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The Social Exclusion of Poor Whites

Degree: Research Report in partial fulfilment of MA in Anthropology

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Supervisor: Dr Nosipho Mngomezulu

Plagiarism declaration

I, Thandiwe Ntshinga (student number: 386845), declare that this research report is entirely my own work and has not been submitted previously for any degree at any other University.

University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa 2019.

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Chapter One-Introduction

I entered my fieldsite, East Lynne in Pretoria, with the intention to investigate the social exclusion of poor whites as a continuation of my research in Cape Town where I focused on their rehabilitation and upliftment. My aim was to pay particular attention to inter-generational white Afrikaner poverty which I have found to be overlooked in historical and anthropological literature on poor whites in South Africa. This work has related to my interest in poor whites by examining how by blurring of the race/class divide poor whites ideologically and symbolically expose the fragility of whiteness. Practically, I knew—based on previous experience—that the lived experience of poor whites would most likely be unattainable to me as a lone Black[1] researcher. What I did not anticipate—also based on my previous experience—was the level of hostility towards me in East Lynne. Poor white East Lynne residents did not want me around them. My argument therefore points to the racist nature of white identity in South Africa in the anti-Black narratives on the 'white primitive' (Willoughby-Herard, 2007) and white middle class practices of poor white social exclusion from dominant white society but also, through their everyday use of various racist strategies, poor whites demonstrating a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. Whiteness therefore is not understood here as intrinsic power and prestige, provided, at its first instance, by colonial domination. Instead, I will use Tiffany Willoughby-Herard's 'whiteness as misery' theoretical framework to disturb accomplishment and benefit as whiteness' operative strategy to suggest "whiteness as pathology, whiteness as diminished self-hood, whiteness as soul injury and whiteness as death" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:487). This will be shown in the social exclusion of poor whites as well as in poor whites' racism. The introduction to my discussion of poor whites will be divided into four sections. These sections will include my research motivation, my research on poor whites in Cape Town, the centrality of race and class in South Africa to my research as well as my chapter outline.

[1] I capitalise the 'b' in 'Black' to highlight my positionality as a Black person .

Research motivation

"Poor whites were a threat to the idea of white supremacy in South Africa because they suggested that whiteness in and itself guaranteed nothing. They revealed that whiteness was a sham, a case of false advertising that was believed in by those who had the most to gain from it" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:492).

My decision to research the social exclusion of poor whites is rooted in my interest in the fragility of whiteness. The structural and social violence of white dominance that is continuously felt and experienced by me as a Black person is key to the motivation behind my research. At its core, critical whiteness studies seeks to address the correlation between white superiority, global racial inequalities and racism. I have therefore intentionally chosen to 'reverse the gaze' in anthropology as a contribution to critical whiteness studies within the discipline of anthropology. In Cape Town my attempt at reversing the gaze presented me with what I felt to be a romantic idea of poor whites who were ungrudgingly accepting of 'new' democratic socio-political changes made over their lifetimes that did not benefit them. For Pretoria, I had hoped to move beyond this superficial engagement to find out more about the fragile nature of South African white identity. An identity, unlike that of other racial identities, which cannot withstand poverty. How can something so grand, so superior, crumble at mere associations with poverty? My aim was to bring out how, by blurring the race/class divide, poor whites are symbolic and ideological reminders of the fragility of whiteness "that in and itself guaranteed nothing" which leads to their social exclusion from dominant white society.

Reflecting on my experiences of hostility in East Lynne, I began to realise that although racist views held by poor white people in the United States can be found in literature, this does not necessarily apply to the South African context other than an acknowledgement that poor white people in contemporary South Africa seek as much distance from poor Black people as possible (Wray, 2006; Kruger, 2016). Little has been done to theorise poor white racism and its relationship to the fragility of whiteness. Instead the focus on poor whites has been to position them as an exceptional failure in whiteness causing them to be dispelled from dominant white

society with experiences of stigma, social exclusion, social pain and social death (Sibanda, 2012; Kruger, 2016). Resultant of these attitudes is an argument which is twofold. Not only is the fragility of whiteness exposed by the social exclusion of poor whites, but also, through their everyday use of various racist strategies poor whites demonstrate a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

The positioning of the white race as superior to every other race has challenged my ability to follow the 'study down' ethical approach to research in "contexts characterized by differential access to power and resources" stipulated in Anthropology Southern Africa's (2005) ethical guidelines and principles for conduct for anthropologists. My middle class standing cannot deter from the access to power that my race does not afford me. The seriousness of racism prevents me from viewing my critique on poor whites in East Lynne as unethical. In fact, I question the ethics of these guidelines as they pertain to racism and the vulnerability of Black researchers. Differential access to power and resources is felt acutely by me as a Black female person which played out in the field. With the "oppositional gaze" (hooks, 1992) of a Black female researcher studying whiteness, it were the poor white East Lynne residents themselves who showed me through their hostility, silence and aversion, that a study down ethical approach to Black field research in a white field does not suffice. The gaze of study down approaches do not account for the reverse gaze.

If the "performance of silence draws its power […] from its ambivalent status and location" (MacLure et al., 2010:498), the question then is, how can a Black researcher view their poor white participants as vulnerable if the participants' form of agency is to demonstrate their access to power via racism? To look at poor whites solely as they relate to my class position would only hinder the intersectional scope of analysis in a manner specific to being a Black female researcher and its ability to tease meaning and intention out of silence and hostility.

Ruyterwacht

There is a comparative element in my research between my experiences with poor whites in Ruyterwacht, Cape Town to my experience in East Lynne. The differences between these two poor white areas are stark but also share similarities. Literature on East Lynne appeared non-existent while the history of Ruyterwacht was not difficult to access. Linguistically, poor whites in Cape Town were willing and able to converse in English whilst in Pretoria poor whites were not. Socially, racial mixing was more evident in Ruyterwacht than in East Lynne. Furthermore, the crude racism found in East Lynne differed from the seemingly racially tolerant attitudes of residents in Ruyterwacht. On the other hand both were small areas geographically placed away from white middle class society. In both these poor white areas, there was a prominent elderly and religious presence.

In 2014, I did fieldwork for the completion of my Honours degree in Ruyterwacht, Cape Town. At that particular time my focus was on elderly poor white residents who could give a comparison between the apartheid era and democratic South Africa in exploring the rehabilitation and upliftment of poor whites. My experience in Ruyterwacht was pleasant. This historically poor white area boasted ideas of community, with poverty connecting residents to each other. Participants were polite and receptive to me. Admittedly, many of the participant introductions made to me was through two community leaders—a senior social worker who worked with the elderly as well as my auntie who worked as the local Methodist Church Reverend in the area. The elderly people that I spoke to at my two main fieldsites—Ruyterwacht Methodist Church and Ruyterwacht Old Age Centre—were all very vocal in expressing their grievances about living in democratic South Africa as poor white pensioners. The dominant narrative that proliferated throughout my fieldwork was how the social housing company, Communicare, that owned most of the properties my participants lived in and was once central to the rehabilitation and upliftment of poor whites in Ruyterwacht, had changed to cause hardship to poor white residents. This hardship was due to monthly rental fees that pensioner participants who lived on state pensions were struggling to keep up with, where I argued that the social work institutions in Ruyterwacht are not homogenous and that the institution which initiated the upliftment of poor whites has now left that work to be done by others. The contrast in fieldwork experience

between Ruyterwacht and East Lynne helps to create a comparative analysis of poor white people in my research.

Black on white and class

My research falls into critical whiteness studies (Blaser, 2008, 2012; Blaser & van der Westhuizen, 2012; Christi Kruger 2016; Steyn, 2001, 2004, 2005; Willoughby-Herard 2007, 2015; hooks 1992; Baldwin, 1993, 1998) as a "new social movement that seeks to expose and dismantle the machination of white power" (Steyn, 2004:147). Moreover, it is geared towards the decolonisation of knowledge production through which "there is a relationship between exposing whiteness and decolonizing the imagination of both the oppressed and oppressors" (Steyn, 2004:147). The racist makings of colonialism and apartheid have made for a rigid race/class divide in South African society. I have observed that in the imagination of both the oppressed and oppressors, there is an 'unnaturalness' to white poverty. For the oppressed, the lived reality of systemic racism often makes white poverty incomprehensible. For the oppressors, the superiority of their race is challenged by the presence of poor whites and the cause of their social exclusion. It is important to explicit an Afropessemistic understanding of race/class as valid, however my approach to race and class explores the realm of possibilities offered by Black feminism where "Black women, who in spite of exhaustion and defeat agitate for different horizons of possibility for Black life (for all of us)" (Malaklou & Willoughby-Herard 2018:4). My hope is that the horizon of possibility for Black life that my research incites is one that disrupts Blackness being synonymous with social death and whiteness with power and prestige. What fieldwork revealed to me is that methodological and 'ethical' approaches to fieldwork taught to us as anthropology students is inadequate for those of us who are inclined to the study of whiteness. Coloniality within anthropology continues through fieldwork approaches taught to me in the three South African universities I have attended as an anthropology student (Mafeje, 1997, 1998; Nyamnjoh, 2012). These approaches are void in comprehending relational dynamics between a Black researcher and white research participants. Let alone, when the Black researcher is middle class and the white participants are poor. These methodologies fail to

acknowledge its success due to colonial backing and how without that backing 'hanging out' is not always possible nor safe (Mafeje, 1976, Magubane, 1971).

Following anthropologist Robert Gordon (2013), I had to find a way not to "study "down" or "up" but "around" [..] and reflect how I am influenced by and subject to my research projects" (Gordon, 2013:120) in critical whiteness studies. Without substantial methodological remedies that could have countered racism in my poor white fieldsite, what has been required of me is the analysis of the "strategic performance of the subaltern for whom silence opens up spaces for action that do not have to be spelled out and where solidarity is continuously performed in the pact of silence" (MacLure, 2010:498). Studying 'around' poor whites has meant, for me, paying particular attention to the solidarity performed in hostility of poor whites in the argument that while poor whites may be socially excluded by dominant white society, their everyday use of various racist strategies in East Lynne, demonstrate a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter Outline

The literature reviewed in the second chapter of this research report, *Poor Whites, a Sore Spot in Whiteness' discourse* engages with two broad themes: whiteness and boundary theory. The literature reviewed in this chapter will be divided into the subthemes; critical whiteness studies, South African whiteness, the victimised racist: the processes of Afrikaner identification, white fragility, whiteness disturbed: the Carnegie Commission's investigation into the poor white problem, separating the poor from the Black: creating the 'good' white, the poor white body: a symbolic threat to whiteness and finally, whiteness as misery.

The subthemes I engage with will foreground the 'whiteness as misery' theoretical assertion made by Tiffany Willoughby-Herard (2007). I argue that the misery of whiteness —highlighted by diminished white selfhood, self-hate and internalised racism—is held squarely by those poor and white who obscure the racial boundaries between white and Black leading to their social exclusion, which simultaneously results in their racist defence of these boundaries. Examining these themes through Willoughby-Herard's theoretical framework presents a more nuanced

comprehension of whiteness by incorporating Black political thought paradigms—Black feminism, Black internationalism and the Black radical tradition—into South African critical whiteness studies.

Theories on post-apartheid South African whiteness rely heavily on the contributions made by Melissa Steyn (2001, 2004, 2005, 2008), and will frame how whiteness is understood in the South African context. Literature on white poverty in South Africa appears to not have been of anthropological interest with contributions being scant with notable contributions made by Annika Teppo (2004), Octavia Sibanda (2012) and Christi Kruger (2016). Anthropologically, Teppo makes a significant contribution to research on poor whites in Ruyterwacht with her investigation into the rehabilitation and uplifment of poor whites through the manufacturing of socially acceptable "good whites" prior to the processes of democratisation of the country. Her work remains relevant to this research, especially as it relates to discussions on the poor white body as a symbol of social differentiation during focus groups sessions. Historical contextualisation therefore provides a solid foundation to the analysis of the anti-Black rhetoric attached to poor whites as a symbolic and ideological reminder of the fragility of whiteness and the political engineering that went into addressing, rehabilitating and uplifting this reminder (Duff, 2015; Koorts, 2015; Lange, 2018).

Throughout my ethnographic chapters, DiAngelo's conceptual tool of white fragility will be highlighted as middle class participants explain their intentional distancing from poor white people indicating internalised racism and self-hatred through the defensive behaviour of white fragility in fleeing the racially based stress-inducing situation. Furthermore, my main participant in East Lynne strengthened my observations that poor white racism is not secure but rather expresses whiteness as misery in diminished white selfhood and desperation through their attempts at maintaining the privileges of whiteness that they were once privy to.

In my methodology chapter, *Black in white spaces*, I will discuss the fieldwork methods I used in my mulitsite fieldsite, first at my apartment in Sandton, Johannesburg North, I will introduce the

white middle class Wits anthropology student focus group participants who presented me with narratives on the social exclusion of poor whites and how by blurring of the race/class divide, poor whites are symbolic and ideological reminders of the fragility of whiteness. In East Lynne at the Blue Bottle Liquor Store, the car park outside the liquor store and the local *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* (or N.G. Kerk)/ Dutch Reformed Church, I had to work around "the threat of silence and the necessary failure of analysis" (MacLure, 2020:493) as approaches to participant observation proved limited. From my young Black female researcher perspective in white spaces like my fieldsites, I will hold to my critique on the unaccounted for racial dynamics (regardless of class status) in fieldwork methodologies which limits ethnographic data collection through participant observation. Effectively, by insisting on participant observation as the status quo to anthropological investigation, vulnerability is in Black researchers who are susceptible to being victims of racism. My critique on the limitations of fieldwork approaches will take coloniality within anthropology as the initial point of engagement, where I agree with many of the claims made by Francis Nyamnjoh (2012) in his controversial "attack" on South African anthropology.

You're looking at poor whites? You've come to the right place, begins the detailing of my experience in East Lynne with an introduction of my fieldsites in East Lynne. In East Lynne, I spoke to a number of poor white residents which included car guards, cashiers, a scrap metal collector and his pensioner mother. Central to my fieldwork experience in East Lynne is hostility. Between July 2017 and January 2018 I had continued with the fieldwork methodologies I had used in Ruyterwacht. I tried to interact and 'hang out' with poor white East Lynne residents through informal interviewing, direct observation and collection of life histories. These methods were limited further than initial interaction with people I had hoped would become my participants. Thereafter, people in East Lynne became increasing hostile and therefore unwilling to converse with me. Eventually, one poor white East Lynne resident and local liquor store employee, Hendrika became my main participant. In East Lynne gossip through name dropping was the only technique which yielded any real engagement amongst poor white residents (Murphy, 1985; Van Vleet, 2003; Guerin, 2006). Ethnographically, emotionally and psychologically, hostility was difficult to engage with however theoretically, silence, hostility and

evasion are behaviours which support my argument that the everyday use of various strategies in East Lynne by poor white residents, demonstrates diminished white selfhood as well as a desperate attempt at maintain the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

"That could be me": white fragility behind the social exclusion of poor whites, will be the first of two ethnographic chapters in this research report. In this chapter I will show how I was able to navigate ethnographic data collection on the social exclusion of poor whites by capitalising on my access to white middle class students. The focus groups comprising of middle class and elite white anthropology students at Wits provided a narrative on whiteness in South Africa by young white South Africans in contemporary Johannesburg which justified the social exclusion of poor whites. "That could be me" was repeated as the connection to poverty when confronted briefly by a white beggar. My middle class participants were consumed by fear (as an emotional defensive move in white fragility) of their own possible downward mobility that is generally not considered in the race/class divide. The behavioural response in white fragility in fleeing the racially based stressed-inducing situation outlined by DiAngelo, will be shown in the social exclusion of poor white people by dominant white society. Whiteness as misery through the social distancing of poor whites highlights internalised racism and self-hatred where the social exclusion serves to reinstate racial equilibrium.

Contrasting the family history shared by one focus group participant about her father's upward mobility and the resultant social exclusion of his extended family, my main participant Hendrika provides insight on the lived experience of social exclusion in East Lynne. Hendrika identified micro-aggressions that are experienced regularly by myself and other Black people globally. The anti-Black attitudes towards poor whites assert the notion of whiteness' inability to confront its internalised racism and self-hatred resulting in the social exclusion of poor whites.

The second ethnographic chapter *Racism: Weapon of the Poor White*, discusses everyday racism in the reality of racial diversity in East Lynne. Racism by poor whites in East Lynne is not from a secure position. Drawing on the works of Cornel Verwey and Michael Qualye (2012), and Melissa

Steyn (2005, 2008), I highlight literature specific to the distinct 'existential crisis' of Afrikaner identity to show how poor whites' everyday use of various racist strategies in East Lynne are aggressive illustrations of racial and ethnic insecurities and anxieties. I will show how the threat of Black upward mobility and Black political power result in a number of racist strategies to reconcile poor whites inability to distance themselves from the internalised racism and self-hatred that causes their exclusion from dominant white society. Poor white racism is therefore a reflection of diminished white selfhood. In this chapter, I look directly at poor white racism, the makings of this racism and the racist strategies, particularly through 'trash talk' and language tensions, of poor whites in East Lynne.

In my concluding chapter, I bring together the arguments from preceding chapters to demonstrate the significance of this research. My key findings highlight the fragility of whiteness through the social exclusion of poor whites and the gap in literature on poor whites' racism. This is demonstrated in anti-Black practices towards poor whites by dominant white society. Additionally, the fragility of whiteness reveals itself in relation to poor whites through their use of everyday racist strategies in post-apartheid South Africa. My conclusion will also provide advice for Black researchers interested in reversing the gaze in anthropology.

Chapter Two–Poor Whites: A Sore Spot in Whiteness' Discourse

In addressing the significance of poor whites to whiteness ideology and their social exclusion, my literature review will revolve around two broad thematic approaches; namely critical whiteness studies (Steyn, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2008; Willoughby-Herard, 2007, 2015) and boundary theory (Teppo, 2004; Wray 2006). Boundary theory relates to whiteness as a boundary marker; how poor whites blur the race/ class divide by being both poor and white as well as how this transgression exposes the fragility of whiteness (Douglas, 1990, 2003; Teppo, 2004; Wray, 2006). Literature on whiteness, particularly in the South African context, highlights that with South Africa's history of white dominance, South African whiteness—which fashioned the country's race/class divide—has not been 'unmarked' as suggested in traditional whiteness studies (Blaser & van der Westerhuizen 2012; Steyn, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2008; Frankenberg, 1996, 2004; Rasmussen 2001; Samson, 2005). The discourse on whiteness in South Africa has violently positioned white people as being inherently racially superior in every aspect of social life. The prolific Carnegie Commission investigation into the poor white question is the dramatic international intervention at addressing the concern of white poverty in South Africa. The 'question' of poor whites points directly to my argument that poor whites are a reminder of how delicate assumptions of whiteness are where rehabilitative measures to uplift poor whites became an official component of the nationalist agenda at the time. Within boundary theory, the body as a symbol of social differentiation will be pronounced with the pathologisation of the poor white body (Teppo, 2004; Willoughby-Herard, 2007) representing the transgression of moral and social boundaries that expose the falsehood of white superiority. Ethnographies on poor whites—by white researchers or with white assistance—provide insight on poor whites and their lived experience which I was denied (Kruger, 2016; Sibanda, 2012). Empirical data on poor whites highlight the significance of poor whites as symbolic reminders of the fragility of the whiteness through their stigmatisation and social exclusion however meanings behind poor white racism have not been wholly articulated. There is a general acknowledgment that poor whites seek a distance from association with (Black) poverty as a display of 'good' whiteness—whilst in turn affluent white people distance themselves from poor whites—and yet none of this distancing has been proposed as racist (Teppo, 2004; Sibanda, 2012; Kruger, 2016). The question

then is, what does racism demonstrated by poor whites say about whiteness and white identity? I argue that whilst being excluded by dominant South African whiteness, in a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa, the everyday use of various racist strategies employed by poor whites demonstrate a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa—indicating whiteness not as power and prestige but as diminished white selfhood in whiteness as misery.

The literature reviewed in this chapter will be divided into the subthemes; critical whiteness studies, South African whiteness, the victimised racist: Afrikaner identity, white fragility, whiteness disturbed: the Carnegie Commission's investigation into the poor white problem, separating the poor from the Black: creating the 'good' white , the symbolic threat of the poor white body and finally, whiteness as misery. The discussions under these subthemes will explicit the argument that while poor whites are socially excluded from dominant white society as a result of them being reminders of the fragility of whiteness, the racism of poor whites in East Lynne demonstrate a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa .

Critical Whiteness Studies

"Whiteness has been an important part of the constitution of the social sciences, so if we are concerned with decolonising knowledge production practices and with decolonising knowledge, having a proper account of whiteness is imperative" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:480).

My work on poor whites fits into the postcolonial agenda of critical whiteness studies with the intention to dismantle whiteness, white superiority and the mechanisms of white power as anti-racial activism (Steyn, 2004). My research in critical whiteness is both theoretical and empirical, with my fieldwork attempts at reversing the gaze and taking white people as the subject for analysis. Superficially sense, poor whites seem to reveal the fragility of whiteness by being poor and white however a deeper investigation into the claims of whiteness show the fragility of whiteness in the social exclusion of poor whites and in the racist attitudes of poor whites.

Critical whiteness studies has been a growing field in academia since the early 1990s after Richard Dyer's (1988) examination of the representation and preservation of whiteness in western visual culture which "functions around comfort, convenience, affirmation, solidarity, psychological well-being, advantage and advancements of whites" (Steyn, 2004:144). In social sciences, the preoccupation with the 'other' has been well cited (Mafeje, 1997, 1998; McGrane, 1989; Nyamnjoh, 2012; Restrepo & Escobar, 2005) which has called for a growing recognition that a critical race approach to analysis "stresses the importance of turning the dissection knife to the invisible centre from whence white power (still) emanates" (Blaser & van der Westerhuizen, 2012:383). Critical whiteness studies is therefore set in the postcolonial agenda, as a member of anti-racist activism and practice, with the objective to dismantle white power for "those who do not want to be stuck with the heritage of whiteness to access more democratic and self-respecting subject positions" (Steyn, 2004:146). Critical whiteness studies entails a commitment to analysis and theoretical debates on racism and how it is "intrinsically interconnected with other forms of social division" (Steyn, 2004:147). Undoubtedly there is a racialisation to poverty and the race/class divide, by focusing on the social exclusion of poor whites and the racism that accompanied my engagement with poor whites, I enter a theoretical debate on whiteness that does not take whiteness as homogenous and inherently superior.

South African whiteness

The fundamental significance of poor whites is how they disrupt South African formations of white identity. An analysis of South African whiteness is therefore essential to the argument that by blurring the race/class divide, poor whites are symbolic reminders of the fragility of the whiteness ideology which also leads to their social exclusion from the white middle class. The theoretical engagement with South African whiteness, the social exclusion of poor whites as well as the racist strategies employed by poor whites in East Lynne show racism being intrinsic to formations of South African whiteness

Melissa Steyn (2001, 2004, 2008), South African sociologist, is exemplary in her contributions to critical whiteness studies in her discourse analysis of South African white identity. Her research analyses 'resistant white discourses' of 'white talk' employed by white South Africans in order to

maintain their privilege against Black political power (Steyn, 2001, 2004). During my fieldwork the discourses of white talk were reoccurring. For both the white middle class and working class, fear was associated with being white in democratic South Africa. I argue that this fear and resistance to anti-racial democratic transition not only results in the social exclusion of poor whites who symbolise this transition but also causes poor whites to employ various racist strategies, demonstrating a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Processes of identification have allowed for white South Africans to view privilege as normal and appropriate within the country's borders (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). This is being challenged as white South Africans are confronted with Black political power in post-apartheid democratic South Africa. Feeling threatened by political transformation, white South Africans struggle to maintain their privilege without the political protection of colonialism and apartheid—a privilege which has become anchored in white South African identification practices. White talk therefore refers to two whiteness discourses in two newspapers the *New South Africa* and *White Ululation,* which are propelled around common themes, attitudes and opinions, revealing "how the representations were part of a struggle to manage the politics of their locations" (Steyn & Foster, 2008:28). These representations play between power and victimhood and were at play during my fieldwork. Be them middle class or working class, white participants were not ignorant to how South African whiteness has been articulated around power and prestige. Furthermore, these white South Africans expressed entitlement through a perceived loss of esteem with Black political power in the post-apartheid era.

"No matter how genuine a liberal's motivations may be, he has to accept that, though he did not chose to be born in privilege, the blacks cannot but be suspicious of his motives" (Biko, 1978:66).

The dawn of democracy and the lifting of cultural and economic sanctions have required a reformation in South African whiteness' discourse into one that fits that of the global neoliberal community. The *New South Africa Speak* is therefore analysed as representing white liberal views in the country characterised by politically correct neoliberal rhetoric. Following politically correct ideas on racism and white prestige, white liberal rhetoric articulated

discourses/narratives around themes stemming from non-racialism and democratic principles. The left-wing non-racial/colour-blind stance is crafty within dominant white discourses as it is powerful in "building white consensus" (Steyn & Foster, 2008:29) whilst simultaneously reproducing racism. By refusing to acknowledge the very real effects of racialisation—"a trademark of whiteness" (Steyn & Foster 2008: 3)—white South Africans are able to position themselves as carrying equal moral accountability in the country's modern democratic society (Steyn & Foster, 2008:3). Although I agree with the argument made by Steyn here, my participants did not propose a colour-blind stance to the race/class divide. All my participants acknowledged—albeit, to vary degrees—the racist history of South African whiteness that allowed for the anchoring of the race/class divide which poor whites obscure. My observations may not have pointed me directly to the discourses analysed by Steyn however as Biko notes above, I as a Black person, am suspicious of the motivation behind white liberals' acknowledgement of "white privilege". I see the acknowledgment of white privilege as a more evolved example of white talk in 2017 and 2018.

Currently, in the white liberal "political dogma that all groups opposing the status quo must necessarily be non-racial in structure" (Biko, 1978:64) there has been a move of acknowledging the privileges of whiteness deemed invisible under the term "white privilege". As white liberals "continue with their work of "fighting for the rights of the black" (Biko, 1979:64) echoing what Black people have been saying about racial inequality in society, an acknowledgment of white privilege is required in a democratic non-racial society. Social media debates have been ablaze with vehement white opposition (seen in the second resistant discourse of white talk discussed below) with a comment by a white man to my white friend's post on white privilege stating "I'm not sipping from that white guilt kool aid". At Wits, I found that with white students being the minority in my Masters class and from the racial tension stemming from the #FeesMustFall protests (which will be discussed in Chapter 6) as well as what I heard about the anthropology department's involvement in the student protest, an admittance of white privilege was expected. It was almost necessary for white survival on campus. Without this self-admittance, white students were vulnerable to attack by fellow classmates and academic staff alike, regardless of race. Be it on campus, on social media or in conversation with self-identified white

liberals, I have regularly found the use of white privilege void of any real sentiment or emotional attachment. I view its use as a superficial attempt at carrying moral accountability in contemporary South Africa where notions of colour-blindness cannot always hold.

The victimised racist: processes of Afrikaner identification

> *"The tropes employed to construct the New South Africa in […] white talk are not significantly different from those employed by their English speaking compatriots, but they are generally employed more explicitly and bluntly"* (Steyn, 2004:155).

The relationship between racism and process of Afrikaner identification is central to understanding the racism I experienced, as an English speaking middle class Black person, during my fieldwork. Engaging theoretically with the argument that the everyday use of various racist strategies is a demonstration, by poor whites, of a desperate attempt at the maintenance of privilege in post-apartheid South Africa, I take into account the resistant subaltern whiteness—"whiteness that may have shifted over time but has generally remained prey to another dominant white discourse" (Steyn, 2004:148)—in Afrikaner identity which positions Afrikaners as victims, first to British political and economic power and then currently to Black political power, and their aggressive racism towards Black people as a reflection of ethnic insecurities.

White tribalism or the "intra-white rivalry" (Steyn, 2004:147) between English and Afrikaans white South Africans has shaped and co-constructed the two prominent whiteness discourses discussed by Steyn. The second discourse discussed as white talk is a resistant whiteness represented by *White Ululation*. This paper rallies the support of conservative right wing whites where white consciousness is hardened around blatant self-interest for the continuation of white supremacy. In a time when overt notions of white supremacy are condemned, this discourse's "process of conservative restoration" (Steyn, 2004:148) is aggressive in fuelling emotions of threatened selfhood behind maintaining colonial social order as necessary and optimal. This discourse fits into the subaltern whiteness (Steyn, 2004; Blaser & van der Westerhuizen, 2012) of Afrikaans identity which has historically and continually been framed around notions of victimhood. Cornel Verwey and Michael Quayle (2012) extend this conservative discourse analysis in backstage Afrikaner 'braai talk'. Braai talk therefore refers to

the private overt racist sentiments held in 'disgraced' (Steyn, 2004) Afrikaner identity, as opposed to public 'aversive racism' coined by (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). Aversive racism points to the contradiction between whiteness' global neoliberal rhetoric of equality, fairness and justice, despite continuing racial injustices.

American psychologists John F. Dovidio and Samuel L. Gaertner (2004) coined the term 'aversive racism' in their study on white people's orientation towards Black people in the United States of America where aversive racism provides a framework to illuminate the "conflict between whites' denial of personal prejudice and underlying unconscious negative feelings towards and beliefs about blacks" (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004:4). In the South African context, I disagree with the assertion that aversive racism is 'unconscious' where "aversive racists truly aspire to be non-prejudiced" (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004:5). Following Steyn, I argue that aversive racism is the safest display of racism under global neoliberal expectations. Aversive racism in South Africa is the result not of true egalitarian attitudes but as a result of democratic transition. In East Lynne, braai talk was explained to me as 'trash talk' by Hendrika as an example of poor whites' everyday use of various racist strategies in attempts to hold privilege. Furthermore, the subaltern whiteness of Afrikaners brings forth the notion of the "racism for beginners" (Steyn, 2004) evident in the more overt racist strategies in East Lynne, Pretoria which differed from my experience of "more indirect strategies in the discourses of their [English speaking] compatriots" (Steyn, 2004:156) in the predominantly English speaking city of Cape Town.

White fragility

White talk comes with it a lens to which one can understand the fragility of whiteness—based on assumed supremacy—in post-apartheid South Africa. Whether projected along left or right wing perspectives, the end result remains the same. Failing to come to terms with Black political power, resistant whiteness discourses reveal that feelings of the loss of entitlement, fundamental to white identity, has accumulated into the performance of victimised white South African identification. The discourses of white talk serve as the proliferation of what Ribon DiAngelo (2011) terms the state of 'white fragility'. White fragility is defined as "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive

moves" (DiAngelo, 2011:54). These defensive moves include emotions such as anger, guilt and fear as well as behaviours including silence, argumentation and fleeing the stress-inducing situation. Throughout my fieldwork the idea of white fragility, represented symbolically through poor white people, was pronounced. Both middle and working class participants spoke on how Black political power and resultant affirmative policies directed at addressing racial injustices have created a state of what my Wits participants termed 'white anxiety'.

White Wits students and Hendrika all spoke to me about white fragility as white anxiety in contemporary South Africa. In East Lynne, poor whites were said by Hendrika to be fearful of their existence due to Black political power with their silence signifying a behavioural defensive reaction to the racial stress my presence provided. As a reminder of the fragility of whiteness all the defensive moves of middle class towards poor whites such as anger as well as fleeing the stress-inducing situation, which I propose as the social distancing from white poverty and poor whites. White fragility is therefore shown in the argument that the social exclusion of poor whites is an outcome of poor whites being a symbolic reminder of the fragility of whiteness and that the behaviours and defensive moves employed by poor whites in East Lynne demonstrate a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Whiteness disturbed: The Carnegie Commission investigation into the Poor White Problem

"Critical whiteness studies must track the institutional and professional investments in the creation of white supremacy and white nationalism through various colonial relations across geographical and territorial space" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:479).

The Poor White Problem in South Africa: Report of the Carnegie Commission is a political report investing white poverty as a social ill and the "causes, remedies and preventative measures" (Albertyn et al, 1932:v) required to address the issue of poor whites. Divided into five sections the Carnegie Commission delved into the economic, psychological, health and sociological aspects of white poverty. Knowledge gathered by the Commission shadowed a pro-Afrikaner discourse which echoed the morals of the Dutch Reformed Church and the then fashionable scientific rhetoric of eugenics and scientific racism (Willoughby-Herard, 2007). The *Poor White*

Study was the first in depth study commissioned to examine the issue of white poverty in South Africa and the problem poor whites caused in global whiteness ideology which also served as the "lynchpin to the political consolidation of Afrikaner Nationalism" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:480) during the grand apartheid era between 1948 and 1994. The international intervention into white poverty through the Carnegie Commission shows the challenge of poor whites to whiteness by being symbolic reminders of the fragility of whiteness. I also argue that the recommendations, discourses and interventions of the Carnegie Commission to uplift and rehabilitate poor whites in the display of good whiteness can be seen through the everyday use of various racist strategies in East Lynne.

The Carnegie Commission poor white study was one which revolved around scientific and sociological causes and fact-finding. Seen as descendants of agriculturalists, poor whites were also denoted by their economic condition as poor bywoners (farm land tenants). Data collected, mainly by intrusive questionnaires, covered 49,434 families in their homes, asserted that the issue of white poverty was not to be understood as an isolated phenomenon but rather as an effect of structural factors of industrialisation in the 1920s. This then framed poor whites as the visible social cost of South Africa's industrialisation (Willoughby-Herard, 2007). Scientific racism catapulted white poverty as a result of hereditary degeneration. Thus ,the commissioners paid particular attention to those poor whites with "subnormal intelligence" fearing that "substandard parents […] were breeding lazy and criminal poor whites and their high fertility rates threatened the very survival of Europeans" (Bottomley, 2012:113). From as early as 1870 this placed poor white children as a focal in the rehabilitation and upliftment of poor whites (Duff, 2011). By targeting children, religious, work and family ideals where instilled through complex networks of educational and religious institutions to curb the effect of perceived substandard parenting of poor whites. In East Lynne, the focus on poor white children can still be felt with prominence of schools in the area. Additionally, there are a couple of specialised schools for Afrikaans children with learning and physical disabilities. The placement of these schools in East Lynne points to the distancing of 'subnormal intelligence' from white society, underpinning the social exclusion and distance of poor whites from dominant white society. To

add to that, Chapter Six will show continuation on the focus on children with Black schoolchildren in East Lynne being a specific target of poor white racism.

In regards to critical whiteness studies and the political and theoretical significance of the Carnegie Commission study of the Poor White Problem, Tiffany Willoughby-Herard (2007) stresses the need of analysing the scientific racism rhetoric in processes and policies behind the pathologising of poor whites. This analysis provides richer theoretical engagement in explaining "the perverseness of racial ideology across class in South Africa through attention to one category of white others" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:481) which continues to lead to the social exclusion of poor whites from dominant white society. I will continue with a deeper discussion on interventions of the Poor White Study as the 'political origin story of the racialization of poverty' (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:482) made by Willoughby-Herard under the Whiteness as misery subtheme and how her political analysis of the Poor White Study strengthens my argument that by blurring the race/class divide, poor whites are not only symbolic reminders of the fragility of whiteness ideology but also, through their everyday use of various racist strategies, poor whites demonstrate a desperate attempt at maintain the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

To further locate poor whites into South African history, I will also look into historical works such as Lindie Koorts' *'The Black Peril would not exist if it were not for a White Peril that is a hundred times greater': D.F. Malan's Fluidity on Poor Whiteism and Race in the Pre-Apartheid Era, 1912–1939* as well as Colin Bundy's *Vagabond Hollanders and runaway Englishmen: white poverty in the Cape before poor whiteism.*

Separating the poor from the Black: creating the 'good' white

"A key insight is provided by thinking of the intense scrutiny of poor whites as a civilising mission that had the political goal of eliminating them as a distinctive community of whites who were also members of racially integrated urban areas and racially integrated families and households" (Willougbhy-Herard, 2007:494).

I see the need for the Carnegie Commission's Poor White Study to have confronted its proposers with uncomfortable truths about the mythology of whiteness and white superiority which needed to be pacified. In order to legitimise and maintain the inaccuracies of white superiority, recommendations were made to rehabilitate and uplift poor whites from poverty. These interventions for white people living in poverty made it clear that addressing poverty was foremost when it came to white people in order to justify white supremacy. These recommendations included preferential employment for white unskilled workers in urban areas as well as anti-Black practices such as forced removals in racially segregated housing and sterilisation. Both Ruyterwacht and, presumably, East Lynne are examples of the Carnegie Commission's recommendations of poor white areas.

In the Western Cape, the area of Ruyterwacht, formally known as Epping Garden Village, is one example of the implementation of such a racially segregated housing project as proposed by the Carnegie Commission. This was due to the fear of miscegenation due to poor whites' closer geographic and economic proximity to Black people's designated poverty. To rehabilitate and uplift poor whites from the possibility of racial mixing, segregated housing projects included houses with yards with the idea of self-sufficiency through gardening and the personal production of household crops. Scandinavian anthropologist Annika Teppo (2004) provides an historical ethnography on the "social construction of the white identity and the category white" (Teppo, 2004:13) in Ruyterwacht. Focusing on the methods, processes and discourses used to turn poor whites into 'good whites'—whites who are socially acceptable—, Teppo looks into the lived experience of poor whites as they underwent this process of rehabilitation and upliftment. She does this by studying the production of social and racial categories. Teppo's work is central to understanding how the idea of "good white"—people identified as embodying socially acceptable forms of white habitus—was foregrounded in the state's interventions in Ruyterwacht. It is important to note that with Cape Town being predominately English and Johannesburg more Afrikaans-oriented, "in the process of making good whites any ethnic differences between whites were underplayed" (Teppo, 2004:15). While Kruger uses Teppo in her analysis of white squatters' display of good whiteness to distinguish themselves from Black squatters as a means of receiving charitable support from white conservatives, I argue that the

anti-Black makings of socially acceptable good whites in poor white areas during apartheid in its methods, discourses and processes continue in the daily use of various racist strategies by poor whites as an attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Despite the extensive scope of the commission, unlike Ruyterwacht, East Lynne's history as a housing project is not as well documented. Information at the Tshwane Community Library and Information Services yielded an unimpressive English search result of a three sentence paragraph compiled by the Historical Consultation Service (HSRC) in 1991 which read as follows: Transvaal township on the district of Pretoria, established on the farm of Derdepoort, a few km east of the city. It was incorporated into Greater Pretoria on 1 July 1964. Lynne East is the name of the local post office. Population (1960): White 2,166; Coloured 14, Bantu 150.

Online, the most recent Census data of East Lynne was from 2011. In 2011, East Lynne had a population of 6400 people which was 50.02% female and 49.98% male. Racially, 65.98% were white people, 22.66% Black people, 9.88% coloured people and 0.70% Indian or Asian people. 71.46% of the population in East Lynne were first language Afrikaans speakers, for 8.92% English was their first language and 3.81% were first language Sepedi speakers. Considering the great lengths and historical significance of the Carnegie Commission as well as its role in the rehabilitation and upliftment of poor whites I was amazed at how little had been documented on East Lynne as a poor white housing project. That said, I found that the methods, processes and discourses of the upliftment and rehabilitation of poor whites analysed by Teppo in Ruyterwacht are applicable in East Lynne—pronounced by their everyday use of various racist strategies.

The poor white body: a symbolic threat to whiteness

"Lazy, unprogressive and incredibly dirty" (Lange, 2003:27) are sentiments held by white middle class people from as early as the 1900s. Poor whites have long endured contempt and obloquy by dominant white society including the recognition of the poor white body as a symbol of social differentiation. Compounding literature with empirical data I collected during my fieldwork, discussions on the poor white body reiterated historic discourses on poor whites transgressing moral boundaries by blurring the race/class divide. My argument is therefore made clear that by

blurring this divide, poor whites are a symbolic reminder of the fragility of whiteness that leads to their social exclusion from dominant white society.

The body as both a symbol for social differentiation and social cohesion is stressed to highlight the significance of poor whites to whiteness, both in literature and amongst white Wits students. Empirically, Teppo's thesis deals with a number of rehabilitation measures pertaining to a multitude of areas in the lives of Ruyterwacht's poor white residents. Drawing on theories of embodiment by Mary Douglas (1990, 2003), Teppo argues that the body should be seen as something that is controlled and shaped by culture. Teppo's use of social boundaries is employed to analyse the changes in the social structure of Ruyterwacht, as well as the boundaries and differentiation of the area's "social and racial categories, their boundaries and their differentiation" (Teppo, 2004:20). Additionally Teppo's thesis analyses "the interplay between the maintenance of social identity, its categorised boundaries in the larger South African White society and local, embodied poor white experience" (Teppo, 2004:20). The poor white body became a topic of discussion in my focus groups to provide colourful data on feelings of anxiety, disdain and disgust towards poor white people. Historic accounts were echoed in my participants' discourses on poor whites whilst also being precise in descriptions of the poor white body as a symbol of social differentiation. This differentiation in turn contributes to the social exclusion of poor whites.

Whiteness as misery

> *"White selfhood then [during apartheid] and now […] has not reconciled itself to the requirements and possibilities of economically just, anti-racist, pro-human selfhood"*
> (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:482-483).

In understanding the social exclusion of poor whites and the racist strategies employed by poor whites in East Lynne, I build on Black political thought in the 'whiteness as misery' argument made by Tiffany Willoughby-Herard (2007). The whiteness as misery claim requires an "open-mind" (Steyn, 2004:147), in that Willoughby-Herard questions whiteness as accomplishment or benefit to rather understand "white supremacy as being anti-human in the sense that it creates devastation and premature death for those

designated as non-white and for those designated after long processes of dehumanisation as white" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:488). By rejecting the notion of power as whiteness' operative strategy, Willoughby-Herard suggests an articulation of whiteness as pathology, diminished selfhood, soul injury and death through her analysis of the language of scientific racism in the Poor White Study and its interventions. Incorporating this theoretical framework anchors my research by dismantling whiteness where whiteness is not synonymous to power and that the historic domination of whiteness is a by-product of racial insecurity. It is this insecurity and misery which, by blurring the race/class divide, leads to the social exclusion of poor whites. Furthermore, the various racist strategies of poor whites in East Lynne as an attempt at maintain the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa provides empirical data on the diminished selfhood, soul injury and death in white identity.

In *South Africa's Poor Whites and Whiteness Studies: Afrikaner Ethnicity, Scientific Racism, and White Misery,* Tiffany Willoughby-Herard takes Black radical tradition, Black feminism and Black internationalism to provide a critique on the general political motivations and theoretically limited evaluations of the Carnegie Commission within critical whiteness studies. Willoughby-Herard analyses, through eugenics rhetoric of the Carnegie Commission, the relationship between critical whiteness studies, Afrikaner nationalism and South African poor whites to suggest that "racism targeting non-Europeans was first enacted in rehearsals—enduringly re-enacted—through racial hierarchy embodied amongst Europeans" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:485). With the intention to complicate whiteness studies, Willoughby-Herard takes into account those whites pathologised as not being 'completely white'. The anti-Black pathologisation of poor whites involved campaigns to protect white civilisation through the eugenics movement, leading to the rehabilitative measure of sterilisation, forced home removals, metal testing and detentions show "misery, punishment, torture, public humiliation and racial demonisation" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:485). Turning away from narratives of 'absolution', known in literature as the sympathetic post-Apartheid discursive idea of white victimhood, Willoughby-Herard describes the threat of poor whites to whiteness as "evidence that white civilisation is vulnerable to internal disintegration and degeneration" (Willoughby-

Herard, 2007:485) to explain diminished white selfhood, self-hatred and internalised racism. Rejecting whiteness studies' assertion that whiteness gives rise to an inherent racial privilege where poor whites serve as an extraordinary exception to the rule, Willoughby-Herard introduces the idea of whiteness being misery. It is the refusal of power as whiteness 'operative strategy which allows for the argument that the social exclusion of poor whites begins with internalised racism and self-hatred. Willoughby-Herard's contribution is thus central to the argument of this research report, as it demonstrates the need to interpret the threat of poor white as more than an exception, but a function of the an anti-Black order masquerading as poverty alleviation. Following the argument made that "racism, in its first and last instance, […], is about controlling white people, reinforcing an amoral self-abnegation and attenuating moral accountability in order to exact compliance with the administrative, ideological and material annihilation of whites and non-whites" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:486), the anti-Black order can be seen as evident in the social exclusion of poor whites from dominant white society as well as in poor whites' everyday use of racist strategies which is a demonstration of diminished white selfhood.

Whiteness as misery and diminishing white selfhood can be seen empirically by South African anthropologist Christi Kruger (2016) who shows how poor whites navigated the burden of being white in post- apartheid South Africa. Humiliated by having reached the same levels of depravity historically assigned to Black people, the white residents of informal settlement King Edward Park in Krugersdorp rejected self-identification with other (Black) informal settlers. Simultaneous to the rejection of a squatter identification is an awareness that this rejection could also close off much needed state assistance and the inclusion of poor whites in "national discourses on poverty, housing and social security" (Kruger, 2016:53). Marked by whiteness and shackled by whiteness' notion of racial superiority, the Park's residents distance themselves from the stigma of white poverty through the relational idea of *white* squatters. Burdened by threatening what it means to be white (as well as poor) in South Africa, poorer whites' performance of good whiteness highlights their forced, if not superficial, sense of belonging and inclusion in South African whiteness. I contend that in East Lynne, the performance of good whiteness was through the everyday use of various racist strategies.

Kruger provides an ethnographic account of the lived experience of '"poorer" whites in King Edward Park, as they "make sense of their socio-economic position in relation to their own perceived whiteness" (Kruger, 2016:53). Like all ethnographies on white South Africans by white researchers, Kruger's article, based on 11 months fieldwork between September 2013 and July 2014, allows for a better understanding of the lived experience of poor whites which I have been unable to access. Kruger found a construction of whiteness which mimicked discourses "that [were] subscribed to by poorer Afrikaners in the 1930s" (Kruger, 2016:46) as a way of distinguishing themselves from other, Black squatters (Kruger, 2016:46). Citing Melissa Steyn's definition of whiteness as "an ideologically supported social positionality" (Kruger, 2016:47), structuring economic and political advantage has been designated to people of European descent. Differentiating her argument from Steyn (2005), Kruger stresses the importance of distinguishing between whiteness as an ideology which offers certain privileges to white people and being considered white as a racial category. In King Edward Park, reflecting the historical practices of the rehabilitation and upliftment of poor whites as recommended by the Carnegie Commission, white squatters performed a display of whiteness particularly through the home. With the expectation to "stay white and to live white" (Kruger, 2016:49), white homes were constructed and presented in a manner which accents the "(perceived) unnatural presence of whites in an informal settlement" (Kruger, 2016: 53) where those who did not adhere to the good whiteness' unspoken values were expelled to the outskirts of the Park (Kruger, 2016:46-53). The intra-poor white social exclusion is remarkable as a strategy of demonstrating esteemed whiteness. By not adhering to white expectations I will show how the social exclusion of poor whites is perpetuated by the middle class and poor whites alike. Additionally, I will show that in order to stay and live white, poor whites used racism as forced inclusion into dominant white society.

American sociologist Matt Wray (2006) unpacks and deconstructs the label 'white trash' a term seen as an insulting slur and a term of abuse used in the United States in reference to poor white people. White trash conjures up images of poor, ignorant and racist whites who are stigmatised by fitting this stereotypical label (Wray, 2006). White trash, he shows, is a provocative term which gives rise to tensions in structural antinomies amongst white people as well as between

them and other races. White trash refers to poor white American people who are positioned or who go against and threaten symbolic and social order. These people, who are considered to be white, are regarded in terms of trash sentiments of "disgust, contempt and anger" (Wray, 2006:2) cumulating into their social exclusion from dominant white society. In that sense, the term is synonymous within the South African context and has the same social connotations, to 'poor whites'. The labels, and with the categorisation 'white trash' and 'poor whites' also signify another tension—one between race and class, two categories that appear to be competitive in nature in social analysis. This is seen with the breaking up of the terms—'white' being an ethnoracial signifier and 'trash/poor' "signifying an abject class status" (Wray, 2006:3). In the South African sense 'white' is an Afrikaner ethnoracial signifier in white poverty. White trash and 'poor white' are therefore more than racial slurs. They are also terms with profound effects on whiteness, giving name to these symbolic reminders of the unjustifiable assertions of white superiority. Wray observes that the approach in whiteness studies which "takes as its subject the historical development and contemporary nature of the white skin privilege" (Wray, 2006:3) but fails to provide a concrete analysis of white poverty.

Wray's book has two major goals in its contribution to whiteness studies'—conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches. Wray explores a new theoretical possibility for accounting for domination and social inequality. Instead of treating the "Big Four" (Wray 2006:4)—gender, class, race and sexuality—as distinct modal categories, Wray proposes that these categories be treated as interrelated "sub processes of a single, larger process of social differentiation" (Wray 2006:5). Methodologically, he seeks to reconceptualise whiteness as a boundary marker by "documenting and analysing interactions and processes common to all modes of social differentiation" (Wray 2006:6), a process which, he suggests, allows for a greater methodological focus on social difference and social differentiation. This is important because it allows one to disassociate whiteness from privilege. Wray cites boundary theory as the best analytical tool he found for his analysis. Mary Douglas (2003, 1990) and Sally Gaule (2001) also contribute to the methodological focus of boundary and social differentiation.

Strikingly, although white South Africans are a minority in the county, white supremacy is experienced in ways that parallel those by the white majority in the United States which

simultaneously makes for contestation around the term 'poor white' itself. Due to colonial workings, the race/class divide was established in favour of the white settler minority. Poor whites are therefore poor in relation to the dominant white middle class and not in absolute terms. Effectively, because affluence was designed for white people, 'poor whites' refer to 'poorer whites' (Kruger, 2016). In the field, I was told by my main poor white participant, Hendrika, that there was an acknowledgement that white poverty could not be equated to poverty which is overwhelmingly experienced by Black people. White poverty therefore was proposed as a "mentality" by being told that they were poor in comparison to socially acceptable white people, more than a true indication of dire economic conditions. The study of whiteness has contributed to the understanding of privilege and inequality in society by focusing on those regarded as privileged. Poor whites, however, destabilise this assumption and their resultant social distancing can be seen as a means of stabilising this assumption. Poor whites can also be seen to stabilise this assumption through the use of various racist strategies daily. It is important to note here that my use of the term 'poor white' is one that distances itself from viewing the signifier 'poor' as derogatory and unacceptable in relation to whiteness. Indeed, Kruger's use of 'poorer' whites reflects that white poverty is not equitable to Black poverty in holding benefits from privileges of whiteness, however my use of 'poor whites' is propelled around anti-racist and democratic ideals which does not see white people as immune to situations of poverty. For me, as a social category, poor whites are not an exceptional failure in whiteness but show anti-racism in that white people (regardless of efforts to assert otherwise) like every other race can be poor. The strength in analysis is therefore in highlighting how the term 'poor white' signifies a tension between race and class and how associations with the signifier 'poor' is an insult which disrupts white selfhood in a way that does not apply to other races.

The social exclusion of poor whites is a result of their challenge and threat to South African formations of white identity. This exclusion and the failure of poor whites to adhere to white expectations can be seen to be internalised and projected onto those who are also not members of the white middle class. In this literature review I have discussed critical whiteness studies as a field with the objective of decolonising knowledge production and dismantling whiteness. American theorists Willoughby-Heard and Wray argue to expand assertions of whiteness based

on power, privilege and prestige with an inclusion of poor white analysis. Whiteness as misery, based on the rehabilitative measure to uplift poor whites, can be seen empirically amongst poor whites in East Lynne and discourses on whiteness by white Wits students. Through the Carnegie Commission, efforts to uplift poor whites explicit how poor whites were understood then as exposing the fragility of whiteness with particular attention to how the poor white body continues as a symbol of social differentiation. Additionally, attempts at displaying good whiteness results in strategies to distance themselves from poverty by the white middle class and poor whites themselves.

In the next chapter, I will cover the fieldwork methodologies I attempted in Pretoria as well as in Johannesburg. I will also describe my multisited fieldsite in East Lynne. In East Lynne I spoke to a number of white car guards, white female tellers at the local liquor store, a white male scrap collector and his pensioner mother to find out more on the lived experience of poor whites. I will also introduce the white middle class participants who, in focus groups, revealed more on the dominant discourse on poor whites which leads to the social exclusion of poor whites from dominant white society.

Chapter Three-Black in white spaces

In this chapter, I examine the process of undertaking fieldwork amongst poor whites in East Lynne. I examine four themes. I begin with a self-reflexive narrative of my own positionality, in a section entitled *Positionality-The Gaze of a young Black middle class female researcher*. I discuss experiences both outside and within South Africa in order to demonstrate my shifting understandings of race from childhood to now. Through an examination of insider and outsider perceptions of my racial positioning I argue that my ambivalence towards race constitutes a refusal of essentialism akin to that of my participants. Asking what it means for a researcher who identifies as both Black and middle class to study poor whites, I demonstrate the complexities of shifting the gaze in ethnographic practice. Informed by this tension in identification, in the second section entitled *Not a hammer or a nail: when the tools don't work,* I discuss the methods I employed in the field, offering a critique of the limitations of participant observation. Reflecting on experiences of initial access and its later revoking, I discuss challenges of building rapport and negotiating access with people who don't want you to be there. I contrast my experiences in Ruyterwacht discussing why this space presented significant and new challenges to undertaking fieldwork. In a context of overt and aversive racism, I argue that we need to think beyond mitigating harm and consider the value of discomfort, partial and incomplete views and silence in fieldwork experience.

Positionality- The gaze of a young Black middle class female researcher

My exposure to whiteness began at birth. I am what is socially referred to as a "struggle kid". I was born to parents in political exile in Australia during apartheid. I was the first Black baby born in that hospital followed three years later by the second Black baby, my sister. My primary school years (and the beginning of my childhood schooling memories) began in the United States where I attended a majority white private Catholic elementary school in Maryland as the only Black student until grade 4. Returning to South Africa in 1999 for the remainder of my primary years and the majority of high school, I was (and still am) categorised as "Model C", a term of social differentiation used to refer to Black children who were afforded the opportunity to attended previously white-only schools (Carrim & Soudien, 1999; McKinney, 2007; Holtman, Louw,

Tredoux et all, 2005). Within the country's majority Black demographic, the "middle class Black" is delegated to the fringes of not only Black society but also white. In primary school in Pretoria, there were generally three to four Black pupils in a class (and only one Black teacher who taught Sepedi for a year at that school). At this formerly all-white government school, racial tensions were evident with racial slurs being used by teachers and white pupils. This was the first time I recall being called Black at school (as opposed to being referred to as an African "alien" in the States) when a white teacher called out all the "Black girls" to speak outside with her. The threat of Black upwardly mobility to whiteness was definitely felt acutely by this particular teacher who was threatened enough by me as a grade 6 pupil for her to complain to my father about the "arrogance" in the way I walked.

The representation of racial demographics improved in my much larger high school where there were not only more Black students but also more Indian and so-called "coloured" girls in this all-girls government school of roughly 1500 pupils. Teachers at this high school did not seem too worried about racial diversity, even boasting an embrace of multi-culturalism. We were, however, still in the minority- in both staff and student bodies. The August 2016 protests against racism in the Pretoria High School for Girls hair policies that have never allowed natural Black hairstyles like dreadlocks and afros, shows an awareness to racism that my Black peers and I did not have while teenagers at this high school. We hid our natural hair under braids and extension deemed appropriate in order to avoid detention. We endured the 'invisibility' of whiteness silently or complained amongst one another.

When I was 17 years old, my family and I moved to Beijing, China. That move may have been the first time I was constantly made to feel inferiorly Black. Socially, Chinese people are direct, transparent, often rude and politically incorrect with a culture that does not conform to democratic neoliberal rhetoric. Chinese culture was also quite exclusionary. There was a clear demarcation between Chinese people and *wei guo ren* (directly translated into English as outside country people). There was an obvious comradery between Chinese people where I have seen altercations between a single white man against a single Chinese man turn almost deadly as any Chinese man who felt it necessary to join this Chinese man in his fight chased the white man in solidarity. There was also a clear gradation by Chinese people towards foreigners. My experience

in Beijing differed to that of my white friends and fellow expats and diplomats. Racism toward Black people was overt. Be it being told at a school that I worked at although I was hired, they were looking for a foreign teacher, not a "chocolate" one, or simply being ignored by family members or other Chinese guests when entering the home of a Chinese-American friend. On the other hand, as much as they adhered to notions of solidarity, Chinese people saw white people as superior, or at least superior to Black people. While I was ignored by Chinese family members and guests of my Chinese-American friend as I entered her home, these same people would jump with enthusiastic greetings at the sight of our white friend walking in right behind me.

In 2010 I began my undergraduate degree at the University of Stellenbosch. My years in Stellenbosch were before racism was addressed publicly with the #FeesMustFall protests. Racism in Stellenbosch was such an issue that post-graduation, my Black friends and I have continuously congratulated ourselves for having *survived*. One day during a lesson in a final year Anthropology lectures, the lecturer had introduced, briefly, whiteness studies to the class. This introduction has not been forgotten as the underlying message of the dismantling of white supremacy resonated well with me. Sitting in a classroom in the Law building surrounded by framed pictures honouring the Stellenbosch intellectuals, some of whom were architects behind the apartheid regime, was where I learned first of this anti-racist field of study. I was captured in class, as by the final year of my undergraduate study I had been jaded by my experiences of racism and white supremacy in Stellenbosch. I saw the value in critical whiteness studies as a legitimate academic enquiry into calling out white people on continued white superiority. What made this lesson all the more powerful was that it came from the then Head of Department, Prof. Kees van der Waal. This, now retired, old white man painted the picture of being a white settler when he had told us about how he had arrived in South Africa on a boat from Holland as a child with his parents. The trajectory of his life history went from his involvement in underground Afrikaner nationalist white male societies while at the Rand Afrikaans University (known now as the University of Johannesburg) to his work supporting the use of English as the medium of instruction in '*die taal debaat*'—the language debate between English and Afrikaans at Stellenbosch University (Van der Waal, 2012, 2015). This began my academic commitment to the

study of poor whites in South Africa which was supported by Kees himself and every other lecturer from that point on while I was part of that department in Stellenbosch.

After Stellenbosch, I went to the University of Cape Town (UCT) to pursue my Honours degree in Anthropology. Discourses on whiteness in society have been successful in deeming English South Africans as morally superior to Afrikaans people. My first move to a predominately English speaking South African city involved me believing that I was making a move from a conservative racist Afrikaans student town to a liberal racially tolerant English city. Academically, I could not believe that the University which prided itself on academic excellence was not critical enough to highlight whiteness studies to its students. It was clear to me that UCT, unlike Stellenbosch, was not supportive of my research. Conversely, in being so supporting and encouraging, Stellenbosch had not prepared me for the resistance towards Black scholarship on whiteness. Francis Nyamnjoh (2012), who was Head of Social Anthropology while I attended UCT, points to this about his department and discipline by mentioning the idea of "frontier African scholars" who are aware of "the advantages of their frontier existence, but they are also not blind to its inconveniences" (Nyamnjoh, 2012:76). I saw that my research was inconvenient to the academic staff at UCT who, I felt, attempted to undermine my interest by either downplaying the significance of my research or suggesting a different focus.

Not a hammer or a nail: when the tools don't work

"If you are not spending money, smiles get a bit tighter and interaction waned".

Before now, I have done little more than pay lip service to my positionality as a Black middle-class person. That said, I have never ignored the challenges of my positionality in relation to my research and participants. Unpopular as it may be in post-colonial anthropology, by 'reversing the gaze' as a Black middle class researcher, I am undoubtedly looking at my 'Other' in poor whites (Nyamnjoh, 2012). What I find to be remarkable is the ease in which colonial anthropologists write about 'encountering the Other' (Moore, 1994). In 2018, I felt, quite possibly for the first time, the coloniality in anthropology's methodological approaches and that "the methodology of participant observation is not appropriate [however] for every scholarly

problem" (Jorgensen, 2015: 3). Having already established the continued racial hierarchy through the brute force of colonialism, this discipline was not designed for African scholarship but rather is "a study of the uncivilised by the civilised" (Mafeje, 1997:14). My tireless efforts at 'hanging out' were repeatedly and outwardly denied by potential participants in the field. From the slow and slight backing away from me, to choosing to ignore my presence, it became evident that approaches to "going native" (Tedlock,1991:71; Narayan, 1993.) was not designed for the subjectification of white people to analysis, let alone by a Black researcher. I believe that had I also had colonial backing as anthropologists of yesteryear, I could also make the same suspicious claim as anthropologist Sally Falke Moore that "anthropologists mixed freely […] with whom they worked, often living among them, acknowledging no colour bar and respecting none of the many social boundaries between rulers and ruled" (Mafeje, 1997:4). Suspicious as this claim may be, I began to realise that the methodological approaches to fieldwork I have been equipped with are inadequate in accounting for race and racism where "the character of field relations heavily influences the researcher's ability to collect accurate, truthful information" (Jorgensen, 2015: 13). Not only that, when expressing methodological shortcomings, what was told to me by a lecturer at Wits was not advice on how to move forward but rather a critique on me for not realising the lack of "feasibility" in my research. I interpreted this as a personal jab that insinuated that the fault was with me for wanting to reverse the (colonial) gaze.

In his controversial critique on post-colonial Anthropology, Nyamnjoh makes a pointed observation in stating that "somehow, anthropologists who study Africa seldom bother to "know white Africans" (Nyamnjoh, 2012:69). This may be an exaggeration to which academics such as Robert Gordon (2013), Anika Teppo (2013) and Isak Niehaus (2013) have refuted, however the point is clear: the trend in anthropology in and on Africa is not to study whiteness. Instead the preference has been a 'study down' approach of which white people are excluded or made exceptional as in the case of white poverty.

In relation to Black anthropological inquiry into poor whites in South Africa, Octavia Sibanda (2012) appears to be alone, claiming that "studies of white people in South Africa by black anthropologists are virtually non-existent; most black anthropologists prefer to study 'at home',

often engaging in a kind of auto-ethnography amongst their "own people" (Sibanda, 2012: 86; Narayan, 1993). Sibanda's 'reversed gaze' section of her paper spoke a lot, not only, to my experiences in the field but also as a Black critical whiteness scholar, academically and socially. In her article based on fieldwork in a poor white area in East London, Sibanda highlights that "access of blacks to the white culture has always been informed and hindered by limited access to a culture perceived as superior" (Sibanda, 2012:82) with pressure from Black peers to study the more prevalent issue of Black poverty. For me, this pressure from Black peers has been disheartening as it does not encompass an understanding of dismantling whiteness, by focusing on poor whites as a symbol of the fragility of whiteness ideology, as a pro-Black, anti-racist preoccupation. There was also some comfort in reading that the only Black researcher I came across was also met with hostility in the field (Sibanda, 2012:82). The difference however in our experiences of hostility is that Sibanda was able to ease her experience with the aid an assistant, that she passingly refers to, whom I assume was white. Due to lack of funding, I on the other hand, had no access to assistance from a white interpreter.

My first visit to Ruyterwacht in 2013 resulted in my first poor white participant, "Uncle" Willie, who was more than willing to share with me his lived experience as a beggar who lived in a homeless shelter. The following year, when getting ready for fieldwork for my Honours degree, I had found out that my auntie was working as the reverend at the local Methodist church in Ruyterwacht. In addition, I had made contact with a senior social worker at the local old age home when I met Uncle Willie. The social worker and my aunt served as interlocutors between Ruyterwacht elderly poor white residents and myself. I was fortunate in Cape Town, as entering Ruyterwacht was much easier with participants intrigued by my relationship with these two community leaders. As a lone young Black female researcher with no notable affiliation to anyone in East Lynne, I was easy to pretend to ignore. It must be acknowledged, that although access to the field in Ruyterwacht was easier, the narrative I received from the field always felt artificial or even romantic. Ruyterwacht was sold to me as a place where racism had disappeared completely under the hardship of poverty. This story that I was fed and wrote about, was vanilla, and paled in comparison to the harsh experience of hostility where in East Lynne everyday

racism could be felt as demonstrations of diminished white selfhood and attempts at maintaining privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Poor whites have historically been understood as being Afrikaans. In the English speaking Cape Town, language was not a large issue as residents of Ruyterwacht were generally bi-lingual. This was not so much the case in predominantly Afrikaans speaking Pretoria. I was not expected to know the language but I found that the people I encountered in the area were not so comfortable conversing in English. As my mother had been living in East Lynne for over a decade, there was nothing novel about interacting with white East Lynne residents. What I began to notice is that my interaction as a customer or local resident differed to that of me as a researcher. If you are not spending money, smiles get a bit tighter and interaction waned. I was left grappling with the question: What are your options when are aware that the group of you are interested will not welcome your presence even before entering the field?

In the proposal writing process, one writes a research proposal citing a variety of techniques, tried and tested, to collect the data required to write up a research report. Personally, this was for the sake of fulfilling course requirements as there has been nothing I have been taught that made for authentic hanging out in Ruyterwacht. The only consideration that I have been encouraged to ponder has been gender based with the possibility of rape and other forms of sexual assault in the field. Historically, there has been a taboo in discussing negative fieldwork experiences. Although more self-reflexive accounts are now available, it is still the norm to gloss over the hardship of fieldwork (Pollard 2009; Belousov, K., et al. 2007). Within critical whiteness studies, it would be an injustice to gloss over my experience of racist hardship in the field. Instead, this hardship explicits my aim in exposing the falsehood of white superiority. I had entered the field looking to investigate how, by blurring the race/class divide, poor whites are symbolic reminders of the fragility of whiteness ideology which leads to their social exclusion from dominant white society. I left understanding the difficulties I encountered in East Lynne as poor whites' desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. That said, methodological approaches to fieldwork also need to evolve to encompass more nuanced representations of a researcher's gaze.

Entering the Field

I was fortunate to have easily secured access to my fieldsite at Blue Bottle Liquor Store on July 3 2017. This was the most seamless event to happen during my time in East Lynne. After walking in and asking one of the cashiers who to speak to about doing participant observation there, I was directed to the manager in his office. His office was a small storeroom-looking room with a table and a chair to the left of the room as you open the door. He was drinking alcohol from the smell coming out of his glass which filled the small office. I give him my standard introduction by telling him that I was a Master's student at Wits doing research on white poverty. He casually told me it was okay if I spoke to his workers but was uninterested in reading information on my project. He was not exactly rude but he was not friendly which was okay with me- he gave me what I needed so I was satisfied. I had hoped for a more 'hands on' approach in the field by working alongside participants but I was stuck doing the same stiff on-site note taking I was trying to avoid. The reason for this was because the manager at the liquor store was not interested in an extra pair of hands as he "already had workers" so I stood next to the counter, taking notes and talking to the cashiers when there were no customers that needed their immediate attention. The willingness of employees to talk to me was short lived. After the first two times I had begun asking questions, there was reluctance at engaging with me afterwards.

Tuesday 9 January 2018, on the other hand, was a hot 35 degree day that tested my resolve as a researcher. This was also the day which almost cracked the thick skin I had worked hard to develop in the field over the years from my very first interview with an Afrikaans farm owner in Stellenbosch. After my reaction to this farm owner's inconsiderate disregard for me as the only Black English speaking interviewer in the group interview, I had taught myself how to conduct myself as a composed researcher in the field amongst white people. I learned how to remain unphased by whatever acts of racism may be thrown my way with a straight face and shrug of the shoulder whilst in the field. On this memorable day, however, I saw how unwelcome I was in the field. When I returned to East Lynne, in the New Year, for my third attempt at ethnographic data collection, and to gather more background information on the local N.G. Kerk, I did not get to ask to the Church follow up questions as I was refused access to the Church. The gate would

not be opened for me. Instead I was given a “sorry, there is no one here with that information” via the intercom. At the Church there had to be someone who had information on themselves, I considered to myself, standing taken aback, sweating, after the ten minute walk from my mother’s house through Jan Niemand Park and Sports Ground, to the Church. That was a hard day that reminded me of a Facebook post that went viral of a graduating African American high school pupil who wrote in her yearbook comment that “anything is possible if you sound Caucasian on the phone”. That was a lesson I learnt years ago when I was in China looking for employment when I had graduated from high school (and then later told, in person, that they were not in search of a “chocolate” employee). It was a lesson that stayed with me with varying degrees of self-acceptance post matriculation. On this day, through an intercom with a camera and being refused entry into this church, the typical scene of a Black domestic worker asking for work in the white suburbs, I was shooed away with little consideration resonated. I was reminded of the South African truth; that no matter how middle class I may be with my tertiary and international education, on the other side of the gate I am just another Black person to which white people are able to deny entry.

Attitudes towards me shifted continuously as I entered the field. There was definitely an undeniable shift in attitude towards me from when I had entered the field in July, to when I visited in September, and again in January. In July I was told by the women at the liquor store that the schools would be the best place to gather information however I found the schools to be extremely unhelpful- rude and dismissive- when they had reopened. I was told by women at both the primary school and high school that any information on their schools remained in the memories of the retired teachers. I was fully aware that this resistance was to be expected but did not feel any better about the reality of it. I was unprepared for the lack of tact in East Lynne. I can only speculate as to why this change had occurred. Michael Murphy (1985) writes that ethnographers “have an obligation to represent themselves in a straightforward manner to those whose cooperation they seek” (Murphy, 1985: 132) however this does not prevent one from being “presented in an entirely negative light” (Murphy, 1985: 135). Perhaps in the time that I was away, people began to reconsider their involvement in my research? Whatever the true reasoning may be, that shift made an already difficult situation harder. The assertion I had

in my mind (and what I was saying to friends and family) was that these people are racist and do not want a young middle class, tertiary educated, Black woman snooping in their dirty laundry and their failure to adhere to socially acceptable expectations—expectations held by Black and white South Africans alike.

With every entry into the field in July, September 2017 and January 2018, disinclination towards me grew as I was trying to develop rapport with white East Lynne residents. This in turn, turned me reluctant towards the field, as the women at the liquor store took longer to pay attention to me when I entered and kept their interactions with me brief. I found it difficult navigating my way in a situation where it was palpable that these people did not want to converse. It is not in my nature to impose myself onto people so I found that informal interviews where short and unpleasant. Additionally, as the season approached summer, I found myself less than enthusiastic at the thought of walking around in the scorching sun during the day. Pretoria can get very hot during the summertime where even the dogs in the neighbourhood could be observed, hanging tongued, laying in the shade not barking—hot and tired.

Focus groups with white middle class Wits students

As a method to unpacking the social exclusion of poor whites I organised two focus groups with middle class young white South Africans. Focus groups are defined by Jenny Kitzinger (1994) as "group discussions organised to explore a specific set of issues such as people's views and experiences" (Kitzinger, 1994: 103) which distinguishes itself from group interviews with "the explicit use of group interaction as research data" (Kitzinger, 1994: 103).The focus groups which I conducted with white middle class Wits students slightly challenged the position I have held of the white middle class not wanting to engage on the topic of white poverty with me. I conducted two focus groups, the first at my apartment on September 11 2017 and the second a week later on Tuesday 19 September 2017 on Wits campus in the Anthropology Museum. Throughout this research report I will be referring solely to the first focus group as the richer of the two focus groups. The first focus group was more informal, serving as an icebreaker as a way of making sure that the first years who would attend would feel more comfortable around their tutor and her Masters' classmates. This focus group "comprised of participants from a (diverse) range of

backgrounds, views and experiences" (Powell & Single, 1996: 500) was attended by my first year tutorial group student, Daniel (Jewish South African man aged 20), and classmates Afra (Italian South African woman aged 24), Sasha (English/French South African woman aged 23) and Cezaane (Afrikaner South African woman aged 23). Daniel was the only first year student of three who had agreed to participate to come to my apartment. One of his classmates had told me that she would not be attending and preferred to join the focus group on campus and the other gave no reason to why he did not participate although he had agreed to.

> *"Facilitation of open, uninhibited dialogue is central to the role of the moderator should therefore be a relaxed, non-judgmental individual and a good listener"* (Powell & Single, 1996: 501).

When organising this first focus group I did consider the situation I was putting myself in. Generally, I do not socialise with white South Africans in my free time, making the thought of being outnumbered by white people in my own home an uncomfortable prospect. That said, unlike Isak Niehaus who justifies his disinterest in anthropological inquiry into white people by weakly claiming that he "avoided whites like the plague […] because I found it hard to empathise with their views" (Niehaus, 2013:120), I decided on a more inter-personal approach to fieldwork as a personal challenge in getting deeper engagement with participants than in my previous fieldwork research experience.

I introduced the focus group with *Outland* by Roger Ballen as the group's 'focused' collective activity (Kitzinger, 1994). I chose to begin the focus group with this video because it is a dark video which I think represents middle class perceptions on poor whites which leads to their social exclusion and had been suggested to me by Sasha. The 'seriousness' of the focus group and the discussions lasted for about an hour proceeded by what ended up turning into somewhat of a house party. During the focus group, all participants claimed that their middle class social status was a result of their parents' upward mobility. Although they all saw the video to be dramatic, their narratives on poor whites depicted in the video were echoed in conversation. The diverse ethnic background of these young white students did little to create a nuanced explanation for the social exclusion of poor whites from dominant white society, showing a homogeneity in South African whiteness as it relates to poverty and the race/class

divide. Being anthropology students, they were all able to articulate how that, by blurring the race/class divide, poor whites are symbolic reminders of the fragility of whiteness which brings about a feeling of anxiety. That said, all but one could speak on engagement with poor whites beyond a white beggar at an intersection. Powell and Single (1996) write that "researchers must also be aware of the potentially self-censoring and conforming influence exerted by the so-called "group effect" (Powell & Single, 1996: 502). My feeling is that there was a possibility that opinions were censored or at least expected to be censored, "generating only "surface" information on individual respondents" (Powell & Single, 1996: 503). This feeling was due to a moment when Cezaane had to defend herself by stating that she was "being honest" when she made a comment that caused Afra to exclaim. In Ruyterwacht I appreciated the question from white Afrikaner men "can I be honest with you?" in response to my questions as I appreciated Cezaane for her frankness in sharing her family's reasons for distancing themselves from their poor family members. In fact, when interacting with white South Africans, I have always valued more the directness of Afrikaans people than what I find to be superficial friendliness of English speaking white South Africans.

Feeling the most disconnected from poor whites was Sasha which she took from not being Afrikaans nor Christian. Prior to fieldwork Sasha had shown interest in my research and was helpful in giving suggestions on data collection. In the focus group, Sasha was the most critical towards poor white people as she provided vivid descriptions on poor whites, highlighting the continuation of historic discourses on the symbolic threat of the poor white body.

Powerfully shot in black and white, *Outland* begins with flashing images which do well to visually introduce to the viewer the dominant discourse on the 'white kaffir'. Poor whites are viewed, by the white middle class, as polluted—morally, physically and spiritually. Reasons for white poverty have been dismissed as being related to drug/alcohol abuse, mental illness, religious bankruptcy as well as close proximity to Blacks. It is the portrayal of a small group of South Africa's white population which are seen to have fallen into the same depravity as Africans, which is troubling and disturbing. Not only for "whiteness' master narrative" (Steyn, 2001) but also for the viewer. Ballen crudely presents Outland's residents as 'freaks' to the audience.

The ‘freak show’ element of this film is reminiscent of the fourth season of the FX horror anthology television series American Horror Story. Effectively, this technique in shooting style reinforces the social exclusion experienced by poor whites—historical and contemporary. This exclusion has allowed poor white people to remain side-lined in history, democratic governmental policies and in the popular imagination. Ballen addresses this directly with the title *Outland*—the place for those who do not belong.

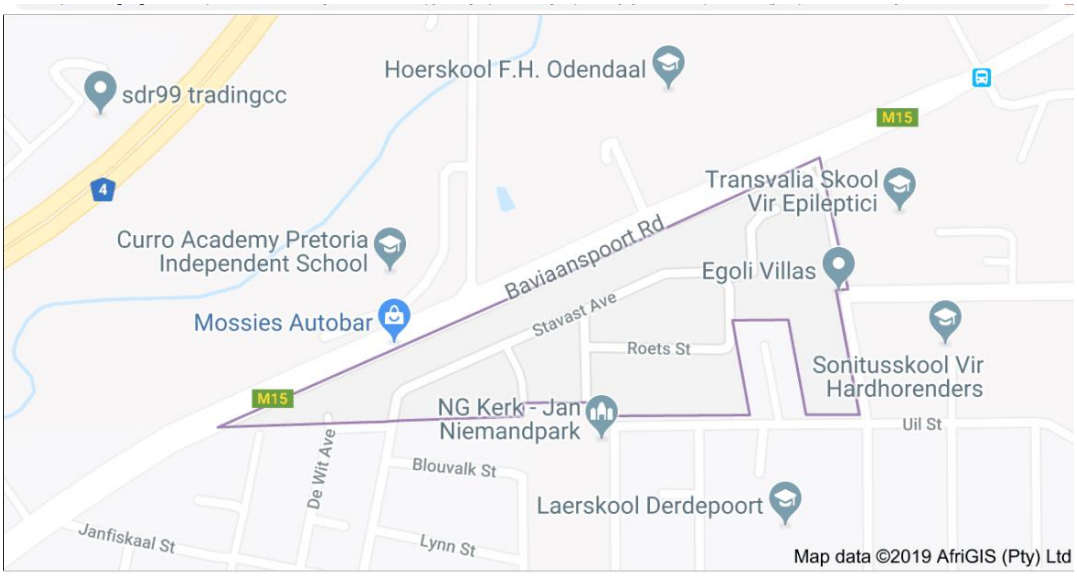
Reflecting on the Ballen video and how it dramatised common perception of poor whites, drug/alcohol abuse was associated to poor whites by my participants, which I do not think is unique to poor whites as to poor people being considered sordid or vile (Lewis, 1966:3). My main participant in East Lynne, a teetotaller who worked at my liquor store fieldsite, told me that she felt the abuse of liquor in East Lynne was a coping mechanism or escape from the daily struggles of poverty. Additionally, Cezaane had mentioned how the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in poor white communities is never acknowledged as a means of dissociating white people from illnesses seen as related to (Black) poverty. This struck a nerve with me as an extended family member of mine had contracted HIV from her, then, unemployed white boyfriend. Religion came up however not in the sense of bankruptcy. The use of religion, according to my participants, was a tool for survival where support is offered by religious institutions’ charity.

I have discussed my positionality as a young Black middle class woman and how that has influenced my interest in critical whiteness studies through my continued investigation into poor whites. I have considered my experiences of pushback to white analysis in my fieldsite East Lynne as well as within the field of anthropology itself. Reluctance at including white people under the anthropological gaze has allowed for limited ‘gaze reversal’ methodological approaches to fieldwork which left me vulnerable to racism amongst poor whites in East Lynne. The focus group I conducted with several white middle class Wits students was fruitful in ethnographic data collection on narratives on poor whites which explain their social exclusion from dominant society. This is to be discussed in detail in the following chapter, *‘That could be me’: white fragility behind the social exclusion of poor whites*. In the following chapter I will detail my fieldsites in East Lynne and the people I spoke to between July 2017 and January 2018.

Chapter Four-"You're looking at white poverty? Well you have come to the right place"

In East Lynne being the "poorest of the poor" was acknowledged and sometimes jokingly embraced with a white female cashier telling me that I had "come to the right place" for my research on poor white people. It was for the discernible presence of poor white people that my mother suggested that I conduct fieldwork in East Lynne instead of spending money on transport costs commuting to another fieldsite. East Lynne may have been a convenient fieldsite choice but proved challenging. Poor white East Lynne residents' hostility towards me showed that East Lynne was not the right place for me, a Black middle class female researcher. Below, I will detail my fieldsites in East Lynne as well as introduce the cashiers, car guards and soup kitchen attendees I spoke to during my fieldwork. I will then conclude this chapter with my ethical considerations.

Ekklesia:



Map 1

Jan Niemand Park:



Map 2

East Lynne:



Map 3

East Lynne, formerly Lynne East (still the name of the post office), used to extend to the river which borders Jan Niemand Park and Pretoria's coloured township, Eesterust. Locally, East Lynne is still understood as encompassing Ekklesia and Jan Niemand Park. My fieldsite lies at the border of Ekklesia and Jan Niemand Park, along Jan Coetzee Street between Baviaanspoort Road and Uil Street. The area also has a number of schools: Sonitus School: Institution for hearing impaired learners/*Sonitus Skool vir Hardhorendes*, *Hoerskool F.H. Odendaal*/ F.H. Odendaal High School, Transvalia School for Epilepsy and Learning Disabilities/*Transvalia Skool vir Epileptici*, *Laerskool Derdepoort*/Derdepoort Primary School and more recently Curro Academy Pretoria.

East Lynne had a vast public transport network. East Lynne 1, 2 and 3 municipal buses ran regularly during the week from downtown Pretoria. Along Stegmann Street, taxis from town to Mamelodi, or vice versa, will take you past East Lynne. Additionally, taxis as well as Putco buses move to and from East Lynne taxi rank to surrounding areas including Montana.

The character of East Lynne is best represented by the local corner store, Trios OK Grocer (locally referred to as Trios) clientele. A racially diverse area, Trios' customers are generally Black, white and coloured. With white car guards outside Trios, a Zulu speaking white man who works at the kitchen at the back of the corner store and upwardly mobile Black and coloured people, East Lynne, to me, at first glance could possibly be a prime example of what Nelson Mandela's optimistic nation-building metaphor for a racially integrated and tolerant 'rainbow nation' could look like (Alexander, 2003; Baines, 1998; Steyn, 2001). The poverty in East Lynne appeared to primarily relate to the white residents and customers. It does not take long to notice that while Black residents drive around in luxury cars like BMWs and Mercedes Benzes, white residents can be seen at street corners begging for money. I had asked a friend who had moved briefly to East Lynne during the time of my fieldwork for his observations and he relayed that white people in East Lynne used motorcycles recreationally and as a mode of transport. That is not to say that all Black residents possess luxury cars, however I have never seen (in the 13 years my mother has lived there) a Black beggar in East Lynne. I have only ever seen one coloured homeless man begging outside the liquor store fieldsite. I was later told by my main participant that this man had a daughter with a "good job" in the area who had often tried to take her father off the

streets by taking him home with her. He would then leave her house to return back to begging outside the liquor store.

Generally, East Lynne is a friendly, polite place. The laid back nature of the area allowed securing access at Blue Bottle Liquor Store straightforward. The liquor store was attached, at the side, to the Trios OK Grocer. The relationship between the liquor store and Trios has a significant history (I was later told that the owners of the two shops were father and son). When it opened in 1998, it was a very small liquor store behind the local corner grocer. Since then it has expanded into a popular liquor store whose customers travel in from a number of the neighbouring areas. Something noticeable about this particular liquor store is how customers drink within the premises of the liquor store—behind the service gate, sitting on beer crates huddled in groups in the sun during the wintertime. When I asked Hendrika about what I view to be quite peculiar, she told me that this was due to the liquor store being more connected to the community than the larger grocery stores like Spar.

Who I met in the Field – Working class vs informal work

Blue Bottle Liquor Store

At the liquor store I observed four white Afrikaner women who worked the tills as cashiers. These women's ages varied from the youngest that appeared to still be a teenager and the oldest that was middle-aged. Due to ethical considerations as they relate to minors, I spoke to who I identified as the adult three of these four women—Marike, Hendrika and Annalie. Hendrika became my main participant in East Lynne. Not too much was said at the liquor store during my visits of probably a maximum of half an hour each visit after the initial observation exercise of an hour. I preferred going into the liquor store when Hendrika was working as she was the most receptive to me. On the days she was not working, I would walk into the store, greet whoever was working at the time and ask my questions. In my research I had hoped that open-ended questions would be used to stimulate conversation (Turner III, 2010; Whyte, 2003). This was not the case. Conversation was not free flowing. Questions were answered directly leaving me to make up follow-up questions on the spot. I generally began with questions on how

long residents had been living in East Lynne, what they did in the area and who they lived with. My interaction with informants was superficial at best. My most ethnographically rich data in East Lynne came from a one hour formal interview with Hendrika. During this interview, my open-ended questions did lead to conversation. Additionally, Hendrika was able to fill in silences I had left for her when previously at her place of employment she was unable. As superficial as my interaction with poor whites in East Lynne may have been, their silence, hostility and reluctance revealed to me that every day, poor whites utilise various racist strategies as a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Hendrika, cashier, age unknown

Born on 8 July, Hendrika was of average height, with brown hair, brown eyes and wore spectacles. She was the third born of four daughters, to an injured army wing office worker father who has passed away and housewife mother. Her father was from Delmas, a farming community in Mpumalanga, and her mother from Pretoria. Hendrika was born and bred in East Lynne. She attended Derdepoort Primary School and later F.H. Odendaal High School. She had been working as a cashier at the liquor store since matriculating seven years prior. Hendrika spoke of being brought up in a strict household where they "didn't mix with people". Similar to what I learnt of Afrikaner upbringing whilst I studied at Stellenbosch University, Hendrika and her sisters had "no opinion as children" following the traditional Afrikaner cultural value that "children must be seen not heard". In school she played the sports her older sisters had played as well as took the subjects her sisters took. This meant that she had played netball (as a goalkeeper) and softball. In high school she took accounting and business studies as subjects. Business may not have been her choice however, she boasted at having achieved better results than her sisters—enough for her to gain acceptance into the University of Pretoria (locally referred to as Tuks) for business study. This was a promising achievement as her teacher had ensured Hendrika that she would receive a bursary in order to further her studies but was left disappointed when she was not granted any funding.

Hendrika lived at home (near the local Shoprite grocery chain store) with her mother, her two unmarried sisters and her boyfriend. She and her boyfriend lived in the back flat. Her married

sister lived in the resort town north of Johannesburg, Hartbeespoort, with her husband. One of her sisters at home worked as a teacher's assistant at the local primary school.

When I first spoke to Hendrika about her relationship, she had told me that she had been married to her husband for six years and did not have children. Her partner was from Daspoort, an area close to Pretoria's larger poor white area, Danville. He was a pump technician who was, at that time, unemployed. Hendrika later told me that she was not actually legally married to him. Not being married to her live-in boyfriend of six years was a living situation which she felt caused people around her to 'judge' as being sinful according to the teachings of the Dutch Reformed Church. Not as conservative in her thinking, Hendrika was in no rush to get married as she felt that she was "not ready" for marriage and that she had nothing to prove considering many relationships and marriages do not make it to six years in any case.

Marieke, cashier, age unknown

Marieke, a blue eyed employee of 9 years at the liquor store with shoulder length greying lighter brown hair, was the only person who was able to give any type of historical context to the place both her and her mother grew up in. Using Hendrika as an interpreter, Marieke told the story of how her mother had moved to East Lynne from Valeria when she was 12 years old in 1968. Her mother had moved in to live with her married older sister once their father passed away. According to Marieke, the local primary school was built in 1920. In the 1960s "Lynne East" had a post office, a cafe near the Moretele River, one shop as well as one bar. In the 1970s, East Lynne began to grow from an agricultural farming area when people who worked for Transnet started living in the area as well as government employees who moved into municipal housing. This was pretty much all the history I got about the history of East Lynne in the field. A receptionist at F.H. Odendaal told me that all she knew was that East Lynne had always been a "low income area". The story I was being told by staff at the local schools was that all the history on the area or the schools was held with retired school teachers. Additionally, after our initial conversation, Marieke became increasingly uncomfortable conversing with me without her colleague Hendrika acting as interpreter/translator.

Annalie, cashier, age unknown

Annalie, whose real name I was not able to find out, was probably the most disappointing for me in East Lynne. I always felt that her and I had the most rapport prior to fieldwork. An example being when she teased me for buying liquor for my upcoming birthday in April 2017, questioning whether "you buy your own gifts?" She was also the cashier who directed me to the store manager when I first entered the field to secure access to Blue Bottle Liquor Store.

When I spoke to Annalie I was intrigued by where she told me she lived. This was because my mother's complex is on the same street as the liquor store, Jan Coetzee Street. On this street between Trios OK Grocer and Blue Bottle Liquor Store and my mother's residence is Derdepoort Primary School which occupies the corner between Jan Coetzee Street and Uil Street. Next to the primary school ,on Jan Coetzee Street, was a house I had been passing for years but never really paid attention to until attempting to enter the field with 'fresh eyes'. On this particular day in the field, I paid special attention to the property which shared a gate with the school's grounds. This property was sizable compared to neighbouring properties in the area. It far extended the idea of a 'large garden' according to my local urban understanding. From the sidewalk I saw two caravans outside the two small, opposite facing houses and a white girl child playing outside by herself with a torn up doll. There was a tyre swing tied onto one of the tree branches. On this day, on my way to the liquor store, I felt that this house stereotypically represented white poverty in South African imagination which "mimics that subscribed to by poorer Afrikaners in the 1930s" (Kruger, 2016:46). I later found out that this was where Annalie lived. She told me she was a border at that home. She rented one of the two small houses from her friend who was the only other resident on the property. She also informed me that it was her friend's granddaughter, who was visiting for the December school holiday, that I had noticed playing outside with the doll previously.

I had always had a liking for Annalie. She was a middle aged woman who wore spectacles with a cropped cut grey hairstyle. Annalie was not the most feminine of women. She would wear either knee length shorts or jeans paired with a t-shirt. The last time I saw her in the liquor store she had some leg injury that required the use of an orthopaedic leg brace. I did not see this type of brace as indicative of any sort of poverty. In fact, I have mainly seen injury to result in

amputation in poor Black communities. This was a stark observation I had made previously while visiting my grandmother one Christmas holiday in King Williams Town, Eastern Cape. While out one day at a local bar with my sisters and cousins, I began to notice that in this small bar, there were a considerable amount of people with amputated limbs. Though I had never been witness to this in any other bar, it made me think about how rehabilitation is not always an option for poor people and that many rehabilitative devices for physical injuries I have seen worn by poor people had been makeshift.

Annalie shared that she was originally from Pretoria West having attended an Afrikaans high school named *Hendrik Verwoerd Hoerskool* in Valleria where she passed standard 9 (grade 11) but did not matriculate for a reason I did not press to find out. In 1982 she worked at a post office. Annalie said to me that she had lived a "traveller's life" with her family, having lived in Pietersburg (now Polokwane), the capital city of Limpopo, and the academic city of Potchefstroom in the North West Province. Annalie had been working at the liquor store for four years. Prior to the liquor store Annalie worked at the local primary school's food centre which catered for poor children in the school which was the aspect of her life she was most comfortable talking about and will be discussed further in Chapter Six. She was a divorced woman who had been living in East Lynne since her son, who at the time was 20 years old in grade 12, was in grade 2. After the divorce, her son opted to stay with his father in Brits—a large town in the North West province known as an agricultural and industrial hub. According to her "you know boys and their fathers". She sounded a little bit sour but accepting of her son's choice. Not that I told Annalie, but the story of her son living with his father after divorce resonated with me as a person also raised, uncommonly, by a single father. I have always found myself inclined to empathy when coming across families who follow this rare custody arrangement, with the March 2018 Mbalo Brief by Statistics South Africa finding that only 2% of single parent homes were headed by the father of children aged 0-6[2]. Additionally, this was most likely the first time I heard a mother's perspective (as short as it was), other than my own mother's, on this type of living situation.

[2] http://www.statssa.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Mbalo-Brief-March-2018.pdf

Soup Kitchen at the N.G Kerk

In Ruyterwacht, I had collected ethnographic data on the lived experience of poor whites at the weekly soup kitchens at the local Methodist Church. I went to the local Dutch Reformed Church in hopes of the same fieldwork participant observation opportunity in East Lynne as in Ruyterwacht. I had secured access from a woman who was in charge while the pastor was away. She was very polite initially, seemingly understanding of my research and my language predicament. This did not last long as when I arrived late to the soup kitchen she was not impressed. My reason for being late was intentional. The woman had told me that the soup kitchen began with a short service in Afrikaans. Not being a religious person or an Afrikaans speaker, I did not interpret her mention of the Afrikaans service as an expectation of my attendance nor an invitation. I interpreted this as a warning of sorts. As in Ruyterwacht, I felt uncomfortable participating in religious activities of praise and worship. Either way, the woman in charge became standoffish. Thankfully there was a brunette woman who had been with the blond woman filling the leadership position of the absent pastor. She did not seem as bothered by me not attending the Church service and encouraged me to talk to the people. This woman seemed like the blond woman's right hand person. My feeling was that language was the most apparent barrier between her and I. Our only direct verbal communication was when she told me "talk" whilst gesturing to the people eating their lunch on the church grounds. This was the only opportunity for me at the soup kitchen because, as mentioned earlier, I was denied entry onto the Church premises thereafter.

When I walked into the Church grounds one of the volunteers, a white middle aged man, thought I was there, in need of a plate. I felt insulted. I wondered to myself (and then later complained sorely to my mother that evening) whether walking into the gate as a Black person was enough to warrant an expectation of poverty in East Lynne when it did not in Ruyterwacht. I did not take the plate of food offered to me because I had made it a point to eat prior to going to the Church. Additionally, the plate of *samp*, beans and some sort of red meat did not fit into my strict vegetarian diet. It must be noted that the Black people who were in attendance were, to me, not the level of poor that would be expected at a soup kitchen or like the people I had

observed at the soup kitchens in Cape Town. These Black people appeared to be general workers in their blue overalls, opportunistic enough to find themselves a free meal. This reminded me of opportunistic strategy employed by my friends and I during our undergraduate years in Stellenbosch where we would attend the weekly Hari Krishna meetings in promise of a free vegan lunch.

Ernest, scrap metal collector, 30 and his mother Tannie, pensioner, age unknown

I found 30 year old Ernest and his mother, a retired nurse, sitting on the grass in the church premises eating the lunch given to them. Feeling awkward about disturbing people whilst eating, I was relieved when the pair invited me to sit down with them to converse about life in East Lynne. I spoke to Ernest and his mother very briefly. They were done with the conversation after 15 minutes when they asked to be "adjourned". Those 15 minutes gave me colourful data on the lived experience of poor whites. Their mother/son dynamic illustrated a loving and co-dependent relationship between the two. A difficult interview to transcribe due to each of them talking over each other, talking to this pair was the closest I got to feeling like I could be talking to one of my participants in Ruyterwacht. They were not shy to tell me about their difficulties .They were also the possible participants I had been looking for who could help me explore intergenerational white poverty.

Ernest was a 30 year old with dark shaggy hair and brown eyes, and was a 'tanned' white man. His arms sported poor quality tattoos—similar to those adorned by gang members, prisoners and former convicts. His mother (who I refer to as 'Tannie', meaning 'auntie', in accordance to respectful Afrikaner expectations in reference to older women) was wearing jeans and sneakers with a matching pink fleece jacket and t-shirt. The quality of her fleece jacket and how it matched perfectly with her t-shirt was noticeable. Her clothes looked new. Tannie was a friendly woman with a completely toothless smile. The skin of her face was weathered and wrinkled making her age difficult to estimate. I joined this pair of smokers just as they were about to enjoy their post-meal cigarette together.

Ernest told me he had dropped out of the local high school at the age of 15 years to make money for his family. He had also attended the local primary school. My suspicion was that Ernest and

Hendrika could have attended school in East Lynne at the same time but Hendrika remained silent when I brought up the suggestion. When I spoke to Ernest he was working as a scrap metal collector which he found more profitable than the "hard labour that the Zimbabweans do for R50". According to Ernest, he earned enough by midday to finish work, whereas the pay for manual labour undertaken by foreign African nationals for a full day was insufficient. Ernest's aversion towards low paying work reminded me of historic accounts of poor whites abhorrence to 'kaffir work' (Willoughy-Herard, 2007) prior to their upliftment. What I found particularly interesting is that this racist sentiment has evolved to fit into xenophobic discourses towards foreign African nationals expressed especially by poor Black people (Landau & Pampalone, 2018). I felt like that was why Ernest could make such a statement to me without batting an eye.

The apple of his mother's eye, Tannie bragged about how hardworking her son Ernest was. A retired nurse, Tannie was also schizophrenic, which was a financial burden on the family as they did not always have the financial need for transport costs to the hospital where she received her medication. Other than her state pension, Tannie also received R1400 rent from her daughter who rented the house with her husband and children resulting in an estimated monthly income of R3000. According to her, this was to help her daughter and grandchildren, as there was "no place where you can rent a house for R1400". Ernest and Tannie stayed together in the wendy house in the backyard together.

Financial woes were not Ernest and Tannie's only complaint. According to the pair, gossip was strife in the area amongst soup kitchen officials. They told me that the people who ran a soup kitchen at another church did not want people exchanging items given to them in their food parcels. The expectation was that people be content with what they were given "even if we don't like it". It was for this reason that Tannie and Ernest preferred going to the N.G. Kerk for free meals. I received this complaint with mixed reactions. On one hand, I am not entirely convinced that the use of foodstuffs should be policed once distributed. On the other hand however, the saying "beggars cannot be choosers" comes to mind where those who claim to be the "poorest of the poor" have the luxury of eating according to their preferences.

***Yoh*! White Car Guards!**

One day, a few years ago, I was driving with a friend from Mamelodi to the local Spar on Jan Coetzee Street, when he suddenly sat up straight in the fully reclined passenger seat of my car. What made this generally laid back man so shocked was the sight of white car guards to which he exclaimed "*Yoh*! White car guards!" At the time I found his reaction incredibly dramatic. I felt that because he was from Pretoria the sight of poor white people should not have been such a spectacle to him. Furthermore, he had been with me to my fieldsite in Cape Town when visiting Uncle Willie, making his shock all the more perplexing. Nonetheless, with no one talking to me for my research, I was desperate and took this reaction (and other similar reactions to white car guards) as a point of engagement with three white car guard informants; Katrina, Stephan and Kurt, around the Trios OK Grocer corner store.

I found Stephan with other white car guards congregating faced out towards ten parking bays, right of the store as one approaches the entrance. Between the entrance and the car guards' area is a space usually occupied by street vendors. The street vendors have changed over the years but on this day, 12 January 2018, a Black woman was selling a number of household goods such as kitchen cloths and clothing items as well as illegal DVDs. Katrina and Kurt occupied the left side of Trios corner store—alongside the coloured male beggar—and watched over the parking bays between the corner store and the adjacent Blue Bottle Liquor Store.

The car guards worked as an organised community, headed by a supervisor, to ensure a source of income for them all. The shifts were broken into: the early morning five to eight shift, mid-morning eight to midday, the afternoon shift which started at noon and ended at five, and the five to eight thirty shift in the evening. I was ignorant to the organisation of the car guard community. I had never really thought about how car guards do their work and or about this organisation. This was reminiscent of poor white organisation in Kruger's ethnography on King Edward Park, where in the white squatter camp "there is a *stoep* [porch], around which much of the day-to-day life in the Park revolved" (Kruger, 2016:48) had self-appointed Park managers. My observation of white car guard organisation has forced me to follow "contemporary students [who] stress their (poor people) great and neglected capacity for self-help, leadership and community organisation" (Lewis, 1966:3), with Stephan telling me about his supervisor who ensured things ran accordingly.

Katrina, car guard, age unknown

I met Katrina when I went to Pretoria for the second time in September and was upset when things were not going well for me. I was frantic and decided to try my luck with this woman who I had seen around the liquor store for years. Talking to Katrina was not easy because her voice was so raspy it could hardly be heard. I do not know why it was as damaged as it was but it made for the most difficult interviewing of any participant and informant. This was why our interaction was only 5 minutes the first time we spoke.

Katrina was a middle aged, 'tanned' white woman, thin framed with thin grey bob length hair. She could often be found sitting on a beer crate against the wall connecting the liquor store to Trios. Katrina told me that she worked between 5:00am and 8:00am, earning between R 30 and R 60 per day. She had been staying in East Lynne for 50 years and had also attended Derdepoort Primary School and F. H Odendaal High School. She told me she lived with her sister and one son (who also worked as a car guard on Jan Coetzee Street). Her other children lived in Boksburg and Cape Town.

On Thursday 11 January 2018, I found Katrina sitting outside the liquor store. She did not recognise me from our previous conversation but she remained as pleasant as she had been before. My conversation with her continued to be brief. Her voice had somewhat recovered but this time she only spoke to me in Afrikaans. We spoke for two and a half minutes. In our brief chat I had asked her about her Christmas holiday, to which she told me that she had gone to Boksburg for two weeks to spend time with her son and "*twee klienkinders"* (two grandchildren). I was later told by Hendrika that Katrina was a victim of domestic violence. Often going to the liquor store bruised and battered. According to Hendrika, Katrina's husband, also a grey haired car guard, became violent when he drank, and that his wife and their son were the usual targets of his aggression. Hendrika suspected that the epileptic fits that the son endured were a result of the physical abuse he suffered at the hands of his father.

Guerin and Miyazaki (2006) write about a hybridity of gossip, rumours and urban legends in the "telling of "serious" knowledge or facts [where] most theories of "social knowledge" work with the assumption that telling each other facts is about learning true knowledge through acting as

lay scientists" (Guerin & Miyazaki, 2006:29). Gossip surrounding Katrina's situation of domestic abuse was not with malicious intent. Rather, Hendrika demonstrated the performance of a 'lay scientist' with her suspicion of Katrina's son's epilepsy being a result of domestic violence. Furthermore, much like the instance in the focus group of Cezanne highlighting the silence surrounding HIV/AIDS in white communities being unmasked by poverty, in East Lynne poverty served to unmask domestic violence in white communities which is often silenced.

Stephan, car guard, 30

I approached Stephan after noticing an increase in white car guards outside the local supermarket OK Trios. At that point I figured that it would be less offensive to approach potential participants as "white car guards" rather than "poor white residents". It was indeed an easy point of entry as I introduced myself to Stephan and his white car guard colleagues. Stephan came across to me as a straightforward person. He did not want me to record our interview and directly answered only the questions that were asked.

Stephan was a brown haired, brown eyed man with sunburn on his nose. I was a bit taken aback when he told me he was only 30 years old. He looked older than that to me. He was seated; one leg crossed over the other, on a black beer crate along the supermarket and did not stand up like most Afrikaans men usually do when I approached him. He was wearing a baseball cap and typical orange nylon reflector car guard vest. My conversation with Stephan, like all other informants, was short. During our conversation he told me that he was from Pretoria West, in an area close to Danville. He had been living in East Lynne for two years with his niece in a house "a few blocks from here". When I asked him how long he had been working as a car guard in East Lynne, he told me he had been working there for five months. Before then he had worked as a car guard at a nearby shopping centre called Zambezi Junction. Stephan had been a car guard for a total of 17 years. 17 years seemed to me like a long time to work as a car guard, which prompted me to enquire on the financial gain in this kind of work. Stephan's reply was as nonchalant as the rest he gave me; "sometimes it's okay, sometimes not but at least I bring in money. Money which puts a roof over my head. Food on the table. I have no feelings. I wake up, do my job and go home". He told me that he worked 12pm-5:00 pm. I mentioned that Katrina

had told me that her hours were between 5:00 am and 8:00 am. “Yes” he began, “Katrina works the morning shift”. Stephan said that everyone worked their own shifts and he worked every day as skipping a day would mean “no money”. Stephan also explained that these shifts ensured that “everyone makes money”. The organisation of the car guard community was unexpected. It was after Stephan informed me that he had a supervisor who worked the shift beginning at 5:30 pm that I asked by whom the car guards were employed. “Was it the government?”, I asked. “No, we are not employed by government. We just work for tips” he replied. It is this, he told me, that allows for a sense of community amongst these white car guards causing Stephan to assert that he felt “part of a family”. East Lynne “was now home” for Stephan who apart from having family in East Lynne, had a fellow car guard girlfriend whom he had been dating for five months. In this sense, East Lynne was much like Ruyterwacht. In fact, my Honours degree research report was romantic in that the resultant ethnography revolved around observations of the different facets of care outlined in literature by my then supervisor, Andrew ‘Mugsy’ Spiegel (Spiegel, 2005).

Amongst poor whites, although socially excluded from dominant white society, there was a sense of care about, and for, one another. Poor white people maintained close relationships with their poor family members and showed concern for other poor white people in their communities. Care through romantic relationships seen in Ruyterwacht was evident in East Lynne. Most poor white people I have spoken to, in Cape Town and Pretoria, had romantic partners who they “struggled to survive” with together.

I thanked Stephan profusely for allowing me to interview him and told him that it was likely I would be back to ask him more questions. Seemingly responsive to this he told me “no problem. I am here every day between 12 and 5”. When I went back to speak to Stephen the next day he was not interested in talking me. As I approached the parking lot one of his colleagues had made my presence aware to him. We locked eyes and he turned away saying something to his colleague in Afrikaans. This moment mirrored the experience of an English speaking journalist who accompanied Kruger in her fieldwork of intentional exclusion by poor whites where a

participant spoke “in Afrikaans so that Sophia (the journalist) could not understand” (Kruger, 2016:46). Socially, I find this type of behaviour to be nothing short of poor manners.

Kurt, car guard, age unknown

Kurt was the final person I approached in East Lynne and yet I had been noticing him in the area for years. A small framed red haired man, I had also seen Kurt at the soup kitchen the day I met Ernest and his mother, Tannie. I spoke to Kurt when I turned the corner after being given the cold shoulder by Stephan. After staring at each other for less than a second, I greeted Kurt with a smile to which he responded with one to match. He had a wide smile revealing a full set of dentures. Had I had a chance to get to know Kurt better, I would have dared ask him where and/or how he was able to get his dentures, but that conversation never happened. In my experiences interacting with Black or coloured car guards I have never noticed the use of dentures. Instead, what I have noticed are toothless mouths like that of Tannie. Additionally, when attending to a dental issue of my own I had asked the dentist what it is that poor people do in relation to dental care. The dentist informed me that although there are dental services provided by the state, most poor people did not make use of these services. I had not known about state provided dental care prior to talking to Kurt. He was definitely the first car guard I had seen to have possibly taken advantage of state dental services. In our conversation, as I was making my way home, Kurt had mentioned that he had been seeing me around the area. I told him how difficult it had been trying to get people to talk to me. Kurt explained that people did not talk because “they are not honest with themselves” and that being “streetwise” was not something that could be acquired overnight. I cannot say I was offended at Kurt’s assessment of me because, to borrow Hendrika’s words “what does he know?” Had Kurt been one of the homeless white people I have seen by themselves downtown in cities such as Pretoria and Johannesburg and not in a predominately white area, I may have been more inclined to his assessment of me. More than anything, the idea of being streetwise in a white area was perplexing as I have been socialised to understand street smarts as being applicable in predominately poor Black areas where the possibility of crime required a heightened degree of vigilance. Additionally, in my family, lessons on racism began early with my father also instilling the same value in vigilance when in uncomfortably majority white areas.

To me, East Lynne had never required street smarts. Never were there stories of crime other than a more recent outbreak of car break-ins at my mother's complex after Body Corporate had decided to cease the employment of security guards who would survey the complex and open the main gate in favour of an electronically operated gate. Reaching into my memory bank of Black people I have seen in poor white areas, I began to remember how it was that Black people were expected to conduct themselves. Speaking to a Black employee in East Lynne, as well as witnessing a verbally abusive interaction between a Black employee and his white boss at a car mechanic shop in Pretoria West, I saw that Black people were expected to "know their place" by looking down and accepting projected sentiments of inferiority (accepting the abuse of their employers in need of their job). He also added that poor white East Lynne's apprehension towards me was 'my problem'. My attempt at creating a more interpersonal dynamic clearly failed with Kurt unlike with Hendrika who was empathetic enough to become my main participant (Blee, 1998; Bondi, 2003; Johnson & Rowlands, 2012; Ewing, 2006). Like many in East Lynne, Kurt spoke about just having to survive daily, especially with the soup kitchen still being closed for the Christmas holiday.

Ethics

> *"Participation implies emotional involvement; observation requires detachment. It is a strain to try to sympathize with others and at the same time strive for scientific objectivity"* (Tedlock, 1991:69).

Throughout my fieldwork I continuously ensured informed consent from people in East Lynne, and students participating in the focus groups. In East Lynne, I approached informants and potential participants as a Master's student at Wits asking for their participation in my research on white poverty. Formal consent by signing consent forms was given by Hendrika and Marieke who both did not want their surnames mentioned but agreed to the use of their first names. I then decided I would not ask anyone for their full names. I have also decided to give my main participant a pseudonym although she did not ask for this privacy. This consideration is more for my benefit than hers. There have been moments in my analysis, highlighted in the above qutoe on 'participant observation' as an oxymoron, that require critique on a person I respect. The use

of a pseudonym has allowed me some emotional distance between my critique on the fragility of whiteness and the person in East Lynne who had been kind enough to participate in my research. Annalie and Stephan would not allow me to record them but agreed to one short informal interview each. Informal consent felt to me like the best move when approaching the white car guards as well as Ernest and his mother. Each had verbally agreed to their quick chats with me.

Formal informed consent was given to me by the focus group participants. All but one were comfortable with their real names being used. Later, one felt pressured into anonymising her name. Being a researcher who "must be sensitive to, and be prepared to initiate, appropriate measures to address ethical dilemmas posed by participants' over-disclosure […]. The major concern is the preservation of confidentiality among group members" (Powell & Single, 1996: 501) I have therefore given pseudonyms to these two middle class white students and have chosen not to include any surnames.

In relation to ethical considerations revolving around my first year students as participants and their ability to feel confident amongst my classmates and I, I was least worried about Daniel. He proved me right by being the first to arrive and the last leave. I asked Daniel why he though his fellow classmates, especially his friend, did not attend, and he felt that his classmates agreed instead of expressing their possible discomfort at being around postgraduate students. When I asked Daniel whether he had felt this same concern, he admitted that he had initially but this swiftly passed.

In terms of safety, Kurt was memorable in the advice he gave me. In our short but colourful conversation he informed me that as a woman I needed to be careful in East Lynne. Never having felt East Lynne to be particularly unsafe, I was intrigued by what I was being told. "Really? East Lynne is not safe?" I enquired. "You must be careful" I was warned. "If you ask too many questions…" then he indicated the slicing of a neck, death gesture. The only other time I had been warned about my safety in East Lynne was as a teenager just after graduating from high school. It was wintertime in South Africa and my friend had come with me to visit my mother as a graduation gift from her mother. On this particular night, we had not made it home before

sunset and were walking down a residential road on our way to my mother's house. A coloured man, who was locking the gate to his yard began yelling at us to go home as it was not the time for young girls to be walking alone. With my friend being Australian, I joked to her that in South Africa "it took a village to raise a child". This time however, ten years later, there was no joke. Concerned for my safety, I exited the field the next day on Saturday 13 January 2018. Exiting the field had also always been a concern for me with my fieldsite being where my mother lives. I have not returned to East Lynne to visit my mother since abruptly concluding my fieldwork.

In the field I had asked for the ages of participants who I felt were close enough to my own age for the question not to be disrespectful. Therefore, I did not ask Marieke, Annalie, Tannie, Katrina and Kurt for their ages as they were visibly much older than me. Interestingly, although calculations taken from our conversations revealed that Hendrika could possibly only be a couple years older than me, she would only give me her birth date not her age.

Between July 2017 and January 2018, I interacted with a handful of poor white residents in East Lynne where gossip and rumours—through name dropping—"enhance[ed] social relationships" (Guerin & Miyazaki, 2006:23) between myself, white car guards and my main participant Hendrika. I feel like the ability to mention a familiar name to these people allowed for my questioning to seem more legitimate. The next chapter, *'That could be me', white fragility behind the social exclusion of poor whites*, begins my ethnographic discussions of my fieldwork in Johannesburg and Pretoria. In this chapter I will give focus on the focus group session with white middle class Wits students who explicit the social exclusion of poor whites as resultant of being symbolic reminders of the fragility of whiteness. Furthermore, the lived experience of social exclusion by Hendrika will be contrasted with the lived experience of dominant white society excluding poor whites.

Chapter Five-"That could be me": white fragility and the social exclusion of poor whites.

In East Lynne I found myself in a peculiar predicament- excluded by those whose social exclusion I was trying to understand. Having prepared myself for the likelihood of such an occurrence, I had conducted a focus group with white middle class Anthropology students. Initiating conversation through Roger Ballen's *Outland* video—an artistic depiction of white poverty in Johannesburg—themes pointing to an idea of white anxiety in contemporary South Africa surfaced. This anxiety, in a time where white South Africans have been declaring notions of white victimhood, is best represented by the presence of poor whites which results in their social exclusion from dominant white society and exploited by Afrikaner minority rights groups such as Afriforum. Only when confronted with the sight of a white beggar did these participants feel a connection to poverty. Feeling, briefly while waiting for the green at a traffic light, like "that could be me". In these brief moments, without the protection of apartheid, poor whites represent the falsehood of white superiority which anchored the country's race/class divide.

In this chapter, I will discussion narratives on poor white people by middle class white students using Robin DiAngelo's 'white fragility' as the conceptual tool to understanding social exclusion as a response to poor whites being a disturbance to racial comfort. I will introduce this chapter with a discussion of white fragility politically, and according to how my participants explained "white anxiety". I will locate the triggers to white anxiety and analyse the defensive emotional and behavioural moves, particularly fear, and fleeing the racially based stress-inducing situation in 'white flight' (Kruse, 2013; Frey, 1979; Renzulli & Evans, 2005). Following the discussion of white fragility as it relates to these white middle class Wits students, I will delve deeper into how, by blurring the race/class divide, poor whites are symbolic reminders of the fragility of whiteness which results in a need for social distance. I will use the life history of Cezanne's family to express the reasoning behind the social exclusion of poor whites as it pertained to her extended family. This will be contrasted with Hendrika's lived experience of social distance between herself and her middle class extended family. Experiences of racial micro-aggressions shared by Hendrika will be discussed to show how anti-Black practices towards poor whites reflect internalised racism and self-hatred in white selfhood that requires distancing from.

White fragility/anxiety

"One of the consequences of creating such a fabulously exceptional human type is that the slightest whiff of decline, the faintest echo of subversion can ignite an intense sense of crisis"
(Bonnett, 2000:38).

Alistar Bonnet's (2000) tongue-in-cheek comment above, on the 'identity crisis' of early 20th century white people provides a vivid backdrop to the state of white fragility and white anxiety in post-apartheid South Africa expressed by all my participants. White fragility is defined as "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" (DiAngelo 2011:54). These defensive moves include emotions such as anger, guilt and fear, as well as behaviours including silence, argumentation and fleeing the stress-inducing situation. In this chapter I will use white fragility as a conceptual tool to analyse the discourses surrounding poor whites in my focus group which leads to their social exclusion from dominant white society.

On a political level, white fragility is most spectacularly demonstrated by the current neoconservative Afrikaner discourse, spearheaded by groups such as Afriforum and partner, Solidarity Helping Hand (*Solidariteit Helpende Hand*). Solidarity Helping Hand was "founded in 1949 as a response to the Afrikaner poverty crisis of the time"[3] and has been fundamental to the historic and current attempts at the rehabilitation and upliftment of poor whites. Afriforum, founded in March 2006, is a non-governmental organisation who serves to protect the interests of Afrikaans people as a minority group with the motto that "Afrikaners—who know no other home—could be meaningful as Afrikaners and in peaceful coexistence with other communities, sustainably at the southern tip of Africa"[4]. Solidarity Helping Hand is partnered with the trade union Solidarity, and Afriforum, to form the "Solidarity Movement". Solidarity dates its inception on 22 June 1902 with the founding of the Transvaal Miners' Association. Where AfriForum adheres to the role of being a "credible Afrikaner interest organization and civil rights watchdog", Solidarity's beliefs centre around Christian values, protection of minority rights and Afrikaans people. These groups have furiously sought to "reinstate racial equilibrium" (DiAngelo,

[3] https://helpendehand.co.za/wie-is-ons/
[4] https://www.afriforum.co.za/about/about-afriforum/

2011:54) under the political cloak of minority rights, including a discourse on white, specifically Afrikaner, victimhood. The resistant discourse of conservative 'white talk' is evident here with self-interest in the continuation of white supremacy. Where in the 1940s the presence of poor white people was propelled as being the 'visible cost of industrialization' (Willoughby-Herard, 2007), today the visibility of white poverty is seen as the cost of democracy and Black political power, although statistics and claims "remain unsubstantiated and are in deep contradiction to other statistics in post-apartheid South Africa" (Kruger 2016: 15). Recently, narratives of white victimhood have surrounded exaggerated claims of a 'white genocide' made by the Solidarity Movement has sparked international intrigue and support particularly by the Australian conservative political parties expressing the support of political asylum of white South Africans.

Responses to white fragility

DiAngelo outlines defensive emotions and behaviours which are attributed to white fragility. When talking to my participants I found fear to be the primary emotion in response to the brief moment of racial discomfort when confronted with the sight of poor white people. As a behaviour of white fragility, fleeing the stress-inducing situation surfaced. White fragility or anxiety is not class dependent. In East Lynne, poor white residents revealed their inability to cope with racial stress. White fragility therefore provides a conceptual framework to understanding both, that poor whites are a symbolic reminder of the fragility of whiteness which leads to their social exclusion and that the everyday use of various racist strategies by poor whites demonstrates a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Fear

The fear of "sinking to the same levels of depravity [as Africans]" (Koorts, 2013: 566) was a sentiment expressed as being symbolically associated with poor whites by the Wits students. The idea of whiteness being invisible is due to white people believing it so, with my participants admitting to "living in a bubble" of racial comfort which they have created for themselves. The race/class divide has been so entrenched in South African society that Black poverty has been normalised and does nothing to bring out an emotional response other than one which follows

moral economy discourse of the 'White Anglo-Saxon Person' as explained by Kim Wale and Don Foster (2007). The authors show how the process of identification encompasses the three discourses of liberal meritocracy, Protestant work ethic and a just world which allows the white wealthy to frame themselves as deserving and moral and the "poor as immoral and undeserving" (Wale & Foster, 2007:52). The moral economy discourse sets a just world where hard work is fundamental to moral and economic worth. Only Sasha acknowledged this narrative amongst middle class white people towards Black poverty. They agreed on a different emotional response to white poverty than Black poverty- not only with them personally but also within their social circles. Other than Sasha, all participants in this focus group acknowledged a sentiment of a racially based connection to poverty in white beggars which they do not feel in the presence of poor Black people. "That could be me" was repeated throughout the focus group session. The idea of white victimhood and the diminishing purchasing power of whiteness in contemporary South African society was a sentiment shared by my middle class focus group participants- something that they called "white anxiety". I had never heard of this term before and was therefore interested in this term that they all said with such conviction and compliance between them. I searched for a definition of 'white anxiety'. White anxiety, for Afra, was feeling "scared". It was a feeling she felt when she saw white beggars that made her reflect and say to herself "if I don't get my shit together I could end up like that". For Cezaane and her boyfriend, the anxiety brought up in them at the presence of a white beggar results in a shared concern over budgeting. White anxiety was therefore related to finances— "sending kids to school and putting a roof over your head". Daniel was able to eloquently explain white anxiety by stating that: "We are used to seeing white people with security in their lives, very rarely that we are exposed to a white person that we know that is absolutely struggling to do anything. So when we see that white person on the side of the road it's like this a picture of what might happen because I don't ever see this in my life and all the white people I know are in some way functionally secure". I see the functionality of security which Daniel mentioned as reflective of the C.W. Mills' (1997) racial contract where "all whites are *beneficiaries*, though some whites are not *signatories*" (Mills 1997:11). Even when living in the situation of poverty, the racial contract asserts that all white people benefit from the privileges of whiteness- knowingly or unknowingly. The racial stress in

confronting the South African reality of whiteness being the furthest from invisible as it relates to race/class results in a racially intolerant state of fear and anxiety. Whiteness as "unearned privilege" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:481) symbolised by "that white person on the side of the road it's like this a picture of what might happen" resulted in fear. For Sasha, fear was replaced by disdain and a recognition that poor white people "had history on their side". The fear is, intentionally, short lived however as middle class white people distanced themselves to be able to "very rarely" engage with white poverty.

The idea of the fearful maintenance of white privilege was shown when Sasha posed a question on white privilege as it applied to poor white people. She asked, "Does white privilege still apply to poor whites?" Daniel responded by not only highlighting how white people feel obliged to help white beggars more than Black beggars but that the emotional response in white people feeling more sympathetic was "an effect of white privilege whether it benefits them or not". I do not see the emotional response to white beggars as necessarily sympathetic but rather more fearful of racial degeneration. It is the inherent fear at the loss of privilege that is represented by poor whites which causes white people within the older members of these participants' social circles to appear sympathetic in their donations to white beggars. What Daniel explicits in his statement is C.W. Mills' (1997) racial contract where "all whites are *beneficiaries*, though some whites are not *signatories*" (Mills 1997:11). Even when living in the situation of poverty, the racial contract asserts that all white people benefit from the privileges of whiteness- knowingly or unknowingly. I saw that these white young people were aware of white privilege in a way that acknowledges to some degree all of them being beneficiaries of the racial contract.

This awareness however does not take into account the "knowledge claims about the racial construct [that] address racial formations that demonise and mark whiteness" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:479) where poor whites represent the fear of white degeneration on a political and individual level, contemporarily and historically. I believe that even with a reflective understanding of white privilege, these white Wits students only do so in the traditional sense; as power and prestige.

"I'm going to Australia": Fleeing the stress-inducing situation/white flight

"I have been told I should 'just leave', I'm like "it's not that easy to get a visa!"—Sasha.

White flight is neither a new nor country specific defensive behavioural response to reinstating racial equilibrium in the state of white fragility. In South Africa this has been seen in the white talk of eroding white dominance—particularly as it relates to affirmative action—where the "implication is that the future of the New South Africa is antithetical to white interest and excludes them so walking away is the rational thing to do" (Steyn & Foster, 2008:41). As mentioned earlier, this has resulted in a plea by Afriforum to the right-wing international community, for white (particularly Afrikaans) people to be granted refugee status in Western countries. South African comedian Trevor Noah made an impersonating joke in a stand up show about white flight with white South Africans "going to Australia". Recently, in news reports, Australians have been seen to support white South African 'refugees'. Critics and opposition to this move have called it fascist and have pointed out the double standard in xenophobic and racist attitudes towards Black and other 'people of colour' in need of political/sexual/environmental asylum.

In the focus group, when talking about white anxiety there was a clear connection made between Black political power, white flight and the symbolic reminder of poor whites of the fragility of whiteness. Born in the post-apartheid 'born free' era, these participants expressed that poor whites were a reminder of a loss in political dominance in modern society. In the case of how the changing socio-political landscape in South Africa affects middle class white Wits students, Sasha provided a personal example of how this change has resulted in growing white anxiety amongst members of her social surroundings. Citing Fees Must Fall protests on the University's campus as a socio-political change with "Black people saying 'enough is enough'", Sasha admitted to "a growing anxiety that you just need to get out of here". A sentiment which she said she had overheard in conversations between her mother and her friends, as well as being told by them directly that Sasha "needs to get out" to better living in a predominantly white society. Sasha could not pretend that fleeing was an option she was inclined towards, with her above quote highlighting the emotional response of fear (in the slight diminished privilege of

international mobility which has the possibility of keeping her trapped under Black political rule) as well as the behavioural response of fleeing in white fragility .

I can only imagine the backstage talk between white South Africans where "varieties of amnesia/silencing/distortion in relation to the past are of the most characteristic features of white talk" (Steyn, 2008:33) are commonplace. In Ruyterwacht, two poor white elderly male residents were "frank" in telling me that "things were better during apartheid, everyone had a job". I do not doubt that behind closed doors, my participants have heard stories that "give away the covert belief that things were actually more 'normal', perhaps even better, in the old white dispensation" (Steyn & Foster, 2008:33). Poor whites, to middle class imagination, represent an uncomfortable confrontation with an anti-racist society that can embrace white poverty in a manner that matches poverty in Black communities. The Black American folk aphorism that "when white people say "Justice," they mean "Just us" (Mills, 1997:2) is relevant to white flight. True commitment to justice in South Africa's democratic transition would call "skilled young white people to see themselves as having a part to play in the challenges of reconstructing the country, but without the unfair advantage of the past" (Steyn & Foster, 2008:41). The contrary is being practiced; instead young white South Africans are encouraged to flee to Western societies where their racial equilibrium can be reinstated. Whether fleeing the stress-inducing situation of a white beggar at a traffic light or "moving to Australia", middle class participants needed distance from themselves from the blurring of the race/class divide.

White fragility and the social exclusion of poor whites

Segregation is proposed as white fragility's primary factor where "even if whites live in physical proximity to people of colour segregation occurs on multiple levels including representational and informational" (DiAngelo 2011:58). Fears of miscegenation fuelled the racially segregated geographical planning of the apartheid state. Within racial segregation was an intra-white class and ethnic segregation where practices of the rehabilitation and upliftment in poor white areas show that the "origin of racial practice was not in the black-white dichotomy of the colonial encounter […] the dichotomy of self and other is within whites in the competition over who

properly possess whiteness, or sovereign humanness" (Steyn, 2004:147). Sovereign humanness required a distancing from Black people but also the "white primitive" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:482) who do not properly possess whiteness.

Spatially, the geographic location of East Lynne directly points to the social distance and exclusion of poor whites from middle class white society. East Lynne, as a poor white area, provided the boundary between white affluent areas and the townships east of the city. This is made evident by the vast public transport network in the area, discussed previously. Speaking about this to Hendrika reiterated the geographic significance of East Lynne by suggesting "it all started out cause all the working class people was living here and needed to get into the city and the other places to do work. And the richer Afrikaans people back in the apartheid times maybe didn't want the taxis and the Putco buses to stop in their areas. So we are the poorer white area; just dump it on us". It is clear that Hendrika was aware that poor white areas acted as a buffer between the moral boundary between Black and white. (Teppo, 2004). Furthermore, there is an acknowledgment of having not properly possessed whiteness which allowed unwanted Blackness to be "dumped" into poorer white areas. Additionally, as mentioned before, a prominent feature of the area's landscape are the number of schools which include Sonitus School: Institution for hearing impaired learners/*Sonitus Skool vir Hardhorendes* and Transvalia School for Epilepsy and Learning Disabilities /*Transvalia Skool vir Epileptic* as specialised schools for children with disabilities. According to its website[5], Sonitus School was Pretoria's first school for the hearing impaired- opening officially on 10 April 1973. The school began with 40 pupils and eight members of staff with the last "pioneer" working at the school up until April 2016. The medium of instruction at Sonitus is mainly Afrikaans as the institution sees an adverse effect on hearing impaired children who are taught in bilingual classrooms. The idea of "dumping" what is seen not to belong in dominant white society can also be extended to these Afrikaans schools for children with physical and learning disabilities and their placement in fringes of white society in EastLynne.

[5] https://www.sonitus.co.za/home

"Although she claimed to have an educated son [...] her condition made it difficult to understand why she would live in such conditions if she had a son with a good job" (Sibanda, 2012:85).

From an African cultural perspective, Sibanda's surprise at discovering that her poor white participant living in an old iron-built house "in a very bad state of despair" (Sibanda 2012: 85), had a son who appeared unwilling to help, is to be expected. This was also the perspective held by the daughter of my extended family member who dated a poor white man. For the daughter, she did not understand why she was asked for money for the poor white man her mother was dating, who had at least one child who appeared financially able to help his father. Culturally, upward mobility is not seen as sufficient cause for shunning poorer family members. This African perspective does not apply to notions of western individualism found in processes of white identification. During the focus group on white poverty, my classmate Cezaane provided the most personal connection with poor whites. This connection serves as examples of the lived experiences of socially excluding and speaks to the experiences of Hendrika's of social exclusion.

Cezaane shared with the focus group the story of her family background. According to Cezaane her "parents came from nothing"—the working class—whereas "the rest of the family did not make the same progression". The progression of Cezaane's family over a 25 year timespan began when her father worked in the army as a lieutenant at the age of 19. As a young father of 22 years old, he then worked in telephonics as well as door-to-door sales. Afterwards, Cezaane's father began working for a company as a shelf packer where he stayed as the company grew over the years. Cezaane's father then proceeded to find employment at a bank until his retrenchment. He then went back to the company where he had worked prior to the bank at which he is currently a Managing Director.

Cezaane described her family's background as "rough"- marked by alcoholism, promiscuity and domestic violence. Her Afrikaans grandmother was a young mother at 16 years old, in a physically abusive relationship with her Afrikaner grandfather. During those years Cezaane's grandmother had to turn to the church for support as means to not end up on the streets with her three children. Her father's upward mobility into the middle class has caused a distance

which “complicated relations”. Cezaane told us how her immediate family “don’t associate with [the paternal side of her extended family] ever” as her father did not enjoy how conversations continuously revolved around money.

“He doesn’t really mix with us. He’s one of those that thinks he’s rich and that he is very important.”—Hendrika.

When talking to Hendrika about her extended family she told me about the social distance from the maternal side of her family- particularly her mother’s only surviving sibling. Hendrika’s uncle, like her father, worked in the army and lived in a nearby suburb Valhalla. Her uncle, according to Hendrika, had never approved of his sister marrying “into a lower kind of family”. “That’s why he started thinking he was more important” she explained “he had a higher rank than my father”. I asked her whether she had a relationship with any of her cousins to which she replied “I have one cousin from that judgy uncle but also he learnt his father’s ways and we don’t mix with him”. Hendrika’s story presents the experience of the exclusion of poor whites from dominant white society. Both in East Lynne and Ruyterwacht I found that all poor white participants kept very close ties with their family in poverty. Boasted as poverty being the thread which bound the communities, close financially co-dependent social networks worked to keep families together. Here, I see western individualism as a prerequisite to sovereign humanness and socially acceptable white people. Poor whites, as mentioned in the methodology chapter, may be excluded from dominant white society because of their lack of financial security but find inclusion amongst those unable to flee the situation of poverty.

Sukkelaar

“I can see myself more in a poor white person. If I got addicted to heroin now and dropped out of school then that’s how I could look. I would have fucking yellow hair cause I have been out in the sun for like fifty years and my skin would look like a leather handbag” –Sasha.

"I will probably never get to the level of begging but what was scary for me were the weird little houses, doily kind of curtains, like four guys outside, it's a Tuesday morning and they are just out there.. if I were to sink to any level it would be that and that's really depressing"—Sasha.

The social distance between the white middle class and poorer white people is represented, amongst Afrikaans people, as *sukkelaar.* Cezaane explained sukkelaar as people who "struggle" where "all you do is struggle". She continued by stating that "it's a judge of character. If someone calls you *sukkelaar* well then you just choose to struggle. You are always stuck that's why you are in the position you are in because you choose to be that way". It was at this point that Sasha interjected by asking whether this view of meritocracy differed to the way "most white people view Black people?" "It's different though", Cezaane answered "we don't talk to them mainly based on them being poor". Although *sukkelaar* was a word I had never heard, 'struggle' was a word which was repeated not only amongst poor whites in East Lynne but also those who participated in my research in Ruyterwacht. Cezaane also illustrated how meritocracy transcended into whiteness from an Afrikaans perspective as "you need to work. You need to earn your keep". What Cezaane highlighted is nothing new, and is reflected in the above quote from Sasha. I see this disdain towards unproductivity and idleness as reflective of the discourse surrounding the Poor White Problem of the early 20th Century. A respectable work ethic was then, as it remains now, fundamental to white, and specifically Afrikaner identity.

"... it's just knowing that her father gets all that money from begging from other people. But, I don't know. It doesn't feel right. Why should he get money for begging whereas other people has to work for money?''—Hendrika.

In East Lynne, all the white residents I spoke to but pensioner Tannie worked either formally as cashiers or informally as car guards and a metal scrap collector. In discussing employment, particularly formal work versus informal work, Hendrika began to tell me about the working situation of her colleague's son's girlfriend, Reinette. Marieke, an employee at Trios Blue Bottle Liquor Store, had a teenage son who dated a girl, Reinette, from a small diamond mining town 30km from East Lynne, called Cullinan. According to Hendrika, Reinette's father chose not to work but rather earned his money from begging at the "corner of Zambesi, there by the China

Mall". Reflected in the above quote, it was evident that Hendrika was unimpressed by the way in which this man chose to make a living. Hendrika told me that the teenage girl's father could earn up to R600 a day. Resultant was that "at home they were like a normal family" even owning a car. Here, owning a vehicle is proposed as a status symbol that are "cues which select for a person the status that is to be imputed to him and the way in which others are to treat him"(Goffman, 1951:294). The status symbol of a car placed this family closer to 'normal' middle class society. Almost with a hint of contempt, she stated "why should he get money for begging whereas other people work for their money?". Interestingly this does not do anything to divert the accusation of unproductivity associated to them in term *sukkelaar* by dominant white society. The idleness, seen by Sasha, in the possibility of her begging, brought up the symbolic threat of the poor white body in "fucking yellow hair cause I have been out in the sun for like fifty years and my skin would look like a leather handbag". This shows an idea of stagnation which lends itself to *sukkelaar*. This can be seen in Sasha's quotes which make a distinction between white beggars and the white working class, where there is still the impression that even on "a Tuesday morning they are just out there" being idle. Furthermore the visual markers of poverty inscribed on the poor white body in hair and skin comes with it a moral judgment likened to heroin addiction.

The term *sukkelaar* may be crude and derogatory, but I do see it as somewhat appropriate in the South African context because, to borrow Sasha's words, "You (as a white person) have history on your side". The privilege of being white in South Africa was not denied by these participants and I see the moral judgment of poor whites based on laziness as telling of a 'race-traitorship' (Ignatiev & Garvey, 2014; Segrest, 1994) discourse on poor white people. For white South Africans work appears to be readily available to them (but not verbalised by them) therefore making perceived stagnation as unacceptable and inter-generational poverty inconceivable. Sitting around my living room table with a handful of white students I had managed to wrangle in for this focus group I began to notice that in the unlikelihood of being born into poverty, inter-generational upward mobility was an expectation amongst my middle class participants. Further, the only association with family who did not achieve this was to serve as a reminder of "what

you are going to land up with" if you do not adhere to the very marked standard of South African whiteness. Sibanda explains this occurrence of social distancing, compounded by western individualism, as stigmatisation in relation to the experiences of poor whites in East London. Challenging 'coastal whiteness' by being poor, poor white people had been "abandoned and shunned by their families and dropped from some of their social networks" (Sibanda 2012:86). The abandoning, shunning and dropping of poor white people from dominant white social networks shows whiteness as diminished selfhood and soul injury in social exclusion of poor whites. This not only applies to the experience of poor whites being socially excluded from family and dominant white society but also middle class white people whose humanity excludes poor family members.

"They don't want to mix with us"

"I think white people is very judgment. Like the other lady Marieke. She once rented in a house in Waverly. Even when she was living there, as soon as the people found out she was from East Lynne they didn't really mix with her. So if she wanted to visit someone or just get out she always came this side to visit one of us here. She didn't really mix with the people from Waverly. I don't know if its just white people but I do find that white people is very judgemental. That's maybe why they don't want to acknowledge that there is a workers class. Cause they really never mix"—Hendrika.

From the above quote from Hendrika about an experience of exclusion by her colleague Marieke, poor white people are acutely aware of white middle class people's apprehension towards them, however throughout my focus group discussions, an invisibility to the white working class appeared. The image of white poverty did not include the working class for this group. Speaking to my participant about the invisibility of working class white people, Hendrika framed this lack of acknowledgment around moral judgement. Throughout conversations on poor white beggars with middle class white students judgement was passed. This judgement appeared to be based on poor whites being able to "strike a nerve" in middle class white people which made them relatable and in turn pointing to poor whites being symbolic reminders of the fragility of whiteness which leads to their social exclusion. Not much, however, was said about

lower income white workers. How does that kind of invisibility feel? Does it affect how you self-identify? These were the questions I posed to Hendrika on this matter of the invisibility of the white working class.

Hendrika explained that due to social distance "we don't always get the feeling of being invisible". It was when entering more affluent areas that when "someone passes by, drives by you, you can actually find them staring at you because they judge you just on what car you are driving or how you are looking". Hendrika then told me a story about when her sister was in her matric year. During her sister's pre matric dance preparation a group of mothers from Waterkloof—an affluent Pretoria suburb—sponsored dresses to be worn by girls at the matric farewell. This charitable gesture was tarnished by, a common occurrence experienced by myself and many Black people, being "watched the whole time as if they were going to steal". This appears to have been a dehumanising event for Hendrika's sister as her and her fellow female classmates were instructed not to leave the premises with the dresses after the dance, forcing them to the bathroom to change out of the dresses to return to the mothers. "So, if you do mix you feel as though you are not seen as a person". These were micro-aggressions that were not "always something tangible that you could see but it's just a feeling that you got when you were mixing with each other. "And they always treated you as if you are a charity case" she added. This was something felt by me when offered a plate at the soup kitchen before speaking to Earnest and Tannie. Micro-aggressions are defined as "subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed to people of colour, often automatically or unconsciously" (Solorzano et al, 2000:60) I could identify with the micro-aggressions experienced in the story told by Hendrika. That the poor whites' threat to whiteness results in the use of the same racist strategies towards Black people employed by middle class white people make possible thinking of white selfhood encompassing internalised racism and self-hatred in the whiteness as misery theoretical framework.

There is a clear parallel between the micro-aggressions experienced by Hendrika and the other poor white people she referred to in her story and Cezanne's relationship with a poor white

mechanic her father had hired when she competed in go-kart racing. While at the racing tracks, Cezaane's father offered work to an old poor white man as mechanic- an opportunity she admitted would have unlikely been given to a Black man. "Work for us, I'll pay you a salary" is what Cezanne said her father told this man as "we need an extra set of hands". This man worked for the family for about two years—where a relationship including shared vacations grew between the two families—before Cezanne's dad started complaining about missing tools resulting in the mechanic being fired for stealing. Cezanne admitted that continuously throughout the two years there was a changed behaviour in front of the mechanic's children where her and her sister would not play on their electronic devices in front of them. Cezanne echoed the precise word used by Hendrika when talking about the social exclusion of poor whites from dominant white society; contagious. For Hendrika there was a feeling that middle class white people saw white poverty as contagious which was confirmed by Cezanne.

The fear of catching some sort of poverty bug from poor white people can seem absurd and yet it showcases both an the symbolic threat of the poor white body which informs their exclusion from dominant white society as it relates to "concepts of pollution, or purity and dirt" (Teppo, 20014:79). Teppo explains that, while acknowledging the body as society's strongest metaphor, illness in the late 19th Century was the "strongest metaphor for structural crisis" (Teppo, 2004:79). Poor whites have then been seen as a symbolic and structural threat to the maintenance of social boundaries which requires distance. Whiteness' low threshold to pain, evident in the feeling of poverty acting as something transferrable and infectious directly indicates the fragility of whiteness which cannot handle the disturbances in the racial boundaries symbolised by poor whites. Again, the internalised racism and self-hatred are evident in the practice of micro-aggressions aimed at poor white people.

I have used white fragility as a conceptual tool in unpacking the state of white anxiety middle class people feel when confronted with poor white people. Under the subtheme *Responses to white fragility,* I paid particular attention to the defensive moves of the emotion of fear and the behaviour of fleeing the racially based stress-inducing situation or white flight. White anxiety was

brought up as a response to the diminishing purchasing power of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa, symbolised by the presence of poor whites. Brief interaction with white beggars brought the feeling of “that could be me” in order to restore a sense of white racial equilibrium avoidance, distance and exclusion to flee the racial discomfort occurred.

Chapter Six-Racism: A weapon of the poor white

"True enough, the system has allowed so dangerous an anti-black attitude to build up amongst whites that it is taken as almost a sin to be black and hence the poor whites, who are economically nearest to the blacks, demonstrate the distance between themselves and the blacks by an exaggerated reactionary attitude towards blacks. Hence the greatest anti-black feeling is to be found amongst the very poor whites [...]. This is the kind of twisted logic Black Consciousness seeks to eradicate" (Biko 1978: 50).

The "twisted logic" of poor white racism that anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko refers to above is what I see as desperate attempts at maintaining the privileges of whiteness. I see the racism of poor white East Lynne residents as to reflect that, still, in contemporary South Africa "poor whites [...] obey taboos and rituals of whiteness more meticulously than the middle class ever did" (Teppo, 2004:81). The process of poor white identification meant stricter adherence to taboos and rituals of whiteness but also involved anti-Black practices in their upliftment and rehabilitation. In the previous chapter I argued that the social exclusion of poor whites from dominant white society revealed internalised racism and self-hatred in the whiteness as misery theoretical frame work. This chapter will focus on the other end of the white class divide who are unable to distance themselves from themselves. I therefore will delve deeper into the second strand of my argument in this research report by expanding on poor whites projection of diminished white selfhood and white fragility in their everyday use of various racist strategies. In this chapter I begin with a discussion on diminished white selfhood and white fragility specific to Afrikaner identity. Discussions under the subthemes; *Afrikaner existential crisis*, *Threatened by upwardly mobile Blacks* and *Black political power* will show poor white people's inability to come to terms with a more pro-human democratic society in which they are not centred. I see downward Afrikaner mobility to be placed squarely on the moral boundary of the race/class divide which results in their everyday use of various racist strategies that demonstrate a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa therefore this will be discussed under the subheading *Obscuring the moral boundary of the race/class divide: The twisted logic of poor white racism.* I will continue by examining the use of various racist strategies employed by poor white people in East Lynne to cope with experiences

of diminished selfhood and soul injury in contemporary South Africa whilst simultaneously demonstrating these strategies as a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa under the subthemes *Trash talk, Language tension* and the saddening *Language tensions in schools*. There has been a long language battle between English and Afrikaners, in East Lynne the battle is racist between white Afrikaners and Black English speakers. The defence of language, in East Lynne, was the favoured racist strategy employed by poor whites threatened by the presence of upwardly mobile Black people in the area, poor whites themselves sought as much distance from Black people as possible. Stuck with nowhere to go, the argument that poor whites' everyday use of various racist strategies demonstrate a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa, will be illuminated throughout this chapter.

Afrikaner existential crisis

As discussed in the previous chapter, political change in the country has caused a state of white anxiety amongst white South Africans. Although this is felt both by Afrikaners and English, poor as well as middle class white people, the anxiety of Afrikaner identity takes on a particular character as a resistant subaltern whiteness. The struggle for political dominance created an Afrikaner identity wrapped around ethnic and nationalistic discourse which established the political order of apartheid South Africa. In a new political order, ethnic uncertainty impacts Afrikaans people in a more profound manner than English South Africans as they "scramble for optimal location in post-apartheid South Africa (Steyn, 2004:144). Currently, the (continued) search for optimal ideological location is seen to be due to the idea that Afrikaners are dislocated in contemporary South Africa. The reactionary discourse salient in current Afrikaner identity is seen to display the same characteristics of contemporary white identities of conservative restoration where "certain whites position themselves as victims of a changing racial order" (Steyn, 2004:151) and in competition with "the black African for the powerful position of victim" (Steyn, 2004:158). Verwey and Quayle add on post-apartheid Afrikaner identity by arguing Afrikaner identity to be experiencing an 'existential crisis' (Verwey & Quayle, 2012). According to Verwey and Quayle, due to Afrikaner identity being so intertwined with Afrikaner nationalism

which drove the apartheid regime, the fall of apartheid has resulted in a crumbling Afrikaner identity. In post-apartheid South Africa, Afrikaans people's 'overwhelming' existential crisis has them wondering "who are we?" in a new political and social climate which they did not engineer (Verwey & Qualye 2012:555). While Verwey and Quayle analyse discourses around the Afrikaner existential crisis my discussion will show without the "securely white and (upper) middle class" gaze (Steyn, 2008:33) how poor whites have amplified the performance of a crumbling Afrikaner identity through their everyday use of various strategies, attempting to maintain the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Steyn writes that the ethnocentric narratives under the Nationalist ideology of apartheid South Africa placed Afrikaners at the centre, making them the "most important population group. They were in charge" (Steyn, 2004:158). Two decades into democracy and Afrikaners are no longer as significant as they had once been. When I questioned Hendrika on whether a shift in Afrikaner identity has caused feelings of white anxiety, Hendrika stressed the forced nature of this shift. "I think maybe that's why the older Afrikaans people is so judgmental 'cause they don't know where they fit in exactly" she sympathised. Hendrika did not shy from talking about the benefits apartheid had on Afrikaans people where "they used to be something important and they used to actually have something, which wasn't theirs to take, but they are stuck not knowing where they fit in". There was a subtle way in which Hendrika was able to appear able to critically engage with Afrikaner identity and its relationship with the Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid yet at the same time reproduce the discourses of resistant whiteness in white talk discourses. This reflects the narratives presented by Verwey and Quayle where the burden of blame lies on older Afrikaner generations and allows for a distancing between modern Afrikaners and the actions of their forefathers as a means to a dignified preservation of disgraced Afrikaner identity. Perhaps, Hendrika suggested, being 'judgmental' was the only defence old poor white residents had in East Lynne. Trash talk behind the back of Black residents, talking nice in the presence of a Black person but still actively avoiding them were presented to me as tools for coping with diminished white selfhood in white anxiety in East Lynne.

Obscuring the moral boundary of the race/class divide: The twisted logic of poor white racism.

"The history of eugenics […] suggest that racism targeting non-Europeans was first enacted in rehearsals—enduringly re-enacted—through racial hierarchy embodied among European"

(Willoughby-Herard, 2007:485).

Dominant narratives on poor whites focus on the visual and material markers of white poverty as well as how the body serves as social text and "a medium in the drawing of social categories' boundaries" at the margins of the social category. The poor white body therefore "elaborates on the danger of moral pollution ensuring from the transgression of those boundaries" (Teppo, 2004:20). Mary Douglas (1966) also proposes that it is at the margins where systems are most controlling that make boundaries dangerous. The threat of poor whites to esteemed white identity propelled the intervention of biological eugenics and scientific racism in the "systematic establishment of procedures for the regulation, constraint and racial marking of poor whites as irretrievable and degenerate, as "like the blacks"" (Willoughby-Herard, 2007:482). The power of the position of poor whites in apartheid South African society was that their proximity to Blackness—socially and economically—could make then 'socially irresponsible' and thus susceptible, as mentioned by Biko, to Black Conciseness. The policing of poor whites not only involved anti-Black racial practices such as sterilisation but also meant a stricter adherence for poor white of taboos and rituals of whiteness than the white middle class in order to gain its benefits (Kruger, 2017; Teppo, 2004). The social pathology of poor whites is therefore drenched in anti-Black racism which I propose as present in processes of poor white identification. In the racialisation of poverty I see poor white racism as performance of good whiteness (or moral 'judgments' according to Hendrika) as a means to creating distance between themselves and Black people through what Biko called an "exaggerated reactionary attitude towards blacks".

The taboos and rituals in whiteness and its obsession with domination reveal "a profound misunderstanding about the nature of human life" (Willoughby, 2007:488) behind poor whites everyday use of racist strategies in East Lynne. Today, in post-apartheid South Africa, having gone through certain dehumanising rehabilitative measures poor whites' misunderstanding of

internalised racism and self-hatred project the anti-Black sentiments they have been subject to as a concealment of ethnic and racial insecurities. Whilst middle class white society are able to distance themselves from poor whites as a reminder of the fragility of whiteness, poor whites have no escape but to act as buffer between Blackness and whiteness. The racism of poor whites is desperate, in that its shows whiteness as "an unearned privilege and therefore a worthless existence crying for an opportunity to live actual life" (Willoughby-Herard 2007:487). In the following subthemes, I will show how democratic South Africa (marked by the simultaneous upward mobility of Black people and downward Afrikaner mobility) has challenged the invisibility of whiteness in poor whites' demonstration of unearned privilege in their everyday use of various racist strategies as attempts at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Threatened by Black upward mobility

By the time I met Hendrika at 8:30am on Saturday 12 January 2018, I had already decided that I was leaving Pretoria back to Johannesburg after being "warned" about my safety as a young Black female asking "too many questions" by Kurt- the car guard outside the liquor store. "Kurt, what does he know?" she said dismissively but still, that was enough for me. I was ready to leave East Lynne. Before I left however, I needed to conduct an interview with Hendrika where her and I were able to have a talk on ideas of white anxiety. Much to our amusement this conversation was interrupted by the librarian who served as a perfect depiction of this anxiety.

Hendrika and I had agreed to meet for her interview at the East Lynne Community Library where we were seated on the ground in the courtyard area not too far from the library's entrance. Our cause for amusement during the interview was when the elderly white female librarian appeared to be performing her disapproval of whatever she thought we were doing by dramatically closing the front doors of the library. When that did not deter us from continuing our interview, the Black female security guard was sent out and told me in Setswana that she was told to tell me to reduce my noise levels. Through the chuckles I was fortunate to have been able to have Hendrika talk to me so openly about my observations in the area. I relayed that over the past 13 years my

mother had been living there, that it seemed as though the more East Lynne moved from being a predominately white space to one which is more racially diverse, the more white people felt threatened and panicked at the perceived loss of privilege. Hendrika concurred with my observation by explaining that the white people in the area did not want to mix with Black people based on fear and ignorance. “They feel threatened by their [Black people’s] existence in East Lynne”. Hendrika would never admit to this—preferring rather the use of the word ‘judgmental’—but the fear and ignorance that she referred to was racist in nature.

Black political power

While speaking about white anxiety and trash talk, Hendrika confronted how the changing political environment in the country “is quite uncertain and that uncertainty causes more fear amongst white people. Maybe that fear fuels their anger”. Although familiar with dog-whistle racism (Poynting & Noble, 2003; Lopez, 2015), I was careful not to presume an understanding of what she meant, and heard in political messages that I was not hearing, so I asked her about the uncertainty in politics she spoke of. She explained that “with this thing that no one knows what's happening with the ANC (African National Congress), if they are going to make a change and get a new president in or if the EFF (Economic Freedom Fighters) is maybe going to win” she told me. This resonated with a critique on how the country’s liberating political party the African National Congress dealt with the end of apartheid and the transition into democracy. Socially, I have heard many Black, particularly young, people criticise “peaceful” democratic transition for not dismantling white economic dominance in the country’s economic affirmative action policies. Recently in 2018, “We want back our land!” has run as a slogan for disgruntled Black South Africans behind the political party the Economic Freedom Fighters political bid of “land expropriation without compensation”[6] which seeks to address colonial injustices through land reform. Following this, Hendrika’s remarks on South African politics is telling, and serves to strengthen this critique on the ANC. “It’s like since 1994 ANC has been ruling everything” she began, “but actually for the first time there might be a chance that they won't win the elections and that makes people fearful cause they don't know what's going to happen”. The emergence

[6]https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2018-05-10-malema-land-expropriation-includes-the-land-under-your-bonded-house/

of opposition party, the EFF, and the statements made by its leaders Julius Malema and Dr. Mbuyiseni Ndlozi have stirred discomfort amongst some white South Africans. Hendrika explained to me that "you will find Afrikaans people fearing the EFF because they always talk trash about white people and insult them and give this threats like "if we get into power we are going to get rid of all the whites" and it does fuel fear." Great concentration and control allowed me not to chuckle at this example of white victimhood. It could have been at this moment that I saw the exaggerated statements from the EFF not as radical, if not unrealistic, but as necessary in dismantling white supremacy in South Africa. Additionally, further scrutiny revealed this discourse as a strategy of white talk which positions 'good Blacks' against ' bad Blacks'—in this case the ANC against the EFF—where the image of the "ideologically more accommodating 'other' is used to discredit and even reprimand the ideologically more confrontational position of other 'others'" (Steyn & Forster 2008: 34). More than pitting good against evil, Hendrika's narrative on South African politics is framed around white victimhood where white South Africans view themselves as defenceless bystanders at the mercy of Black political power.

Trash talk

"Because of the thing that white people don't mix with Black people, they don't understand each other. That's when they fear each other more. 'Cause they don't know why...like I once heard an Afrikaans neighbour of ours was talking to my mom and she was asking "why's the Black people moving here? They are spying on us" Instead of just going and talking to them and starting to mix with them and actually finding out why they are living there. They feel threatened by their existence in East Lynne. It's strange. Like in the house next to us, there's Black people moved in there. My mom will go and talk to the lady of the house. Greet her, be nice to her but then afterwards she will come in and she'll say like " Oh, I don't know what they are doing here" or "she's always making noise". Like I told you before, they trash each other behind their backs. I don't know if Black people do that but I find that white people trash other races. Even coloureds, behind their backs they talk trash but in front of them they try to be nice to them."—Hendrika.

In talking to me about the white anxiety and the feeling of being threatened by the presence of upwardly mobile Black people Hendrika told me about what she called 'trash talk' amongst white residents in East Lynne. The above quote is a personal anecdote on trash talk as it pertained to her mother and their Black neighbour. When Hendrika's mother speaks to her Black neighbour, their interaction is always polite as they exchanged pleasantries however, once in the privacy of their home, "she will come in and she'll say like " Oh, I don't know what they are doing here" or "she's always making noise". The comment "she's always making noise" points to the international white perception of Black people being 'loud', rowdy and disruptive. The message in Hendrika's mother's trash talk is translucent: Black people were not welcomed, in this white space, by her. This resonates with only me being told to speak softer when interviewing Hendrika in front of the local library. Trash talk is a demonstration of one of the racist strategies employed by poor whites to cope with their diminished white selfhood in post-apartheid South Africa.

Hendrika's trash talk is synonymous to the term 'braai talk' which came from a controversial interview in November 2010, when Afrikaans author Annelise Botes made a series of racist remarks about her reasons for 'not liking Black people'. The public and media backlash to this was immediate. A recipient of a prize award for her book *Thula Thula* by the South African Literary Awards association was rescinded. Furthermore, Botes was released from her position at the Afrikaans newspaper, *Die Burger Oos* as a newspaper columnist. Concurrently, she claimed to have received numerous emails in support of her racist comments with donations made by the public to replace her lost prize money and the sales of her book quadrupling. The reason for this support was that "Annalie's mistake […] was that she said things publicly that one usually hears around the *braaivleis* (barbeque) in white suburbia" (Verwey & Quayle 2012:552). Braai talk therefore refers to the backstage talk of Afrikaners that is "reserved for fellow whites or Afrikaners only" (Verwey & Quayle 2012:552). Behind the shadows of the white private sphere, braai talk "reproduces exactly the same racist ideologies of Blackness that drove and justified colonialism and apartheid" (Verwey & Qualye 2012: 573). More recently, the reckless public expression of braai talk on social media by South Africans businessman Adam Catzavelos who on a social media post recorded himself on a beach in Greece saying "let me give you a forecast

here. Blue skies, beautiful amazing sea and not one k***** in sight. Fucking heaven on Earth. You cannot beat this"[7]. Like Botes, the backlash was intense and immediate with business associates breaking ties with his family business expressing disgust and contempt at his actions. This lead to him being fired from his position in his family's business St. George's Fine Foods. The white commentary online on this incident however, was not as enraged. Comments made by white South Africans followed the statement made by AfriForum deputy CEO, Ernest Roets claimed to condemn Catzavelos for his racist rant but pointed that "it is concerning that, when there is a call for violence against minorities, it receives almost no attention in mainstream media. When a white person, however, says something offensive about black people, it is regularly elevated to a national crisis"[8]. Roets may have overstated in that the Catzavelos ordeal elevated to a national crisis, nonetheless I was excited about this clear link between Hendrika's trash talk and Verwey and Quayle's braai talk during our interview as shown below:

Thandiwe: I am kinda excited about this trash talk you have mentioned only because we all know this. We *know* that this is what happens…
Hendrika: No one really wants to admit it
Thandiwe: (laugh) Exactly!
Hendrika: It's an unspoken thing that's there.
Thandiwe: It's an open secret 'cause we *all know* …. [Silence that she would not fill].

As a Black person, the racist sentiments of backstage white talk is hardly surprising. Trash talk or braai talk may not be intended for the knowledge of the (Black) public but Black people are not ignorant to the racist views held by white people. Although in public spaces white people may be "very aware of not saying anything in front of people of a different colour which might offend them" (Verwey & Quayle 2012: 575), my experiences show that a poor job is being done at achieving that. One can only expect uninhibited racism behind closed doors in light of seemingly restrained public racism. Although Hendrika could admit and acknowledge racist backstage Afrikaner talk, it was clear that she knew that the 'unspoken' rule of trash talk meant that she

[7] https://www.thesouthafrican.com/k-word-sa-holidaymaker-video/?mrfCacheBuster=1541998797681
[8] https://www.dispatchlive.co.za/news/2018-08-22-watch--k-word-video-backlash-mauls-catzavelos/

could not tell me more. Here, as shown in the above interview extract, Hendrika's silence was deafening. Throughout the interview I found that the pauses while I scribbled notes provided an opportunity for Hendrika to expand more on questions, answers and discussions points. When trying to draw more from her on backstage narratives she disengaged- completely shutting down. For me, this served to confirm the racist discourses in backstage trash talk which are only spoken in safe (white) spaces. Additionally, as open as Hendrika had seemed, she was careful not to say too much to a Black person. This moment in our interview also illustrates as a trigger to white fragility by presenting a "challenge to white racial expectations and need/ entitlement to racial comfort" (DiAngelo 2011:57) where I chose not to protect the racial feelings of white people. Hendrika's silence can easily be seen as textbook as an emotional response of the state of white fragility outlined by DiAngelo.

Language tensions

"We had this fight once at the shop. The one Afrikaans older guy told the Black guy that he is a "appy" at laughing. Because he had this very hard laugh. Called him as a "appy" (taken from the English word apprenticeship) at laughing and the Black guy didn't understand what "appy" means. So then they started a fight calling each other racist but actually he was thinking that the white guy was calling him "aappie" (like an ape) but he meant "appy" like a learner. But instead of just talking like normal people and explaining what it meant they started fighting and becoming racist. It's useless to do that."—Hendrika.

The struggle for the dominance of Afrikaans against English as a marker of downward Afrikaner mobility extends beyond the classroom as illustrated by Hendrika's above quote where I questioned Hendrika on what I saw to be a reluctance of white Afrikaans speakers in East Lynne to converse to with me in English. True to her notion of any racism in the area being reflective of a generational divide with the "judgemental" nature of the older generation being "very stuck in their ways", Hendrika asserted that the older white residents of East Lynne indeed "will just be rude to them instead of actually just trying to speak with them [English speakers]". The fight between the non-Afrikaans speaking Black man and the white Afrikaner man who chose not to speak English was resultant of language struggle. Here, the idea of dog whistling sending a sharp

message to in group members and therefore inaudible to members of the out group to which the message is not intended, requires consideration of both the in group and the out group (Poynting & Noble, 2003; Albertson, B.L., 2015; Smith, J. & Adendorff, R., 2013). While white East Lynne residents may believe their racist dog whistle to be inaudible in their language struggle, I have to argue that the message is heard loud and clear by the Black out-group. It is clear that, just like me, the Black man saw this language struggle through a racial lens. While Hendrika insisted that there was no racial element surrounding the language struggle in East Lynne, it is evident that there was with the men "becoming racist"—as though racism begins once it is called out. The reason for the white man laughing at the Black man for being a learner in the first place is cause for concern. I believe there was a patronising element in the manner in which the white man spoke that the Black man sensed acutely and responded. This in turn exemplifies my argument that, with the example of language and dog whistle racism, in post-apartheid South Africa poor whites are desperately trying to hold to the privileges of whiteness and that this is done daily through various racist strategies.

Another strategy employed by poor white East Lynne residents left me slightly entertained by what I perceived to be pettiness. Hendrika told me that language tensions resulted in daily complaints on a local WhatsApp group to discuss municipal issues. I was informed that Afrikaans members of this group had issue with communicating in English or translating informative messages from Afrikaans to English. "It's as if they are just stubborn", Hendrika concluded about older Afrikaner East Lynne residents. My conclusion however is not as gentle. Indeed, Afrikaner identity has seen a shift and that in Pretoria, the country's capital city which was once symbolic of the victory of Afrikaner political dominance, this shift could be felt more severely, however to just lightly give poor white people a pass as merely being stubborn is inadequate. The racism of poor whites is being cloaked as a language struggle between the English language and yet this cloak conceals nothing as the only people affected are either Black or possibly coloured. This masking of the racism amongst poor whites is dangerous. My feeling is that this is not imposed as much on coloured residents, many of whom are Afrikaans speaking, as it is on Black residents. Moreover, although the perpetrators of this racism see themselves as amongst the most

vulnerable, they project their racist anxieties onto vulnerable children. That said, the fight between the two men at the liquor store showed to me the resilience of Black people in rightfully challenging poor white East Lynne residents' desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Hendrika explained to me the intra-white rivalry what I understand to be white tribalism in South Africa made explicit by the Afrikaans language having lost its dominance against the English language. Filling in a long pause whilst I was writing my fieldnotes, Hendrika told me about white English speakers' reluctance to speaking Afrikaans by "not even trying". This unwillingness serves to offend Afrikaans speakers which leads to a "kind of an aggressiveness towards each other because they are not willing talk each other's languages". Irritation was said to be felt by Afrikaners at those English speakers unwilling to speak Afrikaans and vice versa. During my time in East Lynne I was also very annoyed because to use Hendrika's words "They can understand *everything* that you are saying". Being an English speaking Black person and former colonial subject is, to me, seen as more threatening than being Afrikaans speaking as that in itself points to downward Afrikaner mobility.

When I attempted to underscore the link between language and race as well as how it seemed to me that racism was being disguised under language, Hendrika was not in agreement. "I think a bit of both because you will find that the white people do quite mix with the coloured people who can speak Afrikaans" she began. "So, the language thing can be more important than really the race thing 'cause you get a lot of Afrikaans people that's mixing with people in Eersterust. Especially the guys. The women not so much but the guys especially. I think it's more the language". A gendered aspect of racial mixing appears to have continued into contemporary poor white society. Historically, a sexist approach to racism saw poor white women as the biggest threat to white purity by engaging sexually—without agency— with men not members of the white race. In poor white areas during the upliftment and rehabilitation of poor whites, the female body was policed and governed with the assumption of immoral feminine poor white promiscuity and susceptibility to African sexuality (Teppo, 2004; Lange, 2003). Interestingly,

while in Ruyterwacht interracial relationships between white and coloured residents were common across the generational divide, the practices of strict surveillance of poor white women in fears of miscegenation appears to have been stamped into East Lynne society.

Language tensions in schools

The early 20th Century saw a targeted focus on children in the rehabilitation and upliftment of poor whites. Education and skills development as a means to producing respectable white citizens was to begin early in segregated learning environments with free and compulsory school system for the "maintenance and discipline of dangerous margins"(Teppo, 2004:33). The dawn of democracy in South Africa brought a legal end to segregation. The 1990s saw for the first time Black pupils attending previously all white schools. Furthermore, Afrikaans as a language of political dominance has now fallen as only one of the country's 11 official languages. Under this subtheme I will discuss how language tensions in East Lynne are targeted at Black pupils and how this is the most unfortunate racist strategy used by poor whites who desperately attempt to maintain the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Laerskool Derdepoort/Derdepoort Primary School

Laerskool Derdepoort was central to the social fabric of East Lynne's community when I did fieldwork—something which they repeat in their own online proclamations. Every white person I spoke to who grew up and went to school in the area had attended this primary school. Furthermore the school was seen to have all information pertaining to the area. Although no information was given to me by the school, their attitude towards me, my readings of their hostility and silence and what I would later find out was a reflection of attitudes towards other Black English speaking residents in the area pointed to the everyday use of racist strategies employed by poor whites as an attempt at maintaining whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. Moreover, language revealed itself as a sore spot in downward Afrikaner mobility with English speaking Black residents serving as a double insult to Afrikaner identity.

The primary school's official mission statement outlines a commitment to providing "excellent and quality education to our community" whilst instilling Christian values and beliefs into their

pupils. The religious discourse of Afrikaner identity (and Afrikaner nationalism) and in the makings of socially acceptable white people is evident here. For, what they view as, the development of health and character, cultural and sport activities are offered and encouraged. Furthermore, the school's website narrative positions itself as a key community role player. Derdepoort Primary School's vision statement asserts that "Derdepoort Primary School is a well-known and leading school that has notable status in the education and broader community". The "vision" of the school boasts a commitment to high standards in education, a balance between sports, cultural and education practices, a fully equipped computer centre, coaching facilities, a 'dynamic' governing body, involvement with and by the parent body as well as former learners who "are worthy ambassadors of a proudly, happy and loyal school community". The claims made by this primary school are aspirational according to my observations. Considering that I was directed to this school for information on East Lynne as a poor white area, I can acknowledge a sense of "notable status" in the area. Conversely however, all poor white East Lynne residents whom I spoke to that grew up in the area were either working class workers or informally working. I saw nothing to reflect the Derdepoort Primary School's "notable status in […] education" whose former learners were "worthy ambassadors"[9].

The only evidence I was able to collect to support any of the claims of this school being a key community player by its website was with what Annalie, one of Hendrika's colleagues working at the liquor store, told me about her involvement with *Laerskool Derdepoort*. Annalie had been living for 18 years in East Lynne and was the next door neighbour of the school. Prior to the liquor store Annalie worked at the primary school's food centre which catered for poor children in the school. Annalie was most willing to talk to me about her involvement with the poor school children. At the food centre food was given to the children everyday—this included breakfast, sandwich break time and a plate of food before going home. Before holidays, children were given parcels to take home. Poor children of this school were also given clothes by sponsors who included the national lotto. It is evident that although the claim has been made that poor whites were being left behind in contemporary South Africa, they do receive resources. In Ruyterwacht,

[9] http://www.laerskoolderdepoort.co.za/

I observed weekly, near expired food parcels from Woolworths distributed amongst elderly residents of this poor white area whilst Kruger mentions charitable "support of neo-conservative Afrikaners" (Kruger, 2016:46) offered to "disempowered" white squatters in Krugersdorp.

According to Hendrika, the school's dismissal of me was based on language and was an issue that affected the teaching environment for English speaking pupils as well "because both schools are still adjusting to the English/Afrikaans". The adjustment Hendrika was referring to is the shift away from Afrikaans as the only language of instruction to now cater for English speakers in bilingual classrooms. Hendrika elaborated on Annalie's work at the school. "It's as if they are still judgmental of the English kids" Hendrika said. She explained that at the school English speaking children were seen as problematic to school staff "but Afrikaans kids is always no problem". I am not sure if pleasant "Afrikaans kids" included coloured children- my feeling is that there is a possibility of that. My understanding of "English kids" were not white English children, as Hendrika had told me that there was no real "mixing" with white children from English medium schools. "English", to me, means Black (to maybe include English speaking coloured pupils) which is interesting as it highlights how both white people of British descent and Black South Africans- historically and presently- persist in being perceived as threatening Afrikaner identity. Hendrika attested that this was a direct result of there being a larger 'older' population in the area where "it's as if they don't want to adjust especially because most of them is older people". According to Hendrika, the younger teachers that can be found at the school worked briefly for a couple of years then would, following a defensive move of white fragility, leave and flee the racially based stress-inducing situation. It is worth noting that in relation to the white flight that I had noticed in East Lynne during fieldwork that Hendrika shared that the only white people in East Lynne are the ones who could leave.

This idea of language tension also extends to the local school for the hearing impaired. The medium of instruction at Sonitus School is mainly Afrikaans as the institution sees an adverse effect on hearing impaired children who are taught in bilingual classrooms. My understanding is that in East Lynne, the downward mobility of Afrikaans has resulted in a fierce language struggle.

The adverse effect of bilingual classrooms is therefore on English speaking pupils, often Black, whose presence in the classroom serves as a threat to not only to whiteness but specifically to disgraced Afrikaner identity where their previous prestige is undermined. The school life of a Black pupil in East Lynne seemed grim to me. Being Black and entering this previously white spaces whose real use was to serve as a buffer between pure whiteness and Blackness, whilst simultaneously rejecting the dominance of Afrikaans in favour of English, English speaking Black children were seen as problematic when it is the ethnic insecurities and anxieties of their educators which is the real problem. Racism, in this case through language, is used as a weapon against one of the most vulnerable in society; (Black) children. The parallel between anti-Black children-centred policies in the rehabilitation and upliftment of poor whites and the contempt for Black English speaking schoolchildren is stark. The lack of humanity in whiteness, in this case racism through language in schools, means that the most vulnerable in society, (Black) children are a particular target of poor white racism.

In this chapter I have focused on the second strand of my argument; the everyday use of various racist strategies by poor whites demonstrating a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness. Where in the previous chapter, white fragility experienced by white Wits students could be corrected through distance from poor white people, this chapter shows how poor whites project their diminished white selfhood onto Black people in the form of racism. There was generous displacement of racism onto language issues as a strategy used to diminish the working of anti-Black racism experienced by Black people in East Lynne. This racism, seen mainly in East Lynne through trash talk and language tensions, points to the performance of good whiteness and racism in the processes of poor white identification as a desperate attempts at maintaining whiteness' privileges. The next chapter will serve as my conclusion to this research report. I will present concluding remarks on the symbolic reminder of the fragility of whiteness in poor whites which leads to their social exclusion from dominant white society as well as their everyday use of various racist strategies which demonstrate a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter Seven-Conclusion

I went into the field in July 2017 with the intention of learning more about the lived experience of social exclusion of poor white from dominant white society. This was to build on my fieldwork experience in Cape Town in highlighting the fragility of whiteness which is symbolised by poor white people. My idea was that by blurring the race/class divide, poor whites were symbolic reminders of the fragility of whiteness and therefore excluded from dominant middle class white society. Empirically, my previous fieldwork experience that being accepted enough into a poor white community in the allocated three week timeframe to get more than a superficial presentation into the lived experiences of poor whites would be far-fetched. After all, my interest was not in poverty per se. The idea that somehow whiteness is immune to poverty with poor whites proving some sort of unnatural contradiction has always bothered me. Poor whites were only a fraction of the story. What I was specifically interested in was what dominant white society despised in poor whites. What is the symbolic threat of poor whites that leads to their social exclusion? What do discourses on poor whites say about the fragility of whiteness? Observations during fieldwork revealed two things about the social exclusion of poor whites. Firstly, that by blurring the race/class divide, poor whites are not only symbolic reminders of the fragility of whiteness. Secondly, through their everyday use of various racist strategies, poor whites demonstrate a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. In this conclusion I will draw out my main findings which support this argument as well as reflect on the contribution I feel this research has made to critical whiteness studies as well as social anthropology.

The narratives on the social exclusion of poor whites revolved around the state of racial discomfort in white anxiety/white fragility. My middle class participants all spoke about the fearful sight of white beggars whose presence made possible a brief connection to poverty in a society where the race/class divide has been so anchored. A connection with poverty which they feel the need to distance themselves from. *Sukkelaar* was introduced as a term assigned to poor whites who did not uphold the rituals of whiteness which promote meritocracy by “choosing to struggle”. Cezanne shared how the upward mobility of her family meant that her father

dissociated himself (and his family) from the members of his extended family who remained in the white working class. For Cezanne's father, he felt it necessary to distance himself from family he saw as not hard working enough to make the same progression as he had and simultaneously did not want to spend time listening to them complain about money. I can agree with this sentiment in the social exclusion of poor whites in respect to *sukkelaar* because there is a subliminal acknowledgement of white privilege in employment. Like Sasha, and what I have heard many other Black people say, poor whites "have history on their side". When Cezaane defined the meaning behind *sukkelaar* and its association to poor whites as lazy and unproductive, Sasha interjected by asking "is this not what white people say about Black people though?". "No, it's different." Cezanne replied. *Sukkelaar*, the white kaffir and/or the white primitive all point to the fragility of whiteness in that there are elements of anti-Black associations within whiteness signifying internalised racism and self-hatred. In order to reinstate racial equilibrium white fragility dictates that white people flee the racially based stress-induced situation. Middle class white people distance themselves from racially based stress in poor whites' symbolic reminder of the fragility of whiteness.

The lived experience of poor white social exclusion from dominant white society came from Hendrika in East Lynne. Indeed where Cezanne reflected on her childhood experiences with poor white people and feeling like the 'disease' of being poor was contagious was matched by Hendrika who said that middle class white people "do not mix with us" and made them feel like they had something that was "contagious". More than being excluded from dominant white society, Hendrika noted micro-aggressions when "mixing" with middle class white people. "They treat us like we are charity cases" reflects the defensive move of guilt as an emotional response to white fragility when middle class white people interact with poor white people. Being able to identify with the dehumanising anti-Black micro-aggressions Hendrika expressed accents whiteness as misery in internalised racism and self-hatred projected onto poor whites.

"What's the study of white people? Sociology.

What's the study of Black people? Anthropology."—Joke made to me by a coloured man at a bar in Johannesburg.

The above joke made to me by a random man after telling him that I was studying poor whites begins the issues of race and the continuation of coloniality in anthropology. I was vulnerable to racism in the field. Being Middle class and Black in a racist environment caused by threatened white identity, heightened by Black political power and upwardly mobile Black people characterises an unaccounted for dynamic between researcher and participants. At various points while trying to 'hang out' I felt broken by racism. Significant sympathy poured from a fellow young Black female colleague studying poor whites when I told her that I conducted my fieldwork research alone. For her, her department (Wits Sociology) arranged a white male field assistant under the official role of 'translator'. This was done to ease the hostility of the poor whites in her fieldsite and her experiences of ethnographic refusal. No such departmental support has ever been offered to me. I went into the field committed to upholding 'ethical' anthropological fieldwork guidelines, although I have always been aware of the racial dynamic between myself and poor whites (ignored in ethical guidelines) that would threaten possible participants. These guidelines stipulate an unequal power dynamic between researcher (assumed (white) middle class) and participant (assumed (Black) poor) of which a researcher must be conscious of. Any encouraged sentiment of sympathy towards the 'vulnerability' of poor white participants was demolished by the time I exited the field in January 2018. In seeking the ethnographic data on the social exclusion experienced by poor whites, I left overwhelmed by the level of racist hostility in East Lynne that I had not experienced in Cape Town. I underestimated the "emotional energy" required (and the toll it would take on my mental health) in my endeavour to contribute to the dismantling of whiteness. By focusing on the margins of race/class as a Black person, racism—in anti-Black attitudes held by middle class and working class white people alike—became central to this ethnography. For dominant white society, anti-Black social practices are employed in their distancing from poor whites indicative of whiteness as misery in internalised racism and self-hatred. For poor whites who have been left behind with nowhere to go, whiteness as misery in diminished white selfhood is demonstrated in my observation and argument that poor whites' everyday use of various racist strategies

demonstrates a desperate attempt at maintaining the privileges of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Methodologically, I do not feel like I was equipped to navigate myself through East Lynne's racist terrain. Every methodological technique I attempted at participant observation yielded limited results. I was regularly ignored, dismissed or avoided when I attempted interacting with poor white residents in East Lynne past initial contact given no tangible alternative other than "what did you expect?" or finding a 'sophisticated' way of writing about ethnographic refusal. I am more than tempted to believe that if South African post-colonial anthropology were to provide the same support to Black students wanting to reverse the gaze as colonial anthropology did in establishing the colonial gaze more racially nuanced fieldwork approaches could be developed (instead of the replication of colonial techniques in 'at home' auto ethnography by Black scholars). I did not want to enter East Lynne for ethnographic data collection but was told that in order to do research on poor whites I had to interact with them. A former Swiss lecturer of mine told me that this was a trend in South African anthropology and although empathetic saw no option in circumventing the predicament. Online in a social media group for Black anthropologists, many suggestions were made that were not offered to me as adequate ethnographic data collection. These suggestions involved focusing more on literature data collection than empirical. I think, for the time being, South African anthropology should allow for 'armchair' research and provide more assistance to Black researchers in white spaces (Eckl, 2008; Dundes, 1986). The only advice I would give to a Black student attempting to reverse the gaze is the advice that has been given to me by academics in the field of critical whiteness: the problem is not with you. You will need to find the small group of people that can help you remain true to your cause. Your work is important because—as the joke above highlights—anthropology was not designed as a study of white people. Least of all, is it designed as a study of white people by Black scholars.

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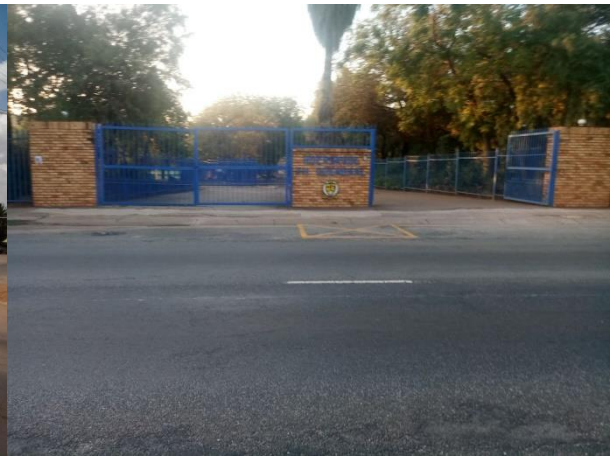
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Appendix:



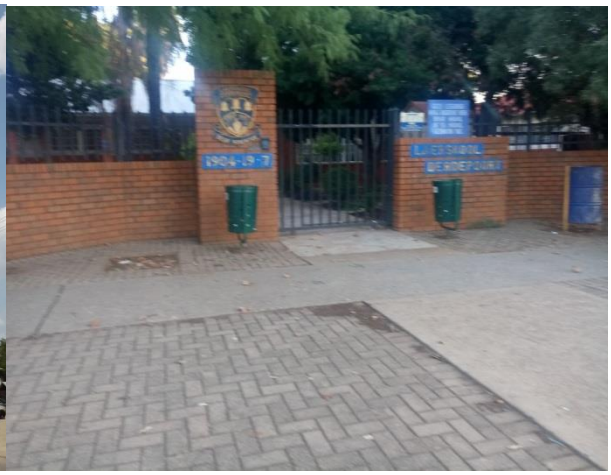
Picture 1: Trios OK Grocer



Picture 2: F.H. Odendaal High School



Picture 3: Signpost on Jan Coetzee Street



Picture 4: Derdepoort Primary School