changing once my baby sister started school four years after me as the bullying intensified within the younger grades. One afternoon my parents were called in to the school due to an incident that occurred involving my sister which, during her grade two physical education lesson which left her hysterical and distraught. Horrifically, my parents were informed that one of her white classmates had pushed her into the diving pool after the swimming lesson ended in attempt to see if a "fat brown girl" would float or sink. It comes as no surprise that there was no real consequence for these hateful actions other than being asked to sincerely apologise to my sister.

Unfortunately, this is merely one example of the never ending trauma children of colour continue to endure whilst trying to receive quality education in South Africa. From being fooled into drinking urine, being referred to as a "curry muncher", a "coon" a "sand/desert kaffir" and a terrorist, being told your pretty for a Black girl, or having your teachers ask if your parents are domestics as no Black family can afford a home in the suburbs, are real life examples of what still takes place within the walls of the convent and afar. Once my parents were made fully aware of the extent of the racialised bullying we had both endured for nearly a decade, they decided it was best we moved schools. Consequently however, after successfully undergoing assimilative procedures from the ages of seven to seventeen I left with a self and identity constructed upon the same settler logic of elimination discussed throughout this chapter. Thus, the self I embodied for many years projected an identity of a lesser replicated mirror image of whiteness. Ironically, during my admissions interview with who would later become my new head mistress, my mother and I were aggressively informed that despite being a "better coloured", I should prepare myself to be treated like the rest of *them* should I be accepted. Significantly, due to growing up in an environment founded upon assimilation where you are taught to hate any trace of *"otherness"*, I found no fault in this remark and nodded in

agreement until my mother brought it up after the interview was over. Interestingly, after moving schools for my final years of high school I very quickly realised that the more racial diversity on display within a school the more racism it allowed. Despite the fact that all girl schools are cliquey and hierarchal, most of them are racially divided and the more whiteness you possessed as a person of colour the more attention and acceptance you received from your peers. The point I am trying to make with the above examples is, that the assimilation of the self-did not stop when settler control over South African came to an end, and continues to be promoted throughout all societal structures. Subsequently, a large population of the Coloured community (including myself) have come to love and be proud of our colouredness despite our assimilative history. Most importantly, with the rise of the technological revolution and social media the younger generations of colour have made significant strides towards exposing the racism and assimilative strategies still utilised within South African schools and universities, which were brought to light during the 2015 #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall protests. However, to overcoming Coloured rejectionism I argue that it is important for us to understand what part of the Coloured self and identity the settler logic of elimination has successfully assimilated as well as the ways in which it is operationalised. Thus, through retelling my own history without the fear of settler contamination has awarded me with the opportunity towards better understanding a truer version of Coloured identity and the self. As Mbeme (2017) states:

> ''The colony is the landscape upon which the self was robbed of its true content and replaced with the voice of the settler."

2.3. *"Moenie vir jou wit hou nie"*

The title of this concluding section, is Afrikaans slang commonly used amongst the Coloured community. Translated into English it means "don't keep you white", a phrase directed towards specific Coloureds who "spoke white" or performed and expressed a white identity. Not surprisingly, after attending predominately white schools throughout my life and the inevitable assimilation of my-self, I would hear this phrase on a daily basis from other members of the Coloured community and especially from my cousins and relatives living within the Cape Flats. It is clear that the arguments presented by Card and Wolfe were correct in the above case of myself and my families as the past tells us who we are and without it we lose our identity. Upon voluntarily assimilating, as a means to be accepted by my peers, I severed my ties to the community lost all knowledge of my ancestry and became recognised as someone who was ashamed of their Otherness. However, I believe that many Coloured youth growing up in post-

Apartheid South Africa have had similar experiences to my own as many of us attempt to uncover, learn and re-tell our histories due to assimilation of the Coloured persons still being promoted and praised . Significantly, whilst conducting this research there were many instances where I began to question the validity of my Colouredness or whether a truer self can exist after assimilation.

Accordingly, as illustrated in the above chapter it is clear that the assimilative projects utilised by the Apartheid regime ensured that targeted communities were stripped of their identities and notions of the self-leaving them psychologically imprisoned within a lesser form of existence. Subsequently, in the attempts towards reinventing or reclaiming the self and identity free from settler contamination, has unfortunately resulted in one which denies the presence and impact the African location has had upon our identities. Currently, within my community being Muslim and identifying as a Cape Malay have identical meanings despite one being a religious identity and the other supposedly an ethnic identity. By assimilating the self and identity of the Coloured/ Cape Malay community the Islamic religion was inevitably mobilised to function as positive marker of an existing identity. As a consequence of the psychological racialised indoctrination caused by the logic of elimination, the self and identity some of us have come to recognise as our own is founded upon the promotion of separatism and the denunciation of Blackness. Thus, to liberate ourselves from the ongoing consequences of assimilation requires the creation of a Coloured self which no longer focuses upon attaining and praising the presence whiteness.

Chapter Three:

Overcoming The Demise of those Misrecognised: The Dialectics of the Other-Self

"God made the white man, God made the black man, God made the Indian, the Chinese and the Jew- but Jan van Riebeek, he made the coloured man" (Adhikari, 2006: 149).

3.1. Introduction

As members of a sovereign state, we are integrally dependent upon our environment and societal institutions to sustain both our lives and the lives of our descendants. Upon acknowledging that the environments in which we reside have been founded upon the unequal distribution of power, our individual experiences of loss, oppression and privilege will differ in accordance to how our respective societies recognise our ascribed identities. Thus, to effectively discuss the above question and fully understand the complexity of my own identity, I will be situating my father's linage as the focus of this chapter. The following analysis will illustrate the depths of assimilation the settler logic of elimination has ensured upon targeted identities. Moreover, various theorisations of recognition and misrecognition will be assessed as a means to illuminating its assimilative foundation and the existential, psychoanalytical, political and intersectional consequences it has had upon conceptions of the self and identity. Thus, influenced by the above findings this chapter will present the argument that I may never recognise my "true" self. This is not only due to the intergenerational psychological split produced through the narcissistic settler colonial enterprise, but also as a result of my ancestors assimilation into the settler polity.

3.2. The Pathology of Recognition and Oppression

Theories of recognition predominately utilise the Hegelian master/slave dialectic to illustrate the notion that the identity of the oppressed are constructed within interpersonal, rather than independent terms (Nakata, 2020: 341). Thus, a self-consciousness is established to assists us towards understanding who we are, through comparing what we are not. As the bodies of the oppressed were viewed as nothing more than an empty canvas, settlers unjustly imposed imperial values and ideologies upon the population which unescapably reconstructed their notions of existence. When looking into the mirror of racism our bodies are merely a reflection of the racialised identity constructions, influenced by the imaginings of the settler culture.

Significantly, the notion of recognition is highly contested and embodies a plethora of definitions. Even in its most pedantic etymological form, it still holds several meanings such as; the act of intellectual apprehension where we recognise that we have made a mistake or referring to the perception that something is the same as one previously known (Oliver, 2001: 26-29). Moreover, within the political and philosophical sphere the act of recognition is rendered as a means of respecting and valuing another individual, whilst simultaneously being fundamental to understanding oneself. A common characteristic evident in all the above definitions is that it requires one to be recognised by another (McQueen, n.d.). The person who is being recognised realises that the recogniser is adept to be conferring recognition. Thus, significant value is placed upon the recogniser by society in order for their attitudes towards those being recognised to count as recognitive. Berlant (2012) argues that "recognition is the misrecognition you can bear" referencing the belief that as you exist as a constructed self you will never truly be recognised as your true self.

Considering the eliminatory logic embedded within the settler colony, misrecognition takes on the form of oppression through imprisoning the minds of the marginalised within the mirror reflection of a forged and skewed construction of the self. To possess the power to recognise the other requires one to exist as a subject of agency tasked with ascribing value and respect towards objects denied of agency and subjectivity (Oliver, 2001: 29). Consequently however, the self which exists with the inherent authority to recognise the other is a product of the colonial hierarchies of power established to achieve settler domination (Nelson, 2009, 80). Thus, acts of recognition reinforce colonial ideologies of superiority and inferiority, because in order to recognise another, or more importantly our true self, requires us to exists as subjects with the power to grant recognition. According to the Hegelian school of thought, subjectivity and the means of becoming a subject encompasses the process of subordination and enslavement. This dichotomy between the subject and object, is a direct result of the pathology of oppression. As such, our relations with others are understood as struggles for recognition, or dialogical mutual understanding where we recognise ourselves in our likeness or in opposition to what is deemed as different from ourselves. Upon noting our desire to be recognised, we are immediately aware of the power and value we have granted towards those who have rendered themselves as worthy to confer recognition (McQueen, n.d.). Recognition further reinforces the oppression of the other as it teaches us to recognise ourselves in relation to the similarities or differences of the identities we encounter. To talk to the other is to point out the absence of similarities which constantly reproduces negative constructions of blackness

(Mbembe, 2017). In a similar vain to Oliver (2001) Nelson (2009) asserts that recognition cannot be achieved as it is contaminated by the deeply entrenched colonial systemic nature of misrecognition. He continues by asserting, that acts of recognition will always be haunted by the "deeply rooted systemic character of misrecognition". However, acts of recognition are increasingly significant as it not only influences fundamental aspects utilised during attempts towards understanding individual identity, but it tells us who we are. As such, recognition is commonly understood as a field of relations of power and authority, reinforcing the inferiority of targeted identities. Evidently, the Hegelian struggle for recognition is insufficient in the attempts to assist questions of difference, as it functions at the level of the ego, heightening and replicating oppression instead of resisting the colonial eliminatory logic. Within settler contexts such as South Africa, settler domination is not dependent upon state brutality and force, but rather assimilative tactics operationalised in various forms such as the acts of recognition. Upon its successful implementation, this assimilative tactic assists settlers by enticing targeted communities to accept the subjugating forms of recognition imposed upon them (Oliver, 2001. Nelson, 2009). This is evident within the Apartheid Bantu education system, discussed in the previous chapter, which ensured the continuous indoctrination of white supremacist ideologies upon the youth of targeted communities, instilling the belief of settler superiority. Acts of recognition and misrecognition reinforce settler domination within the psyche of the oppressed. By imprisoning the conscious and unconscious mind to reflect the settler image of the self, inevitably allowed the colonial logic of elimination to continue its rule over our psychological progression. When you are taught for centuries to believe that you are the lesser based on the imagined ideals of race, reinforced through legal, educational and psychological means, the act of recognition and misrecognition creates an unstable identity and self. Upon referring to the specific case study of my family's journey into Colouredness, the impact the act of recognition has had is highly complex and multifaceted. For example, despite my father identifying as Coloured genetically he is of Indian, Dutch and Coloured decent further assessed in the below sections. However, as a result of the act of recognition as well as the way in which the Indian identity was and arguably still is misrecognised throughout South African society, my father began actively distancing himself from being categorised as Indian. It is important to mention, that much like my mother's experiences my father was privileged to possess racial fluidity due to being white passing in his appearance, allowing him to move between Coloured, Indian and white racial identities. As the settler population made up the minority in South Africa, their assimilative processes implemented to secure white domination created a society in their image which has for centuries projected an undignified reflection of the self. For those of us who

succumbed to the lesser version of the self-due to constant misrecognition, experienced periods of self-hatred and self-deprecation. Accordingly, Fanon (1952: 163-173) argues that colonisation merged the Black self and identity to the recognition of the oppressor. Realising that one's identity is shaped through our relations with others, the emotions of self-worth, self-esteem and self-respect are only deemed possible once they have been positively recognised for their individuality and intersectional differences (Oliver, 2001: 28-30).

Subsequently, the Lacanian mirror image analogy asserts that when looking into the mirror of white domination the body of the other will never be reflected back as whole (Oliver, 2001). It is denied both agency and subjectivity and forced to compare and assimilate the self to mirror the dominate cultural and societal norms. As such, misrecognition can be further understood as the silencing of one's intersectional dimensions of otherness as our identities have never been recognised nor understood through a lens of difference (Oliver, 2001). The presence of otherness is unlikely as the act of recognition compels the assimilation of all difference into familiarity (Ibid, 2001) . Settler domination, acts of recognition as well as unconscious comparison between two beings are inherent traits within the recognition model of identity. Thus, the above Hegelian process of recognition threatens both power and violence over the oppressed and marginalised by both excluding and including them. Significantly, the continuous lack of positive understanding towards differences and otherness is a purposeful consequence of the alienation and assimilation of the oppressed caused by misrecognition. The hostility between recognising the familiar to confirm what we know and listening to the unfamiliar to disrupt what we know, is thus the core of contemporary theorisations of recognition (Oliver, 2001). To talk to the other is to point out the absence of similarities which constantly reproduces the negative constructions of blackness/otherness (Mbembe, 2017: 17). However, Fanon (1952: 101) notes that to seek recognition from the oppressor is to accept the dominate values of oppression. The interruption of white onlookers not only produces a loss of one's body and the disillusionment of the physiological self, but fixes onto it white supremacist historicity. This is made obvious in my continuous journey towards uncovering my true history in order to understand and find comfort in the otherness of my forbidden self.

"The black man is the one thing we see when we see nothing" (Mbembe, 2017: 2)

By reducing the worth of one's body to the stereotypes associated to one's skin, settlers have managed to grant fictional societal statuses founded upon racist biological ideals. The construction and conceptual understanding of race through acts of recognition within the

colony, aided in the disillusionment of targeted identities. This specific assimilative tactic allowed settlers to present non-European communities as beings who were imprisoned in a lesser form of existence. Consequently, the oppressed are recognised as the indefinite impoverished reflection of the perfect being separated through a widening temporal divide. In addition to South African settlers successfully transforming our ancestral memories into sights of loss, the way in which they established acts of recognition solidified the continuation of the settler state operating as a mirror reflecting the image of our existence even after the fall of Apartheid. Oliver (2001) draws upon Hooks (1990) arguing that in order to reject dominate values, as people of colour we need to give meaning and value to ourselves instead of accepting and reinforcing misrecognition. The way we conceive ourselves to be determines our conceptions and relationships with others. Consequently, presented with the realisation that our ancestral sense of worth and respect has been shaped through unequal societal relations, illustrates the importance of positively recognizing ourselves instead of seeking recognition from others as well as reconstructing our misrecognised identity and my own fragmented sense self. Authors such as Taylor (1994), express their support for the use of the politics of recognition as a means towards undoing the inherent oppressive nature of acts of recognition. This theorisation necessitates the importance for us to equally recognise the diversity within one another (Leeb: 2009; 70). Significantly however, attempting to recognise diversity in the other with the preconceived perceptions already imbedded within our psyche will inevitably lead to the exclusion of different people who do not fit the ideal other. Accordingly, the politics of recognition operates at the level of the ego as it upholds a society where subjects/egos supersede one another and reduce the other to themselves (Ibid: 2009: 71). The politics of recognition places the search for self-consciousness as a mirror encounter between one subject with another, thus ensuring that the lost subject can only uncover their true self once their otherness is acknowledged through the settler lens. Notably, this theorisation does not acknowledge the other as an essential human being, but rather creates a patronising process of recognition where the privilege see themselves in the other. Thus, in order to truly understand my own notion of the self, accept my otherness and recognise the comfort in accepting the uniqueness of my Coloured identity I need to relive the entirety of my family's forgotten history. I believe that it is not enough to merely give meaning and value to ourselves through self-determinisation. However, by including the retelling of our truth through retracing existing ancestral histories from both the maternal and paternal sides, provides us with the foundation needed to liberate targeted identities from the never ending fragmented understanding of the self, caused by the act and politics of recognition.

3.3. How Do You Recognise Your *Self*?

When looking into a mirror as an infant, the imagery reflected back is not only deeply connected to our sense of self but also represents that which exists outside of our self (Zizek, 2007: 25-30). Drawing upon the Lacanian philosophy, the stages of life between six to eighteen months of one's infancy is characterised as a vital foundational period, as it is within these moments of the mirror image phase that the narcissistic creation of the self/ego begins. The first image and sense of self we embody is directly influenced by our surrounding environment and its structures. Significantly, this specific developmental phase of one's infancy ensures the advancement of feeling indifferent to the image reflected in the mirror, towards perfecting the accepted face of the self we are forced to recognise within our reflection (Ibid, 2007: 4-12). As such, the self and the associated identity we perform in public spaces is separate from our true sense of self. The once innocent act of mirroring the behaviour and societal norms surrounding us during childhood, is later transformed into the foundation upon which our understanding of the self and self-conscious is formed. This is what the Lacanian philosophy defines as narcissistic misrecognition, which moves beyond daily lived experiences of misrecognition by including the unconscious as a structure, that begins at the entry into language that is constitutive in its misrecognition of the child. However, as we progress through life the mirror which had been previously fogged by the voice of settler onlookers begins to clear as our frustrations over consist misrecognition intensifies. From my own personal experiences, the whitewashed self I performed for most of my life, in the hopes to achieve positive recognition from my settler peers, placed my subconsciousness in a state of limbo. Not only did my desire for recognition draw me away from my family, culture and history, I began feeling as if I didn't belong in my own body. Thus, as a means to initiate the process of rediscovery, one that cannot be socially derived but rather inwardly generated, the following analysis utilises the site of the home as a significant reflective tool to assist my efforts towards creating a truer sense of self.

Nakata (2020:351) explains:

> "The self in Indigenous self-determination is an idea: both a colonial idea and a colonising idea. A necessary fiction, and also a real body: educatable, incarcerable, governable. The self in Indigenous self-determination is also an ideal: that something past can be recovered, and that something new will be made."

In a similar vein to Nakata, Castells (2010:7) asserts that the construction and re-discovery of one's identity is formed upon:

> "history, from geography, from biology, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations"

Despite the devastation caused by the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are lucky enough to still have my grandmother (my father's mother) with us who has further educated me on our history through retelling stories of the past, explaining the significance of our traditional foods as well as living in our ancestral home. Interestingly, unlike my mother's history assessed in the previous chapter, my fathers is highly complex and rife with racial trauma which at times made it difficult for him and my grandmother to relive.

On the 29th of January 1940, my grandmother Mymoena Wanza was born in Somerset West, Western Cape. Prior to conducting my research, I knew very little about my grandmother and her family other than the limited information she decided to share with her grandchildren. It was clear that her past was, and to an extent still is, exceptionally difficult to verbalise to others. For example, growing up I would ask my gran "what she was" as she looked different when next to her brothers and my Indian grandfather, to which she would reply " I am Muslim".

Figure 11: On the far right, a picture of my grandmother as a child.

Discussions surrounding race and identity were never met with acceptance but rather aggressively shut down. Significantly however, upon losing her last living sibling to COVID-19 at the start of 2021 my grandmother recently expressed that she did not share the same father as her brothers. Upon further elaboration, she explained that growing up she experienced a lot of public scrutiny from her own family as well as from the community as a result of the manner in which she was born. Accordingly, before divulging deeper into my grandmothers experiences of misrecognition it is important to discuss her memories of our history. In 1921 my great-grandmother Kamilah Wanza was born in the Strand, Somerset West the eldest daughter of three children from her parents Eisa Kimmy and Abdullah Wanza. Unfortunately,

as a result of Coloured culture in Somerset West during these times, female children from poor communities were not allowed to be inquisitive and were punished for asking their elders questions about their work and life. However, from what my grandmother was told my great-grandmother Eisa Kimmy was a housewife of German decent who married the grandson of an Indonesian slave Abdullah Wanza. My great-grandfather did manual labour in the Strand for most of his life in the form of riding a horse and cart to transport building materials for settler homes. Similar to my mother's family, my grandmother explained that the surname Wanza was not our birth surname but rather one that was given to us once our ancestors arrived at the Cape as slaves. Accordingly, despite having a different father to her brothers my great-grandmother decided to change my grandmothers surname to Davids when she was around the age of fourteen, to ensure that all the siblings had the same last name.

After working as a cook at a hotel for a few years, my great-grandmother Kamilah was employed as a domestic worker for English settlers known as the Fry family. Captured in the photograph depicted within Figure 12 to the left, is the servants quarters my grandmother knows as home in Somerset West where she grew up for most of her life. Surprisingly, my grandmother speaks very fondly of her time on their farm as well as the kindness Mrs Fry displayed to her and her family. However, living on settler farms and not belong to any land was increasingly difficult especially when the Fry's decided to migrate to Zimbabwe leaving my gran and her family without a home. Coincidentally, friends of the Fry's were in need of a domestic which led to my great-grandmother working for the Godlington family who were also English settlers. After years of working as a domestic for both families, upon my great-grandmothers retirement both Mrs Fry and Mrs Godlington decided to purchase and gift Kamilah a small plot of land and a house in Somerset west where my family still resides today. As my grandmother grew up a lot poorer with harsher living conditions in comparison to my mother's side of the family, there is very little photographic evidence of her childhood. She explained that there was no time nor money to take pictures or enjoy life as everyone was doing

Figure 12: Picture of the farm house my grandmother grew up on.

what they could to survive. Subsequently, my grandmother had two older brothers from her mother's previous marriage which created the Davids lineage which ended in a divorce a few years later. Four years after her divorce Kamilah fell in love with a white settler from Somerset West, Kenneth Lombard who I recently discovered was my grandmothers biological father. Inevitably, my grandmother grew up with no knowledge about who her father was and her grandmother went as far as tearing up the only existing photograph she had of him. There was no explanation as to why such extreme measures were taken to keep my gran away from her father other than the fact that he was white and her grandmother disapproved of him. When my gran was six she was a flower girl in a wedding her father attended where she met him for the first time. Listening to her relive the moment, I could hear the excitement in her voice as she described having the opportunity to fully understand her-self and where she came from. However, this quickly turned into sadness as she explained that her grandmother forbid any further discussions about her father. Throughout her life my grandmother longed for her father, she explained that when she was alone and looked into the mirror she would ask all her forbidden questions to the person in her reflection. Consequently, as a result of the above circumstances and the influence it had upon how my grandmother was recognised or rather misrecognised, she faced a lot of discrimination from her own community and family.

Although she had never denounced her Colouredness, this was one of the many reasons as to why my grandmother would occasionally responded to questions surrounding her race by stating "I am Muslim". In addition to being shunned, abused and oppressed for being born out of wedlock, my grandmother was denied educational opportunities to advance herself and was removed from school at just fifteen years old to start working in a factory as a seamstress while her brothers pursued their dreams. Subsequently, our identities and sense of self are not solely constructed upon settler misrecognition but also intersubjectively shaped in relation to our "significant others" whose actions have a persuasive influence over ones sense of self. Nakata (2020: 341) asserts, that significant others can include members from our immediate family and community who recognise us both in a positive or negative light. Additionally, this also includes those who sit in positions of power as they

Figure 13: Picture of my grandmother in her early 20's.

possess the ability to wield extensive control and influence over the degree of precarity we experience through life. Thus, acts of recognition generate an association between our sense of self and the sense with which our significant others view us. Evident within the case of my grandmother, the act of misrecognition from her family, community and state powers ensured the ruination of her sense of self as well as her-self-esteem, respect and confidence. At the age of nineteen my grandmother had her first child, Faeez Davids with her first husband who she was not comfortable discussing. She explained that he was not a good man and did not want to relive that period of her life. As such, similar to her mother my gran fell pregnant prior to being married and in the attempt to avoid additional scrutiny from the community, it was kept a secret and arrangements were made for them to be married immediately. According to my grandmother, in Somerset West members of the Coloured community would very openly articulate their desire to obtain whiteness and those who were "lucky" enough to be born with white features were known by all. My grandmother was constantly teased by her peers and grown women for her fair skin and blue eyes and was inevitably a target for harassment from those who were jealous of the way she looked. Thus, upon falling pregnant prior to being wed she was crippled by public scrutiny and constant misrecognition. Interestingly, despite her anger over being denied the right to know her father my grandmother ended up doing the same thing to her son due to her grandmother insisting that it was the right thing to do. Moreover, my great-grandmother demanded that my grandmother leave her son in her custody and thus raised him under her care whilst my gran moved to Cape Town where she would start a new life.

Figure 14: Picture of my grandfather in his 20's.

Whilst working in a factory in Cape Town my grandmother would stop by a local butcher in Salt River on her way home, where she met my grandfather. After a few years of courting, on the 2nd of June 1963 my grandmother married Abdul-Satar Mohedeen who were both 23 at the time. However, their union was not accepted by either families at first due to my grandmother being Coloured and my grandfather being born into a wealthy traditional Indian family. Significantly, my grandfather was the first of his family to be born in South Africa, thus marrying 'one of their own' was increasingly important to his parents. Additionally, during his

era marrying a women with a child was completely forbidden within the Islamic Indian community. Despite the fact that both families were subjected to various levels of structural violence at the hands of settlers, acts of recognition and misrecognition reinforced negative beliefs of other racial identities. The way in which the Apartheid regime influenced the construction of both the Indian and Coloured identities successfully ensured tension and separation between races. Coloured academic scholar Jodamus (2017: 75-76), draws upon Lloyd (2005: 40) during his analysis who asserts that identity is not the portrayal of essential features; but rather political constructions which exhibits these features as biological. What we are as individuals does not head nor construct discourse, but rather is the effects of discourse itself. Thus, as identities and notions of the self are socially constructed within environments dominated by relations of power, they are arguably a process of meaning construction. Subsequently, in the context of settler colonial South Africa this constructed meaning for being, is an identifying symbol forged for the purpose to secure their rule over the colony. These identifying symbols are formed around a primary racialised identity, that not only influences the way we understand the other-self and othered identities but also inhabits the ability to maintain its legitimacy across time and space. However, unlike other racial identities within South Africa such as; Black, Indian, white and Khoi, the Coloured identity is subjected to unique forms of lasting suffering caused by assimilation and acts of misrecognition.

To further elaborate upon the above sentiments, I will refer back to the introductory quote used at the start of this chapter which states:

> "God made the white man, God made the black man, God made the Indian, the Chinese and the Jew- but Jan van Riebeeck, he made the coloured man"
>
> (Adhikari, 2006: 149).

Having been brought up in a predominantly Coloured community many of us heard similar jokes being told like, Van Riebeeck being the true founding father of all Coloured people, or that we were the product of colonial rape. Despite such racial jokes no longer tolerated in contemporary South Africa, they were previously a highly effective method for deriding the Coloured population (Adhikari, 2006: 149). Significantly however, the primary reason as to why these jokes were harmful to Coloured people, is due to the fact that within South African societies the beliefs upon which they were created was widely accepted as factual. When telling any joke the punchline is only considered to be humorous when both the audience and teller

either share or acknowledge similar assumptions of the targeted subject. Adhikari (2006: 161) asserts that the Van Riebeeck joke exposes popular perceptions of Colouredness, as it embodies quintessential racist stereotypes associated with the Coloured identity during Apartheid. However, the most infamous characteristic of Colouredness highlighted by this joke is our racial hybridity (Ibid, 2006: 151). Although the existence of mixed race relationships and identities have been largely accepted around the world, this was not the case for settler colonial South Africa. As such, it is imperative to note that this specific joke is set within the context of white-supremacist South Africa, which placed the ruling settler minority at the top of the societal hierarchy, the Coloured population in the middle and the Black majority at the bottom. Coloured people were deemed superior to the Black population, largely due to their willingness to assimilate into the Western culture as well as possessing white settler ancestors. Adhikari's (2006: 150) analysis of this joke heavily focuses upon the racial tensions between the Black and Coloured identities, asserting that Black individuals commonly utilised this joke to refute the idea of Coloured superiority. Thus, in light of the above the punchline of this joke reinforces the importance of possessing racial purity as it inevitably surpasses the Coloured's attempts to assimilate or hereditary closeness to whiteness. Significantly, despite the concept of racial purity predating the events of colonising Africa, the setter minority weaponised this mythology as a tool for racial segregation and domination. Founded upon the settler logic of elimination, racial purity is acknowledged as the belief that a true, unpolluted original race exists and must be protected from the lesser contaminated races (Falkof, 2016). As such, within the context of Apartheid South Africa, segregationist utilised medical terms such as illness, disease and infection as scientific justification for racial differences (Ibid, 2016). The settler population were able to socialise their false supremacy by propagandizing the idea of possessing "white purity", whilst the lesser races were contaminated with illness and disease.

When hearing the term, Coloured most South African's immediately associate people being of 'mixed race', however during my grandmothers upbringing it signified a person being a 'half-caste' or a 'bastard'. As a result of settlers obsession with 'pure blood', the existence of racial hybridity was inevitably denied, stigmatised and carried a multitude of abominable connotations (Adhikari, 2006: 153). Upon operationalising the settler logic of elimination in the form of eugenics, South African's were made to believe that the mixing of races would breed genetic weaknesses and physical deformities. Consequently, due to the success of this propaganda campaign Coloured people were believed to be born out of sin, physically stunted, inherently dishonest, morally weak, extravagant, lazy and prone to become alcoholics (Ibid,

2006: 155). The notion of 'racial purity' is merely one aspect as to why my grandmother was rejected by my grandfather's family at the start of their courtship. Instead, I argue that their existing prejudices were emboldened due to the fact that her mother was not only a divorcee and had conceived my grandmother out of wedlock with a white settler, but that my grandmother had grown up to commit the same sin. Significantly, from the onset of colonisation the physical body, nature and sexuality of Coloured women has been subjected to intense scrutiny from society due to an unwavering fable. It is readily believed that Coloured people were born as a result of casual sex between female Khoisan prostitutes and white settler males passing through the Cape. Moreover, the above joke evokes a more sinister reasoning for Coloured illegitimacy, as it alludes to the acts of sexual violence committed during colonisation. Evidence illustrates, that Khoisan servants were commonly forced into abusive unions with white masters which would inevitably result in the birth of a 'bastard' Coloured child. As the identity of Coloured women had clearly become a target for settler acts of misrecognition, they were inescapably characterised as being inferior, unattractive and vulgar but always sexually available (Ibid, 2006: 161). Unsurprisingly, within contemporary South Africa not only do such falsehoods continue to dominate popular beliefs, but for some being Coloured is to exist in an identity that has been obscured by sexualised shame (Ibid, 2006: 152). However, the significance of this joke is to highlight the settler logic of elimination's ability to implicate humour within processes of assimilation and acts of misrecognition. The 'simple act' of telling the above joke has normalised the misrecognised understanding of the Coloured and our self as fact. In their selfish attempts to maintain settler supremacy and purity, through enforcing racial segregation by means of misrecognition, has inevitably erased and silenced the rich origins of the Coloured identity. A profound example of this is evident within the 2019 scandal involving academics from Stellenbosch University. At the end of March 2019, an article was published in the academic journal *Aging, Neuropsychology and Cognition* which sampled a group of 60 Coloured women between the ages of 18 to 64 that concluded its findings arguing that:

> "coloured women have an increased risk for low cognitive functioning, as they possess low education levels and exhibit unhealthy lifestyle behaviours."
>
> (Thumbran, 2019)

Significantly, even after 27 years of being free from the Apartheid regime settler populations continue to operationalise imagined "scientific" hypotheses about Colouredness, that have

been forged upon the logic of elimination, and thus evidently lived on through acts of misrecognition. Accordingly, despite the obvious reasons as to why this publication sparked wide spread outrage, majority of South African's were not surprised that it was produced by academics from Stellenbosch University. Historically, during the Apartheid era the university was known as being the intellectual home for Afrikaner nationalism with its primary role being to create knowledge which justified unjust racist policy (Thumbran, 2019). Accordingly, during the 1950's they had specifically conducted sociological research on individuals classified as Coloured, focused upon assisting our development as a separate racial group (Ibid, 2019). Professor Erika Theron, known as Stellenbosch Universities "expert" on Colouredness, published works which would later become the standard for similar knowledge produced throughout Apartheid universities. As such, in 1955 Theron published an article titled *The Coloured and his Social Problems* where she asserted that the primary cause behind the decline of a substantial percentage of the Coloured population is due to alcoholism (Ibid, 2019). Consequently, the study of the Coloured race became a popular research topic across various academic disciplines, which commonly argued that the Coloured community was highly dysfunctional and plagued by alcoholism. Significantly, majority of these imagined racist stereotypes continue to be closely associated to the Coloured culture despite Apartheid having ended 27 years ago. Thus, based upon the above analysis it becomes clear as to why my grandfather's family disapproved of his desire to marry my grandmother.

As previously stated, on the 2nd of June 1963 my grandmother would marry my grandfather Abdul-Satar Mohedeen despite both families voicing their disapproval. Surprisingly, my grandmothers oldest brother was the most vocal about his dislike for my grandfather and his family. It was noted that he disapproved of my grandfather's lifestyle, as he was often spotted partying and comfortably socialising within a specific social scene reserved only for white settlers. I found this particular comment to be highly fascinating, considering that during this period a large population of the Coloured community displayed an intense desire to obtain a certain level of whiteness. Thus, I would have assumed that he would have been rather pleased for her to marry into a family with certain privileges. Additionally, my grandmother explained that her brother and other close family members would refer to my grandfather as "charra", "darkie" or "moor", which are all derogatory terms used to identify and insult dark skinned individuals. Considering that my grandfather was in fact white passing, the term "charra" and "moor" where also utilised to specifically target individuals from the Indian Muslim communities. Despite being aware of the negative stereotypes that have been associated with

the Indian identity for centuries, I have never been personally effected. An example of these negative sentiments towards Indians is made evident by Daniel Lindley, a former pastor of the Voortrekkers, in 1864 four years after the arrival of the first Indians in South Africa. As such, he was recorded stating that:

> "The skins of these imported Indians is with some exceptions intensely black. Some have a mullatto complexion; but at heart they are all jet black. They are indescribably wicked and seem to me hopelessly lost now and forever. They are the dregs of wickedness. They are under contract to the planters for a certain period. When the time of their servitude shall have expired, they will be free to go and come as they may like. Then we shall have crime and criminals to our heart's content."
>
> (Webb, 1957: 35)

Just like the racist settler colonial ideals of the Coloured and Black population stated above, the Indian identity were no exception to being targeted by the logic of elimination thus ensuring that such beliefs continue on throughout contemporary South Africa. Consequently, in recent years negative emotions towards South African Indians have been exacerbated as a result of the Gupta family, who illegally utilised government resources to enrich their empire and political control in all economic spheres (Bagchi, 2021). As such, for research purposes I decided that over the course of 2021 I would publicly classify as Indian when asked about my race, which usually occurs often due to my diverse appearance. Interestingly, upon disclosing that I was South African Indian and Muslim the first question commonly asked is: why are all of "you guys" wealthy? or is it just normal for all of "you" to have money?. The dangerous generalisation of all Indians being well off in a country plagued by poverty, is in part a direct consequence of the Guptas, the known history of Indians in Africa as well as the country's political climate. However, foundational catalyst behind the increase of tensions between and within races is arguably the logic of elimination and the power of successful misrecognition. It is common knowledge that the issues plaguing South Africa predate the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and were thus worsened due to the implementation of harsh Lockdowns. Amidst the increasing levels of unemployment and hunger, the government failing to meet the needs of the country and the outbreak of deadly riots in Kwa-Zulu Natal, over the sentencing of corrupt former president Jacob Zuma, the aggravation of existing ethnic and racial tensions was inevitable. Significantly, in addition to this the president of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) Julius Malema, reinforced negative stereotypes and misrecognition of the Indian population. He was reported publicly declaring the origins of Black African misery in

South Africa to be the "Indian cabal". Significantly, these sentiments and prejudices towards the Indian identity expressed by Black political leaders, is not a recent emergence. Rather, as a result of settler colonialism, the logic of elimination and its creation of Apartheid racist laws, tensions between all targeted racial identities were purposely and meticulously constructed to eliminate all opportunities for unification against settler domination. However, despite the degrees of oppression all non-white identities were subjected to, settler colonialism and the Apartheid regime focused specifically upon the normalisation of Black oppression within South Africa. Subsequently, tensions between Indians and Black South Africans arguably began with the arrival of Indian merchants who freely travelled to the Cape of Goodhope in search of better economic opportunities. An example of this is evident during an interview conducted in 1970, between Gail Gerhart and the former president of the Pan African Congress (PAC) Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe. When asked why he had advocated for PAC membership to include poorer Indians, he responded noting that they had not come to South Africa on their own free will and had thus been subjected to levels of exploitation similar to the Black population (Sobukwe & Gerhart, 2016: 68). He continued, arguing that the problem was the Indian merchant class who many believed were oppressors who were prejudice towards Africans (Ibid, 2016: 68). Contrastingly, Sobukwe asserted that Coloureds were undoubtingly considered to be Africans, however the inclusion of any Indians received harsh objection from all members of the PAC (Ibid, 2016: 68). As such, the above examples provides further clarity as to why such sentiments towards the Indian merchant class emerged.

On the 5th of December 1939, my grandfather Abdullah-Satar Mohedeen was born in Wynberg, Cape Town in the very same home we live in today. I was surprised to learn that he was in fact the first member of the Mohedeen family to be born in South Africa. However, upon reuniting with my great aunts (my grandfather's sister) children in early November of 2021, they refuted the above fact and noted that my grandfather and his siblings were actually born in India. They further explained, that due to the nature of my great-great-grandfather's work they were able to secure citizenship very soon after arriving in South Africa. Although, my grandfather spoke proudly of his Indian roots I was highly surprised to learn that he was born in India which meant that I am only the second

Figure 15: Picture of my grandfather as a baby.

generation of Mohedeen's to be born in South Africa. Ironically, I have always known South Africa to be home and had always assumed that my roots in India were in the very distant past of out ancestry. Moreover, there has not been a single moment in life where I considered myself belonging to an Indian diasporic community, as I was brought up as a Coloured and taught to publicly identify as such. Accordingly, I had previously misrecognised Diasporic identities as beings with a lost and forgotten self, and thus as a consequence of colonisation possessed an identity with no connection to land or community. Upon conducting self-reflective research, my previous indoctrinated line of thought is embarrassing to the extent of being humorous, when realising that the hybridity of my identity situates my-self within the Diaspora. Contrastingly, unlike the limited findings of my family's Coloured history discussed throughout this thesis, far more knowledge and vital evidence of the Mohedeen lineage exists which I argue is largely due to having maintained ownership over our ancestral home. However, before continuing it is imperative to note that although I am in fact Indian this thesis will not divulge further into the colonisation of the Indian identity, its influence over the creation of the caste system nor the position of the Indian community within South Africa. Being brought up within a racially and culturally diverse home, I had merged the Coloured and Indian identities as one and disregarded the idea of them existing as separate entities. As I had never previously considered myself to be Indian, the extent of my knowledge about the identity does not go beyond what is responsibly necessary to conduct a successful analysis. Subsequently, the discussions surrounding my 'Indianness' are included as a means to assist my attempts towards recognising and respecting all aspect and diverse influences of my Colouredness that were previously silenced.

According to my families recollection, In 1882 in a small village known as Veer, situated within Mahad Tehsil of the Raigarh District in Maharashtra India, My great-great-grandfather Bahawodien Mohedeen (Baba) was born. Captured in the photography depicted within Figure 16 to the left, Bahawodien is the oldest remembered and documented ancestor of the Mohedeen's I currently have access to. My father and his cousin explained that Baba was a wealthy businessman who travelled extensively between the British Commonwealth for trade and business related matters. Unfortunately, with my grandfather passing in early 2014 I was never given the opportunity to further question him about his grandfather and his life in India. However, from the stories told Baba was a Konkani Muslim otherwise referred to as Kokni in contemporary South Africa, who were recognised for being the oldest Islamic settlements in India. My grandfather and his family spoke Konkani as their first language, commonly defined as an Indo-Aryan language spoken by Konkani descendants from the Maharashtra region. Significantly, upon listening to my family re-tell their memory of the past I became increasingly aware of the confusion and hints of secrecy surrounding the nature of Baba's work, especially after learning that he in fact owned an impressive amount of houses and shops in the suburb of Wynberg, Cape Town. As depicted within Figures 16 & 17, Baba was known for always being dressed in an expensive suit accompanied by a very tall red fez which is rich in history and symbolism. Subsequently, upon noting that Baba travelled extensively between the British Commonwealth, during one of his trips to St. Helena Island he met his then to be wife Zainab captured in the photograph depicted within Figure 18 below, with her hands crossed. Significantly, as Baba was a member of the orthodox,

Figure 16: Picture of my great-great grandfather Bahawodien Mohedeeen.

Figure 17: From the left is my great-great grandfather Bahawodien Mohedeeen., my grandfather, his sister and his younger brother.

Indian Muslim religion he believed it would beneficial to return to Indian with Zainab where she would assimilate herself into the Konkani identity prior to their marriage. As result of limited interactions with my extended family, my knowledge about my great-great-grandmother's life does not extend beyond the aforementioned facts. Additionally however, growing up my grandfather would always make mention of how similar I was to his grandmother in both my physical appearance and personality, especially during my rebellious stage when I had decided to pierce my nose and decorate my ears. Inevitably, I was shocked to learn that Zainab was born in St. Helena Island, largely due to the manner in which my grandmother explained the interactions between them. She was described as a proud Indian women who could barely speak English and was devoted to Islam and her family. Interestingly, the extent of Zainab's successful assimilation into the Indian identity became clear when listening to my grandmother explain their interactions with one another. Although she herself was not born Indian, Zainab was apparently vehemently against the mixing of races and thus highly vocal about her disapproval of my grandfather's choice to marry a non-Indian. This example is a perfect display of the outcome of successful assimilation of the self, induced by constant acts of misrecognition. Upon emigrating to India, it is inevitable that Zainab would have been targeted and subject to constant acts of misrecognition, due to possessing the identity of another whilst simultaneously hoping to marry into an Indian family. Accordingly, as discussed throughout this chapter Oliver (2001) asserts that the existence of otherness is improbable as acts of recognition strategically compel desires to assimilate ones difference into the familiar. Thus, as a consequence of the above factors not only did it assist the continuation of the settler logic of elimination but it ensured the complete extinction of the St. Helenian identity from my family's memory and history.

Figure 18: Second to the left is a picture of my great-great grandmother Zainab, sitting with her hand crossed in front of her car which has British flags on either side.

Together Baba and Zainab had three sons and one daughter who were all born in India. One of their sons born in 1912 would eventually become my great-grandfather Kassiem Mohedeen. Consequently, as a result of family feuds caused by their sons lavish lifestyles, very little is known about Kassiem. Growing up my grandfather spoke very little about his father other than his love for women and horses which led me to believe him to be rather absent in the lives of his children. However, from what my father and grandmother could recall Kassiem married my great-grandmother Kulsum in Indian when they were really young. Unbeknown to her, Kulsum would be remembered as Kassiem's first wife due to him eventually marrying three more women once arriving in Cape Town. Prior to settling in the Cape, they had three children together with my grandfather being their eldest son born in 1939. Subsequently, in pursuit for greater economic opportunities in the early 40's Baba Mohedeen pioneered the family's emigration to the Cape of Goodhope and thus founding the presence and existence of our family in South Africa specifically within the suburb of Wynberg. Inevitably, due to the limited resources and in-depth knowledge surrounding the life of my great-great grandfather and his success, I became intrigued to unpack the history of the suburb in the hopes it would reveal why we settled in this particular area. As such, according to historical records it is noted that centuries before the invasion of the Dutch and British settlers in the area now recognised as Wynberg, was home to the indigenous Khoisan population (cite). Unfortunately, in 1658 Dutch colonisers violently erased the Khoisan existence in order to divide the land to be distributed and sold amongst the settler population. One of these plots were transformed into a farm known as De Oude Wijnbergh (Old Wine Mountain), situated in the centre of the Cape Town to Simonstown wagon route. In 1795 this small farm area would transform into a garrison town as colonisers began bringing in hordes of troops. Slowly, the

Figure 19: Kassiem, my great grandfather.

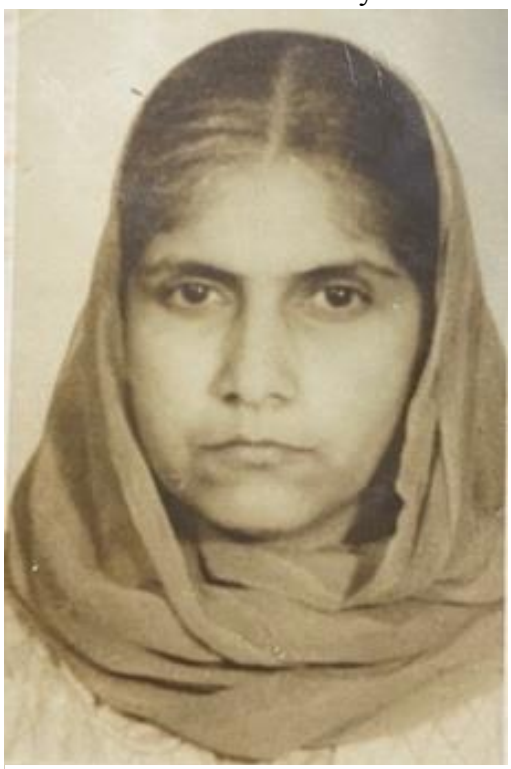

Figure 20: Kulsu, my great grandmother and 1st wife to Kassiem.

suburb known as Wynberg East where, I live today, became the place that housed the skilled seamstresses, tailors, builders, carpenters and shoemakers servicing the military settler community (cite all). Subsequently, as the Apartheid government began the roll out of the forced removals my grandfather and his family were allocated to be placed in Rylands but were able to avoid this by reclassifying themselves as Coloured. However, after speaking with my grandfather's nephew, who is the last know living relative family, he explained that my grandfather was not entirely truthful about how they managed to remain in Cape Town. Upon further elaboration, he noted that when the rest of the extended family were targeted by forced removals they were relocated to Durban and Johannesburg. Due to being a lot darker than my grandfather, his nephew explained that majority of their family could not outrun their Indian identity like the lighter skin family could. Thus, it came to light that in order to remain in our Cape Town home my grandfather had classified the family as white.

Contrastingly, unlike my mother's family who proudly assimilated into whiteness, my father's family kept this a secret for generations and spoke of the matter with a great sense of shame and betrayal. Interestingly, despite all the negative stereotypes attached to the Indian identity during this time, members of the community worked hard to preserve the culture through various traditions and food as well as embedding it throughout the home. Thus, growing up as a white passing Indian made life exceptionally complex for my father despite the privileges that came with sitting so close to whiteness. As such, on the 24th of October 1964 my grandparents welcomed their first and only child together, my father Ebrahim Mohedeen. Considering the complex genetics my grandparents possess, it is no surprise that my father was born with pale skin and blue eyes with very little physical features associated with being Indian. When sitting with my father one evening I asked him how he would identify himself now, despite his Apartheid classification. To which he proudly responded with "I am a Muslim Indian, just like my father and his father before him." Interestingly, although my father physically did not look Indian he never once questioned if he belonged. This intense sense of identity security my father experienced, was mostly a result of growing up within our ancestral

Figure 21: My father Ebrahim Mohedeen as a young boy.

home and the history it stored, as well as the way he was treated by family, his peers and society. During one of our many late night hangouts, my father finally decided to open up and share a few difficult childhood memories about what it was like for him growing up as a white passing Indian. When visiting his grandmother in the Strand, my father expressed how much he resented having to go on these trips due to the abuse he would be subjected to. As previously discussed within this chapter, my grandfather was not accepted by my grandmothers family due to the prejudices they held towards Indians. Therefore, when my father was born my grandmothers family were not expecting to be faced with a little blue eyed, white passing boy whose existence contradicts all that they knew about the Indian identity. Consequently, my father explained that he would often be teased by his brother and cousins as well as experiencing physical abuse at the hands of his uncle due to being different. He continued, noting that at the time he did not understand why his own family would mistreat him so severely just for being Indian. However, as he got older he realised that every time they physically assaulted him and called him a "moor", "charra" or the "*darkie se kind*" (the dark man's child) was not a result of him being Indian but rather him being white. Possessing the physical features of the white settler elite, inevitably awarded my father with certain privileges and freedoms his darker skinned family members would only experience at the end of Apartheid. According to my father, when faced with jealously like the above, he realised that his Indian identity would be targeted as a means to remind even if he is white passing he is still a lesser being. This is a clear example of the power the logic of elimination has over the minds of the oppressed, because even though targeted identities might despise whiteness there is the desire to attain it to achieve recognition. Significantly, my father stated that even though society viewed him as white he never faltered on identifying himself as Indian. Despite obviously being aware of his physical differences, my father explained that when he was home with his parents and his father's family the only cultural traditions practiced were Indian. Moreover, when my grandparents got married my grandmother fully assimilated into the Indian identity, embracing her husband's culture over the one she grew up with. Thus, growing up my father was surrounded by Indian representation at home that included him, which instilled a sense of belonging and security. Interestingly, unlike my mother's family my father openly expressed his dislike for whiteness, as the identity was never acknowledged or praised at home and was the root cause of majority of my fathers struggles.

Similar to my own experience as well as other members of a targeted identity, my father struggled with a fragmented sense of self as a result of acts of misrecognition. However, when

I questioned how my father was able to move past this and form a truer sense of self, he explained that living at home amongst his family history acted as a constant reminder for who he truly is. This made it easier for him to consciously and unconsciously rebel against oppressive settler identity constructs. According to Boylorn (2016: 45), who utilises the home as a site of memory and resistance, she argues that the home is a place of vulnerability and surrender where we can be free to let go and be our full-bodied self without fear of judgement. Significantly, our homes provide us with the space we need to restore the dignity that is denied to those who are subjected to acts of misrecognition in the public world (Ibid, 2016: 46). In line with this, Hooks and Mesa-Bains (2006: 98) argue that:

> "the home is a site where the oppressed and disenfranchised people restore their spirits and continue the process of self-recovery."

Therefore, based upon the above analysis it is evident that our home had a significant influence over how my father's journey towards understanding his true self. Unlike my mother's family discussed in chapter two, my father's side embraced their whiteness publicly as a means to preserve their history and identity in the home. Home is a permanent fixture both figuratively and literally, it is a place where our roots are buried and values are born. Significantly, I argue that upon arriving in the Cape my family grew increasingly attached to our physical home after having left behind our true homeland in search for greater opportunities. Consequently, in their efforts to replicate feelings of closeness and belonging in this new country, our home was transformed into a monument rich with our family's history. However, despite the privilege it may be to still live in my great-great grandfathers house only one side of our complex identity is remembered within its walls. The self, identity and the home share a common characteristic being that they will all undergo some form of renovation and transformation. Thus, to carry around with us the feeling of being at home requires us to interrogate all facets of the self. Once we have logically explored the creations of our constructed self and identity, only then can we freely sit in our understanding of the self and take this feeling of home along with us and *"carry it on your skin like the aroma of sweet perfume"* (Boylorn, 2016: 45).

3.4. Conclusion

Notably, unlike individuals who could not escape their racial classification due to their physical features, certain families within the Coloured and Indian racial categorisation such as my own who presented as white passing or "other", were able to move freely between identities. In

attempts to avoid being subjected to varying degrees of negative misrecognition as well as possess additional privileges, the voluntary assimilation of oneself was utilised as a tool for advancement. An example of this is evident within the previous chapter, when discussing my mother's grandfather who made the decision to erase his Indian roots and assimilate into the Cape Malay/Coloured identity. Contrastingly, despite similarly utilising assimilation for advancement, the Mohedeen's were able to preserve their understanding of the self through transforming our home into a literal site of memory. However, it is important to mention that having the opportunity to maintain ownership and live in our ancestral home for nearly a century, is not a common occurrence for any persons of Colour within South Africa. The roll out of Apartheid forced removals, ensured that the majority of non-white communities were forced out of their ancestral homes in areas that had been designated as whites only. Accordingly, due to possessing the privilege of racial fluidity the Mohedeen's were able to avoid being forcefully removed into the designated Indian areas. Interestingly, this chapter shed light upon how targeted communities can use the home as a site for rebellion. It is no coincidence that anti-Apartheid groups began at home and not in public, due to the literal protection is provided but also the feeling of safety and belonging it would ignite. Therefore, my father's family were able to avoided assimilation as well as the consequences of acts of misrecognition, by claiming our ancestral home in Cape Town.

Chapter Four:

Concluding Thoughts

"Home is brown and decadent, beautifully bland and predictable, composed of curves and angles that carry the legacy of ancestors and the heat of humidity, with darkened edges and thick skin. There are eyes and feet and hands at home. Big legs, wide arms, and mysterious eyes that see in/side out, marking places beneath birth marks a road map can't point to." –

(Boylorn, 2016:44)

When I began this research I aimed to provide an answer to the question posed in my introduction:

"*What is a true self within the polluted and imagined bodies of the marginalized?"*

I had assumed that uncovering a true self after critically assessing my ancestral history would be rather simple. Instead, I am left even more curious about our journey to Cape Town after discovering how much of my history was erased due to the success of the logic of elimination and its assimilative projects. Accordingly, this analysis highlighted the ways in which the colonized inevitably internalize the mental attitudes of the settlers to the point where the settlers become idealized and the marginalized begin to deny their-self. This was made evident during Chapter Two when discussing the reasons why my family had willingly assimilated into whiteness. Existing within the parameters of the pathology of oppression, there are only two ways identity can exist those being good and evil, black, and white. However, acknowledging and understanding these powers embedded within the settler colony has assisted me on my journey towards creating my own true self. I have been trying to breathe through the generations of pollution that surrounds my-self when all along the truth I was searching for sat with the four walls of my childhood home.

Therefore, my true self is that which feels familiar to me. It is the comfort I experience in my own skin even when my figurative home may be a mess. In agreement with Boylorn (2016), to sit and be at home with the self means you are able to feel at home even at someone else's house. As such, through acknowledging my history and understanding my families past experiences with the self and identity constructions I am able to utilize this analysis to illustrate what I am not in order to be comfortable with who I think I am. Even during the instances where society may assume my identity based upon their own limitations, I will still sit comfortably within my true self. Significantly, when we move from place to place our

reflection will change according to the environment, we find ourselves in. Thus, place will always have considerable influence over our identity and understandings of the self. However, I argue that this idea of chasing feeling of home is the third place where we are free to explore our hybridity holistically. It is a place that is free of Cartesian duality, allowing us to create our own understanding of the self and identity, awarding us with the comfortability needed to walk around confident in our skin. As a member of targeted communities, I no longer seek recognition from those who have de-humanized us, instead I recognise our histories that have been forgotten to empower my determination to grant meaning and value to my-self.

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