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Colonial Hotspots: Reflecting on My Conditional Citizenship as a ‘Coloured’ [Woman] in Post-Apartheid South Africa

By Danille Arendse¹

Abstract

The prevailing geopolitical situation has perpetuated epistemic and ontological violence against the citizens of Africa. This indicates that geopolitics have an impact on socio-spatial relations and human interactions that may affect the citizenship of oppressed persons. This paper contains reflections on the conditional citizenship of the author, who is legally identified as a Coloured [woman] in post-Apartheid South Africa. The racial classification Coloured [women], which was created during Apartheid, remains a divisive racial category in post-Apartheid South Africa, one that preserves stereotypes and negative connotations. The author draws the reader’s attention to her geographical location as a specific site of silencing and oppression that has served the reproduction of colonial and Apartheid ideology. Since her location has facilitated subjugation and created conditional citizenship, both of which render Coloured [women] vulnerable to dehumanizing, this specific location is identified as a ‘colonial hotspot’ in emphasis of how colonial and Apartheid epistemes are embedded in present-day socio-spatial relations. Moreover, as a Coloured [woman] in this colonial hotspot, her gender remains silent. The objective of this paper is to emphasize the importance of decolonizing colonial hotspots and warn that failing to devote attention to these phenomena may lead to the recolonizing of socio-spatial relations.

Keywords: Apartheid, South Africa, Post-Apartheid, Geopolitics, Racial classification.

Introduction

Understanding the current geopolitics in South Africa would assist with interpreting the present colonial power. In this auto-ethnographic paper, I draw attention to the construction and durability of the racial classification ‘Coloured,’² which has been reproduced in the post-Apartheid era through the geopolitics of South Africa. This paper argues that identity politics and geography are part of how the racial classification Coloured has continued to exist and become a permanent feature of South African society. The people racially classified as Coloured is historically regarded as the combined offspring of the Khoi-San, Griqua, Nama, East African, and West African people, European settlers, as well as slaves from Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and Madagascar (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Maart 2014; Adhikari 2006a, 2006b; Hendricks 2005; Ahluwalia and Zegeye 2003; Martin 1998). Prior to the introduction of the abovementioned classification, namely Coloured, the colonial rule in South Africa by the British only used ‘European and Coloured,’ the latter also

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² The inverted comma was used for emphasizing the word ‘Coloured’ when first referred to in order to illustrate that it is a social construction. The remainder of the paper, however, does not put Coloured in inverted commas as the experiences related to the racial classification are those of the author and other real-life people.

meaning racial classification as non-European as to the population in the former Cape Colony, now known as the greater Cape Town area (Christopher 2011, 2002: 402).

The first census, undertaken in 1865, was done only in the Cape Colony and classified the population into four racial categories, namely: European, Kafir, Hottentot and Other (mixed-race people). Another census, conducted in the Cape Colony in 1875, used 'skin colour, facial features, degree of assimilation, origins and language' (Christopher 2002: 403) to classify the population into six racial groups, namely: European or White, Kafir and Bechuana, Fingo, Hottentot, Malay, Mixed and Other (Christopher 2011; 2002: 403). The category 'Other' in the previously cited racial categories was therefore reconfigured as 'Mixed and Other,' The category 'Mixed and Other' therefore included a grouping of individuals who were difficult to classify owing to the features that could be applied in describing them (Christopher 2002).

Other regions in South Africa, such as the Orange Free-State, which conducted censuses in 1880 and 1890, only classified the population as 'European' and 'Coloured' while, in 1890, the census conducted in the Transvaal only counted Europeans (Christopher 2002: 403). The census run in the Natal Colony in 1891 only gave an approximated number of indigenous people, and incorporated the people of mixed race in the enumeration of the European population. Although there were discrepancies between classifications in the different regions of South Africa throughout the years, in the 1921 Census consensus on four racial categories was achieved, namely: European, Native, Mixed and Other Coloured and Asiatic. This classification remained intact until 1948, when Apartheid came into effect (Christopher 2011; 2002: 404). With the introduction of Apartheid the racial category Coloured became a legal classification and formed part of the Apartheid divide-and-rule strategy, which was crucial for the social control of the Coloured and Black people in South Africa at the time. The historical progressions of racial classification in South Africa is of major geopolitical significance and in many ways emphasize the conditional citizenship of those labeled non-White. Although the classification of the population varied in the different geographical locations, the undisputed ideology of White supremacy existed as regards the distinction between citizens and non-citizens of South Africa. Moreover, classification contextualizes how identity interacts with space by illustrating the visible barriers created by colonialism and apartheid. This in turn emphasizes the power of the state in determining who may claim full citizenship (Hundt et al 2019; Segalo 2015; Best & Struver 2000). The skin colour of the Coloured [women] was a direct result of their parents' so-called miscegenation, which was exploited by the Apartheid regime and used to divide them as a group owing to the classification³ entrenched and implemented by Apartheid legislation. The racial classification laws contributed to the development of a deep-seated inferiority complex among Coloured [women] (Maart 2014; Petrus & Isaacs-Martin 2012; Adhikari 2006a, b; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003; Erasmus & Pieterse 1999). Reducing a racially diverse population to a single racial category condensed all their unique characteristics, forcing them to fit into one homogeneous group. The biological features that the Coloured [women] shared with the indigenous people of South Africa (Bushmen and Khoi-San people) were used to associate them with having a primitive nature (Erasmus 2011; Adhikari 2006a, 2006b; Erasmus & Pieterse 1999). Through this association, White supremacists created an internal belief of inferiority in some Coloured [women] by connecting them to some unsavory identifying characteristics, based largely on their biological features (Boswell et al 2019; Nascimento 2015; Maart 2014; Petrus & Isaacs-Martin 2012; Adhikari 2006a, 2006b; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003). The very existence of Coloured [women] was

³ This refers to the prevailing racial classifications still used in South Africa, namely: White, Black African, Coloured, Indian and Asian.

regarded as immoral and illegal in accordance with the colonial⁴ and Apartheid ideologies and laws, suggesting that racially mixed people were considered a problem (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Petrus & Isaacs-Martin 2012; Erasmus 2011; Adhikari 2006a, 2006b; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003; Erasmus & Pieterse 1999). In addition to this, some Coloured [women] were associated with sexual shame (Adhikari 2006a, 2006b, Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003; Erasmus & Pieterse 1999; Wicomb 1998; Erasmus 1997). Thus, coloniality and Apartheid caused the policing of Coloured [women] as their race, gender, body and sexuality were regarded as an integral part of them that should be oppressed (Segalo 2015; Crenshaw 1989).

The prevailing notions of division have contributed to the stereotypes and negative connotations associated with the racial classification Coloured [woman]. As such, negative and inferior attributes connected to the miscegenistic origins of the so-called Coloured [women] still contribute to the way that Coloured [women] are perceived, specifically in reference to their physical appearance (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Erasmus 2011; Adhikari 2006a, 2006b; Hendricks 2005; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003; Martin 1998).

When analyzing the racial category Coloured and considering the historical background associated with the racialization of this category, it is important to acknowledge the politics of space and power. Using a decolonial lens, specifically decolonial feminism, allows one to interrogate how the Coloured [woman] has been made subject to prejudice by unpacking the colonial and Apartheid remnants of history still active in society (Kusnierkiewicz 2019; Long et al 2019; Radcliffe 2017; Mendez 2015; Lugones 2010).

In this paper I examined my own identity as a Coloured [woman] by exploring how my location has become the site of epistemic violence and reproduced colonial and Apartheid politics of space. This woman's location is argued to be a colonial hotspot as it actively reproduces colonial and Apartheid logic, thereby rendering her a colonized, prolonged victim of racialized and gendered epistemic violence. Being a Coloured [woman] means that colonialism and Apartheid-rooted logic reproduce my gender as absent. For this reason, I deliberately bracketed my gender alongside my race in this paper (Lugones 2010). Although the colonial empire and the Apartheid era have expired, they are still in existence in South Africa through the notion of colonial hotspots. Revisiting the socio-spatial sites of oppression for Coloured [women] creates the space to issue a challenge and call for the decolonizing of prevailing epistemic violence in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Method

Autoethnography as a research method allows me as the researcher to reflect on the personal experiences that have influenced my identity formation. The reflections contained in this paper comply with the requirements of ethical conduct in research as I ensured the anonymity of any individual who might have been implicated (Ellis et al 2010). As autoethnographer, I am able to use reflexivity to write selectively about my past experiences, which were derived from studying a particular culture, which had empowered as well as colonized my personally lived experiences. In the same vein, when I am writing about personal and interpersonal experiences, it is essential to add anecdotes to indicate the authenticity of my work so that it may connect with a wider audience and have cultural, political and social meaning. To facilitate understanding, my reflections have been interpreted within the decolonial feminism framework (Mendez 2015; Lugones 2010).

⁴ This refers to the colonial knowledge and power extant today.

Positioning my Racial and Ethnic Identity

All racial groups are socially constructed and have significance. In the case of the Coloured [woman's] identity, detrimental power has been exercised against this identity and people have been forced into subordination through the colonial and Apartheid constructions of this identity. Although the prevailing racial category Coloured has had consequences such as stereotyping and discrimination, it has meaning for both the oppressor and the oppressed. Even though the survival of the category Coloured has been challenged in the democratic era, the values attached to this category and their concomitant connotations, which drive the existence of racial hierarchies, are more problematic (Crenshaw 1994). This brings me to instances relating to my appearance, when questions suggested that the individual who was asking did not understand me, *'You don't look like other Coloured women I know; you are lighter'* and *'You could pass for White'*. The focus on my lighter skin was intended as a compliment. I have heard that from family members. My lighter skin is seen as a privilege and is linked to my perceived beauty as a Coloured [woman] (Adhikari 2006a). As a result of coloniality and Apartheid, light features are celebrated among Coloured and Black people, and the people who have lighter skin colour are often referred to as 'pigmentocracy' and/or the phenomenon is referred to as 'Black Colourism' (Nascimento 2015; Maart 2014). This learnt association, namely attaching pride to any display of White-like features, has its roots in history (Adhikari 2006a). American society regarded mixed-race women as superior to Black [women] and the influence of their whiteness was seen as an improvement in the Black race (Nascimento 2015). In South Africa, possessing White features previously allowed Coloured [women] to be reclassified as White during Apartheid, which brought certain advantages (Petrus & Isaacs-Martin 2012; Adhikari 2006a).

My hair and skin continue to be signifiers of my perceived beauty, indicating that being fair and having straight hair are still celebrated today (Adhikari 2006a). Moreover, hair, a sensitive, highly personal topic, continues to be linked to race and gender (Figueiredo 2015). Comments such as, 'Your hair is very curly' or 'You have a lot of hair' are regarded as insults because these physical features have negative associations for Coloured [women] (Marco 2015; Erasmus 1997). This is the underlying foundation for the sales of hair-straightening products and skin-whitening creams to both Coloured and Black [women] to enable them to feel beautiful according to the White values of beauty (Marco 2015; Adhikari 2006a; Erasmus 1997). My hair has been interpreted in racist terms, as I have been said to have an excessive amount of hair ('very curly' and 'a lot of hair') (Fanon 1986) and as such implied that I myself was an excess of being (Maldonado-Torres 2007). When considering how the racial classifications were created in South Africa, it is essential to position myself outside of an ascribed identity. Racially, I identify as a Black [woman] within the Black Consciousness framework, which advocates Black unity and opposes the divide-and-rule strategy that was applied in the classification of people in South Africa (Maart 2014; Petrus & Isaacs-Martin 2012; Adhikari 2006a, 2006b; Biko 2004). Although I racially identify as Black, ethnically I identify as Coloured, because the South African context has uniquely shaped my culture and how I understand my ethnicity. I need to acknowledge that there is no homogeneity in my conception of Coloured [woman] as ethnicity. So-called Coloured people have no common history or a shared culture owing to their diverse ancestry (Erasmus 2011). In my identification with a catchphrase such as 'Vannie Kaap' (From Cape Town), as it is written in AfriKaaps (Cooper 2018), I am able to take ownership of my ethnicity and display pride in the language practices indigenous to Cape Town in the Western Cape, South Africa. This is how I am able to resist the mono-lingualism and mono-culturalism that have erased my diverse ancestry and been forced on

me since birth (Lugones 2014). Alternative slogans allow me to reimagine my ethnic identity outside the oppressive ideologies of race and recreate other options for understanding my identity. Such initiatives are by themselves not enough to promote social change, but they encourage thinking outside the parameters of racialized identities. In light of how I identify, it is necessary to stress that not all Coloured [women] would identify with ‘Vannie Kaap’ (From Cape Town) slogans and might have created their own, alternative slogans. Thus, exploring my positionality is crucial because it facilitates the critical connection between my ascribed classification and how I have constructed my identity.

I underwent a process of rejecting the social construct of Coloured as racial classification and reimagining Coloured as my ethnic identity is part of decolonizing⁵ my identity. Decoloniality encourages counter-discourses and supports efforts towards rehumanizing colonized and Apartheid-influenced subjects (Maldonado-Torres 2016). I therefore need to decolonize the legal racial classification placed on me as a Coloured [woman] because it has only served to perpetuate forcing colonial and Apartheid knowledge on me. The way I have been perceived, treated, stereotyped and sexualized because of this racial category needs to be voiced (Lord 1984). When considering how Coloured [women] have been described in literature, through colonial and Apartheid knowledge, I recognize how my gender has contributed to the stereotyping and challenging of my humanity (Segalo 2015). Gender has colonial properties as colonized [women] were gendered differently owing to their racialized existence and the colonizers’ inability to accept them as fully human. Through this conceptualization of the coloniality of gender, Coloured [women] such as me are theorized as having different female bodies and therefore embody different conceptions of gender. Accordingly, White women are gendered differently from Black women or women of colour (Coloured [women]) (Mendez 2015; Lugones 2010). For this reason, I have positioned myself both racially and ethnically to situate my own identity because my daily experiences have subjected me to racial misrepresentation, stereotyping, silencing, shaming and selective belonging. It is important to state that identity and space are created through relations, which are inter-reliant. Having said this, my identity can be regarded as a ‘critical spatial identity,’ as my identity has become influenced by the space in which I am located (Best & Struver 2000: 1). My geographical location is part of how my identity has been constructed and is embedded in South African society. With reference to my ascribed legal identity, the influence of power is deeply entrenched in the space I inhabit and how my identity continues to be hampered by conditional citizenship (Hundt et al 2019; Best & Struver 2000).

When considering how my gender has been constructed in South Africa through the lenses of colonialism and apartheid, it follows logically that my gender is therefore a colonial hotspot. The bracketing of [woman] in itself is symbolic of this colonial and Apartheid influence that continues to influence my lived experiences. Through my anecdotes, it becomes apparent that my citizenship as a Coloured [woman] is conditional due to the invisible systems of power in operation in South African society (Segalo 2015). Thus, as a Coloured [woman], labeling my gender a colonial hotspot, I am rendering detectable the invisible systems of power that emanate from coloniality and Apartheid. Moreover, it emphasizes how the colonial and apartheid mindset is still articulating my conditional citizenship as a Coloured [woman].

Locating my Citizenship

⁵ To reimagine Coloured as an ethnicity by reducing the impact that colonial and Apartheid knowledge has had on the category Coloured.

Race, gender and belonging have been inextricably linked to my identity and existence, both as a Black and a Coloured [woman] in South Africa (Campion 2019; Mendez 2015; Martin 1998). I deliberately assign the aforementioned plurality to my identity as this is the basis on which I challenge the narrow constructions of identity in South Africa. Since citizenship is an important part of belonging and is often linked to geographical location (Hundt et al 2019; Segalo 2015), I reflect on instances when conditional citizenship was attached to me as a Coloured [woman]. My reason for emphasizing Coloured [women] in this regard is so that I may extrapolate the unique challenges I have faced through being placed in this racial category by law. When reflecting on the experiences related to my location in post-Apartheid South Africa, I want to reflect on a period several years ago when I relocated from Cape Town to Pretoria. The question I would be asked after I had confirmed my racial classification, Coloured, was: *Where are you from?* My response would be: *I am from Cape Town.* This would be met with the acknowledgement that my appearance made sense after hearing my response. My physical appearance had been constructed through the concepts of coloniality and Apartheid, as my biological features were used as racial markers and did not allow for any binary imposition (Campion 2019; Gill & Pires 2019; Figueiredo 2015; Erasmus 2011; Adhikari 2006b; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003).

The need to place me in a racial group demonstrated the desire of the agents of the regime to know how to engage with me because my body presented a disruption in this space. The oppressive structures of coloniality and Apartheid are still influencing the knowledge of and our relations with one another, while these notions are upheld and even protected in the post-democracy era (Erasmus 2011). This, however, made me wonder why the 'visibility' of my body created such confusion outside of the Cape Town area. More importantly, why was my uncomfortable visibility in Pretoria a comfortable visibility in Cape Town? Perhaps this was because, in Cape Town, I was not hyper-visible or continuously conscious of my visibility. My positioning in Cape Town therefore appeared to facilitate belonging through my relations to other Coloured people because my sense of self was not othered. In Pretoria, however, I was markedly visible, which made me 'unbelong' (Maldonado-Torres 2007). In considering both my visibility and invisibility, there was consistency across both the aforementioned geographical locations. Although I have experienced belonging and unbelonging across these locations, both locations actively reproduce Apartheid racial constructions (Campion 2019; Gill and Pires 2019; Figueiredo 2015). My experiences in Cape Town and Pretoria only differed according to my own consciousness of the degree to which my appearance has drawn attention to coloniality, Apartheid, and race and gender, which are intricately interwoven with my sense of citizenship and my visibility. These locations have thus been able to facilitate othering and silencing me (Campion 2019; Indome 2018; Figueiredo 2015; Maldonado-Torres 2007; Martin 1998). In light of this, these two different locations therefore served to reinforce existing invisible barriers, which are cultural, political and social remnants of both colonialism and Apartheid.

Considering colonialism and Apartheid in South Africa is relevant at this point as these former regimes facilitated the distribution of people across the provinces of South Africa (Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003). Cape Town (in the Western Cape province of South Africa) has the highest concentration of Coloured people in the country (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Adhikari 2006a; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003). It should, however, be noted that in terms of the demographics of South Africa, Coloured people are a minority group (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Adhikari 2006a, 2006b; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003; Martin 1998). In light of this, it is no surprise that, after leaving Cape Town, I would physically experience my minority status. The geographical locations Pretoria and Cape Town shifted my positionality from one location to another and made me more conscious of my

marginalized status outside of Cape Town (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Adhikari 2006a, 2006b). These geographical locations have not only been shaped by colonialism and Apartheid, but are still mimicking the segregation and relations reminiscent of coloniality and Apartheid. This explains why citizenship is negotiated differently in different locations (Hundt et al 2019; Segalo 2015).

Other instances are necessary to reflect on as they serve to emphasize the socio-spatial relations that were formed as a result of colonialism and Apartheid. There have been several occasions when, after indicating that I was from Cape Town, my response would be met with some hostility. I would receive responses such as: *Don't you know Cape Town is a separate country from South Africa?* or *Oh, the Coloured homeland!* or *People in Cape Town do their own thing compared to the rest of the country* [South Africa]. I experienced these responses as microaggressions (Campion 2019). They made me consider why the people in Pretoria and those not from Cape Town considered Cape Town as being separate from the rest of South Africa. Why did such separatist ideology persist in the identification of Cape Town? What was it about Cape Town that made people feel that it was not compatible with other parts of South Africa? Was Cape Town regarded as separate because of the epistemes associated with the location or the inhabitants or perhaps even both?

The comments represented the overlapping of race, space, coloniality and Apartheid. Although my racialized and gendered identities are not explicitly mentioned, they are nevertheless present in the kind of comments directed at me. Owing to this, my identities are interlocked with the racialization of Cape Town and subsequently tie and subject me to colonial and Apartheid systems of violence (Erasmus 2011; Adhikari 2006a, 2006b). Perhaps Cape Town masked the colonial and Apartheid rule in the guise of giving me a sense of belonging. Cape Town therefore evokes contradictory feelings in me, because it feels like home, while simultaneously representing violence, as it was the site of my ancestral erasure.

The colonial and Apartheid history of Cape Town facilitated the ideology of separatism and segregation and was responsible for the restricted movement of Black people in Cape Town (Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003). Based on the historical segregation of race groups in South Africa, Cape Town has become a contested and highly political space. Since Cape Town (in the Western Cape province of South Africa) is the only province in South Africa still under White rule, it allowed White people to maintain their power and privilege. This historical segregation, accompanied by the enduring White rule in Cape Town, has perpetuated colonial relations (Adhikari 2006a, 2006b; Martin 1998). The colonial and Apartheid systems are therefore still in existence and depends on the racialized system it has designed. The construction of the Coloured identity was intentional in this system of domination and division, thus it remains necessary to reproduce the conditional citizenship of those assigned to this racial category. Through conditional citizenship (Hundt et al 2019; Segalo 2015) and racially informed locations, I am unable to escape the colonial and Apartheid ascriptions to my identity. As a result, geographical locations are multi-layered and cannot be viewed through a singular lens.

When considering my different experiences relating to the location Cape Town, it is evident that Cape Town presented a political space that reproduced racial segregation and racially demarcated divisions. The geography of Cape Town is saturated with coloniality and Apartheid, which was intended to create conditional citizenship. My experiences centred on Cape Town expose this locality as a hub of power, where race, gender and class are intertwined owing to the persistence of colonial and Apartheid logic. These socio-spatial relations reveal the added oppression of race, gender and class, and thus expose the coloniality of gender (Long et al 2019; Radcliffe 2017; Maldonado-Torres 2016; Mendez 2015; Lugones 2010; Crenshaw 1994). Based on the

aforementioned, it can be argued that locations such as Cape Town in South Africa may be regarded as colonial hotspots. This interpretation permits one to consider this geographical location as conserving colonial and Apartheid ideology. Labeling spaces that perpetuate epistemic violence as colonial hotspots draws attention to the ideology maintained in these socio-spatial relations and interactions. The conclusion is therefore that the need to decolonize colonial hotspots such as Cape Town is essential as the remnants of coloniality and Apartheid knowledge are embedded in the knowledge of this location, which requires reimagining. This realization moreover allowed me to scrutinize how colonial and Apartheid powers are still operating in the socio-spatial relations that prevail in Cape Town.

The non-recognition of my gender in the reflections on the location of Cape Town is worth noting as this in itself is telling when considering the coloniality of gender. Do the people of Cape Town see me as a woman? Does my race render my gender invisible? Is 'woman' a category available to me in the eyes of the colonizer and Apartheid enforcer? As a Coloured [woman], I was gendered differently according to colonialism and Apartheid. My gender is not addressed in the conversations as it is absent from the consciousness of the colonizer and Apartheid enforcer. These reflections reveal how gender facilitated the colonization of Coloured [women] because I am not seen as a woman (Mendez 2015; Lugones 2010).

My gender racialized me and determined my humanity. I was not a woman in the same sense as a White woman or a Black woman because, as a Coloured [woman], I have been racialized through colonialism and Apartheid logic into a different 'gender'. The colonial and Apartheid logic interprets my gender as subordinate to that of both White and Black women because I had the reproductive power to multiply a race that had been deemed to be illegal and inferior. My very existence was thus considered immoral and problematic. It is therefore crucial to acknowledge how gender contributes to sustained racial hierarchy and simultaneously rationalize my invisibility and dehumanization (Mendez 2015; Lugones 2010). These experiences demonstrate how the geographic Apartheid ideology continues to be connected to my gender as a Coloured [woman]. My invisibility as a Coloured [woman] facilitates the continuation of my conditional citizenship due to my gender being a colonial hotspot in South Africa. Thus, exposing colonial hotspots allows the invisible barriers that have cultural, political and social implications to become recognizable. Once barriers are recognizable, it facilitates a conscious movement towards reducing the impact of these barriers. This would entail decolonizing the colonial hotspots, thereby decreasing their power to perpetuate the conditional citizenship of Coloured [women]. More importantly, it demands dismantling the geographical apartheid ideology that will persist if we are not deliberate in our actions to decolonize colonial hotspots.

Concluding Thoughts

The psychological and social damage done by colonization and Apartheid is far from over, but we as so-called Coloured people need to take calculated steps towards liberating ourselves from the grip of the coloniality of knowledge and being (Maldonado-Torres 2016). My lived experience of continued othering practices towards me as a Coloured [woman] has been influenced by the notion of racial purity and the binary categories Black and White (Boswell et al 2019; Campion 2019; Gill & Pires 2019; Isaacs-Martin 2018; Figueiredo 2015; Petrus & Isaacs-Martin 2012; Adhikari 2006a, 2006b; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003). More importantly, my reflections interrogate the manner in which essentialized notions of identity are assumed and my being viewed through racist epistemic lenses (Boswell et al 2019). I have used my experiences to shed light on how different dimensions of coloniality, such as geographical locations, have been informed and continue to

reproduce colonial and Apartheid epistemes in the racial classification of Coloured [women]. Categorizing colonial hotspots is significant because it simultaneously distinguishes these spaces as oppressive and calls for decolonising praxis relating to these colonial hotspots. I am emphasizing the importance of decolonizing colonial hotspots and warning that not devoting attention to this phenomenon will lead to the recolonizing of socio-spatial relations. More importantly, I have identified location in stressing the often hidden coloniality of gender in relation to Coloured [women], which renders us non-gendered, which implies that the gender of Coloured [women] can also be regarded as a colonial hotspot. For this reason, my bracketing of Coloured [woman/women] is essential for highlighting the non-recognition of our gender and humanity. This is why decolonial feminism is crucial for resisting colonialism and Apartheid and has served to advance epistemic justice.

Autoethnography and decolonial feminism (Maldonado-Torres 2016; Lugones 2014) have allowed me to interrogate the hegemonic systems of power that have had an impact on how my identity is perceived and experienced. These perceptions have often silenced or marginalized my voice (Lorde 1984), and therefore demanded the opportunity to reimagine my identity outside the prescribed parameters of Apartheid racial classification. Decolonial feminism has been vital in exposing the multiple forms of oppression I have experienced owing to colonial hotspots still prevailing in post-Apartheid South Africa. I have reflected in depth on my identity to establish a critical connection between how I have constructed my identity versus my ascribed identity. Through autoethnography, I highlighted my lived experiences and in doing so gave prominence to voices that are often under-represented in society, thereby developing a significant critique of the colonial power still present in the democratic era. Moreover, it has allowed me to liberate myself from the daily invisibilizing racial and gendered violence.

Methodologies such as autoethnography and decoloniality as analysis techniques are crucial for making the invisible visible and allowing authors from under-represented populations and those with a colonial history to highlight the intersection between their gender and race in relation to their geographic location. These methodologies reveal the past history of colonialism in the present reality and encourage me to use my consciousness of this history to facilitate change. As I had become aware of the colonial hotspots specific to my region and in particular my race and gender, I had the opportunity to reject the reproduction of conditional citizenship. Through an opportunity such as this, we are able to resist anti-Black ideologies and the notion of White supremacy. This paper should contribute to stimulating increased conversation about the relationship between racism, women, colonialism and conditional citizenship in the literary world.

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