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**Making Public Politics Private: A narrative study of apartheid racial ideology and its effects on white teenage female sexual desire in post-apartheid South Africa**

Hannah Botsis BTSHAN001

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University of Cape Town

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*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.

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## Abstract

An effect of apartheid among the youth has been that transformation in educational institutions has largely not moved beyond artificial interaction. There is an obvious divide between public rhetoric of integration and private experience. A reason for this may be that the private realm is a fertile and productive space for the reproduction of prejudice, where desire is seemingly coded in private tastes and not political ideologies. Theoretically I examine how historical public discourses come to function as personal norms, expressed as personal desire not political ideology. Literature has shown that these racial ideologies function both to fetishize the Other in interracial relationships and to maintain the hegemony of whiteness in interracial contact. Through narrative interviews with a select group of white teenage girls from a mixture of schools in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town, I analyse how historical power relations become an intimate part of our subject experience. Drawing on a psychoanalytical account of ideology I examine how their racial subjectivities are predicated on exclusionary logics that bar certain objects from being produced as desirable for them.

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Hannah Botsis, University of Cape Town

[Hannah.botsis@gmail.com](mailto:Hannah.botsis@gmail.com)

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*“Is there not a longing to grieve – and, equivalently, an inability to grieve – that which one never was able to love, a love that falls short of the “conditions of existence”? This is a loss not merely of the object or some set of objects, but of love’s own possibility: the loss of the ability to love, the unfinishable grieving for that [Other] which founds the subject.” (Butler: 1997: 24)*

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## Chapter One

### **Difference, desire and distance: What's public, what's private?**

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine some of the complexities of white identity, racist ideologies and sexual desire, to look at how they intersect, remain stable and change, and why this happens. In this introductory chapter I look at how these themes are situated in post-apartheid South Africa, a space where identities are open to multiple ways of being, and hybridized experiences, while at the same time being rooted in and shaped by historical discourses about who we ought to be (Steyn: 2001, Krog: 2009). I then introduce a psychoanalytical account of ideology which I will use in explanation of the psycho-social dynamics of 'race' and desire in this project.

Sexuality is part of this identity complex as it is "rooted in historical, social and cultural forces" (Pattman and Bhana: forthcoming). Both South Africa's colonial and apartheid history have influenced the ways in which we sexually desire each other (*ibid*), making it a knot of racialised, gendered and class permutations, that today play out in varied, but also constrained, and importantly, productive ways.

Those who espouse a transformation agenda in educational institutions need to take into account that "the apartheid story is rendered in an infinite variety of ways to the next generation who, in turn, incorporate that story into their own realities in many different guises" (Vincent: 2008: 1443). For this reason mere racial 'representivity' is not enough for integration and transformation, because the very categories we aim to integrate, drag with them their own baggage and complexity, steeped in the ideological substrate of apartheid.

Writing on the complexities of educational transformation in South Africa, Jansen highlights the centrality of sexual desire to this challenge.

As university leaders, we had created the architecture for change and integration on the education campus...but in reality the black and white students continued to

live separate lives. What was natural among college students, the act of dating, took on severe and rigid racialized forms (Jansen: 2009: 139).

He notes that the challenge in transformation has to do with the “artificiality of social relations” (*ibid*) between different ‘race’ groups. He argues that no knowledge has been more forcefully transmitted from parents to children, pre- and post-apartheid, than the notion of racial purity. The challenge in transformation has to do with breaking down the “artificiality of social relations” between different ‘race’ groups (Jansen: 2009: 139), not just “representivity” (Reddy: 2008: 217), as the architecture for change.

Soudien makes the point that while “the official ideology of the post-apartheid government is to promote non-racialism and a new inclusive South Africanism...[t]he identity construction tensions in the new system, however, have not disappeared” (2001: 312). I would also argue that a nonracial ideology cannot become naturalized if learners are unable to work through some of the contradictions of their present, one of which is the continued salience of ‘race’ in their lives and futures, while having intimate social relations which seem to belie this reality. Officially as South Africans we are encouraged to buy into the government’s non-racial ideal or ideology, while at the same time we are asked to acknowledge that previously disadvantaged groups be given protection. Formally, educational institutions are being asked to transform, value diversity, and embrace a discourse of equality. Yet informally, intimate social relations in obvious and not so obvious ways, belie these formal and official appeals and requirements. We live and love separately to a large extent, and the private goes unchallenged as it falls beyond the scope of the state, while, I argue, being one of the most productive spaces for the reincarnation of prejudice, framed in new terms, so that the official and formal frameworks become facades for what is really happening privately.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The categories official, formal and informal I am borrowing from Soudien’s analysis of youth identities in South Africa (2001: 312).

## **Sexuality as public politics (not private inclination)**

The advent of HIV/Aids has brought gender and sexuality in South Africa into the public domain in a new way (Bhana and Pattman: forthcoming; Arnfred: 2004; Reddy and Dunne: 2007). However despite an increased focus on gender equality (Arnot and Mac an Ghail: 2006), empowerment (Campbell: 2000), sexually related violence and sexual education (Ahlberg et al: 2001; Leach: 2002), the matter of desire, and how it operates as a personal and social signifier, is largely absent. Leaving desire and its concomitant social workings uninterrogated makes it a fertile space for the reproduction of prejudice and norms that at a public level we seem to have rejected. The conundrum that even though most youth in South Africa know the dangers of unprotected sex, and yet the incidence of HIV infection is ever increasing, is the same conundrum as that in which they profess a commitment to transformation and yet would not date a person of another 'race'<sup>2</sup> – there is a disjuncture between their public knowledge and private actions. This disjuncture is coded in taste, in parental values, in peer pressure, in social circles and class. The common denominator is that they fall within what we have come to call the private domain of our lives. Because desire is seen as private, the official and public claims of the state seem to make little difference. My argument here is that there is a relationship between the public and the private domains. The ideological formations of the public sphere are pulled into our psychologies with varying outcomes, but when ideology functions as a personal and private norm, it appears as mere personal preference. An ideology which has taken on this form is the most insidious of ideologies as it can be reproduced without appearing to do so, in other words without appearing to be necessarily ideological.

Pattman and Bhana have noted that in South Africa, “white girls’ sexualities are often framed as less risky”. To analyse sexuality in South Africa only in terms of “risk groups and of unequal relationships” is to dilute the issue (Pattman and Bhana: forthcoming). The lack of research into white girls’ sexualities closes an avenue of analysis that may be

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<sup>2</sup> I do not wish to reify ‘race’ and so I will refer to race in inverted commas throughout most of the dissertation to signal its abstract nature, even though it has come to have material consequences in the world.

very helpful in coming to understand racialised identities in post-apartheid South Africa. If we only focus on risk and disease in relation to sexuality we cannot ask why there is so little intimacy between ‘races’.

Sexuality offers a rich site for examining other aspects of our social reality, like ‘race’, gender, and class and why they are expressed in certain ways through our sexual desires. In this study I am focusing specifically on white racial identities and ideologies and how those intersect with other aspects of our social life. If I am focusing on ‘race’ it must be acknowledged that ‘race’, even as socially constructed, is also about bodies, and if it is about bodies, then we are also concerned with the reproduction of those bodies through heterosexual relationships (Dyer: 1997: 25). This process of reproduction entails two important aspects, racial exclusivity in relationships and heteronormativity (Steyn and Van Zyl: 2009). If racial exclusivity in relationships is also exclusively between a man and a woman, this procures heterosexuality as normal. My focus is on the former rather than the latter.

### **Ideology, psychoanalysis and subjectivity**

In this amalgam of ideology, identity, bodies and reproduction, I argue that expressions of desire should not be seen as floating free from ideological interest (Jansen: 2009: 140). Sexuality might be seen as a ‘public irrelevance’, and essentially private aspect of our lives, yet sex is a feature of the public domain (Giddens: 1992: 1). The multiple guises of the continued effects of apartheid, which find expression in personal desire, are integral to understanding the complexities of transformation in education. A psychoanalytic account of ideology allows for an explanation of how these historical, material and current racial and sexual norms come to be internalized by the subject.

In this study I argue that ‘race’ as a material component of reality does not exist and thus a set of beliefs that construe ‘race’ as an empirical reality, fixed in the world, is to function within an ideology and preserve a certain set of power relations which favour one group over another, thus the need to racialise groups of people. A critique of

ideology has been that the accusation of being in an ideology “only applies to others, never to oneself” (Althusser: 2002 and Mills: 2004). In this respect I do not locate myself outside of this racial ideology. In the process of this dissertation I refer to the apartheid categories of ‘race’ (black, white, coloured and Indian) as constructed ideas which have come to take on the appearance of a fixed reality for many South Africans, and thus are salient categories for analysis in post-apartheid South Africa. In writing on ‘race’ there is a tension “between re-inscribing the idea [of race], and acknowledging the inequalities it stands for in one’s efforts to eradicate both these inequalities and the idea itself” (Erasmus: 2008: 179). Thus inasmuch as I am drawing on stereotypical apartheid racial categories in my analysis, my aim is to do so only to the extent that their emptiness as ideological containers can be exposed. We must first understand how these racial constructs work before we can undo them. In this regard, this dissertation aims to show how societal structures and personal agency meet and intertwine with one another to produce multiple and complex effects. Specifically under investigation is how young white teenage girls ‘make private’ apartheid racial ideology in their socio-sexual construction of desire in post-apartheid South Africa.

In this analysis of desire I focus on two things (acknowledging that there are also more aspects to an analysis of desire): 1) the historical construction of racial ideology pre and during apartheid, which Ratele (2009) has called racist sexualization, which in turn provides the structural substrate for the development of the 2) personal psychological idiosyncrasies as far as ‘race’ and desire are concerned, both then and now. The aim of this dissertation is to show how this comes to be. I aim to show, drawing on a psychoanalytical interpretation of ideology, how racial ideology comes to influence personal desire so that desire is experienced as something intimately personal and seemingly apolitical, while in reality desire is a product of a deeply political and thus ideological project. It is necessary to analyze how power operates in relation to our subjectivities to understand how we become susceptible to ideology and why we respond to Althusser’s historical ‘hailing’. I am, possibly problematically, conflating subjectivity and identity to a certain extent. I do not believe that our identities are ontologically racialised (theories of identity are extensive and multiple and beyond the scope of this

project), but I do believe that our racial subjectivities, i.e. how we come to exist for each other in racialised ways, are ideological, and thus a matter of power. It is this connection I wish to tease out and understand: how macro ideologies come to be psychologically embedded in our racial subjectivities. How does the public become private and what happens to ‘power’ in that process?

Furthermore, I wish to examine the meanings that these white girls make from their particular contexts and what that may mean for how ideologies are reproduced sociologically. In my analysis I call this meaning-making process ‘vectors of white desire’ because of the way social aspects of their lives, such as privilege or taste are reconstituted *through* whiteness, to become the domain of whiteness. Using the word vector figuratively, I wish to emphasise the transformative quality of a vector as it enables change and transmission. A whiteness vector does not only attach a certain set of meanings to a body or an idea, it comes to change the nature of that body or idea, by redefining the conditions of its existence. In redefining the conditions of existence for certain subjectivities, it also creates and excludes certain possibilities and ways of being, loving and accepting Others against which a subjectivity is constructed. If the conditions of existence are altered, then a desire is not seen as prejudice or ideological because these conditions in some sense define the nature of reality for the subject. Even if this reality is socially constructed, it still has a natural feel.

The question guiding my research is: what is the role of apartheid racial ideology in the socio-sexual construction of desire for white adolescent girls in post-apartheid South Africa? This problematique embraces both theoretical and empirical challenges. Thus my research questions are as follows:

How is a political ideology expressed as personal desire?

How do historical structural power relations become an intimate part of our subject experience?

How is sexual desire related to an internalized racist ideology?

In what ways is the public historical ideological project of apartheid being expressed in the youth’s private sexual desires?

Is the hegemonic normative perception of whiteness still present in these girls' constructions of desire?

To complement this largely structural analysis of South African society and racist ideology, I re-centred the subject through a set of narrative interviews with a select group of white teenage girls in post-apartheid South Africa to investigate in what ways these ideological discourses are present and appropriated in their construction of sexual desire. Through this process it became clear that power, ideological or otherwise, was not something pressed upon them to which they were vulnerable. Power attached to them and they molded it in particular ways, both exercising agency and being constrained by their situation. Butler's explanation of the psychic life of power (1997) is crucial here because it takes into account both the process of internalizing ideological norms to which we are exposed but also how psychically we have the power to alter these to some degree. She also demonstrates how, because of the psychological-ideological push and pull to which subjects are exposed, certain objects are seen as falling short of certain conditions of existence. For example, not loving or not desiring someone of another 'race' is naturalized to the extent that the subject cannot imagine what they have lost in that exclusion. It is not even registered as an exclusion because that object does not exist in that way (as desire) for them.

In iteratively tracing this process from theory to empirical data, and back to theory, I hope to come full circle in discussing how personal agency (the private) becomes intertwined with the political and ideological super-structures (the public) in which we function, and what this may mean for the possibilities of existence available to certain subjectivities.

In Chapter Two I work through a range of literature starting by detailing a psychoanalytical theory of ideology and how this may be used to understand the racial ideological project of the apartheid state. I then focus on how within this ideology a key feature was what Ratele (2009: 290-305) has called 'racist sexualization'. Using this as an entry point for examining interracial desire in post-apartheid South Africa, I look at

some of the literature available on interracial relationships and educational settings, and what this means for white subjectivities within these spaces.

In Chapter Three I detail the methodological concerns of this study and how they match my theoretical goals and tools, how I went about finding my sample and conducting my research, and some possible shortfalls or problems with the nature of this study.

Chapter Four is largely a description of my participants and a grouping of their responses into themes which I use to expound my research questions.

Drawing on these responses Chapter Five looks at some higher level theoretical questions and explanations for the trends that emerged in Chapter Four. The dissertation concludes in Chapter Five with an explanation of these young white subjectivities and their relation to the public and the private spheres in post-apartheid South Africa.

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**From ideology to psychology: racializing subjectivities**

The basis of liberal humanist ideology implies a notion of the individual self as having agency and control over itself (Mills: 2004: 30). Marxist theorists such as Althusser have adopted a psychoanalytical account of ideology in which the subject could maintain a range of positions. These range from choosing their own roles, and also at times finding themselves cast in defined roles because of their developmental history or because of the actions of others (*ibid*). An ideological analysis may also downplay the centrality of the subject because of its concern with groups or classes of individuals or because of its focus on the construction of individual subjectivity through institutions such as the state (Mills: 2004: 31). This is of course the case in this study, but through a methodological centering of the subject, while accounting for the structural influences of racial ideology on the subject, I hope to circumvent the traditional dichotomy or binary constructed between the subject and the collective and structure and agency. In fact the argument that I make here, and borrow from Butler (1997) is that the power that is expressed in our agency is the same power which constrains us. There is ambivalence in the relationship between structure and agency, society and the individual, in the sense that power both makes our subjectivity possible and constrains us.

Both the psychological pulls of the subject's desire and the society in which he/she exists need to be accounted for in an analysis of racialised desire. The argument here however is that the content of a racial ideology comes to exist within the psychological desires of the subject, and in that sense the explanatory chain loops, and the one validates the existence of the other. What is important though is that, in the final analysis, despite the focus on collectivities and structural belief formations, ideological analysis still "retains the notion of the individual subject who is capable of resisting ideological pressures" (Mills: 2004: 31).

Marxists theorists have tended to focus on the centrality of the state in the maintenance of power relations (Mills 2004: 34). I argue that is the case in terms of racial ideologies in South Africa but the process by which these become internalized and become expressions of desire by its citizens is far from linear. Power does not remain in the clutches of the state. It is dispersed and appropriated by individuals and becomes institutionalized in that process (this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five): “Psychic structures are constituted by the interweaving of many heterogeneous experiences and capacities (Flax: 1993: 93)... The processes of subjectivity are overdetermined and contextual. They interact with, partially determine, and are partially determined by many other equally complicated processes include somatic, political, familial, and gendered ones” (Flax: 1993: 94). The aim of this thesis has not been to deny this complexity, but to draw out one strand from multiple ways of being, and ask, how does it happen that the public becomes covertly engrained in private lives, in the subject’s desires?

The complexity of the individual, and the plurality of outcomes, must form part of any analysis of desire, precisely because it is posited as something at the kernel of our beings and seemingly far removed from the apparatus of the state. There are many layers between the state and its explicit ideology and how this may come to influence the construction of an individual’s desire.

How then does ideology come to influence an individual or rather, how does the individual recognize him or herself within an ideology? Althusser argues that it is the ‘obviousness’ of the ideology which contains its ideological effect: it imposes without appearing to do so (Mills: 2004: 32). It is this obvious ideological recognition which makes it so powerful. As will be argued later, racial apartheid ideology in fact drew on commonsensical notions already apparent in the community which lent itself to the establishment of this ‘obviousness’ of ‘race’, but was by no means a coherent or scientific programme to disseminate ‘facts’ about racial categories.

Ideological recognition of this obviousness is one of two functions inherent to ideology, the second being misrecognition of reality (Althusser: 2002: 32). Thus in order for the

misrecognition to take hold, individuals must see this falseness as true and right. Ideology functions in such a way that it transforms individuals into subjects of a particular ideology through ‘interpellation or hailing’. Individuals recognize the obviousness of what is being said, and respond in such a way that they see themselves in the content of what is being said. Because they recognize it is themselves being called they respond by construing what is being said as truth, precisely because they recognized it as obvious (Althusser: 2002: 33).

Althusser claims that “individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology” (2002: 34), which means that they are always already subjects, because ideology, or power, enables subjectivity. Theories of ideology may be seen as totalizing discourses which rule out the possibility of rupture, messiness and agency as far as the subject is concerned. While this may be true, I argue that revisionist psychoanalytical accounts of ideology which actively seek to describe the complexity of the subject experience are productive because of the explanation this kind of theory provides in linking the public and the private. This does not mean the entirety of the subject’s existence is explained through ideology, only that a psychoanalytical account of ideology is helpful in explaining how a subject comes to internalize the material conditions of his/her existence to construct a certain kind of social world.

Part of the process of recognition and functioning of ideology is that the subject needs another subject (Althusser: 2002: 36). In other words, for the ideology to hold its place as truth in society, each subject is dependent on the Other to maintain the lie about reality. This draws on the premise set out in Hegel’s Master-Slave Dialectic in which the master cannot by definition be a master without a slave and vice versa (Freire: 1972: 18, Kruks: 2001: 84). Hegel describes a situation where two consciousnesses are involved in a mutual struggle for recognition (Kruks: 2001: 84). A problem arises when one dominates the other because it becomes evident that neither has achieved the goal of mutual recognition by another free consciousness. They are misrecognising their own positions in society premised on nonsensical inequality.

Our positions in society are made up of ideological constructions that only function if we all buy into those subjectivities we recognize in the ideology. To use a South African example, for programmes of Affirmative Action to function, all citizens must self-identify as a 'race' which matches the ideological racialisation developed in apartheid. For my being 'white' to mean anything, it is essential that I construct this subjectivity in relation to your Otherness or Sameness. In other words 'white' only takes on a functional meaning if you identify as 'black'. If you do not respond to this ideology, that racial subjectivity does not exist for you – thus Althusser says, ideology interpellates individuals as subjects, they literally speak themselves into a certain kind of subjectivity. Ideology then also functions on the premise that as individuals we 'freely' accept subjection to an ideology (Althusser: 2002: 37). We appropriate power, which gives us the agency to choose to respond to the hailing, to step into that racial subjectivity. For this free subjection to occur, there must be some societal-psychological interplay mechanism which enables the reality which is misrecognised, to be ideologically recognized by subjects, and it is to this which I now turn.

It has been argued that psychoanalysis is a form of psychic determinism, a biological reductionism of the mind. However Žižek posits the possibility that psychoanalysis is an in-depth hermeneutics that opens up a new domain for the analysis of meaning. For even though psychoanalysis may seem preoccupied with the mind as a physiological entity, in essence psychoanalysis is still concerned with the dialectic of meaning (Žižek: 2005: 8). This dialectic of meaning refers to the subject's distorted communication with himself and his Other (detailed above). For our subject positions to hold within an ideological framework, we find *meaning* within an ideology. Within Freudian psychoanalytic theory there are two aspects which become immediately apparent – firstly the biological aspect, which claims to have a theory of drives, and secondly there is an interpretation of this biology which is concerned with meaning (*ibid*). Meaning however must come from outside, or rather, meaning fuses the interior biological experience with the exterior social experience.

Having laid bare these two elements in no way resolves the problem of causality from being in the world to certain psychological states. For example, to understand that desire is at once a psychological drive, which contains certain meanings, does not answer the question of where the content of that drive comes from. Žižek rejects a theory that might adopt a positivist misrecognition of reality or a theory that reduces meaning to an “illusory self-experience” regulated by hidden causal mechanisms (Žižek: 2005: 8). Both of these are internal to the subject and take no account of the socio-historical context in which the subject lives, or inter-subjective interaction (Žižek: 2005: 9).

Psychoanalytic revisionism calls for a socialization and historicization of the Freudian unconscious which would rescue it from biological determinism. Here the various elements of the mind (the Ego, Superego and the Id) internalize various historical and social ideologies to which it is exposed (Žižek: 2005: 10). The (conscious) Ego is structured according to social norms and the unconscious drives oppose the Ego. The Superego internalizes historically specific ideologies, regulating the Ego, and the Id pulls against these social regulations by expressing a libidinal desire. This reveals the social-ethical conflict between Id (desire) and Ego (social norm), because the content of these psychological struggles comes from the ‘outside’, from material reality and its concomitant political ideologies (Žižek: 2005: 10-11). Thus the nature of the psychic is in part the result of the historical process of a particular ideology. This historical process comes to take on a natural feel, and has been analysed as such. This has led to misrecognition of the actual structural mechanisms at play within the psychological realm.

This is not to say that a biological approach to the mind must be totally disregarded, but rather that critical analysis must exhume the historical mediation of things like desire, and find the history within these psychological concepts (Žižek: 2005: 10-11). Where “history has hardened into nature” and has become a “second nature”, critical theory must show how this occurs (Žižek: 2005: 10). A psychoanalytical theory of ideology offers this kind of explanation. It shows simultaneously how reality comes to be misrecognised, but also how this false reality contains an obviousness to which we respond and make ourselves

subjects within it. Crucially, it also includes an analysis of power which enables subjectivity, but offers a constrained agency (Butler: 1997).

This psychological internalization of ideology is a potent mix for societies which espouse fascist views, such as apartheid. It is precisely the fiction which is taken to be truth by a society which makes them so merciless yet inconsistent in their application. For example, 'race classification' during apartheid was far from a systematic application of criteria. Rather it was precisely the amorphous application of criteria which made it such a pernicious practice.

Psychoanalytic interpretation of ideology reveals both our psychological/personal idiosyncrasy *and* the link between a public text and the symbols of our unconscious, which function as motivations at the most intimate level of our being (Zizek: 2005: 25). Including the psychoanalytical theoretical dimension within a theory of ideology reveals a causal mechanism which allows us to make sense of how the subject is interpellated by particular ideological content (Zizek: 2005: 25-27).

Having covered how ideology interpellates individuals as subjects, and found a mechanism which explains that causal process, namely a psychological internalization of ideology (both of these theoretical concepts will be used in an explanation of the findings of this study), one further aspect requires explication. How does a particular ideology become universalized within a society? In other words, how does this public-speaking-to-the-private process come to be hegemonic or generally accepted?

One of the requirements for an ideology to take hold is that it contains elements 'typical' to the society itself (Zizek: 1999: 175). For an ideology to be hegemonised - made dominant - in a society, it needs to contain contents particular to that situation for it to be universalised and made efficacious. Thus when looking at a universal ideological notion, one needs to look for the specific content which makes it efficient as an ideological notion (*ibid*). This is done so that a seemingly empty universal notion can be made

applicable to our actual experience. When an ideology draws on that which is 'typical', it is that obviousness which allows people to identify themselves within it.

Not only does ideology draw on what is typical. It is also circular and self-relating - the narrative of a signifier predetermines what we shall experience as reality (Zizek: 1999: 179). By constructing 'race' with simultaneously particular and ambiguous contents, a normative expectation of 'races' comes to reinforce the content of the signifier. For example, whites (signifier) are pure (content), therefore whites must be pure (reinforcing content of signifier through action). A bio-cultural looping takes place (Posel: 2001). "The ideas attached to spaces and virtues reinforce each other, but also divide social worlds between those who have virtue and those who don't" (McDonogh in Teppo: 2009: 220-221).

For an ideology to become hegemonic it has to have two particular contents: firstly, an 'authentic' popular content and, secondly, its 'distortion' by the relations of domination (Zizek: 1999: 184). This is true of racial apartheid ideology. There were particular elements that drew on what was typical to South African colonial society already. It was not a coherent programme, but it was successful because it seemed obvious to South Africans *what* was being referred as 'race'. In this example of racial ideology "the universal results from a constitutive split in which the negation of a particular identity transforms this identity into the symbol of identity and fullness as such" (Zizek: 1999: 176). Whiteness operates as a negation of Otherness, and in so doing, it changes the conditions and possibilities of existence for itself and for Others. Whiteness, actually premised on nothingness, here takes on a fullness. The symbol of an identity gets conflated with identity itself.

By limiting an identity, or falsely representing it, that identity takes on a new ideological fullness which replaces the real identity with the ideologically constructed one. In other words, what this identity signifies is what is up for political grabs. The signifier must then be negated and emptied so that an ideology can be projected onto it. As 'race' is an empty signifier, or is not an empirical ('real') truth, it can be ideologically manipulated by

filling its emptiness with a particular content. This comes to be viewed as truth (thus we so intimately identify with our own racial subjectivities). The “empty signifier [is] hegemonised by some particular content – the struggle for this content is the political struggle” (Zizek: 1999:176). The power of apartheid ideology is that it has, and still does, fill the signifier of ‘race’ with a content which is a misrecognition of reality, but to which paradoxically we all relate.

The struggle for ideological hegemony is thus always the struggle for the ownership of the terms that are spontaneously experienced as apolitical (Zizek: 1999: 177-178). Desire is one of these terms. Desire is intimately experienced and thus seems off-limits to political struggle. This however is what makes sexuality such fertile political ground in the first place. It is political without seeming to be, and yet the public and the private realms of our lives intimately inform one another.

### **Apartheid Subjectivities: towards racist sexualization**

The apartheid idea was to heighten discipline, regulation and surveillance, so that boundaries were asserted and spaces organized according to ‘race’. Central to this ideology was the idea of racial purity (Posel: 2001: 3). Apartheid ideology functioned on the premise that every ‘race’ observed their ‘proper’ place in society along economic, political and social lines. The political project was built around the “imagining of race and racial difference, and the rationality implicated in it” (Posel: 2001: 3). This rationality was not an objective rationality but rather a manufactured rationality suited to the design of the system itself. Apartheid ‘rationality’ was an instance of the obviousness in ideology to which Althusser refers.

The process of internal racial reasoning has not come up against much analytic scrutiny (Posel: 2001: 3). This is because it has often been assumed that the racial ideology espoused by the apartheid regime was a biologically determined one, drawing on theories of scientific racism. Posel and others (See Steyn: 2001) however argue that apartheid ideologues strategically adopted an ambiguity with regard to ‘race’ (Posel: 2001: 3). I

argue this ambiguity functioned to meet Zizek's two requirements for an effective ideology: popular content and a distortion in the relations of domination (Zizek: 1999: 184). An ambiguous and shifting set of beliefs is difficult to refute or escape, especially when this approach is adopted by society at large, whether by force or acquiescence.

Those that developed the apartheid system of racial classification avoided a 'science of race' and explicitly identified 'race' as a construct with cultural, social and economic dimensions. 'Race' was a judgment on someone's social standing made according to the existing social conventions on difference at the time (Posel: 2001: 3). This appeal to conventions is also noted by Zizek in his analysis of ideology. In order for the ideology to be efficacious it is necessary for the particular in the ideology to seem typical, so that a universal set of beliefs can be drawn from this particularity.

Thus, what made apartheid such a potent ideology was its 'bioculturalist' mix (Gilroy: 2001: 22) which merged bodily difference with differences of class and lifestyle or culture. Consequently each of these ideas mutually reinforced one another, and became evidence of the existence of the other. In Zizek's words, this racial ideology was circular and self-relating. "It was this hybrid conceptualization of race which lay at the core of apartheid's racial project, which enabled a practice of racial differentiation which was far more insidious and tenacious in its grip on everyday life than might otherwise have been the case" (Posel: 2001: 4). This approach, rooted in convention, took shape in both the dominated and the dominators' minds, psychologically embedding ideas about the Other.

The test of 'race' by administrators was to be made according to views held by members of that community (Posel: 2001: 6). It was specifically noted that no special training was needed for the Race Classification Board administrators, as 'race' was such a self-evident matter. This self-evidence contained within it an ambiguity about the criteria of 'race', thus leaving it to be a matter of personal opinion on the part of the administrator. "The fact that race 'could not be established with any precision', therefore was no barrier to the elimination of ambiguity and mobility in the practice of racial classification. There was a certitude in experience, subjective as it was – a certitude deriving from the intensity of

the recognition of race, rather than the deductive rationality of positivistic reasoning about criteria” (*ibid*). It was the embeddedness of historical racially constructed attitudes in the unconscious which still makes ‘race’ such a delineating factor today. This bioculturalist mix is the mix of psychoanalytical theories of ideology. The ‘outside’ becomes rooted on the ‘inside’ with the appearance of being a mechanism only of the ‘inside’. Thus what was ideological appeared to be commonsense, a natural attitude, apparent to everyone.

‘Race’ was an attribute of all experience, was in everything, and thus constitutive of everything (Posel: 2001: 14-15). Central to this racial ideology in which the totality of South African society existed were the widespread white anxieties about racial mixing, and racial proximity. The construction of ‘race’ and the essentialising of difference was designed to allay fears about racial mixing. Keeping white women safe from the threat of black male sexuality and protecting the racial purity of innocent white children was the lens through which this ideology functioned (Posel: 2001: 15-16 and Dyer: 1997). In packaging racial ideology in this way it becomes evident that power’s interests are not limited to the visible, outward life of subjects. The aim of power is equally if not more so, concerned with producing and managing private aspects of subjects lives, including desire (Ratele: 2009: 298). This is how official power molds our sexual interiors (*ibid*).

The Immorality Act of 1949 led to a racialised sexualisation of South Africans which struck at the very generative capacities of the white community, and I argue, pulled into their psychology racial ideologies which still affect their sexual desires today. Apartheid’s racial ideologies, and the way they have been invoked in forms of redress in contemporary South Africa, serve to continue broader “trajectories of lingering racialization, deracialization and re-racialization” in post-apartheid South Africa (Posel: 2001: 17-18). Apartheid’s racial legacies, because of the circular and ambiguous racialisation process, remain powerful normative constructs in people’s everyday thoughts and experiences which are difficult to uproot because they have become naturalized expressions of personal idiosyncrasy.

Anti-miscegenation efforts affected white women in particular ways, which makes them a category distinct from white men for this kind of study. Dyer writes that “interracial heterosexuality threatens the power of whiteness because it breaks the legitimation of whiteness with reference to the white body” (1997: 25). Thus the responsibility of the reproduction of the white ‘race’ fell to white women: “the demand that white women make white babies to keep the race afloat has not been overt, but I think it is being made over and over again in disguised form as a preachment within an all-white context about our duty to keep the species afloat” (Frye: 1983: 124). Here the private aspect of the both ‘race’ and gender issues is emphasized. White women were and are implicated in their own gender oppression and the continued hegemony of white supremacy. They are both publicly privileged and privately subordinated by having these claims made on their bodies (Dyer: 1997: 29). White women’s position of superiority is intimately tied to her sexuality and her sexual desires, thus the focus on white adolescent females and their sexual desires in relation to apartheid ideology in this study. The ideological production-line of desire is a lifelong and does not begin only when one considers having children.

Sexuality, love, marriage, sex and desire are seen as something intimate and private, but in South Africa the private became political because of the agenda for separating races in the colonial and apartheid eras (Sherman and Steyn: 2009: 55). The criminalization of sexual intercourse across the racial boundary meant that a racial coding of sexualities made the most intimate part of people’s lives part of the politico-legislative framework (Ratele: 2009: 290). It racialised their very psychologies. Settlers in South Africa established a social code dominated by notions of ‘race’ and racial hierarchy (Sherman and Steyn: 2009: 57). ‘Race’ relations were fairly flexible until the early nineteenth century when the European ideology of racism became more entrenched (*ibid*). This ideology, discouraging interracial intercourse, as indicated in Posel’s analysis, contained contradictory strands in the representation of the Other (Sherman and Steyn: 2009: 57). Anti-miscegenation sentiments which became more firmly entrenched from this period drew on discourses of social harm and white insecurity (*ibid*: 58-59).

Apartheid laws intended to carnalise racist ideology, and transmit this prejudice into the “respiratory, reproductive and neurological systems” of its subjects (Ratele: 2009: 291). This ideology was pulled into the bodies and minds of apartheid subjects and naturalized, taking on the appearance of innate desire and feeling. Ratele terms this ‘racist sexualization’ (*ibid*), explaining how prejudice informs the constitution of sexualities.

In the 1920s and 1930s, poor Afrikaner farmers migrated to the cities and the upper white classes became concerned about the ‘poor white problem’. They were concerned that these poor whites would put the purity of the white ‘race’ as a whole at risk by interracial mixing (Teppo: 2009: 221). Furthermore there was concern over the sexual conduct of young white women in the cities. This urbanization and poverty led to increased cries from the white community for legislation against miscegenation (Sherman and Steyn: 2009: 60). It seemed that male-centric white dominance was under threat and white men were concerned with reaffirming their social, political and economic control over white women (*ibid*).

As being white in apartheid racial ideology meant being superior and ‘civilized’, white bodies then had to be superior and civilized (Teppo: 2009: 221). Thus the centrality of the body, and particularly the female body (as demonstrated above), to this ideological project must be emphasized. The white women’s body was to be “chaste, lactating mother-body, domestic and self-sacrificing” (Teppo: 2009: 223). The romanticized notion of “mothers of the nation” became appealing to those whose position in society was ambiguous (Vincent: 2000). Thus this empty ideology, based on loose criteria but strict adherence, made the white female body central to their ideology. This ambiguity, while it could have left white women without a place in a male dominated version of whiteness, were given a place as the sexual gatekeepers of their ‘race’. This was overlaid with various socially appropriate roles which they took on, and naturalized – this is what it was to be a white woman. “The poor white female body was perceived as the most vulnerable element and entrance point to the white race. Consequently, bodily control was most strongly directed towards the women” (Teppo: 2009: 224). This is how sexuality came to discipline ‘race’ identification and, as is typical of the ideological

looping effect, 'race' classification came to shape sexual relations (Ratele: 2009: 294). This is the political-legal misrecognition in which apartheid subjects developed their sexual desires and acted out their sexual roles (*ibid*).

Public anxiety over the sexual behaviour of white women was sensationalized through the circulation of stories of young women being raped by African men. This idea of 'black peril' became somewhat of a mythology in the early twentieth century (Sherman and Steyn: 2009: 61). Postcolonial theory suggests that this 'black peril' mythology may have stemmed from whites' fears about their fragile hierarchy expressed through a range of responses from sexual jealousy to a fear of native rebellion (*ibid*).

Central to this protection of the seeming natural order of things was the white female body, mythologised by frontier society as the last and most intimate frontier (Cornwall in Sherman and Steyn: 2009: 61). However, despite these mythologised fears, white society could not admit that it felt politically or socially vulnerable (*ibid*), precisely because this would mean acknowledging the fiction which they had taken on as reality. It would mean dismantling their own ideological construction which interpellated their racial subjectivity as superior, central and normative. Sexual interaction would have been the ultimate transgression in destabilising this myth because:

In the patriarchal construction of the sexual act, whether forced or not, the male is dominant and the female is subordinate...the political scandal of the Black Peril is the subjection of a woman of the dominant race to the power of a man of the subordinate race; the penetration of a white woman by a black man is an act of insurrection (Cornwall in Sherman and Steyn: 2009: 61).

The Immorality Act (no. 5 of 1927) was the first totalizing piece of legislation against interracial mixing in South Africa (Sherman and Steyn: 2009: 63). These reinforced means of sexual protocol came about because of crises in colonial control. Whites felt threatened because interracial mixing called into question the very categories they wished to maintain (*ibid*). At this intimate level of desire the ideological fortress faltered and thus it became the very reason why it was so strictly enforced and monitored. The private sphere became a fertile ground for reproduction of these public prejudices. At the place where there are fissures in the ideological front, here interracial mixing and desire, it will

be most vehemently maintained. But because desire is private and intimate, it was, and is, one of most difficult ideological spaces to reach into and undo. Racialised ideologies became naturalized and today go largely unchallenged because desire is seen as private. This public racial ideology, expressed in private desires, is the last outpost of whiteness which keeps its illusive exclusivity safe. This is 'making public politics private'.

Although all laws barring interracial interaction of any kind have been done away with in the last twenty years, increased contact between the 'races' has not been sufficient to deconstruct this deeply personal yet political construction of desire. In fact despite "a progressive legal order and a democratic political dispensation in the post-apartheid society, sexual subjects, which worried apartheid politics and society considerably, continue to trouble the present order...many Africans and whites still appear to be troubled by the repressive legacies of apartheid laws and hence continue to live out the sexual identities, desires, fears and relationships that apartheid fathers sought to cultivate on this land" (Ratele: 2009: 290).

### **Post-apartheid sexual desire and the stability of whiteness**

The next section examines how apartheid history has come to inform multiple and various expressions of interracial desire today where it is clear that racist sexualisation applies to both apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa, albeit with varying outcomes (*ibid*).

Racist sexualization constitutes the preferences of one 'race' for its own. I have argued that this is accounted for in a psychoanalytical theory of ideology, but it could also account for how bodies are fetishised by 'race' regimes and "how racialization estranges, objectifies the Self and relations, and reifies names" (Ratele: 2009: 301). This was made evident in a small qualitative study of interracial couples at tertiary institutions in Cape Town (Sherman and Steyn: 2009). It was found that the social capital (Bourdieu: 1997) of whiteness remained constant and powerful, even though interracial couples were becoming more frequent and did not consciously feel any outside negativity towards their

relationships (Sherman and Steyn: 2009: 71). While there may be more racial mixing the normativity of whiteness is still firmly in place. This was also found by Vincent (2008) in her study of undergraduate classes, in which she challenges the contact hypothesis. Contact seemed to benefit white students more than students of other races, in that their normative position was affirmed.

In the Cape Town study, a middle-class coloured man dating a white woman, while speaking about other coloured women, seemed to reflect many of the negative stereotypes that stem from ideologies of white superiority (Sherman and Steyn: 2009: 71). Speaking of a friend of his, he said “She’s coloured, but she’s a beautiful coloured girl...she still has this kind of coloured in her, where she has this accent...” (*ibid*).

A black woman who participated in the same study seemed to similarly draw on internalized standards of white beauty and cultural stereotypes of western men when she described her relationship with her white boyfriend: “There is a certain aesthetic I like, physically. I think I am more attracted to white men. Maybe in storybooks that I have read, he calls to mind certain pictures of these suitors in the books, like Prince Charming...the guys I grew up with at home... they didn’t really have the qualities I was interested in” (Sherman and Steyn: 2009: 71-72).

Fetishized and exotic ideas about the Other, detailed in post-colonial theory (Alloula: 2000, Mazrui: 1969), are also evident in the discourses of these ‘mixed race’ couples. For example a white woman speaking about her attraction to her coloured boyfriend said: “I find white people weren’t passionate enough; I’m a very passionate person. I think I’m a very sensual person...for me, I saw myself in black and coloured people. I saw something there, some fire over there, that it’s just not existent in white people” (Sherman and Steyn: 2009: 72). What I found fascinating is her comment that she has those qualities which only exist in other races. Although she has passionate qualities, psychologically, she cannot appropriate them as she is white, and passion is associated with people of colour. These differences could be accounted for by personality, but because of the deeply engrained apartheid ideologies, and the ambiguity referred to earlier, we associate

personal traits with groups. Thus those traits come to represent groups rather than individuals, and in description that division is constant although in practice it is not the case.

Although the findings from this study could not be generalized, it is clear from the respondents that dominant ideas of beauty and sexuality of the self and the Other still adhere to apartheid ideologies of racist sexualisation. Pattman and Bhana (2009) also found that ideals of white superiority were drawn on by girls of all races in their study of girls in a mix of high schools from Durban. One of the researchers in this study spoke about the “eulogizing of whiteness” (2009: 30). They comment that the girls in these studies expressed sexual desire in highly racialised ways which continues to make ‘race’ a powerful marker of their identities (2009: 36). I would also argue that this highlights why sexual desire is a powerful lens for examining both political and personal issues as they pertain to ‘race’. Sexual desire reveals how enmeshed these often separate levels of analysis are. This clearly points to a continuance of the power that ‘race’ exerts in the lives of South Africans (Vincent: 2008: 1427).

Vincent (2008) examined the limitations of interracial contact among students at a formerly white South African university. She found that racialised patterns of reasoning continued to exist, but were often unnoticed and went unchallenged (2008: 1426). The four ‘race’ groups established by apartheid remained ‘common sense’ in South Africa. Vincent argues that this should not be understood merely as a residual effect of apartheid, but rather that new life is being given to these terms, as they are being used for issues of redress in attempting to transform (Vincent: 2008: 1427).

Vincent challenges the assumptions of the “contact hypothesis” i.e. the simple existence of people of different ‘races’ coming into contact with one another will reduce stereotypes and improve race relations (Vincent: 2008: 1430, also see Erasmus: forthcoming). This challenge is refreshing in the face of a general bean-counting attitude that has been adopted in transformation, and brings to light the unseen complexity of bringing together people whose ideas of the Other have been historically distorted.

Vincent takes into account that even though the youth may not have experienced apartheid first-hand there is still residual knowledge that is socially transmitted and reproduced. It is the complexity of the longevity of ideological power that needs to be unknotted for more than artificial, and as will be demonstrated, often damaging, interracial relations to improve.

Hill Collins speaks of the 'new racism' as that which perpetuates racial inequality through the hegemonic ideology that 'racism is over' (2005: 54). When racism does occur it is dealt with as an individual problem and thus the opportunity for seeing how a racist ideology may be reproduced in the youth is not open. Blanking out institutional or structural analyses of racism, and focusing on what seem to be individual pathologies, means that related personal preferences also come to be painted as apolitical. It is for this reason that I have chosen a theory that focuses on structural reproduction as the language of description for this study. Focusing on how macro ideologies come to function personally through a psychoanalytical interpretation of ideology means that racism can be taken as an institutional phenomenon and incorporated into social policy developments. A methodological individualist approach would not fully describe the process of how structure comes to influence the politics of taste. Through not opening institutional racism to scrutiny it becomes difficult to decipher where "continued inequalities emanate from" and thus even more difficult to change. Vincent (2008) suggests this is why everyday 'personal' decisions such as friendship circles, dating and lecture room seating are still racially segregated within a formally desegregated space. Here it is necessary to add that segregation is not the only effect of this individualization of racism, but that this continued psychological effect of apartheid ideology expresses itself in a number of forms, such as the exoticism noted in Sherman and Steyn's research (2009).

One of the strongest forms of informal social policing against racial integration is the policing of sexuality (Vincent: 2008: 1433). Many white participants in Vincent's study claimed to have no problems with interracial relationships. Hill Collins (in Vincent: 2008: 1434) has referred to this as the "love who you want" ideology, an ideology which

disguises the extent to which intimate relationships are still conditioned by 'race' in multi-faceted ways.

Those who advocate mere contact between 'races' as a means to transformation do not take into account that interactions take place within a certain set of historically developed power relations, and thus these power relations will be reflected in interracial contact. For example interracial contact for white students in Vincent's study was experienced as reassuring because the overall hegemony of whiteness remained intact (Vincent: 2008: 1437): "It tells them that they need not change after all. They can go on being themselves. These [white] students may therefore report a decline in their prejudices after entering [a] mixed environment" (*ibid*). The privileges of whiteness are difficult for white people to recognize, in part because they do not consider themselves as raced: "Part of the privilege of being white [is] that white people see themselves as diverse individuals and as self-evidently irreducible to their race. It therefore comes as a surprise when white people find themselves seen in the eyes of black peoples 'as white' – seeing the race of the 'other' is permitted to white people only" (Vincent: 2008: 1439). When placed in contrast to black people's experiences of contact there are frequent references to such encounters as negative, which led to an increased feeling of marginality (Vincent: 2008: 1440).

In an earlier study however, Dolby found what she termed "the politics of resentment" (2001: 8) among white high school girls in the minority at their school. They were resentful of being displaced in a social situation in which whiteness was once dominant. What must be noted about the different findings in these two studies (Vincent and Dolby) is the contrast in socio-economic circumstances of these youth. In Vincent's study interaction between students of different 'races' did not seem constant, and also appeared to be students from a higher socio-economic bracket. In Dolby's study however, the participants were lower middle and working class white students who could not gain access to other more prestigious schools in their city (2001: 7). Dolby's participants' experiences with black students were "not distant, detached and infrequent, but intimate and constant" (Dolby: 2001: 9). Any findings on 'race' in post-apartheid South Africa must necessarily account for the influence of the changing socio-economic status of

citizens, and how this impacts upon interracial experience. If one looks at Sherman and Steyn's findings (2009), many of the couples, while of different races, were of a similar class or socio-economic status.

The multiple experiences and narratives of whiteness detailed in Steyn's book "Whiteness just isn't what it used to be" (2001) are instructive as to the changing nature of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. She considers narratives of whiteness, which she refers to as "shades of Whiteness", ranging from an identification with the master narrative of whiteness, (or the hegemonic narrative of whiteness established through apartheid ideology) to white people who are seeking a more integrated and hybridized experience of whiteness. Commenting on these narratives she writes that "all these stories draw on, react to, or subvert the sedimentation of the master narrative in some way or another. However fragmented, the master narrative is realistically likely to remain part of the political unconscious in South Africa for some time" (2001: 154).

"Apartheid's modes of racial reasoning" (Steyn: 2001: 70) remain widely normalized in the modalities of thought and social practices of the everyday life of South Africans, including the post-apartheid generation. "Apartheid's starting premise was that South Africa consists of a number of races which differ from one another...it became its own best justification as the experience of apartness normalized and naturalized social differences" (Vincent: 2008: 1447). I have argued that a psychoanalytical theory of ideology explains the mechanism for this naturalization and will be drawn on in my analysis of the data of this study. The literature has shown that there is not one linear story to be told about the residual effects of apartheid ideology, but rather that there are multiple ways of expressing and drawing on a continued hegemony of whiteness even while trying to embrace change.

In Chapter Four I hope to illustrate in what ways this normativity of whiteness still operates in teenage girls' narratives of desire, how racial ideologies are appropriated to keep their social privilege intact, and how power is central to this analysis. In Chapter Five I examine some explanatory frameworks for why these ideologies may be

appropriated in the way in which they have been. Here I will draw specifically on Soudien's distinctions between the official, formal and informal spheres and Butler's analysis of the psychic life of power. But before both of these chapters, I turn to some methodological considerations.

University Of Cape Town

## Chapter Three

### **Methodological concerns**

This dissertation sets out to establish how public ideology (historical and current – how they bleed into one another) expresses itself in the private spheres of young white female teenagers' lives and how ideology becomes interwoven with their subjectivity. To highlight this relationship between what is public and private I have chosen to focus on their construction of desire as it pertains to 'race'. As has been shown in the literature review, desire is one of those areas of private life which is often seen to be safe from public influence and an expression of self (Giddens: 1992: 1). It is precisely this assumption which makes it a hotbed for the reproduction of prejudice and stereotyping in post-apartheid South Africa.

Researching 'race' presents many analytical intersections with other social categories. While what is under investigation here is how racial ideology influences one's subjectivity, 'race' remains bound up with gender and class. While I have chosen to focus on young white women in this mini-dissertation, a gender analysis is not the focus of my project. Rather, I aim to trace whiteness, its mutations, ruptures and consistencies, as this pertains to white women who were historically the centre of the project of anti-miscegenation, and more broadly, how this fits into studies on whiteness, ideology and subjectivity. Perhaps, focusing on women, and drawing on a number of feminist theorists may be considered a gender analysis on its own terms. In my methodology gender sensitive approaches are used, but this dissertation will not provide an ontology of gender. Rather, gender is seen as reconstituted in certain ways through whiteness, as is privilege, class and many other socially contingent variables.

Another aspect of social research that needs to be considered is how the researcher is implicated in his/her research. I am investigating whiteness, ideology and subjectivity, and I myself am a young white woman. In foregrounding 'race' as I am, while not subscribing to it as a biological or ontological category, but as one that has social

salience, I need to guard against Leonardo's (2009: 35) comment that "race-scholars may be against race... that is, anti-race, but they may find it difficult to be ante-race" (in Soudien: forthcoming). While my whiteness is part of who I am, it is not all of who I am, and I aim to lay it aside, and work against its ubiquitous capillaries of power.

In my approach to this research I aimed to establish personal, in-depth accounts of the social worlds to which these girls belong. For this reason I chose a narrative interviewing approach for this study (Bryman: 2008: 441, 449). A narrative interviewing approach has its roots in a life history approach to qualitative research, but as I chose to look at more than one person's life, I departed from what would strictly be considered a life history case study approach (Bryman: 2008: 440-441) while remaining in a qualitative research paradigm. Nevertheless I have drawn on some techniques established in these methods suitable to my study. This approach focuses on the role and significance of agency in social life. It is also reflexive in that it recognizes that life stories are always a construction in which both the interviewer and interviewee are implicated (Bryman: 2008: 441). In other words a narrative is always told in relation to something and draws on certain meanings. In the interviews with these girls I made a deliberate attempt to see how their narratives were constructed in relation to the macro ideologies in their society and analyze how this ideology is present in and utilized in the micro aspects of their lives, specifically, desire. In the interviews I attempted as far as possible to "address the girls as active agents, encouraging them to set the agenda and to elaborate on issues which concerned and interested them" (Bhana and Pattman: forthcoming). I did this to avoid the traditional researcher/researched binary, and also to avoid superimposing my own assumptions about whiteness onto the girls' accounts by framing the questions in ways that inhibited the possible scope of their narratives.

Stories or narratives offer an opportunity for a combination of levels of analysis. In this case, examining both ideology and subjectivity, allowed for a drawing together of the public and the private. A strength of this approach is that it is sensitive to "the connections in people's accounts of past, present and future events and states of affairs; people's sense of place within those events and the states of affairs; the stories they

generate about them; and the significance of context for the unfolding of events and people's sense of their role within them" (Bryman: 2008: 553). In other words this approach combines both structure and agency, public and personal, in accounting for the attitudes and experiences of the individual within society.

Narrative research puts the onus of responsibility on the researcher to use methods which will allow for detailed and complex responses. These detailed accounts were obtained through protracted interaction with a small number of participants who were asked to tell their stories in a variety of forms (Vincent: 2008: 1429). The stories that the respondents told can be viewed as a lens for examining racial attitudes in post-apartheid South Africa, as experienced at the most intimate level of sexual desire. In the interviews I drew on the macro to see how it was present in their micro, naturalized accounts of desire. What was important in the interviewing process was how "discourse makes, unmakes, and remakes racial positions" (Dolby: 2001b: 9). The question at hand is how a racial ideology comes to be felt as true, real and natural thereby influencing the way in which we desire others.

I chose to investigate young white female teenagers between the ages of 16 and 18 because historically, young white women were placed at the centre of the apartheid administration's rationale for anti-miscegenation. I was interested in how this centering of white women as a group that needed protection from the Other played itself out in the construction of young white women's desires in post-apartheid South Africa. The literature has summarily indicated that the effects of apartheid ideology in no way led to a straightforward reproduction of prejudice. Exoticism, the hegemony of whiteness, fetishizing of other races and class are just some mediating factors in how racist sexualisation is still at play in South Africa. In my fieldwork I aimed to look for these and other mediating factors, or what I came to call 'vectors of white desire'<sup>3</sup>.

To keep variables to a minimum, and due to time available in which to complete the study, I chose to study middle class white girls from the largely Afrikaans northern suburbs of Cape Town. I interviewed six girls, from three schools, separately, on two

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<sup>3</sup> These will be discussed in Chapter Four.

occasions, both at school and in their homes. The three schools in the study I gave pseudonyms: Fairview, Platteklip and New Gymnasium. These schools are described and introduced in Chapter Four. In total I conducted 12 interviews, each lasting approximately an hour. Through these twelve in-depth narrative interviews I aimed to create ‘intimate portraits’ (Dolby: 2001b: 95) of their lives, focusing specifically on how ‘race’ and sexual desire intersect and structure their social interactions.

The six girls were recruited using a purposive sampling method (Bryman: 2008: 458). This sampling method was strategic in that I wished to establish a good correspondence between my research questions and the sample I chose. The sample was drawn from acquaintances who work in schools in the area. I myself am a white woman from Bellville, an Afrikaans suburb to the north of Cape Town, and as such have contacts in various schools in the area. This also makes me an insider as a researcher, for as a young white woman I am also subject to the structural ideological influences I have flagged in this dissertation. I believe this status made it easier for my respondents to relate to me, and not to feel pressured into altering their answers to suit what they may have taken to be my personal views. As noted by Pattman (a white British male) and Bhana (a South African Indian woman) in their study of African school girls in Durban (Pattman and Bhana: 2009) in both their sets of interviews there were conspicuous additions and absences as far as the respondents were concerned. For example Pattman speaks of a ‘eulogizing of whiteness’ in his interviews while Bhana notes that in her interviews the respondents did not mention racism despite the fact that in Pattman’s interviews they constructed Indians in their schools as “the new racists” (2009: 30). Part of the reason for these discrepancies could be that they were both outsiders to the women they were interviewing.

I approached five schools in the area and three schools responded positively. My liaison with each school was through the Life Orientation teacher. I emailed the teachers a brief of my research and permission letters for parents and learners to sign (see Appendix 3). In these documents my contact details were given, as well as my supervisor’s details and they were encouraged to contact me if they had any further queries. The teachers

circulated the letter and brief to some of their students and if they were interested they were to return the permission slip with their details, which I collected from the teachers. Once I had their contact details and permission, I scheduled interviews. Generally the first interview was at the school and the second was at the learner's home, but this was not always the case. I let them decide where they wanted to meet, and generally after the first interview I was invited to their home for the second. For all the interviews except one I was completely alone with the respondents in a private space. For that exception the girl's mother was within earshot of the table at which we were sitting. In the first interview I focused mainly on biographical information, general comments on their schooling environment, home life, social activities and circles and whether or not they were romantically involved in any way (see Appendix 1). In the second interview I focused on issues around desire and sexuality, hypothetical situations in which they may have found themselves, and how they would feel, respond and why (see Appendix 2). I also asked them to tell me stories about certain moments in their lives, for instance when they first became aware of their 'race'. Some of their own stories emerged from discussion of the hypothetical situations and vice versa. The scenario posing may be seen as leading the participants but I tried as far as possible not to put words in the girls' mouths, and asked them to give me reasons for why they said what they said. In my analysis I also tried to account for and/or not use information where I thought they had taken too much of a lead from myself.

It must be noted that there were only six girls, and the focus of the study was to try and trace their thinking about the theoretical issues raised in the previous chapter more than to establish some kind of generalizable data for this area in Cape Town or whiteness more generally. I aimed to show how ideological norms are internalized and what this may reveal about how whiteness operates, rather than revealing a verifiable trend.

Often social science studies on racial attitudes have taken the form of large-scale surveys or questionnaires (Vincent: 2008: 1428). For example Steyn's "Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used To Be" (2001: 173) used questionnaires in her research. Discussing her methodology she commented that "the question that respondents had the most difficulty

with required them to recall an incident from as early in their lives as they could, and comment on how they had understood the meaning of their 'whiteness' in the incident. This was the question most frequently left blank" (Steyn: 2001: 175). Rather than the fault being on the part of the respondent, Vincent, arguing for the use of a narrative method, said that the blank responses could be a result of the method itself (Vincent: 2008: 1428).

Questionnaires also offer a limited context for analysis and work from a standpoint of methodological individualism (Vincent: 2008: 1429). A fault with this individualism is that it panders to the idea of racism as an individual pathology and offers little by way of access to how systems come to influence the individual's attitudes, beliefs and desires. This means that subjectivity comes to be fixed "rather than allowing room for self-understandings which may be multiple, shifting and contradictory" (*ibid*). It is essential to include this contradictory nature of identity when analyzing whiteness and desire.

All the names and places have been changed. However I tried to describe as far as possible the social situation of both the schools and the girls. I am immensely grateful for both the willingness of the schools to participate and the openness of the girls. In each of the interviews I asked whether the girls would like a copy of the transcript of their interview to check or a copy of the thesis on its completion. Only one asked for a copy of the thesis, and none wanted to check their transcripts. In this regard responsibility for the accuracy of their accounts is mine. One of the principals also asked for a copy of the thesis, all of which I will provide on completion.

The hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the researched is often bracketed out of, or made invisible, in the written analysis (Middleton: 1993: 66), and I have worked against that here. Although stylistically it is difficult to include myself in the analysis, it must be noted that the categories of analysis and nature of the interviews are inevitably bound up with my personality and my history with regard to 'race' issues.

In analyzing the stories people tell about themselves, what needs to be taken into account is how that particular story functions in the interests of the storyteller – what are they seeking to maintain or deny about themselves or their social situations? What are their motives in constructing their narratives as they do? (Bryman: 2008: 560). As ideology is about misrecognition or misperception, which becomes naturalized in our lives, it is perception that is central to the analysis of these stories more than the truth of the stories as such. Furthermore the psychoanalytical account of ideology shows how structural power relations become an intimate part of our subject experience (through the internalization of norms), and it is this I wish to lift out of their narratives.

In the interviews and analysis of the transcripts I tried to look for the intimate spaces in which ‘race’ and identity have become knit together. Following Dolby I wish to “problematize not only the concept of race, but the very notion of identity itself. Race, of course, is part of this broader problematic that surrounds contemporary social theory and the practices of everyday life” (2001b: 114). What is it that enables our subjectivity? And more specifically, what enables our sexual desires in relation to ‘race’ as complex aspects of our subjectivities? In the coding process I aimed to lift out these enablers and see how they functioned in the lives of the girls to answer the research questions at hand.

I coded all the transcripts in an iterative process (Soudien: 2001: 313), expanding the codes as I worked through the data, drawing on my own reading, and also the natural themes apparent in the data. I developed fifteen categories that were more or less general themes, such as family life, school life, romantic life, racial interaction and so forth. Within each of these themes I developed response codes from A to N. These were things like moments of Othering, continuity with norms, residual knowledge and so forth. I then tried to collapse the lesser used themes and responses into the most prevalent codes to see if there was a more central binding factor to these disparate codes that correlated with the theoretical ideas detailed in my literature review. I then chose four of these to use in my analysis of the research participants’ subjectivities in relation to racial ideology (these details are to be found in Chapters Four and Five).

This dissertation has relied on people's descriptions and analyses of what happened to them. I may have misinterpreted this, as they may have done in the re-telling of a story. An analysis of this however is still valid because the focus of the analysis is not on the events themselves but the participants' interpretation of them, and the importance they attach to their interpretations (Middleton: 1993: 68). I am interested in what their stories reveal about how individual psychologies fit into ideological/power structures and the feedback or looping between the two.

Through this narrative investigation into white teenage South African girls I hope to more fully demonstrate how public politics becomes private, how societal norms become internalized (Butler: 1997), and how historical meanings play themselves out in their current constructions of desire. Ultimately the aim of this dissertation is to add to the body of knowledge on the complexity of transformation in education.

University Of Cape Town

### **Difference, desire and the continued hegemony of whiteness in private life**

Sexualities in South Africa are bound up with the effects of apartheid (Steyn and Sherman: 2009), and today “white girls’ desires are expressed, resisted and contested” through apartheid’s racial history and are limited by it (Bhana and Pattman: forthcoming). I wish to demonstrate how we can understand this ideological hailing through a psychoanalytical account of ideology, a psychology firmly rooted in the material conditions of one’s situation. This internalization process results in racisms becoming normalized, “rendering them ingrained and hidden in social structures and discursive practices” (Erasmus: forthcoming) contributing to the ‘invisibility’ of whiteness (Dyer: 1997). The theoretical underpinnings of this process will be examined in Chapter Five; in this chapter I will do a thematic analysis of my findings with brief comment. Owing to space constraints, it was not possible to look at an exhaustive list of themes or tease them out to their ultimate possibilities. I have therefore chosen to look at those themes which were most prevalent in the girls’ interviews in as far as they illuminated the research questions.

I interviewed two girls at each of the different schools I chose to participate in the study. Interestingly, if they were from the same school, the responses of the girls were fairly similar, or had similar logics, thus suggesting the importance of a particular school’s influence, whether formally or informally on its learners’ perceptions and attitudes. Those in a higher income bracket at New Gymnasium were the least integrated and least likely to date interracially, and had the least contact, friendship and intimacy with teenagers of other races. While the other two schools showed fairly good levels of integration there was still a big disconnect between the formal space of the school, and the private socializing and dating outside of the school. Comparing Fairview and Platteklip was most interesting as they were from a similar socio-economic bracket. Platteklip was situated in a slightly less well off area and here integration was much more real, or spoken about in a much more real way. At Fairview, however, both girls spoke

quite candidly of remaining racial tension, singling out African learners as different to white and coloured learners. Through these girls' narratives on desire it becomes clear that "whiteness expands, constructs and changes and simultaneously bars entry... [while] sexuality becomes the domain through which white South African girls operationalise their power, expand their sexual expressions whilst simultaneously constrict it" (Bhana and Pattman: forthcoming).

Any study that takes into account sexuality in post-apartheid South Africa has to necessarily look at HIV/Aids. While this dissertation examines intersections of desire and 'race', when the participants spoke about the risks of sexual behaviour, a firm line of distance was drawn between themselves and the 'types' of South Africans who may be at risk of HIV. Their reasoning was contradictory and highlighted the extent to which images of who is susceptible to HIV were racialised in the media. These narratives of racialized distance from risk are also examined here, as they demonstrate how sexuality in South Africa is a hotbed for the covert setting up of boundaries which reproduce prejudice, using new social circumstances to reconstitute old ideologies. Because of this process it also becomes clear how in this instance 'race' and difference become sexualized (Soudien: 2007: 53) through HIV/Aids.

### **The case of New Gymnasium: Georgina and Chloe**

New Gymnasium is a fairly new private school in the northern suburbs of Cape Town. The surrounding suburb is a wealthy middle class area, a largely Afrikaans community and still predominantly white. This school mirrored the findings and sentiments of Soudien when he writes that "the learners were very aware of race and racial differences; they spoke of their own distinctive whiteness much more unselfconsciously than their peers elsewhere. This unselfconsciousness reveals the absence of formal induction processes into the new South Africa" (2007: 64).

Georgina is a vivacious and attractive only child who has gone to New Gymnasium for most of her life (since Grade Three). She is currently in Grade 11. She describes herself

as different from her quieter parents. Where they enjoy staying at home, she is outgoing. She has a Jewish boyfriend whom she seems rather serious about. He is in matric at the same school. She has had serious boyfriends in the past, and self-admittedly says that she does tend to take on the opinions and worldviews of her boyfriends. She is also the only one of the participants who openly stated that she was not a virgin. Her most recent ex-boyfriend was, according to her, a racist, and after initially being upset by his views she eventually took them on as her own. She says she has had 'flings' with people of other races, but nothing serious enough to tell her parents. Despite saying she formally recognizes that we are all equal and that 'race' should not matter, there were many times in her interviews where her descriptions and language usage belied this fact. For instance when I asked her about the racial breakdown at her school she said:

*Um, there's actually, its not very bad, I mean, ok, we've got one coloured in our Grade, in our class, who thinks that everything is now about him, if you say something, "it's because I'm coloured hey", that's what he says, but I mean sometimes he jokes and then some of the kids get like really angry about it because its not meant like that and they fine with it, but otherwise its perfectly fine, everyone gets along and there no racial issues or anything.*

In this description she implies that if the school was more mixed this would have a negative impact on the school. On the whole, people of different races are far removed from her day to day reality. Where she did speak about a romantic 'fling' with a coloured boy, she explicitly qualified this with comments about the lightness of his skin.

Chloe, also in Grade 11 at New Gymnasium, is a quiet and studious girl. Her parents are divorced, her father lives in Mpumalanga, and she, her sisters and mother live with her grandparents in the neighborhood surrounding the school. She is very close to her family, particularly her mother, who is a teacher at a lower income government primary school in a coloured township on the Cape Flats. Chloe has not had any kind of serious boyfriend and doesn't particularly want one. She is clear that she would not have an interracial relationship, mainly because she knows her father would not approve. Alongside this there seems to be a strong discourse in their home that 'black' and 'coloured' is different and dangerous. This seems to stem from her mother's assumptions about the children she

teaches and their parents, supposedly being ‘prostitutes’ and other unsavoury characters. Her only real contact with anyone of a different background or ‘race’, apart from their domestic helper, is a coloured boy in her class by the name of John. She describes him as bright but with hang ups that she just cannot understand. He seems racially obsessed with white people, saying that he wants his nose surgically changed and that he can tell you the detailed phenotypic differences between ‘coloured’, ‘white’ and ‘black people’. Chloe, well meaning, but condescending because of her unchallenged white position of power, tells him he is lucky to be the only ‘coloured’ in science class when he comments on it, and that he must get over his issues. When asked whether she would feel ill-at-ease being in the minority, she admits that she probably would, but adds she is lucky that is not the case. There is very little reflexivity in her thoughts about Others and herself despite being demonstrably bright. Steyn and Conway (forthcoming) note that “self-reflexivity has always been used as a way to understand processes of racialization” and can lead to personal transformation. This is not the case for Chloe. Rather, she abstracts herself from thinking about these issues simply because she does not have to. This is because her whiteness operates invisibly in her life to construct herself as the norm (*ibid* and Dyer: 1997).

### **The case of Fairview: Melanie and Beth**

Fairview is a formerly white school in a middle class suburb. This school was in the media a few years ago for a racist incident which involved both learners and parents (the details of which will not be disclosed for privacy measures). The school is racially mixed yet despite this formal situation of integration it seems as if there is still voluntary segregation and that the biggest distinction according to the girls is between ‘Africans’ and whites.

Beth, 17 and in Grade 10, is one of two children in her family. Her sister is mentally disabled and is in need of special care. She is very protective of her sister and is open about the fact that if you do not love or get along with her sister, you will not get along with her. Interestingly she was the only research respondent in an interracial relationship.

Her boyfriend, a 'coloured' boy from school, has a mentally challenged cousin to whom he is very close. She felt this was very important to their relationship because he could relate on this special level to her and her sister. She also made it clear in her description of him, as Pattman and Bhana (forthcoming) have demonstrated elsewhere, that he was considered what could be termed an 'honorary white' as he has grown up around white people and goes to white schools. She drew a distinction between him and other 'coloureds' who attend a historically coloured school in the neighboring suburb. She saw 'coloured' learners who went to that school as 'gam', a term used by all the research participants in public schools, to refer to a person they considered to be of low social class/standing.

Beth expressed annoyance with her boyfriend when he used a 'coloured' accent when speaking to his family at home, demonstrating that the ideological power of whiteness was central to her understanding of herself and those that fit into her life:

*Well yes it is, like, um, sometimes, like, obviously cos Mark's family is coloured, they'll be like, or my boyfriend's family's coloured, there'll be things that always that like some of his family, um speaks and then, his accent will kind of like change, like in the way that he talks, and then like, or if he's on the phone here, then I'll be like well don't talk like that because that's not actually how you talk.*

Here she construed and applied the meaning of whiteness to those she wanted to include and exclude from her life. He was acceptable as long as he kept up his whiteness, and did not reveal his colouredness. This is an interesting moment which manifested itself in multiple ways when the girls spoke: the issue was the meaning of whiteness, and if others could successfully appropriate that whiteness, they would be readily accepted/assimilated.

Melanie, 16 and in Grade 10, is one of two children. Her older brother used to attend Fairview but left the school after having altercations with the teachers. Melanie said that she was not sure of the details, just that her parents and brother were not happy, but that she has not had the same problems. Melanie has just started dating a 'white' boy from school. She is quite clear that she would not be able to date a person of another 'race'.

She does not think her mom would mind, but said that her father is quite ‘old fashioned’ in that he is generally still quite racist. She says this irritates her, but is not worth fighting about. She does not socialize intimately with anyone outside of her race group, has not gone to their homes and they have never visited her. Generally she hopes people will just move on and get over their race hang ups. Despite this rather unreflexive response to issues of race, she did speak about her frustration with the way history is taught and that she feels that South African history is one-sided. This moment of insight shows an awareness of living in a country where there is more than one narrative. It is moments like this which reveal the slow ‘becoming’ (Krog: 2009: 92) of living in a society where one realizes your point of view, history and philosophy is not the only one. However this remains largely an academic point for the learners I spent time with, and at the informal and intimate level there was very little vulnerable and honest interaction beyond the necessities of classroom, and maybe the playground.

### **The case of Platteklip: Sandra and Candice**

Platteklip is a formerly white school that is situated in a lower middle- to working-class neighborhood. The school has a reputation for strict discipline and good academic results. Demographically the school has now a majority of ‘coloured’ learners, with about forty percent making up all other races. On the whole integration here seems much more fluid and genuine than at Fairview. A possible reason for this could be that the surrounding area has also transformed and changed since the end of apartheid so that many of the learners attending school live nearby, whereas with Fairview, the surrounding neighborhood is still largely ‘white’ and middle class, with some of the ‘black’ and ‘coloured’ learners living outside the immediate feeder area of the school.

Sandra is the head girl of Platteklip. Her younger brother also attends Platteklip. Their parents are divorced. She speaks about the supposed pathologies of coming from a “broken home, you know, that’s what they call people with divorced parents” and how her parents have overcome this and been instrumental in instilling good values in her and her brother and working together despite their divorce. She sees both her parents as hard

working individuals and wants to emulate this behaviour. She is solidly middle class, with access to all that she needs, and a sound circle of friends, all of whom are 'white'. The prefect body however seems to be a genuinely mixed group of learners who are in the process of learning about each other, and opening up new possibilities while falling prey to certain historical ways of viewing each other. She speaks about traveling in a mini-bus taxi for the first time, and her friends making her pap with a sense of exoticism.

*Ja, I think it's very interesting for me because I've grown up in a white home, I don't know their traditions and their cultures, so for me its really interesting to learn, especially like, we'll um, Sedi, my one friends, she made us like pap, and like stywe (stiff) pap and I mean I've never had pap in my life and I really enjoyed it, and I, you know, those new experiences for me, just it's so interesting to learn.*

For her, learning about, and interacting with, people of other races are niceties, and not essential or threatening (Vincent: 2008). Her whiteness remains central and her friendships and class position are comfortably intact within the ideological framework of whiteness.

Candice is an average matric learner at Platteklip. Her younger sister also attends the school and they live with their parents in a rapidly transforming suburb near the school. Candice's grappling with racial interactions, tensions and quandaries are by far the most honest and real of all the respondents. This is in part because of her class position. Where the others retreat to their suburbs secure in their whiteness, hers is under threat, and her friends, some of whom are white and wealthy, have said they cannot come and visit her in her so-called unsafe neighborhood.

*I mean I have friends from Welgedoen Estate, whose parents wouldn't let them come visit me because of the area I live in, and I mean, this side of Kanonberg is fine, but it's the perception, so, it's hard because you like, wanna accept everybody, but then there are that certain group of people who go do the stupid things.*

She and her family see the school moving on a downward spiral. When she came to the school it was because of its good academic results and supposedly secure class position. This has changed. She emphasized a number of times how her 'white' and 'snobby'

primary school had given her cultural capital (Bourdieu: 1997) which made her more successful than other learners now at Platteklip. She made distinctions between 'coloureds and coloureds', saying some are 'gangstery and gam', but others are fine and she is close friends with them.

Her level of interaction with people of different races is also the most consistent, when compared to the other girls, with people of different races living in the same neighborhood, working with her parents and attending the school. Speaking about the distinctions of experience according to race that are drawn at school, she says that:

*The kids are still like, well you don't know where I come from, you don't go through what I go through, and like in Kannonberg, I go through just as much as what they go through. I go through not being able to walk to the shop when it gets dark, because you have to walk with your keys in between your fingers in case someone robs you, not being able to go past the street because there is a park across the street where everyone gets drunk and there was a girl that was raped there not so long ago, walking on the way to school, so I mean I have to go through just as much as what they have to go through, and I'm sad because (unclear).. but they think, I think some of them have the perception that more white kids are like different and we don't know and we don't understand and... so I don't think it's a discrimination I think it's just difference but they don't know any better.*

Here she is drawing attention to the fact that life experiences are not solely determined by 'race', but that she is still aware of how that perception holds currency with many people, even though her reality reveals something different (she however is not commenting on any of the 'invisible' privileges of whiteness). While this is the very thing which threatens her security in whiteness, gives her pain and makes her feel vulnerable in the future work climate in South Africa, she is experiencing first hand the slow undoing of white power. The racial crucible that is her life reveals her both clinging to the invisible power her whiteness supposedly represents, while at the same time she is immersed in the reality of transition knowing that the social climate and racial distinctions no longer operate as they once did. However she is not free from the grip of whiteness and appears to pander to its wiles, almost as if she is seeking the approval of those who see themselves as white. For instance when describing the many interracial relationships at school she also said:

*I have a white boyfriend, so I'm not complaining.*

### **Vectors of white desire**

I have chosen to use the word 'vector' to describe the various themes that emerged from the interviews. Mathematically, a vector is something that possesses magnitude and sets things off in certain direction. Biologically it describes an agent that acts as a carrier or transporter of a virus (Crowther: 199: 1322). This word represents both transmission and transformation, something is passed on *and* changes the nature of the object/subject at hand. The below themes are not mere factors or characteristics of discourses of white desire. Rather these very discourses of desire are reconstituted through whiteness. They are in a sense, change agents, because by discourses passing through these vectors they take on particular forms. By being exposed to them and existing through them, the racialised versions of who we are, are sociologically reproduced through constant reinforcement. These ideologies hail us, and we move towards them and through them, precisely because they are intimate and familiar properties of the private realm. The four vectors I will focus on in this analysis are: 'Residual knowledge and parental power', 'Othering, being Othered', 'HIV/Aids, a new racial trope', and 'Assimilation as acceptance'.

### **Residual knowledge and parental power**

Residual knowledge from parents, communities and institutions refers to ideological knowledge that has stayed behind from apartheid and is still functional in the lives of the girls to varying degrees. It is the knowledge which they are given by their parents in explicit and tacit ways, and which often goes unchallenged because of the power dynamic between parent and child (Jansen: 2009). It also functions as a tacit logic for making sense of current social changes, which often leads to a reinstatement of white hegemony and normativity.

Below Chloe is speaking about whether she would be in an interracial relationship. Her initial response is to cite her parents as the reason for why she would not be in one.

*I don't know if I would be in one, because I don't think my parents would approve. Like they don't have a problem with me being friends with people, but like I think they wouldn't really be happy if I brought home a black or a coloured or whatever.*

This disjuncture between friendship and dating is something that continually surfaced in the interviews. Parents, having to comply with the official and formal discourses of the country and institutions such as the school, would support friendships of an interracial nature. This was seen as acceptable, but anything more intimate than friendship was seen as a threat. I asked a number of the girls if they could tell me why there was a difference between dating and friendship for themselves or their parents, and often they could not think of a reason why this invisible line existed with such force. Below Chloe is grappling with just such an issue, trying to understand her father's racial logic, she said:

*I don't know, um, he's strange, I think, maybe he's like, doesn't want anything more to form, like I suppose he can't stop us being friends because that will always just be like that but he could stop us from having a relationship, so. Maybe it's like a power thing.*

This is an astute observation in that she and her father realize that because of the political discourses of equality and non-racialism in South Africa, to ban friendship would be antiquated and even illegal, but when it comes to dating there is more privacy, more room for regulation and nuanced responses to difference. Chloe notes that perhaps her father's power would be undermined through interracial relationships, and as he cannot extend his power in the public, or official realm, he clamps down in the private, with decided effect, as Chloe would not date interracially.

Melanie also said she would not date interracially because her parents would not approve. She called her father old-fashioned in that regard, but despite this critique she does not challenge his belief. In fact she acquiesces in his decision and takes it on as her own taste preference not to date interracially. Bhana and Pattman (forthcoming) similarly found in

their study that “although sexuality, gender and race relations are sourced in colonialism and apartheid, such familiar relations are not inevitable but open to change. The trajectory of such changing relations is impeded by reinvesting in relations that are less punitive, normative and without “hassle” - whiteness is actively created and invigorated by maintaining the status quo of intimate relationships. The maintenance of the status quo means the reinstatement of power which positions white middle class boys in more favourable ways”. Although social relations are open to change, the power of parental punishment or disagreement works against acting on the inconsistencies these girls see in their lives. Below is a story Melanie told me about her father and how she is bothered by his racism, but ultimately, the status quo remains as it offers fewer problems, and eventually translates into her personal desire excluding those of other ‘races’ (how this may happen will be explored in Chapter Five).

*Like on TV like when there’s someone on Carte Blanche, and he’s like, “you can’t do your job because you’re black” and I’m like, “yho dad, that’s wrong”. And then like we start a whole little argument.*

*So do you guys argue?*

*Ja, but I don’t do it anymore because I know I’m going to lose. Like the one day, it was like something so simple, like someone was on the TV and then they were um, like, the guy was talking but he had like such a heavy accent, he’s like, “ja, you can’t do your job”, I don’t know what the guy was doing or whatever, he’s like, “you can’t do you your job and you can’t even speak English properly”, and I was like “Dad, what if you were um, English in like a black country, or community, and then they expected you to speak their language and you can’t”, and then he’s like “no, but...” and he makes up all this stuff. Like, ‘this is South Africa and he’s supposed to speak English’ and all this stuff and I was like ok, and I just walked away.*

Apart from losing steam in debating with her father about these issues, and although she registers the unfairness of what he is saying, another aspect should be noted here. The fact that despite her challenging him, both of them believe that they are in a country in which whiteness comes first, and this makes it possible for Melanie to make the statement “what if you were English in a black country...”, which is actually the case, but they position this as a falsehood. Here it is patently obvious that a lie is experienced as truth. Despite the macro changes taking place around them, the ideology of whiteness is

still the logic by which they interpret their lives and reproduce it in accepted family discourses.

However, the ‘closedness’ of this ideology is slowly being exposed to moments of rupture, which are “compelling for the possibilities they enable” (Dolby: 2000: 17). Melanie, again, trying to make sense of residual knowledge in school, speaks about how history is being taught in her class:

*At the moment we’re being taught about, the Great Trek, and Shaka and stuff like that. But I really, really enjoy history. Its like, I always look forward to going to history... We were actually talking to our teacher the other day, but she didn’t really get, how, what we were trying to say. We are taught, like the Great Trek, we are taught from the Voortrekkers point of view, like we are taught like they moved to areas, and we are not taught about the Zulu people were here and then like the Voortrekkers came (emphasis), you know what I mean?*

*So it’s more like from the Voortrekkers perspective? And would you like to see it the other way around?*

*I would actually like to because then you can actually see the full view.*

*And what did the teacher not understand about that?*

*She didn’t understand like how, what we were trying to say, ja, she was confused.*

Here again those in positions of power in Melanie’s life operate from the tacit premise that whiteness is always central, and this is a moment of frustration for her. Here is a glimmer of a real moment of insight into the injustice of apartheid ideologies that play themselves out in many aspects of her life, including being inscribed into the curriculum (Soudien: 2007). She wishes to understand why she keeps hearing only one perspective, when she knows there must be more than one, if only by virtue of the fact that she sits in a classroom with learners who have a different history to her own. The teacher however does not understand. The residual knowledge overpowers her curiosity and collapses her possibilities of knowing in multiples to a single normative version of whiteness.

### **Othering, being othered? (or, Subjectivity predicated on prejudice)**

The second vector of the racialised discourses of desire revolves around Said's (2003) notion of Othering as set up in Orientalism, and the peculiarity of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. Is it possible to be Othered as a white person, while still operating within the dominant ideological framework of whiteness, in South Africa? Or is this merely a moment of the slipping of that framework experienced as a returning of the gaze (Fanon: 1970)? Sandra, trying to describe herself in terms of race in South Africa, says the following:

*Um, I would describe myself as a white female, living in South Africa. I read in the You magazine yesterday there's this guy here from America and he's like, I'm me first and then I'm white, but in South Africa its I'm white first and then I'm me. And it's just, that was exactly how I found it. It's, you know, a lot, especially in our country, everything depends on your race before it depends on, you know, the person you are.*

It is difficult to tell here where the emphasis lies, whether it is on her being white first (Vincent 2008, noted the surprise white students felt when they realized they were raced), or if it is the fact that all South Africans feel raced first. Either reading however indicates the extent to which in South Africa racial ideologies are an intimate part of our subjectivities, especially when our racial subjectivities are seen as anterior to our 'universal human subjectivity', if I could call it that. In other words, 'race' has become central to our subjectivities, and as such our subjectivities are predicated on a form of prejudice and Othering. However that is not the full story as here it seems as if whiteness, and indeed all ideological racial hierarchies in South Africa, are slipping. There is a sense in which these racial ideologies that have been posing as normality are slowly being exposed.

Dyer wrote that "power in contemporary society habitually passes itself off as embodied in the normal as opposed to the superior. This is common to all discourses of power , but it works in a particularly seductive way with whiteness, because of the way it seems rooted, in common sense thought, in things other than ethnic difference" (in Powell 2002:

4, also see Dyer: 1997). Engaging with this text Powell asks whether this makes sense in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. Here, Powell suggests, “the hegemony of ‘whiteness’ is not without ambiguity” (Powell: 2002: 5). Certainly whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa is not without ambiguity, but my argument here is that the ambiguity seems to be introduced at the official, public and formal levels, not necessarily at the intimate, private levels. Yes, as a white person, one may feel more raced than ever before, but this does not mean the meaning of whiteness, its normativity and power to Other, is fundamentally shifting at this private level. Especially where there is evidence of integration actually being an instance of assimilation ‘towards’ whiteness (Soudien: 2007).

This private security in one’s normativity, despite change at a more formal level, is demonstrated here by Chloe:

*The guy who sits next to me, John, he’s coloured, he also always says, I’m the only coloured person in this class or the only two people that are coloured in the class, so like I would never notice it because I don’t sit there in my class and say oh I wonder how many white people and coloured people and black people, but like he notices, so.*

The fact that John notices race where Chloe does not reveals the discrepancies in their internalized ideas of power. Chloe feels normal. She is not only in the majority in her class, but in her life the values that matter are white values. She operates in an environment where she feels familiar with the terms of engagement only because others are excluded. “‘Normal’ acquires meaning only in and through its function as the (apparent) opposite of deviant. Such categories function to create and justify social organization and exclusion” (Flax: 1993: 96). The ideological power of whiteness to Other and exclude without seeming to do so is something that is being perniciously reproduced. Below Chloe speaks about how she thinks an interracial relationship would differ from a same race relationship, drawing on historical ideologies which have materially altered how people value and understand themselves.

*I think it would be the same, obviously it depends how the guy feels about you as well, you know. Like obviously if he thinks it's just some joke he's obviously not really going to care. I think if, you know, if it's a serious relationship you'd get the same amount of support. And like maybe even more support because they going to have to feel they have to prove themselves, because to them they might be, that oh no, I'm different, because like, even, the, like today, like coloured people and black people still think that us white people are superior, like especially like when, like when I talk to like John or like the coloured people in my class, or whatever, they still think that like, um, the white person has to approve of it, you know, never like, the darker person has to approve it.*

Even if Chloe disagrees with this logic of appealing to the 'whiter' person for approval, this is still the lens she uses to make sense of others' behaviour. There is a complete lack of reflexivity on her part as to whether this method of seeking approval is rooted in an idea that is wrong, both factually and ethically. It is just a fact of her life:

*Well like for me no, because I've never been in a situation where there've been like a whole lot of different other races around me, and where I'm like this tiny group of white friends, and everyone else is different colours, so like I've never been in a situation like that. I've never really thought that white people are the minority, cos in my life they haven't been.*

This closeted whiteness is completely different to the experience of the Platteklip girls, Sandra remarks that:

*If you take a look on the playground there's a lot of interaction and mixed racial relationships, so especially at Platteklip we very open to, you know, mixed racial relationships, like when you see a white girl and a black boy, no one's going to go, aaah scandal, no everyone's like no they're happy that's awesome.*

Interestingly despite this rupturing of white normativity in the realm of the school, on a personal level Sandra says:

*I've never been in an interracial relationship, I'm not sure if I would because if I take a look at culture differences sometimes it's a huge difference and not sure if that would make an impact on the whole.*

There is confusion about whether what is satisfactory for others or at the level of ideas can actually be translated into her personal life. Here again the demarcation of whiteness

excludes, while she does not see herself as doing so. This is the stumbling block between public and private aspects of her life. Nuttall, writing on whiteness in South African writing, speaks of a “duplicity which is in part a complicity – now with [her] old friends, now with ‘politically committed’ South Africans.” Here white identity is marked by a doubleness, a multiplication of the self, “sustaining two different characters in one life” (Nuttall: 2001: 125). This is the conundrum that Sandra is facing. Brett Murray, Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year in 2002, comments on this multiplication of the self, this duplicity, that these young women are yet to perceive in themselves.

*The political and social forces beyond the confines of my family formed a system which protected and infringed on me, empowered and disempowered, promoted and denied me. When I looked beyond my private experience of loves and relationships, family and friends and boy becoming man, the contradictions in this system, which divided my life from others, resulted in a cross-questioning of responsibility and complicity (in Powell: 2002: 8).*

I argue that the way to recognize one’s complicity in reproducing racial ideological frameworks is to deconstruct whiteness so that it is delinked from being synonymous with normal. However, instead of delinking these concepts, often racial ideologies are seen as having been abandoned when appeals are made to an individualism that masks the continued functioning of racial ideologies, just as Sandra has done. She has no problem with interracial relationships, as long as it’s not her. This is what Hill Collins (2005) has named the ‘love who you want’ ideology which she considers to be a ‘new racism’. Racism gets lost in the claims that there is no racism, only personal choice.

### **HIV/Aids, a new racial trope**

The ubiquitous nature of HIV/Aids in post-apartheid South Africa has brought sexuality and gender into the spotlight, with discussions often revolving around risk, trauma, vulnerable groups and education. And while there are changes to the way ‘race’ and sexuality intersect revealing “an assertion of new freedoms, sexuality persists as a symbolic site for the elaboration of racial boundaries” (Pattman and Bhana: forthcoming). This is especially the case where sexuality is bound up in complex ways with disease,

'race' and class. Using HIV/Aids as a vector for understanding racialised discourses of desire, shows, in part, "how and where the production and reproduction of HIV/Aids discourse take[s] place" and how this is implicated in the ways that individuals make their identity (Baxen and Breidlid: 2009: xii). The respondents in this study came to use HIV/Aids as a new racial trope. Their abstraction from all issues related to HIV/Aids demonstrates a racialised distance that is placed between whiteness and those who are HIV positive or even at risk. They do not see themselves or their peers as at risk precisely because they do not believe HIV/Aids fits into their ideological frame of whiteness. This produces two results: firstly, they take no precautionary measures during sex because they believe they are not at risk. Secondly, it reinstates the rightness of whiteness, that is to say, if it is only black people that contract the disease, there must be something different between races, thus I, being white, would not be attracted to a backward, culturally distinct group. Thus the pandemic becomes racialised through cultural tropes (Bhana and Pattman: forthcoming). For instance here Beth is speaking about whether people worry about contracting HIV once they have become sexually active:

*In terms of HIV, I think no, the boys don't worry as much, especially if we go back onto the race topic, I think everyone associates HIV and Aids with African people, and um, so ja, a lot of the guys that I am friends with are white and stuff like that, so I think that they feel pretty safe in sleeping around.*

The assumption is that African people have HIV and Aids, not the white boys. This proves to be no problem for Beth's circle of friends, they need not be aware of the risks of sleeping around precisely because she believes the 'white', and she goes on to include 'coloured', boys would not go for African girls in any case. Thus because of this racial distancing, they need not worry about HIV. Here a double distancing takes place. Whiteness remains normal, safe and not at risk. The circular logic demonstrated below goes as follows: I am not attracted to African people. African people have HIV. That African people have HIV is another reason that confirms why I would not be attracted to African people. Because I am not attracted to African people, I will not be sexually involved with them, thus I am not at risk to contracting HIV.

*Um, quite honestly looking at the boys that I'm friends with, I can say that they wouldn't go for an African person, if I'm talking about white or coloured boys, um, so, I think that there is still that whole, separation between the races and also as I said it was easier for like a white person to be friends with a coloured person, than for a white person to be friends with an African person, so ja. I don't think that any of our boys would um, sleep with the African girls.*

It is difficult to know in Beth's statement if she has appropriated qualities of whiteness and extended them to her coloured boyfriend which would assimilate him into the norm of whiteness based on their relationship. Or, on the other hand, whether her statement is drawing on the assumption that it would be easier for a white person to be friends with a coloured person based on apartheid racial hierarchies. A double distancing happens again - it is not just 'boys' and 'African girls', but 'our boys', demonstrating a clear insider/outside demarcation based on race and/or the ability to assimilate.

Melanie, in trying to speak about the types of people who she believes are most vulnerable to HIV, tries to avoid mentioning race, but instead cites poverty, as a place holder for race, and uses HIV/Aids figuratively to refer to a 'culturally distinct' group. She does not feel self-conscious conflating HIV/Aids and poverty as a proxy for race, rather it gives her a politically safe language of description for opinions that are largely racially motivated.

*Um, I don't know like, if I think about it I would see people being HIV positive in like, the more rural areas and like the shacks and stuff like that. But cos they don't, obviously don't have chance to go to school and like they not educated so they don't really know, so, I wouldn't, so like we like educated and stuff here, we have the opportunity to go to school. So I guess that someone who gets Aids, like here, in this area would I don't know, how to put it, do you know what I'm trying to say?*

In her area and life she is educated and protected. Her neighborhood and her life are synonymous with the norms of whiteness. Thus again HIV becomes racialised because it does not fit into the ideological frame of whiteness. HIV becomes a convenient way of demarcating racial otherness in a white world. This is not simply to attach whiteness to white bodies but rather to look more carefully at how the ideological content of whiteness, its norms predicated on Othering, are detached from the signifier and

reattached in new configurations to people of different races dependent on their assimilation into whiteness. It is to this issue that I now turn.

### **Assimilation as acceptance**

It has been argued that assimilation is the hegemonic practice of integration (Soudien 2004: 104 and McKinney 2009: 77). It is through assimilation that, even where there is a change in the class make up of a school, with more affluent and upwardly mobile black and coloured learners, this privilege has had to reconstitute itself through whiteness to be accepted (Soudien: 2007: 52). In this way, whiteness is kept as the invisible norm even where the material situations of people have changed. In order for one's privilege to matter it has to be packaged within the ideological framework of whiteness, where its opaque networks of power mold what we consider normal. For example Sandra (who stated cultural differences as the reason she would not date interracially) notes that, as far as interracial dating goes:

*It is something we've discussed and what my family has always said is as long as you have the same kind of morals and values then its fine because then you of the same type of character, that's what they've always said. He can't be one of those people who, and this applies to any person, um, he can't be the type of person whose like, you know, doesn't respect people, you know, he's gotta be like me.*

Beth, speaking about her boyfriend in relation to other 'coloured' people, creates new boundaries between the types of people who are allowed to draw on the normative power of whiteness or not, while simultaneously maintaining her own normative social position.

*Um, ja well, I've always said that I think you get coloured people and then you get coloured people. You get, um, like him [her boyfriend] and his family are probably like white, compared to other coloured people, you get the coloured people that speak with their coloured accent and um, like if I can talk about people from Autumn Place, not knocking any sort of areas, but talking about areas that are predominantly white and predominantly coloured, I think that they kind of talk a certain way and live a certain way, compared to how a person who kind of grew up with white people I mean, he first when he was born he lived in Klein Vlei and then he moved here, and he went to Pioneers School for two years of his primary school life, but ever since then he's been in Fairview and around Fairview people.*

Later in her interview Beth speaks of another classmate saying:

*Um, well, like in my maths class for example there's a boy named Kagiso, but everyone calls him KG, and he's probably more white than most white people are. And he has an accent like a white person and um, ja, so I think, in terms of being friends with him, its easy, but I think that there are some African people that are really strong about I'm African and whatever, that would, you know. Um, be more difficult to be friends with... Ja, I think probably a relationship between a coloured person and a white person is easier than a white person and an African and the same between African and coloured I think.*

Beth includes or excludes, depending on the Others' ability to assimilate into her way of being. It is not necessary for her to change in any way. When Others are not able to fit into what she considers a normal way of being she unconsciously reproduces a racist ideology she thinks she refutes, especially because she is dating someone of another race. An example is her talking about 'strong Africans'. Through these tacit ways of being "racist ideology reproduces...and systematizes raciological reasoning. This reasoning justifies the existence of different race groups, proceeds to emphasise the correlation between racial and cultural differences, and further postulates a hierarchical ranking of the human worth of these groups" (Erasmus: forthcoming).

This correlation between racial and cultural differences is what Pattman and Bhana (forthcoming) referred to earlier as appealing to cultural tropes. Instead of admitting to racial hierarchical thinking, that logic can be masked in an apparently neutral cultural description, actually a racial and thus ideological description. Here Georgina is trying to explain how she sees people's cultures changing over time, but she keeps slipping into racialised modes of thinking about 'culture'.

*Um, well like in like the culture aspects I guess, cos I mean they more white, cos like even coloureds and stuff, the white has always been the business person in everything, but that's just because of apartheid, I mean, the coloureds were forced to be something else, and then we were the business people and everything and now that they started building up into this world and stuff they also becoming business people and stuff and they like forget their roots and stuff. Because like on Sewende Laan last week they had one guy that's still very in touch, a coloured guy, that's very in touch with his background and stuff, you know the traditional wedding where you have the different dances and lands and stuff, and you have the exact same coloured woman just, she's been brought up in the business world,*

*she knows business and the proper weddings and everything like that and now they going to get married and now it's a conflict between culture and like business type of thing so I think that they like lose their roots to try and fit in here better.*

When whiteness remains the normative logic for making one's identity, as the above has shown, it has been mooted that "dominant groups sometimes re-learn, while at other times they might unlearn, racist messages about Others, but not necessarily with any transformative political effect, in other words, without disrupting racialised relations of power and inequality" (Erasmus: forthcoming). Whiteness remains undisturbed even when it seems that obvious prejudice has been 'undone'. The paradox, so Erasmus says, is that race is seen as a given while whiteness remains unquestioned. Thus contact in reconfigurations of privilege leads to assimilation (Erasmus: forthcoming). In this example whiteness is coded as 'business type of thing'. This is what is meant by saying that privilege, or indeed any social signifier, is reconstituted *through* whiteness. Values and vectors of whiteness are the gloss that is put on difference, which subtly but substantially change the nature of the subjectivity which has passed through this whiteness machine/vector.

Soudien, writing about assimilatory processes in schools, says that often black learners wish to blend in, to be normal. The trouble is that "normal is a problematic position to occupy" (Soudien: 2007: 83). Being normal, as demonstrated by my respondents' comments, means that those who wish to fit in with them, or those they wish to befriend, must embrace the dominant discourse with respect to class and colour (*ibid*), often leading to alienation from their immediate communities and a naiveté about how others perceive them.

From the excerpts above it seems that private desires of whiteness are enabled through a public rhetoric of integration, because they are seen as autonomous spaces. Evidence of this is that most of the girls' narratives above demonstrate an inability to "escape the hierarchalising discourse of their parents" while at the same time they "spoke in the same breath about being the same and yet different to people of colour" (Soudien: 2007: 67). It

is this particular complexity that needs to be explained to understand the continued hegemony of whiteness in their expressions of desire. The power of white normative constructions, which use sexuality as a “domain of racial restriction” (Pattman and Bhana: forthcoming), are still compelling in how these girls make their identities and construct their desires. Because this process of desire construction happens in private, beyond the ambit of the official and formal spheres of school and citizenship, “sexuality, gender and race/class are knitted together to produce [and] reproduce the ideological power of whiteness” (*ibid*). This is what will be explored in the next chapter.

University Of Cape Town

### **The schism between public and private norms in post-apartheid South Africa**

In the previous chapter it was demonstrated that the hegemonic norm of whiteness is still central in these girls' socio-sexual construction of desire. The vectors examined, while not sufficient to explain the entirety of their identities and how desire intersects in this process of subject formation, do show how this process may work in part (privilege, for example, is reconstituted *through* whiteness). In this chapter I wish to extend this process by examining how these vectors come to function in their lives, in other words how the internalization of norms comes about. How do the various levels of sociality speak to each other in the making of norms that take on a life of their own in the minds of citizens? How do these norms find meaning in their psyches and take on the appearance of personal norms as opposed to injunctions?

Based on the evidence provided in Chapter Four, what emerges as part of the problem is that in the context of post-apartheid South Africa there is a schism between public and private norms. Often what seem to be operative in private spaces are old racial ideologies while in public, new nonracial ideologies are drawn on to explain our sociality. This public/private divide results in the split in subjectivity referred to by Nuttall, and the multiplicity of often incompatible values when moving between different types of situations. The very fact that our psychology is seen as private and removed from the claims of the state make it a breeding ground for the almost unconscious, yet insidious reproduction of the hegemony of whiteness in articulations of desire, particularly because desire is seen as part of the private realm<sup>4</sup>.

Erasmus (forthcoming) speaks of registers of racism that are separated into “formalized racial policy and practice, and informal racial practice”. These registers provide similar analytical tools to Soudien’s categories of the official, the formal and the informal for

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<sup>4</sup> One might argue that during apartheid there would have been a consistent relationship between public and private ideologies for white identity. That is beyond the scope of this investigation. Here the focus is the functioning of older ideologies within the current political context.

understanding the differing levels at which racism may operate. Formalized racial policy and practice “refers to formally institutional, state sanctioned, legally enforced racial differentiation and discrimination, such as apartheid legislation”. Informal racial practice “refers to everyday practices such as assimilation, self-segregation, [and] selective contact” (Erasmus: forthcoming). The extent to which both of these have found their way into, what I will call, the public and private racial discourses in post-apartheid South Africa will be considered here, but what is of particular interest is how the private registers of racism and logics of differentiation function so as to reproduce themselves even when the formal or public registers have supposedly embraced an ideology of non-racialism.

In Chapter Four the vectors of white discourses of desire were examined. It was demonstrated that the hegemonic norm of whiteness was stable in personal expressions of desire. The manner in which this norm functions means that other nebulous forms of social structuring, for example, dress or class or music, are reconstituted through whiteness (Soudien: 2007 and Dolby 2001b). In this way the vector is the carrier of a certain way of interpreting and organizing social hierarchies, in a seemingly nebulous way.

How is it possible that these girls in one breath are able to support and articulate the belief that we are all equal and ‘race’ does not matter, but simultaneously code their expressions of desire in highly racialised ways, ways that reproduce whiteness as an ideology? I argue that it is the schism between the public and private spheres. The historical public is still psychically operative in the private, which leads to this paradoxical outcome. There is in a sense a time-lag between historical and current race ideologies in South Africa, but at the same time despite the shift in values from raced to non-racialism, the ‘new’ South Africa’s racial thinking is still very much premised on the logics of the old. For example, the commonsensical notions of ‘race’ that are drawn on in policies of redress give new life to these old categories.

Officially and formally South Africans are told that non-racialism is the central value of our nation and its leaders. This is enshrined in the constitution. In fact in the *Mail and Guardian* special report on race (*The Race Issue: 2009*) President Zuma was paraphrased as saying “There is no need for a debate [on race]...it would just take the country backwards.” In the same Constitution and by those same leaders citizens are also told to understand and embrace affirmative action and black economic empowerment. Within one document ‘race’ does and does not matter, does and does not exist.

In this study this situation is compounded by informal spaces in which at one level these girls have been told race does not matter, as long as it is only friendship. Anything more intimate than friendship, or sometimes even intimate friendship, results in them coming up against explicit and tacit objections from their parents, social policing by friends, or co-opting those that are Other than them into their whiteness through a process of assimilation. These are confusing messages which result in what could be called a crisis of social construction (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 150).

The complexity at the nexus of institution and identity, such as the school, is something that runs from apartheid to post-apartheid South Africa (Soudien: 2001: 312). Learners emerging from institutions in South Africa have to negotiate the transition and transformation of their surroundings in complex ways. Despite the official ideology of the post-apartheid government being one of non-racialism and a “new inclusive South Africanism” (Soudien: 2001: 312), there are still incongruent messages from differing sectors in society, from family to the constitution, about what and who they ought to be (*ibid*).

### **Machinations of whiteness: the private sphere**

In examining how apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa function as “sites of reproduction and contestation”, Soudien (2001: 312) looks at how differing levels of discourse function as regimes that both shape individuals and how individuals shape these discourses through their own actions. The three kinds of discourses he delineates

are official, formal and informal (*ibid*). Although these levels have been separated for means of analysis none of them are “stable or internally consistent and coherent” (*ibid*). The official discourse results from intense political contestation for hegemony (Soudien: 2001: 312). The process whereby this takes place has been detailed in the literature review (Zizek: 1999). The resultant control of political content through the hegemonic norm is, by virtue of this battling out process, necessarily ideological. This need not be used in a pejorative manner, but, because of the power to exclude, often does take on a discriminatory character. During apartheid the official discourse was embodied in the curriculum, the official policies of government, and the actual physical environment was policed according to the hierarchical ordering of apartheid racial ideology (Soudien: 2001). The post-apartheid government wanted to change this official discourse, resulting in a human rights centered constitution that outlaws discrimination and upholds the ideology of non-racialism. Paradoxically however many of the efforts at upholding these ideals through programmes of redress have drawn on the very apartheid racial ideologies they wish to overcome. Therefore, despite the official ideological shift, much of the curricular and physical divisions set up during apartheid have remained, as demonstrated in Chapter Four.

Outside this official discourse, there are always discourses that run parallel and sometimes contradictory to the hegemonic official discourse. These exercise powers over, and infuse individuals with power, in varying aspects of public and private life. Formal and informal discourses fall in this second category (Soudien: 2001: 312). For example Soudien speaks of the formal discourse of the school in which the community and stakeholders in the school decide on an approach, for themselves, as distinct from, but sometimes coinciding with, the official discourse (*ibid*).

The level of informal discourse is the space in which social relationships function. This includes friendships, family life and their social, cultural, and leisure interests (Soudien: 2001: 312). Inside the formal and informal discourses there may be contradictions and challenges to the dominant discourses in people’s lives and this may change from person to person and situation to situation. I emphasized that all these levels of discourse are

ideological in that they are contested, exist within a certain set of power relations, and open to change. How power operates in relation to our public and private identities is crucial to understanding this process and will be detailed further on in this chapter.

The responses of the participants were consistent with the formal discourse in the schools, which flowed from the official discourse of non-racialism. They said that race did not matter to them, did not colour their judgments and that they believed all people to be equal (Soudien: 2001: 318). At the informal level however, as has been demonstrated in Chapter Four, this is not the case, and moving between the formal and informal discourses offers insight into the gaps and points of continuity in how hegemonic whiteness continues to function in a setting that seems to challenge it. If the informal or private sphere is where this ideological reproduction takes place, there is nothing more privately guarded for public means, than sexuality. “Inter-racial heterosexuality threatens the power of whiteness because it breaks the legitimation of whiteness with reference to the white body” (Dyer: 1997: 25). In order to keep the power of whiteness attached to the signifier of the white body, the ‘frontier’ of white female sexuality must be guarded most cautiously. This is no longer possible through the public sphere, through legal appeal and so forth, and the private domain now becomes the place where the separation of the races must be maintained. Whether this is done consciously or unconsciously is open to debate, and there is probably also much variance on the continuum of the ‘maintenance of white purity’. Nevertheless, I argue that, given the evidence of this study and others, it is in the private domain, moreover, the psychic space, where the reproduction of white hegemony seems to be most efficacious.

Whiteness remains closed precisely because it is reproduced at the informal level. This informal level is akin to primary socialization, making it the most powerful factor in an individual’s social construction of reality (Berger and Luckman: 1991). This process will be examined in the following section. Instead of referring continuously to Soudien’s categories, I shall from this point speak of the public, which encompasses the official and the formal levels of discourse and the private, which will refer to the informal psycho-social domain.

## **White subjectivity: socialization and the internalization of norms**

Marx said that “man’s consciousness is determined by his social being” (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 17). This process of taking the social world into one’s consciousness was detailed in Chapter Two and will be expanded upon here. How the materiality of the world comes to exist in our psychology is something that is not free from the plays of ideological struggle. Our desires are not ‘natural’ in the realist sense. They are in fact constructed by the societies in which we live and our desires are not free from the political process of struggling for hegemony. What is more, the psychological in some ways exists posterior to public ideology, because firstly, while public ideology may change, our psychologies do not change at the same pace. There is a lag. Secondly, we are born into a world where meanings are already in circulation and into situations not of our own choosing. We come to know ourselves and form our desires from within a certain set of ideological meanings that were in circulation prior to our engagement with them. This does not mean we are complete victims of these ideologies and how agency is forged alongside this constraint will be tackled further on in this chapter.

The starting point however must be elsewhere. One cannot simply claim that our psychologies are at the play of political ideologies without detailing how our social worlds are constructed. The sense in which we feel that we know things is felt as a priori to individual experience. In other words, social knowledge appears to exist independently of anything we do - that is how it comes to have meaning for us. We are born into a world where meanings have already been constructed by those there before us and thus when we apprehend them for the first time they do not feel constructed. They feel ‘real’ (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 20) or natural. That is why if I have been brought up in a world that continuously says “you are white, and this is what whiteness is”, even when I denounce or doubt this as a naturalistic truth, I am compelled to suspend my doubt to function in everyday life (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 37). The feeling that ‘I am white’ is attached to a set of socially constructed meanings that have material affects on our lives. It is this phenomenon that has enabled the methodology of this study. I denounce whiteness but can still investigate it as a category.

Echoing this sentiment Soudien writes about his research participants that “try as they might, students had difficulty in dismissing the label ‘coloured’ that was placed on them. Although many rejected the term, they found the certainty and familiarity it offered hard to ignore” (2001: 318). Scheler called this phenomenon of taking on knowledge of the world as a priori, the “relative-natural worldview” (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 20). In this way “no human thought is immune to the ideologizing influences of its social context” because knowledge must always be known from a certain social position (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 21-22). Here if knowledge is always known from a certain social position, it is also constituted through certain vectors, or ways of knowing, which leads to particular ways of being, and in turn beliefs about the world and the people in it. These vectors represent varying power structures and ideological interests in society. Helpful as Berger and Luckman’s treatise is, what is lacking from this theory is an analysis of how power operates within this process of the social transmission of necessarily ideological knowledge.

Judith Butler (1997) enters where they leave off, theorizing about the psychic life of power in forming our subjectivity and yet simultaneously constraining our ability to act. Her psychoanalytical account of ideology, subjectivity and power is helpful in understanding how we come to internalize norms that are constitutive of our desires. Berger and Luckman’s theory of social construction offers a framework for elucidating how Butler’s theory of power operates. How we come to internalize norms that calcify a particular ideological agenda is also to explain how power operates in conjunction with, and in constitution of, our subjectivity.

Power exists in the micro-structures of society (Hoy: 1986: 135) at the level of social interaction between individuals, and only takes on meaning when it is enacted (Foucault: 1980: 89 and Hoy: 1986: 134). Socially transmitted knowledge itself is an enactment of power thus the possibility of Foucault’s power/knowledge construct (1980). This distribution and appropriation of power and knowledge both gives us agency and forms our subjectivities, but also constrains us within a particular set of circumstances. We

come to know and think about objects in certain ways, which not only traps those objects in ideological frameworks of meaning, but also hems in the possibilities of our own subjectivities because through ideological social knowledge the nature of the object is changed for us. If our subjectivity is predicated on Others, then we know who we are by what we are not. The power that mediates the type of knowledge we have of Others is intimately tied to how we come to understand our own subjectivity. This is what is meant by saying knowledge is always known from a certain social position.

But acknowledging that knowledge is always known from a certain social position one must also acknowledge that this position is open to change. For example, South Africa is undergoing a macro political transformation that is also changing our social knowledge. Knowing the world from a certain social position is also to change what you know, or to change the actual nature of a thing by how you know it. For example, if I have been brought up in a home where interracial relationships are not tolerated, desiring a person of another 'race' is not only off limits, it is an illogical possibility given the nature of my social reality. Butler asks "what happens when a certain foreclosure of love becomes the condition of possibility for existence? Does this not produce a sociality afflicted by melancholia, a sociality in which loss cannot be grieved because it cannot be recognized as loss, because what is lost never had any entitlement to existence?" (Butler: 1997: 24). Foreclosure means that a worldview cannot acknowledge an exclusion as an exclusion. Rather, it is an unknown, an impossibility, where the conditions of existence need to be altered in order for the knowledge of one's sociality/reality to change.

Erikson's notions of 'moratorium' and identity 'foreclosure' in youth identity are also helpful here in understanding how and why this may happen (Soudien: 2007: 9 and Erikson: 1968). A moratorium allows for a period of experimentation in youth development, while foreclosure refers to choosing an identity prematurely. However through foreclosure one does not only choose an identity, one concomitantly constructs a sociality in which only things that match one's world experience become logical (one could also argue, ontological) possibilities. Everything outside of that experience is not

just different, it is no longer possible. One's subjectivity or the process of subjectivation (becoming a subject) becomes a structuring factor in one's conditions of existence.

It is not a straightforward process when one joins the public and the private realms. For instance, at the public level knowledge is received in a certain way, a learner in school acquiesces in the formal discourse of the school. The knowledge there may differ substantially from the private discourses and thus knowledge that is imparted at home. This presents the problem of trying to transform and develop identities where there is a dialectical relationship between "objective facticity" and "subjective meaning" (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 30). As the world is presented to us, we in turn develop subjective meanings that rely on an objective facticity for validation. This dialectic of meaning is dependent on a substrate of power consistently applied to make the meanings meaningful at all. Thus the process of knowing and being should be mutually reinforcing, but in South Africa they can be contradictory.

In this contradictory social position where public and private methods of validation differ, how does a norm, which makes an ideological interpellation possible, come to exist in our psychology? This is the mystery of power both being in us and around us, and filtered through vectors of meaning which make things salient which might otherwise not be.

Objective reality is constructed in such a way that institutions are central to its maintenance. And like any other institution, "human sexuality is socially controlled by its institutionalization in the course of [a] particular history" (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 73). In this way, our desires, personal as they may be, are also open to the dialectic between objective facticity and subjective meaning. It is not simply a case of innate desire. It is in the places that we most associate with 'nature', those things where we are so quick to say, 'that's just the way it is', that we must excavate the bedrock of our prejudice.

As a set of practices or meanings are institutionalized, the transmission of this knowledge to the next generation brings about a hardening of that institution (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 76). The rationale for its initial coming about is no longer transparent. First hand experience for the reason things are the way they are, is not available. Thus the *institution* comes to be felt as true and real, and thus is counted as knowledge. This is the beginning of what is known as a social world: what was once subjective comes to be felt as objective. Interestingly, Berger and Luckman note that in this process of social reality hardening into objectivity for the second generation, simultaneously strengthens the previous generation's belief in their institution, because they transmit the knowledge as objective and come to believe in it more fervently themselves (1991: 77). This has been confirmed in my fieldwork, if one looks at how residual knowledge functions to regulate the girls. The parents of these girls were at one stage the second generation of apartheid, where that reality solidified into truth for them.

Inasmuch as institutions take on this characteristic of objectivity, to maintain this they require a process of legitimation through which the institution can be justified (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 79). These explanations have to be "consistent and comprehensive in terms of the institutional order, if they are to carry conviction to the next generation" (*ibid*). Herein lies the problem for post-apartheid South Africa. There is a new institution, a new knowledge about the world: we are all equal, South Africa is non-racial. This is formally transmitted to learners in schools. However the legitimation required for these learners to take on this new knowledge as meaningful falls short in the home and amongst friends as here informal discourse, still pandering to the historical forms of social knowledge, is what holds most currency. There needs to be a reciprocity in the process of institutionalization. "Care is required in any statements one makes about the 'logic' of institutions. The logic does not reside in the institutions and their external functionalities, but in the way these are treated in reflection about them. Put differently, reflective consciousness superimposes the quality of logic on the institutional order" (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 82). It is power [attached to subjectivities] that allows the reflective consciousness, our agency, to impose a logic on an institutional order. It is the

same power which gives institutions an autonomous feel, that operates within our psychic realm.

How then are these institutions internalized? Internalization means the process by which the world comes to have meaning as a social reality (Berger and Luckman: 1991:150). This means that the signifier is no longer empty but filled with a particular ideological content, so for instance different 'races' come to take on certain meanings. The first step in this process is "primary socialization" (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 149). Primary socialization, where one establishes relationships with significant others (for instance, parents), is the first socialization one undergoes in childhood. These significant others function as mediators of one's social world, and in the process of this mediation also modify it, presenting a particular version of reality. "They [significant others] select aspects of it [social world] in accordance with their own location in the social structure" (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 151). Primary socialization is highly emotionally charged and is the beginning of the learning process. Without this foundation, or point of reference, all other learning becomes difficult as there is no meaningful reference point in the world (*ibid*).

I argue that the gap between primary and secondary socialization, which could also be read as the gap between public and private discourses, leads to a crisis of social construction when moving from one dominant ideology in society to another. "Some of the crises that occur after primary socialization are indeed caused by the recognition that the world of one's parents is not the only world there is, but has a very specific social location, perhaps even one with a pejorative connotation (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 161). In the girls' worlds there are remnants of the old way of being, old forms of knowledge, that are experienced as forms of loss and isolation (Jansen: 2009), while new ways of viewing the world are being opened up. This moment of transition is one of complexity and confusion, but it also opens up the possibility of a new way of being. What is most difficult in this case, is that often a change entails a breaking with the knowledge passed to you by one's significant others. This is an intense emotional relationship, with its own set of tensions, expectations and power dynamics, as

demonstrated by the residual knowledge vector. One might disagree with one's parents but it requires too much energy and tension to go against them. Perhaps this is why even where belief may change, action and preference when it comes to desire, do not. The politics and power relationships involved in filial relationships should not be underrated in the mediation of social norms.

However "subjective biography is not fully social. The individual apprehends himself as a being both inside and outside society. This implies that the symmetry between objective and subjective reality is never static" (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 154). This highlights the agency that allows individuals to resist and appropriate in different ways the ideological structures that surround them. As much as the structures shape their subjectivity, they also shape the structures. It also implies that there are discrete psychological laws which govern the mind beyond purely social influences (which are beyond the scope of this study).

Secondary socialization is the process whereby we internalize institutional structures in our social worlds. In this process role specific knowledge is formed. Semantic fields that structure our interpretations (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 158) are developed which places people in certain roles. What Berger and Luckman do not mention is that this process is often hierarchical because of the disparate positions people (because of a particular political ideology) find themselves in. "This body of meanings will be sustained by legitimation" (*ibid*: 159). The process of legitimation detailed above maintains a certain status quo which is inevitably ideological. For example, maintaining that the power of whiteness remains attached to white bodies.

When instances occur that challenge the knowledge we have of our social worlds, these can be read as "reality-disconfirming" acts (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 171). The weight by which we count them however is dependent on the closeness of the relationship to the person who delivers the blow. For instance a teacher or the Constitution will have much less influence on how we interpret the normative standards of reality than our friends and families. This is what allows Soudien to say "significant as

school is, its messages are not powerful enough to withstand those from home” (2007: 59).

The nature of our development from primary to secondary socialization, including changes in our perception of reality over time and through these experiences, allows for a pluralistic tolerance of difference. The example Berger and Luckman offer is one of inter-faith associations and tolerance. I think this example is comparative to the current example of South Africa where there are competing semantic and value universes at differing levels of society. “Generally speaking, in situations where there is competition between different reality-defining agencies, all sorts of secondary-group relationships with the competitors may be tolerated, as long as there are firmly established primary-group relationships within which one reality is on-goingly reaffirmed against the competitors” (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 172). This was seen clearly in the data presented in Chapter Four. The competition in world-views was tolerated at a distant public level, but this was only possible because the intimate private level was protected, albeit in tacit ways, from different reality defining agencies. Chloe was correct in assuming that her father banning interracial dating was a ‘power thing’ because he could control the private domain even while the public domain moved away from his personal beliefs. The public discourse on race and friendship was acceptable as long as his and her primary-group relationships fell within what he considered to be an appropriate worldview, one that excluded interracial dating. Despite these guards that are erected, this does not deny the possibility that subjective reality can be transformed (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 176) and this is where the hope in destabilizing these tightly protected ways of knowing, such as the hegemonic norm of whiteness, lies.

What I wish to emphasise here, and which may seem in places not to be the case in this thesis, is a point Soudien makes elsewhere. “[I]nvariably, we reduce identity to the container of race. Critical as this container might be (and we must not underestimate how much it shapes our understanding of ourselves and others), it is never the whole story about who we are as individuals and as members of communities” (2007: xii). While this thesis has been involved largely with exploring how ‘race’ shapes the subjectivities of

young white women in post-apartheid South Africa, my politics is about releasing us from the trappings of these racialised modes of description and ways of being. To transform the conditions of existence for all of us, so that possibilities for loving outside of racial ideology are truly opened up.

To talk of transformation however, is to talk of a process of “resocialization” (Berger and Luckman: 1991: 176). The most important means for enabling this transformation is a “legitimizing apparatus for the whole sequence of transformation” (*ibid*: 179). I think it is here that the problem lies for transformation in South African education and the country more broadly. The legitimating apparatus in this case only extends to the public context and the private is left alone and unknown. This is the contribution this thesis aims to make: to add to the knowledge about this private space and demonstrate how it is related to the more broad and obvious places of transformation. Desire seems far from the official realm of the state, but the most productive space for ideology turns out to be our private socio-psychological articulations, behaviours and thoughts. This is where “the unfinishable grieving for that which founds the subject” (Butler: 1997: 24) can be interrogated.

### **White subjectivity: power, desire and exclusion**

The founding of the subject or the process by which we become subjects, both with power to act, and then also to only act within our situation, is paradoxical in that it is both constraining and enabling (Butler: 1997: 1-2). “Power not only *acts on* a subject but, in a transitive sense, *enacts* a subject into being” (Butler: 1997: 13). A theory of power which operates alongside a theory of the psyche is something that has been avoided by both discourse theorists and psychoanalysts (Butler: 1997: 3), but it seems to be a theoretical necessity in explaining the relationship between the public and private domains, and the subject and its desires. This is especially so because “this psychological dimension of power, the fact of its *subjectivization* in forms that are not wholly conscious - nor indeed reducible to the rational effects of governed subjectivity - becomes a crucial factor of analysis, particularly so in ‘psychologized’ forms of power such as racism. Here

a variety of historicist, discursive and sociological models of analysis confront their limits” (Hook: 2010).

The beginnings of this historical discussion around the nature of subjectivity are explained in Hegel’s master/slave dialectic. The slave and the master are dependent on one another for their subjectivities to take shape in their consciousnesses (Butler: 1997: 3). The master’s conception of him/herself is predicated on the slave’s subordination to him/her, the power he/she exercises over the slave he/she experiences as part of his/her subjectivity. And also, paradoxically, in exercising power over the slave, the master’s identity is subordinated in the sense that without the slave to act as his/her Other, he/she would have no concept of himself/herself as powerful. The power that the subject appropriates is both in him/her and external to him/her, both form him/her, give him/her agency, then constrain him/her. Here the “power that at first appears as external, pressed upon the subject, pressing the subject into subordination, assumes a psychic form that constitutes the subject’s self-identity” (*ibid*). Those structures that we see as external are drawn into our psychologies, and in this way the materiality of the world mingles with the intangible world of the psychological to develop internal sanctions and desires. In Althusser’s formulation of interpellation, the subject becomes a subject through responding to state authority, which “constitutes a specifically *psychic and social* working of power on which interpellation depends but for which it can give no account” (Butler: 1997: 5, my emphasis). So how can we account for this internalization of power while responding to ideology, without appealing only to the state apparatus of power as a dispatcher of ideology?

The first thing that Butler alludes to is what Berger and Luckman saw as significant others in primary socialization. She flags the importance of ‘passionate attachments’ (Butler: 1997: 6). She characterizes subjection produced through the workings of power, and enabled through passionate attachments, as “one of the most insidious of its productions” (Butler: 1997: 6), because the subject is both “formed and subordinated” psychologically through a power that is mediated socially: “No subject emerges without a passionate attachment to those to whom he or she is fundamentally dependent...although

the dependency of the child is not a *political* subordination in any usual sense, the formation of primary passion in dependency renders the child vulnerable to subordination and exploitation” (Butler: 1997: 7). This process explains why it is that the ideological values of the parents are so efficacious in influencing the child’s desires about interracial dating.

Without this psycho-social relationship with the parents, and in turn the psycho-social world of power and ideology, the subject could not exist as a subject with agency and yet “the agency of the subject appears to be an effect of its subordination” (Butler: 1997: 12). So then, “What does it mean for the agency of a subject to presuppose its own subordination? Is the act of *presupposing* the same as the act of *reinstating*, or is there a discontinuity between the power presupposed and the power reinstated?” (*ibid*).

The psychological subject, far from existing in fixed biological states is “temporally based”, in other words vulnerable to its own facticity. As such its subjective reality is open to changing circumstances and “the power that initiates the subject fails to remain continuous with the power that is the subject’s agency” (*ibid*). The power that gives the subject the agency to resist its facticity, is the same power that constrains the subject and makes it capitulate to its societal norms. This moment explains both continuity and rupture, and reveals the almost inescapable salience of political ideology, while leaving open the option to change from within that very situation: “If in acting the subject retains the conditions of its emergence, this does not imply that all of its agency remains tethered to those conditions and that those conditions remain the same in every operation of agency” (Butler: 1997: 13).

Power then is not only experienced as the facticity in which one finds oneself, rather power becomes a psychic entity which creates the subject. Power gives the subject agency and constrains the ways in which it might act, but not in consistent straightforward ways - this is the paradoxical nature of power, agency and identity. In the same sense that power enacts the subject, Althusser can make the claim that we are all always already interpellated by ideology. Power must have a particular content to become

efficacious. This is not necessarily pejorative (content need not be synonymous with false consciousness). It is merely the nature of what it is to be a subject, to have an identity. Because of our social contexts we become who we are, but also change and react to our context. We are not passive, but also not fully agential in the sense that there is no external content which is internalized. We are always already in context and one cannot say that there is something outside of cultural bodies (Grosz: 1994 in Daya: 2009), and because this enculturation is ideological, we turn around/respond to the hailing process.

How do self-reproach and social regulation fit into the puzzle of power and the subject? In answering this question I refuse the “ontological dualism that posits the separation of the political and the psychic” (Butler: 1997: 19). Thus there is a need to offer a “critical account of psychic subjection in terms of the regulatory and productive effects of power. If forms of regulatory power are sustained in part through the formation of a subject, and if that formation takes place according to the requirements of power, specifically, as the incorporation of norms, then a theory of subject formation must give an account of this process of incorporation” (*ibid*).

Is the norm first outside and then enters into our psychology, or “does the internalization of the norm contribute to the production of internality” (*ibid*)? In other words, does the internalization of a norm actually ‘give’ us subjectivity, give content to our subjectivity? This complexity is why the vector image is helpful. The norm-as-vector actually changes the nature of our psychology, changes that internality that Butler is speaking of, and in so doing changes the conditions of existence of the subject and how that subject will come to know others. The process of knowing others and knowing oneself, and knowing how to act in relation to others and oneself, becomes something ideological, because of the transformative/change-quality/content-giving of the internalization process. So here I agree with Butler when she says:

I argue that this process of internalization *fabricates the distinction between interior and exterior life*, offering us a distinction between the psychic and the social that differs significantly from an account of the psychic internalization of norms... norms are not internalized in mechanical or fully predictable ways...how are we to account for the desire for the norm and for subjection more generally in

terms of a prior desire for social existence, a desire exploited by regulatory power? (Butler: 1997: 19, original emphasis)

This seems to explain Ratele's process of racist sexualization (2009). With racist sexualization official power exploited the desire for social existence by regulating what was seen as appropriate sexual desire. We all want to exist for the other (it was Hegel who said that human desire is the desire of desire), but when official power says that to exist, to be counted as whole, to be recognized you must negate your desire for and the existence of the Other, then although one's existence takes on this unknowing melancholia spoken of earlier, this is chosen and reproduced. This happens because the subject would rather 'exist' and be subjected to this ideology than not exist at all. The way in which power has been articulated here by Butler illustrates how both master and slave are subjected within the matrix of power. To exclude others from your sexual desires, while exercising power in that exclusion, is also to be subjected to the very power you seem to harness. It traps you in a fabricated ideology/logic of desire and existence.

So when a girl decides that she is 'naturally' not attracted to people of other races, while claiming to believe we are all equal, what is really happening is that she is "bound to seek recognition of [her] own existence in categories, terms, and names that are not of [her] own making, the subject seeks the sign of its own existence outside itself, in a discourse that is at once dominant and indifferent" (Butler: 1997: 20). But the girl is not left here, fatefully bound to the ideologies of her family or society, "conditions of power do not unilaterally produce subjects" (Butler: 1997: 21), as with the vectors, these forces are set off in different directions because of her agency.

Despite the possibility to harness one's agency and alter the conditions of one's social reality, as we have seen with the girls in this study, "the psychic operation of the norm offers a more insidious route for regulatory power than explicit coercion, one whose success allows its tacit operation within the social" (Butler: 1997: 21). In other words one's desires for white boys or not, come to be felt as natural, or as a matter of taste, not a matter of politics: "And yet, being psychic, the norm does not merely reinstate social

power, it becomes formative and vulnerable in highly specific ways. The social categorizations that establish the vulnerability of the subject to language are themselves vulnerable to both psychic and historical change” (Butler: 1997: 21).

Psychoanalytically then we can think of social sanction as working through foreclosure not to prohibit existing desire but “to produce certain kinds of objects and to bar others from the field of social production. In this way, the sanction does not work according to the repressive hypothesis... but as a mechanism of production, one that can operate, however, on the basis of an originary violence” (Butler: 1997: 25). In this case then the internalization, and continued prevalence, of the hegemony of whiteness for these girls, is not a matter of sanction. Rather it is about coming to think of certain bodies, or characteristics attached to those bodies as impossibilities in their social universes. It is not that interracial relationships are allowed or not allowed, or desired or not desired, but rather that the Other is beyond their point of reference as a logical possibility or their ‘conditions of existence’. That is what Butler means when she says:

*is there not a longing to grieve – and, equivalently, an inability to grieve – that which one never was able to love, a love that falls short of the “conditions of existence”? This is a loss not merely of the object or some set of objects, but of love’s own possibility: the loss of the ability to love, the unfinishable grieving for that [Other] which founds the subject. (Butler: 1997: 24)*

In conclusion, the ultimate irony of this finding is that through the exclusion of certain objects<sup>5</sup> from the possibility of romantic existence for these white girls, white subjectivity is also formed. White subjectivity then is a negative space, predicated on exclusionary logics that bar certain objects from being produced as desirable for them. The power that is exercised in the machinations of the hegemony of whiteness, is the same power that constrains that subjectivity, which leaves it in a state of permanent melancholy, that “unfinishable grieving for that which founds the subject” (*ibid*). In order to move forward from this place of exclusion then, it is necessary to denounce one’s white subjectivity,

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<sup>5</sup> The objects of exclusion here are not ‘non-white’ bodies per se, because as demonstrated in Chapter Four the signifier detaches from the signified, and what becomes important in post-apartheid South Africa is not the body but the meaning of that body. If that body cannot subscribe to the hegemonic ideal of whiteness, values, ways of living, then they will be excluded. So assimilation into whiteness is key in understanding this exclusion.

and establish a more universal notion of one's subjectivity (Soudien: forthcoming) one that is not dependent on marginalities and Othering for a sense of self. However because the mechanisms of the norms and desires of whiteness are often not read through the kaleidoscope of power that Butler has detailed, the private reproduction of the hegemony of whiteness is not seen.

In answering the research questions posed at the beginning of this paper it has been shown that the role of apartheid racial ideology in the socio-sexual construction of desire for these white teenage girls has been to obfuscate the intermeshed nature of the public and private spheres. Political ideology does not respect this distinction. The supposed divide between internal and external power has concealed how racial subjectivities function, in particular how whiteness is predicated on a sense of Otherness. This racial ideology is most evidently expressed in personal desires if one traces modes of assimilation as the basis for interracial integration. Historical structural power relations become an intimate part of our subject experience through the processes of socialization, most forcefully transmitted through those to which we have a passionate attachment. This psycho-socialization happens within a social context and as such is not free from the pulls of societal ideologies. Sexual desire then can become a potent internalized racist ideology because it has the appearance of personal preference and thus is invisibly but insidiously reproduced, even in a transforming society. These public historical ideologies have been made private and continue to draw on the hegemonic norms of whiteness as standards for sexual desire. The private sphere of desire has been shown to be a myth as the aegis of power reaches into this space. In this space power enables subjectivity but also paradoxically generatively produces a notion of Otherness. It would be fascinating for further investigation to be done into how passionate attachments and filial power dynamics work in the transmission of ideological content and how these may intersect with the legitimizing tools available to a transforming society.

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University Of Cape Town

## Appendix 1

### INTERVIEW ONE: BACKGROUND AND SOCIAL SITUATION

The questions in the schedule consist of a base-line of questions.

The questions should elicit responses that will themselves require further probing.

Can you tell us a little about yourself, where you grew up, your family (degrees? professions?), and the community in which you live? A little about your schooling and education?

How would you describe yourself in terms of race? Is this important to you? Is it important to your family? What is the racial breakdown at your school? Have you thought about this before?

Where would you place yourself in social class terms right now? Would you say that you are a member of the middle-class, upper-class or working-class? Why?

What is your attitude to questions of gender and sexuality? What do you think of people who are gay? Have you got gay friends? Do you have a boyfriend or a girlfriend? What is your relationship like? Is it supportive, demanding, frustrating? How do you feel about relationships with people of other races? How do your family and friends feel? HIV?

Do you practise a particular religion? Is it important to you? Why? Is your family religious?

Tell us a little about your friends? What kinds of things do they do? Where do they live? How long have you known them?

Do you have friends outside of what you consider to be your immediate community, outside your 'racial' group? Do you think this is the norm or unusual?

How influential is school in your life? Do you identify with your school? Has your school, the learners and the teachers, changed much since you have been there? How does your family feel about your school? How is HIV taught at school? What to people and yourself think of it?

Movies, music, fashion what role have they played in your life? Clubbing, partying, spending time with friends, how does this all work? Do friends have, for example, cars?

Why do you think those things are fun or attractive? When you go to these places, are there people of different races there? What is the extent of the mixing of races? Do you feel that people of different races have different senses of fashion, music etc?

What are the major sources of excitement in your life?

What are the major threats and dangers in your life? Illness? Crime? Financial? HIV?

What are the major opportunities which have come your way?

What has frustrated you?

What are your aspirations for yourself?

What are your aspirations for others around you, and others in the broader society?

What do you think of South Africa? Its politics? How South African do you feel? Have you lived in many different places?

Where do you like to hang out with your friends?

What do you talk about with your friends?

What do you consider a good friend to be?

What kinds of music do you like? Why? Lyrics, rhythm, etc?

Do you talk about politics or current events with family? Friends?

Do you feel like you can make a difference in the future of SA? The world? Your community? Do you want to?

Do you have hope for the future? Do you find it scary or uncertain?

What symbols, icons or ideologies do you relate to or that seem to represent the youth of today in SA?

Do you enjoy multicultural, diverse mixed social situations? If so why or why not? How does it make you feel about yourself?

## Appendix 2

### INTERVIEW TWO: RACE AND SEXUALITY

I am going to say a series of words to you please tell me what comes to mind when I say them:

HIV/AIDS

STDS

Sex

White

Black

Race

Romance

Relationship

What are some of your family values? Can you tell me a story about your family which would demonstrate some of these values?

Please tell me what you think of as sexy, attractive and beautiful, what makes you desire someone? What is it that attracts you to someone?

Please tell me what you see as unattractive and ugly, that you would not want to be in a relationship with.

Tell me a story where you first became aware of race.

Would you have sex with someone of another race? How would you feel about having children with someone of another race? What would your reaction be to people close to you doing this?

What constitutes race for you?

What is physically attractive in a person? What qualities are attractive?

What do you feel your expectations are of you as a woman by your family? Friends? School? Church? Do you think these are particular to you being a woman?

Are you very conscious of your bodily movements? Do you feel you need to dress/sit etc in a certain way? Have you been told that there is an appropriate way to behave?

Do your parents discuss sex and morality with you? Is there some sort of implicit understanding in your home? Among your friends? Are you open about these things with your friends?

Do you talk about STDs/HIV etc...

Do you think desire is innate/personality driven/society/biological?

Do you find people of other races attractive? Why?

Is language, how someone talks, important to you? Why?

What do you think of HIV positive people? Describe someone that you think is HIV positive... how do your parents feel about it? If mentioned in your classroom, do you ever feel that it could be referring to people in your classroom or circle of friends? Do you feel personally affected by HIV? Are you fearful of contracting it? Why?

Do you personally know people of other races who are wealthier than you? How does that make you feel?

Who makes the decisions in your home? Who must you ask for permission?

Is one of your parents' careers seen as more important than the other?

If your parents forbade you to date people of other races, would you obey them? Why?

Do you feel that racism is over? Is it just individuals that are racist these days? Or do you think it's a more broad issue?

Do you find it strange when people highlight your being white?

How do you want people of other races to perceive you?

In terms of sexuality, how do you want others to see you?

Could you comment on what your whiteness may mean for others and yourself? How do you make sense of this?

Appendix 3

Date

Interview participants for a masters dissertation in Education at UCT

Dear (respondent and parent)

My name is Hannah Botsis and I am a master's student in education at the University of Cape Town. I have approached teachers' at your schools to seek out your help.

My dissertation covers issues relating to the nature of white teenage female's concept of self in post-apartheid South Africa. I would very much like to supplement my theoretical findings by speaking to young white females who are currently seniors at high school (ages 16-18). Speaking to you would greatly help me in improving my research to more accurately understand young people's white identity in post-apartheid South Africa and how this fits into the educational process.

If you participated I would ensure that what you say would be kept in the strictest confidence. The information that I gain from you, if reproduced in my dissertation, would be under a pseudonym. Both your name, school, teachers, family and where you lived would be disguised and I would not reveal your identity to the public. I would not discuss what comes up in the interview with those you know.

What would be required from you would be to participate in two interviews. These interviews are to get a sense of who you are, and how you view the world. You are the expert! And thus your opinions and stories are what I am after, you do not need to worry about knowing anything or preparing especially for such an interview. If you wished to see my notes or transcripts after the interview you would be more than welcome.

If you are interested in being a part of this process or would like any further information about anything at all, please let me know. If you do decide to participate I would need both yourself and your parents to sign a consent form which I will supply. Furthermore below I have included my supervisor's details if there are any further queries.

Your help would be so much appreciated in making this dissertation a success.  
Looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,  
Hannah Botsis

Hannah Botsis

[Hannah.botsis@gmail.com](mailto:Hannah.botsis@gmail.com)

072 809 3150

021 913 2285

Professor Crain Soudien

[Crain.soudien@uct.ac.za](mailto:Crain.soudien@uct.ac.za)

## University of Cape Town, Faculty of Humanities

### School of Education

#### Consent Form

Title of research project: Making Public Politics Private (please see attached letter for more detail and supervisor's details)

Name of researcher: Hannah Botsis

Telephone: 021 913 2285 Cell: 072 809 3150

Email: [Hannah.botsis@gmail.com](mailto:Hannah.botsis@gmail.com) or [Hannah.botsis@uct.ac.za](mailto:Hannah.botsis@uct.ac.za)

Name of participant:

Nature of research: Two narrative one-on-one interviews, one on personal life history, another scenario based interview.

Participant involvement:

- I agree to participate in this research project.
- I have read this consent form and the information it contains and had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I agree to my responses being used for education and research on condition my privacy is respected, subject to the following:
- I understand that my personal details will not be included in the research and that I will not be personally identifiable
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project.
- I understand I have a right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Signature of participant/guardian (if under 18):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant/guardian:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person who sought  
consent:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person who sought consent:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: