White English-speaking South Africans of the Transition Generation: Negotiating Identities Through the Intersecting Discourses of Whiteness and the 'New' South Africa

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A [minor] dissertation submitted in [partial] fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Sociology

Faculty of Humanities
University of Cape Town
2012

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

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

Signature: Natalie Zeno Date: 19 November 2012

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful for all of the love and support I received from my family and friends who were cheering me on throughout this process. I am particularly grateful to my fiancé, Clay, who continuously supports me and provides me with a voice of reason during those times when I lost my own. Having the opportunity to be a postgraduate student at the University of Cape Town is an experience I will always treasure. I found myself intellectually challenged by my professors and peers constantly. What I learned from them has broadened my view of the world and has impacted my participation in it. I would like to give a special thank you to Melissa Steyn, for the guidance she provided me throughout the development and work on this thesis. She had a special way of providing guidance to me while empowering me to be the leader of my own project. I am especially thankful to my respondents who participated in this study. I am so appreciative that they shared their stories with me, and for that I am forever grateful.

ABSTRACT

South Africa's history includes a Nationalist government that implemented a system of apartheid, which socially constructed racial categories in order to reserve privileged rights and status to white South Africans. As a result of this history, as well as the fact that whites make up a small minority of the country, whiteness in South Africa is not invisible nor is it the norm as it is in the West. However, white English-speaking South Africans, or WESSAs, in the past have managed to maintain a state of invisibility compared to white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, who were the architects of apartheid. In addition, white English-speaking South Africans seem to struggle with cultural definition, which adds to their state of invisibility. Therefore, whiteness in the context of white English-speaking South Africans makes for an interesting study.

The country's transition into a democratic nation that is free of apartheid laws has meant that whites have had to look at their position in the country more thoughtfully. For many this has led to a complicating of their identities and the emergence of new subjectivities. Discourses of the 'New' South Africa, which speak of a rainbow nation and challenge old discourses of whiteness, are constructing as well as being constructed by these new ways of thinking. These discourses have posed a threat to the maintenance of power and privilege of whiteness, and therefore discourses of whiteness are working to reinstate old meaning through new disguises.

Furthermore, this study is particularly concerned with white English-speaking South Africans who were born from 1980 to1989, which this study has named the 'transition generation'. This is a generation of young South Africans who were born on the cusp of apartheid's demise, and therefore they are not completely defined by apartheid nor can they be separated from it. The transition generation has been faced with the challenge of negotiating their relationship to the past while positioning themselves in the country's current landscape. The researcher employed a discourse analysis of the 14 in-depth qualitative interviews she conducted with 7 WESSA participants. Two one on one interviews were conducted with each participant. During these interviews the researcher engaged the participants by asking open-ended questions, which were meant to elicit long and thoughtful answers about what it means to be a WESSA in the country today. By exploring the discursive construction of identities, this study attempted to understand the ways in which these South Africans negotiate their identities through intersecting discourses of whiteness and the 'New' South Africa. Doing so has led to the recognition of narratives which add to as well as undermine the hegemonic discourse of whiteness.

The analysis has revealed that WESSAs of the transition generation are constructing their narratives through discourses of whiteness which appear as discourses of the 'New' South Africa, and this works to maintain its power. For example, these discourses appear in narratives which speak of white guilt, colour blindness, and white victimization. However, it has also found discourses of the 'New' South Africa, which truly do challenge hegemonic whiteness, that are being constructed by and constructing those who emit honest self-reflection. Furthermore, this study works as a platform for discourses which challenge hegemonic whiteness to emerge, and therefore adds to new ways of being white and South African. Additionally it provides insight into the way in which discourses of whiteness work in disguise, and therefore it unmasks these disguises in order to pull whiteness from its position of power.

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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

In 2009, I moved to South Africa from the United States, and for the first time I really began to see how I was shaped by my position as a white American woman. Back home, race is not as freely spoken about as it is in South Africa, and as much as I knew that I was white and that society categorised me as such, naively I did not think that it had a significant effect on my identity or position in society. According to Dyer (1997) "in the West, being white is not an issue for most white people, not a conscious or reflected on part of their sense of who they are" (p.5). However, race most certainly does shape white women's lives just the same as gender and sexuality does (Frankenburg, 1993). During my childhood, we had 'multicultural' weeks in school where we celebrated different cultures, which were always minority groups. These groups included Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans. We would eat the 'exotic' foods of these cultures, watch ethnic dancing, and learn about different histories. As a child, I found this wonderful and mystifying. Today, after my introduction to the concept of 'whiteness' and my move to South Africa, I cannot help but question the underlying power relations of discourses of 'multiculturalism'. Hazel Carbey cited in Dyer (1997) points out how black literature in predominately white classrooms is placed on a bookshelf under the heading of 'multiculturalism'. I most certainly remember this as a child. The fact that one separate week or a separate bookshelf is set aside for 'other' cultures, and particularly 'people of colour' leads white children to construct themselves "in relation to a (black) perceived "other"" (Hazel Carbey cited in Dyer, 1997 p.3). Furthermore, my move to South Africa, where whiteness is not invisible, and where its norms do not go unchallenged, has led me to reflect on my own socially positioned whiteness. Dyer (1997) explains the importance of such reflexivity in race relations, particularly from the side of the dominant, which is necessary to pull it from its "position of power" (p.2).

As noted above, whiteness in South Africa is not an unchallenged norm nor is it invisible, as white South Africans make up a small minority of the country's total population. During decades of apartheid rule, the Nationalist government reserved privileged rights and status to white South Africans on the premise of white supremacist ideology. The apartheid system socially constructed racial categories by implementing acts like the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act of 1950 in order to maintain white privilege and oppress those determined as non-white[1] (Ross, 1999). The socially

1 Requirements of length do not allow for in-depth historical contextualisation. Although it is not explicitly described, there is an assumption of this context.

constructed racial categories set out by the apartheid system were so strongly imbedded into South African society that their existence remains in the country today. Posel (2001) states, “After decades of apartheid's racial reasoning, the idea that South African society comprises four distinct races- 'whites', 'Coloureds', 'Indians', and 'Africans'- has become a habit of thought and experience” (p.56). The influence of these remaining categories provides a challenging landscape for South Africans to negotiate social identities which are removed from these pre-given 'racial' categories.

1.1 The 'New' South Africa: Proudly a Rainbow Nation

> And we as we have always said, are the rainbow people of God. We are beautiful because we are the rainbow people of God and we are unstoppable, we are unstoppable, black and white, as we move together to freedom, to justice, to democracy, to peace, to reconciliation, to healing, to loving, to laughter and joy, when we say: This South Africa belongs to all of us, black and white! *Speech by Archbishop Desmond Tutu at a rally in 1993; reprinted in Tutu, 1994, p.251*

The country's transition into an apartheid-free society has been “constructed on the vision of 'non-racial' democracy and 'intercultural' harmony (a rainbow nation)” (Franchi and Swart, 2002, p.210). The 'rainbow nation', a phrase adopted by Archbishop Desmond Tutu of the South African Anglican church, became increasingly popular during the challenging years directly after the end of apartheid rule. Eaton (2006) notes how this vision of nationhood was necessary to create a national identity that all South Africans could share. The discourse around this 'New' South African identity centres on “reconciliation, tolerance, multiculturalism, and pride in the 'political miracle' of the new South Africa, all symbolized by the Rainbow Nation metaphor” (Eaton, 2006, p.24-25). The changes in the country are intended to “eradicate the oppression of the past, pro-actively prevent all present forms of discrimination” and by the same intentions “recognize and preserve the 'cultural' diversity and multilingualism of present-day South African society” (Franchi and Swart, 2002, p.210). The point here is that the same racial categories used during apartheid are being used today, but rather than using them to unequally separate people, the categories today are being upheld on a platform of cultural sensitivity. Franchi and Swart (2002) explain, “In present-day South Africa, young adults are called upon to negotiate their definitions of themselves at the intersection of an apartheid legacy of pain, oppression and segregation, the socio-political transformations of the present, and the promise of non-racial, intercultural integration, equity and prosperity for the future” (p.212). The vision for the country is that of non-racialism which is encouraged by multiculturalism. However, the nature of this vision is slippery. It may easily be misinterpreted by some as reinstating cleavages between cultures and actually

encouraging division between people so long as one group is not held as superior or inferior.

In contrast, Chick (2000) explains how the policies within this discourse, such as multilingualism in schools, have the "potential to construct a truly multicultural South African identity" (p.32). The construction of such an identity can only come about if such policies are actually upheld in full and not in part. Chick (2000) recognizes the pitfalls in the actual execution of policies of multiculturalism. He finds that although multilingualism is the official language policy in schools, an "English-only discourse" is the reality which reinforces old power structures (p.35). This study is an extension of the above investigation, and asks how the contrasting nature of a discourse of 'non-racialism' coinciding with 'multiculturalism' affects the articulation of identities.

Today the 'rainbow nation' metaphor is criticized for being superficial and a distraction from addressing the real issues surrounding race and economic inequality (Brown, 2001). Others criticize it for reinstating difference among cultures and creating division in the country (Boyce, 1999). However, the use of the metaphor, whether it employs positive or negative effects on the country, is still moving through the social world. It is part of a larger discourse of nationhood which is finding new ways to build common national identity through national pride. For the sake of this study, the researcher calls this the discourse of the 'New' South Africa. The very discourse which speaks of a 'rainbow nation' and constructs campaigns of being "Proudly South African" around many aspects of everyday life including sport, food, music, and government. It is a discourse which celebrates diversity and frames all citizens of the country as South African.

1.2 White English-speaking South Africans: History and Demographics

This section provides an explanation of who white English-speaking South Africans, also known as WESSAs, are and the justification for focusing on this particular group in the following study. Firstly, for practical communicative purposes, this study focuses on white English-speakers, for the researcher's first language is English, and it is easier to interview respondents of the same language (Truscott, 2007). Next, is the observation that little has been explored or written about white English-speaking South Africans as a group. Salusbury (2003) attributes this to "the lack of unity" amongst the population of white English-speaking South Africans, which makes it very hard to define the group culturally (p.24). Most commonly white English-speaking South Africans are thought to be tied to Britain with great numbers of this group arriving in the Cape during the British colonization of 1806 (Paton, 1981). However, a substantial number of the white English-speaking population trace their heritage back to immigrants who came from all over the European continent including Jews of Eastern

Europe who escaped Nazi Germany (Peberdy, 2001; Salusbury, 2003). On arrival to South Africa these immigrants took on the English language and became more closely aligned with the political views of the British, which were more closely related to their countries of origin (Salusbury, 2003). In addition, the WESSA group is comprised of immigrants who came into South Africa after African countries gained their independence from colonial powers. These individuals come from a number of African countries, including whites from Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Zambia. They moved to South Africa after being unable to cope with black rule (Crapanzano, 1985 cited in Salusbury, 2003).

The diversity within this group, who make up about 40% of the total white South African population, also makes it a hard group to pin down and define culturally (Sparks, 2003). There is little sense of community as a result of the lack of history that usually bonds a group together, like the Afrikaners. Truscott (2007) notes how "White English-speaking South Africans have generally subscribed to a philosophy of individualism, which, it has been suggested has perpetuated the in-articulation of group characteristics" (p.26). Furthermore, Sennett and Foster (1996) explain that the central characteristic to the group's identity is defined by what they are not as opposed to what they are, that is "not-Afrikaans/ not-black" (Truscott, 2007, p.26). The slippery nature of the definition of the WESSA group makes for an interesting study of whiteness. Similar to whiteness in the West, these white South Africans are able to maintain a sort of invisibility, and this has made it challenging to pin down the group's role in the country.

1.3 The Transition Generation

This study is concerned with those born on the cusp of apartheid's demise and who were the first generation raised in a multi-racial democratic country. I have determined that white South Africans of the transition generation were born between 1980-1989; today being between the ages of 31 and 22. The rationale behind these ages is that respondents may likely have some memory of apartheid as well as early memories of transition out of apartheid. This is not to mean as children they necessarily knew the word apartheid or its exact meaning, but that they may have memories of experience with the apartheid landscape. Nadine Dolby (2001) explains how these South Africans are "a generation whose past, present, and future are neither completely defined by apartheid, nor completely free of it" (p.9). In his book on Afrikaner youth, Jonathan Jansen (2009) names white South Africans of the transition generation the "second generation". He describes the "second generation" as the children of the perpetrators of apartheid compared to the children of survivors. Jansen (2009) attempts to uncover the knowledge held by white South Africans of the transition generation about apartheid, which they did not experience firsthand. He states, "I noticed quite early on that my white students (of the transition

generation) [2] would often express very firm views about the past, hold rigid views about the present, and convey (especially among the men) fatalistic views about the future" (Jansen, 2009, p.51). Jansen's (2009) particular interest was the student's knowledge of the past and how they came to acquire it. He poses an important question about the way in which knowledge travels between generations, and he traces the way in which indirect knowledge has been transmitted through different mechanisms to children of the 'second generation'. Jansen (2009) finds that through their indirect knowledge, children of perpetrators are experiencing diverse emotions including denial, irritability, shame, intense reactions, silence, and indifference (ibid, p.66-67). These South Africans are faced with the task of negotiating their relationship to the apartheid past, which they were too young to knowingly participate in, and position themselves in the county's current landscape.

1.4 The Value of this Study

Great value is provided by the analytical process. Discourse analysis can lead to social transformation, for talk is action and the very essence of discourse analysis involves talk. The knowledge discourse analysis constructs can make changes in the way people talk for example from racist to non racist (Wood and Kroger, 2000). In addition, the over arching value of this study is simply articulated in a quote by Richard Dyer (1997). He powerfully states:

> We may be on our way to genuine hybridity, multiplicity without (white) hegemony, and it may be where we want to get to – but we aren't there yet, and we won't get there until we see whiteness, see its power, its particularity and limitedness, put it in its place and end its rule. This is why studying whiteness matters (p.4).

1.5 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to draw on descriptive narratives provided by participants in order to trace the way in which white English-speaking South Africans of the transition generation negotiate their identities. The analysis is concerned with the way in which "discourses construct knowledge" and work to facilitate identity formation (Brookes, 1995). It was hoped that by analysing how and if narratives of identity are shaped in the intersections of discourses of whiteness and the 'New' South Africa that this study would bring us to an understanding of new ways of being white and South African. This allows us to recognise narratives that add to as well as undermine the hegemonic discourse of whiteness. In exploring these new ways of being, this study aimed to add to the discourse around new possibilities of being white and South African. Such ways of being white that disrupt the dominant "master narrative"

2 My addition

of whiteness and open up spaces for social transformation (Kelly, 2005; Steyn, 2001).

CHAPTER TWO:
WHITENESS AND IDENTITY FORMATION: KEY LITERATURE

2.1 Historical Frame of Whiteness

This study begins with the notion, as Frankenburg (1993) explains, of 'race' as a social construct. She states, “White people and people of color live racially structured lives,” and, “any system of differentiation shapes those on whom it bestows privilege as well as those it oppresses” (Frankenburg, 1993, p.1). Race, as Teresa Guess (2006) explains is historically linked to social organization. “The notion “race” is informed by historical, social, cultural, and political values” (Guess, 2006, p.654). As a ranking system of privilege and oppression “race and racism are fundamentally interwoven,” situating whiteness historically as a site of racial dominance (Frankenburg, 1997, p.9). For example, to be white in the first colonies of North America, at that time considered Anglo-Saxon, was to be positioned as superior. In constructing the self as superior is to hold one's self in comparison to a perceived 'other', constructed as inferior (Frankenburg, 1997). Furthermore, the colonisation of the African continent was informed by this reasoning and highly dependent on the notion of the European colonisers as superior marked by their civilised behaviour and held against the inferior, darker skinned Africans. In this sense whiteness came to represent civilisation, purity, and enlightenment. Colonisers legitimized their place in Africa as necessary in order to save the barbarians from themselves by bringing civilisation to the continent (Frankenburg, 1997; Steyn, 2001). Steyn (2001) explains that it is these assumptions that carry the “colonialist master narrative”, which continue through “systems of knowledge” (p.xxvii). However, this 'master narrative' has been challenged by post-colonialism which has begun to shed light on the way in which these narratives have been constructed to serve the interests of capitalism and colonialism (Steyn, 2001). By doing so whiteness and its attached privilege is being stripped of the invisibility that has carried it for so long.

2.2 Invisibility of Whiteness

Dyer (1997) in his book *White* provides an in depth analysis on popular film and culture in America and for that matter the world. He shows how white people dominate the images of the world, particularly in movies where the hero is most often a white male saving a helpless female who is also white. In his analysis, Dyer (1997) reveals whiteness as the recognized norm - at least among the white people of the West. As the norm, it (whiteness) is treated as the human condition holding the rest as the perceived 'other'. He states, “For those in power in the West, as long as whiteness is felt to be the human condition, then it alone both defines normality and fully inhabits it” (Dyer, 1997, p.9). This is

problematic for when “the equation of being white with being human secures a position of power”, white people believe that they can account for all people (Dyer, 1997, p.9). The 'master narrative' has been perpetuated by these very notions of normality allowing power to perpetuate unnoticed. Furthermore, hegemonic whiteness continues without question while discourse around culture focuses on the constructed “other”. Dyer (1997) demands that white be recognised as a colour too, but contends, “we cannot do that if we keep using a term that reserves colour for anyone other than white people (p.11). Steyn (2005) notes, that the 'othering' of people who are not white marginalizes them in a place outside of the so called norm. Through this normality the ones “who perpetuate racism are never exposed” (ibid, p.120). Furthermore, white people place themselves as the norm, and “don't quite see that they thus construct the world in their own image” (Dyer, 1997, p.9). Furthermore, when the researcher refers to Discourses of Whiteness in this study, she is referring to discourses that exhibit these characteristics.

2.3 Whiteness in the South African Context

Steyn (2005) notes that in South Africa post-apartheid the country has put major political and social pressure toward efforts which deconstruct privileged whiteness from the centre of power. In contrast to the West, whiteness in South Africa is very visible where, in the past, the white South African minority entrenched “racial oppression and segregationist extremism” on the basis of white superiority (Steyn, 2005, p. 119). South African whiteness has been shared by the Afrikaners and the English, two groups of European decent. The two groups share a privileged position, but their historical relationship is marked by English imperialism and conquest.[3] This has created great tension between the two groups, while providing a heterogeneous experience of whiteness in the country (Steyn, 2001). Different from Afrikaners, many English-speaking South Africans hold closer ties to Europe, and therefore are “psychologically more alienated” from the continent (ibid, p.31). Steyn (2001) explains how the psychological alienation from the continent and ties to Europe have provided a “more international frame of reference” for WESSAs, which has exposed them to “counter discourses on issues of “race””(p.32). During apartheid, the whites in opposition to the Nationalist government came mostly from the English-speaking community. However, influenced as these white South Africans were by liberalism, they still enjoyed privileges for being white. In addition, because they were not the leading group of white supremacy the English have been able to maintain a state of invisibility while holding on to the option of leaving back to Europe. In full, as the privileged group white South Africans have still largely been able to hold their identity as the standardized norm and “ignore the manner in which

3 Requirements of length do not allow for in-depth historical contextualisation. Although it is not explicitly described, there is an assumption of this context. The longest of the Anglo-Boer Wars spanned from 1899-1902.

the notion of race has structured people's life opportunities in society as a whole" (Steyn, 2001, p.xxvi).

Still, the emergence of narratives that challenge the 'master narrative' brings to light the process of complicating identities and the articulation of new ways of being white and South African. Nuttall (2000) explains how this complicating of identities has led white South Africans to locate their identities within a broad range of whiteness. Furthermore, South Africans are re-shaping their historical, political, and social identities in search of their place in the country. In Melissa Steyn's (2001) work on white identities in the 'New' South Africa she writes, "People who staked much of their identity on their privileged whiteness are now subordinated politically"(p.xxii). The place of whiteness in South Africa has changed dramatically, and this has created a context for white South Africans to examine their identities more thoughtfully. Furthermore, "South Africa's historical process, which include the nation's demographic profile, the extremely racialized nature of the society, and the recent disruption of old power structures within the country, make a study of whiteness in this context very revealing" (ibid, p.xxii).

Steyn (2001) recognizes five narratives of whiteness employed by white South Africans as they "make sense of the world" and recognize their "place in it" (p.xxxviii). These narratives of whiteness are umbrellaed by the 'master narrative' of whiteness which "formed the hegemonic core discourse for subsequent and divergent articulations of whiteness" (ibid, p. xxxix). Furthermore, counter-narratives of whiteness which express new ways of being white are in reaction to this hegemonic discourse of whiteness. *Narrative One: Still Colonial after All These Years* identifies a narrative expressed by white South Africans who are "telling the same old story about whiteness" and assuming the same power relations between whites and blacks (Steyn, 2001, p.59). *Narrative Two: This Shouldn't Happen to A White* is supported by ideals of white superiority, and it constructs whites as victims of the aftermath of apartheid and therefore includes beliefs of reverse racism. *Narrative Three: Don't Think White, It's All Right* includes those who have come to terms with the change in power relations and are "working on accepting the present, though not without a good measure of griping and complaining" (Steyn, 2001, p.83). The narrators of *Narrative Four: A Whiter Shade of White* are consumed by denial which can be viewed as a coping mechanism in avoiding the "uncomfortable feelings that may accompany being white in the New South Africa" (Steyn, 2001, p.101). Lastly, the narrators of *Narrative Five: Under African Skies (or White, but Not Quite)* make strides at rejecting the 'master narrative' of whiteness. They plan to approach the future by "letting go of old selves" and allowing themselves to "transform along with the changes in the country" (Steyn, 2001, p.115). This study does not intend to prove that any or one of these narratives is being told, but these narratives do provide a beneficial platform to

begin exploring and engaging with new ways of being white and South African. Allowing counter-narratives to the hegemonic discourse of whiteness a space to be heard is not to re-centre the power of whiteness. Rather, it focuses on the complexity of identities and allows “anti-racist subject positions to emerge” amongst white South Africans. (Kelly, 2005).

Discourses of whiteness and the 'New' South Africa are intersecting, challenging, and shaping each other. We see this through Steyn's (2001) recognition of the above narratives of whiteness that are currently being employed by white South Africans. These counter-narratives are constructing debates over what then white South Africans, who recognise their problematic whiteness, should be doing. Therefore, new discourses, which are products of the intersected discourses of whiteness and the 'New' South Africa, have emerged within this debate. These discourses are necessary to this study, for they are constructing knowledge of what one ought to be *doing,* and therefore are shaping one's perception of self. For example, Samantha Vice (2010) acknowledges the counter-narratives to the 'master narrative' that white South Africans are taking up, and she addresses the question of how one is “to *be* a good person and live well under these morally dubious conditions?” (p.326). Vice (2010) argues that white South Africans can do best by looking inward and focusing on “personal transformation” through “humility and silence”, for “any voice in the public sphere would inevitably be tainted by the vicious features of whiteliness” (p.340). Tabensky (2011) elaborates on what Vice means by this. He explains that “white selves damaged by apartheid should generally avoid the temptation of becoming public critics of the current political order”, and rather take the time for introspection to resist “the temptation to climb to moral high ground when offering criticisms” (Tabensky, 2011). Furthermore, Vice (2010) notes the appropriateness of whites feeling shame in South Africa, and she argues that this shame must be dealt with in humility and silence. She does not mean to encourage an all together quietness of white South Africans, but she does note the importance of a political silence among white South Africans. Furthermore, white South Africans should still engage in conversation with other South Africans when it comes to topics of race and privilege. However, one should remain silent in the political landscape “to prevent one's whitely perspective from causing further distortion in the political and public contexts, where whiteness is most problematic and charged” (Vice, 2010, p.337). Silence in this sense does not mean to disregard or ignore the voices of non-whites, but it means to take a morally responsible approach in maintaining a sort of restraint to ensure that one's social position does not cause further harm (Vice, 2010, p. 335).

In reaction and opposition to Vice's (2010) suggestions of humility and silence, some critics feel that silence among white South Africans is not a responsible approach. Kumar (2011) argues that non-racist

white South Africans should use their privileged positions and stand with “blacks and others engaging in collective struggle against” the current government and the continued racial injustices in the country. Kumar's (2011) argument is one which advocates for a common voice among South Africans and calls for those in privileged positions to financially aid campaigns. Unlike Vice (2010), the common voice that Kumar (2011) argues for intends to allow all South Africans, black and white, to be heard equally but on the condition that some voices do not overshadow other voices. Hemson (2011) agrees and contends that silence is not the answer. However, humility is necessary, and Hemson (2011) calls for “self-aware engagement” between black and whites “rather than withdrawal”. In this sense humility is a must, and South Africans must come together in less “opinionated and arrogant” ways (Hemson, 2011).

2.4 Identity Formation

Stets and Burke (2000) explain how “individuals are born into an already structured society” and “Once in society, people derive their identity or sense of self largely from the social categories to which they belong” (p.225). As a social category informed by historical power structures, race is passed down through the pre-structured society shaping the bodies which inherit it. Therefore, whiteness is inherited and reproduced (Ahmed, 2007; Guess, 2006; Stets and Burke, 2000). The theorists of Social Identity Theory argue that people construct their identities by categorising themselves into a social group in which they view themselves as sharing common social traits. Identity Theory also views self-categorisation as relevant, but focuses on the categorisation of the self as an occupant of a role which guides behaviour (Ashforth, 1989; Stets & Burke, 2000). However, the two theories do not address the *way* in which meaning is imparted by society onto people affecting the way in which people structure their identities.

In contrast to the approach put forth by Social Identity and Identity Theory this study takes from Stuart Hall's (1996) notion that an identity is not a fixed state of 'being' but “a process never completed-always 'in process'” (p.2). Identities are using social resources as they are constantly in a process of becoming. This is the discursive approach to identity formation, which “accepts that identities are never unified” but “increasingly fragmented” and “constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices, and positions” (Hall,1996, p.4). Hall (1996) states, “identities are constructed within discourse, not outside discourse” (p.4). Therefore, an identity is not as straightforward as self-categorization, for it moves within discourse problematizing, contradicting, and complicating notions of the self (Chick, 2000; Lin, 2008). For South Africa, a country stimulated by social change, white South Africans are in a process of creating narratives that attempt to situate

themselves within racial and national discourses. After apartheid's demise Steyn (2001) notes, “White South Africans would have to draw on the available repertoire of discourses (not necessarily only narratives of “whiteness”), and reconfigure and reinterpret these to create meaningful identities within drastically changed political circumstances” (p.41). This study is an extension of this and seeks to understand the way in which WESSAs of the transition generation articulate their own identities, which are “embedded within culturally shared interpretive repertoires” (Wetherell and Potter, 1998 cited in Steyn 2001, p.48).

2.5 Emotions Shaping Discourse and Identity

In light of Jansen's (2009) observation that white South Africans of the transition generation are experiencing diverse emotions in relation to the past, present, and future, a discussion within the discursive approach on identity, which includes a question of emotions, is employed. Sara Ahmed (2004) explains, “rather than seeing emotions as psychological dispositions, we need to consider how they work, in concrete and particular ways, to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and collective” (p.27). This theory looks at the way in which emotions drive discourse thus shaping and reshaping identities. Furthermore, emotions are not stemmed from the individual on a private level but are working to bind subjects together and shape the “materialization of collective bodies” such as the body of the nation (Ahmed, 2004, p.121). Ahmed (2004) explains that it is emotions lack of residence in a “body, object, or figures that allows emotions to (re)produce or generate the effects they do” through discourse (p.124). The movement of emotions depend on past histories of association which are assigned to the present. Take for example fear as an emotion driving discourse around race/racism. A subject may express fear of the perceived “other”. Instead of assuming the subject owns that emotion or that the “other” is inherently someone to be feared, Ahmed (2004) observes the way in which the emotion works to circulate through the social world aligning subjects with or against each other. In her book on emotional discourse, Megan Boler (1999) explains that through “emotional expressions and silences” we learn to “enact roles assigned to us” by categories of “dominant culture” (p.xx). She notes how experiences of power relations such as class, race, and gender “are shaped by the social control of emotion” (ibid, p.5). In addition, Boler (1999) calls attention to “the role emotions play in shaping our perceptions, our selection of what we pay attention to, and our values” (p.xv).

Furthermore, Vice (2010) contends that white South Africans who recognise their problematic whiteness are “morally required to feel certain emotions”, such as guilt and shame (p. 327). In relation to Boler's (1999) argument then, the emotions Vice (2010) explains as 'appropriate' for “well-

intentioned white South Africans" to feel are not only inhabited by a person but are also working to construct the role one takes on as a member of society. This study does not necessarily agree with this part of Vice's (2010) argument, and therefore argues against the appropriateness of such feelings as shame and guilt. This is not to say that one should not feel ashamed by the way her privileged whiteness comes as a result of the oppression of non-whites but that such an emotion should not be "cultivated" as the means to a moral self, as Vice suggests (Hemson, 2011). This thought is in relation to the researcher's reaction to the word 'appropriate', which the researcher equates to the word 'useful', and in this context the researcher does not find guilt or shame useful. If discourses of emotions are shaping the roles in which white South Africans are taking upon themselves as responsible members of society, then guilt and shame are not useful emotions to the discursive construction of what it means to take responsibility for one's privileged whiteness. This is due to the idea that guilt and shame are not productive emotions, for they act as a distraction and provide a cover up that makes it seem as if one is taking responsibility for one's position in society when really one is hiding behind shame and guilt (Ahmed, 2004). Hemson (2011) challenges Vice's suggestion of 'appropriate' emotions and states, "if there is a particular white responsibility that comes with our history, it must be to address the needs of the present and not indulge our various hurt emotions" such as shame and guilt. Rather, "The emotions worth celebrating are those that recognise South African resilience over the wrongs of the past" (Hemson, 2011). At any rate, this study does not intend to take on the debate over which emotions are 'appropriate' to feel. It does however recognise the fact that discourses of emotions such as guilt and shame are present in South Africa. Therefore, this study is concerned with the way discourses, which are driven by emotions and in turn perpetuate such emotions, ultimately construct knowledge and influence processes of identity formation.

CHAPTER THREE:
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The methodological tools used in this study are driven by post-structuralism and social constructionism. They are also closely aligned with the theories explored in the literature review. The following section of this chapter will provide a brief overview of the key concepts of post-structuralist theory and social constructionism that are pertinent to this study. Both of the former theoretical practices are too complex to explain in full, for the scope of this thesis does not allow it. This is due to the many debates within both theories which are a product of the disagreements amongst the theorists within them.

Post-structuralism came about in the 1960's and 1970's by a group of French philosophers including Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Lacan, and Baudrillard (Craib, 1992; Poster, 1989). Post-structuralism was a reaction against structuralist theory, which focused on underlying structures and "downplayed individual agency and political power" (Salusbury, 2003, p.38). Post-structuralists instead focused on the importance of language, and therefore did not seek single truths in the world but "posited that individuals and the social world are constantly dialectically involved in a process of becoming, and so they turned their attention instead to social and linguistic interplay" (Hollinger, 1994 cited in Salusbury, 2003, p.40). This study is informed by post-structuralist ideas around language and its influence over identity formation. The main analytical tool used in this study, discourse analysis, is also inspired by one of the pioneers of post-structuralist thought. Foucault, who explained the intimate connection between language and power, challenged the assumption that power only moved from the top down (Burkitt, 1999). Furthermore, power is something that is operating in multiple ways from multiple positions and is therefore present in all "social relations" (Salusbury, 2003, p.40). Language is one of the main tools used in social relations, and therefore power resides deeply in language (Burr, 1995). This explains the need to explore language further, and to understand the way in which power is reproduced within it, often times in not so obvious ways.

Many of the notions which make up social constructionism exhibit the essence of post-structuralism. Like post-structuralist thought, social constructionists do not believe in the ability to find 'real' 'truths', and therefore "our understanding of objects and events is created through social agreement" (Salusbury, 2003, p.41). Importance is placed on social processes and the way in which things become understood

as truth and accepted as such in the social world (Burr, 1995). Furthermore, theorists of social constructionism argue that the social world, which includes the self, is a product of social processes and that our knowledge is a construct of our own reality. Therefore, knowledge is constructed through the daily interactions between people and is greatly rooted in language. Furthermore, the theorists of social constructionism explain that the way in which we make sense of ourselves is enacted through narrative.

Discourses are situated in specific contexts, and therefore it is important to note that the discourses observed in this study are situated in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. However, it is not to say that this context itself is not given meaning and "understood through a process of social construction" (Salusbury, 2003, p.43). As Potter (1996) explains, the most pertinent arena of examination is epistemology, and therefore the very context of post-apartheid South Africa is meaningful because it is constructed as such (Salusbury, 2003). This brings us back to the notion that discourse is situated within power relations which therefore construct knowledge (Danziger, 1997), and in relation to this study, inform identities.

3.2 A Qualitative Approach

This study engages in a qualitative approach to data collection through in-depth interviews. Although there are various qualitative research approaches, the core assumption of qualitative research is grounded in the idea that 'reality' is subjective rather than objective (Schurink, 1998). Miles and Huberman (1994) describe the richness of qualitative data, which can provide "chronological flows, assess local casualty, and derive fruitful explanations" (p.15). People's life stories provide much insight into a field of study which cannot be as abundantly explained through quantitative research. Furthermore, there is important insight to be found in the way in which people remember, and the way they structure their narratives (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Pertinent to this study on identity formation is the point in which respondents experience reflexivity. This is explained by Giddens' Theory of self-identity, which explains how people construct themselves through their personal narratives (Seibold, 2002, p.10). This element of Giddens' theory is 'the reflexive project of the self'. This project is "defined as 'the process' whereby self-identity is constituted by the reflexive ordering of self narratives" (Giddens, 1991, p.244 cited in Seibold, 2002, p.10). The personal narratives are not "literal" full life ""stories", but are the descriptions of the respondents' "world making"" (Steyn, 2001, p.xxxvii). According to Stets and Burke (2000) identities are formed by one's "self-views that emerge from the reflexive activity of self-categorization" (p.225). When people reflect back on their biography through narratives they are also partaking in the self-categorizing process.

Furthermore, the narrative process allows for a "transition from the unreflective to the reflective" (Fouché, 1990, p.382).

This study embraces an approach which acknowledges the researcher's personal and social impact on the research process. This requires deep reflexivity on the part of the researcher in order to maintain integrity and ethical consideration throughout the study. This approach works within the realm of the post-structuralist and social constructionist theories, which are positioned on the idea that "it is not possible to achieve an unmediated representation of the world" (Salusbury, 2003, p.45). Furthermore, all knowledge is produced within a specific context. In this case, the researcher is central to the context which determines the knowledge produced in this study. For these reasons, a qualitative approach accepts that all knowledge is open to interpretation and contestation (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, Tindall, 1994).

3.3 Method

3.3.1 Gaining Access to Participants

In following the theory of social constructionism, which focuses "on social processes and communication between individuals", a conscious decision was made by the researcher not to try and obtain a representative sample of participants (Salusbury, 2003, p.46). This required the researcher to reject the idea of taking on a study group of participants with the same or similar backgrounds, life histories, economic status, sex, education levels, ect.. Furthermore, it was the full intention of the researcher to select participants who were likely to have different "life experiences" (Salusbury, 2003, p.46).

The research employed a snowballing approach to gain access to participants (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). This type of approach uses a method which begins with one or more people who are connected to the researcher in some way. They then connect the researcher to other potential participants. This was carried out through an email which explained the motivation of the study, its purpose, and what is entailed (See Appendix 1). The researcher sent out a mass email to a few people she was loosely acquainted with and asked those people to then forward on the email to other people who would potentially be interested in participating. To begin with the researcher attempted to email the request for participation to acquaintances that she was connected to in different ways. The reason for this was to try and connect with different types of people. The request for participation seemed daunting to some people because of the length of the interview and the sensitivity of the topic of study. Therefore, a face to face introduction was required in some cases in order to better explain the study and gain a level of

trust. In other cases multiple follow up phone calls were required in order to pin down a date and time to meet. Ultimately the approach was successful, and participants with a range of backgrounds participated in the study.

3.3.2 Description of Participants

The intent of this study was to examine white English-speaking South Africans of the transition generation. However, defining, categorizing, and providing this group with a title is problematic in the first place. Social constructionism rejects definitive categories, for the conceptualization of such a group is made in the world view of the one defining it, and therefore it is artificial and easily contested (Salusbury, 2003). Therefore, this study examines those South Africans of the transition generation who experience being classified 'white', 'English-speaking' and a South African citizen, while also identifying with those social categories.

All participants who took part in the study were in some way connected to the researcher. In most cases the researcher and the participant were only loosely connected in the sense that they had only previously been introduced one time before the interview, or they were introduced the day of the interview. The sex of the participants was also not a criterion, and it was hoped to have representations of males and females. Ultimately, the study included two females and five males. All were born between 1980 and 1989, and therefore for this study considered to be part of the transition generation. The participants' levels of higher education had varied as well as their religious backgrounds with a few coming from Jewish heritage and others from Christian. Ancestral roots were also a point of difference amongst some of the participants, and those who did mention ancestry claimed German, Nordic, and or English roots. In addition, participants were born in different parts of the country ranging from the Cape Town area, the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal, and Gauteng. However, all seven of the respondents currently live in the Cape Town area.

A list of demographics and biographical information will not be provided in this study, for the essence of this research is a discourse analysis which focuses on the words participants use and the way they use these words in ordering their narratives. The researcher does acknowledge that one's background plays a part in the construction of one's knowledge, but once again this study is not concerned with the backgrounds of the participants so much as it is concerned with the stories they are telling today. The way in which these stories are constructed through discourse and in turn reiterate or create new discourses and thus affect identity formation is the focus of this study.

3.3.3 Interviews

Two interviews with each participant were conducted. Combined, these made fourteen interviews. Both interviews were designed to be a discussion around what it meant to be a white English-speaking South African in the country today. Both interviews revolved around a list of questions (See Appendix 3) which were designed to elicit deep thoughtful answers. The questionnaires were created to be semi-structured. This meant that the researcher embraced the possibility of improvisation and did not feel the need to follow the questionnaire too stringently, but the researcher did ensure that all topics of interest were eventually covered.

Interview one included questions which involved a bit of reflection and thinking back on one's life, while interview two included questions which involved an imagination of the future. Both included questions around present-day South Africa and what it meant to be a white English-speaking South African in the country today. These interviews were meant to be one on one with just the researcher and the participant. This was in order to elicit deep thoughtful answers without any pressure to answer one way or another. Conducting two interviews with each participant was beneficial in that it allowed the participant to think in between interviews and come back to the second interview with more self reflection. It was also beneficial for the researcher to play back the first interviews before conducting the second interviews. The researcher was able to come prepared with questions that were related to statements that the participant had made during first interview that the researcher wanted to dig deeper into or needed to clear up.

The interviews took place in multiple locations and at different times including a conference room at the University of Cape Town, at the Food Lover's Market on one participant's lunch break, the homes of participants, and in one case a participant came to the home of the researcher. Keeping in mind the amount of time the researcher was requesting of the participants, who all lead busy lives, the researcher made sure to accommodate the participants and meet them at their convenience. Each interview took approximately one hour with the longest interview being seventy-two minutes and the shortest being forty-three minutes.

3.3.4 Reflexivity

A researcher's use of reflexivity is highly important to ensure the quality of the research. Finlay and Gough (2003) state, “the etymological root of the word 'reflexive' means 'to bend back upon oneself'. In research terms this can be translated as thoughtful, self-aware analysis” (p.ix). Firstly, a researcher must acknowledge that his or her personal, historical, and social frame has constructed the initial interest in

the project. One's background, assumptions, and interests are all contributing factors to the research. This requires the reflexivity of the researcher to "bend back upon oneself" in critical self-reflection (Finlay & Gough, 2003, p.ix). Some grounded theorists take the stance that researchers must take the necessary precautions to ensure their constructed realities do not impose on the analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998 cited in Hall & Callery, 2001. p.258). However, to not include the subjective position of the researcher would be irresponsible and misinform the driving of the analysis. Steyn (2001) encourages researchers to "incorporate their whiteness into their analysis making the positionality from which the representation originates visible (p.xxiv). A reflexive process explained by Moustakas (1994), called bracketing, requires that the pre-judgements of the researcher not be blocked out. Rather they are engaged with to include the researcher's constructed self that has driven the study in the first place. Reflexivity in this sense provides validity to the research (Hall & Callery, 2001, p. 258).

Specific to the interview situation, a researcher, through the self-reflexive process, must consider the interview as an event that has been constructed socially, historically, and politically affecting both the interviewer and respondent (Wengraf, 2001; Kvale, 1996; Hall & Callery, 2001; Finlay & Gough, 2003). The dynamics between researcher and the respondent are played out along a power balance. Wengraf (2001) explains how the power balance in the interview situation is positioned by each participant's historical, social, and political positions. He points out that both participants come to the interview space with different personal histories and social roles which may be very similar or very different. Wengraf (2001) states, "You need at least to get clear for yourself the collective history which you share and the histories which you imagine that you might well not share prior to designing the interview" (p.44). This is important, as these histories may shape the way in which you carry out the interview and later interpret it. Responsibility is of the researcher who must be aware of the contextually constructed nature of such positions which may play out in the interview process. Hall and Callery (2001) note that if the prior goes unrecognized it "could influence the structure of the theory being produced" in an irresponsible way (p.262). Being reflexive then enables researchers to reveal the ways in which data has been organized in relation to their experiences.

In this study on whiteness and identity formation, the need for reflexivity was highly important in regards to my position as a white American woman. My own experiences as a white America woman are constructed through my historical, political and social frames, and it has been entirely beneficial to bend back and look upon myself. According to Dyer (1997) "in the West, being white is not an issue for most white people, not a conscious or reflected on part of their sense of who they are" (p.5). Therefore, it is important for me to engage in the reflexive process throughout my research. Without

imposing my experience of being white onto the data, I still acknowledge my experience and observe how the research is constructed by me, the researcher.

3.3.5 Ethical Considerations

Racial inequality in post-apartheid South Africa calls for an investigation of its perpetuating factors. However, in light of this study's sensitive issues, deep ethical consideration is required. In so doing, it is the responsibility of the researcher to include ethical consideration throughout the research process (Kvale, 1996; Wengraf, 2001). Throughout this project serious ethical guidelines have been followed to ensure the protection of respondents and the validity of the research. An explanation of the guidelines has been outlined below.

To begin, the researcher was given formal permission to undertake this study by the Sociology Department of the University of Cape Town. Informed consent was given by each participant in the study, which "entails informing the research subjects about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design, as well as of any possible risks and benefits from participation" (Kvale, 1996, p.112). It was reiterated to respondents that it was voluntary participation, and at any time they had the right to withdrawal from the study (Kvale, 1996; Wengraf, 2001).

Confidentiality was ensured to respondents through pseudonyms to provide anonymity. The exclusion of any identifiable biographical information was also necessary to ensure that respondents were completely unrecognizable (Kvale, 1996; Wengraf, 2001). This was also included on the consent form (See Appendix 2) provided to respondents prior to the interview in order to "reassure them about the confidentiality and anonymity of the material" (Wengraf, 2001, p.192). Confidentiality is enacted to protect respondents from any harm that could come from participating in the project. It creates a safe atmosphere where participants can honestly engage in detailed descriptions of their life experiences without fear of negative outside reactions (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, Tindall, 1994).

During the stages of analysis and writing, ethical considerations were strongly integrated into this study. First, the researcher used "loyal written transcription of an interviewee's oral statements", and the material was interpreted as relevantly and correctly as possible (Kvale, 1996, p.111). In so doing, thoughtful consideration was made to ensure that meaning was not being imposed or forced onto the data (Miles and Hubermann, 1994; Kvale, 1996; Wengraf, 2001).

3.4 Transcription

All interviews were recorded with a hand held device after gaining the permission of the participant. They were later transcribed by the researcher who used the basic transcription techniques that are listed below. These transcriptions make up the body of text for analysis. The researcher found it beneficial to transcribe the interviews herself and make brainstorming notes throughout the process. It was interesting to see how first assumptions made during the transcription process evolved and changed during the in-depth analysis process. This was a crucial exercise and learning experience which reiterated the importance of not coming to conclusions too quickly.

… -conversation trailing off, or trailing in.

(.) -a short pause.

(..) -an extensive pause.

[ ] -a portion of the text is omitted.

Italic -while not explicitly exaggerated, emphasis in the sentence falls on these words.

Bold -words are exclaimed or exaggerated

3.4 Analytical Tools

The analysis of the data takes an emergent approach in the sense that the researcher is not trying to prove that any or one narrative is being told within South Africa. I want to see what emerges from the narratives within an intersected discursive frame of whiteness and the 'New' South Africa in order to see the ways in which WESSAs of the transition generation are fashioning identities and positioning themselves in South Africa today.

Dominant discourses are constantly in a process of re-articulation in order to disguise their maintenance of power. This is why Foucault says we need not only analyse the formation of such discourses but also the strategies they take up to generate “old meanings in new disguises which conceal the exercise of power and thus make it more acceptable” (Brookes, 2010, p.464). Gunn (2006) adds that the analysis of power should not be concerned with the possessors of power, but rather “how power is exercised, its practices, strategies, and technologies” (p.710). Wood and Kroger (2000) explain, “Discourse analysis can point to the ways in which certain practices serve to obscure and therefore perpetuate what is taken for granted” (p.13-14). What is taken for granted in society is also considered as “'common-sense' or 'truthful'”, and therefore often goes uncontested (Burr, 1995, p.62). This occurs as discourses construct meaning “around things that are not 'really' there, and...once an object has been elaborated in discourse

it is difficult *not* to refer to it as if it were real" (Parker, 1992, p.5). The form of analysis employed in this study is motivated by this approach of discourse analysis, which does not simply identify discourses, but it also examines "what a speaker is *doing* with his or her speech, and what is achieved by structuring a discourse in a certain way" (Salusbury, 2003, p.50). Wood and Kroger (2000) elaborate on this notion, and contend that the goal of discourse analysis is to identify "what is being done in a discourse and how this is accomplished, that is, how the discourse is structured or organized to perform various functions and achieve various effects or consequences" (p.95). Salusbury (2003) explains Wetherell and Potter's notion of "interpretive repertoires", which finds that discourses take on different meanings and to different degrees when employed in different contexts. Wetherell and Potter "believe that it is necessary to investigate the political and ideological functions of discourse" in their specific contexts (ibid, p.50).

Furthermore, discourse analysis will be employed to analyse the narratives of white English-speaking South Africans. Steyn (2001) explains how respondents use "the cultural resources available to them to fashion identities" (p.xxxvii). The cultural resources of interest to this study are discourses which "maintain power through their ideological properties" and are fashioned through narratives (Brookes, 1995, p.462). Therefore, "The purpose of discourse work is to address how those institutional power relations are both reproduced and contested within more 'low-level', everyday contexts of talk and action" (Levett, Kottler, Burman, and Parker, 1997, p.8). Discourse analysis shows how respondent's narratives are situated in broader social frames (Steyn, 2001). Hall (1996) explains how self narratives may seem to be or are superficial, "imaginary", or "constructed in fantasy" (p.4). However, he points out that despite the "fictional nature of this process (narrativization of the self)" one should not disregard its "discursive, material, or political effectivity" (ibid, p.4). Within a framework constituted by the intersected discourses of whiteness and the 'New' South Africa, discourse analysis is used in observing the narratives of white English-speaking South Africans of the transition generation. By observing the data within this frame, this analysis aims to identify narratives which either disrupt dominant discourse or fail to escape it, and to examine the ideological functions of these discourses within its specific context. This will allow space for new discourse to emerge, which provides new ways of being white and South African. Furthermore, throughout the analytical process the researcher was aware not to re-articulate or reinstate dominant discourse.

CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of this study has been broken up into three sections, each including its own sub-sections. The sections have been created from common discursive themes which emerged throughout the data. However, it is necessary to note that these themes are somewhat arbitrary, for the data cannot be separated from itself since the discourses are "intricately related, and are reliant upon each other to achieve their rhetorical force" (Salusbury, 2003, p.53). Therefore, the data has been broken into themes for the ease of the reader. Within each section, the respondents' narratives will be analysed within a discursive frame of whiteness and the 'New' South Africa in order to understand the way in which these discourses work to together, as well as in opposition, to reproduce and contest dominant discourses.

4.1 Cultural Discourses

In South Africa where white people are the minority it is assumed that they should be able to articulate their sense of cultural identity with general ease. This assumption is made in relation to white people of the West who place themselves as the norm to which everyone else is measured, and who therefore struggle to pin point their own culture in its invisibility (Dyer, 1997; Frankenburg, 1993; Steyn, 2001). However, this assumption underestimates the power of whiteness which controls discourse even from a minority position. In opposition to those whites in the West, the ability to articulate one's culture has been true for white Afrikaners who pronounce Afrikaner Nationalism and stake claim in their rights as "legitimate occupants of the country" (Steyn, 2001, p. 28). However, cultural definition seems to be not as certain for those who consider themselves to be white English-speaking South Africans. Multiple discourses within the following data suggest this uncertainty.

4.1.1 Hybrid Culture, Normal Culture

The following looks at the cultural discourses employed by the respondents of this study, which work to maintain the invisibility of white English-speaking South African culture. The maintenance of the culture's invisibility works to reinstate its power. This will be explained throughout the following analysis. The discourses employed in the talk of white English-speaking South Africans, which work to maintain its cultural invisibility are identified in two ways. First, by claiming it as something hard to pin point due to its cultural hybridity, and second, by claiming normality compared to a perceived 'other'.

In the following four examples white English-speaking South African culture is described as being a hybrid culture. In Example 1 below, Jake outright denies that the group has its "own culture" because they are more "just part of other cultures".

Example 1:

Int: And do you feel that white English-speaking South Africans as a group have a culture?

Jake: It's weird because I don't think that we have our own culture. We're more just part of other cultures.

In Example 2 below, Mike explains that he has "adopted many cultures", but he is not clear on how to describe his "main culture". Mike's answer is that the group does and at the same time does not have its own culture, and this continues to portray his uncertainty. Mike explains that as a WESSA one is "subject to many different sub cultures that mold you and turn you into the person that you are". He therefore accepts that his culture is one of sub-cultures.

Example 2:

Int: Can you describe your culture?

Mike: I think through my whole life I've adopted many cultures but um my main culture (..) yeah I wouldn't really know how to describe that. I've been interested in a lot of sub cultures I'll tell you that...

Int: And do you feel that white English-speaking South Africans as a group have a culture?

Mike: …That's a very interesting question I'd say yes (..) and no. Being white in South Africa, you're, white English-speaking South African, I'd say you're subject to many different sub cultures that mold you and turn you into the person that you are.

In Example 3 below, Jeff also describes white English-speaking South Africans as a "mixture of whatever is around" since most people have English and Afrikaans relatives.

Example 3:

Jeff: … English people are just like a mixture of whatever is around really. So especially since all of us have got like maybe an Afrikaans uncle or aunt or something like that going back to the families where like kids were brought up some were brought up as English and some were brought up as Afrikaans if you got your aunt and uncle so it's just a mixture really of whatever is around.

In Example 4 below the description of a hybrid culture is backed up by Kate.

Example 4:

Kate: I don't actually think that there is one homogenous English culture...

Next, the same discourse of cultural hybridity is taken up by two respondents, but they also draw from a discourse constructed in the context of the 'New' South Africa.

Example 5:

Ryan: ...It's not like an overt thing where there are huge defining characteristics where you could say oh definitely. We almost pick strands. We participate in everything so that we fall into the South African blanket...

In Example 5 above, Ryan notes how white English-speaking South African culture is not an "overt" culture, but he does not identify this as problematic. Instead he attributes this to the fact that WESSAs "pick strands" and "participate in everything" which allows them to "fall into the South African blanket". This narrative is informed by discourses of the 'New' South Africa which consider every citizen to be a South African and encourages people to come together as 'one'. Ryan explains that his culture's participation in "everything" is "*so* that" they "fall into the South African blanket". This makes the participation "in everything" a conscious decision *so* that WESSAs are able to "fall into the South African blanket..." rather than it being an inherent cultural trait.

In Example 6 below, Carol denies the ability to separate white English-speaking South African culture from a broader South African culture. She states, "everything that is culture about us is more a general South African point of view". Carol notes that this point of view is one of "post-1994. The rainbow nation". Therefore, she implies that everything pre-1994 of WESSA culture, which would include negative characteristics such as racism have fallen away.

Example 6:

Carol: There is nothing that I can say specifically about English-speaking South African people culture wise. Because everything that is culture about us is more a general South African point of view. Like post-1994 culture. The rainbow nation.

In Ryan and Carol's narratives we can see the discourses of the 'New' South Africa working with a discourse of white cultural hybridity to further secure WESSA culture's invisibility. The fact that white English-speaking South African culture is so hard for those who consider themselves part of this group to define shows the way in which it discursively constructs itself to remain invisible and thus escape scrutiny. This escape happens as a result of being able to blend into other groups as the situation arises and avoid responsibility as a group for its part in systematic injustices. Therefore, this discourse of cultural hybridity is setting up a platform for white English-speaking South Africans to employ discourses of racial denial and avoidance. This will be looked at further into the analysis.

Another cultural discourse has emerged within the talk of white English-speaking South Africans. It also works to maintain the invisibility of WESSA culture by claiming itself as normative. In the

following Example 7, Jeff describes his culture as “quite normal”. He explains this normality by comparing his culture to what is seen in movies, and therefore finds it “very westernized”.

Example 7:

Int: So how would you describe your culture?

Jeff: My culture uh (.) I dunno I would say its like quite *normal* in the sense of like comparing it to like movies and stuff umm its very westernized...

Frankenburg (1993) explains that when white people construct themselves as normal they then construct everybody else as abnormal. The unmarked 'normality' of whiteness allows its power to reinstate itself while focusing on the abnormal 'other' (Dyer, 1997). The 'master narrative' moves within this old colonial discourse of what it means to be 'normal'. Furthermore, in the ttalk of the following WESSAs to be “normal” is to be “westernized”.

Example 8:

Carol: ...But our side of it is more westernized compared to the African like paying lobola and being a chief there is so much culture there down to what they eat and we don't have that.

In the above Example 8 Carol also makes her culture out to be “westernized compared to the African” 'other'. As Carol compares her westernized self to the African 'other' she notes traditions which make up culture, and she states, “we don't have that”. Furthermore, culture is seen as something only inhabited by non-western 'others'. In this sense colonial discourse continually works to provide a framework for thinking about cultural identities as the observation of marked racial 'others', which has allowed whiteness to remain “unexamined and unnamed” as a racial being (Frankenburg, 1993, p.17). Salusbury (2003) argues that “a discourse of “normal”culture is dangerous in that it justifies the evaluation of all other cultures by the criteria embedded in the normative position” and “inevitably” the “difference is constructed as inferior”(p.57). This colonial discourse which focuses on the 'other' compared to the white western self is employed by Jake in Example 9 below in order to illustrate his own white English-speaking South African culture as superior to an inferior African culture, which is not westernized.

Example 9:

Int: Can you describe your culture?

Jake: No I can't actually. As far as I'm concerned I don't really have a culture. Like as a white South African I sort of perceive culture as being somethings that's (..) I don't want to say this but primitive. I think we're more of like a westernized culture the white South Africans.
(some more comments pass)

Jake: ...like in South Africa when people talk about culture for me when someone says the word culture I think of black cultures and things like that and I don't think of myself as

falling into a culture because I think of it as a thing that is like not advanced.

In the above Example 9, Jake begins by claiming that he doesn't "really have a culture". This is because he perceives culture as being something that is "primitive" and "not advanced" which he does not believe himself to be. It is interesting how he firstly states, "I don't want to say this..." before describing culture as something that is "primitive". He is obviously aware of counter discourses to this claim and wants to use a part of these discourses in order to preface what he is about to say. At any rate his view of culture is still constructed by the old colonial discourse, which contends that being white and "westernized" are positive traits while the black African 'other' is constructed in negative terms. Jake explains that when he hears "the word culture" he thinks of "black cultures". He then explains that he is culture-less because he thinks of culture as being something that is "not advanced". Furthermore, this narrative re-establishes an old colonial discourse which constructs "a normative cultural centre that functions as a hegemony" with the unmarked white western self at the centre compared to the marked "cultural" or "ethnic" peoples (Salusbury, 2003, p.56).

In the next two narratives, Examples 10 and 11, Jake continues to employ a discourse of superiority and inferiority as he describes African cultures.

Example 10:

Jake: ...Especially when it's hate crimes because a lot of them there is no point in killing you but they will just because of like revenge. A lot of their cultures are revenge based cultures. Like as whites I don't know if it's just me, but were not like if we've been hard done by we've got to get *revenge* like they need to die and pay for that like they're cultures are very revenge like that if you ever do them badly then watch out because something's going to happen...

In Example 10 Jake talks of African cultures as being "revenge based cultures" compared to whites who, according to Jake, do not seek revenge when they are "hard done by". This narrative constructs the African culture as barbaric, for it argues that Africans will kill for no other reason than revenge. White South African culture is constructed as peaceful and forgiving, and therefore superior to a "revenge based culture". There is no point of reflection in this narrative about the oppression of black people under a white regime, which may account for the reason why some Africans seek revenge. In addition there is no recognition that around the time of apartheid's demise, the country, which was headed for civil war, was able to change its course and negotiate "a future based on national reconciliation" under a black regime (Steyn, 2001, p.xxi). Jake argues that white people do not seek revenge after they have been hard done by. However, this argument is weak in that it conveniently does not recognize the fact that white people as a group have never been on the receiving end of what it means to be "hard done by" as the African people have.

Jake continues to construct his cultural identity through a colonial discourse in Example 11. He speaks of a white man who spent his life helping black people only to be killed by them. Jake states, “It makes everyone think that they are literally barbaric. Like I mean who does that”. The fact that white people perceive black people to be “barbaric” are made to be the fault of black people. When Jake says “It doesn't do well for their culture” the discourse is working to remove the focus of wrong doing by whites to focus on the faults of black people who could avoid being viewed as barbaric so long as they stop doing barbaric things. Jakes last statement, “I mean who does that” works to construct white people as void of doing something like that.

Example 11:

Jake: For instance what's that example of that guy who spent his life living with black people and helping them and stuff and then he was killed and that doesn't do well for their culture. It makes everyone think that they are literally barbaric. Like I mean who does that?

The narrator of Example 12 below continues to draw from the discourse of superiority and inferiority. Jake talks on the subject of interracial relationships, but he is careful to make it clear that he is “not attracted to black people”, and therefore his following narrative is strictly hypothetical.

Example 12:

Jake: But also it's a bit different, like a coconut like when talking about a white black person. Like if I brought home a girl, I'm not attracted to black people, but hypothetically if I brought home a black girl that talked in a like very refined English accent, not an English accent but a normal South African accent then it would probably be far more accepted than if a black girl came and was like (in heavy African accent) oh nice to meet you (laughs). And the same thing a white girl would never date a black guy that speaks like black black people do. Like they would date possibly with a very small chance but it would be a white black person.

In this narrative Jake explains that interracial relationships hold different meaning when talking about “white black people”, and therefore the idea of this type of relationship becomes a bit more realistic. Furthermore, on this subject “racial integration is acceptable (or at least feasible)[4] as long as all races conform to WESSA cultural norms” (Salusbury, 2003, p.58). Jake explains the acceptability in terms of the way the black girl speaks. First Jake says it must be a refined English accent but then corrects himself and says “not an English accent but a normal South African accent”. Again white people are constructed as the norm to which all others must conform.

As we have seen in the above examples, the invisibility of WESSA culture maintains itself by claiming

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to be a normative culture as well as identifying itself as a hybrid culture. Through these cloaks of invisibility its power is able to reinstate itself in not so obvious ways. First, by claiming a hybrid cultural identity white English-speaking South Africans are able to slip in and out of cultural groups when it best suits them. This allows them to avoid responsibility for their part in systematic oppression and privilege. Second, by holding itself as the norm to which all else is measured a discourse of superiority and inferiority circulates and constructs a white hegemonic centre. White hegemony thus goes unchallenged by remaining invisible in this normative state.

4.1.2 WESSA Culture Pin Pointed

In the following section, respondents are able to locate their white English-speaking South African culture in a context where they can compare themselves to white Afrikaner culture. In this context, they do not label themselves as normative but rather with characteristics that are in opposition to those of their white counter parts. In other instances, white English-speaking South Africans pin point their culture with regards to Europe. These frames of reference provide WESSAs with the ability to articulate their culture to a certain extent. However, when looked at closely, the following descriptions of WESSA culture provide interesting insight into the way it maintains a state of invisibility even when it is defined. This observation will be explained through the following examples.

In Example 1 below Jeff claims that white English-speaking South Africans are liberal compared to conservative white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. In this example, Jeff describes WESSAs as being liberal with regards to the type of activities they partake in at school such as being on the debate team. He explains that this is because “there is a little bit more encouragement” to be more “grounded” and to “try different things”.

Example 1

Jeff: A lot of Afrikaans kids [ ] go hunting and stuff like that. English-speaking kids not so much. I mean our parents are a little bit more I'd actually say liberal not conservative because they like encourage that whole go out and kill animals. It's more a case of okay so going to an all boys school um Afrikaans kids are very like rugby is there end all of be all which I think comes from like their fathers, uncles everything else. Where as the English-speaking kids maybe not so much. Um yeah you'll play rugby but its not your end of days, so depending on maybe your family dynamics but there is a little bit more encouragement and it's more sort of grounded to try different things. So like for English-speaking kids I think being in the debate team is probably as important as making the first team rugby or something like that.

Int: Oh okay, did you do debate team?

Jeff: Yeah well I did drama and music so I think I went more for the grounded side of

things...

In the above quote Jeff identifies himself with liberal WESSA culture because he partook in the "grounded side of things". Next Jeff connects liberalism with being able to express one's emotions. Therefore, according to Jeff, in WESSA culture "emotions are not a bad thing to have" compared to the "more hard ass" Afrikaners. This illustrates how society discursively constructs emotions which work to inform cultural identities (Ahmed, 2004). In this case WESSAs are co-constructed with Afrikaners. Compared to white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, "where showing weakness for them is crying", for WESSAs, who are constructed as 'having' emotions, this is a strength. Furthermore, by 'having' emotions WESSAs in this context are able to be empathetic, compassionate, and loving people. To a certain extent this allows them to escape the kind of scrutiny that would identify racism and oppression, and it therefore "provides a discursive means of refuting blame" (Salusbury, 2003, p. 63). Where as Afrikaners are constructed as emotionless and therefore remain capable of such hatred towards 'others'.

Example 1 Continued:

Jeff: And you could always see with the English people the whole thing where it takes a man to cry and if you are upset about missing home go ahead and cry it out. Afrikaans kids like not so much. They were like a little more hard ass.

Int: Why do you think that is?

Jeff: Umm I think coming from their culture now they've got the whole Voortrekker idea and they are like quite a tough bunch of people and I think showing weakness for them is crying. So coming back to the English side of things emotions are not a bad thing to have...

In Example 2 below, Brad also pin points white English-speaking South Africans to be "far more liberal" than white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. He attributes this to religion.

Example 2:

Brad: Well one of the clear differences is that English-speaking South Africans tend to be more liberal. This is a big generalization but on average are far more liberal far more liberal. A lot of its got to do with religion. Afrikaans-speaking South Africans tend to go to Dutch Reform Church which is a very conservative church where as English-speaking South Africans go to either Anglican, Protestant or Roman Catholic. So there's that and I guess just the way we were brought up. English-speaking South Africans are far more liberal.

Brad also states that it was "just the way we were brought up". The characterization of WESSAs as liberal places them on a moral and political side that is opposite from the Afrikaners. This narrative constructs racism as something which is overt and it ignores covert racist practices which have provided all white South Africans with opportunities that are entirely unequal to the rest of the country's people (Steyn and Foster, 2008). In doing this, one is separating WESSAs from the actual

conceptualization and implementation of apartheid policies. Kate, in Example 3 below, recognizes this problem. She therefore describes white English-speaking South African culture to be one of "social engagement" compared to "white Afrikaans-speaking communities". Kate's narrative problematizes the way many WESSAs claim liberalism as part of their identity. She admits that she too used to hold this view, but now she recognizes the way in which white English-speaking South Africans were also responsible for apartheid as well as continued systematic racial injustices.

Example 3:

Kate: Umm (sighs) well okay also white people white English-speaking people would see themselves to be more liberal and a place like UCT would obviously and Rhodes I think white English-speaking people claim that it's part of their identity but I'm very critical of that claim that they're sub part of the blame in the whole conceptualization and practice and institutionalization of apartheid. But um I suppose I did use to have those I did use to hold those believe those ideas more and they've been challenged...there is definitely well look I think there is maybe one could say that there is more of a culture of social engagement in white English-speaking rather than white Afrikaans-speaking communities.

Furthermore, white English-speaking South Africans partake in "more of a culture of social engagement", but as Kate recognizes, this does not relieve them from their role as beneficiaries from the country's past and present racial inequalities.

In the following few examples, respondents provide character traits of WESSAs which are compared to white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. It is interesting how the following traits are ones which work to maintain the culture's state of invisibility.

Example 4:

Ryan: Um English-speaking South Africans have and this might be a carry over from the generations ahead of us but we are a more reserved um what is the word I am looking for like a tight lip (..) like I don't really know from my generation it might be more our parents but less abrasive...

In Example 4 above Ryan describes previous generations of WESSAs as more reserved and less abrasive than white Afrikaners. In the following Example 5 he describes English-speaking white South Africans as less ready to voice their opinions so as not to cause a scene. These traits remove WESSAs from the spot light, which therefore remains on white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.

Example 5:

Ryan: There have been times when I have just let it brush over because I know that hashing it out would just cause a scene and that is maybe a very English thing is to not

cause a scene where Afrikaans people are more ready to voice their opinion...

In Example 6 below Ryan describes WESSAs as “timid people on the sidelines” who have “just been fence sitters”. This also exposes the way WESSAs have been able to avoid hard criticism about the apartheid past. As long as they have remained on the side lines they have been able to reap the benefits of being white while not being held responsible for the oppressive system which fueled such benefits (Salusbury, 2003).

Example 6:

Ryan: ...We've always been the timid people on the sidelines. Afrikaans people sort of got stuck in. The old Nationalist government may have been horrible but at least Afrikaans people have always had like a standpoint. English people have just been fence sitters.

The following four examples reveal the way in which WESSAs are still culturally tied to Europe. Steyn (2001) explains that “with much closer ties to “back home,” being “white” for the British settlers” meant “having the right to maintain a European frame of reference in Africa” (p.31). In Example 7 and Example 8 below, we see this is the case for Jeff and Kate who explain that their family traditions and holiday celebrations are still tied to European traditions.

Example 7:

Jeff: Um we still stick to a lot of the British traditions stuff like that.
Int: Like what kind of traditions?
Jeff: Uhh the best one would be Christmas in thirty degree heat we will still have the turkey and all that kind of stuff...

Example 8:

Int: can you describe your culture?
Kate: ...very informed by German European habits I suppose like when we have Christmas and what we do on those sort of occasions and its secular my family has Jewish heritage that is why my grandparents moved down to South Africa but for the last two generations it has been secular it always has been non-religious and yeah I do think it has strong ties to German culture.

Steyn (2001) continues to explain how the British “kept a tighter hold on their European identities, and fought the anxiety of potential cultural disintegration” (p.31). However, In Examples 9 and 10 we see how respondents Brad and Ryan are grappling with a push and pull between their ancestral heritage and their desire to be defined culturally as South Africans. They both recognize that parts of their cultural identities are still very connected to England, but they both speak of being disconnected from England as well. There seems to be a moving away from the old WESSA mentality, which was to remain “psychologically more alienated from the African continent than the Afrikaners” (Steyn, 2001, p.31).

Example 9:

Brad: ...a lot of things that come directly from the English culture as well. You know. It's hard to think of some right now. But especially the way we speak and things comes directly from sort of *England* not necessarily America or Australia or so on.
(some more comments pass)

Brad: ...people automatically assume that everything we have is borrowed from the English culture but I don't think that is the case.

Int: and why is that?

Brad: The majority of us have been here our families have been here for almost two hundred years so that is more than enough time to form a culture...

Example 10:

Int: Would you say your family has any traditions or customs?

Ryan: Not really I guess by and large English-speaking South African culture is Christian, traditional. It's quite similar to English heritage and English culture but it's not we're here and there is something distinctively South African about it and that is hard to describe. Because we are now fourth or fifth generation we're not English...

As much as WESSAs attempt to move away from being solely defined by their European heritage, there is no denying their ability to move in and out of it as it suits them, and this is a privilege in itself. Ryan, in Example 11, explains that because WESSAs speak English as their first language they are "quite adaptable to western culture". This shows how WESSAs are to an extent still psychologically alienated from the African continent. The fact that they are able to "fit back into England or into the States" shows that WESSAs can pick and choose which side of the fence they want to sit on as it suits them.

Example 11:

Int: Are there other ways it has affected you growing up being English-speaking?

Ryan: I think probably and this is an advantage or a good and a bad thing in different circumstances. But because we haven't developed our own language except for slang words it has made us quite adaptable to western culture..but yeah um people who emigrate because they grew up with I don't know they just seem to fit back into England or into the States. But that could be a good thing and a bad thing.

The above examples which describe characteristics of White English-speaking South African culture were pin pointed by WESSAs themselves. These narratives provide insight into the way WESSA culture remains out of the spot light and easily mobile when it chooses to be. Even when it is pin pointed WESSA culture is described by characteristics which reveal its invisible nature. By claiming a liberal identity and sitting on the fence when it comes to political and moral issues WESSAs construct an identity which evades responsibility for its privileged whiteness. In their connection to Europe WESSAs are able to move between cultures as it suits them. This also maintains a state of invisibility, for it provides WESSAs with a means to avoid scrutiny for their role in a system of racial inequality.

4.2 Evasive White Discourses

South Africa, post-apartheid, is a country no longer governed by overt racist ideology. The general public has taken on the international discourses of human rights and equality for all, and therefore have deemed racism unacceptable. For white South Africans this new landscape has brought challenges to their maintenance of privilege. Therefore, white South Africans have had to adjust to these changes and at the same time find a way to maintain their privileged position in a country governed by a black majority (Steyn and Foster, 2008). Steyn and Foster (2008) explain how white South Africans have taken up discursive strategies "which resemble the more 'respectable' international whiteness" (25). They have dubbed this *'White Talk'.* These discourses work to construct an image of white South Africans as positive members of the 'New' South Africa and at the same time allows them to resist "transformation" (Steyn and Foster, 2008, p.25). By doing so white South Africans are able to evade responsibility for their privileged whiteness and consequently reinstate old power structures. The following sub-sections of this portion of the analysis include *Old Discourses, New Disguises* and *Rich White, Poor White*. The descriptions of these sub-sections are provided under their prospective headings below.

4.2.1 Old Discourses, New Disguises

In this sub-section of *Evasive White Discourses*, white English-speaking South Africans position themselves in line with the views held by the majority of the country as well as the international community. Steyn and Foster (2008) describe this as a position that values "democracy, social development, non-racialism and non-sexism, reconciliation, equality and freedom" (p.28). By employing this discursive repertoire a white English-speaking South African is able to feel like a positive member of society, evade criticisms about the past, and join the neo-liberal global community of whiteness "as a respectable member of the family" (Steyn and Foster, 2008, p.28). The following discursive strategies are found in the *'White Talk'* of white English-speaking South Africans, who claim feelings of guilt, beliefs in non-racialism, and position themselves as liberal thinkers. These ways of thinking are merely old discourses in new disguises.

In the following Example 1, Brad draws from a discourse of emotion to explain his reaction to his privileged position in South Africa. Brad claims to hold feelings of guilt; however, this emotion can be read in more than one way. It is circulating in the social world through discourse, and therefore it is working to align people with or against each other (Ahmed, 2004; Boler, 1999). Furthermore, Brad is constructing a part of his identity through his narrative of white guilt. He constructs guilt as an

'appropriate' emotion for whites to have in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. Brad, is therefore constructed as a 'well-intentioned' white South African (Vice, 2010).

Example 1:

Int: How has being white affected you in your life?

Brad: Um I sometimes feel guilty for being white. You know um I was six years old in 1990 when Nelson Mandela was released from prison so I didn't really know what was going on I can hardly remember the signs of apartheid and things like that...
(some more comments pass)
...But it makes you feel guilty especially seeing really poor people and knowing that you've had a privileged upbringing and you know we've obviously had a lot more than the majority of South Africans and it sometimes makes you feel guilty.

Int: And what do you do with that guilt?

Brad: Well I suppose you try and justify it to yourself that you contribute towards society and help with charities and things like that which I honestly probably don't do enough of. I pay tax I pay a lot of tax and not a lot of South Africans pay tax so I guess that is contributing and I console myself with that. But at the same time I do feel guilty that lots of people in this country are really poor...

In the last part of Example 1, Brad uses the word “console”, which makes guilt an emotion that actually allows one to feel sorry for one's self. People console themselves when they are feeling sad or sorry for themselves. When one claims feelings of guilt it works as a distraction and a cover up, which makes it appear as if one is taking responsibility for their privilege. Furthermore, Brad's guilt allows him to get off the hook from taking responsibility for his privileged whiteness.

In Example 2 Brad continues to draw on a discourse of emotion. This time the emotion of shame is described by Brad's embarrassment of his privilege. Vice also (2010) contends that shame is an emotion that 'well-intentioned' white South Africans are “morally required to feel” (p.327). Brad makes an excuse for his privileged position by stating “what did I do you know I was just born into it”. However, this obvious evasion of power is covered up by his feelings of shame, which construct him as a positive member of the 'New' South Africa. This is not to say that Brad does not genuinely feel ashamed of his privileged position, for this analysis is not concerned with emotions in that regard. However, it is concerned with the way in which shame works through discourses of whiteness and the 'New' South Africa to align the subjects who feel its affects. Ahmed (2004) asks, “in allowing us to feel bad, does shame also allow the nation (or person)[5] *to feel better?* What is the relation between the desire to feel better and the recognition of injustice?” (p.102). Brad's shame is a recognition of his privilege, but his expression of shame also allows him to feel better. Furthermore, emotions such as shame and guilt are not merely “privately experienced phenomena” for they are wrapped up in power (Boler, 1999, p. 6). In this case the emotions work to maintain privileged positions and therefore reinstate old power relations.

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Example 2:

Brad: It's more an embarrassment than anything else. It's sort of looking back at yourself in that situation you sort of feel embarrassed for being more privileged I mean you're just born into it it was your hand of cards so when I say guilty I mean sometimes you maybe feel like what did I do to deserve...how come I am better off than them? I am and they're not. What did I do you know I was just born into it.

Examples 3 and 4 below draw from two ideals which construct the respondents who employ them as liberal thinkers. These include the beliefs of colour blindness and non-racialism, which remain two of the current government's platform strategies in creating an equal democratic South Africa (Steyn and Foster, 2008). These strategies are often found in white discourses which actually work to reproduce racism in a covert way (Frankenburg, 1993; Steyn and Foster, 2008). Brad, in Example 3 below, dreams of a colour blind society.

Example 3:

Brad: ...Eventually it (racism) will go away but I don't think in my generation. And like I said my parents were a little bit more racist than I am and my kids we'll raise them more liberally than my parents raised me and they'll be less racist and so on and every generation you will sort of water it down until you end up with a society that is virtually colour blind.

Example 4:

Int: When did you first become aware of being white?

Jeff: Um probably like primary school, grade school. Sort of like suddenly you like realize that all the black kids hang around together and the white kids all hang around together. But I wouldn't say that is because of a race thing I would say that's because of language so you think of seven year olds who don't know maybe two or three different languages, black kids did, but they felt easier talking in their own language during break time time...

In Example 4 above, Jeff denies that race played a part in the reason why school children separated themselves into certain groups. He explains that the reason why "black kids hang around together and the white kids all hang around together" is caused by differences in language. Although this may be true in part, Jeff's narrative ignores the country's history of systematic racial segregation. His denial is therefore power evasive in that he does not acknowledge his own advantages as a white South African (Steyn, 2001). Jeff carries on with his narrative in Example 5 below, where he also employs a discourse of non-racialism. In his present life too, Jeff claims to not notice a difference between him and his black colleagues. Jeff's ignorance when it comes to differences in race allows him to evade responsibility for his whiteness, and to provide a "means for the production and maintenance of unequal positionalities in society (Steyn, 2011, p.6).

Example 5:

Int: And do you on a day to day basis mix with non-white South Africans?

Jeff: Not not so much now because there's just not that many black guys around where I live and stuff um when I was at school I wouldn't have an issue with it. Going with our company wise though we've only got like two black guys working here and one coloured guy, but I've never really noticed a difference. I could quite easily go out to lunch with them just as easily as I'd go out with any of the white guys in the office. So yeah I've never had an issue with it. I think it may be more the way you were brought up and stuff as opposed to race...

Mike, in Example 6 below, employs an interesting discursive technique which allows him to separate himself from other whites by drawing on a discourse of individualism. Individualism is often found within broader white discourses, for it allows whites to ignore the way their lives are shaped by race (Salusbury, 2003).

Example 6:

Mike: ...I never really wanted the BEE complex you know of like oh i'll never get a job because they only hire black people and they only hire coloured people (says this in moaning voice) or like people of colour before a white male English-speaking like puts me at the bottom of the pile where as like that's a huge contrast to like two decades ago... (some more comments pass)
...I always felt that if you're going for a job I always felt my philosophy in life is that you're an individual person foremost like it's cliché to say oh colour doesn't mean anything and stuff (in mocking voice) but its not your race or your social standing it's your personality that people will appreciate and it's the person that you are like the individual the one unit...

Mike equates the way he views the world with being an individual. By removing himself from other whites who hold a “BEE complex” he constructs himself as open minded and accepting of the changes in the country. However, his claim that it is one's personality rather than one's race or social standing that will affect one's prospects in life allows old power structures to be reinstated. The denial of race allows one to ignore their privileged position. Again, an old discourse, one of individualism, is disguised as being part of the 'New' South Africa, and therefore accepted by those who employ it.

The next discursive technique which works to disguise old power relations is provided in Examples 7 and 8 below. The following narratives are constructed “around the belief that whites are in a position to define themselves and the “other” more or less unilaterally, and that intervention needs to take place on “white” terms, for the “good” of the “blacks.” (Steyn, 2001, p.59).

Example 7:

Int: Do you think there are routes or a way that you can mix more with non-white South Africans?

Jeff: Um (clears throat) you know it would be like a case of what your involved in what your interested in. I think a good route would be probably getting more involved doing community service type thing. Because the sad fact is obviously the majority of South Africans are black and the majority like in anywhere would be the poverty stricken side of things (..) so the easiest way to get involved with non-white South Africans would be getting involved in community projects cus that's really the only way you're going to get into the townships.

Example 8:

Brad: I love this country and I love the people and I feel part of this country and I also want to make a contribution to this country.
(some more comments pass)
...we need to try and stay here because it's the only way that this country is going to get better. And help the people help those that don't know so that one day they can do it themselves.

In the above examples, Jeff and Brad draw from discourses of the 'New' South Africa to describe their relationship with black South Africans in the country today. They construct themselves within a humanitarian frame of reference. Brad even draws from a discourse of love to illustrate his commitment to the country and its people. However, in both narratives the relationship with the 'other' is still constructed by an old colonial discourse. This is illustrated by the idea that the future of the country will be bright for all its people so long as whites carry out their duty as “saviors” to the inferior blacks (Mutua, 2001). Both of their narratives “promote integration”, and therefore appear to be influenced by the positive ideals of the 'New' South Africa, but ultimately the future of the country is still constructed “in the name of the old” (Steyn, 2001, p.64).

In the following Example 9, Carol's narrative refers to the topic of emigration. In reaction to a black political majority, emigration has been the path that many whites have taken in post-apartheid South Africa. At first glance it appears that Carol disagrees with her father's advice to leave the country. However, Carol constructs her father as “intelligent” and “clued up”. This implies Carol's agreement with her father's reasons behind wanting his children to “get out of the country fast”. The interview conducted with Carol in full displays these reasons, which are constructed by discourses of white victimization and discrimination. However, Carol ends this story by noting that she does not want to leave the country because of her deep love for it. Here we see discourses of whiteness and the 'New' South Africa collide as Carol constructs her position in the country. By declaring her love for the country and separating herself from her father's wishes she remains to be viewed as a positive participant in the 'New' South Africa.

Example 9:

Carol: My dad is like get out of this country fast and he is intelligent he is clued up [ ] and he is

like if there is one thing I want for my kids it's to get out of this country where as I don't actually want to leave because I love it here.

The most pertinent aspect to Example 9 above is that Carol constructs her narrative, and therefore her identity, in a way which allows her to be *viewed* as a positive participant in the 'New' South Africa. This is carried through as Carol continues her story in Example 10 below. Carol constructs her views and wishes through a discourse of the 'New' South Africa while her actions are still informed by old ways of thinking. She uses the emotion hate to construct the way she feels about her behaviour, and she adamantly states that she embraces the changes in the country. As Carol participates in self-reflection she is shaping her identity to be one of open mindedness. At the same time she acknowledges her "own incapacity to think outside a universe of discourse" that she recognizes is "premised on racism" (Frankenburg, 1993, p.100). These claims allow her to clean her hands of racism. By stating that she wishes she were different her narrative works to construct her as a victim of her upbringing. By doing so she evades responsibility for her prejudices.

Example 10:

Carol: Some of my friends have been with black guys and really it hadn't bothered me at all but because of how I've grown up I've never done it and I don't think I would just because of the way I've grown up and I hate to say it but that's how we've been brought up is that we're from different cultures and that I should be with a white person. That is literally how it goes and I hate to say it and I wish I wasn't like that. But I will never ever look at a mixed race couple and be like what the hell. I wouldn't I really wouldn't. It's just not for me and I hate to say it but that is literally how I've been brought up. But otherwise I embrace it it is the 'New' South Africa.

This section of the analysis showed the way in which white English-speaking South Africans of the transition generation are constructing their identities by employing discourses of whiteness disguised as discourses of the 'New' South Africa. The previous narratives displayed how power and privilege are maintained through the use of discursive techniques which allow their narrators to construct themselves as positive participants in the 'New' South Africa.

4.2.2 Rich White, Poor White

The discursive repertoire that will be discussed in the following sub-section of *Evasive White Discourses* is one full of thoughts which are shaped by old colonial racism. Steyn and Foster (2008) explain how this '*White Talk'* often draws from positive discourses of the 'New' South Africa in order to appear as operating in the best interest of all. However, unlike the narratives found in *Old Discourses, New Disguises,* white South Africans who draw from this discursive repertoire are "essentially hostile to the new social order" in an attempt to extend their "white privilege into post-apartheid South Africa"

(Steyn and Foster, 2008, p.35). The respondents who construct their narratives within this discursive frame fall along a spectrum of hostility. This is a story of old mindsets which are still being constructed by racist white discourses. Furthermore, the narratives provided in the following make excuses for their racism, speak of reverse racism, and construct themselves as victims of post-apartheid, hence the title of this portion, *Rich White, Poor White.*

Jake, in Example 1 below, constructs a narrative that attempts to make excuses for his racism and the stereotypes he uses to describe black people. His attention to the fact that his following narrative "is going to sound bad" and that what he is saying is "racist in a way" allows him to set himself apart from other racist whites who are not reflective and may not notice when they are being racist. However, Jake continues his narrative with racist white talk which makes excuses for racist white South Africans. Black people are constructed as "docile", and Jake argues that the racist names black people are given are suited to the fact that they are lazy. As Jake explains this is "not even a generalization". Furthermore, black people deserve the racism that they get, and whites are not responsible for it.

Example 1:

Jake: ...this is going to sound bad but a lot of racist people in South Africa are people who have black people working for them.
(some more comments pass)
...if you get Zulus from Natal working for you they will literally you will catch them sitting doing nothing they literally try and do as little work as possible. And that's not even a generalization that's not true. And I think it is just lazy. A lot of them aren't doing things not because they think you owe it to them but it is just lazy. They are very docile. I don't even know, see that is racist in a way, but like, so white people will call them names and stuff because that's the name that people call them but you're just calling them that because they're lazy**...**

Next, In Example 2, Carol draws from a discourse of the 'New' South Africa which emphasizes the importance of progress in the country for all South Africans. She draws from this discourse to construct herself as having the best interest of the country in mind. However, by focusing on the fact that "blacks are as racist towards whites", and that this too needs to be addressed if the country is going to progress, Carol deflects responsibility from whites.

Example 2:

Carol: Like in terms of racism everyone says that whites are racist towards blacks but it's the other way around as well. Blacks are as racist towards whites. But it's never acknowledged because of our past. But that shouldn't be if we're trying to progress.

Carol also does not acknowledge that black people may tend to be racist towards whites as a reaction to the past. Blacks are constructed as perpetrators too, and this allows Carol to dismiss her own

engagement in “complex self-reflection or critical inquiry” (Boler, 1999, p.187).

Jake, In Example 3 below, brings up the topic of guilt, but unlike the respondent's who spoke of having guilt in *Old Discourses, New Disguises,* Jake explains why one should not feel guilty. His explanation is full of *'White Talk',* which protects the old order by criticizing the current government. Jake does note that he “feels guilty a lot of the time”. He is aware of a discourse of white guilt, and understands that by prefacing his narrative with it he appears to be a 'well-intentioned' white South African.

Example 3:

Jake: I think being a white English-speaking South African you feel guilty a lot of the time. Like driving around and stuff in your car and there are beggars and stuff who come to your window it really does make you feel guilty. Meanwhile should you or shouldn't you be feeling guilty. And the reason that you shouldn't well this is going to sound racist but like a lot of them, black people, they aren't willing to work and the reason for that is because things haven't been implemented properly. So if you have a child you get paid a month to month thing and that to buy the basics is actually, some of them can survive on that and they rather not work and just have children and get paid this money every month.

One shouldn't feel guilty, as Jake explains, because black people “aren't willing to work”. The new government is to blame for this as things “haven't been implemented properly”. Jake attempts to “sap power from black people and the mechanisms that are being put in place to promote social transformation” by focusing on the negative (Steyn and Foster, 2008, p.35). Furthermore, the new order is to blame, but black people are still constructed through Jake's narrative as lazy, as he states, “they rather not work and just have children and get paid this money every month.” In this narrative, Jake frees himself of any moral duty to feelings of guilt by constructing the current government as the one to blame for the unequal distribution of wealth. Furthermore, Jake avoids taking responsibility for his own privileged position in the country.

In Example 4 below, Carol constructs her narrative through an old discourse of superiority and inferiority. To Carol it is unimaginable to think that a black person could be more qualified than a white person. In this discourse, Steyn and Foster (2008) explain how “African Advancement is often construed as the consequence of tokenism, or even corruption” (p.41). For Carol affirmative action is the only reason why a black student would get into UCT over herself.

Example 4:

Int: Is it possible that a white person doesn't get into UCT or doesn't get the job because of an equally qualified black person?

Carol: No no it's definitely not.

Int: Because they are black or because the are equally qualified and black.

Carol: No not all they don't have the qualifications. I promise you the amount of people who got denied into UCT it took a phone call to go oh yeah sorry we'll take a look at your CV again oh okay you are in. It happened to me I didn't get into UCT and my mom phoned and asked why and they said oh sorry we didn't actually look at your CV yeah you are in sorry. I expected to get into UCT and I was **shocked** you know I did really well at school so I was horrified.

In Example 5 below, Jake also constructs his narrative through a racist discourse of superiority and inferiority as he speaks about interracial relationships. To Jake the only reason why a white man would date a black woman is if he can not get a white woman. Since black people are constructed as inferior in this discourse, Jake also constructs white men who date black women as inferior. He adds that it is "quite easy to date a black girl", which constructs black woman as weak. Jake goes on to speak of relationships between black men and white woman. His notion that it is much harder for a "black guy to date a white South African girl than a white guy to date a black South African girl" works to construct his own masculinity as superior to a black man's. [6]

Example 5:

Jake: It's quite funny if a white guy hooks up with a black girl. None of my friends would. So okay I don't know what it is but there is a stigma against being in interracial relationships. So like if my friend starts dating a black girl like white guys and myself we'll find it really strange in the way that he's dating a black girl so that means he can't get a white girl. And the funny thing is I think it's actually quite easy to date a black girl. I think I might be wrong (.) But it's a lot harder I think for a black guy to date a white South African girl than a white guy to date a black South African girl. Like I am comparing it to gay people and that's bad but I don't mind gay people as much as I don't mind interracial relationships.

Additionally Jake compares his feelings about interracial relationships to his feelings about gay people, who he doesn't "mind". By making it known that he is heterosexual, Jake constructs his narrative in a way that attempts to protect his masculinity as well as his racial superiority.

The next discursive technique taken up by white English-speaking South Africans draws on the topic of emigration. Emigration is constructed as the only option whites are left with as the country, according to these WESSAs, continues to decline. Steyn and Foster (2008) explain that overt racism is no longer acceptable, and therefore discursive techniques, like the following, are employed to support whites in their attempt to maintain their privilege. The relentless negativity in this discourse "creates a powerful

6 Frakenburg (1993) explains, "given male dominance within white culture, the "protection" or "salvation" of white women and their supposedly civilized sexuality from men of color and their "primitive" sexuality has been the alibi for a range of atrocities from genocide and lynching to segregation and immigration control" (p.76). Due to the length requirements of this study it is not possible to deeply engage with the relationships between race, sex, and gender, but it is suggested for future research.

case for the conclusion that the New South Africa is a fiasco as predicted" and that power should remain in the hands of the whites (Steyn and Foster, 2008, p.36). The following three narratives explored in Examples 6, 7, and 8 are constructed by this discourse.

Example 6:

Jeff: ...You know I would rather go and live in a flat in sort of like Australia where if a crime happens its because a crime happens than live in South Africa and know that I'm gonna get robbed here for the simple case that I'm living in a white area and I've got a nice car. So yeah you do feel a little bit, it is a race thing definitely.

In Example 6 above, Jeff focuses on the country's crime rate as his reason for wanting to emigrate. Although the increasing crime rate affects all South Africans, Jeff constructs black people as the criminals and white people as the victims of crime. Steyn and Foster (2008) explain "how *White Talk* functions as a form of social control" in this context, for it "justifies stricter police and criminal justice systems that affect black people disproportionately" (p.38). Mendieta (2004) explains how the same thing occurs in the United States where the justice system works to benefit the dominant white status group. As a result prisons have turned into racialised spaces, which ostracise and separate black people from society.

Next, In Example 7 below, Carol also refers to crime as the reason she wants a British passport. She uses her love for the country as the reason she stays for now. This love seems to run deep as long as it benefits her. These WESSAs want to pick and choose when they are South African citizens and when they are not.

Example 7:

Carol: I don't want to leave I love it here. But I would like a British passport just to be safe. (laughs) like I really would like that. I would like the option of being able to leave but I don't want to.

Jake, In Example 8 below also wants to pick and choose when he is a South African citizen as it suits him best. The mind-set of wanting to choose shows how white English-speaking South Africans are still connected to Europe. The ability to choose displays a level of privilege most South Africans do not have.

Example 8:

Jake: To be honest I see myself trying to get a passport anywhere I can anywhere in the world and then living here with the option of leaving.

In Examples 9 and 10 below, the subject of white guilt is addressed. Jake firstly argues that "enough

things are being done to benefit them (black people)[7] now", and therefore whites "shouldn't be ridiculed all the time". This resentful sentiment displays an attitude of "get over it" and "can be read as impatience with the constant harking back to the past among black people" (Jansen, 2009, p.40). Jake feels the time for apologies is over, and although the past can make one feel guilty, he explains, "there is nothing we can do about it". His argument of I am who I am and I can't change that along with I was "just born" draws on a "discursive repertoire of modern humanism" which allows him to claim innocence (Steyn, 2001, p.109). Jake's narrative constructs a get out of jail free card, which he plays when it comes to addressing his own privileged whiteness. This allows him to avoid taking responsibility for his part in maintaining his privilege. The last line in his narrative constructs white South Africans as victims of post-apartheid, for it is "unfair" that they are constantly made to feel guilty.

Example 9:

> **Jake:.**..it's like enough things are being done to benefit them now and like we shouldn't be ridiculed all the time so it does make you feel a bit guilty being a white person meanwhile there is nothing we can do about it I can't change to being black I can't just be like okay fine i'll be black it's like this is who we are. I don't know if I'm explaining myself properly but you feel guilty for those reasons even though what did you do to feel guilty yourself? So it's a bit unfair for us because we were just born.

In Example 10 below, Jeff comments on an earlier statement that he made about not necessarily feeling guilty but having that guilt forced upon him. Here he also constructs white South Africans as victims of post-apartheid who are left with no choice but to emigrate if they want to live a life free of being "made to feel like absolute crap".

Example 10:

> **Jeff:** ...I have felt a few times where its just like ugh you know what stuff it then I'm gonna emigrate and get out of here. And that's kind of not fair or right because it feels like I'm being kicked out of the country I was born but also that being said though the case of if I don't leave I'm just gonna be made to feel like absolute crap for the rest of my life. And if I ever have kids here they're gonna feel like crap. Every time I mean every time there is a new tax there's a new this that and the next thing it's to like fix poverty and stuff but there is only so much we can do it's not fair so...

Jeff's desire to emigrate is constructed in a way that removes him from looking like another racist white who could not handle a black political majority. Instead, Jeff becomes the victim who "feels like he is being kicked out of the country" while black people are now constructed as the perpetrators. Jeff explains how the task to fix poverty has become the burden of white people who pay the majority of taxes, but he states, "there is only so much we can do it's not fair".

7 My Addition

In the following Example 11, Jake's denial of the country's past allows him to avoid taking responsibility for the way in which his privileged position was obtained. It is pretty unavoidable to deny that apartheid happened at all, but Jake's narrative is constructed by the "belief that minor atrocities might have been committed" but that these atrocities are highly "exaggerated" (Jansen, 2009, p.39). Jake constructs white people as victims of this exaggerated criticism.

Example 11:

Jake: Well still even to this day there's no like hectic pictures of like well not that I've seen, and they would have come out, of white people like killing or badly treating them like terribly and stuff it's not like the holocaust.
(some more comments pass)
...But like other countries who have done that and have killed off the local people aren't suffering as much as the white people in our country who simply just came here and were like okay you guys there and we're here.

Examples 12 and 13 below carry on with the discourse of white victimization and discrimination. According to Jeff and Jake, BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) has turned into a system of reverse racism. Jeff's narrative below fails to acknowledge why a policy such as BEE would be put into place.

Example 12:

Jeff: But you know there's nothing that sucks more than hearing you're right for the position but this is specifically a BEE position. And you know that there is a position out there but because you're white you can't even go for the interview. It's a bit unfair you know. Is that shift like has it felt like the apartheid is turned around yeah it's said a few times but yeah you do sort of feel like what's next are we gonna get told like we can't sit on that park bench cus we're white?

Jake acknowledges that ten years is not enough time to achieve complete equality in the country, and therefore appears as a reasonable person. However, his reason is followed by a "but" which concludes with a statement that continues to construct whites as victims.

Example 13:

Jake: In terms of BEE and all that you've got to take a time span into account and they said like ten years or whatever to try and get things even or whatever and that is not a lot of time let's be honest but you've got to start calling it reverse racism when it takes as long as it has and things are actually just there is more reverse racism there is more like things going against us all the time.

This section of the analysis showed the way in which white English-speaking South Africans of the transition generation are constructing their narratives in a way that attempts to extend their privilege into the 'New' South Africa. This is conducted by appearing to have the best interest of the entire

country in mind and by avoiding overt racism. Furthermore, these WESSAs reinstate their privilege by making excuses for their racism, and by constructing themselves as the real victims of post-apartheid.

4.3 Changing Tides

The third section of this analysis includes those white English-speaking South Africans who construct their identities through narratives which challenge old discourses of whiteness. Unlike the WESSAs in the previous narratives, these narrators display the necessary levels of honesty and self reflection required to achieve positive social transformation (Makhanya, 2012; Steyn, 2001). Steyn (2001) explains how these white South Africans do not "deny personal implication in social processes of racialization" (p.115). Therefore, they take responsibility for their privileged whiteness as they search for productive ways to be part of the change in the country.

In Example 1 below, Kate's narrative displays honesty about her conflicted position in the country. In the following she recognizes that her privilege comes from "a very unjust system". Kate is therefore conflicted about her position in the country, and she problematizes her continued grasp on her privilege. Steyn (2001) notes how white South Africans who construct their identities within this discursive frame are "aware of the need to let go of old selves" in order to "take on the responsibility of who they are going to become as they transform along with the changes in the country" (p.115). Kate understands how holding onto one's privilege and claiming to be on the transformative agenda is problematic. She is honest about her part in this hypocrisy. By acknowledging this she forces herself to be truly conscious of her continued privilege in the country.

Example 1:

Kate: ...I think that often I do personally feel very conflicted about my position in South Africa and what I should be doing and what I may do and what I have been entitled to do through a very unjust system. And I have had a lot of these conversations with close friends who are not white, with my boyfriend. And there are no easy answers to them because I think that I agree with Samantha Vice that white South Africans. That there is a caution in that that you can't, not that you can't be a proud white South African, but that it requires some consciousness of the privilege and the continued privilege, and how that may really change and that there are many ways in which people might convince themselves that they are liberal and that they have a transformative agenda in mind, but I think that for most people and for myself included what if it *really* means giving up everything that you have and know. I don't think people um that's much more difficult.

Int: Could you be a bit more specific?

Kate: Okay I think that for example the fact that most white South Africans are still very privileged and their privilege is directly linked to the suffering of many of the majority of the country and that to take part in this development program or that development program or to support liberal developmental policies or programs... that things won't

> change unless there is a compete over hall a complete system over hall and that there's a redistribution of wealth you know and a redistribution of the social positioning and that it is in some senses really hypocritical to be a *proud* South African be on the transformative agenda and still hold on to one's privilege like *I do.* Like I love living where I live and I love going to the mountains and doing these things that require privilege and require a certain standard of living that I am very hesitant to give up. And so that is very problematic.

In Example 2 below, Kate continues to recognize her conflicted position in the country by problematizing the work she does on the transformative agenda. As much as she wants to be part of the change in South Africa, she wants more to ensure that the change happens in the right way and empowers the very people it means to empower. As Kate renegotiates her identity and position within the country's current landscape she also understands that it is important to do so. Unlike the previous narratives she is "reasonably unafflicted by feelings of victimization and persecution" (Steyn, 2001, p.120).

Example 2:

> **Kate**: ...there is something to the idea that Samantha Vice talks about that there also needs to be a stepping back and an opening up for new discourses to emerge in academia and politics. And if I take that really seriously does that mean that I should stay here? You know that the space that I am taking up shouldn't that be... I sometimes think that. I don't like thinking that cus I love being here and I'd love to think of myself as part of change in South Africa but for example the work that I do at the university shouldn't there be somebody else that is doing it. Should it again be another white liberal girl that is running these sort of programs that focus on change.
> (some more comments pass)
> ...sometimes I feel like there is no place for me although I wish there would be.

Steyn (2001) explains how those who construct their identities through discourses which work to dismantle white privilege are often left with feelings of pain and lonesomeness. Kate notes, "sometimes I feel like there is no place for me although I wish there would be". She is honest about her desire to have a place in the change, but she understands, as painful as it may be, that her role needs to entail "a stepping back" if real change is to occur.

In the following two examples below, Ryan and Kate recognize the continued privilege they experience. Unlike the narratives in the previous two sections, these WESSAs do not take on the mentalities of white victimization and discrimination. Ryan, in Example 3 below, understands the way in which the unjust system of apartheid continues to reassert its power today. He describes how the work force is still dominated by whites. Ryan explains how networks have been established amongst older generations of whites in the working world. This makes it easier for young white South Africans

to compete for jobs.

Example 3:

Ryan: Being white there are advantages to it and I was just elaborating on it and one of the advantages is that since we are now sort of at an age where we need to go out into the working world most people who are already in the working world are white, well not mostly but uh, it's a difficult thing to describe, but I just mean (..) The white generation ahead of us receives white people into the working world a little bit easier. There's also like our parents and our parents friends that have been working we have those connections. You know people my age who are coloured or black where their parents really struggled to get work they don't then have the same networks.

In Example 4 below, Kate also acknowledges the continued privilege of white people, including their upper hand in the work force. Interestingly, she does bring up the BEE policy, but instead of thinking of it as a road block for white South Africans she sees it as a sign for people to begin thinking of the work they do in a different way.

Example 4:

Kate: I think that the fact that most white people already have the upper hand of having a history of education and going to good schools and that sort of thing. Puts them in a position that is unimaginable to a lot of black students who have so many more battles to fight to get to that point and I don't want to say anything conclusive because I don't have proper [ ] but I just don't necessarily think that the whole BEE thing is the best way of going about things in the sense that it doesn't necessarily empower the very people it seeks to empower. But I think that white people continually underestimate their privilege and yeah also just need to think of it in a different way. If everything in their history would lead them to believe that their life would be following in precisely the same way as the previous generation and that their job would be as the manager of this or that and suddenly they find that actually shit you know there is a whole lot of other people competing for this position I think it also signals a need for a different way of looking at the kind of work you do.

Kate's narrative above constructs white people as the ones who need to change their mindsets. The following few examples below do the same as the narrators look inward to find ways they can change. In these narratives, whites are constructed as having work to do on themselves to ensure that they keep changing with the changes in the country.

Example 5:

Int: And how do you view your role as a South African citizen?

Brad: Well I have to make sure to help facilitate as well you know for example if I were to have kids one day and those kids were to want to socialize or marry people of another culture or colour I've got to make sure that I'm more liberal than my forefathers...

In the above Example 5, Brad does this by ensuring that he helps facilitate acceptance by leading by example. He does not claim to be inherently more liberal than his forefathers, but states, “I've got to

make sure that I'm more liberal than my forefathers". This displays Brad's honesty with his self-reflection. He realizes it is one thing to say that he agrees with the changes in the country, but another thing to live them truthfully. Therefore, Brad recognizes the need to keep himself in check.

Like Brad, Ryan in Example 6 below, understands the need to be realistic and keep himself in check when it comes to the changes in the country. He problematizes claims of colour blindness, and he realizes that it is necessary to acknowledge one's problematic whiteness in order to begin dismantling its power.

Example 6:

Int: What is *your* role?
Ryan: To keep being a torch bearer and also to get realistic and understand that there is definitely a side of the apartheid legacy that lives within you and you've got to keep it in check. You are definitely born with a problem or not born with but we grew up with a problem and now people like to say oh you no I'm not racist I don't see black and white but that is crap everybody sees colour. So it's like having any problem if you don't acknowledge it you can't deal with it.

Next, In Example 7 below, Kate reveals that people's comfort is their biggest challenge to being more socially engaged.

Example 7:

Int: And *why* is it a challenge to be more engaged?
Kate: That's a good question. Because it's so comfortable. It's so possible to comfortably not.

She does not try and divert focus onto the government or anyone else but recognizes the fact that denial and avoidance allow people to remain in their comfort zones. By doing so people don't have to acknowledge the way their lifestyles reinstate systems of inequality, and therefore they are able to evade responsibility.

The following Examples 8, 9, and 10 show how white English-speaking South Africans, who construct their identities through a transformative discourse, employ a technique which distances themselves from other racist whites. Truscott (2007) explains that "the differentiation of one's self from other whites forges an anti-racist aspect to one's identity" (p.67).

Example 8:

Ryan: There are definitely people who are keen to cut their loses and just go. Which is a hell off a piss off I mean like South Africa was good enough for white people when it was completely unfair but now that things have to change they are only too happy to leave.

That is the challenge to being white. Are you decent enough inside to live here when it is fair.

In Example 8 above, Ryan constructs himself as a decent, white South African who stayed and embraced the changes, compared to those whites who were not decent enough to stay in the country post-apartheid.

In Example 9 below, Kate constructs herself as a white South African who is not panicking about her future in the country. According to Kate this is because she has not simply inherited the old racist view of the world like so many other whites.

Example 9:

Kate: ...I know that there are other kinds of people who just inherit precisely that world view and will continue with that, and they're the ones who are making the most fuss because they're the ones who are not looking at alternative positions you know and they're particular view has been challenged by things like BEE and so on and I think that they're panicking. But a lot of people aren't panicking because you know there are other ways of looking at it.

In Example 10 below, Ryan describes how he is most embarrassed by his racist white friends, and therefore he constructs himself as non-racist. He admits that he "definitely could mix more", and by saying this he does not glorify the friendships he does have with non-whites. Ryan has work to do and he recognizes this.

Example 10:

Int: And do you have a desire to mix more or...?

Ryan: Yeah I definitely could mix more I don't think I have any difficulty mixing in different race circles it honestly doesn't bother me at all. If anything I am embarrassed that I have some racist white friends than I am about introducing my friends of colour to other white people. That is probably the thing that gets me in social situations the worst.

Steyn (2001) explains, "one must first know one's whiteness, reach into it, feels its texture, before it will let one go" (p.133). In Example 11 below, Kate explains how she "would like to more than anything else" be considered African. However, she realizes the importance of acknowledging the effects her whiteness has had on her life.

Example 11:

Kate: ... the other places I've been in Africa they suggest that to me as well and I think those do have really personal memories to me. But at the same time looking back at it if I look back at it through another lens it was the story of the white South African doctor going up to the rural village so you know you can look at it in all these perspectives so in that way how African how much Africanness can I claim. I don't know. But I would like to

> more than anything else more than any other you know I feel affiliated with it more than anything else.

Steyn (2001) continues by explaining how, "an undertaking to confront the past honestly requires the courage not to evade the unpleasant feelings that accompany a more informed knowledge of what really happened" (p.134). Kate does not jump to the chance to call herself African. As much as she would like to and as much as she feels affiliated with Africa, Kate understands that it would be problematic to do so without honest self-reflection. In her narrative she challenges the master-narrative, and therefore renounces "the role of the white master on the continent, foregoing the assumption of a God-given place on the continent" (ibid, p.145). Furthermore, as uncomfortable and as painful the truth may be, without it, social transformation can not be achieved (Steyn, 2001).

Kate's honesty is carried through in her narrative about the present and the future. In Example 12 below, she does not try and downplay the continued racism and systematic inequalities in the country. In speaking about the future Kate acknowledges that the country has a far way to go before it can measure the changes by leaps and bounds. Kate's hope for the country's future is pragmatic in that she feels the old generation must "phase out", so hopefully the new generation can rise up with new ideas. Apartheid as law may have ended but the injustices in the country are still abundant. Furthermore, Kate does not try and downplay the amount of work still required of whites in order to achieve social change.

Example 12:

> **Kate:** ...there is still a lot of racism and there is a lot of effort being put into reinstating those fundamentally racist ideas of they are different, they are not as good as us, *they* always stuff things up like look at this government. I mean it is different shapes and forms that is not at all reflective or not at all I don't want to use the word progressive but just responding to the actual situation it's kind of a tunnel vision. And I experienced a lot of that and there are a lot of people like that who are in very powerful positions and who make very big decisions about the country and not politically but economically people running massive companies running schools that sort of thing. So I think that is still hugely problematic and my hope would be you know that that generation will phase out and that the new generation will have different ideas.

The narratives of this section showed how the WESSAs of the transition generation who construct their identities through transformational discourses speak truths about their privilege and are honest about their conflicted feelings. They are hopeful for the changes in the country but acknowledge that there is still a long way to go. These WESSAS take on their whiteness in an honest and responsible way which works to dismantle its power and privilege.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

5.1 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The researcher encountered three great obstacles while conducting this study. Firstly, the interview situation as a socially constructed space was keenly felt by the researcher. Before participating in the interview a respondent's knowledge around what he or she will say may have already been constructed. Therefore, as respondents entered the interview space they brought with them pre-conceived notions of what they thought would be expected of them. The researcher negotiated this context as best she could, but it was impossible for either party to enter the space as blank slates. The second obstacle came while attempting to elicit *personal* stories from respondents. Too often the respondents would answer questions by using broad generalizations. They answered by explaining what is meant to be a WEESA in general rather than what it meant *to them* to be a WESSA in the country today. The researcher had to ensure that she also elicited the personal stories. However, the fact that it was more natural for respondents to construct their narratives by using broad generalizations is interesting in itself. If it had not been for length requirements the researcher would have liked to investigate this further. The third limitation of this study is the fact that it does not include an investigation of the intersections of race, sex, class, and gender, and the way in which these aspects may be involved in the discursive construction of identities. Furthermore, it is suggested for future research on the topic of WESSA identity and its discursive construction.

5.2 Integration of Findings

The data captured in this study provides important insight into the ways in which white English-speaking South Africans of the transition generation are shaping their identities and positioning themselves in the country. The common discursive themes that emerged from this data display the way discourses of whiteness and the 'New' South Africa are intricately intertwined as WESSAs draw from both to construct their identities. Furthermore, it is apparent that these discourses are highly engaged in a push and pull relationship of either reinstating or challenging hegemonic power. The discursive techniques that WESSAs of the transition generation use to construct their narratives show how this push and pull is at work.

As we have seen in section one of the analysis, white English-speaking South Africans encounter difficulty as they try to articulate their cultural definition. This lack of cultural definition allows

WESSAs to maintain a level of invisibility when it comes to issues of power and privilege. The cultural discourses employed by WESSAs in this study, which maintain its invisibility, include old discourses of whiteness. For example, some WESSAs construct their culture as normal, and therefore construct all others as abnormal. This draws from an old colonial discourse of superiority and inferiority, and therefore it reinstates old power relations. WESSAs also employ discourses of the 'New' South Africa in ways that actually work to maintain the power of hegemonic whiteness. These WESSAs construct themselves as being part of the 'rainbow nation' and therefore claim cultural hybridity. However, by claiming cultural hybridity and appearing as positive participants in the 'New' South Africa, WESSAs are able to slip in and out of cultural groups as it suits them. Furthermore, they are never really forced to take responsibility for their privileged whiteness. Additionally, when white English-speaking South Africans of the transition generation do seem to pin point their culture it is with characteristics that continue to help WESSAs evade responsibility for their privilege. For example, many WESSAs claim to be more liberal compared to Afrikaners. This places them on a moral and political high ground, and therefore it allows them to avoid scrutiny for racial oppression of the past and the present. WESSAs evade responsibility for their privileged whiteness by staying under the radar, and this also works to reinstate privilege and power relations in their favor.

The evasion of power, scrutiny, and responsibility for one's privileged whiteness continues through out most of the narratives of this study's respondents. In the section titled *Evasive White Discourses* we once again witness old discourses of whiteness at play with discourses of the 'New' South Africa. WESSAs construct their narratives by drawing on discourses of the 'New' South Africa to appear as positive participants in the country while truly resisting transformation (Steyn and Foster, 2008). For example some WESSAs construct their identities in relation to the apartheid past through a discourse of white guilt. By claiming feelings of guilt these white English-speaking South Africans construct themselves as remorseful for the wrongs of the past. However, feelings of guilt work as a distraction and gets one off the hook for their privilege. Furthermore, they do not really have to confront their privilege and take responsibility for it.

Some WESSAs of the transition generation who draw on *Evasive White Discourses* are more hostile to the new order as it poses a threat to their maintenance of privilege. Their narratives are shaped by old-colonial racist discourse, but at the same time they use discourses of the 'New' South Africa to appear to have the best interest of the country in mind (Steyn and Foster, 2008). These white English-speaking South Africans are constructing themselves as the victims of post-apartheid, and by doing so they avoid taking responsibility for their privileged positions. Interestingly they make excuses for their racism by

pre-facing their racist comments before stating them. This shows how discourses of the 'New' South Africa have had an influence on WESSAs of the transition generation. They are aware of counter-discourses to racism and understand that overt racism is unacceptable to the majority of the population. These WESSAs, who are still shaped by racist discourse, are now finding new covert ways of employing racism or pre-facing their racist comments with excuses.

We then see a shift in the section titled *Changing Tides*. Here some WESSAs begin to construct their narratives and their identities within a discursive frame of the 'New' South Africa that truly challenges old discourses of whiteness. As painful and lonely as it may be, these WESSAs exhibit the necessary levels of honesty and self-reflection that are required for positive social transformation. They take responsibility for their privilege as they search for productive ways to be part of the change in the country. These WESSAs problematize the way in which they support social transformation but still hold on to their privilege, and they acknowledge that this needs to change. Additionally, white English-speaking South Africans who position themselves within this discursive frame are hopeful for the country's future, but they recognize that there is still a long way to go. They acknowledge that the journey towards the future requires much more work on the self. Therefore, they are constantly problematizing their place in the country, the work that they do, and the privilege that they continue to hold.

In general this study shows how identities are formed inside of discourse, and therefore are not in a fixed state of 'being', but are rather always in a process of becoming (Hall, 1996). WESSAs of the transition generation are negotiating their identities within South Africa's current landscape by drawing from old discourses of whiteness as well as discourses of the 'New' South Africa. Through this negotiation they are being constructed by as well as constructing discourses of emotions in order to position themselves in the country. Emotions such as guilt, shame, pride, love, hate are claimed to be felt by many of the respondents of this study. However, the use of these emotions in structuring one's narrative can be read in more than one way, and the analysis of this study revealed how emotions are moving through the social world through discourse and are aligning subjects with or against each other (Ahmed, 2004). By examining the narratives of this study's respondents through a post structuralist and social constructionist lens, the way in which knowledge is both a construct of our own reality and deeply rooted in language was revealed. Furthermore, as discourse constructs knowledge it is intricately wrapped up in power relations.

5.3 Contribution of the Study

This study contributes to our understanding of the ways in which discourses of whiteness work to maintain power by actually appearing as discourses of the 'New' South Africa. It has also provided a platform for discourses around new ways of being white and South African, which challenge hegemonic whiteness, to emerge. WESSAs of the transition generation are faced with the task of negotiating their relationship to the apartheid past which they are not fully defined by and not completely separated from. This study has shown that as WESSAs engage this relationship and find their place in the country their identities are being constructed by the intersecting discourses of whiteness and the 'New' South Africa. This poses a new challenge, and therefore it is the researcher's greatest hope that this study can contribute to the growing body of literature which may inspire WESSAs to partake in honest self-reflection about the way in which their privilege maintains itself and reinstates old power relations through discourse. Being more reflective and intuitive when it comes to recognising discourses of whiteness in disguise will allow us to unmask the disguises and pull whiteness from its position of power. This study adds to the literature on whiteness and shows the nuanced positionalities that white people take up in different contexts. Furthermore, the particular context observed in this study is interesting due to the unusual power relations that whites find themselves in.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Call for Participation

Participants Needed: White English-speaking South Africans: Interviews

Hi my name is Natalie Zeno and I am doing a Masters in Sociology at UCT. My interest and dissertation topic is on identity formation, in particular white English-speaking South African identity. Even more so, white English-speaking South Africans who were born between 1980-1989. I have named this group the 'transition generation'. It includes those born on the cusp of apartheid's demise who were the first generation raised in a multi-racial democratic country. I would greatly appreciate the participation of seven people, born between 1980-1989, whom identify as white English-speaking South Africans to inform my work.

My move to South Africa in 2009, from the United States, allowed me to begin reflecting on my own position as a young white westerner born in 1988. This in part is what led me to my interest in identity formation. The other part was sparked by my conversations with South Africans in general, but in particular white English-speaking South Africans of the transition generation. I listened to frustrated as well as hopeful dialogue about the country, and became intrigued by the way in which these dichotomies are in a constant push and pull with each other. Although this study is for academic purposes it has been inspired by my relationships with white English-speaking South Africans of the transition generation who challenge the stereotypical box of white colonial racist.

As I began to read on this subject I found a lot of academic texts on Afrikaner identity, but felt that white English-Speaking South Africans were underrepresented. Therefore, the purpose of my dissertation is to provide a space to explore the complexity of identities which includes what it means to you to be South African, to be white, to be English-speaking, to be a woman, a man, a parent, a child, a partner, a rugby fan, a dancer, an artist, a student. All of the many things we are and how our experiences have made us who we are. This study is meant to understand who we really are as opposed to how we are portrayed as members of certain groups. I would hope that you could share some of this with me.

Participation would involve: 2 x one hour interviews which focus on life experience and are Strictly Confidential

If you are interested or have any questions please contact me at 079 042 4213 or natalie.zeno@uct.ac.za

Kind Regards,
Natalie Zeno

Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form

Interview Agreement

I, _____(name), agree that I am participating willingly and voluntarily in an interview with Natalie Zeno (the researcher) on this day _____(date) at _____ (place).

I understand that these interviews form part of a dissertation for a Masters in Sociology at the University of Cape Town in 2011/2012.

I understand that I will participate in two one-hour interviews and that I may keep a journal between interviews, but that the keeping of a journal is optional.

I understand that the researcher may use the information from these interviews.

I understand that my name will remain anonymous, and that the researcher will replace my name with a pseudonym to ensure anonymity.

I understand that the interview will be recorded so that the researcher may more accurately reflect my views in the report.

I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any stage of the research.

I understand and agree to the above terms and conditions.

Signature (participant) _____ Date: _____

Signature (researcher) _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3: Interview Questionnaires

Interview Schedule 1

1.) Can you please tell me a bit about your childhood? School, playmates, family, holidays

2.) What stands out about your childhood?

3.) What were some events in your life that history that were significant to your development? How?

4.) Can you describe your culture?

5.) Do you think WESSAs have a culture? If so how would you describe it?

6.) How important is being white to you and why? How has being white affected your life?

7.) How important is being English-speaking to you and why? How has being English-speaking affected your life?

8.) How important is being South African to you and why?

9.) Do you consider yourself African? If so why?

10.) I want you to take your time to think back on your life. When did your first become aware of being white?

11.) What happened to bring about this awareness in you?

12.) During that time, what were the differences for you in being white rather than black?

13.) How did this make you feel at the time? How does it make you feel now?

14.) When did you first become aware of being English speaking rather than Afrikaans? What brought this awareness in you?

15.) What do you think characterizes English-speaking South Africans? How do they differ from Afrikaners?

16.) What does it mean to you to be South African?

any last comments....

Interview Schedule 2:

1.) How do you view yourself today? How would you describe yourself?

2.) Do you believe desegregation has affected your life? If so how?

3.) Do you mix with non white South Africans? If so how? If not why? If not and you want to how do you think you can change that?

4.) Could you tell me about what it feels like for you to be a white English speaking South African?

5.) In your own life today, what difference does it make being white rather than black

6.) What are the major challenges facing white English-speaking South Africans today in this country?

7.) What is the future of white English-speaking South Africans in this country?

8.) How do the attitudes of different generations of white English-speaking South Africans, toward living in this country, differ from your own?

9.) How have the political changes in this country influenced the politics of white-English speaking South Africans? More specifically have these changes influenced your own politics?

10.) How do you view your role as a South African citizen? (responsibility)

11.) How do you envision your future in South Africa?

any last comments...