Feeling Difference:

History, Encounter and the Affective Life of a Postcolonial Neighbourhood

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Declaration

I, Talia Meer, declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university.

Signature: Signed by candidate Date: 05-02-2019

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Abstract

In this dissertation I develop an account of Observatory, a neighbourhood of Cape Town, South Africa, and its fem (cis- and transwomen, feminine men and gender non-conforming) residents, to show how place history, personal identity and everyday encounters come to be co-constituted through affect. I argue that *structures of feeling* – overarching historical affects – and the *feeling of structures* – embodied experiences of historical affects and structures of difference, including race, class and gender – shape life over the long durée and in the immediacy of encounters. As different but connected affective scales they elucidate how fems, usually cast as subjugated in urban life, are implicated in the unfolding of history, how they accomplish specific trajectories, and unexpectedly summon the past or future through embodied encounters. Through intimate, visceral, but deeply social and historical ways of knowing their own bodies and *others*, fems feel out, enact and make differences daily. These differences are constructed relationally, not just hierarchically, as identities and histories are reconstituted and power geometries shift from encounter to encounter.

This dissertation is purposefully transdisciplinary and seeks an intersectional sociological understanding of embodied affect through an expansive view of the gender-based violence literature, urban and diversity studies, and critical race and queer theory. It combines exploratory archival work, in-depth interviews with twenty fems, and ethnographic observation to produce a historically grounded and empirically rich take on the relationship between urban space, postcolonial time, and everyday forms of difference, embodiment and encounter. In doing so, it straddles a concern for how fems make liveable lives in contexts of gendered insecurity, but also for how their strategies may in turn operationalise other historically entrenched forms of difference, particularly race, thus constructing and endangering others.

In this dissertation, I re-illuminate a familiar, although underexplored, race-gender-space encounter. I denaturalise not only the white, global north ciswoman as the focus of inquiry into gendered city life, but also her presumed position of oppression. By addressing a range of fem positionalities in Observatory, I argue instead that fems can and do access histories of power, shaped by colonialism and apartheid. This highlights fem capacity to effect and affect urban space and those within. In addition, I develop an empirical ground for the study of affect that attends to life as lived and emplaced, and that provides an analysis of postcolonial affects from the global south. In this way I push beyond narrow developmentalist approaches to global south cities to bring their rich affective life into focus.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

This dissertation aims to thread together the historical, spatial, relational and affective strands of life in a diverse neighbourhood. By tracing the history of the Cape Town neighbourhood of Observatory, and the contemporary experiences of its fem (cis- and transwomen, feminine men and gender non-conforming people who identify as feminine) residents, I argue that, in the everyday life of the postcolonial city, historically produced affects (feelings) are powerful structuring forces that shape meaning-making, sense of place, and interactions in everyday life. I highlight the centrality of racialised feelings in producing the postcolonial city, gendered subjectivity and interactions within it. I argue that despite a global focus on diversity and urban mixing (see for example Vertovec 2007; Arnaut 2012; Wessendorf 2014), or pervasive anxieties about the feminine experience of victimisation in public space (see for example Pain 1997; Wesely & Gaarder 2004; Phadke 2005; Koskela 2014), particular racialised ways of knowing and feeling shape the character of the neighbourhood, fems' optimistic experience of belonging and attachment to it, as well as their experience of desirous and fearful encounters in the neighbourhood. I reveal fem residents as deeply implicated in the production and experience of raced violence, structural and intimate, as they live and make the post-colonial city through optimism, desire and fear.

By affects I refer to relations between bodies, where a body could be anything – a person, an object, a place. They are the capacities of bodies to affect and be affected, move and be moved (Deleuze 1978). They may be synonymous with emotions or feelings – and throughout this dissertation I use them as such. They include those feelings we can readily name, such as fear, as well as those we may articulate much more vaguely, such as feeling uneasy.

When I started this project, I was mainly interested in how feminine identified people experienced public space in Observatory. How place shaped experiences that were often seen as ubiquitous, such as public harassment, but also how these experiences were shaped by gender identity rather than simply being the experience of a particular sex. Quite quickly I realised however, that beyond gender or other identities, there were specific, deeply historical and largely uncommunicated, logics at work. They informed everyday attitudes and interactions in place – who belongs, who is safe, who is desirable, and who is not; shaping the experience of

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urban life constantly whilst remaining under the surface of *doing.* I was feeling the force of feelings.

Observatory offers a rich social space in which to understand the intersection of space, identity history and feelings. In Cape Town, Observatory is often seen as a uniquely inclusive neighbourhood in the segregated city, accepting of race and class mixing, and described historically as a 'grey area' – neither black nor white, or both during apartheid. In this way it is both the epitome of the cosmopolitan diverse city-space, and a uniquely potent symbolic space for the sedimentation of the idea of the good post-apartheid life. Because of its tight cluster of houses, shops restaurants and bars, as well as other small businesses, it is one of the few spaces where Cape Town's middle classes walk the streets. Whilst its formal residents are largely middle class, it has a large homeless population, and is also a significant destination and thoroughfare for people using public transport to work, or healthcare and other public service nodes. The area is also a known hotspot for street and home-based sex work. In addition, many people commute from nearby townships to work in Observatory or the surrounding suburbs as domestic workers, gardeners, car-guards or to panhandle. This mixing makes Observatory especially diverse in the South African context, but also reflects the appeal and tensions of other diverse spaces across the globe. Focusing on Observatory enabled me to explore the experiences of people who inhabit different intersecting identities, including race, class, age, gender, sexual orientation, and language, and to explore how they feel and produce the feeling of the neighbourhood.

Feelings matter in how we know and live the city. They are territorialising forces; informing the social and historical transformation and ordering of physical space into a place (Ince 2012). They are central to understanding embodied experience within the city and have material outcomes for the use and occupation of the space (Yeoh 2015). There are no aspects of city life, landscape, history or encounter, that are not suffused with feeling, and there is a growing literature attending to the affective in urban life (for example Walkerdine 2010; Nayak 2010; Rodó-de-Zárate 2017; Pettit 2018). In this vein, I am concerned with the historical significance and material impact of affect in Observatory.

This research aims to understand how fems make sense of, experience, interact within, and produce the urban space of Observatory, future, present and past, and their raced, classed and gendered bodies within it. Broadly, this dissertation revisits some central questions raised by Kristyn Gorton (2007, 334) in her review essay on feminism and affect theory, and brings them to bear on the spatial context of the postcolonial city:

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- What is the place of emotion in public spaces and interactions?
- How might a focus on feeling reconfigure the feminist emphasis on the personal as political?
- How do feelings work towards, or away from, a more just society?

More specifically, I address the following questions about affect, place, history and encounter:

- What are the dominant feelings present in records and articulations of Observatory? And what feelings are less apparent, but still tangible?
- How do discourses of racial difference and diversity feature in articulations of place and people?
- What are the affects and effects of these perceptions of history, identity, difference or diversity on fems' sense of place and belonging? That is, how do they shape how fems feel and what they do?
- How are fem subjectivities informed by place, collective and personal histories, including of colonisation and apartheid?
- How are these perceptions operationalised in moments of encounter with men in public? How do they constitute embodied fem subjectivity in relation to that of men?
- How do these everyday encounters dovetail with or depart from established histories and their affective structures to shape the space?

To this end, I work on affects in two central ways in this dissertation. On one hand, I show how specific affects come to circulate in a place over time and shape the feelings of entire groups, including notions of neighbourhood and belonging. They shape what we may know of a place, its past and peoples, and what signs, symbols and feelings are available in the present, from which to construct images of the future. These overarching historically produced affects can be understood as *structures of feeling* (Williams 1977). I focus on white fear and diversity optimism as dominant in structuring the neighbourhood over time (Chapter 3), and on how historically charged optimism shapes residents' attachment to and sense of belonging in Observatory today (Chapter 4).

On the other hand, I analyse how emotions subjectively arise, and are managed or suppressed in individual residents as they go about the streets of Observatory. Here I focus on the subjective experience of desire (Chapter 5) and of fear (Chapter 6), although in the process I demonstrate how the structures of white fear and diversity optimism show up as individual emotions within encounters. I refer to these individually experienced and expressed affects as the *feeling of*

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structures. They are both the individual manifestations of structures of feelings, but also the felt experience of other organising structures such as race, class, sexuality and gender. They constitute the subjective feelings of living with difference that shore up notions of place, belonging and identity in the constitution of daily life. I describe my dual framework for working through affect further in Chapter 2.

This dissertation is explicitly and necessarily transdisciplinary, and thus draws from and makes contributions to a range of disciplines and fields. By focusing on how histories of raced feelings – structured by colonisation and apartheid – work to shape gendered subjectivity and interaction in the present, and thus perpetuate these raced feelings into the future, I believe this dissertation offers novel insights into the affective and material experience of the postcolonial city, and into the contradictions of diverse cities everywhere. It offers a deep-dive into the biography of a particular place that shows the co-construction of space, history, race, class and sexuality in the experience and articulation of gendered subjectivity. At first glance this dissertation traces a specifically South African story, about colonisation, apartheid, and its diverse/divided aftermath, a microhistory which "places agency and historical meaning in the realm of day-to-day transactions" (Brewer 2010, 87). However, through contextual and empirical specificity, this work also links into bigger debates about intersectionality, the role of gender in urban life and specifically in global south cities, urban diversity, and the theorisation of affect. I unpack these four contributions in more detail.

First, this dissertation is an exploration of what attending to intersectionality in both theorisation and research practice might offer. Whilst there has been increasing work from the global south (see for example Phadke et al. 2009; Matebeni 2011b), most research on gender and the city stems from the north and is implicitly and overwhelmingly white (for reviews of the northern literature see Bondi & Davidson 2005; Spain 2014). Both typically focus on (presumed) cisgender women. By contrast I think through what taking gender as a spectrum seriously might mean in research. I use the category fem to group diverse feminine identities: cis- and transwomen, feminine men, and gender non-conforming people who identify as feminine. Focusing on fem as a category of analysis questions what it means to be feminine, and to move through the world as such, and how gender orders differently feminine people differently. Thus, I aim to avoid the sex-essentialism in much of the existing scholarship on gender and cities, which excludes or over-determines the experience of gender-non-conforming and trans peoples (Erel et al. 2010). This often results in an othering of these identities rather than acknowledging common vulnerability and experience among groups marginalised by patriarchal norms and practices,

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and vulnerable to gender-based discrimination and violence. In working beyond binary normativities – man/woman, cis/trans, but also private/public, now/then – I purposefully deploy a queer perspective.

This choice of sample and framing intentionally moves past the tendency of intersectional approaches to continually expand the list of identity categories (Anthias 2012). Rather, it aims to understand the particular and overlapping histories, experiences of embodiment, expression, interaction and vulnerability that may productively be compared across feminine identities. In addition, I veer closer to thinking about intersectionality as an assemblage, an arrangement of temporal, spatial and subjective characteristics, where identity/subjectivity is dynamic and ever-emerging, where categories – race, class, gender, sexuality – "are considered events, actions, and encounters, between bodies, rather than simply entities and attributes of subjects" (Puar 2011, 5; see also Anderson & McFarlane 2011). Thus, I am not only analysing the sex-gender-sexuality triad in relation to feminine subjectivities (Butler 1990), but also in relation to postcolonial urban public space and its significance in subject formation (Valentine 2007). By thinking through gender as a product of colonial histories, and as tightly bound with spatial logics that rely on and coproduce other categories of social difference, particularly racialised and classed ones, I am asserting a queer feminist stance into postcolonial urbanism, but also a critical race perspective on a still largely colour-blind feminist gender-based violence literature. I discuss this further in Chapter 2.

Importantly, in employing fem as a way to work through the intersectional experience of the city, I am not coining a term. Fem is not a fixed category and I am not espousing its adoption. My use of fem is anticipatory (Muñoz 2009), it seeks future ways of living and studying gender that are not confined by sex-determinism or gender binarism. I am advocating for analysis that takes into account the vastness of experience, the collectiveness of identity, the mutuality of embodiment, the arbitrariness of categorisation, beyond women, men, cis, trans and so forth, to think about other ways that we might slice gender. I hope that this will encourage others to undertake different configurations and collations of genders, relevant to the understanding of different social phenomena, to seek commonalities and differences in unexpected ways, and to explore different collations of gender as co-constitutive of racial, sexual and classed experience.

This brings me to my second contribution. Work on gender in urban public space has tended to focus on the feminine experience of vulnerability, discomfort and violence (this is a huge body of work that I also address in Chapter 2, but see for example Pain 1997; 2000; Koskela & Pain

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2000; Koskela 2014). Where fem agency is emphasised, it is in relation to avoiding or resisting oppression. Research into urban insecurity is deeply emotional (Rebotier 2011), because of the potency of fearful experiences for those sharing their stories, and the solidarity of those documenting them. This makes it hard to trace its emergence or impact, including how feminine fearfulness might perpetuate oppressions, gendered or otherwise. Further, because of the emphasis on fear, there is little exploration of fem agency in performing desire or desirability in public space. I directly address these lacunae to show how fems rely on historically produced feelings about place, race, class and gender to determine who belongs, who is desirable or who is dangerous. I argue that fems are proactive urban actors, employing optimism, fear, and desire in constructing the post-colonial city.

In addition to exploring fem agency, by engaging the affective life of Observatory, I aim to overcome a narrowly materialist, developmentalist approach to analysing African cities and cities of the global south more broadly. Akin to the tendency to focus on gendered violence such an approach sees these spaces largely as the location of problems in need of economic, infrastructural, or legal interventions, instead of spaces bursting with their own symbolic, affective and material vibrancies. The work of scholars like Achille Mbembe (2001; with Nuttall 2004), AbdouMaliq Simone (2008; 2010; 2011, among others) and Mamadou Diouf (2003) are important exceptions. Yet, these vivacious discussions of African urban postcoloniality hardly take up issues of gender and sexuality. Amina Mire (2001, 1) sees this as a larger problem of masculinist African historical and political scholarship, where "African women entered the nationalist literary and political imagination, not as subjects with political goals of their own but as mothers of the nation's children and wives of men who are the real political subjects". If we are to take postcolonial African cities seriously, as sites of varied and complex ways of feeling, being and doing, the lack of scholarship that complexly addresses gender and sexuality is a real limitation. Again, this dissertation hopes to contribute nuanced, intersectional scholarship that does not reduce gender in the African city to women's work or vulnerability, but sees it as intertwined with all aspects of life.

Third, I destabilise the notion of diversity as it currently dominates discussions of difference in cities across the globe. In this literature the role of gender is unexplored, and there is little work on how fems experience or constitute diversity (Jarvis 2014). In addition, analysis of diversity is often ahistorical, where the focus is on how people get along in the present or forge new futures in new places (De Bock 2015). By contrast, this dissertation is deeply concerned with temporality. On one level I am interested in how the past connects with the present to shape

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spaces, subjectivities, collectives and interactions. On another, I am interested in figuring the temporality inherent to the ways that we all make sense of life, its rhythms and flows.

I argue that time is deeply intertwined with how we understand diversity. In the narrative of diversity, through the addition of difference, spaces of homogeneity are purportedly transformed into highly-desirable cosmopolitan mash-ups of culture, language and sociality (Ahmed 2000). I demonstrate that the workings of feelings in Observatory around the notion of diversity relies on and perpetuates "the progressive narrative of freedom in post/apartheid South Africa" (Mupotsa 2015b, 183). This narrative is ever future-oriented, where the bad old days give way to a brighter, more (racially) mixed present and, hopefully, future.

I demonstrate how understandings and practices of diversity privilege the feelings of the historically advantaged and mask a range of racialised violences that characterise the everyday experience of diverse spaces for fems of colour. Further, by historicising the emergence of diversity in place and the feelings that lurk beneath the visage of diversity, this dissertation purposefully addresses how diversity today may have come to be constituted through ongoing historical violences. Place and life histories reveal how Observatory's present diversity is the product of colonisation and apartheid planning, including the displacement and exclusion of people of colour. Yet, in celebrations of diversity, white people are constructed as always naturally in place, and people of colour as always graciously allowed in. Everyday life within this diverse space is fraught, as residents constantly employ and struggle against historically embedded ways of feeling and doing difference, in order to manage fear and guard the optimism that attracts and binds them to the space. This felt experience is often difficult and uncomfortable and characterised by fems as the cost of diversity. Thus, an analysis of these feelings, past and present, reveals an affective life of the neighbourhood that is not linear, but far more complex and contradictory, constantly pulling the past into meaning-making in the present, redirecting future possibilities, and cutting off others.

Such an understanding of the long histories that undergird diversity is not only relevant to South Africa, where the allure of diversity is strongly felt in the wake of historical legal segregation and ongoing inequality but resonates with global urban contexts that represent a particular kind of freedom from dominant oppressive social ordering. Think for example of how San Francisco is still constructed as a mecca for queer emancipation, or (West) Berlin as a refuge amidst economic, political and social conservativism. In the face of the less-than-ideal present these

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cities become iconic representations of freedom even as the historical moments that enable their alterity dissipate and they are assimilated into global hegemonic orders.

Fourth and finally, this dissertation also takes up the challenge of bringing different conceptions of affect into conversation, to account for its multiplicity and produce a more capacious account of affect in spatial and historical context. The affect studies literature is characterised by cleavages: between pure affect and mediated emotion, between the sensual and psychoanalytic, between historical and immediate, between personal and political (for a summation of the debates see Hemmings 2005; Tolia-Kelly 2006; Holzberg 2018).

I see this largely as a question of scale, reflecting the trouble of maintaining the analytical power of affect as large-scale, historical and structuring (the structures of feeling), and immediate, intersubjective and embodied (what I call the feeling of structures) when *doing* affect studies as opposed to abstractly theorising affect. I engage with this problem in a number of ways. From one perspective, I theorise both the macro and micro scales of affective life by using a range of data sources. There is a tendency to use one kind of data in affect studies. Work that has emphasised affect as structures of feeling tends to rely on texts to show how affects inhere in places, bodies, and other objects, over time (for example Cvetkovich 2003; Love 2007; Berlant 2011). Work that emphasises the feeling of structures, affect as located within and between individual bodies and its links to the historical and the political, tends to use qualitative empirical data such as interviews or observation (for example McCormack 2008; Nayak 2010; Waitt 2014; Da Costa 2016). By including both archival and empirical findings in my analysis, I can triangulate this data to feel out the long flows of affect across time, and into the present, to affirm marginal affects through their past traces, and historical silences through contemporary articulations.

These different sources are embedded in different temporalities and produce different time-scales in analysis. The archives invoked in understanding structures of feeling tell a story about how histories are conveyed, and how they persevere or ebb away, whereas personal stories relate to memory and how people produce narratives about themselves. In bringing these two scales together I want to address each of these aspects of affect and think through the question of how we embed the individual in the large-scale flow of history into this moment. Thus, whilst I am excited by the analytical possibilities of affect, and how it can illuminate aspects of subjectivity, emplacement and history, I am also committed to a materialist approach to affect (Berlant 2011), that centres real peoples' first-hand experiences. I think an approach to affect that works from both structures of feeling and feeling of structures is expansive enough to

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convey some of the felt complexity of affect, whilst still being able to inform an analysis of everyday injustice.

Together, thinking about *structures of feeling* and the *feeling of structures* in the everyday life of the neighbourhood deepens our understanding of the "right to the city" to include its significant and pervasive affective implications (Harvey 2003). This raises important questions about how feeling and difference structure cities, and of individuals' and collectives' ability to partake in cities, allowing or disallowing the full and free use of public spaces, and full and free participation in urban life. It takes seriously postcolonial histories, as they sediment in and are operationalised through individual bodies, collectives and affective relations. At the same time, it avoids some of the pitfalls of rights discourses. It moves us beyond legalistic and simplified understandings of who has access to a space and who is entitled to its use and occupations, to think more carefully about what histories and feelings circulate in spaces and how spaces, regardless of equality before the law, rely on racialised, gendered and classed understandings of individual and collective belonging. The right to the city then cannot always or entirely be addressed through large-scale politics or through the mechanism of legislation and policy. This dissertation allows us to understand how affects condition our access to spaces; and our belonging, encounters, sense of desire and desirability, as well as safety and danger in those spaces and among people. How socio-economic structures that maintain spatial and economic injustice are undergirded and sustained, day in and day out, in the intensity of a gaze, the tensing of the body, the hurried step, the disdainful sneer, through the force of feelings. And thus, how we are all implicated in the production and perpetuation of affective and epistemic regimes and of bodily practices that effect social and spatial injustices.

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Feeling and Doing

I take a materialist approach to affect studies, seeking to ground an analysis of feelings – structural, historical and embodied – in the experiences of real people. In an effort to capture the historical, spatial, relational and affective strands of life in Observatory, I used a combination of historical and ethnographic methods.

To form an historical account of Observatory, I used a wide range of document sources, as well as interviews with long-term residents. To generate a contemporary picture, I used one-on-one in-depth interviews, social media posts, participant journals and ethnographic observation.

Making up the Archive

Various scholars have studied the neighbourhoods of Cape Town in an effort to recover the lives and experiences of people and neighbourhoods of colour influenced and disrupted by colonial and apartheid politics and urban planning (Jeppie & Soudien (eds.) 1990; Dhupelia-Mesthrie 1994; 2014; Western 1996; Field (ed) 2001; Ralphs 2008). However, their focus is largely on urban segregation, documenting the effects of forced removal, neighbourhood formation, social and cultural reproduction among people of colour, and anti-apartheid struggle. These historical projects aim to write popular histories "from the bottom up" and reflect a commitment to the notion of reading colonial archives "against their grain", and as "counterweights to ethnography" (Stoler 2002, 99).

Following this body of work, effectively linking neighbourhood life to the broader political, spatial and social projects which shaped them, and which they constituted, I undertook to trace the production of Observatory as a specific place with a specific character, within the wider tread of colonial and post-colonial urbanity. However, unlike the existing accounts of South African cities, because of the specific characterisation of Observatory as historically and contemporaneously diverse, this would be an exploration of how diversity came to be constructed, rather than how segregation was produced. In addition, my reading is focused on the affective, the feeling as much as the doing. Affect has been taken up in historical studies to focus on the affective experience of the historian – what it feels like to do history (Robinson 2010), and in what has been termed history of emotions – which tracks how emotions are experienced and expressed in different cultures and periods (Bourke 2003).

By contrast, I am interested in how feelings connect the past and the present. I am not making any claims about or interventions into history as a discipline but rather through historical research I enrich a sociological and affective understanding of the present. Here Ann Cvetkovich's (2003) poetic conception of "an archive of feelings" has been instructive. Specifically, she focuses on the expansiveness of archive, including the monumental and banal, text and life, and her conviction in "the quest for history as a psychic need rather than a science" (268). However, Cvetkovich explores lesbian public cultures as repositories of affects with an emphasis on picking-up marginal or condemned affects. I however, turn to place-history (what is known, recorded and reproduced about a place) to show the working of *hegemonic affects* inherent to the popular history of a seemingly diverse place.

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Developing such an archive was not a straightforward task. There is no traditional archive of Observatory, a set of historical documents, to start from. Instead I collated texts from disparate sources that bring Observatory into view. Throughout I was concerned with how to generate a postcolonial and decolonised account from colonial records (Stoler 2002). I sourced material from online repositories of national and provincial government archives, the African Studies Collection at the University of Cape Town (student projects, newspaper clippings, public records, photographs, posters, flyers, diaries, tour guides), from the Observatory Public Library, from provincial or citywide newspapers (including the *Cape Times* and *Cape Argus*), as well as from smaller community newspapers (such as *ObsLife*), from social media (such as the Facebook page of the Observatory Civic Association, and Neighbourhood Watch), and from novels set in Observatory. I began by including everything that I found that pertained to Observatory, with the exception of administrative forms such as building permits. I then homed in on those documents that gave some indication of the feelings people had in and about the space.

It should be apparent from my attention to affect, and my choice to mix historical 'evidence' with other sources, that I do not make "an epistemological distinction between the city as a lived, physical space and the city as a complex ensemble of shared knowledge, memory, and representation" (Parker 2012, 530). Nevertheless, these sources are largely produced by and invested in the lives of dominant groups. By reading into the affects that these documents reveal (or betray), we might subvert their purpose – the imperious documentation of privilege – and hopefully learn more or differently than its producers wanted us to know.

Picking, Choosing, Interviewing and Observing

I knew from the outset that I was not interested exclusively in the experiences of cisgender women. In part because it was clear to me that the way in which gender shaped city life was not delineated strictly in terms of the sex-gender binary, and because I could already see that there were similarities between the experiences of ciswomen in public spaces and some gay men, including their experience of being catcalled (see for example McNeil 2014).

On deciding that I would include a range of feminine peoples who resided in Observatory, I posted recruitment flyers in various public places in Observatory, on social media and by e-mail, and also shared the information by word of mouth.

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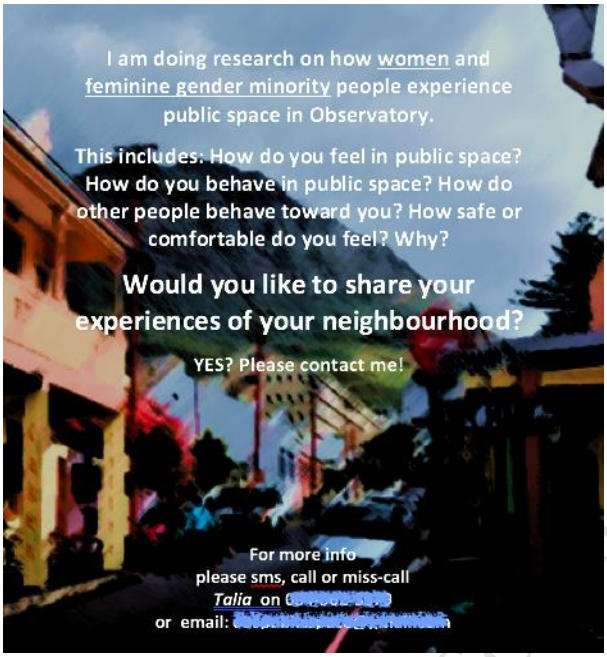

Figure 1. Recruitment Poster, 2015.

I interviewed twenty people on two or three occasions each between 2015 and 2017. A list of participants (by pseudonym) and demographic information is contained in Appendix B. Interviews largely followed a narrative format (Clandinin et al. 2009). Participants led the discussion, although I asked for clarification, or chipped in when I had a comparative example. Because I share many of the identities and experiences of the fems that I interviewed I was also able to offer affirmation or empathise, adding to a more conversational style of interview.

Initial interviews were historical in approach, addressing identity formation, and life stories in relation to the spaces that had shaped them. In particular participants were encouraged to discuss where they had lived before, what they knew of Observatory before they lived there, how they had come to move to Observatory, what their first impressions were, and how their use of and feelings about the place have changed over time. Thereafter, interviews sought information about perceptions of Observatory specifically, including experiences in and encounters with people in public spaces. Interviews ranged between 30 minutes and three hours, averaging 1.5 hours per interview.

I also gave participants journals in which to record anything that caught their attention in public space including encounters. Many participants did not use these, but several did. Others recorded voice-notes on their mobile phones or sent me e-mails instead, whilst others did not

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record any events between interviews. The notes and records that participants shared in various forms also provided valuable information about everyday encounters.

I obtained written consent for interviews, and all interviews were transcribed and anonymised with the use of pseudonyms that loosely reflect the gender and language of participants actual names. In transcription I chose to include pauses, hesitations and other irregularities in the flow of speech where they do not hamper comprehension. Where necessary I add omitted words, or English translations in parenthesis. In addition, I have included my own words where I ask a follow up or clarifying question within the segment of interview. Sometimes my interventions are clumsy, I occasionally cut-off or pre-empt interviewees, and this is also in the text. By inclusion I do not want to demonstrate verifiability or authenticity (Crang 2002), but instead reflect that these texts were produced in dialogue between myself and the narrator.

In some cases, I was privy to participants' social media profiles and, where relevant, they suggested the inclusion of information in posts or I asked to use the information. In such instances I have transcribed the posts and anonymised the information.

I also conducted ethnographic observation throughout, including visiting local public spaces such as parks, and walking the streets. This was aided by my residence in and familiarity with the area. I know many people, including homeless residents, and they also provided me with information. In addition, I attended public events, such as community markets, and public meetings of neighbourhood groups. I wrote field-notes regularly, most often on my smartphone. Where I include remarks by individuals that I recorded in field notes rather than in formal interviews, the speaker is denoted by an initial, such as 'T', rather than a pseudonym. I also regularly checked public websites, social media pages and blogs about the area, and occasionally this online information is also included.

'Fems', 'People of Colour', 'We' and other (mis)labels

The problem of naming surfaces throughout this dissertation. It encompasses a core concern of this project: how to articulate experience in ways that are intuitive and relatable, and yet justly reflect the complex socio-historical process at work within them; how to draw certain kinds of occurrences together, whilst acknowledging nuances in the subjective experience.

Once I had completed a first round of interviews, I sought an identifier that would serve as an umbrella term for this group. Taking the notion of gender-as-spectrum seriously, I sought to

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highlight the common element of self-identified femininity. I devised 'fem' as a shorthand, distinct from 'femme' – associated with butch/femme roles in queer culture.

The choice is thus practical and political. It denaturalises femininity as inherent to ciswomen. Further, trans-inclusion is important, given that intersectionality in the original anti-racist feminist usage advocated largely by lesbians of colour has typically omitted trans and (more) dissident sexualities; and that this has largely continued in contemporary feminist work (Erel et al. 2010). In this way I offer a feminist interrogation of the locus and relations of power, that is not invested in a homogenised (ciswomen's) identity (Cohen 2005).

I am interested in an affective approach that enables an analysis of social difference "without pre-given, hierarchical or oppositional accounts of gender" (Waitt 2014, 666). I do not want to homogenise the experience of this group of residents, nor emphasise their power(lessness) only relative to those who do not share their feminine identity. Instead I hope to show the complexity of feminine subjectivity, as unfinished, processual, and differentiated.

Importantly this dissertation is not specifically about fems or femininity, but the fem experience is the perspective from which I take up an intersectional analysis of history and encounter in the city. The term appears unevenly in the text, receding in Chapters 2 and 3, and then re-emerging gradually as the subject of city making in Chapter 4, 5 and 6. This shift is indicative itself of the ways that our understanding of gender has shifted and sharpened over time. Chapter 2, attending to the existing bodies of literature on affect, neighbourhood, and encounter, reflects the strong focus on (white) ciswomen's gendered experience of the city, and Chapter 3, concerned with the history of Observatory, reflects the documented record of white men as urban post/colonial agents. Once I have traced these lineages however, I break with them, to show how alternative conceptions of femininity can illuminate the gendered experience. The vagaries of fem through this dissertation then also demonstrate the difficulties of sustaining an intersectional analysis that holds race, class, gender and sexuality together. Inevitably, through the different foci of different chapters, some structures of oppression recede, come to the fore, or show up together.

The grouping of people based on a self-identified affiliation with femininity points to, but does not totalise, similarities in experience. Within this group there are an array of differences, privileges and oppressions at work. Variation in gender identity was only one aspect of difference, and participants varied wildly in terms of race, socio-economic status, work, and urban/rural upbringing. Appendix B offers an overview. For example, the circumstances under

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which people resided in Observatory differed markedly, with some owning their single-family homes and others renting them, some living in communal households or student residences, one lived at her employer's home a few times a month but usually commuted from Khayelitsha daily, and two had histories of homelessness and their housing situation remained precarious.

Terms related to race also bear clarification. To speak about similarities across racialised groups, I use the term people of colour. The term has only very recently come into use in South Africa. As colonialism and then apartheid created multiple racial categories of colonised peoples, in a hierarchical relationship to one another, the term can obscure differences in identification and experience. For this reason, I only use the term when I am referring to broad differences, particularly in relation to white people. Where I am referring to individuals, and to differences between people of colour, I use the range of apartheid era categorisations: black, Indian, coloured[1] and white. These may be reductive categories, but they still shape how South Africans understand their own, personal and familial, identities and that of others.

Finally, I want to draw attention to my own position in relation to this work, the space and the people. I live in Observatory myself and had been for four years before I commenced this study, amounting to eight years at the time of writing. I knew a few residents before I interviewed them, and those that I did not I inevitably had some acquaintance/s in common with. Usually I knew the places mentioned in interviews, and occasionally the people. I often related to their experiences and sometimes shared my own. For this reason, my field notes do not merely include observations but also my own behaviour, anxieties, and encounters, an example of which is included in Chapter 6.

As you read this dissertation consider that I am represented in it too, not just as a collector and curator of others' histories, encounters and emotions, but as a queer South African Indian ciswoman, a resident of Observatory, who has invested in it a range of hopes, desires and fears, and who is involved in its spatial and affective production, who is othered, and who others. I hope that I have represented residents in a fair and nuanced way, because frequently their feelings, actions and contradictions are my own.

[1] In South Africa, 'coloured' refers to people who are of mixed heritage, often including European, African and Asian ancestry.

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This complicity is reflected in my writing. Frequently I use the first person 'I', but often I slip into 'we'. This *we* destabilises the boundary between fems as the object of study, and *I* as researcher. It references my intimate and ambiguous position, and my contribution to the raced, gendered, classed and sexualised production of identities and spaces under discussion. But it also invites the reader into the fold. At first glance the *we* under consideration is specific, referring to *we fems in Observatory*, but it is also more nebulous. It reflects a central contention of this work: the line between who is *we* and who is *them* is constructed, continually redefined by history and in each encounter. It is not generalisable, nor is it individuated, it is part of an ongoing process of subjectification, (de)identification and (dis/)emplacement. Perhaps in reading *we* the reader might feel implicated in the power relations and feelings explored in this dissertation and join *us*.

Structure and Arguments

In this introduction, Chapter 1, I have described how I see space, history and identity as co-constructed with affect and outlined the main contributions of this dissertation with regard to intersectionality, gender and African cities, urban diversity, and the theorisation of affect. I then discussed the methodologies that I employed in this project and noted the decisions that I made about the definitions I use. I conclude by outlining the structure of the remaining text.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the wide range of literatures that intersect in the conceptualisation of this dissertation, including on affect and emotion, on place-making and belonging, and on gender, race and public space. To argue for the efficacy of affective approaches to urban and gender research; and for an empirical foundation for affect studies that populates theorisation of feeling with the lived experience of people.

The body of this dissertation is divided into two parts. Part 1 focuses on collective affects, through the notion of *structures of feeling* to demonstrate the ways in which affect is both the object and medium of the ordering of everyday life. To start, Chapter 3, explores the history of Observatory to show how the feelings of different groups are unevenly incorporated into the affective landscape of the place. This means that some collective affects are valorised, and constitute the hegemonic record, and others fade away. I argue then, that the socio-spatial schema of apartheid did not only generate material (economic, social) injustice but also affective injustice. The unevenness of power is often obscured from view in the existing history of the space because only privileged perspectives are recorded. These privileged perspectives reveal two dominant structures of feeling within Observatory, white fear and diversity optimism –

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which changes direction over time from anticipatory optimism, hope for a diverse future, to nostalgic optimism, hope for a return to or maintenance of a diverse past. The shift from the dominance of fear to optimism marks out a progress narrative, emblematic of the bigger South African story of the rainbow nation.[2] This raises a set of question about affect as "shared historical time" in the present (Berlant 2011, 15), and how structures of feeling are continuous or discordant with specific histories, which I turn to in the next chapter.

Building on this affective history, Chapter 4 unpacks the ways that Observatory is experienced by contemporary residents. I argue that residents' relationships to the space are shaped by optimism in diversity, a structure of feeling that positions Observatory as a desired object to which residents' good life fantasies are attached. By examining residents' optimistic attachments to the neighbourhood, I identify three versions of the affective relation at work in the present: nostalgic optimism (as introduced in Chapter 3), cruel optimism and sceptical optimism. This chapter highlights how place-histories are stratified and are differently experienced by different groups, and thus generate multiple affective versions, or alternative affects, that structure the relationship of individuals and collectives to people/s and place beyond affective hegemonies.

Part 2 moves on to think about how affects change or maintain meaning and efficacy as they resonate within and between bodies, to circulate and generate effects in everyday interactions in the neighbourhood. I unpack the connection between affect and bodily capacities by considering the interconnection of affects with various structures of differentiation, such as gender, sexuality, class and race. To this end, Chapter 5 focuses on the feeling of desire, to understand the ways that encounters between fems and men on the street demonstrate how feelings of attraction and repulsion are also mediums for the operation of power and oppression. I argue that far from being an automatic and autonomous bodily sensation, desire is directed, expressed and constrained along historically entrenched lines of race, class, gender and sexuality, and is central to the experience of urban public space for both fems, and the men they encounter.

[2] The term 'rainbow nation', coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to describe multiracial South Africa after the 1994 democratic elections, was widely adopted, including by President Nelson Mandela, and became an iconic image in the first hopeful years of democracy.

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Chapter 6 reveals the ways in which fems' safety strategies invoke historical norms about race in order to navigate urban public space, identify and avoid dangers. In the South African post-colonial context, universalised ideas of the strange black man are knotted with local readings of race, sexuality, gender and class, to produce him as the object of fear. As he does not belong, he needs a clear visible agenda, without which he is subject to scrutiny and speculation. By contrast, white men are always presumed to be in place, and their intentions to be honourable. Thus, they not only present the absence of a threat but can be construed as symbols of safety. In this chapter I argue then that in the moment of encounter the past catches up with the present, or the present moves instantaneously backward, as fems perpetuate historical ways of feeling the space and the bodies of men within it as they negotiate their own safety and subjectivity.

Chapter 7 returns to the central question of how feeling and difference is lived and structures the postcolonial neighbourhood of Observatory. It provides some conclusions about how together the two parts of this dissertation bring collective affects and embodied, interactive experiences to bear on the making of difference, historical time, and the just use of urban space.

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CHAPTER 2: Affect, Place, Gender, Race

I am concerned with how the neighbourhood is made through feelings that accumulate, reconfigure and shift over time; as well as how feminine bodies effect and *affect* space within these felt histories. To this end, and in keeping with the transdisciplinary scope of this work, I bring several disparate literatures into conversation. I have arranged these literatures into three groups: work on feelings, their transmission and circulation, that shape relations to people/s and spaces; work that tells us how place and community is made and experienced, particularly in diverse or diversifying places; and finally, work that engages with what it means to be feminine in public spaces, and conversely how threats to fem enjoyment of public space are constructed and embodied in the figure of the stranger. Based on these literatures I argue for a complex account of affect (Blackman & Venn 2010; Holzberg 2018), able to cope with the multiple and messy configurations of feelings in the emplaced historical present; and a materialist approach to affect studies (Berlant 2011), which provides a rich account of gender and embodiment in the postcolonial city, and which can offer a fruitful empirical example for affect studies that populates the theorisation of feeling with the lived experience of people in contexts of complex historical, social and subjective inter-relation.

Affect, Emotion and History

In this section I will first delimit some of the major debates within affect studies, before outlining my own approach to affect, and the concepts that I use to analyse affect within this dissertation.

The recent focus on feeling in scholarship has been termed the affective turn (Gregg & Seigworth 2010; Athanasiou et al. 2008). It is used mainly to refer to scholarship that has emerged from the work of Gilles Deleuze, and his theorization of affect as an object's/body's capacity to move and be moved (see Deleuze 1978; and Anderson 2016 for accessible explication). This idea has been taken up in different ways (see Wetherell 2012 for a selected review of the field), with the sameness or difference of affect and emotion being a central contestation. Some affect theorists steadfastly differentiate affect and emotions, seeing affect as pure, sensuous, precognitive; and emotion as interpreted and subjective (Anderson 2016). Such a view, associated most closely with the works of Brian Massumi (2002) and Nigel Thrift (2008) takes affect as largely unknowable, impervious to representation or communication, making research into affective life impossible and leaving it to the realm of theory and speculation (see Wetherell (2015) for a critique).

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Clare Hemmings (2005), Divya Tolia-Kelly (2006), and Anoop Nayak (2010), among others, have critiqued the notion of an affective turn as ahistorical, cut off from preceding bodies of work on feeling and emotion. The centrality of feelings and embodiment to experiences of the political and social, particularly as they pertain to gender, and later sexuality, class and race has been the core methodological and theoretical principle of feminist scholarship in its effort to recover women's, and later queer people's, experiences into an understanding of the world (Hochschild 1983; Lorde 1984; hooks 1989; Povinelli 2006; Pedwell & Whitehead 2012). Similarly, anti-colonial, postcolonial and critical race theory also has a longer history of engagement with feelings, demonstrating how uneven power relations, structures of oppressions and in/exclusions manifest through feelings (Fanon 2008 [1952]; Said 1995 [1978]; Bhabha 1994; Massad 2008). In seeking to elucidate the gendered and raced inequities inherent to subjective and social experience, I see this dissertation as a product of this genealogy. In the South African context, there is also significant work that may not fit the categorisation of affect studies, but that richly engages the (racialised) historicity of feeling. For example, Gabeba Baderoon (2009; 2014) shows how religion, food, and oceans affectively link the past and present, Yvette Christiansë (2002) has deconstructed the losses of apartheid racial passing; and Helene Strauss (2008) has highlighted the discomfiture of white embodiment within interracial encounters.

In addition, Tolia-Kelly (2006) argues that a 'pure' affect approach risks ethnocentrism, by confining feelings to the body, outside of sociality, structure, and history. It also makes universalising claims about the nature and experience of affect based on a global north canon, and world view. From this perspective affect studies stands to benefit from work that is embedded in the social and historical context of the global south.

The tendency to divorce affect from historical and geopolitical forces has been linked to the tendency to invest one-sidedly in the positive potential of affect. As has been variously remarked upon, affect offers new possibilities for politics outside of the gloomy reality of structural inequality and pervasive violence (Hemmings 2005; Da Costa 2016). By emphasising the unknown (or even unknowable), sensuous, unique, ephemeral nature of interactions and environments, scholarship has focused unevenly on how by attending to affect we might see gaps, disruptions and alternatives to the status quo. As Clare Hemmings (2005, 548) rhetorically asks "who would not prefer affective freedom to social determinism?". That is, to think in terms of affects, such work is invested with its own hopes and aspirations for scholarship beyond the current political milieu and the alternatives it may inspire or enable.

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However, scholars like Sara Ahmed (2004b), and Margaret Wetherell (2012; 2015) have argued against the distinction between affect and emotion, as even bodily sensations evoke histories, individual and shared memories, and are thus also mediated. Thus, affects are not formed nor felt outside of the structures of power and material conditions of the world, and though they may disrupt power relations, they can also stretch and affirm them (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2010; Da Costa 2016).

In recognition of this, more socio-historically contexualised affective analysis has emerged. These works extend feminist, queer, post-colonial, and critical race studies lineages (Sedgwick 2002; Cvetkovich 2003; 2012a; Ngai 2004; Povinelli 2006; Kwan 2007; Nayak 2010; Anderson 2012; Haritaworn 2015; Wetherell et al. 2015; Zembylas 2018). Significant for this dissertation, besides seeking the possibilities of affect, they approach affect as implicated in the workings of ideology, and social reproduction.

Another critique has been that work on affect has largely remained at the level of philosophical abstraction, ironically, without "grounding, embodiment or emotion" (Pain 2009, 2 cited in Nayak 2010, 2370). It is still hard to glean what affect can offer in understanding the messy reality of life as lived, or what its limits may be (Da Costa 2016). Important work that highlights the injustices enfolded in affective life often relies "neither [on] its own ethnography nor data from diaries, letters, or other primary materials of social history and autobiography" (Berlant, 2011, 11), leaving the ethnographer wondering what real people might have to contribute to these insights. Indeed, it is a core assertion of this dissertation that the ordinary manifestations, production and maintenance of hegemonic power, and thus oppression (raced, classed, gendered and sexual) is effected continually via affect.

Finally, the growing body of affect scholarship has been concentrated in and on the global north, responding to the "impasse" of neoliberal capitalism, war, counter/terrorism, and inequality. Dia Da Costa (2016, 2) argues that although work on contemporary Europe and North America provide important insights into how feelings structure people's lives, we cannot generalise from them and overlook "the powerful history of development and the differentiated relation to affect under colonial capitalism in other historical contexts". Similarly, Sneja Gunew (2009; 2016) and Yael Navaro (2017) respectively ask us what a decolonised and diverse affect studies might look like. A special issue on the topic edited by Gunew (2016), offers alternative traditions of philosophy and aesthetics as important ways of knowing, organising and doing feeling. More to my purposes, in that volume Carolyn Pedwell (2016), analysing empathy, delineates how

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(positive) affects are implicated in the perpetuation of colonial power relations. This work is akin to that of Jasbir Puar's (2007; 2015), which alerts us to how what we ordinarily think of as identities (such as sexuality) are loaded with affective capacities, and how emotions are always already implicated and generated through uneven relations of powers. This is certainly true of the affects of optimism, fear and desire under consideration in this dissertation. Fear however, already regarded as negative, offers an example of how the power geometry assumed in affective relations (such as who is oppressing whom) may be more complex than immediately apparent.

With these critiques in mind, I do not take affect in an ontological sense, as grounding social being or as outside of the social. Instead, I see the emergence and circulation of feelings as part of history – a formation of spatial, collective and individual identity and interaction that does not point to an authentic experience, but to the ways in which the production, weighting and distribution of feelings effect power in the world.

I will lay out the scholarship central to my understanding of affect and emotion and their usage in this dissertation.[3] Like others, I have found Raymond Williams idea of "structure of feeling" articulated in *Marxism and Literature* (1977), extremely productive. The concept has been central to emerging understandings of feeling as part of and permeating psychic (internal) and social (external) life (see for example Love 2007). Structure highlights a relationship between consciousness and feeling. Williams (1977, 132) explains:

> We are talking about characteristic elements of impulse, restraint and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelating continuity.

Williams conception avoids the notion of true feeling, and thus the dichotomy between pure affect and conscious or mediated emotion. Instead, the notion of *structure of feeling* allows me to think through how thought and ideology shape and are shaped by feelings, and how feelings persist and structure social life, beyond the moments of their genesis. Long after the formal

[3] For a breadth of work on affect see the edited collection of Gregg and Seigworth (2010), Wetherell (2012), as well as the special issues edited by Blackman and Venn (2010) in *Body & Society* and Pedwell and Whitehead (2012) in *Feminist Theory*.

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ideology shifts or changes, such as the demise of apartheid, its residue is still felt in bodies, and creates affects between bodies and other bodies, objects and spaces.

Lauren Berlant takes up Williams's term and emphasises how structure illustrates the ordering work of affects. For her structure of feeling signals "a common historical experience sensed but not spoken" (p. 65), that structures social life. She expounds the notion of cruel optimism, a shared experience of the aspirations and disappointments of neoliberal capitalism in the global north, though its expository power, like capitalism, exceeds this terrain. We want something because it promises certain things – to live in a specific neighbourhood because it offers cosmopolitanism and upward-mobility perhaps. Thus, a desired object is always optimistic. However, as a structure of feeling, optimistic attachments are not automatically felt (personally) as optimistic. Our cosmopolitan new neighbourhood may in fact make us feel out of place, and anxious. Cruel optimism then is a structure of feeling where the desired object makes life untenable, yet the desire endures. Such an understanding of affect is central to the arguments of this dissertation as it articulates feeling as historical, collective and individual, and as involving contradiction.

Berlant's work on optimism has been taken up by South African scholars, perhaps due to the intense sense of promise that saturated the country at the end of apartheid, and the disillusionment that has followed. Eric Worby & Shireen Ally (2013), observing the wave of nostalgia in South African public culture, argue that it is not an untruthful recollection of the past, but rather a way of reconstructing the past, present and future in relation to each other. They see nostalgia as protecting an attachment to the ideal of a post-apartheid state, an imagined history and the impossible promise to overcome it. Danai Mupotsa (2015b, 183) draws from Worby and Ally (2013) and Berlant (2011) to analyse wedding pictures as representing the "desire for inclusion within the progressive narrative of freedom in post/apartheid South Africa and the recognition of its flimsy presence, absence, promises and failures". Bridget Kenny (2016) reveals the optimism of precarious workers who desire state recognition, but also relationships with other workers.

Ann Cvetkovich, an American contemporary of Berlant, is also concerned with how feelings are connected with histories. In *An Archive of Feeling* (Cvetkovich 2003) she traces how lesbian life, art and activism document particular feelings, that one can glean from the texts. I directly take up the notion of *archive of feeling* in Chapter 3, to understand what affects are contained in the historical record of Observatory, and what these tell us about how life was structured in the

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space over time. Unlike Cvetkovich, I am interested in tracing the *hegemonic affects* in a record of (colonial) domination – the affects that defined what may be easily documented, recalled and circulated, and what must be supressed. The archive of feeling then is constituted within the repository of documents, popular stories and place-characteristics that we have today, such as what is known and recorded about Observatory. It is both illustrative of dominant structures of feeling and produces and extends these structures by preserving them in/as history, making them available for sense-making in the present and future. Those stories, images and feelings that do not make it into the record, and into the archive of feeling, often do not survive.

Significantly, Ben Anderson (2014) emphasises that although affects are formed over time, they can also be the objects and medium of political intervention. Political efforts, such as propaganda, may be directed at the manipulation of the behaviour, norms, prejudices, and needs of populations, to generate a particular affect in a particular period and preserve it in life and archive. Anderson (2014) also points out that an affect can manifest in different *versions,* depending on the forces that bring it into being. For example, in Chapter 4 I am interested in how residents' different historical experiences, or understandings, produce different versions of the structure of feeling of optimism, as it is invested in Observatory. The corpus of images, discourses, signs and symbols that operationalise each of our attachments may differ by collective or individual. The concept of version allows the multiplicity, coexistence and interplay of alternative accounts of feeling without attributing it to "different interpretation" or privileging one or other as authentic (Anderson 2016, 53).

On a different track, Sara Ahmed has developed a set of works on how affect effects political agendas through and on bodies. Her earlier work on strangers (2000), and on collective feeling (2004a; 2004b) is of particular interest to me. Here she shows how emotions work to secure collectives by reading of *other* bodies through history and repetition (of acts, encounters, and emotions) and how they mediate relationships between people and other people, organisations, and spaces. In this way bodily capacities produce "affective economies": "relationships of difference and displacement without positive value" (2004a, 120). These capacities are differentiated and rely on historical, political, social and cultural meanings of bodies rather than qualities inherent to the lived bodies we encounter. Affects suffuse language, they are embedded in discourse, gesture, facial expression, posture, movement. Thus, as much as language interpellates the subject (Althusser 1971), so too do affects. Through interaction we each and all summon specific subjectivities into being, reifying figures, such as the dangerous stranger, the kindly neighbour. In the process we are doing the work of governance, where our

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(seemingly personal) feelings often (re)produce political and social hierarchies and exclusions (see also Pedwell & Whitehead 2012; Pedwell 2014; Goodley et al. 2018). Based on this understanding, I also think of affect not only as *structures of feeling* – the overarching affective currents that subtend human life, action, interaction and feeling – but also as how structures (economic, political, historical, affective) are felt in individual bodies – *the feeling of structures*. It is around these two conceptions of affect that I structure the rest of this dissertation.

In addition to structures of feeling and feeling of structures, Arlie Hochschild's (1983) notion of "feeling rules" is a useful complimentary concept. Feeling rules represent a convention about how to feel that effects governance in daily life: "since feeling is a form of pre-action, a script or a moral stance toward it is one of cultures most powerful tools for directing action" (Hochschild 1983, 56). Jane Kenway & Johannah Fahey (2011) take this idea up in a survey of the Australian national archive of feeling, to understand how the nation's position in global power geometry shapes and executes feeling rules and thus the way in which national feelings are expressed. For these authors, feeling rules offer a practical concept for social scientists to address how collective and individual feelings are shaped in daily life, that is more tangible than the expansive and ephemeral notion of structure of feeling.

However, I formulate my approach to affect, and thus the relationship between structure of feeling and feeling rules, quite differently. Rather than either or, I think that seeing how the terms can work in concert offers an approach to affect that is both functional and full. I take up the idea of feeling rules as multiple normative boundaries governing the emergence and expression of emotions that directs us toward what is collective about feelings and links the feeling of structures to the structure of feelings. They are co-constitutive and mutually supporting. For example, *the structure of feeling* of white fear may be enacted in individual bodies – *the feeling of structures* – via rules compelling white South Africans during apartheid to fear white genocide, black fertility, or the threat of black violence and so forth. Thus, the feeling rules directing fear of black people in actual encounters is both part of the *structure of feeling* of white fear that has informed the movement of men of colour for centuries and an example of the *feeling of structures* that govern feminine safety and respectability – feeling rules in Hochschild's sense as a powerful moral script. These feeling rules can be gleaned in the analysis of everyday life, and in the archive of feeling.

The authors I have discussed each come at the question of "What do affects do?" from different angles. These different perspectives exemplify the debate about what is rightfully the study of

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affect and that of emotion – Berlant (2011) herself disqualifies Ahmed's work as "not really working on affect but emotion" (12). I am drawn however to understandings of affect as multiple. Following Anderson's (2014) assertion that affects are differently produced, experienced, mediated at various levels of life, and Billy Holzberg's (2018) suggestion that different theorisations of affect, located in different genealogies, might more fully illuminate a phenomenon, I am curious about what incommensurate, or partially compatible approaches to affect can reveal about the fem experience of Observatory.

Such a framing does not capture all of affect. I recognise that affects cannot be completely delimited or predicted by history or structure (Massumi 2002). As Wetherell (2012, 66) puts it we are not simply "affect automatons", and individual feelings often defy (feeling) rules. Part 2 then, focused on the individual embodied feelings that emerge from encounters in public space, demonstrates the ways that feelings frequently manifest in unexpected ways. Still, because the affective is in and *of* the world, however partially we may grasp it, it is vital that we deconstruct how it underlies active modes of knowing and feeling. In doing so I try to leave room in my analysis for what may emerge besides.

To summarise then, I engage two central ways of thinking about affect, around which this dissertation is organised. The first figures affect as collective, overarching, time and space travelling, tying individuals into felt relations that govern the organisation of entire groups relative to each other, objects or spaces, and that may be manipulated through political action. These I refer to structures of feeling. At the same time different versions of an affective structure might manifest in different collective or individual experience, as it stirs and settles different histories and specificities. Second, I turn to affects as they occur within and between bodies, as intimate and interpersonal, summoned through specific acts and encounters but also dialogical with structures of feeling, and thus also deeply historical, and ideological. In everyday life the feeling of structures is guided by feeling rules, which in turn reinforce and flow into structures of feeling. In any encounter, neither structure of feeling, or feeling of structure, nor any version or rule is formative, all are perpetually informing and preceding each other.

Place-making, Belonging and Difference

In order to explore the role of affect in the production of space, it is necessary to draw-out the perspectives on place-making relevant to this project. I take up a conception of space, sociality and identity as intertwined, highly malleable, temporal and complex. Such an understanding

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relies on a theorisation of space as socially produced, and thus subject to conflict and inequality (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]).

De Certeau (1998 [1980]) offers us a useful conception of what makes space into place. Individuals and groups territorialise spaces – make sense of, and make claims over space, that thus produce abstract space as *real* (De Certeau 1998 [1980]). The key to place, its sense of character and specificity, is representation, the ideological and symbolic elements of space which animate physical space. In order to make their subjective experience of space real, subjects must assert their interpretations, which involves ideas, attachment and experiences that may both challenge and affirm stable representations of space. This struggle over authority of interpretation renders urban spaces critical sites where identities and communities are produced and contested. It is through this production of space, as Henri Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) points out, that identities form, or fail to:

> Groups, classes or fractions of classes cannot constitute themselves, or recognise one another, as 'subjects', unless they generate a space. Ideas, representations or values which do not succeed […] will lose all pith, and become mere signs, resolve themselves into abstract descriptions, or mutate into fantasies. (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974], 416)

Feminist geographer Doreen Massey has been integral for contemporary understandings of the connection between the production of space/place and self (identity). Both are created through an interactive web of social relations and the production of both are connected and contextualised through the politics of marginalisation or territorialisation (Massey 1994). People and places have multiple, shifting identities, based on varied interpretations of past and present, or projections of the future. In addition to a shared sense of time, dynamic geometries of social interactions produce the culture or identity in a space in any given time.

Other feminist geographers have also shown how the axes of identity – race, class, sexuality and gender among them – never operate aspatially but are imbricated within the places in which people live (Pratt & Hanson 1994). I will cover the specific contributions on how gender shapes city space and belonging in the following section. For my purposes, the assertion of space and identity as co-produced, and as fundamental to how some groups come to monopolise place, character and belonging, is central and must frame contemporary conversations on plurality and urban spaces.

Recently, theorisation that centres social struggle over space, has been supplanted by discourses of diversity, emphasising movement, fluidity, hybridity and commingling of peoples

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(Vertovec 2007; Berg & Sigona 2013; Wessendorf 2014). Contiguous with the uptake of diversity studies, the association of difference with fear of otherness popular in the 1970s and 1980s has been replaced with a celebration of difference "as the hallmark of cosmopolitanism in the 21st century" (Valentine 2013, 6). At a time when debates about exclusionary city planning, neoliberal development, gentrification and segregation are central issues for cities across the globe (see for example Lees 2000; Lees 2008; Butler 2003), discourses of diversity reflect an ideal, the very city-ness of cities, characterised by the "throwntogetherness" (Massey 2005) or "rubbing along" (Watson 2006) of different peoples, and the potential for mutual appreciation and rich collaboration (Arnaut 2012). In contexts like South Africa, where segregation continues to characterise the urban landscape, economies and political and social networks (Oldfield 2004), its affective appeal is irresistible.

However, diversity scholarship has tended to focus on transnational movements, the presence of new ethnic communities within the cities of the global north (for example Valentine & Sporton 2009; Wessendorf 2013; Blokland & Nast 2014). This has been critiqued by postcolonial scholars who argue that profound and concentrated diversity has long been a feature of the global south (see Deumert 2018 for a summary of the debate). Ben Rogaly & Kaveri Qureshi (2013) have sought to challenge the "ethno-national group fetishism of migration studies", and to demonstrate that instead of simply seeing diversity demonstrated in big flows, we also need to appreciate small movements and its more stable (or stabilising) attributes. Thus, this dissertation is concerned, in the context of Cape Town, with how diversity is shaped by multiple movements, small and big, and how these movements are both fuelled by affects, and productive of affects in the historical present.

Further, diversity discourse runs the risk of overemphasising identity differences and glossing over structural inequalities (Arnaut & Spotti 2015). It focuses on the presence of multiple groups, without necessarily interrogating how they came to be there, and what uneven power-dynamics sustain their presence. Because diversity has emerged within the specific context of large-scale migration, it also carries explicit or implicit ideas of a core (white) identity against which everyone else can be defined, reifying the privilege of white people and notions of 'us' and 'them' (Ahmed 2000; Rogaly & Qureshi 2013; Ndhlovu 2017). For example, Ahmed (2000) convincingly writes of how diversity, centred on the idea of including and celebrating difference, and that of 'stranger danger', the idea that we ought to be wary, or indeed afraid of those whom we identify as not familiar, are two modes of dealing with difference and its proximity. I argue throughout this dissertation that the histories of places – how they came to be open, or more

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open, to some and not to others, and histories of peoples – how their life-course runs toward or away from specific places, is essential to understanding how people cohabit in place, and who is better or worse off within it. Following post-colonial approaches, this allows a nuanced view of belonging, not as natural, but as necessarily effecting and affecting the violence of othering and exclusion.

Central to this violence is the production of histories. There is relatively little work done on the experience of historical privilege (Borell et al. 2018), and even less within the context of urban diversity and belonging. Belinda Borell, Helen Barnes Moewaka and Tim McCreanor (2018) point out that contested spaces and space-bound identities are forged through careful selection of representations from the past and manipulating those into the future. This is as much about selective remembering as it is about forgetting. This is fundamental to the maintenance of a master narrative which produces group identity, which necessarily excludes some. Affect, though historically underexplored, is essential to making such claims. In fact, I would argue, those that are the most effective at territorialising spaces are those who are able to make their concerns the most viscerally and consistently *felt*.

However, the accumulated experience over time has significantly improved the material and structural economic, social, political and *affective* wellbeing of later generations, and might tell us how some move past bad histories more quickly than others. Though it has not been taken up in this way, historical privilege is a useful notion for linking past injustice to present-day contexts, particularly in light of questions of diversity in the postcolony. Here an explicit turn to affect could illuminate an understanding of historical privilege as well as marginality. By thinking through Cvetkovich's (2003) notion of archive of feeling, and, via Berlant (2011), the optimistic structures of feeling that diversity unevenly creates in historically marginalised or privileged groups, the first analytical chapters of this dissertation make this productive connection.

Post-colonial critiques of identity and diversity have also challenged ideas of cohesive identity formation, arguing that the post-colony is defined, not so much by multiple cultures or communities, but by multiple subjectivities (including within a single subject) (Arnaut 2012). The conditions of post-coloniality fracture the unified individual, such that identifications and disidentifications are simultaneously experienced by subjects in particular moments (Mbembe 2001; Englund 2004). This links productively to my thinking about the multiplicity of affects, how the feeling of structures might invoke specific identities, affiliation and action in a specific times and places, and tie into specific structures of feeling, and yet be completely otherwise in other

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conditions: how race, class or gender may be strategically essentialised in specific encounters, that run counter to ordinary collective and individual affects.

Finally, this work also runs into emerging debates about the nature of urban life in Africa, and the postcolony. However, I am especially interested in the experiences of feminine peoples in postcolonial and African cities, which, particularly in public spaces, are extremely underexplored. In the South African context, questions of race (and its relationship to class) and livelihood are seen as pre-eminent (see for example Parnell & Pieterse 2010; Pieterse 2006). Where gender does appear, here and in the rest of the continent, research largely tackles material questions alone, including economic opportunities or gender-based violence. Whilst these are important foci, this literature ignores the role of gender in the non-material, representational and affective aspects of the city, and how these indeed have material consequences. That is: How does gender shape our thinking and imagining of the city into being? How do differently gendered bodies differently produce the city? How is the "right to the city" shaped by embodied affect (Harvey 2003)? Also, given the focus on the informality, diversity, and complexity of African urban modernity (Simone 2001; Mbembe 2001): How do we understand gender in this milieu? How do fem peoples experience the diverse and chaotic (arguably masculine) African city? How does gender feature in the urban postcolony, including in relation to history, sexuality, race and class?

Against these varied literatures on place-making, belonging and diversity, I am interested in how, place identities are not simply reliant on historical interpretation or contemporary mixing, but how affects, *personal, collect and emplaced,* may be enmeshed and co-produced in Observatory, and how its specific history and place-identity bear on affective encounters in the archive and in everyday life.

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Gender, Race and Public Space

There is a large feminist literature that engages with feminine (largely ciswomen's) experience of cities and urban public spaces, that is relevant to this dissertation. Before immersing in it, it is worth pointing out some features of this literature. As already mentioned, affect has long been central to feminist scholarship, which emphasises the personal, subjective, experiential, and emotional, rather than the objective (Hemmings 2005; 2012; Pedwell & Whitehead 2012).

Feminist scholarship emerged to challenge the purported objectivity in the social sciences. However, as feminist philosopher Lois McNay (2004) argues, the mobilisation of feeling and

experience sometimes reinforces rather than undoes the objectivity-subjectivity dichotomy. Feminist standpoint theory, for example, asserts the subjective realm as formative and informing, privileging experience, linked with emotion and affect, as the grounds of authenticity and knowledge. This however, borders on unexamined empiricism without investigating the conditions that produce experience or subjective knowledge. Experience risks supplanting (abstract male) reason as truth. Here McNay powerfully summarises the problem of the hegemony of experience in feminist thought:

> While the project of making experience visible may bring to light the impact of silence and repression upon the lives of marginalized groups, it often prevents a more critical examination of the way in which categories of representation are historically constituted. The metaphor of visibility exposes the mechanics of repression along a vertical analysis of the explicit and the latent, the dominant and the marginal, but it does not have a horizontal analysis of the way in which these categories of representation are relationally constructed: Making visible the experience of a different group exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms, but not their inner workings or logics; we know that difference exists, but we don't understand it as constituted relationally. (McNay 2004, 179)

That is, the emphasis on experience, and gendered oppression particularly, is largely isolated and taken for granted. The literature seldom interrogates the formation of affects in historical context nor reflects on what affects are included and which are ignored or refused – how feminine fearfulness foments (rather than being compounded by) racial hatred for example.

Another frequently cited critique of experience is that it is often framed as the experience of ciswomen, a unity determined by sex, and sexual subordination. This universalising impulse has been roundly criticised by feminists influenced by poststructuralism, such as Gayatri Spivak (1987) and Judith Butler (1990).

With these critiques in mind, this section provides an overview of the literature on feminine subjectivity in public spaces, gendered urban encounters between fems and men, and the relational figure of the urban stranger.

Fem in the Streets

The robust body of literature analysing gender, particularly women's experiences in urban public spaces, is mostly focused on ciswomen's feelings of fear and insecurity. For example, Rachel Pain (1991), provides a powerful critique of claims about women's 'hysteria' or exaggerated fear in public, by challenging definitions of violence and asserting that gendered fear reflects women's exposure to harassment – verbal and gestural assault – in urban space. Thus, she criticises the failure to recognise women's experiences accurately, and argues that women's

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absence or occupation, discomfort or enjoyment of urban space cannot be understood without resolving such issues of (mis)recognition. More recently, Vera-Gray's (2014) phenomenology of women's experiences of street encounters, and Bailey's (2017) analysis of online sexist trolling that delegitimises women's negative experiences in public space have affirmed this view. There has also been work that demonstrates how there is no single women's or feminine experience in the city, and that structural and contextual factors shape insecurity and fear. Such work has demonstrated the way that women's, and to a lesser extent other fems', personal geographies of discomfort, exclusion, and insecurity, are shaped by sexual orientation (Valentine 1993; Bell & Valentine 1995; Namaste 1996; Moran et al. 2003; Rodó-de-Zárate 2017), gender identity (Doan 2007; 2010), class, race and ethnicity (Yeoh & Huang 1998; Skeggs 2005; Pande 2012). Such work has also moved beyond gendered oppression to an analysis of gendered 'spatial confidence' (Koskela 1997) to demonstrate how despite an uncertain, and at times threatening urban environment, women (other fems are not included), are frequently bold in their use of public space (also see Koskela & Pain 2000; Pande 2012). Such a focus on oppression and danger, or overcoming it, however, has also resulted in a literature that only addresses the negative affective elements of the feminine experience such as fear, or the positive ones in as much as they relate to overcoming negative feelings (see for example Koskela 1997; Koskela & Pain 2000 on boldness and resisting fear respectively).

The existing body of work validates, contextualises and nuances the role of gender in public, and moves beyond the trope of female/feminine victimhood to account for the diversity of ways that structural vulnerability impact fems' experiences of public space and how gendered vulnerability and oppression is resisted every day (Koskela 2005). However, it often glosses over the heterogeneity inherent to the feminine experience in public space that may fall outside of the binary schema of oppression/resistance, and the ways that the feminine experience informs and is informing of power beyond gendered oppression/resistance (Abu-Lughod 1990). This includes the possibilities of pleasure and desire, as well as the weaponisation of fear, and the productions of public space that they may realise.

In many ways the absence of feminine sexuality, feelings of attraction or pleasure in the literature on urban encounters underscores the divergence between feminist work that emphasises victimisation – or negative affect, and that which focuses on empowerment – or positive affect. For example, Andrea Cornwall, Sonia Corrêa and Susie Jolly (2013) argue in the edited collection *Development with a Body* that feminist development work ought to move beyond negative dimensions of sexuality – disease, risk, violation – toward accounting for more

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positive aspects, including rights to sexual fulfilment, wellbeing and pleasure. However, in this volume, as in the literature more broadly, the only mentions of desire or sexuality in public are focused on sex work. Congruently, in the larger body of work on gender and sexuality in public space, there is also considerable recent work on sex workers. Sex workers appropriate the city for their own purposes: in the course of their work, they carve out small, ephemeral spaces where desire, or its potential, is rendered public day in and out, where their mere presence is seen as at odds with proper public conduct (see for example the work of Phil Hubbard: 2001; 2005; with Sanders 2003). Whilst the street-based sex worker is a powerful symbol of public sexuality, the reality of sex work is largely (if not only) about the desires of men clients.

Besides sex workers, queer people, mostly gay men, have also been a focus of scholarship on public desire (two seminal edited collections in this regard are Bell & Valentine (1995) and Leap (1999); some recent examples focused on lesbians include Cooper (2007b); Podmore (2001) and Matebeni (2011a)). Queer signalling, cruising and sex in public (and semi-publics) are framed as sexual utopias, where the normative rules do not apply, and where "new spaces for sex and new ways of being-in-the-world are produced" (Brown 2004, 101). The focus in the literature comports with Rubin's (1993) classification of public sexuality as 'bad sex', distinguished from 'good' sex (private, procreational sex). To the extent that public sexuality is taboo, the academic imagination has largely conceived of it being done by those who already are understood to have or embody 'bad sex' – queers and sex workers, which open up a range of affective potentialities seemingly foreclosed for 'good' heterosexuals. However, by focusing on the desirous possibilities of sex work and male-centred queer sexual publics, the literature remains firmly focused on the desires of men.

Further, queer alternatives to heteronormative culture, lie not just in the alterity of the sex acts and norms, but also in the presumption of an equal playing field of desire – positive, non-oppressive, emancipated, and hinting at a more imaginative, less constrained sexual future. That is not to say that both sex workers and queer people do not experience discrimination, or violence in the course of engaging in public sexuality - in fact sexuality and desire are inherently risky and risqué. But this risk is always conceptualised as coming from without, as external, and imposed on queerness. In framing queer desire as utopian, resistant, in the face of normativising violence, the possibility of queer sex encompassing some elements of restriction, repression or violence is overlooked – this includes racist, sexist, or classist violences.

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In an effort to move beyond the dichotomy in the literature – between those who do participate in public sexuality (mostly men) and those who don't – the latter half of this dissertation provides an exploration of how fems (good and bad) must negotiate the highly raced, classed, gendered and sexualised spaces of the city and their bodies within them, in an effort to take the possibilities, as well as risks, of sexuality and desire, alluded to in the queer and sex worker literature, into account for all feminine people.

(En)Countering Street Harassment

In making sense of fems' use of and movement in public spaces, I also engage with the work that specifically addresses gendered street level encounters between men and fems. Couched within the language of gender-based violence, encounters wherein men direct attention at fems – again the literature has almost wholly focused on ciswomen – is largely defined as "public harassment" (Gardner 1995), "street harassment" (Logan 2015; Chaudoir & Quinn 2010), "stranger harassment" (Fairchild & Rudman 2008; Fairchild 2010), or "stranger intrusions" (Vera-Gray 2014).

These scholars have frequently mentioned that street encounters have a somewhat ambiguous character because a given act may not be deemed offensive to all people, or in all situations; age and attractiveness of the approaching man, time of day, location, and whether the fem (usually ciswoman) is alone or with friends, combine to determine whether the action is perceived as harassment or desirable attention/flattery (Fairchild 2010). However, it is widely asserted that harm derives from the inherent power dynamics, and the ever-present potential for this power to be threatening or violent (Cooper 2007a), such that "any interaction with an unknown man in public can be perceived as offensive and/or threatening" (Nielsen 2004, 44). Where encounters are experienced as pleasant or flattering, this is attributed to women's self-objectification, an internalisation of society's view of women (Fairchild and Ruddman 2008, 345), or a coping strategy, wherein women play down negative feelings in order to get through everyday life (Fairchild & Rudman 2008; Vera-Gray 2014). However, such a 'false consciousness' explanation of women's feelings when they say that they do not feel oppressed reaffirms a disempowered view of women and troubles the feminist commitment to women's experience.

Feminist scholars are understandably reluctant to engage alternative perspectives on street encounters, for fear that they will undermine harassment experiences as benign expressions of free speech, or part of the banal hassles of daily life, and support sexist views pervasive in popular discussions of street encounters (Bailey 2017). Feminist scholars argue that seeing these

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encounters as anything but malicious overlooks the ways in which everyday interactions are part of an overarching schema of gendered subordination (Vera-Gray 2014). However, there has not been any debate about the limitations of only framing street encounters between men and fems within the ambit of victimisation. As such, efforts to understand feminine people acting as gendered, raced and classed subjects, beyond the assumption of oppression (only), are quite limited with regard to understanding street encounters. This has obscured the heterogeneity of feminine subjectivity and embodiment, and its effect and affect in public space.

The result is that such analysis fails to see street encounters as a product of, and productive of urban space beyond the generation of feminine fear, and shies away from acknowledging feminine agency, beyond overcoming fear, misrecognition or objectification. In investigating fem experiences of Observatory, I encountered a range of feelings other than fear. An affective approach that attends to structures of feeling reveals fems as enmeshed in historical and political processes, that emerged before their time, and that will persist into the future. At the same time, closely reading the feeling of structures that flare-up in fem encounters with men reveals desire, as well as fear, as shaping the contours of the neighbourhood and the street. Further, where fear does emerge, however legitimate, it is not neutrally deployed. Instead it (re)activates ways of seeing and feeling danger that have been honed over centuries, and that govern who can move where and how through the intimate everyday.

As noted earlier, because feminist attention is on the reclamation and validation of (mostly women's) feelings as a way of knowing that discloses the omnipresence and potency of gendered power, any analysis of other structures of power (such as race or class) is limited to how they compound gendered oppression. This is in part a problem with intersectional formulations that see pathways always leading toward the gendered body and never away from it – how the fem body might affect others. For example, Hawley Fogg-Davis (2006) and Melinda Mills (2007) address the underexplored ways that race and gender intersect in black women's experiences of street encounters in the US. In India, Shilpa Phadke (2005) addresses the compounding effect of class in women's experiences of risk and fear in public. However, there is no work that explicitly addresses how race and class determine the subtle rules about who can interact with whom in public, and how that interaction is perceived from either side. Phadke (2005) however, does allude to how class is a determinant of how notions of threat and risk are shaped in ways that demonstrate the variance in women's identities and the perception of these in public. Although she mentions that middle-class women in India seem to be protected from

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the gaze of poorer men, she also does not unpack why poorer men are seen as embodying danger for women.

In this regard, both the context for the production of fem fear, and the production of the analytical frameworks that govern its analysis seem significant. It is worth noting that much of the analysis of street encounters relies on specific notions of normatively good conduct: Erving Goffman's idea of "civil inattention" (Goffman 1963, 84). For feminist writers, given the possible harm inherent to interactions with unknown men, minimal contact, or none at all, as encapsulated by civil inattention, "represents a foundational convention, aspiration and norm" (Cooper 2007a, 206). Feminist scholars thus make tacit assumptions about subjective understandings of politeness, etiquette and acceptability (for example Gardner 1995; Lenton et al. 1999; Nielsen 2004; Bailey 2017).

However, given the middle-class global north site of Goffman's observations, and that much of the existing work on street encounters is also focused on similarly located experiences, it seems likely that these authors are overgeneralising specific place and class habitus to other contexts. Even within the context of the global north, there is an increasing body of work that unpacks the judgements people make daily about what type of peoples, behaviours and embodied practices are acceptable in which settings (Hubbard 2000). Beverly Skeggs (for example 1997; 2005) and Sara Mills (2004; 2005) point out that acceptable interactions in public, or otherwise, are often stratified by class. Mills asserts that politeness, like gender, does not exist in and of itself, but is a function of social norms and interactions, and thus judgements of (im)politeness, just as judgements of appropriately gendered behaviour, can only be made within particular communities of practice. Skeggs particularly has argued that the discourses of suffering and vulnerability, including I would argue those at work on gender and public space, often paradoxically rely on an unacknowledged confidence that is rooted in the privileges of class (see also McNay 2008). Again, these insights have not been brought to bear on how feelings about street encounters, including harassment, are identified and experienced.

By considering the histories of public space, and public encounters, their gendered, but also their racialised, classed and sexualised affects, I hope to provide a more nuanced account of encounters, and public life in general. Contrary to the blanket assertion that public spaces and encounters with unknown men are unwanted and dangerous, I reveal encounters as emblematic of and informed by deeply entrenched ways of seeing, understanding and engaging with each other, that are historical, collective, personal and place-specific.

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Knowing the Stranger

This dissertation is in no small part an academic response to an affective experience – my own frustration with and within a feminist tradition of work on gender and public space, and gender-based violence that seldom makes its own affective investments apparent. The body of literature on the feminine experience of public space is pitted with references to "interactions with strangers", "strange men", and "stranger intrusions" (Fairchild 2010; Vera-Gray 2014 are but two of a myriad examples). Whilst providing rich accounts from the perspective of fems (mostly ciswomen), these works simply take the figure of the stranger, the threatening unknown man, as a given, and as though it is a race-neutral category, innocent of history.

Strangers are socially constituted, discursively produced positions (Ahmed 2000; Cooper 2007a). The figure of the stranger has long been addressed in philosophy, sociology and social psychology. Simmel introduces the stranger as caught within the ambivalence of proximity and distance. He writes: "In relationship to him, distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near" (Simmel 1950 [1908], 402). Thus, the stranger is constituted in bodily encounters that always reference elsewhere. The relationship might be antagonistic and contested, but it relies on consistent interaction (Koefoed & Simonsen 2011). Other significant work that also sees the stranger as an outsider is centred on the experience of the Jewish diaspora after World War II, (see for example Bauman 2000), or on the oriental other (Said 1995 [1978]; Ahmed 2000; Massad 2008). Similarly, this notion of stranger comprises both that which is unknown, and that which has become proximal - moving from *there* to *here*, *far* to *near*.

The invocation of geographical distance enfolds the relative social, cultural, ethnic, or economic forms of distance that position the stranger (Cooper 2007a; Jackson et al. 2017), and relationally, ourselves. He has the power to (dis)identify and thus to reconfigure identities; "this is why the look of the other produces nausea and even terror, as our own capacity of determination drains away" (Alcoff 2006, 70). In this way the stranger can be construed as both promise and threat, as diversity and danger (Ahmed 2000). In Observatory, it is this very ambiguity that makes the encounter with difference so challenging and yet the source of such optimism.

Davina Cooper (2007a) and Lucy Jackson, Catherine Harris and Gill Valentine (2017) point out that as the twentieth century progressed, and there was a significant population shift to urban centres, so too was there a shift in the conception of the stranger, which now focuses less on asymmetrical otherness, but rather on the coexistence of various complexly constituted

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unknowns (Cooper 2007a). It is within this vein that we might understand Goffman's (1963) focus on encounters in public spaces between strangers, where interaction should be minimised amidst uncertainty (also see Lofland 1973). As outlined above, it is this line of thinking that much of the literature on street harassment has followed, where strangers pose the constant possibility of harm (such as in Gardner 1995; Nielsen 2004; Dhillon & Bakaya 2014).

A growing number of scholars have argued for politicising fear. Susan Ruddick (1996) argues that inequity in public spaces is not a by-product of other structural forces (only) but that othering is inherent to and constitutive of public spaces, linked as they are to ideas of community, insider/outsider, and belonging. Unsurprisingly then, in recent years, this inquiry has been largely trained on the cities of the global north, unpacking how in the wake of 9/11, amidst increased immigration, austerity measures and social and economic instability, strangers from the global south are interpreted as threats to nation and personhood (Haldrup et al. 2006; Valentine 2008; Valentine & Sporton 2009; Noussia & Lyons 2009; Long et al. 2014; Harris et al. 2017). And as strategies of governmentality have increasingly been exposed as systemic violence, there has been a focus on policing and profiling within the global north, as they rely on long-established strangers (such as black men in the US) and new ones (like refugees in Europe) (Willis 2010; Fassin 2011; Fassin 2013; Hattery & Smith 2017; Davis 2017).

In South Africa, and other postcolonial contexts, there have been efforts to understand urban segregation (Robins 2002; Samara 2010; Fassin 2011; Paasche et al. 2014), where small movements, rather than transnational migration, produce strangers (Caldeira 2000; Pedrazzini & Desrosiers-Lauzon 2011). In postcolonial contexts, fear and strangers are tied together in very particular, context-specific race-class figurations born of the hierarchical nature of colonial rule (Rebotier 2011).

These various works on the production of strangers and strangeness have focused on how hegemonic (mostly white) identities and feelings construct the stranger. Work that unpacks discourses of women's and queer rights in relation to the perceived sexist, homophobic other has illuminated however that in addition to race and class, gender is central to the social fiction of the stranger (Razack 2004; Puar 2007; Haritaworn 2012; Haritaworn 2015). The dangerous stranger is constructed as a cis-hetero black man, and his othering is tied into his apparent regressive or violent relationship to femininity – women and queers – reifying historical ideas of the civilised west, and barbaric rest.

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Despite this expansive body of work on the figure of the stranger, the unknown or unknowable other is ubiquitous but seldom deconstructed in the literature on gender, fear, and public space. Some work on women and other feminine people's experiences have alluded to what or who constitutes stranger-ness, with various authors noting in passing that women's fear in the city is often focused on poor and black men (Pain 2000; Shirlow & Pain 2003; Phadke 2005). There is a tendency to over-simplify the distribution of power, seeing "street harassment [as] simple: the person with privilege asserts it over the person that is less privileged" (Nielsen 2004, 35), despite the acknowledgement that those experienced as harassers, mostly poor or working-class men, may engage women in order to trouble their subordinate positions. Because analysis is focused on gendered vulnerability only – race, class, sexuality and so forth are only considered as compounding/intersecting identities – fems (mostly women) are injured and the stranger is injurious, and any violence he may experience, historically or in the moment of encounter, is glossed over.

Similarly, in South Africa, pervasive discourses about gendered violence explicitly and implicitly implicate the black man (Scully 1995; Posel 2005; Moffet 2006; Dosekun 2007; Dosekun 2013; Judge 2017). However, this is rarely the focus of analysis, and we know little about how this racialised fear produces city spaces or the figure of the black man from the perspective of the fearful.

There is as yet no in-depth investigation of the production of stranger-ness through the experience of feminine peoples, including those who do not benefit from racial privilege. Such analysis does not interrogate the role of fem fear, including fems of colour, in the production of space, in terms of both their own embodied experience and the affects that they may produce in others, nor does it relate fem fear into the notion of the stranger and how such fears may contribute to governmentality. This dissertation takes up this task. I am particularly interested in how the stranger is a gendered construct, not simply as the embodiment of problematic masculinity, but as a relation to and an enactment of feminine subjectivity.

Conclusion

In a critique of feminist analysis of Sarah Baartman, Zine Magubane (2001) demonstrates how some figures come to exemplify a particular kind of social relation, whether, as in Magubane's case it is one of racial and sexual alterity, or in mine, feminine oppression, and by contrast queer freedom and stranger danger. She cautions us that the ways in which we construct the "theoretical object" (the focus of theoretical inquiry) tells us a lot about our own affective and

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other investments, and of "the inherent dangers in the deployment of any theory without due attention to historical specificity" (831).

In taking the feminine body, variously raced, cis-het and/or queer, as my theoretical object, I hope to show my affective invests in a critical race, queer, feminist perspective on postcolonial urbanism. I want to demonstrate ways of seeing feminine life in urban spaces as complex, contingent, even ambivalent, produced relationally with other individual and collective bodies, feminine and *strange*. I see affective analysis as adding to feminist theorisation to move beyond a contraction of feminine experience to vulnerability and resilience. In this way we can see gender as central, but co-infrastructural with other categories of difference, to produce fems as actors within a complex web of histories and interaction, as experiencing and enacting oppression in multiple spheres.

In this chapter I have laid out my own approach to affect. I rely on the rich and varied conceptions that exist in earlier feminist work, and in more recent focus on feelings. I combine the concepts and frameworks that appeal to me and that resonate with my case to plot out an approach to affect that is analytically rich, and that illuminates various aspects of life, as lived, in time and space.

By reviewing theorisations of affect, and empirical explorations of fems and strangers on the street, I also want to emphasise that an affective analysis does not, even should not, be disembodied and abstract. It is possible to evoke the richness, multiplicity and contingency of affect without being elusive or vague. Empirical explorations of affect also do not need to only focus on the sensuousness of life, to its lines of flight, its rhythms and seductions. Belonging and neighbourhood-making is deeply affective, embodied and relational, people form all manner of attachments to the places that they (hope to) live in, but these attachments are often weighed down by the (good and bad) feelings of history.

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PART 1/ The Structure of Feeling: Post/Colonial History and Neighbourhood Affects

> In the dream in which every epoch sees in images the epoch that follows, the latter appears wedded to elements of ur-history […] Its experiences, which have their storage place in the unconscious of the collective, produce, in their interpretation with the new, the utopia that has left its trace behind in a thousand configurations of life from permanent buildings to ephemeral fashions. (Benjamin, in Buck-Morss 1991, 114)

> When the past is painful, as riddled with violence and injustice as it is in post-apartheid South Africa, remembrance presents a problem at once practical and ethical: how much of the past to preserve and recollect and how much to erase and forget if the new nation is to ever unify and move forward? (Murray 2013, back cover)

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Time in postcolonial Africa, Achille Mbembe asserts in *On the Postcolony* (2001, 15), is not linear, moving smoothly from past to present: it is entangled, there is an "interlocking of pasts, presents and futures". Such a conception of time implicates the past and future in the present, seeing them as co-present and co-constitutive, without necessarily attributing causality or directionality. From an affective perspective, this interlocking takes place through the work of *structures of feeling*, overarching affective flows that shape history to generate (dis)continuities, subjectivities, interactions and events. This raises important questions about what from history endures, supported by dominant structures of feeling, and which histories and feelings are more marginal, barely making it into the record, constituting collective forgettings (Murray 2013), or less-favoured rememberings. Partial histories in turn conceal competing presents and futures, potential and foreclosed. What structures of feeling have calcified into our understanding of Observatory as a place, our notions of who belongs and who does not? Surely, different histories can reveal quite different affective structures, and vice versa?

Considering these questions in the two chapters that constitute Part 1, I think through how understanding history more fully might help us glimpse otherwise unacknowledged affective structures and emotional experiences at work in the neighbourhood. I demonstrate how the operation of specific racialised affects inflect Observatory's colonial, apartheid and democratic history, structuring residents' attachments to the space as a site of their (future-oriented) good life projects. As Carolyn Pedwell (2016, n.p.) remarks, "embodied location and geo-political context matter to the production of affect, to the particular ways in which [it] might work and

gain significance". In Observatory, the confluence of state efforts (or lack thereof) and the everyday efforts of individuals to make lives according to their own values and purposes, have produced the space both as a specific site of freedom within the context of its history and geography, and as a generic site of diversity that references the cosmopolitan global city.

In this section, I focus on two structures of feeling: white fear and diversity optimism, the latter of which I delineate into several *versions* (Anderson 2016). Although I am explicating these feelings through a richly peopled history and the life stories of individual residents, fear and optimism here do not represent emotions present and felt in individual bodies (although they may well be). Rather, emotions are extrapolated from the personal and subjective in order to understand their role in the political (Gunew 2016). By tracing how historical events and histories of place-making and residence are patterned over time, we might glean the structures of feelings that subtend them.

Simultaneously, outlining the flows of feeling that shape Observatory tells us much about the formation of (inter)subjectivity and relationships; about what makes life liveable and what suppresses its vitality in the daily work of living and getting along with others.

In Chapter 3 I analyse Observatory's history as an archive of feeling and demonstrate the lineage of two structures of feeling: white fear and diversity optimism. I show fear and optimism to be hegemonic affects, both in that they emerge from and are indicative of the feelings of the powerful, and in that they themselves dominate the affective landscape, suppressing other (possible) feelings. These structures of feeling are tangible in histories of colonial and apartheid law, and in collective and individual action. They mediate and are mediated by discourse, enabling and saturating the formation of place-history, and guiding individual emotions – they are "what makes ideology stick" in everyday life (McElhinny 2010, 311).

In Chapter 4, I turn to contemporary Observatory to understand how, in the historical present, the structure of feeling of diversity optimism configures residents' relationships with Observatory in ways that conform to or contradict hegemonic affects, and how these optimistic relationships differ according to individual and collective histories.

Thus, the first of these chapters (3) demonstrates how, in shaping individual and collective identity, sense of place, and affect, individual feelings can gain momentum to become politics – they can distribute and withhold real benefits, not least among them access to and belonging in

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spaces. The second chapter (4) shows how politics shapes the feelings of entire groups, and how this in turn shapes neighbourhood and belonging.

Together these chapters show the development of a progress narrative in Observatory's history, linked to the emergence of the country from apartheid to democratic politics, from the dominance of white fear to diversity optimism. In Observatory, this narrative conditions residents' attachment to the space and their interactions with each other. However, the attainment of progress is not always easy, and residents often struggle with the cost of living in the diverse present.

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CHAPTER 3: A History of Hegemonic Affects

In this chapter I trace an affective history of Observatory. By *affective* history I intend three things: a rejection of history as fact-finding, an emphasis on affect as central to the living, recording, curation and telling of history, and a recognition of my own affective investment in a history that purposefully racialises and genders the narrative.

Although there is no coherent history of the neighbourhood, popular memory and the existing accounts of its institutions and organisations tend to see Observatory's past in idealised terms, holding a romantic view of race relations, whilst simultaneously omitting historical detail about gendered and racialised experiences of place and belonging, and their affective manifestations and implications. As Premesh Lalu (2009) alerts us, overcoming colonialism and apartheid requires "coming to terms not only with the effects of history, but with the discourse [and I would add, *feeling*] of history itself" (10).

I am not interested in providing a complete historical record. Instead I want to attend to both the materiality and emotionality of history – *what happened, how did it feel, for whom?* – whilst also interrogating "the relationship of credibility to intersubjective truths" (Swartz 2008, 286) – *how and what comes to be known about a time, a place?*

I am drawn to Ann Cvetkovich's (2003) notion of an "archive of feeling", which conveys both a focus on the affective and a commitment to an analysis driven by the political imperative to "never forget" (242). Understood this way, the past is keenly in relationship with the present, structuring contemporary liveability and embodiment (Macharia 2015). The past runs into the now with every passing second, making an archive centred on place, rather than period, cumulative, it is historical *and* contemporary. Whilst Cvetkovich's is an archive of *marginal* affects, I seek to reveal the recollection and forgetting inherent to the valorisation of *hegemonic* affects in post/colonial histories. In places like Observatory, lauded for its alterity, the workings of these affects are not immediately apparent, and the enduring affective structures of power may be missed. Thus, although I do include data from interviews, social media and contemporary literature, my archive is largely constituted by colonial documents. I follow Cvetkovich and Ann Stoler (2002) in taking an ethnographic rather than extractive approach to this archive, seeing it as a site of power which reveals how epistemic, affective and social regimes were/are produced.

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In tracing Observatory's archive of feeling, I reveal the working of hegemonic affects: those *structures of feeling* that come to dominate the record, that form the popular feelings or normative common-sense of a place over time, and that frequently serve powerful groups within or invested in that place. In this way, we can think of ideology, discourse, culture and space as being underwritten by structures of feeling. In daily life, these structures are effected by *feeling rules* (Hochschild 1983): "the established, immediately familiar and orthodox procedures for emoting and making sense" (Wetherell et al. 2015, 60).

I argue that Observatory has been constituted through the working of two hegemonic affects: white fear and diversity optimism. Within the affective structure of white fear, the fearful object may be people of colour, constructed as threatening to individual and collective white subjectivity and aspirations. Such fear can be mobilised and manipulated through political power (Anderson 2016). The notion of "swart gevaar" – the danger of black people to white people – mobilised in the South African elections of 1929 is perhaps the archetypal articulation of this. However, white fear may also be trained on *the other within* (Kristeva 1991[1988]), wherein the white person fails to achieve proper subjecthood within the necessary (colonial/apartheid) ideological framework, and thus is herself a source of individual and collective fear (Teppo 2004). Fear, experienced as urgent and immediate, is constantly reconstituted and calibrated to the dangers of the present. However, at different times this immediacy may be directed forward – the present danger is mobilised to shore-up the future of whiteness, or backward – it recalls past/passed fears. Importantly, white fear is not always and only synonymous with the fears of white people: it can structure the individual and collective affects of others who tend toward the promise of whiteness, or who recoil from the threat of blackness. This accounts for how people of colour may be complicit in the maintenance of white power.

The second structure of feeling I describe is diversity optimism, which emerges later in the history of Observatory. I separate it into two flows, distinct in their temporal direction. On the one hand, anticipatory optimism is forward oriented, reflecting the hopes of (mostly white) people invested in a post-racial future whilst firmly embedded in the present structures of racial inequity. This mirrors the anticipatory tendency of (queer) utopianism described by José Muñoz (2009, 25), in that it signals "a way of being in the world […] that challenges the dominance of an affective world, a present, full of anxiousness and fear". Here the anticipatory impulse, motivated by the insufficiencies of the present, simultaneously scours everyday life for something more (more meaningful, more free), whilst also leaning toward a future good life (Ruti 2017). On the other hand, nostalgic optimism is backward-oriented, attached to an

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imagined diverse past. It connects the past, present and future (Worby & Ally 2013). By affixing the good life to the past, objects (including places) become desired by their association with *what may have been*, and this affective investment shapes both the present, and expectations of the future. It does not rely on a linear trajectory, but instead moves us backward as we live the present and fashion the future. Whilst all kinds of people may ascribe to nostalgic optimism, I see it largely as a relation of whiteness to both time and people of colour, where looking back revises the past, and thus imbues whiteness in the present with benevolence through an imagined past racial diversity.

Although my focus is on hegemony, I am also interested in marginal affective experiences, particularly where they are produced by the working of hegemonic affects. However, hegemonic affects not only structure an epoch, but also shape what we might know of it. People of colour and feminine subjects specifically cannot be fully recovered on the basis of the colonial and apartheid archive. A gendered reading of the archive particularly is hamstrung in two ways. First, the archive barely concerns itself with anyone other than white men. Second, where colonial and apartheid archives address femininity, they were focused on one fem figure: the straight white ciswoman. Because she was constructed, according to Calvinist morality and white fear, as domestic, chaste and vulnerable, the archive is thin on material about fems in public life.[4] This gendered violence of colonial archives, where the record is overwhelmingly white and masculine, is well noted by feminist historians (Ghosh 2004; Swartz 2008; Scully 1995). So, whilst I try to portray these marginal affects throughout this chapter, they often feel out of reach. What is lost in such an account is, in fact, a sense of what has been lost.

The biography of the neighbourhood that follows begins to develop a picture of the affective landscape of Observatory to provide context and a basis for an analysis of affect in contemporary space. Through this chapter I demonstrate both white fear and diversity optimism as structuring and emerging from events in the chronology of Observatory to show how they have shaped the space and produced the diverse historical present. Over time, the shift in dominant affect from white fear to diversity optimism has enabled the progress narrative that has enthralled the country until quite recently: the movement from racism to multiracial diversity. However, the

[4] By contrast there is a wealth of information on the domestic lives and leisure activities of the wives of men in the colonial administration.

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long lineage of fear is always present, sometimes plainly, often just below the surface, structuring life in Observatory effectively and companionably with diversity optimism.

From Frontier to Settled Fear

The first period of colonial settlement in what are now the neighbourhoods of Observatory and Salt River was characterised by the trepidation of settlers defining and maintaining a frontier. Frontier life established the affective racialised norms – the feeling rules – that would endure in the space, and saw white fear become a dominant structure of feeling.

For centuries this area was important grazing land for Khoi people (Abrahams 1994). However, in 1652 Dutch colonists under Jan van Riebeek set up a replenishment station at the Cape. What we know of this time is based on colonial records focused on the pioneering activities and emotions of the Dutch East India Company. Van Riebeeck's diary is pitted with anxieties about the unwelcoming indigenous people who he refers to as "rogues" and "thieves" (Thom 1952, I 294). Fear characterised the scene as free burghers[5] struggled with their new environs and it became apparent that the Khoi would not simply forfeit their grazing land to the newcomers. On 22 May 1659, van Riebeek recorded the following in his diary:

> Several free burghers have been found *so terrified and overcome with such fear* that some of them fled last night to the redoubt Corenhoop, *completely deserting their houses and leaving them to the mercies of the Hottentots* [derogatory term for Khoi]. Farming is everywhere standing still and being neglected since *no one dares to go into the fields* with his plough or anything else; all the more pity at this time, in the rainy season, for thus ½ of the land will lie fallow, *to our great detriment*. (Thom III 1952, 15) (emphasis added)

The settlers' fear is noted as so great that they acted completely out of the character of the frontiersman. Instead of bravely defending their lot, they fled their settlements and the means of production to seek safety, risking their crops, and possibly their ability to sustain themselves in future months. The immediate threat was felt as too great to consider the future. It is this feeling, of lurking danger, of "being overcome with such fear", that dominated settlers'

[5] Free burghers (citizens) refer to early European settlers at the Cape, who were not, or no longer, officials of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), who were granted land by the VOC.

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relationship to the space and other people. It is this feeling, which takes as its object the dangerous *other,* and the territorialising strategies produced and legitimised by it, that I describe as an affective structure of white fear. This does not, of course, consider the affects of those cast as other.

In colonialism's affective economy of difference, where some feelings matter more than others (Ahmed 2004a), white fears rallied considerable political and material resources behind them. Van Riebeeck and his men established a thorny border, punctuated by guard towers, to keep the Khoi out of the fertile floodplain. The Black River marked the end of the settled territory (see Appendix A for a map), and thus marked the *first colonial boundary* between the European settlement and the "wilderness" of the continent beyond (Hart 2003, 3). This boundary would continue to order the space to the feelings and project of colonialism, later marking the line between apartheid Cape Town and its townships.[6]

The area continued to develop as farmland over the next century and a half. Having defeated the Khoi, colonists enslaved them, along with trafficked people to meet the labour needs of the colony. However, they seemed uncertain about the role of black people that they viewed as migrating from the hinterland into the Cape Colony. In 1797, the first of what would become pass laws were implemented "excluding all natives [black people] from colonial territory" and "directing farmers and others employing natives to discharge them" (Union of South Africa 1920, 2). In 1827, to account for the demand for labour, Ordinance No. 49 allowed "native foreigners" into the colony for employment "under passport" (Union of South Africa 1920, 2). That colonists saw themselves as at home, and "natives" as "foreigners", established the feeling rule that would characterise the settlement as in need of protection from *dangerous others*. This emotive strategy would become central in the production of white fear. Over the next 200 years the pass would be taken up across the country to control the movement of black people in urban centres.

In 1820, the Royal Observatory Cape of Good Hope, was founded under British astronomer Fearon Fallows, giving Observatory its name. Like the frontiersmen before them, fear was

[6] In South Africa 'township' refers to the underdeveloped peripheral urban areas that, from the late 19th century until the end of apartheid, were reserved for blacks, Indians and coloureds, and are still almost exclusively occupied by these groups. According to the racial hierarchy of apartheid, coloured and Indian townships were usually better developed than black ones.

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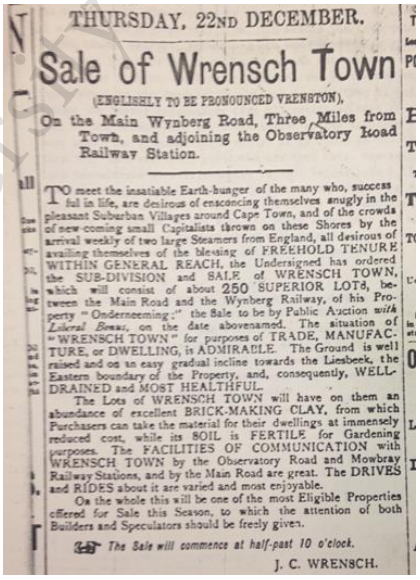
central to the experiences of Fallows and his team. He writes (cited in Warner 1995, 113) of the construction of the observatory, undertaken largely through slave labour:

> No sooner had work commenced, then we found such a system of plunder […] that it became quite *unsafe to trust oneself alone without being well armed*. [We] durst venture to remain upon the ground after dusk of the evening, except at the *hazard of our lives*. (emphasis added)

Fallows called in the military, which erected a guardhouse and continued its watch long after construction, until 1829. There is of course no record of the conditions of work under military surveillance from the perspective of the labourers – free or enslaved. Fallows remained concerned about dangers around the observatory. He took measures to close small taverns in the area fearing that they would attract bad behaviour or criminality (Warner 1995). Efforts to regulate access and activity in the space conveys the continued sense of vulnerability early settlers felt, and their sense of prerogative.

Slowly, Observatory's farmlands solidified into an urban settlement. With the construction of the train line in 1864, farms were sub-divided and small freestanding and terraced houses erected (Robinson 2011). Demonstrating its rough-and-ready character at the time, the advertisement by Mr Wrensch (1881) (Figure 2) appeals to potential English buyers hoping to improve their circumstances with relatively little means.



THURSDAY, 22ND DECEMBER.

Sale of Wrensch Town

(ENGLISHLY TO BE PRONOUNCED VRENSTON),

On the Main Wynberg Road, Three Miles from Town, and adjoining the Observatory Road Railway Station.

TO meet the insatiable Earth-hunger of the many who, successful in life, are desirous of ensconcing themselves snugly in the pleasant Suburban Villages around Cape Town, and of the crowds of new-coming small Capitalists thrown on these Shores by the arrival weekly of two large Steamers from England, all desirous of availing themselves of the blessing of FREEHOLD TENURE WITHIN GENERAL REACH, the Undersigned has ordered the SUB-DIVISION and SALE of WRENSCH TOWN, which will consist of about 250 SUPERIOR LOTS, between the Main Road and the Wynberg Railway, of his Property "Onderneeming;" the Sale to be by Public Auction *with Liberal Bonus*, on the date abovenamed. The situation of "WRENSCH TOWN" for purposes of TRADE, MANUFACTURE, or DWELLING, is ADMIRABLE. The Ground is well raised and on an easy gradual incline towards the Liesbeek, the Eastern boundary of the Property, and, consequently, WELL-DRAINED and MOST HEALTHFUL.

The Lots of WRENSCH TOWN will have on them an abundance of excellent BRICK-MAKING CLAY, from which Purchasers can take the material for their dwellings at immensely reduced cost, while its SOIL is FERTILE for Gardening purposes. The FACILITIES OF COMMUNICATION with WRENSCH TOWN by the Observatory Road and Mowbray Railway Stations, and by the Main Road are great. The DRIVES and RIDES about it are varied and most enjoyable.

On the whole this will be one of the most Eligible Properties offered for Sale this Season, to which the attention of both Builders and Speculators should be freely given.

☞ *The Sale will commence at half-past 10 o'clock.*

J. C. WRENSCH.

Figure 2. Cape Times advertisement for plots on the Wrensch property, 1881 (UCT African Studies Collection).

The working-class character of Observatory was entrenched at the end of the South African War (1899-1902), with substantial immigration of poorer Britons. These early residents, eager to

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remake themselves as respectable subjects, copied the conventions of the English bourgeois (Young 1998). But despite their best efforts, Observatory did not resemble the wealthier Victorian suburbs, raising fears about respectability for its white residents.

Alongside Britons, Jews from Lithuania and Latvia (South African Jewish Museum 2015), Italians, Portuguese, and South Americans also settled in Observatory, and neighbouring Salt River and Woodstock (Bickford-Smith et al. 1999) (see Appendix A for map). People of colour also moved into the area. With the onset of bubonic plague (from 1901), these mixed neighbourhoods were seen as the locus of death and danger, where the threat was plainly located in this range of *other* bodies. William Simpson (1905, 191), plague advisor in the Cape, describes the contamination as a result of race mixing, cultural inferiority and poverty:

> Cape Town for its size has a very large proportion of filthy slums and insanitary houses. […] overcrowded with a heterogenous population, consisting of native, coloured people, Indians, Arabs and whites of almost every nationality. The natives […] being unused to town life [crowd] together to an extraordinary degree. […] The coloureds are as dirty in their habits as the native; the Malay and Indian people possess the habits of the Asiatic; and the poorer class, Portuguese, Italian, Levantine, and Polish Jews, which made up the bulk of the poor white, were almost as filthy as the others.

Simpson (1905) goes on to emphasise that "the majority of the whites attacked [by plague] were foreign", highlighting the separation between immigrants and good, clean South African whites. Annika Teppo (2004) provides an account of how whiteness was constituted in South Africa as a constellation of origin, language, religion, and respectability. Southern Europeans, for example, were suspect on the basis of their darker skin colour and, frequently, their Catholicism.[7] Further, that they resided in "heterogenous populations", and did not observe the colour-bar immediately marked them as both inadequately white, and a threat to whiteness itself. As feared and reviled as these Europeans were, it did not culminate in decisive action, as white fear was largely predicated on an us/them dichotomy that saw black people as the ultimate other. Thus, in 1901, on the premise of plague-control, black renters in Cape Town were moved to a peripheral segregated location in Ndabeni (Wilson 1988). This marked the first segregationist removal that would become characteristic of apartheid.

[7] Religion was a key defining feature of community and nation. On one hand British settlers were largely Anglican Protestants, and on the other Afrikaner Calvinism was a significant force in Afrikaner, and ultimately apartheid, nationalism.

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Alongside racial mixing, the consumption of alcohol was also viewed as a threat to proper white subjects, and a cause of moral and social degeneration. In a history of the St Michael's Church, Observatory residents are portrayed as taking a hard-line against alcohol consumption, being "almost unanimous for many years in its aversion to liquor shops" (Langham-Carter 1992, 30). As the painting by civil servant Charles Bell (Figure 3) demonstrates, drinking was often portrayed as a vice of people of colour, associated with moral and intellectual inferiority. However, it was also closely tied to a wider moral panic in the expanding city about whites mixing with others. Bars and taverns were seen as sites of inter-racial sociality, and alcohol as loosening norms (Wilson 1988).

Figure 3. *Hottentots Street Scene*, Charles Bell, 1839 (UCT Bell Heritage Trust Archives).

In addition to growing anxiety about low morals, the government also sought solidarity between white English and Afrikaans people. Its "black peril" propaganda targeted both issues, rallying the white nation against the perceived threat of black male sexual assault on white women (Samuelson 2002, 98). Black men then not only threatened the body and virtue of white women – the fem paragon – but also white progeny (as they risked conceiving mixed instead of white offspring), imperilling the white social body, the nation.

In 1902, the Cape passed the *Betting Houses, Gaming Houses and Brothels Suppression Act* (known as the Morality Act) that prohibited "voluntary sexual relations for the purpose of gain between white women and Africans" (preamble). In a plea to parliament, the Attorney General explained the problem as he saw it:

> There were certain houses in Cape Town which *any Kaffir* [racist slur for black person] could frequent, as long as he could pay the sum demanded, he could have *illicit*

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> *intercourse* with these white European women. This was a matter of *gravest importance*, for once the barriers were broken down between European and native races in this country, there was *no limit* to the *terrible dangers* to which women could be submitted, particularly in isolated places. (cited in Bickford-Smith et al. 1999, 39) (emphasis added)

Affects can organise individual and collective feelings but are also the object of the manipulations of power by state and non-state actors (Anderson 2016). The feeling rules to which the Attorney General ascribes and to which he directs parliament are clear. His individual fear is articulated as fear of the unbridled sexuality of black men and its consequences for white femininity, and thus the collective. Unsurprisingly, it was largely immigrant European women, dubious in their whiteness and thus their femininity, who were under suspicion and arrested (Bickford-Smith et al. 1999). Their transgressions were seen to expose other, presumably good, (British and Dutch) white women to the "terrible dangers" of black men. Scares around black men's sexuality are indicative of a larger concern about the limits and contradictions of colonial slave society and "how to mark the boundaries between men and women, settlers and natives, slaveholders and slaves" (Scully 1995, 338).

Observatory was one area where these distinctions were most blurred. It was widely seen as a dormitory suburb for white labour. Bordering on the racially-mixed areas of Woodstock and Salt River (see Appendix A for map) where its white residents laboured alongside people of colour in the docks and factories, its inhabitants were already "quite below the level of society" (Salt River workman quoted in Worden et al. 1998, 259). Those who could afford it lived further away and commuted via train. Observatory, then, was the very limit of respectable society, not good itself, but not wholly disreputable.

In the 1920s, as large factories cropped up in Observatory, middle-class residents, alarmed by this industrial and working-class spatialisation, began moving "out and up" to the neighbouring suburbs (Unneberg 2005, 18). This anxiety interlocks fears about dangerous (classed and racialised) others, with fears about their own otherness, of the stigma of class, cultural and geographical proximity to people of colour. White fear in Observatory was as much about the harm that others might cause to one's person and property, as about harm to one's standing as a good, pure, and segregated white person (Watson 1970; Teppo 2004).

Indicating a country-wide anxiety, Dr James Mitchell, the national secretary for public health, asserted that being "swamped" by urbanising blacks was a "real racial danger" (cited in Klausen 2016, 180). Unsurprisingly, in 1923 segregation became entrenched by *the Natives (Urban Areas) Act* which declared South African urban areas 'white' and required all black men in cities

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and towns to carry passes. However, these harsh measures did not stem the movement of black people into Cape Town, especially in light of burgeoning Salt River industries (Kinkead-Weekes 1992). In 1927, despite centuries of white men's casual access to the bodies of black women, not deemed proper fem subjects and thus unworthy of protection (Scully 1995; Klausen 2016), *the Immorality Act* was passed to prohibit sex between black and white people. This was specifically a further measure against the perceived threat of black men and their danger to white ciswomen, the singular and archetypal fem. The same year the majority of the city's black population was relocated to the new township, Langa, a considerable distance from the city centre (Wilson 1988). By now fear of "swamping" was powerfully articulated in terms of "swart gevaar" (black peril), which formed the theme of Barry Hertzog's election campaign in 1929. Demonstrating the power of feelings in underscoring ideology, the campaign capitalised on individual and collective fear as an instrument and objective of political action, a mobiliser and distributor of political power.

The years between the First and Second World Wars were also characterised by anxiety over poor whites (Bickford-Smith et al. 1999). As white working-class immigration to the Cape increased, rates of miscegenation, for which it was already notorious, were believed to increase (Bickford-Smith 1995). One source laments that "it is quite a common thing for the European immigrant introduced for railway and mechanical work to marry, even to prefer to marry, women of colour" (Evans cited in Bickford-Smith 1995, 65). It was of course far less permissible for black men to marry white women. Whilst concern exceeded the degree to which interracial relationships really took place, the actual occurrence was less important than a *feeling* that miscegenation was rampant and ubiquitous (Teppo 2004). Miscegenation epitomised low morals, but also reified visceral fears about the possible access of black men to white women, and the imagined moral and genetic turpitude of the white nation (Klausen 2016).

Observatory was of course heavily implicated in scares about mixing. Teppo (2004, 45) notes that the problem was articulated in spatial terms, as "illnesses and social evils were perceived to be originating from the depths of the racially mixed areas of District Six[8], Woodstock and Observatory". She adds that when a housing scheme was constructed in 1938 to rehabilitate

[8] District Six was an inner-city neighbourhood in Cape Town, where over 60,000 residents were forcibly removed in the 1970s. There is a museum dedicated to it in the city, and it has become a well-known icon of multiracial urbanity and the traumas of apartheid.

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poor whites by subjecting them to segregated conditions and monitoring by clergy and social workers, Observatory was a key area for recruiting residents.

Black people however, remained the main source of fear. Determined to purge the cities, the state moved from public health to slum clearance legislation. Under Hertzog, the 1937 *Native Laws Amendment Act*, effective from 1938, prohibited the acquiring of urban land by black people from other races, extending the principle of land segregation implemented in rural areas by the 1913 Land Act (Kinkead-Weekes 1992).

At the local level, a number of rate payers' associations – predecessors of the contemporary community improvement districts operating across Cape Town's suburbs – campaigned to remove black people from the city and consolidate segregation in line with the rest of the country. One example, the Ratepayers' Association of Salt River, a coloured neighbourhood, demonstrates how the structuring force of white fear, was not effected through the feelings of white people alone. In 1937 the association's chairman complained of the "danger and disgraceful behaviour" of black people in his ward (quoted in Kinkead-Weekes, 1992, 19), and in 1938 he asserted that the black population of Woodstock, Salt River and Observatory had doubled in the previous months, as Langa had no room for the blacks "flooding into Cape Town in truckloads" (quoted in Kinkead-Weekes, 1992, 21). The use of terms like "flood" and "truckloads" follows the rules of swart gevaar – a consistent invocation of scale through which black danger was articulated as a *sizeable* threat to the fragile white (and in the Cape, coloured) body, individual and collective.

At a subsequent meeting with the Native Affairs Sub-Committee, the association asserted that blacks in the area had resulted in declining conditions and property values and increasing numbers of taverns, again linking alcohol consumption with danger. The racialisation of this anxiety is also clear from Cape Argus reportage, with headlines such as "Shebeeners in the Suburbs"[9] (Kinkead-Weekes 1992, 22), echoing Fallows in the 1820s or the prohibitionist residents at the turn of the century.

Structures of feeling – such as white fear – represent patterns in emotion, repetition, ebb and flow, demonstrating the "banal, mundane, forceful, relentless and ordinary human work" of

[9] Shebeens are typically black-owned and run informal taverns or bars.

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affect (Wetherell et al. 2015, 60). Feeling rules such as the articulation of the danger of black people in relation to sex, drinking and population size govern the ways that feelings are articulated so that they achieve this repetition and are swept up in and power the flow of structure of feelings.

The result of these fears was night raids in the problematic suburbs, what the Town Clerk described as "systematic inspections carried out on unexempted single Natives ordered into the Location" (quoted in Kinkead-Weekes 1992, 23). In one spell in 1939, at least 233 "single male natives" were evicted; landlords were also fined for "unlawfully harbouring natives" (Kinkead-Weekes 1992, 22). The national Department of Native Affairs also pressed the City Council to proclaim Cape Town exclusively white, under the amended *Urban Areas Act*. Council did so on 9 June 1939, henceforth criminalising black people entering the city without employment (Kinkead-Weekes 1992). This example deftly demonstrates how white fear is not restricted to the bodies and collectives of white people; here, the individualised fears of a handful of largely coloured residents represent and incite collective feelings that contribute to powerful and large-scale political objectives to the detriment of numerous *others*.

This early period in Observatory's history demonstrates how, from the outset, it was widely characterised by white settler's fear – fear of frontier theft, fear of disease, fear of deviant sexuality, fear of low morality, fear of miscegenation. Thus, the immediacy of white fear, its visceral present tense, could be mobilised against a dystopian future, the end of whiteness. All these dangers were embodied in people of colour, particularly in black men. However, these fears also tapped into deeply felt white fear about residents' own (dis)respectability, their sub-par whiteness, articulated by state and residents' own concern about poor whites. These affects constituted the flows of feeling in the neighbourhood, and wider city, and also the focus of resident and state political action – where fear became the focus of political campaigns, laws and policies.

What is not in focus is the fear, anxiety and loss of people of colour, particularly black people impacted by laws borne out of white fear. This unevenness in which, and whose, affects matter continues into each successive epoch in the history of Observatory, structured by the primacy and pre-eminence of white fear as a moving force in individual, social and political life.

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Grey Area and the Emergence of Optimism

In 1948 the National Party came to power, marking the beginning of formal apartheid although segregation was already underway. In 1950, the first iteration of the *Group Areas Act* was passed, providing for racially segregated work and residential spaces. This era saw the valorisation of white fear, articulated as swart gevaar, as a political objective and a collective affect, determining nation and neighbourhood.

In Observatory, this was continuous with a local history of white fear, from the frontiersmen's fear of the Khoi, to city-dwellers fear of swarthy Europeans and black people swamping the city. However, as responses against apartheid fomented, this period also saw the neighbourhood become associated with alterity, generating a new structure of feeling rooted in a celebration of difference, which I call diversity optimism. In this period, future-oriented diversity optimism was invested in alternative forms of social life that emerged in the interstices of the apartheid order, tending toward a vision of the good life as racially and sexually liberated, and as yet unachieved. It was a feeling, collective and individual, of experiencing moments outside of apartheid time, yearning for the (possibly unattainable) future. It is this future-focused version of diversity optimism that I call anticipatory optimism. This affect did not replace white fear, but organised Observatory alongside it.

Observatory continued to be a site of mixing through the 1950s and 60s, with Patric Mallet (2013, n.p.) describing it as "a truly non-racial community united in poverty". This mixing made Observatory fertile ground for both white fear and optimism about the transgressive possibilities of desire beyond race lines. For example, Observatory is known to be the site of the first arrest under the *Immorality Act* (1950). This Act, a direct response to fear of miscegenation, extended the criminalisation of sex and marriage between white and black people to whites and all people of colour. In 1951, the apartheid police barged into a second-floor Observatory apartment to wrench a white woman and her coloured lover from their bed, and made the first arrests under the Act.[10] Though traumatic for the couple, this no doubt added to Observatory's reputation as a space of fem freedom, racial and sexual transgression, evident in the proud retellings of the story by residents, stoking optimism about ways of doing, being and feeling in the space beyond

[10] Observatory Heritage Day Stroll, 24 September 2018, organised by the OCA.

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the strictures of apartheid. This event likely also fuelled white fear about loose morals and miscegenation in the neighbourhood at the time.

Under the *Group Areas Act* (1957, amended in 1966), intended to effect complete racial segregation, in 1961 Observatory was made a white-only neighbourhood. It is unclear how black people were impacted, as they were already restricted by *the Natives (Urban Areas) Act* (1923) and subsequent city legislation. However, the Act severely affected coloureds and Indians, overriding previous ownership or rental rights. Whilst there is no comparable study, it is likely that Observatory experienced *less-forced* removals, similar to those documented in neighbouring Mowbray (Western 1996) (see Appendix A for map). Juan Montoya-Pelaez (1987, 10), explains that likely "the property market agents following the Group Areas regulations [determined] the population group entering the market in Observatory". That is, tenancy boards evicted coloureds and Indians in favour of white tenants. Coloured and Indian-owned homes were also likely expropriated by the state, and newly displaced residents were moved to the townships of the Cape Flats, about 20km away.

The experience of removal demonstrates the effect of white fear and provides a powerful contrast to the emergent affect of anticipatory (and later nostalgic) optimism. Attention to a structure of feeling might reveal some aspects of social life, and obscure others. For this reason, I recount what I have gleaned about forced removals in Observatory because removals, fuelled by the emotive forces of white fear, have come to be concealed over time, by optimism.

I found several examples of displaced Indian and coloured households from disparate sources, which, although limited in detail, intimate segregations' impact on people of colour in Observatory. Historian Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2014) writing about the Indian township of Rylands, notes that some of her 78 interviewees originated from Observatory. Karen, a current coloured Observatory resident, told me that her husband's family was removed from Observatory to Belhar. In *Transforming Cape Town* Catherine Besteman (2008, 67) writes of one of her research informants: "Lynn drove me past her childhood home in Observatory, discussing her concern for her ageing parents, removed […] to dangerous Bonteheuwel".

Several stories about shop-owning families forced to move highlight how displacement from Observatory also meant a loss of livelihood for many. L, a white ex-resident, remembers "two Muslim shops" in the late 1960s, "Abu's on the corner of Arnold and Bishop Roads and Becker's, across the road" (Field notes, 27-03-2017). Mallet recalls "the Khshevs who had run Ox-sole Shoe Repairs in Trill Road since 1903 before they were forcibly removed […] from their home

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upstairs and later had to give up the property in the 1980s" (Mallet 2013, n.p.). In her student project on the history of Wesley Street, Megan Anderson (1990, 1), a white resident, mentions the Parkers, a Malay family who owned a corner-store on the street, and who were also forced to leave Observatory. She also writes that residents told her of a local Indian shoe-maker who burnt himself to death "as an expression of resistance and despair at the implementation of […] Group Areas Act, in the 1960s." In what appears to also be a student assignment documenting the religious history of the area, Lisa Narunsky (1991) reports that the Act saw an increase in suicide, with coloured and Indian traders having to give up their livelihoods. This is in keeping with suicides noted in other sites of forced removal in Cape Town (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 1994).

Whether or not suicides like these occurred in Observatory, these stories powerfully indicate the deadening affect of forced removals that haunt spaces long after the event is over, and those who embody the experience of loss have been moved out of sight. In Observatory this is true despite a popular history that would come to undermine and erase the history of forced removals. This is addressed further in Chapter 4.

Nevertheless, Observatory remained permeable to coloured people, particularly because there was constant movement between it and neighbouring Salt River, classified as a coloured area. This allowed for socialisation outside of the norms of segregation, and an overarching affective structure of anticipatory optimism. Such an affective relation frames Observatory as a place where people could participate in transgressive acts and affects, and fashion post-apartheid identities, contrary to the present organisation of space, sociality and feeling. So, in actioning alternate visions of the good life before the good post-apartheid life was realised across the country, anticipatory optimism indicated an aspiration for the future and a positioning against (and within) the present.

By the 1970s Observatory was widely known as a bohemian enclave amid rigid segregation and puritanical values, where the neglected Victorian buildings provided a romantic foil for alternative cultures. Students and activists, embodying hippy youth culture, its values and aesthetics, were attracted to Observatory in the pursuit of freedom in their personal lives and as a political end. For example, Steven Robins (2016) characterises life in Observatory in the late 70s and early 80s: "We read the Communist Manifesto, bought our food from veggie co-ops, lived in dirty run-down digs […], drank cheap red wine and smoked far too much dope" (10). Most young people were white, but the visibility of coloured and Indian people kept the fantasy of diversity alive. Countercultures, as much as any other mode of being in the world, produce

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feeling rules (Hochschild 1983), and those at work under anticipatory optimism defined interracial affinity as desirable.

Life histories of older residents also provide some insights into the feeling of the time that supplements the information offered by document sources. For example, Sauda, a 64-year-old Indian ciswoman, who was a resident in the 1980s, points out that only white people were able to formally rent, so people of colour lived in shared homes through the design and efforts of white tenants. Sauda, a single mother of two young children, sought the stability and security of home-ownership in Observatory. In 1986, Sauda's partner, a white man, assisted her in purchasing a home in Rochester Road from a sympathetic white gay couple. Because Rochester Road marked the formal boundary with Salt River (see Appendix A), the north side of the street was designated coloured, and the south side, part of Observatory, was designated white. Rochester Road was the only place that the couple could purchase a home as a closed corporation, and because the property was on the Observatory side of the street, they had to have written consent from neighbours. The majority stake had to be owned by the white party, with her partner owning 51% and Sauda 49%. Whilst for Sauda this was a practical move, enabled by the genuine kindness of the sellers and her partner, these individual movements of people of colour into Observatory, created a sense of diversity, politicisation and futurity that inhered in its structure of feeling. Not all residents were affected in the same way, and racism was of course still part of daily life. Sauda sometimes felt scrutinised by her white neighbours but says that people of colour "mostly felt safe, because there were young people living their lives and making a point of having mixed homes with each other".

Sauda's story alerts us to the sense of complicity among people producing the social relations, affects and space that they desired for themselves, the city and country. It also raises desire as central to the production of alternatives in Observatory. It is not coincidental that the couple who sold to Sauda was gay. Queer people were criminalised under apartheid and the couple's own sexual dissidence and their investment in Observatory as a space of relative sexual freedom may well have informed their decision to collude with Sauda to get her into the neighbourhood.

In a short memoir, activist Zackie Achmat (1995) describes how as a coloured child in Salt River in the 70s, he discovered that the white (and evidently poorly monitored) toilets at the Observatory train station were a meeting place for men to have sex, "regardless of race or class" (334). In his account of his frequent visits to the toilets, he is not only trouncing the normative rules of heterosexuality, but also norms about age and sexuality, apartheid laws governing race

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segregation and sexuality, and the dichotomy between public and private space. Although as a precocious child he may not have been aware of the cultural and affective resonance of the space and of his participation, as an adult reflecting on the experience, he constructs the narrative according to the feeling rules of the time. In fact, the apparent purity of his childhood desires, innocent of political agenda, add to the affective appeal of the story as epitomising anticipatory optimism.

As with the couple arrested under the *Immorality Act*, Sauda's story, and Zackie Achmat's childhood trysts, the affective experience of desire is seen as heedless of apartheid structuration. These stories are not exceptional, in fact it is their apparent ubiquity that fuelled both white fears that coalesced in and around the space, and optimism about the hopeful lived experience of the space as diverse, racially and sexually liberated. Thus, as much as anticipatory optimism turned on the promise of racial liberation, it also held the promise of sexual liberation, and frequently the two were intertwined.

Optimism was as much underscored by public political life as personal. Several political organisations, implicitly or explicitly positioned against apartheid, established themselves in the neighbourhood. The Western Province Literacy Project, focused on adult literacy for black people, had offices on Station Road for a few years from 1975 (Western Province Literacy Project 1975). The National Union of South African Students also had their Cape Town office in Observatory around 1984 (Gottschalk 2013). Observatory was also a hub for women's activism. The Black Sash monitored the local Bantu Administration Court, and the non-racial feminist organisation the United Women's Organisation, later the United Women's Congress, had an Observatory branch, constituted of white women (Fester 1997). There was also a branch of the United Democratic Front, a "virtually entirely English-speaking white group", with a large membership of women (Gottschalk 2013, 7). Jointly with the Claremont branch it produced the journal *Upfront*, as well as anti-apartheid poster campaigns. Although these political organisations were largely white led and constituted, their race permissiveness lent to the appeal of the area as an optimistic political space, and allowed some movement of people of colour, particularly coloured people.

The presence of activists and organisations served to rehabilitate Observatory's image among some. Whereas previously Observatory's interracial encounters had been associated with poor morals, alcohol consumption, poverty and illicit sex; now, amidst rising opposition to apartheid, it was associated with liberal, socialist, or anti-racist values. Observatory became a specific site

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of freedom structured by anticipatory optimism, and the promise of embodied and spatial difference.

It was in this period that Observatory developed a reputation as a *grey* area – not black nor white, but both or neither. This perception of Observatory has endured into the present where it is frequently asserted that it was not subject to segregation or forced removals and was always grey. The persistence of this trope demonstrates the rich affective appeal of optimism. History is re-made in its image, so that instead of seeing mixing in the neighbourhood as future-seeking exceptions to the norm, it has been recast as the norm itself – a benevolent, post-race, post-apartheid space, ahead of its time. Such a perspective glosses over the multiple ways that Observatory was also a space in which segregation and forced removal *did* occur.

Further, permissiveness toward racial mixing made Observatory attractive both to those who transgressed race categorisations by ignoring or opposing apartheid and those who sought mobility within its strictures.

The latter included people who were light enough to pass as white but had non-white ancestry, or whose families were classified in a non-white group. In language and culture, the boundary between many coloured people and poor white people, who did not ascribe to the class norms and values of good whiteness, was often imperceptible (Watson 1970; Teppo 2004; Du Plessis 2004). In *Passing for White*, Graham Watson (1970) describes assimilation into a Cape Town neighbourhood and its school as a significant gateway for the race, social and economic mobility of passers. Whilst Watson gave the neighbourhood a pseudonym, it is almost certainly Observatory and enough time has passed that there is no harm in saying as much.[11] Observatory seems to have been a preferred destination for passers, who may not have succeeded under greater scrutiny elsewhere. In her evocative novel, *Playing in the Light* (2006) Zoë Wicomb also describes Observatory in the 60s and 70s as a space where light-skinned coloureds came to construct fragile new white identities.

[11] The geography and social stratification – between better-off coloured people and poor white people, the histories of migration into the suburb by Jews and southern Europeans, the presence of light industry, the occupations of residents (textile machinists, railways workers, artisans) are all an unequivocal match for Observatory. Further, Watson mentions other candidates, Woodstock and Salt River, by name and in comparison to his site, leaving only Observatory as the neighbourhood in question.

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But as Yvette Christiansë (2002, 377) tells us, passing is an "ambivalent story". Whilst passers effectively cheated race-classification, they also assumed privilege within an unjust system. This meant eschewing family and friends and manufacturing a completely new personal history. Encounters with others then were constantly fraught with danger – the possibility of discovery as a pass-white, or contamination by association with passing neighbours. Constant fear of exposure, as well as the daunting task of creating a new identity, and the immense loss of history is powerfully portrayed by Wicomb, whose characters experience Observatory as suffused with discomfort and risk. Passers come to embody white fear: racial anxiety about others, and about oneself – body, family, history. So even as some contravened the laws to generate spaces of anticipatory optimism, others subverted the laws, and their lives perpetuated and were structured by racialised fear.

According to Montoya-Pelaez, Observatory was popular for middle-class white families until the early 1960s, when the area "went down and came to bear a stigma" (elderly resident in Montoya-Pelaez 1987, 4). The nuclear family is a widely understood barometer for propriety (Hubbard 2000). The flight of families is likely the cumulative effect of fears over the presence of people of colour, and fear of association with or being perceived as poor or worse, pass-white. Pass-whites were an open secret in Observatory, and (non-)confrontation was also governed by white fear – fear that to recognise the presence of the people of colour in one's midst shatters the fiction of apartheid's success and completion, and one's own credibility as white. Watson's (1979) monograph provides an amusing account of the pains that white school staff and education officials took to ignore or cover-up the race of non-white students and continue the façade. Montoya-Pelaez (1987) alludes to the school's situation, stating that it was in disrepute and unpopular with good white families. He notes the absence of a good school as a reason for the notable movement of whites out of Observatory through the 70s and early 80s.

Whilst some fled the mixed melee of Observatory, others, largely young people, drawn by a structure of anticipatory optimism, moved to the neighbourhood. This started a process of gentrification, already observable in 1985 (Montoya-Pelaez 1987), and in full fruition today. This early gentrification led to a boom in business, and Observatory became popular for its gritty nightspots and affordable housing. It began to lose much of its white working-class character. Some residents perceived this as positive, plainly sharing their anxiety and animosity toward poor (and likely also pass) whites in Montoya-Pelaez's (1987) study. One remarked happily that "the poor whites have buzzed-off" (71), another hoped that it would create a more "upmarket atmosphere" and "attract the more well-to-do" (75). The voices of those forced to "buzz-off"

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are notably absent from the record. As fears about poor whites dissipated, the historically wide category of *dangerous others* narrowed and homogenised to only people of colour, and still more to largely black people. The next section will show how fear of black others would continue to shape the neighbourhood long after anxiety about *other* others dissipated.

White fear, enforced by and enforcing of legal and social structures, remained hegemonic in this period. However, perhaps due to Observatory's marginal (poor, industrial) position, the state did not intervene much after people of colour were removed. Thus, the mixing of whites, Indians and coloureds went largely unchecked in Observatory during the height of apartheid. Liberal, largely white, activists and students magnetised to the promise of diversity, invested in Observatory their aspirations for their own lives and for the future of the country, bound into a structure of anticipatory optimism.

Whilst some people of colour benefited from the openness to mixing, the contrast of Observatory as the traumatic site of forced removals, and the anxious site of race-passing, produces Observatory as a site of negative affects for coloured and Indian people and powerfully illustrates how affects are not totalising. Emplaced affects may be collectively and individually differentiated – spaces may be felt differently for different people and groups. (I explore this idea further in Chapter 4.) Further, born of the particular history and geography of Observatory and the proximity between coloured and white sociality in Cape Town, black people could not access the optimism of mixing.

In contrast to the hegemony of fear and the rise of optimism, the affective experience of exclusion and loss of Indian and coloured removal, the assimilation and anxiety of coloured passing, and the abjection of black exclusion are largely inaccessible to us through the apartheid archive, and only surface tenuously and partially in this accounting. This uneven affective landscape deepens over the next decades of Observatory's history.

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Transitions: Optimism and Fear

In the last years of National Party rule, Observatory's dubious history was imbued with enormous affective appeal as it came to spatially encapsulate the earnest hope that South Africans could all just get along. As democracy became inevitable, more and more people were magnetised to Observatory as a site of optimism, a local effort toward and a projection of the good post-racial life, that epitomised an emerging national feeling project. Thus, this era saw anticipatory optimism emerge as a dominant affect, structuring feelings about, and the living of

life within Observatory. Motivated by the insufficiencies of the present, the tendency toward optimism manifests in the cracks within the present order, whilst looking to the future and good life that it promises (Ruti 2017).

As political transition approached, new forms of social and economic reproduction emerged. In Observatory, a few examples demonstrate the rise of optimism. In 1992, a mixed-race couple – Portia, a black woman, and Jason, a white man – started the Africa Café out of their home. The restaurant, now located in the city centre, is described on its website:

> The Africa Café had the humble beginnings of *a dream in a South Africa that had yet to transform into the democracy and icon of freedom that it is today*. Portia and Jason De Smidt had no formal training in food preparation but armed with creative flair and abundant passion they were determined to open South Africa's first African restaurant. Their idea was not warmly received by the business community and without much needed financial backing the only option was to open the doors of their small home in the bohemian suburb of Observatory. (emphasis added) [12]

Observatory, the desired home space, extended its promise to the work space. Here the couple could practice freedom, make the lives and livelihoods of their choice, realise their "dream". Anticipatory optimism then seeks the cracks in the unyielding present, to exercise freedom in a country "yet to transform".

The couple was also featured in the glossy magazine *Fair Lady* in 1993 (see Figure 4, below), exemplifying the rehabilitation of the neighbourhood not only within Cape Town, but as a national representation of what was new about the new South Africa. The title, *Observatory Status* (Richards 1993), a play on the political term observer status, suggests that the author is re-evaluating the neighbourhood for her (likely sceptical) readers. She remarks that its rise in popularity is due to affordability, but also attests to the currency of its ethos, directing readers to the new feeling rules at play in the changing political climate. In one instance she declares that "its brand of cross-cultural décor" is "a lesson on living with colour" (26) – and what lesson could be more pressing for South Africans in 1993, one year before the first democratic elections? She describes a décor shop as "what feels like the whole of the Orient" and concluded

[12] https://www.africacafe.co.za/#our-story [Accessed September 23, 2018]

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that readers should visit to buy "some people's food and some home style that's as new South Africa as it comes" (26).

Observatory status

Nobody could call it chic, but Observatory – the tiny district sandwiched between Cape Town city suburbs – is certainly big on character. In its brand of cross-cultural décor is a lesson on living with colour

By NANCY V RICHARDS

Left: WILD WARE – Local artists and craftsmen, T-shirt and clothes designers and a crazy iron chair man all peddle their talent On The Wild Side. Study the goods closely: each piece is unique. ☎ (021) 47-7984.

Below: TABLE FOR THREE – Portia, Jason and little Lumai de Smidt run The Africa Cafe from home so they only open in the evenings. Portia got her knowledge of African food from her mother, who had a catering business in Swaziland.

Lower Main Road, Obs, is an honest buzz. It's had no major investment from canny property developers, no upmarket shopping malls, no heavy PR – like a thriving tomato plant on a compost heap, it's simply grown organically out of very humble beginnings.

Its rise has probably had more to do with its affordability than anything else – even now it's still arguably the only Cape Town suburb that first-time home buyers can afford. Business rentals are relatively low and there's an empathy among the locals that makes them celebrate, not groan at, the arrival of a new shop or restaurant. It's a great place for a street party – in fact, it is a street party. Pop into Bensons and meet the owner of Parchos having coffee, browse in The Scholar's Bookshop and meet the students from the interior design school. Take a small wad of notes and buy yourself some people's food and some home style that's as New South Africa as it comes.

Below: *The Victorian House Book* and *The Whole Earth Catalog*, The Scholar's Bookshop ☎ (021) 448-5970.

Observatory status

Left: HATTER'S HAVEN – A Touch of Madness in Trill Road, run by Lawrence Huckstep and Anthony Adams, must rate as the smallest décor shop in the world. See what feels like the whole of the Orient in just a few square metres. Behind the goodies, check the amazing paint effects. Deco wall lights from R198 each. ☎ (021) 448-2266.

Above: THREADS AND SNATCHES – Cheryl McNevin has been in Obs for three years. Her clothing businesses, Threads and Buzzy Buzzard, run from a pair of Victorian houses, supply the big chains.

Left: INNER MONGOLIA – Allen Bethel has recently sold Moghuls, the restaurant with paohyderm wall work, to Elaine Enwor of Elaine's of Rockey Street. ☎ (021) 47-4854.

Below: Napkin holders, R17.95 each. Interior Art.

Figure 4. *Observatory Status* article in Fair Lady, Food & Décor supplement (Richards 1993).

Portia and Jason are pictured on the first page, beaming over their baby. The image makes a sharp contrast to the spectre of racial and sexual transgression that had stigmatised Observatory barely a few years before. Portia's black body no longer represents danger, the corporeal manifestation of white fears about disease, violence, moral decay, sexual perversion, the decline of the white nation, nor the gendered abjection of slavery and apartheid. Instead, she is recoded as diversity itself, blackness as sexy, desirable, cosmopolitan, urban (see Ahmed 2000). This is a significant task for the new nation: to assert the modernity of people of colour, black people especially, after centuries of constructing them as rural and backward (Mamdani 1996). As importantly, this rehabilitation of blackness must accompany a revision of whiteness, as embracing of difference, inclusive, and optimistic (Strauss 2008). These imperatives still shape the identities of Observatory residents today (see Chapter 4). In 1993 however, the young family embodied the very ideal of the new race-mixed South Africa.

In 1995 Café Ganesh opened. The restaurant's origin story is also indicative of the optimism of the time, and the prominence of a new form of whiteness. Its website describes its owner, Ant, being injured in a road accident and receiving an insurance pay-out with which he "disappeared

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to India" and on returning was inspired to open a "café for artists".[13] The trip to India is important in establishing Ant as embracing of difference, to ground his desire for Café Ganesh as a space both aspirant and representative of the changing city and nation, and part of a global cosmopolitanism. The website also describes the venue as singularly diverse and as epitomising hope:

> Perhaps no other place in Obs, or Cape Town for that matter, exemplifies the hope of a new South Africa chilling out with itself, than Café Ganesh, a converted stables just off the Lower Main Road. Overflowing with 'urban shabby chic', Ganesh offers delicious traditional African dishes […] in warm and evocative surroundings.[14]

The idea of the "new South Africa chilling out with itself" conjures the idea of a diversity that is natural, relaxed, unforced and unhurried, positioning Café Ganesh as an authentic example of the diversity that could become status quo, at a time when it was still novel and tentative. Over the next two decades, Ganesh would indeed become a comfortable space for diversity, as the neighbourhood continued to change around it.

However, this period in Observatory, as in the country, was also marked by violence. On December 30, 1993, operatives of the anti-apartheid Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) opened fire in Observatory's Heidelberg Tavern, killing four people. The APLA executive likely didn't make the distinction between Observatory and other white areas, or perhaps even took umbrage with the idea of its perceived diversity whilst its residents remained ensconced in the structural privilege of white South Africa. In the aftermath, the media widely remarked that the tavern, and Observatory, were odd targets because of its diversity. A 2014 interview with the mother of Lyndi Fourie, who was killed in the attack, emphasises the "irony" of an attack on Observatory, but also on a version of post-apartheid whiteness:

> The *ultimate irony* is that it was Lyndi, of all people, who was caught in the violence; Lyndi *who had grown up among black people* on a farm in the Eastern Cape; *"colour-blind"* Lyndi, who, [her mother] says, "*had lots of black friends*, and who, when she was doing civil engineering, *really empathised with the plight of black people* because she had to do field work, and during the lunch hour they would talk to her […] (Mesure 2014) (emphasis added)

[13] http://cafeganesh.co.za/2016/06/09/about-ant/ [Accessed September 23, 2018]
[14] http://cafeganesh.co.za [Accessed September 23, 2018]

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What is clear from this account is that Observatory is now not only attached to the promise of diversity, but also the promise of good whiteness. The event is framed not as an attack on white positionality or complacency in apartheid, but as an attack on *white benevolence*, a central component of the new nation. That the pan-Africanist APLA, widely perceived as anti-white, was responsible no doubt raised anxieties about black men in the neighbourhood, no longer just a threat to the white (social and collective) body but to the futurity that the neighbourhood and its diversity-embracing residents represented.

At the same time, the increased activity and nightlife in the area, and the removal of legal controls of people's movement, led to an increase in reported incidents of crime. A local newspaper article from 1994, entitled *Observatory New Crime Capital*, cites "drug pushing", "shoplifting, petty-theft and vagrancy" as the main concerns (Schutze 1994). In the same period, the local Valkenberg Hospital reduced its psychiatric beds, mostly through de-institutionalisation of long-term patients (Smith 2005). This is widely believed to have increased the homeless population in Observatory (Peck 2012). In addition, the suburb's racial profile swiftly began to change, reflecting the shifts taking place in urban centres across the country. According to Peck (2012) it was in this period that Observatory also really began to be associated with foreigners, both European and from other African countries. By the time of the 1996 census, the first that included all races, fifty percent of residents were people of colour, with roughly equal coloured and black people (Peck 2012, Appendix B). Taken together, demographic changes, concerns about crime, roving ex-Valkenberg patients, and decades of existing stigma about poor people, poor morals, and racial mixing in the area strongly contributed to the pervasive characterisation of the space as *dangerous in its diversity* – relinking white fear, ever *present*, and diversity in the new socio-political context. Now that diversity was status quo (at least on paper), it was bound to disappoint the promise of anticipatory optimism.

This period then also marks the reification of fear as a dominant collective affect within the space, exemplified by a greater focus on security. Thus, fear renews itself. It is experienced as direct and pressing, oriented toward the perceived immediate threat to the individual and collective. The absence of a police station in Observatory, and anxiety about the accessibility of the neighbourhood by major road and train networks, led to a focus on protecting and ultimately securitising the suburb (Junck 2016). There was also a familiar emphasis on retaining (white) families that were perceived to be leaving (Junck 2016), mirroring the perceived outward movement of respectable whites from Observatory in the 1920s, and then in the late 70s.

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Ironically, the local post-apartheid response to white fear was more militarised than during apartheid. A neighbourhood watch, ObsWatch, was established in 1997. It was financed by residents and businesses, directed by a locally elected board, and employed police reservists as patrol officers. They were visible through their office in the Observatory train station and by patrollers wearing armbands with their watching-eye logo, baton and radio, surveying the neighbourhood on foot or bike (Unneberg 2005). It consisted largely of white men, and was described as militant, including in its "zero-tolerance" stance on homelessness (Junck 2016, 16). ObsWatch set a precedent, both in terms of the widespread acceptance of community and private policing in the area, and the tactics that they employed. It focused on preventing, as much as stopping crime, unabashedly relying on profiling and stop and search tactics to identify potential perpetrators (Junck 2016). During apartheid, white fear motivated residents to police respectability and ignore racial difference to maintain the fiction of white racial homogeneity. In this recent period however, residents' responses were more openly hostile to those seen as not belonging in the neighbourhood – particularly black men. Contiguous with swart gevaar, residents sought to securitise the suburb, and fortify it against incursions from outside, mirroring, in the ever-fearful present, the logic of apartheid which the neighbourhood is purported to have escaped.

The 1990s saw Observatory exalted as the epitome of a political and cultural moment – a pocket where the rainbow nation had already come into being, and an example for the rest of the segregated city, and country. Quite quickly however, Observatory came to manifest the disappointments as much as the possibilities of the time. Political violence, a rise in reported crime and securitising neighbourhood responses renewed local fear of a violent imagined other. Through their association with diversity, fear and optimism came to be companionably produced in the affective life of the neighbourhood.

Nostalgic Optimism, White Fear and the Diverse Hereafter

In recent years, the construction of Observatory as the epitome of post-apartheid urban diversity has solidified. Like many urban neighbourhoods valorised for their alterity across the globe, Observatory has found favour with young middle-class people, and is a prime site for neoliberal property development. This however has entrenched the affects of nostalgic optimism, and concomitantly white fear, as its residents seek out the good diverse life, and the easy delineation of 'us' and 'them', 'community' and 'outsiders'.

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A current Google search for Observatory reveals numerous descriptions of its eclecticism and diversity. Take this current excerpt from the popular tourism website *Cape Town Magazine* for instance:

> Need to let your hair down and let out your creative freak somewhere close to the city? Visit Cape Town's most bohemian suburb, Observatory.
>
> It's an arty district locally known as 'Obs'. […] You'll find quirky restaurants, easy-going bars, live music and lots of hippies in Observatory, which also represents one of the largest residential arts communities in South Africa. We're talking shabby chic.
>
> People from various walks of life find themselves calling this area home. Youngsters, students, artists, philosophers, actors, backpackers and all kinds of weirdos engage in alcohol-fuelled debates about philosophy, politics, jazz, organic food, books, history and the arts.[15]

Such descriptions unfailingly follow the feeling rules of diversity optimism. However, this optimism is no longer focused on the future but makes a temporal u-turn. Observatory's diversity is seen as rooted in its dominant history, through which young people can now become part of a tradition of mixing and alterity, continuous with a benevolent and resistive past. In this way, it can be seen as connected to what Eric Worby and Shireen Ally (2013) see as the prevalence of (anti-apartheid) "struggle nostalgia" (457), "which recovers a more hopeful past in the face of its disappointing present" (458). It is this change in directionality – backward rather than forward – that I highlight in describing this reconfigured relation of optimism as *nostalgic optimism*.

Gentrification however, has fully materialised. Real estate agents and property developers have had a major influence, including in the redevelopment of existing property and the erection of several new large condominium-style developments. This has been incentivised by the city government since 2008 through public-private partnerships, which have seen the implementation of an urban development zone where investors benefit from considerable reduction in taxation (The City of Cape Town 2018). The result has been a major revitalisation of the city centre, including Observatory, which has shed much of the stigma associated with it in the 1990s and early 2000s, as crime-ridden and grimy.

[15] http://www.capetownmagazine.com/observatory [Accessed July 12, 2018].

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Developments are not seen as breaking with Observatory's working-class or activist history. Rather, this history is central to the marketability of the neighbourhood, particularly for young people in search of diverse, cosmopolitan lives. An online advertisement for *Trendy Apartments for Cape Town's Young Elite* describes the space:

> During the apartheid years, Observatory was one of the few so-called *'grey'* suburbs, where South Africans from *all race groups lived side by side*. Aside from this *celebration of diversity*, which lives on in the present day, there are many other reasons to love, and consider living in, this laid back, bohemian neighbourhood.[16] (emphasis added)

Central to this emotive script is the articulation of Observatory as a grey area under apartheid, inviting the prospective resident to become part of this historically continuous "celebration of diversity". Thus, the question of residence is also centrally concerned with a (re)constitution of identity. Similarly, an advertisement by Pam Golding Properties (Figure 5, below) exemplifies how property agents and developers leverage the area's history. This mailbox flyer was part of the *We are Pam* campaign.

Figure 5. Pam Golding property agent mailbox flyer, 2017.

Following the established feeling rules for evoking the affective appeal of the area, it ironically asserts "We are the street art off Gympie Street". The street is infamous because in 2010 local government, citing drug-trading and urban decay, forcibly removed coloured residents who had

[16] http://www.habitatmag.co.za/the-winchester-trendy-apartments-for-cape-towns-young-elite [Accessed May 5, 2018].

lived there for generations, many of whom had arrived after the destruction of District Six. The advert relies on and maintains a relation of optimism in diversity, by invoking the past, and people of colour who are fast disappearing. At the same time, in declaring themselves the faces of "Observatory, Woodstock, Salt River and Zonnebloem [District Six]" the pair are actively revising history and whiteness within it (Strauss 2008). They are both concealing the specific racialised histories of these areas, and unintentionally pointing toward the areas' (white) future. As Danai (Mupotsa 2015b, 188) points out, nostalgia creates "a temporal loop", situating us "both in and out of time".

In line with this property development orientation, and congruent with the suburb's history, securitisation has continued apace. ObsWatch was eventually succeeded by Observatory Improvement District (OBSID) in 2008. OBSID follows the Community Improvement District (CID) model, an international 'best-practice' that characterises neoliberalisation at the local scale. Similar to their global-north counterparts, CIDs are neighbourhood business and property-owner organisations providing additional services. OBSID, like other CIDs, is funded by additional property taxes (rates) (Didier et al. 2012). In this regard, and in its concern with property and the respectability of the suburb, it is not unlike earlier rate-payers associations. CIDs have been criticised as reproducing exclusionary spaces, including through the enclosure of public space, and the private command and control of public streets in the name of crime-prevention (Miraftab 2007; Baro 2017). They have been a major contributor, together with allied urban policy and private developers, to the property boom, narrowing-down spaces for affordable housing, where the eviction of working-class and poor people from the city centre is actioned against white fear, and considered an unavoidable casualty of urban improvement. CIDs typically include some element of philanthropy, which offsets its tenacious pursuit of a sanitised city, and invests in the feeling of optimism. Similarly, OBSID primarily undertakes security, maintenance of the public space and infrastructure in the area, as well as organisation of some community development projects. Typically, about half of its annual budget is committed to securitisation (OBSID 2018), and it employs a private security company to patrol the neighbourhood, by vehicle, foot and bicycle.[17] However, as documented in the minutes of OBSID meetings (see for

[17] In 2018/2019, OBSID allocated R3,146,858 for combined 'public safety' expenses, compared to R143,208 for 'social upliftment' expenses, out of a total budget of R6,169,152.

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example OBSID 2009), there have been ongoing concerns about the profiling strategies of private security, and their use of force and lack of accountability.

White fear has continued to be a dominant affective relation in the space. As the neighbourhood has become more affluent it has been able to rally more resources behind this affective structure. ObsWatch was resurrected as Observatory Neighbourhood Watch in 2015. As before, it also relies on patrolling and profiling in order to control the space and its perceived community (see Unneberg 2005, Junck 2016 for more on local securitisation). Their messaging, including through the ObsLife community paper, and on social media (see Figure 6 and 7 below) is unambiguous. Residents and neighbours – the community – is white, usually portrayed by a white woman, the most vulnerable and coveted fem epitome. Reiterating the feeling rules of white fear, in 2016 these social media advertisements used stock images of five white women, one white man, and no people of colour, to depict residents; the fearsome other is, of course, a man of colour.

The small script under the image of the man of colour (Figure 7) reads: "Sorry if this picture offends you but it spreads the word". The author's reflexivity demonstrates their awareness that white fear is not *the only way to feel about others*, or even that this fear could be seen as unpopular or dated. This articulation reveals "the pinch" between what is felt, and what they suspect readers may feel ought to be felt (Hochschild 1983, 57). With this caveat, they are purposefully counteracting the feeling rules of diversity optimism, as they may be directing the reader, alerting us to the urgency of fear, the visceral present threat.

Figure 6: ONW Advert, 2016.

Figure 7: ONW Warning, 2016.

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OBSID and the Neighbourhood Watch have a close relationship with the police. These local security initiatives pit safety for upper- and middle-class residents directly against the freedom and mobility of perceived others in public street space (Miraftab 2007; Didier et al. 2013; Baro 2017). As white residents, and to some extent other middle-class residents within a white habitus are constructed as the community, rightfully and always *in place*, they can rely on both public and private institutions to protect their interests *and affects*.

At the same time, venues like Café Ganesh, frequented by people of colour, provide respite in an increasingly wealthy and whitening suburb and also maintain a relation of diversity optimism for residents and visitors alike. Café Ganesh is an enduring encapsulation of the romanticism of the transition period. One food blogger in 2015 described the food as "the rainbow nation on a plate" (Lamberis 2015). Although such spaces provide important refuges for people of colour, their leisure and creative endeavours, they also safely maintain the optimism of diversity in the neighbourhood, bridging its past and present, which is constructed as exceptional against the rest of the segregated city.

Likewise, Peck and Banda (2014b) have argued that the presence of venues run and frequented by people from other African countries also contributed to alternative visions of the space:

> Added to Observatory's popularity is its reputation as "African" and (subsequently) "cosmopolitan". The express depiction of an "alternative" African Observatory challenges the […] "ownership" and "rightness" of whites in Observatory. In essence, contemporary Observatory has also opened its landscape to the migration of Africans and to the *celebration of Africanism*. (emphasis added)

However, from an analysis of local noticeboards, Peck & Banda (2014a), observe two competing narratives about the neighbourhood. On the one hand Observatory is tied to a specific territorialisation of the area: a neighbourhood run by OBSID and protected by the neighbourhood watch, that is clean, "vagrant-free" (365), and "village-like" (363). This perfect Observatory for largely white, middle-class rate-paying residents is emblematic of white fear. It "discounts other members of the ethnoscape which may also form part of the landscape of the area" who through exclusion become visible as other (366).

On the other hand, Peck and Banda (2014a, 375) argue that the space is also produced through the aspirations of "extremely diverse" peoples, uses, discourses and symbols "consistent with those striving to make a home in the 'new' South Africa", particularly by seeking employment. Like Café Ganesh, by staking new claims, indexed by new signage, and the presence of new bodies on the streets, these "diverse peoples" produce an alternative social and affective

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landscape for and about people of colour. However, they also tie into the affective fabric of diversity optimism, which can be mobilised by, for example, property agents, in ways contrary to the needs and feeling of people of colour.

This echoes the contradiction described by Sara Ahmed (2000), where people of colour are celebrated as embodying diversity, whilst simultaneously being reviled as dangerous others. Neither vision of Observatory is totalising, but aspirant newcomers are at a major disadvantage, and the historical moment that facilitated their ingress, may already be closing. Observatory is increasingly unaffordable for people of colour, as property prices have rocketed, and the market is dominated by (white) developers, upper-middle class professionals, and foreign investors.

In 2013, Cape Town Open Streets (CTOS) was established to organise "play-filled car-free street events that celebrate the social potential of streets" (Taylor 2015, 4). The first was held in Observatory, and widely seen as a celebration of diversity. However, the social media advertising for this event (Figure 8 and 9 below) provides a vivid visual demonstration of the conflicting affective registers at play in Observatory.

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Figure 8. Open Streets Social Media Poster 1, 2013.

Figure 9. Open Streets Social Media Poster 2, 2013.

The first image (Figure 8) was one of a series of Facebook posts promoting the event, illustrating what *safe* open streets could look like. However, the poster's creators, apparently unintentionally, populated this utopian vision to "create shared spaces that bring people together, no matter who we are or how we move" with only white people (CTOS 2018). That this was posted and then received enthusiastically online by several Observatory residents, suggests the endurance of the structure of white fear, where notions of freedom and the inclusivity of public space rely on the construction of safety and community as homogeneously white, conversely constructing people of colour as unsafe and outsiders. When someone pointed out the glaring whiteness of the poster, the organisation responded that this was unintentional, and that the actual event would be the real test of the diversity of the event. Shortly after, the second poster (Figure 9), with black people *inserted*, was posted.

The omission of people of colour from visions of open streets echoes their exclusion from the perfect community of Peck and Banda's (2014a) first noticeboard. The positioning of only white bodies as 'the community' also resonates with the positioning of property agents Dex and Luke, as the "we" of Observatory. In both instances the myth of the grey area informs the feeling of the space, whilst the community is produced as white. In the symbolic landscape of Observatory, through both nostalgic optimism (looking backward to an idealised past) and white fear (the sense of present danger), the other comes clearly into sight through omission (and then

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insertion), and the space is made naturally, vividly, white, even as it optimistically celebrates inclusivity and diversity.

Conclusion

By producing an archive of feeling for Observatory, through an account of different periods of Observatory's history, I have drawn attention to the feeling rules that shape each era. What becomes clear is not the definitive affective character of each period, or categorical breaks between periods, but rather how throughout Observatory's history, specific affective structures – white fear and diversity optimism – emerge, are sustained, redeployed and intensified. These hegemonic structures of feeling shape the character, history and affective landscape of Observatory, to secure Observatory as a white space and life within it. Whilst they may appear incongruous, white fear and optimism are both tied to the way that difference has been understood and effected within Observatory, and they are in fact, mutually enforcing in the creation of space and community. Further, the shift in dominance from fear to optimism represents an urban, spatial and racial progress narrative: the movement of time, as a shift in affect, toward a better, more diverse future. Whilst white fear persists, it is certainly less plainly favoured in the post-apartheid present, where it may evoke the bad past.

Observatory, like various iconic spaces of freedom, is an important symbolic space. The recalibration of the present and future-seeking of anticipatory optimism enabled alternative forms of socialisation and organisation, demonstrating that however draconian, the apartheid regime was not a continuous, homogeneously applied system of socio-spatial ordering. It also then allowed different ways of feeling and doing with respect to living with and desiring difference, beyond the present dominated by racialised fear. Accounts such as Achmat's memoir about queer inter-racial sexuality offer a glimpse of affective experiences outside of the normative order of segregated space and acceptable desire (same race, opposite sex).

These anticipatory affects are by definition marginal, against the grain of dominant social and affective structures, mirroring queer utopianism – efforts to seek alterity in the dismal present (Muñoz 2009). Major epochal shifts like the transition from apartheid to neoliberal democracy, however, have elevated diversity optimism into the mainstream of local culture, as it became a political objective and means by which to shore up the new nation. This structure of feelings then extends from undergirding the specificity of Observatory as a counterspace, to subtending the national feeling project of the rainbow nation. That is, in the shift from anticipatory to nostalgic, the affective structure of optimism becomes part of the status quo.

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This move relies on a reworking of history, the construction of Observatory as a grey area, always and completely racially diverse. The structuration of place and community by nostalgia, associated with a glorified "grey" past, has meant that the pernicious elements of Observatory's colonial history have been overlaid and blurred by collective memory, contemporary discourses and scholarship that privilege ideas about its alterity (see for example Unneberg 2005; Peck & Banda 2014a). This has led to enduring representations of, and affective investments in, the space as a colonial and apartheid-era twilight zone, where the racial politics of the time were somehow suspended.

In the historical present, nostalgic diversity optimism regulates the feeling of and dealing with difference. During transition, it coalesced with efforts to construct the nation and, even as the project declined, it still constructs the notion of the neighbourhood and its community. It describes the multiple ways in which individuals cohabit and co-create spaces; and the rules of this cohabitation, spatial constitution and assimilation. Together with the enduring structure of white fear, nostalgic optimism has companionably territorialised the space as race-less/race-filled, devoid of colonial or apartheid histories, a space that is produced as *and* produces a post-race/race-inclusive future, without the presence or feelings of people of colour.

On one level, this masks the powerful material and affective impact of white fear on people of colour who were forced from the space, or who gave up their histories and identities to reside there. On another, the pervasive optimism of Observatory as a multiracial glitch in the apartheid landscape also ignores that it was largely those who were relatively privileged by their proximity to whiteness, in terms of their access to state resources and the social capital of light-skin, who constituted this diversity. Those who were viewed as already close to the white body were more easily assimilated into it.

As Worby and Ally (2013, 458) point out, forgetting is co-constitutive of memory, and thus nostalgia is not simply an untruthful recollection, but "a specific way of enfolding the past into the present, and indeed the future". However, collective forgetting is also not accidental nor benign, but creates a gap for new preferred imaginings to become credible through repetition (De Certeau 1998 [1980). Ironically, as the discourse around racial difference shifted from danger to diversity, as Observatory progressed toward urban cosmopolitanism, its white residents have been able to rely on the structuring affect of nostalgic optimism to construct themselves as benevolent, always outside of and opposed to the historical injustices of

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colonisation and apartheid. By looking back at the remembered/constructed multiracial past, the whitening of the future is obscured from view.

The hegemony of nostalgic optimism as a structuring feeling in Observatory today, at the expense of the bad feelings of the past, demonstrates how "some forms of being affected are more organised (culturally worked up, pervasively applied, cliched, canonical, familiar and mundane) than others" (Wetherell et al. 2015, 59). They have more clout, they are more enduring and show up more in popular discourses, eclipsing other feelings, and refashioning history to their logics. The grey area then, is a spatial and temporal location, a metaphor for diversity, but also a metaphor for ambiguity, a murky place where things are no longer clear, events are obscured, histories lost. This in turn forecloses an entire range of possible affects that could be felt out in the history of the neighbourhood. This has vastly different affective implications for different groups in the present, that I will explore in the next chapter.

The contemporary relationship to history, rooted in a modern progress narrative, moving from colonisation and apartheid to democracy, from racism and segregation to multiracialism, is highly instrumentalist, solidified by economic and social production. In a neoliberal context of "use and appropriation" (Love 2007, 9), Observatory's past is effective for marketing the present and future. Profit-oriented property developers appeal to the buyers' desire to participate in diversity, to join the progression from fearful past to optimistic future, whilst whitewashing the space. Simultaneously, civil society and community events such as CTOS, are saturated with the affective flows of optimism. They hopefully open spaces for different affective experiences of the street. However, they do not challenge the structures that make streets unliveable for people of colour and the urban poor (Taylor 2015). They are also invested in the affective experience of fear as central to the delimitation of community, only in the diverse present, the workings of fear, now out of favour, even backward, are subtler.

This has implications for the presence, subjectification and feeling of bodies in Observatory today. The refiguring of the past and present through nostalgia revises whiteness, so that white residents are successfully transformed into 'good' post-racial whites. Simultaneously, in the move from apartheid to democracy, the integrity of the white body has ceased to be a national project and as working-class people have been pushed out, the category of other has narrowed and homogenised to include only people of colour. Specifically, black men, bearing the full historical weight of white fear, the culmination of infinite anxious presents, are the main concern. This relationship between benevolent whites and suspicious strangers, central to life

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in Observatory, and in diverse spaces like it, reproduces the coloniality of power (Mignolo 2007), long after the colonial epoch.

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CHAPTER 4: Optimistic Relations and Histories of Belonging

History is a cache from which we select the feelings, discourses, signs and images that produce social space (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]). What is available to us from the past is dependent on our own subjective experience and informed by our life histories. This in turn structures our feelings and relations with others – people, objects *and places*. For this reason, Lauren Berlant (2011, 15) describes affect as exemplifying "shared historical time". These feelings structure the "languages of life" (Mbembe 2001) and the linked symbols, language and feelings through which we locate the past, articulate and constitute the present, and gesture toward possible futures.

Multiple understandings of the past do not render a single smooth affective structure that governs all present affective experiences. Rather they produce multiple, partially connected "versions" of an affect (Anderson 2016). Following from the account of Observatory's past that I provided in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on the relation between individual aspirations and historical experience. By addressing affective relations in contemporary Observatory, I analyse the ways that different personal and collective histories enliven *versions* of affective structures to variously shape the *historical present* in Observatory, as individuals seek their subjective good lives. I argue that, demonstrative of different histories, fems' affective attachments to Observatory, and its perceived diversity, are stratified by race and class into three versions: nostalgic optimism, cruel optimism and sceptical optimism.

It is significant that notions of diversity have become central to the history record of Observatory, indeed South Africa, and this should be contextualised against the larger drama of nationhood, urbanity and subjectivity. On the one hand, the shift from apartheid meant that white people had to remake their position, not as the chosen few, but as people who could and would get along with difference – as modern urban subjects.[18] On the other hand, the city is the bequest of colonialism – from which people of colour have been purposefully excluded, constructed as rural, or relegated to its outskirts (Mamdani 1996). Thus, the political shift has also been about claiming the modernity of people of colour. Like any claim about progress though, the argument relies on the need to reject or overcome backwardness (Love 2007). The

[18] Of course, this imperative is not evenly felt by all white people, and as recent reports of racism and exclusion in urban contexts have demonstrated, in many cases this is a failed project.

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desire to join the contemporary democratic nation and participate in urban cosmopolitanism is central to the South African urban experience. Diversity, as encapsulated in the discourse of the rainbow nation and new South Africa, reflects both a desperate desire to get away from a past, and an effort to constitute a modern present and future. Unsurprisingly, given the ways in which Observatory's past has been constructed as a celebration of diversity, both people of colour and whites are drawn to the neighbourhood to claim their diverse present and shape their futures.

By living in Observatory, fems are expressing an *attachment* to Observatory. An attachment represents a set of promises toward the good life, that someone, something, *some place*, may make possible for us, and is thus inherently future-oriented and optimistic (Berlant 2011). Berlant articulates what she sees as a prevailing structure of *cruel optimism* at work in the global north, where people (optimistically) maintain a vision of the good life, under (cruel) conditions that frustrate its attainment. Whilst she recognises the ways in which race may inform affective relations, in her analysis, cruel optimism operates across groups impacted by neoliberal capitalism. By contrast, in Observatory, and in South Africa generally, the vision of the good life, and its (un)attainability, is unavoidably shaped by individuals' positions within historically produced spatial and racialised hierarchies that still structure the material and affective experiences of daily life. In line with the affective history plotted in Chapter 3, a feeling of hopefulness or optimism tied to an idea of Observatory as a space of diversity is central to structuring residents' relations to their neighbourhood. However, as we are able to glean multiple perspectives in the present, which may have been constrained in an historical exploration largely reliant on the colonial and apartheid archive, more *versions* of optimism, also vested in diversity, come into view.

Different groups and individuals will have different affective relations with a place. In Observatory, various collective and life histories, largely structured by racialised histories of trauma or privilege, produce different takes on optimism, all maintaining a sense of attachment, futurity and investment in place. In this way we may think of bodies as archives, repositories of feelings. For example, the historical trauma of colonisation entails collective experience, where the effects of the trauma are experienced across several generations (Mohatt et al. 2014). However, from generation to generation, and day to day, that trauma is located in specific individuals, bodies that constitute that collective, and manifest in unhappy feelings, such as alienation or loss (Ahmed 2010). History's unhappy bodies likewise inspire unhappy feelings in others, such as white fear, suspicion or guilt. Conversely, those whose socio-historical location

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situates them on the historically privileged side of colonial affects are replete with happy/ier feelings such as generosity, conviviality and belonging.

These different affects, or different versions of an affect, may be more or less known or accepted. Through the archive we know the feelings of some: they persist in the records and popular memory, they smooth the way for future affects, they shape the worlds to come, and they close down other feelings – or at least render them alien, unintelligible. Structures of feeling, as affective performance, can be actualised or fail (Haritaworn 2015), as some subjects have the historical privilege to naturalise their feelings, whilst others lack the authority to communicate, transmit and enact their versions.

For this reason, understanding the optimistic attachments that residents have to Observatory requires particular attention to the individual life stories, as well as inherited or collective histories of residents. These affective relations structure both the relationships that individuals have to place and to each other. Through fems' accounts I identify three, coexistent, mutually constituting *and* competing affective structures, *versions of diversity optimism*, that are highly, and largely discretely, racialised.

The first affective structure that I lay out is that of *nostalgic optimism*, which I have already introduced in Chapter 3. In this chapter I explore nostalgic optimism in the present as an affective relation born out of an historical experience of privilege. For those who have experienced colonial history favourably, diverse Observatory, with its promises of race mixing and race redemption, is an attainable ideal of a good life. The relation is optimistic as it is invested in a romantic view of the space and life within, tied to a sentimental notion of race-mixing or inclusion, without attending to structures of inequality. Whilst during apartheid segregation (as described at the end of Chapter 3), this optimism in diversity was forward-oriented, toward an imagined 'rainbow' future – anticipatory; more recently it has become backward-looking, toward an idealised multiracial past – *nostalgic*. Ironically, nostalgic optimism in the present idealises a time in Observatory precisely when its residents were looking hopefully toward the future.

Dia Da Costa (2016) argues that in much of the colonised world, it is not that people have had an optimistic vision of the future which is only now being frustrated by the cruel optimism of late neoliberal capitalism. Instead she defines an affective structure of cruel pessimism, the conditions under which people who never expected to, never get ahead. However, largely because of the specificities of the low-caste position of those in her Indian case study, Da Costa

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does not consider how a political break with colonialism, such as Indian independence or the end of apartheid in South Africa, could bring visions of the good life into view, to create new attachments, that were not previously imaginable. Thus, drawing from Berlant (2011) and Da Costa (2016), I outline two affective relations in which people who have historically lived under the conditions of cruel pessimism – a sense of never get-ahead-ness – approach a change in historical circumstances. I adapt Berlant's notion of *cruel optimism* to the specific historical circumstances of people of colour, particularly poor people of colour, in Observatory. With the end of apartheid people of colour eager to escape the material conditions of townships moved to Observatory hoping to be accommodated within its apparent diversity. Despite their optimistic attachments however, the space never fully includes them, and the promises magnetised to it remain unattainable, becoming more elusive as gentrification and capitalist property development gain momentum. Thus, this relation is one of tenuous belonging, where the vision of the good life remains intact, even as the viewer is ejected from the picture.

The third affect that I sketch out is a structure of *sceptical optimism*. Sceptical optimism is an affective structure in which people who have historically lived under the conditions of cruel pessimism but have more class privilege and are able to assimilate into Observatory, however partially, approach this change in their life circumstances. It is the condition under which you seek out the good life, aware that history is not on your side.

Movements to and from Observatory exemplify attachments where residents' various individual and collective histories mean that the structures of nostalgic optimism, cruel optimism and sceptical optimism are simultaneously at work, such that Observatory is characterised by an affective economy of difference (Ahmed 2004a). Although this difference is highly racialised and classed, it is also manifested through the gendered body and fem subjectivity. For this reason, although each version of optimism demonstrates a particular relation of race, class and history, fems' experience extends or challenges this relation in gendered ways, through safety management, dating practices, sex work and mothering for example.

An analysis of such an affective economy reveals that contrary to the progress narrative brought to life by the affective shift from fear to optimism, residents' attachments to Observatory are far more complex and contradictory. The affective experience of optimism is fraught and does not uniformly position residents in an improved, diverse present. Current fem residents' affective experiences of living and belonging in Observatory rely on different, time-anchored understandings of people and space, understandings that constantly knot the present, past and

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future together in complex, and uncomfortable ways. Present-day Observatory is simultaneously backward and forward-looking and filled with the multiple affective investments of residents seeking out better futures.

Nostalgic Optimism Continued

As outlined in the previous chapter (3), the notion of diversity has become integral to popular ways of understanding Observatory, seen as grounded in its specific history. This has produced the space as the object of a structure of nostalgic optimism. The suburb today is seen as a continuation from its 'grey area' days. In everyday conversations, advertisements and recollections of Observatory, the neighbourhood is represented as a sort of liberal ideal, a race, class, sex and gender diverse space. That is, magnetised to Observatory are the twofold promises of difference: a place that is unique (different) in the schema of the post/apartheid city, and that holds diversity (differences).

This is particularly significant for white people, who in the years since apartheid have been under pressure "to distance themselves from the ideological and corporeal markers [of] the country's shameful past" (Strauss 2008, 22). Observatory's difference is vital in this regard and its emphasis constitutes a feeling rule for residents' attachment to the place. Many white residents highlighted Observatory's reputation for being accepting and diverse as a reason for choosing and continuing to live there, echoing the popular discourse and marketing strategies outlined in Chapter 3 that link Observatory's past to an optimistic diverse future. This is true for South African and immigrant white fems alike. For example, Dani, Amy, Liezel and Quin, all young white fems, mentioned that they had understood the neighbourhood to be and experienced it as an alternative, or inclusive space, and hence had later chosen to live there.

Dani, a 35-year-old queer French woman, comments on the popular association of Observatory with liberal activism and mixing, saying that during apartheid, "It [was] where [people] could live the diverse country and future they wanted to create". This exemplifies the dominant thread in the ways that Observatory is understood, as a cluster of promises, central among which is a promise of racial and sexual diversity or mixing.

Dani is wary of this kind of optimism, complaining that "people can pretend to be better whites than people living elsewhere!" However, she also admits to buying into Observatory's promise of difference. She says that on moving to Cape Town fourteen years ago, she was very anxious not to be mistaken for a white South African. Compounding Observatory's historical association

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with racial diversity, as outlined in the previous chapter, it is now also strongly associated with internationalism, housing students, NGO volunteers and other young people from across the world. Research from the global north demonstrates that young urban middle classes seek out denser and socially diverse neighbourhoods, urban heterotopias, to distance themselves geographically, politically and culturally from the homogeneous suburbs (Lees 2008). In South Africa, where the spatial ordering of apartheid remains largely intact, this imperative may be especially pronounced. Here perceived cosmopolitan places do the double work of separating residents from homogenous segregated spaces, but also from recent histories of racism. Thus, for Dani, living in Observatory cuts her off from the shameful history of white South Africa, and differentiates her from white South Africans, or at least "the conservative suburban ones".

> On a very basic, social level, I didn't have any friends, I was starting from scratch, I didn't have a car, and I didn't want to be stuck in the suburbs, with only families. I wanted to meet people, all kinds of people, who had similar interests to me. I had to share a space, and I wanted to live with people who had a similar idea about community and home-making as me. I wanted to date, and at that time more men, I didn't want to date white South African men! I know that sounds weird, but you know what I mean… So, it was very practical. But then on another level, when you go out and meet people, and they ask where you live, you say Observatory, and that means something. It says something about you. It's not Rondebosch or Claremont, or worse Constantia.

Dani's affective investment in Observatory is romantic in two ways. Ascription to collective feelings confirms one's social position and contributes to the cohesion of the group, based on the assumption of shared values or qualities (Blokland 2001). Thus, Dani's optimism is that of a young person establishing a new home and seeking community – it holds the promises of friendship, love and/or sex, and belonging. Simultaneously, it also holds the promise of what it will not include, the association of bad whiteness, and its shameful history. The disgrace of apartheid taints all whites. Even though, or perhaps because, Dani is not South African and that history is not (directly) hers, she is very careful to distance herself from it. This distance is both symbolic – "Observatory […] *means something*. It *says something* about you", and geographical – "It's not Rondebosch or Claremont", spaces that may be viewed as comfortably, continuously, white.

Significantly, whilst Observatory is distant from, or breaks with the histories of other local white spaces, in its association with internationalism it is also connected with global spaces,

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constructing its difference as universally intelligible.[19] Such an identity relies on being different from other white South African spaces, but also on holding difference, where diversity (national, linguistic, racial, sexual) is the mark of global cosmopolitanism. So, for Dani, emphasising that she lives in Observatory is also a way of alluding that she is not from South Africa, directing those she encounters to how they should feel about her, further separating herself and the space from bad genealogies.

Amy, who is a 38-year-old American white bisexual ciswoman, notes that after moving to Cape Town from the US, via the rural Eastern Cape, she was struck by how white the city centre seemed. By contrast "in Obs it just felt… we came here for drinks a few times… I had those 'There are black people too!' [moments]. That was also a big issue". She further describes her attraction to Observatory because it reminded her of the space she grew up in:

> I mean Denver has sort of expanded but our neighbourhood, […] is very much like Obs. That's one of the reasons why I stay in Obs. Its multimillionaires living next to a low income housing facility, or government housing facility, it is homeless people, it is, there's a lot of drug users in the area, now that marijuana is legal there is plenty of people just cruising down the street smoking spliffs and what what. But it's also considered to be, we lived two blocks away from the biggest gay cruising park in the west, outside of San Francisco […] So it's very, it's just very very integrated, very diverse. […] It's very similar to Obs in the feeling, the texture of the neighbourhood.

Thus, in Amy's personal geography, although she may have lived in other places in between, Observatory is continuous with her neighbourhood in Denver. The spaces of Denver and Observatory support and inform her vision of herself and her home-space as part of diversity. As she moved continents and her life changed, its desired object has shifted smoothly from Denver to Observatory, in the pursuit of the good life, to which diversity is central.

Observatory's diversity is not without its hazards however. There is a pervasive view, mentioned by both Amy and Dani, that foreign white women's participation in diversity is particularly sexualised. Dani explains:

> I remember going out dancing for example, and at the time I always thought of it as mostly me and with me being like a young obviously foreign white girl who was easy

[19] See for example South African Airlines' blog that compares Observatory to New York's Greenwich Village "with crowds of young people coming up with fresh ways of expressing themselves" (Cape Town Tourism 2018).

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> prey. It was like ... and people would say that, like even like, friends of ours would say like, oh yeah, I usually go for the white European girls because you can get them into bed easily. And I remember getting really pissed at it. But on the flipside, there was this idea that white women were touring… you know? Like on a sexual safari, that they wanted to try black men… and you were aware of that, because you don't want to date white South African men! But also, you don't want to be seen as like, experiencing the locals! So Obs was really interesting, and there was a great social scene but it's also very complex!

Affective relations frequently involve contradictions and trade-offs, and an affective structure can never completely capture one's experience. Observatory holds the promise of racial diversity, but this inevitably also includes specific gendered readings of interactions that fall out of the affective flow of nostalgic optimism. Whilst optimism in diversity serves to structure race relations so that they distance white people from associations with apartheid, the transgressive potential of interracial desire during apartheid holds other connotations in the globalised present. Transgression remains inherent to interracial desire and whereas white South African fems are perceived as more likely to conform to the limits of same-race desire, white foreigners are seen as more promiscuous, or "on safari", curious about the sexual prowess of black men. The idea of being "on safari" or "experiencing the locals" re-articulates, in sexual terms, the idea of young white people moving to diverse neighbourhoods to experience or participate in the diversity, which is embodied in people of colour. This view of her sexuality makes Dani feel upset and angry, and uncertain of how to engage with men in public, or in personal relationships. The feeling rules about how to participate in diversity and diverse desires are not quite clear for fems and seem to conflict with other rules about feminine respectability. For Dani, this uncertainty, and the risk of stigma or men's unwanted attention seems to be the cost of diversity.

The complicity of white South African suburbia in apartheid, and young white South Africans' desire to distance themselves from it, combined with the particular interpretation of Observatory, as place and collective identity, means that its difference may be even more profoundly felt by white South Africans, and may provide an opportune site to revise white identities. Liezel, a 24-year-old student, moved to Observatory specifically because it was different from where she grew up. As a young white ciswoman, from a sheltered and socially conservative Afrikaans family, Liezel is intentional about living outside of her comfort zone. When she began university, her parents bought a house in Claremont so that she could live close to university. Subsequently however, she has decided to live in Observatory, to challenge the conservatism, and insularity of her upbringing. Thus, whilst young activists of the 1970s and 1980s moved to Observatory because the relative freedom of the space allowed them to create

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the kind of world they wanted to live in; Liezel hopes Observatory's differences will help her become the person that she wants to be.

But Observatory is frequently a site of discomfort for her. She finds the street loud and frantic, with many different sensory stimuli competing for her attention. In addition, she says "since I've lived in Obs, there's a fear that's been building in me and I don't quite know how to stop it because I think about things and then like [tell myself] 'No, get over it!'". Against the feeling rules of diversity, for her, engagement with difference includes a potent feeling of risk, centred on the possibility of experiencing violence, particularly rape. Given pervasive gendered violence this anxiety is understandable, however its potency within Observatory is linked to the range of men of colour in the neighbourhood and colonial histories of gendered and racialised violence. This is addressed specifically in Chapter 6.

Despite this, Liezel maintains that she does not want to move away. When I press her on why she persists in living in Observatory, she explains her rationale by way of an anecdote. She tells me about seeing an older white woman driving through Observatory in a large luxury vehicle. The woman stops at an intersection, and then tries to drive on, even though a man and his daughter, who I presume are black, are starting to cross the road. The woman is visibly irritated when she has to wait for them to finish crossing. The woman drives on prematurely, narrowly passing the small child. Liezel explains the woman's behaviour as emblematic of how she does not want to be in the world:

> I think there's a sense of-of-of convenience that I'm-I don't want in my life. (Pause) Umm, even though I also do. But there's a sense of … I really get angry at- at constantly shielding ourselves, particularly as white people, from everything. That's why we drive nice big cars and that's why we do all these things and that's why we never engage with anyone on the street- because we're just driving big cars and never taking public transport cos it's more convenient. And then also like you see like- for example today I saw this white lady-that's why I'm saying I'm pissed with white ladies at the moment, umm older ladies. Just like-because it's a green light for her but there's a crossing. And they need to press the button. To fucking cross Because that's the rule. Supposedly-well that's the rule but it's a fucking stupid rule anyways. And then this guy's now already started crossing cos I let him cross. With his tiny little girl. Who's like, I was never taken to any space like that- with so many people, with so many cars- at that age in my life, you know. But here she is having to like dodge cars. And this fucking like, white lady is so angry now that she has to- that there are people walking that she drives, you know? And like this kid is like this (shows small distance with her hands) far away from her car. And not like I have like some sort of weird sentimental thing with children. But. It's just like what the fuck are you thinking? And she-I think she kind of knew because afterwards she was waiting for me to look at her, and I did. I was like so angry and M's [her partner] like 'calm down'. And I'm like, no. This is fucked up, like. So, there's a sense of not wanting to-there's a

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> sense of not wanting to convenience my life so that I end up living in a- actually just reproducing the white, nuclear, pretty, heterosexual…

For Liezel, the woman embodies and enacts white privilege. The woman's behaviour enrages Liezel, not just because it is inconsiderate and potentially dangerous, but because the woman, through her gender, whiteness, and relative wealth, is like an apparition of a future that Liezel could materialise. Liezel expresses feeling a contradiction in both wanting and not wanting the "convenience" of white privilege and its spaces. In contrast to the suburbs, or the white owned farmland that she grew up in, that are "reproducing the white, nuclear, pretty, heterosexual" norm, she sees Observatory as a place where she is not "shielding" herself, presumably against other people, and life's risks and hardships.

Significantly, whilst nostalgic optimism, as embodied in the property agents, Luke and Dex, in the previous chapter, is cast as flatly positive, devoid of any tension or disharmony, Liezel's lived experience is not sealed neatly into the affect of nostalgic optimism. Instead she straddles optimism and white fear. She acknowledges that part of confronting difference on a daily basis is disconcerting or challenging. In order to have the one you must endure the other. The feeling rules of white fear contrast with the feeling rules of diversity optimism, and discomfort becomes part of the embodied experience of diversity. On the one hand it means the constant confrontation with her privilege, but also a constant fear of crime and violence that she associates with life outside of white comfort-zones. This discomfort is part of the process of transforming herself, from the outside in, by assuming the habitus of someone at ease with diversity, she can become comfortable. Her good life fantasy of Observatory holds the promise of a better self, and she is prepared to endure anxiety and fear in its pursuit.

Dani, Amy and Liezel did not live in Observatory during apartheid and did not experience its 'greyness' or transgressive diversity first hand. Instead, as Talja Blokland (2001, 272) describes, one may develop a sense of a place by drawing from "a container of stories about the past that one does not necessarily need to have lived through personally". It is a "collective feeling" (Ahmed 2004b), which in Observatory encapsulates the emotional resonance of discourses of diversity about and within it. These collective feelings ground a relation of nostalgic optimism that structures the present in relation to an ideal of the past, including for those that have no direct experience of this past.

Although Dani, Amy and Liezel are all aware that they benefit from white and middle-class privilege, nostalgic optimism resonates with them precisely because it suggests the bypass of

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histories of inequality and discrimination by (retroactively and contemporaneously) reimagining people of colour, not as abject and excludable but as a social good, as the embodiment of diversity, and thus with the ability to imbue goodness onto (white) people and spaces.

Significantly, for Dani, a queer ciswoman, Amy, who has had same-gender relationships, and for Liezel who identifies as "straight but in a relationship with another woman", Observatory is also attractive in its perceived sexual diversity, also emerging from a romanticisation of its history, although they each stressed its racial diversity as a primary motivator for living there. By contrast, Quin, a 33-year-old white transfeminine person, sought out Observatory as a space of queer, rather than racial, identity formation.

Quin also moved to Observatory because it was different from where they grew up in conservative Afrikaans Pretoria. For Quin, Observatory's affective appeal is tied to the development of their sexual and gender identity over time. They had their first experiences of Observatory when they, then identifying as a boy, would come from Pretoria on school vacations to visit their gay older brother, who was living in a communal house in Observatory. As a queer teenager still living with their parents in Pretoria, Observatory, where they were exposed to queer culture and nightlife through their brother, presented a brief reprieve from the aggressive masculinity and heteronormativity they experienced in their hometown. Quin explains that at the time they were unable to articulate exactly what about Observatory appealed to them, only that it represented freedom and safety:

> I don't think Pretoria was ever a safe space to be queer. I don't know if there were ever safe spaces to be queer there. I mean, I'm aware there were queer spaces, but they were all under cover. […] Both my brothers were living in Obs throughout my high school. My holidays were spent here. When I could move to Cape Town that was the first thing I did. As soon as I felt comfortable with myself.
>
> TM: What was Obs like for you at that stage?
>
> Obs was a safer space than… I'm not sure that I would've articulated it as, "I want to move to Cape Town to be queer." I just thought this is where I feel safer. But, in those days, I would've framed it in terms of alternative [punk/metal] culture, and that stuff.

Here, as Liezel did, Quin frames Observatory in opposition to spaces of white conservativism and homogeneity. However, what defines Pretoria for Quin is its lack of safety for queer people, its felt lack of sexual diversity. Quin's visits to Observatory are described as central in alerting them to the possibilities of alternate gendered and sexual futures and shaping their aspirations for queer personhood. It is significant that they say that they moved to Observatory as soon as they were comfortable with themselves, suggesting that their relocation was as much about an

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affective shift as a geographical one. Through participation in the neighbourhood's punk/metal music and gay sub-cultures, Quin began to explore and refine their queer feminine identity. Although this is mostly unspoken, the "promised land of freedom" that Quin describes Observatory as in the mid-90s and early 2000s, and particularly the gay and alternative music scenes that they participated in, was largely white. However, in contrast to the idea of a whiter, and a more homogeneously cis-heterosexual Pretoria, Observatory is fixed as the desired object, the promised land, where Quin's personal history with the space, and the wider history of Observatory, reinforce a relation of nostalgic optimism.

The affective experience of hope for personal and social transformation, or "living the […] future you want to create" as Dani put it, based on an idealised version of the past, without necessarily engaging the structures that make Observatory emblematic of diversity (and other places emblematic of segregation) is at the core of nostalgic optimism. Observatory is represented as unaffected by apartheid, a model of the good life, simultaneously containing the rainbow sheen of the new South Africa, and historical credibility of anti-apartheid activism. It represents the good life both because it redeems the past and facilitates a hopeful present. However, nostalgic optimism holds relations of power in place, whilst visions of Observatory as the good (diverse) life mask the perpetuation of raced/classed/gendered violences, including the harm of having histories of dispossession denied.

The durability of the affective structure of nostalgic optimism is borne out in a small conflict over a mural in the Station Road children's park in 2016. I had contacted Edwin, a long-time resident with an interest in the neighbourhood's history, to find out if he had any resources that may be useful to me. He suggested that we meet at the park. When I arrived, Edwin was interviewing park-users. He told me that a recently painted mural of an historical street scene was the source of some contention. The image depicted the small public toilet building, still situated on the corner of the park that faced the street, with a sign that read: "WHITES ONLY". Next to it is a tree, with a door reading: "NON-WHITES" (see Figure 10, below).

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Figure 10. Children's Park Mural, 2016.

Edwin told me that some white parents had complained on social media about the mural, because they "felt that their children should not be subject to images of discrimination" and because it was "insensitive to the nannies", all black women, who accompany children to the park, to be confronted with this representation of discrimination. Further, some felt that the image was unnecessarily harsh, as Observatory, they believed, had not been subject to strict enforcement of segregation. To counter this perspective, Edwin was talking to nannies in the park to get their views, and I listened in on their conversations and chatted to others myself. Overwhelmingly, the women had a very matter of fact attitude and felt that the picture "was right, because it did happen", but were mostly unconcerned with it.

In contrast to the parents who were upset by the mural, in an open Facebook group one white woman resident, who supported the mural, expressed that the mural conveyed historical information that she did not know:

> From what I have viewed of the mural it is portraying historical aspects of Observatory. I learnt something today myself because of this artwork. Even though Observatory has *a rosy history of being a "grey" area*, those public bathrooms on Station Rd *were for whites only*. (emphasis added)

Here, to quote Karen, one of my participants, residents "painting the picture that it was always integrated" comes into conflict with an actual painting reminding viewers that Observatory was

reserved for whites. As Mbembe (2001) suggests, time warps as the past comes vividly to bear on the present. However, experiences diverge due to differing accounts of history. Some white residents' affective investment in the romantic idea of Observatory's anomalous status during apartheid are deeply and enduringly felt. Even when confronted with the fact of race-based segregation in Observatory, that there were only toilets for whites because Observatory was restricted for whites only, the resident in the Facebook group follows and directs the reader to the feeling rules that determine the neighbourhood as having a "rosy history", as a "grey area".

After the complaints, the offending representation of the apartheid signage was amended. The artist chose to rewrite the signs to read "Porta-loo", over the previous "Non-white" sign, and "Non-porta-loo" over the "White only" sign, in order to shift the focus from historical inequality to contemporary inequality where some black townships have inadequate, inferior and temporary sanitation facilities (such as portable toilets). However, it seems that some residents did not appreciate this witty compromise, suggesting that Observatory's happy apolitical diversity should not be disrupted by allusions to wider inequality. Ultimately, the signs were painted over completely.

For white fems in Observatory, historical privilege marks them as part of a shameful history. In some ways, moving to Observatory has provided a way to sidestep this history or to physically and symbolically create distance between the lives, lifestyles and ideologies of white nations and generations, to forge new cosmopolitan identities. In contrast to the examples of property agents and developers outlined in the previous chapter, these residents' investment in Observatory is not linked to an economic rationale, but rather to an earnest romanticism about the history of the place, and what it could provide to residents both in terms of social and affective experience. Fem residents described Observatory as a place to which the promise of the good life is idealistically attached because of a particular understanding of its history, that it had somehow escaped the segregating effects of apartheid and had arrived in the future before anywhere else. It is the same affective pull of diversity that property agents rely on.

Optimism about diversity may not be bad in itself. The significance of cities often lies in their ability to draw out the more idealistic aspects of human differences (Massey 2005). However, diversity has come to represent a form of hegemonic affect, an extension of diversity optimism (made of anticipatory and then nostalgic optimism) in the history of Observatory, smothering other affective experiences that do not have the weight of privilege. Such an affective structure upholds material privileges and those enmeshed in a romantic relation with Observatory may

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not actively seek to challenge the structural privileges that the space and their whiteness affords them. The presence of diverse others may be seen as a good in itself, even as people of colour may not share the benefits of this diversity. It is this contradiction that I explore in the next sections of this chapter.

The Cruel Optimism of the New South Africa

Within the recent history of colonialism, including apartheid, the loss of vision of a good life is not new for people of colour in South Africa. However, the emergent reality of transition and democracy provided the circumstances under which an affective relation of optimism for the first time characterised the experience of many. Whilst the historical present is informed by a different trajectory than in the global north focus of Berlant's analysis, in contemporary South Africa, the solidification of neoliberal capitalism has also created the conditions under which the vision of the good life, belatedly brought into view by the end of apartheid, is frustrated by these very conditions.

Since pass laws were suspended in the late 1980s, Observatory has acted as a transitional space for people of colour, including immigrants and gender diverse people, who have been able to find relatively accessible shelter and make a living here, whilst also feeling relatively secure in their various identities. Observatory has typically been accessible to students, immigrants from other African countries, and other new arrivals to the city. It is central, well connected via public transport, and until recently has been the cheapest among the central neighbourhoods with a large stock of affordable rental accommodation in dilapidated but solid houses divided up into house-shares.

Most fems of colour, unlike white fems, had no prior knowledge of Observatory, and tended to be invested in its practical accessibility and resources rather than its representations as diverse. These participants almost all came from outside of central Cape Town, either from its more remote suburbs and townships, or from elsewhere in the country or continent. For example, Valerie and Lydia, both coloured ciswomen, moved to Cape Town from the rural Western Cape to go to university. Uncertain of the city, anxious about getting around and fearful of crime, particularly gendered violence, which they perceived to be located in the townships, both women found accommodation in Observatory and continue to live there in shared houses although both now have professional jobs. Valerie, who is 26 years old, summarises the perks of the neighbourhood: "Its central to many things, the houses are beautiful, public transport is easy. I don't have a car, I rely on public transport, it's close to work for me, it's also close to the

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city centre, which is great". Similarly, when he first moved from Zimbabwe to South Africa in 2007, Oscar, a 29-year-old gay "feminine man", lived at the Observatory YMCA for three months whilst he looked for work. Wary of living in Cape Town's townships due to fear of both homophobia and xenophobia, the YMCA was one of the few affordable spaces available to him within the central city. Observatory made a good impression as a space where his feminine gender presentation as well as non-South African status would be accepted, or at least not present an unmanageable obstacle to daily life, and he continued on in Observatory for ten years.

The practical appeal of Observatory demonstrates the material benefits, particularly accessibility and relative safety in response to fem fearfulness, that moving closer to the city centre offers fems of colour. Moving to Observatory, however practical, nevertheless represented a relation of optimism, where residents were attached to the space as laden with promises, particularly given historical exclusion and removal to the peripheral townships a generation before. This includes belonging, tertiary education, professional careers, financial security, stable housing, and middle-class lifestyles. However, for many, the achievement of their desires was often scuppered by the reality and structuration of life in Observatory, even as they continued to invest in it their good life fantasies. For Oscar, this has meant frequently enduring sexist, sexualised, transphobic, racist and xenophobic encounters within diverse Observatory. These examples are discussed in Part 2. However, at this point, two other life stories, that of Fami and Elle, more sharply exemplify the affective relation of cruel optimism as it structures the lives of residents of colour, past and present, in Observatory.

Fami is a 58-year old coloured ciswoman and lived in Observatory from 1990 to 2016. She now lives in Salt River and moves between the two on an almost daily basis. Her story in many ways reflects those of younger fems, for whom Observatory comes to be imagined at the site for the good life. In the late 1980s, fearful of gang violence in the township of Manenberg, she sent her two young children to live with her brother in the relatively safer township of Mitchells Plain. However, she was unable to find accommodation or work in the Cape Flats, and when her neighbours told her that they had moved to the city centre, she immediately decided to join them:

> They told me it is a better life here in Observatory, because Observatory it is a fine place, if you need money you can just keep your hand up, ask people and you can get. […] I just packed up and I tell my sister it is better for me to go sleep on the stoep [porch] and be safe, than to be there, to get killed from gunshots.

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On arriving in Observatory, she was both alarmed and amused when she discovered that her neighbours had set up home among the gravestones of the St Peters cemetery in Observatory:

> They say to me: "Don't worry about the roof over our heads, you know what, just walk with me", and as we walk we come there, where Pick and Pay [supermarket] is now today. There was lots of graves, only graves, there was no shops, you know. Everybody knows there in the nineties there was no shops. There was a little church and the one sister's boyfriend's mother was a caretaker of the graves. I walk and I was start getting like now I leave one place to another place… I look now in the grave I am not used to that, I am not, it is scary. A little bit scary. So, I went in but I see now everything is okay there is two little rooms in the – the one, two sisters room is there and I, but for me it was still a little bit … Ja, in the graveyard, was a little bit, like a church, church where they, was praying people and they burn out the people… For me is I was still, I was strong to give that township life up to come to listen to my friends. [They] tell me: "Ja, but it is okay [Fami], you will see your life will come right and it is easy, easy money." But any case for me it wasn't all about money, for me it was just about safety.

She speaks in a sober but loud whisper when she tells me: "So in the night time for me I was thinking badly about the two sisters, every morning they come early in but in the night, they go late, what are they doing? […] I am honest, they was, the two was, prostitutes". Later in our conversation she adds quickly, vaguely: "But, but I also, I was also… I was also in that, because it was easy money".

Eventually Fami found domestic work "working for a boer [white Afrikaans] man". She became romantically involved with the man but continued to work for him until the family left Cape Town. Soon after she met her partner, another white Afrikaans man, they moved in together, and made a living doing painting and maintenance together for twenty years. He died a few years ago, but she continues to make a living doing home maintenance in Observatory. Despite its uncertain beginnings, she speaks with obvious pleasure and pride about her long residence in Observatory: "Working very hard. That's how I stayed". For Fami then, Observatory represented the good life in that magnetised to it are the promises of a comfortable life beyond the struggle, fear and hardship of her past, and the promise of her improved self, "strong" and "hard working". This aligns with Harry Pettit's (2018, 1048) assertion that the "meritocratic promise" that "belonging is achievable through hard work" informs the working poor's feelings of optimism and their attachment to global cosmopolitan places.

Similarly, Elle, a 37-year-old coloured transwoman, was able to create a relatively stable home on the streets of Observatory for about sixteen years. She moved to Observatory in the early 1990s, because she found it to be a safer space that the city centre, which she perceived as

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being particularly unsafe for both homelessness and sex work due to both police harassment and struggles for territory among groups of sex workers. In Observatory she was part of a community of homeless people and sex workers, which provided some degree of security and stability. During her time in Observatory she has lived in a range of spaces, including under a highway overpass and in the greenbelt along the Liesbeek River.

Elle considers Observatory home. She has lived there longer than anywhere else. Central to her attachment to Observatory is her longing for belonging and mutual regard:

> Obs has always been a student valley. So that was also the excitement around Obs. You always have students that are hungry for sex. During the day, there's always students that you can show off, and they'll give you money, now that it's become younger. Before, there was a lot of elderly people in Obs. They were never rude or… We had a lot of… Ya…*Mutual respect.* Yes, we had a lot of respect for *society around here*. (emphasis added)

As a visible transwoman she felt that she did not stand out as much in Observatory, and thus was more accepted and more able to belong within the space than elsewhere. She adds, smiling:

> Here people don't really look at you for [what] you are, and they understand gender… they understand homelessness… they understand sex work. They can live with you. It's the odd ones out that… can't.

In addition, Observatory was, and has remained, a conducive location for sex work. Elle explains that because all kinds of people feel comfortable coming into Observatory, and do not look or feel conspicuous in the space, she has always had a range of clientele from across the class and race spectrum, including middle-class white men, of which she is particularly proud. The warren-like built-environment of Observatory also makes the neighbourhood especially helpful in evading the police. The police are usually in vehicles, and constrained by poor visibility, and numerous narrow, one-way streets; whilst on foot, it is easy to disappear into a small alleyway.

For both Elle and Fami, Observatory has been the site of their good life fantasies, where within the confines of poor, coloured femininity, they have been able to leverage their gender and sexuality to carve out lives for themselves. However, it is also the space within which such fantasies have become untenable. As documented in the previous chapter, in recent years gentrification in Observatory has reached full tilt. As a result, fems like Fami and Elle, who have been able to tenuously maintain their residence in Observatory, and thus their proximity to the good life, have been increasingly less able to do so. Property prices that have been steadily climbing have almost doubled in the last three years. At the same time, many long-term

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landlords in Observatory are cashing-in on the property boom. The result is an unprecedented shortage of affordable housing in the area. Big developments are addressing the shortfall but are accessible only to middle- and upper-income buyers and renters (Sendin et al. 2017). The effect is a continuation and deepening of apartheid segregation, and in Observatory – where the late 1980s and 1990s did see an increase of people of colour in the area – re-segregation.

Fami, after an initial period of instability, had been living in a shared home with her partner for the last twenty years. Although the house legally belonged to her partner, they renovated it together, and she stayed on after he died in 2013. However, with the property becoming increasingly valuable, his children were eager to put the home on the market, and in 2016 they sold it. Fami's future in Observatory was again, after two decades, uncertain. Unable to find affordable accommodation in the area, she is now living in a rented room in Salt River, sharing with other women. Despite her hard work, merit did not save her from exclusion. Fami's story is in some ways the epitome of a relation of cruel optimism, brought to its inevitable cruel conclusion by the vagaries of neoliberal capitalism. However, unlike Berlant's examples from the global north, within the recent history of colonialism, including apartheid, the loss of vision of a good life is not new to Fami. The circumstances that allowed her to invest in Observatory as the good life were a disruption to a history of marginalisation and violence.

Similarly, Elle has lived "all over" Observatory for many years. Although she says she moved to Observatory about sixteen years ago, she also says she feels she's been here more or less her whole life because Observatory has been the main site of her sex work for over twenty years. However, in 2015, she moved to Blikkiesdorp[20] to live with her mother because increased pressure from police and local security agencies was making living unhoused in Observatory untenable. When she speaks of being forced to leave Observatory, she says she was "evicted by the community", creating the community as homogenous, and placing herself outside of it. She has been homeless since she was eleven and has had to move around a lot, often in response to increasing hostility toward sex workers and transphobia in the places that she was living in. However, she describes the process of being forced out of Observatory as "the worst eviction

[20] Blikkiesdorp is a relocation camp on the outskirts of CT, initially housing those evicted from Woodstock and Salt River in preparation for the 2010 Soccer World Cup. It was meant to be temporary accommodation, and the homes are poorly constructed with walls and roofs of tin and zinc sheets, but 12 years later there is no sign of change.

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of all". She does not want to go into much detail. She like many of the other participants prefers to talk about the fun, accepting version of Observatory, but she does say:

> I decided to cancel the Obs thing and stay in there [Blikkiesdorp]. Because now the police is getting too crazy. They [unclear if residents or police] were also sending their dogs at night. The dogs normally walk there and…
>
> TM: By the river?
>
> Ya. We didn't wanna move [from] there, so they would send really evil dogs!

The way that Elle talks about Observatory "society around here" or her eviction "by the community" also highlights the hard limits to her belonging. She, like other outsiders, may be *in* Observatory, but she is not *of* Observatory.

For fems of colour, marginalisation and displacement by the market mechanisms of neoliberal capitalism and its attendant community improvement and regeneration (see Chapter 3), is a contemporary iteration – a symbolic renewal – of centuries of historical trauma (Mohatt et al. 2014), that continually renders them out of place and place-less. Nevertheless, both Fami and Elle endure in their optimistic attachment to Observatory. As Da Costa (2016, 9) reminds us, "We might experience disappointments (the realm of emotions), but powerful atmospheric structures (the realm of affect) compel our sensual attachment to sites and sources of disappointment". This attachment might be considered a failed version of optimistic attachment to Observatory (Haritaworn 2015). Not only does the good life not materialise for poor fems of colour who transgress the middle-class norms of sex, gender and class, but they are unable to maintain their proximity to (within) the loved object (space) of Observatory.

Fami describes her longing for the neighbourhood, which she visits frequently to meet friends, to look for or do a job, or sometimes just to be there:

> It is not … for me, for me, it's sometimes I can sit there. It is most of the time, ja like last week Sunday. I was just thinking no, now I miss … Ooh Gods, I miss Observatory now! Now what makes me not to walk from Salt River to Observatory? It's not Joburg [distant city]! Then I come and sit. And one, two, three everything comes to my mind… And I just watch the people there.

For Fami, Observatory remains the desired object, intimately tied to the good life. But this good life is not merely an imagined future, it is also a nostalgic past. In seeking the good life, Fami is reaching for a romantic vision of a life she already had, and that was cruelly taken away from her. Similarly, Elle still frequents Observatory on a regular basis, several times a week, for work. When I ask her if she still feels safe in Observatory, her response perhaps epitomises the

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workings of cruel optimism. She answers with an enthusiastic "Definitely!". I am surprised and clarify that even after being forced out by police and residents she feels safe and she nods, "If I could bring my mum here, I'd move back here anytime".

Sceptical Optimism

Where nostalgic optimism is a continuation of a history of privilege wherein the good life is accessible and attainable, and cruel optimism arises from a strong sense of changing reality wherein the good life is in fact unattainable; sceptical optimism underscores the connection of postcolonial subjects to histories of oppression, whilst maintaining a sense of possibility. If cruel optimism gives you a vision of the good life whilst holding it just out of reach, so too does sceptical optimism, whilst also retaining an image of a history of denial. However, affective structures are not closed and complete, and one might move between nostalgia and scepticism.

In this section I am going to focus almost exclusively on the experiences of Karen, a 36-year-old coloured straight ciswoman, for two reasons. First, Karen's story richly demonstrates how forced removals, contemporary racism, and upward mobility coalesce to shape the experience of place for people of colour in South African cities. Second, and just as importantly, in the absence of dedicated historical documentation and analysis of forced removals in Observatory, the experiences of Karen and her partner provide some insight into the kind of affective relations that recent but unacknowledged histories of dislocation might generate in the neighbourhood.

Karen and her partner's families (all classified as coloured) were evicted during the 1960s under the apartheid Group Areas Act from neighbouring Mowbray and Observatory respectively. Now that she lives in Observatory, Karen understands it through a language of life that combines exclusion and inclusion, intergenerational loss, return, and class mobility. Within this language of life, moving to Observatory was an important personal and political choice for Karen and her partner, a return to and reclamation of a space lost by their families.

Despite the pervasive view of Observatory as historically and contemporaneously diverse, people of colour have found it more and more difficult to find homes in the neighbourhood, outside of communal student housing. Every conversation that I had with Karen and her partner about moving to Observatory revealed how they made sense of Observatory in terms of exclusionary spatial practices. For Karen, their move then, was an act of reclamation, of "pushing back in". This was never going to be easy, and she describes how she and her partner found

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rental housing in Observatory only through the empathy and collusion of Wayne, the "maintenance guy":

> I sat there [outside the house] for about an hour, and [the neighbour] said this guy is not coming. So she gave me his number, and I called and I said I've been waiting for 2 hours and the people [neighbours] are being very nice, but still. And he said he wasn't going to make it. I told him I put my head through the window, I liked what I saw… And he said: "You know what, let me speak to Angela, you sound like a very nice girl". So, I spoke him when I got back to work, and I said: "Wayne did you speak to Angela?" He said "No [Karen], you're a very nice girl, also you're coloured, like me, and I'm going make sure you get it, because there can't be another white person there! You know this white people they get the best places to stay, but I'm going to bring you in here!"

Although he had only spoken to her on the telephone, Wayne understood Karen to be "a nice girl" and deduces, presumably from her accent, that she is *also* coloured. His intervention with Angela, the estate agent, on Karen's behalf seems to be motivated by his desire to help coloured people, like himself, edge into Observatory, which he sees as yet another part of Cape Town still effectively reserved for white people. This relationship to Observatory contrasts to that characterised by romantic optimism. The long history of exclusion and her awareness of the current barriers to entry means that Karen's relationship to the possibilities available to her, whilst optimistic, is charged with scepticism, or wariness.

Similarly, when Karen and her partner were looking for a house to buy in Observatory in 2014, they were restricted by their budget and the soaring property prices in Observatory. At this time, they were fortunate to meet a seller who "was a bit of a lefty" who wanted to sell specifically to people of colour, and hence accepted their offer on the house over other higher offers. This experience echoes that of Sauda in the 1980s who gained access to Observatory through a complicit gay couple. They are deeply aware that without this lucky break they may not have been able to buy property or continue to live in central Cape Town. Their acute awareness of the inaccessibility of the area to most, including middle-class people of colour, means that their scepticism is both historically rooted, and contemporarily justified.

For Karen, life in Observatory enfolds both notions of exclusion and inclusion, segregation and diversity, and she operationalises them as needed to make sense of her position in Observatory, and what it means to her. This tension is central to the lived experience of sceptical optimism. Karen is aware that her personal and familial sense of dispossession is at odds with other histories and affective structures at work in Observatory. She sees the prevalence of these spatial histories to be a result of forced removals in Observatory not being documented, and not

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widely known, likely because they happened on a much smaller scale, piece-meal, and were not as confrontational as in places like District Six. Remarking on the silence about forced removals in Observatory Karen says:

> They [Observatory residents] also like painting the picture that it was always integrated, but they weren't always integrated. But that's hard to prove [that it was not]. […] They [her family and other coloured people] were all renting you must remember, so they were told to go, and they had no claim.

Similar to the artist's depiction in the park mural (Figure 10), Karen's sense of personal history in relation to Observatory relies on historical events that are not widely recognised and that contradict the hegemonic collective memories and affects of and in the space.

Here we might think of bodies as archives, where people of colour encompass otherwise unacknowledged affects, articulating counter-memories, "temporal and spatial constellations of certain times, intricately impressed in legacies of the past and itineraries of the present/future" (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2010, 5). Karen's very presence, her individual and collective history, raises questions, and threatens the myth of the grey area. She stymies progress toward a diverse future by dragging the unhappy past with it. Thus, people of colour are archives of bad feelings both in that they inspire negative affects such as fear and guilt in other residents, and by pointing to less favoured histories (pasts) they raise the im/possibilities of alternative presents and futures. These presents and futures then might not fly freely toward the future, buoyed by diversity, but instead weighed down by persistent histories of violence, may stutter, or halt altogether. They may continually reflect the injustices of the past rather than its escape from it.

However, Karen's affective version, burdened with the bad feelings of history, struggles to achieved credibility, or even intelligibility (Haritaworn 2015). Against the dominance of diversity, it may flare-up in moments of encounter, in her interactions with neighbours, but it is not supported by the hegemonic flow of affects over time. At the same time the presence of some people of colour, including Karen, however limited, enforced diversity optimism, and the idea of Observatory's white residents as benevolent, which informs the affective relations of sceptical, romantic and cruel optimism. Affective structures that rely on and perpetuate ideas of the historically grey Observatory, and bohemian, integrated contemporary Observatory, render Karen's narrative unintelligible within broader discourses of the neighbourhood, erasing the marginalisation and trauma of those systematically excluded and forcibly removed, creating whiteness as an unenforced, uninterrupted 'natural' quality of Observatory, and white people

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as in place, the core of diversity (Ahmed 2000). That is, Karen's version fails in the face of the hegemonic affective structure of romantic optimism.

Simultaneously however, Karen, following the feeling rules of diversity optimism, says that she finds people in Observatory very friendly and "open-minded". In the South African context, against the history of rigid segregation, relations of nostalgic optimism serve to attribute a certain benevolence to the white residents of Observatory, who unlike their counterparts in the neighbouring suburbs are seen as accepting of mixing. However true this may be, diversity becomes the product of white benevolence, without recognising how white residents were central to, and certainly benefitted from the dispossession of other racial groups. The benevolence of white residents in Observatory was a common refrain among participants such as Karen. For example, Noma, a 38-year-old black straight ciswoman, who even when noting experiences of discrimination, hastened to say that mostly people in Observatory were "not like that", or "not like other whites". This affirms efforts like Liezel's to revise and reconstitute her whiteness by moving to Observatory. Such a white identity within Observatory relies upon hegemonic affects tied to Observatory as a site of diversity, as outlined in the previous chapter.

Congruent with white benevolence, Karen has done her best to "see the good" in existing residents. As Jin Haritaworn (2015, 91) observes, "we can understand happiness as a form of consent in a context that punishes and pathologises non-conforming emotions such as anti-racist anger or sadness". Thus, whilst Karen is aware of the ways that the specific history of Observatory has both punished people of colour and stunted the expression or recognition of this past, she is also keenly optimistically invested in the neighbourhood, and its happy promise of the good life.

Karen illustrates her efforts to see the good in her neighbourhood with an example of her changing attitude to enclosed, access-controlled parks. Parks in Observatory are designated as children's parks, and dog parks. These are governed by various formal and informal rules. In order to access the parks, *a resident* has to purchase a key for a small, but not negligible fee from the local library. This effectively ensures that only those residents who can afford the fee can access the park, almost certainly excluding the working poor, and homeless, or anyone from other neighbourhoods, including townships that do not have such leisure spaces. It also ensures that only those with the necessary social capital can access the park, as it relies on the discretion of those issuing the keys to judge if the key-buyer is someone who should be using the park – a resident with dogs and/or children.

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Karen says, “they lock the parks”, “when I first came here I thought that’s such a white thing!”. However, she concedes that now that she has gotten to know the people who use the parks and who are responsible for the parks, she sees how this benefits the park users, including her, and how anyone can access it, for appropriate use – to walk their dog or play with their children. Although the spatial practice of entering the park with a key, and shutting it behind her, against anyone seeking to enter illegitimately, initially appeared exclusionary to Karen, as a home-owning, dog-owning, park key-having person of colour, this has now become part of the practice of inclusion and diversity. This may be viewed as an example of assimilation, where the vertical promise of class mobility involves becoming white as an institutional line. Becoming part of the white middle-class body (institution, community, and so on) is central to how people of colour come to constitute diversity, rather than danger, in urban neighbourhoods (Ahmed 2000). This process has also been described by Homi Bhabha (1994) as mimesis, rather than assimilation, where you can be upwardly mobile by approximating (never fully effecting) the habitus of the white bourgeois body (see also Skeggs 1999; Da Costa 2016). Of course, individuals choose to strategically engage in certain race and class practices and performances, but mimesis is never totalising, and in some instances individuals might divert from the script to challenge class and race hegemony.

For example, within the same conversation, and with many pauses and clarifications demonstrating the discomfort participants often exhibited contravening the narrative of diverse Observatory, Karen goes on to say:

> But you don’t also know, like, how to… because I always find it… most… but I’m generalising now, because that’s my experience… even with my experience as well… White people show you, down the line, what they think of you. Just by the use of language. ‘You people’ you know, that’s their favourite. Ya, or like… ‘them’.

Karen is cautious in her criticisms of the inclusivity and diversity of the neighbourhood. Even as she is starting to tell me about her experience of racisms, she reins herself in to emphasise that this is “just her experience” and to ensure she is not “generalising”. It seems that she is feeling “the pinch” between what she feels and what she ought to (Hochschild 1983, 57). Where happiness is seen as consent, discontent can be read as dissent; to point out racism can easily be seen as a rejection of the community, its history and ideals. To align oneself with the other, marks one as such, and in opposition to the community (Ahmed 2004b; Haritaworn 2015). For this reason, the acknowledgement of racialised feelings is often the cause for feelings of shame, articulated through hesitation, caveat and qualification.

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Popular perception seems to be that because Observatory is diverse, it cannot be racist, or enable racism. Karen's inclusion in this diversity seems to necessitate her complicity and makes it difficult to name racism. Her ambivalence here demonstrates how even though she experiences negative emotions such as disappointment, powerful affective structures compel her attachment to the sites and sources of disappointment.

Karen and her partner are (partly) assimilated into the white body of Observatory, and like other people of colour, come to constitute diversity within the existing socio-spatial milieu. However, phrases like "you people" do important work, by singling out the other. It is deployed particularly in moments when newcomers do not easily fit within or ascribe to white middle-class practices, highlighting how people of colour can never quite become (part of) the white body. Those who seek out assimilation under postcolonial conditions are instead in a process of mimesis – only ever becoming *like* the white body. The process of becoming like is indefinite, as it is built into the affective structure of sceptical optimism, where residents like Karen can lean forever toward their vision of the good life, but never quite reach it.

Susanne Wessendorf (2013) notes that it is not only being a newcomer that marks people as 'other', as it is not always evident who is new. Instead, being new combines with being visible and with challenging (even unwittingly) the local status quo. Those that embody difference are never too far from the association with danger. Karen provides another example of the tenuous position that those designated "you people" are in, and how easily the slip from included to suspicious other can be.

Whilst most of her neighbours in their first Observatory home were white, Karen notes that one particular neighbour continually took issue with them, constantly making complaints and accusations against them. This came to a head when someone "broke into one of the lady's houses in the complex, she [the neighbour] then said it could be one of our friends because of the people we were bringing there – 'undesirables'". This conversation took place in Karen's living room on a Sunday afternoon, and her husband, seated nearby, turns his head from the TV and interjects to explain:

> Do you know Benji? […] He has Cerebral Palsy, a limp, he can't talk nice. But he used to play the piano there by Pick n Pay [supermarket]. Anyway, I brought him in to come and bath there by me, a few times. They didn't know what he was doing there. There was a break in, and they saw me bringing Benji in, and they linked that. Cause Benji was this homeless guy.

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Karen and her husband's position is jeopardised both by violating the norms of acceptable white middle-class culture, and by purposefully coming into contact with those who are clearly marked as other. Thus, Karen's assimilability is contingent upon them maintaining a distance from those who represent the dangerous aspects of difference. It is this fragility of assimilation that suggests mimesis, always striving to be included, but always in jeopardy of exclusion; always close, but never quite there (Da Costa 2016).

As sceptical as Karen may be, her optimism about Observatory is always apparent. She describes being upset by the racial profiling in the chat group for her street:

> But then there's, like, "suspect male walking down…" like, every fucking suspect male is a "black male in a hoodie". I'm like, how many black men with hoodies don't walk up and down the road are suspects?

At the time Karen was pregnant and in response to this I ask her "How do you feel about the idea of raising your little boy in Obs?". Karen responds enthusiastically that she is very excited about exposing him to Observatory's "different cultures" and "different faces". When I clarify that I was asking the question in relation to the profiling of men of colour, she explains that she is not concerned. Here her optimism slides from scepticism toward nostalgia:

> I feel quite excited. […] I know that there is going to be… that there is *so many different people* here, and the child is going to be exposed to *so many different cultures and so many different faces*. And that, I'm excited for. […] Uhm, but I'm excited because *we chose the neighbourhood for that mix of people*. Uhm, and now we're going to raise a child and that's so… it's also about how you interact because that's how the child will respond to people. It's important because the child… he mirrors you.
>
> TM: No, I mean more in terms of how other people see… the stereotype, you know what I mean? Like, you're going to have a little boy that other people are going to see and perceive a certain way, or not, do you ever think about how others will perceive your kid?
>
> That's actually a good question, because I think if it was ten years ago, then I would've had that… I would've had more… but I've seen how people perceive, or how the people's mindsets and viewpoints and things are changing all the time. And I see that people are more open. What I do want my child to know is… to understand and never to be ashamed of is where they're coming from. That is because I see that societies are accepting of people of different colours and different people and being unique. You know, you being different… (emphasis added)

The contradiction of anticipating racism and remaining committed to the vision of diversity is at the core of Karen's relationship to Observatory. In contrast to the impasse or treading water of cruel optimism described by Berlant (2011), the tension of sceptical optimism is being in a

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continuous state of subtle but active conflict. Knowledge of the structural conditions that underlie everyday life must be suppressed (often just barely) in order to continue optimistically leaning toward the good life. At the same time the promise of the good life, tethered as it is to objects, including places, is constantly tempered by an awareness of the facts of history, individual and collective.

Conclusion

Against the grim history of apartheid and ongoing racialised geographical segregation, it is perhaps unsurprising that fems are drawn to, and cultivate optimistic attachments to, places like Observatory. This veritable 'grey area', seen as historically more open to alternative spatial, social and economic configurations, or at least less open to dominant ones, becomes the desired space in which individuals and collectives may join the diverse present. However, in postcolonial Observatory, the structure of optimistic feelings are themselves indicative of the uneven distribution of power. Homogenising accounts of place history, such as that of Observatory as diverse, risk glossing over the complex relationships that different people have to particular spaces, and the different histories that inform them, even as residents each tend toward progressive, diverse presents and futures.

The question of where to live is both a personal decision and one that goes beyond the present determination of where to play out daily life, to dis/connect individuals to histories, and futures. By focusing on how participants come to live in Observatory – and in some instances how they come to leave – this chapter addresses how individuals' varying relations to place are indicative not only of the subjectivity of individual experiences given their positions and contexts, but also of larger flows that guide individual feelings according to historical and contemporary logics of inclusion and exclusion, legitimacy and illegitimacy.

Through this analysis, I demonstrate how a theorisation of affects as structures of feeling can be extended in three specific ways. First, by moving beyond Berlant's global north focus, and parallel to Da Costa's case study of caste in India, I have shown how in the post-colony, affects can be explicitly racialised. Second, contrary to both local celebrations of diversity in Observatory and global academic investments in diversity as a lens for understanding difference in the urban context (Gidley 2013; Berg & Sigona 2013; Nowicka & Vertovec 2014), I reveal how an analysis of affective relations can shed light on underexplored layers of difference, and how it is felt in relation to place history and belonging. Third, such an analysis connects with existing work on how feeling undergirds injustice (Hochschild 1983; Ahmed 2000; Berlant 2011; Da Costa

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2016) but takes as a focus the affective political economy of difference of the city. The different optimistic relations that result from residents' attachments to Observatory indicate that the burdens of shared spaces, or spaces that hold difference, are not evenly shared. In fact, optimistic structures may serve both to galvanise romantic images of utopian spaces, whilst concealing their inequities, even for those who are effectively removed from the desired space, and its promise of the good life.

Hegemonic affects that centre diversity and the production of the white body as *in place* rely on the selection and reproduction of particular historical narratives, including about people of colour. The experiences of people of colour, their alternative histories and feelings of loss or exclusion, are not widely acknowledged, whilst simultaneously relying on their presence as the constitution of the diversity from which white residents benefit. *If* forced removals in Observatory never took place, white people never benefited from it. White people are seen as *always there* and *benevolent*, and people of colour are always newcomers. Ironically the preservation of this stable configuration creates white people as extremely mobile – able to move in and out easily, whilst in place, whereas people of colour have to work to get in and stay in.

Subjectivity is not simply dependent on personal characteristics but histories. For young white residents, moving to Observatory entails some degree of rehabilitation, wherein participation in diversity allows them to participate in the good urban cosmopolitan post-racial life (Arnaut 2012). In this progress narrative, the onus is on each one of us to get along, get past our pasts, to show that we can embrace difference. This is true for white people, on whose reformation the nation relies. Diversity is central to moving on and improving (self, space, society). This comports with findings that social mixing or a desire for diversity is central to the neighbourhood choices of young middle classes (Lees 2008), and that demonstrate that the more privileged tend to place a premium on where they live and tend to be motivated by a cultural politics (Hanquinet et al. 2012). Neighbourhood then can also be a source for distinction much like other forms of cultural consumption (Blokland & van Eijk 2010). Those participants who sought out diversity in Observatory, like Liezel, are making an effort to get to grips with their surrounds beyond the cultural and aesthetic value it may hold, and the search for diversity does engage with questions of race and privilege, as opposed to simply seeing diversity as "social wallpaper" (Butler 2003, 2484). However, the pursuit of the good life is nevertheless invested in a romantic idea that exposure to others can reconstitute the self and subvert historical inequality without

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structural change. In this way, the confident pursuit and attainment of the good life is possible, without frustration or scepticism.

As such, diversity describes both the multiple ways in which individuals cohabit and co-create spaces, and the limits and regulation of this cohabitation, spatial constitution and assimilation. Fems of colour are also invested in the progress narrative of diversity. Against historical exclusion, movement to the city represents not only a reclamation of historically alienated space, but also of the self, the urbanity of fems of colour, who were constructed and socially and spatially ordered as rural and peripheral. Constantly constructed as new-comers, as *not always there*, people of colour however, have the least 'choice' in participating in diversity. Nevertheless, they too may be optimistic because the perception of Observatory as a diverse inclusionary space allows them to construct a vision of the good life congruent with expectations of social mobility and de-racialisation called into view by the democratic transition. Once pass laws were suspended, Observatory acted as a stepping stone for people of colour, including immigrants and gender diverse people, who have been able to access the white city, find relatively accessible homes and make a living in Observatory, whilst also feeling relatively secure in their various identities.

Unfortunately, fems asserting a different space, through different spatial or corporal practices, have the onus of working against what is already in place. For Fami and Elle, the outcome after years of struggling to be included is a re-enactment of race and class-based displacement, and gendered vulnerability, not altogether different from historical exclusions, although for them the promise of diverse Observatory remains, cruelly, in place.

For others, like Karen, relative class privilege means that they can assimilate into Observatory, albeit unevenly and with difficulty, by dint of their status as property-owning middle-class South Africans. However, they feel constantly under threat of not belonging. As Karen and her partner demonstrate, they never quite achieve "enoughness" within the space (Blommaert & Varis 2011), they are always not quite assimilated, constantly in the process of mimesis (Bhabha 1994). Because they are less credible, the articulation of their alternate histories is a risk – you are not enough of a resident if you're not into diversity. But this articulation also challenges the dominant construction of the space. Their tenuous position is central to the lived relation of sceptical optimism, through which they continue to seek out the good life despite an historically informed scepticism.

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Since the origins of the settlement, people of colour have had a fragile place 'within' Observatory; they are constantly skirting the edge, shut out, or furtively in; and now, within but easily produced as without; assimilated with difficulty, but easily excludable. They often have to work within the terms of whiteness, under the hegemony of nostalgic optimism. Thus, the logic of diversity in Observatory acts both to determine who is appropriately diverse, prescribing who legitimately or authoritatively constitutes those spaces, who we can bring closer, assimilate, and who we must differentiate ourselves from, keep at arm's length, push out, *remove*.

The varied and conflicting structures of feeling that shape residents' relation to difference and belonging in Observatory, demonstrate both how subjective interpretations of the space vary from person to person and experience to experience, and how experiences – including historical interpretation – are underwritten by histories of privilege and oppression. People of colour are archives of bad feelings, constantly evoking unwanted histories of racism and removal, and of white fear in other residents. And whilst racist histories suffer a lack of credibility, white fear is potently felt. Whilst Liezel is fearful, her fear has its genesis in the bodies of men of colour; likewise, those people of colour coming "from outside" incite unhappy feelings in Fami. By contrast, it is Karen whose home-making and neighbourhood practices do not conform to the strictures of whiteness, who incites unhappy feelings in neighbours, by bringing others in, by being other herself.

However, fems are not completely circumscribed by their pasts. Liezel's reflexive confrontation of fem fear, Dani's frustration at racialised sexual objectification, Karen's moments of nostalgic optimism for her child's future amid her scepticism; each of these responses is out of step and congruent with the structures of feeling that shape their historical presents. These are all also specifically gendered aspects of optimism, shaped by respective racialised histories. Thus, the space is constantly made and remade as identity formation takes shape in relations to space; and as groups struggle for power (or against powerlessness) to convert their subjective feelings into public knowledge, to have their effect on and affect in space recognised. The hegemony of diversity optimism, in all its versions, means that marginal histories, including that of past and contemporary displacement and racism, are not articulated widely or freely; they are mentioned tentatively, as embarrassment or provocation – but barely sustained in the everyday production of space. Yet, the past persists, even for those who do not readily acknowledge it. The idea that the past could be lurking around the corner or materialise when we least expect it is central to the analysis of encounters in Part 2.

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This is the uneven ground on which the future is constructed. These varied affective versions of optimism unevenly extend the past into the present and future through the quest for the good life. This gives us a sense of how different times (past, present, future) are knotted together in residents' attachment to Observatory. Observatory is constructed as having escaped colonial and apartheid time and reaching the future first. This however has led to the conditions that structure an affective political economy where some feelings count more than others, and which maintains an affective injustice that subtends material and representational injustice through nostalgic, cruel and sceptical optimism.

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PART 2/ The Feeling of Structures: Experiencing Difference in Everyday Encounters

> Whilst they emanate from the dynamics of our energies, impulses and encounters, affects also carry residues of meaning. They are haunted by past intensities, not always spelled out and conceived in the present. Immediate expression and transmissions of affects may indeed revive repressed sensations, experiences of pain or joy. Although not explicitly expressed as such, they are temporal and spatial constellations of certain times, intricately impressed in legacies of the past and itineraries of the present/future. (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2010, 5)

> In the face of this unsettling situation, the desire for the logic of order and identity is reasserted: 'We' must secure our centrality, and 'they' who upset our homely space must be pushed out from the centre. They are not 'like us' and therefore they are threatening. And yet this very strangeness is both frightening and enticing. Our ambivalence towards strangers expresses fear and desire (including erotic desire) fused into one. It also pits their desire (for a new life) against our fear (of the disruption of our existing life). (Sandercock 2000, 205)

Part 2 is focused on how in daily life, through ordinary encounters and interactions, emotions shape the city space, by enlivening existing structures of inequality, race, class, gender and sexuality. Through emotions, these structures are made material; they are sensed in our bodies and orient our actions through and in space. Again, individual affects, like collective affects, are relational. And whilst structures of feeling organise the *present* according to (different) shared historical time(s); the feeling of structures references the spontaneous, day-to-day subjective feelings of individuals as they are affected by other bodies, times, places and objects, and the structures that they invoke. Thus, individual emotions are also political. Following Sara Ahmed (2004b, 26), this section is focused on how "emotions do things", and particularly how they "work to align individuals with collectives – or bodily space with social space". Crucially, such a perspective asserts that emotions are not merely a private matter, located in individuals, and expressed on personal preference, whim or need. Rather, feelings such as desire and fear, the focus of the next two chapters, can be read as moments where the structures that shape our world are enacted between bodies in proximity, and are viscerally felt. They are both manifestation and expression of wider structures of inequality, and the enactment of their organising principles in the social space. In these interactions, oppressions appear smaller, distanced from wider mechanisms of power such as legislation, but are also more intimate and

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thus can feel more potent. By unpacking how (public) place-history and (personal) life histories coalesce into moments of encounter, we might see the general in the specific, the structural in the personal. This is the supposition on which the notion of feeling of structures turns.

Whilst the chapters in Part 1 showed how colonial and apartheid politics played out in Observatory's past to condition residents' aspirations for the future, the chapters in Part 2 show how politics is executed on the level of individual feelings through interactions in the historical present. Following the affective history established in Part 1, this section leans in for a closer look at how historically defined identities come to be materially situated in the present via the everyday geographies of encounter. The motifs of desire and fear are strongly threaded through the experience of the city (see for example Sandercock 2000), and there is no figure that captures the seduction and threat of urban modernity better than that of the roving urban man (Pedrazzini & Desrosiers-Lauzon 2011). This section attends to exactly this dualism, first in Chapter 5 by exploring the way that fems negotiate encounters with men that are tangibly desirous, and then in Chapter 6 by addressing encounters with men that are felt as fearful.

The encounter acts as a portal to alternate times, it re-opens histories and fixes individuals to historical tropes. But it also offers possibilities for feelings that are disjointed from the affective flow of time. The affective experiences of actual individuals rather than imagined collectives (the white nation invoked in swart gevaar discourse in Chapter 3, or even the collective of 'we coloured people returning to Observatory') will be, of course, more specific, variable, and fragmented (Wetherell et al. 2015). They follow feeling rules that produce and are produced by dominant affects, although in ways we may not expect; but they may also be resistant to them. Encounters are negotiations about space and interaction, but also about history and identity. Thus, attention to individual encounters allows us a glance into the less tangible sensations alluded to by theorists such as Brian Massumi (2002), who focuses on the intensities of encounter that precede their articulation through discourse. They give us hints of the confounding, erratic, flare-ups of feeling that real people experience, that perhaps do not conform to economic, social or affective logics.

The existing literature on fems in public privileges the structure of gendered subjugation over the multiple ways that fems' might experience urban spaces and people within them. As Billy Holzberg (2018, 15), following Massumi (2002), points out, most cultural theories are circumscribed by an assumed known grid of power – structures – against which social phenomena are interpreted. In such accounts, we may lose sight of the "event" (Massumi, 1995,

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87). Whilst these next chapters aim to unpack the event of the encounter, they do not follow a Massumian account of affect. Instead, I trace how the event might lead us to unaccounted-for intensities *and structures.*

Part 2 addresses two questions:

- What might we reveal by considering the fem body in public space, particularly in encounters with desire and fear, as other than always already signifying vulnerability?
- From this new vantage point (outside of a narrow view of vulnerability) *what do fem affects do* on the street and in daily life?

The two chapters must be read together – each explores one side of the fem experience of encounters with men on the street. Sometimes they even address the same experience from the different perspectives of the two affects in question: desire and fear. Whilst the first shows how fem subjectivity shapes openness to engagement with men; the second demonstrates how perceptions of men's identities plays on fem identity and experience to inform this openness, and what possibilities for engagement are foreclosed.

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CHAPTER 5: Encounters with Desire: Negotiating Sexuality, Race, Class and Gender in the Street

In this chapter I make a case for inscribing desire into an analysis of street-level encounters between fems (cis- and transwomen and other feminine people) and unknown men[21]. By desire I refer broadly to those sensations and emotions that relate to attraction, and the expression of these feelings (through words, glances, gestures, or touches). Kopano Ratele (2011) points out that how and who we desire, and how we construct and manage ourselves as desirable to others, is both a physiological and a social process. Affect interfaces each. Embodied desire is libidinal of course, but it manifests in the body through historical trajectories and social norms – feeling rules (Hochschild 1983), which guide us toward and away from possible desires. By analysing fems' descriptions of encounters with men in public spaces, I argue against a focus on only feminine vulnerability, and show fems as embodying and managing a range of feelings including pleasure, excitement, or curiosity associated with sexual interest in another person, or sparked by their interest, and the absences or inverses of such feelings (such as discomfort, anxiety, repulsion).

Feminist scholars and activists have primarily been concerned with placing encounters between men and fems (again usually ciswomen) within wider structures of power, locating men's advances in public space on a continuum of violence/oppression that at its furthest reaches culminates in violent rape and femicide (Vera-Gray 2014). Such work has been vital in recognising how outwardly petty comments and behaviours can powerfully shape fems' emotional experiences and wellbeing in public space. This focus has understood men's sexuality mainly as a weapon of gendered warfare. Thus, in understanding encounters between people in the street, particularly from the experience of feminine people (almost always ciswomen), there has rightly been an emphasis on negative emotions, including fear, anger, sadness and distrust (see for example Valentine 1993; Pain 1997; Pain 2001; Shirlow & Pain 2003; Koskela 1997; Koskela & Pain 2000). The feminine experience in and of public space and city life then is seen as essentially insecure and uncomfortable, (over)determined by the need to *avoid unwanted* street encounters with men, where such encounters are largely defined as "public

[21] The next chapter, Chapter 7, addresses the category of "men" and "strangers" and problematises the notion of the unknown man in relation to dominant sexualised, gendered and raced tropes.

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harassment" (Gardner 1995), "street harassment" (Logan 2015; Chaudoir & Quinn 2010), "stranger harassment" (Fairchild & Rudman 2008; Fairchild 2010), or "stranger intrusions" (Vera-Gray 2014).

These are important perspectives on fem street life, but not the only ones. By focusing on desire, I do not want to exclude negative affects, but I am interested in how we can broaden feminist analysis to locate the moments where enjoyment, rather than *just* repulsion, and curiosity, rather than *only* apprehension, shape the affective cityscape for feminine peoples. However, I want to emphasise that although the ways of thinking about encounters between men and fems presented in this chapter fall outside of the binary of gendered oppression/resistance, they do not exclude but frequently intersect with them. However tenuous, these ways of experiencing encounters beyond traditional gender-based oppression frameworks, complicate how fems navigate city space, and how interactions with men in public space may be objectifying, affirming, threatening, comforting, or any combination of these.

Geographers of sexuality and queer theorists have pointed out that public conduct and comportment are central both to the structuring of street life and the production of sexual subjects (Seidman 1996; Hubbard 2005). This has real implications not just for the productions of norms about the material freedoms and mobilities of differently produced genders and sexualities in cities, but also the affective experience of the city. From moment to moment, day to day, the contemporary cityscape is shaped by conflicting affects, which flow from and reinforce norms about urban space and sociality. As Simonsen (2007, 177) notes, "the fleshy world of other bodies" is a world of differences, and in such a world, encounters with other bodies involve "practices and techniques of differentiation", and the exercise of power. However, the literature has largely constructed fem sexuality in public according to a dichotomy, where (largely heterosexual) ciswoman experience the space as one of sexual oppression, and queers, characterised by "a stigmatizing mark as well as a form of romantic exceptionalism" (Love 2007, 3), are seen as producing public sexual counter-spaces free of power imbalances. Trans- and homophobic harassment in public space by contrast is seen not as inherent to the queer encounter with desire, but as oppositional to it.

Encounters are shot through with desire – including desirous glances, sexualised language, pleasurable sensations, and sexual objectification – enfolding the myriad ways that feelings of attraction, and pleasure, and their lack or opposites, shape the cityscape, itself a network of bodies, tied together with looks, words and touches. Whilst these desires are instructed and

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mediated by power, particularly gendered power, they are not a proxy for gendered power. Instead differences of all kinds are central to the operation of desire, and it is according to these differences that feeling rules determine what desires are desirable. By bringing the feminist focus on gender oppression in public space into conversation with queer studies efforts to explore the emancipatory possibilities of desire, I extend existing work on identity, power and violence in public spaces. Through the frame of desire, I offer an analysis that accounts for a multiplicity of ways that we each affect and are affected through place, biography, and overarching categories of identity. Particularly, I want to show how other categories of difference, such as race and class, are produced by and produce the gendered and sexual body, often mediating the oppressive effects of gender, and limiting the emancipatory effects of desire.

Thus, a central aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how the feelings that we might take for granted – such as attraction – are infused with racialised, sexualised, classed and gendered ways of sensing, and making sense of other bodies – they are part of the *feeling of structures* in everyday life. Through an analysis of how desire permeates encounters between fems and unknown men in Observatory, I argue that fems constantly negotiate desires (their own and that of the men they encounter) in public spaces via a range of feeling rules that articulate concerns about safety and norms about respectability. Through feeling rules, desire (or desirability), whilst frequently seen as impervious to normative boundaries (see for example post/interracial desire in Chapter 3), can be another medium through which classed, raced, sexualised and gendered inclusion and exclusion are enacted in the social space of the city. I conclude by considering what accounting for the multiplicity of desires and the various ways public space is shaped by these desires might mean and how such a perspective may give us a fuller account of affective life in the city.

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Pleasure and Proximity: Managing Desirous Encounters

It is widely accepted in scholarship (Vera-Gray 2014), popular media and personal accounts (see for example the Holla Back website[22]) that street encounters with unknown men are unwanted and avoided by fems. Such encounters, characterised by men's objectification of fems, or the

[22] https://www.ihollaback.org/read-stories/ [Accessed May 14, 2017]

expression of sexual desire, serve to constitute an urban environment where the feminine body is continually socially produced as sexualised and sexually accessible. This view was also articulated by fems in this study.

As a result, some fems felt that *all* encounters with men in public places ought to be avoided. This echoes the literature that describes urban public spaces as theatres for the performance of feminine objectification (Kalms 2017).

Simangele, a 22-year-old black straight ciswoman student who has lived in a student residence in Observatory for 3 years, typifies this view. She states: "Because of my identity as a woman, and as a female I'm more vulnerable". Her emotional experience of the street is characterised by fear and she "often feels threatened" by passing men, particularly when they express interest in her. She is always wary of men she encounters as however benign their attentions seem, she feels that they mask a sexualised intention:

> If they're asking me how I am… sometimes that's how they try to… [get your attention]. I'll just say that I'm fine and walk away. Ya, but *you know the intention*, when someone just says, "Hi, how are you?" It's always the case. Unless they want directions, or something like that. But, I mean, why else would they be approaching you?

Similarly, Lydia, a 31-year-old coloured ciswoman lawyer who has lived in Observatory for seven years, says that on the street, men's attentions are never welcome. For her, in addition to men's relative power, her fear also relates to the unpredictability of public spaces and those who inhabit them.

> It really has to be that [that men's attention is unwanted] because I'm very aware of psychos. And sometimes it's attractive people who's going to… I don't know what, but they can do things to you. You know what I mean? So, for me it's… those are just inappropriate. There's just an inappropriate way of doing things, and it really doesn't matter how you look. For me, it's like that.

As has been observed in the urban studies literature, public spaces epitomise the unknown. It is where people interact with those outside their private circles, and hence hold considerable risk or potential for friction (Simpson 2011). Lydia's preference for civil inattention (Goffman 1963) in public spaces conforms with the perspectives documented in the street harassment literature (see for example Nielsen 2004). In the unpredictable urban environment, the threat of escalation from even the most trivial encounter looms large, and a passing remark can feel like a precursor to harassment or violence.

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However, Lydia also has a second objection to public expressions of desire by men, and the reciprocation of these by fems. She sees such behaviour as "trashy", or inappropriate behaviour, and by drawing women (or other fems) into the sexualised encounter, as "trashing" them:

> It's like *trashy*. I don't know. It's just not… that's not appreciation of what you see, for me. It is the way that you're doing it. It's either… I don't know. It could be relating to lots of things. Depending that you're either *trashing the women* or you're… it could be sexually, in terms of, "I wanna do something to you." It's not really appreciating. You know what I'm saying? (emphasis added)

Lydia's use of the word "trashing" reflects her idea that the public display of sexual interest is demeaning, or even humiliating to the women (specifically) that it is directed at. The statement of "I wanna do something *to* you" captures the ambiguity that she sees in these public interactions, that men's sexual interest could be/come violent. She feels the structure of gendered oppression acutely.

Still, she is very clear that she is not opposed to flirting or sexualised banter, but that the street is simply not the right place for it:

> There's nothing wrong with appreciating somebody's body, or anything like that. I don't have a problem with that. […] It depends on the environment and the circumstances. It really depends on that, because I'm saying there's appropriate time and place… and appropriate way for things. And we are all… this is society's way. We are taught this in school. We all went to school. People know what is right, I believe, and what is wrong.

Lydia's view is that interactions that hint at desire, that involve the expression of "appreciating somebody's body" or "wanting to do something" to/with them, are categorically out of place on the street. This is related to her sense that public interactions are inherently risky, and her fear of violence. However, as she describes it, public conduct is also a matter of etiquette and ethic, a question of "right" and "wrong". So, for Lydia, in the feeling of structures, together with gender, class also directs her emotions and actions. This understanding of in/appropriate sexual conduct is founded on a set of ideas, or knowledge about acceptable sexuality and its expression. Queer theorists such as Steven Seidman (1996) see sexuality as undergirded by regimes of knowledge through which we understand and relate to bodies, desires, and identities. These regimes establish feeling rules, moral and political boundaries and norms about what desires, or other feelings are acceptable. Lydia feels that sexual desire should be private, and she sees the public expression of private feelings as "trashy". This may be because pervasive knowledges about public sexuality frame expressions of public desire, particularly for women and other feminine people, as "a grotesque and even animalistic mode of behaviour deemed

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quite unacceptable in modern society" (Hubbard 2005, 323). Feminine public desire is frequently closely associated with sex work, and those who partake in public desires are suspected of trading sex, and the perceived low morality associated with it (Koskela & Tapi 2005).

Part of the stigma of public desire is its apparently indiscriminate or undiscerning and spontaneous character – those desiring know little or nothing about the desired – desire is not premised on shared identity or social location. Thus, for Lydia expressions of desire are acceptable in private and semi-private spaces, such as office buildings, bars, and gyms. She gives the example of the gym, saying that here you could admire attractive people and approach them in ways that are subtle, but demonstrate your attraction or romantic/sexual curiosity by asking, for example, "How did you get your biceps like that?". She also mentions running clubs, which are shared social spaces that are not spatially bound – in fact members meet and run in public spaces – but are socially exclusive. Here acquaintance and mutual interest provide a foundation, or at least pretext, for *discerning* feelings of attraction.

Dani, a white 35-year-old queer ciswoman homeowner from France who has lived in Observatory for fourteen years, explains that good sociability, including sexuality, is widely understood as private, and that this is particularly clear in Cape Town where class and race inequality is so stark:

> Like you meet people in spaces that are – in closed spaces. But you wouldn't just meet somebody and say hey let's hang out err-on the Rondebosch Common [large open field near Observatory]. The- like- the sense of what you can and can't do in a public space is fundamentally different [from private space]. And I think that's got to do with white, middle-class fears, around what's safe and what isn't. It also has to do with what you're allowed to do in those spaces. I mean... as a twenty-something year-old, like you hang out with your friends, you have a – you drink. You can't do that. In public spaces so also you'll be like – you have to go, to another place. Yah. Or it's not- Necessarily private. It's regulated, right? Like they're just specific. Socialising outside is associated with homeless or yah, poor-poor people who-who can't- Well and-and men or women to an extent who...aren't able to access the socially sanctioned socialising spaces, right?

Dani's example of norms against public drinking, paralleling norms about public intimacy or sociality more broadly, resonate with Phil Hubbard's (2005, 322-323) summation of good and bad public conduct in cityscapes governed by global northern norms, including to some extent the suburbs of Cape Town:

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> Modern citizens are only supposed to allow the boundaries of their body to be crossed in private; to allow this to happen in view of strangers is to fail to observe the complex systems of manners that have been developed since the beginning of the Enlightenment.

In this way, norms about the inappropriateness of public drinking, and those about public sexuality, both relate to the social prohibition of bodily permeation and flows in public.

By contrast to Lydia and Simangele, other fems who were attracted to men (that is, excluding those who asserted that they were exclusively attracted to women or non-binary people), admitted to enjoying the desirous interactions with unknown men. As a result, they did not feel that these interactions had to be avoided at all times and engaged in complex calculations about how and when these encounters were permissible.

These admissions were usually expressed with some timidity, and much nervous laughter. Unlike with incidents that they deemed threatening or harassing, fems shared far fewer of these pleasant or pleasurable encounters. This may be because men tend to be aggressive or harassing more often than not, or because pervasive gendered oppression means that fems interpreted men's advances as threatening more often. But it may also be because of the relative social prohibition on feminine expressions of desire and sexual agency. According to the tripartite system of sex-gender-sexuality famously articulated by Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* (1990), the feminine archetype, the heterosexual ciswoman, is expected to demonstrate sexual receptivity and passivity, in relation to the sexually assertive masculine heterosexual man she is supposed to attract. The feeling of structures may be more sharply felt under the scrutiny of others. As discussed above, with respect to Lydia, norms about femininity are often more potent in public spaces, where expressions of sexual agency are not only seen as unfeminine, or non-normatively feminine, but as immoral and connoting promiscuity or sex work (Koskela & Tapi 2005; Hubbard 2005). Yet fems are often caught between the imperative to display their bodies and be available for the male gaze, and yet to appear respectable (Waitt et al. 2011). Thus, appearance is simultaneously a source of pleasure and expression of identity, and a site of regulation, and potential violence (Phadke 2005).

Due to this ambiguity, fems, particularly ciswomen, were also much more reticent about encounters where they felt they had in some way participated or permitted the desirous encounter, and these conversations are pitted with my own words, prompts and follow-up questions. Valerie, a 26-year-old, coloured ciswomen who works in the financial sector, provides

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a notable example of a positive and reciprocal encounter that progressed into a flirtatious "street friendship":

> And it's really funny because there's this guy who drives this cute little car. When he sees me, every morning, he hoots at me. We've kind of built a street friendship and…
>
> TM: Have you ever spoken?
>
> No, we haven't. But it first progressed from a stare, then to a wave… and then to a hoot… and then to, like, a roll down (makes the motion of rolling down the window and raises her eyebrows in a coy expression) (Laughing)
>
> TM: Do you think you'll actually talk to him?
>
> Ya. He seems like a funny guy.

This flirtation affirms the possibility of desirous affects to offer alternatives to fem fearfulness, pointing to how attachments might exceed structuring forces (Massumi 2002). However, it is not innocent of structuring forces either, and – as I unpack in the following chapter – the perceived class of the man in the car has much to do with his desirability.

Frequently however, fems simultaneously expressed concerns about the inherent risk and inappropriateness of public interactions premised on desire, and an acknowledgement of the subtle pleasures of the encounter. Oscar is a 29-year-old black gay Zimbabwean, who identities as a "feminine man". He is tall, slender and androgynous, and wears a combination of feminine and masculine clothes and accessories. His non-normative gender presentation means that in addition to maintaining a reserved or demure feminine demeanour in public, congruent with his feminine gender expression, he is also alert to the pervasive homo- and transphobia in public space, and that any public expression of desire may not only be inappropriate but potentially dangerous. He readily acknowledges that street encounters can and do occur both in a "nice way or in an offensive way", and that gauging which is which is not always straightforward. He mentions examples where men on the street commented on his "interesting dress sense", or his "gazelle walk" and he was unsure whether these were transphobic jibes, simple compliments, or desirous advances. He describes one example:

> I mean, a couple of people did comment that like, "Oh, your style is very *innnnnteresting*". And that, for me, is always like… (makes a hand gesture to show a so-so or unsure). Ya. And I was like, "What *do* you mean?" or they're like, "You know, you've got a certain kind of uhm … *flair*". He didn't get into specifics. But I think it was just a heterosexual man. For him, I think it came… it's a bit of a compliment? (emphasis added)

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He feels that these "lovely comments" are loaded and meant to point out his non-normative feminine dress and demeanour, given his male body, but that they are also compliments, recognition of a femininity that he has carefully cultivated. As such his appearance is simultaneously a site of regulation and risk, and a source of pleasure and confidence. Authors such as Beverly Skeggs (1997) and Gordon Waitt, Lorretta Jessop and Andrew Gorman-Murray (2011) have demonstrated how ciswomen specifically experience this ambiguity. However, for gender non-conforming fems the stakes are higher, as both the desire for recognition, and the risk of gender policing may be greater. This is explored further in the next section of this chapter.

Although they were less specific about particular encounters, Elle, a 37-year-old coloured transwoman sex worker, and Noma, a 38-year-old straight ciswoman domestic worker, also mentioned moments when they noticed men observing them, or complimenting them, and didn't mind it or felt good about it.

> Elle: "Here's always people that says things that make you feel good. Ya, there will be strangers… [that say] Like, 'You're sexy'".

> Elle: I don't mind when people tell me I'm hot. I am! And it's now nice to hear a person say that to you. Even someone you don't know. Maybe they will be a client, maybe not. But it's nice. So long as it's not like those others [referencing experiences of sex worker and/or transphobic harassment].

> Noma: Yes, sometimes they are flirting. They say "Hello Sisi, you are looking nice", or they make noises. I don't have to respond. I just ignore them. But sometimes. It feels nice. (laughs) [But] I don't have to entertain it.

However, these two women have markedly different approaches to these experiences, and their responses demonstrate a tension between the inherent gendered power dynamics of men's attention on the street and the feeling rules guiding fem responses, and any feelings of pleasure that may derive from them, or even their own desires in relation to men's attentions. Elle readily acknowledges these encounters as sexualised, and is comfortable with them, or finds them affirming, whilst acknowledging that some interactions are (purposefully) oppressive or harmful.

Noma however is more conflicted. Whilst she laughingly tells me that it does "feel nice", she also says here, and several times later, that she does not "entertain" the comments. For her this is an important distinction, she cannot control whether or not men notice her, or how she feels about it, but the feeling rules are clear, and she respond in line with her beliefs about good public conduct, and so she does not encourage any advances from men on the street. She also cautions her teenage daughter against "entertaining these men". She talks about the tension

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she feels between fear for her daughter's safety and respectability, and recognising that feeling flattered by sexualised attention is not unusual. She notes that if a woman who "wears minis" and walks on the road is friendly, "to some people it's like they're being attracting to be raped or something like that"; but as a young woman "at that time, you are like, maybe I'm the teenager… you want that attention that the men… the boyfriends must see you. Ya, it feels good at that time."

Gayle Rubin's (1993) distinction between good sex (private, marital, middle class, reproductive, exclusive/discerning) and bad sex (public, for pleasure, inclusive/undiscerning) is useful here. Noma seems to see her enjoyment of men's "flirting", or potentially her daughter's enjoyment, as transgressing the norms of good sex, socially sanctioned norms about not just the kinds of sex people should have, but about how sexuality should be expressed and *where*. Similarly, for Lydia, bad (public) sexuality is laced with danger, and for young women, even though its expression may not prompt violence, it may be used to justify violence. Elle however, does not express concern for these norms. Her profession of sex work immediately puts her outside of the norms of good sex, and so does her sex-gender-sexuality as a transwoman. Whilst men's attentions affirm both Noma and Elle's femininity and are a source of pleasure, Elle may be more receptive of this affirmation because social transphobia ordinarily denies her femininity, and because she is less concerned with the norms that govern feminine respectability. The next section of this chapter addresses the position of trans people in relation to public desire in more detail.

Tasha, a white 30-year-old straight ciswoman academic, experiences a similar tension. In response to my question "Do you ever feel positively about men's attentions on the street?", Tasha explains at length that she feels very conflicted about men's attention, acknowledging that she both takes pleasure from it, and is angered by it, and upset at her own enjoyment of it:

> Yah there's (sigh)- I've definitely experienced that. […] I- I think I've had a different response to it [from negativity]. Like a more inquisitive response to it since being an adult but I definitely had – like I definitely, still to this day occasionally have moments but that's like-. And then you're always going through some sort of process of like... (clears throat) or I'm always going through some sort of process of being like well … (pauses). You know, you kind of somehow (pauses). This is almost like a judgement of the person themselves and you're like we- you know- like if it's kind of *a cute guy* then like *does that make a difference?* But I've-I've definitely noticed like an- in a kind of way that I don't like, a feeling of … you know? It's not that you- it's not that I want some- somebody to do that as I walk past, but it's more like when- when there is a- when there is something that's noticed or when I can tell that somebody is, you know, like and that- that sometimes happens in a way when somebody just smiles at you or something like that and you can

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> kind of pick up on… Without it being a necessarily- a rude kind of catcalling thing or whatever but definitely like… a feeling of kind of appreciation of stranger's appreciation, you know. Even though (laughing) like you know [it's not good] – even though on the other hand it's something that really pisses me off and I, you know, I hate. But there's definitely a very like conflicted feeling there sometimes, but it's not… it's not like *every* time that happens I- I sort of get nice feelings. (emphasis added)

Her feelings of conflict are evident, both in that she provides multiple caveats about when, why, and how she might enjoy men's attention, and in the hesitant way she stops and starts, mid-sentence as she is trying to work out what she feels, or what to share with me. She is clearly reluctant to talk about enjoying men's attention. Given the wide range of negative experiences, and outright harassment that Tasha and most fems have experienced, it makes sense that when an encounter is felt as enjoyable, she feels complicit in her own objectification or victimisation. Throughout this conversation she is at pains to make me understand that this enjoyment is seldom and limited. She continues in this vein:

> Like, you know you can pick up on it when- or *I* can pick up on it anyway- when- when you talk to someone and there's like an element of flirtation. Or ...just something where there's like sort of a little bit of a spark. And that feels nice even when I'm in a relationship. So, but I also then like sometimes I wonder like how much like over-thinking needs to happen about that. Like and how much of it is just kind of a bit of a *natural response* to, you know, somebody appreciating you. […] Then that's- and then sometimes I like am I over-thinking it but (laughs) yah. That's stuff about umm, *kind of liking attention at the same time as not wanting it* is yah- is a real pickle. (emphasis added)

Even when fems conceded that unknown men's attentions could be enjoyable, or even reciprocated, they had limits about the kinds of attention that they found pleasurable, or even tolerable. Given the wider framework of patriarchy, and the pervasiveness of violence, including gender-based violence, these moments of enjoyment were often fleeting, tenuous, and involved a calculation of risk. Tasha's suggestion that her enjoyment of the encounter is "a natural response" alludes to the intensities of affect as Massumi (2002) understands it: precognitive, that is then interpreted, or even distorted, by her "over-thinking it". This example suggests that as much as these unfettered intensities may be felt, they are always mediated by history and past experience. They are felt within the feeling of structures, as in line with or at odds with feeling rules, and wider structures of feeling, and categories of difference. So, whilst the event may not precede the structure, nor the structure dim the event, embodied intensity and the feeling of structures may affirm each other or conflict in the embodied experience.

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Elle, who is much more cavalier about her enjoyment of eliciting attention from men on the street, is also very aware that the boundary between positive attention and fear of harassment and violence must continuously be gauged:

> So, if somebody comes along, you would dive into their thoughts through body movements and stuff. You would pick up how this person is not gonna be one of those. If you see it's one of those, you arm yourself to get into "now that's gonna happen", or you just make sure that you duck.

Fems tended to emphasise distance and proximity in determining risk. It is the proximity of perceived *others*, that threatens *us* (Simmel 1950 [1908]). Although for Elle the feeling of structures differs from Tasha, as she is acutely aware of the constraints of binary sex-gender, she and Tasha share a similar awareness and calculation of risk.

Tasha describes that she is more likely to enjoy the pleasure of being desired by, or feeling desire for unknown men, if there is no imminent physical proximity or contact, and if she feels that she can easily exit the encounter should it become uncomfortable.

> But I- I guess there's just an-there's an element of (pauses). I guess when I find it not that worrying or not that problematic; there is an element of protection or distance. So, what I mean is like me being able to q-quickly and easily get out of that situation. When I don't feel in any way threatened. When it's just somebody that-that in a different circumstance when I might feel threatened because say I was on my own road and it was getting dark or- Something like that. Standing very close, getting in my space or...touching. […] When there's a- when there's a- when there's an environment where-where I don't feel like I can get out and dodge. Whereas when I'm-. Maybe when I'm in my car or maybe when I'm with a group of people or something like that where there's an element where the vulnerability is not so stark. Then, I think that might be the kind of environment where it would be more...And again l-l-l-like it doesn't seem like there's a-there's a way that I can make rules about it. Like it doesn't seem patterned enough to find a clear rule. But like that I guess would be-. In my head that's a distinction. Because I can't-. If I'm feeling threatened I'm not feeling like sexually in any way. You know. Like it's not- there's not even a tiny flutter of anything if I'm in any way concerned for my safety. So, I guess that maybe is part of the distinction.

Similarly, to recall the example of Valerie's street friendship, for Tasha and Valerie distance affords them a degree of control over the situation and lessens the gendered power imbalance in their interactions with men. Valerie mentions that so long as the man in the car is at a distance, she does not perceive him as threatening, and then is more likely to interact with him. She explains: "I think, for example, if there's a specific distance between us". She then second-guesses her desire to speak with her "street friend", the man in the car that she had been flirting

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with on her way to work. Considering what would happen if he got out of the car to speak with her, she says:

> I think that would freak me out a bit. I think now, because there's this distance, it's safe and I perceive him from that distance, that he's in a car and dressed… going to work. But, I mean, if he had to be a guy in a broken truck, or something, I might react to that a bit differently.

For Valerie the car signals both a physical distance between her and the man, and a social proximity, his middle-class respectability. Further, that he is on his way to work, that he has to be somewhere so is unlikely to stop to engage with her further is also important to her, and signals that the encounter is unlikely to escalate, or become more intimate. The next chapter further addresses fems' perceptions of men's reasons for being in the street in relation to risk.

Tasha gives me an example of when she stopped at a traffic light recently, and a black man selling crafts on the side of the road, was giving her "sparkly eyes" and she exchanged a few words of greeting with him. She found the experience pleasurable because "he was cute" and she was attracted to him, but she also felt that she was a safe distance away and could exit the situation easily, saying, "I was in my car and I could drive away if at any moment I felt unsafe". Again, a wariness of escalation belies the encounter, such that even as they are felt as pleasurable, and the desire is both tangible and mutual (she perceived his "sparkly eyes" and reciprocated), it enfolds an element of risk (she was simultaneously aware of the space between them and the time-bound, red traffic-light length, interaction).

In both instances, cars acted as buffers between Valerie and Tasha, containing the man within in Valerie's case, and in Tasha's case providing a barrier and allowing an easy getaway should she need it. This however has significant class implications for when, and even who, may be desired. It sets both fems who do not have the option of being buffered by a car, and men who do not have a car to make them less physically proximate and middle-class presenting, and hence more innocuous, at a considerable disadvantage.

Contrary to claims about false consciousness and self-objectification (Fairchild & Rudman 2008; Davidson et al. 2013) made in the literature to explain positive experiences of catcalling and other forms of men's attention, fems in Observatory expressed an acute consciousness of the ways in which the feeling of structures, the embodied felt awareness of wider frameworks of gender and class shaped their experiences of street encounters and limited their ability to engage in desirous interactions. Even when they could take pleasure in men's attentions or

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express their own desire, this took place within an acute awareness of risk, or even shame about participating in what may be conceived (and is portrayed in both the academic literature and popular feminist media) as their own objectification.

Further, the ways in which proximity constrains engagement are central to the permissibility of public desires, because not only do they limit interaction to mitigate danger, but they also mitigate (dis)respectability. This highlights the second reason that fems seemed uncomfortable discussing positive – or the absence of negative – feeling about men's attention. On the one hand, street encounters are an opportunity to affirm one's commitment to diversity – unlike private encounters which are carefully selected and restricted, public encounters offer an engagement with the fullness of the city, an embrace of and participation in city-ness. Tasha's engagement with the man's "sparkly eyes", across race and class lines hints at the emancipatory future-orientation of desire, highlighted in the history chapter – where desire suggests a way out of the strictures of social ordering. On the other hand, for both Tasha and Valerie, the feeling rules for desirous street interactions mean that they do not see street encounters as having the potential to manifest in further romantic or sexual interaction. Encounters are from the outset, in Lydia's words "inappropriate", "wrong" or out of "time or place". Whilst Tasha and Valerie may have "entertained" it, to use Noma's term, they draw the line at casual flirtation. Tasha for instance is careful to tell me that the "cute" guy, was not "cute like let me give you my number" and Valerie was clear that the "street friendship" would remain just that, a friendship, on the street. Perhaps this is the limit to which "good" fems can engage in "bad sex[uality]", subtly, briefly, at a distance. This suggests, instead of a desire for civil inattention, a desire for a kind of civil attention from men. An engagement with desire that is safe, pleasurable but not proximal.

Similarly, fems also emphasised that they would not tolerate interactions that were "impolite". Politeness was central to the acceptability of interactions with men in general, although what was deemed polite was greatly subjective. Valerie, says that she doesn't like attention that is overtly sexualised, and prefers "a nice polite smile, and it's just a 'hi'". Here too however, the fear that any comment could become sexualised makes even innocuous talk risky for some. For example, Kim, a 30-year-old white straight ciswoman, describes an unknown man who told her "I'm in my pyjamas":

> I'm like, "Who the fuck is this dude and why is he telling me what he's wearing?" I mean, clothing is an association of nakedness… people taking off clothing. I'm like, "Don't talk to me about clothing."
>
> TM: Because you felt it could easily escalate?

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> Ya. Like, "Oh, I put on my pyjamas. Come and take my pyjamas off." Do you know what I mean?

Kim demonstrates, how even those interactions that are innocuous at face value, may feel threatening, because they are loaded, they promise more – looks precede words, a compliment may precede a threat, an observation may precede a demonstration. Kim's alarm may be because pyjamas are also clothes worn in bed, a site of sexualisation. However, this example also shows her sensitivity and anxiety about sexual innuendo from strange men, in a context where the remark may well have been innocuous or meaningless.

Clearly, appropriate behaviour, politeness, and impoliteness are not inherent to certain behaviours or speech acts, as the street harassment literature readily assumes. Rather, appropriateness, and hence pleasure, threat or offence rely on "a series of judgments made by interactants on the appropriateness of others' actions and these judgments themselves are influenced by stereotypes", that include notions of adequate class, raced and gendered behaviour (Mills 2005, 276). As Skeggs (1997) has pointed out, expressions of femininity and class are clasped together in the performance of territorialisation – making of space and belonging – and gender. In South Africa, perhaps more clearly than elsewhere, expressions of classed femininity are racialised. For example, as alluded above, in Valerie's case her working-class background is tightly bound to her coloured-ness, and her claims to middle-class respectability cannot be divorced from this (class-mobile, coloured) positionality. I take up a discussion of Valerie's gender and sexuality in relation to her race and class in a later section on race and desirability.

Race and class, along with gender, are central to the feeling of structures within the encounter, the emotions that they produce, and the determinations about their appropriateness or desirability. They suggest that the strangeness or discomfort that some encounters produce, is not simply about the strangeness of the other (addressed in more detail in the following chapter), but also about the strangeness within, "the hidden face of our identity" (Kristeva 1991 [1988], 1). In moments of public desire then, we may more clearly see the "event", rather than only the structure (Massumi, 1995, 87). It may reveal affects or sensations – such as desire or pleasure – that fems may prefer not to acknowledge or reveal because they do not fit within the habitus of their class, raced, or gendered position, and norms about good sex(uality).

Whilst the literature on street harassment emphasises the risks of men's attentions in relations to fears about rape and other physical violence, it doesn't address the ways that men's

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attentions, and fems' willing reciprocation are construed as a moral threat. This raises the questions: Who can and cannot engage in pleasurable encounters? Who can desire and who can be desired? What are the risks of such affective liberties? The inequality inherent to the relative restriction or constraints on fems' ability to express and partake of desire in public, is both a function of norms about respectable public conduct, and fear embedded in both social policing and individual experience. The extent to which fems are un/able to express their feelings, including desires, and rebuff or indulge the desires of others directly impacts their ability to discursively, visually, affectively and corporeally produce space through sexuality.

Desirability, Queer Femininity, Affirmation and Safety

The street, governed by a common-sense conformity of gender and sexuality (Butler 1990; Waitt et al. 2011) is widely produced as a strongly heterosexual space (Koskela 2005). Likewise, street encounters are largely constructed in the literature, and in popular discourse as heterosexual (Gardner 1980; di Leonardo 1981; Tuerkheimer 1997; Swim & Hyers 1999; Lenton et al. 1999; Phadke 2005; Mills 2007; Ilahi 2008; Logan 2013; Vera-Gray 2014). Although there is some recognition that men may focus their attention on women who are not heterosexual (Valentine 1993; Fogg-Davis 2006), whether they perceive them to be or not, the male gaze is still constructed in terms of patriarchal heterosexual desire, the desire *of* straight men, *for* (cis)women's bodies.

However, Observatory has a long history of sexual transgression, including of visible inter-racial and same-gender sexual relationships and social spaces, and the visible presence of sex work. One ex-resident in his fifties shared that when he was a student people used to refer to the neighbourhood as "Obscenity", rather than Observatory, because of "alles wat all gaan aan!" – everything that (all) went on! As Kath Browne & Eduarda Ferreira (2015) point out, what is permissible in a place – what actions take place, how, and how they are reacted to – makes a place heteronormative, queer, or fluid. As a result of this long history of alternative sexual identities, actions, and reactions, Observatory seems to be collectively understood as sexually permissive and less normative because of its history as a place for transgressive sex. This may enable the expression of some forms of queer desire, affect and expression that may not be possible, or at least not without great(er) risk, elsewhere, allowing more varied expressions of sexuality. For example, in the following encounters, described by Quin, a 33-year-old white transfeminine person, and Oscar, queer desires serve to re-organise the street, against the dominant heterosexual imperative, producing queer visibility and affects as deeply

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(inter)personal but also micropolitical. However, these do not necessarily conform to the vision conjured in the literature on queer sexuality, specifically queer public sexuality, as emancipatory or utopian (for example Leap 1999; Brown 2004).

Oscar reports being propositioned by men on different occasions. In one instance he describes seeing the same man over the course of a few weeks on his way home from work in Observatory, and each time the man would profess his love for him and ask Oscar "Can I come see you at your house?", implying the desire for a sexual encounter.

> One of the occasions was quite bad. The first time it happened, I was going to A's house. The guy said, "Hey. How are you? I've seen you around." And this guy had walked me down quite a couple of times because he had been proposing love to me for quite a couple of times. A lot of the times, I'd laugh about this shit. Sometimes I'd indulge people with the conversation like, "You love me, but you don't even know me?" But for them, it's not about me it's about them.
>
> TM: So, this guy would just see you on the street and tell you they love you?
>
> Yes. On a good day, I'd just indulge the conversation.
>
> TM: And what's he doing, just hanging around on the road?
>
> Ya, pretty much. And the guy, that like, maybe 4 or 5 times, checked out my morning routine of going to work.
>
> TM: So, he was stalking you?
>
> Yes. Up until I had to call the security down here [at his office] to ask them to speak to this person. And he didn't understand I was saying no to him.

On other occasions Oscar reports a man approaching him and saying "Hey!" to get his attention, and when he turned, "they were groping a hard-on". Oscar responded by dashing the last few blocks to his friend's house. He says these experiences have unfortunately strongly tainted the experience of living in Observatory, where the advances of unknown men feel like the price he pays for the relative freedom to express his feminine gender identity. He sums it up as "Obs is absolutely lovely, on the street, or whatever. But it comes at a price."

Quin, who is 33 years old, feminine gender-nonconforming, and is undergoing transition to a more feminine physical presentation, also reports being followed by a man who seemed sexually interested or at least curious. They shared the following experience on social media:

> So creep outside of [supermarket] in greasy sweatpants asks me "are you a girl?" which I ignore, then when I come out again, he follows me for two blocks, a couple of paces behind, stopping when I do and staring at me. Finally, I turn and tell them to fuck off and of course he acts like I'm crazy and calls me several colourful things, but at least does fuck off.

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In conversation however, Quin challenges the idea that this encounter was (only) homo- and/or transphobic, explaining that they feel that the attention was desirous:

> The thing that I posted on Facebook… it was weird because I felt guilty for getting angry with the guy because, in retrospect, I think he was looking for sexual attention. I don't think he was harassing me in a kind of "how dare you be queer" way. I think that he was hoping… the reason he was following me home was because he took my, kind of, ignoring of the things he was saying as an invitation. He was definitely a, sort of, possibly street person. I don't know, unless he's someone who hangs around in dirty sweat (Laughing). When he asked me if I'm a girl, I don't know if it was a loaded question. I'm not clued up about what the terms are these days. He might have been asking me, am I a bottom. I mean, there's definitely a sexual element to it. He wasn't following me in a, kind of, I'm going to do you violence way but…
>
> TM: What makes you think that, though?
>
> It's very hard to put a finger on it. It just wasn't threatening in a violent way. It was just unwanted attention.

Clearly, the queering of space described by Oscar and Quin is not automatically positive or romantic, it does not automatically present a gender-equal, or non-violent/threatening vision of the city. Whilst the relaxed norms about sexuality in Observatory and the tangible presence of queer people may embolden queer people to express or enact their desires, these queer desires are also shaped by gendered norms about whose body may be enacted upon, and these encounters may be shot through with risk and violence. Oscar and Quin's encounters demonstrate the way that 'objectifying' street level interactions can and do help generate a space of non-normativity, where queer desires, however unreciprocated, unwanted, or violent, co-create the sexual cityscape. This ambiguity however is under-acknowledged in the literature that emphasises the positive potential of queer(ing) public space (Oswin 2008) and provides an alternative to public discourses about queer desires that are increasingly homonormative, seeking to construct queerness as (only) within appropriate personhood and conduct (Cvetkovich 2012b).

Significantly, trans and gender non-conforming fems, who are often seen as, or feel like, interlopers in their expression of femininity, may also experience (perceivably) straight men's desirous attentions as affirming of their femininity, in a context where their gender presentation and identity are under attack. Verbal and gestural transphobic assaults are frequent and violent. Amy, a white ciswoman, and a close friend of Oscar's, is deeply empathetic to the harassment of transwomen and non-binary fems in public and likens it to the casual street-level harassment she and other ciswomen experience, only worse. She mentions being constantly astonished at

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the level and frequency of harassment Oscar experiences when they are walking around together. She also reports intervening when a man was yelling "at a transgender woman on the other side of [the road] walking in the opposite direction…[who] called her a "he-she" and just kept on".

Similarly, HyeJin, a trans activist reports on her blog: "I got followed ten metres by a guy shouting '*that guy has tits*' to a bunch of other guys while making gestures that were 'suggestive'."[23] Similarly, in relation to constantly getting attention about his gender expression and presentation, Oscar sees himself, or his body, as "the body that provokes". He reports frequent transphobic encounters where his feminine clothes and/or make-up and demeanour combine with his male body to render him vulnerable to the malicious curiosity (Müller 2018) or aggression of passers-by. However, he also feels that sometimes even curious attention or comments are affirming because they are a grudging recognition of his femininity.

In different media accounts, Elle has described the continuous street-level transphobic harassment that she receives. In one example, on a blog dedicated to documenting sexist street encounters, she writes:

> I'm a transfemale sex worker doing street-based sex work and get harassed on a regular basis, it seems to me like second nature already!!! Worse is the fact that I'm HIV positive and sometimes on my way to the clinic the police harass me saying I'm working in the day and need to get off the street! Then there's the part of the community that does not agree with my choice of identity and will irritate me as I walk to the clinic, which sometimes makes me come late for appointments or just stay away!!!

In contrast to the violence of transphobic harassment, experiencing men's hailing through catcalling, for example, serves to interpellate trans and gender non-conforming fems as feminine, a recognition and affirmation of their felt identity. That is, incorporation into normative heterosexual, man to woman objectification serves as an articulation of gender. This is a fact that has been used to paint trans fems' experiences as exceptional or invalidate their experiences as those of unfeminine or non-women. For example, Fiona Vera-Gray (2014) states, in response to trans activist Paris Lees' article *I Love Wolf Whistles and Catcalls; Am I a Bad*

[23] Kim, HyeJin (2013) Catcalling and safety: negotiating spaces as a transgender woman. Available at: https://universityofbrokenglass.wordpress.com/2013/10/23/catcalling-and-safety-negotiating-spaces-as-a-transgender-woman/ [Accessed 15 January 2017]

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Feminist (Lees 2014), that this raises a question "about the differences between growing up identified externally as female and growing up identifying as this only internally" (56). That is, for Vera-Gray, Paris Lees' experience is solely a function of her physiology, her sex. This is not only a reductive view of transfeminine embodiment, but also strategically overlooks the many ciswomen who admit, albeit timorously, that they too enjoy wolf-whistles and catcalls in certain contexts.

For this reason, I want to emphasise that finding affirmation from men's attentions in the street is not particular to trans fems. The previous section provides multiple examples of ciswomen taking pleasure, however slight or contradictory, from men's compliments or desirous glances. The comparison in the previous section, between Noma and Elle's feelings about men's attentions, is illustrative. For Elle this attention may be felt as a validation of her femininity, she is performing her gender within the expression of her (hetero)sexuality. This may also be true for Noma who acknowledges that men's attentions "feel good at the time". However, because the recognition of her gender is not at stake daily, for Noma the risk of disrespectability or escalation to violence usually outweighs this pleasure and affirmation.

The affirmation felt by trans fems is not always straightforward and can be felt as conflicting. Quin shared the experience of being hailed in public by a man in a social media post:

> Mixed feelings: When you're ambiguous enough at a distance for someone to read you as female but the result is them catcalling you.

In conversation, Quin says that passing as fem is affirming, but they are much more concerned with the ways in which passing as a ciswoman, that is not being read as trans or gender non-conforming, can afford them some degree of safety. They say pointedly: "Intellectually and emotionally, passing, it's not something I give a shit about. But safety-wise, it totally is".

Similarly, HyeJin highlights that whilst she recognises the harm that catcalling may have on ciswomen, for her, and other transwomen like her, men's desirous attentions can be an indication of safety, and provide comfort in public spaces that can otherwise feel vehemently hostile. In her blog post on the issue she writes:

> But there is this thing, catcalling is a sign of safety for me; as odd as it sounds, being catcalled usually gives me some relief when it happens. Now I don't wanna generalise, and surely I don't speak for all transgender women, this is just my experience. When I get catcalled, I least I know that they didn't notice that I am transgender; meaning that

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> as long as I shut my mouth (voice issues), the risk of transphobic harassment is a lot less.[24]

Against a lived experience that may be characterised by violence and harassment for transgender and gender non-conforming bodies – what Oscar calls "bodies that provoke" – encounters with men's desire, rather than men's anger or ridicule, may be the best alternative. Those street encounters that are based on a recognition of trans or gender non-conforming fem's femininity are evidence of their successful passing or covering (Yoshino 2006), and may be both affirming, indicating that their femininity is being recognised by others, and protective, as an indication of their momentary evasion of the malicious attentions that may come from being identified as transgender or gender non-conforming.

These various stories, where desire played a role in queer spatiality – sometimes more overtly, sometimes more subtly – through encounters between fem participants and men on the street, demonstrate the ways that shifting our perspective from fem fear alone can illuminate otherwise unnoticed aspects of public life. The literature on street harassment engages only with street encounters as a form of misrecognition (Cooper 2007b), reminding fems (although typically ciswomen) of their vulnerability, and thus is construed as a form of gendered violence. Feminist authors have strongly asserted that "just as rape is not about sex, street harassment is not about flirtation or courtship" (Fogg-Davis 2006, 65). Whilst such an understanding is useful in thinking about how patriarchal power dynamics enable gendered subjugation, it denudes the power-laden heterosexual interactions between cismen and ciswomen, including street encounters, of the content and potential of desire. In stark contrast, expressions of queer sex and sociosexuality are viewed as vividly desirous, emancipatory and transgressive of the powerful heteronormativity of the street and other publics. This overlooks the ways that power differentials and gendered norms about who can and does exercise desire in public spaces still operate across queer subjectivities, or how sexual objectification is itself a potent marker of femininity, providing comfort and safety through the unlikely shelter of the objectifying male gaze.

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[24] Kim, Hyejin (2013) Catcalling and safety: negotiating spaces as a transgender woman. Available at https://universityofbrokenglass.wordpress.com/2013/10/23/catcalling-and-safety-negotiating-spaces-as-a-transgender-woman/ [Accessed 15 January 2017]

Race, Desire, Desirability

Whilst the previous two sections of this chapter have focused on the ways that gender, sexuality and their feeling rules shape desire in public space, this section unpacks their relationship to race. Race was a major factor in the way that fems navigated desire in the street. This was for two reasons: norms about race, skin colour and beauty ideals, and thus desirability, are very much at play in public spaces, interacting with the heteropatriarchal norms that make men's attentions a legible standard for desirability; and because, whilst Observatory is seen as a diverse space, in the wake of apartheid, norms about race and sexuality mean that inter-racial relationships are still often perceived and experienced as novel or transgressive, in keeping with diversity optimism and the history of the space.

Just as men's attention can be a troubling but pleasurable experience for some fems, enacting inclusion and recognition that may otherwise be denied on the basis of gender, some fems reported a colour-based hierarchy of men's attentions. Dineo, a 25-year-old black lesbian ciswoman who feels that she experiences a lot of attention in the street because she is very light skinned and curvy, and fits a particular ideal of desirable femininity, explains:

> What's annoying, though, is that at work… with the black girls at work… even some of my friends, we joke about: "But you get hit on more because you are yellow bone, or you possess this stereotypical African (making an hourglass figure with her hands) … whatever".

This reflects a pervasive social bias toward lighter-skinned women (Sanger 2009). Dineo describes the way in which men's attentions in the street and elsewhere frame attractiveness in terms of race, as well as skin colour, resonating within a wider cultural framework that values light skin:

> Also, because black women aren't coloured, and black woman aren't as beautiful… and whatever. And people don't wanna… yoh, but that's a story for another day, with regards to the whole power play between coloureds and blacks. But you oppress what you're familiar with… what you know you can squash. A black man… even if you look at some of our Hip-Hop videos, most of the girls that are the video whores are coloured women, 'cause that's what's considered beautiful, kind of thing. But you still want to make her feel inferior in some way, but it's like, black girls are… and you'd be like, 'Yeah, I like my girls yellow. I like my girls coloured.' And it's definitely an in thing. There was a twitter war, where a lot of the black feminists were speaking on… I think some guy said something very problematic, like, "Coloured girls are like calamari and black girls are…" I don't know, something like tripe [offal]!

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In this raced matrix of desirability, and in the highly racialised urban spaces of Cape Town, street encounters may serve to entrench feelings of racialised otherness in participants, not through racialised encounters, such as those described by Deidre Davis (1994) and Laura Logan (2013) that focus on historically embedded tropes about the hypersexuality of black women, but through the absence of sexual attention. Both Noma and Simangele observe that they only get attention from black men, often in isiXhosa, and that they feel that on the whole, men of other races do not pay attention to them. That they are patently aware of this is significant.

Simangele says that she did not feel obviously black until she moved to Cape Town, Observatory specifically, from Johannesburg. She has embraced this acuity of identity and notes particularly wearing her hair "natural" and in "bantu knots" as a way to visually and bodily embrace her blackness. However, she also admits to struggling with a new sense of blackness as otherness. She does not express a sense of diversity optimism. Observatory and its differences are a source of discomfort for her, and by being confronted with people of different races in close proximity, she also feels confronted with her own subjugated position in the racial hierarchy. This is felt in some instances as a sense of alienation and invisibility. In her journal (undated entry) she writes:

> I have always kind of felt like I do not belong in Cape Town because people just don't really notice me. Sometimes I feel very invisible.

This sense of invisibility and exclusion plays out in streets and public places. In conversation she tells me:

> And also, it's weird because I haven't experienced much cat-calling here as I did back home. I'm not sure why, but I mean, that hasn't happened.

When I inquire further, she attributes it to the greater presence of lighter skinned people in Observatory, as opposed to where she grew up in Johannesburg. She highlights the ways that the wider cultural framework that values light skin, described by Dineo, shapes her daily embodiment of dark skin in Observatory:

> Sometimes I think that, because I don't really have that many interactions, I'd be like: "White people, coloured people or Indian people would rather not speak to me. They'd always rather speak to other white, coloured or Indian people."
>
> TM: Including in the street?
>
> Ya, I think so. Yes, definitely. I think that's the main thing.
>
> TM: Really?

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> Ya. Like, because I'm black, they will *obviously* not be interested. And if they are… (pause). Well, if they're white then it's *a fetish*.
>
> TM: So, like, you're not getting gender-based oppression, you're getting race-based oppression. The absence of one is because of the presence of another?
>
> Ya. It's really messed up. But also, I'd rather… (long pause). Because I'm not getting the one is because, like, other people are avoiding interaction with me because I'm black. I don't really mind that. It's just… (pause) I guess… it doesn't *really* matter. (emphasis added)

Her explanation is tangibly self-conscious and pitted with long thoughtful pauses. Her inability to describe the ways "it doesn't really matter", echoes Tasha's hesitance of why men's attentions are enjoyable. They reflect in this case an inability to articulate why the absence of men's attentions is undesirable, or even uncomfortable. Whilst Simangele does not perceive herself as enjoying men's attention, its obvious absence in the spaces of suburban Cape Town serve to shape her experience of embodiment all the same, making her feel "very invisible". This is in contrast to the black male body, which is hyper visible within the flow of white fear, as described in following chapter.

In fact, in the only instance that Simangele recalls being approached by a man on the street, a white man in fact, involved him telling her at length about his father's domestic worker. Aligned to the stereotype of the domestic worker as sexually available, as opposed to just invisible,[25] the man explains that his father is having a sexual relationship with his young domestic worker, whom he is paying a large sum of money:

> Yeah, he is quite old. And when he asked me if I was Xhosa and obviously, I'm not so I told him I wasn't. And then he asked me how old I was, I was like okay, this is like really personal. And then, yeah this is a really awkward interaction. And then after that he started getting upset for some reason. I don't know, like his mood just changed, and then he told me that his father – okay I guess not in his words but I'm just gonna paraphrase. He said my father is fucking this 19-year-old Xhosa girl who works for him. And I don't know, I'm assuming doing like domestic work. And he is paying her R10 000 or something like that, like a ridiculous amount of money for that. And he was like upset. So, I was just like really taken aback.

[25] Historically, in the South African household, these two – sexual availability and invisibility of the black slave woman/ domestic worker's body – have gone together.

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In this encounter the man operationalises tropes about the hypersexuality of black people (Sanger 2009; Lewis 2011), who historically have been portrayed as unconstrained by social rules (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of this in relation to colonial/apartheid portrayal of black men). In this case, the young woman in the story is seen as responsible for transgressing norms against work-place, transactional, intergenerational, interclass, and (even now) inter-race relationships. Simangele observes with discomfort that the man was suggesting that she was like, or even was, the woman who works for his father, because "like why would he just ask me randomly if I'm Xhosa and if I'm 19?". This specificity, ironically, implies an equivalence between all black women in the space, marking Simangele's gender and sexuality as problematic, through her race and age.

Race shaped encounters for coloured women too. Valerie points out that she does not like attention that could be seen as critical of her demeanour and appearance:

> But, I think, when it's negative, it's when it is something about you… when it becomes about your gender or sexuality. And you're interpreting it that way. Like the guy saying, "She's just a poppie [little doll]." No more is it about me not wanting to give him attention, it's about me being a woman and maybe being dressed a specific way and like, "That's why she's like that." Negatively gendered attention.

Poppie means 'little doll' in Afrikaans. In South Africa it can be used both as a term of endearment or as an equivalent to 'bimbo', to demean a woman as attractive but stupid or superficial (see Van Der Westhuizen 2018 for similar references to "poppies" and "little dolls" in relation to Afrikaner femininity). This comment must be read in the context of the Western Cape and the pervasive derision of coloured femininity, including through stereotypes of social inferiority and sexual availability (Adhikari 2006).[26] Zimitri Erasmus (2001, 14) writes that "being Coloured is about living an identity that is clouded in sexualised shame".

As a young coloured ciswoman from a semi-rural working-class background, Valerie is sensitive to popular perceptions of coloured femininity, and the way that coloured identity is stratified in the collective imagination, between Cape Malay coloured (who are often middle class, Muslim and living in the city centre), Cape Flats coloured (urban, poor and working class, living in coloured townships), and farmworker coloured (rural poor and working class and living on

[26] Mohamed Adhikari (2006) mentions the insulting stereotype of the "goffel", a working-class coloured woman characterised as socially inferior, physically unattractive but sexually available.

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remote farm land). The latter two categories can be associated with a kind of class habitus, known as "gam".[27] Valerie explains "gam" as follows:

> You know like, in Cape Town, Cape Malay people, I hate to use this term, they would refer to them as being gam. Agh, I don't even want to use that term.
>
> TM: Is it like crude?
>
> Well it's a term, it's generally associated with lower, poor coloured people, and obviously the way they talk to each other and the slang, the strong slang. Yah, I actually, I wouldn't use that term, I think it's a horrible term. I knew a lot of friends from Paarl from different classes of coloured people… It's not a nice term.

Although Valerie is careful not to demean others, she is at pains to explain her childhood in the rural wine farming region of Paarl in relation to her relative access to opportunities, her choice to follow the English (instead of Afrikaans) stream in high school and to speak English in daily life, all characteristics that distinguish her from "gam" coloureds. As an adult, her university education and her corporate job continue to do the same, although not without difficulty. Valerie describes the way in which she struggled to reconcile her relatively lower socio-economic status when she went to university:

> And the labelling starts, and then again you actually don't realise how language is so powerful. You can't fit in because you come from… And so these discourses start, and they start to build like a very negative stereotype. […] Because also it says about what you can do on weekends, about what you can do and what you can't do. You're either hanging out on the Camps Bay strip, or the Rondebosch/Claremont strip. For me that was a culture shock, I won't lie. I think for me speaking English gave me the privilege to go everywhere, but here being English did give me, but it was more about socio-economic status.

Against this background, Valerie interprets the man's comment "She's just a poppie" as a negative appraisal of her femininity as an expression of class. She is upset that her work attire, which she believes conveys, or should convey, the appearance of feminine sophistication, is interpreted as an effort to be 'dolled-up', and that her appearance is used to discredit, and

[27] The term gam originates from gamtaal, the 'the language of Ham'. Ham refers to the biblical figure who has historically been used to justify slavery because he was cursed – African peoples are said to be the descendants of Ham. Gerald Stone (1995, 280) writes of gamtaal: "The middle class tend to dismiss it as 'not a language' and discourage their children from using it, and 'respectable' working class coloureds of rural origin have tended to despise it as a volatile linguistic mess, characteristic of the unstable urban Peninsula coloureds".

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objectify her. It is also possible that she sees the use of the Afrikaans term instead of a comparable English one as a particular slight, because it operates on her rural origin, gender, race and class identities. Because Valerie is constantly negotiating class and gendered assumptions, like the one inherent to being called "poppie", she is vehement in resisting comments or behaviours that she sees as evaluative, that bring her middle-class respectability or expression of femininity into question and challenge her right to the space.

In addition to the skin colour and race of fems, interracial relationships also provided fertile ground for the illustration of how race shapes desire in the micro-publics of neighbourhoods. Several participants mentioned interracial relationships as a source of discomfort for them, due to the experience of the gaze of others. For example, Valerie describes encounters where other people express their disapproval about her and her male companion in public spaces:

> With a guy they may make comments about the guy, that he's with you. If you're in an interracial relationship that happens quite often. It depends on the space you're in. In Obs you might get the stare, right? Ok, you get a stare from whomever. In other areas, so I remember when you go to like smaller towns, for example, you know you might get a comment, from just people on the street. Or even in Cape Town the homeless people might make a comment if you're holding hands, or you're touching his back. If they can make some kind of assumption that you're a couple, an interracial couple, and they may make a comment.

This attention made Valerie feel scrutinised and judged. Observatory might be more permissive, but the looks of passers-by still convey curiosity, if not hostility toward interracial relationships. Despite the changed legal framework, under this social policing, public interracial desire can still feel illicit, and thus also at constant risk of sanction. However, because of the affective flow of diversity optimism, Observatory is still experienced as progressive and open, and outright hostility is seen as unlikely. Instead tensions percolate through the expression of unspoken feelings – stares that might betray suspicion, alarm, or disgust – all recalling the historical force of white fear and the visceral disavowal of sexualised racial mixing. An analysis of desire then gives us insights into a range of other affects.

However, as Valerie tells me the meaning of the looks "depend", and in Observatory it can as easily convey positive feelings where, when "they look at you, [it] could be good one, a nice one". Thus, the look can convey a sense of complicity or pleasure and participation in a kind of post-racial present, structured by diversity optimism.

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An odd little note provides another example of how desire and race co-constitute each other and are caught up in a range of other feelings, in the production of space of Observatory. In 2013, the year before I commenced this project, a large number of Observatory residents checked their mailboxes one weekday to find a small anonymous note, presumably from a fellow resident. The note, recognisably stencilled with a school stationary letter set, then photocopied and hand-cut, read: WHITE GIRLS GO OUT WITH BLACK-BLACK MEN. A LOT OF GIRLS – DEGUSTING (sic). The note then engaged with two affects: it takes as its object the *desiring* interracial couple, at which it directs *disgust* – desire's inverse.

Figure 11. Amy's copy of the note residents found in their mailboxes, 2013.

This note generated a range of emotional responses for residents. Dani, a 35-year-old, white, queer ciswoman who lived with a black man friend at the time remembers feeling amused and uneasy about the note, wondering – before she realised how widespread it was – if it was targeted at her household.

> I think I was amused, in a way. But I was also surprised that someone would go through such effort to voice their racism, or disapproval at my living situation. I was amused that they would assume that they thought I was going out with [my housemate], that was how I made sense of it. An erasure of queerness – the man and woman living together must be "going out". It was weird that someone noticed who went in and out of our house. It was funny and creepy. Creepy that someone was watching us and we didn't notice them. Like a peeping-Tom.

On learning that many of her neighbours and friends in Observatory had received an identical note, she felt relieved that someone had not specifically been observing her and her home. More than that, she was astonished by the extent of the note-writer's efforts:

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> I was even more in awe of their efforts. That some racist person would print so many of those, or pay to photocopy so many of those notes, and then physically walk the length of Observatory to put them in people's mailboxes. And they must obviously have thought that it had some kind of impact, that their racist disapproval would affect us - make us "white girls" not "go out with black-black men". […]. It's obviously someone who lives in Observatory, why else would someone go through the effort? We're assuming it's a white person, but we don't know. I mean we know racists are everywhere. It was, and it wasn't surprising – in that we've built this idea of Obs as exceptional from the wider city, but at the same time we know that racists are just everywhere.

Dani's reflection that the note-writer must have spent considerable time and effort on its preparation and distribution and must have believed their work to have an impact, brings to the fore the writer's affective investment both in (against) the sexual relations in question, evocative of white fear, but also in the segregation of the neighbourhood. In fact, the note can be read as an artefact in the archive of feeling, suggesting the author's emotions, rather than anything about the white girls and black men it references. In contrast to the time-consuming task of flyering most of the neighbourhood, the note seems rushed, almost stream of consciousness. Its directness, its brevity and its use of upper-case letters conveys an urgency and creates an admonishing tone.

The author's repetition of "black" in "BLACK-BLACK MEN" emphasises their repulsion at blackness, whether understood as dark skin colour or a more complex assemblage of ethnicity-language-culture-colour. These men are understood as not just black, or incidentally black, but really and truly, potently, "black-black". This may also be a reference to men from other African countries, as South Africans like to believe that they can identify other Africans by their darker skin (Neocosmos 2006). The sexual indiscretion is all the worse for this extra-blackness. Within the sub-text of "black-black men" lurks the stereotype of the hypersexual, virile black man (see Chapter 6 for further discussion of this stereotype). "Black-black men" in relation to "WHITE GIRLS" evokes white fear about the sullying of white women, and the white nation itself by proximity to people of colour, and sexual relations with black men in particular. The use of the diminutive "girls", in contrast to men, underscores their vulnerability. However, the note is directed at the girls, the subject of the sentence, suggesting their agency, it is their transgression – as Dani points out, the note seems intended to "make us 'white girls' not 'go out with black-black men'". That the note also states "A LOT OF GIRLS" expresses a sense of anxiety at the scope of the problem, congruent with the feeling rules of white fear. The passivity of "black-black men", the object of the sentence, suggests that they are beyond admonition, incapable of

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reform, but also underscores their status as object, *phallus*. The conclusion of the note simply with the word "DEGUSTING", completes the picture of the writer's repulsion.

At the same time, the use of the school stationary set stencil, the dotting of the upper-case letter 'I', the simple language, and the misspelling of "disgusting" makes the note seem naïve. Instead of counter-acting its affective saturation with disgust however, this compounds it. An apparent lack of consideration for spelling, grammar, style or presentation adds a sense of earnestness, urgency and potency to the feelings conveyed in the note – as though the reader has access to the author's pure, undiluted feelings, their embodied intensity (Massumi 2002).

On the morning of the discovery of the note, I found my elderly white neighbour Rose with her arm through the fence of the neighbouring house, her hand reaching awkwardly into her neighbour's mailbox. When I asked what she was doing she informed me, still one-handedly grappling with the fence and mailbox, that she was trying to remove the offensive note before the new neighbour, a young black man, saw it. She was concerned that he might think that the note was directed at him and feel bad or unwelcome. That is, she was trying to protect him from racism's touch, the felt corporal experience, as racism affects the body (Ahmed 2004b; Tate 2014). This kind neighbourly concern may also have been informed by nostalgic optimism. Maybe she was trying to protect herself from the taint that the note-writer's sentiments might mark other (white) residents with. Because the author is not known, they could be anyone, even kindly Rose.

This concern is borne out by how Dani, and the friends and neighbours that she talked with, felt affected by the note in the days and weeks to come. She says that there was a sense that Observatory was less safe in some way, and that they were less free and more observed in their public interactions, and expressions of desire than they had thought. It reminded her of the trope about the "loose white girl", the sexual tourist, cruising Observatory for black men, as outlined in Chapter 4. It reminded her of the perception of sexual deviance still inherent to mixed race relationships, something that in some ways, living in "a progressive bubble", a mixed-race household and social circle, she didn't often think of, until this brought it firmly into her mind. However, it also raises the emancipatory potential of desire, highlighted in Chapter 3, as interracial desires still offer an alternative to attempts at oppressive social ordering. Dani explains how she responded to the note and its writer in her public interactions in the weeks after:

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> It shows the entitlement and arrogance of white supremacy, or racist white people. They have an opinion of your personal life and feel entitled to voice it, they assume it will change something. And in writing their racist opinion and distributing it widely, they must recognise it's not an opinion they should have, because they stencilled it instead of handwriting it. The space is not conducive, whilst they share their opinion they do it in a really sneaky way. They don't go round yelling their opinion in the street. But so what if I am in interracial relationships? I'd be walking down the street with my partner, or even a friend, and I'd see someone looking at us… I'd wonder if it was them [the note writer], and I'd think, "Good! I'm glad they're watching us!".

Her perception that Observatory "is not conducive" to the note's sentiments, highlights the space as one of racial liberation, and she affirms this liberation in her pleasure at being observed in interracial intimacy, as partaking in diversity optimism.

The encounter with the note is a proxy for the encounter with the note-writer. Even for white women, implicated in the note through their relationship to "black-black men", the racist *gaze* of the note-writer is felt, long after the possible *seeing,* the feeling of being watched, racisms touch, lingers (Ahmed 2004b; Tate 2014). However, Observatory is seen as a space that is "conducive" to interracial desire, and this allows Dani to respond to the lingering dis-ease in a way that is empowering.

The various experiences of men's attention shared by fems demonstrate that to frame street encounters and public life only through the rubric of gendered oppression is to ignore the specificity of place and person, but also of how sexuality is always racialised. The diversity in experience highlighted here and in the previous sections necessarily reflects the diversity of fem identities. Perhaps the examples of fems' tolerance of, or even desire for men's attentions in this chapter, however specific and contextual, is because it includes identities that have typically been excluded from discussions of gender in public that focus on women, as a homogenous and exclusive (middle-class, white or cis) category.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented a range of subjective positions and experiences that are often denied or glossed over in discussions of street encounters that focus on gendered oppression only. These experiences demonstrate street encounters not as a specific site of gendered harm, but as one form of the multiple "social collisions" we experience in everyday life (Gardner 1995). Such collisions bring our own world views, and indeed our own views of ourselves into contact with others, in ways that not only shape our sense of space – such as our perception of safety – but also our sense of self, the ways in which we feel (in) our bodies, including in relations to the

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bodies that (do or do not) desire us. These social collisions are inherently affective, and we are set on course by historically embedded structures of feeling, such as white fear and diversity optimism. This renders the experience of embodiment as deeply intersubjective, shaped not simply through our own being and feeling but also through others, and our experiences of the city space, and the meanings of race, class, language, gender and sexuality within it.

By unpacking these varied classed, raced, sexualised and gendered experiences I have demonstrated that questions of desire are central to debates about gendered access to public space, the expression of desire and sexuality, freedom and oppression. Through residents' accounts in this chapter, men's attentions can be seen to operate on varied feminine subjectivities, with considerably different effects, opening the way for understandings of gender in public space that are not tied to feminine vulnerability. Such an analysis also does not take gender as a singular unit of analysis for understanding the experiences of fems in public space, divorced from the race and class identities inherent to their lives and bodies, and the ways that they may contort or contradict common-sense assumptions about the experiences of feminine subjectivity under the male gaze.

This approach reveals that fems can and do take pleasure from men's attentions, and are not simply passive objects, or even only victims or resistors, but may actively partake in the desirous interactions, employing unspoken and somewhat vague rules about proximity and appropriateness in order to maintain both safety and respectability. The multiplicity of ways that street encounters may be understood and experienced are largely masked by conceiving them only as "harassment" (Fairchild & Rudman 2008; Chaudoir & Quinn 2010; Fairchild 2010; Vera-Gray 2014; Logan 2015) or "intrusions" (Vera-Gray 2014). Analyses that explain away any enjoyment of or reciprocity within desirous public encounters as only self-objectification ignore the simple, and otherwise widely acknowledged, fact that fems are not only sexualised objects, but sexual subjects, albeit with the structures of patriarchal society. By considering how fems negotiate desire in public space in Observatory, I have shifted the emphasis from feminine oppression to interpersonal, (intersectional) time-bound negotiations of (inter)subjectivity through interaction.

Within the historical present, street encounters offer an opportunity to perform one's gender or sexuality, and one's attendant commitment to respectability or diversity, beyond the confines of private life. Whilst street encounters can and do subject fems to scrutiny and objectification, they can also be moments of recognition that can affirm feminine self-identification, including

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in relation to sexuality and race-specific modes of interpreting femininity. Conversely, their absence can be read as signalling a failure in femininity, including through (racialised and gendered) hierarchies that define desirable femininity. In this way hailing from men can be understood as central to the construction of "desired and disregarded bodies" (Dirksmeier & Helbrecht 2015, 490).

The claims of some fems to recognition through street encounters challenge the equivalence or transparency of subject positions, but also demonstrate the ways that understandings of recognition may be intelligible between for example, working-class and class-deviant ciswomen, and trans fems. Both may be excluded from middle-class femininity, and the disdain for street desire inherent to it. This suggests considerable differences between the experiences of those who do or do not find themselves the focus of men's attention in public spaces, beyond the monolith of 'women' centred in the existing gender-based violence focused work on street encounters. The experiences of trans and gender non-conforming people, like those of fems that do not ascribe to global north middle-class notions of appropriate public conduct, demonstrate the significant limits to the explanatory power of gender-based violence analysis of street encounters.

I do not want to deny that many experience street encounters at best as "daily hassles" or at worst as "sexual terrorism" (Vera-Gray 2014, 15 & 31), nor to negate the valid analysis of gendered power in urban public space that such claims bring to life. Nor is this chapter espousing an objectivist view of identity (that people have a true knowable gender, race or other identity) (Cooper 2007a), that underlie ideas of recognition. Instead I see identity as built into the pragmatic moves we make in our daily lives, in order to be seen, or not seen, recognised as one or the other, in order to self-actualise within skewed power dynamics and frameworks of violence. My analysis then, does not undermine the negative portrayal of fems' encounters with men in the street. Instead it demonstrates the complex daily reality of managing others' desires and our own, along with concerns for respectability and safety. Even when safety is not the determining factor in an encounter, fems have a keen sense of what combination of proximity, depth of interaction, gendered roles and un/sexualised language makes an encounter desirable, acceptable or safe for their specific subject position. By contextualising such encounters against various categories of identity and subject positions, I demonstrate how the fearful encounter is but one, important and pervasive, experience, amid a range of other, perhaps contradictory or contentious, perspectives.

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At the same time, such a perspective does not replicate the traditional feminist analysis of gender oppression. A focus on encounters gives us a glimpse of how affects, like white fear or diversity optimism, show up, combine and dissipate with other structures (gender, race, class) in daily life. In the micropolitics of everyday encounters, feelings of fear, oppression, violation and sexual subordination foment alongside and interact with those of desire, attraction and pleasure, maintaining traditional power relations and hinting at transformations. By taking these contradictions seriously, we can appreciate the multiple, complex ways that street encounters, especially those considered normatively negative or sexist, can be both empowering, and can generate the streets as momentarily, non-normatively raced, classed, gendered, or sexualised spaces.

The desirous encounters described by fems in this chapter are fleeting and contingent, and ultimately do not transform the cis-normative heterosexual patriarchal structuring of sexual relations, including in public. However, the very possibility of challenging injustice depends also on being able to challenge the hegemonic schema through which social relations are produced, and to reveal relations that may "have far less or quite different discursive and material [and affective] significance" (Cooper 2007b, 212). In this way, seeing encounters through the lens of desire allows us to see public space not as an unbroken site of men's assaults, but as a network of interactions, wherein individuals manage the structural constraints within which they are placed against immediate and spontaneous expressions of sexuality; where moment by moment fems get a glimpse of how straight (white) men, the most privileged of urban sexual subjects, might experience the city: as "a site of multiple sexual opportunities" (Hubbard 2005, 331; see also Duncan 1996).

In addition, taking the perspective of desire allows us to see inequality in the access and uses of public spaces as a power imbalance, between those who feel entitled to express their desire in public, usually straight cismen, and those who do not, including fems. It deepens our understanding of the "right to the city" – the right not only to what exists, but "an active right to make the city different, to shape it more in accord with our heart's desire, and to re-make ourselves thereby in a different image" (Harvey 2003, 941) – to include its important and pervasive affective implications. That is, what are we entitled to in everyday urban life, and what kind of space(s) do we enliven through urban sociality? From the affective perspective of desire, this raises important questions about the power geometries inherent to street life – not just about whose desire may be expressed publicly given the heteronormativity of social spaces, but also in terms of gendered and class norms about who may desire/be desired by whom, and

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where. It raises the question of whether and how relative freedom to express desire may impact on others' experience of public space, and how such desire may be both constitutive of the everyday street life, and of individuals' ability to partake in it, allowing or disallowing the full and free use of public spaces, and participation in urban life.

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CHAPTER 6: Feeling Strangers: Fem Fears and "Dodgy" Figures

In this chapter I examine the figure of the stranger as described by fems in Observatory. Strangers however, are not real subjects but relational, socially, discursively and *affectively* produced positions (Ahmed 2000). Hence, I am interested in the work that the figure of the stranger does, both for fems negotiating public space, and for the production of public space as "a world of strangers" (Lofland 1973). I argue that the figure of the stranger is central to the ways that fems envision safety and danger and how they manage their experience of urban public space.

In contemporary South Africa, depictions of black immobility, and the perils of black identity can seem passé, even implausible, given the apparent attainment of the 'rainbow nation', particularly in mixed spaces like Observatory. However, I argue that fems rely on notions of the stranger and strangeness that are deeply embedded in the ways that they already make sense of the city, in order to make snap judgements about safety and danger. The figure of the stranger is ingrained in fems' own experiences and the collective histories of urban spaces in South Africa. The identification of strangers through the emotional responses of fear, suspicion, anxiety and discomfort, on the one hand, makes urban fem life more liveable by creating stability in an experience widely characterised by unpredictability. On the other hand, these emotions coalesce into white fear as a structure of feeling that sustains and normalises racialised and racist tropes about who embodies danger and safety, that have been coproduced along with the history of the fragmented city, and that contemporaneously qualify and valorise the experience of fem fearfulness.

By assessing fem people's fears as they are directed at and accumulate around those designated strangers, I am not at all suggesting that these fears are not real, or that they are not grounded in material conditions of gendered insecurity and violence. I am not negating the importance of striving to create spaces that are safe for *everyone*. It is not my aim either to minimise experiences of harm, either physical or psychological. Instead I am highlighting that fear is not neutrally deployed, or rationally parsed out among spaces and people. Fear, indeed any emotion, is "historically, socially, and politically contingent" (Rebotier 2011, 105).

Every day, through countless acts of (mis)recognition, the "stranger as figure" (Jackson et al. 2017) or "stranger fetishism" (Ahmed 2000) is produced. As the previous chapter demonstrates, it is not language alone that structures the possibilities of subjecthood or interpellates the

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subject (Althusser 1971), but feelings, conveyed through the language of glances, touches, movements, gestures and words, but also in atmospheres and tensions. Similarly, as Butler (1990) argues, subjectification is iterative and both produces and perpetuates particular subject formations, including how, through feelings of threat, fear or stress, fems summon the stranger to life.

Race is central to the production of strangers in South Africa, but operates alongside class, gender and being in or out of place. Fem people relied on a range of historical and contemporary race-based tropes, which are tied into and supplemented with stereotypes about sexuality, gender and class, in order to make sense of encounters, and to pre-empt their relative desirability, or danger, before they occurred.

Childhood Fear and "These Black Boys"

Most of us have been taught from childhood not to speak to strangers. In these parental fears, conveyed to us early on, is the spectre of the unknown, usually male, figure, that poses risk, that embodies danger (Allen 2004). Across race and class, and from both rural and urban settings, fems reported a range of cautionary messages from parents and other adults that established the looming threat of the stranger in their early lives. In the South African context, perhaps more than most places, this figure, in addition to being gendered, is also deeply racialised and sexualised.

Take for example Rehana, a 23-year-old Indian bisexual ciswoman student who was raised by her grandparents in a small interior town in KwaZulu-Natal. Her grandparents, Indian Muslims, were religious and felt responsible for Rehana's moral and physical wellbeing. In this regard they saw keeping her away from boys, particularly black boys, as essential. Rehana explains their rationale as follows:

> If I can be really blunt, there's intense racism in my family against black people. Black men are always seen as very… in very particular ways, as violent and… you know, you get raped. So, that type of thing. I mean, as I got older, not specifically… it was always hinted at very subtly. There was always, kind of, the sexualized violence that would get hinted at. They would… Like, once, my granddad said to me… oh, there was a boy in my class- Lungelo. We were really close, and he was this black kid. He lived a couple of blocks away from me, which was surprising in that neighbourhood. But it was fine because his dad, or his mom, was a doctor or something. I came home one day, and I was talking to my granddad saying that it was his birthday, this guy's, Lungelo, so I wanted to get him something. And he was like, "These *black boys*, they only *want certain things* from you. You should be careful." So, things like that. It was never very explicit, overt. (emphasis added)

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Whilst norms about what can and cannot be said about sex and sexuality prevented Rehana's grandfather from being "very explicit" about the dangers of black men, his meaning was clear – black boys' sexuality presented an imminent threat to adolescent Rehana. These fears are not novel but map onto existing historically established ideas about black male hypersexuality and predation (Lewis 2011; Moolman 2013; Pande 2017). In fact, as already outlined in Chapter 3 with respect to white fear, the fear of black male sexuality and the need to protect white women were explicit and recurring feeling rules in the development of the segregationist, white-supremacist logic of apartheid. In the hierarchy of race created by apartheid, it is unsurprising that the racist concerns of Indian and coloured people also subtend this structure of feeling.

However, this may be less expected from a black man. Dineo's father, a black man himself, was more direct in expressing his opinions, about the sexual predation of black men. Dineo, a 25-year-old black ciswoman, explains how both her mum and dad made "spaces feel very unsafe" because of their anxiety about men's intentions with their daughters:

> But my mum didn't allow us to take public transport. She was very… like, afraid of *our own people*: "But you don't know!" (mimicking her mother's voice) And even my dad… […] That's where the strictness comes in. He didn't want me to go out. If I go out anywhere: "Come back at six or seven." I mean, that's when the party starts! So, one thing is my parents made spaces feel very unsafe, especially in terms of males. As I said, we didn't take public transport because, like, "We're gonna get raped. We can't walk there." […] Like, "We're gonna get raped. Don't take a taxi." My dad would be like, "You know how these boys are. I don't want you to go out." (emphasis added)

Whilst she does not spell it out here, her reference to "our people" and the dangers of men on public transport and mini-bus taxis[28] clearly suggest that though her parents may have been concerned about men in general, they put some emphasis on men of colour, particularly black men.

As a child Dineo and her family lived in the Afrikaans town of Bloemfontein. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, they were among the first middle-class black families in the white suburbs of the town. This led to Dineo's experience of the space being characterised both by a feeling of

[28] In South Africa "taxis" usually refer to mini-buses that transport people for a fee. Although the taxis are privately owned and operated, they constitute the largest proportion of daily commuter transport.

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safety and wellbeing at their improved middle-class circumstances and white environs, and by outright racism.

> Because whiteness was always something to aspire to. Sometimes you'd be like, "Oh, my God, *at least they're talking to us*!" And these boys are being rude as fuck, you know what I mean? And it's strange, though, because I would be around black men... I'd walk around the street, and I would be more scared of a black man that won't say anything than a white boy who's swearing at me. In Bloem[fontein], growing up. Definitely… like, a black hobo who's walking around and not saying anything or black guys… and then *I'm scared* of them, but these white boys… like, "Oh, my gosh. *They're calling me Kaffir* [racist slur for black person]." And they're shooting… pellet guns. Things like that happened so often. Now that I think about it, I think if someone would do that to me, I'd fuck them up. Like, on a real level. But we were so, "Argh man, *white boys do that*. If you go to their space, expect that." […] But we felt like we're living nicely because of the fact that the space is white and feels safe. (emphasis added)

This excerpt should be read against the context of Dineo's emergent black middle-class family seeking legitimacy and belonging in a new spatial and political landscape. Dineo describes seeking the attention of the white boys, irrespective of the kind of attention she was getting, and was relieved that "at least they're talking to us" even when they were being overtly racist or violent. Within transitioning South Africa, racist behaviour from white people, reluctant to accept new-comers into spaces reserved for them under apartheid, is still ordinary. The neighbourhood is seen as "their space", white space, even though this was where she also lived. There racism was expected, even commonplace, and perhaps endured as part of the growing pains of a new democracy.

What is really remarkable is that the behaviour of these boys was not felt as threatening. Perhaps this is because young girls are often accustomed to the bullying and harassing behaviour of boys. The phrase "Argh man, white boys do that", echoes the familiar attitude and phrasing 'boys will be boys'. In this instance however, it casually excuses both gendered and racialised transgression. Additionally, because "whiteness was always something to aspire to" it may be absolved of wrong-doing, coded as already safe. Dineo and her family's relationship to their new neighbourhood was one of diversity optimism, much like that described in Chapter 4. Within diversity optimism, they hoped to get along with difference, and overcome segregation physically and psychically. This optimism is an orientation toward the good life, as they envisioned it, where inclusion in the space and proximity to whiteness meant that they "were living nicely". Given the context of white violence, both state and individual, against black people in apartheid South Africa, this attitude exhibits an immense faith, and affective investment in

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'the rainbow nation' and the need to forgive and forget, but also faith in the protection of geographical and class position.

But not all difference affirms optimism. By contrast, the black man, despite his inaction, his distance "across the road", is already coded as dangerous. This may be because Dineo sees him as out of place in the white suburb, ironically similar to the way she may be perceived by the white boys. The stranger is widely understood as an outsider (Simmel 1950 [1908]; Bauman 2000), a figure which both enfolds the unknown, and which has become proximal - moving from *there* to *here*, *far* to *near.* In the South African context this movement was literalised during apartheid. By segregating black people, and other people of colour, to race-specific townships, black people had to migrate daily or more periodically to and from townships to white centres to serve white industries and homes. This segregation was premised on centuries of constructing black people as embodying dangers of all kinds for the white minority. Through white fear, they were isolated as the locus of disease (Saunders 1979; Wilson & Mafeje 1963); their sexuality demonised as rapacious, leading to miscegenation and white genocide (Klausen 2016); their cheap labour threatening the jobs of poor whites (Teppo 2004), and efforts toward equality constructed as insubordination and terrorism. As black women were employed on a large scale as domestic workers, black men specifically were *not supposed* to be within white centres, and certainly not residential areas, where they represented danger to the white society. Achille Mbembe & Sarah Nuttall (2004) assert that "post-apartheid South Africa has given a new centrality to the figure of the migrant [worker] in general and that of the stranger in particular". An inverse to the flaneur, the lone white urban male explorer, who is racially unmarked and whose anonymity proffers freedom not scrutiny (De Certeau 1998 [1980]), the mobile black man is hypervisible, the central focus of personal and collective regimes of surveillance, control and security.

Dineo's descriptions move between interpersonal and spatial registers, the comparison of dangerous black with safe white bodies parallels that of dangerous black with safe white spaces. Dineo's description of the warnings she received and the fear she experienced visiting her cousins in a township of Bloemfontein, provides a clear contrast to the suburb she lived in:

> We have cousins in Bloem[fontein] that lived in the township. We'd go sleep over there… my mom's sister's kids, they're boys. And it would be like, "If they send you to the shop, go with your cousin. You must have a male…" So, even in that, it was like *I need a black male figure to protect me from the other black males*, 'cause if I'm alone and my cousin is not there, then what are *those people* going to do to me? (emphasis added)

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Dineo's experience points not only to the relationship between the construction of racialised bodies, black and white, migrant worker and flaneur, but also to the way that this relationship is spatially constituted through the contrast of the township and the suburb. Significantly, Dineo's family straddles the divide between black township urbanity and middle-class suburban mobility. Her parents' investment in their new middle-class lives includes the habitus of white fear focused on black others, and townships. However, it also demonstrates their desire to protect their daughters from the dangers that they see as inherent to township life, to black life.

This dynamic is also illustrated in Lesego's experience. Lesego, a 24-year-old black ciswoman medical student was raised by her mother in a white suburb of Johannesburg, where they were one of a few black households. Because her mother worked, she was sent to her grandparents in the township of Soweto for school holidays. On the one hand this meant that she would not be at home unsupervised, but on the other her mother was anxious about her being in a less safe neighbourhood:

> Not so much [warnings] in [suburb name], than when I went to visit my grandparents [in Soweto]. She [mother] would, basically, just *encourage me not talking to weird people*. Weird being *that random guy across the street* who'd always say 'Hi'. There were a few people who you were told to stay away from. Most of them lived in the neighbourhood. […] I think the stereotypical way of looking at it would… like, [suburb] is a very white area and Soweto is a black area. *A lot of violence is expected in black spaces*. You need to be aware of it there. Whereas in [suburb], your neighbours are grandparents of sixty or something. There aren't any serious eminent threats there. (emphasis added)

In the suburbs, Lesego's mother did not caution her children about using public space or interacting with strangers, implicitly conveying that is was safe. By contrast, on occasions when Lesego visited her grandparents in Soweto, her mother would always warn her against talking to "weird people", "random" men, outside of her grandparents' home. That townships are inhabited by "weird people" and the suburbs are not, echoes the othering of both bodies and spaces outside of whiteness. As there are "grandparents of sixty or something" in the suburbs, so too are there in Soweto, and likewise there are of course, young "random" men in the suburbs. The real difference is affluence, employment, adequate infrastructure, and competent policing in white suburbs. However, by reducing this difference to race, whiteness is constructed as the norm, benign even benevolent, and blackness as strange and dangerous – "weird".

The idea of the stranger originating in the townships persisted even in instances where participants themselves resided in a township, because whilst the physical distance of the stranger may have been overcome, the relative social, cultural, ethnic, or economic forms of

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distance that ground the position of the stranger remained in place (Cooper 2007a; Jackson et al. 2017). Cal, a 31-year-old coloured gay "feminine man", lived for a time in the coloured township of Mitchells Plain as a child. However, for him the distance between him and township identity was maintained by his attending a historically white school in the suburbs, his family's choice to speak only English and not Afrikaans like most other people, and his parents' insistence that he not mix with their neighbours. He was also inundated by warnings about the dangers of strangers in the township:

> You know, Mitchells Plain was the type of place… my mother didn't grow up there. She was from this side [the city centre]. As for my father… I mean, they were displaced from District Six. My mother was the one, always, to be like, "Don't open the door for strangers!" […] When that happens, it was always my mother… up in our faces about security and things like that. So, it was always like, "Don't open the door for strangers." Things like… my sister had to carry the house keys during the day. So, I was always conscious about, when in Mitchells Plain, I was always conscious about security and, always, to never wander off alone. That's why I didn't even like staying there, because… even at that age, six… seven, I didn't like it.

Cal sees his family as not from the township. Whilst they see themselves as out of place in the township, they are not the strangers, but are beset by fears of strangers who are from there. For this reason, "even then", and thus still now, Cal associates the spaces beyond the city centre with fear. That Mitchells Plain's residents, like his parents, were all removed from elsewhere, particularly District Six, does not cross his mind. Again, fear of the stranger and the strange space of the township is outside of history. White fear persists in the present, delinked from its colonial and apartheid genealogy. However, Cal's fear is also based in class difference, where his relatively middle-class family feels out of place and anxious in working-class Mitchells Plain. This example shows then how (white) race fear and class fear, as well as how white privilege and class privilege map so easily onto each other in South Africa.

For fems of colour there is an unspoken distinction between the black men we know and the men we don't. Dineo points out this contradiction, when talking about her father's constant warnings, making her wonder if perhaps as a young man he was predatory toward girls:

> So, my dad's always been… and I know it's strange "Watch out for black boys!" (mimicking her father's voice). And I know… I'm like, maybe it's because of the way you thought at that age, "Where you, you were like a predator?" Why is it [that you're saying this]?

This contradiction between trusting the black men you know and fearing the ones you do not is one that fems of colour must manage constantly in determining danger and safety in public

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spaces structured by white fear. For Dineo this has led her to be more sceptical of the men in her own life, ironically including her father. Here the invocation of dangerous blackness threatens the position and authority of her father. She questions his knowledge of black men's dangerousness as coming from his own dangerousness.

Nevertheless, parents continue to exert an influence into adulthood particularly for young women, in ways that perhaps sons are not subject to. Dineo for one is still continuously warned against the dangers of public spaces by her parents.

> Even to this day, if I go home, he's like, "If you're gonna come back after twelve, then you're disrespecting me. Do you want to get raped? Must I go fetch you in a body bag? When will you learn?" […] There's this thing… even my mom, I'd tell her, "Oh, I'm walking in Obs." she'd say, "Don't walk alone! Even if it's around the corner, take an Uber." And I'm like, "Mom, are you serious?" My parents have this… I think they've instilled a fear.
>
> TM: Anxiety…
>
> Yeah, like, constantly. But if I say I'm with whoever, "Oh, so it's a white person?" And I'd be with Daniel or whatever. And if I'm with my black friends, they'd be like, "Are you guys safe? Where are you guys?" It's the strangest thing.
>
> TM: But when you're with a white person, they worry less about safety?
>
> Yes, definitely! It's so strange.

Here the threat of the violent black stranger is again shifted from a focus on unknown men to Dineo's "black friends". The questions "Are you safe? Where are you guys?" suggests that by being with other black people, and likely then in black spaces, Dineo is being exposed to the dangers of blackness, perhaps the same dangers that her parents endeavoured to keep her away from in her childhood. Further, the question of rape raises the spectre of white fear, and the vulnerability of fems, now including people of colour, to the dangers of black male sexuality.

Within the particular conditions of South Africa's transition to democracy, fem people of colour within middle-class or emerging middle-class families, describe a curious relationship to white fear and its object, the stranger. Edward Said (1995 [1978], 54), sees all identities as "imaginative geographies" that are set-up through "boundaries in our own minds; 'they' become 'they' accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from 'ours'". For Rehana, Dineo, Lesego and Cal these boundaries, set-up in childhood, do important work.

On the one hand, their families are suddenly presented with the possibilities of their class position under the new dispensation. They partake of white society, living in previously white areas, going to previously white schools, taking on a white habitus. Part of this habitus is white

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fear and the practice of othering exemplified by the attitudes of their parents. It is a process of differentiating themselves from dangerous others – people of colour, particularly men, who do not share their class position, and who represent a blackness that they do not identify with. By pointing to the other, who is not like 'us', by rendering them abject or abhorrent, we are distancing ourselves from abjection, and the parts of our own identity that we want to suppress (Kristeva 1991[1988]). Othering emerges as a psychic and social break with particular racialised pasts, that their parents have lived through, but hope to isolate them from.

At the same time, during a period of instability and pervasive fear, affixing danger to black male bodies, and within black spaces, serves to secure families of colour in the tenuous position of making homes and lives in white spaces, creating safety and predictability invested in the white habitus that represents their improved optimistic future. That the fear of the other, and indeed the other within, is directed at the black man is unsurprising. Nor is it surprising that this threat is seen as especially potent for young ciswomen, a threat to girls' moral and bodily integrity. This fits neatly within a history structured by an affective relation of white fear, where black male heterosexuality has been a major site for the exercise of anxieties of all kinds, personal and political (Scully 1995).

Separated from the particular histories of black exclusion in urban centres, black men are not seen as becoming dangerous (through marginalisation for example), but, through an affective structure of white fear, are constructed as always already a universal sign for danger (Ahmed 2000). This imaginative geography provides a formative map of safety and danger in the urban environment, informing fems' sense of themselves relative to the other bodies they may encounter in their childhood, and frequently in their adult lives.

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Racing the Stranger

As adults, fems frequently relied on these well-established ideas about race, gender and sexuality to make the distinction, between who was a stranger and who was not. This shaped their experience of Observatory as a place of safety or danger as well as their encounters within it.

In some cases, strangers were associated with a general fear of crime. For Fami, who is coloured, 58 years old and has lived in Observatory almost half her life, strangers were plainly those who did not belong in the neighbourhood, those who were "coming from outside" to commit crime in Observatory. In describing the neighbourhood, Fami, a coloured ciswoman, constantly

compared contemporary Observatory to the way it was "before". I had the sense that she was purposefully avoiding talking about race, and I found myself interpreting her silences, facial expressions and body language as much as the words she was using. It became clear to me, that "before" broadly referred to her early years in Observatory, when the neighbourhood was still almost exclusively white, and she was one of a handful of coloured residents. She describes the contrast between now and before as follows:

> "It's very very very different" she says, "so different from the way it was before". (I nod) "It was very safe. So safe. You didn't have all *these* things. (She's scowling, it's clear these things are very bad) The people were different. The houses, the whole place. I sit sometimes, you know have my drink, just to relax, a little drink, there by the Lower Main Road. You can see it's all different. The crime was not like now. I dunno, you hear all the time about these break-ins. It was so safe before. People didn't smoke all those things, tik and all that. Sure, there was some stealing, the people would break the cars and take the cassette players. They smoked some dagga [marijuana], mandrax, those things that people had before. Now I don't walk at night anymore, not late. Before, I would come even 4 'o clock in the morning. And it's not the strollers [coloured homeless people] mos! They are harmless. They might harass you for something. Just a bit of money. Ok some of them (She trails off. Does she want to say some of them might be involved in crime?). But it's not them. It's the others. It's not the ones who come from the houses, the Observatory houses either. It's those who come from Salt River, Woodstock, Manenberg. It was all open. You didn't have these things, the park is closed, the houses are closed (she motions to the driveway gate). That park, there by the dogs, there used to be so many people. Veeeeerry many people. All sitting there. It was so different before. People trusted each other. But it's not the place, it's the people. The people were different."
>
> TM: How?
>
> Families, more families.
>
> TM: White families?
>
> Ya. (She says it as though I am asking something very stupid, she is scowling. Either this is self-explanatory, or so insignificant a detail I shouldn't bother asking. Then she stops and seems to reconsider.) But you know it was before. Before Mandela times. Apartheid days, so Observatory was mos white".

For Fami, the Observatory that she cherishes, that has been the most beneficial for her, and that has enabled her to leave homelessness and poverty, is a benevolent white Observatory in line with diversity optimism. Her acknowledgment that it was "apartheid days, so Observatory was mos white", does vaguely acknowledge that whiteness in the area was maintained through restrictive legislation.

She also clearly attributes what she considers Observatory's decline to outsiders, from coloured neighbourhoods, when she says: "It's the others. It's not the ones who come from the houses,

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the Observatory houses either. It's those who come from Salt River, Woodstock, Manenberg" – all coloured neighbourhoods. She does not express any irony that she herself comes from Manenberg, and her right to live and make a home for herself in Observatory is not diminished by her feeling that Observatory should be protected from those coming from "outside". These discrete subjective positions are congruent in Fami's understanding of her identity and the space, yet rely on different languages of life. For example, Fami's right to live in Observatory, which she sees as innately white and pleasantly so, is based on her own historical dispossession, her right to seek a better life in the city centre and, the necessity of homelessness and sex work; whereas her nostalgic assertions about "before" rely on ideas about Observatory as a white suburb of families, and the need to keep outsiders from the townships out. Her historical belonging serves (to some extent) to legitimise her presence in Observatory, and at the same time to differentiate her from, and delegitimise others coming in from "outside".

Some residents were more specific in their racialised concerns about safety. In the Western Cape, where half the population identifies as coloured (StatsSA 2014), racialised fear about strangers is stratified between concerns about black men and coloured men. Where, for some, the former is associated with sexual deviance, coloured men are associated with gang-related crime (Salo 2003; Jensen 2006).

Simangele, a 22-year-old black ciswoman student from Johannesburg, often feels like a racial minority in Observatory, as discussed in Chapter 5. She remarks that she has never been around as many coloured men. She is particularly wary of coloured men in public space, because of pre-existing ideas she has about coloured men.

> So, I think, maybe it might be that I… also because there are a lot of stereotypes about coloured people. And where I am from, there weren't many coloured people. But every time… for instance, when I was mugged, the first thing that I was asked is, "Oh, were they coloured?" you know? Like, from back home, and just from other people, in general. And, it was, they were!
>
> TM: Okay. What are the stereotypes that you are aware of about coloured people?
>
> Well, that coloured men, especially, are aggressive and violent… and anti-black.

Simangele's view is indicative of the perception of the coloured man as a "hooligan or thug, lurking around interstitial urban spaces, seizing the moment, exploiting hard-working people and having a propensity for arbitrary violence" (Jensen 2006, 280). Encountering many coloured people for the first time, and feeling like a stranger herself, adds credence to the otherness and danger of coloured men. This view is entrenched when she is mugged, and her friends and family

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all ask if the perpetrator was coloured. The criminality of the coloured man was assumed even before the crime, but the crime confirms it. Significantly, Simangele's example demonstrates the ways that racialised fear and othering do not only rely on a sense of racial hierarchy, and people of colour may equally enforce othering strategies against each other.

The idea of the violent coloured man, motivated by material gain, is in contrast however, to that of the sexually violent black man. This is brought into focus in a conversation with Lydia, a 31-year-old coloured ciswoman, who has worked in the criminal justice system and feels that her professional experience with perpetrators of sexual offences supports wider social perceptions about black male sexuality.

> If it's a black guy I'm always scared, not only for robbing, I always feel like this person may rape me. Do you understand? But also, because I see these things, I worked in criminal court, I know how people are capable of. I feel it's because of the social, just how we are, how we grew up and our environment. So, I'm more scared of seeing that. And I feel that it's a legitimate thing.
>
> TM: When you say black guy you mean like … 'African' black or black as in and coloured guys also?
>
> I mean African black. But *coloured guys I'm also scared because I feel they are going to stab me or shoot me*. I do! It happened to me already [referring to being mugged].
>
> TM: Can I just be clear. When you see black men on the street your fear is that they are going to attack you, rape you, but with coloured guys… there's a difference. Can you explain the difference?
>
> I feel like if I … *The coloured guys I feel they are more after material things*. They're more after material things, that is what they would want from you. And *I feel with black guys, they have issues*, I don't know what issues it is. I feel like they have issues and they would want to get that out. I may be a target. So, I feel scared in that way. I don't really feel threatened in terms of they are going to rob me when it comes to black guys.
>
> TM: When you say they have issues, do you want to explain what you mean?
>
> Rejection. I think it's a social thing. Maybe they were rejected by some women or something. They want to feel powerful or something. It could be, it could be a person they think is not…, even if its white, girl or coloured girl, or even if it's a black girl who is looking like she has more. (emphasis added)

Thus, for Lydia, encounters with men of colour are often viewed as threatening. Although she perceives both coloured and black men as a threat to her physical safety, from coloured men this threat is located in their coveting of her personal property, for black men it is located in their coveting of her gendered body as way to enact masculinity. Here Lydia is alluding the pervasive view of wounded black masculinity, where the disempowerment and emasculation of apartheid, and current unemployment and poverty might motivate black men to rape (Dosekun

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2007; Ratele 2008). This once again comports with the history of white fear and the black man as covetous of the white, and now also the middle-class (cis)woman of colour's body.

Parallel to fear about black men and danger more broadly, fems also expressed fears about black men from other African countries. In South Africa, Africans from other countries are frequently maligned as criminals (Akokpari 2001; Neocosmos 2006), seeing concerns about black men being extended from the roving migrant worker to the African foreigner. From the late 1990s until perhaps six years ago, there has been an increasing presence of Africans from other countries, specifically men, in Observatory (Peck 2012; Peck & Banda 2014b). This demographic shift has also affirmed the structure of white fear.

When fems mentioned African immigrants, they were thus often cited as a source of fear. For example, continuing the conversation about how she feels Observatory is less safe "now" than it was "before", Fami singles out African immigrants as the cause of the problem, particularly those she understands to be Nigerian:

> I am telling you when years go by, now I can see Observatory become now not Observatory. A year or two after that so it become ninety, ninety-four, five, six, seven, eight, two thousand. […] I can still remember that was, when we saw these people coming into Observatory, we was like what are they doing here but we didn't know, border was open, they could jump in […]
>
> And, I am telling you when [friend] and a lot of people decide to move out when it start, when the Nigerians come in. They was maar [but/just] living here around us and then was they start come here – I have got nothing against them – the people's houses was break in, the people's cars was stealing and a lot of things.

Fami's description of "a lot of people decid[ing] to move out" is alarmist but may be somewhat accurate in reflecting the anxiety that residents feel about people from other African countries. Peck (2012, 97-98) also noted an overwhelmingly negative attitude to Nigerians or those perceived to be Nigerian, saying "they are rarely discussed as academics or students and they are almost exclusively discussed as 'problems' in Observatory" (97-98). A black man resident wirily tells me when discussing resident's fear of (perceived) Nigerians: "Nigerian is just shorthand for *big* black man, *dark* man." That is, Nigerian has become a sign for stranger.

Whilst the considerable demographic shifts in Observatory in the mid 2000s was in part due to the in-migration of people from other African countries including Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia (see Peck 2012; Peck & Banda 2014a; Peck & Banda 2014b), there was also a steady increase in black South Africans, including students and young

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people seeking new prospects in central Cape Town (as described in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4). Thus, what Fami may be describing is the movement of black people into Observatory, an area previously reserved for whites, and that coloured people like herself historically had some access to. However, because of the affective structures of xenophobia, her fear is tied to bodies she perceives as Nigerian.

Other fems directly expressed concern about the sexualised threat of foreigners, not dissimilar to that associated with black South African men. For example, Oscar, a 29-year-old black "feminine man" describes what he calls the "West African man phenomena", wherein he felt that those men who were especially sexually aggressive were typically West African, which he identified by "the way they're talking or by the way they're built". Liezel, a 22-year-old white student, also tells me that she does not like encountering "big black men", and then amends that to include all "big men". These descriptors immediately recall caricatured images of large African men, rooted in colonial stereotypes and honed through white fear (Lewis 2011; Moolman 2013).

In contrast to the descriptions of relative sexual and gendered freedom in Observatory offered by gender non-normative fems like Oscar, Quin, and Elle, in the previous chapters, Liezel, who identifies as a "straight same-sex practising ciswoman" explains that she feels anxious about being affectionate with her partner in the neighbourhood, because of the presence of black men.

> And it's also again, it's funny because it' also very racialised anxiousness I feel. Me and M [partner] we've spoken about it where you know that discourse. Discourses around African homosexuality has been so strong and the ideas of it being un-African – even though we all know it's not un-African when we're really going deep into it – it feels so present. You know what I mean? And reading all these actually exotified accounts of like correctional rape and all this shit is frightening. And so it becomes complex in that feeling of *who is watching us*. So, if I'm sitting in Hello Sailor [restaurant] *I don't give a fuck, you know*. (emphasis added)

Liezel references both discourses about the rape of black lesbians by black men in South Africa (Judge 2017), and the unAfrican-ness of homosexuality (Awondo et al. 2012); two widely recognisable tropes in what Melanie Judge (2017) refers to as the "blackwashing of homophobia". This refers to the ways that discourses about homophobia-related violence constitute the subjectivities that enact or experience violence, such that homophobia in South Africa is seen as the domain of black people. Certainly for Liezel, black men on the streets of Observatory embody the threat of homophobia. By contrast, Hello Sailor, a small bistro and

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coffee shop, represents a reprieve from this threat. Waitrons are typically tattooed, have asymmetrical haircuts, and skinny jeans, and the space is decorated with vintage sailor paraphernalia. They serve American-style barbeque, artisanal coffee, craft beer and gin. That is, the space is exemplary of white, global hipster consumptive and aesthetic practices (there is a very small literature on this topic but see Hill 2017; Gilson 2017 for examples). For this reason, the bistro is a familiar space for Liezel, referencing both global cosmopolitanism synonymous with sexual tolerance (Puar 2007; Oswin 2008), and the safety of whiteness (Judge 2017). Liezel's experience is both a micro-manifestation, and perpetuation of the global narrative that sees liberal whiteness, and its concomitant spaces (continent, country, suburb and coffee shop), as the guardian of queer freedom, and produces homophobia as located in the black body and its locales (continent, country, township and street).

When I press Liezel on the obvious racial and even xenophobic connotations of her fear, she concedes that there is an element of suspicion of men from other African countries.

> So, I think there's a-there's a lot of reserv- I-I-I don't interact a lot with umm...say big black men. If I can put it that way. Particularly like intimidatingly big people (Laughing) And also like...and I feel almost like the same with white men – big white men. […] I don't like big men (Laughs)
>
> TM: Does the fact that those guys on that patch are foreign men also-
>
> Yah. So-yah. I-it plays-it definitely plays a- It plays a role I think, and again because a lot of stereotypes, and also because of real experience. Like M [partner] was in an Uber and this [foreign] man kept telling her to-like she must marry him and go to- take her to Denmark and to Denmark, and she was feeling uncomfortable and then he stopped the Uber at he – he sees police and he's like: "Don't tell them this is an Uber, tell them this is me giving you like a free ride. Please don't tell them it's an Uber." And then like that's just like...not nice. Not fucking okay.

This incident should be contextualised against Liezel and M's experience and fear of homophobia. Liezel describes feeling constantly anxious about having their sexuality known in Observatory, and in public in general, where "you always look around to see who's seeing". In the story of the cab told by Liezel, M did not feel comfortable telling the driver that she was not interested in marrying him and that she was in a relationship with a woman. Liezel does not mention the nationality of the driver, in fact she does not know it. But her description evokes the image of the harassing or violent black foreigner impressing his conservativism on the liberal feminine European subject (Haldrup et al. 2006; Haritaworn 2015). For Liezel, the feeling of structures in the encounter is overwhelmingly gendered, and the gendered vulnerability of M's position, including her fear of homophobia, forecloses other readings of the situation. However,

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the driver's appeals to be taken to Denmark, and his concern, perhaps even fear, about being stopped by the police suggests his relative insecurity in South Africa, given both social and state xenophobia, which inform his "not nice" behaviour.

For Liezel, white fear combines with newer fears about the homophobia of black men (Haritaworn 2015; Judge 2017). Liezel's dis-ease about the perception of homosexuality as unAfrican comes to rest in the body of the foreign African cab driver, whose request for marriage both confirms his heteronormativity and activates fears about his homophobia, even though the topic of homosexuality is never addressed. Liezel may well have reason to be cautious, but her interpretation conforms to existing analyses of street encounters understood as negatively felt interactions that rely solely on the gendered body, and overlook the ways that structures such as class, race and nation-state inform the material and recognition power of different bodies (McNay 2008). Again, we are reminded that the black man's body cannot incur violence, but instead violence inheres to his body: he is always already violent.

Simangele, Lydia and Liezel's fear of encountering black men in public spaces is not premised on the stranger as someone not encountered before, or unknown. In fact, each of these accounts demonstrates an intimate knowledge of the stranger (Ahmed 2000). These deeply known, deeply felt notions are communicable across space, generation and individual, so that fems of different racial, class and geographical backgrounds share notions of the stranger that are tied into globally pervasive ideas about strange men. Significantly, these global others are imbued with local content: the colonised black man as hyper-masculine, sexualised and violent; the African man as homophobic, conservative, sexually violent; and the coloured man as gangster, motivated by material gain, armed, excessively violent.

However, the figure of the stranger gains credibility through fems' specific life histories and subject positions. Particular life experiences, such as (not) coming out, or being mugged, collide with these wider affective structures that shape strangeness in wider contexts, to produce fem subjects that have an acute sense of their own vulnerability, based on their specific intersecting histories and subjectivities, but ironically homogenise and de-subjectivise those they encounter into a figure, able to contain all their anxieties.

Placing the Stranger

Every day, individuals and identity groups are continuously constituted through encounters, producing them as more or less familiar or strange (Simmel 1950 [1908]). Although fems

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maintained a range of concerns about black men and coloured men, they did not avoid all men of colour, but instead made judgements encounter by encounter. They used a range of visual readings that position the stranger, which continually open up past iterations of place and identity (Amin 2008; Wilson 2011). These readings were not always reliant on skin colour or race alone. Historical understandings about which (raced) bodies belong in the city and which do not, guided by the affective structure of white fear, were combined with interpretations of class and occupation determined through other visual cues like dress and demeanour in order to make judgements about who to avoid and who to encounter.

Often these judgements were vague and relied on fem's affective, felt judgement of the situation and the person in question, rather than any identifiable trait or characterisation. Several participants used the terms "dodgy" to convey the unconfirmed, dubious or suspicious quality of this figure. Valerie, a 26-year-old, coloured ciswoman for example says:

> You see a dodgy character… but it's just that *feeling* of being unsafe. It's difficult. […] Dodgy varies. Someone can be dodgy in an obvious way. But someone could be well-dressed, but you don't know them, why should you be… why should you trust them.

Frequently, a dodgy person was not obviously dangerous, and did not pose an immediate threat, but was disconcerting, and was seen as having the potential to be dangerous. The idea of dodginess as "just that feeling" affirms "emotions as ways of knowing, being and doing" that can fall outside of discursive representations (Anderson & Smith 2001, 8). Nevertheless, these feelings conform to larger logics and may enforce them all the more effectively for their visceral inarticulability. Despite the vagueness, there seemed to be a pervasive common-sense understanding of what constitutes dodginess. Lydia describes how not being able to clearly judge what someone is doing in a given space is central to this understanding:

> Like sometimes there is guys. *I don't want to make this a racial thing man*. Do you know what I am saying? Like when they park there in their cars. Like sometimes these guys sit there [on the Liesbeek river bank]. Ya. So, I jog past them already. And there is maybe two guys sitting in the car. I mean I've gone there, I'm not gonna lie to you, I've gone there and sometimes, when I go through social issues or relationship issues. I would just go down there in my car because I just wanna get away, and get some space, and I don't wanna go too far. So maybe that's why they are there. […] *Or maybe they're there to exchange drugs. Or maybe they're there for I don't know what reason. But I also think maybe it's somebody, some psycho, who is out there to get someone like me.* (emphasis added)

Although Lydia, who is herself coloured, frequently prefaces her stories by telling me "it's not a racial thing", it is always clear that it is men of colour who are under scrutiny for occupying public

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space without a clear motive. When Lydia drives to the Liesbeek river (see Appendix A or map) to sit in her car and clear her head, she knows that the men she sees may be doing the same, or something just as innocuous, but she cannot help wondering what they are up to, and if their apparent idleness is an indication of their (potential) wrongdoing.

When I asked Simangele and Kim, a 30-year-old white ciswoman, how they made judgements about who was a threat and who was not, they similarly called up a clear image of potential danger:

> Simangele: Uhm, like, I don't know… sometimes I just feel bad because I'm profiling other people. But when I see certain people… I don't know. They just look like they're up to no good, and *they're just walking around and you're not sure why.* I don't know, I feel threatened sometimes. Oh, and when I do walk down Lower Main [Road], I do see familiar faces. But it doesn't put me at ease because *they're always just standing around*. And I always wonder *what are they doing*? Like, just outside a building and *there's no store or restaurant or anything*. *That's creepy*.

> Kim: If you say to me, "Kim, imagine a street that looks dangerous." I will tell you there is a dude, that's *chilling*, or on his phone, that's *just sitting*, or just messaging slowly and *walking around*. That's the picture in my mind.

For Simangele and Kim "standing around" or "walking around", with no clear purpose, are red flags. Lydia, Simangele and Kim's anxiety about idle men highlights the pervasive vulnerability and suspicion inherent to fem embodiment captured in the literature (see for example Koskela 1997; Pain 1997; Koskela & Pain 2000; Olstead 2011), and the way that a myriad dangers are sensed in even the most banal interactions and observations.

Simultaneously however, and less apparent in the literature, it points to the way that fem vulnerability can enact racialised, class and gendered oppression. It also highlights how histories and their hegemonic affects are entrenched and transmitted across time and space, and saturate the common-sense logics, or habitus, of everyday life. Kim's description of a man "chilling" as a danger sign – where their relationship to the space is not obviously shaped by work – epitomises an important relationship between black bodies and work in the city. The idea that certain bodies must demonstrate a reason for their presence in the city, assumes that some bodies simply do not belong, and is embedded in the colonial history of the spaces, encapsulated in the obligation to carry passbooks to enter cities. Whilst passbooks are widely associated with apartheid, they were first introduced in 1797 to prevent black people from entering the Cape Colony, and later were adapted to allow for black people to work within the Colony (Union of South Africa 1920). Ultimately this proved an effective means of controlling workers' mobility

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and enforcing contracts as black labour was increasingly desired within colonial and apartheid economies. The 1923 *Natives (Urban Areas) Act* and the 1945 *Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act* respectively made urban areas in South Africa 'white only', required all *black men* to carry passes at all times, and provided for the removal of idle black men.

Thus, work was, and largely still is, the ticket into the city for black people, particularly men. Within this racialised spatial schema, being seen to be standing or walking around was immediate grounds for suspicion. The quintessential urban experience of simply walking, as the flaneur does (De Certeau 1998 [1980]), is not their prerogative. Spatialised knowledges are honed by each contemporary encounter, accruing new features over well-worn topographies to galvanise some bodies as more suspicious, more feared (Caldeira 2000; Ahmed 2004a).

Conversely, being seen to be doing something makes bodies that may otherwise be read as strangers, less strange and more *legible* as belonging. Liezel and Lydia observe that dog walking legitimises presence in public places and removes ambiguity about people's motivations:

> Liezel: You're just people there walking dogs- it's like that shared- like you know what they're doing there, you don't have to wonder like 'What are you doing? Standing on the street corner?' It's like you have a sense of legitimacy being in the street. Because I think that's often like the discourse that comes up a lot is like well what is this person doing in the street? And if they're not clearly doing anything, are they up to no good? You know what I mean?

> Lydia: There will be this occasion when it [fear/anxiety] comes up, but it only comes up when I see there's a car with maybe guys. I mean if it's a man walking with a woman and dog, I'm not gonna feel like… [that].

In another instance, Liezel also mentions dog walking, not only as a visible indication that someone is not up to anything bad, but also as a way to create familiarity and identify with others across difference:

> But then I walk the dog and there's two Malawian guys there […] In the umm... dog park. Walking other people's dogs. And we just chatted and chatted and chatted for the whole forty- but yah, and then I would just chat and chat and chat and that like- there like it just feels sooo comfortable. Like nothing can go wrong there. You know, you're sure people [are] walking dogs.

The role of dog walking to allow people to manage the tensions between the familiar and unknown in public and semi-public spaces has been observed by Sylvie Tissot (2011). She argues that in diverse and gentrifying spaces, dog walking, and the use of dog parks, serves to spatially and socially distinguish people from poor, black and 'deviant' populations, through a shared

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habitus. This is true in South Africa, where dogs were instrumental in colonial and apartheid efforts to dehumanised and disposes people of colour, and where in the current context urban dog walking is seen as a white or middle-class activity (Baderoon 2017).

Even when someone is not visibly doing something, like walking a dog, their reason for being in the neighbourhood can be conveyed through clothing. In this way clothing and demeanour is essential in constructing a *legible* legitimacy in the space. Similarly, Lydia recalls one of a group of young boys slapping her backside but asserts that she wasn't threatened because "they're decent because they either have school clothes on", or "their parents would've taught them something". That they were wearing a school uniform for her is an indication that someone is "decent". Race, class and attire serve to mark someone, at least in the encounter, as familiar and predictable, thus less threatening, or unthreatening, despite the experience of physical harassment.

Similarly, Valerie contradicts her own assertion that "dodginess" is not about appearance, race or class. Here again, she references race and appearance, which seem to indicate class:

> There are these really weird strange people walking the street, you know. Everyone says you have to watch out for these guys.
>
> TM: How do you know they are weird and strange?
>
> I mean it's just, the… I dunno. Intuitively, I guess. But also, you know they are dressed probably not as everyone you see all day. They look dirty dodgy. Black, mostly black or coloured boys.
>
> TM: So, like homeless guys?
>
> No not really, they wouldn't be… kind of between being homeless and being a drug addict kind of guys. Just like dodge. Dodge guys. So, I've never had any encounter or anything with them. But you know, for me, but if I did see them I would avoid walking on the same side of the road as them.

Kim also explains the role of clothing and appearance in her judgement of potential danger:

> I generally… if someone is wearing a UCT or CPUT [local university or college] hoodie, I'm like, "Oh, it's chilled. It's a student." If somebody is *clearly on their way somewhere*. There's a lot of guys who walk down to the station, either *in their work or overall clothes*. They're clearly on their way to somewhere. Like, you've got a reason. You… this is, you're walking through… I think when people are *meandering*. I mean, they'd be on their phone and walking on a slow pace. Then, I get more… like, *"What is your reason for being here?* I don't recognize you. You don't look as if you're going anywhere or doing anything. *Why are you here?* And one of the reasons that you're here could be to hurt me." (emphasis added)

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Here, clothes act as a marker of both class and occupation. The university-branded hoodies convey both that the men are students, and their middle-class identity (or aspirations), which fit into Observatory, a largely middle-class neighbourhood. Here, we might recall Valerie's description of her street friendship with the well-dressed man in the nice car. Like the university hoodies, nice cars and formal dress also denote middle-classness, whereas being on foot references both working-class movement and the stranger on the move through the city streets.

Like walking a dog, the "work clothes and overalls" produce a legible alibi for the poor or working-class body in the suburb. In this way the relative social or economic distance that locates the stranger may be reduced. They may not constitute the imagined community (Anderson 1991): they are not 'us', but they are related to us, through class, or a relation of labour. The socio-spatial legacies of apartheid are vividly apparent in the notion that black men's presence in the city must be accounted for. However, instead of the legal requirement of passes carried on the body, fems require visually legible markers that must be *worn on* the body of black men if they are to move unscrutinised or without eliciting discomfort. The legislation may have changed, but through an affective structure of white fear, the black man continues to show up in the same way again and again.

Whilst stranger fetishism constructs some bodies as irredeemably dangerous, it can also construct others as harmless. Valerie, who is coloured, and Liezel, who is white, both grew up in the Western Cape and describe encounters with coloured homeless men as harmless and funny. Liezel ascribes this to her familiarity with coloured culture and humour, and her ability to use Afrikaans to easily communicate:

> I'm not so afraid I think of interacting with bergies [homeless people] cos most of them are Afrikaans and most of them are coloured. And it's what we would have tru- what my parents would have called Cape coloured. And so, there's a sense of like I know how to speak that lingo, 'cause I've grown up with coloured people on the farm. And, you know, everyone on the farm's coloured. And you talk, and you banter and this like kind of thing. So you know how to banter. And you'd find the humour hilarious. You know what I mean? And it's a thing that you miss when you're, when you're away. More than anything else I think. In terms of like umm...public life. Or on the street life. Or walking the street.

Affirming this harmlessness, Valerie says "It could just be like. You know like the homeless guy is just sitting there and goes like 'Hey sexy lady!', and you're just like 'Hey man, how are you?', you just greet." Valerie goes on to explain that because of his relative social powerlessness he is not perceived as a threat, and his comments and compliments are funny rather than alarming:

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> But it's funny, if it's a homeless person you find it funny, you don't take it offensive or whatever. You know, you just, they're just there, you know. I never think deep. I just don't take it that seriously. But if it's somebody my age, or a waiter, or something, I think it depends on how intimate the contact is, for me they are the homeless, they are there, doing their thing.

Here the figure of the 'bergie' – shortened from 'bergbewoner', mountain dweller in Afrikaans – plays out a historical trope about the good-natured comedic coloured drunkard, widely regarded as a harmless nuisance on Cape Town's streets. Fiona Ross (2015) describes the bergie as a significant anti-type against which respectable colouredness can be defined. The notion of the drunk bergie is related to the history of alcoholism in the Western Cape, a consequence of Dutch farmers paying their farm labourers in wine. The name maintains a negative connotation but is widely used. The jovial and hapless coloured urban drunkard, contrasts with the figure of coloured gangster, or violently hypersexual black man. This represents to some extent the relatively privileged status of coloured people during colonisation and apartheid, who were not summarily excluded from residence in the Cape as black men were, on the basis of their foreignness and danger to colonial society, and particularly to white women. But this also demonstrates the contradiction of colonial representations of men of colour as hypermasculine – savage and sexually violent, and emasculated – or infantile and hapless (Moolman 2013). This latter depiction is perhaps most evident in the figure of the comedically drunk homeless man (or woman). Compare, for example, participants' descriptions with the Cape colonial propaganda in Chapter 3 (Figure 3).

Dineo says that she feels more comfortable when homeless men are around because they act as a buffer between her and other men she may encounter. She also attributes their relative safety with their social position, including in terms of their diminished masculinity:

> I don't know what it is, but I think he's reduced to such powerlessness. There's no way he's even gonna try to hit on me. It's funny because a construction worker who's not necessarily top tier, in our class system, will do the same thing… or a taxi driver, or whatever. It's like… because he still has some sort of power. He's still… with men, it's always... the group and gassing them up, and it's always… with a homeless man, he's usually alone. Also, like, I do a lot of charity work. So, I'm almost… and this sounds so weird, but you know the homeless people in Cape Town. There's quite… especially in the city bowl area, there's quite… you know them. And, also, because I've been interacting with them, I think that's what makes it easier and safer. Also, I feel like… I've never felt "This man is gonna… even if it means stabbing you gonna… ask for money". If I say no, it's a no type of thing. Whereas a man in the streets, or in his car, or whatever, if you say no and then it's a bit "Why?" You say no and it's "C'mon. What are you…?" but it doesn't happen like that with homeless people.

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In contrast to the familiarity of the homeless man, who is unthreatening because he is a particular kind of benign figure and because his constant presence on the street also creates familiarity, some behaviours served to underscore the strangeness of unknown men on the street. For Liezel, gatherings of men, especially when men are conversing in languages she does not understand, also raise red flags:

> There's a feeling around like...around like umm...a gathering of people. On the streets, and particularly I guess the street corner. Which is sad, but which is-which symbolises a type of imagined fear or threat...umm. And I'm thinking about that sp- and I guess then again, it's also the thing- It's not like we all speak English here. You know. So, there's that language element as well. Like, 'They're saying something about me now, but I don't know what they're saying'.

Whilst Liezel states the "gathering" as the source of her "imagined fear or threat", the significant marker of difference between Liezel and the fear-inducing others is language. Whilst she does not say as much, I perceive that she is referring only to people speaking black African languages, both from South Africa and the rest of the continent. The "language element" and the "gathering of people", is implicitly but plainly raced. Significantly, white anxieties about groups of people of colour is not new. Gatherings of people of colour during apartheid was not only a cause for suspicion but illegal (see for example *Riotous Assemblies Act*, 1956, amended 1974 and 1978).

In addition, for Liezel language matters in meeting unknown people and can create neighbours (diversity optimism) or others (white fear). Liezel's recognition that "it's not like we all speak English here", references that her first language is Afrikaans. However, she sees speaking in Afrikaans as a central way for her to relate to and express familiarity and belonging with people she encounters. As discussed above, speaking Afrikaans with coloured people on the street, with whom she shares language and Western Cape-based identity, creates familiarity and complicity across race and class lines. By contrast, Liezel feels alienated by people speaking languages she does not understand, which is experienced as anti-social, against community, because it cuts her off from the sociability and circulation of information on the street. This suggests that she perceives the city as a rightfully English- or Afrikaans-speaking space, and she feels like she belongs because she speaks and understands the language that *should* be spoken. The use of unfamiliar languages is here related to the possibility of threat or harm. "They're saying *something* about me now", rings of a sinister plot, some conspiracy for ill-ends.

Cooper (2007a) suggests that in addition to the fact that strangers have not yet been encountered before – that they are personally unknown – the normative distance of the

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stranger, including linguistic and racial difference, render the figure of the stranger unintelligible. This may be because we cannot position the figure of the stranger: *Who are they? Where are they from? Why are they here?* Ahmed (2000) however argues that the stranger is precisely known, their difference inherent to their identification as strange. For Liezel, the men on street corners are rendered strange by their unintelligibility – her inability to read their bodies and what they are doing there, which she directly links to their literal unintelligibility – that she is not able to understand what they are saying. However, following Ahmed's point, she would not call out a gathering of white, German-speaking tourists standing, conversing intently on a corner. A group of strangers is *not any* gathering of men speaking an unknown language.

By locating danger in strangers, those who are viewed as distant, fems seem to minimise their personal risk by locating violence outside their relatively privileged social worlds (Dosekun 2015). Steffen Jensen (2006, 284), analysing coloured identity specifically, points out that over the course of colonial, apartheid and democratic governance, state security and welfare efforts have divided people of colour up into "those who constituted polite society, notably women and the middle class, and those who were threatening". Similarly for fems, identifying danger in the city requires them to place individuals by reading their gendered and raced bodies in relation to the space, determining their belonging or strangeness in relation to how they occupy the space. On the one hand fems are extremely precise about what constitutes a dangerous man – gathering, linguistic unintelligibly, black foreignness, doing nothing. These all operationalise epistemic regimes based on white fear and class fear – historically consistent, place-specific, universally intelligible ways of knowing, seeing, identifying and addressing danger. They are against black leisure, black sociability, black expression in the central, historically white, neighbourhoods of the city. This is particularly significant in Observatory where popular knowledge and feelings about the space are tied to the notion of diversity.

On the other hand, fems are extremely vague in their use of language and description. A whole range of markers for appearance stand in for class: "between a hobo and a drug addict" for poor; "work clothes and overalls" for working class; "decent", "in uniform", "university hoodie" for middle class. Vaguer still is the common descriptor 'dodgy'. Perhaps in this way, the unspecific, but widely used term 'dodgy' conveys both the known and the undefined nature of the strangeness encoded in the bodies of men of colour in Observatory. 'Dodgy', like 'Nigerian', itself becomes a signification of strangeness, a way of saying "poor man of colour", "black man", "coloured man", without saying it.

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Embodying the Stranger

Fems acknowledged that their strategies for identifying dangerous encounters amounted to profiling but saw it as necessary for managing their own (dis)comfort and safety in public space. Nevertheless, some participants were deeply conflicted about it, and used various strategies to rationalise their racialised and classed readings of men's legitimacy in public spaces.

For example, Kim, a white ciswoman, says that she saw her profiling practices as taking place case by case, as needed, and that she was against universalising or institutionalising profiling. Using the example of the nearby suburb of Rondebosch, she expresses how she feels that everyone should be able to wander around as they choose:

> Rondebosch community improvement district wanted to put up cameras in Rondebosch to spot the criminals before they commit the crime. And, essentially, it was like a racial profiling exercise where it's like if black people are walking around in Rondebosch and they don't look as though they're, either, a domestic worker or they're driving their car into the garage, that's not okay. It sucks that people need a reason for being in a space. I wish it was okay to just, like… Rondebosch has beautiful houses. It's normal to just wander around and just look at people's gardens and like, "Oh, okay, this is cool." Just that whole freaking camera situation in Rondebosch… I think it irked me at the time. And it stayed with me. Every time I walk in Rondebosch and looking at houses, I think of that. It's, like, we can do this and no one… well, no one probably does suspect us, but chances of somebody suspecting us of mysterious behaviour are… [low]

Lesego, a 24-year-old black queer ciswoman, feels deeply conflicted about how specific encounters lead to generalisations. In order to not generalise, she explains that she spatially fixes her perceptions, so that a behaviour or characteristic becomes attached to an individual in a place or context, but not generalised to all people of that group. A snippet of our conversation about avoiding foreign men on a particular strip of Lower Main Road in Observatory, widely associated with African people and businesses, illustrates this point:

> I think the easiest thing for me to do is compartmentalise locations to types of people. So, like for instance I am at a very like naturally and culturally diverse church and so I think it's also part of what makes me aware of the stereotypes, but if I have a certain perception of a Tanzanian guy for instance, and I take that into everywhere I work, walk, I feel like it takes away from the fact that there's so much more than just that one person and so much more than just that one experience. And so how I try to manage that is I'll say this black man of Tanzania, to say it's in this location, completely differently from this black man of Tanzania from that location. And so I'm compartmentalising like that.
>
> TM: Okay. So, this reverts back to the way that you said you feel like it's more people from ... can I say it ... people from other African countries?
>
> Yes.

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> TM: Okay. So more people from other African countries on the Lower Main side who behave in this particular way. But you're not saying that all people from other African countries or all men from other African countries behave in that way in other places?
>
> Ja. That's what I try to do.

By fixing behaviours that she associates with particular people to particular places, Lesego tries to avoid blanket profiling. Whilst she still associates the behaviour with an identity (Tanzanian man), she spatially binds that profile to a location. In this way she can both effect a safety strategy by avoiding Tanzanian men at that location, but also avoid generalising about anyone (not all Tanzanian men everywhere). In this way she reconciles her need to proactively address the vulnerability she feels, as a young gender-queer woman frequently walking alone, and her awareness of how histories of racism, and xenophobia, shape experiences and perceptions of danger.

Similarly, Liezel recognises that her feelings about strange men are rooted in a classed and raced history and tries to minimise their effects. She explains that she cannot help the feelings that these histories, both her own, and that of the country, stir in her, but she can choose how she acts on them:

> So, I've put a little bit of thought in it and I think the feeling I … that I feel happy to walk around in Obs. But I feel afraid also to walk around in Obs and I think it would be naïve to say that I don't because I do. And I think sometimes that fear it's almost, like if I'm feeling slightly compromised or slightly afraid, it's almost like I can never show it, because of two reasons: the idea that you must never show anyone that you're afraid in case they wanna attack you. But more importantly for me, I don't wanna let go of the performance, if you can put it that way, of knowing that I consciously chose to live here, and that is what I chose, to live with people of all sorts. And I could say lower class, I know class doesn't apply necessarily in South Africa, I could say homeless people who seem dodgy if you could put it that way or who feel dodgy. And again, that is so difficult because then I am ascribing to racial prejudice, I am ascribing to class prejudice, I am ascribing to… […]. But then I am all those things. I'm classist, I'm racist. No, I am still, but you don't want the rest of the world to know it.

Liezel is frank about how she experiences her daily engagement with difference as ambiguous, involving feeling both "happy" and "afraid". She says that she is unable to manage her feelings and that she cannot pretend to herself that she is not afraid. Instead she manages her behaviour and appearance in public spaces by suppressing her embodied fear, still a continuous part of her everyday movement through Observatory, to its most subtle and imperceptible form. This is in itself a safety strategy because she does not want potentially dangerous men to know that she

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is fearful and think that she is a soft target. This is a technique widely employed by women in urban spaces (Koskela 1997).

In addition, as described in Chapter 4, this is an example of Liezel's diversity optimism. It is the work she feels she has to do to fit into her surrounds, to not be conspicuously uncomfortable, to not enact or show the racism and classism that she feels constitutes her experiences with the world and that she is trying to overcome. In this way, she sees living through the fear and discomfort as a form of resistance to "white ways of being" in the world. By not sticking to "white comfort zones" but also by suppressing the expression of fear, she feels that she is confronting her racism and classism. She adds, in conversation, that against the feeling of structures of class- and race-based fear, "I am resisting it, I'm protesting it the whole time".

However, not all fem residents were concerned to conceal their fear, nor their wariness of particular men on the street. For example, Valerie describes walking home one night with two friends, a man and a woman. She and the other woman identified someone along the way as "dodgy", and drunkenly decided to run away from him, causing a small commotion:

> We were walking, coming from Obs. We were walking, coming back from [Café] Ganesh. When we came to Lower Main [Road], there was this guy standing. Just in the dark. Generally, they tend to be tall (Laughing). Tall… hoodie. A big hoodie. Just standing on the street, at a random place. Looking around. The space that they're in seems uncomfortable already. So, their behaviour doesn't correlate. Why are standing in the middle of a corner and, every minute, walk up and down. I think sometimes it could be somebody in their own community. It's just the behaviour, at that moment. Yes. Like, they know they're about to do something that they really don't want to do. We saw this dodgy guy and my friend, she was quite drunk, said, "Ooh, he looks dodgy." And I think he heard her. He walked down the road. We walked pretty fast. Next thing, we saw him coming back up. He was walking super slowly. And we were like, "Let's just pretend nothing's happening." There was a guy [their friend]. He was like, "No, don't worry." When we got around the corner, we ran. (Laughing). The guy [their friend] was like, "No!" But I'm telling you, we were running home. He was like, "Girls, what are you…?" […] But then he came running afterwards as well. And he was like, "He's coming! He's coming!" (Laughing) Actually, he was just messing with us, so…

Here Valerie and her woman-friend's strategy was to avoid the man that they perceived as threatening by running away, instead of acting confident as Liezel describes. Their avoidance, particularly because they were drunk, could not have gone unnoticed by the man that they were passing, and ultimately running from.

Stories like Valerie's, from the perspective of fems trying to dodge danger, inevitably raise the question of what the encounter might feel like from the perspective of the men in question.

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That is, how do fems, affected by interactions with men, affect the men of colour that they encounter. Some examples that emerged through the experiences of fems and other Observatory residents are revealing.

One example came from Kim who observed that her strategies to identify and avoid potentially unpleasant or threatening reactions were not going unnoticed by the men she was scrutinising. Just as she was observing strangers, they were also observing her, perhaps also seeing a stranger. She describes one particular encounter:

> It's a bit of a steep walk right up the [Station Road] bridge. I was just walking up and these two guys just standing at this road here and they were looking up. I looked down at them. And they, sort of, looked up *mistrustfully*. I don't know if I perceived that. It's highly possible. Uhm, there was just a thought that came to me in the moment of like: "As much as I'm looking at them and wondering what they're doing here, they could also be looking at me thinking, '*What is she doing here?*'" (emphasis added)

Kim's sudden realisation that the men she had been observing were also observing her, is in fact a sudden awareness that these men are not just "outsides" (Gordon 1997, 73), but have internal lives just as she does, and they are wondering, as she is, what her motives are, what her glance means. Although in this interaction we do not know, we can imagine that just as a lifetime of feminine embodiment has made Kim wary of unknown men, so too are men of colour wary of the suspicions of unknown women, and their possible implications.

I also noted a similar revealing interaction with a young man in my field notes. The encounter took place on a day that I was running late for an appointment and began my walk in a rush. Once I was on my way, I slowed my pace and became occupied with my own thoughts, when I suddenly alerted to how I was being perceived by a passing man:

> I'm feeling a bit more relaxed, and am walking more slowly, thinking about what I need to get done today. I register two men talking intently ahead of me on the sidewalk. One short, one tall. The short one turns and walks down the road away from me. I realise that I'm passing the road I should be walking up. I stop dead in the middle of the road and start to walk toward Main Road. The tall man, who was still walking toward me, sees me abruptly change direction, and calls after me, his Congolese accent clear: "Hey sister! Feel free!", he passes both arms in an ushering motion in front of him, as though he is directing traffic down the road. My heart sinks, I say "No, no. I wasn't thinking." I point toward the mountain, "I should go this way!" He says "Oh. Ok" he sounds unconvinced and walks on. (Field notes, 17-05-2017)

In this moment I am painfully aware that the young Congolese man thought that I had changed direction to avoid him, and possibly also the man he was talking with. My protests that I was

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simply going the wrong way and should change direction, only sound and make me feel as though I am making excuses for my behaviour. From his side, the young man seems extremely sceptical of me. That he feels that he has to declare his safeness, declare that I should "feel free" near him, suggests that he is accustomed both to the perception that fems may hold of him, and to mediating the fear that he inspires.

From the other side of the encounter, Oscar, a 29-year-old Zimbabwean, tells of being profiled. Despite identifying as a feminine man, and his slender figure and stylish androgynous or feminine clothes, he is still often read on the street as simply a black man, with all the negative associations that that identity may hold. Oscar relates two experiences of being seen as a threat. The first encounter was with a woman when he was trying to ask for directions, and the second was with a man when he was walking to the store in the neighbouring suburb of Rondebosch.

> It was my first time going into the building. It's a big building. I didn't know which side the entrance was, so I saw a woman coming from that direction. I went to her and I was like: "Excuse me" and then she jumped, and she said: "I don't have money". I was like: "Huh?" then she's like: "I don't have money, I can't help you." I was like: "I just wanted to ask you for directions to the entrance". Then she's like: "Oh, I'm sorry". She was apologising, then I just kind of went away. So, there is that.

> And then I was walking to the train station. And no one that side [in Rondebosch], really walks. People are driving nice cars and all that. No, I wasn't walking to the train station. I was going to the store. And it was on a Sunday afternoon. There was a dad with his kids… these two kids, riding. And they pass me. I was like, "Oh, sweet. Father and the children riding on a Sunday." And then they ride down. And they come back. And then they kind of like circle, and then the father just comes and checks me out. And then rode down again. I was like, "Wait a minute. Did this just happen?" I was like, I guess, when people aren't used to something, then… because it's a Sunday. There wouldn't be any gardeners or maids walking around the neighbourhood. And it's a black person walking.

In the first encounter, the woman expresses her fear at being approached by Oscar when she "jumps". Her declaration "I don't have money" suggests that she thought that Oscar was begging, or more nefariously, wanted to rob her. In the second incident Oscar is profiled by a white man on a bicycle, who is both taking stock of Oscar, and making a show of demonstrating to Oscar that he is being watched. They are making their feelings known, performing white fear and concomitant suspicion. They are observing Oscar's position in the space and the space between them, interpellating Oscar as stranger.

Over the course of this project, I would often be talking with men that I knew about my research, and they would share their feelings about encounters with fems on the street. Two entries from

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my notes are relevant here. First S tells me about noticing a woman clutch her purse and hurry away as he approaches:

> S tells me that when he walked from the shop, he approached a woman who hastened across the road, her bag tightly clutched under one arm. He says "Ok, it was by the bridge part of Station Road, now that can be a bit quiet". He tells me he is used to it. You think it's fine, its normal, I'd do the same, or I should! Then maybe I won't get mugged!" Then he seems thoughtful and adds "You get used to it sorta. But then when it happens you're always like, 'Who me?' And you start thinking again about how to move, manoeuvre, in the street, how to look ok". (Field notes, 20-11-2016)

Similarly, in my notes I recount a conversation with T, where he reflects on a conversation that we had had about fems' association of black men on the street with rape, which has influenced his movement through Observatory in the days after:

> I had previously mentioned to T what people have been telling me about fearing sexual violence from black men specifically. He seemed taken aback by this. He brought it up again today. He says that he knew that people were aware of him in the street, perceptions varying from Rasta to drug dealer, or both. He knew that women were wary of him too. He often finds himself in "the awkward stalemate of cycling behind a woman, or speeding up, breaking the rhythm of pedalling to pass them quickly; not wanting to creep up on them, or have them feel that that they are being followed". But the idea that he specifically embodies the threat of sexual violence has "added a whole other dimension" to him walking and cycling around the city. In the days since our conversation he has found himself, usually quite aware of his body and space – a product of being a black man, but also of being a cyclist in an aggressively car-oriented city – hyper-alert to his own proximity to women in the street. "Avoiding them. Smiling, not smiling, thinking about how best to convey harmlessness". Uncertain if he is succeeding. (Field notes, 06-07-2016)

In a later conversation he clarifies the reason he found the conversation so disconcerting, was particularly the idea of embodying sexual violence for black women, saying "I know that white people are scared, but I didn't think that black women would be looking at me and being scared – that really bothered me" (Field notes, 12-08-2018).

Oscar, S and T's feelings of being profiled echo Fanon's (2008 [1952]) description in *Black Skin, White* Masks, of the experience of black men under the white gaze, in a white world. Fanon's (2008 [1952], 83) account of the difficulties in the "bodily schema", the "third-person consciousness" of the body, and the body being "surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty" resonates with the experience of black men in Observatory, aware that to some fems they represent a violent figure. Such a figure, whilst produced by colonial histories, is felt in the encounter only in the present tense of fear, dislocated from history and subjectivity.

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Fems' uneasiness, however founded, around men of colour, works to 'stop' these men. The fem gaze too creates a third person awareness of their bodies. Of their proximity, the space between them, of the movements of those they encounter, their gaze on them, the return gaze. This awareness is absorbed into the bodily habitus, as part of the structuring of the self in public space. However, as T and S point out, specific encounters may serve to resurface this bodily schema as unnatural. Requiring, in T's case that he has to actively work toward re-establishing his equilibrium, embodiment, movement, and relationship to public space.

As Lewis Gordon points out, the working of racism, however casual or implicit, assumes that that the black subject has no psychic life, but "only an outside" (Gordon 1997, 73). This is also the implicit assumption at work in street encounters, and women and other fems' fears in public spaces. The black man is seen everywhere, perhaps not named, but certainly felt, yet seldom is he understood to have history or subjectivity. The black body is unable to fully escape the force of these affects since "a body that is signified as a source of fear through its markedness cannot be free to affect and be affected similarly to one that is not" (Tolia-Kelly 2006, 215).

"You Wouldn't Expect that from a White Guy"

Whilst fems spoke at length about their encounters with men of colour, and the threat they perceived them to be, mentions of white men were conspicuously absent. Whiteness often goes unnoticed, concealing both its power and violences; whereas black people are always visible, usually conspicuous (Mupotsa 2015a). Against South Africa's particular history, white men are ironically, but unsurprisingly presumed to be benign or even benevolent in public spaces, consistent with global ways of viewing whiteness, national historical ways of constructing white masculinity in contrast to the black danger of white fear, and Observatory's specific history of benevolent whiteness, rooted in nostalgic optimism.

Some fems asserted that they saw men of colour, because *there was something* to see, because black men were more aggressive or problematic than other men:

> Dineo: It's always black men. I hate that I always say this, but I have never had that happen from… (long pause) A white man has never done that to me.
>
> TM: Why do you think that is?
>
> I'm gonna blame it on patriarchy. I'm gonna blame it on the way that, culturally, men can just do whatever they want to us. Like, in my Tswana, Sotho and Xhosa families, your husband can you hit you ten million times. He can do whatever he wants. At the end of the day, that's the man of the house. From a young age, boys in black families are taught to exert some sort of power or whatever. They can do whatever the hell they want.

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> Rehana: I don't know hey. Like my partner and I often talk about like this-this racialised thing and his theory is that well one, men of colour generally don't have like good templates for yah, just in their childhood and stuff. Umm yah, he thinks there's like a crisis in masculinity (half laughs). Black masculinities. Umm and yah I mean we've never actually talked about white men.

Congruent with pervasive stereotypes about black men, Dineo and Rehana felt black men's visibility indicated that men of colour were in fact more sexually aggressive and saw it as a product of toxic black hypermasculinity.

Fems also recognise that their more frequent experiences of sexualised encounters with men of colour is likely a result of the greater presence of men of colour on the streets. As Simangele points out "in Obs there are just a lot of black and coloured people in certain spaces". Rehana also acknowledges this, and notes that in cities with larger white populations, or with a larger proportion of working-class white men, this may be different:

> I mean it- I did kind of think about that-umm-like a month or two back because I saw this weird article that was written about this woman who was living in France? I think. Umm it's-from what I could tell she was a white woman and she decided to-whoever would catcall her umm or harass her she would engage them, but it's and she sometimes had photos of the men and they were mostly white, so I think it just depends on the context.

Men of colour, particularly working-class and poor men, in Observatory, and in South African cities in general, are more greatly represented among working-class and poor people who use the street more often and for longer periods of time. They are more reliant on walking and public transport to move around the city, but also because they frequently work in public spaces, such as in construction, public maintenance, and informal trading. They may also be guardtjies[29], drive mini bus taxis and cabs, where they interact with pedestrians constantly, or spend time parked on the side of the road between drives. In addition, men of colour may also use public space recreationally, instead of patronising private leisure spaces that cost money. In Observatory this includes socialising outside the local supermarket, and corner stores, and playing soccer on the Station Road green.

[29] The guardtjie is the person, usually a man, who assists the driver of minibus taxis by hailing potential passengers, collecting money, and alerting the driver to where passengers want to get off.

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This racialised nature of public space and thus encounters, is often glossed over in the literature and media on the issue. Recently, however, a popular video documenting a white woman walking in New York constantly receiving unwanted attention from men, by Hollaback, an anti-street harassment advocacy group, and a marketing agency, unwittingly brought attention to the issue.[30] The makers report the woman experienced more than 100 incidents of harassment "involving people of all backgrounds", however the video records only black and hispanic men, save one. The video, although popular, was criticised for being filmed in only black neighbourhoods, and for focusing on men of colour in the editing of the video (Rosin 2014).

Addressing the dearth of encounters with white men, Noma, a straight black 38-year-old ciswoman, mentions to me that although white men never make advances towards her in the street, she thinks that "they can". We had this conversation in a local park and I make the following observations my field notes:

> She says that all kinds of men do it [catcall or publicly "flirt"], and that she doesn't see it as being certain men. I ask her if white men ever do it and she says no, but "They can, they might. I don't know because I don't see it".
>
> This strikes me as an interesting insight. She is pointing out both that they *can*, that is they are able to, in terms of power and agency, but also that they *can* be doing it to other women elsewhere, even if she has never experienced it. (Field notes, 10-05-2016)

Supporting Noma's view, Liezel says that although white men "may not be on the street, but it might be a white guy in a freaking club" that is a source of discomfort or fear. White men, and other middle-class men, tend not to linger on the street. They do not rely on public transport, and almost exclusively use private vehicles, only walking a few meters to or from their cars. This is in some part due to middle-class concerns about crime, but also because they have far greater access to circuits of urban consumption, and to private work and recreational spaces. For this reason, participants highlighted that they tended to have more encounters with white men in private or semi-private recreational spaces.

Valerie describes a recent experience of being in a bar with woman friends, when an unknown white man approached them. Although they did not want him to join them, he was insistent,

[30] Rob Bliss Creative, 2014. *10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman*, USA. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1XGPvbWn0A [Accessed May 25, 2017]

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and they eventually conceded in the hope that he would be less disruptive if he was sitting at their table. Unable to ignore him and his friends, they left early:

> We were in a bar, and then this guy wanted to sit at our table and the girls were like, "No." And then he was just like, "Actually, check my six-pack." And the girls were like, "You know what, since you have such a great body, you can sit in our table."
>
> TM: And how was that? Was he nice?
>
> No, he was an arse, obviously.
>
> TM: But then why did you invite him to sit at your table?
>
> Because he was just going on and on until he eventually just…
>
> TM: And so did that make it uncomfortable? Like, how did you guys react? What did you do?
>
> We had quite a huge table… those round table. We had, like, half of the table was free anyway, so… and the barman suggested that they come, "He just wants to chat with the girls." And I think they… he was out of a group of guys. He was the nicest guy, I would say, because the other one who was sitting next to me was just… he was this horrible Afrikaner boitjie [equivalent of 'dude'] that was making really horrible comments about everyone in the bar. […]
>
> TM: What did you do? You just turned around and spoke to your friends?
>
> I was tired, man. I came from the office at nine and I just went to join them for a drink, so I was just like, "whatever", but we didn't stay long. We just had one drink and then I left, so…

When discussing why white men may be seen as less aggressive in the street, participants also explained that they felt that white men had what Quin, a 33-year-old white transfeminine person, describes as "cultural constraints" on their masculinity. That is, they ascribed to western norms about respectability and the necessity of "civil inattention" in public spaces (Goffman 1963), and see private spaces as the rightful place for the expression of desire. This is seen as particularly effective in the historically English centre of Cape Town, where norms about politeness and respectability still have a Victorian sensibility.

However, in private and semi-private spaces, white men may not have the same inhibitions, allowing them to engage in sexually expressive, aggressive or even violent behaviours. Kim explains that the negative experiences she has had with men have been in white middle-class private and semi-private spaces:

> Just the fact that all of my bad harassment encounters have always been in private spaces. So… like, for example, in this guy's car. That was my point of reference for sexual assault. That's where it happens. It happens in some dude's car. Or at the workplace.

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> Like when I was working at [business name]. I was, like, that's where that happens. It's always been in private spaces.

As in private spaces, white men in online spaces are not governed by the cultural norms that prohibit the expression of desire in public. Rehana makes this point, comparing white men's reserved, or even fearful, conduct in public with their demonstrative behaviour in the anonymous and semi-private spaces of online forums:

> I've noticed those narratives come out a lot-like white people are *scared*. Umm- Well not-not so much related to this exactly. But I think like the broader, political feeling. […] I mean I think online it plays out very differently. I think white people online are very different to how they are- yah… I think they just- there's just like a lot of 'listen to my point of view and my voice". A lot of the time. Umm, or they explain things to me a lot of the time. […] Umm but I-I don't see that, well on campus I guess or in public, it's almost like they *fade into the background* (half laughs). But that could just be how I perceive the world. (emphasis added)

This disjuncture between how white men behave in public and in private may account for the range of experiences of fems. Fems of colour may report less threatening behaviour from white men because they do not occupy private or intimate spaces with them. Further, whilst white men may feel a certain entitlement and sense of place in the suburbs and on its streets, given the pervasive fear of crime, they may be more reserved, cautious and hurried, and so may "fade into the background".

This however does not mean that white men do not express desires in public at all, but rather that they may be subtler in doing so. Rehana and Liezel have both experienced encounters with white men that are not as overt as those with men of colour, but that still feel plainly sexualised:

> Rehana: Umm, it's [men's attention] pretty much across the board. Like judging from my experiences in Cavendish [shopping centre] or just - I think (sighs) - this might be problematic - but I think often just like umm, construction workers and- like that guy in Millstock Cars [car dealership] – they're very explicit and very aggressive. Whereas with others [white or middle-class men] it's that leer-y stare, that I really struggle with a lot.

> Liezel: I mean it could be that creepy guy that owns [coffee shop in Observatory]. Like I find him abusively… forward. And like- you know, cat calling is not always just a voice. It's a- it's a- it's a- it's a feeling as well. And it's a-it's like multi-sensory, you know.

Nevertheless, views about the respectable conduct of white people and the relative subtlety of white men's advances when they do target sexual attention directly and assertively at fems in public spaces, are widely interpreted as exceptional, or anomalous. Being drunk or otherwise intoxicated is one reason that was frequently cited for such a breakdown in white respectability:

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> Rehana: I don't think I've ever experienced like street harassment from white men. Umm I think maybe there were a few instances where it was like a drunken night in Long Street, where there's like a drunken crew of white men umm but it's always just like a rowdy group.
>
> Kim: So, for me if somebody is- (sighs). It's so hard to explain without like...without an element of judgement but I guess there is an element of judgement when you-when you look at somebody and you decide whether or not they're going to be a threat to you. So, for me it's more...what I get more worried about is, and actually I feel that a lot with umm...with the-like the...*white drug addict street p- street population* in Cape Town. I feel a lot of umm...I guess there's like a weird tension and aggression that I feel there.
>
> Lydia: I ran already where there was [white] guys in a car shouting at me. Like, whistling like, "Hey, hottie!" or something like that. But I thought they were drunk, or something. Ya. You know, it was like a… almost this coloured type of car where it's so pimped up or whatever. So, they were driving down Obs. But it was like… they're beach boy type of vibe, so I was like, "Okay, they're probably drunk or something." I didn't necessarily feel like… they're obviously not… how can I say? *The appropriate white people*. Do you know what I'm trying to say? So, they were… I don't know, they just looked like they don't have those… I don't know. You know what I'm saying? You get that type of standard that this is how you're appropriate. But they were just more like, uhm… a little bit hippie. Like, free spirited. I don't know. Maybe they do a little bit of ganja [marijuana] here and there. I don't know. But it's like that type of vibe. I was laughing because it was funny for me. It's something unexpected. You wouldn't expect that, normally, from a…
>
> TM: White people… white guys.
>
> Lydia: Ya. So that is what was strange. That is strange, hey? Because if people who were white were screaming out of the things, I was gonna be like, "Really? Does that happen?"

Significantly both Rehana and Lydia seem incredulous about the attention they have received from white men. Rehana simply states that white men do not direct "street harassment" at her, and then in the next breath thinks of exceptions where white men have in fact behaved in ways that she interpreted as harassment. Similarly, after detailing an incident where white men were yelling at her out of a car, Lydia says "I was gonna be like, "Really? Does that happen?". In all three of the above examples, what the women perceive to be a break down in white social norms is attributed to substance use. This is consistent with white fear's feeling rule about alcohol consumption leading to white disrespectability and interracial sociality and sexuality. This is also closely associated with the contravention of contemporary middle-class norms. Particularly, Kim cites the white "street population" and Lydia associates them with symbols of working-class recreation, such as the "pimped up" car and what she assumes is marijuana use.

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Rehana and Lydia also point out that such behaviour is also associated with groups of men where men may feel emboldened to behave in ways they may not usually do on their own.

Quin and Elle, a 37-year-old coloured transwoman, are also alert to the ways that drunkenness shapes white and middle-class men's public conduct. They are both trans feminine people and see this kind of entitled masculinity as more of a transphobic threat than the everyday street encounters they may have with working-class men:

> Quin: It depends so much on what kind of cultural constraints on someone in terms of how they want to respond [to their gender presentation]. The drunk or middle-class people, I'd be more scared of. But in the day, they're just gonna be like "Weirdo", or whatever (says it low under their breath, looking shifty, mimicking the non-confrontational way it might be said). But given the right circumstances… [anything could happen].
>
> Elle: Mostly white boys. Oh, yes, especially when they're drunk.
>
> TM: What would that be like?
>
> You know you get these butch students…
>
> TM: Men… like, very masculine men.
>
> Ya, the white masculine… When they discover that you're trans, and they're drunk, it's like… sometimes they'd go to the extent of fighting with you. […] And because varsity students are respected, so "You have to respect me too, and you need to move out of my space because this is my space, not yours. You are on the streets, which means you don't belong here." But there's not a lot of them.

Both Quin and Elle see white men as harbouring ill-feelings toward them. As Quin points out however, because of norms about civil conduct middle-class white men might ordinarily suppress their aggressive responses. However, in "the right circumstance" all bets are off. Elle suggests here that being drunk is one of those circumstances where middle-class privilege and white masculinity can culminate in violence.

Because white men's advances are seen as anomalous, white men may still be constructed as benign in public spaces. In addition to Liezel feeling more comfortable expressing her same-sex desires among white people or in white spaces, mentioned previously, Dineo also feels more comfortable around white people, including white men. After speaking with Dineo I made the following note about an anecdote she told after I had turned off the recorder:

> Once I turned off the recorder, she added a story of how when she and her friend were walking and they were about to part ways, her friend said: "There's a white man and his dog, you'll be safe", and she was! She felt safe and she walked along behind them toward her home. She says "Our homesteads and our school systems glorify whiteness" in

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> relation to how comfortable she is with whiteness, how she relies on whiteness as a marker of safety. (Field notes, 2016-06-05)

As white men are perceived as in place in the city and its suburbs (Ahmed 2000), they are perceived to belong, to be *doing something*, and so are not strange. In contrast to the men of colour who are *doing nothing*, it is always clear what white men are doing in Observatory because it is assumed that they live there, and thus do not have to account for their presence.

Thus, fems construct white men as safe in public spaces through a combination of personal experience, place-history and the affective reach of white fear, which conditions feelings about black men as dangerous and white men as safe. The specific social location of white men in South Africa means that they are less likely to express desire in the street. Fems attribute this to social norms about appropriate conduct, the proliferation of white leisure spaces in the city, and white men's relative insecurity in the street.

Conclusion

Everyday encounters are pitted with countless, repeated acts of (mis)recognition, in this way "fixing" identities and differences to particular bodies. However, labels and stereotypes are not spontaneously enacted. They have a long history, they are inter-referential, time traveling. Daily, through banal interactions, moments when nothing happens, fem residents and users of Observatory streets link the political objective of colonial regimes and their attendant histories of displacement and violence with the specific living bodies of men of colour, and through each encounter make their strangeness anew.

Encounters are negotiations of status positions and power in relation to others, however temporary (Dirksmeier & Helbrecht 2015). Encounters between fems and men iteratively produce feminine subjects – raced, classed, and emplaced – and strangers – raced, classed and displaced. However, only through investigating the subjective personal histories of the fems in question can we begin to understand how the stranger is constructed through a myriad fears and anxieties, social discourse and personal experiences. In doing so, we can also begin to understand what (implicit) purpose the construction of the stranger serves for the fems in question.

In interpreting encounters within existing feminist analysis, some meanings are privileged over others. Whilst feminist analysis has explored women's, and to a lesser extent other fem's, emotional lives, it has done so only to the extent that it unpacks those elements of the feminine

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experience that comport with dominant ideas about how we see femininity in public space – as oppressed or resisting oppression. It has shied away from addressing how fems might perpetuate specific histories of violence through affective relations and embodied spatial strategies, whilst negotiating a hostile and insecure world.

By centring gender in interpreting encounters in public space, we might under-analyse the way in which encounters are constructed through mutual readings of those involved, which rely on a range of markers that convey the meaning of the encounter. In addition, fem residents draw on a whole range of aspects that give them social power, including their class, race and resident status. Whilst this may be an effective strategy for avoiding risk, and a range of other encounters including positive ones, it may also effectively create the kinds of urban exclusions that feminist scholars have highlighted as characterising the fem (largely ciswomen's) experience. Just as the gaze of the stranger serves to 'stop' fems, so too may the fem's gaze 'stop' strangers (Ahmed 2000, Fanon 2008 [1952]).

However, the gender-based violence literature that documents this history only envisions fems as victims or as resisting victimisation. There is no analysis of how fems might contribute to other oppressive practices. In focusing largely on the gendered dynamics of encounters, and the ways in which unknown men might oppress the women that they interact with, some of the agency inherent to fems' everyday negotiation of public spaces may be missed. In this regard, the racialised encounters reported by fems were noteworthy in the ways in which they revealed street encounters, within the context of patriarchy, as sites of fem power, usually race and class power, directed at black men. Just as men interpellate fems as gendered bodies, fems interpellate the men they encounter based on visible identity categories.

In this chapter I have shown how the construction of strangers has served to counter uncertainty and precarity in fem's childhoods, to secure individuals and collectives. By isolating other black people as the abject and fearful, family lore shored up black middle-class identity, and attended to adult fears about the vulnerability of their children during the unpredictable and frequently violent time of South Africa's transition.

In fems' present experiences, the affective structuration of white fear, including framing the black man as a stranger, allows them to map out safe and unsafe encounters in the unpredictable public spaces of Observatory and the wider city. In the construction of the stranger, fems' subjective experiences are contingent on and incorporated into existing global

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and universalising, historical and place-bound notions of who is dangerous and who is not.[31] Fems frequently described these determinations in terms of feelings. Sometimes they were able to articulate the feelings and intuitions that directed them toward or away from particular men, and sometimes they more vaguely described the sensations that particular people or circumstances triggered. Whatever the case, these affects are always sensed through their own personal histories and wider socio-spatial histories. Often the feeling of fear serves as much to obscure as illuminate the processes of (mis)recognition taking place through the encounters, because its affective force in the present overrides its long lineage.

Contrary to the prevalence of diversity optimism in the present (see Chapter 4), fear of black men creates continuity with historical white fear. It is a backward drag that complicates the linear progress into the diverse present and future. He halts progress toward a diverse future showing up with the traumatic past. Thus, like Karen reminds her neighbours of their historical lineages and transgressions (see Chapter 3), so too does the man of colour. He too is an archive of bad feelings catalysing negative affects such as fear and guilt for fems (and other residents), recalling unwanted histories and the fragile artifice of the diverse present. When he enters the scene, in encounter after encounter, the progress narrative balks. It is in these moments that we feel the failure of history's progress, and our own complicity in it.

The stranger we should be wary of is both a gendered and a racialised construct. Through commonplace encounters that daily reproduce the stranger as the unknown black man, in the South African post-colonial context, he is fixed as the object of fear (as opposed to comfort or desire). This perpetuates the affective relation of white fear into the present. Within the context of pervasive gendered violence, black men without a visible agenda are constructed as always out of place in the city centre and are immediately subject to scrutiny and speculation. By reading clothes, behaviour and demeanour as indications of class, but also intent, fems read unoccupied, idle or poor men as an especial threat. Significantly, such an analysis demonstrates the universality of the figure of the stranger that marks men of colour in cities everywhere, but by carefully reading the stranger through fem experience in Observatory, this trope is filled with localised content and produced of specific personal and place histories. The stranger is clearly

[31] See Pedrazzini & Desrosiers-Lauzon (2011) for a parallel example of the Malandro in Venezuela.

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implicated in subjectification and identification, an articulation of the self, and a relation to the world.

White men however are completely emptied of content. They are neither a universal sign, nor do they invoke histories of violence on the street, which is ironic given apartheid state violence ordered and executed by white men, politicians and police. They are barely mentioned in fems' descriptions but when they are they are always presumed to be in place and are usually a neutral presence. In some cases, they not only present the absence of a threat but can be construed as *benevolent* symbols of safety. In this regard, in Observatory, the revision of whiteness and white masculinity specifically, a central task of the rainbow nation moment, seems to have been effectively achieved.

Although fems recognise how their particular experiences, as well as wider racialised discourses, shape their perception of strangers, their reliance on the stranger figure means that they must continually disregard the particularity of individuals and the historicity of the trope. This is not always easy, and involves a considerable amount of emotional labour, both for fems of colour, and white fems who are aware of their relative privilege.

Seeing fems of colour's profiling practices as internalised racism risks glossing over the complexity of gendered, classed and racialised embodiment in contexts that are saturated with both raced and gendered violences. The particular meanings given to specific bodies and the feelings that structure and emerge from encounters with them are part of a localised, and generalisable past: of colonisation, white supremacy, heterosexism and patriarchy. These are not simple feelings that can be summed up as self-hate, but rather complex constellations of feelings that emerge through interactions that evoke solidary group identity (as people of colour) and feminised fear, recognition and rejection, often all at once.

All residents employ representational, material and affective (non-representational) strategies against the ambivalence and uncertainty of living with difference. The idea of affective strategies does not imply that feelings are falsified, but recognises that fems seek to manage the feeling of structures in encounters in response to particular structures and structures of feeling. Lesego for example, manages her fear by isolating it to particular places, so that others might be safe in other spaces. And yet others, such as Lydia, develop complex logics based on racialised tropes about who to avoid, when and where.

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This is encompassed in the use of the term 'dodgy', which allows expression of victimisation without having to own up to the profiling. The vagueness of 'dodgy' is not a weakness, it is this flexibility that allows it to be deployed against different othernesses. This also allows the speaker the vagueness to not have to clearly identify, define or name the source of their discomfort. Affectively, it is universally intelligible – when someone says 'dodgy', it conjures different images in different people's minds, whilst maintaining a clear sense of dis-ease. Fems and their *others* maintain a complex and tenuous affective and structural relation, where both white and fems of colour recognise the histories and implications of their profiling practices, but are affectively invested in them all the same.

The result is that men of colour, particularly poor or working-class men, are outside of the progress narrative of diversity. They remain other, always constructed as hostile and threatening, backward (embodying bad histories), and the evoking backward feelings for other people (Love 2007). He is a source of dis-ease, not only because of the fear he triggers in others, but also because of the shame and discomfort that emerges as a result of these racialised feelings.

Yvette Christiansë (2002,376), talking about people of colour in general, reminds us that not everyone arrives in the new nation, that the melancholic affects of apartheid and colonisation cut us off materially, symbolically and affectively from the spaces and other desired objects that we hope to inhabit, to which we wish to return:

> Although the end of apartheid promised everyone a "new" and inclusive place, it is clear that not only is there insufficient geopolitical space for the newly emancipated subjects of South Africa, but also some subjects have remained, and must remain, in exile. This exile is symbolic, material, and constitutes the very limit of what can be thought in the economy of compensation.

I would add that this exile is also affective. What Christiansë describes as exile is a sense of being not at home, of being dislocated, unable to return to an historic place or time. This is a kind of affective displacement. For black men this may include the feeling of being othered, figured as backward, being out of place and time. The dis-ease experienced by men like T and S, might not be very different from that described by Karen, whose intergenerational familial exile and return is unacknowledged within the narrative of diversity, who feels dislocated and at home, or by Simangele who feels invisible, not there at all, in the space.

Significantly, individual affects are not restricted to individual subjective experiences, but through such experiences echo and project ideas of difference and sameness, which both enact

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structures of differentiation and also bring them into being. On an individual level, thinking about the capacity of all bodies to affect and be affected offers a chance to consider social difference as co-constructed through the forces created between people (Tolia-Kelly & Crang 2010). In this way, individual bodily feelings and expressions of fear enliven over-arching structures of feeling to produce encounters as moments of differentiation in daily life. This alerts us to how fems, can be understood as vulnerable and marginal and implicated in the coloniality of power (Mignolo 2007).

Whilst the stranger has been analysed as a social fiction, this has largely been done in relation to how hegemonic identities and feelings construct the stranger (Said 1995[1978]; Ahmed 2000b; Haldrup et al. 2006; Koefoed & Simonsen 2011; Harris et al. 2017). In this chapter I focused on how those widely perceived as vulnerable in public space, feminine people, and even fems of colour, actively engage in constructing black men as strangers. Whilst there is important work that delimits how current community security mechanisms such as neighbourhood watches, constituted of or acting on behalf of privileged groups, apply this logic at the local level (Ahmed 2000; Robins 2002; Didier et al. 2012), there has not been much attention to how feminine people, typically seen as the least agentic in the public sphere and the most at risk from strange men, might contribute.

This chapter shows that through everyday gendered encounters, fems interface "colonial history and uncertain transnational forms of hierarchy and oppression" (O'Riley 2007, 2), such as neoliberal community improvement districts (CIDs) described in Chapter 3. The strategies of fearful fems can reproduce oppressions. Whilst classical authorities and disciplinary institutions that reproduce socio-spatial differentiation (politicians or police for example) are imbued with structural and hegemonic power (Rebotier 2011), fems everyday interactions are reinforced by and can feed into these larger structures. By closely examining gender, with its concomitant structures of power, this chapter offers us a more complex understanding of how continued segregation, inequity and the endurance of historical injustice contribute to fearful publics.

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CHAPTER 7: Conclusion: Feeling Difference

At its heart, this work is about what it means to feel difference, our own and others', in the historical present, the intimacy of everyday life. It asks how difference has come to be constituted and understood in a particular place, over time, and how its benefits and burdens are unevenly shared between and among those living as and living with difference. Rather than simply taking stock of the bodies present, this dissertation provides a complex account of difference through the frames of structure of feelings and feeling of structures. It explicates difference through the working of hegemonic racialised and gendered affects in the historical characterisation of the neighbourhood, in the work of inhabiting it and belonging in it, and in the daily moments of desire and fear that populate public space within it. These hegemonic structures of feeling show up time and time again in contemporary everyday encounters, where they coalesce with a range of other (racialised, classed, sexualised, gendered) structures that shape fem embodiment and inter/action in public space.

By addressing a range of fem positionalities in the particular context of the postcolonial South African city, I point to ways that fems, traditionally constructed as the most vulnerable or least agentic, can and do access histories of power, shaped by colonialism and apartheid. This alerts us to how difference and thus oppressions, are constituted relationally (McNay 2004), not just hierarchically. Fems are not always disadvantaged, struggling against gendered oppression at every turn. Instead, as this dissertation has shown, they are enmeshed in complex affective relations, (re)negotiating subjectivity and the terms and consequences of history continually. Such an emphasis on the historicity of affect, rather than only contemporary experience, tells us not only what fems feel and do, but how those feelings and actions come to be, and how an emphasis on some feelings, and the feelings of some, might masks others. Thus, in an effort to destabilise the established marginalised position of fems in the city, this dissertation reveals how in the social collisions of everyday life (Willis 2010), the power geometry between and among bodies and collectives might change from encounter to encounter, reproducing some histories, and effacing others.

I also demonstrate how fems, including fems of colour, are implicated in the coloniality of power, long after the colonial epoch (Mignolo 2007). Colonial power is still ubiquitous, not only in the big things – state action, law and policy for example – but in the little, and the very little things. Indeed, this recognition also suggests that these little things are not as slight as we might assume. The ease with which we all rely on familiar, sensual, visceral, but deeply social and

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historical ways of experiencing difference, knowing ourselves, others, and their relation to one another, is the most pervasive and unchecked, and thus effective, perpetuation of the coloniality of power.

In this concluding chapter I return to the central question of how feeling and difference is lived and how it structures the postcolonial present. First, I return to the relationship between feeling and structure in constructing difference in Observatory, then I move on to how particular ways of understanding difference have led to a particular conception of time in the space, and finally I reiterate what an affective understanding of difference as historical and embodied means for just access to and enjoyment of urban space.

Feeling and Structures in the Postcolonial City

I have demonstrated the power geometry at work through the *structures of feeling* of *white fear* and *diversity optimism*, as individual and collective feelings have shifted in concert with political transitions and different regimes have sounded out their stance on difference. These two affective structures emerge and recede through different epochs, creating continuity and change that may not be immediately apparent in traditional historical accounts, but that I reveal as compelling life in Observatory.

White fear began as a characteristic feeling of colonial frontiersmen. However, through an historical account, I show how it gained momentum as a collective feeling and political strategy during apartheid and persists in the place-making strategies of individuals, collectives and institutions in Observatory today. In the historical present white fear continues to structure how community and outsider are defined and differentiated, and subtends the material forces of neoliberal securitisation, gentrification and development.

By contrast, diversity optimism emerged during the height of apartheid as an anticipatory impulse, a rejection of the oppressive present, to dwell in its interstices and to seek glimmers of an idealised future. In the present, however, diversity optimism looks both back- and forward, relying on a vision of the past to condition fems' attachments to the neighbourhood and their fantasies of the good diverse life within. However, not all residents have the same vision of the past, splintering residents' optimism in diversity into nostalgic, cruel and sceptical versions based on their racial and class differences. Through versions of diversity optimism, I show how historical privilege and marginalisation effect and affect neighbourhood residents by unevenly

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conditioning individuals' sense of place, reproducing racialised hierarchies of credibility, legitimacy and belonging.

Simultaneously, the neighbourhood is also shaped by moments of encounter on the street and other public spaces, where affects are intersubjective and embodied. Exploring what I call the *feeling of structures* – embodied experiences of historical affects and structures of difference including race, class and gender – in relation to *structures of feeling* – overarching historical affects – allows us to put the historical, affective and material aspects of embodiment and subjectivity together. In this way we can understand how difference is made in the resonance of histories and the repetition of tropes that inform the material realities of race, class, gender, sexuality, and their enactment in and against the lived body. Thus, instead of simply thinking of difference as (positively) captured by diversity, informed by *structures of feeling*, the *feeling of structures* allows us to consider the varied and ambiguous affective experiences that people with different histories and embodiments might have in feeling out their neighbourhood, their neighbours and those they see as strangers.

These inherently affective encounters are guided by historically embedded *structures of feeling*, although they do not always stay on course. Desirous encounters offer up opportunities for fems to slip affective structures that shape the gendered experience of difference, where the momentum of the event might overtake its history. In the moment however, fems are frequently reined in by the feeling of structures, the visceral pinch between what they should feel, shaped by historical raced, classed and gendered norms, and what they do feel. Where they might transgress norms surrounding the expression or reciprocation of men's desires in public, they remain cognisant of risks to their safety and respectability. Instead, fems tend to rely on historically embedded ways of knowing and feeling difference to interpellate men of colour as dangerous others. This allows them to map out safe and unsafe encounters in the unpredictable space of the street, in the process stretching and affirming an affective relation of white fear.

By linking the persistence of certain histories through *structures of feeling* and, using residents' life stories and familial histories which illuminate the *feeling of structures* as an embodied experience, I bring two different affective scales together in understanding how fems live (with) difference, to situate the individual in the flow of history. By moving away from a focus on ciswomen's fearful embodiment, I reveal not just the similarities and differences in the immediate experiences of fem subjects, but also in the long histories available to them, the ideas

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they reach for, the futures they tend (and tend toward) and the presents they enable. What the experiences of residents demonstrate is that there is significant divergence in the embodied gendered, classed and racialised experience of belonging in a place or being a resident, and yet remarkable overlap in the way that residents figure others.

Thus, as much as it is concerned with documenting and nuancing the urban feminine experience of difference, this dissertation also strongly focuses on the possibilities and failures of history and encounter in the postcolony.

Forward, Backward and Stasis

In the global and South African context, and in Observatory in particular, the compulsion to move past racialised difference as a way of knowing and feeling the city and to embrace discourses of diversity – well-intentioned as they may be – has made it difficult to fully and critically engage with the negative effects and affects of urban spaces. Although this dissertation considers the promise of diversity, it lingers longer over those ways of feeling and being different that are not new and cosmopolitan but backward looking and historically consistent.

Whilst investigations into diverse cities focus on people of colour, seen as constituting diversity, there is generally little interrogation of the structural historical and affective processes and personal experiences through which whiteness is produced and maintained in such spaces. Whiteness is the unchallenged core of diversity, around which others are gathered (Ahmed 2000). In Observatory, the central position of whiteness remains in place throughout political transitions from colonialism and apartheid to democracy. These political shifts also represent an affective shift in Observatory, from the dominance of white fear to the dominance of diversity optimism. This produces an urban, spatial and racial progress narrative: the movement over time away from dividing differences toward a diverse future.

Contemporary optimism for diversity not only reveals individual and collective aspirations, but also remakes history. The result is that whiteness in Observatory is revised as benevolent, such that the good whiteness of today relies strongly on the presumption of good anti-apartheid whiteness in the past. This obscures the ways that whiteness was complicit in colonial and apartheid structuration, and the ways that whiteness has been and continues to be, privileged in Observatory.

People of colour also ascribe to the progress narrative implicit in diversity optimism. The movement of people of colour from townships, rural areas, and more homogenous suburbs to

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Observatory is a spatial manifestation of the temporal move from abjection to inclusion, from apartheid segregation to the diverse city. In seeking to improve their lives, to leave the margins – to partake in the benefits and opportunities of urban modernity – people of colour are also heavily invested in the idea and feeling of Observatory as enduringly diverse, even as their lived experience suggests otherwise.

The feelings, structural and embodied, that I have traced in and through Observatory are tied to the spatialised experiences of current fem residents – Lydia, Valerie, Cal, Amy, Kim, Quin, Elle, Oscar, Lesego, Rehana, Simangele, Noma, Dineo, Karen, Liezel, Hanifa, Dani, Tasha, Fami and Sauda; but also to the plethora of bodies and feelings that preceded them. This tie can assert a powerful backward pull, even as individuals and the collective orient toward the future. Affects connect our moments to a myriad moments before; they summon the past, present and future through the repetition of feelings, signs and interactions. Affective encounters then can be sites of time-travel.

Fems of colour then are themselves archives. They hold stories that do not cohere in the dominant narrative of Observatory, they represent historical exclusion, trauma and displacement. Their current presence is haunted by the traces of their previous residence, removal, restriction. Thus, fems of colour, and people of colour generally, are stuck in a temporal bind, and even as they strive to make lives in the present, and articulate hope or fear about the future, they evoke the past, they halt progress toward the diverse future by embodying the bad past. Their very embodiment is riddled with historicity, unlike white people's bodies – which remain neutral despite their genealogies of violence – the racialised body is always already an archive, a repository of histories that often we would rather forget. Yet this archive is often illegible or unintelligible in the mundane experience of the city – creating a discomfort that is frequently inarticulable or reduced to stereotype.

Although white fear is no longer a state-practiced discourse and feeling in the post-apartheid present, it remains strongly embedded in the way that the neighbourhood is managed, regulated and territorialised. Significantly, whilst optimism has shifted, divided and multiplied along with the various collective and personal imperatives of residents coping with sweeping political changes, white fear remained relatively consistent, narrowing and refining its target over time. Thus, even as people shy away from the spectre of racialisation and segregation, racialised fear haunts them. Even as some people of colour ascend to 'us' status, they constantly risk disgrace, embarrassment, violence, rejection, or being re-figured as 'them'. For people of

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colour then, the distinction between the assimilated 'us' and the different 'them' is premised on a tenuous boundary, and at any moment the boundary may give.

People of colour are everywhere reminders of the omnipresence of violence, their bodies signalling both historical harm and the potential to harm. In the present, harm can include the recollection of past trauma or the articulation of the current experience of racism, disturbing the diverse present. Yet, gender slices through the experience of racialisation to produce further difference, so that fems of colour are also constructed as vulnerable to injury and men of colour are only ever injurious.

Encounters with men of colour in particular reveal the daily reality of residents in the diverse neighbourhood as out of step with this progress narrative. Men of colour evoke the long histories of white fear, and demonstrate the failings of the rainbow nation, the omnipresent and racialised threat of violence, even in its most romanticised spaces. Whilst white fear is not only felt by white people, it describes a particular relation between race and gender in the historical present. Historically, white womanhood is cast as an ultrafeminine form, and black manhood as ultramasculine. Even in contemporary gender-based violence literature, although implicit, feminine vulnerability is typically articulated through the white global north middle-class woman; and, by contrast, as I have shown, urban predation is constructed as the viscerally masculine black man. In Observatory, encounters repeat this configuration, referencing and re-enacting gender-race, fem-masculine encounters before it. Contemporary encounters mimic the archetypical encounter of the vulnerable white woman and the brutish black man. The encounter is always potentially antagonistic. Even for fems who themselves embody both positions, such as feminine black men, this means oscillating between being feared (as a black man) and being fearful (as a feminine person). When this is not the case, fems are reluctant to share their experiences because complicity in desirous encounters, or spatial confidence, can be perceived as a mark against good (white) femininity.

This dynamic squeezes real people, multiple experiences and complex subjectivities into tropes, freezing them in the ever-iterative moment of encounter. As the person of colour ever signals history, and the white body futurity, the gendered encounter, instead of containing endless potentiality as the optimism of affect studies has suggested, is a moment of stasis. This is a difficult position. Living with difference in the wake of colonisation and apartheid is relentlessly daunting and frequently painful. The cost of diversity is frequently felt, including in the

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conflicting feeling rules, between feeling diversity and feeling fearful, and their concomitant impulses to be respectable and/or safe, or to follow the transgressive trajectories of desire.

Observatory references the cosmopolitan, global, gentrifying city that reproduces widely familiar in/exclusions and displacements but is also intensely invested in local forms of racialisation and exclusion. Similarly, the position of the fem and the man of colour, stuck in an iteration of raced and gendered difference where no one wins, haunted by past encounters, doomed to repeat them, is specific and universal. This dissertation sheds light on how those who are not the epitome of whiteness, and certainly not viewed as protectors of white space, nevertheless produce segregating affects, useful for understanding how historical productions of space live on in purportedly mixed neighbourhoods across the globe, how the gendered experience of cities is produced relationally, along with race and class, and how fems, or anyone, may be simultaneously oppressed and oppressing.

Feeling Forward…

A central concern of this dissertation is to illuminate those aspects of life that are ordinarily unnoticed or taken for granted but are world-shaping all the same. I explored how the feelings we usually think of as interior and subjective might effect meaning and action in political and social life; and how what we usually think of as exterior – history, politics, material conditions – is in turn, part of embodied emotional life. Through the notions of *structures of feeling* and the *feeling of structures* I engage with affects as they shape life over the long durée of Observatory's settlement, and as capacities between bodies going about the neighbourhood. As distinctive but connected affective scales, structures of feeling and feeling of structures elucidate both how fems are implicated in the unfolding of history, and how they accomplish specific historical trajectories through embodied feelings, interactions and uses of space.

Through the force of feelings, we are all complicit. This dissertation has shown how, through regimes of feeling, fems effect governance that mimics larger systems of power, working in tandem with colonial histories and neoliberal urban organisation, policy and legislation. Whilst fems do not have the institutional power of, for example community policing organisations (such as neighbourhood watches and CIDs), their affective relations with men of colour serve to subtly exceed the institutional boundaries of these mechanisms into the smallest of exchanges. Fems may not be able to reliably invoke the power of these institutions in turn, as gendered harms are frequently disregarded, particularly when they are not physically violent. So whilst the victim-subjectivity invoked through fear of black men is a pragmatic move against gendered

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urban fear (Dosekun 2013), it does not lead to the systemic amelioration of this fear. In fact, whilst urban fear as a political instrument of power has historically relied on the vulnerable white woman, and more lately the vulnerable queer (Haritaworn 2015), such power is extremely callous to their needs. Fem's affective practices, everyday, taken for granted, amount to something. They territorialise space, unwittingly and sometimes unwillingly, according to logics older and more sinister than their own. They become complicit in the feeling and enforcement of a spatialisation that frequently also excludes them, or at least sees them as inconsequential.

Whilst a central aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate how affects are strongly emplaced, historical and contextual, I am not making an argument for historical determinism, in public or personal life. Instead, the experiences of fems in Observatory point us to ways that in the process of place-making, and in moments of encounter, old tropes are reimagined, enlivened or dismissed. And how affect is another plain on which injustice shapes our world, akin and attendant to material forms of injustice, including spatial and economic, or representational. I see affect not only as a product of injustice, but as infrastructural to it, as producing difference in history and encounter. In that there is some possibility for transformation.

Importantly, recognising affects as distributed differently in different bodies and space turns us away from an approach to injustice that is purely legislative, embedded solely in a discourse of rights. Recognising the potency of feelings moves us beyond legalistic and simplified understandings of the right to the city, and forces us to think carefully about how feelings, historical and immediate, rely on racialised, gendered and classed understandings of individual and collective belonging which are not captured by legislation or policy. As AbdouMaliq Simone (2016) points out, law and policy, focused on the articulation of rights to generate inclusivity, are also claims for clarity. But as the lived experience of fem residents show us, the city, as all spaces, is an affective space, where things may be much more murky and opaque.

By contrast, I dwell on the ambivalence and ambiguity, the potential and suppression, the freedom and violence of urban life. It is unclear how this ambivalence might point toward a different, improved affective cityscape, against severe and casual injustice. It does, I hope, open up new lines of inquiry about history, affect and subjectivity, and about the efficacy of even those presumed most vulnerable in producing space and urban belonging, and perpetuating post/colonial modes of feeling, knowing and doing.

If we take feelings seriously, then we must recognise that they condition difference, and subsequently our access to, belonging, encounters and sense of safety and danger in spaces and

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among people – they can distribute and withhold real benefits, smoothing the terrain for some and impeding others, in ways that rights discourses cannot capture, regulate or maintain. The codification of a right into law may demobilise the political struggle underlying it, and individuals and collectives often become reliant on *right* to determine *just*. By contrast, identifying and understanding structures of feeling and feelings of structure requires constant re-evaluation and might thus provide for a more open-ended engagement with spatial (in)justice.

This dissertation, then, allows us to think about how we are all implicated in violence, and how such violences happens in the most banal, intimate or unlikely times and spaces. Whilst changing affects do not automatically change the world around them (Berlant 2011), I do believe that by being aware of how our feelings are not only subjective, but also historical and intersubjective, by understanding how our personal and specific emotional responses are perhaps not as personal or specific as we would like to think, and remaining alert to how they shape the experience of embodiment, place and belonging for others, we can be more attentive to how we feel (in) public. This dissertation urges us to think of how we are all implicated in networks of relations that produce injustice daily, how we might better navigate the urban landscape attuned to the feelings, individual and collective, of others, and how we might feel new histories and new encounters into being, including through scholarship that attends to the fragility and duplicity of subject positions and the construction of victims and oppressors. Reimagining difference in neighbourhood, history, belonging, desirability and danger are central to such a project, and could direct us to more just ways of engaging each other, but also towards unexpected solidary connections.

Thus, affect also allows us to expand our sense of agency – where change can include feeling something (different)! But it is harder, I think, to change our feelings than to change our actions. How do we live with difference in the historical present attentive to "how such intimate moulding and shaping of each other's flesh is taking place and how relations of dominance and violence interfere in the free and reciprocal shaping of each other"? (Verhage 2014, 104). Perhaps, like Karen, sceptical optimism is the best we can hope for. A kind of tentative hope bound up with the angst of all that has come before, a recognition of all the missteps, ill-feelings, and misrecognitions, attending to that which is discordant, which unsettles our neighbours and neighbourhood, to bear testament to those histories that are omitted, that hover like shameful family secrets just below the level of discourse.

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An engagement with the affective politics of everyday life, with the unwieldy intersections of subjective experience, contemporary and historical injustice, does not suggest we ignore structural and material impediments to free access and enjoyment of our neighbourhoods and their public spaces. Instead, it allows us to see that these aspects do not definitively ensure such freedom in practice and asks that we consider the ways in which we each ascribe to the feeling rules of colonial spaces, the ways in which we compel each other to change course, stiffen, quicken our gait, or leave. Seeking a more just city requires that we attend both to the large and the little of political life.

While my analysis has been critical of fems' experience of the neighbourhood, I do not of course relegate feminine embodiment or regard fems' use of city spaces as inherently problematic. In fact, to reveal something of the ambivalence and complexity of fem subjectivity in the postcolonial city points to its contingency, the potential for other ways of sensing the city and others within it. It alerts us to the inadequacies of the present. This is an unsettling process. It raises deeply uncomfortable aspects of how we make our way in the world, how we guard our positions at the expense of others, and how we are each more vulnerable and more powerful in our engagements with others than we might have thought. It unsettles some suppositions about what it is like to live with difference, to be different, to seek difference, to desire or fear difference. Feeling unsettled unsettles the paradigms on which our daily lives are premised and opens up rather than resolves the question of how to deal with difference. To stir the anticipatory impulse that we might seek, in our daily lives, those moments that lean toward something else – to feel difference *differently*.

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Laws and Policies

Betting Houses, Gaming Houses and Brothels Suppression Act No. 36 of 1902 (Cape Colony).

Black Land Act No. 27 of 1913 (Union of South Africa).

Natives (Urban Areas) Act No. 21 of 1923 (Union of South Africa).

Immorality Act No. 5 of 1927 (Union of South Africa).

Black (Native) Laws Amendment Act No. 46 of 1937 (Union of South Africa).

Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act No. 25 of 1945 (Union of South Africa).

Immorality Amendment Act No. 21 of 1950 (Union of South Africa).

Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 (Union of South Africa).

Riotous Assemblies Act No. 17 of 1956 (Union of South Africa).

Group Areas Act No. 77 of 1957 (Union of South Africa).

Group Areas Act No. 36 of 1966 (Republic of South Africa).

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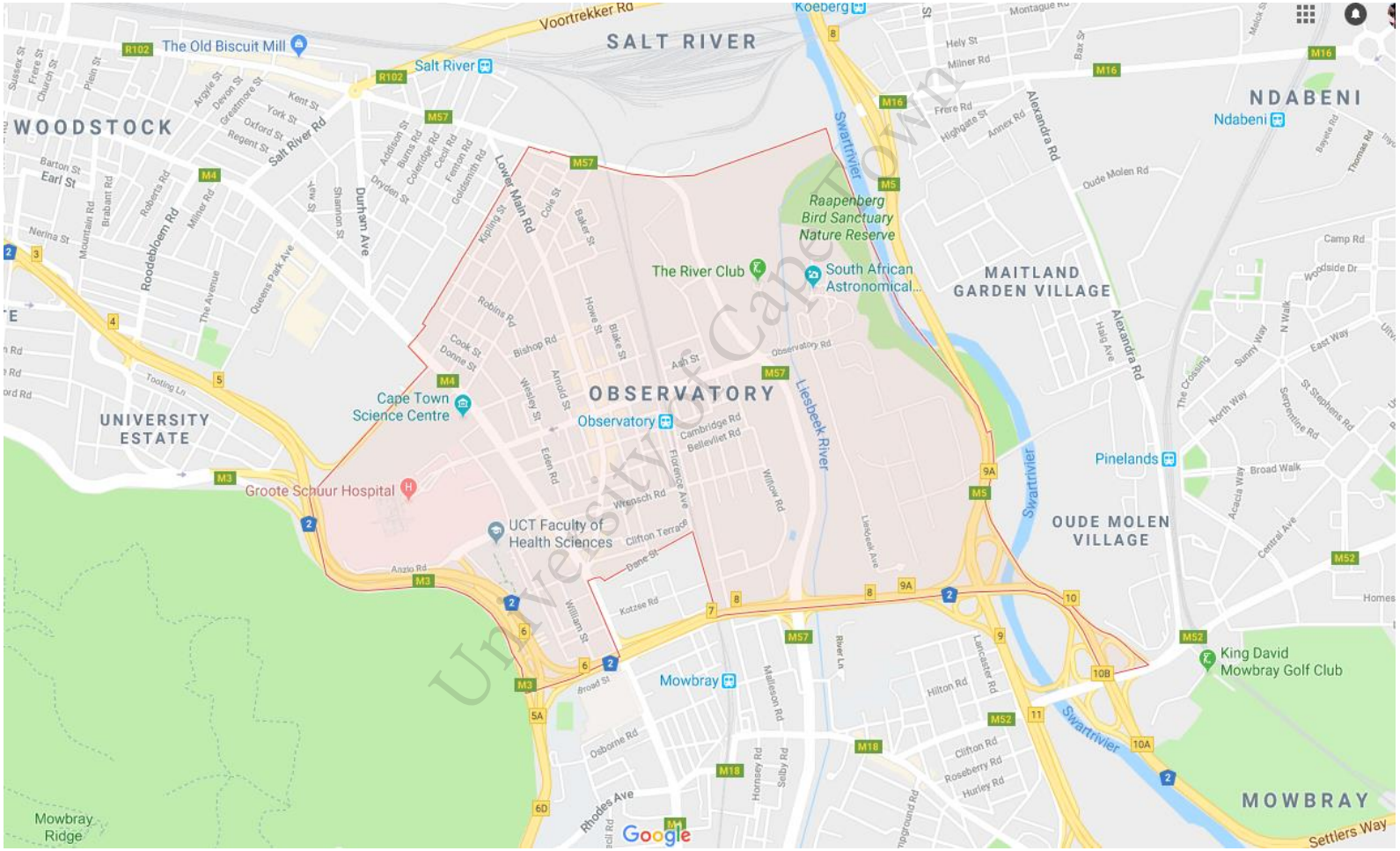
Appendix A: Map of Observatory and Surrounds



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Appendix B: List of Residents Cited

	RACE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER	AGE	OCCUPATION	GREW UP IN	YEARS IN OBS
Amy	white bisexual ciswoman	38	Academic	USA	8
Cal	coloured gay feminine cisman	31	Corporate	Mitchells Plain, CT	6
Dani	white queer ciswoman	35	Academic	France	14
Dineo	black lesbian ciswoman	25	Media	Bloemfontein	1
Elle	coloured straight transwoman	37	Sex worker	Retreat, CT	16-20
Fami	coloured straight ciswoman	58	Building maintenance	District Six, CT Manenberg, CT	+/- 20
Hanifa	Indian straight ciswoman	22	Student	KwaDukuza, KwaZulu-Natal	3
Karen	coloured straight ciswoman	36	Corporate	Montana, CT	8
Kim	white straight ciswoman	30	Corporate	Port Elizabeth	5
Lesego	black queer androgynous ciswoman	24	Student	Johannesburg	3
Liezel	white straight same-sex-practicing ciswoman	24	Student	Breede Valley, Western Cape	1

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	RACE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER	AGE	OCCUPATION	GREW UP IN	YEARS IN OBS
Lydia	coloured straight ciswoman	31	Attorney	Eastern Cape	7
Noma	black straight ciswoman	38	Domestic worker	Nyanga, CT	8
Oscar	Black gay androgynous/ feminine cisman	29	Media	Harare, Zimbabwe	8
Quin	white pansexual gender non-conforming/transitioning feminine	33	Artist	Atteridgeville, Johannesburg Pretoria	3
Rehana	Indian bisexual ciswoman	23	Student	New Castle, KwaZulu-Natal	1
Sauda	Indian straight ciswoman	64	Retired	Johannesburg CT	-
Simangele	Black straight ciswoman	22	Student	Johannesburg	3
Tasha	white straight ciswoman	30	Academic	Johannesburg Gardens, CT	2
Valerie	coloured straight ciswoman	26	Corporate	Paarl	6

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