Representations of Mixed-Race Identity in Post-Apartheid South African Literature

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Zusammenfassung der Dissertation

Es gibt bislang wenig Forschung über die Identität der ersten im Englischen sogenannten ‚mixed-race' Generation im post-Apartheid Südafrika. Während des Kolonialismus und institutionalisiert durch die Apartheid galten ‚interracial' Beziehungen und ‚mixed-race' Kinder als illegal. Zwar gibt es seit dem späten 19. Jahrhundert literarische Werke mit ‚mixed-race' Charakteren, doch spiegeln diese Bücher das rassistische und sexistische „rassenwissenschaftliche" Denken jener Zeit wider. Innerhalb der literarischen Traditionen gab es im Laufe der Zeit Veränderungen, um den Rassismusder Apartheid widerzuspiegeln. In Bezug auf die Repräsentation von ‚mixed-race' Identitätent jedoch basierten die Darstellungen nach wie vor auf der Reproduktion der Rhetorik von „Rassenmischung" und „Blutreinheit". Im Post-Apartheid-Kontext sind Überbleibsel dieser Ideologien in den Darstellungen von ‚mixed-race' Charakteren präsent und spiegeln die andauernde Reproduktion von rassistischen Konstruktionen wider, die den Idealen des Nicht-Rassismus im "neuen" Südafrikas gegenüberstehen. Unter dem Blickwinkel der Critical Race Theory und der Intersektionalität untersucht diese Arbeit, in der Post-Apartheid-Literatur die Darstellung von ‚mixed-race' Identität in Bezug auf die erste Generation, die als Kinder von PoC und *weißen* Eltern geboren wurden. Diese Dissertation analysiert fünf literarische Texte, die im Post-Apartheid-Kontext spielen und in denen ‚mixed-race' Charaktere mit einem *weißen* Elternteil vorkommen: Zakes Mdas Roman *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002), Achmat Dangors Roman *Bitter Fruit* (2003), Penny Lorimers Roman *Finders Weepers* (2014), Sara-Jayne Makwala-Kings Memoiren *Killing Karoline* (2017) und Fred Khumalos Kurzgeschichte *Let The Music Play On* (2021). Die Analyse orientiert sich an den intersektionalen Sphären der sozialen, persönlichen und politischen Macht. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass alle fünf Texte ‚mixed-race' Identität in eine breitere Diskussion über rassistisch erzeugte Positionalitäten im Post-Apartheid-Kontext auf der Grundlage verschiedener rassifizierter Erfahrungen darstellen. Durch den Fokus auf ‚mixed-race' Charaktere mit einem *weißen* Elternteil untersucht diese Dissertation auch die anhaltende Präsenz dominanter Narrative des *weißen* Hetero-Patriarchats im Post-Apartheid-Staat. Letztlich zeigt diese Dissertation, dass Darstellungen von ‚mixed-race' Identitäten dazu dienen, den Zustand der rassistischen, Geschlechter-, Klassen- und Machtdynamiken des Post-Apartheid-Staates und die Unzulänglichkeiten einer ‚racial transformation' auf verschiedenen Ebenen der Gesellschaft zu kritisieren.

Abstract

The study of first-generation mixed-race identity in post-apartheid South Africa remains largely under-researched. Throughout colonialism and institutionalised through apartheid, 'interracial' relationships and 'mixed-race' children were considered illegal. While literary works representing 'mixed-race' characters exist, dating back to the late 1800s, these books reflect the racist and sexist race science thinking of that era. Although there have been shifts within literary traditions on 'mixed-race' identity to reflect apartheid racial dynamics during that era, representations remained based on reproducing 'miscegenation' and 'blood purity' rhetoric. In post-apartheid literature, remnants of these ideologies are present within the representations of 'mixed-race' characters and reflect the continued reproduction of racialisation processes juxtaposed with the non-racialism ideals of the 'new' South Africa. Through the lens of Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality, this thesis examines how first-generation 'mixed-race' identity, characterised as children of an interracial relationship, is represented within post-apartheid literature. With a specific focus on characterisation, this thesis analyses five literary texts set in the post-apartheid context, all of which include 'mixed-race' characters with one white parent: Zakes Mda's novel *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002), Achmat Dangor's novel *Bitter Fruit* (2003), Penny Lorimer's novel *Finders Weepers* (2014), Sara-Jayne Makwala-King's memoir *Killing Karoline* (2017), and Fred Khumalo's short story *Let The Music Play On* (2021). Organised through intersectional spheres of social, personal, and political power, the findings show that all five texts represent 'mixed-race' identity within broader discussions about racial identity in the post-apartheid context from multiple racialised experiences. In addition, through these representations, this thesis investigates the ongoing presence of dominant narratives of white hetero patriarchy in the post-apartheid state by focusing specifically on mixed-race characters with one white parent. Ultimately, this thesis finds that representations of 'mixed-race' identity are used to critique the state of racial, gendered, class, and power dynamics of the post-apartheid state and the shortcomings of 'racial' transformation at multiple levels of society.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The study of mixed-race people is not a new phenomenon. Globally, they have been intertwined for centuries in ways that created or entrenched histories and constructions of identities. With the establishment of Critical Mixed-Race Studies in the early nineties, scholarship on mixed-race studies has shifted and grown outside the US context, where most research is located. In South Africa, through the historical legacies of colonialism and apartheid, mixed-race people have been featured in literature since the entrenchment of colonisation, evident in colonial writings. The obsession with miscegenation and blood purity of scientific and eugenicist racism has created lasting stereotypes about mixed-race people, particularly in countries with a history of white heteropatriarchal supremacist rule.

Terms like 'mixed-race' or 'biracial' are the most common terms used to describe people of immediate mixed parentage and are primarily influenced by the United States and the United Kingdom, which exemplify societies built on racialised colonial legacies. However, these terms are not without their complexities. Throughout history, people born out of interracial relationships have been considered lesser, particularly in societies where white hegemony and purity were deemed superior. Words like 'half-caste', 'mixed blood', 'half-breed' and 'creamy' have been used to describe people of mixed heritage. While this dissertation acknowledges that the term 'mixed-race' or 'biracial' are not ideal, better terminology has not yet been put forward as an agreeable term, the debates of which will be laid out later in this section. Moreover, with the development of Critical Mixed-Race Studies as a field, the term 'mixed-race' or 'biracial' are the most widely used.

The case of first-generation mixed-race people – defined in this dissertation as people who have parents that are racially categorised as different races according to apartheid racial classifications – in post-apartheid South Africa is intertwined and rooted in the complex web of racialisation processes established through settler colonialism and apartheid. If you were to Google "mixed-race people in South Africa", you would see a definition for coloured[1] people, a mix of people of various ethnicities with multiracial histories that were forcibly solidified into the apartheid racial category of coloured.

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[1] All racial classifications are written without capitalisation except for "Black" – which refers to a Bikonian (Biko 1970) conceptualisation of Blackness being inclusive of all people of colour rather than just black (or African, as was the apartheid categorisation). Therefore, when reading "Black", I am referring to this conceptualisation of Black under Black Consciousness thought.

Due to racial segregation laws in apartheid, people categorised as different races had almost entirely separate daily experiences, legacies of which are still visible today. Not only are coloured people considered to be in a standalone racial category, but they also have their own language, accents, dialects and cultural identity stemming from their history of slavery and colonial oppression and regional histories (Erasmus, "History" 13). Later, this chapter explores how the experiences of first-generation mixed-race people differ from those of coloured people as coloured identity; although their heritage is racially mixed, first-generation mixed-race people do not experience the cultural aspect/capital of coloured identity unless they have one coloured parent.

Although first-generation mixed-race people did exist throughout settler colonialism and apartheid, the apartheid regime officially made it illegal for interracial relationships to exist; thus, the children born out of these relationships were 'illegally' born. These children were classified as coloured, as they were no longer 'racially pure'. With the abolishment of laws against interracial relationships and miscegenation formalised through apartheid, first-generation mixed-race people and interracial couples have become increasingly visible in post-apartheid society. However, this does not mean they do not experience racism or that society or their families have overcome problematic attitudes towards interracial couples and mixed-race people.

A vital framing point for understanding first-generation mixed-race identity in South Africa is that they exist within and between racial categories. Therefore, first-generation mixed-race people experience being mixed-race and another racial category. For example, a person with one white parent and one black parent is both first-generation mixed-race and black. As I will discuss further in this chapter, first-generation mixed-race people, in the very framing of whiteness, cannot be white, nor do they consider themselves white, as they disrupt the "purity" that whiteness is based on. However, racial categories in the South African context have become stagnant and entrenched.

Increasingly, in the post-apartheid context, a wide range of research focuses on interracial couples regarding identity construction, cultural beliefs, reconciliation, experiences of racism and stigma, and attitudes about post-apartheid South Africa[2]. Published work on first-generation mixed-race identity is less common[3]. However, while there are several postgraduate theses on the subject, work written by first-generation mixed-race authors is even less

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[2] See Childs 2015; Dalmage 2018; Steyn et al. 2018.
[3] see Jackson 2022; Van der Pol et al. 2022.

common[4]. Therein lies part of the research problem that this thesis seeks to address; to decentre the US and UK-based knowledge systems within Critical Mixed-Race Studies and contribute to knowledge in this growing field in the post-apartheid context.

The limited availability of research within the post-apartheid South African context in the social sciences is not necessarily reflected in literary studies. While early literary works focus on miscegenation and interracial relationships under colonialism and apartheid, more literary texts represent first-generation mixed-race people in post-apartheid South Africa. These works and their relevance will be considered later in this chapter. Encouragingly so and as usual, literary works are reflexive of the reality of the society around them. Works such as Yewande Omotoso's (2011) *Bom Boy*, Nadine Gordimer's (2012) *No Time Like the Present*, Zinzi Clemmons' (2017) *What We Lose*, and Fred Khumalo's (2019) *The Longest March* are examples of works written about first-generation mixed-race identity that are not considered in this research as they do not fit explicitly within the scope of this project.

Thus, the main aim of this dissertation is to assess how mixed-race identity is represented in post-apartheid texts. Through the use of critical race perspectives of Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality as the theoretical frameworks, I will show the ways that mixed-race identity is represented in literary texts as reflexive of the state of mixed-race identity in the post-apartheid setting. In addition, I will identify how dominant narratives of whiteness are persistent within identity representations and structural conditions in the narrative world. By framing the analysis through an intersectional lens, I will show how representations of mixed-race identity shift, resist, create, challenge and shape the personal, social and political aspects of structures of power and privilege within post-apartheid South Africa. Finally, I will argue that representations of mixed-race identity remain within outdated and historically problematic literary traditions. Within the post-apartheid context, the first-generation mixed-race characters become the characterisation of the complexities of the post-apartheid space. They are represented as the reflections of the processes of racialisation, the entrenchment of the legacies of apartheid white supremacist-heteropatriarchal structures and the failures of the new democracy. Therefore, my research questions are as follows:

Main Research Question:

How are first-generation mixed-race people represented in post-apartheid literary texts?

Sub questions:

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[4] see Gamedze 2019 and Berlein 2021.

1.   In what ways are dominant narratives of white heteropatriarchy present in the representation of mixed-race people in post-apartheid literary texts?

2.   How do the personal, social and political aspects of intersectional analysis influence the representation of mixed-race people in post-apartheid literary texts?

1.1.1. *Positionality Statement*

My parents met at the height of apartheid in 1985, at Rhodes University[5] in Makhanda (previously Grahamstown) in the Eastern Cape province. The university had just begun to introduce racially 'integrated' university residences. My father, a white man, and my mother, a coloured woman, met through mutual friends. The apartheid state considered my father a sympathiser with the liberation movement. Under the Immorality Act, it was illegal for people of different races to be in any relationship, particularly a sexual or romantic one. My parents and many other interracial couples were followed by police officers hiding in trees and cars, waiting to arrest them for breaking the law.

My parents dated for about six months before my father left South Africa. At the time, white South African men were conscripted into the army. He had been able to put off his conscription by studying at university; however, without further study opportunities and a refusal to join the military, he chose to leave, with an agreement for my mother to join him when she could. As a coloured woman, her only funded education opportunities were to be a nurse, social worker or teacher. Coming from a single-mother household, after her father's death, she became a teacher and had to commit to working for the state for three years after completing her state-funded degree. After that, my mother joined my father in England, where they were married within two weeks of her arrival. They lived in exile together for four years, returning to South Africa in 1992, two years after the end of Apartheid was officially announced.

This story can easily be told as a romanticised version of love conquers racism and of star-crossed lovers who defied the laws of a state that saw their love as impure. However, that would be a disservice to the years of struggle, the countless people tortured, murdered, and assassinated in state-led violence and the legacies of the horrors of apartheid that mar South African society today. Their story, if anything, indicates the injustice of apartheid and reflects the different lived realities of those living under the regime. A white man that grew up with the privileges that his whiteness afforded him, unlimited opportunities and resources, unaware of

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[5] Protests by Rhodes Must Fall movements called for the decolonisation of formerly white universities in South Africa. Rhodes University, named after British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes, is unofficially known as the University Currently Known As Rhodes or UCKAR. Debates about the name change have been ongoing for years.

the oppression of 90% of the population, influenced by the propaganda of the threat of communism and the danger of black people until the age of 21 when he realised the reality of apartheid. Juxtaposed to a coloured woman, a descendant of slaves brought by the Dutch from South East Asia, whose family was forcibly removed from their homes and forced to live in racially designated areas, who went to less-resourced schools and limited opportunities purely based on her race, had to apply for a permit to attend a white university, attended protests and actively participated in the liberation movement from a young age and could not sit on particular benches, go to specific beaches, freely access opportunities all because she was considered to be a second class citizen.

With the turn of democracy came the establishment of a new, all-inclusive national identity of the Rainbow Nation. This played hand in hand with the 'born-free' generation, to become the central pillars of national identity in post-Apartheid South Africa. As first-generation mixed-race people, my brother and I would be considered poster children of this non-racialism and unity nationalist ideology. However, the intergenerational nature of the wounds and racialised indoctrination of apartheid were passed on to my peers by their parents and grandparents. I often felt that I had to choose if I were white or coloured; to be both, I quickly learned, was an unacceptable answer and would elicit ridicule and shame. In South African Afrikaans slang, the word 'brak', meaning a small dirty river, is often used to describe stray dogs; this was a term commonly used by my peers to describe my identity throughout my high school experience.

I found solace in identifying as 'mixed-race'. It felt like something that described me best as I did not fit within the racial demarcations through which society regulated racial identity. I was too fair in complexion to be accepted as coloured, but my accent was 'too coloured' to be accepted as white, or so I was told. My own experiences of navigating uncomfortable social situations in which I was called on to answer questions such as "What are you?", "you look so exotic" and "Is that really your mother?" made me seek information about racially mixed people in South Africa and worldwide. I discovered a lack of research about people like me in South Africa, although I had many friends who identified as mixed-race and felt similarly lost in their identity.

I provide this historical background of my life as a starting point to understanding my positionality when writing this research. As an intersectional scholar using intersectionality as a theoretical and practical tool for analysis in my research, it is essential to explore how the intersections of my identity shape how I approach research. While this topic is personal and, in many ways, is born out of my lived experiences, the research presented in this dissertation

provides a valuable contribution to this growing field. While I acknowledge that my identity as a mixed-race person provides me with a different level of insight into the analysis of the literary texts, this does not make the study less credible or valuable. As my theoretical framework will show, discussions about race, racism and processes of racialisation are the shared experience of everyday life for racially oppressed people. Thus, these experiences inherently qualify them to discuss the topics that affect them.

What my research will also show is that the representations of first-generation mixed-race identity within literary texts in the post-apartheid setting are wide-ranging and reflect the multitude of experiences of mixed-race people outside of the narrative world as well, an argument that I have made elsewhere (see Metcalfe 2022 and Metcalfe 2023). Therefore, by understanding my positionality as a researcher and writer, this thesis will provide a meaningful intersectional contribution to understanding how first-generation mixed-race identities are represented in literary works in the post-apartheid context. As a final note, I am adding a trigger warning for sexual violence and representations of trauma, which are discussed throughout this dissertation but specifically in Chapter Two.

1.1.2. Outline of Chapter

This chapter provides the necessary background information for research conducted in this dissertation by outlining the main research questions. I have already outlined my research by discussing the background of where this research project came from, why it is essential, what gaps in the knowledge it fills and what contribution it makes to the field. And finally, I situated myself as a researcher within my positionality and interest in this research.

Next, I situate this research within the historical background of post-apartheid South Africa about how processes of the racialisation of identity(ies) have been constructed. Thereby considering the impact of settler colonialism and apartheid that have created lasting legacies of oppression and have entrenched white-heteropatriarchal power structures present within the post-apartheid setting today and are reflected in the post-apartheid narrative world.

Then, the conceptual framework will be unpacked by defining the main concepts considered for this research. These are Race and Racialisation, Identity and Belonging, Whiteness, Colouredness and Mixedness, in how they relate to conceptualising first-generation mixed-race identity. The aim is to ultimately locate these concepts within their specific framings in the South African context, leading to analysing the complexities of mixed-race identity. In addition, this section will outline global debates about identity, race and whiteness to show how the South African example contributes to these ongoing discussions.

After this, representations of mixed-race identity in literary texts in the South African context will be showcased. First, demonstrating representations of mixed-race identity within apartheid literature and then bringing the discussion to the present and assessing how post-apartheid literature has shifted or not with the transition to democracy. Finally, I show how representations of mixed-race identity might have changed during different transitionary phases.

Subsequently, I outline the theoretical framings for my research, namely Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality, to assess the merits and critiques of each theory. Ultimately justifying why these theories are the most effective in answering my research questions and their importance as analytical tools that can contribute to research on mixed-race identity.

Moreover, I briefly discuss the methodology that guides the literary analysis, narratology and post-colonial narratology and highlight my focus on characterisation for conducting my analysis. Then, I expand on the corpus used within this research and provide the standardised selection criteria that narrowed down the five primary texts selected. Finally, I outline the structure of the upcoming chapters and give a brief insight into their purpose.

1.2. Conceptualising Mixed-race Identity in South Africa

This section seeks explicitly to conceptualise mixed-race identity in South Africa. Through providing a historical outline of the constructions of race and processes of racialisation in South Africa stemming from settler colonialism to post-apartheid society, I show how mixed-race identity, in its social construction, has to some extent, shifted through these various contexts, but not broadly. As previously outlined, this dissertation focuses on representations of mixed-race identity, specifically on first-generation mixed-race identity as previously defined. By understanding the processes of the racialisation of identities and belonging in South Africa, I locate first-generation mixed-race identity within this historical context. In addition, I show how constructions of white heteropatriarchy, as a legacy of settler colonialism and apartheid, remain entrenched within racialisation processes present in contemporary post-apartheid society. These conceptualisations are crucial in understanding South Africa's relationship to mixedness, which has its beginnings in the construction of colouredness, which I show is considered as its own cultural identity. As I outline in this section, conceptualising mixed-race identity in South Africa is an essential contribution to de-centring the Western focus of Critical Mixed-Race Studies.

1.2.1. Race and Racialization

The constructions of race in South Africa have a four centuries-long history. South Africa, particularly the Cape of Good Hope (Cape Town), was a stop along major trade routes between Europe and Asia. 1652 is generally considered the beginning of more formal structures of settler colonialism in South Africa, with the arrival of Dutch settlers, most famously Jan Van Riebeek (Posel 2001; Jacobson et al. 2004; Gqola, "Slavery" 2010; Ellison and de Wet 2020; Mamdani 2020; Coetzee 2021; Daniel 2022; Pirtle, "White Supremacy" 2022). While racial segregation was not immediately formalised in the same way it is visible today, the arrival of European settler colonialist constructions of race can be traced to this historical link.

These racist beliefs stemmed from European racial thinking that evolved into the Enlightenment period of the 18th century. In the book series *A Short Introduction*, Ali Rattansi unpacks *Racism* (2007) by considering its historical legacies and how it has evolved and transformed modern society. Racial classification within the Enlightenment period, as Rattansi notes, were framed around whether all humans were the same species, thus, leading to the focus on biological aspects of humans (Rattansi 26). These debates rely on the work of Immanuel Kant, writing in the 16th century, who is considered the first theorist on race, and that of David Hume, who regularly argued that anyone who was not white could not be considered colonised and that your skin coloured determined your intellectual ability and moral standing (Rattansi 27). As the enslavement of Africans continued into the ensuing centuries, racist thinking that Africans could not be considered human because they were morally and intellectually inferior became institutionalised in societal structures and served as a justification for the continuation of slavery (Rattansi 30). Ultimately, this led to the largest forced 'migration' through the enslavement of African people to other parts of the world for the profits of European nations, which was justified through faux morality of the need to 'civilise the African', resulting in a legacy of racism still prevalent today.

These constructions of race informed colonial thinking at the time and factored into the treatment of the indigenous and enslaved populations. With the arrival of the British as a settler colonial force in the 1800s, South Africa experienced the entrenchment of two forms of racialised colonial thinking, which built multiple legacies of white supremacy on top of the other and at the cost of the indigenous population. By the time of formalised British colonial rule in South Africa, the Dutch settlers began to view themselves as Afrikaners (Boer[6]) and separate themselves from their Dutch roots to view themselves as a group indigenous to Africa

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[6] Afrikaans word for farmer, this is how they conceptualised their identity.

(Mamdani 145). An assessment of this process of identity will be discussed later in this chapter. However, these tensions between settlers culminated in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. It is also known as the South African War (Ellison and de Wet 427). However, this war was fought between two colonising groups at the cost of indigenous people who gained nothing from the outcome of this war, as they continued to be oppressed by both groups. In 1910, South Africa became the Union of South Africa – or a "self-governing dominion of the British Empire" (Ellison and de Wet 428). Thus, beginning more formalised policies for racial segregation and categorisation in South Africa.

Racial classifications during this time were based on three categories, white, coloured and native (Ellison and de Wet 2020; Posel 2001). In her widely cited paper, *Race as Common Sense: Racial Classification in Twentieth Century South Africa* (2001), Deborah Posel highlights the vagueness of pre-apartheid racial classifications, which had little to no definition of who could be considered for which racial category. This "common sense" racial classification informed/s both apartheid and post-apartheid approaches to racial categorisation, where "common" understandings of race constructions– influenced by race science – are used at the individuals' discretion. Officials charged with racially classifying the population were given "free reign to an assortment of social and individual prejudices on what was racially self-evident" (Posel 96). Ultimately relying on officials and the population to self-police racial classifications. Although there were no systemised criteria, race classification was generally based on appearance, general acceptance by others, social standing and proven lineage or descent (Posel 90).

It is important to note that South African racial classification is not based on the "One Drop Rule" used in the US. Which was mainly focused on blood, and the "mixing" of blood, primarily white blood, meant that a person could no longer be considered white. In South Africa, due to the prevalence of racial mixing throughout the years of colonisation, the one-drop rule as a policy would have excluded almost all prominent Afrikaner families and therefore jeopardised their claims to whiteness (Posel 2001; Verwey and Quayle 2012; Ellison and de Wet 2020). Thus, enforcing the "common sense" rule, which was followed by medical personnel that relied on race science, which included nail or hair tests in determining race, especially in cases for those considered racially ambiguous (Posel 90). This allowed for the movement of racially ambiguous people across racial categories.

This was the case until the more rigid classification structures were implemented in the apartheid regime, specifically the Population Registration Act (PRA) of 1950. When the apartheid government came to power in 1948, it wanted to institutionalise racial classifications

to formally protect "racial purity" (Posel 2001; Jacobson et al. 2004; Ellison and de Wet 2020; Pirtle, "White Supremacy" 2022). While there had been other bills to racially categorise the population in the pre-apartheid era, the PRA and the Group Areas Act of 1950 saw the solidification and rigid construction of racial categorisations, which remain present and reproduced in contemporary South Africa.

Although one could argue that because of the vagueness of racial classifications, race was socially constructed, which it was and is, biological beliefs about race were still prevalent, but only in so far as it excluded "blood" as a marker for white purity. Despite this, Hendrik Verwoerd, widely considered the architect of apartheid, argued that "there were no purely biological determinants for race" (Posel 101). The irony of apartheid racial classifications and ideology is prevalent in many of the apartheid nationalist propaganda, which was selected based on their use to advance Afrikaner nationalism. While the PRA did provide more criteria for racial classification, there was still a reliance on individual discretion but in a way that always linked race to social standing, which was the basis of the interlinking of class and race that was so prominent with apartheid society, which is evident today.

The PRA ensured that race and class became intertwined with the very fabric of everyday life in apartheid. In the conducting of a national census in 1951, various criteria were used, ranging from lining people up and yelling out who was "coloured" and who was "native" while walking down the line; to stating that men who played rugby were coloured, and those that played football were native (Posel 105-106). These examples show how loosely these racial categorisations were defined in the common-sense approach to racial classifications.

In their paper *The Classification of South Africa's Mixed-Heritage Peoples 1910–2011: A Century of Conflation, Contradiction, Containment, and Contention* (2020), George T. H. Ellison and Thea de Wet state that the PRA was initially presented as "a bureaucratic undertaking designed to establish a system of racial classification that would: resolve any prevailing uncertainty; facilitate the implementation of further race-based legislation; and assist those whose true racial identity was difficult to assess based on their appearance alone" (Ellison and de Wet 433). This was specifically the case for those classified as coloured. The threat of their racial ambiguity posed a significant problem of control for the apartheid government. Their very existence threatened the core tenants of the state regulation of racial purity, particularly their racial ambiguity, which blurred the lines between white and coloured. (Ellison and de Wet 434). It was never denied that the coloured population was racially mixed, and still, they were afforded more "privilege" within the apartheid state because of their association with whiteness. In the later years of the apartheid regime, they were used as political tools to "save"

apartheid through various forms of political power and inclusion. However, they were never considered equal or able to achieve whiteness if they could not "pass" in appearance.

State control of every part of South African life seeped into regulating the sexual relationships of its subjects, regardless of race. Laws like the Prohibition of Mixed-Marriages Act (PMM) of 1949 and the Immorality Act (IA) of 1950 were significant in state regulation of racial purity and racial classification and aimed to address the "problem" that coloured people posed to these ideals. Both laws made it illegal to have any sexual relationship with a person of another race and prevented marriage between people of different races. This, coupled with the Group Areas Act of 1950, which created racially demarcated areas for specific races to live, was intended to prevent racial mixing. Attitudes about the illegality of racial mixing became entrenched as values of apartheid society, which were policed by people and institutions. These conceptualisations of race and the illegality of racially mixing (not just sexually) are evident in the social fabric of post-apartheid, where many continue to police racial categorisations and segregation.

At the turn of democracy in 1994, South Africa entered the post-apartheid space. While the language of "post-" makes it seem like that period is over, contemporary South African society bears unfortunate geographical, spatial, racial and class resemblance to apartheid society. Archbishop Desmond Tutu coined the construction of the 'new' South Africa as a "Rainbow Nation", which refers to the diversity of the South African population racially and linguistically. In her paper, *Defining People: Analysing Power, Language and Representation in Metaphors of the New South Africa*, Pumla Gqola argues that Rainbowism as an ideology has become central to the national strategy for reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa as well as the project of non-racialism (Gqola, "Defining" 95).

In their paper, *Race and Nation in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2000), Moodley and Adam argue that "what lies at the heart of the South African dilemma is the tension between the ideal colour-blindness and the need to recognise race to diminish the reality of colour inequity" (Moodley and Adam 56). Although this piece was written more than twenty years ago, the calls for better strategies for racial transformation and the critique of colourblind policies remain (Ruiters 2009; Milazzo 2015; Pirtle 2021). Similarly, in their book *Paradise Lost. Race and Racism in Post-apartheid South Africa* (2022), Gregory Houston, Modimowabarwa Kanyane, and Yul Derek Davids lay out how non-racialism has not been achieved and how it can be achieved through creating strategies that can eradicate race. The central premise across all chapters is acknowledging how "racial privilege and stratification that shaped apartheid continue to play out in a post-apartheid context" (Houston et al. 14).

Thus, debates on racial transformation and redress have similar tones from the beginning of the post-apartheid era to now. Moodley and Adam argue that to achieve non-racialism meaningfully, ten legacies of racialisation from the apartheid era must be addressed. They argue that:

> By delineating different manifestations of race in South Africa, progress and continuity can be better discerned and specific strategies to combat racism devised and prioritised. Degrees of racial exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination differ in various realms or have disappeared altogether. Other forms of racial distancing are not experienced as offensive by some but are very much resented by others. Misunderstandings abound, and the ten landscapes of racial interaction can provide a road map of obstacles and clear stretches towards greater harmony (Moodley and Adam 56-57).

The first racialisation legacy they identify is legal racism. Here they acknowledge that while the racist laws that entrenched racial segregation and processes of racialisation have since been wholly annulled or repealed, the legacies of their destructiveness remain and are present in the structures of society where white supremacy is glaringly present (Moodley and Adam 57). Second and relatedly is scientific racism based on European justifications for colonialism (Moodley and Adam 57). While these beliefs are no longer popular within the mainstream discourse of diversity and multiculturalism, the resurgence of outwardly claiming to believe in biological racial differences has begun to rise again with right-wing populism. In post-apartheid South Africa, reliance on "common sense" constructions of race remains entrenched in racial transformation policies that still rely on apartheid racial categorisations set out in the Population Registration Act of 1950 for redress (Erasmus, "Confronting" 247).

Third is social racism, which Moodley and Adam argue is more subtle in the post-apartheid space, turning into more micro-aggression and subliminal forms of discrimination. Social racism is harder to police or combat as many still hold onto racist stereotypes for particular racial groups (Moodley and Adam 58). An example of this is the non-transformation of structures of whiteness that black, coloured and Indian people now must navigate. These formerly white-only spaces remain intrinsic in their typecasting of the racialised 'other' and have not had to transform. In contrast, those previously excluded must assimilate into whiteness to be accepted within these spaces.

Fourth is racism within sports, a huge talking point for transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. A large part of the Rainbow Nation ideology is wrapped up in the spectatorship of sporting events, most famously the 2010 FIFA World Cup and every time the national team

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of any sport plays in a World Cup. The significant debates on racism in sports link back to overspending on white schools and underspending on black and coloured schools in the apartheid era, a legacy that is glaringly evident in academic and sporting achievements, where merit over tokenism is central to this debate (Moodley and Adam 58-59).

Then concerning the ongoing pressure to meet white beauty standards, aesthetic racism is the fifth legacy of racialisation. Constructions of black bodies, and particularly the bodies of black women, have been detrimental to images of self-worth, leading to the consumerism of whiteness. Colonial powers used black female bodies as sites for colonial justifications of scientific racism. Black women were considered to rank the lowest on the 'racial hierarchy'. An example is the story of Sara Baartman, sometimes referred to incorrectly and derogatorily as the 'H*tt*nt*t[7] Venus'. Yvette Abrahams, in her paper, *Images of Sara Baartman: Sexuality, Race, and Gender in Early-Nineteenth Century Britain* (1998), writes of the tragic story of Sarah Baartman, brought as an enslaved person to London in 1810 from what today is known as South Africa, to be exhibited in Human Zoos for Europeans to show them how inferior black people were and display the 'animalistic' features of black woman (Abrahams 122).

Abrahams argues that representations of Sara Baartman at that time, as well as ones currently displayed of her, reflect the colonial imperial mindset that not only were Africans inferior but black women were hypersexualised savages (Abrahams 127). These stereotypes ran deeply into colonial thinking across colonial powers, where colonisers frequently raped enslaved Black women as they were not considered human. Similar stereotyping of black men as hypersexual and dangerous to the 'purity' of white women have equally played out in the effects of colonial legacies. These gendered legacies of racism largely remain, intact today.

Relatedly to the fifth legacy, the sixth, sexual racism remains prevalent in the post-apartheid space. The legacies of the illegality of interracial relationships, homosexual relationships and any perceived "sexual deviance" from apartheid constructions of purity and godliness remain persistent beliefs in the post-apartheid state. While there has been an increase in interracial marriages since the annulment of the Prohibition of Mixed-Marriages Act of 1949, rejection, isolation, and outright racism towards these couples remain (Childs 2015; Dalmage 2018; Steyn et al. 2018). In a paper titled *Legacies of the Sexualization of Race: The Impact of Dominant Narratives of Whiteness on Mixed-Race People in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2023), I highlighted how first-generation mixed-race people still feel the effects of sexualised

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[7] I have chosen to remove the vowels of this word so that it remains legible without writing the word entirely. This word is used explicitly as a derogatory term for coloured or indigenous people (Khoe/San/Nama/Griqwa) by the Dutch.

racism, despite not having lived during apartheid. Participants who identified as female expressed how they felt exoticised and fetishised by their peers because of their appearance and proximity to whiteness. Similarly, their bodies were sexualised because of their blackness, which they felt was a repetition of colonial constructions of black women's bodies as hypersexualised (Metcalfe, "Dominant" 94). Conceptions that mixed-race people and interracial relationships are catalysts to "fixing" racism are heavily mythologised in the post-apartheid space (Moodley and Adam 60). This is evidently not the case, as legacies of sexualised racism remain rampant.

Then the sixth legacy is cultural racism, where Eurocentric constructions and methods of knowledge are considered the universal standard for knowledge production. During the apartheid regime, African languages and cultural practices were all but banished from public spaces, and a heavy reliance was placed on English and Afrikaans (Moodley and Adam 61). This linguistic reliance remains in the post-apartheid schooling system, where black learners who attend white schools, report being told not to speak their native languages (Moodley and Adam 61). The colonial and apartheid racist belief of a lack of intelligence amongst black people and, therefore, money should not be spent on their education has created lasting legacies that reflect stereotypes that black people are not smart (Moodley and Adam 2000; Erasmus 2010; Letsoko et al. 2022).

Related to these debates is the eighth legacy of educational racism. Apartheid legacies of underfunding black and coloured schools have created lasting educational imbalance and access to resources. While there has been a considerable effort to desegregate the schooling and university systems, access to quality education and the resources that come with it remain elusive for many (Moodley and Adam 62). Those that do "make it" to universities then experience an uphill battle to compete with their better-resourced white peers, who have had access to well-resourced schools through their generational wealth.

Calls for decolonising the university curriculum have sparked debates about what decolonisation should look like in a South African university space. In 2015, the #RhodesMustFall movement began at the University of Cape Town, where students called for removing the statue of colonialist Cecil John Rhodes and decolonising the curriculum that privileged Eurocentric knowledge production. This ultimately led to the #FeesMustFall movement, where students protested the increasing price hikes in university fees, access to resources and financial support, and argued for the insourcing of cleaning staff into the university structures, and the decolonisation of universities. Universities have seen protests every year regarding these issues. While minimal efforts have been made, admission processes

and university demographics remain largely racially segregated (Erasmus, "Confronting" 248). Higher education remains predominantly white and elitist in post-apartheid South Africa.

As a result of this lack of access to educational spaces, the ninth legacy, economic-racial inequality, remains a significant legacy of racialisation in the post-apartheid sphere (Moodley and Adam 63). Wealth and economic power in South Africa remain in the hands of the white elite, who have not had to give up their intergenerational wealth or redistribute any of their land. While there has been a rise of black elites and the black middle class in the post-apartheid context, Letsoko et al., in their paper *The Struggle to Belong: Middle Classing and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2022), noted that there remains the expectation for this group to assimilate into white structures or neighbourhoods, where their traditions are not welcome or celebrated (Letsoko et al. 840). Moodley and Adam argue that the illusion of transformation and, thus, unity are hindrances to fundamental socio-economic transformation. The final racialisation legacy is psychological racism, where the legacies of the horrors and violence of apartheid continue to affect those who lived through it (Moodley and Adam 63). Intergenerational trauma is inherited by the 'born free' generation who juggle this trauma with the pressure to succeed in the freedom of the 'new' South Africa.

Evidently, these legacies of racialisation have not been overcome since Moodley and Adam's paper in 2000. Transformation processes are slow and often face institutional barriers and a lack of political will to some extent. How, then, can South Africa move towards the non-racial democracy that was initially envisioned if we continue to use race in its apartheid form? Moodley and Adam (2000) have used "racialisation" to describe how different aspects of racism exist. Does this mean that we should no longer use 'race' when discussing experiences of racism? Could this even be done in the South African context where biological constructions of race have been touted as social constructs in a racially skewed common-sense approach to racial classification?

In a chapter in the book *After Race* (2004), Robert Miles questions the validity of still using race as a concept within academic studies on race, or do these reproduce the very thing we want to overhaul? (Miles 26). Miles argues that we should consider a 'concept of racisms', which he defines as "the complex relationship of exploitation and resistance, grounded in differences of class, gender and ethnicity, give rise to a multiplicity of ideological constructions of the racialised "other"" (Miles 46). Therefore, arguing that race is not important outside of how people are racialised, where academics actively contribute to this process, where they matter is when racisms seek to naturalise, exclude, and sustain privilege.

The colonisers held power to dictate racial categorisations and, unfortunately, remain relevant in former colonies like South Africa, where apartheid categories of race are used in social and institutional structures. Considering Miles' argument that we should reconsider race as a part of our vocabulary or as a concept that can be used for study, would that lead to the end of racism? While Gilroy discussed the 'new racism' of the 1930s, Rattansi describes the 'new racisms' of the last 30 years. Rattansi distinguishes between 'old racism' and 'new racism'. He argues that 'old racism' is believing in the existence of the biological construction of distinct races that are hierarchically constructed, and are based on unchanging superior or inferior characteristics, and exists in natural contention with each other (Rattansi 95). Whereas 'new racism' has become more covert and considers culture and ethnicity rather than biology, it can be referred to as 'neo-racism' or 'the racism of cultural difference' (Rattansi 95-96).

To consider the complex nature of racism, Rattansi notes that commentators have begun to argue against using racism in a singular form and instead consider racisms as more aptly suited (106). In addition, Rattansi argues that it is impossible to offer a conclusive categorisation of types of racism, as racist beliefs take different forms in varying contexts (106). As a result, he argues that racialisation has become more common (Rattansi 107). The concept of racialisation, as Rattansi argues, moves research away from unproductive discussions about whether individuals, claims or propositions are racist or non-racist. Instead, it considers "more useful analyses of the different mixes of biological and cultural connotations of difference, superiority and inferiority that emerge in public and private statements, conversations, jokes" (Rattansi 107). Moreover, racialisation does not imply inferiority to those who experience it. Rather it encompasses the range of these experiences from harsh and violent racism to more subtle, nuanced, everyday racist micro-aggressions (Rattansi 107).

Racialisation is a better approach than the language of non-racialism, which can be viewed as being colourblind (Milazzo 8). Zimitri Erasmus, in her book *Race Otherwise* (2017), argues that "racialisation refers to everyday thought, action and institutional processes that (re-)make the idea of race and imbue it with cultural and political meaning. This process is key to power relations between people assigned to race groups and categories by the more powerful in these relations" (Erasmus, "Race Otherwise" 153). In this way, Erasmus locates processes of racialisation as a valuable access point of analysis within the South African context. Especially in that racialisation, unlike racism which focuses on a specific act, captures the processes of making and remaking race within the context of the socio-political knowledge and cultures (Erasmus, "Race Otherwise" 153).

What is evident within the processes of racialisation in post-apartheid South Africa is its deep entrenchment of and reliance on race within the fabric of society, which is only further exacerbated by racial transformation policies that rely on apartheid racial categorisations. Erasmus argues that we should consider a critical-standpoint approach where we aim to understand racism from an intersectional vantage point as it currently exists rather than solely based on its historical legacies (248). This is particularly important in how mixed-race identity is constructed in South Africa. While the terminology of mixed-race is not ideal and could also be argued that it reproduces ideas of biological race, processes of racialisation and the multiple racisms experienced remain a reality of deeply racialised societies like post-apartheid South Africa.

1.2.2. *Identity and Belonging*

The 'new' South African national identity has become synonymous with the Rainbow Nation ideology. The construction of the 'new' South Africa and a new "South Africanness", Gqola argues, is dependent "on the continuation of other identities because 'we are never only South Africans'" (Gqola, "Defining" 95). Meaning that the intersections of our identity can never be amalgamated into one neat box of only being considered South African; race, gender, and class are never far behind. In this way, identity becomes a fluid process, constantly shaped by the impact of various intersections of power in different social locations.

According to Stuart Hall in his chapter, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" (1990), identity can be considered a form of production, never a complete process, and constantly changing (Hall 222). From this, Hall introduces the term "cultural identity," which he defines in two ways. First, it stems from a shared culture and can be a collective of many true selves connected to a common history or shared ancestry (Hall 223). Within this definition, Hall argues that our shared history or ancestry creates a sense of 'oneness' amongst displaced people. Although Hall's arguments are based on the context of cultural identity amongst the Black Caribbean diaspora, his arguments relate to colonised people worldwide who struggle with their identity in a post-colonial environment.

The second definition of Hall's cultural identity acknowledges that while there are similarities within a shared cultural identity, differences define us as individuals. Therefore, as Hall argues, no one experience defines or shapes our identity; instead, there must be an acknowledgement of the ruptures, disruptions, and discontinuities in how history has intervened in constructing our identity(ies) (Hall 225). Thus, Hall argues that only through consideration of both elements of cultural identity can we understand the experiences of

colonised people and how they construct their identity(ies). Similarly, in *Against Race* (2000), Paul Gilroy argues that identity "helps us to comprehend the formation of the perilous pronoun 'we' and to reckon with the patterns of inclusion and exclusion that it cannot help creating" (99). Meaning that considering the relationship between identity and difference, sameness, and otherness, is a question of power and authority, mainly when a group views themselves as their own political entity (Gilroy 99).

On this point, Gilroy argues that when used for nationalist purposes, like creating uniformity amongst a particular group, identity is essential. Here, introducing uniformity and using symbols can encourage the illusion of sameness, as can the myths of nation-building rooted within 'divine favour' or 'moral sanctions' (Gilroy 102). Gilroy highlights a South African example to elaborate his point: Afrikaner nationalism was founded on the story of the 'Groot Trek'[8] (the great journey) and the Voortrekker Monument to commemorate this journey to become free from the British. Not only was this the basis of Afrikaner nationalism, but this rhetoric was also used to sustain it in what Gilroy calls "large-scale theatrical techniques for producing and stabilising identity" (103).

Through this, Gilroy argues that identity ceases to become an ongoing process, or what Hall calls a means of production. Thus, this dissertation considers both Gilroy's and Hall's approaches to understanding identity. Gilroy's caution of how uniformity can seek to fix identity rather than what Hall would argue is its natural form of fluidity is precisely the point this research aims to consider. That there can be no uniformity amongst first-generation mixed-race people, despite the influences of nationalist ideology and their own cultural identity. This research specifically aims to understand, as Hall argues, how history ruptures, disrupts, or discontinues their identity construction and how they have sought to make a space for themselves within a post-apartheid setting.

In their discussions about difference, Hall and Gilroy argue that it is through colonisation that colonisers attempted to create a 'homogenous other'. Through this, Hall argues that difference can challenge fixed binaries by considering identity along two axes. To explain, he uses the example of the Black Caribbean diaspora, where the two axes of "similarity and continuity" provides grounding and continuity in the past, and "difference and rupture" that shows how groups share disruptions in their history (Hall 226-227). Hall contends that when understanding colonised peoples, there is a paradox in that enslaved people came from

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[8] Afrikaans for the Great Journey – a defining moment in Afrikaner history where Afrikaans people travelled to find a 'homeland' in South Africa.

different parts of Africa, speaking different languages and had different traditions, but through the disruption of slavery and colonisation, there was a forced unification across their differences, while at the same time, cutting them off from their direct pasts (227). Moreover, Hall argues that meaning and representation are never complete; they evolve continually.

Locating their arguments in a South African context, identity in post-apartheid South Africa remains influenced by Rainbowism juxtaposed to the realities of historical legacies of structural oppression. The new national ideology was hoped to be a site of social and political unity. With the new democratic era, the government put much effort into constructing new discourses for the post-apartheid space to construct new realities that challenged the myths of the apartheid regime, not just channelling unity through sports, namely the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. These "new truths", as Gqola argues, "reinforce and legitimise unity as a master text in the definition of the parameters through which South Africanness can be inhabited as an identity" (Gqola, "Defining" 96). The primary way that this was done was through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) which began in 1996. The commission was set up to lay bare the crimes of apartheid as told by the victims and the perpetrators to create a cathartic process of national healing and expose the horrific crimes of the apartheid regime. While heavily influenced by Christian doctrines of confession, repentance and forgiveness (Cooppan 2012), the TRC became a site for establishing new national memory, which turned away from the apartheid regime's policy of silence.

Guided by the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995, the TRC investigated gross violations of bodily harm (GVHR), which was "defined as 'killing, abduction, torture or severe ill-treatment' emanating from 'conflicts of the past'" (Goldblatt and Meintjes 8). Definitions of each type of GVHR were decidedly narrow and did not account for gendered experiences of violence. Goldblatt and Meintjes (1998), Gqola (2001a) and Borer (2009) all argue that experiences of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence, were not adequately addressed at the TRC hearings. Similarly, systemic violence outside of the GVHR constructions, which affected women the most, was hardly acknowledged. While a special commission for women was created, where women could discuss their experiences of sexual violence within a closed hearing, very few women testified on sexual violence crimes explicitly (Goldblatt and Meintjes 1998; Gqola, "Defining" 2001a; Borer 2009). The dynamics of public and private dichotomies for sexual relations are a problematic hangover of apartheid and colonial legacies.

These legacies persist in deeply concerning ways despite the 'reconciliatory' legacies of truth and forgiveness that come from TRC-era ideology. Another visible irony of the

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Rainbow being evoked as a symbol of unity and freedom is that South Africa remains a largely conservative society where homophobia and transphobia thrive, usually in micro-aggressive or physically violent ways. While there are pockets of acceptance and queer culture, which is additionally supported by the constitution, members of the LGBTQIA+ community regularly experience violence. Black lesbian women in poor communities bear the brunt of profound homophobic violence and report high levels of rape and murder in this community (Muholi 2004; Matebeni 2016). South Africa's incredibly high rates of gender-based violence reflect the continued interlinkages between race, class, and gender to experiences of violence (Muholi 2004; Gqola, "Nightmare" 2015; Matebeni 2016; Gqola, "Fear" 2021). Sexual violence became a state-sanctioned weapon of the apartheid regime, where it was frequently used as a suppression tool for black and coloured women. In addition, sexual violence was also widespread within liberation movements. From 1 December to 16 December every year, South Africa observes 16 days of activism on gender-based violence, culminating on Reconciliation Day, a national holiday of unity. The irony of having a day for reconciliation proceeding over two weeklong dedication to eradicating violence shows the failures of the post-apartheid regime to address the legacies of violence that continue to be reproduced in South Africa.

The TRC confession-forgiveness-reconciliation rhetoric, coupled with the Rainbow Nation ideology of unity, is central to the construction of post-apartheid South African national identity and are running themes within literary works that are produced. In a study of ten first-generation mixed-race people, I asked participants about their thoughts on the Rainbow Nation ideology and whether they thought it was still meaningful in the post-apartheid space (Metcalfe 2022). Participants argued that not was the project of Rainbowism flawed, but the symbolism itself ignored opportunities for tangible redress and national healing (Metcalfe, "Dominant" 10-13). Olebogeng, a first-generation mixed-race man, felt that he could not see himself reflected within the image of a Rainbow where the colours are segregated. He says:

> The idea of the Rainbow Nation itself, it's a symbol of segregation because the colours are clearly defined in a rainbow, so when you say something is a Rainbow Nation, and that's what I've started to see growing up is that there are still these defined lines, whereas I don't see myself in that way, and I'd like to think that I don't see people in that way, that they are part of the Rainbow, which is why, it is kind of like my identity is aligned with that Rainbow or it's a mix of the Rainbow itself (Metcalfe, "Dominant" 11).

First-generation mixed-race people and those born in the 'born free' generation, like those in my study, were hoped to be the face of what unity and non-racial South Africa could look like.

However, Olebogeng's struggle to relate to this national ideology, despite playing a significant role in his experiences within his context, raises questions about how belonging is constructed within the contradictory nature of Rainbowism. On the one hand, you must be non-racial and project unity; on the other, you are expected to choose an 'acceptable' racial category within which to place yourself. In tandem with understanding identity, belonging is integral to understanding how people construct spaces for themselves in the societies to which they 'belong'.

In her paper, *Belonging and the Politics of Belonging* (2006), Nira Yuval-Davis argues that it is essential to distinguish between belonging and the politics of belonging. While belonging tends to come from an emotional attachment, it is naturalised; however, it only becomes politicised when threatened (Yuval-Davis, "Belonging" 197). Whereas the politics of belonging is encompassed by several political projects that aim to construct belonging in a specific way for a particular group but are built by those same projects (Yuval-Davis, "Belonging" 197). To Yuval-Davis, belonging can be a way to identify with others or to self-identify (199). For example, the need to create a new sustainable national ideology to construct a unified group of already fragmented people, as was the case for many post-colonial nations.

In addition, Yuval-Davis argues that belonging can come from how we see ourselves in relation to others, whether through ideology, resistance or individual or collective identities. In this way, political and ethical values influence attitudes concerning the how and where of identity construction and the categorical boundaries that should or should not be drawn (203). In her discussion of the politics of belonging, Yuval-Davis argues that it relates to how we construct identity within the idea of a nation or a community and that within this process, there is a construction of an 'us' and a 'them' (204).

If we maintain and reproduce boundaries within these communities, even within the same nation, that might seek to promote specific locations and positionalities above others; it leads to the creation of various levels of belonging (Yuval-Davis 206-207). Moreover, within these hierarchies, one can find themselves either in the periphery or centre of these social groupings in particular contexts. For example, immigrants who move to countries where they experience racism or prejudice can both 'belong' (with people who share similar experiences) and 'un-belong' (with those who resist their presence due to a false sense of nationalism) in that context. In the case of first-generation mixed-race people, as this dissertation will argue, they can belong to multiple groupings constructed around race while feeling as though they belong to none.

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Feelings of un-belonging have been the centre of debates on decolonisation in the post-apartheid era, particularly at universities, which have become protest sites. The #RhodesMustFall (RMF) and #FeesMustFall effectively raised awareness about the issues facing the post-apartheid generation. It was much more than a movement motivated by political and socio-economic factors; it was the culmination of the need for new ideologies other than Rainbowism and a reflection of the failures of post-apartheid society. In his book *Breaking a Rainbow, Building a Nation* (2018), Rekgotsofetse Chikane wrote about the importance of #RMF as a shift in redefining identities and the politics of belonging within post-apartheid society, noting that it was an essential catalyst to challenging the colonial underpinnings of white heteropatriarchal capitalist structures that have remained unchanged. He argues that "#RhodesMustFall imparted a message that called for universal moral equality between people that was reliant on the creation, by all of society, of a moral equivalence of the worst-off within our society, blacks and those who benefit from their impoverishment" (Chikane 87).

The #RMF movement ensured that black women remained front and centre of the movement's structure and output as part of the lessons learned from the exclusionary and patriarchal language of the writings by Steve Biko in his seminal book, I *Write What I Like* (1978) on the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM); and showing a critical reflexiveness on gender-based violence in post-apartheid South Africa and a commitment to actively not reproducing the silencing tactics of the previous liberation movements (Gqola, "Contradictory" 141-142). #RMF was heavily influenced by Black Consciousness and Radical Intersectional thinking. In its intersectional construction, #RMF was cognisant of the importance of linking multiple intersections of social locations to decolonisation, a response to the BCM focus on race as the primary tool of oppression.

While #RMF morphed into #FeesMustFall, the constructions and practical applications for decolonising white spaces from within remained, and the language of the Rainbow Nation may still be espoused in discussions of national unity that are still held onto by an out-of-touch government. Still, the new generation of South Africans critically reflects and challenges what "South Africanness" and a South African identity should and can look like. First-generation mixed-race people are active participants in this debate. Within the literary texts analysed in this paper, the mixed-race characters are represented as the sites of these contestations of identity and the politics of belonging.

1.2.3. Whiteness

Whiteness and white supremacy remain deeply entrenched within the post-apartheid landscape, and its structures are so steeped within the fabric of society that they have become invisibilised. Going forward, it is essential to clarify, in this research, 'whiteness' refers specifically to a system or power structure that privileges white people, stemming from legacies of colonial racialised practices that have been built into the structural and institutional make-up of societies, like South Africa. As Anoop Nayak, in his paper, *Critical Whiteness Studies* (2007)*,* argues, a common misconception about Whiteness Studies is that it is the opposition to white people. Instead, Nayak argues that three significant beliefs underpin critical whiteness studies:

1.   "Whiteness is a modern invention; it has changed over time and place.

2.   Whiteness is a social norm and has become chained to an index of unspoken privileges.

3.   The bonds of whiteness can yet be broken/deconstructed for the betterment of humanity" (Nayak 738).

Nayak believes that understanding paradigms on whiteness that consider abolishing, deconstructing, and rethinking white identities could lead scholars to "observe the many shades of difference that lie within this category – that some people are 'whiter' than others, some are not white enough, and many are inescapably cast beneath the shadow of whiteness" (Nayak 738). Critical whiteness studies can challenge and subvert the construct that whiteness is a universal norm (Nayak 738). Similarly, in his chapter, "The Contentious Field of Whiteness Studies" (2017), Jun Mian Chen argues that whiteness studies provide an opportunity to explore racism, thereby creating the potential to contribute to our understanding of racial justice (Chen 15).

Since it emerged as a widespread academic field of study in the Global West during the 1990s, Chen argues that whiteness studies have taken two distinctive umbrella approaches: historical and experiential. The first refers to scholars who analyse the historical roots of whiteness through understanding it as a fluid concept and is thus subject to transformation (Chen 15). The latter refers to scholars who are primarily white themselves and therefore analyse "whiteness as a social condition of white people that needs to be acknowledged, exposed and ultimately resisted" (Chen 15). An example of the experiential approach would be Peggy McIntosh's *White Privilege and Male Privilege* (1995), which Chen argues has led to many "socially identified" white people examining their privilege with the benefits they receive from institutional and structural white supremacy (Chen 15).

From a historical perspective, Chen argues that whiteness, as a term, was socially constructed during European colonisation to set themselves apart from those they colonised, leading to the modern propensity to equate whiteness and white people with European origins (Chen 15-16). These categorisations of difference based on binary groupings of black people and white people stems from the representations of the "other" and formed the foundation for the justification of the slave trade, which created the conditions for the fabric of society to become embedded within white supremacist ideology (Chen 16). As a result of this history, both whiteness and blackness emerged simultaneously, yet "whiteness is the invisible while blackness is that which is visible" (Chen 16). This invisibility of whiteness speaks directly to Nayak's point that whiteness has operated as a "taken-for-granted" category which is so mundane that it passes without comment (Nayak 737).

In South Africa, writing and knowledge produced about whiteness are widespread. Especially as it relates to the constructions of white identities and how they have shifted and maintained through multiple historical contexts, in her seminal work, "*Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used to Be": White Identity in a Changing South Africa* (2001), Melissa Steyn investigates the constructions of whiteness within the post-apartheid context. Although it stems from strong European origins, whiteness in South Africa is constructed and has survived within unique conditions in the South African context. Steyn argues that the "peculiarities" of South African whiteness can be noted in two aspects. First, "white people never achieved a comfortable assurance of their political, cultural, and even physical survival in the land they colonised, as did whites in other deep settler countries" (Steyn, "Whiteness" 25). In this way, whiteness was constructed within the fear that it would always face resistance from the majority black groups and was constantly on the verge of cultural genocide as a result (25). This logic was a key motivating factor for Afrikaner nationalism and the need to establish Afrikaans as a dominant language to ensure cultural longevity. The second is that because of the conflict between the two white settler groups, the Boers (Afrikaners) and the British, two different ethnic white groups were created (Steyn, "Whiteness" 25-26). Although both groups view themselves as being distinct from the other, they each maintain their association with whiteness and don't construct the other as the "non-white other[9]" (Steyn, "Whiteness" 26).

As previously noted, Afrikaner nationalism relied heavily on establishing themselves as their own distinct ethnic group by distancing themselves from their Dutch settler colonial

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[9] Because of the problematic nature of the term "non-white" – a colonial and apartheid hangover which further dehumanises people of colour – I use it only through quotations marks, either in quotes or phrasing from other authors, which are cited.

roots. Cornel Verwey and Michael Quayle, in their study, *Whiteness, Racism and Afrikaner Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2012), outline how historical constructions of Afrikaner identity are shifting in the post-apartheid context. They argue that Afrikaner nationalism has consistently been based on a network of themes of cultural and racial purity, language, religion and perceived victimhood which intertwine to form an intense form of nationalism (Verwey and Quayle 553). Like Steyn's arguments, Verwey and Quayle note the overt reliance on fearmongering within Afrikaner nationalism of the threat that the black majority poses to their constructed identity. Coupled with racist beliefs of white superiority, the perceived threat to their identity championed the entrenchment of racial segregationist policies of the apartheid era. On Afrikaner nationalism:

> Afrikaner nationalism constructed and maintained Afrikaner identity, as well as the ideology of apartheid. The use of Afrikaner cultural and historical symbols (including the Afrikaans language) formed a very important part of this construction. Afrikaner nationalism was instrumental in constructing Afrikaner identity as the most powerful ethnic identity in apartheid South Africa. This 'version' of Afrikaner identity was then maintained by a self-referential world. Afrikaner nationalism, apartheid, and Afrikaner identity were, for many years, practically inseparable (Verwey and Quayle 556-558).

Wrapped in the construction of Afrikaner nationalism is the persistent colonial ideology of white superiority or the "master narrative of whiteness", as Steyn terms it, which endures in constructions of whiteness and white identity in a system built for it to thrive. In the case of Afrikaner nationalism, they capitalised on this system and established laws to entrench its longevity further. Steyn reflects on this legacy that "race is certainly not just skin deep. Indeed, it is generations deep and continents wide" (xvii). In her reflection, Steyn considers the intergenerational constructions of whiteness and how it adapts within various forms to sustain white supremacy, the enduring aim of Afrikaner nationalism. At the turn of democracy, white people experienced a sense of precarity for what their association as lasting beneficiaries of whiteness would mean in the post-apartheid context. Pumla Gqola, in her book *What is Slavery to Me? Postcolonial/Slave Memory in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2010) investigates how white identity has attempted to mutate to fit within new national narratives of the post-apartheid regime.

Both Gqola and Verwey and Quayle note that although white South Africans tended to acknowledge to some extent the horrors of apartheid, they distance themselves from being personally culpable. Verwey and Quayle found that their participants tended to distance

themselves from perceived outdated stereotypes and extreme caricatures – like how all Afrikaans wore Khaki clothing and matching long socks – to present themselves in more modern and progressive ways (561). In addition, participants argued how the negative connotations of Afrikaner identity – like being responsible for apartheid – damage their cultural identities (Verwey and Quayle 561). In contrast to the importance placed on the Afrikaans language during apartheid, in the post-apartheid setting, participants were eager to distance themselves from Afrikaans' personal importance in their lives (Verwey and Quayle 563).

Verwey and Quayle note how participants place their Afrikaner identity as secondary to their whiteness in the post-apartheid setting. While they do not reject their Afrikaner identity, they value and recognise the affordances of whiteness and hold on to its privileges (Verwey and Quayle 567). Again, in contrast to apartheid constructions of Afrikaner nationalism, participants aligned themselves with English-speaking white South Africans, with whom they identified the commonality of their whiteness, espoused through 'us' language (Verwey and Quayle 567). In questioning why participants sought to emphasise their whiteness, despite the negative connotations attached to whiteness in the post-apartheid setting, Verwey and Quayle found three reasons:

> The first is that whiteness is not something that *can* be jettisoned so easily, since it is literally 'written' on the skin. The second, lies in a shared sense of being under threat. The third lies in pragmatic usefulness: while language, history, and culture are part of Afrikaner identity, they are not useful in post-apartheid South Africa. Whiteness, on the other hand, still affords access to power and privilege. While political power is no longer the privilege of white South Africans, economic privilege continues (567-568).

While participants actively try to distance themselves from the legacies of apartheid by rejecting Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid ideology, in attempts to carve out a space of belonging in post-apartheid South Africa, participants claimed their identity as inherently African. This claim, however, is not new to the post-apartheid era. Steyn argues that Afrikaner white nationalism has been historically conditioned to view itself as separate from its European origins to become 'native' to South Africa (xi). This idea of Afrikaner indigeneity was central to apartheid propaganda.

The complexities of the terminology of African and who can be African are steeped within apartheid race language, where African was used as a racial category for black people. Conversely, European was used as a racial category for white people. 'Africa' has also been used as a racial categorisation in the post-apartheid era, thereby adding to complications of who

has access to transformation policies (Verwey and Quayle 555-556). In agreement, Gqola argues that white identity(ies) in the post-apartheid era has mutated to intertwine itself with the history of indigenous Khoi and enslaved people ("Slavery" 110).

A play made for Afrikaner audiences in 1995, just after the turn of democracy, titled "Onser ma"/our mother, was based on the story of Krotoä/Eva, a famous Khoi woman who worked as an interpreter for the infamous Dutch colonialist Jan van Riebeek. Krotoä also married a Dutch man and had mixed-race children with him. After his death, the children were forcibly taken from her to be raised as Dutch, and she was exiled to Robben Island to die. The treatment of Krotoä is an example of early Dutch colonialist tactics. The attempt to reclaim Krotoä due to her production of mixed-race children also highlights the reclaiming of the historical legacies of racial mixing within Afrikaner families. Where once these legacies were silenced as part of the "common sense" approach to racial classifications, in the post-apartheid setting, these are embraced in an attempt to, as Gqola argues "symbolically reposition themselves in the present" with Krotoä as their foremother or in Afrikaans, *stammoeder* ("Slavery" 111).

This appropriation dressed as reclamation requires a deliberate "forgetting" of the colonial impact of Krotoä's life story, which, as Gqola argues, is ultimately a battle for repositioning power in the post-apartheid space. Krotoä becomes a valuable tool to foster belonging in an identity-seeking legitimisation. In her book, *Remembering the Nation, Dismembering Women? Stories of the South African Transition* (2007), Meg Samuelson argues that the "Krotoä-Eva we encounter in cultural texts produced during the South African transition by white South Africans claiming belonging in the rainbow nation through identification with her domesticated figure" (18). In this way, Krotoä's devastating experience at colonial hands has been reproduced on countless black and brown women, from colonialism to apartheid, and she is reduced to a docile motherly figure. A jarring shift compared to the hypersexualised construction of "other" female bodies who were not white women that were espoused for centuries by settler colonial and apartheid sexualised racism.

The assertions of indigeneity through the appropriation of Krotoä in the hopes of redefining African identity is ultimately a denial of the destructive nature and legacies of intergenerational trauma inflicted on much of the population while continuing to benefit from their oppression (Gqola, "Slavery" 123). These reflect not only a failure to understand the extent of trauma inflicted but a whitewashing of history that does not require critical reflection while keeping power structures intact. Gqola argues that these attempts to capitalise on

Blackness "depoliticise race and ahistoricise power relations" ("Slavery" 129). The outcomes of these attempts can be summarised as follows:

> They are as much about erasure as dominant white identities were during apartheid: there is no history to make sense of no reconciliation to participate in, no engagement with white privilege for those who have to be white. In contrast, forced into a different kind of usefulness and servitude, Black women historical subjects are trapped in the same relationship with white South Africans who have repressed their support for apartheid by forgetting whiteness in ways that mask its historic and ongoing effects (Gqola, "Slavery" 129).

As is evident, constructions of racial identity are always deeply steeped within gendered dynamics. The construction of white femininity was a central feature of Afrikaner nationalism, where Black bodies were demonised, and white bodies praised. The level of white heteropatriarchy experienced by white women in apartheid does not exclude them from being perpetrators of oppression. Their proximity to whiteness protects and still protects them within white supremacist structures. Azille Coetzee, in her paper *Afrikaner Nationalism and the light side of the Colonial/modern gender system: understanding white patriarchy as colonial race technology* (2021), argues that the construction of the white heteropatriarchal family was foundational in the language of Afrikaner national identity, for which the white woman was responsible.

The *volksmoeder*/people's mother constructed the white Afrikaner woman as a mother and wife who served her country and her husband by protecting the racial purity of the Afrikaner identity (Coetzee 99). Compulsory heterosexuality was essential for family life and the core religious piousness attached to Afrikaner nationalism (Coetzee 100). Coetzee argues that "Afrikaner nationalism was deeply invested in harnessing and disciplining white women's reproductive capacity in services of the racialised traditional family" to the extent that white women were denied abortions due to the "vulnerability of whiteness"" (101). Similarly, Steyn argues that "whiteness needed to create docile bodies, both of its women and of those it marked as excluded" ("Whiteness" 20).

White men were expected to protect white women from being "taken" by Black men. The Swaartgevaar/Black Peril's narratives were an integral justification for the need to control white women's sexuality. The colonial belief that Black men were overtly sexually virile, coupled with the perceived threat that Black men wanted to rape white women, is not a narrative exclusive to the South African context. The use of this narrative to justify white male domination over white women is evident in the vilification of white women who "crossed racial

lines", which is viewed as a loss of patriarchal control (Coetzee 102; Steyn, "Whiteness" 20). Coetzee argues that the *Swaartgevaar* narrative endures in the post-apartheid setting, where depictions of criminal behaviour remain associated with black men (102-103).

The apartheid legacy of black women providing cheap domestic labour to white women has also endured post-apartheid. Gqola argues that the historical domestication of black women within the play about Krotoä, where her relationship to Jan van Riebeek is portrayed as a father-daughter relationship, reflects the ironic nature of apartheid rhetoric ("Slavery" 119). This "domestication" is reflected in the number of black women who cared/care for white children during apartheid, despite the construction of black femininity as being hypersexualised. The disproportionate number of black women who are currently still doing domestic work as cheap labour in post-apartheid South Africa remains another untransformed legacy, except the whitewashing of this historical legacy of exploitation is now wrapped up in the concept of the black domestic worker as being "part of the family", a popular response to discussions about living wages for domestic workers. Steyn addresses this issue:

> Enabled by economic and political advantage, hundreds of everyday trivia reinforced the sense of white superiority in a self-fulfilling manner. Even work relations, the one arena in which whites and blacks encountered each other, were mostly alienated, with the possible exception of one deeply gendered anomaly. Black women working as domestic servants in white households frequently acted as de facto mothers to white children, giving rise to race/gender intersections that influenced identity...the peculiar logic of racism managed to explain any anomalies or contradictions in ways that blamed the victim, thus maintaining the white self-image of respectability ("Whiteness" 40).

Here, the domestication of black women has once again been done to suit the need for a changing narrative of whiteness without the critical reflection it requires. Mutations of white identity continue to shift at a general level. Verwey and Quayle note that white Afrikaners know how to blend into public spaces and manage public perceptions of themselves. Privately, however, Verwey and Quayle identify what they call "*braai* place" politics. A *braai*/barbeque is a central feature of South African life. It is where the men gather to discuss politics while the women prepare other food in the kitchen. In this setting, Verwey and Quayle observed that when in public, participants tailored their racist comments or jokes because "people might take [them] the wrong way" (565). The participants attributed this shift to negative perceptions about Afrikaners rather than recognising the problem of using racist language.

An example of this, highlighted in Verwey and Quayle, is a participant who stated, "Don't tell a k*ff*r he's a k*ff*r, he's a human being, man" (565). The use of this derogatory language to seem progressive is an attempt to depoliticise its very real and traumatic historical legacy of treating black people as sub-human. Instead of using the language of equality, the participant still comfortably uses this terminology to describe the person he is trying to show that he now sees as a human being. Other participants echoed the continued use of the K-Word when speaking about black people, showing their private persona while being aware of public expectations to condemn racism (Verwey and Quayle 566). In addition to projecting their transformation to fit within the new South Africa and claiming Africa as part of their identity, participants also made statements glorifying apartheid by comparing it to the failures of the new majority black post-apartheid government:

> This participant sets up the apartheid past as a 'golden age' when 'we' were in charge and the country was 'right'. Now that whites are no longer in power, he argues, South Africa can 'only go backwards' and 'can never come right again'. Once again, this central pillar of apartheid ideology – that blacks are incapable of governing themselves – is recycled openly, without shame or defence (Verwey and Quayle 570).

This quote shows that constructions of Afrikaner identity in the post-apartheid era are based on picking and choosing historical moments that benefit a positive image of a transformed, progressive and more liberal identity in the public sphere. They can still maintain and discuss the glory days of apartheid comfortably in their racist language in private. While a lot has been written about the constructions and reconstructions of Afrikaner identity, the construction of the 'white liberal' is most often used mainly for English-speaking white people, who separate themselves from the 'negative' connotations of whiteness by separating themselves from the Afrikaner.

The white, English-speaking liberal was present in apartheid as a person who opposed the apartheid regime while accepting the benefits and privileges it afforded them. Describing white liberalism during apartheid, Biko (1978) defined white liberals as "people who claim that they too feel oppression just as acutely as the blacks and therefore should be jointly involved in the black man's struggle for a place under the sun. In short, these are people who say that they have black souls wrapped up in white skins" (21). In explanation of this point, Biko goes on to say that white liberals "vacillate between the two worlds, verbalising all the complaints of the blacks beautifully while skilfully extracting what suits them from the exclusive pool of white privilege" (23).

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Biko's arguments reference the involvement of white people in the anti-apartheid movements. He highlights a critical issue that continues into the post-apartheid era: the lack of accountability for the benefits that were received because of the structures of whiteness for white people during settler colonialism and apartheid. While participants in Verwey and Quayle's study did not distance themselves from whiteness or the privilege that came with it, they instead recognised the negative connotations of racism attached to Afrikaner identity rather than to whiteness. In the case of white liberals (of which Afrikaners are not considered part of, to a larger extent), they aligned themselves with anti-apartheid movements and anti-racist ideologies to establish themselves within defining a potential new South Africa. While, of course, there were many white anti-apartheid fighters/activists that were deeply committed to the movement in meaningful ways, what Biko discusses here are the structural experiences of whiteness even for those committed to the movement:

> The liberals view the oppression of blacks as a problem that has to be solved, an eye sore spoiling an otherwise beautiful view. From time to time the liberals make themselves forget about the problem or take their eyes off the eyesore. On the other hand, in oppression the blacks are experiencing a situation from which they are unable to escape at any given moment. Theirs is a struggle to get out of the situation and not merely to solve a peripheral problem as is the case for liberals (Biko 24).

In the post-apartheid space, Daniel Conway, in his paper *Shades of White Complicity: The End Conscription Campaign and the Politics of White Liberal Ignorance in South Africa* (2017), echoes Biko's sentiments. Conway argues that because all white people were "economic, social, and in broad terms, political beneficiaries of apartheid", they can be all be considered to in some ways be complicit in apartheid (122). By emulating the language of the new South Africa, white people proclaim their support for non-racialism while still viewing themselves as legitimate definers of the new language of the post-apartheid space. As Steyn and Foster conceptualise, this 'White Talk' ensures that white people can maintain their privilege by inserting themselves into defining the terms of non-racialism and transformation. In this way, Conway argues, they preserve their status and power within the post-apartheid space (122).

On the point of white complicity, Conway argues that white liberals are often in defence of their role in apartheid by maintaining ignorance of the horrors that occurred around them (123). This feigned ignorance can no longer be accepted as the TRC aimed to lay the crimes of the apartheid regime bare in front of the nation. However, white ignorance is maintained

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through academic institutions and media outlets that attempt to shift the narrative that post-apartheid South Africa should focus on meritocracy and non-racialism (Conway 124). As previously noted, the #RMF movement focused on decolonising academic institutions. This included challenging the predominance of white academics in university structures. Conway argues that when challenged about their complicity in apartheid, white academics argued that they were at the "forefront of white opposition" and thus excluded them from the racial transformation of academics at universities (126). Echoing Biko, Conway argues that the espousing of 'White Talk' is "actively and intentionally complicit in defending and perpetuating ongoing forms of racial privilege" (125), especially in a society where white liberals remain in dominant positions in university structures and media outlets where they continue to benefit from economic power (Conway 136).

On the point of decolonisation of structural whiteness within universities and institutions, Achille Mbembe, in his piece *Decolonising Knowledge and the Question of the Archive* (2015), argues that whiteness works well when it is mythologised into being an omnipresent yet invisible structure. Echoing the need for the decolonisation of white spaces, Mbembe highlights the importance of transforming and restructuring colonial and apartheid constructions of whiteness to understand how its structures remain pervasive in post-apartheid society; thereby being critical of the 'White Talk' espoused by white liberals that attempt to erase and depoliticise inherent whiteness. To this point, Gqola highlights the pervasiveness of white solipsism in the post-apartheid space ("Defining" 101).

Coined by Adrienne Rich, white solipsism "refers to the tendency to think, imagine and speak as if whiteness described the world" and is a "tunnel vision which simply does not see non-white experience or existence as precious or significant unless spasmodic, impotent guilt-reflexes, which have little or no long-term, continuing momentum or political usefulness" (Gqola, "Defining" 101). In this way, experiences of whiteness are universalised, thus requiring no critical reflections. Like the white ignorance that Conway described, white solipsism, in its nature, is out of touch with the reality of the lived experiences of those oppressed years of multifaceted oppression.

While those white liberals in interracial relationships defied the apartheid regime and challenged its laws of racial purity, they still benefited from the economic power that whiteness afforded and continues to afford them. Although access to whiteness was jeopardised and, in some ways, limited access to the generational benefits that structural whiteness affords, cultural capital remains. In their chapter, *Strategies Employed by Biracial People When Encountering Unofficial Racial Census-Takers in Post-apartheid South Africa* (2022), Natasha Van der Pol,

Zaynab Essack, Melissa Viljoen and Heidi van Rooyen discuss the notion of passing. Not limited to first-generation mixed-race people, 'passing' as another race for upward racial mobility in apartheid was also done by racially ambiguous coloured people. However, Van der Pol et al. identify that mixed-race people who are perceived or able to 'pass' as white might choose to do so in situations where they feel unsafe to reveal their entire racial heritage (274). 'Passing' is a controversial concept. As Van der Pol et al. note, "passing for white perpetuates the cycle of what is constructed as white privilege in post-apartheid South Africa" (274). Additionally, the mixed-race person themselves does not actively try to 'pass for white'; instead, they are perceived to do so by others who view them within the limited constructions of racial categorisation.

Similarly, in my study on first-generation mixed-race people, I also focused on participants with one white parent to understand the specific effects of whiteness in how they constructed their identities. While no participants considered themselves white or attempted to 'pass' as white, they discussed the challenges of reconciling whiteness's inherently violent and destructive nature in South Africa concerning their identity formations. However, for all participants, although they have access to whiteness, in a limited way through their white parent, they do not experience its benefits directly outside of the benefits received by their white parent:

> Although participants were raised in different cities that have their own specific racialised segregation and historical legacies, the White institutional culture prevalent in historically White schools standardised and replicated in White educational institutions across the country, thereby entrenching a specific version of South African Whiteness that maintains dominant narratives of Whiteness. Some mixed-race people can achieve this based on class, those who have a White parent benefit from the legacies of Whiteness that might include generational wealth, a historical legacy of higher education or ownership of land. The access to White privilege is steeped in the way they access the institutional culture of historically White spaces, albeit conditionally (Metcalfe, "Dominant" 13).

In this way, whiteness maintains its exclusive nature. Through their very existence, first-generation mixed-race people could disrupt the purity of whiteness; however, South African whiteness is steeped within common sense race approaches, and mixed-race people can either move between these spaces or not, depending on societal acceptance of their identity(ies). Although participants were reflexive of structures of whiteness, they were self-

reflexive on their "participation and simultaneous oppression by White supremacist structures" (Metcalfe, "Defining" 16). Therefore, outlining whiteness, including its pervasiveness and relevance within post-apartheid society, is crucial to identifying how whiteness seeps into the narrative world. In my analysis of the selected literary texts, this research investigates the complexities of navigating and negotiating structures of whiteness is a persistent feature in the representation of first-generation mixed-race people.

1.2.4. Colouredness and Mixedness

Mixed-race identity has a long history in South Africa. Unfortunately, this history is marred with sexual and physical violence at the hands of colonising forces and the displacement of indigenous and enslaved people, leading to lasting legacies of trauma. This is not to say that this is the only way mixed populations developed. The construction of the mixed population in South Africa was solidified through years of laws that enforced racial categorisations and classifications that stemmed from colonial-era policies that extended into apartheid. In his book, *Burdened by Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa* (2009), Mohamed Adhikari argued that because of laws like the Group Areas Act (1950) and the Prohibition of Mixed-Marriages Act (1950), coupled with the separate racial category of 'coloured', coloured people developed into being viewed as their own[10] race where coloured people who had children with other coloured people, had coloured children (xxi). Because of this, South Africa is considered to have the largest population of self-identifying coloured people on the African continent. Countries like Zambia, Zimbabwe and Nambia also have self-identifying-coloured populations.

Coloured identity is denoted as a "person with mixed-race ancestry" (Adhikari viii). While this definition is seemingly vague, it was meant to include people who were not white/European and not black/African. The construction of this category was formed out of racist colonial ideology that focused on maintaining social control over the colonised population, thus leading to an internalisation of this category by those demarcated within it. The apartheid categorisation of 'coloured' included multiple ethnic groups under one racial category. These included "Cape Coloured, Cape Malay, Griqua, Indian (but eventually became a standalone racial category), Chinese, "other Asiatic, and "other Coloured" (Reddy 75).

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[10] See Zoë Wicomb's argument about the ways in which the apartheid government tried to construct the racial category of coloured as racially pure in "Shame and Identity: The Case of the Coloured in South Africa." *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid, and Democracy, 1970–1995*, edited by Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998. 91–107.

While the existence of coloured identity has long been debated, it has endured and continues to be used within the post-apartheid context. These debates primarily focus on the construction of relative privilege for coloured people over black/African people through colonisation and reinforced through the apartheid regime (Adhikari x). Although coloured identity has its origins within Dutch colonialism, it was only really solidified after the emancipation of the Khoisan and enslaved people (Adhikari xi). Adhikari argues that with the integration of those considered to be mixed, or derogatorily referred to as "half-castes", rebuffed, attempts to form their own separate identities were made; namely, an identity that highlighted their 'civilised' nature because they were descendants of Europeans, which resulted in faux privilege within this system (xi).

The construction of coloured identity in South Africa comes from different roots, which Adhikari categorises into four strands of thought. The first is that coloured identity only stems from miscegenation, which he calls the essentialist group of thought (7). This aligns with the belief that coloured people exist because they are products of European miscegenation, and therefore "racial hybridity is taken to be the essence of colouredness" (Adhikari 7). Adhikari highlights a particular 'joke' often told about coloured people, which highlights this thinking that "coloured people were born nine months after Van Riebeek landed (7). While some coloured people were born out of this situation, not all were, some were brought as enslaved people from Southeast Asia and were classified as coloured. In addition, coloured identity endured because it was established and then received recognition for being separate from black/African people. In essentialist thought, coloured people are constructed as bystanders to historical events rather than actors with the historical agency (Adhikari 8).

The second thought focuses on liberal essentialists that believe that racial segregation was not in line with early colonial society, which relied on integration and assimilation of the coloured population (Adhikari 9). In this way, miscegenation was considered an example of this integration while still defining coloured people as their own specific race. The third thought, the instrumentalist approach, considers coloured identity as an artificial construct created and sustained by white supremacy meant to entrench societal control (Adhikari 11). In this strand, Adhikari argues that "seeing coloured identity simply as a device for excluding people of 'mixed-race' from the dominant society to viewing it conspiratorially as the product of deliberate divide-and-rule tactics by the dominant white minority to prevent the black people from forming a united front against racism and exploitations" (11). In this conceptualisation of coloured identity, it is assumed to be a fluid and ongoing process where coloured people make and remake their identity(ies).

The final strand, which Adhikari argues shows the most promise for understanding coloured identity in the post-apartheid context, is viewing it as a "product of creolisation" (16) and stemming from discussions about creolisation in Zimitri Erasmus's *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place* (2001), where coloured identity is understood as a cultural identity that has been shaped by the white supremacist legacies of oppression (Adhikari 16). Erasmus argues that "coloured identities are not based on 'race mixture' but on cultural creativity, creolised formations shaped by South Africa's history of colonialism, slavery, segregation and apartheid" (4). In this way, Erasmus attempts to avoid black/white reductionism that does not acknowledge the fluidity of identity(ies).

Erasmus outlines her argument on coloured identity as a form of creolisation. First, defining coloured identity through the prism of 'race-mixture' is a continuation of racial eugenics that ignores how colonial encounters created and sustained cultural formations (Erasmus, "History" 7). Second, coloured identity is constantly created and recreated by coloured people to create meaning; therefore, it is not only a production of apartheid racial classifications imposed onto them (Erasmus, "History" 7). Third, although historical legacies have positioned coloured people between black and white, there must be an acknowledgement of complicity in suppressing black/Africans (Erasmus, "History" 8). Finally, in the 'new' South Africa, there is a need to move away from reductionist views of 'blackness' or 'Africanness' and to emphasise "reflexive political practice" with the acknowledgement of the contradictions and trauma of the past (Erasmus, "History" 8-9).

Erasmus argues that historically, coloured identity has been viewed with negative connotations, where it has been associated with shame, promiscuity, impurity and illegitimacy (9). In this way, coloured people have been constructed within this ambiguous position where they are not considered to have a culture because they are not European or African (Erasmus, "History" 9). Even within the Black Consciousness Movement, which was predicated on identifying white supremacy as a dividing force amongst people who were not white, coloured people within the movement were considered to be "blacks of a special type" (Erasmus, "History" 9).

In the post-apartheid setting, Erasmus argues that the rainbow nation as a construction of national identity is limited towards being inclusive of coloured people, as it limits the ability to create new language and vocabulary through its non-racialist approach (Erasmus, "History" 15). In addition, constructions of the authenticity of African identities and the association of whiteness with Europeanness ignore the possibility of hybridised identities, like that of coloured identity (Erasmus, "History" 15). Erasmus argues that these two points make it

difficult to include coloured identity in positive ways within the national identity discourse in post-apartheid society. To do this meaningfully, Erasmus states that there needs to be a reframing of coloured identities to move beyond 'mixed-race' interpretations to where it is viewed as a creolised cultural identity that has been shaped by the historical legacies of the contexts in which it is formed.

Similarly, in the chapter, *Collaboration, assimilation and Contestation: emerging constructions of coloured identity in Post-apartheid South Africa* (2009), Michele Ruiter argues that constructions of identity in the post-apartheid era continue to use race and ethnicity for identity markers, which reflect the same apartheid conceptualisations of these categories (106). Therefore, arguing that "a national identity needs to be cognisant of localised identities that continue to constitute and reconstitute the mainstream" (Ruiters 107). Perceptions of coloured identity in the post-apartheid, as a result of the complex historical legacy, have created a fragile sense of belonging for coloured people (Ruiters 115). On this point, Erasmus argues that coloured identity(ies) are "produced and reproduced in the place of the margin" (Erasmus, "History" 20). However, that is not to say that coloured people do not have agency in the production of their own identity, "processes of creolisation involve agency" (Erasmus, "History" 21).

Thus, Erasmus argues that coloured identity must always be considered within its historical legacy. Which requires recognition and interrogation of how coloured identities were formed by compromises for the privilege at the cost of fellow black South Africans (Erasmus, "History" 22). Erasmus expands on this point, arguing that coloured identities are constructed as "less than white but better than black" (Erasmus, "History" 22). Therefore, exposing the shades of complicity that are inherently rooted in coloured identity is necessary if one is to claim coloured identity, especially within the post-apartheid space. While many coloured people rejected their coloured identity under apartheid to be accepted within the liberation movement to be considered Black, under its Black Consciousness framing, Erasmus reflects on why this is problematic for her personally within the post-apartheid era:

> For me, it is a 'truth' which defies the safe prison or the dominant ideology: that
> I ought to identify only as black and not coloured; that coloured identity is an
> illusion from which I need to be saved by my black sisters who promise to put
> me in the right road and confer my 'true' blackness upon me; that the former
> aspect of my identity is best discarded as a relic of the past. I refuse the safety
> of identifying only as 'black' because it allows me to forget or deny the 'truth'
> of racial hierarchies between coloured and African and of present privilege, and

their significance in the formation of their own identities. The safety of identifying only as 'black' denies that 'better than black' element of coloured identity formation. It denies complicity. It denies the privileges of being coloured. It places engagement in racial relations of power outside of the coloured self. Identifying only as black further expresses the desire for political authenticity ("History" 25).

Erasmus' reflection highlights the complexities of racism within the coloured community. This acknowledgement of the negative legacies of coloured identity are directly opposed to the one brush fits all notion of the Rainbow Nation. It also leads to a further discussion about the reality of racial categorisations and power structures within the post-apartheid space and how they are reproduced or created. Whitney Pirtle, in her study *"White People Still Come Out on Top": The Persistence of White Supremacy in Shaping Coloured South Africans' Perceptions of Racial Hierarchy and Experiences of Racism in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2022), shows how coloured people perceive the society and their assessment of racial power, mainly white supremacy, within the post-apartheid era. Pirtle found that racial tensions continue to exist, where coloured people view white supremacy as an enduring structure, perceive white people are still benefiting from racial privilege, and view themselves as uniquely disadvantaged in this new dispensation ("White Supremacy" 11). In addition, Pirtle found that racial resentment was not only between coloured people and white people but also between black people and coloured people because of the language and effect of transformation policies ("White Supremacy" 11). Ultimately, Pirtle found that the continued presence of racial hierarchies "demonstrates that the non-racialist and colourblind push to decentre discussions of race contradicts how South Africans see race and racism still mattering," especially as it pertains to ways of dismantling white supremacy ("White Supremacy" 11).

Another legacy of white heteropatriarchal supremacist ideology that has shaped the production and reproduction of coloured identity lies within the gendered and sexualised aspect of its construction, especially in relation to the history of slavery. The sexualised nature of black and coloured people is evident in the stories of Krotoä and Sara Baartman, highlighted in previous sections. Because of the sexually violent legacy that is entrenched within coloured identity construction, as well as the language of "half-breed", "mixed breed", or "H*tt*n*t", lasting legacies of shame and silence exist within the coloured community.

As Gqola notes, there is a need to shift to a gendered post-colonial memory of the historical legacies of slavery and its continued effects on the coloured population today, especially for women (Gqola, "Slavery" 12). Like Gqola, renowned literary scholar Zoë

Wicomb, in her paper *Shame and Identity: the case of the coloured in South Africa* (2011), argues that constructions of coloured identity, mainly coloured women, are associated with concepts of shame. Where coloured women are humiliated by the colonial regime through sexual violence and body shaming, Wicomb argues that the very existence of coloured as a racial category was constructed out of shame, and coloured people were constructed as degenerates (Wicomb 92). The reimagining of post-colonial memory through Sara Baartman or Krotoä reflects the contradictory nature of these legacies of shame.

Linked to narratives of shame is the construction of respectability. Erasmus argues that for young, coloured women, because of the legacy of shame, there was extra pressure to be seen as respectable (Erasmus, "History" 2). If you were to become pregnant out of wedlock, you would be shamed by your community. Therefore, there were only two options: respectability and shame (Erasmus, "History" 2). Within these narratives of shame and respectability lies the unachievable construction of purity. The construction of coloured women within the sexist and racist narrative has fed into real-world consequences of the Immorality Act, where the very 'act' that 'created' coloured people is considered immoral. Alternatively, to marry a person of another racial category was illegal, thereby enforcing respectability for staying within the boundaries of the coloured 'race', thereby solidifying it, or transgressing this law at the risk of being shamed or shunned.

The landscape of attitudes towards 'racial mixing' has shifted in the post-apartheid space. Where once interracial marriages and children were outlawed and considered to be shameful, interracial relationships have become more publicly visible (Amoateng and Heaton 367). Although not exponential, it has been attributed to increasing socio-economic mobility and the integration of public spaces, particularly within education, albeit within more middle-class to elite spaces (Amoateng and Heaton 376). Despite the increase in interracial relationships and marriage, attitudes towards these relationships remain somewhat reflexive of apartheid-era thinking.

Erica Chito Childs, in her paper *Mixing in the Rainbow Nation: Exploring Contemporary Attitudes toward Interracial Couples in South Africa* (2015), argued that attitudes towards interracial relationships were steeped within apartheid racialised thinking. Across the focus groups, participants reflected a polite acknowledgement that interracial relationships were accepted within post-apartheid South Africa and espoused Rainbow Nation ideology; however, their description of their everyday reality was steeped within racist language about people of other races (Childs 22-23). The ironies Childs found amongst

participants show the contradictions between the post-racial image of the post-apartheid era versus the reality of the deeply entrenched racial segregation.

Participants that did express interest in being in an interracial relationship or had found someone of another race to be attractive were quick to dismiss or entertain the idea due to family pressures where they might experience being shunned (25). Similarly, in their study about how interracial relationships are hyper racialised titled, *Hyperracialized: Interracial relationships in post-apartheid South Africa and the informal policing of public spaces* (2018), Melissa Steyn, Haley McEwen and Jennie Tsekwa found that participants experienced pushback or threats from their families while in interracial relationships. Steyn et al. also noted that participants' behaviour was policed by others and themselves within the spaces that they were in (11). In some cases, participants chose not to hold hands in public to avoid confrontation or to socialise within circles that they consider safe (Steyn et al. 11-12). Childs and Steyn et al.'s studies clearly state that attitudes towards interracial relationships remain intensely regulated and controlled by apartheid white heteropatriarchal constructions of intimate relationships. These attitudes are also present within the narrative worlds of the texts analysed in this research, in that they show the continuation of processes of racialisation that are steeped in apartheid rhetoric, which sustain negative attitudes towards interracial relationships, which then impact the first-generation mixed-race children that might come from these relationships.

Coloured people, at their colonial construction, were first-generation mixed-race people who have now morphed into a cultural identity through centuries of racial framing and classification. First-generation mixed-race that challenges the 'fixedness' of coloured identity that attempted to be placed onto them through colonial and apartheid legacies. Classifying first-generation mixed-race people under the generalised construction of coloured, as was done during apartheid, is not accepted by first-generation mixed-race people (Metcalfe 2022). In the study I conducted on first-generation mixed-race identity, participants felt that they could not claim to be coloured as they did not relate to the historical and cultural identity of coloured identity; Zandile said:

> I go by mixed-race, and I think there's an important distinction in that because I think that race is not just a skin tone thing. I think race is also very cultural. So, even though I might present at Coloured, I don't think I could ever call myself Coloured, because I don't have that cultural background (Metcalfe, "Dominant" 11).

From Zandile's comments, there is an awareness of the different cultural and historical legacies that shape the post-apartheid space. This expression of agency as well as an understanding of the processes of racialisation, show a shift within new generations. Similarly, participants in Van der Pol et al.'s were reluctant to identify themselves as coloured. Although some participants used coloured as a default to not having to explain their racial history, others explained that they were mixed (Van der Pol et al. 277). Those that used the term coloured and did not have a coloured parent were often rejected by coloured people for trying to claim a coloured identity in the post-apartheid space (Van der Pol et al. 278). While I do not necessarily agree that mixed-race people struggle between choosing coloured identity as their racial identity or not because of possible economic or transformational benefits as argued by Van der Pol et al., an argument that Pirtle ("White Supremacy") challenged within her discussion on coloured identity; I think that Van der Pol et al. has highlighted the critical contentions of first-generation mixed-race identity and the expectations to fall within existing racial categories or be isolated for not doing so.

Zandile's comment and those of participants in Van der Pol et al.'s study are echoed in Heather Dalmage's study, *Mixed-Race Families in South Africa: Naming and Claiming a Location* (2018), where participants in interracial relationships with children stated that they would want their children to identify with their cultural background, rather than be generically categorised as coloured, especially if neither they nor their partner identified as coloured (408). In addition, parents wanted to ensure that their children felt a sense of belonging within their families and were active participants in their culture and heritage (408). It appears that coloured identity is viewed as its own cultural identity with a specific historical legacy, as Erasmus had hoped. However, whether it is viewed as fluid or has become a stationary race category is unclear.

It is essential to ground the discussions of how coloured identity has been conceptualised throughout South Africa's historical legacy to understand perceptions of mixed-race people. The distinction between coloured and first-generation mixed-race identities is crucial to reframing identity(ies) in the post-apartheid space while grounding them within the reality of their complex history(ies). At the same time, I acknowledge that the construction of first-generation mixed-race identity and the terminology attached are not perfect. Especially as it would seem as though I am constructing coloured identity as a fixed racial category. However, I am considering the processes of racialisation rather than the construction of race itself. In this way, first-generation mixed-race identity is considered through how racialisation processes are present and represented in literary texts. This analysis demonstrates the fluidity

of first-generation mixed-race identity, despite the limitations of racialised power structures and white heteropatriarchal legacies reflected in the narrative world.

1.2.5. *Global Mixed-Race Identity: A Critical Mixed-Race Perspective*

The terms 'mixed-race' or biracial are commonly used to refer to people who have a multiracial heritage. While this term has been criticised for implying the existence of 'pure' races, I will show discussions within the field, globally, about terminology, identity construction and how governments have responded to these arguments in various contexts. Despite the contentions of the term, as will be set out in the following pages, I have decided to use "mixed-race" as it best fits the sample that I am considering, as it differentiates between people with a multiracial history or members of an established grouping with a history of multiracial heritage. It must be noted that it is not the purpose of this research to support racial categorisation but rather to show how processes of racialisation influence how mixed-race identity and the associated socio-political context are represented in the narrative world.

In the seminal edited collection *Mixed-race Studies: A Reader* (2004), Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe explains the terminology of mixed-race identity to justify its continued use. Ifekwunigwe argues that the term was born out of the need for uniform terminology that was not essentialist and would be able to provide a critique of race built within that did not reify historical constructions of race (xx). In this way, Ifekwunigwe argues that using mixed-race is a "necessary, deliberate and discursive political intervention" (xxi). Therefore, her use of mixed-race describes "individuals who according to popular folk concepts of 'race' and by known birth parentage embody two or more worldviews or, in genealogical terms, descent groups" (Ifekwunigwe xxi). Thus, critical debate on race, a focus on lived experiences and a critique on social conceptualisations of race underpin the political intervention of this definition.

The use of mixed-race as a marker for identification has long been criticised. Naomi Zack, in her paper, *The Fluid Symbol of Mixed-race* (2010), argues that "race exists insofar as people use race to identify themselves and others racially. What does not exist is a biological foundation for human races or human racial divisions" (Zack 875). Thus, she argues that if there is a recognition for racially "pure" people (e.g. white) to be entitled to distinct racial identities, then why not the same for mixed-race people? (Zack 876). Although Zack does argue that "if "pure" races do not exist, then neither do mixed races" (876). In the context of the United States, in which Zack writes, historically, mixed-race people have been considered to hold power, although in a symbolic sense to rectify racial injustice and divisions; however, this

does little to deconstruct white supremacy as a whole (887). However, Zack (2010) argues that mixed-race identities will continue to change and develop based on mixed-ancestry and the lived experiences of that person, and mixed-race people will have more freedom to change their preferred racial identity, thus is the fluidity of mixed-race identity (Zack 888).

As previously stated, and shown in Zack, the largest concentration of writing and research on mixed-race identity comes from the US, which has long struggled with its racial history and the lasting effects of slavery and Jim Crow laws. With the era of the Presidency of Barack Obama, there has been an increased focus on blackness and mixedness, particularly for those who identify as black and mixed-race. It has also drawn attention to mixed-race celebrities, sports players and supermodels. In her book *Transcending Blackness: From the New Millennium Mulatta to the Exceptional Multiracial* (2013), Ralina L. Joseph looks at modern representations of mixed-race people in the US by analysing texts and media that portray mixed-race people. Joseph argues that there are representations that equate mixed-race people to pain, where they have problems with their identity as a direct result of their racial heritage, a stereotype that literary scholar Sterling Brown in 1933 called the "tragic mulatto" trope (Joseph 1-2). In this representation, the mixed-race person is portrayed as a person "without a race" and thus is "inevitably ruined" (Joseph 2). Others present the mixed-race person as the standard for progressiveness and thus "functions as a bridge between estranged communities, a healing facilitator of an imagined racial utopia, even the embodiment of that utopia" (Joseph 2). Therefore, Joseph aims to challenge the idea of the isolated mixed-race person, devoid of the community, by considering the importance of cultural representation in challenging racialised norms:

> Racialisation works by means of cultural representation, and representations actualise racialisation; put another way, lived experiences of race reform representational ones, and representational race informs experience. Changes in culture and racialization do not, however, immediately translate to changes in material life in such areas as state and public policies (Joseph 3-4).

Joseph (2013) then argues that current representation does not consider the complexities stated above, where, instead of showing mixed-race black people embracing blackness in complex ways, the narrative has shifted to a transcendence of blackness, meaning that the representation of the "exception multiracial" who acts as a unifying agent for the post-racial US (Joseph 4). Moreover, as a result, it produces anti-black imagery steeped within representations of mixed-race people in the US, where "blackness is a deficit that black and multiracial people must overcome" (Joseph 7). Similarly, Zack argues, there is increasing

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political pressure for mixed-race people in the US to choose to identify as black, pushing a desire for them to live in solidarity with the struggles of their black family due to legacies of racial oppression.

Joseph uses the term "mulatto/a" to exemplify the trope of the isolated and confused mixed-race person, which is as out of date as that term. She argues that for her, the term mixed-race is more suitable to how she views herself, rather than multiracial, and even less so, biracial – which she sees as continuously highlighting divisions between black and white (Joseph 10). She does caution that first-generation multiracial scholarship and activism has tended to generally adopt an "addictive race model" where "mixed-race functioned as another valid category to tack on, instead of a way to deconstruct race or complicate currently existing racialised categories" (Joseph 24). Despite this, Joseph argues that the term multiracial has been co-opted into colour-blind racism, which reinforces racialised discrimination, and, as Rattansi argues, does not sustain critical engagement with systemic and structural racialised inequalities (Joseph 25).

In their book *Global Mixed-race* (2014), Stephen Small and Rebecca C. King-O'Riain seek to highlight terminology of mixed-race used in different locations through a compilation of work written by authors in those contexts. Their definition of 'mixed', as an overarching term, is defined as "people who feel they are descended from and attached to two or more socially significant groups" (vii). While the definition provided by Small and King-O'Riain highlight "two or more" socially significant groups"; this dissertation specifically aims to consider people who are direct descendants of two groups. As previously stated, a substantial portion of the mixed-race studies field is taken up by examples from the United States; using this as a backdrop, Small and King-O'Riain aim to assess how people of mixed descent in other contexts identify, speak, or resist categorisation (viii). They consider whether all people of mixed descent should identify as being mixed. Or how are the differences between ethnicity and race discussed in different contexts? These questions are based on a consideration of how colonialism and slavery came to form the foundations of how we understand the multiracial experience today (viii).

Therefore, the main aim of their study is to highlight how mixed people have come to embody multiculturalism in a 'fashionable' and 'new' way, and those same ideas drive the commodification of mixed-race bodies while being treated with suspicion due to their 'impurity' or 'inauthenticity' (viii). Small and King O'Riain acknowledge that there has been a long history of mixing racial, linguistic, ethnic, religious, and national mixedness, which reflects patterns of colonisation, power and migration. However, they argue, much like the aim

of this dissertation, studying mixed-race people can give us an understanding of the changing social constructions of race, the social significance given to mixed heritage and the changing role of individuals, institutions and communities in the way that they shape attitudes and behaviour towards race (Small and King O'Riain x-xi).

They highlight the increased demand and commodification of mixed-race bodies worldwide due to the fast pace of the "flow of racial ideas" because of globalisation (xii). Media coverage, movies, television series, advertising and pop culture have increasingly spotlighted mixed relationships, interracial marriages, and mixed-race children. It created what journalist Ruth La Ferla coined "*Generation EA: Ethnically Ambiguous*" (xii). This term stems from research La Ferla (2003) conducted on the increased demand for mixed-race models in the fashion, television, and movie industries, signifying a new 'trend' toward perceived racial diversity. Small and King-O'Riain respond to this trend by questioning how mixed bodies have been used to further the commodification of multiculturalism, which glosses over lived experiences of marginalisation (xii).

In their aim to consider a more globally focused analysis of mixed people, Small and King-O'Riain focus more specifically on the less researched contexts of Europe, Africa, and Asia; by examining populations with a long and established history of socially distinct populations of mixed heritage, namely, Zambia, Brazil, Mexico, Australia and New Zealand, Trinidad and Tobago and Kazakhstan (xiv). Although not explicitly featured in this book, South Africa has a population of mixed descendants, coloured people. In addition, they study countries with a relatively 'new' mixed population with socially recognised and publicly visible populations like the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, and Japan. While I contest their idea of 'new', as the countries listed are former colonial powers that contributed to forced migration or settler colonialism, which enforced laws against interracial relationships, Small and King-O'Riain argue that it is because of these practices and the subsequence response in recent years, that they are grouped together. For example, the ways globalisation has changed, expanded, or disrupted their historically entrenched racial ideology (xiv).

As previously stated, the term mixed-race is not without contestations. However, this research seeks to transcend mainstream narratives criticised by Zack and Joseph of the 'pitiful' mixed-race person without an identity or community because of their mixedness. In addition, this research does not seek to reify utopian beliefs that mixed-race identity is a solution to racism. Therefore, this dissertation aims to identify these tropes in the representations of mixed-race identity in literary texts while highlighting the processes of racialisation that contribute to these representations. Although Van der Pol et al. has used biracial to discuss the experiences

of first-generation mixed-race people in post-apartheid South Africa, in quotes from their participants, the participants themselves used mixed or mixed-race when discussing their identity (273-274). While the terminology has been criticised for its subconscious reifying of racial purity, I argue, like Mahtani (2002), Aspinall (2009), Zack (2010), Joseph (2013), Small and King-O'Riain (2014) and Morning (2014), that many people with multiracial histories prefer the term mixed-race to define themselves best, more specifically so, first-generation mixed-race people and until a more useful term is offered, this is the terminology used going forward.

As previously noted, a large amount of research on the experiences of mixed-race people stems from the context of the USA. As a result, most of that research focuses specifically on mixed-race people with a white racial history or a white parent. This is primarily due to the legacies of racialisation and white hetero patriarchy in the US, but increasingly, research has tried to decentre whiteness from mixed-race studies. In *Red and Yellow, Black and Brown: Decentring Whiteness in Mixed-race Studies* (2017), Joanne L. Rondilla, Rudy P. Guevarra and Paul Spickard examine identity construction amongst mixed-race people "who are of multiple minority descent" in the context of the United States, by aiming to broaden knowledge of multiracial communities and to engage in discussions that reflect the changing landscape of the US and globally.

Rondilla et al. argue that eighteenth and nineteenth-century constructions of race that relied on ranking 'races' on a racial hierarchy only considered "non-white" minorities in relation to whiteness, and when mixed-race people were discussed, they were said to be 'defective' or 'weak' because they would disrupt the 'purity' of race (5). As stated previously, race is a social construction, and there are no such thing as 'pure' or 'biological' races, but the racism that stems from that social construction remains a social fact. Criticism of the multiracial movement, as Rondilla et al. discuss, is that those who suggest multiracial identity as a channel to eventually not talk about race are only considering multiracial identity to whiteness, which remains a dominant narrative in many parts of the world (8). Moreover, this ignores the experience and contributions of multiple minority mixed-race people to mainstream discourse. Therefore, the aim of their book, as Rondilla et al. argue, is to decentre whiteness through centring the lived experiences of "non-white" groups who have historically and systematically been silenced and placed at the periphery (8).

The importance of this work, as Sharma argues in the epilogue of Rondilla et al.'s edited collection, is that decentring whiteness is a direct challenge to conventional aims of critical mixed-race studies, which tend to privilege whiteness through focusing on neglecting dual

minority mixed-race people (219). According to Sharma, decentering whiteness is "giving voice to non-whites while recognising the ways that racism has structured our lives" (220). It can also debunk myths that people enter into interracial relationships to climb the ladder of racial hierarchy, as non-white interracial couples contest this myth as they and their children are not perceived as a 'threat to whiteness' (222). Experiences highlighted in the collection are stories of "blaxicans", "blasians" "blackpina" or "indipinos", self-expressed terms by people who are both Black and Mexican, or Black and Asian, or Black and Filipino or Indian and Filipino (225). These stories bring questions about the larger racial order and how "non-white" people have been forced to mould into the racial hierarchy policed by whiteness (Sharma 226).

While it is true that most scholarship on mixed-race identity is primarily focused on whiteness, it is also based mainly in the context of the US and has been around for much longer in its current format. This means that mixed-race identity has been discussed for years through colonial writings about the 'dangers' of mixed-race children, as pointed out by Rattansi; however, its current format in critical mixed-race studies has evolved to a positive description that goes beyond what Joseph and Zack have noted, referring to a person in perpetual confusion, to a person whom both transcends and transgresses boundaries of racial categorisation. This dissertation focuses on whiteness and mixed-race identity in post-apartheid South Africa precisely because of the history and present-day existence of dominant narratives of whiteness within their respective institutional and societal fabric. This is not to say that there are no examples of "non-white" racially mixed people in this context; however, I am arguing that mixed-race identity in relation to whiteness has not been exhaustively explored in the post-apartheid context. I have used examples of scholarship from the US as a background and starting point to frame the discussion of mixed-race identity.

Examples of studies done in other contexts, besides those in Small and King O'Riain's book, can be found in the Journal of Critical Mixed-Race Studies. One collection focuses on *Mixed-race in Nordic Europe* (2022), which highlighted research focused on identity, racism, racialisation, belonging and the challenging of racialised histories within Norward, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Greenland and Iceland. A forthcoming collection focuses on *Mixedness and Indigeneity in the Pacific*, which includes many states and territories and assesses conceptualisations of belonging in relation to indigeneity in an attempt to decentre western constructions of mixed-race identity limited to whiteness. This shows the increasing and truly global contributions towards the field of Critical Mixed-Race Studies. These are also reflected in the recently published Conference Proceedings of the 2022 Critical Mixed-race Studies Conference titled Ancestral Futurisms: Embodying Multiracialities Past, Present, and Future,

which features research from the US, Brazil, New Caledonia and my paper titled, *Legacies of the Sexualization of Race: The Impact of Dominant Narratives of Whiteness on Mixed-Race People in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Metcalfe 2023). Inspired by Rondilla et al.'s phrasing on whiteness, through the research produced in this dissertation, this thesis aims to decentre the US as a focal point and contribute to the increasingly global focus of Critical Mixed-Race Studies.

1.3. Mixed-Race Identity(ies) in South African Literature

1.3.1. Apartheid Literature

Early twentieth century writing on South Africa was primarily shaped by the experiences of colonialism and the harshness of the South African mining environment while significantly ignoring the oppression of indigenous and enslaved South Africans (Povey 84). At the same time, not many books were published in African languages, and literary works produced in English were dominated by white authors (Povey 85). Although, as racialised policies became more entrenched within the South African climate, literary works began to address race and the processes of racialisation that reflected the society at the time. Works that considered mixed-race identity conceptualised mixed-race people as coloured, as was the language of the time. Since these writings and the solidification of coloured identity through apartheid laws, coloured identity has transformed into a more defined cultural identity expressed in the group dynamics we see today in the post-apartheid space.

In pre-apartheid writing, coloured people or mixed-race people were referred to either as "half-caste" or "half-breed", in line with British and Dutch colonial writings at the time (Mafe 30). Novels like Oliver Schreiner's (1883) *The Story of An African Farm* use language such as "H*tt*nt*t, k*ff*r[11] and half-caste" in the description of mixed-race or coloured people. In this book, Schreiner identifies one of South Africa's most significant problems at the time as being the existence of "the half-cast" while making no reference to the acts of sexual violence that produced this group (Mafe 33).

Falling in line with the US tradition of the tragic mulatto/a, identified by Sterling Brown in 1933 within US fiction, this trope is comparable within the South African context. It is a valuable lens for understanding mixedness. In her book, *Mixed-race Stereotypes in South African and American Literature: Coloring Outside the (Black and White) Lines* (2013), Diana Adesola Mafe outlines this trope where the mixed-race character is portrayed as being filled

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[11] I have chosen to remove the vowels of this word so that it remains legible without writing the word fully. This word is specifically used as a derogatory term for indigenous groups classified as black (Xhosa, Zulu, Tswana, Ndebele, Shona, Sotho, Venda, Pedi, Swazi, etc).

with turmoil as a result of their racially mixed-heritage which has subsequently "tainted" their blood, and thus they either descend into madness or become a burden to society; either way, they can never reconcile their identity and ultimately have to choose between their two races and live in constant fear of being found out to be an imposter to that race or either kill themselves or be killed (Mafe 5-6).

In line with this trope, pre-apartheid literature focused mainly on miscegenation or interracial relationships, reflected in books like William Plomer's (1925) *Turbott Wolfe* and Stuart Cloete's (1937) *Turning Wheels* (Mafe 35). However, these works did not delve specifically into the children produced from these marriages. One book that focused on mixed-race children and received international recognition then was Sarah Gertrude Millin's (1924) *God's Step Children*. The work's obsessive focus on the "tainting" of blood to produce mixed-race people, who are then described in the most grotesque racist language, "their fuzzy brown hair stood away from their heads in golliwog fashion, and they were full of sores and vermin" (Mafe 39). Added to the racist language in this book is the additional layer of racialised sexism that portrays the mixed-race woman as hypersexual (in the form of colonial and apartheid sexualisation language of black women). Mafe argues that the portrayal of mixed-race women as hypersexual is directly related to their perceived "inability" to control their hypersexual "black side" (40). Thus, reinforcing colonial stereotypes about black female sexuality while at the time reifying that mixed-race women could never be considered white as they would constantly have to negotiate the supposedly overwhelmingly sexual urges linked to their black ancestry.

Apartheid literature began to engage more with the racialisation nature of the society, especially as the solidification of racial categories was introduced through the Population Registration Act of 1950 and the Group Areas Act of 1950. Peter Abrahams, classified as Coloured, wrote about the experiences of the coloured community and was one of the initial literary scholars to write about race as a social construct. In the novel *Path of Thunder*, Abrahams (1948) writes at the beginning of formalised apartheid. In this novel, Abraham constructs more realistic and fully fleshed-out coloured characters in juxtaposition to pre-apartheid white authors (Mafe 49). While Abrahams maintains elements of the tragic mulatta/o trope, Mafe argues that he "repeatedly links that tragedy [of mixedness] to the racist and segregationist social systems in place rather than biological predetermination" (49). In addition, he focuses not on the "tragedy" of having mixed blood but on the tragedy of interracial love in a racially segregated system (Mafe 50). This shift provides a significant moment for setting the

tone for literature written during the apartheid era. It also becomes an inherent and unquestioned element of works on race within the post-apartheid era.

Bessie Head, a mixed-race woman herself, in her novel *A Question of Power* (1973), challenges the hypersexualisation and eroticisation of mixed-race women in the US tradition of the tragic mulatta/o trope. While Millin's *God's Step-Children* hypersexualised the mixed-race female character, Head in *A Question of Power* constructs the mixed-race woman as asexual and not overtly desirable by standards of beauty projected onto mixed-race women. However, where Head does continue in the line of the tragic mulatta/o trope is the characterisation of the mixed-race character within madness or being unstable (Mafe 59). Moreover, this is reflected in the character's inability to deal with their mixedness, where they struggle to form good relationships and perceptions of both their races, black and white, in this case (Mafe 66). Although the female protagonist of Head's novel predictably, within the standardised version of the trope, is prejudicial against her blackness, she can identify with the experience of racism by white people against black bodies (Mafe 68).

The presentation of respectability and shame within both Head's and Abraham's novels in relation to colouredness has formed a pernicious part of the literature on coloured identity. Head's protagonist, through her characterisation as contravening the mixed-race/mulatta beauty standards and accompanying exotification, "embodies shame and reiterates the "ugly" identity that has historically been ascribed to coloured people" (Mafe 77). The solidification of her character as falling within the tragic mulatta/o trope lies within the internalisation of coloured/mixed-race people as inadequate (Mafe 79). Although the protagonist ultimately finds happiness in the end, which strays from the traditional tragic mulatta/o trope of only unfortunate outcomes for these characters, she must give up parts of herself to be happy (Mafe 81). In this way, although Head has stuck to some traditions of the tragic mulatta/o trope, she has challenged certain conventions, particularly the way these novels end, by changing the portrayal of the redemption of the character (Mafe 81-82). Despite her tumultuous journey, Head gave her protagonist a sense of peace and hope at the end, which has provided another shift within apartheid literature that, although exhibited in different ways, remains an element of post-apartheid literary works today.

1.3.2. Post-apartheid Literature

Because South Africa gained 'independence' from British colonisation during the apartheid era, there is debate about the terminology of post-independence literature in South Africa. Young, as quoted in Adigun (2019), argues that postcolonial criticism aims to re-assess

colonial history from the perspective of the colonised, to determine the socio-economic and political-cultural impact of colonialism on both the colonised and coloniser, to analyse decolonisation processes and to contribute to liberation (Adigun 5). In the South African context, Warnes (2012) discusses whether to refer to South African literature as postcolonial or post-apartheid. Warnes argues that while South African literature can only be considered postcolonial after 1994 because all South Africans were not free during apartheid, literature within the post-apartheid space has been used to critique colonialist policies and systems of knowledge and to imagine alternate realities that confront colonial and apartheid legacies (Warnes 330-331). I agree with Warnes that post-apartheid literature is the most applicable to South African literary and political contexts and is therefore used within this dissertation.

Ives S. Loukson, in his book *Post-Apartheid Criticism: Perceptions of Whiteness, Homosexuality, and Democracy in South Africa* (2020), attempts to establish a post-apartheid literary criticism. In discussing the debate between the terminology of post-colonial and post-apartheid, Loukson argues, "because racism granted apartheid its uniqueness as compared to colonialism, post-apartheid criticism understands racism as the very procedural dimension that brought about multi-dimensional plus values and contributed to the embodiment of a technologically and economically wealthy centre and reversely its poor periphery" (257), therefore "post-apartheid criticism pleas more openly that post-colonial criticism does, for extensive exploration of the various links between the post-colonial condition and global economy" (257). While I agree that "post-apartheid" criticism is much better suited as a descriptor of the current landscape of South Africa than "post-colonial", I disagree that racism is unique to apartheid, as all founding racist laws of the apartheid regime, as well as the scientific racism it was based on, stem from colonial era propaganda and laws that enforced legalised racism.

Loukson argues that post-apartheid literature works with sociology, reflecting South African society and historical legacies within the narrative world (31). When considering post-apartheid literature, some scholars suggested that South African literature would die once apartheid ended, mainly as apartheid literature was primarily focused on the "evils of apartheid" (Loukson 31). However, Loukson argues that post-apartheid literature has found new ways to express the realities of the post-apartheid environment.

A defining moment in post-apartheid literature and the conceptualisation of South Africa as a democracy was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). As previously discussed, the TRC provided a space for all South Africans to testify or confess to crimes committed during the apartheid regime. As outlined, there were many criticisms about the TRC

process and the lack of justice that came out of it. However, the lasting legacies of themes such as confession, vengeance, truth, reconciliation, resistance and the legacies of trauma remain immortalised within post-TRC fiction, which makes up a large part of post-apartheid literature. All five novels considered in this dissertation contain references to the TRC imagery. Thus, Cooppan (2012) argues that TRC has become an "embedded narrative event" as "most post-apartheid literature returns to the buried events of the past so as to produce testimonial scenes of crime confession, witnessing, catharsis, forgiveness and healing" (49). Post-apartheid literary works like Antjie Krog's (1998) *Country of My Skill: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa* and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela's (2003) *A Human Being Died That Night*, focus on the TRC as a site of trauma, testimony and confession.

The theme of the TRC as well as the hopes and fears of the new democracy, are reflected in many post-apartheid novels. These novels also interrogate new discussions about what race relations or racial categorisations could look like or how they could shift within the post-apartheid space. Zoë Wicomb's (2006) *Playing in the Light*, a play on Toni Morrison's (1992) *Playing in the Dark*, presents the TRC testimony as a catalyst for exploring the legacies of racial categorisations of multiracial people. In addition, it looks at the movement of racially ambiguous people between racial categories, in this case, moving from the racial category of coloured to white, reflecting the reality of many who circumvented the Population Registration Act's limited framework. In the US, mixed-race fiction, this movement between racial categories would be considered as "passing" or "shapeshifting" between races. There are many true stories within the coloured community about those who were "play whites", meaning that they were coloured people pretending to be white people, examples of which can be found within my own family.

Wicomb's work is primarily based on the experiences of the coloured community in South Africa. Wicomb's (1987) novel *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town,* although categorised as apartheid literature, reflects on shame and silence within the coloured community that reflects the history of violent racial mixing. In her more recent works, *David's Story* (2000), *Playing in the Light* (2006) and *October* (2014), Wicomb continues to analyse how coloured identity can be reconciled with the atrocities of apartheid and how that exhibits within the post-apartheid space. These legacies of shame are reflected within the representations of mixed-race identity in the analysis section of this dissertation.

Following another prevalent theme in post-apartheid literature, Kopano Matlwa's *Coconut* (2007) provides a take on black elites and the growing black middle class in post-apartheid South Africa and how the 'born free' generation navigate the entrenched structures

of whiteness within which they now must engage. Similarly, Kabelo Sello Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* (2000) reflects the realities of the post-apartheid era and the continued legacies of racialisation within narratives of whiteness. Although neither Matlwa's nor Duiker's novel deal with first-generation mixed-race identity specifically, they provide an insight into the lasting legacies of whiteness, which connect the old/new processes of racialisation alongside the critique of realistic freedom in post-apartheid society.

Celebrated authors Nadine Gordimer and JM Coetzee, both white South Africans who have written both apartheid and post-apartheid fiction, are South Africa's only Nobel Laureates for Literature. Their works predominantly focus on having white protagonists and have previously focused on interracial relationships. In the post-apartheid context, Gordimer's (2012) *No Time Like the Present* focuses on an interracial couple who fought against apartheid and their journey in the post-apartheid sphere. In contravention of the tragic mulatta/o trope in South Africa, which presents mixed-race children as products of violent or illicit interracial relationships, Gordimer's novel depicts mixed-race children born out of a relationship of love. This novel was excluded from my analysis because the children were too young.

J.M Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) has been hailed as a seminal work on race debates within the post-apartheid space. I would argue, however, that the colourblind approach of Coetzee's writing, in juxtaposition to the stark racialised dynamics between the lines, is not a transformative approach to debating the post-apartheid state but somewhat further entrenches the invisibility of whiteness that remain in cross-racial interactions between characters. In addition, the portrayal of interracial sexual relations is steeped within apartheid narratives of whiteness, where the white male protagonist engages in sexual relationships with stereotypically hypersexualised coloured women. In contrast, the white female, constructed as the epitome of purity, is then raped by the stereotypically 'sexually virile' black man. *Disgrace* reproduces the racist and sexist stereotypes of colonial and apartheid literature on interracial relationships. While the novel ends when the white female character, Lucy, decides to keep her child, the concerns around having the baby remain steeped within the potential 'tragedy' of the mixed-race child's hypothetical life.

More recently and as a highly coveted resource of first-generation mixed-race identity, Trevor Noah's (2016) *Born A Crime* is a seminal autobiographical work on first-generation mixed-race identity in post-apartheid South Africa. Noah's international acclaim as host of the Daily Show in the US has brought attention to his life story. Mixed throughout the autobiographical stories from his life are segments of the historical location of racial dynamics and legacies of race relations in South Africa's history. Noah's text represents one type of story

of first-generation mixed-race people; it is essential to note that his experiences are not universal to all mixed-race people but share similarities in how the racialised structures of the apartheid and post-apartheid state seek to regulate racial categorisations. What Noah's book does highlight is the challenges of racial ambiguity. In apartheid classifications, Noah would most likely be classified as coloured, which many South Africans in post-apartheid might agree with. As previously noted, coloured identity has evolved into its own racialised cultural identity, and therefore the new language of the post-apartheid era should reflect first-generation mixed-race people who do not share this cultural identity, like Noah as the product of a white father and black mother, for example.

While some post-apartheid literature reflects mixed-race identity to some extent, outside of the tragic mulatta/o trope, many linkages remain. As my analysis of the five chosen literary works will show, representations of mixed-race identity within the post-apartheid literary works remain entrenched within the realities of post-apartheid race relations, which are embedded within legacies of apartheid racialisation processes but are also represented as an opportunity to overcome these rigid categorisations. Unfortunately, within these two representations, the mixed-race character is sacrificed as the poster child for the new democracy, where the hopes and contradictions of the Rainbow Nation ideology are encapsulated within their very characterisation. In this way, the first-generation mixed-race identity is represented as the personification of ambiguity that reflects the post-apartheid space.

1.4. Theoretical Framings

1.4.1. Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is "a collection of activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism and power" (Delgado and Stefancic 3). In the third edition of their book *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (2017), Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic update the critical race theory to include current events that have shaped the world since the publication of their first edition in 2001 and the second edition in 2012; as well as to show the multi and interdisciplinary use of intersectionality today. CRT has since extended beyond the field of Law, in which it was initially constructed, to fields like Sociology, Philosophy, or Education. Delgado and Stefancic argue that CRT emerged in the 1970s due to the need for new thinking strategies about race after gains in the 1960s Civil Rights movement in the US started to be rolled back (4). Unlike civil rights discourse, Delagado and Stefancic argue that CRT "questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including

equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism and neutral principles of constitutional law" (3).

CRT draws from two previous movements: critical legal studies and radical feminism (Delgado and Stefancic 5). From critical legal studies, CRT borrowed the term legal indeterminacy, meaning not all legal cases have the correct outcome. This outcome can be decided by emphasising one line of authority over another (Delgado and Stefancic 5). Moreover, from radical feminism, an understanding of the relationship between power and socially constructed roles, as well as 'hidden' or 'unseen' patterns of domination and oppression, like patriarchy (Delgado and Stefancic 5; Crenshaw et al. xiv-xv). In addition, "conventional civil rights through" influenced CRT to a lesser extent and aims to address historical injustice through practical consequences and a strong focus on community and group empowerment (Delgado and Stefancic 5-6). Furthermore, from ethnic studies, a focus on cultural nationalism and cohesion and the need to represent group-specific ideas and texts (Delgado and Stefancic 6). In my research, CRT is used as a theoretical tool for understanding racial dynamics in relation to power structures within the identity representations of first-generation mixed-race people in post-apartheid South Africa. In addition, CRT serves as a more comprehensive theoretical framework for this context, rather than critical whiteness studies, because of its more comprehensive nature and suitability as a framing tool for analysing the representations of mixed-race identity in post-apartheid literary texts.

Delgado and Stefancic argue that there are six central tenets within CRT. However, they argue that while most critical race theorists might not subscribe to all, they generally agree with each tenet's propositions (8). The first is that racism is an everyday and commonplace experience for people of colour, which means that people of colour, based on their lived experiences, should be considered experts on experiences of racism. The second tenet proposes that the system of white supremacy, the privileging of white people over people of colour at multiple levels of society, serves both a psychological and material purpose for those who benefit from this system (Delgado and Stefancic 8). Within this second tenet, as Delgado and Stefancic that the psychological purpose relates to the everyday experience of racism, which has become ordinary, leading to colourblind policies which can only be remedied through a consistent insistence on equality and fair treatment through shedding light on blatant and hidden racism (8). Moreover, material purpose refers to material determinism, meaning that racism benefits and advances the interests of white elites and working-class white people, who already experience the power, albeit differently, but are therefore unwilling to make the

necessary changes to overhaul racist and white supremacist systems (Delgado and Stefancic 9).

The third proposition of CRT is the "social construction thesis", where race is considered socially constructed and influenced by many social locations (Delgado and Stenfacic 9). Because of this, critical race theorists do not believe in biological or genetic constructions of race as they consider races as "categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient" (Delgado and Stefancic 9). They posit that while people with common origins might have similar skin tones or hair textures, this does not encompass their entire genetic legacy; instead, our commonalities more likely stem from personality or moral behaviour (Delgado and Stefancic 9).

The fourth tenet focuses on the consequences of differential racialisation, referring to "the ways the dominant society racialises different minority groups at different times, in response to shifting needs such as the labour market" (Delgado and Stefancic 9-10). In this way, the dominant group might construct and enforce stereotypes within popular culture to present a minority group as hard-working, disciplined and willing to serve the needs of the dominant group. Still, over time, these constructions and stereotyping might change to a 'negative' portrayal concerning another minority group which has become more amenable and 'available' to their needs.

The fifth, closely related to differential racialisation and the most integral tenet to my research, are the notions of intersectionality and anti-essentialism, which argue that people have neither a unitary nor stagnant identity, as it is encompassed by age, sex, race, gender, class and sexuality, amongst other things (Delgado and Stefancic 10-11). The inclusion of intersectionality speaks to the influence of both critical legal studies and radical feminist thought within CRT. Intersectionality forms part of the theoretical framework of my research and will be discussed in detail, including essentialism, later in this chapter.

Finally, the last tenet refers to the presumed competence of people of colour, who bear the brunt of racial oppression, to discuss race and racism and how it impacts their lives (Delgado and Stefancic 11). This "voice of colour thesis", as Delgado and Stefancic call it, holds that because of different histories and experiences with oppression, people of colour can discuss and share their experiences with white counterparts who would be unaware of these experiences due to their privileged position with racial hierarchies (11).

While CRT remains the most applicable discourse on race for my research, there are some critiques by other academics, as discussed in Delgado and Stefancic's chapter titled: *Critiques and Responses to Criticism*, external criticism, like that of Randall Kennedy, who

problematised the idea that scholars of colour having a 'unique' voice to discuss issues of race and accused mainstream scholars in the CRT movement of ignoring the writings of writers of colour, which contradicts the purpose of CRT (102-103). Similarly, Daniel Farber and Suzanna Sherry charged critical race theorists of "hiding behind personal stories and narratives to advance their points of view" in the context of people of colour and their performance in US educational testing, a point in relation to the "voice of colour thesis" (Delgado and Stefancic 103). Delgado and Stefancic responded to these external criticisms by arguing that critical race theorists, because of Kennedy's "conventional criteria", he missed the opportunity to "take racial analysis to a new level" (103-104). In response to Farber and Sherry, critical theorists argued that they had "confused criticism of a standard with criticism of individuals who performed well under that standard" (Delgado and Stefancic 104).

Delgado and Stefancic, in their discussion of internal criticism of CRT, argue has taken two forms: the pragmatic value of CRT and the value of the theory itself (105). In response to the question "Is critical race theory pragmatic?" some have raised questions of why CRT as a movement is not doing more to affect the lives of people of colour on the ground and within activist movements, like Black Lives Matter, for example, in the US (Delgado and Stefancic 105). Alternatively, whether, CRT should be expanded to consider religious discrimination, which often occurs in tandem with race (Delgado and Stefancic 105). From this, Delgado and Stefancic argue that most internal scholars agree that more work should be done to bridge the gaps between theory and reality. The second internal critique speaks to the value of CRT as a theory, where one "persistent critique", as Delgado and Stefancic argue:

> Accuses the movement of straying from its materialistic roots and dwelling overly on matters concerning middle-class minorities – microaggressions, racial insults, unconscious discrimination, and affirmative action in higher education. If racial oppression has material and cultural roots, attacking only its ideational or linguistic expression is apt to do little for the underlying structures of inequality, much less the plight of the deeply poor (Delgado and Stefancic 106-107).

Another issue related to internal criticism is that CRT has become increasingly "preoccupied" with identity politics instead of focused social analysis (Delgado and Stefancic 107). While internal critics highlight the importance of focusing on social constructions of race, the role of mixed-race people, and racial 'passing', these issues are at the periphery of the central issues currently facing society (Delgado and Stefancic 107). These critics argue that the amount of attention CRT has given to understanding the intersectional identities of mixed-race

people is not as valuable today as it was a decade ago (Delgado and Stefancic 107). I cannot entirely agree with this criticism in that it might be considered exhaustive in the context of the US; however, the use of both CRT and intersectionality to understand mixed-race identity has not been oversaturated in South Africa, which provides a valuable context to use these theoretical frameworks as analysis tools to understand mixed-race identity construction in contexts under-researched in this field.

In recent years, CRT has been used within contexts outside the US that experience racial inequalities and entrenched systemic racism and white supremacy. In South Africa, CRT has been used more explicitly within legal scholarship. As with all structures in post-apartheid South Africa, the legacies of apartheid's racial policy are evident within Law. In his paper, "Towards a '(post-)apartheid' critical race jurisprudence: 'Divining our racial themes'" (2012), Joel Modiri argues that a race-critical approach is necessary for legal scholarship and understanding post-apartheid society. Modiri places CRT within the post-apartheid social sphere by arguing that CRT "allows us to examine racial issues more critically and directly in the context of their social, economic and political implication for law and legal rules" (Modiri 233). Also, Modiri argues that a CRT research lens can help provide an analytical framework for engaging with race issues due to South Africa's violent past.

Concerning the tenets of CRT, Modiri argues that while racism is a mutual experience for people of colour in South Africa, tribunals like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, set up to deal with the atrocities of apartheid, silenced participants of colour and absolved many white perpetrators of their crimes, while providing a platform for the normalisation of racial inequalities that stem from racialised violence (237). Like Cole and Maisuria's (2005) challenge of conceptualisations of white supremacy and its maintenance in modern-day British imperialism, both Modiri (2012) and Mbembe (2008) argue that white supremacy manifests in the same way as it did during apartheid, where white people maintain wealth in post-apartheid South Africa. Modiri (2012) argues that the interests of white elites are entrenched in ways that even white people who opposed apartheid benefit from white supremacy and continue to perpetuate and maintain ideals of white supremacy. As a society grounded within white-hetero-patriarchal structures, the post-apartheid context can be analysed through CRT and, more explicitly for this research, Intersectionality.

1.4.2. Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality, like Critical Race Theory, has its roots within Black Feminist Thought in the 1980s United States. Kimberle Crenshaw is a founder both of Critical

Race Theory and Intersectionality. Thus, her works are pertinent to both foregrounding the understanding of intersectionality going forward in this dissertation and in linking CRT and Intersectionality as the underpinning theoretical frameworks of my research. In this dissertation, intersectionality can be described as an analytical tool to understand power, privilege, and oppression through social locators like race, class, gender and sexuality, amongst others. In her paper, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Colour" (1991), Crenshaw argues that it can be used to reconceptualise identity concerning specific experiences, whether group politics or individual identity. Thus, intersectionality is a critical tool for understanding the identity construction of mixed-race people as it is specifically designed to consider the influence of multiple factors in how identity can be represented.

Crenshaw argues that intersectionality can be used to understand the multiple intersections of identity, mainly to capture the multiple forms of power exerted within black women's lives in the US. Intersectionality was born out of the need to challenge whiteness within feminism that was centred on women in scholarship dictated mainly by white women and therefore considered sexism but not that women can experience both sexism and racism, as is the case for women of colour (Crenshaw 1244). Crenshaw considers both structural and political intersectionality. The first shows how black women experience different domains of power within different structures, where analysis of class is integral to understanding the experiences of black women and, therefore, must be considered in relation to and with gender and race (1244). Moreover, the latter shows that black women are placed within two marginalised groups; they are both black and women meaning that their experiences are shaped by both factors (Crenshaw 1251). Thus, Crenshaw argues that black women face an additional burden compared to white women and that it is a failure of feminism not to consider both factors as mutually informing lived experiences.

Historical, structural, and political experiences must be considered as constantly being present in the daily lives of black women, which ultimately leads to the theory of intersectionality as a tool for unpacking the multiple axes of identity in relation to structural and political power. Crenshaw states, "I have also used intersectionality to describe the location of women of colour both within overlapping systems of subordination and at the margins of feminism and anti-racism" (Crenshaw 1265). Finally, she argues that intersectionality can be a way to reconceptualise race "as a coalition between men and women" (Crenshaw 1299). Thus, it is necessary to consider the multiple intersections of identity, and through intersectional analysis, we can understand differences.

With the increasing popularisation of intersectionality, Leslie McCall, in her paper "The Complexity of Intersectionality" (2005), argues that its introduction has brought new methodological concerns and contentions. According to McCall, the contention is how to study intersectionality, specifically the methodologies used. That complexity comes precisely from expanding the subject of analysis to include multiple elements of social life and, thus, more categories of analysis (McCall 1772). These complexities are then considered within three approaches to intersectional analysis. The first approach is the anti-categorical complexity/approach because it is grounded in methodology that deconstructs analysis (McCall 1773). This approach considers questions like how to constitute groups of given social categories. Second, the inter-categorical complexity/approach needs scholars to adopt existing categories of analysis to write about inequality amongst different social groupings (McCall 1773). Here relationships of inequality amongst existing social groupings are ever-changing and imperfect, and therefore consider those relationships the centre point of analysis. Finally, the intra-categorical complexity/approach falls in between the previous approaches because it rejects categorisations while strategically using them (McCall 1773).

Two strands of thought are at play within the contentions of intersectional methodological practices regarding how these categories are used and conceptualised in intersectionality. These categories are formed within their historical positions. McCall considers anti-categorical and intra-categorical complexity linked to feminist poststructuralism and feminist epistemologies (McCall 1778). While inter-categorical complexity, the lesser-known approach, critical realism, is discussed in this section and where ontology over epistemology is considered with realism (McCall 1793). As her concluding argument, McCall argues that there can be a disconnect between theory and practice, and therefore fields that seek to use intersectional methodology must consider an interdisciplinary approach.

McCall notes that "intersectionality is the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies in conjunction with related fields have made so far" (1771). As Lewis (2013) argues, these fields range from economics to postcolonial studies to critical psychotherapy. Not only has intersectionality "travelled" to other fields, but Lewis (2013) also argues that it has moved to other contexts outside of the US (Lewis 869). Moreover, since McCall's 2005 suggestion of moving towards interdisciplinary uses of intersectionality, this has been the direction scholars have taken; however, it is not without its concerns. Yuval-Davis (2011), McCall (2005), Puar (2013), Bilge (2013), Nash (2008) and Lewis (2013) all argue that intersectionality has increasingly become mainstream. Yuval-Davis (2011) argues that before "becoming 'mainstreamed'", intersectional analysis was conducted by "black and other

[67]

racialised women who, from their situated gaze, perceived as absurd and not just misleading, any attempt by feminists and others, since the start of the second wave of feminism to homogenise women's situation and especially to find is analogous to that of blacks" (Yuval-Davis 4).

Yuval-Davis argues that differences in how intersectionality has been used come down to how different disciplines have used it and for what purpose. How did intersectionality come to be so popular? ("Intersectional Contestations 2). Kathy Davis, in her paper "Intersectionality as Buzzword: A Sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful" (2008), argues that the first characteristic of a successful social theory is that it speaks to its audience's primary concern (Davis 70). Davis argues that "intersectionality addresses the most central theoretical and normative concern within feminist scholarship: namely, the acknowledgement of differences among women" (70). More specifically, it addresses the long history of exclusion amongst women by making visible power relations and multiple positions of groups and individuals in everyday life (Davis 70). In addition, Davis argues that intersectionality embodies a commitment to self-critical and accountable feminist theory while generating theories "which can speak to the concerns of all women" (72).

According to Davis, the second characteristic of success is that it "provides a novel twist on an old problem" through disputing or unsettling previous beliefs (Davis 72). While Davis acknowledges that the historical legacy of black feminist thought stems further than the creation of intersectionality and that many black feminist scholars have sought to address the same concerns as intersectionality, where intersectionality differs is in its appeal to a wider range of feminists (73). Davis argues that it offers "a novel link between critical feminist theory on the effects of sexism, class and racism and a critical methodology inspired by postmodern feminist theory, bringing them together in ways that could not have been envisioned before" (73). As a result, intersectionality provides an everyday basis for "mutually beneficial collaboration" (Davis 74).

Davis believes the third characteristic is that they should play a role in bridging the gap between specialists and generalists, thus appealing to a broad academic audience (Davis 74). Davis argues that intersectionality is enough of a "buzzword" to attract generalists who will not necessarily read the theoretical underpinnings of this theory but are attracted to it because of its popularity while at the same time attracting specialists who aim to understand and debate the validity of the theory in its entirety (Davis 75). Davis (2008) argues that intersectionality specifically aims to mend divisions between generalists and specialists by "compelling the

specialists to ground their meta-concerns in concrete social and political contexts of women's lives and the generalists to reclaim theory as an integral part of feminist inquiry" (Davis 76).

The final characteristic of the success of a social theory, as Davis (2008) argues, is that it is "paradoxically, inherently ambiguous and obviously incomplete", meaning that great theories thrive off their incompleteness and ambiguity (76). Davis argues that this is the case because it provides an opportunity for debate and for other academics to attempt to fill in the blanks, as it were (Davis 76). Thus, Davis concludes, "Intersectionality, by virtue of its vagueness and inherent open-mindedness, initiates a process of discovery which not only is potentially interminable but promises to yield new and more comprehensive and reflexively critical insights" (77). In response to Davis's arguments, Gail Lewis, in her paper *Unsafe Travel: Experiencing Intersectionality and Feminist Displacements* (2013), argues that by highlighting the success of intersectionality, we highlight the role of BIPOC women who have produced knowledge from the margins by applying these theories to many realities bringing it into the centre (Lewis 871).

While acknowledging intersectionality's success, Lewis aims to consider the effects and tensions that might occur because of the increasing use of intersectionality across multi- and interdisciplinary fields. Discussions of the intersections of structures of race, class or gender as central to the politics of the production of knowledge, especially in a globalised context, led Lewis to consider: "What would happen if intersectionality, a concept, theory or methodology gathered ever greater momentum, proliferating a growing intersectionality literature with ever greater distance from the birthplace where the concept was explicitly named", or put simply, "what happens when intersectionality as a theory, concept or method, travels?" (872). Lewis aims to answer this question by considering how the concept of race is considered and engaged with among feminist scholars in Europe, and specifically how this might affect the displacement of women of colour feminists within the European context while considering both race and racialisation in this context.

Lewis considers the racialised dynamics that arise within feminist spaces, despite its commitment to intersectionality scholarship, by considering race in European feminist locations/sites (Lewis 870). Lewis argues that the white elite and popular discourses in Europe are inundated with racialisation processes and, as a result, have led to a process of dislocation in feminist discourse that patterns experiences amongst feminists "differentially constituted as race subjects" (Lewis 870). Lewis argues that intersectionality has had enormous success in becoming a popular tool for understanding multiple axes of power, thus providing room for growth and transformation (Lewis 871).

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However, Lewis argues that intersectionality, in its original conception, was always meant to consider the interlocking roles of race, class or gender, amongst others. However, as intersectionality has moved through various disciplines and changed contexts, its foundational importance on race is being debated (872-874). In her analysis of race in Europe, Lewis considers anti-immigrant, anti-muslim and racist statements made by various people in positions of power and through the media, often brushed over as 'harmless' comments (876-877). Moreover, even comments supporting inclusivity and diversity, these comments are playing to making statements to be viewed well internationally rather than providing meaningful change for minorities in Europe (Lewis 877).

At an Intersectionality conference held in Frankfurt in 2009, which was overwhelmingly white in speakers, chairs and audience, many people of colour, including Lewis, felt uncomfortable. Lewis argues that a debate at the conference on whether race could be used as a concept of analysis within a European context, where Germany and its history was used as an example of how harmful this category can be and therefore, because race 'isn't like race in the US or UK' it is not the same for Europe. In this way, Lewis argues that an atmosphere was created where it seemed impossible to bring up race issues and make it seem as though race and processes of racialisation are exclusive to women of colour rather than the effects of race on whiteness.

In many ways, I agree with Lewis' arguments. In its original construction, intersectionality strongly focuses on race; to say that this could change based on the context is not to consider how beneficial intersectionality is to the lives of women of colour. It seems to be an elitist conversation to consider whether race is essential in a particular context, especially when so few people experiencing the oppression that comes with the power of institutional racism are not present. Thus, having a conversation about intersectionality without race white-washes intersectionality in a way that can never fulfil its true purpose as initially intended.

Like Lewis, Sirma Bilge, in her paper, *Intersectionality Undone: Saving Intersectionality from Feminist Intersectionality Studies* (2013), argues that there has been an increased attempt to "whiten intersectionality" through a depoliticisation of intersectionality, created as a theory and tool for social transformation and challenges of colonial and white supremacist structures (407). Bilge argues that intersectionality has been appropriated and commodified for neoliberal regimes that "reframe[s] all values as market values: identity-based radical politics are often turned into corporatised diversity tools leveraged by dominant groups to attain various ideological and institutional goals" (407). Thus, she argues that intersectionality has become "ornamental" as it is deployed as superficially in a way that

undermines the core underpinnings of the theory, addressing power structures (Bilge 408). It thereby reduces intersectionality to a tool for "rebranding" of "good public relations", without doing the work of social justice and critical reflexivity on which intersectionality was formulated (Bilge 408).

For Bilge, the "whitening" of intersectionality is neither "the embodiment, the skin colour of the heritage of its practitioners, nor does it attempt to police the boundaries of who can legitimately do intersectionality and who cannot" and is achieved "in part by excluding from the debate or overlooking the contributions of those who have multiple minority identities and are marginalised social actors – women of colour and queers of colour" (412). Bilge considers two strategies for how the whitening of intersectionality plays out. By using "whiteness", her arguments are grounded within an understanding that "whiteness as a social formation that is conditioned, reproduced and legitimised by a racial habitus" and that ultimately ", one does not need to be White to "whiten intersectionality" (Bilge 413).

The first strategy to "whiten" intersectionality, according to Bilge, is arguing that intersectionality "is the brainchild of feminism" (412). Consequently, Bilge argues that this appropriation removes intersectionality from its origins within black feminist thought and critical race theory, which aimed to challenge mainstream whiteness in feminism (Bilge 412). Bilge quotes Barbara Tomlinson, who argues that attempts by white feminists to decentre race are an appropriation of intersectionality; within Europe, some scholars are "concerned with feminist conceptions of intersectionality appear to find valuable a "purified" intersectionality, quarantine from its exposure to race. Establishing the Black feminist scholars who originated intersectionality as "unworthy" – parochial, "race-bound," incapable of "theorising" – justifies extracting them from the valuable tool of intersectionality" (Bilge 413). Bilge continues, arguing that debates around the "usefulness of the category of race" aid in whitening intersectionality to the point where it becomes palatable to white-dominated departments at European universities (Bilge 414). In this way, both Bilge and Lewis argue that the discussions mentioned above lead to the silencing of those whose life experiences intersectionality was intended initially to highlight.

The second strategy for whitening intersectionality, according to Bilge, is arguing "the imperative to broaden the genealogy of intersectionality" (416). Bilge illustrates this point through an example of an intersectionality conference of French-speaking feminists in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 2012. Bilge discusses how French feminists have argued that their work in relation to sexuality and sexism should also be considered intersectional work, even though they do not consider race in their analysis (416). This demand for recognition, Bilge

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argues, is a way whitening of intersectionality through "broadened genealogies requirements certain acrobatic skills: it entails juggling what is represented as recognition ('to honour founding mothers and foundational texts'), while simultaneously pushing them into the background so that other (usually White) genealogies [can] be traced. In other words, attempts to reformulate genealogies are always political and never innocent" (416).

In this way, Bilge argues that this allows historically white departments of feminist and gender studies to invalidate the knowledge produced by women of colour by repurposing the original goal of intersectionality to fit within the narrative they seek to create (418). Therefore, as she argues, this leads to the irony, quoted below:

> A tool elaborated by women of colour to confront the racism and heterosexism of White-dominated feminism, as well as the sexism and heterosexism of the antiracist movement, become, in another time and place, a field of expertise overwhelmingly dominated by White disciplinary feminists who keep race and racialised women at bay (Bilge 418).

The arguments made by both Bilge and Lewis speak to the appropriation of intersectionality that both "whitens" and removes it from its original purpose while silencing the voices for whom the intersectional theory was created. This mainstreaming of intersectionality, as explained by Davis earlier, shows how intersectionality has been a successful theory. As Davis argued, there is a level of "unsafe travel" that Lewis warns of when it moves between various fields. In similar arguments, Tomlinson, in her chapter *Powerblind Intersectionality: Feminist Revanchism and Inclusion as a One-Way Street* (2019), argues that white feminists have attempted to move intersectionality away from its original purpose and origins as a theory created by and for women of colour (175). In doing so, Tomlinson argues that these feminists are using power-blind strategies, which she argues "emanate from an unsated but deeply rooted commitment to willed blindness to power that pervades neoliberal culture and politics" (176).

While Tomlinson argues that colourblindness[12] is often seen as a more apt critique for arguments relating to the analysis of racial hierarchies and that colourblindness is often infused without power relations being recognised, thus the importance of critiquing powerblindness (174). Colourblindness, according to Tomlinson, "proceeds from an uninterrogated baseline norm that imagines a world where racism does not exist until an isolated and aberrant event or

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[12] I acknowledge that this language can be considered ableist, however, it used by the author and best suits an understanding of what is discussed here.

individual injects it into social life,"; but powerblindness "is even more insidious than colourblindness in that it is not even articulated as an ideological commitment yet serves to structure social relations" (175). Tomlinson critiques McCall's article previously mentioned in this chapter as a text that "appropriate[s] intersectionality by gestures of enveloping women of colour in an unmarked "feminism"" (177).

By this, Tomlinson argues that McCall's paper is seminal to writing on intersectionality. However, McCall does not actively mention that feminists of colour created intersectionality, instead choosing to list associated authors (almost entirely women of colour) in a footnote for the reader to consider on their own (McCall 182-183). Additionally, Tomlinson argues that McCall's opening paragraph, as quoted below, highlights the colourblindness employed by McCall:

> Since critics first alleged that feminism claimed to speak universally for all women, feminist researchers have been acutely aware of the limitations of gender as a single analytical category. In fact, feminists are perhaps alone in the academy in the extent to which they have embraced intersectionality—the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations—as itself a central category of analysis. One could even say that intersectionality is the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far (McCall 1771).

Tomlinson argues that in her opening paragraph, McCall has omitted racial difference in a way that claims intersectionality, a knowledge produced by women of colour, as part of feminism while at the same time establishing feminism as "a singular site for intersectionality" by ignoring the work of other fields, like queer, ethnic or racial studies (McCall 183). In this way, it claims that intersectionality can only be considered through gender, thereby employing both colourblindness and powerblindness in a way that continues to systematically marginalise the knowledge produced by women of colour (Tomlinson 183)—an argument made by both Lewis and Bilge.

As popular as intersectionality is, while considering the words of caution by authors previously discussed, I would argue that intersectionality is a critical tool for understanding how mixed-race people construct their racialised identities within the context of colonialism and whiteness. Intersectionality must be considered within its intended goals in a way that considers power structures as integral to understanding the intersections of social locations, like race, class, or gender. Intersectionality provides both the space and tools for feminists of colour, like me, to research the experiences of people of colour, like those considered in this

dissertation. Therefore, my research aims to explicitly engage with intersectionality as a tool intended to centre race while understanding the multiple axes of oppression and privilege that interlock the lived experiences of mixed-race people, an aim considered within Critical Race Theory as well.

Intersectionality and CRT are, at their foundation, interwoven theories. Both theories were created and influenced by a seminal feminist of colour, Kimberle Crenshaw. A black feminist legal scholar, Crenshaw, aimed to employ black feminist antidiscrimination doctrine to analyse race and sex, creating intersectionality. As previously discussed, intersectionality has "travelled" within and to various fields; however, Carbado, in his chapter *Colourblind Intersectionality* (2019), argues that intersectionality within its "home" of Critical Race Theory has been under-theorised, and crucially, CRT's literature on colourblindness and intersectional literature on colourblindness are rarely in dialogue with one another (200). Moreover, Carbado argues that by highlighting selected legal cases, intersectionality is often colourblind in some instances, which is in exact juxtaposition to Crenshaw's (1989; 1991) seminal pieces on the need for intersectionality within the legal field (Carbado 202). Carbado argues that a consequence of this colourblind intersectionality is captured in the quotation below:

> One consequence of colorblind intersectionality is that white women can simultaneously be "just women" and stand in for all women; white men can be "just men" and stand in for all men; and white gays and lesbians can be "just gays and lesbians" and stand in for all gays and lesbians. The fact that whiteness is intersectionally unmarked across each of the preceding (and other) social positions shores up whiteness as the default and normative racial category through and on which gender, sexuality, class, and so on are expressed. At the same time, colorblind intersectionality instantiates non-whiteness as the racial modifier of gender, sexuality, class, and so on. In this respect, there is a relationship between the notion of women of color as 'dif-ferent' and the unarticulated racial intersectionality of Jespersen's [the defendant] white identity (210).

Carbado's argument is then: intersectionality while facing many critiques and having "travelled" far outside of its "genesis", intersectionality must be brought back into a conversation within its home of Critical Race Theory in order to avoid the deployment of colourblind intersectionality (Carbado 204-205). Carbado's arguments speak to Crenshaw's original conceptualisation of intersectionality to address the exact issue of colourblindness within the law where "woman" is synonymous with "white" and to highlight the experiences

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of black women and their multiple social locations. While both Crenshaw and Carbado refer more to the field of Law in their examples, intersectionality and CRT were constructed within both theories and were intended to critique power structures that make, remake, and regulate social locations that make up identities. Moreover, they are, thus, both critical theories for conducting an analytical investigation into mixed-race identity representation in post-apartheid South African literary texts.

I have previously used both Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality in order to analyse the identity construction of mixed-race people in post-apartheid South Africa. While Metcalfe (2022) and Metcalfe (2023) are both written from a social science perspective, using these theoretical frameworks is valuable within the literary analysis conducted in this presentation. As Modiri (2012) showed, CRT can be a practical analytical framework to understand the post-apartheid South African landscape, the context in which all literary texts analysed are based. Using the premise that race is a social construct, and that racism is an everyday experience, CRT and Intersectionality are valuable frameworks to understand processes of racialisation that occur within the narrative world. In addition, they provide a tool for grounding the analysis of the literary texts within identity theories that are cognisant of the personal, social and political landscape in which they are based.

Although, through a Critical Race Theory perspective, Intersectionality is a core tenant within its theoretical framing, Intersectionality, as both a theory and an analytical tool, can stand within its own right. Thus, both are presented as interconnected by stand-alone theories as the theoretical framing for this research. A CRT lens locates the analysis with an understanding of systems of racialisation and white supremacist structure. At the same time, Intersectionality ensures that the analysis considers multidimensional factors between and outside of the speech in the literary texts, which shape characterisation in the narrative world. In addition, the structuring of this dissertation's three chapters of analysis is specifically sectioned to frame the analysis of mixed-race identity in post-apartheid South Africa with the spheres of social, personal and political power structures that influence, construct and produce intersectional identities. Together, CRT and Intersectionality provide a framework for analysis that answers the main research question: How are first-generation mixed-race people represented in post-apartheid literary texts?

1.5. Methodology

Mieke Bal, in her Fourth Edition of the book *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (2017), defines narratology as "a field of study is the ensemble of theories of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events – of cultural artefacts that tell a story.

Such theory helps us understand, analyse, and evaluate narratives" (3). While Narratology is the systematic study of analysis of narrative form and representation, and Postcolonial Theory explores the impact, effects and implications of colonialism and imperialism and the response to it, postcolonial narratology allows the raising of questions about power and ideology while unpacking a text (Heinen 21). Gerald Prince, in his paper *On Postcolonial Narratology* (2005), argues that while postcolonial narratology is "sensitive to matters commonly, if not uncontroversially associated with the postcolonial (hybridity, migrancy, otherness, fragmentation, diversity, power relations); it envisages their possible narratological correspondents and it incorporates them" (373). In this way, postcolonial narratology becomes a useful methodological lens to analyse the representations of first-generation mixed-race characters in post-apartheid literature because they exist within power relations that construct them as hybrid and as the 'other'.

As a response to Prince's construction of postcolonial narratology, Sue J. Kim, in her paper *Introduction: Decolonising Narrative Theory* (2012), argues that while postcolonialism could be either be "considered or shunted to a parenthetical", while colonialism and forms of neocolonialism are "ideological, historical conditions" that are part of society and everyday life (238-239). In this way, she argues that the main question derived from postcolonial narratology should be "how the history of colonialism and the condition of postcoloniality shape our societies, assumptions, and ideas, including narratology" (Kim 239).

Kim, in her critique of Prince's conceptualisation of postcolonial narratology, argues that its construction still relies on the version of narratology that has grown from "Western narratives and narrative forms", thus, if it is to be genuinely postcolonial, this definition must be decolonised (241). While I agree with Kim, there is no scope within this paper to delve into these complexities. For this dissertation, postcolonial narratology provides a strong methodological framing for analysing literary texts in the post-apartheid context. As previously stated, the decision to use post-apartheid instead of post-colonial is specific to the experience of oppression within the South African context. Then, in specific relation to characterisation, the narratological element focused on in this dissertation, Prince argues that postcolonial narratology aims:

> To account for the kind of characters inhabiting these spatial and temporal
> setting and to supply the instruments for the exploration of their significance,
> their complexity, the stability of their designation and identity, or the actantial
> slots that occupy and the actantial function they fulfil. In addition, it would
> allow for the study of their perceptions, their utterances, thoughts and feelings,

their motivations, their interactions and their position with respect to such commonly exploited semantic categories as goodness and badness, class and power, sex, gender, or sexuality. But it might also make provisions for focusing on the exploitation of particularly pertinent features like (formerly or newly) colonising or colonised, race or ethnicity, otherness and hybridity, collaboration, (forced) assimilation, resistance, or ambivalence, and, obviously, linguistic and narrative capacity" (375-276).

The focus on characterisation in the analysis of the corpus in this dissertation, through the lens of post-colonial narratology, provides crucial insights into the multiple ways in which mixed-race identity is represented, particularly in a context where colonial and apartheid legacies remain key influences in social, political and personal spheres of power. In addition, postcolonial narratology works well with critical race-based theoretical framings of Intersectionality and Critical Race Theory in that all consider the impact of power relations, multiple intersectional locations and the lasting impact of colonial structures. In this way, postcolonial narratology, especially within the context of post-apartheid literature, provides a solid methodological tool to understand the complexities and intersectional modalities of this society, which is reflected in the narrative world of each literary text.

1.5.1. Corpus

The number of literary texts written about mixed-race people within South African literary history at an initial glance seems expansive, mainly because of the focus on coloured identity, rather than first-generation mixed-race. As noted previously, mixed-race was a term used to describe coloured identity. Within my discussions about the post-apartheid context, I have made this distinction to differentiate between first-generation mixed-race people and those who identify as coloured, as previously discussed. Within this framing, the expansiveness of the literature became more limited, especially with the added criteria.

The standardised criteria for literary texts that would be used within the scope of this research were: there had to be a character that was mixed-race within the definition of a first-generation mixed-race person; the text had to be written in post-apartheid South Africa, and the timeline of the novel had to, to some extent, occur within the post-apartheid (post-1994); characters had to be mixed-race and old enough to show an understanding of their identity in relation to their surroundings, and finally the character had to have one parent that is considered a person of colour under apartheid and post-apartheid racial categorisations and the other parent had to be specifically white, in order to understand the role of dominant narratives of whiteness within representations of mixed-race identity. I identified five literary texts that met this

specific criterion: three novels, one memoir and one short story. With the focus on characterisation, seven characters are analysed, five main/protagonist characters and two side/supporting characters. What follows will be an outline of the plot of each of the five literary texts analysed in the upcoming chapters and their narrative style.

1.5.1.1. The Madonna of Excelsior – Zakes Mda (Two characters)

The Madonna of Excelsior begins in Excelsior, a town in the Free State, a province in South Africa with a large white Afrikaner community during the 1980s in apartheid. As with all apartheid racially segregated towns, a large black township, Mahlatswetsa Location, is set on the outskirts to provide cheap labour to the white Afrikaner community in their businesses or farms. The novel follows the protagonist Nikki through her life in Excelsior. At a young age, Nikki is raped by a white Afrikaner named Johannes Smit, who is well known for his sexual abuse of young black women, an act he does not see as abuse. Later, Nikki enters an exploitative sexual relationship with her white Afrikaner boss, Stephanus Cronje, who ultimately impregnates her. Popi, her daughter, is born, and Nikki is arrested for contravention of the Immorality Act along with several other black women and, in a rare instance, white men. The Excelsior Trial was an actual event that occurred during apartheid; ultimately, all charges were dropped.

After this event, the novel switches from Nikki to Popi as the main protagonist. As a mixed-race child, Popi is called coloured, a label she rejects. She hates her blonde hair and blue eyes and is often ostracised for her white features by her black friends. Popi grew up to join the liberation movement and ultimately saw the transition into the post-apartheid era. Popi is wrapped up in the building of the new democracy. The cracks of post-apartheid realities begin to show through the third-person narrator, who uses collective voice to describe the events that occur. The novel interrogates the building, shifting and changing of identities through the transitions of these time periods and provides a critical and satirical commentary on the realities of post-apartheid South Africa and the absurdities of racial categorisations juxtaposed with the national ideology of non-racialism.

Popi and the Seller of Songs (who does not have another name) are children born from the Excelsior 19 trial (the name for those arrested during the trial). Both characters show the different experiences of first-generation mixed-race people in the final years of apartheid through the trajectories of their lives in apartheid and their relationship with each other and themselves. The intersectional nature of their lived experience provides an important site for understanding representations of the fluidity of mixed-race identity and how interactions within the same power structures do not create the same lived experience.

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This novel interrogates the fickle nature of identity construction in relation to the real experiences of grappling with the consequences of racial segregation laws. In addition, it provides valuable insight into the intersectional nature of lived experiences under the apartheid regime and the continuation of these legacies within the post-apartheid space. The intersectional nature in which the characters can be analysed speaks to the complex and interwoven nature of real-world apartheid experiences that are represented within the novel.

1.5.1.2. Bitter Fruit – Achmat Dangor (Two characters)

Bitter Fruit is set in Johannesburg at the start of democracy and just before the beginning of the TRC. Silas and Lydia, a married couple, both of whom are first-generation mixed-race but each with one coloured parent, raise their son Mikey, who just started at university. Lydia and Silas' marriage is wrought with tension and uncomfortable silence. When they were newlyweds, Lydia was raped in front of Silas by a white policeman, Francois du Boise, ultimately leading to her becoming pregnant and giving birth to Mikey. The trauma and memory of that night takes up space between them in their marriage. Upon Mikey's discovery of Lydia's diary, he discovers that he is the product of the rape, and that Silas is not his biological father, beginning a chain of events that ultimately leads to the complete breakdown of the already fractured family.

Mikey makes friends with another first-generation mixed-race classmate from university, Vinu, and they bond over their mixed-race identity in a toxic co-dependent way. She confides in Mikey that her father has been molesting her since a young age and asks him to kill him for her. Within Mikey's friendship with Vinu, he takes a decisive step to insist that he be called by his full name, Michael. Michael becomes radicalised at the mosque by Silas' family in an attempt to root himself within an identity which has since been pulled from under him.

Eventually, Michael kills Vinu's father as a practice run for killing his biological father and his mother's rapist, du Boise. He ultimately does this and then flees to join a radical Islamist terrorist group. The novel captures the themes and language of the TRC and post-TRC era. The dialogue between characters presents the shifting language of vengeance to reconciliation, from justice to amnesty and forgiveness. Their lived experiences are steeped within the intergenerational trauma of apartheid and are reflexive of both sides of the TRC coin, to forgive or to seek vengeance. While neither option is perfect, the novel interrogates this complicatedly seminal moment in post-apartheid history through the mixed-race characters who become embodiments of these complexities. The novel is narrated through a third-person narrator, with the characters' focalisation of their inner thoughts incorporated.

1.5.1.3. Let The Music Play On – Fred Khumalo

In this short story, narrated through third-person narration, the protagonist Fikile has moved to South Africa from the United States, where she was born. Her black South African father, who went into exile in the US, recently died, and her white American mother had a mental breakdown leading to Fikile being sent to live with her Aunt in Kwa-Zulu Natal, a province in North Eastern South Africa where the majority of Zulu people live. The short story begins with Fikile on her first day at school. The school is a famous historically white school which has now been racially integrated by the financial elite.

Set at least within the last decade, the short story tracks Fikile's experiences within the school and her relationships with her classmates. It provides valuable insight into the born free generation or those that grew up entirely in the post-apartheid era. This literary text is the only work out of the corpus with a character born in the post-apartheid period. Because she was raised in the US, Fikile must navigate the intersectional nuances of racial, gendered and class politics within her new schooling environment in a context foreign to her to some extent. Fikile ultimately struggles to figure out her identity within the post-apartheid context, navigate structural whiteness, interrogate what it means to be African and understand herself in relationship to fellow black people around her. This short story provides valuable insight into representations of identity(ies) in the post-apartheid era and a commentary on how the 'born free' generation navigates or resists the continued legacies of structural oppression.

1.5.1.4. <u>Killing Karoline – Sara-Jayne Makwala-King</u>

In this memoir, Sara shares her life story. Born of an affair between her white mother and black father, while her mother was married to a different white man, Sara's life began out of the complexities of apartheid. However, she was initially classified as white when she was born; after a few weeks, her skin became darker, and her mother confessed the affair to her husband. Given the birthname Karoline, Sara's biological mother and the man named her father on her birth certificate, her mother's husband told their families that Karoline/Sara had a severe kidney disease and required treatment in England. They put her up for adoption and told their families that Karoline/Sara had died upon their return to South Africa.

After 'becoming' Sara, she discusses her journey of dealing with her identity growing up in the UK, reaching out to her biological mother, and facing rejection. After a long battle with drugs and alcohol, she moves to South Africa for a drug treatment program, where she meets her half-siblings and her mother's white husband, listed as her father, on her birth certificate. Sara navigates her identity within the post-apartheid space but also the profound legacies that apartheid had on her family. Sara explains her recovery journey from addiction and the identity crisis she had faced for many years. Ultimately, Sara officially changes her

name from Karoline (still on her South African birth certificate) to Sara and is reborn within her new context and understanding of herself.

1.5.1.5. Finders Weepers – Penny Lorimer

In the final novel, Nikola, or Niks as she prefers to be called, is an investigative journalist living in Cape Town. Having grown up with her black mother who worked as a carer for a white family, the family paid for Niks to go to school and university, giving Niks a cultural capital that could provide her with a stepping stone to access white spaces. When the daughter, Boniswa, of her mother's friend Precious, goes missing, Niks is sent to the Eastern Cape (a province in South Africa but the town of Fort Spencer is fictional) to find her or what happened to her. Nonceba, Niks' mother, has never told her much about her white German father. On her mission to find Boniswa, Niks accidentally meets members of her family that her mother has not told her about. She discovers why her mother moved to Cape Town because her grandfather banished her after having children with a white man. She also discovers that she has an older brother whom her father took away with him to Germany when he left her mother without warning.

While the novel does not centre Niks' mixed-race identity in the same way as the other literary texts do, Niks still grapples with her identity and comes to terms with how that has shaped her lived experience and that of her mother. The novel also tackles issues of shame, silence and secrecy that remain ironically visible in the post-apartheid space. It tackles the experiences of black women as carers for white families, the violence of the post-apartheid regime, and the problems with rampant corruption in the schooling system, particularly in rural communities. And at the same time, it provides insight into the nuances of the lived experiences of first-generation mixed-race people.

1.6. Structure of Work

The coming chapters will analyse the five literary texts that comprise this research's corpus. The chapters have been organised within the framing of intersectionality. Collins (1993) argues that there are three main circles in which people construct their identity, representing the different levels at which we engage with various power structures. Namely, the personal, the social and the political. These circles interact with each other, similar to a Venn diagram, where they are influenced by each other in circular ways.

Chapter Two is titled Conceiving the Character. It represents the social sphere. This chapter focuses on the social environment surrounding the characters before and at the time of their birth. Through focusing on the irony of constructions of 'immorality' within the framework of the Immorality Act that made interracial relations 'immoral', I unpack the stories

of how the character's parents met, the circumstances of their relationship and the underlying social issues that will ultimately shape the characterisation of the mixed-race characters within the novels. Then I analyse the post-apartheid version of the absent black parent trope in US literature, which is the absent white parent trope in the post-apartheid context. Across all novels, the white parent does not play an active role in the lives of the mixed-race character; this representation entrenches the idea that interracial relationships and mixed families are somehow incompatible. And finally, I look at the role and legacies of intergenerational trauma present within the family structures of the mixed-race characters. These legacies of trauma are replayed within the development of the mixed-race characters and are essential to understanding the events that unfold in their lives and how they respond. This chapter frames the social environment of the narrative world as a reflection of the post-apartheid to show that the characterisation of mixed-race people within these literary works is representative of the broader narratives on identity and racialisation in the post-apartheid space.

I focus on the personal sphere in Chapter Three, Belonging and the Politics of (un)Belonging. In the first section, I investigate how mixed-race characters are discussed by the secondary characters and what they tell us about how mixed-race identity is represented. Whether this is from their classmates in events in their school or as they have moved through different phases of their lives, but through the lens of feelings of belonging and unbelonging, these are told to us either as an interpretation by the character of what was said to them or by third-person narration in cases where the character is not the focaliser. The following section addresses what the mixed-race characters tell us about themselves, or the narrators tell us about the characters and how they navigate the spaces they enter through, either trying to find belonging within the group or navigating moments of unbelonging that lead them into isolation from other characters. The final section considers the representation of the tragic mulatta/o trope in post-apartheid literature. I ultimately show that although there are strong correlations between the representation of mixed-race people to the tragic mulatta/o trope in the US, mixed-race characters are represented more as a challenge to structures and outdated processes of racialisation. Although their lives represent the tragedies of apartheid, the ending of the novels reflects happier outcomes than that of the trope in the US. In this way, mixed-race characters become the complexity of the post-apartheid era that balances the legacies of the past with the optimism of the future. I also note that despite this optimism, mixed-race characters resist this narrative in how they represent the incomplete goals of the Rainbow Nation.

This ultimately leads to the final analysis chapter, Chapter Four, titled The (Un)Making of the Rainbow Nation focuses on the political sphere of power and how mixed-race characters

navigate the national ideologies of the apartheid state through their intersectional identities. This includes focusing on how the characters engage with the construction of the Rainbow Nation itself, the 'new' language of non-racialism in South Africa or the narratives of forgiveness and reconciliation. In this way, the mixed-race characters become an entry point into the conversations of racial and political dynamics in the post-apartheid era through their expressions and responses to post-apartheid political strategies for national healing and reconciliation. Finally, I assess the endings of each literary text that each has open endings. While each novel in someway provides a critique of the political ideologies of reconciliation, the Rainbow Nation, and the unrealistic nature of non-racialism, I show that none of the literary texts provides strategies to challenge these nationalist narratives, instead opting for open-ended endings that imply to 'move on' or 'live' with the traumas of the past. In this way, I show how the mixed-race characters represent the complexities of racial dynamics within post-apartheid literature through the narrative world and as representations of mixed-race identity in post-apartheid society.

Chapter Two: Conceiving the Character

The historical legacy of apartheid, specifically the strict regulation of interracial relationships, has considerably impacted how mixed-race characters have been conceived in literary works in the South African context. Delgado and Stefancic describe the third tenet of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the "social construction thesis", where race is a social construct and negates that race is based on biological, genetic constructions. And instead, categorisations of race are used, manipulated and reinvented by the dominant powers in society for their convenience. The apartheid state, in its policy of racialisation, employed a common-sense approach, where race was based on appearance, common knowledge and immediate family history to construct purity rather than a complete reliance on genetics (Posel 90). Through a critical race approach, considering that race is a social construct, that white supremacy is created and sustained by racism to advance the interests of white elites, and that differential racialisation changes the constructions of 'race' in different spaces for the needs of the dominant power, it is possible to understand the setting in which these mixed-race characters have been conceived and the overarching power dynamics that plague the narrative world.

This section specifically focuses on the social sphere of intersectional power. It deconstructs and unpacks how regulatory practices of racial policing, supported by apartheid racialised legal policies, sustained and reproduced racism in South African society, as represented by the narrative world. Through analysing the ironies and contradictions of morality through the effects of the Immorality Act and other laws against interracial relationships, I will show that the representation of mixed-race characters, even before their birth, is already rooted within these racialised power dynamics. In addition, the representation of the "Absent parent trope" within South African literature is based on the absenteeism of the white parent, specifically the white father, rather than the black father, as is portrayed in mixed-race literary works from the US, including their lack of culpability for their actions within systems of whiteness that seek to protect them. Finally, I will analyse how legacies of trauma are reproduced from the parent's experience onto the mixed-race children. In this way, the mixed-race characters are conceived within specific racial, gendered and political power structures, reproduced through the societal buy-in to the regulation and policing of these structures.

2.1. Illicit and 'Immoral' Births: The Policing of (Im)Morality

The historical and legal underpinnings that create the setting in which the characters exist can be attributed to the Prohibition of Mixed-Marriages Act of 1949, the Immorality Act

of 1950, the Population Registration of 1950 and the Group Areas Act of 1950. Each literary text in the corpus references the precariousness of the character's mixed-race identity as not being entirely accepted into society. This will be delved into further throughout this subsection. This is expressed either through specific references to the contravention of race purity laws, through acts of sexual violence or illicit sexual relationships or 'trysts'.

The entrenchment specifically of the Immorality Act of 1927, which outlawed sexual relationships between 'Europeans' (white) and 'natives' (black), before the inception of formalised apartheid in 1948, is a reflection of the deep-rooted belief that interracial relationships were considered a most severe and 'immoral' act. In addition, the subsequent amendment to the 1927 Act in the first years of the apartheid regime, becoming the Immorality Act of 1950, specifically made it an offence for sexual intercourse, relationship or marriage between 'Europeans' and 'non-Europeans', meaning all 'other' races that were not considered White (Posel 95-97). Replaced by the Sexual Offences Act of 1950, which ensured more restrictions and regulations on interracial relationships in all aspects of everyday life, understanding the impact of the Immorality Act is essential to understanding the representations of the mixed-race characters across the corpus considered in this dissertation. The various Acts related to controlling interracial relationships form the basis of understanding the prevailing structures that created and sustained white supremacist hetero-patriarchy and the power it wielded, not only by the apartheid state but by everyday white people. This legacy extends into the post-apartheid setting. In this way, this section specifically seeks to highlight the contradictions of the constructions of morality and immorality and how these are represented in the conception of each mixed-race character.

The impact of the Immorality Act and the theme of 'illicitness' surrounding the character's births are expressed across all five literary texts, some more so than others. In Fikile's case in *Let The Music Play On*, her white mother and black father married after meeting in the US, and therefore her birth story was not impacted by the Immorality Act and thus will not be discussed in-depth in this sub-section. However, her birth is influenced by her father going into exile because he was a liberation fighter during apartheid. Chapter Two of Sara-Jayne Makwala-King's memoir, *Killing Karoline,* is titled *an immoral act*, a fitting description of the surroundings of Sara's birth. Sara begins by saying, "Even before I was born, I was a problem child. A problem *unborn* child, but a problem nevertheless" (Makwala-King 17). The notion of being born "a problem child" is indicative of the precarity of the apartheid legal

system, where a child, no matter how harmless, is considered a 'problem' to be dealt with "because of the colour of [Sara's] skin" (Makwala-King 13).

Sara's birth story, resulting from a consensual affair between her white married mother and her black father employed by her mother, is wrought with a complex set of power relations. While the white mother, Kris, who enjoyed relative freedom during that apartheid era, would also experience sexism as a white woman, especially given the overtly religious and conservative beliefs under the apartheid regime, especially impressed onto white women (Azille Coetzee 102). The Black father experiences immense limitations on his access to all public spaces. Through Swaart Gevaar[13]/Black Peril rhetoric, his relationship with a white woman would bring more severe consequences onto him, rather than her, that could ultimately result in death.

Sara's story, as written in her memoir, provides substantial evidence of the real-world issues reflected in the narrative world of the other four fictional characters. The theme of conceiving a mixed-race child being equivalent to abnormality or as a punishable act perpetuates a belief that mixed-race people exist as averse to societal norms. This belief extends into the post-apartheid setting. That being said, the idea of immorality is upheld in how the characters are conceived, literally and figuratively. The first describes how they were conceived, and the latter is an underpinning source of conflict within the characters throughout their development in the narrative world.

In highlighting the 'immoral' nature of her existence, Sara tells of how the early years of her life, as Karoline, were marred and doomed by the racialised cultural hegemonies of the apartheid regime from the start (Makwala-King 16). Sara's disassociation of herself from Karoline reflects the false nature of immorality as a construct of those in power. Where the 'immoral act' that results in her birth is considered illegal under apartheid law, what happens to Karoline, being given up for adoption because of the colour of her skin and her parents telling her family that she died, is undoubtedly more aligned with the definition of immoral (Makwala-King 10-11). This will be dealt with more in-depth in Chapter Three, where the personal sphere of intersectional power dynamics will be discussed. However, her birth story speaks to the nature of apartheid racialised thinking and legal policies, where the protection of the construction of race is more important than the protection of a child considered 'not worth'

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[13] Refers to the belief that black men are the biggest risk to the 'purity' of white women who are in constant danger of being raped or assaulted. See Azille Coetzee (102-103).

protecting because of the colour of their skin. Sara tells of how she reflected on this perceived 'immorality':

> While over time I came to understand what had what had happened to Karoline, learning in very basic terms what apartheid was and how my conception was deemed a criminal act, it wasn't until I saw in black and white how vehemently the apartheid government sought to prevent the types of union from which I was born that I understood the significance and gravity of what I represented" (Makwala-King 19).

The constructions of morality and immorality were ultimately decided by the state and reproduced in societal relations. Referencing her birth as a criminal act echoes the title of Trevor Noah's autobiography, *Born a Crime* (2016). He writes, "Race-mixing proves that races can mix – and in many cases, want to mix. Because a mixed person embodies that rebuke to the logic of the system, race-mixing becomes a crime worse than treason" (Noah 21). Noah's writings here reflect the quote above in that the very act of being born and ultimately living is considered an illegal act by an institution that hates you for the threat you impose to their skewed moral construction of race. Sara provides the exact wording of the Immorality Act 1927 (Makwala-King 19). The terminology reflects society's "black and white" separation in literal "black and white". The apartheid regime ensured they had control over all aspects of life, whether public or private.

The institutionalisation of the regulation of sex was decided through their Christian dogma spurred by its racist underpinnings. The creation of formalised ways to ensure the reproduction of 'racial purity', as Ellison and de Wet[14], was heavily policed through their construction of morality. Noah describes apartheid as a "police state" (18). This further exemplifies Sara and Noah's assessment of using racialised laws to ensure their existence was criminalised. Although, according to the extract from the Immorality Act that Sara shares, men, either 'European' or 'native' would receive up to five years imprisonment, whereas women 'European' or 'native' would receive up to four years imprisonment (Makwala-King 19). However, white men were almost always likely to 'get away' with being charged with the Immorality Act, similarly but not equally was true for white women, however for both black men and women, they would bear the brunt of this law (Azille Coetzee 102). In this way, Sara did not stand a chance of being considered to be an average child as she was born into a perpetual state of precarity, policed and enforced by the state, and ultimately the societal

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[14] See Ellison and de Wet 428 for further arguments on reproductions of 'racial purity'.

pressure of contravening whiteness and its structures led to her mother giving her up for adoption.

Sara makes specific mention of the internationally famous example of the sex scandal of Excelsior that saw the rare trial of seven white men and fourteen black women that were arrested and charged for contravention of the Immorality Act in 1927 (Makwala-King 19). This is the real-life story of what happened in the town of Excelsior in the early 1970s, which forms the setting of *The Madonna of Excelsior* and the historical underpinnings of Popi's birth story. Popi's conception, like Sara's, was based on an illicit and illegal sexual relationship. Still, for Popi, this relationship was between a white farmer, Stephanus Cronje and her black mother, Niki Pule. In the description of Popi's conception, the narrator tells of how Stephanus' wife, Cornelia, had humiliated Niki by accusing her of stealing from their shop (Mda 40; 49). When Stephanus showed sexual interest in Niki, as was the case with most white men in the area (Mda 48), Niki used this interest to enact revenge on Cornelia:

> She looked into his eyes in the light of the moon. She did not see Stephanus Cronje, owner of Excelsior Slaghius[15]. She did not see a boss or a lover. She saw Madam Cornelia's husband. And he was inside her. She was gobbling up Madam Cornelia's husband, with the emphasis on *Madam*. And she had him entirely in her power. Chewing him to pieces. She felt him inside her, pumping in and out. Raising a sweat. Squealing like pig being slaughtered. Heaving like a dying pig. Ag shame[16]. Madam Cornelia's husband. She who had the power of life and death over her. He became a whimpering fool on top of her, babbling insanities that she could not make out. Then there was a final long scream, "Eina-naaa![17]" A dog's howl at the moon. And two sharp jerks. It was all over, His body vomited inside hers (Mda 49).

The sex act between Niki and Stephanus is described with such vivid disdain, where her quest for revenge outweighs the disgust, she feels having him inside her. Her comparison of him "squealing like a pig being slaughtered" speaks to his profession as a butcher; the comparison here is that he is helpless to her, just as the pigs are helpless to him. The description of his ejaculation inside her as "vomit" speaks to Julia Kristeva's concept of Abjection. Kristeva argues, "It is not then an absence of health or cleanliness which makes something

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[15] Butchery.
[16] Popular South African phrase to express pity or as a reaction to news.
[17] A South African term to express pain or distress.

[88]

abject, but that which perturbs an identity, a system, an order; that which does not respect limits, places or rules. It is the between, the ambiguous, the mixed" (127). Stephanus as the white male, does not respect the limits of Niki's body in the same way that the apartheid state does not respect the bodies of black women. The representation of disgust that Niki feels is a representation of disgust with a system where white men can act with such impunity that they feel entitled to black women's bodies. His invasive presence in her body impregnates her with a mixed-race child, which represents the ambiguity of the apartheid regime. Niki's disgust does not only lie with Stephanus and the apartheid regime; it is also with the humiliation that Cornelia Cronje inflicts on her.

In a rare moment of power for a black woman in the apartheid regime, Niki relishes her brief encounter with having control over a white man; she uses him to enact her revenge on Madam Cornelia and what she represents, the apartheid system that gives Cornelia and Stephanus power over her. In this so-called immoral act, Niki, who "had him entirely in her power", makes Stephanus a co-conspirator, which he later becomes in the trial against them. However, as soon as Niki held that power in that immoral sexual act when it was over, "he was in control again. He had the power of life and death" (Mda 49). A representation of the power of the apartheid state, where white people can rely on the state to protect them through the laws that give them their privilege and advantage. Although Stephanus and the other white men accused in the Excelsior trial remained protected by the system, as the case was eventually dismissed, it left serious questions about the Immorality Act, mainly as it was used to persecute white men (Mda 96). Niki and Stephanus' affair continued:

> They had "done their thing" in the sunflower fields before. In between the barn romps, which happened only once a fortnight. They had even "done their thing" in Madam Cornelia's bedroom, when she was visiting her parents in Zastron. They had used Madam Cornelia's own metal antique bed that looked like a hospital bed to Niki. On Madam Cornelia's own downy duvet. Niki's head resting comfortably on Madam Cornelia's own fluffy continental pillow. Niki's greatest triumph! (Mda 52).

Their continued sexual relationship shows their continued contravention of racial purity laws. Niki's presence in the same marital bed of Stephanus and Cornelia represents the flagrant disregard for the 'sanctity' of marriage, espoused in the Christian dogma of the apartheid regime. However, despite the ongoing relationship, which primarily involved financial support from Stephanus (Mda 54), Niki does not receive the benefits of whiteness afforded to Stephanus and Cornelia. She only 'enjoys' them for fleeting moments among "Madam

Cornelia's own fluffy continental pillow". While Niki's relationship with Stephanus is presented as revenge on Madam Cornelia, it must always be located within the broader scheme of apartheid power dynamics that actively work to oppress Niki and those like her, which define and dispense morality as they see fit and are reproduced in social interactions. Therefore, the underlying contradictory implications of 'immorality', who has the power to be immoral and who doesn't, remain immortalised in Popi's characterisation and her journey throughout the novel.

While Sara's birth came from a consensual sexual relationship, although still wrought with apartheid power dynamics and intersectional realities, I question the consensual nature of the sex that resulted in Popi's birth. The intersections of race, gender, class and location shaped the power dynamics of interracial sex during the apartheid era. Niki, Popi's mother, had been sexually assaulted by another white farmer, Johannes Smit as a teenager, who preyed on the poverty that young black women lived in, created and sustained by the apartheid state and system (Mda 17). After talking to her friends about reporting him, Niki's friend Mmampe says, "Do you think the police will believe you had nothing to do with it? You took his money, didn't you? They will arrest you and charge you with the Immorality Act. Haven't you heard of black women who are in jail for sleeping with white men?" (Mda 18). In the same conversation, Mmampe tells Niki, "You can make a lot of money from this foolish white man. Just give him what he wants and eat the money" (Mda 18).

One could argue that this exchange between Niki and her friend is a way of regaining their power and control in a society where they do not have any. However, to "give him what he wants" (Mda 18) does not provide them with overall power, only in a fleeting moment where Niki "had full awareness of the power packed in her body" (Mda 52). To this point, Andy Carolin argues, "Niki's erotic agency and the dissembled cast of characters invert stereotypical power relations and undermine the mythologies of racial purity in sexual moralism that were integral to heteronormative whiteness" (121). Despite this, the black women ultimately put themselves at risk, as the apartheid state will not rescue them, especially as they threaten whiteness. At that moment, the 'immorality' of her actions are not immoral but an act of survival intertwined with shifting power dynamics rooted in the complexities of race and gender expectations of a white supremacist apartheid state.

Perhaps the most pernicious example of the contradictions of 'immorality' and the most horrific example of the violent, sexualised oppression of the apartheid state is the circumstances of Mikey's conception in *Bitter Fruit*. Mikey's mother, Lydia, mixed of a coloured mother and

a black father, was raped by an apartheid policeman, Francois Du Boise, who is Mikey's biological father. During her ordeal, Silas, born of a white mother and coloured father, Lydia's husband, is present but incapacitated by other police officers who protect Du Boise while he rapes Lydia (Dangor 13-14). Khaya Gqibitole argues that colonial-era rape and sexual violence became more widespread during apartheid, where "rape was used as a tool to subdue, humiliate and annihilate black people" (89). The multiple levels of violation that Lydia experienced, not only after being raped, but that this rape was sanctioned by the state, at the very least to dehumanise her and, at the most, to break her completely.

At the time of the assault, Silas and Lydia are newly married, but they raise Mikey together and never discuss what happened that night (Dangor 13). The intersections of race and gender are ever-present throughout this ordeal. Du Boise, a white male police officer, enjoys and exerts power given to him by the apartheid state over Lydia, classified as a coloured woman, through an act of sexual violence. Additionally, this power is exerted over Silas, a liberation fighter classified as coloured, as he is beaten and unable to save his wife from being raped (Dangor 13). Both Lydia and Silas acknowledge this apartheid strategy in an argument after Silas' chance run-in with Du Boise years later (Dangor 4-5); Lydia asks:

> 'Would you kill him for me?'
>
> 'Who?'
>
> 'Du Boise.'
>
> 'Lydia…'
>
> 'If you were a real man, you would have killed him on the spot, right there in the mall, splatter his brains against a window, watch his blood running all over the floor.'
>
> 'You're joking.'
>
> 'Joking? He took your woman, he f*cked your wife, made you listen to him doing it. I became his property, even my screams were his instrument. Now, you're a man, you believe in honour and all that kind of k*k[18]…'
>
> 'Lydia stop it'
>
> 'You know what he called me as he was f*cking me?'
>
> 'For f*ck's sake, Lydia!'

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[18] Afrikaans swear word, equivalent of sh*t.

'He called me a nice wild half-k*ffir[19] c*nt, a lekker wilde[20] Boesman[21] p*es[22]'
(Dangor 17).

Lydia's language, which expresses the vulgarity of the act committed on her, pours out of Lydia after years of silence between her and Silas about what happened that night. Within her words lies the deep trauma and pain from rape, with the added layer of state-sanctioned rape, which normalised "the rape of the oppressed" (Gqibitole 93). Lydia challenges Silas at the heart of his fears from that night by throwing the oppressor's language back at him, questioning his manhood and challenging the heteronormative construction of man as protector. This vivid description of what happened to Lydia lays bare the vulgarity of an immoral and horrific act of violence and, with it, the impact of apartheid-sanctioned sexual violence, which ironically resulted in the contravention of its racial purity laws.

In challenging Silas to kill Du Boise, Lydia challenges the immorality of what was done to her as being less immoral than killing another person, namely Du Boise. Underpinning what Lydia tells Silas Du Boise told her, specifically his reference to her mixed-race identity, is how first-generation mixed-race people were viewed as abnormal (Dangor 17). Du Boise's comments on Lydia's mixed-race identity and coloured identity underline the reasoning for the Immorality Act to prevent people like Lydia and Silas, who is also first-generation mixed-race, from existing. However, in the process, Du Boise contravenes his own mantra and apartheid law, not by enacting his power over Lydia but by raping and impregnating her with an 'immoral' child. It is as if, under the apartheid state, only when an interracial couple has consensual sex is it immoral, but not in acts of sexual violence, then it is justified as a tool for continued oppression.

The immoral act here is the act of rape. Added to that is rape by a police officer. Rape by a white man. Lydia chose not to report what had happened to her, much for the same reasons that Niki did not report her assault by Johannes Smit to the police. What had happened to them was not considered immoral by the apartheid state. Using black and coloured women as accessories to punish black and coloured men, especially those involved in liberation movements, was a common tactic of the apartheid security police. In Lydia's case, Du Boise is the personification of her oppression, and the physical manifestation of her scars is represented in Mikey. In her diary, she writes, "But I also know that I am pregnant. Inside of

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[19] Derogatory term used by the apartheid state for a black person, equivalent of N-word in the US context.
[20] Translation from Afrikaans: wild. In this context, could be translated as 'savage'.
[21] Derogatory term used to describe a Coloured person. Translation from Afrikaans: Bushman.
[22] Afrikaans swear word for a vagina. Considered to be vulgar and dehumanising.

me is a rapist's seed. My child will be a child of rape" (Dangor 126). The trauma of this experience and the resulting child are constant reminders of the brutality of apartheid and take up space in the family home, as if it is another person, Lydia, Mikey, Silas and the horrors of apartheid, living under one roof.

The horrors and deeply entrenched scars of rape are represented in Niki and Lydia, whose bodies are a "battlefield" of "political trauma" (Gqibitole 92). In this way, the constructions of morality rely again upon those who have the power to dictate its construction. In her conversation with Silas, Lydia asks for her husband to give her justice for what has been done to her because she knows she will not receive this justice from the apartheid state, and certainly not in the post-apartheid era where rape is excessively high and underreported (Gqibitole 87). Her quest for justice, much like Niki's quest for vengeance, is limited to the options available to them in a society that has normalised what has happened to them and where the dehumanisation of their bodies is a tool of political power branded with a self-justified, inconsistent version of morality.

While not such a violent example of the Immorality Act, Nix's birth in *Finder's Weepers* is marred by the silence and shame that seems to follow the 'immoralness' of conceiving mixed-race children in each narrative world. Nicola, or her preferred shortened version of her name, Nix, was born of a black mother and a white father during the apartheid era. A further discussion of her name and shortened name will be discussed in the next chapter. Nix's mother, Nonceba, had only told her that her father, Werner Schmidt, was German and left when Nix was young (Lorimer Chapter 23). When Nix confronts her mother about her past, Nonceba reveals that she had worked for a white man as his housekeeper; Nonceba says, "Eventually he said that he had fallen in love with me and wanted to get married. Of course we could not in those days because of apartheid: I was black and he was white, but I agreed to move in with him and stay with him – as if we were married" (Lorimer Chapter 23).

They had two children together; a brother Nix had not known of. Nix's father took her brother and disappeared to Germany without telling Nonceba, who was left to raise Nix alone. Nonceba recalls, "In the morning I went to the police. They were not very interested, but I told them it was my white boss who has disappeared, with my son. I did not tell them we were together" (Lorimer Chapter 23). This experience provides another example of how white society, particularly white men, are protected through apartheid white supremacist ideology. Despite their responsibility for breaking the law, the consequences of their actions reflect only on the black or coloured woman and the resulting child.

[93]

As a result of her relationship with a white man, Nonceba was marginalised by society and, subsequently, her family. When she takes Nix's brother to meet her family, as Nonceba finally reveals why she is estranged from her family, a secret Nix did not know, she says, "'I took our son to see my parents, to explain to them about my life. My father was very angry when he saw my child was half white. We had a big, big argument. He chased me from their home in our village and told me that I was dead to him and must never come back" (Lorimer Chapter 23). This shows how apartheid rhetoric and law against interracial marriages seeped into all aspects of life, including the oppressed's lives.

These legacies and rhetoric are present within the participants in Melissa Steyn et al.'s study, who have faced similar challenges in interracial relationships in the post-apartheid era (11-12). They report experiencing taking action to avoid even small displays of public intimacy to avoid any possible confrontation or even condemnation from their families (11). In this way, they are both policed and police themselves in anticipation of conflict over their interracial relationship. Nonceba's family police and condemns her for being with a white man. In return, Nonceba becomes more guarded over Nix as her mixed-race child because she cannot trust the system or her family, who view her as a co-conspirator in their oppression. The social regulation of the entrenchment of apartheid-styled 'morality' lies in the societal buy-in of the 'immorality' of interracial relationships. Of course, the power dynamics and internalised trauma of white oppression are also contributing factors here. Still, the overarching 'successes' of apartheid is reliant upon policing and self-policing within the moral framework it dictates.

The impact of the Immorality Act, physically, mentally, emotionally and socially, is deeply rooted in the conception and birth stories of Sara, Popi, Mikey and Nix. They become the personification of the 'abnormality' of a mixed-race person that the Act intended to prevent. However, their birth, along with being able to follow their journey through the narrative world in which they each exist, is in itself an act of resistance against the structures of apartheid and the control of the public and private lives of all its citizens. The representation of mixed-race characters as being the contradiction of the complexities of apartheid can represent a challenge to outdated sexual regulatory laws. And at the same time, it can be further harmful tropes that mixed-race identity can only be formed through extreme violence and resistance against white oppression, as evident through Niki and Lydia. The implications of the Immorality Act provide an essential background to understand how mixed-race characters have been conceived in the narrative world.

Evident within this sub-section is the non-systemic social application of morality against the backdrop of the legal entrenchment of morality through governing sexual relationships. The racialisation and gendering of rape, which constructs black and coloured women only as victims, reflects the deeply entrenched white supremacist misogyny that remains in the fibre of post-apartheid society. Without the societal buy-in to the reproduction and regulation of morality, as dictated by the white-heteropatriarchal Christian dogma of the apartheid state, the entrenchment of these ideologies would not have been so widely 'successful'. Mixed-race characters represented the warped irony of morality and race purity constructions and embodied the horrors and the contradictions of apartheid tools of power.

2.2. The Absent Parent Trope: The (In)culpability of the White Biological Parent

In the South African context, the representation of the "absent parent trope" within both apartheid and post-apartheid literature can be attributed to the legacies of racial segregation. While in the US context, literature on mixed-race identity also reproduces the absent black father trope (Odanga et al. 145). Odanga et al. argue that as a result of slavery and economic structures of white supremacy, black men were primarily absent from family structures; this has been further perpetuated within mixed-race literature in the US, where black fathers are portrayed negatively and often without the historical context of socio-racial hegemony of the society around them (146). Within this corpus, the absent parent is the white father and, in some cases, the white mother. While it was considered illegal for mixed-race families to exist within the apartheid context, as represented in the literature, this sub-section will show the white parent's decision to be absent in raising their mixed-race child to keep the protection of whiteness.

The impact of racial segregation due to apartheid laws, such as the Mixed Marriages Prohibition Act of 1949 and the Group Areas Act of 1950, is critical in the make-up and experiences of mixed-race families. These laws of enforced racial segregation have shaped the geography of South African cities and remain visible today. Despite these structural conditions, through a gendered, racial and class analysis, this subsection focuses on the lack of culpability from the white parent to take responsibility for their actions and their mixed-race children. And that despite societal pressure to preserve 'race' purity and segregation, they relied on the invisibility and inculpability of whiteness, which created and entrenched the power structures they benefit from, and they take no accountability for the contravention of these structures. Instead, the burden of care lies with the black mother.

Here is an outline of the biographic information of the mixed-race characters for reference:

Table 1. Character biographic information

Title	Character Name	Mother	Father	Time Period
The Madonna of Excelsior	Popi	Black Mother Niki Pule	White Father Stephanus Cronje	Birth during apartheid (1970)
The Madonna of Excelsior	The Seller of Songs (secondary character)	Black Mother Maria	White Father François Bornman	Birth during apartheid (1970)
Bitter Fruit	Mikey	Coloured Mother Lydia Ali	White Father François DuBois	Birth during apartheid (1979)
Bitter Fruit	Vinu (secondary character)	Indian Mother, Primi Viljoen	White Father, Johan Viljoen	Similar age to Mikey
Killing Karoline	Sara	White Mother Kris	Black Father Jackson Tau, works for mother's family	Birth during apartheid (1 August 1980)
Let the Music Play	Fikile	White Mother – American	Black Father, South African, professor, deceased	Birth during post-apartheid but born in the US
Finders Weepers	Nix/Nikola/Sibahle	Black Mother Nonceba Mniki	White Father, German, Werner Schmidt	Birth during apartheid (1979)

Three of the seven characters have black mothers employed or work informally for their white fathers, while one has a black father employed by the white mother. The intersectional implications of race, class and gender work simultaneously with the power dynamics in a system of white supremacy, like that of apartheid South Africa throughout each literary text. The power dynamics of exploitative and cheap labour, synonymous with the apartheid system, are present within the relationships across four of the five texts. Only in *Let the Music Play On*, where Fikile's parents were married and lived together until her father's death, is there an example of a mixed-race family living together as a 'normal' family, but even then, the black father dies, and so is absent. Although this was in a US context, the storyline begins when Fikile moves to South Africa to stay with her aunt (Khumalo 133), and we are not exposed to her life in the US with her parents or their marriage.

Across this dissertation's literary works, biological parents do not live and raise the mixed-race child together. While this might reflect the period, given that six out of the seven mixed-race characters were born during the apartheid regime, all characters also experience

life in a post-apartheid setting. In this way, they become emblematic of the transition between apartheid and post-apartheid while also representing the continuity of apartheid ideology, which will be discussed further in Chapter Four. In *Finders Weepers*, Nix's mother and father briefly live together "as if [they] were married" (Lorimer Chapter 30); after her father professes his love for her mother, Nix only discovers this information when her mother confesses that Nix has a secret brother:

'It's true, you have a brother. He was born three years before you. When I was younger I moved from here to find work in Cape Town. I was employed by a German man, Werner Schmidt, who had started a business there. I was his housekeeper. He was very kind to me and I worked hard. Eventually he said that he had fallen in love with me and wanted to get married. Of course we could not in those days of apartheid: I was black and he was white, but I agreed to move in with him and stay with him – as if we were married. Then I had a child the year the schoolchildren marched against apartheid, in 1976. It was a boy. He was called Karl. He was a beautiful child (Lorimer Chapter 30).

While Nix's parents' relationship is presented as loving, the power dynamics involved require further discussion. This excerpt shows no verbal or emotive expression from Nix's mother that she was in love with Werner. She had worked for him, and they had raised their children together until Nix was six months old. After this, her father kidnapped her brother, sold the house without her mother knowing and moved back to Germany (Lorimer Chapter 30). While we can never know the extent of their relationship, Nonceba's retelling of events could be tainted by her hatred for the man who took her child and her mourning for losing that child. As is evident in her use of the past tense to describe her son, "it was a boy. He was called Karl. He was a beautiful child." (Lorimer Chapter 30).

The relationship between Nonceba and Werner, where Nonceba worked as his domestic worker, is not necessarily portrayed as non-consensual but remains wrought with power dynamics that leave Nonceba with minimal options. Gqibitole argues that the white men who have these relationships "do not own up to their crimes as though they are entitled to having sex with domestic workers, as long as they do not make children with them" (91). In this case, two children were conceived. It is unclear if Werner left because he wanted his mixed-race son to grow up outside of apartheid society and was concerned about being imprisoned. Regardless, he uses his power within the structures of whiteness to evade responsibility for the care of his children, leaving Nonceba to deal with the aftermath. These power dynamics are further

reflected in her powerlessness to get her child back after she had reported him missing to the police:

> I told the police that my son had been stolen by this man, but they did nothing. 'Then one of the black policemen took pity on me. He could see that I was desperate and I think he knew the truth when he saw you. He made some enquiries and came back a few days later to tell me that Werner had left on a plane with Karl the previous Saturday. They had gone to the airport and got on a plane to Germany. If you had not been sick that day, he would have taken you too (Lorimer Chapter 30).

In this interaction, Nonceba, as a Black woman, cannot get the help she needs for her family because of her race and gender, especially as she is accusing a White man of taking her son. Werner, as a white man in a white supremacist system like apartheid, can act with impunity to a certain extent. At the same time, Nonceba is villainised for her relationship with a white man due to the colonial stereotypes that hypersexualise black women's bodies. In addition to his whiteness, Werner has a German passport, which he most probably accrued for his son and daughter while planning to take them and leave. While it is not explicitly discussed in the novel, Werner's decision to leave, regardless of whether Nix was with him, indicates the gendered power dynamics of taking his son with him rather than waiting for his daughter to get better and then leaving.

Mixed-race children, especially those more 'visibly mixed' like those with a black and white parent, were considered taboo, yet they were rarely removed from the mother, especially if the mother was black or coloured. Thus, indicating the normality of mixed-race children within the post-apartheid space. The Nonceba retells how the Black police officer "knew the truth when he saw you" (Lorimer Chapter 30), showing how mixed-race children were visible but not actively spoken of. Nonceba represents the burden of care placed onto the black mother who must now navigate society with an 'illegal' child in a space of constant fear and potential ridicule from their community around them.

Similarly to Nonceba, in *The Madonna of Excelsior*, both Niki and Maria worked for the men that fathered their children. While these relationships were, to some extent, technically consensual, they were also transactional, where the women who slept with the white men would receive extra money and be taken care of (Mda 18). However, Stephanus Cronje, the biological father of Popi, and Reverend François Bornman, the father of the Seller of Songs, Maria's child, take no accountability for their actions. However, in a rare example, both the black

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women and white men are charged in the Excelsior 19 trial with the contravention of the Immorality Act (Mda 70). While Niki is left in jail for her 'crime', Stephanus Cronje is given bail and commits suicide (Mda 72). In this way, Stephanus escapes culpability for both his affair and raising the mixed-race child that he participated in creating.

During the trial, another accused White man, Reverend Francois Bornman, had attempted suicide, "Maria's eyes had exclamation marks in addition to question marks. Her lover had failed in his bid to join Stephanus Cronje. The scoundrel was trying to escape responsibility. He had proved to be just as cowardly as Niki's lover" (Mda 82). These two instances highlight how shame and guilt protruded from and within interracial relationships within apartheid society, especially when put on public display, like the Excelsior 19 trial.

Although it was uncommon for white men, in particular, to be charged with contravention of the Immorality Act, the number of white men involved with black women and the creation of many mixed-race children with widespread impunity became embarrassing for the apartheid government. However, the trial stops short of any actual, punitive outcomes for the white men, who are allowed to return to their God-fearing wives and communities, while the black women are forever branded as 'whores' and made to raise their mixed-race children. In line with the book's title, that complicates and plays on the Madonna/Whore construction, which is laced within black/white female intersections. Gqibitole, on the topic of the white male characters in *The Madonna of Excelsior*, argues that "even their crimes against the hateful *Immorality Act* are expunged to save the Afrikaners' good name, while the black women they violated spend jail time ostensible for "breaking" the law by sleeping with white men. The stigma of "sleeping" with their bosses and the criminality that accompanies it follows them to their unforgiving communities" (91). This lack of culpability is evident when Reverend Bornman has his followers join him at the hospital after his attempted suicide:

> It was the work of the devil, he said. The devil had sent black women to tempt him and to move him away from the path of righteousness. The devil had always used the black female to tempt the Afrikaner. It was a battle that was raging within individual Afrikaner men. A battle that the Afrikaner must win. The devil made the Afrikaner to covertly covert the black woman while publicly detesting her. It was his fault that he had not been strong enough to resist the temptation. The devil made him do it. The devil had weakened his heart, making it open to temptation. Almighty by attempting to take his own life. He was therefore praying every hour that God should forgive him (Mda 85).

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By playing on the colonial and apartheid narrative of the hypersexuality of black women[23], the Reverend attributes his actions to "the devil", who has "sent black women to tempt him". The rhetoric used here is reflected by Nadia Sanger[24], who argues that the hyper-sexualisation of black female bodies shows the racist sexual desire of white European colonial men. Although Reverend Bornman constantly refers to "Afrikaner men", playing into the apartheid propaganda that Afrikaner people are 'native' to South Africa[25], the reality is that Afrikaner men are not exceptional to being considered European settlers in direct contrast to the Afrikaner exceptionalism espoused in the Reverend's words.

The apartheid space was centred on mixing racist Christian dogma to suit the structures of white supremacy. Steyn argues that through these structures, there was an active campaign for dehumanising black people ("Whiteness" 5). Therefore, it is unsurprising to see the narrative of the Afrikaner as the upstanding man "who had been led astray by the devil in the guise of black women" (Mda 86). The white Afrikaner women are excluded here and were viewed as secondary to Afrikaner men but still experienced the privileges of whiteness and the power of patriarchy through association (Azille Coetzee 102). The narrator further expands on how prevalent this rhetoric was across the apartheid landscape for White men who contravened their white racist Christian beliefs in the 'sanctity' of marriage and the 'purity' of the white 'race':

> The devil was on the loose in the Free State platteland[26]. Grabbing upstanding volk by their genitalia and dragging them along a path strewn with the body parts of black women. Parts that had an existence independent of the women attached to them. Parts that were capable of sending even the most devout citizen into bouts of frenzied lust (Mda 87).

Reducing black women to "parts" fits within settler colonial discourse, where Augustine Park argues there was an active campaign to make black bodies 'ungrievable'. She argues that "it is this ungrievability in which life is not recognised as life and the settler colonial logic in which the Other is always-already marked for elimination that animated/ animate the drive towards social death" (Park 280). In this way, the analogy of "parts" makes it easier to

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[23] See Gqola, "Slavery" 119.

[24] See Nadia Sanger's discussion on representations of hypersexuality of black women in South African magazines in "New women, old messages? Constructions of femininities, race and hypersexualised bodies in selected South African magazines, 2003-2006." Social Dynamics, 36.1 (2009): 137-148.

[25] See Mahmoud Mamdani's discussion on the Afrikaner ideology of indigeneity in Neither Settler Nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities. Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020.

[26] The farmlands in the province of the Free State.

not see the black women as people or victims, but rather as Othered objects that lead white men to the devil, as tools of temptation incapable of human agency part of a broader scheme in the further supposed victimisation of the white Afrikaner man. On this point, Carolin argues that the hypocrisy expressed in white men's desire for black women is seen "simultaneously as definitive of and antithetical to particular configurations of the Afrikaner body politic" (119), which means that they had little control or agency over their desire for black women, a ploy to avoid culpability.

At the same time as the white men pleaded for forgiveness from their white Christian God and to absolve them of their sin of giving into temptation, they did not face the consequence of having to raise a mixed-race child in a society that criminalised the child and its parents for existing. Gqibitole argues that the black female characters in this novel are vulnerable to "white lust", where "instances of rape of black women [were] swept under the carpet to save the honour of the Afrikaners" (90). The burden of care, however, continues to fall to the black woman, regardless of her perceived humanity or not, as was the case for both Niki and Maria. At the same time, the white fathers of their children escaped outright disdain:

> When we finally got to see Popi, we were not in the least taken aback that she looked almost like a white woman's baby. The midwives who attended to Niki were not astonished either. Of late they had been helping quite a few black women from the Mahlatswetsa Location and the neighbouring farms, who had been giving birth to almost white babies. Or to "coloured" babies, as they were called. As if they were polychromatic. Or as if everyone else in Mahlatswetsa was transparent. Some barn women were already cuddling their own coloured offspring, while others' stomachs were expanding by the day. It was a bursting of forbidden sluices that we were all talking about in Excelsior (Mda 57-58).

Niki's motherly instincts to protect Popi, regardless of her parentage, speak to the fact that while racists laws and regulations for segregation aimed to villainise Popi's existence, she was still a baby that needed a mother, and Niki was still a mother who needed to protect her child. Even within the language of the description of the racial categorisation of coloured is the ridicule of its construction as "polychromatic". The narrator here, in keeping with the satirical tone of the novel, highlights how social constructions of race may be ridiculous. Still, they are rooted in very real and powerful consequences for those that they seek to control and oppress.

Given the prevalence of mixed-race babies or "coloured," as was used in the apartheid categorisations, there is an apparent disconnect between implementing the apartheid laws instead of the ability to police them. While the Excelsior 19 were one of the few examples of

punitive action for contravening race purity laws being made at the time, their story served as a reminder of the apartheid state's overarching power, which was felt unequally by white men as opposed to black women. The abuse of power by the white men over the black women that worked for them through sexual coercion disguised as agency further highlights the inculpability of the white men represented in these three novels, indicative of the inculpability of the apartheid system for the traumas inflicted on black women, who live with the consequences in their mixed-race child.

While white men certainly enjoyed the privileges of white supremacist patriarchy, white women were never far in their shared access to the privileges of both whiteness and patriarchy. Among the literary works considered, only two characters had white mothers and black fathers. Fikile, in *Let the Music Play On*, was born and raised in the US by her white mother and black father until her father died; she was then sent to South Africa to stay with her Aunt due to her mother's inability to cope with her grief (Khumalo 139). As a result, Fikile's parents are not considered during this section, as they met and lived outside of the South African context. However, in *Killing Karoline*, Sara is the child of a white mother and a black father from an 'illicit' affair in the late 1970s. In her memoir, Sara outlines the circumstances for a series of betrayals and lies surrounding her conception, birth and subsequent adoption, outlined in the quote below.

> The relationship continued, the threat of imprisonment apparently not enough to prevent them embarking on their perilous tryst and eventually, in the December of 1979, my biological mother became pregnant with me. Choosing not to disclose her affair, Kris told Ken of the pregnancy and they married shortly after, exactly five months before I was born. None the wiser as to her secret, both Kris and Ken's white families looked forward to their first grandchild. Ken, believing the child his new wife was carrying was his, was apparently 'overjoyed' at the prospect of becoming a father, but Kris carried the nagging, shameful doubt that the baby growing inside her was the result of her affair with Jackson…For the duration of her pregnancy she hid her terrible secret, confiding only in her doctor, who of course was unable to prove my paternity until after I was born. My future rested entirely on my race. As it was, when I was eventually pulled from her on the winter's evening of 1 August 1980, it was apparently not immediately clear that I was Jackson's child and I was pronounced a 'white' baby and given the name Karoline, and believed to

be the first child of an unknowingly cuckolded, but apparently delighted, Ken.
To this day, it is his name that appears on my birth certificate (Makwala-King 23-24).

The details outlined in the quote above stem from correspondence via letters between Sara and Kris (her biological mother) after Sara reached out to her. The lengths to which Kris went to protect her affair are emblematic of the shame that came with the double 'sin' of having an affair but doing so with a black man. Choosing not to tell Ken about the affair, Kris ensured that there was no way that the child she was carrying would ever be accepted unless she gave birth to a white-passing child, leaving Karoline's fate to a "Russian roulette of genetics". Sara retells that her "future rested entirely on [her] race" (Makwala-King 24). This statement speaks to the fickleness of racial categorisations under apartheid law. Having a white-looking child meant that the child could be classified as white – which ended up being the case for Sara, at least for the first month of her life. Through letter correspondence with Kris, Sara discovers that three weeks after her birth, it became evident that Sara was not the 'white' baby she was initially declared (Makwala-King 25-26), ultimately leading Kris to confess her affair to Ken, as well as Sara's true parentage, which resulted in the "only option in the circumstances" (Makwala-King 27), adoption.

Through their correspondence, Kris informed Sara that she "would likely have ended up in a 'coloured' children's home" (Makwala-King 27). "Numerous times" (Makwala-King 27), Kris stated that Sara "should be grateful for having avoided such a fate" (Makwala-King 27). Kris' use of language to guilt Sara into feeling grateful for being abandoned and then killed off by her mother feeds into a broader conceptualisation of a white saviour complex. Kopano Ratele notes that White women were charged with the 'protection' of the 'purity' of the White race, arguing that "If they copulated with other men, like the woman in this case, white women destabilised ideology of the superiority of whites and jeopardised their privileges" (164). In this way, by 'saving' Sara from the coloured children's home and giving her up for adoption to a lovely family in the UK, thereby having done enough to expect Sara's gratitude. While simultaneously ensuring that she preserved her access to the privileges of whiteness by removing Sara, a blemish to her 'pure' white record, through elaborate self-serving lies. The quote below outlines the lengths to which Kris went to ensure the threat that her mixed-race baby posed was removed:

Once it was decided that I was to be adopted, a reason, of course, had to be given for why I so urgently needed to be taken overseas. Like many babies, I was born with slight jaundice, and it was the jaundice that would be efficacious

in ensuring my departure from South Africa went unquestioned. Together with a paediatrician at Sandton Clinic, who knew the real reason for my having to disappear, and being someone they felt they could trust, Kris and Ken concocted a story that I was suffering a rare kidney disease, symptomised by jaundice, that required a level of treatment only available at London's Great Ormond Street children's hospital. A referral letter was written, tears were shed by Ken's parents, who remained dumb to the truth, and on 18 September, Kris, Ken and baby Karoline arrived in the UK (Makwala-King 27).

As is evident in the quote above, there was a clear plan and system for removing the 'threat' of mixed-race children that involved the parents and doctors. While one might argue that all parties could be charged for the contravention of the Immorality Act and subsequently sent to jail, as Kris stated in her letters (Makwala-King 27), the apartheid system rarely punished the white parties involved, as is evident in the Excelsior 19 trial. Kris, at all times, from the beginning of her affair to discovering she is pregnant to hiding the parentage of her child and giving her child up for adoption, weaves a complex web that ensures that the privileges and benefits that whiteness affords her remain intact with little to no culpability on her end. And her final act of exculpation, as told by Sara, highlights the lengths Kris went to in preserving her access to whiteness and thus her participation in apartheid white supremacist ideology, "they would do what to most people is unthinkable, the unconscionable, the unspeakable. They would 'kill Karoline'. They would say I had died" (Makwala-King 29).

By telling their family that Karoline had died, Kris removes the final traces of her 'indiscretions', showing the power of white supremacist thinking. Steyn argues that "whiteness needed to create docile bodies, both of its women and those it marked as excluded. Treacherous white women were (and are) considered a threat to the continuation of the superior race" ("Whiteness" 20). The extent to which Kris went to ensure that she would not be cast as a "treacherous white woman" (Ratele 164) ultimately ended in the perceived death of her child, not only garnering her false sympathy but allowing her to steep into the falsity of victimhood in a system that already viewed her as such. Similarly, Ratele argues that "as a constitutive part of the production, amplification, and rooting of whiteness in South Africa, the immorality laws created a racial, antagonistic, and sexually conflicted, masculine whiteness and a soft, subordinate, and supposedly asexual feminine whiteness" (172).

The supposed asexuality of white women feeds into the narrative of the *Swaartgevaar* or Black Peril, where black men were considered the biggest threat to white femininity. Constructed as overly sexually virile and predators of white women's virtue, black men,

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especially those in relationships with white women, were viewed as aggressors, thereby removing any responsibility from white women who were constructed as chaste. Gqibitole argues that while rape was used "tool of suppression" by the apartheid regime, "it was also used to regulate the white minority and sow fear and suspicion in the country" (89). Gqibitole refers to the juxtaposition of white virtue against black evil of blackness, as stated by Reverend Bornman in his speech at the hospital in *The Madonna of Excelsior* (Mda 85).

Ultimately, the cost of maintaining white supremacy again falls on black women. While white women and men escape culpability for the children they create, black men, specifically the black men represented in the novels considered in this study, also escape the burden of care in raising the mixed-race child that comes from their "perilous tryst" (Makwala-King 23). The burden of care, and thus responsibility for the mixed-race children across the novels, falls to the Black mothers, thereby the White men and women who are parents of these children become proxies for the impunity of whiteness in a system that seeks to protect its racial 'purity' at all costs, with the buy-in of the subjects it seeks to protect.

Although often placed as juxtaposed, white men and women work simultaneously to uphold white supremacist heteronormative patriarchy. Whiteness in white supremacist societies is often invisibilised (See Dolby 2001; Steyn 2001; Mbembe 2008; Modiri 2012). Not in that it does not exist, but to those that experience its privileges, these are so normalised that they are unaware that the structural nature of whiteness ensures those privileges. In contrast, Whiteness is omnipresent in the lives of the people oppressed by its structure. In this way, it is both visible and tangible in the lives of those who do not experience its privilege but instead are forced to live under the weight of the oppression on which it thrives.

In *Bitter Fruit*, Mikey's White biological father, Du Boise, is an elusive presence that appears throughout the storyline but takes up an enormous amount of space in the characters' lives, as a presence that exists between them but is never confronted (Dangor 32). He is omnipresent in the relationship between Lydia and Silas (Dangor 13-14), which causes conflict and tension between them. Although when the story begins, Mikey is not aware of these details, he feels this presence in his life as well, a "ghost" (Dangor 32) that weighs on the family. Evidence of this is found in Mikey's discovery of Lydia's diary:

> Yet, he cannot bring himself to read the first entry, it is not a sense of decency
> that deters him, for 'every enquiring mind has the right to know even the
> forbidden', he rationalises, but an unexpected foreboding. This diary has
> something to do with Lydia's accident, her subsequent hospitalisation, with the

name Du Boise that he has heard his parents whisper tensely between them in the hospital room. A ghost from the past, a mythical phantom embedded in the 'historical memory' of those who were active in the struggle. Historical memory. It is a term that seems illogical and contradictory to Mikey; after all, history *is* memory[…]Now his mother and father have received a visitation from that dark past, some terrible memory brought to life (Dangor 32).

At this point, Mikey has not yet discovered the true nature of his parentage but is aware that what is written in his mother's diary would change his perceptions of his parents and family life. Like his mother and father, Mikey ignores the heavy presence of this "ghost" (Dangor 32) that haunts his family. This is further expressed by Mafe, who argues that Du Boise "haunts the story, much like the apartheid regime. Symbolically reduced to a decrepit old man dying of skin cancer, Du Boise nonetheless retains a powerful hold on the Alis" (Mafe 121). While Mikey was raised with present parents in the home and, to some extent, active in raising him, his white biological parent is absent. Of course, in this regard, Lydia's pregnancy was the result of rape by a white police officer, not a person whom she had a relationship with like Popi, Sara, Nix and Fikile's fathers.

Du Boise, as a white police officer, is the symbolic exemplification of the violence of the apartheid system as the lasting trauma inflicted on the oppressed. Lydia's diary provides insights into the night that she was raped through vivid description, her prose, Mikey describes as having "the transcendent quality of pain captured without sentimentality" (Dangor 127). Mikey focalises through his inner thoughts on what he reads in his mother's diary, of the "casual talk among the other cops, an ordinary, an everyday" (Dangor 128) that Lydia describes after the rape. This casualness indicates the inculpability of Du Boise's actions, and thus the apartheid state, in their 'normalised' meting out of sexual violence as a tool of oppression against black and coloured women. Helen Moffett argues that a "tacit social understanding that certain kinds of white-on-black violence were 'necessary' as a kind of oil that kept apartheid hierarchies running smoothly" (139). The 'tacit' complicity of Du Boise and his colleagues, who told Lydia "To be glad that they had no time for a 'tournament'" (Dangor 128), ultimately threatening to gang rape her, amplifies the "tacit social understanding" and communal approach to sexual violence as a tool of oppression.

Du Boise appears to bare no responsibility for what many perpetrators of crimes during apartheid argue were political orders at the behest of the apartheid state. As Moffett argues, "both forms of violence – men's sexual attacks on women, and racist attacks shaped by apartheid ideology – reveal the anxiety of the perpetrator class about the possible loss of their

dominance" (140-141). The intersection of racist apartheid ideology and sexual violence runs as a consistent theme throughout the character development of Lydia, Niki and Maria, where they are reduced to objects by the white men who exploit their bodies with impunity.

Throughout this section, the role of the white biological parent has been represented as physically absent from raising the mixed-race child. However, their presence and the overarching looming of the whiteness they represent take up a considerable amount of space in the lives of their biological mixed-race children, the personal experience of which will be discussed in Chapter Three. The mixed-race children bear to some extent the physical and genetic markers of white acceptability for people of colour about celebrating white beauty standards or physical attributes (also discussed further in Chapter Three). Still, they will never access or be protected by its privileges. The invisibility of whiteness only extends to the white parents to be used as a coat of inculpability. At the same time, their mixed-race child feels both its physical and emotional effects and its disdain because they represent the challenge to the 'purity' of whiteness. This is consistent with the trope of an absent parent, in that mixed-race families are not represented as capable of existing together as a family unit, apartheid, as a system of white supremacy, ensures this cannot happen, a legacy extended in the 'new' South Africa. Finally, the role of the absent white biological parent trope provides a metaphor for the omnipresence of whiteness in the South African context, and the representation of the mixed-race characters embodies not only consequences but its legacies as they move through the post-apartheid space.

2.3. Intergenerational Trauma: the legacy

As in many post-conflict contexts, legacies of trauma that manifest in physical, emotional and mental capacities shape not only the generation that lived through the period of conflict, but these legacies persist in the lives of future generations. In South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to provide a space for the discussion of the atrocities of apartheid, to uncover the truth and the extent of what crimes against humanity were committed under apartheid, and to create strategies for reconciliation (Gobodo-Madikizela, "TRC" 2005: 7). It was hoped that by giving a space for both victims and perpetrators to share their stories, this would promote national healing. However, the underpinning ideology behind the TRC was Christian dogma centred around a culture of repenting for one's sins to receive forgiveness. All novels surveyed in this dissertation were published after the TRC concluded, and the final report was submitted in 1998. Therefore, they all carry the underlying theme of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Vilashini Cooppan argues that "in some versions of the post-apartheid national story, the plots of trauma and history have been so entwined that history has seemed to be trauma, and trauma has seemed to be history" (47). Thus, Cooppan argues that at the core of all stories in post-apartheid South Africa is trauma, where the cure is achievable through mourning (47). The TRC, as a tool of national healing that focused on forgiveness, mourning and truth-telling with the ultimate goal of reconciliation, is an "embedded narrative event" within post-apartheid literary texts (Cooppan 49). As a result, Cooppan argues that this focus on "testimonial culture" within post-apartheid literature inadvertently "fetishises wounding narratives of pain, injury and loss" (51). The TRC narrative and its focus on forgiveness and testimony become a helpful entry point into understanding the legacies of intergeneration trauma represented in post-apartheid literature.

Whether the TRC is actively mentioned or not, it shaped post-apartheid South Africa's national ideology and identity and remained an undercurrent theme throughout all literary texts in this thesis. Therefore, the collective and national trauma, as experienced by the South African population, is reproduced in multiple ways. This subsection focuses on the representation of intergenerational trauma on the characters across the novels and how these are reproduced explicitly in the representation of the mixed-race characters. In addition, the intersectional social sphere of power is expressed in the collective trauma experienced by the South African population, which is regulated through national, communal and individual healing processes.

The themes of forgiveness and reconciliation cannot be unpacked without understanding the experiences of intergenerational trauma present in each literary work considered in this dissertation. Although in *Let the Music Play On*, Fikile did not spend her formative childhood years in post-apartheid South Africa, like her classmates, she felt the effects of apartheid in her father, who went into exile because he was a liberation fighter (Khumalo 137). While this manifestation of intergenerational trauma might not seem as extreme as those presented in the other texts, the violence that her father experienced at the hands of the apartheid state, and his resulting responses, are captured in Fikile's altercation with Rutter, the white school bully, where Fikile says, "My father spent years in prison for peace in this country, so you can sleep at night, cracker-b*tch, without fearing a black man will crack your skull with an axe" (Khumalo 137). Although it seems like a witty response to her classmate, Fikile's statement is riddled with an intersectional understanding of the trauma, both spoken and unspoken. In addition, it acknowledges the Swaartgevaar narrative expressed as

one of the justifications of 'the need' for apartheid. The experience of trauma, although experienced by her father, is reflected and shared within Fikile's statement.

The first part speaks specifically to her father's experience of being in prison and having sacrificed many years of his life for freedom in his country. This specific language forms part of the rhetoric of remembrance in post-apartheid South Africa, which acknowledges the sacrifices made by liberation fighters for freedom. The latter part of the quote can be interpreted in a similar tone of needing to be grateful for the "peace" in South Africa but is ladened with an undertone that white people should be glad that black people did not seek revenge for the crimes of apartheid, as was the primary fear rhetoric being expelled by proponents of apartheid before the transition to democracy. Within Fikile's statement exists both the legacies of apartheid trauma and an underlying threat that white people should be 'grateful' for the structures of white supremacy that continue to 'keep them safe' in the post-apartheid context. Furthermore, it highlights the interplay of TRC rhetoric that emphasises forgiveness and reconciliation while undermining the injustice of being unable to confront the trauma experienced.

As in *Let The Music Play On*, Finder's Weepers has no specific reference to the TRC. Still, the language used in discussions about the past is laced with forgiveness and reconciliation rhetoric based on the catharsis of airing out the family secrets. In her investigations into the disappearance of the school's principal, Boniswa, her mother's friend's child, Nix accidentally meets a family that she later finds out is part of her mother's family and, therefore, her family members (Lorimer Chapter 5). As previously stated, Nix later discovers that she doesn't know her mother's family because her mother was cast out for having a relationship with a white man (Lorimer Chapter 23). It is in the interaction quoted below that Nix first hears of the existence of her brother and the reason why her mother has never returned to the family home, although not directly from her mother yet, but from her granduncle's wife, Thuto:

> Once we had our tea in front of us, Thuto told me that after the birth of her child Nonceba Mniki had been cast out by her parents and family. I did not correct her regarding gender and birth date; she had probably forgotten the details of the story. 'Her parents were very upset with her. You know that we Xhosas do not like our children to marry or have children with someone outside our culture, especially a white man in those days,' she said. 'Some people would actually kill a child from a mixed-race union.' 'Don't you think that's a bit drastic?' I

asked, testing her. 'Yes. I myself would not punish the child, but Nonceba's father was a very strict man and he would not listen to any other opinion on anything. Once he made his mind up, that was that,' she said. 'She has not been back to her home to this day.' Like father, like daughter, I thought. 'What about her mother?' I asked. 'Oh, she did what her husband said,' said Thuto, with a slight edge of contempt, and then, more forgivingly, 'but he was a man with a very strong will.' 'Where is the grandmother now?' I asked. 'She stays with her other daughter near King William's Town,' she said. 'Where does Nonceba stay now?' 'She stays with the people she works for in Cape Town,' I replied. 'And where is her son?' 'I do not know her son,' I said. 'But her daughter is nearly thirty years old. She also lives in Cape Town.' She frowned. 'So she had more children. Where is the white man now?' I shrugged and shook my head (Lorimer Chapter 11).

In the scene quoted above, various aspects of intergeneration trauma are linked between Nix and her mother, Nonceba. Thuto's description of why Nonceba had been cast out highlights the attitude towards mixed-race children at the time. Later, when Nonceba tells Nix why she was not allowed to return to her family home, she expresses her father's disapproval, "my father was furious when he saw my child was half white" (Lorimer Chapter 30). Whereas Thuto speaks about the attitudes towards mixed-race children in a matter-of-fact way, even when mentioning that "some people would actually kill a child from a mixed-race union" (Lorimer Chapter 11). Although Thuto is not aware that Nix is the child of Nonceba or that she is mixed-race, she includes Nix, using 'we' to describe the cultural norm of not marrying outside of the culture, and in particular white men by saying, "you know, we Xhosa's" (Lorimer Chapter 11). This inclusion of Nix not only assumes Nix's awareness of this cultural norm but reinforces the 'normality' of this belief and is a precursor to explaining why someone might kill a mixed-race child.

The interaction between Nonceba and her parents, as described by Thuto, highlights the complexities of gendered and racialised thinking. The relationship between Nonceba's parents is constructed within heteronormative patriarchal structures, the father decides to cast his daughter out of the family, and the submissive mother is an accomplice to those decisions. In the final part of the conversation, Nix mentions that Nonceba has a daughter as well, to which Thuto frowns and replies, "She had more children. Where is the white man now?" (Lorimer Chapter 11). This statement might show that people had thought Nonceba had got pregnant

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with a white man's child by mistake, but then to have a second child with the same white man shows that Nonceba made this choice and, in this way, disobeys her father.

The tone of Thuto's question, "Where is the white man now?" highlights the running theme of the expected absentee nature of the white male parent from the lives of their mixed-race children. What is most important to note in this quotation is the multiple interpretations of one event within the family that has had different yet equally devastating effects on the lives of each of the characters. She is ultimately speaking to the collective construction of trauma at a familial and individual level (Miller 148). For Nonceba's parents, they have lost a daughter, Nonceba has lost her parents and the support of her family network, and Nix lost the chance to have a relationship with her mother's family or understand the links to who she is as a person. Although it can be seen that Nonceba's father had a choice about whether or not to remove Nonceba from the family home, the influence of so many years of racial segregation affected all people who had to live under the colonial and apartheid rule, and in many cases led to devasting effects on the family structure during this time, and for future generations.

In her memoir Killing Karoline, the relationship between familial separation and intergenerational trauma is incredibly relevant in Sara's family structure. To protect the secret of Sara's parentage and the construction of the 'ideal' family life within a system of white supremacy, Sara's mother and stepfather went to extreme lengths, even faking the child's death, to continue under the façade of whiteness. The ramifications of these decisions are reflected throughout Sara's memoir, in her childhood experience being adopted and living in the UK (Makwala-King 40), in her relationship with her adoptive parents (Makwala-King 42), in finding out about her birth name Karoline (Makwala-King 90), reaching out to her biological mother and father (Makwala-King 85-90), and then finally in meeting her half brothers and sister (Makwala-King 181). The trauma of being adopted, finding out your birth name, feeling unwanted, and then discovering that your birth parents have told everyone that you are dead have all influenced the trauma that Sara has dealt with in and throughout her life and the implications and reflections of which are evident in the quote below:

> To this day it remains unclear as to whether my biological parents' union was propelled by love or lust, rebellion or revenge, boredom or loneliness, fear or fun, or perhaps a combination of all of these. I still do not know. So much remains hidden, left unsaid, buried and locked away by those who *do* not know but, for reasons known only to them (I assume guilt and shame), they chose not to divulge. When I think about my story, it often feels like a play. A tragedy, of

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course. Akin to Macbeth, the one whose name shall never be spoken. There is a script, but none of the players is true to it. Instead, they ad lib, casting aside what is written to show their own character in their best light. Lines are discarded, scenes deleted, characters so altered from the original that the true story is lost by the end. Whatever the real circumstances of how I came to be born into a system of segregation, hate and oppression, the ramifications would, like a ten-tonne weight tossed into a pond, ripple outwards for times and times and times to come (Makwala-King 30).

Sara's comparison of her life to that of a tragedy speaks to the profound impact that uprooting her family life and early traumatic memories have had on how she constructed her identity. In addition, it becomes a precursor to the representation of the tragic mulatta/o trope in mixed-race identity representations that will be discussed in Chapter Three. Sara's story highlights not only how the apartheid government regulated all aspects of its subjects' lives, including who could or could not exist as a family, but also shows the lengths to which many bought into the system at a high personal cost. The last line of the quote above is crucial in pointing out the legacies of intergenerational trauma. While Sara's story represents one family, there are many stories just like hers of families separated because of racial classification systems. These reasonings and the importance placed on racial categories that led to such deep and entrenched segregation continue to shape not only Sara's life but post-apartheid attitudes towards interracial families and couples, especially those who have children.

The legacies of intergenerational trauma are pernicious across all of the novels surveyed in this research; however, in *The Madonna of Excelsior,* the narrator provides a vivid and incredibly graphic account of the traumas that occur to characters within the novel. In each instance, the narrator uses a collective voice, including the reader and the people in the narrative world, to view the traumas experienced by the character from a watcher's point of view. In this way, the characters never describe the trauma themselves; it is as if they have disassociated from their bodies while the trauma occurred, a reflection of experiences of trauma that happen in real life. An example is how the narrator tells us how Johannes Smit raped Niki, as if we (the reader and the narrator) are watching the scene play out together.

Deep in the sunflower field, Johannes Smit pulled off Niki's Terylene skirt. She tried to hold on to it, but he had the strength of ten demons. He threw her on the damp ground. Then he pulled down her panties and took them off. He sniffed them, which seemed to raise more demons in his quivering body. He stuffed the

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panties into his pocket. Yellowness ran amok. Yellowness dripped down with her screams. He slapped her and ordered her to shut up. Her screams were now muffled with his hand on her mouth. His pants were at his ankles. He lay on top of her and pleaded, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to hurt you. But if you make a noise, people will come and ruin our fun." Niki wept softly as his hardness touched her thighs. Intense heat sucked out his shiny seed before he could penetrate her. He cursed his pipe as it leaked all over her. He damned its sudden limpness. He just lay there like a plastic bag full of decaying tripe on top of her. She heaved him off her body and jumped up. She grabbed her skirt and ran like a tornado, destroying a swathe of sunflowers in her wake. Johannes Smit's accomplices called after her, "Niki! Niki! Wait for us! (Mda 17).

From telling this traumatic event, which is filled with colourful and vivid detail, we are forced to listen and hear about the trauma that Niki went through and how Niki fought to protect herself against Johannes because "he had the strength of ten demons" (Mda 17). By relating Johannes to being a demon, the narrator not only highlights the demonstrative act occurring to Niki but of the demons personified in Johannes and this trauma, which will continue to haunt her. Niki is terrified throughout her ordeal, as the narrator tells us, "Yellowness dripped down with her screams" (Mda 17). The narrator uses euphemisms to say to us what has happened to Niki, rather than explicitly telling us that Niki is being sexually assaulted and that she has urinated out of fear during this traumatic experience. In some ways, these euphemisms could be attributed to giving humanity back to Niki after her dehumanising experience, which becomes a core moment in her life, but a normalised experience of black women in the narrative world.

The narrator, in their satirical way, tells us of Johannes' 'failure' to penetrate Niki while vividly describing Johannes in imagery that would cause disgust, as "a plastic bag full of decaying tripe", perfectly encapsulates the disgust that Niki feels about him and what he has done to her, but also how everyone in the town thinks about men like Johannes, who rape and use black women for the own twisted fantasy of 'forbidden sex'. Johannes' comment that "people will come and ruin our fun" shows that he is aware of the immorality of his actions and delusional in thinking that the women he rapes are also enjoying themselves. This further indicates the 'inability' of white men to 'free themselves of their sexual desire for black women (Carolin 120). The satirical narration of Johannes' 'inability to perform' and Niki's consequent disgust, although not quite abjection as Kristeva (127) describes, engages with the trauma Niki experiences in a way that doesn't dehumanise her.

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While Niki's friends Maria and Mmampe have had a sexual relationship with Johannes, for them, this was purely transactional, even referring to him as a "squat hairy gorilla" (Mda 16) and "Hairy Buttocks" (Mda 16). At the same time, Johannes believes it is because he is desirable (Carolin 120). The narrator's description of Niki's friends as "Johannes Smit's accomplices" (Mda 17) refers to how Maria and Mmampe encouraged Niki to go with Johannes by saying, "he will give you more money" (Mda 16). After the ordeal, Niki's friends catch up to her. In their interaction below, the narrator tells of the complex nature of the 'consensual' and non-consensual sexual relationships that were happening in Excelsior:

> Niki was not amused. "I am going to report him," she cried. "I am going to tell the police about what he has done to me." "Don't be foolish, Niki," admonished Mmampe. "Do you think the police will believe you had nothing to do with it? You took his money, didn't you? They will arrest you and charge you with the Immorality Act. Haven't you heard of black women who are in jail for sleeping with white men?" "But he forced me! You were there! You saw it happen!" "He will deny everything," said Mmampe. "And we didn't see either. We were not in the sunflower field with you. Don't be stupid Niki. You can make a lot of money from this foolish white man. Just give him what he wants and eat the money." "For sure he'll be back," added Maria, laughing. "Just take the money and let the man water your thighs (Mda 18-19).

From the interaction between the three friends, the precarious nature of the line of consent is situated within the juxtaposition of transactional relationships versus the law. Again, the question of consent is wrapped up in the socio-economic situation in which the characters are set in, but included in that is their awareness that this is temporary. In addition, they are aware that the power structures of white supremacy will not protect them, as Mmampe says, "Haven't you heard of black women who are in jail for sleeping with white men?" (Mda 18). Even Niki's response is considered laughable by her friends when she says, "But he forced me" (Mda 19). Out of her friends, Niki is the only one that contradicts the stereotypical description of the "uncontrollable lust attributed to black women" that Johannes Smit ostensibly believes (Carolin 121). In this way, she is the lone contradictory voice against the fetishisation of her body for the 'use' of white men.

Niki's friends make it clear that they would not support her if she were to go to the police, thereby reinforcing their willingness or unwilling complicity in supporting Johannes' obsession to 'have' Niki. They view Johannes as a "foolish white man" (Mda 19) and see him as a way to gain financially within a system that seeks to impoverish them. At least in this way,

they might feel a sense of agency in their power over white men, evident in Maria's comment, "Just take the money and let the man water your thighs" (Mda 19). This euphemism for Johannes's consistent failure in 'sexual performance' further adds to the overall failure of the apartheid state to regulate these sexual relationships but also emasculates the white men who have all the power that the system provides yet cannot 'perform'.

Although the narrator uses colourful metaphors and euphemisms to tell us what has happened to Niki, these metaphors are powerful in how they encapsulate and visualise the traumatic experience that Niki is experiencing. Another argument could be that the narrator reflects the public/private dichotomy that shapes discussions about sexual violence. Meaning that incidents of intimate partner violence are often unreported in South Africa, as many believe that conversations around sex, even when it is rape, should only exist within private spaces and not within a public setting (Goldblatt and Meintjies 10). However, the narrator's use of descriptive metaphors is consistent throughout the novel, particularly in discussions about traumatic events. While I don't think that this lessens or takes away from the pain that the characters are experiencing, it provides an even more vivid visualisation of the destruction of these experiences and how they learn to live with what has happened through metaphors rather than blunt descriptions.

The use of vivid metaphoric descriptions is evident in the narrator's telling of Niki's response to finding out that police officers were looking for all women with mixed-race children to charge them with contravening the Immorality Act. Niki is warned by a stranger that the police are coming and that doctors were performing blood tests on the babies "to confirm that the blood was indeed mixed" (Mda 63). The narrator tells of Niki's internal dialogue of confusion after her discussion with the man, "Niki wondered how it was possible for the doctor to tell if the blood was mixed or not. Mixed with what? Was it not all red?" (Mda 63). The use of colour in this example shows the absurdity of racial categorisations, simply in one line, "Was it not all red?" (Mda 63). This commentary, fitting with the narrator's satirical depiction of apartheid racist thinking, reflects the lengths to which the apartheid government went to further the importance of 'race science' that underpinned the system. As satirical as the narrator's commentary is, the accurate and vivid description of what Niki did next reflects the traumatic outcomes of these racial categories and the fear that those who 'disrupted' it felt, especially for a mother who wants to protect her child:

> With a Minora razor blade, she shaved her daughter's little head clean. No
> stranger would know that the hair that belonged on that bald head was not black
> and matted. Not nappy. Not frizzy. But Popi was still pink. They would see that

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she was of mixed blood. Niki took the smoking brazier into the shack and placed it on the floor. She held a naked Popi above the fire, smoking the pinkness out of her. Both head and smoke would surely brown her and no one would say she was a light-skinned child again. The baby whooped, then yelled, as the heat of the brazier roasted her little body and the smoke strung her eyes and nostrils. Cow-dung smoke is reasonable in gentle doses. But this was an overdose. There was so much that it made even Niki's eyes stream. She assured the baby that it was for her own good. She sang a lullaby as she swung her over the fire. Rocking her from side to side. Turning her round and round so that she would be browned on all sides. Evenly (Mda 65).

This telling of the lengths to which Niki goes to protect her baby provides both a vivid and terrifying description of the fear that faced women who had mixed-race children. Shaving her daughter's head and removing any traces that Popi's hair was "not nappy" (Mda 65) highlights both Niki's awareness of the criteria for racial categorisation and but also desperation to prove that her child is not mixed-race so that she can keep her baby. Niki's previous thought of "Was it not all red?" (Mda 63) is replaced with "they would see that she was of mixed blood" (Mda 65). Niki is doing whatever she can to protect her child, and her logic that "both head and smoke would surely brown her and no one would say she was a light-skinned child again" (Mda 65) reflects this. While it is impossible to "smoke the pinkness" (Mda 65) out of Popi, Niki tries anyway in her desperate attempt to thwart the system.

In reference to this scene, Gqibitole argues that the women who become impregnated from these multiple forms of rape not only "have the burden of raising the mixed-race children, but they are also expected to love and care for the reminders of their humiliation" (91). I think that Niki's actions largely disprove that the mixed-race children are a source of humiliation for their mothers. In a horrific way, Niki does was she thinks is the best way to protect her child. The climate of fear created and sustained by the apartheid government, against the backdrop of knowing that she would alone bear the brunt of the consequences of interracial sex, breeds desperation. In addition, Gqibitole, in their analysis of the quote, that Niki's attempt to darken Popi's skin was a "futile act to expunge the guilt and shame she feels" over her mixed-race child (92). Again, I disagree; while Niki does feel guilt for subjecting Popi to the difficult life she knows she will have in a society not accepting of mixed-race people, Niki does what she does to Popi out of protection against the system, not because she is ashamed of her child.

Ultimately Niki is captured by police and is allowed to keep Popi, who grows up with scars from her skin being peeled off during this event. Years later, the narrator tells us that Niki

told Popi that the peeling spot on her neck was an allergy, but "the peeling spot on Popi's neck and chest should have stayed small as the child grew bigger. But it had grown with her. And had hot bigger with her" (Mda 137). This represents the reproduction of intergenerational trauma within Popi, which moulds into becoming part of her. The impact, fear and exertion of the power of the weight of the legal and social structures of the apartheid system play out in Niki's desperation to protect her child. The social structures that regulate and reinforce the legal policies of racial segregation remain a regulatory force in constructing what kind of 'features' fit with a certain 'race'. Niki is aware of the precarity of her position as a black woman with a mixed-race child, but also that she will not be protected by the white man who fathered her child when the system comes looking for her. Wearing the scars of that day physically, the trauma of that event is physically present in Popi, in addition to the emotional and mental scars inflicted on her mother, Niki.

In keeping with the interlinking of the social nature of intersectionality and the influence of intergenerational trauma, the experiences and trepidations of the TRC, are the most evident within *Bitter Fruit*. In the novel's first few pages is a vital interaction between Lydia and Silas that sets the scene for their relationship and the ever presence of the traumas they have experienced alone and together. The traumatic grounding experience here is Lydia being raped by Du Boise in Silas' presence, but it is not something that is ever discussed openly. The following will describe the scene where they discuss what happened with each other for the first time. After Silas saw Du Boise at a shopping centre, he spoke to him and told Lydia that he had seen him (Dangor 9). Their conversation is as follows:

'All these years, we never spoke about it'.

'There was no need to.'

She looked up at him, her eyes scornful. 'No need to? What do you mean, no need to?'

'It was a time when, well, we had to learn to put up with those things.'

'What did you have to put up with, Silas? He raped me, not you.'

'It hurt me too.'

'So that's it. Your hurt. You remembered your hurt.'

'Sh*t, Lydia. I didn't mean it that way. I was there, helpless, f*cken chained in a police van, screaming like a madman.'

'So you didn't hear me scream?'

'Of course, I did, how do you think I knew?'

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'How do you know it wasn't a scream of pleasure, the lekkerkry[27] and fyndraai[28] and all that, the things you men fantasise about?'

'F*ck you, Lydia, I know the difference, I know pain from pleasure.'

She stood up, her angry reaction slowed by the coldness in her body. 'You don't know the pain. It's a memory to you, a wound to your ego, a theory.' She thrust her face into his. 'You can't even begin to imagine the pain' (Dangor 13-14).

The weight of the years of not only the trauma but not having discussed what happened is evident in their interaction. Their interactions show how they experienced the event in vastly different ways. For Lydia, Silas confirms what she already believes, that he does not understand the pain that she has gone through over the years and that he constantly centres himself within her experiences without trying to understand and support her. At the same time, Silas thought pushing things down and not bringing up painful memories was the best way to handle the situation, as Lydia herself never brought up that night. Ronit Frenkel argues that "Silas' idea that there was no need to discuss the rape, as it was part of the anti-apartheid struggle, effectively silenced both Lydia and the impact of the trauma on their relationship" (158). In this way, their "inability to speak about the past" becomes a representation of the silence that exists in their marriage, the breakdown of which is a "metaphor for South Africa's past" (Frenkel 158).

Lydia and Silas are traumatised by the event but only apply a band-aid to the festering wound in themselves and their relationship caused by that night. Aghogho argues that within Lydia's questioning of whether Silas has had a genuine concern for her over the rape, there is a problematisation of victimhood (12). In this way, Aghogho argues that Dangor attempts to gender the narrative of trauma in a way that "does not invalidate Silas' status as a co-victim" but it does "assert Lydia's position as the primary victim of the crime – such the one whose pain should be at the centre of considerations" (12). Thus, representing a counter-narrative to the critiques of the TRC not being focused on being truly inclusive of hearing women's stories.

Through their conversation, Du Boise and that night are no longer an experience that has happened outside of the home, now they are openly discussing it, and the years of pent-up frustration and rage are ultimately evident in Lydia's "scornful" (13) eyes, which culminates in Lydia purposefully stepping on broken glass: "He glanced down the slenderness of her back, saw the pool of blood spreading on the floor, saw his heavy shoes immersed in its dark glow,

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[27] Afrikaans slang to enjoy something or to get pleasure from something.
[28] Sexually explicit Afrikaans slang that refers to a sexual act.

saw her feet dancing, the delicate little steps, on the jagged edges of the broken beer glass" (Dangor 17). This scene is essential not only in framing Lydia and Silas's relationship but also in framing the underlying theme of intergenerational trauma that remains throughout the novel, as it represents the freshness of the open wounds of trauma if you just scratch the surface (or break the skin).

Silas, with strong political connections and as a liberation fighter in the armed wing of the ANC's Umkhonto we Sizwe[29] (MK), playing into his patriarchal power constructions and egotistical self-image, works for the Minister responsible for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and often appears in public to discuss the developments of the TRC. While Lydia is in the hospital, Silas sends her a message telling her he cannot visit due to a "big story about to break" (Dangor 123). As Lydia watches the news that night, Silas appears on TV, and a nurse recognises him and asks if he is her husband. This is Lydia's response:

> Yes, the smooth and devious one, handsome in his own way, he is my husband.
> You should have left Du Boise alone when you saw him, Silas, you should not
> have brought my rapist home. I can't rest peacefully with both of you around,
> your bodies, your smells, even your sounds have become all mixed up. It's like
> he raped me on your behalf, so that one day I would live with him through you.
> When you are inside me, and around me, it feels like Du Boise. He made you
> his instrument. It is not enough that I have to deal with the thought of his seed
> in Mikey, his genes, his blood, his cold and murderous eyes (Dangor 123).

While Lydia does not say this out loud to the person who asked about her husband, she speaks to Silas in her mind while watching him on the TV, as if he is in front of her. The way she talks to him seems to reflect what she had always wanted to say to him but never did, especially given that their communication style is to "hug and make up, say nothing further about the problem, no matter how serious" (Dangor 107). By saying, "You should have left Du Boise alone when you saw him, Silas, you should not have brought my rapist home", Lydia refers back to the incident at the beginning of the novel where Silas tells her of seeing Du Boise, thus stirring up the trauma of that experience again. Lydia's response here to say, "You should not have brought my rapist home" refers to, Silas bringing up what happened; he then brings the trauma of that experience and the memory of what happened into the home in a physical manifestation, rather than the ghost-like presence that the memory had before.

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[29] This is the armed wing if the ANC while it was a liberation movement in apartheid.

While once she was able to separate the trauma of what had happened to her through writing in journals or compartmentalising the memory from her body, now she is forced to confront the experience in her home that she had made a sanctuary from that trauma. Silas disrupted her safe place and broke the walls that separated her traumatic experiences, and they mix together with her memories of Silas. Now when she sees Silas, she sees Du Boise, and she can no longer separate them from each other.

At this moment, the lasting impact of trauma is at the heart of Lydia's words. The trauma and re-traumatization of this moment in her life, which occurs and reoccurs in waves, highlights the pernicious and devasting nature of state-sanctioned sexual violence. By raping Lydia in front of Silas, Du Boise as a representative for white supremacist violence, both himself and at the behest of the apartheid state, creates a trauma that is not only traumatic at that moment but destroys family relations, intimate relationships and plants a seed of destruction that only festers on the personal level. In contrast, more layers of trauma are added to the social and political levels. Lydia's words are encapsulated in this, "it's like he raped me on your behalf, so that one day I would live with him through you" (Dangor 123).

The aim of apartheid state-sanctioned sexual violence, specifically for liberation fighters, was to break them down from all angles. If the state could not charge them with the contravention of any laws, they would either charge them with the Immorality Act, abduct or torture activists or commit sexual violence on them or their family members. Thus, leaving a layer of lasting trauma. For Silas and Lydia, Du Boise rapes Lydia in front of Silas. At the same time, he is cuffed inside the police van, putting him in a helpless state and not being able to protect his wife, which adds to the lasting power play of heteronormative gender roles between a 'husband' and 'wife' where the husband is constructed as the protector. The apartheid state specifically sought to emasculate men through the use of women's bodies. Throughout the novel, Lydia references how her body was used by not only the apartheid state but how her pain was not seen by Silas, who experienced the event as his failure to protect her rather than understanding and supporting her through the traumatic experience. By saying, "he made you his instrument", Lydia locates both her and Silas in the complex web of state-sanctioned sexual violence, wrought with gendered and racialised power dynamics, that result in the re-traumatisation of the victim and the family, in which they live every day after.

To address the rampant acts of sexual violence committed by agents of the apartheid state and also against female freedom fighters within liberation camps, the TRC created a special hearing on sexual violence. While this special hearing was a closed session to the public, the TRC ultimately did not recognise sexual violence as a politically motivated abuse

and, therefore, would not recommend prosecuting perpetrators (Goldblatt and Meintjies 10). In addition, due to the stigmatisation that victims face when they come forward to report acts of sexual violence, there was a great hesitancy amongst both men and women to come forward to discuss their experiences. Out of the over 21 000 testimonies of about 38 000 human rights violations, only 446 statements related explicitly to reported instances of sexual violence and of those, only 140 of those referred specifically to acts of rape (Kusafuka 47-48).

Like many of the women who had experienced sexual violence during apartheid, Lydia contemplates the implications of her testimony at the TRC. Her thoughts, quoted below, show her uncertainty of what coming forward would mean but also reflects the failings of the TRC in reality, which are then conveyed within the characterisation of Lydia in the narrative world. Feminist lobby groups heavily criticised the TRC for the patriarchal construction of the commissioners, which were majority male, and the women who presented in the public hearings did not discuss their personal experiences of violence, instead speaking about their male family members. (Goldblatt-Meintjies 8). Scholars and activists have continuously critiqued these hearings for their patriarchal line of questioning. Women's experiences were often treated as synonymous with men, diminishing women's stories within the struggle and making their experiences secondary[30]. These debates around the special commission and the surfacing critiques inform how the characters in the narrative world experience the TRC. Silas, the proud male liberation fighter, focused on gathering the truth and fully believing in the TRC and the new regime. Mikey, the product and "bitter fruit" of the apartheid regime. And Lydia, the silent, 'good' wife who stands by her husband and son while pushing her trauma to the side, is aware of the political implications and false promises of the TRC:

> It would have not helped her to appear before the commission, even a closed hearing. The offer had been made, a special session on abused women. 'Of course, everyone acknowledges that both sides used women, exploited them, this is an opportunity to bring the issue out into the open, to lance the festering wound, to say something profoundly personal.' A young lawyer from the TRC had brought the offer. She looked into his eyes and saw an evangelist fervour. When she refused, she saw in Silas (whom she'd asked to remain with her in

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[30] See Kusafuka's discussion on the gendered dynamics of sexual violence testimony at the TRC: "Truth commissions and gender: A South African case study." *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2.9. (2009): 45-67.

order to inhibit the young emissary's eagerness) a brief moment of disappointment. Her appearance would have given him the opportunity to play the brave, stoical husband. He would have been able to demonstrate his objectivity, remaining calm and dignified, in spite of being so close to the victim (Dangor 156).

Lydia's words echo the arguments of feminists and scholars at the time. She, unlike Silas, doesn't fully believe in the idea of reconciliation and forgiveness promoted by the TRC. Her description of the lawyer who spoke to her when she looked into his eyes "and saw an evangelist fervour" (Dangor 156). This highlights the intense belief that those involved with the TRC had in the process and what that process could mean for the country. At the same time, Lydia represents those more sceptical, more aware that just because you speak at the TRC does not mean that your life would drastically improve or that the trauma would suddenly be removed. In Lydia's words is the very contradiction and critique that the TRC posed, what does true justice look like? And how can we achieve that?

Miller argues that Lydia doesn't want to speak about her trauma because she worries that it will be appropriated in a way that silences her voice (153). To this point, Frenkel argues that after being raped, Lydia "enters a zone of silence" where "her trauma is verbally unspeakable but can still be articulated in written form" through her diary (160). Lydia cannot speak at the TRC as she has barely spoken about this before, and to expect her to do so in a public setting, makes her dubious of Silas's motives to get her to speak. Frenkel notes that "the boundary between speech and silence is muddied as past, present and future collapse, within the narrative of memory" (160). In this way, the TRC has attempted to voice this silence. Still, Lydia represents those whose silence becomes a form of rebellion against dictating how one should heal, rejecting the TRC's principle of national healing for collective trauma.

In the post-apartheid environment, gender-based violence remains rampant (Gqibitole 87). Those who experienced sexual violence, especially women who were liberation fighters, who have come forward to accuse now high-ranking male government members of rape, whom they are forced to work with in parliament or civil service, continue to be silenced and stigmatised. Lydia is represented as the voice of the women who did not come forward, did not trust the process to take care of them, and could see that to some extent, at least about sexual violence, the TRC special hearing was window dressing at best. Lydia calls out the patriarchal double standard that would result if she came forward and how Silas would politically capitalise on her rape, further adding to her belief that Silas does not understand her pain, as he only watched her be raped, not experienced it for himself. A reflection of the experiences of so

many women in the South African context is aptly expressed in Lydia's ultimate refusal to come forward at the special hearing:

> Nothing in her life would have changed, nothing in any of their lives would change because of a public confession of pain suffered. Because nothing could be undone, you could not withdraw a rape, it was an irrevocable act, like murder. Once that violating penis, that vile *cock* had been inside you, it could not be withdrawn, not by an act of remorse or vengeance, not even by justice (Dangor 156).

Lydia's insistence that nothing would change if she were to speak at the special hearing is further solidified by her statement that "nothing can be undone, you could not withdraw rape" (Dangor 156). Lydia "dismisses confession as a way of coming to terms with rape" and recognises the Christian undertones of its construction, ultimately rejecting "the Commission's notion that it is enough to speak the past once in order to move on from it" (Miller 154). Her vivid and visceral description of the "violating penis" (Dangor 156) shows that the pain that she experienced has not dissipated as the trauma of this experience continues to haunt her, as well as the memory of Du Boise inside of her. For Lydia, justice does not look like testifying at the special hearing for sexual violence. If Du Boise were to apply for amnesty, which we later find out he has (Dangor 278) and entirely confess everything and argue as to why his actions were politically motivated while showing remorse, which was a criterion for amnesty, this would not provide healing or justice in Lydia's mind.

Du Boise is the physical, mental and emotional manifestation of their trauma, passed on to Mikey, who lives with Du Boise in his house and within him, without even knowing—a physical product of the trauma of apartheid and the manifestation of its violence. Whether Lydia appears at the TRC, Du Boise is always part of their lives; he lives in their intimate moments with each other. And this cyclical nature of trauma and re-trauma is evident in Lydia's vivid descriptions of the man that has taken so much of her life, especially while in the hospital. Lydia says, "She had recalled his face every night, his small and dull eyes, not beady, but transparent in their blueness" (Dangor 156). Du Boise's eyes are burned into her memory, just as is the sexual violence he committed upon her. From Lydia's experiences, it is evident that the nature of trauma cannot be addressed through narratives of forgiveness and reconciliation, as the TRC attempted to do.

The language of forgiveness does not automatically include healing and thus becomes an intergenerational issue as the characters struggle not to pass their trauma onto their mixed-

race children. This is evident across all literary texts studied in this research, where the legacies of intergenerational trauma are compounded by the impact of laws such as the Immorality act, which create lasting systems that protect whiteness and allow white people to act with a level of impunity, and escape culpability for the mixed-race children they create. The cost of this social system of protecting white supremacy is those oppressed by it, the black and brown women and their mixed-race children, as they also contribute to reproducing these legacies through cycles of intergenerational trauma, particularly within the post-apartheid context. The next Chapter considers the personal sphere of intersectional power that will delve into the representations of the mixed-race characters in how other characters define them, how they define themselves through the lens of the mixed-race literary trope of the tragic mulatta/o, ultimately ending with the representations of how the mixed-race characters resist this trope in post-apartheid literary texts.

Chapter Three: Belonging and the Politics of (un)Belonging

The politics of belonging, as outlined by Yuval-Davis et al. (2006), can be situated either temporally, related to various historical and socio-economic or technological developments; or spatially, within globalisation developments; and finally, intersectionally, where "even at the same time and in the same place, not all people affect and are affected by specific politics of belonging in the same ways" (Yuval-Davis et al. 7). Through the intersectional politics of belonging shows that boundaries are constantly moving and shifting as they interact within various power systems in both group and individual dynamics (Yuval-Davis et al. 7-8). Theories of belonging are essential to understanding how characters within the narrative world experience feeling of both belonging and unbelonging, and this is influenced by how they move through various spaces in the narrative world.

Concerning belonging, this chapter will evaluate the prevalence of the American literary tradition of the tragic mulatta/o trope within South African literature. Coming out of nineteenth century and early twentieth-century American fiction, the representation of the mulatta/o as "a tragic, ambiguous figure" remained dominant throughout American literature, usually present within novels about passing or the characters either die or are reborn (Mafe 4-5). Mafe argues that the continued use and relevance of the tragic mulatto trope shows how it "functions not only as a dated cliché and cautionary tale but also as a radical embodiment of possibility and a vehicle for social critique" (4). Constructing mixed-race characters within this discourse of tragedy is also present in South African literature about mixed-race people, which would be about either Coloured people or first-generation mixed-race people. This trope is significant to understanding how mixed-race characters are represented within post-apartheid literature and if this "outdated" trope, as Mafe (4) refers to it, remains present within literature written in a post-apartheid, supposedly post-racial critical context. Therefore, this chapter seeks to identify the existence of this trope within its old conceptualisations and in new emerging literary traditions of resisting this trope in the post-apartheid context.

Concerning intersectionality, although intersectional experiences constantly oscillate between the personal, social and political spheres, this chapter will focus specifically on how the characters are represented within the personal sphere of their intersectional experience and will focus specifically on the representation of the main characters with their interactions with other characters, how they deal with these interactions and what conflicts arise. Finally, this chapter will be organised into three subsections that will each deal with representations of belonging and (un)belonging within and outside of the tragic mulatta/o trope, where mixed-

race characters are represented as being in constant states of confusion about their identity and are not accepted by those around them. The first sub-section investigates what other characters tell us about the main characters, specifically what the characters are called by those around them and their response to that. The second focuses on what the characters say and tell us about themselves and how they internalise or resist the characterisations by others. And finally, the last sub-section will focus on how the mixed-race characters resist the tragic mulatta/o trope within post-apartheid literary works, a shift from the apartheid portrayal of this trope.

3.1. Named by Others

Mahtani, in her paper *What's in a name? Exploring the employment of 'mixed race' as an identification* (2002) suggests that early work on mixed-race identity, particularly in the US and the UK, like that of Root (1992) and Ifekwunigwe (1999), describe that, within popular discourse at the time, myths surrounding 'mixed-race' people were based on 'having no home' or 'out of place' and shows the mixed-race person as in a constant state of confusion of their identity (Mahtani 470). Other myths espoused is that 'mixed-race' people are the solution to 'curing' racism in a "vacant celebration of sanitised cultural hybridity, where the 'mixed-race' person is seen as a 'rainbow child' glimmering with hope for a colour-blind future" (Mahtani 470). Like the colour-blind and sanitised version of the "Rainbow Nation" championed in post-apartheid South Africa's reconciliatory ideology.

Aptly so, Mahtani (2002) highlights how theories of race have consistently aimed to reflect beliefs of so-called 'racial purity', which in turn have become powerful social constructions embedded in all societal structures (Mahtani 471). However, as Aspinell (2009), Zack (2010), King and O'Riain (2014), Morning (2014) and Hubbard and Utsey (2015) argue, Mahtani agrees that by their very existence, mixed-race people challenge mainstream racial categorisation and challenge the limitations of its boundaries, which are already laced with class and gender (Mahtani 471). Therefore, by rendering the mixed-race subject as problematic by not 'fitting in' or 'groupless', popular discourse maintains racial hierarchies in our understanding of mixed-race people (Mahtani 471).

The "problem" of fitting in is echoed across the literary texts that have been surveyed. As is the politics of naming. This section focuses on how characters are named by others and their responses to these names. By understanding the labels that are put onto the mixed-race characters, we see how legacies of apartheid naming, especially in terms of racial categorisations or stereotypes, influence the ways the character's identities are being represented, and especially how this affects the ways they navigate of the politics of belonging. The way that characters are represented across the literary works considered in this research is

often told to us by secondary characters or through the third-person narrative. The spaces and interactions that the characters participate in show how they are perceived and interpreted by those in their personal circle. Echoing Mahtani's argument on the "grouplessness" of mixed-race people, across all the works considered, the characters are either told that they don't belong or made to feel as though they don't belong, thereby creating moments where the theme of belonging and (un)belonging feature prominently in their interactions with other characters in the narrative world.

In her memoir, *Killing Karoline*, Sara's life story is wrought with moments of feeling that she does not belong and that she is in a constant state of seeking acceptance and belonging. As a mixed-race adoptee within a white family in the UK, Sara struggles to find acceptance within the predominantly white community around her, where she often experiences both racist micro-aggressions and blatant racism from the white community in which she is raised. While Sara went to school in the UK, South Africa follows the structure of British education, which remains steeped within white colonial structures that privilege the English language. Sara reflects on her childhood, particularly in her early life stages. Although she does not explicitly state that these are her first memories of being racialised, how she reflects on these experiences in her writing shows how she internalised the words that those around her said, despite her young age:

> It is summer and my brown skin, browner than usual, having been touched by the sun, is the colour of moderately strong coffee and makes my cherubic arms and legs even more biteable than usual. I am the only brown little girl at my nursery school – in fact the only brown child. Adam is the only brown boy at his school of seventy-five pupils. We both stand out a lot. We say 'brown' because that's what colour our skin is. We say 'half-caste' because that is what other people say. We also say 'gollywog' because Robertson's says it on their jam jars and we don't know any better (Makwala-King 44).

In this quote, Sara's use of the word "brown" to describe herself, as being the words that those around her used to describe her and her adopted mixed-race brother, show that without telling us explicitly all the racist micro-aggressions she experienced, she still internalised this racialised language. The word "half-caste", in particular, tells how the people who interacted with her not only racialised her but used racist language. Adding another layer

to her experience, showing how the word "gollywog" was used on jam[31] jars speak to the broader system of normalising racist language without the context of where it comes from and whom it oppresses. The casual racism of Sara's childhood is steeped in colonial racialised thinking. In her writing, Sara not only tells us of her personal experiences of racialisation but locates these experiences within the structures of white supremacy in England, where she was raised.

In addition, Sara uses the language of "we" to include herself in those that did not "know any better" (Makwala-King 44). Sara's implication of herself as part of using the racist language shows that she might have been unaware that this language was problematic. This normalisation of everyday racism speaks to her participation in everyday racism, despite being a victim of the racism being expressed. To belong to the group around her, Sara takes on the languages that they use. Already feeling othered, Sara attempts to establish herself within the racial hierarchy that she observes in her schooling system, where those at the top, the white children, perpetuate the racial hierarchy by othering those "lower" on the racial hierarchy through language.

In her experiences within her everyday life, it is clear from her writing that what she describes as banal experiences have underlying intersectional layers of how these experiences have affected her. For example, Sara describes a dress that her grandmother made for her: "making your own is better, because then whatever you are making fits perfectly. Fitting is important. Sometimes things fit. They are snug and comfortable; they become part of us. But sometimes even things that are new do not mould to us and they occupy awkward space. In us, they do not find a home or footrest. They twitch easily, arching their backs against out outstretched arms and open chests. When things do not fit, we panic. Terrified of consequences, unfinished pictures, spilling over the edges and blurred lines" (Makwala-King 45). In Sara's own analysis of the dress that her grandmother made for her and the reasons why, Sara gives us a glimpse into her inner thoughts and what it means for something to "fit perfectly". The juxtaposition of the dress is made specifically for her to 'fit into' versus the conceptualisation of what it means "to fit in", reflect Sara's broader sense of (un)belonging reflected in the way she interpreted the words of others. The "awkward space" that cannot find a home within her, echoes Mahtani's arguments of the representations of mixed-race people as not being able to fit in. They search for belonging in multiple spaces but cannot reconcile the awkward space within themselves to find a home around them and within them. Although Mahtani considers

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[31] In British English and South African English, jam can be considered a smooth marmalade.

this an outdated reflection, Sara's childhood in the 1980s takes place at a time when this rhetoric was still widely used. Sara grapples with (un)belonging within her own family. Her interpretation of her grandmother's comments seems projected onto herself because she does not "fit". In this way, she panics, as do those around her, even her peers, panic because she does not "fit" in.

The concept of "fitting in" describes not only a feeling of belonging once you have "fit in" but also actions that need to be taken or parts that need to be given up to embody the acceptable version of what "fitting in" would look like. For Sara, her physical features and skin colour can never change to the extent that she would be entirely and wholeheartedly accepted into white English society, and for her to "fit in" would require a level of assimilation into white supremacist structures, as well as active participation in its status quo. Sara describes her experiences as a mixed-race person in her majority-white schooling environment:

> Before long I become aware of some sniggering behind me. I turn to see two blonde girls, about my age, both with ribbons in their long hair. They have a look in their eyes that makes me uncomfortable. Sly. Untrustworthy. Tricky. They giggle conspiratorially when they see me looking and the bigger of the two steps forward. 'Is that your brother?' she demands, thrusting out her finger. I turn to where she is pointing and see a tall, brown-skinned boy with a full mouth hovering in a classroom doorway. 'No,' I reply, feeling a heat in my cheeks that I cannot be sure is fuelled by anger or embarrassment. 'Then he must be your cousin. You both look the same – brown, like poo!' concludes the bigger girl. 'Dirty,' adds her smaller friend. 'Yes,' agrees the bigger girl. 'Dirty brown poos.' They snigger and continue to stare at me until what feels like hours later Adam comes to fetch me to tell me we are going home (Makwala-King 65).

This experience for Sara not only shows the racism that she experienced at school but that broader processes of racialisation happen from a young age by peers as well. Using "conspiratorially" to describe the girls reflects a feeling of unbelonging in that Sara is excluded from the inside joke between the two girls, which she later understands as racism. In addition, the conspiring of the two girls reflects the normalisation of racist language within their home environment and in the spaces in which they exist, spaces that Sara and the boy being referred to can never belong to or "fit in", especially as they are considered to be "dirty". The use of this language, as well as the girl's childish equating of brown skin to "poo", reflects not only

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the racism around them but the ways that they have internalised it and projected this language onto something that they have been told to equate as equally disgusting, black people.

Sara's experience is not only rooted in the racism inflicted on her but the racialised schooling system, showing how her experiences within social spaces affect her personal responses to them. Sara was raised in a white family with mostly white people around her in a historically white area. However, this does not mean she was automatically accepted within the structures of whiteness. Sara's reflections on her childhood are representative of Yuval-Davis' politics of belonging in that although she tries to find belonging with the groups around her, the power structures do not allow her entry, especially in the maintenance of white spaces. In this way, Sara makes decisions that don't make her a direct target of the othering, so she participates in the othering of others to 'survive'. This need to survive at the cost of not standing up for another person reflects how the fear that the white environment creates is not accepting or allowing any person of colour to "fit in", as this is based on their participation in the oppression of the "other". This is further expressed in Sara being called a "Paki" by her peers, referring to a derogatory term used for people of Pakistan descent:

But I knew I wasn't a paki because the type of people these kids were talking about and had mistaken me for were nothing like me. First of all, 'pakis' looked different, and second, they sounded different, certainly not like they were from Surrey. Some of them didn't even speak the same language as I did. I knew this because to my utter excitement a family had just recently moved from another country (not actually Pakistan but Bangladesh, an apparent irrelevancy for those who took umbrage to the new arrivals and would graffiti the walls of their home every week) (Makwala-King 70).

Sara's rationalisation of the comparison of her and the terminology of "Paki" indicates her trying to understand the levels of differentiation placed onto people of colour by white supremacist racial categories. For Sara, growing up within her close-knit white community with her white parents in Surrey, she feels as though she is English and speaks English in the same way that the white children around her, creating a de-facto association with whiteness. Because people she was from Surrey have the same accent that she has, she feels she belongs, and so being called 'Paki', a group of people she cannot relate to, doesn't make sense to her. Sara's added comment that origin was not important for whether someone is considered 'Paki'

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or not shows the lumping together of the racialised other. Cole and Maisura[32] argue that the terminology of 'Paki', reflects racialised xenophobia and Islamophobia, reminiscent of 1980s immigration which has only intensified in recent years (104). It reflects a lack of understanding of why the 'other' – Sara and Pakistani (more generally Southeast Asian people) – were being lumped together within the structures of the "white supremacist other". The "threat" of immigration of people from former colonies was a huge driving force in racist attacks and language present in Sara's childhood.

Sara, who felt othered and alienated by the white children at her school and the structures of white supremacy in her everyday life, does not see the "ugliness" of the Pakistani girl that moves in next door, Rahela, that she was taught to expect. Sara is envious of her hair, which she describes as "acres and acres of dead-straight, black, shiny hair. It moved, actually moved in the wind! When she tied it up, her ponytail hung loose and danced about her back; she was lucky enough that sometimes she'd have to brush it out of her face and over her shoulder as she leant over to read her book. I envied her and adored her simultaneously" (Makwala-King 70). Compared to what Sara said about her own hair, "whilst it was always clean, it was never exactly shiny; there was no movement to it and a ponytail was a thing of pure fantasy. Texture-wise, as I was told so often by people who thought it entirely acceptable to randomly pat my head, it felt 'just like a sheep'" (Makwala-King 70).

The different ways in which Sara describes the differences between her and Rahela show how Sara's internalisation of white beauty standards, a common dominant narrative of whiteness. For Sara, at that time, Rahela had the kind of hair that she wished she had, hair that might make her more readily accepted in society. Sanger[33] argues that historical constructions of "good" and "bad" hair are inextricably linked to colonial legacies of racial difference. Where 'white hair' and features are constructed as the benchmark for beauty, which are regulated by both the beauty industry and those that buy into it. Sara's comparison to Rahela's hair is wrought with the intersections of race, gender, class and nationality. Sara is taught that hair that 'moved in the wind' was the acceptable beauty standard, so why was it that Rahela was not then treated "better"? Compared to her own hair, she makes sure to reference that her hair was always clean, a response most likely to being told that she was "dirty". Although Rahela has some parts of "acceptable" whiteness that Sara is envious of, Rahela, like Sara, will never

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[32] See Cole and Maisura (2007). Their focus is on the historical legacy and a critical race understanding of xeno-racialisation, as they call it, whereby immigrants experience both xenophobia and racism based on historical legacies of racist thinking.

[33] See Nadia Sanger's (2009) work on white beauty standards within South African magazines, where black models are presented in ways that confirm to white beauty standards, especially in the "taming" of their hair.

find belonging within whiteness, a system based on regulations of racialised categories as their skin colour can never provide them with access.

As Sanger and Joseph have argued, hair politics have always been central to the construction of standards of white beauty, especially those imposed within white colonial spaces and that remain entrenched within white supremacist post-colonial structures. Joseph argues that hair is "one of the most tangible signs of lure and danger of identity fluidity" for mixed-race characters (74). And within the lasting colonial structures that construct hair like Sara's as "just like a sheep" (Makwala-King 70) or "like wire wool" (Makwala-King 45) are the same structures that sustain (un)belonging and encourage assimilation to white standards of beauty to achieve belonging within their desired group. The animalistic comparison of Sara's hair to that of a sheep again repeats linkages to white supremacist policing of black hair and black bodies. Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly argue that hair is "a socio-racial structure that venerates white European beauty and aesthetic standards whilst denigrating features associated with the Black body" (4). For Sara, growing up with a white mother that has not learned how to "manage" or "deal" with her hair and so outsources this task in a way that makes Sara feel as though she is responsible for the "state" of her hair:

> I am fourteen the first time a black person touches my hair. Mum has made an appointment for me at a salon that 'deals' specifically with 'Afro-Caribbean' hair. It has taken fourteen years, but we have finally admitted total defeat. My hair is a problem. I am sorry for that. I feel guilty. I am embarrassed, but I am also excited. Soon I will have new hair! Swishy, flicky, flappy, silky new hair. I am of the belief that I will be able to use things like diffusers and barrettes and butterfly hair clips to create the styles I have seen in Just Seventeen, Sugar and More, although I have yet to see a girl who looks like me in any of those magazines. I will be able to toss my hair over my shoulder and out of my eyes. I cannot wait for my hair to be a stylish nuisance. Most of all, though, I cannot wait to walk in to school on Monday morning and look like all the other girls – at least from the back (Makwala-King 72-73).

Sara expresses feeling embarrassed and guilty because although her mother cannot teach or help her properly care for her hair, the blame to which is laid at Sara's feet. This is another way in which the normalisation of white beauty standards is reflected within their interaction about "the problem" that is Sara's hair. For Sara, her mother's "frustration" with her hair and wishes to have hair that conforms to more "acceptable", meaning white, beauty standards. The "manageability" of Sara's hair is steeped within respectability politics that

govern black bodies in public spaces (Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly 7). Even though Sara is mixed-race, this does not mean that her hair is more "manageable", her body remains controlled and regulated by institutional (in her school) and structural (societal perceptions) that problematise her hair.

Although Sara remains understands that even this brief change to a new hairstyle is conditional by her added remark that she would "look like all the other girls – at least from the back", Sara knows that she is not going to get the full acceptance she seeks (Makwala-King 72-73). The precariousness of what a new hairstyle could or could not mean for the acceptance she is searching for within her community shows the thin line that Sara walks between "respectability"/whiteness and "problematic"/blackness. The navigation of this line is best reflected in Sara's first experience at a salon that specifically "deals" with black hair:

> We walk in and everyone in the salon stares. In fact, they stop what they are doing and then stare. Everyone. People getting their hair done, people doing the hair, people sweeping the hair, some people who don't even seem to be there for the hair. But they all stare. 'Hellair!' says Mum briskly. To my ears, she's never sounded so posh. 'Way-ar h'yarr for mayy daught-aars harr appoinT-menT.' She certainly isn't being rude. but something about the way she speaks, holds herself, her rather false, slightly patronising smile, makes me retreat into myself. Inside, I am furious. The staring continues; Mum is oblivious, but I can feel everyone's eyes burning inquisitive, almost accusatory, marks onto my skin. I am achingly aware of this collision of the two worlds to which I am connected, but neither of which I feel a legitimate part of. Frustratingly, though, I am expected to navigate both with ease and assurance and apology where necessary, but I will for a long time feel like an ill-equipped mediator required to translate between two reluctant strangers (Makwala-King 73-74).

This interaction is wrought with racial-class-gender politics where Sara must navigate the "collision" of black and white spaces, in which she is meant to act as the "ill-equipped mediator", for the meeting of two spaces that "neither of which I feel a legitimate part of" (Makwala-King 73-74). From everyone stopping to stare at her and her mother upon their entering to the falsity and privilege of voice and language that her mother uses to talk to the black people in the salon shows how Sara can find belonging in neither space. Coming from a predominantly white environment, Sara, upon seeing her mother interact with black people other than her, is uncomfortable with how her mother behaves. Although Sara acknowledges that her mother "isn't being rude", she hears the falsity of white performativity perhaps as a

response to being in space where her mother is now the only white person, a stark difference to their everyday life.

As a result of the constant remarks that surround Sara in the spaces that she enters in her predominantly white circles, a result of her white parents, Sara only sees her mother in her comfortable space amongst other white people. This comfortability creates the invisibility of whiteness. Sara Ahmed argues that "whiteness could be described as an ongoing and un-finished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they 'take up' space" (150). In this way, whiteness "takes up space" and does not orientate itself to the environment it enters, rather, it expects that the space shifts towards whiteness (Ahmed 149-151). Sara's mother enters into the space where she is the only white person and exhibits the expectation for those in the space to shift towards her whiteness through her "posh" language, a performance she would not need to exert over her white friends. For Sara, she also adjusts and shifts towards the pressures of whiteness, where she has learned to anticipate non-acceptance and feelings of unbelonging. Although Sara is the one narrating and telling us of her experiences, even within these experiences, we hear the voices of those around her that she has internalised, fostering feelings of unbelonging within the spaces she exists and within herself as well.

Like Sara, in *Let the Music Play On*, Fikile was not fully raised within the South African context, but when Fikile does attend school in South Africa, she faces similar structures of white supremacy that racialise people who are not white. Attending a former white-only, all-girls catholic school as a black person within post-apartheid South Africa, the normative structures of whiteness that sustained the school during apartheid remain ingrained in the structures in post-apartheid society, despite the change in demographic amongst staff and students. Fikile's first impression of her school is noticing the enormous wealth and, in particular, the white elite. "'We seem outnumbered, Auntie' Fikile says, looking at the children and parents getting out of their cars. 'Well, it's an expensive school. Financial power is still largely in white hands.'" (Khumalo 134).

The exchange between Auntie Promise and Fikile explains the continuation of white financial power in a matter-of-fact statement and a warning to Fikile about the kind of environment she is about to enter, especially as someone who has not been raised in South Africa. Despite being part of the "new" black middle class, Fikile and Aunty Promise historically unchanged white spaces. As noted by Letsoko et al., expectations of assimilation

into whiteness are an expectation for black elites, particularly because elite schools remain bastions of apartheid whiteness but are the most well-resourced.

Moreover, Fikile knows that she now has to walk into a schooling environment to try to make new friends among long-established groups. "Fikile knows that some of the girls at St Mary-Magdalene's have been with each other since grade one. They move around in cliques, not unlike packs of feral dogs. And like feral dogs, when they attack, they do so viciously" (Khumalo 138-139). And so to find a space of belonging not only within the limiting structures of the school but also the everyday politics of a high school environment, in addition to sounding, looking and being raised in a different country to her peers. Fikile's comparison of the cliques to feral dogs sets the expectation that these cliques function on a hierarchy and are viciously territorial about who they accept and who they do not. On her very first day, Fikile is asked to introduce herself to the class by her black female teacher, Miss Myeni, who immediately admonishes her in front of the class because she assumes that Fikile is wearing contact lenses, as her eyes are blue:

> 'Now, Fikile, I know there's nothing in our school regulations about contact lenses but it's highlight unseemly for a school girl – a St Mary-Magdalene's girl! – to walk around hiding the true colour of her eyes. When you walk down the street you should be the epitome of the St Mary-Magdalene's ethos. Only black tarts walk around with blue contact lenses.' But, ma'am, this is my natural colour.' Fikile inherited the colour from her white mother, but she's not bringing up the topic of her mother in front of this whole class (Khumalo 135).

This interaction reflects how the apartheid regulations for racial classifications, specifically based on perceived 'race-specific' physical features, remain active in how her teacher immediately racialises Fikile. Within the language used by Miss Myeni has racist and sexist overtones that feed into the hyper-sexualisation of black women by referring to Fikile as a "black tart" because of her eye colour. The use of the word 'tart' is grounded in disgust for black women that attempt to ascribe to white beauty standards, especially during apartheid. In the post-apartheid space, constructions of what Kalinga calls the "black Jezebel narrative", which is rooted in colonial and apartheid perceptions of black women, remain prevalent in the construction of "good" and "bad" black women. While these stereotypes were frequently challenged in the post-apartheid era, especially through women wearing more revealing clothing in public spaces as a shift towards empowerment over their sexualities, these tropes remain deeply entrenched in everyday experiences (Kalinga n.p).

The irony here is that although Fikile is expected to adhere to the white standards of beauty that are present within the schooling code of conduct while being admonished for doing so. Despite this, Fikile is racialised as a black woman throughout the short story. Because the school that she is attending is a historically white elite school, the sexualisation of Fikile's physical features is part and parcel with the regulation of 'decorum' through the 'ethos' of the school, which is steeped in dominant narratives of whiteness. Miss Myeni's reference to this is not only her "concern" for the representation of the school, but underlying is the racial dynamics at play within broader policies of transformation that ensure that black girls can attend this former white institution in post-apartheid South Africa. Common complaints about transformation and integration in formerly white institutions is that the quality of education will decrease due to racialised educational inequalities (Erasmus, "Confronting" 249). These undertones of the "concessions" that white people made to "allow" black people into their schools are wrought within Fikile's interactions with her teacher and her classmates.

The traces of respectability politics within Miss Myeni's words uphold the dominant narratives of whiteness that remain present in the school structures that sexualise and racialise young black girls, who need to transcend these stereotypes to truly "represent" the former white school they now attend. Like Sara, Fikile must also shift towards whiteness rather than whiteness change or be dismantled. The regulation of the perceived precarity of black people's acceptance into these white spaces is strictly controlled and policed by not only the structures of whiteness but the buy-in from all those who adhere to it as the official status quo. This is further exacerbated by Miss Myeni's response to Fikile's retort that this is her natural eye colour:

> 'Now,' Miss Myeni switches to Zulu, 'you don't want me to embarrass you in front of your classmates. Blue eyes and brown skin? Yes, we were brought up to fool white people, your parents and I. In order to survive, we had to play games with these white people…' She switches back to English. 'But don't insult my intelligence. Look, you're wearing an isiphandla like the good Zulu girl you are (Khumalo 135-136).

Miss Myeni's switches to Zulu while speaking to Fikile further indicates how she continues reproducing narratives of whiteness that need to regulate and control how young black girls look and act. This switch could be seen as a way not to create further embarrassment for Fikile, who is now a representative of all black people within this white space, but because Miss Meyeni explicitly brings up how during apartheid, black people specifically sought to trick white people, shows how she actually views on the structures of whiteness in the school.

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In that, she recognises that, on one hand these structures are problematic and racist, but she understands the game that needs to be played because whiteness might be able to provide access through her teaching position, and therefore she must enforce it. This is the same reason why she tolerates the blatant racism and disrespect towards her and others from a specific white student, Lucille Rutter, whose parents are major financial contributors to the school.

In the same breath, Miss Myeni both includes and excludes Fikile. Using language like 'we' is inclusive in how she acknowledges and sees Fikile as a black South African girl who should understand the precariousness of their existence within the white-dominated space in which they find themselves. While on the other hand, by telling Fikile that she does not believe that she could have brown skin and blue eyes, she excludes Fikile in not believing her and chooses to rather admonish Fikile for not fitting 'neatly' into the racially constructed boxes that stem from apartheid-era racial categorisations. Fikile is representative of the new black elite that navigates the white structures of the post-apartheid space that are unwilling to be moved.

Another layer within Miss Myeni's words is her reference to Fikile's parents, who are assumed to be both black South Africans. When Fikile is first asked if she is wearing contact lenses, Fikile does not explain out loud in her classroom, rather, the narrator tells us that her blue eyes come from her white mother. She chooses to avoid bringing up this topic, because she can sense that openly sharing that she has a white mother might ostracise her further from being accepted by the other black and brown girls in her class. So, while Fikile is assumed to be black, therefore placing her in a group where she might find some belonging, it rests on her not sharing that her mother is white, which is never revealed throughout the entire short story. We are unaware if she would have been treated differently based on this information.

In the same event, Miss Myeni refers to Fikile's *isiphandla* and compliments Fikile for being a "good Zulu girl", thereby including her as a member of the group to which they both belong while admonishing her for embarrassing the group with her fake contact lenses. Even with the reference to the isiphandla that Fikile is wearing draws attention to the otherness constructed in the dominantly white school environment.

> "Fikile had forgotten the piece of goat skin tied around her left wrist –
> the 'Zulu bangle' bestowed on her after her Auntie's people slaughtered a goat
> in her honour to welcome her to Africa. Now the white girls are on their feet,
> looking at the goat skin. The two black girls in the class are mortified, staring
> fixedly at their hands. Fikile guesses they are probably thinking: *How can you*
> *embarrass us, bringing your backwardness to this bastion of civilisation!*"
> (Khumalo 136).

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The reactions from the other black girls in the class, and their unwillingness to be grouped with Fikile, shows the underlying precariousness of belonging within this schooling environment. This short story is written and set well into post-apartheid South Africa, at least in 2014 or later, bason of the reference to a Pharrell Williams song released in 2014. This is a reflection of how white supremacist structures are so deeply ingrained within the schooling environment that the two other black girls in the class are embarrassed that Fikile would bring their traditional practices into this white environment and wear it so openly, where they most likely never discuss their traditional practices and are complicit in the reproduction and maintenance of the systems of whiteness that operate at the school. Fikile's guess that the girls were thinking, "*How can you embarrass us, bringing your backwardness to this bastion of civilisation!*" (Khumalo 136) reflects the underlying colonial and apartheid-level thinking about traditional African practices as being "backward" or "uncivilised", a label that the black girls are the school were trying to avoid. The precariousness of belonging and acceptance is rife within this interaction, where Fikile disrupts the balance of complicity and compliance that the black girls and teachers within the school have fallen into.

Towards the end of the initial conversation about Fikile's eyes, again within the same breath, Miss Myeni both includes and excludes Fikile and her lived experience by giving her final judgement, saying, "You may have gone to an American school, but you don't have blue eyes Zulu girl" (Khumalo 136). Ultimately reminding her that she is a black Zulu girl from Africa and should not be putting in fake contact lenses to appeal to standards of white beauty while at the same time reproducing stereotypes of whiteness to ensure that Fikile 'steps in line'. Fikile's eye colour is mentioned in various capacities throughout the rest of the short story, where she is referred to as a "freak" by Lucille Rutter her nemesis (Khumalo 145) and then by the secretary in the principal's office, "still wearing your contact lenses? You're lucky they haven't complained.' Fikile has given up telling people these are her real eyes, blue as they are and black as she is." (Khumalo 153). For Fikile, there is no longer a point in fighting a losing battle to prove not only her eye colour but who she is as a person and the pretences that she needs to keep up to create a sense of belonging within this new environment that she finds herself. Here, in Fikile's navigation of this new space, she represents how the uniqueness of whiteness in South Africa, as discussed by Steyn[34], can be difficult to navigate especially coming from a different context of white supremacy. In her representation, Fikile exposes the

[34] See Melissa Steyn for her discussion on the specificity of South African whiteness in "Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used To Be": White Identity in a Changing South Africa. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press Albany, 2001.

nuances of South African racial politics, which continue to be reproduced more than 20 years after apartheid has ended.

Finding belonging within the schooling environment is a struggle that Nix also faced throughout her schooling in *Finder's Weepers*. As a result of her mother's work as a carer and cleaner in a white family's home, Nix could attend white schools. This was not an option given to every black woman that worked for white families, but it shows that Nonceba was still reliant on the "generosity" of white people to provide her daughter with access to "good" "white" schools that she could not afford on her own. The continued exploitation of black women through domestic and care work for cheap labour remains a crucial feature of the post-apartheid space[35]. In this way, Nix is associated with what whiteness can provide, but does not access it in the same way as she might have, had her white father stayed in her life.

Her mother told her that they were moving "to the cottage in the 'very beautiful' garden and that [she] would be going to a new, English school with Lou and lots of other white children" (Lorimer Chapter 2). Lou is the white daughter of the family that Nix's mother worked for. In a rare instance, Nonceba's employers "allowed" Nix to live with her mother. Often during apartheid and in post-apartheid South Africa, black women who work as domestic workers would have to live away from their children, and family members would have to raise their children while they earned money. Similarly to Popi in The Madonna of Excelsior, Nix was made aware of her 'coloured' skin tone by her peers, thus being aware that she was considered to be different from them:

> I'd previously been a solitary child. The fact that I did not live in the area where my kindergarten schoolmates lived and was 'coloured' in terms of skin tone only, had not encouraged the formation of any lasting relationships. The children of my mother's previous employer were older than me and had mostly ignored me, occasionally handing me cast-off toys, books and clothes in what I now recognise as a patronising rather than a generous way. I was an outsider, a watcher – a tendency I have yet to grow out of. But in Lou I found a true and lasting friend. I can still remember us as seven-year-olds, smearing our pricked forefingers together in the belief that it would make us 'blood sisters' (Lorimer Chapter 2).

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[35] See Amy Jo Murray & Kevin Durrheim. "There was much that went unspoken": maintaining racial hierarchies in South African paid domestic labour through the unsaid, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 42.15 (2019): 2623-2640, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2018.1532096.

Nix and Lou's relationship is interesting in that although the power dynamics of the relationship between their mothers are based on a racial hierarchical level, they remain close and are not discouraged from being friends. They remain friends well into their adulthood. Nix is initially represented as solitary and has yet to find belonging within her black peer groups, reflecting the "in-betweenness" that Mahtani has previously argued exists within mixed-race people. While it seems as though Nix's mixed-race identity is not the main focus of the plot, in the same way that other mixed-race characters are represented across the literary works, there are glimpses of Nix's struggles with her mixed-race identity, whether these are passing comments or active comments made by other characters. In one such example, Nix finds a stray cat, and upon deciding what to do, she reaches out to Lou for advice:

> I wasn't keen to add a dependant to my pared-down existence, and – as Lou reminded me – black people don't really keep pet cats, but the white half of me couldn't face the thought of myself as the Angel of Death, so I shelled out what felt like a minor fortune to have him cleaned up and brought back to health. (Lorimer Chapter 4).

Lou's response that "black people don't really keep pet cats" speaks to the stereotypical racialised language that Lou has learned in her white spaces. The way that Nix responds is so casual that one could miss the racialised nuance in Lou's statement. As a result of having grown up in and around systems of whiteness, Nix is most likely used to the gross generalisations of casual racism from those around her. Nix separates herself into two halves: the white half that cares about animals and the black half that doesn't. By her own telling, Nix distances herself from her 'black half' to point out that she cares about animals, perpetuating the same stereotype. While it isn't true that black people don't own pets or cats, the care placed on animals by white people has been a feature of literary texts in South Africa. In many novels, the politicisation and violence of the dog have been a major feature in literary texts. Stemming from the use of dogs as weapons by the colonial and apartheid state police to attack black people, there remains a negative and traumatic perception of dogs in the post-apartheid space[36]. In addition, ordinary white people weaponised their dogs against black people as a form of protection, a projection of the Swaartgevaar that was meant to be coming for them, if apartheid

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[36] See Gibeba Baderoon's paper on "Animal likenesses" to discuss the relationship between apartheid and the use of dogs as tools of oppression in Journal of African Cultural Studies, 29.3 (2017): 345-361.

fearmongering was to be believed. In J.M Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), the white protagonist David Lourie shows more care for the dogs euthanised at the shelter than he does for the black people he is in daily contact with. These vestiges of the dehumanisation of black people over the lives of animals link back to the labelling of black people having 'barbaric' animal sacrifice traditions. The so-called civilised practices of white people to care for animals and the "uncivilised" traditional slaughtering of animals are juxtaposed in a web of colonial legacies that still form justifications for the exclusion of black people from white spaces (Letsoko et al. 2022). Animals as pets are deeply rooted within racial dynamics that must be understood within their political and historical legacy. It is not that black people do not care about animals; it is that animals have been weaponised as an extension of white supremacist ideology. Nix herself accepts that it is unusual for black people to have pets, and so caring for an animal must be because of her "white half".

The subtle racialised experiences that Nix experiences, although not presented as outwardly racist, reflect the everyday racism of the post-apartheid space, where owning a pet is steeped within a racialised historical legacy. Even Nix's acceptance into Lou's family and as Lou's friend is wrought with historical legacies of intimate care work of black women during apartheid that has extended into the post-apartheid space. Nonceba began working for Lou's family during apartheid and continued to do so well into post-apartheid. Whether her working conditions changed or improved is unknown. The nature and intimacy of domestic work in South Africa, as argued by Steyn (2001), notes that often black women raised and were mothers to white children, more so than they were to their own ("Whiteness" 40). While Nix was considered "part of the family", through this approximation to whiteness, she could build a level of cultural capital within whiteness, for example, by joining family holidays:

> Although I'm a born-and-bred city girl, I'd spent some holidays in the country
> with my white family when I was growing up. I found myself remembering
> those happy times now: hikes and braais[37]; swimming and messing about in
> boats; sleeping on thin, uncomfortable camping mattresses; screaming with Lou
> at the bugs that invaded our tent; lying around the campfire with Dr Joe [Lou's
> father] pointing out stars and planets; and how lost and alone I'd felt under the
> cavernous night sky, which always made me over-conscious of my own

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[37] South African word for barbecuing. It is originally Afrikaans but is used widely across all language and racial groups.

blackness. My mother never came with us, insisting, against all persuasion, that

she preferred to stay at home and 'spring-clean'(Lorimer Chapter 4).

Nix's reference to the family her mother works for as her "white family" and reflects her fond memories of this time, shows how Nix was integrated into this family. However, what is telling, and echoes Steyn's (2001) argument, is that Nonceba never went with on these trips. While Nix feels that she is being embraced by "her white family", Nonceba knows that she is still an employee, no matter how much "part of the family" she is considered to be. In this way, the power dynamics of intimate care work govern how Nonceba exists within these white spaces. By telling Nix that she had to "stay home and 'spring-clean'", Nonceba reinforces the boundaries of her relationship with the family. As Nix was young at the time, she might not have understood the power dynamics at play, yet when she was with the family, she describes feeling alone and "over-conscious" of her blackness. Even though she is "part of the family", part of her still understands that she does not fully belong. She feels lost within this feeling, representing her comparison to the enormity of the empty sky.

Despite her struggles to find belonging within the old and new spaces she accesses, Nix is given access to opportunities because of the approximation to whiteness and those with access to its structures. Nonceba might see this as a necessary sacrifice for Nix's future, understanding that with this kind of access, Nix can transcend her social status. Something that she might have been able to do had her white father stayed in her life. Another part of the sacrifices for access to whiteness is something that Nix might have done subconsciously, although it is never stated why, is to refer to herself as Nix rather than by her African name:

'Sit down, Sibahle,' ordered my mother, without preamble. She has always

refused to use 'Nikola', the name I presume my German father gave me before

disappearing out of our lives forever, although everyone mostly calls me Nix

(Lorimer Chapter 1).

Nonceba's refusal to call Nix by her first name, given to her by her German father, and choosing to call her Sibahle, her African name, is a strong political choice. The politics of naming is deeply political. In the colonial and apartheid eras, traditional African names were Anglicized, and African people were given English names. Many black South Africans have their "ethnic" name, as well as an English name, on their birth certificates. These legacies are evident even amongst the most famous South Africans, like Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu. This legacy has continued into the post-apartheid era, reflected in the #MyNameIsNot hashtag, which was repurposed into the South African context to call out the continued microaggressions and the unwillingness of white people to learn how

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to say black names (Dlakavu 2015). Simamkele Dlakavu highlights these everyday racist experiences where white people ask her, "do you have a nickname? A shorter name? Your name is hard to pronounce". Dlakavu highlights the double meaning behind these questions as an indirect way of asking her for her English name. While she admits that sometimes she provides a shortened version of her name, "Sima", to avoid confrontation, she makes a conscious effort not to use her "English" name (Dlakavu 2015).

Nix has made the conscious effort not only to use her "white" name, Nikola but to shorten her already "easy" name to Nix, a common nickname for white women named Nicole or Nicola in South Africa, representing her navigating the white spaces where she has been "overwhelmed" by her blackness. While Nix might have faced the same struggles, she says that "almost everyone calls her Nix," except her mother. To ensure that Nix still understands her Xhosa identity and language, Nonceba insists on calling Nix by her first name Sibahle and speaking to her in Xhosa. In response to the white world around her, Nonceba ensures that Nix does not sacrifice parts of herself and her culture to find belonging within whiteness.

Despite Nonceba's best intentions, Nix makes her movement within these spaces "easier" or adaptive to whiteness to "fit in" Nix adapts and shifts. This "shape-shifting" to fit in is indicative of Naomi Zack's (2010) argument that mixed-race people are expected to "fit" within multiple spaces and move across racialised spaces more easily. However, as Zack argues, this movement comes at a cost which projects the "in-betweenness" of mixed-race people within the binary constructions of black and white. For Nix, her shape-shifting technique is her name. Throughout the novel, Nix oscillates between her "white" name and her "black" name, depending on who she speaks with. During her investigation to hide her heritage and identity, she refers to herself as Nikola Schmidt (Lorimer Chapter 6), and when she reveals her identity to her family, she calls herself Nikola Sibahle Mniki – using her family name (Lorimer Chapter 23). Nix's "in-betweenness" as a mixed-race person that shifts and aims to reconcile her "white half" and "black half" is a representation of mixed-race identity as being in a constant state of contention or confusion within itself. While this trope has been considered outdated within mixed-race literature, it remains in the post-apartheid literary text as we begin to understand what mixed-race identity could look like in this setting, especially regarding their negotiation of belonging.

For Popi, her journey to find acceptance and belonging within others and the community around her is a central focus in the plot of *The Madonna of Excelsior*. How the community responds to her and shapes her identity is evident in many of her interactions with

the other characters in the narrative world. Popi is the Afrikaans name for a doll. As discussed in the previous chapter, Popi was given this name due to her white skin colour, blue eyes and blonde hair. Popi doesn't change her name or give herself a new name. However, the physical parts of herself that she hates the most are those that gave her the name Popi, as will be unpacked further in this section. Following Popi throughout the various stages of her life reveals new challenges for her and the development of her own understanding of the experiences of prejudice and racism that she faces. Throughout the novel, the collective voice of the town is used by the narrator; the narrator also tells us how Popi responds to the town's people around her and gives us a description of how Popi builds her identity in response to and despite her experiences with them:

> When other children saw her in the street, they shouted, "Boesman! Boesman!" And then they ran away laughing. At first, she used to cry. Then she decided that she would not go to play in the street again. She would play alone in her mother's yard. She was only good for her mother's ashy yard. She did not deserve to play with the other children in the street (Mda 107).

Being called a "boesman" is a central feature of Popi's story. Boesman, in its literal translation from Afrikaans, means "bushman" and is a derogatory term used to describe not only an indigenous Khoi or San of Griqwa person but also all others grouped under the apartheid racial classification of Coloured[38]. The use of this word, particularly on Popi by the black people around her, shows that they do not see her as black, which contrasts how she sees herself. Their constant calling her a "boesman" and then laughing is partly the reason why Popi rejects the town's people around her. Their rejection becomes internalised within her as she feels that "she was only good for her mother's ashy yard". While this particular experience happens during the apartheid era, the children in the town, and through their rejection of Popi, learn and reproduce racist stereotypes and uphold racial classifications.

Like the protagonist, Elizabeth in Bessie Heads, *A Question of Power* (1973), who isolates herself because she cannot find a place to belong or fit in with her community around her (Mafe 64); so does Popi, isolate herself. Where Elizabeth moves from community to community trying to find belonging within others without finding it in herself, thus developing isolation as a strategy for protection from the parts of herself that she hates, Popi stays within her community but isolates herself from those outside of her immediate family:

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[38] See Gqola 2010 for unpacking this terminology and how it has been used from the colonial to the apartheid era. While it is used in the post-apartheid era, it retains its derogatory nature as it has transformed into an insult for any coloured person, not just about a Khoi or San or Griqwa person.

Popi's withdrawal from her age-mates had been an escape from their snide remarks. Even at school, she kept to herself. And when she did, they said she was too proud to mix with them because she was a misis – a white woman. But when she tried to socialise with them, they called her a morwa – a coloured girl. Jokingly of course. But it still stung" (Mda 114).

Again, Popi goes from isolating herself to then being told that she he behaving as a white woman would, by ignoring the black people around her, and then trying to reintegrate herself, only to be ridiculed once again. It seems that Popi eventually decides that keeping to herself is the best option because either way, the town around her will reject her. By calling Popi a "misis", the black community around her associate her with whiteness and the power that comes with it. While Popi can never access this power as she will never be accepted by white people – not only because she isn't "purely" white but also because of who her biological father is – her community, which she identifies with, continuously rejects her. Popi struggles to belong to any group and therefore rejects them all before they can reject her again.

Again, the derogatory name calling of "morwa" is used interchangeably with "boesman", both equally used to tell Popi that she is different and can never truly be black, although Popi hates her whiteness and wishes that she would be more black. This contrasts with Bessie Head's Elizabeth, who hates her blackness and therefore strives to successfully "pass" as white (Mafe 66). However, Popi hates her "colouredness" and the in-between space that she is forced to exist within. Although Head's book is written in the apartheid era, traces of the apartheid era tragic mulatta/o trope are present within Mda's characterisation of Popi. While the trope has shifted in some ways, the more positive endings are one example. The parts of the novel where Popi is living in the apartheid era reflect the same apartheid-era narratives present in Head's characterisation of Elizabeth, while the later parts of Popi's life in the post-apartheid era are deeply rooted and shifted by the post-apartheid political ideologies of national unity. Despite this, the tragic mulatta/o trope remains a present source for the conflict represented inside of Popi.

In addition, because of the high-profile nature of the Excelsior 19 trial, Popi can't escape from the political stain it put on the town and in the minds of its inhabitants. The widespread fact of white men's sexual exploitation of black women remains a common part of life in Excelsior, especially since this continued well after the trial and into the post-apartheid era. Unlike Head's Elizabeth and Popi, who are represented as the isolated tragic mulatta, the Seller of Songs in The Madonna of Excelsior, embraces her colouredness, not in the sense that

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she sees herself as coloured, but rather that she does not have the hatred of her appearance that Popi has:

> As she turned away from us we would comment on how she was the spitting image of the Reverend Francois Bornman. And on how her eyes and ears looked exactly like those of Jacomina, the dominee's daughter and wife of Tjaart Cronje. We were able to see these resemblances quite expertly because we knew that the Seller of Songs was Maria's daughter. The Maria of the Excelsior 19. But of course the Seller of Songs was much younger. She was born several years post-Excelsior 19. Obviously Maria had continued with her escapades with white men. Could she – the temptress that she was – have continued spreading her body parts before the path of the dominee" (Mda 189).

The fact that the Seller of Songs is not given a name but rather is characterised by her job as a penny-whistler/busker on the streets exemplifies that her character is meant to show the direct opposition to Popi. The Seller of Songs represents another direction that a mixed-race character with the same experiences and historical legacy as Popi could go. Both the Seller of Songs and Popi are born from white men, while the Seller of Songs is younger than Popi, her mother, Maria, was one of the Excelsior 19. In this way, the Seller of Songs exemplifies the post-Excelsior 19 mixed-race children that were raised in the post-apartheid era and rise above the derogatory racial terms directed at them. In addition, the Seller of Songs represents the continuation of the same "immoral" practices that rely on the sexual exploitation of black women's bodies.

However, the language used by the narrator to describe Maria's continued relationship with Reverend Bornman is reflexive of the same language that the Reverend used to describe the black women as "the devil" that made the "Afrikaner to covertly covert the black woman while publicly detesting her" in the hospital after his suicide attempt as a result of being one of the Excelsior 19 (Mda 85). The Reverend continued his relationship with Maria, resulting in the birth of the Seller of Songs. While Maria is admonished by the narrator for "spreading her body parts", there is no mention of the actions of the Reverend, that defied his own preaching countless times. In addition, that Jacomina Bornman, the Reverend's daughter and the Seller of Songs' half-sister and Tjaart Cronje, Popi's half-brother, are now married reflects the interwoven nature of the apartheid small-town life.

A further intertwining of the characters within the novel is the relationship between the Seller of Songs and Viliki, Popi's brother and Niki's son with her legal husband. Their relationship, which Popi hates, again defies the trope of the isolated tragic mulatta/o that cannot

find love because they do not love themselves (Mafe 73). Mafe argues that because of the representations of coloured women as "shameful" by their very existence that has upset "purity" constructions of race, these characters are represented as the embodiment of this shame, a burden they carry through their isolation (74). The Seller of Songs falls in love and is capable of loving both herself and another. Staying within the purpose of The Seller of Songs to be the representation of a post-apartheid mixed-race character, she directly discusses her relationship with Popi:

> Why does Popi hate me so?" the Seller of Songs once asked. "Don't worry, she will get used to the idea that we are together now," Viliki assured her. "She will accept you just as my mother has finally accepted you." "Popi…I think she hates me because I remind her of who she really is," observed the Seller of Songs. Viliki gave an embarrassed chuckle. You should teach her that I didn't make myself to be like this," added the Seller of Songs. "In the same way that she didn't make herself to be a boesman either (Mda 197).

In this way, the Seller of Songs identifies the problems within her relationship with Popi as the problem that Popi has with herself. Where Popi hates that she is called a "boesman" and has internalised this to hating herself as the "colouredness" within her. By Viliki's response to her question, he is aware of exactly what she is talking about and has observed Popi throughout their lives as being isolated but hateful towards herself (Mda 197). The Seller of Songs as a happy mixed-race person and not the tragic mulatta that Popi is portrayed as represents the transformation of the trope within the post-apartheid space. Referring to both her and Popi as being boesman is a reclamation of that derogatory terms and a show of the removal of power that the term could have over you. Where either you rise above it like the Seller of Songs or wallow in it, like Popi. In addition, The Seller of Songs represents a level of belonging within herself that Popi has yet to find. In this way, the Seller of Songs finds belonging in the community around her, finds love and is a visible member of society. Popi's own journey within herself will be discussed later in this chapter.

Despite the government's attempts to create racial segregation and enforce the production of racial purity, white people required the exploitation of the Black population, which resulted in the ironic co-dependency of dominant narratives of whiteness that were founded upon racial segregation with the intimate nature of cheap labour to support this segregation. In this way, the Seller of Songs is representative of the apartheid legacy of "immoral" sexual relationships that are born out of exploitation that continue to produce tragic mulatta/os. However, the Seller of Songs represents the happier ending of the post-apartheid

novel that both Loukson (2022) and Mafe (2013) argue is a major shift within the post-apartheid narrative. In addition, she represents the multitude of experiences of mixed-race identity that do not solely fall into the "tragedy" of being mixed-race, a different representation of the traditional tragic mulatta/o trope in post-apartheid fiction.

While Popi, throughout most of the novel, spends her time isolated from the black community that she sees herself as part of, Mikey, in *Bitter Fruit*, has found another mixed-race character that he confines in and finds a sense of acceptance and understanding with, Vinu. Mikey, however, is considered and considers himself to be Coloured. Therefore, the struggles of his physical appearance are not reflected in the same way as Popi. However, naming and the politics of naming are a feature within his character development and are influenced by his relationship with Vinu where she becomes a catalyst for not only the way that he seems himself but a turning point in his character development. Vinu is the representation of the complexities and politics of naming:

> Vinu from his English class at university, is celebrating her parents' divorce. She dyes her hair bright orange and invites Mikey out for a drink. Her tall body flung down in a chair, she tells him that his name is even worse than hers. 'Vinu Viljoen,' she says her name out loud. 'Bastard people are beautiful, bastard names are not.' They laugh, and then she starts crying, and Mikey hugs her, stares fiercely at the curious people around them, until they are forced to look away. He tells her he understands. 'Why don't they marry their own kind?' she asks. 'That way, they won't have to *discover*, years after they've brought children into the world, that they're culturally incompatible, and the children won't have to suffer' (Dangor 163-164).

> Vinu's name, as she describes it, reflects the juxtaposition of her identity, the two halves of her racial identity that are working against each other to construct and 'out' her as a bastard. Her use of the phrasing "why don't they marry their own kind?", a phrase often used by racists to justify why interracial relationships should not exist, reflects her internalisation of the struggle that she feels to be born from these two different racial-cultural experiences. This, additionally, reflects her struggle to find belonging because of her "bastard" heritage (Miller 158). Vinu describes her life experiences as something that she has had to "suffer", most likely as she struggles to join the cultures of her white Afrikaans father with that of her South African Indian mother.

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Vinu's statements here are also fuelled by the sexual relationship that she has had with her father, who molested her as a child, which she understood as them being in love (Dangor 207). Therefore, her parent's divorce is more layered than just a breakdown in marriage due to cultural differences, which is often labelled as the only reason why interracial couples separate. Vinu, like The Seller of Songs, becomes the representation of other experiences for mixed-race people. However, both Vinu and Mikey are represented through the tragic mulatta/o trope throughout the entire novel. Vinu, as a representation of the colliding of worlds during the apartheid era, is a 'struggle' baby. Her parents, although in an interracial relationship, both fought in the liberation movement and were placed in political positions in the transition to democracy. Given that both Vinu and Mikey were university-age at the time of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996, both were born at the height of the apartheid era and most likely just before the repeal of the Prohibition of Mixed-Marriages Act in 1985.

Vinu's statement that "bastard people are beautiful, bastard names are not" reflects the collision of her two worlds, making her obviously different to those around her. Her name cannot give her solace as it constantly highlights her mixedness. Vinu calls both her and Mikey bastards, even though he has not told her about his mixed-race heritage. However, Vinu recognises the in-betweenness of coloured identity and the construction of coloured people as bastards[39]. The contradictory nature of Vinu's comment that she finds the beauty in "bastards" as people but not within their names can be seen as a reflection of physically having to use a name that might cause you to face constant questions about your identity. Whereas, if you look like Vinu – South African Indian, or Mikey – Coloured, you could 'safely' fit within the racial categories. However, like the Seller of Songs for Popi, Vinu inspires a shift in Mikey from one mixed-race character to the other:

> Mikey says that from now on, he is to be addressed as 'Michael', that is his name. It is a declaration of loyalty to her. He doesn't know why he is making this decision; after all, if you want to change what people call you, you should choose something more appropriate, a first name that goes with the family name. 'Something like Moosa Ali,' Vinu says, 'or better still, Mohamed Ali'. (Dangor 164).

For Michael, the nickname his parents gave him feels childish and part of the life he thought he had before he found out the truth about his biological father. Like Vinu's name,

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[39] See Erasmus (2001) for her discussion on the constructions of coloured identity and the phrasing of coloured people as being bastards.

Michael's is a juxtaposition of two worlds, where his surname is the remanence of his father's Cape Malay Muslim identity, a religion that he returns to more radically after his conversation with Vinu. Michael and Vinu's conversation about changing his name to "something more appropriate" shows that both of them are struggling with their identity and particularly what to call themselves. Frenkel argues that the very hybrid nature of their identities unsettles them (160). Michael's declaration of loyalty to Vinu is not only to Vinu but to what she represents for him, a space of belonging. They become each other's comfort and find ultimate acceptance within each other, something that they had been searching for. Although their relationship in itself is incredibly toxic, they become a safe space for each other to share how they truly feel about their identities:

> He is so 'brave' to have taken back his identity, to have dared to become 'Michael' again. He has no idea how defining a nickname can be, why does he think parents impose such things on their children? She answers herself: because children often become what their parents don't want them to be. So they change the child's name, make a diminutive of it, in an attempt to recreate the child as they have conceived it. A child's given name is an instrument of self-identity, of freedom, don't you see? (Dangor 206).

This conversation provides insight into how Michael and Vinu, more particularly Vinu, interpret their relationship with their parents. Vinu, in almost a conversation with herself, praises Michael for reclaiming his name and taking some of the power back that his parents hold over him, naming being one form of power. Vinu, in her attempt to bond with Michael, reiterates the importance of names. Her assessment of parents, although marred by her own rage towards hers, views them as having power over their children to construct their identities. Vinu's statement that "children often become what their parents don't want them to be" foreshadows the radical direction that Michael's character development takes, where he becomes radicalised by Islam and murders both his, Du Bois, and Vinu's father.

The problem with the way that Vinu and Michael are represented, especially their names, sustain the tragic mulatta/o trope that mixed-race people are in a constant state of confusion. Their names, "Vinu Viljoen" and "Michael Ali" are contradictory in their very construction, due to the cross cultural naming, which portrays a perpetual state of confusion. They embody the debates around interracial relationships, the "problems" with the mixing of cultures and the unsatisfactory answer to how to deal with the crimes and legacies of apartheid.

In this way, the main and secondary characters across all five literary texts engage with the politics of belonging differently. They are named by those around them through the lens of

colonial and apartheid language, which society continues to reproduce. These characters represent the continuation of the "tragedy" of being mixed-race in how their struggles with their identity are portrayed in the narrative world. The representation of their navigation of belonging and unbelonging in how they interact with the characters around them tells of the complexity of the mixed-race characters' experiences. As argued by Loukson, characters within the post-apartheid narrative "are amalgamations of diverse living conditions or identities" (258). As reflected across the literary texts, the character's interactions with other characters, including other mixed-race characters, become catalysts for how they negotiate the post-apartheid space and embody the contradictory nature of the progress of racial transformation.

3.2. Named By Ourselves

This section will focus specifically on the defining moments within the character's development where they find belonging and/or acceptance within themselves, whether it be through how they name themselves or how they accept their mixed-race identity as part of their identity. In addition, I will focus on how the mixed-race characters are represented within the more positive angles of the post-apartheid narrative, where not only is there space for the hybridity of their identity to be explored, but how they negotiate the power structures around them. Ultimately adding to the foundation of how these characters resist the tragic mulatta/o trope in the final sub-section of this chapter.

In her study, Mahtani surveys a group of Canadian women who identify as mixed-race and how they perceive, reject, or engage with the label of 'mixed-race', looking specifically at their experiences of race, class and gender (Mahtani 474-475). In addition, Mahtani proposes that mixed-race as a term can be viewed as a "linguistic home", which can provide comfort for those who identify with it (Mahtani 476). Although no character refers to themselves as being mixed-race, they all choose a racial category that "fits" them the best – black or coloured; they create new understandings of their identity without having to name "it". The "linguistic home" for the characters is not solidified under one succinct terminology, rather, their mixed-race identity is deliberately represented as being a non-homogenous experience, despite the similarities across the corpus.

Within the very conception of the trope of the "tragedy" of being mixed-race is the perpetual state of confusion about the identity that mixed-race characters have. This confusion is interwoven into why they struggle to find belonging and acceptance within the communities around them. More specifically, a major part of this tragedy is that they don't accept themselves (Mafe 16). Like the US tradition, Mafe argues that the portrayal of mixed-race identity as being

synonymous with shame is represented within the representation of the character's struggle with coming to terms with either the ways that they were conceived – illicit affairs or sexual violence – as a reproduction of the colonial and apartheid violence inflicted on them and their black and coloured parents by the state (18). Therefore, strong themes about vengeance or restitution are prevalent within how the characters are represented and culminate in specific moments of realisation that break the wall of their confusion, which will be explored further in this section.

For Sara in *Killing Karoline,* her trajectory is to accept what has happened to her. The prologue of the memoir begins with Sara at Ken's house. Ken is the white man that was married to her mother at the time of her mother's affair and is the person that is listed as her father on her birth certificate. Along with Kris, her biological mother, Ken, participated in the decision to give Karoline up for adoption, ultimately killing Karoline. While in South Africa, Sara goes to see Ken. While standing in his apartment, she contemplates what it is that she hopes to gain from this meeting. Does she want acceptance or to have a brief moment of control, or to be able to enact revenge for what he had done to her (Makwala-King 11)? Within their light and superficial exchange of niceties, Sara becomes enraged by the casualness of Ken's demeanour against the backdrop of the banality of his apartment filled with a life that didn't include her:

> And there it was. Because the irony of it was that this man, into whose life I had entered some twenty-seven years before, this man whom I needed to hate but also needed to be acknowledged by, was, in a place and a time, my father. Whatever the truth was, it was this man whose name appeared in black and white on my birth certificate. But this man had killed me. This man and the woman who had carried me in her belly had killed me, and they had killed Karoline (Makwala-King 11).

Sara's anger at Ken's nonchalance is further exacerbated by the history that lies between them, a history that Sara is still seeking to find forgiveness within for him. Acknowledging what Ken represents to her life and the trajectory of her life is a moment of understanding within herself as to where her anger is actually being placed. When Sara sees Ken, although she views herself as Sara, she is drawn back into thinking about what life could have been like as Karoline. This tug of war between Sara and Karoline within herself represents the tragic mulatta/o trope that represents this constant state of being unsettled as a mixed-race person. While Sara is not negotiating her racial identity within this specific moment, but rather the facts of how she came to be Sara and not Karoline is deeply linked to how she views the multiple facets of her identity. One has to wonder if she had been a boy child if the actions of

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Ken and Kris would have been different, while Sara never discusses this possibility, the reality of gendered racism remains deeply entrenched in her experiences of her identity.

Despite this, Sara has consistently viewed herself and Karoline as two different people rather than as two parts of herself that co-exist inside her. Sara's statement that Ken and Kris had killed her and that they had killed Karoline (Makwala-King 11) reflects her struggle to reconcile the person that Sara became with the person that Karoline could have been had she not been killed. Throughout the memoir, Sara often returns to Karoline, not as a reflection of herself but as another life experience that was not lived. In addition, Sara does not feel that she has to live Karoline's life for her. Rather, she sees herself and her life as her own, separate from Karoline, yet at many times, consumed by her.

In Sara's description of her childhood, she has always known that Karoline was the name she was born with (Makwala-King 15). But maintained that she "hated the name Karoline" as she felt that it didn't fit her and yet somehow belonged to her at some point (Makwala-King 15). Sara even references the story of her life as being written as a "tragedy" where she questions why Kris and Ken had "even bothered to give me [her] a name at all. They had killed me off so early in the tragedy that they would have been forgiven for simply calling me 'baby'. '*The part of the unwanted bastard child was played by "baby"*'" (Makwala-King 15). Sara's added last line is a play on a script for the tragedy that is her life. In this way, she separates herself from the early trauma of what has happened to her, by making Karoline a different person, not an extension of herself. Karoline is the "unwanted bastard baby" and not Sara. Yet, the "problem" of Karoline continues to influence the problems that Sara has in her life:

> Over the years, as my life as Sara-Jayne began to meander along its own path, something happened that I had not counted on. I found myself being drawn back to Karoline. Ultimately, I allowed her to be reborn and then to be laid to rest with a dignity she had not been afforded by them. What I can say is that after all that has happened, Karoline has now gone, which is strange because in one sense Karoline is me, in another I am Karoline, and my story is about both of us. What happened to her and why, and what happened to me and how? (Makwala-King 16).

The reconciliation of who Sara and Karoline are, is further expressed by Sara in this quote. While you might expect this reconciliation of the self at the end of the memoir as a concluding point, Sara frames the co-existence of her and Karoline before dissecting the life that she has lived as Sara and how she came back to understanding Karoline. Sara grieves

Karoline throughout her childhood and becomes restless because Karoline has not been put to rest. Sara saw it as her duty to discover what Karoline's life could have been by reaching out to Kris, Ken and her half-siblings. Once having done so, Sara lays Karoline to rest "with a dignity she had not been afforded" by Kris and Ken. Sara's grieving of Karoline is essential for her to truly become Sara.

In keeping with the 'old' tragic mulatta/o trope, Karoline, the representation of the tragic mixed-race character, especially the mixed-race woman, is killed off (Mafe 17-18). Although, as Sara noted, Karoline was young when she was killed, but yet has a significant impact on Sara to shape her life into a self-described tragedy that begins with Karoline's death. Contrastingly, despite the tragic occurrences within Sara's life, Sara embodies the 'new' version of the trope. In this 'new' version, as Joseph argues, is the "new millennium mulatta", which represents "a self-reflexive character who is knowledgeable, angry, or sad about and self- conscious of her tragic destiny. Nevertheless, despite her many efforts to the contrary, she is unable to perform outside the confines of the tragic mulatta and ends up inevitably living up to the stereotype" (11). Sara represents this new shift in how mixed-race characters are portrayed, stuck between the new and old versions of the trope, which ultimately becomes an extension of the same in-betweenness of the old trope, just with a more positive outcome.

Sara's self-awareness becomes integral to her representation of the tragic mulatta trope disguised as the "new millennium mulatta"; this ultimately leads both to her difficult life, but ultimately to her happier ending. Similarly, Popi, in The Madonna of Excelsior, represents both the tragic mulatta of old, in her experiences in the apartheid timeline of the novel and then the new millennium mulatta within the post-apartheid setting. Also represented as a tragedy, Popi's life begins with conflict, both within the relationship between her parents, but also the racial power dynamics of the society around her. The constant exclusion and taunts that Popi experienced from her peers because of her mixed-race identity is a classic representation of the isolation expected of the tragic mulatta character (Mafe 64; Joseph 64-65). The irony of Popi's pendulum of belonging is captured in the narrator's telling of the double standards the town's people, across all races, employ when they make reference to Popi.

> She kept her daily flagellation of taunts to herself. Taunts. Taunts. Taunts. Even though on one hand we praised her for being beautiful, and for having a wonderful voice, we continued to laugh at her for being a boesman. As we laughed at other men and women, and boys and girls, who looked like her, and were brave enough to walk the streets of Excelsior. We laughed. Until she lost

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hope that we would never accept her. Until she was filled with thoughts of revenge. No one told her that vengeance had a habit of bouncing against the wall, like a ricocheting bullet and hitting the originator. Look what happened to Niki when she filled her loins with vengeance! It was because of that vengeance that Popi was now prisoner of the perpetual doek[40] on her head, of blue eyes and of hairy legs (Mda 137).

The narrator specifically highlights the plight of the mixed-race people in Excelsior and the stigma that they face. The phrasing of "who looked like her and were brave enough to walk the streets of Excelsior" highlights that there were others that experienced the same insults and rejections faced by Popi, but that there were those who also hid away as a result. The narrator tells us of how Popi was filled with thoughts of revenge, making specific reference to how Niki acted in a vengeful way against Madam Cornelia, which resulted in her affair with Stephanus Cronje and, ultimately, Popi. What is interesting here, and a constant source of pain for Popi throughout the novel, is her hair, blue eyes and hairy legs. These traits that Popi has, no doubt inherited from her white father, are considered solely "white" physical traits and therefore make Popi visibly stand out from her peers.

Mafe argues that within the traditional representation of the mixed-race female character, their beauty is often praised and highlighted as a key feature of her identity (73). As previously stated, Elizabeth, the mixed-race protagonist in Bessie Head's *A Question of Power* (1973), contravenes the beauty standards of the stereotypical portrayal of a mixed-race woman in the way that she does not consider herself attractive as she hates the "blackness" of her features, but crucially other's do not desire her (Mafe 74). Popi, while she does not consider herself attractive and hates the "whiteness" of her features, is still considered attractive by others around her. Popi covers her hair and her legs so that her "white" features are not visible as they "other" her, especially as she hopes to gain acceptance as black within the black community around her. The description of Popi as a prisoner of these white traits is reflected throughout descriptions of Popi when her hair is particularly referenced.

Popi considers her hair to be a curse that she doesn't know how to deal with. She has tried to participate in the "camaraderie of braiding" hair, but her hair is straight, and it cannot hold the braid or a dreadlock (Mda 225). This completely flips the white standards of beauty that mixed-race women are praised for "achieving", whereas the "black" features are downplayed (Joseph 75-76). Between the rejection of whiteness and blackness, Popi's hair

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[40] Afrikaans word for scarf that is wrapped around your head to protect your hair.

becomes the major signifier of her racial "otherness" and a representation of what Joseph has called the "danger of fluidity" (74). The description of Popi's hair as "flowing locks" is a signifier of the "white traits" that she has. But these are perceived by Popi to be a "curse", as she is compared to a white woman, an identity that she can never nor wants to attain. In a conversation with her mother,

> "Your hair cannot be a curse, Popi," said Niki quietly. "God cannot create a curse on your head." "The pain of my whole life is locked into my hair," said Popi bitterly. "Hair is just hair Popi. Hair or no hair, you are a beautiful person, Popi. A very beautiful person. (Mda 225).

Popi's relationship with her hair must be viewed as an extension of her relationship with herself. Everything that Popi hates about herself is reflected in the ways that she cares (or doesn't) care for her hair. Popi's hair becomes a metaphor for acceptance and rejection. For as long as Popi hates her hair and views it as a curse, she never feels accepted in the town or by black people in the community. To Popi, her hair is in aberration, a reflection that she is an aberration in her own society, at least, that is how the narrator tells us that she is perceived. Despite Niki's attempts to make Popi feel better about her hair and her body, "hair is just hair, Popi" is not the case for Popi as it is tied to her self-worth and the construction of her identity.

For Popi, her hair excludes her from opportunities to make friends, become part of her community, to participate in cultural practices that would bond her with those around her and would give her moments of acceptance. While Popi dreams of being able to participate in these rituals, her understanding that her hair is also the accepted benchmark of white beauty standards, is juxtaposed by her friends striving for hair like hers through relaxing and perms. Popi references things that she can do with her hair that are "like a white woman" – a point that has most likely been clear to her many times. As a result, Popi has chosen to cover her hair, to hide it, as a source of shame that she has internalised as a shame of herself. She is made to feel ashamed of her hair, blue eyes and hairy legs through the racial categorisations and decades of unfounded racial science that tell her and those around her that she does not belong to their group. Popi uses "doeks" to "diverted the eyes of the curious from her blue eyes to the glorious top of her head" and "slacks that hid her hairy legs" (Mda 146). Throughout the years, Popi has "learnt ways of not calling attention to her colouredness" (Mda 146). These learned strategies reflect the lengths to which Popi goes to blend into the background and to further submerge herself within her isolation. Popi's hatred of herself is so intense that when people are nice to her, she cannot understand why they do not hate her as well:

Would people ever stop this foolish notion of being nice to her? Didn't they

know that she was a boesman? No one had any right to be nice to a boesman.

Didn't they know that? (Mda 149).

Popi drives herself further into the "tragedy" of her existence as a mixed-race person to the point where she internalises her "otherness" as an aberration in the society around her. Not only have others named her a "boesman", but she also now uses this word to name herself, believing that this is all that she is worth, a tragic portrayal of her identity. Despite her internalisation and hatred of herself, the townspeople continue to praise her for her beauty. Much like Head's Elizabeth in *A Question of Power*, Popi becomes resigned to never being the standard of beauty that is accepted. Moreover, the role of silence and Popi's unwillingness to hear how others' perceptions of her have changed as she has grown up shows how committed she is to her solitary fate:

Whenever we saw Popi, we praised her beauty and forgot our old gibes that she

was a boesman. We lamented the fact that we never saw her smile. That a

permanent frown marred her otherwise beautiful face. That her dimples were

wasted without a smile. Perhaps we had forgotten that we had stolen her smiles

(Mda 162).

The narrator points to the irony of the town expecting Popi to smile and be thankful for their appreciation of her beauty when the taunts that they said to her face and the whispers made behind her back sowed the seeds of hatred for herself within her. Their specific comments create the expectation that Popi should perform appreciation for them without recognising the pain that they have put her through, serves as a broader metaphor for the "move on" narrative of the post-TRC post-apartheid space that erases the ability to discuss the past while expecting those who have suffered to suppress their trauma. In this way, Popi, in true tragic mulatta fashion, represents the dichotomy of national trauma versus national reconciliation. It is a process where the tightrope between the expectations for smiles for those who buried their smiles (the oppressed) by those who have taken those smiles (the oppressors) is precariously close to snapping in the post-apartheid space, just like the rage within Popi that is always at risk of seeping out. Regardless, Popi's internal battle for acceptance within her community still reflects that she wants to be part of the community, but the expectation is on her to heal so that she can find belonging rather than the community structures changing to create ways for her to belong. The onus is placed on Popi, as the tragic mulatta to find ways of existing within exclusionary structures that, in their very construction, will never grant her access.

In the representations of Sara and Popi, it is much easier to spot the tragic mulatta trope than in the representation of Nix in *Finders Weepers*. Although not immune from this trope, it is represented more subtly within the nuances of her negotiating of predominantly white spaces, as well as within predominantly black spaces. A turning point for Nix in her journey is finally learning the secrets of her family that her mother has kept from her. Silence and secrets were key features of apartheid life, especially for protecting mixed-race children. When Nix accidentally meets her mother's family, which she had longed to connect with for so many years, on her trip to the Eastern Cape as an investigative journalist, she discovers why her mother has never brought Nix to meet her family. After confessing her real identity to her mother's family and her relation to them, her granduncle Thembile and grandaunt Thuto give Nix the acceptance and belonging to her family that she had been searching for:

> 'It says in the Bible that the sins of the fathers will be visited on the children,' said Thuto, 'but I do not believe that. Remember I said to you that your grandfather was a very strict man. Unreasonable. I think your grandmother would be happy to see her daughter again. I remember she was a good girl in those days. I think your grandmother would like to meet her granddaughter.' I let out my breath and a wave of feelings I could not name welled up in my throat. I could not speak. 'Hey, don't cry,' said Thuto. 'It is a good thing to have family.' 'I know,' I croaked, trying to control myself. 'I have never known a blood family, other than my mother.' 'You look tall and skinny, like her,' said Thembile. I felt small hands on my back and turned to see Asakhe, the younger of the sisters, touching the thick, single braid that ran down my spine, as if she could not quite believe it was attached to my head. She gave a shy smile and, in response, I undid it, allowing my mass of frizzy curls – the bane of my life – to spring free. Her hands felt intimate as she stroked it. It was like something a younger sister might do, and tears welled again. I tried to swallow them back (Lorimer Chapter 23).

As her family rallies around her to show their support for her, the interaction between Nix and her family reveals not only their acceptance and care but their immediate willingness to include and officially welcome her into the family. Thuto's acknowledgement that she does not agree with the stance of Nix's grandfather to cut out Nonceba and Nix from the family shows her going against patriarchal and cultural decision-making and further provides security for Nix, who was concerned about not being accepted. While Thembile, her actual blood relation, what he does say, by acknowledging how she looks like her mother, shows how he

has remembered her mother and acknowledged Nix's connection to him. A stoic man of few words, Thembile is the quintessential elder male in the family. Although his statement might not seem like it, within the cultural nuances, he is expressing his acceptance of Nix as his family.

The most practical expression of this process of belonging within her mother's family is Asakhe's response to immediately braid Nix's hair. The cultural significance of braiding or caring for a family member's hair cannot be under-stressed at this moment. Especially when Nix describes her hair, much like Popi, as the "bane of my life", a feeling that she might not have had or, to a lesser extent, had she had the cultural experience of being surrounded by many family members, particularly the women in her family and having her hair done. This seemly small act of stroking one's hair and Nix's response to hold back tears is not only a significant moment of healing and understanding in Nix's journey and character development but crucial in showing how belonging can be an action expressed by those around us, specifically Nix's family within the narrative world.

In continuing her healing journey, Nix and her mother finally have a much-needed conversation about secrets that have silently been living between them when her mother arrives in the Eastern Cape with her friend to bury her daughter Boniswa, whom Nix came to find. In this conversation, Nix's mother reveals the reasons behind the decision that she made not to see her family. Nonceba, as any parent would, wants to protect Nix while at the same time being hypersensitive to how Nix could experience racial exclusion or be looked down upon because of her mixed-race identity. Now we know that her extra sensitivity to this is because of the rejection that she experienced not only from her family but her community:

> 'You were a child, and I wanted to protect you, then … I don't know,' she said.
> 'And then I saw how the other children at your school saw that you were different from them. They started to reject you. Even the people at church were always looking at you. You were not black enough.' I did not remember any of that. 'When I applied for the job with Mona, she said that they would educate you with their children. I decided that you could grow up like a white child. You would still be with me and know my language but you would be protected from people like … your grandfather.' She said the word with distaste. 'I did not want you to come here and find out all this.' 'Is it so bad that I know now?' 'No.' She gave one short laugh, which sounded almost like a sob (Lorimer Chapter 30).

Nonceba's experiences within her community show why she took the opportunity for Nix to be educated within white schools. Not only do these schools historically have better

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resources, but they also provide access to systems of whiteness, access that Nix, despite having a white father, would not have had access to through her mother alone. In her statement, Nonceba reveals her experiences of (un)belonging in her community and her family, believing that Nix, due to her mixed-race identity, would then find belonging elsewhere as she would not receive it from the black community. However, Nix ultimately felt moments of (un)belonging within her white school environment, despite her mother's best efforts to protect her from rejection by those around her. Nix and Nonceba's interaction in the last line shows a breakthrough moment in the cycle of intergeneration secrets, where Nonceba carried the burden of her past to protect Nix from it while Nix has searched her whole life to understand the decisions that her mother has made. At this moment, Nonceba's attempts to find a place for her daughter to belong and Nix's attempt to find belonging within her community culminate in them finding belonging within each other and the family unit they created together.

As Nix spends more time in the Eastern Cape and amongst her family in their ancestral home, she begins to feel more at home within herself and her identity, yet she still hopes to gain approval from those in her community. She recognises that she no longer has the cultural capital to be truly accepted within the community because her life has become so far removed from those rooted there. Nix recognises that: "These were supposedly my people but, despite the fact that my family was rooted here, despite my ability to speak their language, I knew I would never belong. My European father, the circumstances of my upbringing, my relative wealth, the colour of my skin and the 'voices of my education' had created an uncrossable gulf" (Lorimer Chapter 37). While this could be interpreted as the tragedy of the mixed-race character to never truly belong within the communities that they seek acceptance; however, I think this is a commentary on the tragic nature of the unchanging landscape of the post-apartheid space. Post-apartheid South Africa is also a tragic character that cannot find belonging within the old structures that continue to control it. Like Nix, Popi and Sara, the post-apartheid space is represented as a space of hybridity that surrenders to the dominant narratives of whiteness rather than overhauling its power.

The post-apartheid space is filled with contradictions. It represents both hope and suffering, reflected in the patterns of intergenerational trauma. Just as the post-apartheid space is filled with contradictions, so are the representations of Mikey in *Bitter Fruit* as a tragic mulatto male. Mafe, in her analysis of Mikey as a representation of the tragic mulatta/o trope, argues that he represents the classic contradictions of this tragic characterisation, innocence and guilt (124) She argues that "on the surface, Mikey is a polite and dutiful young man. He

runs errands for his mother, chauffeurs his grandparents around town, does his homework, and wants to be a writer. But there is another side to Mikey, who also believes in tasting forbidden fruit and tempting fate" (Mafe 124). Ultimately, she argues that this "dual persona" that Mikey has is representative of his conception in that "his appetites prove to be unnatural and his moral compass slightly askew, traits that are implicitly rooted in the unnatural conception and the skewed morality of a nation" (Mafe 124).

Like the gendered construction of the tragic mulatta women, for the mulatto male, beauty is a central point of contention and a feature of their characterisation. For Mikey, torn between innocence and guilt, his beauty becomes a celebrated feature contributing to his overtly insatiable sexual appetite, which ultimately taints both his beauty and his innocence. Mafe argues that Mikey's seeking out inappropriate and unsuitable sexual relationships with his aunt, his father's friend, and his professor exemplify the tragicness of his beauty (126). Although Mikey does not consummate the incestuous relationship with his aunt, his beauty, or "his curse" as his mother calls it, makes him attractive even to those within his family, especially to his mother, who is jealous of his relationships with other women because she is attracted to him (Mafe 128). Mikey and Lydia's relationship is not only representative of the tragic mulatto/a trope, but instead of the white father's advances onto the mixed-race daughter, as is the case in the 'traditional' form of the trope, Lydia impresses sexual advances onto Mikey (Mafe 129). On their own, they both represent the shame that is attached to racial mixing, and together, they personify the complexities of the negotiation of the unspeakable acts embodied in their intergenerational trauma.

Miller argues that throughout the novel, the representation of "exotic eroticism" is pervasive in the ways that the characters are "gazed upon and the ways that they perceive themselves" (157). The projected beauty of the mixed-race characters is visible in the reproduction of colonial exoticism by the white characters juxtaposed to the bragging of sexual conquests by the mixed-race characters themselves (Miller 158). In this way, Miller argues that the characters are "represented as beautiful, but the beauty is tainted, "dirty," and always racialised" (158). Mikey, Lydia and Silas are all first-generation mixed-race, which speaks to the ironies and ineffectiveness of the immorality act to prevent miscegenation. However, all three are representatives of versions of the tragedy and shame that is attached to mixed-race identity. Mikey is the beautiful, innocent and sexually insatiable tragic male that manipulates women with his beauty, which ultimately 'taints' his beauty. Lydia, also beautiful, is the tragic woman whose beauty is 'tainted' by being raped and descends into self-destructive behaviour. And Silas, the isolated tragic male that cannot see the suffering of his wife and son. The secrets

are the only things that hold their relationships together, which is why the family ultimately falls apart once Mikey finds out about his true parentage:

> He is calm, detached now from the full import of his mother's words: 'Mikey is a child of rape.' During the night, when he had first read this sentence, he had been overcome with horror. It stood on its own, a realisation that must have come to her in all its finality years later, after her son was born. The starkness of the statement tried to conceal a hysteria that was absent from the rest of her writing. He had stopped reading for a while, fighting off the desire to weep. Suddenly, every tender touch, hug or kiss on the forehead she had offered him no longer seemed like a spontaneous, simple, motherly gesture. He remembered the anguished look in her eyes when she held him, and how often she embraced him so fiercely that he feared she wanted to tell him about some great wrong that she had done. Lydia loved him out of pain and guilt. Yes, she too suffered the inverted morality of other rape victims, accepting blame for what happened (Dangor 129-130).

Mikey's discovery of his mother's journal and the secrets contained is a defining moment for him. He begins to piece together and unpack the silence that has sat between them all these years. Ultimately seeing his mother as a person who has suffered as well, with a new understanding of their relationship, where the silence of her unspoken trauma becomes a tool for understanding (Miller 147). In the last sentence of the quote, Mikey shows his awareness of rape survivors to internalise what has happened to them and blame themselves for it. Lydia's reference to Mikey as "a rapist's seed (Dangor 126) speaks to how she has both distanced and consumed herself with her son to escape her trauma. By Mikey's own reflects of their relationship, what he thought was motherly love, he now understands it as her feelings of guilt and shame for not only what happened to her but having him grow from a rapist's seed into a man. Mikey continues to read his mother's diary until Silas comes into his room. Mikey acknowledges that Silas has been a good father to him but notes that he is "so different from Lydia, and from himself (Dangor 131).

Mikey's recognition of the trauma that his mother faced, which has been passed down intergenerationally to him, makes their lives more tragic than that of Silas, who retreats into isolation to not deal with the pain of those around him. In this way, he views himself and his mother as separate from Silas, especially after trying to reconcile that this man is not his biological father (Dangor 130). After discovering his true parentage and reflecting on what it means to have a white father who not only represents the apartheid system but directly and

personally enacted crimes in its name, one of which resulted in his birth. Mikey states that, "he is determined not to sink into the melancholy that comes with reliving the past. He knows that it will not be possible to apply his golden rule – look to the future, always – with the same single-mindedness as before. He can no longer think of the future without confronting his past. Christ, he thinks, I am beginning to sound like Archbishop Desmond Tutu. And what does he know? He has never been raped nor is he a child of rape" (Dangor 131). Mikey reuses his mother's language that "Mikey is a child of rape" (Dangor 129) to name himself within his new identity. He now names himself as the "son of some murderous white man" (Dangor 131).

In the representation of the tragedy of his identity, how now will Mikey find a sense of belonging, especially as he is the physical manifestation of the trauma and heinous crime committed by the apartheid regime? Thus begins his journey for retribution and vengeance, which he sees as his moral duty and obligation (Mafe 122). Mikey, in his new outlook on understanding the past to build his future, one evening travels to places of his childhood, including his grandmother's old home, in what he calls "the apartheid heritage route" (Dangor 186). This becomes one of many journeys that Mikey begins to take to understand himself, whether it is to his father's family at the mosque where he becomes radicalised (191-194) or to Vinu's house to kill her father (Dangor 252), or to the mall where he ultimately kills Du Boise (Dangor 276). After his first trip, Mikey reflects:

> Perhaps it is true: our memories are chained to poverty, we cannot live without our apartheid roots. What is he really looking for? For evidence that he is indeed Silas's son, that Lydia is wrong, that her usually infallible maternal instincts had been undermined by bitterness, by her fear of the worst, when she proclaimed him to be Du Boise's bastard son? What will the evidence be? Physical resemblance, the unmistakable lineage to be found in the shape of a nose, the contour of a cheek or even more telling, the depth of an eye, the familiarity of a glance? (Dangor 186) .

Mikey's reflection here represents his internal struggle to understand who he is now that he knows himself to be a "child of rape". In this way, the representations of Mikey's identity within the tragic mulatto trope are consistent throughout the novel. His traumatic beginnings, much like Sara, Nix and Popi, are deeply shaped by the racialised historical legacies of the apartheid regime. These characters represent these legacies, caught in limbo between the apartheid and post-apartheid state. Their reflections of themselves or how we are told that they view themselves reflect the internal battle to find belonging within themselves and the broader society. However, the tragic mulatta/o trope, in its traditional and 'old'

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construction, only ensures that the characters are represented as permanently in limbo with no hope of overcoming the internal battles that rage within them (Mafe 4). In this way, they never find belonging or acceptance and are doomed to wallow in self-pity within the structures of white supremacy that sustain systemic violence against them. The next section will show how the characters transcend this old version of this outdated trope to form represent the trope within a contemporary or new-millennium setting.

3.3. Resisting the Tragic Mulatta/o Trope

As has been laid out within the previous sub-sections of this chapter, the representation of mixed-race identity within the tragic mulatta/o trope is prevalent across the literary works analysed in this dissertation. In the trajectory of the 'old' tragic mulatta/o trope within American literature, the mixed-race character is represented as being in a constant state of confusion about their identity because they are considered to have no race and therefore pose a 'problem' to racial hierarchies (Joseph 2). In newer versions of this trope, mixed-race characters "function as a bridge between estranged communities, a healing facilitator of an imagined racial utopia, even the embodiment of that utopia" (Joseph 2).

This is the case for representations of the trope within the South African literary context. Mafe has established the transferrable connections between the US representation of the trope and its representation in South Africa (1). This is particularly because both are societies where control of miscegenation for the furthering of white supremacy is a historical legacy. While it has already been established that there are some differences, namely the rejection of whiteness within the mixed-race South African characters as opposed to the rejection of blackness in the mixed-race American characters, this trope remains a prevalent feature in the representations of mixed-race identity in post-apartheid literature.

While the 'old' construction of the trope remains prevalent within the representations of mixed-race identity, evident within the previous sub-sections, 'new' representations of the trope, which have changed to reflect contemporary debates remain. Joseph argues that after the early version of the tragic mulatta/o trope comes the co-existing tropes of the "new millennium mulatta", who is always alone and uncomfortable in their skin, and the "exceptional multiracial" who represents a unifying force in a post-racial society (4). The new millennium mulatta is self-aware of the racial dynamics in society but feels that they don't belong regardless because they do not want to "choose" a racial side, whereas the exceptional multiracial "transcends race" and is the embodiment of building bridges between different races (Joseph 4-5). Even in the terminology construction of these terms, mulatta/o, a word laced

with the colonial remnants of sexualised racist violence and rooted within white heteropatriarchy, shows the exceptionalism of this 'post-racial' mixed-race person.

Within my corpus in the South African context, the major shifts away from the tragic mulatta/o trope are that is that none of the mixed-race characters dies at the end of the texts or descends into madness and commits suicide, a common feature of early versions of this trope (Mafe 4). In addition, Joseph identifies that within the US context and in the duality of the conceptualisation of the new millennium mulatta and the exceptional multiracial that "the condemnation of blackness is either implicit, where blackness is stigmatised through the presentation of tragic- mulatta inevitability, or explicit, where throwing off the yoke of blackness means arriving at a safely post- racial state" (4). In the South African context and among my corpus, there is a rejection of whiteness rather than of blackness. South Africa's inverse of the US racial dynamics, where a black majority and white minority make up the post-apartheid space, and the maintenance of whiteness as an oppressive structure rather than the norm, can be attributed to the rejection of whiteness. In this way, representations of mixed-race identity, although they have the "inevitability" of the tragic mulatta/o trope within and the stigmatisation of blackness in white structures, an overall rejection of whiteness and the mixed-race characters, linkages to whiteness, despite colourblind Rainbow Nation ideology, is present within the literature analysed here.

It is important to note, however, that in neither of these 'new' constructions of this literary trope is there a conceptualisation of resistance. Rather, these representations of resistance to the multiple versions of this trope are present within the novels that seek to spotlight this trope and challenge it by emphasising the hybridity of the characters' identities. And more specifically, resistance to this trope can be seen in the representation of the character's resistance to being categorised in apartheid racial classifications and their challenge to being forced to "fit in" to these rigid racial boxes. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that these characters. Ultimately this section will consider how mixed-race characters have been represented not only as resistance to the tragic mulatta/o trope but as a means to discuss identity politics and challenge racial categorisations in the post-apartheid era.

Resistance to this trope and the rigid apartheid racial classifications that are still imposed within the post-apartheid space is represented differently across the literary works. In *Let The Music Play On,* Fikile is the only exclusively contemporary representation of mixed-race identity in the South African context in this corpus, as she is the only character among the corpus to be born after 1994. Fikile becomes the quintessential interplay of the US version of the exceptional multiracial, when transposed into the post-apartheid society, she becomes the

new millennium mulatta. Having grown up in US society for most of her life, Fikile understands race within the parameters of the transcendence of race in the supposedly "post-racial" US context. Although outwardly, Fikile is considered a black South African Zulu girl, when she speaks, she speaks with an American accent. This is commented on throughout the short story by Miss Meyeni, who asks her to help with help to immigrate to the US (Khumalo 143); by the school secretary who "loves the way you [Fikile] speak" (Khumalo 153), a comment also made by her friend Amina (Khumalo 141). In her conversations with Amina, Fikile jokes about 9/11, saying that "they killed our people" about her considering herself American (Khumalo 141). In addition, Fikile uses African American slang, including the N-Word (Khumalo 141), a further indication of her American upbringing.

As previously shown, the black characters around her consider her both black and African in her physical appearance, except for her eyes (Khumalo 134-135). However, Fikile struggles to adjust or understand the racial dynamics of post-apartheid society, particularly within the institutional whiteness in her school. When Fikile finds out that she has been kicked out of the school's jazz band, she tells her Aunty Promise that she wants to go home. When Aunty Promise says that she is taking her home, Fikile responds, "I want to go home. Home-home! Home as in Boston, US-of-fucking-A!" (Khumalo 151-152). Fikile considers herself American and thus a foreigner in South Africa, but she is still expected to perform black identity as it is constructed within the South African context.

In this way, Fikile represents the commonalities of white supremacy in the US and post-apartheid South Africa. However, in the post-apartheid space and within the specific constructions of South African whiteness, Fikile becomes the new millennium mulatta that, as Joseph argues, wants to be able to transcend race and gender but can't (159). As Steyn argues, the master narratives of whiteness in the South African context are shaped by a particular historical legacy (25), which functions differently from narratives of whiteness in the US to some extent. Adjusting from the representations of exceptional multiracialism (in the US) to a society that 'promotes' multiracialism but does not practice it (post-apartheid South Africa) becomes Fikile's site of internal struggle. However, Fikile resists the racial categorisations put on her, whether through standing up for herself in deeply racist encounters with the school bully Lucille Rutters (Khumalo 137; 145; 150; 155). In this way, she represents the resistance to the tragic mulatta trope in the way that she disrupts the normative order of post-apartheid racial expectations and categorisations, as she, to use Loukson's description of the post-apartheid narrative (248), holds a mirror to South African society.

Sara, like Fikile, is raised outside of South Africa but still within structures of white supremacy in the UK. The linkages between white supremacy in the South African and UK contexts are deeply interlinked through the coloniser-colonised relationship. As has been shown, Sara struggles with her identity within the institutional whiteness of British society. However, she constantly has one foot in South Africa and one in the UK, as she cannot fully place herself within either of these contexts, a classic representation of the 'not belonging anywhere' part of the tragic mulatta trope. However, Sara, as a self-aware mixed-race person that challenges the race and gendered stereotypes that whiteness has put on to her, represents the new millennium mulatta.

Sara's quest for belonging by going back to South Africa as an adult, to live as a South African and to discover her roots reflects her journey towards the rebirth of herself. As part of this journey, Sara goes to a rehab centre for her eating disorder and drug addiction, where she must write a letter to their 'addict', instead Sara writes to Kris, her biological mother, whom she describes as "the one who had given me life but had sentenced me to death" (Makwala-King 173). After reading her letter to her therapy group, she comes to a defining moment:

> In a thunderclap, I was irreversibly changed. Besides the pain, I also felt exhausted. I had regressed to being seven weeks old. In a state of absolute vulnerability, I was Karoline again. I would swear that at that point I knew exactly how that tiny child had felt as she was abandoned by her mother. I believe it, *she*, I, had known it was wrong; it was discordant with nature, against the most sacred thing on earth, the severing of the bond between mother and child. I had carried that sorrow with me since that day and it *would* have clung forever simply because we didn't know how to exist without one another. I am convinced the mother feels it too – something tragic and toxic, sad and shaming that can only be discarded once it is acknowledged honestly and accepted truthfully (Makwala-King 174-175).

Sara's moment of clarity reflects her moment of rebirth within herself. She finally understands the crux of why she has struggled with her identity for so many years. By acknowledging what happened to her as something terrible that was morally wrong, the abandonment of a child. While Sara was on a 'tragic' path of self-destruction, staying in line with the trope, she overcomes this perpetual tragedy and lives. She empathises with Karoline and with herself, who now recognises Karoline within her. Even in her reference to Kris, she refers to her as "the mother", not as her mother. This shows Sara's rejection of Kris, after searching for so many years to find acceptance from her. This moment represents the shift from

the tragic mulatta trope that would have led her to further self-destruction, to self-awareness. In this way, Sara represents the shift from hanging onto the 'old' trauma's of the past (apartheid) and moving towards the self-aware future (post-apartheid). The death-rebirth-and death of Karoline is an essential part of furthering the tragic mulatta trope (Mafe 4). However, the last time that Karoline is finally laid to rest is when Sara goes to change her name officially. This process becomes a cathartic act, a kind of funeral for Karoline:

> 'First name?' she sighs. 'It's Karoline,' I say. 'With a K.' 'Spell it for me.' 'K-A …' I stop. I need to think about it. I've never had to spell it out before. It doesn't come naturally. I try again. 'K-A-R …' Fuck. 'It's just Caroline, but with a K,' I tell her. 'ID number?' Shit. I've been reciting it all morning in preparation for this moment but now I can't even recall the first number, let alone all thirteen digits. For thirty-three years I've never had to use it. Never been asked for it. I feel like I'm committing a fraud. I fake a cough, hoping it will buy me a few seconds to will the numbers into my mouth, but nothing comes and I have to read it off the palm of my hand where I've scrawled it in blue ink just in case. She pulls one of the papers I've been clutching towards her and begins typing. 'You need a replacement ID book?' she asks. 'Uh, no, just an ID book. No replacement.' 'So you've lost your ID book?' 'No, I need one.' 'Another one?' For fuck's sake. 'No! I need an ID book. I've never had one.' She looks at me. 'But you are South African?' 'I am South African.' I confirm. And I mean it. (Makwala-King 193).

While this quote is long, I felt that this moment is so significant in Sara's resistance to the tragic mulatta trope that her full experience of becoming a whole of herself should be expressed. Sara needs a South African ID document for daily life, including opening bank accounts and getting a job. She ultimately needs to go back to being Karoline or go through the processes that Karoline would have had to do to move on with her life as Sara. Although Karoline was born in South Africa and Sara was raised in the UK, Sara reconciles this part of herself to prove her "South Africanness" by passing the ultimate test, the reciting of her ID number. At this moment, Sara doesn't have to decide or prove that she is any race, she is simply South African.

Until she waits for her documents to be ready, Sara lives as Karoline. She opens a bank account, attends concerns, even votes in the national elections as Karoline (Makwala-Kin 194). In this way, Sara allows Karoline to live as a normal person, not dead, not scarred by the traumas of her life, but an average person running errands and living their life. When the time

comes to collect her documents and to change her name officially from Karoline to Sara, I wouldn't argue that Sara, in officially changing her name, is killing Karoline. The traumatic act of killing is something that was done to Karoline, but out of that trauma, Sara was born. The loops of birth-death-and rebirth are the crux of the representation of Sara's mixed-race identity, Sara tells us as much:

> For more than thirty years of my life Karoline and I are inextricably intertwined. But one day, having let her breathe for a while, I realise it is time for her to go. It is time to be me again and forever. I make the trip back to Home Affairs, but this time when they ask for my ID number it rolls automatically off my tongue. 'You want to change your name?' 'Yes.' 'You are getting married?' 'No,' I laugh, 'I'm kind of getting divorced.' A few clicks on the keyboard and Karoline is gone (Makwala-King 195).

The role of rebirth and death are central features in the representations of Mikey's mixed-race identity in *Bitter Fruit*. When he changes his name from his childhood nickname, Mikey, to his full name Michael, it represents a shift in his character development. Michael resists the helplessness of the tragic mulatto trope, which should represent his surrender to his tragic state. However, like Sara, Michael seeks rebirth. But to be reborn through an act of vengeance that he disguises as justice, the killing of his and Vinu's white fathers. Mikey views Vinu as a kindred spirit in the tragicness of their identities and their lives; both bastards, both struggling to find belonging, both searching for a way out of their confusing reality. Upon meeting Vinu, he decides that one day he will write about her, about the tragicness of her life:

> She has brown eyes flecked with blue. What is the colour of her skin, he wonders? Something cliched, like amber, honey. One day, he will write a story about her – or someone like her. A true bastard, endowed with all the exoticism of an unlikely mixture: a Hindu mother and an Afrikaner father. That much we have in common. He'll start off: 'Shastri –'No, something much simpler, why not 'Vinu', that's a clean-sounding name for a tragic character? 'Vinu had a rough, bastard kind of beauty.' No, too sentimental. Vinu's story has to be told in a straightforward, unadorned way (Dangor 206).

Instead of writing about himself, Michael will write about Vinu, whom he considers someone that understands the complexities of his life. He tries to separate Vinu from himself but sees himself projected within her. The intertwining nature of their identities and what they represent to each other are intertwined in the language of the bastard, a colonial hangover of a

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person that is not accepted as a legitimate child. They don't see themselves as worthy of being whole, only half. When Vinu tells him that her father has molested her from a young age, Mikey becomes even more protective over her. When she tries to explain that the relationship was consensual and, in her mind, beautiful, Mikey tells her, "Don't fool yourself. There was nothing beautiful about it. It was rape, Vinu, simple, crude rape" (Dangor 210).

Mafe argues that Mikey's assertion to Vinu reflects the strong moral code that he has developed (130). In addition to this is his continued and, in the end, radical learning at the mosque, where the Imam describes countless stories of Muslim women being raped by white colonialists (Dangor 204). Mikey comes to understand, from his conversations with the Moulana Ismail, that rape is an act of genocide and that colonialists use it as a tool, for "you conquer a nation by bastardising its children" (Dangor 204). These discussions eventually trigger Mikey to tell Vinu it was "simple, crude rape" (Dangor 210), ultimately leading to his response to want to protect Vinu and avenge what has been done to her.

Both Lydia and Vinu are representations of tragic mulattas who turn to tragic mulatto men, Silas and Mikey, to seek vengeance against their rapists. Mafe argues that Vinu echoes Lydia when she asks Mikey to kill her father (Dangor 224), in the same way that Lydia asks Silas to kill Du Boise (Dangor 17) (Mafe 130). She argues that "in Vinu's case, the rapist is not a symbolic patriarchal white man but her literal Afrikaner father, Johan Viljoen" (Mafe 130). The representation of Lydia and Vinu as the tragic mulatta women who orchestrate murder is a break from US tradition within the South African context (Mafe 130). However, the use of tragic mulatto men for acts of violence, specifically including patricide, is in line with the standard version of this trope (Mafe 130).

For Mikey, as the violent and turbulent male is representative of colonial and apartheid characterisations of black and coloured men as being violent (Coughlin 50). It is because of this trope that Mikey, as a child of rape, would never commit violent acts of rape against his fellow tragic mulatta women, or engage in a sexual relationship with Vinu, as he doesn't want to manipulate her sexually (Mafe 130). He considers the raping of coloured women as something done to the "double sinned and doubly damned" (Dangor 240). This echoes Erasmus, Gqola and Adhikari's arguments that coloured people are considered to be born out of sin and rape, and in this way, Mikey believes that coloured women are doubly affected as they are born out of rape and are then raped as well. Again, reinforcing his challenging and resistance to colonial stereotypes that disproportionately affect the tragic mulatta women in his life. Although within Mikey's moral code, he is the protector of these women, he does commit violence against the white male rapists, which he views as vengeance and not a disruption of

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his moral code and innocence. For both these women, he is Michael the Avenger, as he calls himself (Dangor 140).

Mikey considers the murder of Johan Viljoen, Vinu's father, a dry run for when he kills Du Boise. The day that he goes to kill Viljoen, he has already done his background research and knows exactly where he will be. In Mikey's description of this murder, there is no remorse, almost as if this is a banal act, to know that "he is capable of killing another human being" (Dangor 253). He describes the murder as: "Viljoen's body falls backwards, not forwards as Michael thought it should. A rose tumbles from a flailing hand, and lies on the grass, as if plucked and abandoned by some casual, vandalising passer-by" (Dangor 253). The casualness of this description, with little to no reflection, represents Mikey's belief that he is justified in his killing. The one factor that does surprising is not that he has murdered a person, it is that the body didn't fall the way that he expected it to.

The banality of his next murder of Du Boise is captured in Michael's planning beforehand. When he makes his way to the site that he knows Du Boise will be, a mall, he starts asking himself who Du Boise actually is and questions if he is more than just a "former security policeman, a rapist and torturer?" (Dangor 274). Michael himself is surprised at his own questions about Du Boise, as this might lead to him considering Du Boise as a complex human rather than as a monster. To alleviate this possible problem, Michael banally runs through biological facts about Du Boise and his service within the apartheid regime, reminding himself that "this man is a rapist, my father, yes, the "sower of my seed", as the saying goes (Dangor 274). When the time comes, he steps in front of Du Boise, where in a brief moment he sees himself in mirrored to some extent in Du Boise's face (Dangor 276). Du Boise is sick with skin cancer that makes his complexion, as Michael describes, "unnaturally white" (Dangor 276). Michael says to himself "that could be my face one day" (Dangor 276). In this reflection, Mikey acknowledges Du Boise as his father before he describes the grotesque murder he commits:

> My heritage, he says in a whisper, unwanted, imposed, my history, my beginnings. Michael fires – twice – directly into Du Boise's face, forgetting his carefully worked-out plan: shoot into the heart, it is quieter, tends to attract less attention. He wants to obliterate Du Boise's face, wipe away that triumphant, almost kindly expression, leave behind nothing but splintered bone and shattered skin (Dangor 276).

Mikey wants to obliterate him because he sees himself in Du Boise's face (Dangor 276). He knows that to truly have a new beginning; he must fully destroy the cycle of trauma that Du

Boise represents. His obliteration of Du Boise's face represents the complete destruction that Du Boise wreaked on his family's life, especially his mother. However, the "splintered bone and shattered skin" (Dangor 176) represent the small legacies left behind, the tangible and intangible traumas left by the apartheid regime. The apartheid regime was never truly obliterated, its legacies and structures remain deeply rooted within the post-apartheid landscape, Mikey knows this, and his murder of Du Boise represents his attempt to kill his past and be reborn.

In addition, the murders of both Du Boise and Viljoen, in Mikey's eyes, are representative of the justice and retribution that Vinu and Lydia were denied, both by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and by the apartheid state. Mikey's vengeful murders are a response to the failures of the rainbow nation ideology of forgiveness and reconciliation are not enough to satisfy the need for justice. Coughlin questions whether Mikey becoming violent is an "aftershock" of the violence that Du Boise committed during apartheid or does his shooting of Du Boise represent a warped sense of "liberation from a violent past"? (55). In Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), he argues that for true liberation to occur, you must respond to your oppressor (the coloniser) in a language that they understand, violence (49). Mikey, in his sense of justice and pursuit of liberation from the tragedy of his mixed-race identity, represents the rebirth and resistance of this trope. He goes as far as to change his name after he murders Du Boise; he reflects that "He, too, is going to a death of sorts. Michael is to die; Noor will be incarnated in his place. May Michael's truth live on after him" (Dangor 277).

Mikey goes through a cycle of death and rebirth. First, from the partial death of Mikey to the full death of Michael to the rebirth of Noor, who is the "Prophet's light" (Dangor 277). Michael by no means fully escapes his representation of the tragic mulatto trope, and neither does he become a millennium mulatto or an exceptional multiracial. For Mikey, the representation of his resistance lies in his resistance to the reconciliatory ideology of the post-apartheid space. Michael is the representation and physical embodiment in the narrative world of the legacies of the apartheid regime that seep into the post-apartheid space unchecked. To break this cycle, Michael kills himself in name and becomes reborn as Noor, freeing himself from the violence of his past.

Popi's rebirth in *The Madonna of Excelsior* is not as abrupt or violent as Michaels's. Her representation is as both the shifting nature of mixed-race identity from the apartheid to post-apartheid era alongside the shift of the tragic mulatta trope to the new millennium multiracial. As has been previously shown, Popi has struggled with her identity and, more

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specifically, her physical features. She hears the comments outright to her face that tell her that she is a 'boesman' and that she behaves like a white woman because she has isolated herself from those that call her names. Popi also hears the whispers of the townspeople behind her back, that speculate about why she looks the way that she does (Mda 208). The towns folk discuss her true parentage, that she is a child from the Excelsior 19, that she is the daughter of Stephanus Cronje (Mda 208). Popi doesn't listen to these rumours, Niki hasn't told her the truth and she doesn't ask either:

> Old people had a tendency to remember things that happened thirty years ago whenever they saw Popi. And to think of people she knew nothing about. For no one had ever given her any history lessons on the events that had shaped the town of Excelsior. She knew vaguely that there had been a scandal. Snippets of gossip about her origins had drifted her way throughout her twenty-nine years of existence. She never asked Niki anything about it and Niki never volunteered anything. Popi did not want to know. She was Pule's child (Mda 209).

Deep down, Popi knows that Pule, Niki's husband, is not her father, but it is much easier for her to continue to isolate and hate herself if she doesn't confront the reality that her father is Stephanus Cronje. The whispers of the town only add to her unwillingness to know or actively embrace the truth, especially as she sees the townspeople as standing against her because of her mixed-race identity or because she doesn't believe that they should be nice to a 'boesman'. In this way, Popi represents the isolated tragic mulatta. The mixed-race character that thinks of herself as ugly represents the ugliness of the violence that birthed her. Previously, I have argued that the nature of Popi's birth was not based on a consensual relationship but rather a transactional survival for Niki. The sexual exploitation of black women who are constructed as "hypersexual" by white colonial legacies, is a key feature within the tragic mulatta trope. Joseph argues that sexual assaults on black women and mulatta women are not considered violent acts but rather the expression "of white men's sexual freedom" (12). Popi, who is aware to some extent of how white men behave in her town, although she refuses to see herself as a victim of that, she makes herself unsexual by covering her body and isolating herself from any potential advances and throughout the entire novel, she never has a romantic interest, instead, Popi says that she is committed to the liberation movement, rather than any man (Mda 162).

The narrator tells us of the turn to democracy, where Popi becomes more involved in the town council to further the cause of liberation and her brother Viliki even becomes the first black mayor of Excelsior (Mda 164). With the turn to democracy, Popi becomes more vocal

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and present within the town as a councillor and standing up to the white people on the council as well (Mda 182-184). Popi's return to public life represents her coming out of the shadows of the 'illegality' of her existence as a mixed-race person. The racial dynamics are supposedly changing in the post-apartheid era, where there is increased integration of black and white people within spaces of political power, and Popi represents this changing attitude. As the country transitions to democracy, so does Popi transition to the new millennium mulatta. Although not as self-aware as Sara, she understands the value of the power that she now has to make a difference in her community and no longer wallows in the isolation of the "tragedy" of her appearance.

The crucial and defining moment of self-awareness, where Popi finally has her turning point moment, is when Tjaart Cronje becomes sick and asks to see her (Mda 251). After much debate about whether she should see him or not, Popi relents and goes to see him. Their exchange is awkward, especially as they have been fighting each other on the town council for so long (Mda176-177). When she enters the Cronje house and Tjaart's bedroom, it is the same bedroom that Popi was most likely conceived in (Mda 253). In this full circle moment with a portrait of Stephanus Cronje hanging on the wall, the backdrop is set for the defining conversation in Popi's journey:

Popi's eyes remained fixed on the portrait. "I wish you had known him, Popi," said Tjaart Cronje in a quivering voice. "Known him?" asked Popi. "Our father," responded Tjaart Cronje. "He was not a bad man." "*Your* father." "*Our* father. Surely you know that by now." "I have heard whispers." There was an uneasy silence for a while. Then Tjaart Cronje made some small talk about their days on the council. He did not talk about their fights. He recalled only some of the funny moments when the joke had been on him. Self-deprecating moments. Soon Popi was laughing. An uneasy kind of laughter (Mda 253).

This moment between Popi and Tjaart represents the reconciliation moment that is pushed by the TRC and the Rainbow Nation narrative. It is clear that Tjaart already knew that Popi was his half-sister, and yet he had mentioned nothing to her over the years. Tjaart's acknowledgement of their sibling relationship confirms to Popi what she had bottled inside of her, along with the whispers. At this moment, Popi and Tjaart shift into a new understanding, an acknowledgement of their shared past, a moment of reconciliation after their constant fighting, as the wall between them finally breaks down. This moment of reconciliation is a shifting point for Popi from the new millennium mulatta to the exceptional multiracial. As Joseph argues, the exceptional multiracial form the bridge between races in the "post-racial" US (4). However, in the South African context, Popi's representation of an exceptional

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multiracial is based within the reconciliatory narrative of findings ways to live with those who have oppressed you. Popi does not transcend her race, as does Joseph's exceptional multiracial, instead she embraces her beauty and her "colouredness", where she is no longer at war with the two halves of herself. Her absorption into her own beauty comes after her final conversation with Tjaart:

> You are a lady. A beautiful lady. Popi was blushing all over. No one outside Niki and Viliki had ever called her beautiful before. At least not to her face. Apparently she never knew how we used to gossip about her beauty, begrudgingly praising it despite our public denunciations of her being a boesman (Mda 254).

Although Popi has now realised her beauty, the problem here is that she only does so after she is told that she is beautiful to her face by a white man. Although throughout the novel, there are references to her beauty, as I have described earlier in this chapter, Popi did not listen to those. However, in a problematic representation of her self-worth, it seems that only through validation from Tjaart, a white man, she actually believes that she is beautiful, despite the black characters in her life consistently telling her so. In this way, whiteness still becomes the major driving force to set the benchmark for beauty. Even though Popi and Tjaart have their moment of reconciliation, the tone is still set by Tjaart; he makes her come to see him in his own home, despite her objections, breaks the silence of their shared secret and then declares that she is beautiful, all which elicit a change within her. The dominant narratives of whiteness run as an undercurrent throughout their interaction, showing that the structures of whiteness still dictate society, even dictating how reconciliation is meant to happen.

Nevertheless, my interpretation of the representation of the exceptional multiracial, as Joseph has described, ignores the reality of the continued reliance on racial categorisations within structures of white supremacy. I don't think that Popi represents this ignorance but rather highlights the contradictory expectations of the exceptional multiracial to act of being a bridge between the races when the structures of society, the institutional whiteness, are not being addressed or radically transformed. The emphasis remains on Popi to do the work of transformation, another gendered and racialised element of the emotional labour burden that Popi must carry as a black/mixed-race woman. The onus is on Popi to change her mindset for this new post-apartheid space, to transcend her tragicness to love herself and become the unapologetic hairy, mini skirt-wearing woman that she is at the end of the novel (Mda 256).

In a conversation with Niki, for the first time, Popi refers to herself as coloured. Niki responds that she is happy that Popi is finally "free of shame about being coloured" (Mda 251). Even in this comment, where Popi has embraced her appearance to the point where she can joke about it, the undercurrent of the stereotypes that Wicomb[41], Erasmus[42] and Adhikari[43] have highlighted about colouredness being convoluted with shame reflects the lingering racial stereotypes within the post-apartheid space. The contemporary multiracial in the post-apartheid setting is not exceptional, but rather the representation of the mundane continued and consistent use of racialised categories, steeped within their racialised stereotypes in post-apartheid South Africa.

The representations of Popi shift between the tragedy of her mixed-ness to a moment of self-awareness while still being aware of the racialised and sexualised undertones of her identity within the new dispensation, to the embodiment of reconciliation, the ideal goal of the post-apartheid narrative. In this way, Popi's representation of resistance lies within the multitude of ways that her identity shifts, showing the hybridity of the mixed-race experience based on the power structures that it lives within. Similarly, Nix in *Finders Weepers,* although not fully discussed in this sub-section as it has been unpacked more deeply in the earlier parts of this chapter, represents that moments of reconciliation or resistance to the post-apartheid narrative do not have to come from a moment between a black and a white person or a victim-oppressor relationship. These acts of resistance to the tragic mulatta trope came from her conversation with her black mother and her family. These were not dictated by whiteness, in the way that it was for Popi; rather, Nix represents the conversations of forgiveness and understanding that need to happen within black and coloured communities between each other as well.

Although all characters in some ways have represented the tragic mulatta/o trope to some extent in one way or another, they also represent the politics of belonging within the post-apartheid space. The characters are represented as shifting between belonging and (un)belonging. However, all characters eventually find a space to belong, thereby directly challenging the representations of the tragic mulatta/o trope. However, even though none of

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[41] Shame and Identity: the Case of the Coloured in South Africa." *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid, and Democracy, 1970–1995*, edited by Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998. 91–107.
[42] *Race Otherwise*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press, 2017
[43] "From Narratives of Miscegenetation to Post-Modernist Re-imagining: Towards a Historiography of Coloured Identity in South Africa." *Burdened by race: Coloured identities in southern Africa*. Eds. Mohamed Adhikari, Cape Town: UCT Press, 2009: 1-22.

the characters dies, as is the trajectory of this trope, all characters have moments where they must kill off parts of themselves to be reborn. While this does not happen in the same way as the US representation of this trope, in the post-apartheid context, where South Africa itself has had to kill off parts of itself to be reborn, the mixed-race characters represent this cycle of rebirth. The death of the self remains a key representation to various extents across the corpus. In this way, the characters represent the need to cut oneself off from the past to move on, in line with the complex debates about forgiveness and reconciliation in the post-apartheid era.

To reiterate Mahtani's point about the myths of mixed-race identity where in a "vacant celebration of sanitised cultural hybridity, where the 'mixed-race' person is seen as a 'rainbow child' glimmering with hope for a colour-blind future" (470). The characters here represent both the legacies of apartheid racial classifications mixed with the hope of a post-racial Rainbow Nation future. As Gqola argues, Rainbowism "stifles rigorous discussions of power differentials" (Gqola 98). In this way, representations of mixed-race characters as the embodiment of Rainbowism stifle discussions about the micro-aggressive and overtly violent nature of racial classification and the power structures that continue to reproduce this violence. In the next chapter, the representations and the use of mixed-race people on a political level, either as a challenge to or a continuation of racialised power dynamics and processes of racialisation within the post-apartheid space, will be discussed.

Chapter Four: (Un)Making of the Rainbow Nation

The post-apartheid space is defined by the Rainbow Nation ideology. Coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, it refers to the diversity of the South African nation. Pumla Gqola argues that Rainbowism as an ideology has become central to the national strategy for reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa. Within the Rainbow Nation is the 'born free' generation, born in 1994 during the first democratic elections. Gqola argues that while Tutu's original phrasing of the Rainbow Nation did not outright deny difference within South Africa, it has since become an ideology of colour-blindness or non-racialism, the preferred terminology in South Africa (Gqola, "Defining" 95). In her assessment of the problematics of the Rainbow, Gqola states:

> The rainbow is also a reflection, a spectacular visual illusion. Within the boundaries of Rainbowism, there exist a series of possibilities that (potentially) rupture the ideal. Rainbows are a fantasy, yet they remain symbolic and constitutive of the new 'truths' in a democratic South Africa. Rainbows appear 'mysteriously', they are not dependent on human labour. They are transitory, fleeting and perpetually out of reach (Gqola, "Defining" 99).

This visualisation of the Rainbow as a problematic metaphor for the kind of transformation South Africa needs reflects the state of entrenched white hetero patriarchy that remains prevalent in institutionally problematic post-apartheid structures. An intersectional analysis of these structures requires understanding the political, structural and historical conditions that make and remake power. Crenshaw argues that political intersectionality can be used to understand multiple and overlapping systems of subordination that place specific identities at the margins of society (1265). In this way, intersectionality becomes a valuable framework to reconceptualise race by understanding its movement within and outside different power structures.

Processes of racialisation and new racisms have been reconceptualised within the post-apartheid state, where identities are shifting to adapt to the changing power dynamics. This is undoubtedly the case for identities and constructions of whiteness. Although institutional whiteness remains a pernicious undercurrent, the mixed-race characters across the corpus are represented in ways that challenge these undercurrents. As this chapter focuses on the political sphere of intersectional analysis, I show that the mixed-race characters negotiate these shifting dynamics. First, by understanding what new structures are being created. In this subsection, I specifically focus on shifting identities that are adapting to the new structures that remain

rooted in the old. Moreover, in the final subsection, I analyse the endings of each text in this corpus to show coping strategies for identities within the post-apartheid space. I show how mixed-race identity is used to further the political ideology of overcoming the traumas of apartheid without suggesting meaningful ways to do so. Ultimately showing how mixed-race characters are used in the making and unmaking of the Rainbow Nation. Their characterisation highlights how the new structures still represent the old while embodying the contradictions of a 'new' multiracial utopia.

4.1. New Power Formations in Old Structures

The racial dynamics of the post-apartheid space are constantly shifting to create new meanings, however still within the old power structures. The post-apartheid state is founded upon ideologies of non-racialism (Milazzo 8). Instead of focusing on the transformation of race and racial identity, Erasmus argues that there should be a focus on processes of racialisation ("Race Otherwise" 153). Within this framework, understanding the processes that make and remake social meanings of race can be analysed, rather than employing non-racialist strategies that paper over the social realities that have created racisms. The mixed-race characters across the corpus are represented as an entry point into multiple sides of the debate on race and racialisation in the post-apartheid space. This sub-section will focus on how they are used to understand, challenge or contribute to these debates, particularly in discussions about identity in/under the Rainbow Nation. In addition, it will focus on how white-heteropatriarchal constructions of identity are represented within the narrative world as a broader commentary on post-apartheid society.

Bitter Fruit is a strong example of the post-TRC narrative in the post-apartheid novel. Vilashni Cooppan argues that the TRC has become an "embedded narrative event" which has shaped the themes of confession, testimony, catharsis, healing and reconciliation within post-apartheid literature (49). This argument is echoed by Aghogho Akpome, who argues that not only does the novel explore collective trauma but collective amnesia as well, which is exemplified in the ways that the TRC privileged specific stories of others to create a "common national narrative" (Akpome 17). The irony here, as Akpome highlights, is that the TRC was set up to uncover the truths of the apartheid regime to foster a national narrative of transparency; yet narratives that did not fit within the framing of the national reconciliation project were conveniently swept under the carpet (17). Ultimately this reflects the lack of authentic and meaningful transformation, a common critique of post-apartheid society (See Adam and Moodley 2000; Gqola 2001a; Erasmus 2010; Reddy 2015).

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Even within the language of 'the new South Africa', common phrasing in Rainbow Nation rhetoric to reflect a dramatic shift between apartheid and post-apartheid society is an assumption that transformation has already happened just through democratisation. Achille Mbembe argues that this 'South African miracle', as it has occasionally been referred to, should rather be considered a stalemate due to the lack of social integration and economic inequalities (9). Michael, in *Bitter Fruit*, questions the language of the 'new South Africa'. He represents the transitional generation that grew up both during the apartheid and post-apartheid era, like Popi and Nix. Michael observes the 'new South Africa as a space where "'the struggle' sowed the seeds of bright hopes and burning ideals", which is now only "harvesting" an "ordinariness" and "a vanity fed by sly and self-seductive glimpses in the mirrors of their personal histories" (Dangor 168).

Michael reflects on his disillusionment with the 'new' regime and even with "Madiba[44], whom he once thought of as the saving grace of the older world" (Dangor 168). He captures the debate of those who believed that with democracy would come transformative change and improvement within their lives but instead were left disappointed when they scratched at the surface of this 'new' society. Michael distances himself from the language of 'new' South Africa, stating that:

> It is a phrase his father uses, and Kate, and Julian, and, of course, Vinu's parents. Politicians of all persuasions use it whenever they feel the need to sound idealistic, whether to celebrate or to lament the way the country has changed. Michael is always amazed by the sudden drama in their voices, the way even the dullest orator takes on the tone of an actor in one of those science-fiction films about distant galaxies and exotic and hybrid beings (Dangor 181-182).

The irony here is that within the post-apartheid state, Michael's hybridity is praised as the 'new' acceptance of racial tolerance now that mixed-race children are no longer considered illegal. However, as noted in the previous chapter, he views himself as a bastard and a child born of rape, a catalyst for his disillusionment with the new dispensation (Dangor 131). Ultimately reflecting how far away acceptance of hybrid beings like him is from the post-apartheid imagination, in juxtaposition to the faux idealism espoused by politicians and liberation fighters like his and Vinu's fathers. However, even Silas, as a representation of the old guard, is disillusioned by the TRC process, despite working with the Minister in charge of the commission. He recognises a "growing area of grey, shadowy morality" within the party,

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[44] The clan name and commonly used for former President Nelson Mandela.

the government and the country (Dangor164-165). Miller argues that Silas' discomfort with the new regime and his part in it, where members of the government have "to make decisions that accord not with their own wishes but with the 'needs of the country'", which makes "demands on their personal principles" (Dangor 165); reflects his broader unhappiness in the regime (Miller 156). Silas starts to recognise that his old 'role' as a 'fixer' during apartheid has now become an accepted and necessary evil of the post-apartheid space, where "everyone now accepts that back-room, 'fix-it' men are necessary in South African politics, that the old days of public debate are gone. Being in government is different from fighting for freedom. Things have to be managed now" (Dangor 171).

In this way, Silas, although placed within a level of access and privilege not afforded to everyone in the 'new' South Africa, remains unsure of his role in a society where "some liberation movement activists remain sceptical" of his presence within governmental structures. Adding to the changing and shifting nature of the post-apartheid space, Lydia seems to become more alive within the 'new South Africa'. She is the only one out of the mixed-race characters to take a positive shine to the newness of what her life could become:

> Lydia informs Silas and Michael that she will be starting another job in the new year, part of the research team doing 'control tests' on HIV-positive mothers. Testing the effectiveness of a drug to stop the transmission of HIV from mothers to their unborn foetuses. She speaks a new language, slick and coded. She is also rapidly being transformed, terms and thought processes that astonish everyone; her family, her estranged husband, her alienated son, her mother and father, her sister Gracie, all look at her as if she is a strange insect emerging from a cocoon they had mistakenly assumed was her permanent, incarnate being (169-170).

The representations of Lydia here reflect how the 'new' post-apartheid space has allowed her to no longer wallow in her trauma. The new energy of the post-apartheid regime, coupled with finally discussing with Silas what happened the night Du Boise raped her and Mikey no longer being co-dependently attached to her in their incestuous relationship, Lydia represents the freedom of this 'new' era. Although Lydia's trauma has not magically been removed, nor has she forgiven Du Boise for what he has done to her, she does see the opportunity of the post-apartheid era to be a catalyst for the change she needs. Getting her own car to drive to her new job further separates her from her family, which has now almost wholly disintegrated (Dangor 170); it gives Lydia more power and freedom to move through the post-

apartheid space, as she is not trapped within idealistic thinking or an obsession with vengeful justice, like that of her husband and son.

Each character portrays a specific representation of the post-apartheid space. Mikey, the transitional mixed-race male, testing the waters of the new era and finding that it is almost just as dirty as it was before; Silas, the representation of the young guard of the liberation movements going into government to enforce the freedom and non-racial society they had fought for; and Lydia, the woman that the apartheid violence had tried to destroy, rising out of the ashes of that same regime, to find a slice of freedom for herself. These characters represent the multitude of gendered and racialised experiences of the apartheid era as an entry point to understanding the complexities of the post-apartheid society, where the pot of gold at the end of the Rainbow Nation is only reserved for a few.

Shifting racial identities within the changing narrative of the post-apartheid space are well represented in *The Madonna of Excelsior*. In particular, the shifting of white Afrikaner identity. As Cornel Verwey and Michael Quayle have argued, constructions of Afrikaner identity are reliant on themes of racial, cultural and linguistic purity, the maintenance of which is fed by fearmongering of the demise of Afrikaner identity at the hands of the black majority (553). These themes are represented in *The Madonna of Excelsior* through the conversations among the white Afrikaner characters before and after the transition to democracy. In their conversations are the interplay of Verwey and Quayle's braai place politics and Melissa Steyn's White Talk, where white people are only openly discussing their racist ideologies amongst each other because they know better than to say it in racially mixed company.

In a discussion just before the first democratic elections at Tjaart Cronje's house with his father's old comrades from the Excelsior 19 trial. Tjaart expresses his dismay that the decided power-sharing agreement will disadvantage the Afrikaners and strip them of their power, where they ultimately have to "bite the dust" (Mda 143). He receives negative responses from the 'elders' at the table, to which he doubles down by complaining that the government is negotiating with terrorists (black liberation fighters), something previously considered "inconceivable" (Mda 143). Adam de Vries, the former mayor of Excelsior, explains that this is all part of a grander plan and that FW de Klerk "was thinking only of the future of the Afrikaner people when he released the likes of Mandela from jail. It was part of de Klerk's wisdom. He would never just hand out power to the blacks without making sure that the Afrikaner had a meaningful stake. The rights of the Afrikaner would always be protected" (Mda 143).

Adam de Vries's arguments here represent the feelings of Afrikaner people, who there believed that they would always retain power. Moreover, in many ways, they did. They were not expected to hand over land or redistribute wealth and resources. At the end of his speech, Adam de Vries declares that "the Afrikaner would always have the power" (Mda 143). It is important to note that even in their conversation, despite the presence of women at the table, the reference to 'the Afrikaner' is only a reference to the Afrikaner men, whom they view as having the most to lose, especially as they consider Afrikaner women only to be auxiliaries. These gendered dynamics echo Azille Coetzee's arguments where within Afrikaner identity, women are viewed only as necessary in their ability to reproduce more racially 'pure' Afrikaner boys rather than as agents for political power. In this way, the female white Afrikaner characters remain excluded from the debates on the shifting nature of national identity.

A further exemplification of the normality of racist language and conversations amongst the white Afrikaner characters is a conversation between Tjaart Cronje and Johannes Smit after the democratic elections. They sit at a bar together, "looking back with sad fondness to the glorious days when the Afrikaner had ruled supreme, and the "k*ff*r" had known his place. They felt their people were alienated from what was fashionably called "the Rainbow Nation". The Afrikaner was an Afrikaner and could never be part of a rainbow anything. Deep feelings of resentment and anger swelled in them with each gulp of the beer. They blamed the generation of Adam de Vries for deceiving the Afrikaner" (Mda 234). Even though they only speak with each other, as two white men, they remain in a public place. However, their use of the K-Word to describe black people within a public space shows that there is still a level of protection for them to continue their racist language despite it being considered hate speech. Despite their thriving businesses and Tjaart Cronje's position on the town's council, they wallow in their perceived victimhood and loss of political power. They do not feel part of the Rainbow Nation because they do not want to be; they would instead retain the absolute power and security they received from the apartheid regime.

Discussions about shifting identities within the post-apartheid space are limited to debates between the male White Afrikaner characters and the discussion of shifting black masculinities. Viliki, Popi's brother, becomes the representation of the new dispensation. He becomes the first black mayor of Excelsior, but after his retirement, he becomes disillusioned by the 'new' South Africa. Arguing that "now others are up there and have forgotten about the rest. Survival of the fittest is the new ethos. Each one for himself or herself in the scramble for the accumulation of wealth" (Mda 232). Viliki's words comment on the corruption that has plagued the new democracy and the loss of the shared struggle they once had against the

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apartheid regime. He represents a nostalgia for unity against a common tyrant of oppression, whereas now, there is an individualised struggle to survive.

Viliki often engages in conversations and political discussions with the white former mayor Adam de Vries. Their conversations represent the continued 'talks' and constant negotiation of black and white people on a localised level, especially in defining ways to live together in the post-apartheid state. Their conversation represents how they both lament something lost in the past. For Viliki, it is the shared struggle and his recent disappointment, which he would never admit to de Vries or any white person (Mda 243). For de Vries, the loss is the political power and superiority of Afrikaner identity. Both engage in these conversations because they want to continue to play politics, as both are no longer active politicians, to take on their old roles of oppressor and resister. In one such discussion with Adam de Vries, who now has a comfortable position in a company with the emerging black elite, they discuss what it means to be African in the post-apartheid society:

> "Now all of a sudden you are a spokesman for the Africans, Meneer[45]," Viliki remarked mockingly. "It is good that now you people finally see yourselves as Africans." "I have always been African," said Adam de Vries passionately. "Long before anyone else called themselves Africans, my people called themselves Afrikaners, Africans. Unlike the English-speaking South African, the Afrikaner does not look to England or any European country as the mother country. His only point of reference is South Africa. He does not see South Africa as a colonial outpost. He is deeply rooted in the soil of South Africa. How dare you question my Africanness?"
>
> Viliki laughed and remarked that Adam de Vries was the kind of African who viewed himself as superior to other Africans. Otherwise why had he perpetuated discrimination based on race?
>
> "It was for the good of everyone," screamed Adam de Vries. "Things just went wrong. But there was any intention to hurt anyone. All we wanted to do was to guide the black man to civilisation (Mda 243).

Their discussion echoes Steyn's arguments that South African whiteness, mainly white Afrikaner identity, is deeply rooted within the belief that the Afrikaners are native to South Africa ("Whiteness" 25). These claims to African indigeneity continue into the post-apartheid

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[45] Afrikaans word for "Sir" – used satirically as this is how black people had to refer to Afrikaner men during apartheid.

space and reflect the need to be considered as part of the Rainbow Nation and have a legitimate claim to acceptance within the post-apartheid society. The rhetoric of the necessity of apartheid to "guide the black man to civilisation" remains laced in this conversation between Viliki and Adam de Vries. While Viliki calls him out on his convenient association with being African, he also highlights that there remains a sense of superiority within de Vries' construction of Africanness.

These conversations represent the discussions about the shifting nature of national identity and political power in the post-apartheid space, mainly how the character's conversations are reflections and representations of the multitude of debates happening in South Africa at the time (Goodman 62). However, missing from these debates is Popi, Niki or The Seller of Songs or any black female voice. These conversations happen without the black women, representing the continued exclusion of black women from South African society. Pumla Gqola argued that black women carry multiple mountains of oppression on their packs, each representing "the meanings emanating from our location in Africa with the accompanying history of interlocking oppressions in the burdens we carry" ("Mountains" 12). However, these mountains are carried by black women on their backs so that they can move with them rather than being immovable obstacles (Gqola, "Mountains" 12). In this way, the burdens of care, beauty, trauma, sexual violence, patriarchy, whiteness, poverty, and survival become multiple mountains that black women carry in a society where they experience multiple forms of oppression. The absence of black female characters in debates on the future of democracy and national identity, outside of Popi's role on the council, represents a broader commentary on the silencing of women in the new dispensation.

In the final chapter, Popi is only represented in the discussion about the new national identity in so far as she is used as a symbol for reconciliation. This further reflects the satirical nature of The Madonna of Excelsior in discussing the post-colonial experience. Ralph Goodman argues that the novel contributes to a broader commentary on racial identity and thus provides a satirical answer to "the enforcement of racial categories in the past is to fragment and muddle as many human categories as possible, thus suggesting that identity is, in fact complex, unpredictable, and not as the practice of apartheid suggested, related to mere surface appearance" (69). Popi's discussion with Tjaart about their shared father reflects the ultimate goal of the Rainbow Nation, authentic and genuine reconciliation. The representation of which is a satirical commentary that this is unrealistic, especially as Tjaart eventually dies of the anger that eats him up inside (Mda 254).

Outside of this event, Popi is then only portrayed as staring in the mirror, obsessed with her beauty, devoid of her personal politics, only looking inward rather than forward, as she used to when she was part of the liberation movement and town council. The narrator tells us, "Popi had been very busy admiring herself in the mirror. Lately, Popi spent all her mornings looking at herself in the mirror, admiring her blue eyes, and brushing her long golden-brown hair. She no longer hid it under huge turbans…She enjoyed her beauty and celebrated it" (Mda 256). While there is nothing wrong with Popi's newfound love for herself, it brings her back into isolation with herself, this time not to wallow, but to a new understanding of herself where she is "making up for lost time" (Mda 256).

An important takeaway from the political dynamics of the post-apartheid state, as represented in *The Madonna of Excelsior,* is the fragmented but hybrid nature of identity. Popi, the mixed-race character who represents the trauma of the past and the hope for the future, remains characterised by the ironic and hypocritical nature of the Rainbow Nation and the so-called freedom attached to it. The struggle for black liberation is more complex in the post-apartheid setting now that the common overwhelming and obtrusive oppressor is no longer visible in the ways they were before. Their presence blends into the structures of society, where their power remains protected by the institutions they have created.

Although *The Madonna of Excelsior* was published in 2002, the warnings of the ongoing lack of radical transformation and the maintenance of dominant narratives of whiteness represented as a satirical commentary remain core undercurrents *in Let The Music Play On*, published in 2021. Constructions of Africanness have now taken on new debates. With the rise in xenophobic violence towards Africans from other African countries, to some extent depicted in *The Madonna of Excelsior*, violence remains steeped within South African society, representing new forms of racialised violence (Mlambo et al. 195). These underlying tensions are touched upon in *Let The Music Play On*.

Fikile's physical appearance, specifically her blue eyes, is constantly commented on throughout the short story (Khumalo135,153). Her blackness, however, is never questioned by her teachers and black classmates; however, when Fikile is outside of her schooling environment, she realises that "some South Africans think she is from 'Africa'" (Khumalo 143). She expresses this irony to her American friends, who respond, "We thought you were in Africa" (Khumalo 143). These underlying xenophobic tensions have become a key feature of post-apartheid society as more economic migrants and refugees come to South Africa. The differentiation between South African and 'other' Africans reproduces colonial othering in

post-colonial spaces. Fikile describes an instance where she was mistaken for a non-South African-African:

> One day she decides to take issue with this when a cashier at Pick n Pay says to her, after looking at her bank card: 'Oh, my sister, you're a Gumede. I thought you were from Africa'.
>
> 'But this is Africa.'
>
> 'What I mean to say is we're not like them. The Africans.' (Khumalo 143).

This interaction with the cashier is rife with xenophobic rhetoric. Gumede is a common Zulu surname in Kwa-Zulu Natal; the province is considered the homeland of the Zulu people. When the cashier recognises the surname, her attitude towards Fikile is immediately changed, even going so far as to call her "my sister". Although familial greetings are commonplace in South Africa, the cashier stresses their kinship by reiterating Fikile's surname and saying, "We're not like them. The Africans". In this way, she co-opts Fikile into her xenophobic comment as a normative statement and as if to apologise for thinking that she was not South African. In this way, the constructions of a new national identity become exceptionalised to only focus on South Africans rather than the Pan-Africanism that was widespread during anti-colonial resistance across the continent.

This is not the only time that Fikile is surprised by responses that she receives to issues that she thought would not be reproduced within the post-apartheid space. Fikile and her friend Amina become exceedingly close from Fikile's first day of school, becoming "inseparable" (Khumalo 142). However, their friendship is tested when Fikile meets a white boy, Derrick, from the jazz band at KES's all-boy school nearby. Fikile expects her friend to share her excitement about a new romantic interest in her life. Instead, Amina "explodes" and yells at Fikile that "You travel all the way from America and come here to fall for a whitey! What's wrong with you?" (Khumalo 147). Fikile does not immediately recognise that Amina is serious, jokes with her about being jealous, and tries to tell her more about the boy she is interested in. Amina then responds:

> 'F*ck off, man, just leave me alone! You're a phoney, a traitor to the cause.'
>
> Fikile stares incredulously at Amina. She is being serious! Without another word, Amina stomps off, leaving Fikile with her mouth agape (Khumalo 148).

Fikile's response of incredulousness at the scene that unfolded before her, leaves her shocked that Amina, who she thought was a progressive thinker like her, would respond in this way. As a mixed-race person herself, interracial relationships are normalised in Fikile's life. While she is aware of South Africa's racialised past, having learned the history from her father

(Khumalo 137), she does not expect Amina's response to be this strong, ultimately ending their friendship. Amina reproduces the 'other side' of the racial policing of interracial relationships that happened during the apartheid era, where black and coloured people who were in interracial relationships were considered 'sellouts' and 'traitors' to the movement. Later in the short story, Fikile is texting Derrick; he tells her that she is beautiful but that he does not "see race" and hates "people who focus so much on race" (Khumalo 149). Fikile is bothered by his response. Although she does not tell us this herself, the racial micro-aggressions underlying Derrick's message make her uncomfortable. Derrick clearly knows that she is a black woman, or why else would he bring up race as a 'casual' topic of conversation?

In these two scenes, Fikile represents the reproduction of apartheid thinking on interracial relationships. Amina represents those who believe that dating a white person is selling out black liberation, and Derrick, who believes that race and racism are no longer features of South African society. As the mixed-race character born out of an interracial relationship, Fikile represents the contradictory natures of the non-racialism ideology of the 'new' South Africa, where the 'old' policing of interracial relationships policed by the 'new' generation of 'born frees'.

A defining incident of the continued reproduction of apartheid racialised legacies occurs when Amina tells Fikile about a WhatsApp message between Lucille Rutter, Fikile's white nemesis, and her aunt (Khumalo 144-145). In this exchange, Rutter complains to her aunt that there are too many black people at the school now and that they "keep cropping up all over like locusts", adding that she "thought Aids would have taken care of this" (Khumalo 144). In another screenshot of messages, Rutter tells her aunt that a "new black piece of sh*t from America" is making fun of her and complains that her mother does not listen to her when she complains about Fikile (Khumalo145). Her aunt tells her not to worry about "a stupid foreign k*ff*r" (Mda 145). Her aunt then tells her that she will "deal with her" by planting crack cocaine in her [Fikile's] locker (Khumalo 145).

In this incredibly racist conversation with her aunt, Rutter reveals the continuation of racist language and active hatred of black people. As the only black person to stand up to Rutter (Khumalo 137), Fikile becomes the main target of Rutter's hatred of black people. Kedibone, a black classmate and member of Rutter's friendship circle, sends these screenshots to other people in the school rather than going directly to the school's principal and ultimately remains friends with Rutter (Khumalo 146). Although Rutter and her aunt do not put drugs in Fikile's locker, instead, they use their power over through (accrued through various monetary donations) to remove the keyboard, the instrument Fikile plays from the jazz band. The official

reason is that "the school thinks the jazz band is too cumbersome" and therefore got rid of only the keyboard (Khumalo 149). Fikile goes home and tells her aunt about what has happened, including telling her about the WhatsApp messages (Khumalo 152). The next day, Aunty Promise brings a piano to the school. Fikile's Aunt is a famous TV show host and, as a result, is a celebrity with much social clout; no one knows that she is Fikile's Aunt (Khumalo 153). Aunty Promise confronts the principal about the WhatsApp messages and threatens to release them to the public, saying that the school is "covering up for the rich" (Khumalo 154). When the principal tells her to "calm down" and calls her Mrs Gumede, Aunty Promise responds:

> 'Tjoo, tjoo, tjoo, this woman! She doesn't even know who she's talking to! Professor Monarch, Gumede is my maiden name. Fikile is my late brother's daughter. American-born, if I might add. Her maternal grandfather in Jackson, Mississippi, United States of America, is an FBI man, retired. My married name is Ramaphosa…' 'I'm sorry-' 'At my home, we don't eat sorries. Sorry is meaningless. Now, Professor, my late brother, Fikile's father, fought so this country should realise true liberation-' 'Mrs Ramaphosa, please lower your voice-' 'Clearly Mandela's voice wasn't loud enough for you. Now, I'm invoking the ghost of Steve Biko. Biko is going to burn you with his fire…' (Khumalo 155).

This conversation represents the interplay of old power versus new power. While money is an important factor in wielding power over institutions to conform to your needs, in the 'new' South Africa, political clout and 'struggle credentials'[46] are equally as important. For a school that relies on the 'new' wealth of the black elite, more so than on the 'old' white money, especially when they could be publicly shamed for tolerating racist behaviour, it stands a lot to lose if Promise leaks those messages. In addition, the surname Ramaposa is of a very well-connected political family in South Africa; one such person is the current South African president, Cyril Ramaphosa. Aunty promises reference to Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko, bringing forth the revolutionary and political spirit of black liberation and struggle where racism is not tolerated in any shape or form. Through invoking the "ghost of Steve Biko", Aunty Promise taps into the power of ancestral connections and the influence of Biko as a significant source of resistance against white racism; ultimately saying that she will not give up on holding the school accountable for their actions. Throughout the altercation, the white

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[46] Referred to people who can prove that they have fought hard for liberation for South African freedom, and by stating the sacrifices that someone made for the struggle, you show their credentials to be considered as a hero that fought for freedom.

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principal continuously tells Aunty Promise to calm down, which is taken as a racial microaggression that paints Promise as the angry black woman, which enrages her further.

Fikile listens to this conversation from the principal's secretary's office, who listens with her to the altercation (Khumalo 155). The black female secretary's analysis of the situation is even more telling of the state of race relations at the school, as a site of colonial whiteness with a 'new' diverse face. The secretary tells Fikile, "'this white woman has met her match. How long must these whites shit on us while telling us about Mandela and reconciliation? Yes, thanks very much Madiba, for our freedom. But, hell! In truth, it's us blacks bending backwards to reconcile" (Khumalo 155). These statements reflect the current discussion about the failures of the Rainbow Nation, where black people feel that they have to share the responsibility for reconciliation. In contrast, white people can continue their lives as before. This echoes Sara Ahmed's commentary that whiteness "takes up space" and expects others to bend to it (150). The secretary's language of "us" includes Fikile as a comrade in the continued struggle to liberate black people in South Africa from white oppression fully. Whether or not she has a white mother, Fikile will always be considered black and, in that way, can never escape her skin colour or the realities of what that means in post-apartheid society, regardless of wealth or citizenship.

Fikile's outsider perspective of South African racial dynamics is used to spotlight the ironies and contradictions of the 'new' South Africa. In the same way, Sara, in Killing Karoline, views herself as an outsider as well, experiencing South African racisms and racialisation with fresh eyes, rather than as someone who views these dynamics as normative. Upon her arrival in South Africa, Sara is surprised at the normality of South Africa. From discussions with white South Africans living in England, who left due to the "violence *everywhere*", she imagined a "post-apocalyptic wasteland where people only venture out in the dead of night to commit heinous acts of violence on one another" (Makwala-King 163-164). Only once she sees South Africa she realises that "the voice of White Fear is a loud one and I have inadvertently fallen for its convincing rhetoric" (Makwala-King 164). Although she is self-reflexive about her internalisation of "white fear" narratives, she very soon becomes aware of the realities of the post-apartheid society:

With every new day in South Africa, I'm ambushed by troubling realisations of the way things are here. I had no idea it was still so … *bad*. People say it isn't, of course, that things are '*so* much better' and, yes, on *paper* things have changed in the years since I was born. South Africa is a democracy, there is a

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Constitution. People like me can now walk on beaches and sit on benches alongside the privileged minority. Progress, they say. Apartheid, I'm told, is over, and perhaps for those who lived through it, those who survived through it, and those who *benefitted* from it, some things *have* changed. But to me, arriving with a blank slate, as an *outsider*, it's like watching a movie from the olden days. I'm met by a land *still* undeniably divided along colour lines, nowhere close to rebalancing its glaring inequalities. It is a country of haves and have-nots, rich, poor, poorest, and mostly still black and white (Makwala-King 164).

The juxtaposition of the White Fear narrative she had been told to her experience of the visual representations of continued racial oppression are evident within this quote. As a self-proclaimed outsider, Sara views the state of progress and transformation in the post-apartheid society as a "movie from the olden days" coming to life. The jarring reality is that those around her tell her there has been progress and that things are better now. However, the reality is the "glaring inequalities" present in all aspects of public spaces and life. Sara spends most of her time around her white people who live in immense wealth and is horrified by their treatment of the black people who work for them (Makwala-King 165-166). Around her, she calls out the stark contradiction between who has benefitted and continues to benefit from apartheid and those who were oppressed and continue to be oppressed. Sara's perspective highlights how little things have changed and how normalised this lack of transformation has become in the 'new' South Africa.

For Sara, whose black father worked for her white mother, the realities of the inequalities and continued mistreatment of black people within white spaces are shocking to her. In her personal life, she believes "perhaps naïvely" (Makwala-King 185) that she will not find these types of racisms. However, she sees the dominant narratives of whiteness running deeply as undercurrents in her relationship with her white family. A particular source of conflict is her relationship with one of her white half-brothers, Alex, where she convinced herself that "the colour of my skin doesn't matter" to him (Makwala-King 185). She further comments, "I have been in South Africa long enough to see that there is still a long way to go in achieving anything close to the promised Rainbow Nation, but I am his sister2 (Makwala-King 185). Sara's assessment of her relationship with her brother speaks to the personal and interpersonal layers of the intergenerational effects of apartheid racialised thinking within post-apartheid society. She describes the turning point and "rock bottom" moment in her relationship with her brother as follows:

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Alex is doing the introductions when he turns to a friend sitting next to me at the table.

'Have you met Sara before?' he asks, his eyes rolling a little from his fifth Stella.

'Yes. We met at the house after the christening,' answers the friend.

'You probably thought she was the maid!' quips Alex.

I listen, keep listening. Hear it again. 'You probably thought she was the maid!'

The maid?

After a second of crowded silence I laugh. To save him. To save him, I betray myself, my skin, my father (Makwala-King 186).

Her brother's comment shocks her. She does expect to feel this level of rejection from him. She comments that she has pretended that she would never or could never experience this type of racism from her own family (Makwala-King 186). This moment represents the broader narrative of how easily racist commentary is expressed in post-apartheid social settings, echoing the "braai-place politics" theory of Verwey and Quayle (565). This normalisation of racist language between white people seems to be commonplace. However, Sara is not white, yet she becomes the target of racism within this space. The well-meaning white person, or white liberal, still uses racist language, covered as an 'endearing joke' from drinking too much at a party.

In addition, Sara is shocked at her complicity in the racist language used against her. She laughs to "save him" from himself because she does not want others to think badly of him. She knows that the Rainbow Nation ideology is too good to be true, yet she remains shocked that she could have an experience like this from a member of her own family. Alex felt comfortable enough in this environment to use racist language without understanding or caring about the cost it would have on Sara. In this way, he does not value Sara as a black woman or can believe that he has a black sibling. Referencing that she could be considered a maid is filled with gendered and racialised language that profoundly disrespects black women, especially domestic workers. His lack of black or coloured friends does not go unnoticed by Sara, and in a previous instance, he tells her that "things were better under apartheid" (Makwala-King 185). Even though an outsider, Sara is quickly disillusioned by the Rainbow Nation ideology and even more so by this experience with her brother. Later that night, she reflects on Alex's behaviour:

For the first time, the thought strikes me that perhaps at the root of his discomfort, his inability to fully accept me, his refusal to discuss the past, is the idea of Kris, his *mother*, having lain with my father? Is he secretly disgusted by

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the thought she could have done such a thing? Allowed herself to be taken by 'one of them'? I have been kidding myself, thinking it didn't matter (Makwala-King 186-187).

Sara's reflection is wrought with the contradictions of the post-apartheid state. At the heart of Alex's 'well-meaning' persona is a person that is disgusted by interracial relationships. One could argue that finding out that he had a sister that he did not know about and his anger at his parents for not telling him is a shock, and his reactions come from a place of betrayal. However, his lack of black or coloured friends, his comfortability with using racist language, and his lack of respect for Sara all reflect his entrenched narratives of whiteness and white superiority. Moreover, a further echo of the Swaartgevaar/ Black Peril narrative paints white women as pure and black men as the disruption of that purity. In her very existence in his life, Sara forces him to confront the ugly legacy of apartheid and his mother's role within that, where he must reconcile his perceived view of his mother's purity with her consensual decision to have a sexual relationship with a black man. Sara's presence disrupts the normalisation of whiteness for white people in the Rainbow Nation. Her very existence in her brother's life is a constant reminder. In one of her final assessments of whiteness and white privilege in contrast to the immense racial, gendered and class inequalities in post-apartheid South Africa, she says, "There are eons left to endure of grey, cloud-filled skies before the sun grants us a glimpse of a rainbow" (Makwala-King 167).

Representations of the 'new' face of the post-apartheid regime, plastered over crumbling structures, are ever present throughout Finders Weepers. The novel provides a commentary on the "historically traumatising effects of South African state education" (Binder 34). Sara Binder argues that Finder Weepers provides an alternative representation of black female bodies within the post-apartheid space, both in relation to violence and specifically sexual violence, within and outside the schooling system (28). The novel places the experiences of black women at the forefront of these debates, especially as they are the most deeply victimised by these structures of violence, thus giving them a voice that they might not have outside of the narrative world.

Although Nix's mixed-race identity is discussed throughout the novel to provide added insight into the complexities of racial identities, she also represents the legacies of violence inflicted on her mother, who had to raise her alone and became separated from her family. Through Nix's struggles with her own identity, she understands her mother's pain. In other moments throughout the novel, Nix becomes a vessel for uplifting the voices of the black

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female characters. For example, the novel switches between what happens in the present, as Nix tells us and an email exchange that Boniswa has with her mentor (Binder 33). Although Boniswa is absent from conversations in the novel because she has been murdered, in this way, Nix keeps her voice alive. Boniswa's email exchange also provides a running commentary on violence in the education system juxtaposed to Nix's unravelling of what has happened to Boniswa. Ultimately, Nix becomes the thread that sows together the multiple strands of each character to provide a general commentary on the state of the 'new' South Africa:

> It was done. I was what I was. And there were many others like me. Lulu – all of us – were, in some measure, denied proper belonging by death, by poverty, by history, by language, by race, by apartheid, by many things. We were a wounded people. Boni was right. The only way forward was acceptance and caring; a constant striving to communicate across our self-imposed barriers, to build relationships, to return to the values of community. Ubuntu: I am only a person through other people, she had written (Lorimer Chapter 37).

Despite Nix's reservations and surrendering to the failures of the post-apartheid state in the first part of the quote, she evokes parts of the Rainbow Nation ideology of unity and Ubuntu in the second half. Ubuntu, an African principle that "I am only a person through other people", means that there needs to be a reliance on our community to lift everyone up. As an age-old ideal, Ubuntu has become co-opted in the post-apartheid space. However, Nix recognises the importance of returning to the fundamental ideals of Ubuntu, which is what I believe was the original aim of the Rainbow Nation ideology.

Across all literary texts, the mixed-race characters become the messengers of the political failings and contradictions of the post-apartheid state. Whether in critiquing the language of the 'new' post-apartheid space, or the challenge of the Rainbow Nation ideology, these characters are represented as an entryway into multiple angles and perspectives of the changing political narrative in this 'new' era. In this way, they become racial chameleons on the walls of the 'old' versus 'new' debate, either as the embodiment of the future that we could have or as the reminder that we have not come as far as we think we have in the racial, gendered and socio-economic transformation of South African society.

4.2. The Multiracial Utopia: The 'New' South Africa

This section focuses specifically on the endings of each literary text. As has been shown, each literary text, and the mixed-race characters within, represent different critiques and challenges to the political ideologies of the post-apartheid era. Across each novel, the mixed-race characters disrupt and challenge the myth of racial harmony that the Rainbow

Nation sought to create. This 'new' multiracial utopia of racial transformation and non-racialism can be viewed instead as the reconfiguration of white heteropatriarchal structures that continue reproducing racialised, gendered and class violence within multiple forms of aggression. However, the ending of each novel remains open-ended. This sub-section will show that despite the valuable critiques, often through a satirical or spotlighted lens of the contradictions of the post-apartheid state and the multiple voices within, none of the novels provides any strategies for shifting, changing or moving forward in post-apartheid society. In this way, mixed-race identity becomes a valuable entry point for discussion but does not solve the troubles of the post-apartheid state; instead, they represent the ideals we could have.

After her long journey to a point where she has reconciled her identity and, to some extent, has learned coping mechanisms to deal with her trauma, Sara, in *Killing Karoline*, finally laid Karoline to rest. In the novel's final part, Sara describes her moment of feeling genuinely South African – at the public funeral for Nelson Mandela held at Green Point Stadium in Cape Town (Makwala-King190). In the moment of communal singing and celebration of Madiba's life, Sara sings the South African national anthem with gusto, feeding off on the energy of those around her, and she thinks to herself, "My people" (Makwala-King 191). This is a full circle moment for Sara, especially since the opening line of the book is a warning from Ken, the white man on her birth certificate married to her biological mother, where he says, "'Just don't write a book about it.'" (Makwala-King 9).

Sara's memoir, although a representation of her life, captures the many struggles of mixed-race identity in the post-apartheid space. She was struggling to find belonging, dealing with the overwhelming pressures of white supremacist structures, and being unable to fit within the rigid racial classifications. Representations of mixed-race identity within Sara's story become rooted within the historical and political structures that have been sustained to 'other' it within South African society. She represents the personal and interpersonal complexities of "dealing" with the trauma of apartheid and the reproduction of cycles of intergenerational trauma. In the final paragraphs, Sara shares that she has accepted what happened to Karoline and, ultimately, what happened to her will always be part of who she is and has been able to save herself:

> But I am gradually accepting that, above everything, it is my own truth that will
> lead me to where I am supposed to be. There is something to be said for dancing
> to the beat of your own drum. These days I know that even if the music stops, I
> will keep on moving. Not only do I have my own momentum, but I'm the only

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one who can adjust the volume. My own music is now so loud that the dead are beginning to dance to it. And so, no, there are no fairy tales, there are no happy endings. There is only time and the possibility of another chapter (Makwala King198).

Sara's final lines provide a somewhat neat tying up of her otherwise complex narrative. Although her ending remains open-ended, the style of this text as a memoir already denotes that there will be a level of open-endedness in the ending because that person will continue to experience life after the book is published. *Killing Karoline* becomes a moment in time and reflects some of her darkest moments. However, in the broader scheme, I do not think Sara has the answers for moving forward in the post-apartheid space, nor does she offer any. The representation of mixed-race identity through Sara's memoir shows its complex and hybrid nature and as an identity constantly evolving based on its multiple locations and contexts.

In a more fictional sense, Fikile's characterisation in *Let The Music Play On*, through representations of mixed-race identity, reflects the born-free generation and their negotiation of dominant narratives of whiteness, shifting economic structures and different intersections of power. In addition, Fikile represents how deeply entrenched institutional whiteness remains; despite the challenges of new black political and economic power, the normative structures of whiteness have remained mainly intact. Fikile, like Sara, navigates the post-apartheid space as an outsider without the cultural capital of understanding the normalised and mostly unquestioned responses to problematic institutional structures.

The novel begins with Fikile's first impressions of her new school as "A damn feast for the eyes" (Khumalo 133). She describes the immense wealth ostentatiously displayed in the school parking lot. It symbolises a clash between who is more economically successful; it displays new wealth against the backdrop of a school that upholds the performativity of diversity against the backdrop of an institution built on the unattainability of whiteness, no matter how wealthy you are. Fikile represents the challenges of navigating the land mine of the post-apartheid status quo and even the reproduction of racialised stereotypes of interracial relationships.

In the end, like her father, who fought for freedom and went into exile, Fikile becomes exiled from the school's jazz band for standing up for what is right, as her father taught her. While these experiences are hardly comparable regarding the political weight and danger of resistance, they echo each other as a new site and battle of black liberation in the post-apartheid space and reflect the work that still needs to be done. While *Let the Music Play On* does not

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end with a neatly drawn ending. We are unsure of what happens to Fikile after she re-joins the school jazz band, but as the short title suggests, she is expected to move forward and not become trapped in her struggles with her friends and schooling environment.

> In the bathroom, she sits on a toilet bowl, crying. Then she starts giggling. Yes, yes, yes! I'm back in the band. But the giggles die down just as quickly. Amina, Kedibone and Derick's faces flash through her mind. The faces of all the band members when she takes a seat behind her auntie's expensive piano. And Rutter's menacing scowl. *Did it have to come to this?* she thinks. *Why did I show those WhatsApp screenshots to my crazy aunt? What have I done?* She takes a deep breath, gets up and walks out to face the music (Khumalo 155-156).

From this quote, it is evident that the ending of the short story has an open ending. Fikile sits in the bathroom with the inner turmoil of having to "face the music" for telling her aunt about the WhatsApp messages. Here, the complexities of standing up to whiteness are exposed, as the consequences are difficult to manage when you are only a teenage girl. However, the short story, like its representation of the post-apartheid space, makes the reality of life messy. Despite this, the short story, through Fikile's representation, does reflect the current realities for those who have spent their entire lives in the post-apartheid era. To Let The Music Play On while simultaneously having to "face the music" shows how overwhelmingly complex genuine diversity and integration can be when the reality of the experience within the 'old' structures does not reflect the 'new' non-racialist national ideology.

Similarly, for Nix in Finders Weepers, she represents the merging of 'new' voices within the post-apartheid era. Although she does reflect upon the institutions of whiteness and her own experiences living within them, the plot is not entirely centred on representations of her mixed-race identity. Although Nix provides a unique angle to understanding how mixed-race identity can move and shift within multiple places, her character provides access to multiple spaces that another character with different intersectional locations might not be able to access. In addition, Nix provides a voice that places black women's stories at the forefront of this narrative world, voices that are often excluded from the post-apartheid reality. Nix recognises her disillusionment with the national ideology as she travels into the more rural parts of South Africa, escaping the multiculturalism façade of the big cities. Here she shows the endless cycles of violence that continue to be perpetuated not only by the institutional structures but within and amongst the communities.

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Towards the novel's end, Nix decides to adopt the young girl Boniswa was helping, Lulu and will take her back to Cape Town. This exemplifies the practical application of Ubuntu (Lorimer Chapter 28) rather than the superficial governmental strategies for transformation that have not been beneficial in poor rural communities in particular. Nix's representation extends beyond the foregrounding of her mixed-race identity, but rather the emotional burdens that are carried by black women, through her mother, who was cast out of her family and could only work as a domestic worker, to Boniswa, a young rising star who studied in the US and became principal of a once great school but was eventually murdered, and to Lulu, who represents the new, young bright future which was almost snatched away through sexual violence. In the end, Nix leaves back to Cape Town:

> Time passed quickly and we began the round of goodbyes. I was driving Princess, my mother, Lulu and myself back to Cape Town in my hired car, so this was a farewell for us too. Tears were shed and hugs, handshakes and promises exchanged, and we set off on our journey home. A small clutch of people waved until we could no longer see them as we travelled slowly away and life, such as it was for all of us, moved on (Lorimer Chapter 38).

Similarly to the corpus, there is no one strategy for moving forward; instead, one should just "move on". This ending, like Let The Music Play On, reflects the inevitability of the status quo. However, in *Finders Weepers*, it is evident that state structures can neither be trusted nor relied upon to ensure societal transformation; therefore, Nix represents those who have to do the individual work of uplifting their communities, even if it is just one child. The underlying critiques of the failures of the significant overhauling of white heteropatriarchal structures are rooted in the characters' everyday lives in the narrative world, ultimately providing an open-ended commentary on the state, or lack thereof, of transformation of apartheid historical legacies.

Bitter Fruit, as a novel steeped within representations of intergenerational and collective national trauma, provides a commentary on the national ideologies of forgiveness and the realities of the efficacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). This novel has four first-generation mixed-race characters, each represented in different ways. Mikey/Michael, the protagonist, represents the transitionary generation disillusioned by the post-apartheid space. Silas is the 'young' freedom fighter representation, those with enough struggle credentials to be considered for positions within the new administration. Lydia represents the women who are scarred by their trauma but find ways to free themselves from

the shackles of apartheid in the post-apartheid space. Moreover, Vinu, like Mikey, represents the transitionary generation but continues to be plagued by the legacies of the sexualised racism of apartheid.

All characters represent different forms of disillusionment with the 'new' South Africa. Among the realities of the 'new' multiracial South Africa, they struggle to find belonging and acceptance in this new dispensation as they remain trapped in the legacies of the past. The ghost of the past, the ghost of Du Boise, becomes a secondary character to the lives of Lydia, Silas and Mikey, and the traumas of the apartheid state, a tertiary character. They respond to both in various ways, but their overwhelming presence in their lives consumes each of them. The foreshadowing of the first line in the novel, "It was inevitable" (Dangor 3), guides the characters along their journeys throughout the narrative world. The inevitability of cycles of intergenerational trauma and violence as inevitable catalysts for the violence Mikey commits and how Silas and Lydia hurt each other.

In the novel's final part, Lydia learns of Du Boise's death in a news report on TV (Dangor 277). She immediately calls Silas and asks about Mikey. In her heart, she knows that Mikey was involved in Du Boise's death. An inevitable fact. At this point, Lydia has left Silas, not knowing where Mikey is, but has left to find her freedom in the 'new' South Africa. The final lines of the novel include her singing along to a Leonard Cohen song while she drives towards Cape Town for her 'new' life:

> Time and distance, even this paltry distance, will help to free her. Burden of the mother. Mother, wife, lover, lover-mother, lover-wife, unloved mother. Unloved, in sum, except for those wonderful, unguarded moments, Mikey, Silas, and of course, black Joao, beautiful as jet. Even Du Boise does not matter anymore…Amen Amen (Dangor 281).

Lydia leaves behind the burden of the traumas that weigh her down, tired of the multiple roles she has had to fill. Like Mikey, Lydia searches for a 'new' life, to be reborn from the ashes of their past. Silas, however, remains behind to sit in the 'new' dispensation and tries to contribute to the 'new' South Africa, an idea that he is unsure he still believes in. The representations of mixed-race identity here are wrought with all the idealism of the Rainbow Nation but saturated by the trauma of the past. It becomes a representation and commentary of the struggles for true reconciliation amidst the failures of justice and the beginnings of vigilantism, as the meting out of justice is left to the victims.

The Madonna of Excelsior provides a satirical commentary on the state of political power within the post-apartheid landscape as it shifts between apartheid to post-apartheid society. The thirty-year span of the novel, as represented through Popi's life, reflects the shifting nature of identities and values alongside the stagnant transformation of the 'old' structures of power. Popi's anger at the society around her and for being born as a mixed-race person becomes an open wound that festers inside her for most of the novel, representing the collective trauma of the apartheid regime. The collective voice in the novel is the satirical commentator that points out the ironies of contradictions and multiple viewpoints in the town over the thirty-year time frame. The use of The Seller of Songs as a mirror for what Popi does not like about herself is represented as the mirror of South African society for all of the ugliness, joy and hope.

The Christian dogma of the Rainbow Nation is present throughout the novel. It begins with the opening line, "All these things flow from the sins of our mothers" (Mda 3). The analogy of sins represents the morality or immorality of the actions that produced Popi. However, the reference to our mothers, while ignoring the role that the white men played in creating the mixed-race children in the town of Excelsior, also highlights the burden of the traumas of apartheid that have been placed on black and coloured women. They carry the burden of all the sins of the apartheid regime yet must move forward regardless. For Niki, she resorts to isolation, with only her hives of bees as company, becoming the Bee Woman (Mda 241). Niki's isolation into the solace of the bees reflects her unwillingness to be involved in the town's drama. Instead, she believes the bees are ancestral spirits guiding her forward (Mda 241). Niki says she does not care for the bees; they look after her (Mda 241).

In the novel's final pages, Popi returns home to spend more time with Niki and spend more time with the bees. They reflect on the past and where all the old characters are (Mda 257). While Niki and Popi sit near the hives, the narrator brings the novel back to the beginning, with the colourful descriptive imagery of their surroundings, where "the wind was blowing very hard. In its whines, they could hear the songs of Viliki and the Seller of Songs that the wind carried from distant villages and farmsteads. They could also hear their moans of pleasure coming from distant fields of sunflowers" (Mda 257). The representation of the calm environment reflects that both Niki and Popi are at peace within the peaceful environment around them. In the final event, Niki and Popi disappear with the bees:

> And then the bees began to swarm. They buzzed away from one of the hives in
> a black ball around the queen. And then they formed a big black cloud. We saw
> Niki and Popi walking under the cloud, following the bees. Or were the bees

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following them? We did not know. We just saw the women and the bees all moving in the same direction. Until they disappeared into a cluster of blue-gun trees a distance away. We knew the bees had succeeded in filling the gaping hole in Popi's heart. Popi, who had been ruled by anger, had finally been calmed by the bees (Mda 257-258).

When bees swarm, it is because they are leaving the hive, following their queen, who has been replaced, to find a new home. Niki and Popi go with the bees, disappearing to find a new home. Because Niki believes that the bees are providing her with a message from her ancestors, she has already surrendered to being part of their colony and follows them willingly as their spirits guide them. Moreover, because Popi has no more anger, her fuelling force throughout the novel, she too surrenders to the bees and follows them. Again, keeping in line with the endings across all the novels, Niki and Popi's leaving with the bees represents a stage of moving from the past towards an unknown future.

The novel's final line reflects the first, except rearranged, "From the sins of our mothers all these things flow" (Mda 258). In this cyclical phrasing, while the narration itself is not circular, it changes the subject of the sentence to describe what is known to have come from the "sins of our mothers". "These things" are not specific but speak to the complicated historical legacy behind the sins and the experiences of the women who have been brandished as sinners. This ending remains open-ended as Niki and Popi walk into the unknown with the bees, but as their ancestral guides, they protect them. These bees have provided a new form of belonging as they leave behind the town that had isolated and ridiculed them. Their leaving and moving with the bees represent that the healing process and journey are much longer and more complex than the Rainbow Nation ideology projected.

This section has specifically sought to engage with how the mixed-race characters are represented in the political sphere. Their intersectional experiences are reflected differently across the corpus as they interact with different yet similar structures. The underlying thread of the persistence of dominant narratives of whiteness and the need for an alternative conceptualisation of the Rainbow Nation ideology runs through all literary texts considered here. Their characterisations represent an entry point into different conversations across different racial groups in the post-apartheid space. Within their narrative worlds, they interact with various power structures that are shaped by the historical and cultural legacies of the apartheid regime. They challenge and resist singular forms of reconciliation and forgiveness. Instead, they represent the hybridity of the healing process, which cannot be nationalised. To

some extent, the mixed-race characters are meant to embody the 'new' South Africa, yet they are represented as the very contradiction of this new language. In this way, they represent the complex web of politically shaped identities and power structures constantly shifting to construct and deconstruct the non-racial/multiracial society of the 'new' South Africa.

What is missing from all the literary texts across the corpus is the lack of representation of a healthy, loving interracial couple with well-adjusted, functional mixed-race children. While this exists in society, as is present in the studies by Van der Pol et al. and Metcalfe, these representations are not present in this corpus or outside of it in mixed-race literature in South Africa. In this way, using mixed-race identity as a tool to showcase and critique racial dynamics in South African society is a convenient angle in that in their very conceptualisation and existence, mixed-race people disrupt the status quo of processes of racialisation. Therefore, current literary texts on mixed-race identity do not represent the full range of mixed-race identity and mixed-race experiences in the post-apartheid reality, instead choosing to represent mixed-race identity through a tumultuous lens as a social-political critique of South African society.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The story of mixed-race people in South Africa has a long, complex and often traumatic history. It is marred by the visceral effects of European race science enacted on colonised populations which have had a lasting impact on the fabric of South African society. For first-generation mixed-race people, they embody both the legacies and the disruption of these legacies. Expressions and representations of their identity have been used to discuss racial dynamics that exist in society throughout all of South Africa's racialised history. The severe effects of race purity and segregation laws significantly contribute to these representations of mixed-race identity in the narrative world, particularly as a reflection of South African society.

As Ives Loukson has argued, the post-apartheid narrative holds a mirror up to South African society while maintaining somewhat positive and hopeful endings (248-249). The corpus of this analysis comprised five literary texts published and set within the post-apartheid era. The post-apartheid narrative that Loukson describes is evident across all literary texts. Through theoretical framings of Intersectionality and Critical Race Theory, the research has argued that representations of mixed-race identity within post-apartheid literary texts are used to understand contemporary racial dynamics within multiple levels of society. In addition, this dissertation has demonstrated that the legacies of dominant narratives of white heteropatriarchy continue to plague South African society and remain a constant undercurrent in representations of mixed-race identity. Moreover, this thesis has shown the multiple layers of mixed-race identity representation in post-apartheid literature through the intersectional spheres of social, personal and political power.

This thesis has sought to analyse the representations of mixed-race identity in post-apartheid literature by focusing on mixed-race characters with one white parent through characterisation. A limitation is that the selection criteria recentres whiteness as a focal point of mixed-race identity representations. Future studies could benefit from a decentred approach of whiteness to reflect the diverse nature of mixed-race identity across those racially classified as black, coloured, Asian and Indian in the post-apartheid context. Moreover, this study could have focused on literary texts only set in the post-apartheid context instead of including two texts representing the transition period. However, through that lens, the ramifications of apartheid and its continued influence on racialised identity would remain key features within that discussion. Moreover, given the amount of valuable analysis produced in this research, a deeper dive into a specific literary work rather than five could glean a more in-depth and focused angle for unpacking mixed-race identity in post-apartheid literature. This deeper five

could include a focus on other elements of narratology; space and memory would be interesting narratological elements to provide new contributions to the study of mixed-race literature.

That being said, by showing the social dynamics that play a significant role in regulating and maintaining social constructions of race, this dissertation demonstrated the multiple factors that influence the setting in which the mixed-race characters are represented. These social dynamics are influenced by apartheid racial purity and segregation laws, namely the Prohibition of Mixed-Marriages Act of 1949, the Immorality Act of 1950, the Population Registration of 1950 and the Group Areas Act of 1950. It has been established through the conceptualisation of whiteness in Chapter One that constructions of whiteness were reliant on inconsistent 'common sense' approaches to racial classification. In this way, constructions of 'purity' could not focus on 'blood purity' because of the long-established history of intermixing within colonial South African society. The establishment of the race purity and segregation laws aforementioned was a strategy to systematise racial classification to 'produce' and maintain 'purity' within races dictated by the structures of whiteness.

These laws were explicitly used to construct, regulate and entrench racial segregation. By focusing exclusively on the Immorality Act as the most significant contributor to attitudes towards mixed-race identity, this dissertation showed the contradictory conceptualisations of morality that were imposed onto the South African population. Grounded within white supremacist Christian dogma, the Immorality Act made interracial sexual relationships illegal to ensure the reproduction of racial purity in the 'white race'. As this thesis has exhibited, the enforcement of these laws relied upon a climate of fear fostered by the apartheid government. Despite this, these laws were often circumvented, resulting in mixed-race children.

Constructions of morality, as dictated by the apartheid regime, in tandem with the Immorality Act, provided the power structures that governed the reproduction of mixed-race children. As this thesis has shown, these constructions are ladened with intersectional dynamics where the 'morality' of whiteness and maleness is protected above all else. The use of multiple levels of sexual violence, including rape, were used as tools of oppression by the apartheid regime to suppress and dehumanise black and coloured people, especially women. The entitlement of white men to the bodies of black and coloured women through sexual violence is rooted within white supremacist constructions of morality. These same structures protect them in the name of the protection of 'Afrikaner identity'. For those who suffered sexual violence at the hands of white men, represented as proxies of the apartheid regime, the immorality of this violence is only considered when applied to disrupting the 'purity' of white women.

The Immorality Act's physical, mental and emotional impact, and its social construction of morality, are deeply rooted within the conceptions stories of the mixed-race character, Sara, Popi, Mikey and Nix. In this way, they embody the 'abnormality' of mixed-race people within a society and legal system that classifies their existence as illegal. Despite the social dynamics surrounding their conception and birth, the mixed-race characters' birth is represented as a challenge to apartheid racialised morality. However, it is essential to highlight that these characters were not always born out of resistance to apartheid racial purity laws; they are also represented as products of the violence of the apartheid regime.

The implications of the Immorality Act provided an essential background to understand how mixed-race characters have been conceived in the narrative world. This thesis has also shown that the inconsistent social construction of morality allowed the gendered and racialised entrenchment of white supremacist violence, which remains a core feature of South African society. The apartheid regime was only 'successful' in its campaign for white supremacy because of societal buy-in and a climate of fear. As a result, the mixed-race characters embody warped irony and morality and embody the contradictions of racial purity.

This is further expressed in the representations of the Absent parent trope in mixed-race literature in the South African context. The inculpability of the absent white parent to bear no responsibility for creating their mixed-race child is present across the stories of Sara, Popi, Mikey and Nix. Although the white biological parent is absent from raising the mixed-race child, their omnipresence and whiteness become looming features in the representations of mixed-race identity, where their absence takes up considerable space in their children's identities. The mixed-race characters, despite their de-facto associations with whiteness and phenotypical 'markers' of constructions of white beauty, are never able to truly access whiteness or be protected by the privilege it offers. In this way, the protection and ultimately visible invisibility of whiteness becomes a means of protecting the white parent from the consequences of the reproduction of their mixed-race child. These acts of impunity represent the white biological parent as symbols of the impunity of whiteness in the apartheid regime. Using racial segregation laws to ensure that mixed-race families cannot co-reside becomes a valuable tool to escape culpability and discard their mixed-race child. Moreover, the mixed-race characters as represented as the embodiment of the consequences of white impunity and the legacies of the burden of care that black and coloured women have to take on as a result.

The legacies of intergenerational trauma at both a national and international level are evident in the representation of the mixed-race characters across all five literary texts. Through unpacking the language of forgiveness and reconciliation espoused by the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission's narrative of national and collective healing through truth-telling, testimony and catharsis to deal with the traumas of the past, the complexities of what healing looks like are represented across all texts. This thesis has argued that the language of forgiveness, as dictated by the national ideologies of collective trauma, is more complex than simply forgiving and moving on. This is evident through the multiple depictions and critiques of the TRC narrative represented either overtly or as undercurrents across each text. The representations of mixed-race identity become the critiques of the legacies of colonialism and apartheid through dominant narratives of white heteropatriarchy, regulated by the social constructions of race regulated through societal policing of processes of racialisation, culminating in the reproduction of cycles of intergenerational trauma.

Interlinked with the social dynamics and reproduction of power within social spaces are how power structures are navigated at a personal level. And more specifically, the role of the politics of belonging in the navigation of the spaces in the narrative world. In focusing on how mixed-race characters interacted with other characters, this thesis showed the representation of the intimate level and personal consequences of processes of racial dynamics within mixed-race identity. Across all primary, secondary and tertiary mixed-race characters, representations of how they dealt with finding spaces of belonging or feeling as though they belonged varied, ultimately showing the multidimensionality of mixed-race identity. The mixed-race characters are named by those around them, who reproduce and police racial identity constructions and stereotypes. Through the lens of the tragic mulatta/o trope within the South African context, the mixed-race characters represent the continuation of the "tragedy" of being mixed-race. Expressed in their struggles with their identity, they are characterised by the complexity of both sustaining and overcoming the trope. Contradictory to the US construction of the tragic mulatta/o trope, in the post-apartheid context, none of the mixed-race characters dies, instead the trope is reproduced in how they cut parts of themselves to 'overcome' the 'tragedy' of their mixedness.

While some characters are represented through new versions of the tragic mulatta/o trope, namely the New Millenium Mulatta and the Exceptional Multiracial, overall, they represent the continued existence and insistence of a solid racial identity to navigate the narrative and real world. While across all five literary texts, the characters resist both old and new constructions of this literary trope; they ultimately embody a broader commentary on the state of racial dynamics and processes of racialisation in society. In this way, and through their interactions with other characters, including the mixed-race characters present in their narrative world, they become catalysts for embodying the contradictory nature of the 'progress' of racial

transformation in the post-apartheid context. Ultimately the mixed-race characters, through perceived resistance to these tropes, represent the nationalist narratives of needing to move on from the traumas of the past. This is expressed through each character's 'turning point' moment that shifts them away from the tragic mulatta/o trope in the more positive 'moving on' ending.

In this thesis' analysis of the mixed-race characters' representations within the intersectional structures of political power, across all literary texts, representations of post-apartheid Rainbow Nation nationalist ideology are present. However, all texts challenge this rhetoric where the mixed-race characters become messengers of the political failings and contradictions of the post-apartheid state through their interactions with other characters or inner dialogues with themselves. Regardless, the mixed-race characters represent the multiple opinions on the state of post-apartheid society. However, their very existence within the narrative world, just as within actual society, is their representation as the merging of 'old' and 'new' formations of racialised identities and processes of racialisation. They represent the sustained gendered, racialised and class dynamics of apartheid-era rhetoric mixed with the language of the 'new' South Africa, which has just put a fresh coat of paint over a cracked wall.

Ultimately, the mixed-race characters' intersectional representations differ but remain rooted in the structures of white heteropatriarchy. In the narrative world, the mixed-race characters navigate these power structures, which are rooted in the historical and cultural legacies of the apartheid regime, in ways that highlight their continued existence while representing the ways their mixed-race identity disrupts these structures. However, all literary texts critique the nationalist ideologies that present post-apartheid society as a multiracial utopia, none of the novels provides alternatives to this ideology, and in all endings of the corpus, reproduces the theme of 'moving on'.

Another angle missing across all literary texts is the representation of healthy and loving mixed-race families with reasonably well-adjusted mixed-race children. In this way, the use of mixed-race characters as a tool to understand processes of racialisation in post-apartheid society and to present them as a disruption to the status quo is a convenient position to take as in their very existence; they are divisive to socio-political constructions of racial purity. In some ways, the mixed-race characters should embody the 'new' multiracial/non/racial South Africa, yet their representations are depicted as the very contradiction of this new language. Therefore, mixed-race identity, through mixed-race characters in this corpus, represents the complexity of social, personal and politically shaped intersectional identities that shift within their interactions with various power structures in post-apartheid literature.

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