UPROOTED: Unearthing The Ties Between Food, Family, and Forced Removals in Plettenberg Bay.

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Signature: Nicola Booysen

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Abstract

Approximately 3.5 million South Africans were subjected to forced removals during apartheid (Platzky & Walker, 1985: 1). Against this backdrop of race-based displacement, this study focuses on Plettenberg Bay in the Western Cape, South Africa. Known for its pristine beaches and affluent lifestyle, Plettenberg Bay's reputation as a tourist haven often obscures its history of forced removals. This study aims to shed light on this overlooked past by examining the ongoing effects of dispossession on its displaced residents, using food practices as a window into the layered histories of oppression and resilience.

At the kitchen tables of Plettenberg Bay families the Van der Westhuizens and the Booysens, the concept of the "archive of the ordinary," as proposed by academic Anthony Bogues (2011, cited in O'Connell, 2018), comes to life. These spaces, where both families, displaced between the late 1960's and the 1970s from Piesang Valley and Keurboomstrand, gather, prepare, share, and enjoy food - offer rich narratives of heritage, memory, and resistance. The kitchen table serves as a focal point for this research, symbolising the heart of domestic life where food is prepared, shared, and enjoyed. Through the stories embedded in memories, recipes, ingredients, and traditional practices, this research seeks to illuminate the ongoing legacy of displacement and to address the paucity of knowledge on Plettenberg Bay's *other* residents.

KEYWORDS

Plettenberg Bay
Forced removals
Colouredness
Home
Memory
Apartheid
Colonialism
Race
Oral History
Trauma
Food
Indigenous rights
Land

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

ANC: African National Congress

BITOU LM: Bitou Local Municipality

CNE: Christian National Education

DA: Democratic Alliance DRC: Dutch Reformed Church

GNU: Government of National Unity

MJC: Muslim Judicial Council

IK: Indigenous Knowledge

NP: National Party

NCC: National Coloured Congress

PA: Patriotic Alliance

TEK: Traditional Ecological Knowledge

WCG: Western Cape Government

VOC: Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company)

CEE: Commission for Employment Equity

EAP: Economically active population

GIWUSA: General Industries Workers Union of South Africa

Notes on terminology

Race

I believe race is a social construct that attempts to categorise and hierarchise human beings based on physical differences. Biologically, despite visible differences such as skin colour, hair texture, and body shape, all human beings belong to a single race: humanity (Thomas, 2020). In South Africa, race was a central element of apartheid social engineering, used as a tool for discrimination and division.

I open with this statement to clarify my position on race: while I view race as a social construct, it remains a powerful and real factor in the lives of all South Africans today. Recognising its significance, I have chosen to capitalise the terms "Black," "White," and "Coloured" in this research, acknowledging the roles these identities play in our collective and individual lives. Though my personal relationship with the term "Coloured" is complex, given its history as a tool for division and oppression, I accept and respect both those who embrace and those who reject the label. In this study, when I refer to "Indigenous," I mean to acknowledge the Khoi and San heritage of those classified as Coloured, particularly in the context of Plettenberg Bay.

In some instances, aligned with the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) (Biko, 2004), which challenged apartheid's racial classifications and promoted a unified non-white identity, I may use the term "Black" broadly to refer to all non-white South Africans.

Specific Terminology: "Khoikhoi," "San," and "Khoisan"

Throughout this research, I use the terms "Khoikhoi," "San," and "Khoisan" interchangeably, though I recognise that these terms themselves carry complexities. The terms "Khoikhoi" and "San" refer to distinct groups with unique cultural practices, languages, and histories (Hahn, 1881). The umbrella term "Khoisan" emerged during the colonial period to group these communities, but it may oversimplify their rich identities (Penn, 2005). I use these terms here with respect for their historical significance and with an awareness of the impact colonialism has had on how indigenous groups have been classified and understood.

Historical Terms: "Hotnot"

This research also references historical terms such as "Hotnot" or "Hottentot," which are now widely recognised as offensive. These terms are included solely to reflect the language or self-identifications used by past generations or in historical records, not to perpetuate disrespect or harm. Their inclusion here is intended only to maintain historical accuracy within the context in which they were once used.

Culture

Culture can be understood as a system of interconnected elements, including history, values, norms, beliefs, and shared knowledge, forming a group's identity. Geertz (1973) views culture as a web of shared symbols that provides meaning, while Hall (1997) emphasises culture as practices and representations shaped by history and power structures. In this research, "culture" refers to this collective identity, relating to place, people, and shared ways of connecting. In South Africa, cultural experiences are significantly influenced by the legacy of segregation, aligning with Hall's view of history's role in shaping cultural identity.

Introduction

As I approach New Horizons, I turn off from the N2, flanked by high walls on the opposite side of the road. It feels as though these walls are there to divide, to guard one side from the other, to keep Black people to the left along the stretch of the N2 while the other side remains enclosed. Entering New Horizons, I take the first road to my left, heading toward my mother-in-law's house. The street names here are familiar: Melkhout[1], for instance, reminds me of the trees and lands from which the Van der Westhuizen family was forcibly removed, as they have shared.

As I drive along Melkhout, I come upon the graveyard, enclosed by brick walls and iron gates that mirror the harsh lines of a prison. Through the bars, I glimpse the modest, almost unmarked graves within, a stark reminder of lives laid to rest with quiet dignity, yet behind boundaries that feel unyielding, as if the walls and gates exist to protect and contain. I continue my journey along Kiepersol Street, where my mother-in-law's house sits, a modest purple brick structure with a wooden fence, weathered by time. The house leans slightly, a crack tracing its way from the roof to the floor, a testament to the structural challenges and limited means to repair them. Behind the brick house stands a wendy-house[2], built for my sister-in-law, who is expecting. The boundary wall, once separating the house from the neighbours,' has collapsed entirely, erasing the line of distinction.

As I enter, the small home radiates warmth. My mother-in-law greets me with open arms, offering tea, eager to hear about my day and share hers. The kitchen is a cosy 500 square feet; its once-sturdy grey cabinets are now worn, and their glass panes have long since fallen out. Yet, the space remains immaculate, every corner reflecting her care. Over tea, she talks about her plans for the day. She will soon head out to clean the church, preparing for the Sunday service, a ritual she's known since childhood in Piesang Valley, where Saturdays were for cleaning and readying the St. Andrews chapel. I sit down, and she brings out biscuits and tea. We settle in; she is ready to share her story.

It is estimated that 3.5 million South Africans were subjected to forced removals during apartheid (Platzky & Walker, 1985: 1). Against this backdrop of race-based apartheid-era removals, I focus on Plettenberg Bay, a scenic coastal town in the Western Cape, South Africa. This study explores the hidden history of forced removals in Plettenberg Bay, a town known

[1] The tree's name, "Melkhout" (Afrikaans for "Milkwood"), comes from the white, milky latex it produces.
[2] A Wendy house is a small wooden structure commonly used in South Africa, as a means of housing.

for its beauty but marked by a lesser-known past of dispossession. Through the lens of food practices, this research seeks to uncover how apartheid-era policies, particularly forced removals, contributed to long-term economic marginalisation and social displacement. By analysing personal narratives, historical records, and socioeconomic data, I aim to reveal not only the economic consequences, such as poverty and limited opportunities but also the resilience of those affected, as demonstrated in their efforts to adapt, and sustain cultural traditions.

Through this multidimensional approach, examining both qualitative and quantitative impacts, this study will explore factors like employment types, income inequality, and living standards to provide a fuller understanding of how apartheid policies continue to shape the lives of individuals and communities in South Africa today.

Research Question

Introduction

Forced removals (Platzky and Walker, 1985) during apartheid-era South Africa left deep scars on people uprooted from their ancestral homes, and Plettenberg Bay was no exception. Forced displacements not only fractured communities but also disrupted cultural practices that had been deeply embedded in the rhythms of daily life. Among these practices, food traditions strongly reflect resilience and adaptation, preserving ties to heritage while navigating the realities of displacement (Baderoon, 2004). The journey of food practices tells a story of what changed and why. Was it a good change, bad or simply necessary with no other option?

Question

How do the cultural practices, including food traditions, of Coloured families forcibly removed from their ancestral homes in Plettenberg Bay reflect their experiences of displacement under apartheid-era policies, and how have these practices shaped their lives, their sense of community, memory, and identity over time?

Food is more than a means of sustenance; it is a thread weaving together the fabric of family and community (Highfield, 2017: 4). A simple plate of food can tell a complex story: the time taken to prepare it, the choice of ingredients, the hands involved, and each aspect that speaks to history, culture, and identity carrying with it the flavours of tradition, regional influences and the intergenerational transfer of knowledge (Highfield, 2017: 5). Oral histories are shared and preserved through food, as recipes, techniques, and stories are passed down from

generation to generation. From casual tea gatherings to festive celebrations with shared desserts, food creates spaces for connection, storytelling, and the forging of lasting memories (Highfield, 2017: 5).

In Plettenberg Bay, as in many places, food was central to the lives of diverse communities before apartheid-era forced removals disrupted these deep-rooted traditions. This study focuses on the experiences of the Coloured community, highlighting how these displacements impacted their cultural and culinary practices. Families were uprooted from their ancestral homes and moved to marginalised, cramped areas, sometimes far from their former neighbours and extended families. This displacement altered not only their physical landscapes but also reshaped their social and culinary practices, raising questions such as:

- What recipes did they cook before, and do they still prepare these today?
- Do they still have access to the same ingredients?
- Are subsistence farming practices still feasible?
- What happens to food's role in fostering community when the close-knit ties around the kitchen table are broken by forced separation?
- Has distance and trauma changed how they connect through food, or have they found new ways to preserve these bonds?

This thesis seeks to uncover the stories embedded within recipes, ingredients, and culinary practices of displaced families. Focusing on the kitchen table as an archive of memories and traditions, this study will explore how forced removals have reshaped their relationship to food and the communal experiences it fosters. Ultimately, this research aims to understand the impact of forced removals on their lives and to shed light on how food can heal, hinder, connect, and divide in the face of displacement and adversity.

To guide this exploration, I will examine the following questions and sub-questions:

- What were the traditional food practices of forcibly removed Coloured people in Plettenberg Bay, and what historical stories do these practices reveal about the community?
- In what ways have culinary traditions served as a means of remembering and commemorating the history of forced removals in Plettenberg Bay?

- How have the families adapted to their new surroundings in post-apartheid South Africa following forced removals?
- Do displaced families find new ways to connect through food, or has the physical distance altered the nature of these connections?

Research Aims and Objectives

This research aims to explore the impact of forced removals on the lives of Coloured people in Plettenberg Bay, focusing on how these experiences have shaped cultural identity, family connections, and everyday life from the time of apartheid-era displacement between 1960-1970 through to present day 2024. The first objective is to investigate the historical significance of traditional cultural practices, including but not limited to food, within the context of forced removals during apartheid, particularly between the 1960s and 1980s when families were displaced. This will examine how cultural and social practices helped sustain a sense of identity and community across generations despite displacement. The second objective is to gather and document personal narratives, memories, and stories of resilience from members of the Van der Westhuizen and Booysen families. This involves identifying and interviewing individuals; both directly and indirectly affected by the forced removals - who have expressed a willingness and commitment to sharing their experiences through this research.

Interviews will capture personal stories of adaptation and resilience, focusing on how forced removals influenced their quality of life, community connections, and cultural practices over time. The third objective is to establish an archive of everyday practices, including traditional recipes, household rituals, and social gatherings, as remembered and practised by family members. Observations of shared activities, meal preparations, and family interactions will provide insights into how cultural heritage has been preserved, adapted, or lost. These observations of meal preparations and family gatherings will be translated into data by carefully recording details such as ingredients used, preparation methods, and the dynamics of these practices. This will allow for analysis of how these traditional practices have been maintained or changed over time.

Research Methodology

This research will use a mixed-methods approach, integrating literature and qualitative interviews, collecting, and analysing food narratives, recipes, observational data, and economic and statistical analysis. Focusing on my in-laws, the Van der Westhuizens and Booysen

families, whose members range in age from their 30s to their 80s, this study captures intergenerational perspectives on displacement, resilience, and cultural heritage. Engaging with older generations who directly experienced the forced removals from Plettenberg Bay and younger generations who grew up hearing these stories, will provide a nuanced view of the lasting impacts of displacement.

Data Collection

Oral history interviews will be central to this research, as they enable family members to recount personal experiences of forced removals, resilience, and adaptation, providing valuable personal and often emotional perspectives that enrich historical understanding and may challenge dominant narratives (Srigley, 2020). In the context of decolonisation, which Srigley (2020) contends "always requires action," this research entails putting aside certain traditional ways of knowing to embrace new, relational frameworks that better honour these narratives (Srigley, 2020: 12). To gather in-depth personal accounts, I will conduct semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with family members across these age groups. These interviews will be recorded, creating a rich archive of narratives that explore the emotional, social, and cultural impacts of forced removals. Participants will be encouraged to share stories, memories, and reflections on how food has shaped their identities, family traditions, and sense of community. Through these interviews, I aim to understand how food practices and social connections have evolved from pre-removal around the early 1900s to the present 2000s and how they relate to resilience and adaptation. In addition to qualitative data, this study will draw on existing economic and statistical data from social profiles and spatial planning reports from the Bitou Municipality, focusing on factors such as income levels, access to food, and employment trends to examine the economic inequalities faced by these families post-displacement. This quantitative data provides context for the economic challenges and disparities experienced by the Van der Westhuizens and the Booysens, who were forcibly removed from Piesang River and Keurboomstrand in Plettenberg Bay. It also highlights how resource access can affect food choices, sourcing, and preparation methods.

The collection and analysis of food narratives and recipes will complement these oral histories, providing tangible insights into how displacement has influenced culinary practices. Recipes passed down through generations function as a form of cultural memory, preserving knowledge, traditions, and connections to ancestral lands (Assmann, 1995). By examining the ingredients, techniques, and stories associated with each recipe, this study aims to uncover how

food practices have been adapted, preserved, or transformed. I will also draw on observation of meal preparations and family gatherings for insights into whether and how these practices continue today. By combining oral histories, personal narratives, food practices, observational data, and economic analysis, this research aims to provide a multidimensional view of how forced removals and economic inequality have reshaped the lives of displaced families. The study will highlight how inequality influences cultural preservation and change while highlighting these families' resilience in maintaining traditions within an unequal socio-economic landscape.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry offers insight into how individuals understand their world through the stories they tell (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Riessman (2008) explains that this method gathers rich data from extended personal accounts, while Phillion, He, and Connelly (2005) emphasise that narration reflects life's constant social, cultural, and political changes. In this study, narrative inquiry will capture the lived experiences of the Coloured community in Plettenberg Bay, examining elements like housing, daily life, and traditions within this unique context.

Chase (2005) notes that narrative inquiry is particularly effective for sensitive topics, allowing participants to discuss forced removals in a non-threatening way. I will interview five family members aged between 30 and 80, both male and female, who experienced or inherited stories of forced removals. These interviews will be recorded, with participants sharing personal stories, recipes, and any written recipe materials they are willing to contribute. This data will help build an archive of food practices, traditions, and memories, capturing both past and present cultural heritage.

For the research, interviews will be conducted in Afrikaans and translated into English. To maintain participants' privacy during translation, I will seek assistance from a trusted relative familiar with both languages, ensuring accuracy and confidentiality. Recognising the sensitivity of forced removals, I will proceed gently, allowing participants to set the pace and begin with accessible topics like food traditions to create a comfortable environment for deeper reflection.

Foodways

Food is a fundamental part of the human experience, essential for survival, and deeply intertwined with identity and culture. As Stanley, Lewis, and Mafofo (2023) emphasise, food

serves as a vital lens through which cultural practices and societal norms can be understood, reflecting the values, histories, and identities of people. As Jin Feng (2019: 156) observes in "Tasting Paradise on Earth: Jiangnan Foodways", food nostalgia is not just a contemporary phenomenon but embedded in the longstanding history of a place and its people.

Foodways tell a layered story of culture, history, and environment (Highfield, 2017). They are connected to networks of privilege and marginalisation, with communities often serving as the landscapes upon which these dynamics play out (Vogts & Costandius, 2017: 273). Highfield also emphasises the impact of colonialism on food systems, particularly in Africa, where native crops were often replaced with imported species, and plantation-style agriculture promoted monoculture, such as the mass production of maize (Highfield, 2017).

The Michigan State University's 4-H Folkpatterns series and Simpson-Miller (2021) in "Food and Identity in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Ghana" further illustrate how cultural definitions of a "proper meal" differ and how globalisation influences the foods that become central to daily life. In "Edible Identities: Food as Cultural Heritage," Ronda Brulotte and Michael Di Giovine (2016) underscore how food heritage is a strategic tool for expressing and negotiating identities.

For this research, foodways will serve as a lens to explore the traditional activities and experiences of families in Plettenberg Bay, enhancing our understanding of the Coloured community's cultural fabric during the 1970s. Interview questions will focus on foodways-such as the types of food the family ate, where ingredients were sourced, who created and prepared the meals, and memories or traditions associated with specific dishes. I will also gather archival materials, including recipe books and photographs.

Thematic analysis will identify recurring themes and patterns within the data. Ethical considerations will guide each step of the process. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, confidentiality will be maintained, and the research will be conducted with sensitivity and respect for the community's experiences and traumas.

Addressing Research Gaps

While previous research has provided valuable insights into forced removals, such as O'Connell's "Uitgesmyt" (2020) and Platzky and Walker's (1985) "Surplus People," a gap remains in understanding the specific experiences of displaced communities regarding food.

Additionally, there is a disproportionate focus on Plettenberg Bay's natural environment at the expense of its human history, particularly the experiences of its indigenous Coloured residents (Coetzee, 2000). While the town's coastal beauty and ecological significance are undeniable, the stories and experiences of its displaced residents have been largely overlooked. This research aims to redress this imbalance by centring the voices and experiences of those affected by forced removals.

To address the limitations of previous research, this study is focused on two of Plettenberg Bay's Coloured families. It adopts a narrative approach, prioritising the voices and experiences of those directly affected by forced removals (Clandinin et al., 2000). By centring food practices as a critical lens for exploring the complexities of displacement, this research aims to offer a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Limitations

This study faces several limitations, including a small sample size focused on two families, which may limit the ability to generalise the findings across the broader Coloured community. Relying on oral histories introduces the potential for recall bias, and translation from Afrikaans to English may lead to subtle nuances being lost. Additionally, the sensitivity of forced removals may impact participants' willingness to fully revisit painful memories. Finally, while foodways provide valuable insights, this focus may overlook other aspects of life affected by displacement, such as religious practices or education. Despite these constraints, the research aims to offer meaningful insights into the impact of forced removals, cultural resilience and the shaping of identity in response to traumatic events - highlighting the enduring struggles and adaptations of affected communities.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1: Plettenberg Bay

This chapter provides a historical overview of Plettenberg Bay, emphasising its transformation under apartheid policies that prioritised tourism over the rights and homes of local communities. It draws on Winfred Tapson's "Timber and Tides. The Story of Knysna and Plettenberg Bay" (1961) and Patricia Storra's "Portrait of Plettenberg Bay" (1978) as well as recent municipal spatial planning documents. This chapter uses theories of place branding, tourism, and inequality to examine the effects of apartheid-forced removals on indigenous

Coloured residents. It also explains the way Plettenberg Bay positions itself in terms of its tourism brand and property values versus the reality of its "other" residents.

Chapter 2: Colouredness

This chapter explores how colonial and apartheid policies constructed and regulated Coloured and indigenous identity, imposing a legal and social framework that shaped daily life. It draws on the work of scholars such as Dr Nadia Kamies (2018), who examines the intersections of shame, respectability, and slavery. It also references Professor Mohammed Adhikari (2005), who explores the complexities of Coloured identity and community dynamics, and other scholars who have engaged with aspects of Colouredness in their research. It discusses how race classifications affected access to education, political representation, and community cohesion. It also draws on the work of academic Wayne Dooling to discuss the Hottentot Code and its impact on indigenous people. Personal stories are included to show how individuals and communities navigated racist laws like the Population Registration Act and how it affected their lives.

Chapter 3: Forced Removals

This chapter looks at what the families remember about the specific event, life before and after forced removals. It captures the lifestyle, the memories, and life in New Horizons after forced removals. It focuses on the policies and practices of forced removals in Plettenberg Bay, detailing the impact of state-led displacements on community structure and cohesion. Using Laurine Platzky and Cherryl Walker's "The Surplus People" (1985) alongside research from O'Connell (2020) and Bonita Bennett (2021), it explores the trauma and violence associated with these removals. Concepts of symbolic violence, colonialism and apartheid are also discussed, highlighting how removals extended beyond physical displacement to inflict deep emotional scars. It also looks at ideas around indigenous knowledge. It further examines power dynamics and autonomy.

Chapter 4: Food

This chapter examines food as a cultural touchstone for displaced communities, connecting people to heritage and identity through shared culinary practices. It considers how food acts as a means of cultural preservation and a form of resilience, especially within the restricted circumstances of displacement. Integrating narrative inquiry and theory, the chapter reflects

how food practices sustain community bonds and preserve cultural identity. Additionally, it discusses food sustainability and quality related to forced removal experiences.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The conclusion chapter will synthesise the study's key findings, examining how apartheid-era forced removals have impacted the Coloured community in Plettenberg Bay as it relates to cultural identity, social practices, and living standards, among others. It will discuss what has been lost and how the families have navigated this loss. It will highlight how these families have preserved elements of their heritage, mainly through food practices, while navigating socio-economic challenges. Additionally, the chapter will provide recommendations for supporting displaced communities and suggest avenues for further research.

Chapter One - Plettenberg Bay

Overview

This chapter provides a historical and socio-economic overview of Plettenberg Bay, a town celebrated for its natural beauty, elite tourism and sky-high property prices, yet marked by a hidden history of displacement and marginalisation. It will explore how the town's branding as a luxury destination intersects with the realities of economic inequality and racial divisions that persist today. Beginning with the area's colonial and apartheid-era transformations, the chapter delves into the impact of forced removals on the indigenous Coloured community. It examines the selective narratives that obscure this past. Through an analysis of tourism, place branding, and socio-economic disparities, this chapter seeks to restore visibility to the marginalised histories and communities that form an integral part of Plettenberg Bay's identity.

Introduction

Each summer, Plettenberg Bay undergoes a dramatic transformation as thousands[3] of affluent young festivalgoers descend upon the town for "Plett Rage[4]," "the ultimate party destination," a "coastal gem[5]". This event turns the town into a playground for privileged, predominantly White youth drawn by luxury estates, exclusive experiences, and curated adventures to end off their high school years in style. With million-rand properties, beaches, guided forest walks costing over R10,000, polo grounds, golf courses, and vineyards, Plettenberg Bay is marketed as a sanctuary of natural beauty and refined leisure. In this paradise, elite tourism is just a Google search away. Yet, beneath this polished façade lies a buried history: a history marked by dispossession and forced removals that the town's original inhabitants, the Coloured community, endured in the shadow of these newly crafted landscapes. In 1961, Winfred Tapson had already documented the tourist boom that surged through Plettenberg Bay, a wave of wealth and whiteness cresting over the town, pushing the Coloured community into the background. Their lands became currency, bartered for the prosperity of others, while their presence was to fade, a shadow obscured by the bright veneer of a town repurposed for affluent pleasure.

[3] This year organisers anticipate attendance of 2500-4000 people.
[4] The event is for young adults to celebrate the conclusion of their high school years. This event has been hosted in Plettenberg Bay since 2000. Events are held on the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th of December 2024.
[5] https://plettrage.co.za/festival-info/

> This new prosperity has brought Plettenberg Bay a new grace of living for those whose homes are there, skilfully painting over the ineradicable poverty of the indigenous coloured population and giving the town at least the dignity of municipal status (Tapson, 1961: 174).

Rogerson (2014: 190) notes that urban tourism is often pursued as a tool for "economic regeneration, enhancing city images, and attracting high-spending tourists to stimulate broader economic growth." However, who truly benefits from this economic growth? While such strategies can boost the local economy, they often disproportionately favour affluent tourists and larger businesses. Mbaiwa (2004) critiques this model as "enclave tourism," where tourism development is isolated and controlled by external entities, thus limiting meaningful benefits for local communities (Mbaiwa, 2004: 17).

The quote by Tapson (1961) illustrates both spatial apartheid and othering[6], where economic development and "beautification" are imposed at the expense of marginalised communities (Fanon, 1967: 21, Bourdieu, 1986: 18). The indigenous population is effectively rendered invisible, relegated to the background to create a sanitised, marketable image that serves affluent interests (O'Connell: 2012: 32). This selective framing not only erases the underlying poverty and displacement but also reinforces a divide, positioning the affluent newcomers as rightful inhabitants while the original community is "othered" and excluded from the town's newly constructed identity and prosperity. In this context, Plettenberg Bay becomes more than just a vacation spot; it is a landscape of silenced stories and dismembered identities (Derrida, 1994: 73). The reality of forced displacement, shared through a global lens with other communities like those in Gaza, reveals the painful legacy of marginalisation that tourism campaigns and property marketing carefully obscure. This chapter will trace the ongoing impact of these historical displacements, examining how the land now claimed for luxury continues to fracture and undermine the identities of those who once called it their ancestral home. I have chosen to begin this chapter by exploring the positionality of the Coloured community as indigenous descendants, aiming to restore their dignity and counter the narrative that frames Plettenberg Bay solely as a home for the wealthy or a tourist destination. By emphasising their deep-rooted heritage and rightful place within the town's history, this chapter

[6] *Othering* where certain groups like Coloured people here are framed as fundamentally different, inferior, or outside the norm by those in dominant positions, white settlers in this case.

seeks to challenge past efforts to marginalise their identity and erase their connection to the land.

'Plett It's a Feeling!'- The Indigenous Peoples

At first glance, Plettenberg Bay is a place of breathtaking natural beauty, where nature's wonders come together, creating a mesmerising natural landscape. The region is renowned for its pristine sandy beaches, framed by majestic mountains and lush green forests. It offers a paradise-like setting that feels almost otherworldly, depending on which side of the town you are in and what view is accessible to your eyes. I made these observations while walking through the town. "Those who know and love Plettenberg Bay - and today they are legion- will say that the beauty of it alone justifies a special psalm of praise" (Storrar, 1978: ix). Today, Plettenberg Bay is run by Bitou Local Municipality (LM); it has a population of roughly 65 240 people. This population comprises 16.5% White, 0.3% Asian, 28.8% Coloured and 52% Black African (Bitou LM, 2022: 31). This sharply contrasts with my husband's account that during his youth, the Coloured population was by far the largest community in Plettenberg Bay. His account is also in line with that of Storrar (1978: 1), "there is the absorbing saga, about which we learn more with each succeeding year, of the successive waves of brown men living in the caves along this shore." This quote concerns the archaeological discoveries made at the enchanting Robberg Peninsula[7] (Storrar, 1978: 1). It suggests that Coloured people not only lived here in large numbers but were also prehistoric[8] and indigenous to the area. Jean and John Comaroff (1991) have cautioned against treating local cultures as isolated "ethnological islands" without history, emphasising the analytical and political risks of such an approach, especially in South Africa:

> Anthropologists have pointed to the dangers, both analytic and political, of treating local cultures as ethnological islands unto themselves, islands without history. To do so in South Africa is especially egregious. For these very islands of culture, of reinvented

[7]Robberg is a World Heritage Site. Rocks from this region date back 120 million and evidence of middle and later Stone Age inhabitation has been found in a few of the caves along the peninsula(https://www.capenature.co.za/reserves/robberg-nature-reserve).
[8] A period before written records were kept.

> tradition, have long been an integral part of a brutal system of domination (Comaroff J & Comaroff, 1991: xii, xiii).

My husband often recalls that his grandfather referred to himself as a "Gora[9]," underscoring a deep-rooted sense of identity in the region. Storrar (1978) introduces the concept of a Coloured identity later in her book, suggesting a mixed heritage that seems inauthentic and potentially revisionist[10], a form of "archive fever" (Derrida, 1994: 19). She describes the first White settlers in Plettenberg Bay encountering a population of Hottentot and Bushmen descendants, along with "possibly imported slaves," who survived through fishing and hunting in the local forests (Storrar, 1978: 4). By the 19th century, she notes an "astonishing variety of ethnic types" in the area, supposedly creating the diverse blend that characterises the Coloured community today (Storrar, 1978: 4). This account, however, raises questions. Historical records indicate that enslaved people typically arrived alongside White settlers rather than beforehand[11]. This timeline makes it unlikely that early indigenous populations were already mixed in the way the author implies. The attempt to frame indigenous people as inherently mixed can be seen as a subtle revision, potentially diminishing their true cultural and historical identity by imposing a narrative that wasn't initially there. Given this, I hypothesise that Plettenberg Bay's modern-day Coloured[12] community likely traces its roots predominantly to the indigenous Khoikhoi and San populations, with additional influences from later arrivals.

In tracing the history of Plettenberg Bay, the treatment of the Coloured community becomes strikingly apparent. As early as 1961, their presence has been relegated to the margins, cast as little more than a passing detail in the narratives of the town. Writers like Tapson (1961) and later Storrar (1978) recorded the Coloured community with minimal attention, often diminishing their role in the town's story. Tapson (1961: vii) went so far as to describe the Coloured community as a mere "neutral-tinted background" against the "diversely painted canvas" of Plettenberg Bay, an emblematic use of words that encapsulates an enduring indifference. She also refers to the "poverty that lay upon the coloured folk down at the Bay and the bleakness of their future" (Tapson, 1961: 172). This subtle erasure in the books is like "selective forgetting;" it mirrors the physical marginalisation enacted through apartheid-era

[9] Gora refers to an indigenous Khoisan group believed to be named after a chief called Kora (or Gora).
[10] Someone who examines and tries to change existing beliefs or how events happened.
[11] More on the history of slavery will be discussed in a chapter on Colouredness.
[12] Colouredness will be discussed in the following chapter.

spatial planning and later policies that pushed the Coloured community to the town's periphery (O'Connell, 2012: 224; Derrida, 1994: 69). Forced removals and deliberate exclusionary planning rendered their presence both peripheral and invisible in the town's landscape, aligning seamlessly with a history that views their story as inconsequential, a neutral background rather than a vibrant, integral part of Plettenberg Bay (O'Connell, 2012: 183). Spatial planning under apartheid functioned as a form of symbolic violence, rendering marginalised communities invisible in the urban landscape (Bourdieu, 1986: 20).

'Plett, It's a Feeling'! - A Place By any Other Name

There is no clear account of when the first White settlers arrived in Plettenberg Bay. However, there is a documented history of how the area came to be known as Plettenberg Bay, "towards the end of 1778, Governor Joachim van Plettenberg, then on his way back to Cape Town from the eastern limits of the colony, visited the bay" it was on this visit that he named the place after himself (Tapson,1961: 1).

Tapson notes (1961: 1), "Up to this time, travellers had used a variety of names for the place: Bay of Content, Keurbooms River Bay, Pisang River Bay[13] as well as Algoa Bay, and Formosa." The first ships to arrive at Plettenberg Bay was that of Bartholomew Dias, a Portuguese explorer around 1486, he aptly named it the Bahia das Alagoas, the Bay of the Lagoons:

> So far as is known, it was not until 1576, roughly 90 years after Dias first saw our Bay of the Lagoons, that a certain Manuel de Mesquita da Pastrello sailed this way and named it the Bahia Formosa, the Beautiful Bay (Storrar,1978: 11).

In 1630, Bahia Formosa (now Plettenberg Bay) saw its first Portuguese inhabitants when approximately 200 men on the ship *San Gonzales* were shipwrecked there (Storrar, 1978: 14). Of these, 133 sailors died, while 100 survived and made it to the shore (Storrar, 1978: 14-15). These men may have recorded the earliest accounts of the indigenous people living at

[13] The spelling "Pisang" is as in the quoted material.

Plettenberg Bay, describing them as "these savages are not quite black, they go about naked, with a small piece of skin around their loins; in winter they add to this capes of the same" (Storrar,1978: 16). According to Storrar (1978: 16) although they did not understand a word of the language spoken by these people who gathered around them out of "curiosity", they managed with sign language to barter pieces of iron, salvaged from the ship, in exchange for cows and sheep.

From these accounts, Plettenberg Bay had several times been given names by people who were not even from the place, even though the accounts also demonstrate that the place already had inhabitants who had food in abundance[14] (Storrar,1978: 16). Imagine having a first-born baby and a person that you have never met named the child without your consent or knowledge. This is a sentiment expressed by my husband many a time, reflecting a feeling of intrusion and disregard for the inherent rights and identity of the original inhabitants. To him, it is akin to a stranger naming one's child without consent, a symbolic act that dismisses the rightful ownership, connection and belonging of those who have lived here for generations.

Today, Plettenberg Bay is located within the Eden District and governed by the Bitou LM. The name "Bitou[15]," also shared by one of the area's primary rivers, reflects the region's indigenous heritage. It is derived from the "bitou bush" (chrysanthemoides monilifera), a native shrub that thrives abundantly in this landscape (Van Jaarsveld, 2016).

> The Bitou LM (Local Municipality) covers an area of approximately 991.89 km² divided into seven wards. Wards 1 and 7 are mostly rural in nature while wards 2 to 6 mainly constitute the urban parts of Plettenberg Bay town and surrounds. The northern parts of the Municipality comprise a number of large farms with the cadastral density increasing significantly to the south. The municipal area is made up of 234 parent farms, approximately 1 852 farm portions and an estimated 14 000 erven located in the various proclaimed townships (Bitou, 2022: 31).

[14] Clear from the ability to trade their cows and sheep.
[15] The specific name moniliferum means 'bearing a necklace' and pertains to the shiny, fleshy fruit arranged in a ring on the margins of the daisy flowers, like a necklace. The Afrikaans vernacular name bietou (bitou) is derived from the original Khoisan name (Van Jaarsveld, 2016).

The municipal area is home to several rivers, including the Keurbooms River, the primary river that flows into the Indian Ocean at Plettenberg Bay (CNdV Africa, 2013: 106). The Piesang River winds through Piesang Valley, contributing to the region's unique landscape. In addition to these rivers, the area features wetlands and supports diverse wildlife and plant species (Bitou LM, 2022: 11). Notably, the municipality boasts one of the highest percentages of formally protected land in South Africa. This protected area is part of the Garden Route National Park and encompasses a variety of ecosystems, including mountains, inland plateaus, a coastal corridor, and a marine reserve (CNdV Africa, 2013: 203).

Despite the natural beauty and extensive conservation efforts described above, communities like New Horizons - a segregated community established for Coloured people in 1968 under the apartheid Group Areas Act - face significant socio-economic challenges. Many households in New Horizons, which forms a vital part of this study, experience severe levels of poverty (Bitou LM, 2022: 76). As the first township, or "ghetto,"[16] built in Plettenberg Bay, New Horizons exemplifies the long-standing impacts of apartheid-era spatial planning, which I will explore further in this chapter. This disparity raises important questions: For whom is conservation ultimately intended if efforts to address poverty and uplift marginalised communities fall short compared to investments in nature conservation and tourism? In this chapter, I will delve further into these racial and economic disparities within Plettenberg Bay, examining how positioning the town as a "playground for the rich" often overshadows the needs of historically marginalised communities.

I have chosen to begin this chapter by exploring the positionality of the Coloured community as indigenous descendants, aiming to restore their dignity and counter the narrative that frames Plettenberg Bay solely as a home for the wealthy or a tourist destination. By emphasising their rightful place within the town's history, this chapter seeks to acknowledge and honour the contributions of the Coloured community, challenging past efforts to marginalise their identity and erase their connection to the land.

'Plett It's a Feeling'! - Home of the Elite

'Plett It's a Feeling!' is the place branding created for Plettenberg Bay by Plett Tourism in 2013 (Camatti and Wallington, 2022). Place branding connects directly to the concept of nation

[16] A segregated place, characteristic of an underprivileged neighbourhood.

branding, which, as Somogy Varga (2013: 826) explains in "The Politics of Nation Branding: Collective Identity and Public Sphere in the Neoliberal State", is a "marketing strategy that targets external markets to establish and communicate a specific image of national identity, to increase exports and to attract tourists, investments."

Figure 1: Plettenberg Bay's central beach, with Beacon Island, previously called Beacon Islet and Beacon Isle Hotel, in the background (Daniels, 2024).

In 2022, Nicola Camatti and Simon Wallington[17] conducted a case study on the town's place branding strategy, analysing the co-creation and implementation process, which aimed to represent all of Plettenberg Bay's rich and poor, Black and White residents. They note that co-creation emphasises the collaborative involvement of diverse stakeholders in developing a place's brand, which adds "depth and legitimacy" (2022: 1) to the brand identity. In reflecting on this process, Camatti and Wallington acknowledge that:

[17] Wallington, is the son of Peter Wallington, who was the Executive Chairman of Plett Tourism between 2012 and 2018.

> Plettenberg Bay is still largely divided along racial and economic lines with the hopes of the 'Rainbow Nation' often at odds with its reality. In a place with such a young and contested national identity as South Africa, the importance of a strategy that is not merely skin-deep but instead rooted in the community it represents could be considered of extra importance (Camatti and Wallington, 2022: 1- 2).

The racial divide is illustrated by this example from the Bitou LM Spatial Development Framework report:

> Approximately 64.1% of households earn less than R3 500 per month. This poverty is mainly concentrated in Kranshoek, New Horizons, Bossiesgif, Kwanokuthula, Green Valley and Kurland. It is evident that 59.2% of the population recorded an individual monthly income of less than R800 per month, thus living below the poverty line. In terms of Food Security, 56.2% of 3 766 respondents interviewed indicated that they had skipped a meal for 5 or more days in a 30-day period, while about 6.5% of around 59 068 respondents indicated that they had skipped a meal over the past 12 months, (Bitou LM, 2022: 41, 42).

This reality sharply contrasts with the high-end properties in Plettenberg Bay, often priced between R8 million and R10 million, as depicted below. This photo captures a display from one of several real estate agencies on the main street, showcasing these properties prominently in their windows.

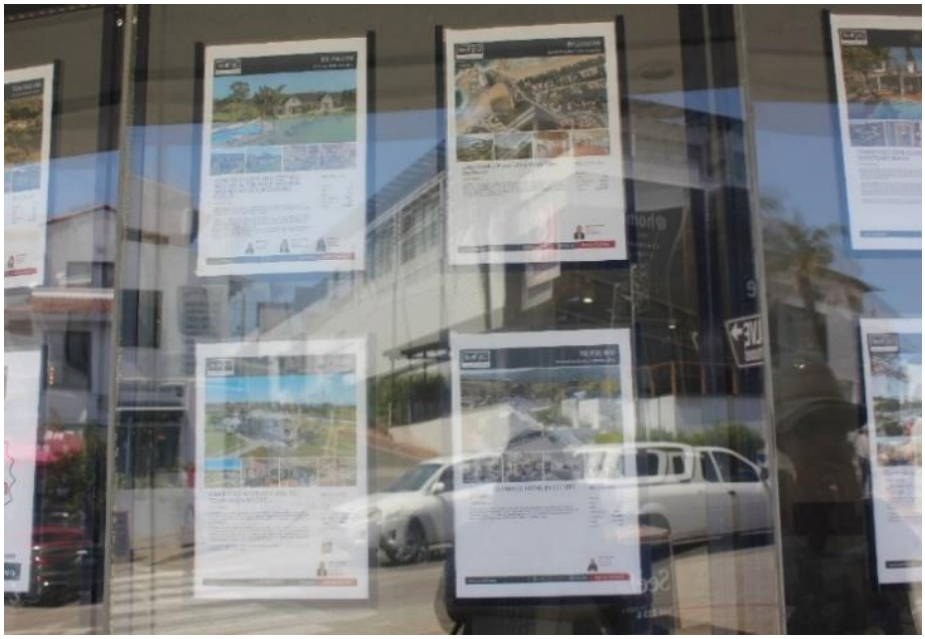


Figure 2: The window of a real estate store in the town's main road (Daniels, 2024).

With its emphasis on tourism, there are Camino walks, which are spiritual walks, promoted for tourists at a price of R12 500, three times the average income of a local Coloured resident, "5 Days - 5 Nights - 80 Kilometres - A fully catered, slack packing hiking trail through the forests and river valleys of the Garden Route, from the Garden of Eden near Knysna to the Keurbooms River in Plettenberg Bay", the website reads (Plettcamino, n.d.). The image gallery on the site features White visitors, smiling in outdoor gear, indulging in massages, and dining on artfully styled charcuterie boards against a backdrop of lush nature. This is nothing compared to realities in New Horizons where my in-laws live. Here, people are burdened by worries of daily survival, how to afford their next meal or scrape together R20 for electricity. As we delve further into this chapter, evidence from the Bitou LM social profile will bring these harsh realities into focus, underscoring the vast divide between the marketed image of Plettenberg Bay and the lived experience of its Coloured residents.

Figure 3: Visitors on a Camino hike (Plettcamino.co.za, n.d.).

The vast gap between high-end offerings like R12,500 Camino Walks, over R3000 a ticket for Plett Rage (excluding accommodation), million Rand properties, the Plett Polo club has VIP box seats advertised for R6000, golf course memberships over R7000, wellness retreats and rehabilitation targeting international clients, hotels and more. Plett's natural splendour appears to be a gold mine, and rich White people are cashing in. The luxury versus the extreme poverty in segregated communities exemplifies the deeply entrenched race and class divides in Plettenberg Bay. This disparity is a textbook case of "classism," as defined by Saqib Bhatti and Keri Leigh Merritt (2022) in their essay "Classism" in Boston University's report "Moving Toward Antibigotry." They describe classism as "the belief in or support for a policy or idea that denies value, dignity, liberties, and opportunities to people based on their perceived membership in a socioeconomic group" (Bhatti & Merritt, 2022: 131). The authors further note that "classism intersects with almost every other marginalisation, particularly racism" (Bhatti & Merritt, 2022: 131). This is evident in Plettenberg Bay, where poverty is concentrated within Coloured and Black townships, highlighting the intersection of race and class.

The town's emphasis on tourism, catering to wealthy visitors through luxury experiences, reflects entrenched classism that aligns with White privilege (Boersema, 2022). A letter from the Plettenberg Bay Municipality in 1993 to the Commission of Regions reveals this mindset. In it, the municipality argues to remain within the Western Cape, citing tourism dependency:

> Plettenberg Bay depends on tourism for its existence, and the 'Garden Route' is now becoming an international tourist marketing area. Incorporation into the Eastern Cape would likely be disastrous from a tourism perspective. If Plettenberg Bay were part of the Eastern Cape Region, it would lose its marketing benefit, and future tours would stop in Knysna, severely impacting Plettenberg Bay's economy, (Plettenberg Municipality, 1993).

This appeal shows how the tourism industry was structured primarily to benefit the White settler population. Observing the luxury branding and wealth-oriented marketing across the town reveals a curated image designed to attract affluent visitors, leaving segregated communities on the sidelines.

According to Tapson (1961: 172, 173), Plettenberg Bay's fortunes from an unassuming fishing town to a luxury place took root with the establishment of a Norwegian-run whaling station at the Beacon Isle in 1912, "If a whaling station could be established at the Bay, prosperity would flow in and the coloured people would not have to depend solely on their deep-sea fishing for a living". She references "all the grounds" owned by the Anglican church and later taken over by the government. While further referencing the attitude of the vicar Willie Breach, who maintained a "strict, loving discipline among his flock. Every Sunday he would round up the fisherfolk on his way to service and meekly they would follow." This raises questions about how the church suddenly came to own the land belonging to the indigenous Coloured people. Tapson's (1961) depiction of vicar Willie Breach "rounding up the fisherfolk" each Sunday with "strict, loving discipline" is also a clear manifestation of colonial paternalism, where the Coloured community is treated not as autonomous[18] individuals but as subjects to be moulded under the watchful eye of an overseer (Mbembe, 2001: 31). This colonial "gaze," cast down from above, frames the community as dependent, stripping them of agency and positioning them as mere extensions of a colonial order rather than rightful inhabitants of the land (Fanon, 1967: 83). The establishment of the whaling station, framed as bringing "prosperity" to the Coloured people, further reveals this colonial mindset. What is presented as economic development is, in truth, a calculated move to extract labour and resources cloaked in the

[18] This will be discussed in a chapter about Colouredness.

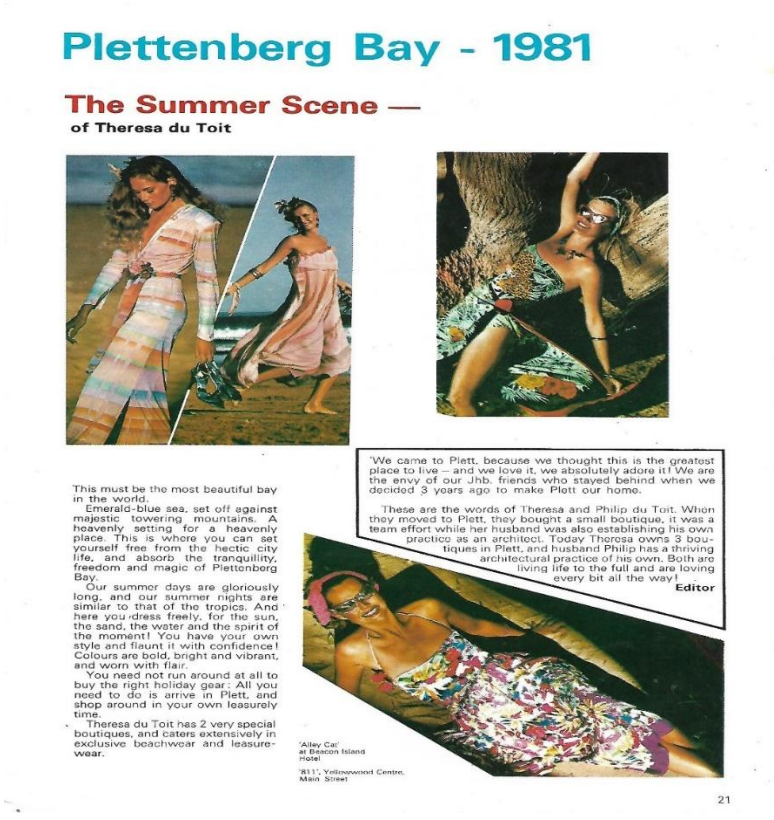
language of upliftment. This "prosperity" serves as a tool of colonial exploitation, a way to reshape the land and its people for the gain of others while reinforcing their marginalisation.

The whaling station brought a brief influx of "prosperity" to the town until the facility closed in 1920, "although it functioned for less than a decade, it gave to the bay an ephemeral prosperity and was the seed from which the present-day vitality has sprung," (Tapson, 1961: 173) After the Norwegians left, the abandoned structures were converted into a hotel that catered to anglers "until Owen Grant, the doyen of hotel builders, put his magic touch upon this rock which has been scoured eternally by the water of Pisang Rivery and buffeted by the mighty wave of the Indian Ocean" (Tapson, 1961:174):

> The relics of the whaling station were demolished and the rocky eminence, metamorphosed into the Beason Islet Hotel. The lure of the beautiful bay, has lost its tarnish now. The new bright glitter comes from the alien hosts of summer visitors, drawing the wealth of money-spenders from all corners of Southern Africa. In December, January and February its beaches are encumbered with the summer-brief gaiety of bathers, its houses and hanging gardens are with life and liveliness. This new prosperity has brought Plettenberg Bay a new grace of living for those whose homes are there, skilfully painting over the ineradicable poverty of the indigenous coloured population and giving the town at least the dignity of municipal status (Tapson, 1961:174).

Figure 4: The Old Whaling station in Plettenberg Bay (Pletthistory.org, n.d.).

Figure 5:This is a picture of Plettenberg Bay's central beach in the past (Pletthistory.org).



Plettenberg Bay - 1981

The Summer Scene —

of Theresa du Toit

This must be the most beautiful bay in the world.

Emerald-blue sea, set off against majestic towering mountains. A heavenly setting for a heavenly place. This is where you can set yourself free from the hectic city life, and absorb the tranquillity, freedom and magic of Plettenberg Bay.

Our summer days are gloriously long, and our summer nights are similar to that of the tropics. And here you dress freely, for the sun, the sand, the water and the spirit of the moment! You have your own style and flaunt it with confidence! Colours are bold, bright and vibrant, and worn with flair.

You need not run around at all to buy the right holiday gear: All you need to do is arrive in Plett, and shop around in your own leasurely time.

Theresa du Toit has 2 very special boutiques, and caters extensively in exclusive beachwear and leasure-wear.

'We came to Plett, because we thought this is the greatest place to live – and we love it, we absolutely adore it! We are the envy of our Jhb. friends who stayed behind when we decided 3 years ago to make Plett our home.

These are the words of Theresa and Philip du Toit. When they moved to Plett, they bought a small boutique, it was a team effort while her husband was also establishing his own practice as an architect. Today Theresa owns 3 boutiques in Plett, and husband Philip has a thriving architectural practice of his own. Both are living life to the full and are loving every bit all the way!

Editor

'Alley Cat'
at Beacon Island
Hotel

'811', Yellowwood Centre,
Main Street

21

Figure 6: A magazine article from 1981 not long after forced removals, selling Plett as a holiday destination (Pletthistory.org).

‘Plett, it’s a Feeling’! - A lived Reality

These persistent racial and economic divides within Plettenberg Bay are captured vividly in Mandy Rossouw’s 2010 Mail & Guardian article, “The Politics of Plettenberg Bay.” She describes the town as one of “super-rich and ultra-poor residents,” where affluence and poverty coexist with sharp clarity. Despite political disputes over poverty alleviation between the ANC-led municipality and the DA-led province, her portrayal of KwaNokuthula as a “poverty-stricken township in which alcohol abuse is rampant” underscores the inadequacy of governmental responses.

The slogans and banners calling communities to “mobilise against poverty” at a community meeting in New Horizons reflect the cyclical acknowledgement of need without substantive change (Rossouw, 2010). The structures defining these areas are not merely geographic but deeply historical, rooted in apartheid-era laws like the Group Areas Act, which assigned Black communities to the outskirts, far from White urban centres. This “horizontal segregation,” as (Bifulco, Ladd, & Ross, 2008) describes it, remains palpably visible, with New Horizons and KwaNokuthula mirroring the apartheid-designed townships of the Cape Flats.

Administrative authorities have long recognised the profound disparities shaping Plettenberg Bay. In the 2013 Bitou Spatial Development Framework, the municipality introduced “The Coming Together Initiative,” an effort endorsed by the Presidency to bridge the divides born of apartheid planning. It aimed to “integrate segregated urban areas, associated with economic disparities, as a result of apartheid planning, within Plettenberg Bay” (Bitou Municipality, 2013: 62). This echoes earlier community-driven ideas, like the 1993 “Proposal for a Pioneering Community Development Project” from the Plettenberg Bay Community Development Committee. That proposal described “poor people living under very unsatisfactory conditions” and outlined an “integrated, multi-faceted community development programme featuring total community involvement and a large measure of self-help” (Plettenberg Bay Municipality, 1993).

In theory, such plans signal a commitment to bridging the gaps between communities; in practice, they raise critical questions. If, year after year, new frameworks and development plans emerge, why has so little changed for the marginalised communities in Plettenberg Bay? Why does each new strategy appear to merely restate intentions rather than unravel the entrenched legacies of ghettoisation and segregation? The Bitou Municipality’s 2022 Spatial Development Framework reiterates the principles of “spatial justice,” citing the National

Development Plan's goal to reverse the historical "ghettoisation and segregation" that confine certain groups to marginalised spaces (Bitou LM, 2022: 7). But as I observe in New Horizons, the reality of "ghettoisation," described by Keys (2021) as "the physical placement, through policy or politics, of segregated or marginalised social groups into specific residential areas," remains intact, still governing the lived experience of Plettenberg Bay's original inhabitants.

This persistent failure to dismantle spatial divides calls into question the sincerity and impact of these recurring development plans. Ford and Griffin's (1979) description of ghettos, spaces marked by "rotting tenements, abandoned automobiles, garbage-strewn vacant lots, teeming populations, congestion, pollution, poverty, crime, and a generally unmiddleclass environment" (Ford & Griffin, 1979: 140), resonates powerfully with the conditions in communities like New Horizons. Although crafted within the context of racial segregation in the United States, their analysis extends here. In both countries, similar techniques to contain and isolate communities deemed undesirable are reflected, often under the guise of development.

In Plettenberg Bay, the result is a dual narrative of preservation and neglect. Such efforts consistently highlight needs and injustices without dismantling the structures that enforce them. Instead, they perpetuate the "selective forgetting" (O'Connell, 2012: 224). This act of forgetting creates a narrative of progress and development while maintaining existing divisions through strategically using the term "spatial justice." So, I would argue that while Bitou's frameworks might appear transformative, they operate within entrenched boundaries. As Foucault (1982: 792, 798) argued, institutional power relations shape not only the physical landscape but also identities and social relations, delineating who is permitted to belong and who must remain "other". These frameworks also align with what Derrida (1998: 2) calls an "archive of power," serving records that simultaneously erase and reshape histories. For instance, the municipal reports on New Horizons document conditions while neutralising their origins, positioning poverty and segregation as historical remnants rather than outcomes of ongoing policies. This "coming together" masks a mechanism that categorises and perpetuates inequality, operating under the guise of policy.

Within this "poverty trap," defined as a self-sustaining cycle that perpetuates poverty across generations, the marginalised remain in a state of disconnection from the narrative of development. They are bound to what Foucault (1982: 785) described as "power structures" that do not simply govern space but mould social realities, further entrenching New Horizons

as a “designated space” cut off from the affluent, tourist-centred identities constructed for Plettenberg Bay’s centre. While affluent tourism and luxury developments are prioritised and protected, the marginalised communities endure repeated promises of integration and redress, their conditions shifting little. These communities remain largely unseen in the “Garden Route” or “Plett is a feeling” brand.

Figure 7: My mother-in-law Christina lives in Kiepersol Street, also known as “Lyfpyn straat” or Body-pain Street (Daniels, 2024).

Figure 8: Beacon Isle Plettenberg Bay (Daniels, 2024).

'Plett, it's a Feeling'! - A New Type of Colonialism

The slogan "Plett is a feeling" aspires to capture the spirit of a new, inclusive South Africa, aiming to reshape Plettenberg Bay's identity as a brand that reflects democratic and multicultural ambitions (Camatti and Wallington, 2022: 1-2). Yet, the reality captured in these photographs, mirrored in government documents, newspaper articles, and my own observations, reveals a contrasting picture. Figure 8, for instance, depicts an elderly Black man seated on the beach on a sunny Saturday morning. His posture, as if positioned on the sidelines, evokes a quiet resignation, perhaps a longing to be in the water yet constrained by an unspoken awareness of his "place." This image resonates with Winifred Tapson's (1961: iv) portrayal of Coloured residents in "Timber and Tides", where she describes them as forming a "neutral tinted background," a visual metaphor that subtly reinforces social hierarchies in towns like Plettenberg Bay. Tapson's phrasing operates as a "racial microaggression" in literary form, a reflection of racial inequities so deeply embedded in the fabric of society that such descriptions read as normative and unchallenged (Hirokawa, 2023: 271). Historian Saul Dubow (1992: 210) explains this phenomenon as the persistence of "conscious habits of the mind," where notions of superiority and hierarchy are embedded in a naturalised social order, rendering human difference a given rather than a construct. In this context, "Plett is a feeling" becomes more than a slogan; it represents a dissonance between aspirational branding and lived realities,

where longstanding patterns of exclusion and hierarchy persist or are stuck just below the polished surface.

Figure 9: Torn Plett is a Feeling branding on the N2 opposite of Qolweni (Daniels, 2024).

As I observed the scene around me, the language on the beach became a subtle yet telling marker of identity. German was the primary language I overheard, suggesting the presence of either foreign nationals or a particular subset of locals. A woman once introduced herself to me as "a German-South African," her identity straddling two worlds. This duality, rooted in privilege, a vestige of colonial histories, suggests the perks of whiteness that persist in post-apartheid South Africa (Boersema, 2022; Kamies, 2018). She spoke of her pride in Germany's commitment to teaching both language and history to children, suggesting a rootedness that transcends geography. Her heart, it seemed, was firmly planted in German soil, her identity aligned with her homeland. It prompts the question: does she, and others like her, view South Africa merely as a landscape for the privileges afforded by whiteness (Boersema, 2022)? And what about Plettenberg Bay, specifically, that draws and retains this expression of whiteness? Whiteness here is less a colour than a "condition," a set of unspoken permissions and privileges

embedded in the spaces it occupies (Hirokawa, 2023: 280). Law professor Keith Hirokawa describes such spaces as governed by tacit rules:

> Wherever whiteness dominates space, space carries rules and expectations about the identity and characteristics of people who are present - visitors, owners, and occupiers. Spaces are racialised because of intentional practices of discrimination and segregation (Hirokawa, 2023: 280).

In places like Plettenberg Bay, these spaces often remain coded and controlled, with their invisible boundaries felt even in mundane moments. Later that evening, around 7:30 p.m., this coded spatial order revealed itself again as I entered a local Spar with my family. The stares were unmistakable, unfamiliar, uncomfortable, unwavering. A young White woman's gaze held so long that she eventually smiled to break the tension, while two White men looked on with similar fixation (Fanon, 1967: 107). At that moment, the space felt heavy with unspoken restrictions. Our presence as the only people of colour, not as staff but as shoppers, seemed to unsettle the "rules" of this space. I found myself questioning if our simple act of shopping had crossed an unseen line: were we out of place at this hour, in this setting? Or were these glances merely the result of unfamiliar faces in a part of the town where most residents are White? The encounter left me grappling with the subtleties of racialised space, where the gaze becomes an instrument of control, marking who belongs and who intrudes (Fanon, 1952: 78). These moments suggest that the boundaries of whiteness in Plettenberg Bay, though invisible, are tangible, defining spaces through a quiet yet powerful assertion of "normalcy" that resists any breach.

Figure 10: A warning sign on the road to the beach in Plettenberg Bay (Daniels, 2024).

The local Checkers at Market Square presented a different dynamic. During our visit in the afternoon, we found the store mostly filled with White shoppers, though there were a few Black patrons, creating a notable but quiet minority presence. The atmosphere was more indifferent; shoppers, young, middle-aged, and elderly alike, appeared occupied in the practicalities of their tasks, absorbed in the routine of afternoon shopping. The stares that punctuated our previous experience were muted here, replaced by an ambience of indifferent routine. In contrast, the following day, my mother-in-law suggested we stop by the local Shoprite, accessible from a back entrance near the main street parking lot. Here, the composition of the space changed entirely. The store was alive with the presence of Plettenberg Bay's Black and Coloured residents, filling the narrow aisles with an intimacy absent in the more detached atmosphere of Checkers. Walking through, I overheard a woman remark to another in Afrikaans, "God must have been good to you; you're eating meat now." The comment was unassuming but showed layers of economic reality beneath the surface.

Figure 11: Plett is a feeling, Plett Tourism, and a website banner. This picture has been torn on the N2 branding (Plett Tourism, n.d).

‘Plett, it’s a Feeling’! - The I of Inclusion

The above picture reflects the idyllic image of “Plett is a Feeling,” projecting Plettenberg Bay as a cosmopolitan, rainbow-nation destination. The beach scene, featuring youthful bodies of different races moving toward the ocean, conveys a narrative of freedom, a place unburdened by a history of racial inequality. Yet is this truly the “feeling” Plettenberg Bay wants to evoke? Is it the tranquillity of the ocean or an unspoken social division, where the beach at noon resembles an exclusive space occupied by White visitors, except for a Black artist sculpting in the sand and a Coloured family seated, fully clothed, in the shade?

Njabulo Ndebele’s concept of “split personality” (1999) aptly describes such places where the legacy of apartheid coexists with a polished façade. Though colonial violence has receded into the past, Plettenberg Bay retains its elite enclaves, projecting success through its “dominant culture across time and space” (Ndebele, 1999). The forced removals of Coloured residents are scarcely mentioned on the Bitou Municipality website, reduced to a line about New Horizons, built-in 1968 without infrastructure and served by water tanks and the bucket toilet system (Bitou, n.d.):

> New Horizons was built in 1968 as the first municipal town resulting from the apartheid group’s act. This township was opened without any infrastructure and the bucket system was used as toilets as water was delivered in tanks. Many of the residents were living in the main town of Plettenberg Bay and have colourful and poignant stories about their move (Bitou, n.d).

This tension raises a fundamental question: does Plettenberg Bay seek a cosmopolitan identity? The picturesque beach scene conflicts with my experience of Main Street, which is quiet, with its boutique stores and restaurants largely empty on a regular weekday, except for Black staff. On Tripadvisor, a tourist describes Plettenberg Bay as “calm and serene” compared to the “busy” Knysna (Tripadvisor, 2010). Yet what appears serene to a visitor evokes something deeper for those who know its history of dispossession.

Figure 12: A picture of a commercial building in town facing the taxi rank (Daniels, 2024).

Tourism, some argue, is a "new form of colonialism," with host nations dependent on and subservient to Western demands (Smith 1992, 62; Williams, 2012: 198). In Plettenberg Bay, the economic disparities remain stark. Prospects for a middle-class life, meanwhile, are limited. When I visited in September 2024, not a single property from New Horizons was marketed in the town's main road real estate windows. As the World Bank (2018: 42) notes:

> South Africa is the most unequal country in the world, and incomes are highly polarised. The country is characterised by high wealth inequality and low intergenerational mobility, which arise from high income inequality and inequality of opportunity for children. This also helps explain the missing middle and polarisation in the labour market. These inequalities appear to be passed down from generation to generation, implying little change in inequality over time and perhaps even a worsening of the already bad situation (World Bank, 2018: 42).

On Property24 in October 2024, just three properties in New Horizons were listed, priced between R370,000 and R380,000 for small plots around 300m² and one three-bedroom house for R850,000. By comparison, a modest four-bedroom apartment in Plettenberg Bay's central

district is listed at R3 million, while a beachfront five-bedroom home spans R18.5 million. This disparity in property values highlights the ongoing "poverty trap" that restricts asset growth and perpetuates wealth inequality, keeping New Horizons outside the economic mainstream (Barret, 2018; Chatterjee, 2019; Bitou, n.d.). Homes in New Horizons, priced below R1 million, contrast sharply with multimillion-rand properties by the beach, reflecting the entrenched economic stagnation that persists despite South Africa's post-apartheid promises (Barret, 2018; Chatterjee, 2019; Bitou, n.d.). Philosopher Daniel Weltman (2024) critiques such "cosmopolitanism" as a pretext for colonial legacies, reinforcing "settler colonialism" through ideas of universal moral norms and open borders that favour newcomers over longstanding residents (Fabre, 2021; Moore, 2015).

Plettenberg Bay epitomises the post-apartheid "upper-class" experience, where whiteness is preserved both "discursively and materially" through premium property and exclusive access to natural resources (Boersema, 2022: 38). Boersema highlights how even the apartheid-era elite sought to maintain a global image despite their racist practices, concerned about their stigma while continuing to demand state protection (Boersema, 2022: 35). This drive to rebrand persists; Holtzhausen & Fullerton (2015) found that even after the costly 2010 World Cup, Americans' views of South Africa remained shaped by "apartheid" and "poverty." Their work shows the difficulty in transforming a country's image without altering its underlying social dynamics.

Is it truly this difficult to change a place's brand? The answer lies in tackling the material inequalities that underpin its identity. Without addressing the lasting impacts of apartheid's spatial and economic inequalities, Plettenberg Bay's brand remains as curated as it is incomplete, a reflection of ideals rather than an authentic, inclusive reality.

'Plett, it's a Feeling'! - A Past and a Future filled with Possibilities

Plett was a fishing village long before it became a tourist destination. Cast your mind back; there is evidence of a fishing industry all over Plett, from whaling to squid to hake; these are the industries that have shaped, to a great extent, the history of this beautiful town. The history of human life in Plettenberg Bay stretches back to 120,000 BC with Stone Age Man. We see traces of their lives in two caves, the Nelson Bay Cave on the Robberg Peninsula and the Matjies River Rock Shelter near Keurboomstrand.

Writer Dr Nadia Kamies (2018: 185, 186), in her thesis "Shame and Respectability: A Narrative Inquiry into Cape Town's Coloured Families through Photographs, cultural practices and oral histories" shares her observations from a trip through former mission stations in the Western Cape, South Africa. She describes a similar phenomenon of post-colonial and apartheid legacies in terms of racial divides, as I have observed in Plettenberg Bay:

> A common theme, a shared identity, running through these little towns – more affluent 'white' centres, with poor Black settlements, far enough from the centre but close enough so the labour source can walk there. Many towns have their history of indigenous inhabitants, slavery and forced removals (Kamies, 2018: 185).

In reimaging Genadendal, a rural town in the Western Cape, through evidence from the past seen on her visit to the museum, Kamies says:

> I could imagine the mill turning again, the printing press clacking away in the background while the cooper made his barrels, and the carpenter drilled holes for the riempie to be strung through. I imagined youth showing visitors around their town, past the memorial to the soldiers who had died in WWI, leading them on hikes into the surrounding mountains, returning to eat freshly baked cakes at tables and chairs set out under oak trees on Die Werf270, in front of the 19th-century church building. Most of all, I imagined the pride and dignity of human beings who are truly free, (Kamies, 2018: 186).

What would a reimagined Plettenberg Bay be if it were to become the dream reality of all its residents? If its Coloured children could share in the wealth? Would it include involvement of the local community in the Camino walks or the sale of prime property? What share would they have in the profits of every single venture exploiting their indigenous home? Anti-apartheid activist and cleric Allan Boesak (2019) advocates for "uplifting politics" to address

the “sickbed of our rainbow nation dreams,” yet repeated plans to link townships to the Plettenberg Bay CBD, such as the “Coming Together Initiative”, feel symbolic rather than substantive.

The economic reality underscores this divide: Bitou’s Gini coefficient stands at 0.65, reflecting extreme inequality, especially when contrasted with White communities (Bitou, 2023). Wealth concentration remains a colonial legacy, where land ownership plays a pivotal role (Angeles, 2005). In Settler Colonies like South Africa, “a very disproportionate income distribution” persists, as colonial-era privileges remain intact (Angeles, 2005: 7). Chatterjee (2019) emphasises that this wealth polarisation arises from “non-labour income” like real estate - a sector dominated by a few, excluding those who cannot participate in property ownership. The GDP per capita of R63,969 and an upper-bound poverty rate of 62.5% further exemplify how Plettenberg Bay’s economic growth is not widely shared (Bitou LM, 2023).

Figure 13: A graveyard in the centre of New Horizons, enclosed by houses on all sides (Daniels, 2024).

Economic inequality continues to be a defining challenge in post-apartheid South Africa, with historically marginalised communities experiencing restricted access to economic opportunities, which perpetuates entrenched poverty (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005: 300). The stark income disparities among residents of Plettenberg Bay mirror South Africa’s broader status as one of the most unequal nations globally, where the benefits of economic growth remain unevenly distributed (World Bank, 2018: 42). However, this phenomenon is particularly evident in the Garden Route District, where Plettenberg Bay is located, as figures

exceed the national average (Bitou LM, 2023). In 2022, the district's Gini coefficient[19], an indicator of income inequality, stood at 0.61[20] (Bitou LM, 2023). A 0.61 Gini coefficient suggests that a considerable portion of the district's wealth is concentrated in the hands of a relatively small group of people. At the same time, most of the population have a much lower income (Harmse, 2014). Within the Bitou LM, income inequality was even more pronounced, with a Gini coefficient of 0.65. While both values, 0.61 and 0.65, suggest a significant degree of income inequality, a Gini coefficient of 0.65 is worse, indicating a more substantial disparity (Bitou LM, 2023). The most significant disparities were observed within the Coloured communities, with a Gini coefficient of 0.56 (Bitou LM, 2023). While this is not the highest possible level of inequality among these residents, it still reflects a substantial disparity in income, as a significant gap exists between those with money and those without, despite living in the same community. This could be explained by the fact that the local municipality is a major employer in the region (Bitou, 2023). As mentioned earlier, for those few residents fortunate enough to secure stable employment with the municipality or other government entities, such as the police, a steady income allows them to cover basic needs, pay bills, and perhaps even save a little. This stability is skewed in contrast to many others in the community who face limited job prospects and often must accept low-paying, sporadic work when available, struggling to make ends meet. On the other hand, White communities had a comparatively lower Gini coefficient of 0.43, indicating a moderate level of income inequality. While there is still some disparity in income distribution, it suggests a more balanced distribution. This highlights the racial divisions that continue to shape economic inequality in the region (Bitou LM, 2023).

South Africa's history of inequality is rooted in policies of the pre-1994 government (Frye & Kirsten, 2012). It enabled the marginalisation of most South Africans, "excluding millions of people from the political, social and economic base of our society and denying them the long-term accumulation of land, assets and sustainable livelihoods" (Frye & Kirsten, 2012: 1). In his discussion paper "Income Inequality and Colonialism", economics professor Luis Angeles (2005) argues that "colonialism is a major explanation behind today's differences in Income Inequality among countries" (2005: ii). His analysis includes South Africa, noting that "as long as Europeans stayed a minority" within a colony, "the greater the inequality in the country"

[19] The Gini coefficient measures income inequality within a population on a scale from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates perfect equality (everyone has the same income) and 1 indicates perfect inequality (all income is held by one person or household) (Harmse, 2014).
[20] See footnote 3.

(Angeles, 2005: 1). Angeles differentiates between "New Europes," where Europeans became the majority (e.g., Australia and the United States), and "Settler Colonies," like South Africa, where only a segment of Europeans settled, creating a society marked by exclusion and inequality. In Settler Colonies:

> Indigenous people, together with the imported slaves…had much more restricted access to land and were often left with working in the European mines or plantations as their only alternative. Accordingly, their living standards were far below those of the European minority, creating deeply entrenched inequality (Angeles, 2005: 4).

The Settler Colonies argument is framed around Europeans making up "between 10 and 30 per cent of the colonial population" (Angeles, 2005: 7). He further explains:

> Although many aspects set the colonies of this group aside, we can identify two common denominators among them that are particularly important for our argumentation. First, the European minority was able to appropriate for themselves most of the land and mining resources in these countries, thus creating a very disproportionate income distribution. Second, independence in these countries was done by Europeans descendants and, we should add, for European descendants. This implied that the privileges that this group had obtained during the colonial period were not to be removed with the change of political status (Angeles, 2005: 7).

With the "co-existence of extreme poverty and extreme wealth", a visible South African reality (Chatterjee, 2019: 1), "despite more than 20 years of democracy", to understand overall inequality, researcher Aroop Chatterjee (2019:2) stresses the importance of "measuring wealth inequality[21]". In South Africa, "wealth inequality 'captures the historical legacy of low wages,

[21] (Chatterjee, 2019)defines wealth inequality as the unequal distribution of household (money-metric) assets.

personal and organisational discrimination, and institutionalised racism" (Oliver & Shapiro, 2013, in (Chatterjee, 2019: 4).

According to Chatterjee, elements that play a crucial role in keeping wealth concentrated include factors like "social and cultural capital," but he contends that this does not explain private wealth. "Non-labour income" like that in the value of land in Plettenberg Bay as an example or "non-earned income" is mainly at the top end of the income distribution, "meaning the polarisation in income inequality is driven by ownership of assets, rather than labour market participation" (Chatterjee, 2019: 2). Chatterjee's (2019: 2) theory can be understood in material terms with land as an asset to growing private wealth, as is shown by the prices the property on that land is sold for, like in Plettenberg Bay. It can also be understood in terms of the type of job a person holds and how it will pay a different income level, either high or low wages. For example, as a domestic worker, which was a usual form of work for many of the female family members I interviewed, the income earned was low, which also meant prospects for building wealth were lower, notwithstanding the role of other factors like the impact of apartheid and colonialism on this phenomena as discussed previously (Angeles, 2005; Chatterjee, 2019; Frye & Kirsten, 2012).

Employment opportunities for those without wealth in Plettenberg Bay largely align with the Bitou Municipality's claim that tourism is a primary job provider (Bitou, 2023). Like nations such as India and Ethiopia, the tourism sector is highly "labour-intensive" and was particularly vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic (Aynalem et al., 2016; Bitou, 2023). While tourism and hospitality offer jobs in "accommodations, transportation, and attractions," the sector struggles to provide stable income, facing persistent issues with job insecurity, low pay, and long working hours (Aynalem et al., 2016: 1).

Leroux and Oyedemi (2021: 154) argue that "a country can be postcolonial in the temporal sense, but remains economically and culturally colonised," suggesting that if colonial inequalities persist, it is "premature to proclaim the demise of colonialism". This perspective resonates in places like Plettenberg Bay, where colonial-era economic and social structures continue to shape lives. Tapson's Timber and Tides (1961) highlights historical exploitation in the region, from indigenous servants and Italian-owned silk industries to Dutch timber extraction and Norwegian whaling. Europeans carved out an economy built on the labour and resources of indigenous populations, with profits sent back to Britain for example, a pattern that still reverberates in present-day economic exclusion (Tapson, 1961: 119, 154; Leroux &

Oyedemi, 2021: 14; Angeles, 2005). The "internalised subordination of identity and culture" remains evident long after achieving political independence (Leroux & Oyedemi, 2021: 14).

In 2022, Bitou LM reported a real GDPR[22] per capita of R63,969, representing the average economic output - essentially, the total value of goods and services produced per person in the area (Bitou, 2023). The municipality's GDPR reached R4.2 billion in 2021, showcasing robust productivity mainly driven by finance, real estate, and tourism (Bitou LM, 2023). However, these figures do not capture the unequal spread of wealth among its residents. Despite the area's high economic output, 62.5% of Bitou's population lives below the Upper Bound Poverty Line (UBPL), subsisting on less than R1,227 per month (Bitou LM, 2023). This sharp contrast stresses the difference between economic output and wealth distribution. Although Bitou's economy generates substantial wealth, it remains concentrated within certain sectors and among a small, affluent portion of the population. Upscale property values and high-revenue industries boost the GDP, leaving little economic benefit for the broader community. For many residents in marginalised Coloured communities, such as New Horizons, economic participation remains limited to low-wage service jobs with low prospects of high-value property ownership or upward mobility.

These socioeconomic disparities align with my observations in Plettenberg Bay. Ultimately, Plettenberg Bay's economic vitality masks a profound imbalance. The town's emphasis on luxury, high-priced property benefits the few, sidelining long-standing indigenous communities from real growth out of their circumstances. The prioritisation of profit over equity creates visible divides: affluent enclaves thrive while historically marginalised neighbourhoods remain on the periphery, their residents trapped in cycles of poverty. Here, economic growth doesn't alleviate inequality; it deepens it, reinforcing boundaries that keep wealth within reach of a select few.

[22] Gross Domestic Regional Product (GDPR) measures the total value of goods and services produced within a specific region (such as a province, state, or municipality) over a certain time

Pictures: The “front” and “back” streets of the town or central business district area of Plettenberg Bay.

Figure 14: The view from the town’s main street (Daniels, 2024).

Figure 15: Taxi rank at the back of the main street of Plettenberg Bay’s town or CBD area (Daniels, 2024).

Pictures: These are both homes in Plettenberg Bay.

Figure 16: A house in New Horizons (Daniels, 2024).

Figure 17: A house in Plettenberg Bay's town area (Daniels, 2024).

Conclusion

This chapter highlights the leap between Plettenberg Bay's polished image as a premier tourist destination and the socio-economic disparities faced by its indigenous Coloured community. The luxury image that draws affluent visitors today rests on a foundation of land dispossession and the marginalisation of the Coloured community, whose historical presence is obscured. It further shows that White settlers established both material and social dominance, entrenching a form of "whiteness" that continues to define who belongs and who benefits within the town. Tracing the town's history from colonial settlement to contemporary place branding shows how economic development has benefited White settlers or affluent newcomers while sidelining indigenous residents. The findings draw attention to how tourism and urban branding perpetuate exclusionary narratives and deepen the racial and economic divides, solidifying the need for more inclusive approaches that honour the community's heritage and address historical injustices.

> *Although one may speak of many Coloured communities, it is questionable whether one can speak of the Coloured people at all. In this essentially residual category are to be found people of the most diverse descent, including enslaved people from the Indonesian archipelago and the descendants of the area's most truly indigenous groupings: the pastoral Khoikhoi ("Hottentots") and the hunter-gatherer San ("Bushmen"). To be "Coloured" in South Africa today is merely to say that one can trace some ancestry from Africa or Asia, or both, and speaks either English or Afrikaans as a home language. That the very notion of a "Coloured people" exists is due to the complex sociology of three centuries of European domination and more recently the classificatory madness of the apartheid regime (Viall et al., 2011)*

Chapter Two - Colouredness

Overview

This chapter offers a roadmap for understanding the concept of "Colouredness" within the South African context, tracing its historical roots, socio-political construction, and contemporary implications. Beginning with a discussion of the diverse ancestral origins of Coloured communities, it examines the intersections of slavery, colonialism, and apartheid policies in shaping Coloured identity. The chapter also explores cultural representations, social stigmas, and the reclamation of heritage in the post-apartheid era. It includes personal narratives, critical theories, and historical analysis to provide a nuanced understanding of how Coloured identities were constructed, resisted, and continue to transform over time.

Introduction

With over a decade in journalism, my career began at "Son op Sondag", an Afrikaans newspaper with a predominantly Coloured readership. In those early years, I frequently wrestled with journalism's limitations, feeling restricted in my ability to make a tangible difference as many in the Coloured community faced profound socio-economic challenges such as poverty, violence, crime, substance abuse, unemployment, etc. Yet, over time, I

witnessed journalism become a powerful voice for the voiceless, often sparking action and drawing attention to essential municipal services for those who felt their needs were consistently ignored.

During this journey, a colleague introduced me to the notion that Coloured South Africans, often labelled as "mixed race," have deep ancestral connections to the Khoi and San, the First Nations of South Africa. Initially, I resisted, though I didn't understand why then. Now, I can hypothesise several possible reasons. As South African history professor Mohamed Adhikari (2006: 467) notes in "Hope, fear, shame. frustration: Continuity and change in the expression of Coloured identity in white supremacist South Africa, 1910-1994", Coloured identity has long carried the weight of "shame" due to the negative connotations associated with the idea of being "mixed." For many, being classified as Coloured brought associations of being neither entirely Black nor fully White, which was politically and socially stigmatising (Adikhari, 2006: 482). This stigma, I would say, has its roots in narratives described in Archaeology professor Andrew Smith's (1983: 47) "The Hotnot Syndrome: Myth-Making in South African School Textbooks", which reveals how South African education fostered negative perceptions of Khoisan identity, labelling them as "primitive" and inferior. Terms like "Hotnot" served to deepen this stigma, while school textbooks and colonial myths downplayed the Khoisan's historical presence and diminished their ancestral land rights.

> The schools are ideal places to instil the ideology of the ruling elite. At school... the child is consciously exposed to a pre-selected and organised system of knowledge of values for a prolonged period. Children have difficulty being selective, particularly in education systems that encourage rote learning…control education or re-education as an ideological vehicle and you prepare youth as the necessary "cannon fodder" when the need arises (Smith, 1983: 39).

This revelation highlighted the gaps in my understanding, which I now believe were shaped by living in a segregated community and, further still, the effects of a segregated or skewed education system. I hope to unpack these ideas in this chapter.

Through my personal journey of discovery, I would learn how deeply social engineering worked to obscure ancestral roots and foster a sense of inferiority. A pivotal moment came when a Dutch student complimented my hair as “kroes,” or “curly”, a word that carried negative connotations for most of my life, despite not knowing why. I even shared this insight in my column, “Tien plus met Nikkidee,” “Ten plus with Nikkidee” at the time. While living in London briefly in my teens, I was also confronted, for the first time in my life, with a form which did not include the label Coloured. Today, there is a growing movement among Coloured people to reclaim Khoisan heritage, with many embracing their ancestry and rejecting imposed colonial labels. This revival reflects a reconnection to indigenous heritage and a reassertion of cultural pride (Trotter, 2009:121). As Smith had in the 1980’s already remarked on the Coloured community re-evaluating their ancestry:

> The riots that took place in 1976 showed that many of the "Coloured" people identified with the black struggle, and so were saying that they did not wish to identify with the Afrikaner tradition. This leaves many of them in a confused traditional position: they have been told that their aboriginal heritage is primitive and not worthy of civilised people and they have limited rights to the land of their ancestry in both ownership of land and the franchise. The increased identity with the "black consciousness" movement, particularly among the young, suggests they are more than ready to look at their ancestry in new ways (Smith, 1983:45).

This brings me to the critical question: Why were Coloured people given this label in the first place? Why was a new identity constructed for us? Why could we not just embrace our heritage without the weight of politics?

Colouredness - Historical Roots and Development of Coloured Identity

The existence of a distinct "Coloured" identity is a product of South Africa's layered history, shaped by over three centuries of European colonisation and, more recently, the rigid racial classifications enforced by the apartheid regime (Viall et al., 2011).

Identities based on the idea of race, rooted in pseudoscientific theories from late 19th and early 20th century Europe, fuelled the emergence and expansion of racist practices in South Africa (Hendricks, 2001:30). This Hendricks (2001: 30) argues, would imply that "racialised distinctions with their corresponding boundary markers and hierarchical valuations were not prevalent at the Cape before this period, which makes it a twentieth-century phenomenon."

In the historical context of South Africa, the roots of Coloured communities are closely connected to the region's earliest indigenous peoples: the Khoikhoi[23], pastoralists often derogatorily labelled as "Hottentots," and the San, hunter-gatherers disparagingly referred to as "Bushmen" (Adhikari, 2002: 57). Alongside these indigenous ancestors, Coloured communities can also trace lineage to enslaved peoples brought to the Cape in the early 1600s (Gqola, 2004: 6). Kamies (2018: 36), explains that Indian Ocean slavery differed from North Atlantic slavery in crucial ways: it was predominantly female, focused on household work rather than plantations, and race-based associations with slavery were less rigid. Kamies (2018: 36) contends that because boundaries between slaves, free people, indentured labourers, and settlers were further blurred by diverse groups like independent traders and Muslim clerics - Colouredness at the Cape emerged through a creolisation[24] process "under specific conditions" further shaped by the adaptations of the Dutch and British to local conditions.

Historian June McKinnon (2004:11) notes that Jan van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape in 1652 marked dramatic social changes for indigenous inhabitants, incoming settlers, and slaves. By 1657, to meet the colony's labour demands, the Dutch began importing enslaved people, with the first groups including 228 individuals from Guinea and 174 from Angola, arriving in 1658 (Kamies, 2018: 36). By 1700, about half of the enslaved population came from the Indian coast, likely speaking Bengali (Kamies, 2018: 26). Shell (1994) argues that slavery at the Cape created a foundation for a racially stratified society, embedding hierarchies that shaped social identities and continue to influence South Africa today.

[23] Even the words Khoikhoi/Khoisan are often disputed or rejected as incorrect labels or group names imposed by Europeans.
[24] Creolisation is the process where elements of different cultures blend to create a new culture.

As a child, I remember learning in school that Jan van Riebeeck "founded" the Cape, a narrative we absorbed without questioning how a foreigner could lay claim to land already inhabited by indigenous people. Slavery was rarely mentioned, and our concept of it was shaped more by American media than by local history, with places like the Slave Lodge barely resonating. Postcolonial theory critiques such simplifications, where colonial figures are centred while indigenous histories are minimised. Edward Said (1978: 221) argues that colonial narratives often erase indigenous presence, reframing colonial expansion as "discovery" or "founding." Said's (1978: 221) idea feeds into Smith's (1983: 39) explanation of how the school system reinforced colonial myths, shaping public understanding of South Africa through a Eurocentric lens.

According to Kamies (2018: 37, 38), relationships between indigenous women, slaves, and settlers emerged over time, and while initially not frowned upon, between 1682 and 1685, attempts were made to regulate interactions between White and enslaved people. The only recorded marriage between a European and a Khoikhoi during the VOC era was in 1664, between Pieter van Meerhoff, a Danish VOC soldier, and Eva, a Khoikhoi interpreter (Kamie, 2018: 37, 38). According to Kamies, between 1652 and 1795:

> There were 1,273 (mixed unions) and 147 cases of marriage and other unions between Coloured and European people. These unions produced a mixed population of Coloured people who were to occupy the interstitial zone between White and Black. A space between structures and objects; it can be interpreted to be neither here nor there or extended to be neither Black nor White. Many enslaved women married European men, founding large families that were integrated into the White community, with European surnames concealing slave origins, signifying that many Afrikaners trace their roots to Eastern foremothers. It is important to understand this deliberate creation of a buffer zone between Europeans and indigenous people, as it would be the offspring of these unions who later occupied this in-between space as 'coloureds' after emancipation and during apartheid (Kamie, 2018: 37, 38).

What becomes clear from these records is that the heritage of Coloured people is not uniformly "mixed" in the way it has been politically constructed. While many Coloured individuals can trace their lineage to indigenous African groups like the Khoisan, the colonial and later apartheid project appears to have intentionally shaped this identity as something distinct, marginalising it and distancing it from indigenous African heritage (Smith, 1983: 45). This separation likely served to weaken the claim of Coloured people to indigenous land and rights, positioning them as outsiders rather than rightful heirs to the land and culture of their African ancestors. Further to this, Baderoon (2004: 17) notes:

> Both because it is central to the system of racial classification and because it seems always about to collapse this system, Coloured identity has been among the heaviest policed concepts during apartheid. and, significantly, during the colonial period.

The Legacy of Slavery and the Hottentot Code

The historical context necessary to understand the experiences of Coloured families in this study is well articulated by Tapson (1961). She says:

> A story about Knysna should more properly begin at Plettenberg Bay, for it was there that the white man's acquisitive eye first marked the potential riches of the 'Houteniqualand' forests. From the late eighteenth century onwards, the exploitation of these forests became a Box and Cox affair between the Dutch and British as each, alternatively, ruled at the Cape (Tapson, 1961: 1).

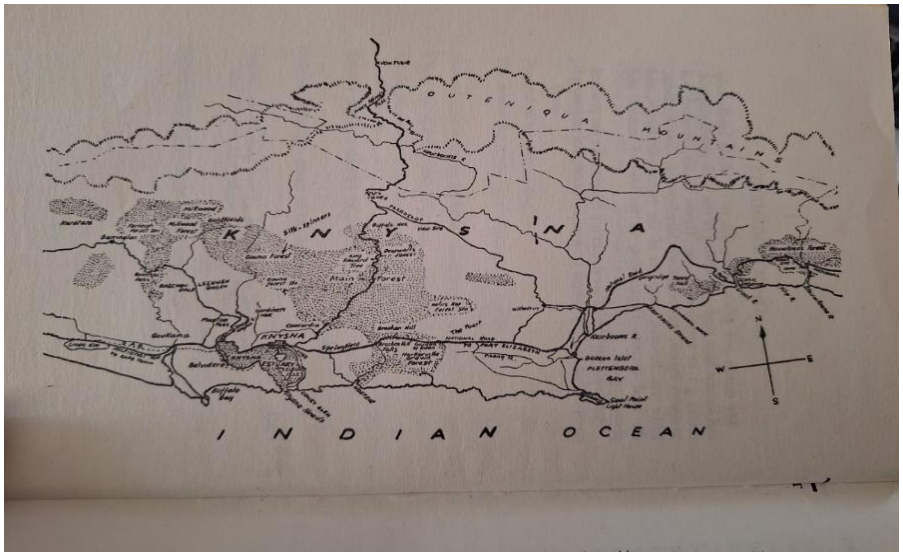


Figure 18: A map of what was previously called Outeniqualand. It then described the coast between the Great Brak and Keurbooms Rivers (Tapson, 1961).

Tapson's (1961: 1) use of the word "potential" can be interpreted as an insinuation reflecting the disrespect and superiority complex that White settlers held towards the indigenous peoples of Knysna and Plettenberg Bay (Erasmus, 2017). The notion that a place already inhabited by people living their lives needed a White man to recognise its "potential" points to a colonial mindset that viewed indigenous existence as lacking value until validated by European eyes (Fanon, 1963: 21). This raises a critical question: potential for what? I propose the implication suggests the exploitation of indigenous lands and people, revealing a fundamental disregard for existing social and cultural systems (Fanon, 1963: 65).

Researchers like Baderoon (2004: 13), Gqola (2004: iv), Kamies (2018: 31), Wicomb (1998: 100) and others have been instrumental in building a record of South Africa's slave history, which has long been understated and often minimised in both historical and public narratives. Their work sheds light on the pervasive impact of slavery on South African society, particularly how it shaped power structures that persist today and lie at the heart of the social construction of Coloured identity. I now move to contextualise this history within the Southern Cape region to trace the development of power imbalances between indigenous people and White settlers in the Cape Colony, a dynamic that deepened over time. Slavery was not merely the possession of people as property; it also cultivated in Europeans a mindset of racial hierarchy, reinforcing colonial domination and social stratification. As noted by Bogues:

> The voyages of Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus inaugurated an epoch of human history in which both colonialism and racial slavery profoundly shaped our ways of life for many centuries … the[y] opened the way for the institution of a hierarchical system of classification of human beings … difference and discontinuity in the gaze of the Western observer became linked to conceptions of historical progress, and race became a determining factor for human status (Bogues, 2010: 6-7).

As part of their efforts to acknowledge the contributions of slaves, Iziko Museum South Africa (n.d.) explains that the definition of slavery "is not clear-cut," as it encompassed various forms of "unfree or bonded labour" and could signify a lack of free will or intense hardship (Iziko, n.d.). Izak van der Merwe (2002) in "The Knysna and Tsitsikamma Forests: Their History, Ecology, and Management" highlights this, noting the "growing wealth" of farmers, who often employed "many Khoikhoi servants," a term that thinly veils the exploitative and coercive nature of these relationships, more akin to slavery than voluntary service.

Sociologist Gavin Williams (2016: 896) further contextualises this phenomenon in "Slaves, Workers, and Wine: The 'Dop System' in the History of the Cape Wine Industry, 1658–1894", illustrating how measures like the apprenticeship (or *ingeboek*) system enforced control over so-called 'free Bastard Hottentots', "the children of slave fathers and free mothers", compelling them to "serve their masters until age 25" (Williams, 2016: 896). Measures to curb "vagrancy" and "desertion" included requiring such individuals to carry a pass, restricting their freedom to move independently (Williams, 2016: 896). This control over labour demonstrates a social system engineered to benefit settlers, entrench racial hierarchies and undermine the autonomy of indigenous people.

Reflecting on this legacy, my husband's words echoing those of his late grandfather again become relevant: "I am a Gora" (Booysen. T, 2024), a phrase of defiance to hold onto his heritage with pride, against a history that marked indigenous people as inferior. African History lecturer Wayne Dooling (2005) explains this dynamic further in his work "The Origins and Aftermath of the Cape Colony's 'Hottentot Code' of 1809. The Hottentot Code institutionalised racial hierarchies, by stripping indigenous people of autonomy and subjecting them to enforced

"servitude" (Dooling, 2005: 57). Dooling (2005: 57) describes how, in 1801, the relationship between settlers and their 'Hottentot' servants was "dire," with ER. Bresler, landdrost of Graaff-Reinet, portraying servants' views of settlers not as masters but as "executioners," forced to serve "only through hunger and fear." This "unlimited lust for power" among settlers permitted abuse without restraint, entrenching a system and racial hierarchy that degraded indigenous peoples' dignity and sought to remove their autonomy (Dooling, 2005: 57).

The term "servant" almost acts to obscure the forced, exploitative arrangements that mirrored being enslaved, which speaks to a profound power imbalance and legacy of exploitation. Bresler's critique of settlers' "lust for power" is reflected in the 1809 "Hottentot Code" - enacted by the Cape Colony's governor after Britain's 1806 occupation (Dooling, 2005: 50). It also followed the abolition of the slave trade in 1808 (Williams, 2016: 899). Dooling (2005: 50) calls this law a "final seal" in the systemic subjugation of the Khoikhoi, restricting their movement and autonomy and prefiguring South Africa's later pass laws. These restrictions exemplify the systemic dehumanisation and control embedded in colonial policies (Mbembe, 2001: 29). Dooling clarifies that the code formalised these structures of inequality through explicit language designed to entrench racial domination:

> Individuals of the Hottentot nation should find an encouragement for preferring entering the service of the inhabitants to leading an indolent life… The most important article in the proclamation stipulated that henceforth all 'Hottentots' (as the Khoikhoi were pejoratively known) were to have a 'fixed place of abode'. 'Hottentot' servants were not to move from such an abode without a pass and could be asked by any white settler to produce one to verify that they were not bound by any contracts. Those in breach of these regulations were classified as 'vagrants' (Dooling, 2005: 50).

The "Hottentot Code" enforced subjugation over indigenous lives, reflecting the dehumanising treatment faced by figures like Saartje Baartman (Wicomb, 1998: 91). Saartjie Baartman, a "Khoi/coloured woman", as Zoe Wicomb (1998: 91) notes in "Shame and Identity the case of the coloured in South Africa" - was exhibited as the "Hottentot Venus" in Europe from 1810 until she died in 1815. Baartman, who lived on a colonist's farm, was showcased for her

physical features, subjected to public prodding and objectification (Lindfors, 1996:1). The eviction of homeless individuals from the Castle of Good Hope, justified by Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis as preventing "urban decay"[25] (Zagagana, 2024; Valentine, 2024), reflects these enduring colonial legacies. As a symbol of settler dominance, the Castle's "preservation" over the needs of human beings echoes historical patterns of erasing Black lives and imposing social control. This symbolic act of "petit-bourgeois moralism" prioritises colonial aesthetics over marginalised lives, reinforcing racial hierarchies or a form of racialised power structures under the guise of civic order (Bourdieu, 1986: 21; Wicomb, 1998: 105).

The literature on the "Hottentot Code" and slavery offers insights into the oppressive power dynamics imposed on indigenous communities, who endured extreme violence. This included "seizing workers' livestock, withholding their wages, thrashing labourers severely, chasing runaways, and holding children hostage to force their parents' return" (Williams, 2016: 896). It clarifies how practices from the slave trade were adapted to establish a form of indigenous "serfdom" (Dooling, 2005). The "Hottentot Code" mirrored chattel slavery, reinforced by an 1812 law requiring Khoikhoi children raised by settlers to be "apprenticed" for ten additional years after age eight (Dooling, 2005: 50; Iziko, n.d.).

Mission stations, regarded by officials as reducing the labour pool post-slave trade, also served settlers' economic interests by providing seasonal Khoi labour without year-round obligations (Williams, 2016: 900; Crowder, 2015: 693). While seen as sanctuaries, the mission stations effectively maintained a compliant labour force. "Many of the farmers saw it as their duty to uplift their 'volkies' (work folk) to their own so-called "civilised" Christian standards," says Kamies (2018: 109).

Farmers further entrenched control through the "dop system," compensating workers with alcohol instead of fair wages to retain cheap labour and prevent urban migration after emancipation (Kamies, 2018: 29). This practice, along with poor conditions, led to health crises like foetal alcohol syndrome and high infant mortality. Interest convergence, explains the system's endurance, benefiting farmers under the guise of worker "benefits" by fostering dependency and minimising costs (Crowder, 2015: 693).

[25] In November 2024 homeless people who were living outside the Castle were evicted by the municipality and the mayor.

> The farmer could be like a father to his workers because they were considered to be childlike and lacking in moral maturity. In the rural areas of the Western Cape dominated by wine and wheat farms, families continued to live on the farms for generations, controlled through low wages, tied housing, corporal punishment and the dop system. There was neither incentive nor opportunity to break the cycle of dependency that workers were caught up in (Kamies, 2018: 109).

Missionaries, Education, and Segregation - The Colonial Role of St. Andrew's Church

When I visited Piesang Valley in 2022, I came across a plaque at the small wooden church bearing the name "Newdigate" and a dedication to William Newdigate, who built the local Anglican church in 1850, the same church where my mother-in-law and her siblings were baptised. "Every Saturday afternoon, I would clean the church for Sunday service," she reminisced (Kamfer, 2022). Kamies (2018: 37-67) speaks of the "performance of respectability" to counter negative stereotypes, arguing that the "genealogy of racial oppression and dehumanisation laid the foundation of the shame associated with Coloured identity," leading to a "daily struggle to prove respectability". Christina Kamfer nee van der Westhuizen's comments also take me back to Tapson's (1961) reference to the fisherfolk and the bishop's "strictness". When colonial authorities introduced separate education systems, missionaries ran the first schools.[26] It focused on teaching 'Hottentots' to abandon their nomadic ways of life and "to realise the dignity of labour and the need for discipline and regular habits" (Horrell, 1970: 5-6).

> By 1861 government schools had become reserved for White children only which meant that Coloured children were confined to mission schools that did not provide for secondary education (effectively excluding 'Coloureds' from acquiring secondary education) (Horrell, 1970: 5-6).

[26] This is even evident in Piesang Valley, as will be discussed in the forced removals chapter.

Figure 19: Hester's baptism certificate from St. Andrews church in Piesang Valley (Daniels: 2022).

Colonialism cannot be fully understood, nor could it have achieved its objectives of conquest and domination, without the help of the church. Comaroff and Comaroff (1991: 4) describe it as a "contest of conscience and consciousness." Fanon argued (1963: 192) that Christianity was responsible not merely for the glorification of European "civilisation" but also for the "conquest of the (black) mind". According to Storrar (1978: 137-146), in the 1840s, settler families were concerned about "the spiritual starvation" of the Knysna and Plettenberg Bay communities. The St. Andrews, Redbourn, Anglican church was a "quaint little (wooden[27]) church tucked away some five kilometres up the Piesang valley" Storrar (1978: 137-146).

> The small wooden church of St. Andrew, Redbourn, erected to serve 'for a few years', which was completed first and which still stands today, the oldest church in the Diocese of George. Entries in the Newdigate farm journals for 1850 and 1851 indicate the pressure William was putting on his workmen to get the church completed expeditiously. Although St. Andrew's Church must have been virtually completed by the end of that year, there are references to William's men putting three windows in the church and erecting a post-and-rail fence round the churchyard in May 1860, so presumably the first windows were temporary (Storrar, 1978: 137-146).

[27] I added this. It was made of stinkwood.

Figure 20: Christina is standing at St. Andrews church in Piesang Valley, where she was baptised (Daniels, 2022).

According to Storrar (1978:138), before the Anglican church was established in Plettenberg Bay, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) "was already well established in some interior parts of the Colony." Storrar (1978: 144) writes that the church was a wooden "school chapel" at one point, confirming 48 people attended "most of them Coloured." About Bishop Robert Gray, "the first bishop of Cape Town", the paternalism towards the indigenous community is highlighted when she references that he was concerned about them because "they always conducted themselves so well." She also refers to the school having 55 Coloured children enrolled. When Bishop Gray "inspected the school," he was so impressed he noted, "I have seldom seen a school in a better state of discipline; I am very much pleased with the school…all the children are clean and nicely dressed" (Storrar, 1978: 146). She does not mention the year but notes that the church's future was "bleak" after "all the families who have in the main supported it, have been moved out of Piesang River valley in terms of the Group Areas Act"

(Storrar ,1978: 146). In 1963, the church was declared a national monument, and in 1975, it was "skilfully restored" (Storrar, 1978: 146).

Colonial educational systems were structured to reinforce hierarchical knowledge, embedding a worldview that prioritised colonial dominance and marginalised indigenous identities (Shizha, 2006: 25). According to Kamies (2018: 91), "education…was as much about moulding character and socialisation into different roles as it was about literacy; discipline was strict, and cleanliness emphasised." In an 1860 letter from Governor George Grey[28] to Bishop Gray, the school's intended purpose was outlined:

> In no other place could native children under our care be so thoroughly removed and kept apart from Heathen and barbarous influences as near Cape Town. In no other place could females be so secure from being taken away and disposed of to some Heathen husband, whom they had never seen, and for whom they had no regard. In no other place could all the force and appliances of civilization be brought to bear with the same uninterrupted effect upon the Children of barbarous and Savage Chiefs (Hodgson, 1975: 2).

Mission schools laid the foundation for instilling colonial beliefs, and with the Afrikaners' rise to political power in 1948, they passed a resolution to introduce Christian National Education (CNE). This policy sought to integrate Calvinist Christian values throughout the educational system. The government then urged church-operated schools to cede control, facilitating the implementation of "a racially differentiated curriculum," as described by Jenni Karlsson (2002: 343). By 1953, the Bantu Education Act was introduced, followed by the 1964 and 1965 Coloured and Indian Acts (Kamies, 2018: 90). These Acts stressed a curriculum focused on "obedience and communal loyalty, acceptance of allocated social roles amongst others, as well as restricting appointments to women" (Kamies, 2018: 90).

The 1967 Education Policy Act (Act 39 of 1967) affirmed that South African schooling would uphold a distinctly Christian ethos, with a focus on indoctrinating Coloured and Black communities into Christian values (Kamies, 2018: 90). Afrikaner nationalist theology played a

[28]Grey was appointed Governor and High Commissioner of the Cape Colony in 1854

crucial role in "initiating and sanctifying" apartheid, as Sparks (2003: 29) argues. Reverend Allan Boesak, a prominent DRC minister, politician, and anti-apartheid advocate, agrees that the DRC served as the "deepest source of inspiration" for Afrikaner socio-political strategies in its influence on shaping acceptance of apartheid ideology (Boesak, 2005: 141). Boesak contends that the DRC's Calvinist principles, which advocated for Christ's dominion over every sphere of life, were central to the emergence of Afrikaner nationalism. This political theology motivated all believers, across class and privilege, to actively engage in politics and public life; it was both "militant and revolutionary," with Afrikaners declaring apartheid as a divinely ordained policy of the church (Boesak, 2005: 141-142).

Built with Pride, marked by Struggle

Walking through the one-story purple-painted[29] house of Christina, the broken tiles on the floor bear the memories of feet passing through them for decades of many lives lived, adults and children, mothers, fathers, daughters and sons, including my husband. The home[30], while modest, proudly displays grey built-in cupboards, down-lights, and a built-in stove - modern features that Christina added over the years with hard-earned money, tangible marks of her pride and dedication to building a better life. Yet, as these once-new features age and need maintenance, the home also reveals the weight of struggle; with everyone now unemployed, even minor repairs are a challenge. These white and grey walls resonate with laughter and tears, the stories of my new family intertwined with a deeper ancestral pain that, through this research, we begin to uncover. As Homi Bhabha observes (Bhabha, 1994: 63):

> Remembering is never a quiet act of introspection or retrospection. It is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present.

This house stands as both witness and relic of that "re-membering" process - a site where personal resilience meets the shadows of historical trauma. Trauma Gobodo-Madikizela (2019:

[29] I will go into more detail about the house in the next chapter on forced removals.
[30] Ideas around will be explored in Forced Removals chapter. Here it refers to the house, the building the family live in.

71) explains “is the encounter with an overwhelming experience of external events and an internal process of registering these experiences.” The need for repair is not just physical; it echoes the broader struggles of a family and a community shaped by intergenerational challenges, surviving and building despite decades of systemic inequality. Like the memories it holds, the house embodies a spirit of perseverance that refuses to be dismembered by the traumas of the past.

On a cold October day in 2024, I sit at the dining table, warming my hands around a cup of tea prepared by my mother-in-law. At 63, she has spent her entire life in Plettenberg Bay. Her family’s roots here run deep; her parents and grandparents lived and died in this town, grounding her in a legacy of place that spans generations. As we talk, her sister, Hester Jantjies nee Van der Westhuizen, walks in and joins our conversation about Piesang Valley. It’s casual, as always; memories of the valley are woven into the daily fabric of their lives. In this community, origins and stories are shared knowledge. The strength of oral history and collective memory is evident in phrases like “Hulle is nie van Plett nie” (“They are not from Plettenberg Bay”), “David hulle het in Poortjies gebly,” (David and his family lived in Poortjies), common remarks, marking who belongs to this place’s history and who does not. Such expressions illustrate how, as Perks & Thomson (1998 :28) observe, oral histories help shape and affirm a community’s identity and belonging. These fragments of local memory serve as reminders of lives “profoundly lived but also of lives denied” in the wake of forced relocations to New Horizons before a golf course replaced these histories and the landscape adapted to new narratives (O’Connell, 2012:42).

Figure 21: The Plettenberg Bay Country Club golf course (Daniels, 2022).

Reflecting on these events, I consider Joanna de Groot's (2009: 420) concept of the "over-privileged positioning of state power" in forced removals. The apartheid-era transformation of Piesang Valley into a "world-class" golf course exemplifies this, as state interests favoured economic gain over ancestral ties. As Professor Premesh Lalu (2009: 8) notes in "The Deaths of Hintsa: Postapartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Past," it refers to "the disconnection" between "economic demands versus the critical assessments of the past." The golf course became a symbol of these power dynamics, where commercial priorities to benefit the few replace community heritage, attempting to erase both physical and cultural histories (O'Connell, 2012: 42). Families like the Van der Westhuizens and Booysens are left with stories that resist this erasure, reasserting generational ties to land even amid a historical imbalance of power.

Segregation was not merely social but a calculated tool of economic control; townships like New Horizons were strategically positioned close to industrial hubs to create a readily

accessible "pool of workers" (Platzky et al., 1985: 65, 102; Kamies, 2018: 101). My husband's account provides insight into the exploitation of cheap labour, revealing both the violent coercion involved and the systemic racism that positioned White people above Coloured people (King & Rueda, 2008; Wolpe, 1972). As Tyrone (2024) recalls:

> I remember my father told me the town planner was always an engineer and the mayor was a contractor, most ruthless of men. I remember when I grew up we used to be petrified to work on the "geboue[31]" back then white people used to beat their workers. You would hear stories, sal dit nooit maak op die geboue jy nie, jy sal vrek gaan (you'll never make it on the construction sites, you'll die) . Most of the men had two jobs, work on the "geboue" (construction site in English)[32] and December work on the golf course and when they were off, so the money they got paid on the "geboue" was never enough (Booysen. T, 2024).

References to the "geboue" (construction work) illustrate how hard labour served as a test of manhood, with masculinity being measured by one's ability to endure pain and hardship. Terms like "vrek" ("to die") highlight the extremity of these conditions, where references to death and survival underscored labour that pushed men to their limits, aligning with the notion that manhood is proven through resilience and physical endurance as noted by Australian sociologist and professor Raewyn Connell (2005: 31, 36) in her book "Masculinities." As I start the interview with his mother, Christina, further details of this phenomenon surface in response to what I think are neutral questions, like name, age, job, etc. To my surprise, the job aspect solicited a different response than expected. In her last job, my mother-in-law worked as a domestic worker, but the role she chose to highlight in her response was that of a housekeeping "manager" at a hotel. Her choice of the term "manager," a leadership position within any organisation, seems purposeful, a way to reclaim the pride and dignity often diminished by the master-servant dynamic inherent in domestic work. I notice the emphasis in her tone, marked by a pause as if she's carefully considering her response. A pause that feels

[31] Construction site
[32] My definition

loaded with reflection, provides insight into the value she places on this position and the sense of respect it afforded her.

> I was housekeeping manager at the Plettenberg Hotel for 20 years, then I went on to do domestic work for 15 years. I was 18, 19 when I worked at the Lookout Hotel before that. A family member of mine worked there before (Kamfer, 2024).

Domestic work in the South African context is a job with historical roots, a means of survival for many women. Still, it is rooted in exploitative practices that mirror the "social reproduction" of slave-like conditions, perpetuating skewed power relations between workers and employers (Varman et al., 2022: 155 -256).

Figure 22: A picture taken across from the Beacon Isle Hotel. Picture: Plettenberg Bay Historical Society

The picture above, taken across from the Beacon Isle Hotel at the Piesang River mouth, powerfully illustrates the entrenched power imbalance as explained by Indian professor Rohit Varman et al. (2022: 4) in "Workplace Humiliation and the Organization of Domestic Work".

Varman et al. (2022: 5) note the skewed relationship "generates among the humiliated complex and powerful feelings of shame and outrage, but also of helplessness and inhibition."

The emotions the picture stirs in me are immediate and intense; perhaps because I have been classified as Coloured, I see echoes of a painful legacy. This scene of servitude mirrors the hierarchies of slavery, evoking privilege, shame, and the persistence of oppression (Varman et al., 2022: 2; Kamies, 2018: 101). In the image, White patrons are seated comfortably while a Black woman stands in uniform, marked by her attire as the worker, reinforcing a visual separation from those she must serve. My grandmother was a domestic worker. My mother recalled a day she had to go to work with my grandmother to help clean a White man's house; she was only 10 years old. The questions I now have for the woman and others who may have found themselves in a similar position flood my mind: How does she feel about this relationship or her job? Did she have to work long hours? What were her working conditions, how did she feel about them? Was she happy or sad? Did she feel stuck? Was she angry?

How Cultural Representations Enabled the Social Construction of Coloured Identities Through Negative Stereotyping

February (1981) explores the portrayal of "Hottentot" characters in early 19th-century theatre, noting recurring stereotypes: a fondness for alcohol, a quick temper leading to conflict, moral looseness, and limited communication skills. By the early 20th century, these traits were projected onto Coloured people in Afrikaner mythology, confining them to specific, derogatory roles. This "Hottentot" stereotype persisted despite evidence of active resistance by Coloured communities against colonial land dispossession (February 1981: 19). Adhikari (2005: 14) elaborates on these stereotypes, which included associations with criminality, gangsterism, substance abuse, and vulgarity, often attributed to their mixed heritage. Such definitions were negative, characterised by "what it was not" rather than any distinct cultural or positive identity (Adhikari, 2005: 14, 26). This stereotyping can be understood as part of a broader process of social engineering. As Giliomee (2003: 379) argues, apartheid ideology and Afrikaner nationalist policies were deeply rooted in Western notions of "scientific" social engineering and racial classification, which sought to structure society according to a systematic racial pecking order. This framework relied on stereotypes applied to Coloured people, suggesting that apartheid's social engineering aimed to fix racial identities and justify segregation. Hall's (1997: 8) theory of "othering" suggests that dominant groups construct their identities in

contrast to marginalised communities. The Coloured community was thus defined not by unique cultural attributes but by perceived deficiencies compared to other groups. This process aligns with Hall's (1997: 18) concept of a "system of representation," where meaning is created by organising and categorising concepts. Here, dominant groups arranged traits into clusters to form stereotypes, establishing relationships of difference that reinforced social hierarchies and maintained the Coloured community as a marginalised "other."

For the Coloured community, this system organised their identity by highlighting perceived deficiencies relative to dominant groups. Thus, the portrayal of Coloured people was not merely a random collection of stereotypes but a structured representation arranged to reinforce a perceived or imposed inferiority and dependency. Hall's theory aligns with Said's idea of orientalism (1978: 1), which shows how colonial powers defined "the other" to justify subjugation. Both theories demonstrate how dominant groups create complex networks of concepts that portray marginalised identities as lacking or incomplete, rationalising their exclusion and control. By constructing indigenous populations as morally deficient and uncivilised, colonial powers reinforced their own superiority, positioning themselves as necessary "civilisers." Similarly, Mbembe's concept of "necropolitics" (2003: 18) and Bhabha's notion of "fixity" (1994: 75) help explain how such stereotypes justify not only control but also the subjugation of African lives. Mbembe (2001: 2) discusses how colonial authorities reduced African autonomy, portraying Africa as a "dark" and backward continent in need of Western intervention. Similarly, Bhabha's concept of fixity examines how stereotypes render certain identities static and unchanging, freezing the "Hottentot" and "Coloured" identities into limited roles that deny their complexity and agency.

Apartheid Race Classification - Navigating 'Cape Coloured' and 'Cape Malay' Classifications in Apartheid South Africa

Discussing the idea of "shame and respectability" associated with being classified as Coloured, Kamies (2018: 40) starts by explaining that her mother was listed as "Cape Coloured", and her maternal grandmother is from Malmesbury. She adds that her grandfather would always, in arguments, refer to her grandmother's "strandloper" heritage. Kamies notes that because History textbooks attached a negative stereotype to Harry, the Strandloper, described as untrustworthy and ungrateful in his relations with the Dutch, her grandfather's "strandloper" reference likely "struck a nerve" with her grandmother (Kamies, 2018: 40). It was only later,

Kamies (2018: 40) adds "that I learned that their leader, Harry, the Strandloper was in fact Autshumato, who had served as an interpreter for Van Riebeeck in the early years of the settlement at the Cape."

Kamies (2018: 40; Fanon 1967: 107) suggests that this indigenous heritage may have left her grandmother with internalised shame, a consequence of internalised racism experienced at the hands of colonial values that created inferiority and self-doubt in marginalised communities. Her grandmother's pride in fair skin and straight hair, along with her grief over losing a blue-eyed child, illustrate how colonial hierarchies valued "whiteness" (Kamies, 2018: 177). Shame literature, as discussed by Demir (2019: 66) and Fanon (1952: 13), specifically in postcolonial contexts, reveals how such values fracture personal and familial identities. Kamies's (2018: 41) father, classified as Cape Malay, offered a clearer cultural and historical identity than the maternal "Cape Coloured" label. His identity included unique linguistic, cultural, and religious practices that set it apart socially and culturally, with a family language blending Afrikaans and Malay terms, referencing rituals like kaparangs (wooden sandals) and abdas (ritual bathing) (Kamies, 2018: 41). Religious practices were central to everyday life, with daily prayers, fasting, and celebrations like Labarang, along with children attending madressah[33] to learn Arabic (Kamies, 2018: 41). The community also took pride in shared customs, like the pilgrimage to Mecca, traditions maintained despite apartheid's constraints (Kamies, 2018: 41).

From these experiences, it becomes evident how colonial and apartheid-era values shaped identities differently. The maternal "Cape Coloured" identity reveals internalised shame and inferiority linked to colonial hierarchies that prized whiteness (Boersema, 2022; Demir, 2019). In contrast, the "Cape Malay" identity on her father's side provided a cohesive cultural narrative grounded in distinctive language, religion, and traditions, fostering pride and resilience that persisted independently of apartheid. Unlike the "Cape Coloured" label, which carried internalised shame, the "Cape Malay" identity offered cultural continuity and pride, resisting colonial assimilation and preserving self-worth (Kamies, 2018: 40-47).

This complexity extends to the broader Van der Westhuizen family. Mureedah Beydon, née Mavis McCullum, Christina's aunt, reclassified herself as Cape Malay to secure a teaching position at a Coloured school. Removed from her family at age seven and classified as White,

[33] A school that teaches Islamic education.

she faced discrimination in both Coloured and White schools due to her heritage, enduring racial slurs. She recounts:

> At 17, I changed everything about myself. I registered as Mureedah McCullam, Cape Malay. I had to choose, so I chose Cape Malay. I couldn't teach at Coloured schools because my ID showed I was white. At white schools, they wouldn't change either because they called me 'half nartjie,' which didn't feel nice (Beydon, 2024).

Erasmus (2017) addresses the "complex colonial and apartheid history" tied to "Malay" as a social category, explaining that it historically reflected language, geography, religion, and status rather than genetics (Erasmus, 2017: 110-111). Thus, "Malay" is viewed as a social construct. Kamies (2018: 44) explains that authorities promoted divisions between Malay, Coloured, and African identities using the Cape Malay Association (CMA), which aligned with Hertzog[34] in exchange for promises of voting rights (cited in Baderoon, 2004; Erasmus, 2017). Kamies (2018: 45) notes that I.D. du Plessis, a folklorist, helped shape the "Cape Malay" identity by portraying the "idealised Malay" as gentle, introspective, yet capable of "running amok" when provoked. According to Kamies (2018: 45) when Du Plessis was appointed Commissioner of Coloured Affairs in 1952, he formalised "Cape Malay" as a sub-category under Coloured, reinforcing distinctions in religion and culture, where "Malay" became synonymous with Muslim and Coloured with Christian.

Eugenics, Colonial Policies, and the Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism

Eugenics theory posited that Africans were biologically inferior, framing African people as an inconvenient barrier to the advancement of Africa by supposedly superior White Aryan populations (Kamies, 2018: 51).

A hair colour[35] chart found in the Stellenbosch University Department of Cultural Anthropology in 2013 bore the name of Dr. Eugen Fischer, a German scientist known for

[34] He was the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa from 1924 to 1939.
[35] A human skull was also found at the time.

studying 'mixed-race' populations in South West Africa (SWA)[36] (Lee, 2013). Fischer's findings, based on studies of children of mixed Nama and European ancestry, deemed them superior to "pure Negroes" but inferior to "pure whites," reinforcing the notion that racial intermixing was to be avoided (Becker, 2017).

In the 19th century, ideas about race were largely pluralistic. However, Charles Darwin confirmed that Black and White people were part of the same species (Kamies, 2018: 51). Polygenesis, on the other hand, posited that God had created "two men," one Black and one White (Kamies, 2018: 51). This theory, despite conflicting with Christian doctrines of human unity, fuelled scientific investigation into Black bodies in an attempt to prove inherent racial differences. The Royal Society, for example, suppressed 18th-century research findings indicating that skin colour was only a surface-level variation (Koslofsky, 2014). Historian Craig Koslofsky explains that British colonialists later leveraged polygenesis to justify both African enslavement and the domination of Native Americans (Koslofsky, 2014).

When Germany decided to expropriate the native Herero and Nama people's land and give it to German farmers, a Herero rebellion took place between 1904-1907 (Ferguson, 2012). The genocide, which followed the uprising, resulted in thousands of Herero and Nama being killed. Autopsies were performed on massacred bodies for racial-biological research (Kamies, 2018). Becker (2017) identifies Fischer as a pivotal figure in the development of 20th-century racial science, colonialism, and genocide. She argues that, although German colonisation officially ended after WWI, its racial science persisted, "brought back and applied in civilised central Europe," influencing racial policies that ultimately led to the Holocaust (Becker, 2017). Adding to this perspective, Ferguson (2012: 189-190) writes that "if Auschwitz marked the culmination of state violence against racially defined alien populations, the war against the Herero and Nama was surely the first step in that direction."

This link between colonial practices and European atrocities is also explored by Francophone Caribbean writer Aimé Césaire (1972: 9-14) who contends that Europe's expressed horror at Nazism in the 1940s stemmed not from its violation of humanity but from the fact that it targeted White people (Pinkham, 1972: 3). According to Césaire, Nazis "applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India, and the blacks of Africa" (Pinkham, 1972: 3). Césaire's statement highlights the colonial mindset, wherein Europeans viewed themselves as inherently superior

[36] Now Namibia.

and saw non-Europeans as fundamentally different, to justify colonial oppression. This disparity shows how European colonial powers normalised dehumanisation abroad, only to confront its atrocities when these methods were turned inward.

This history of SWA is directly connected to that of South Africa in that after Germany, the Union of South Africa became the country's second colonial power from 1921 onwards, mandated by the League of Nations (Hartmann, et al., 1998). This political move of expansion, "offered raw material for the production of knowledge (and images) about 'Bantu' and 'Bushmen' which fed into several institutional and administrative initiatives in South Africa itself" (Hartmann, et al., 1998: 3).

The practices of genocidal violence and racial hygiene in SWA would serve as a foundational model for the racist segregation policies that would later be formalised as apartheid in South Africa. Racial science, eugenics, and Christian nationalist ideology, often advocated by leaders of the DRC together provided both "scientific" and religious justifications for "the divine right of each nation to a separate existence" during apartheid - reinforcing the notion of Black inferiority and legitimising racial discrimination and separation (Sparks, 2003: 148).

After the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), many Afrikaner families were left destitute[37] and migrated to cities to work in mines, where they faced direct competition with Black workers for the same jobs (Kamies, 2018: 57). Having White skin was their only advantage, which left them feeling aggrieved; the desire for "nationhood" started:

> A nation needed its own flag, a language, a culture and a history. The desire for a distinct national identity demanded that Afrikaners distance themselves, and their history, from the Coloured people with whom they shared blood, language and religion. Power and European descent became very important and maintaining racial distinctions became a compelling necessity. The colour bar was to become the hallmark of the South African way of life (Kamies, 2018: 56).

[37] The British High Command placed many families in camps, where they died.

With growing international support for the Afrikaner cause, Britain's Liberal Party, upon assuming power in 1905, sought reconciliation with the defeated Boers (Kamies, 2018: 56). By the time the Union of South Africa was formally established on 31 May 1910, Afrikaner nationalists had secured substantial influence over the country's political reorganisation, allowing them to shape voting rights based on the old franchise rules of the former Boer states, the Zuid Afrikaansche Republic[38] and Orange Free State (Kamies, 2018: 56). Pressed to expedite the unification process, Britain accepted the northern colonies' demand that only Europeans could sit in parliament although non-Europeans retained limited voting rights in the Cape and Natal. Britain withdrew, viewing the racial exclusions as unfortunate yet leaving these "domestic" matters to the discretion of South African authorities (Van der Ross, 2015). Sparks (2003: 129) labels Britain's decision "an act of unprecedented betrayal," highlighting it as the sole instance in which an imperial power willingly transferred sovereign control to a racial minority. While WWII prompted colonial powers to retreat from racial discrimination gradually, the opposite occurred in South Africa (Kamies, 2018: 57). When the National Party took power in 1948, race, culture, and heritage became central to policy, with White people positioned as politically superior. To eliminate ambiguity about who qualified as White or Black, new legislation strictly enforced racial segregation, forbidding racial mixing (Kamies, 2018: 57).

The Population Registration Act and the Institutionalisation of Apartheid

The Population Registration Act 30 of 1950 became the linchpin for embedding institutionalised discrimination as the foundation of apartheid, introducing the Race Classification Board, which employed pseudo-scientific tests and measures to categorise individuals by race (Kamies, 2018: 58). The Act stated (Government Gazette 1950):

> A white person is one who in appearance is, or who is generally accepted as, a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance is obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a Coloured person. A native is a person who is in fact or is generally accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of

[38] ZAR – South African Republic or Transvaal

> Africa. A Coloured person is a person who is not a white person or a native.

A Race Classification Board would determine race by "testimony from family and friends, and a person's hair, eyeballs and cuticles examined for pigmentation" (Kamies, 2018: 58). According to Kamies (2018: 58), while the act was "a seemingly innocuous step since registration of citizens was an accepted practice in many countries", it paved the way for more legislation to dispossess and discriminate against people including the Group Areas Act 41 of 1950, dividing urban areas by race, the Separate Amenities Act 49 of 1953, setting limits to racial contact in "education, employment, entertainment, sport, and public amenities." The Immorality Act of 1927, initially banning sexual relations "between Europeans and natives", was amended in 1950 and 1957 to extend the prohibition to all relations between Whites and 'non-whites' (Kamies, 2018: 58). Similarly, the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act 55 of 1949, which governed personal relationships and outlawed interracial marriage, was among the first laws enacted following the National Party's rise to power in 1948 (Sparks, 2003; Van der Ross, 2015).

The implementation of laws like the Immorality Act and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act reinforced a social order, that publicly defined and enforced racial boundaries, positioning "whiteness" as superior and desirable while stigmatising "non-whiteness" as inferior. For Coloured people, who were systematically categorised as neither fully "White" nor fully "Black," these laws intensified feelings of marginalisation and ambiguity around their identity (Sparks, 2003: 86). The Population Registration Act positioned being Coloured as "an in-between identity, a biologically based hybridity which at once made them superior to blacks and inferior to the same because of their 'lack of culture'" (Gqola, 2010: 13). It became "a hold-all category, a miscellaneous category of the ethnically undefinable, a penumbral group in apartheid's stark world of light and shade" (Sparks, 2003: 83).

Reddy (2001) explains by 1959, the Population Registration Act was amended and divided Coloureds into seven subgroups: Cape-Coloured/Malay/Griqua/Chinese/Indian/Other-Asian/Other Coloured. These laws had devasting impacts on the everyday lives of people as even the final digit of a person's ID number denoted their racial category (Kamies, 2018). One example of how this system extended into various facets of daily life, included healthcare (Kamies, 2018). Even hospitals assigned codes and colour-coded files for each racial group,

reserving the number "1" for White males, "2" for White females, and "3" for Coloured males. Citing the experience of Public Health professor William Pick in his book "The Slave Has Overcome," whose father is descent from a Khoisan tribe and his mother a freed East African slave, the Adler Museum of Medicine (2008: 9) notes:

> If, unknowingly, they sat on a bus seat reserved for a white student, walked into a lecture theatre or post-mortem room in the presence of a white body (alive or dead), or failed to rapidly withdraw as a white patient entered the consultation room, they were asked to leave and risked public censure, "Lang's voice rang out, 'You, non-white, get out! (Adler Museum of Medicine, 2008: 9)

Beydon (2024) further recounts how the moment apartheid became law was the day her life ultimately changed:

> Toe Apartheid begin het, toe kom Government en sê jy is wit, jy is bruin, jy is 'n baster, jy is 'n hotnot. *We were born before Apartheid. When Apartheid started, then Government came along and said you're white, you're brown, you're a baster, you're a hotnot.*
>
> They classified all the children and people inside the house. I was one of the outcasts, I was a 'whitey'. They took me to welfare; then I walked away from there.
>
> My eerste ID was ek wit, ek was 16 jaar oud. Ek moes dit aanvaar het. My ma het in die poskantoor gegaan, dan het sy vir ure gestaan, want dis nie-blankes, maar wanneer ek ingaan dan gaan ek in en weer uit, want ek was privileged as 'n wit mens. Dit het nie rerag goed gevoel om so te wees nie, want baie keer moes ek huis toe hardloop om my ma te gaan haal, want dan het hulle my neef opgelaai, want hy was baie

donker, en dan het hulle gevra waar loop hy met die mies[39] se kind. Hy mag nie saam met die mies se kind gewees het nie.

My first ID was white; I was 16 years old. I had to accept it, and that's why I'm alone to this day: I wasn't allowed to be with my people. My mother went into the post office, and then she stood for hours because she's non-white, but when I went in, it was in and out again because I was privileged as a white person. It didn't feel good to be like that, because many times I had to run home to fetch my mom, because then they picked up my cousin, because he was very dark in complexion, and then they would ask where he was walking with the Mrs. child. He was not allowed to be with the Mrs. child.

Race, Language, and Identity - The Fluidity of South African Coloured Communities

In present-day South Africa, racial categories are defined as Black-African, Coloured, White and Indian/Asian. Black African refers to people from ethnolinguistic groups, namely Zulu, Xhosa[40], Ndebele, Tshivenda, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho and SiSwati (Christopher, 2002 in Tewolde, 2024: 1). The terms "Indian/Asian" is used to describe South Africans "from the region of the Indian subcontinent, including those of Chinese heritage" (Tewolde, 2024: 1). Coloured describes "individuals who are defined as having a mixed racial background" (Christopher, 2002 cited in Tewolde, 2024: 1).

In the last census for 2022 (Statistics South Africa, 2023), the South African government recorded a population of 62 million[41] citizens, with Black Africans making up the lion's share of the population at 81,4%, followed by the Coloured population at 8,2%, the White population at 7,3%, and Indians/Asians at 2,7%.

Erasmus and Pieterse (1999: 167-187) argue that the definitions of African, Black, and Coloured have become even more complex and ambiguous in the post-apartheid era than in the 1950s or 1980s. Additionally, Kamies (2018: 157) adds that while political power rests with

[40] Nearly one in seven Xhosa people in SA are estimated to be of San descent and there are Khoi clans among the Xhosa (Levenson & Jacobs, 2018).

Black leadership, the post-apartheid settlement has maintained White privilege, pointing to a "rainbow nation" ideal as largely "superficial."

Van der Ross (2015) notes that Coloured communities vary significantly across provinces, with distinctions made between "a Capey, a Bolander, a Kimberleyite, a Transvaler, a Natalian, or someone from the Eastern Cape" (Van der Ross, 2015: 8). On the diversity within the Coloured community itself, Kamies (2018: 184) adds Coloured people in Durban typically don't speak Afrikaans but are more likely to use isiZulu, while those in Cape Town's southern suburbs speak a different dialect of Afrikaans than those in the northern suburbs. In Eldorado Park and Eersterus, many Coloured people may speak Sotho, and there are notable linguistic differences between urban Coloured communities and those in places like Kimberley or Malmesbury (Kamies, 2018: 7). Erasmus (2017) supports this view, challenging the notion of Coloured as a biological or ethnic identity. Instead, she describes it as a fluid social category shaped by creolisation, a blending of cultures resulting from slavery and colonialism, making Coloured identities inherently intersect with Black African identities (Erasmus, 2017).

Coloured Nationalism?

According to Adhikari (2006: xii), the idea of "Coloured nationalism" was influenced by various factors, such as assimilationist aspirations that sought inclusion within the dominant society, the intermediate racial status held within South Africa's social hierarchy, and a sense of marginality. Kamies (2018: 149) questions "the shift from the pre-1994 non-racist struggle to the resurgence of a Coloured identity." Black, during Steve Biko's Black Consciousness movement, referred to all those oppressed under apartheid. Now entrenched in South African law and the Constitution, legally, all non-white people are considered Black.

In the 1980s, Coloured identity became an incredibly divisive topic as more educated and politically active individuals, classified as Coloured under the Population Registration Act, began to reject the label, seeing it as an apartheid construct (Adhikari, 2006: 152; Kamies, 2018: 150). It was increasingly perceived as a fabricated category designed to support the apartheid government's divide-and-rule strategy (Adhikari, 2006). According to Sparks (2003), this shift in perspective allowed many Coloured individuals to move beyond feelings of shame tied to "the dark side of their parentage" and the inclination to seek acceptance from White

communities, instead aligning themselves with the broader Black struggle (Sparks, 2003: 72-73).

The rejection of Coloured identity was further demonstrated in the widespread refusal to engage with the NP's 1984 Tricameral Parliament, which created separate legislative chambers for Whites, Coloureds, and Indians. According to Kamies (2018: 150), over eighty per cent of Coloured and Indian communities boycotted it. In response, the United Democratic Front (UDF) - aligned with the 1955 Freedom Charter was formed, bringing together student groups, civic associations, and political organisations under a non-racial agenda (Sparks, 2003). However, Levenson and Jacobs (2018) argue that the Tricameral Parliament "formalised" Coloured politics, which later continued within the New National Party (NNP) and the Democratic Alliance (DA) after 1994. However, post-democracy, Adhikari (2005) notes:

> Having the right to live where you want, marry whom you want, and send your children to the school of your choice is of little consequence to the labouring poor of the Coloured townships. Only a relatively small section of the Coloured proletariat has experienced any improvement in living standards that can be attributed to the coming of the new order (Adhikari, 2005: 176 - 180).

Cape Forum chairperson Heinrich Wyngaard (2024), in response to questions on the idea of Coloured nationalism during a radio interview on RSG, highlighted that the community was raising their voice after: "I can testify of the continuous plight and struggle and feeling of (hopelessness) that is creeping into many of these communities. The only flame of hope is the first week of the month when the SASSA payout and the R350 occur. After that, our people creep back into sackcloth and ashes."

Further to this, the 24th Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) report 2023/2024 (Department of Employment and Labour, 2024) found persistent economic inequalities in South Africa, with White people still dominating top management roles. Despite representing a smaller share of the economically active population (EAP), White people held 62.1% of top management positions. In contrast, the Black African population, which comprises 80.7% of the EAP, occupied only 17.2% of top management roles, and the Coloured population, at 9%

of the EAP, held just 6.1%. These figures speak to the underrepresentation of non-white groups in leadership.

Mametlwe Sebei, the president of the General Industries Workers Union of South Africa (GIWUSA), argues that these findings of continued inequality in the labour sector are unresolved contradictions of post-apartheid South Africa (Daniels, 2024). He adds that although the repressive regime ended, the economic structures that favoured White capitalists and foreign investors persisted.

> The unresolved national question consists in the fact that the economy is still monopolised by a predominantly white domestic capitalist class and an overwhelming foreign imperial capitalist class. Therefore, it is particularly those previously oppressed groups that would remain excluded from the management of the economy. The management of the economy, the private sector in particular, is closely related to ownership of the economy (Daniels, 2024).

Fisher (2018, as cited in Kamies 2018: 156) suggests that Coloured communities are beginning to reflect on what was sacrificed in pursuing non-racialism. He believes it's essential to examine both the identities that were set aside and the unified Black identity embraced during apartheid. Fisher (2018, as cited in Kamies 2018: 156) emphasises reclaiming discussions on race and progressively exploring heritage. Adhikari (2006), however, notes that rejecting Coloured identity was not widespread; instead, it was primarily an opposition to racist ideologies and a drive to foster unity against apartheid policies, embraced by a minority of politically active Coloured people in the anti-apartheid struggle.

Both Fisher and Adhikari make valid points, but Adhikari may be on the pulse considering the socio-economic challenges faced by the Coloured community as along came political leaders from the Coloured community, Gayton McKenzie and Fadiel Adams. McKenzie and Adams in 2024 set out to ensure that Coloured people and their issues would remain on the fringes of "not white enough, not black enough" no longer (Adhikari, 2005: 24). Together, they brought "the Coloured question" to the forefront of political discourse, resonating with public sentiment and addressing an ever-evolving social and political landscape in South Africa. Their impact,

was reflected in both leaders securing seats in Parliament[42], which highlighted their message's widespread relevance and urgency for the community (Adhikari, 2005: 184).

While the label Coloured is complex and contested, often criticised for its roots in racial categorisation under colonialism and apartheid, McKenzie and Adams recognised the significance of the term within the community itself. They have not created this label but have embraced it "tied up with the desire to counter negative stereotyping with a more positive self-image" (Kamies, 2018: 155). Drawing from Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner: 2004, 9), their campaign tapped into a shared sense of identity of the group, acknowledging that, despite its fraught history, many within the community have reclaimed and redefined the term. While some choose to reject it, for others it represents a unique cultural heritage that has persisted through generations of struggle, adaptability, and survival.

McKenzie and Adams tapped into this redefined sense of belonging within the Coloured community, which has gradually been shaped in response to historical erasure and marginalisation (Erasmus, 2017; Adhikari, 2006).

> A principal cause for Coloured dissatisfaction with the new order and thus an important determinant of the way the identity has found expression is that members of the Coloured community, especially the working classes, see themselves as having gained little, if any, tangible benefit from the new dispensation. Although the skilled and well-educated Coloured middle classes have profited from the extension of civil liberties, and many have been able to take advantage of opportunities that have become available to formerly disadvantaged people through affirmative action and black economic empowerment initiatives, the Coloured working classes have been victims of jobless economic growth (Adhikari, 2006: 179).

McKenzie is the leader of the Patriotic Alliance (PA), and Adams represents the National Coloured Congress (NCC). McKenzie has since joined the Government of National Unity[43]

[42] McKenzie secured 9 seats, while Adams secured 2.
[43] A broad coalition government formed after the ANC for the first time since 1994 did not win an outright majority.

(GNU), while Adams has joined the Progressive Caucus[44] in Parliament. I find the term "nationalism" problematic here due to its negative associations with Afrikaner nationalism, which I believe is fundamentally different. Afrikaner nationalism constructed racial categories to reinforce social and economic hierarchies, promoting separate development through an exclusive "us" versus "them" framework that solidified divisions between racial groups and justified the marginalisation of Black[45] communities (Dubow, 1992: 215). In contrast, contemporary political movements addressing the Coloured community's concerns focus on inclusion rather than exclusion. These parties highlight pressing issues such as poverty, gang violence on the Cape Flats, and inadequate living conditions, advocating for collaborative solutions within the broader South African political landscape. Unlike Afrikaner nationalism, which pursued isolationist policies, these movements have joined broad political alliances to serve their constituents and all citizens facing similar socio-economic challenges. This approach shows that when marginalised groups seek visibility, it is often a response to a sense of historical erasure. Rather than advocating for separation, I would argue these movements reflect a collective push to redefine belonging, asserting the significance of Coloured identity within South Africa's shared narrative and positioning it as integral rather than peripheral.

Kamies' (2018) concept of a "superficial" rainbow nation resonates with O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead's (1986) assertion of societies "refusing to confront and to purge [their] worst fears and resentments" (O'Donnell et al., 1986: 30). In post-apartheid South Africa, this reluctance often stifles open dialogue, leaving little room for the candid conversations necessary to bridge any lingering social divides and address unresolved injustices from the past.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights the complexity of Coloured identity, shaped by centuries of colonialism, slavery, and apartheid. It highlights the systemic forces that have marginalised Coloured people and the resilience and cultural pride that have emerged despite these challenges. The analysis also shows ongoing struggles with socio-economic inequalities and the reclaiming of heritage as part of a broader movement toward justice and inclusion.

[44]The Progressive Caucus is an alliance of political parties, formed in opposition to the Government of National Unity (GNU) which they feel is neo-liberal.
[45] In the Steve Biko meaning

Chapter Three - Forced Removals

Overview

This chapter delves into the profound and enduring impacts of forced removals on the Coloured community in Plettenberg Bay, focusing mainly on the lived experiences of families such as the Van der Westhuizens and the Booysens. It explores how apartheid-era policies systematically dispossessed individuals and communities, using state-sanctioned violence to enforce segregation and maintain control. Using the lens of the "archive of the ordinary," as articulated by Bogues, this chapter emphasises the importance of valuing everyday lives and overlooked narratives of the "other". Beginning with a detailed account of Christina's life and her family's displacement from Piesang Valley, the discussion connects the personal stories of loss to broader socio-political frameworks. The chapter also looks at how laws such as the Group Areas Act functioned as instruments of racial segregation and forced displacement. It then transitions into personal narratives that illustrate the traumatic experiences of displacement during the removals, highlighting the emotional and physical toll on individuals and families. Finally, the chapter reflects on the aftermath of these removals, revealing how the legacies of violence and exclusion continue to shape socio-economic realities in a post-apartheid South Africa. By presenting these experiences within a broader theoretical

framework, the chapter sheds light on the enduring consequences of settler colonialism and the resilience of marginalised communities in reclaiming their histories and identities.

Introduction

In New Horizons, Plettenberg Bay, Kierpersol Street is nicknamed *Lyfpyn straat*, or "Body Pain Street"- a name that reflects the enduring hardship of those who live there. This is where my mother-in-law, Christina, 63, resides - a woman whose life has been marked by the legacies of dispossession. Christina, the daughter of Esther McCallum and Johannes van der Westhuizen, is a descendant of Plettenberg Bay's indigenous people classified as Coloured by the apartheid government, who lost their land because of apartheid-era policies in the 1970s.

At 63, the purple-painted house she calls home, with its cracked walls and paint, sinking foundation, and uneven roofline, represents the sum of her life's hard-earned labour. Decades spent working as a housekeeping manager at the Plettenberg Bay Hotel and as a domestic worker for a wealthy White family, among others, took a physical toll - *lyfpyn*, the aches and pains that accompany years of service in a system built on inequality. Her labour was given wholly, and her body, hands, mind, and time were dedicated to a job defined by a master-servant dynamic, catering to the comfort of others while sacrificing her own. This house, despite its imperfections, is the home my husband grew up in, a testament to her resilience and sacrifice.

Yet even now, in her retirement, this home stands as a hollow testament to a lifetime of labour, a reward unbalanced, insufficient, and marked by the inequity of a world she helped build but could never claim. Her work, invisible yet essential, provided comfort and wealth for others while leaving her unable to secure the same for herself. The land she once called home, seized and repurposed after apartheid-forced removals, has been moulded into symbols of prosperity for others. Luxury estates, a golf course and upmarket establishments now sit on top of the losses her family bore, embodying what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986: 18; 1984: 71) in "The Forms of Capital" and "A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste", describes as "symbolic capital." Spaces are reimagined not for their intrinsic value, like history or cultural heritage but for the status and power they confer upon those privileged to possess them (Bourdieu, 1986). The power to possess and redefine the space often lies with the economically and socially dominant classes who wield capital and influence to transform spaces into

exclusive symbols of status (Bourdieu: 1986: 16). However, in this context, the land's value and purpose, is rooted in a false power, a constructed dominance that stems from historical injustice and theft rather than any legitimate claim (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 9). So, the "power to possess" is itself an illusion, as it's based on an appropriation that disregards the inherent connection between the original inhabitants and the land. As Smith (2021: 19) explains in "Emotional Heritage," heritage practices and performances are shaped by specific discourses, with some holding greater political power than others, often masking injustices while promoting particular social and political agendas.

Christina's story, etched into the walls of that small purple house on Lyfpyn Street, is a quiet but enduring testament to this harsh asymmetry. Here is the imprint of a system that conceals the pain of dispossession, leaving some with the bright promise of wealth while others are left holding only remnants of what might have been. Her house remains a symbol of what was taken and the enduring weight borne by those who can only watch as their histories become the foundation for someone else's prosperity.

This narrative serves as the foundation and entry point for a chapter dedicated to exploring forced removals of the Coloured community in Plettenberg Bay. African Studies scholar, curator and filmmaker Professor Siona O'Connell, in the "Archive, Injury, and Image: Imaging Freedom through The Photographic Archive of the Racially Oppressed" (2018: 8), emphasises the importance of valuing the everyday lives, experiences, and resistance of marginalised people often overlooked in traditional archives and historical narratives. The chapter on forced removals captures the lived trauma and memories of those displaced, whose voices linger as an "archive of the ordinary." By focusing on the "ordinary," I aim to shed light on the hidden or dismissed experiences of those who have lived under oppressive systems like apartheid, highlighting their resilience and how they navigate power structures (O'Connell, 2018: 10).

Christina's story, rooted in *Lyfpyn straat*, also embodies the personal impact of displacement and labour exploitation, encapsulating the profound, often invisible costs borne by families uprooted from their ancestral homes. Her life illustrates the enduring consequences for unwilling victims of settler colonialism and apartheid-era policies. The chapter begins with this intimate account and grounds the broader analysis of forced removals in lived experience. It highlights how displacement not only stripped people of their homes but also perpetuated a system that channelled their labour and sacrifices into the prosperity of those in power. Apartheid forced removals cannot be understood as isolated historical events but as a

systematic series of events interwoven into the ongoing injustices that continue to shape the lives of Coloured people for the benefit of "whiteness".

Even in post-apartheid South Africa, the legacy of forced removals, as endured by families like the Van der Westhuizens and Booysens, persists, as what Algerian-born French theorist Jacques Derrida (1994: 10) calls a "hauntology," a ghostly presence of past injustices. Ndebele (1999: 5) questions the morality of "looking down on others" from vacation homes in spaces whose ownership and origins remain contested. He says, "The landscape of apartheid is reproducing itself with a vengeance… townships… bursting with informal settlements" (Ndebele, 1999: 5). Through a post-colonial lens, he critiques the moral disconnect that occurs when privileged people enjoy vacation homes in beautiful locations, while nearby communities live in hardship. By "looking down on others," he means that people in these privileged positions are either indifferent to or complicit in the inequalities around them. These vacation spaces are often situated on land with histories of dispossession and contested ownership - land that may have originally belonged to indigenous or marginalised communities who were forcibly removed. This reality is starkly visible in Plettenberg Bay, where affluent White residents inhabit prime locations with sweeping ocean views and easy access to leisure, all supported by inexpensive labour from domestic or construction workers living nearby in townships like New Horizons. These patterns of spatial and economic inequality reflect a continuity of apartheid's dispossession strategies aimed at economic gain and the preservation of White comfort and privilege (King & Rueda, 2008; Wolpe, 1972).

Professor Lynette Steenveld (2015) further contextualises the enduring dynamic of who is afforded economic privilege and who is not in her analysis of capitalism, racialism, and whiteness in South Africa. She explains that the South African economy is fundamentally capitalist and historically rooted in racial inequalities that perpetuate oppression (Steenveld, 2015: 45). From the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 through colonial and apartheid eras, "whiteness and the economy" have been intertwined, with economic resources fuelling both settler dominance and internal colonial conflicts (Steenveld, 2015: 45). These economic motivations continue to define the experience of the "oppressed" and "oppressor", as prime real estate and resources remain concentrated among the privileged, while marginalised communities remain systematically disadvantaged. Steenveld explains:

> The history of South Africa from colonial times is an anti-colonial struggle of the indigenous population against European economic expansionism. Thus, whiteness and the economy can most simply be understood in terms of the waves of European settlement from Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 to the present time. The resources fought over were always economic ones – whether among the colonising settlers themselves (Dutch and English) or between various kinds of coalition between colonists and the indigenous people (Steenveld, 2015: 45).

In Plettenberg Bay, the primary economic resource has long been the land, with its wealth of natural assets: timber, fish, stunning oceanic and mountain views, and, crucially, the labour of the indigenous Coloured community (Storrar, 1978; Tapson 1961). In this way, Steenveld's analyses would position the colonial and apartheid land dispossession along with exploitative labour systems as not merely historical events but active, "haunting" forces shaping the landscape of post-apartheid South Africa (Jacques Derrida, 1994). While Tuck and Yang (2012) argue that "equivocation is the vague equating of colonialism that erases the sweeping scope of land as the basis of wealth, power, law in settler nation-states," in Plettenberg Bay, this reality cannot be concealed, it permeates every aspect of life, from types of businesses, marketing and property sales to conservation efforts that profit from nature reserves (Keulartz, 2013: 4).

As another example of this skewed positionality, O'Connell, during the launch of her films on apartheid injustice, "The Wynberg 7" and "The Impossible Return" (2015) in Cape Town, scrutinises the "spectacular views of the mountain that frames this city in particular ways". She argues that they serve to both beautify and "obscure and overlook the realities of life for many in Cape Town". The paradox advanced by O'Connell can be similarly applied to Plettenberg Bay, where the breathtaking views of the ocean or mountains cocoon visitors in a sense of privilege, overlooking and often ignoring the struggles and historical injustices faced by residents in areas like New Horizons. O'Connell (2015) suggests that 1994, the dawn of democracy, should have marked a "point of no return" - a decisive shift toward equality and justice. Yet, Plettenberg Bay reveals that this point has not been reached. Instead, the town embodies a feeling of being stuck in a space between past and present, where racial inequalities persist, and the "bridge" to a better life remains stalled at the foundation level (Bitou LM, 2022;

Camatti & Wallington, 2022). I can't help but ask, when will this house be built? And what form will it take if it is ever rebuilt? O'Connell (2015) continues, urging us to "guard the past, to give it a presence in the 'here' and the 'now' and to emphasise our obligation to remember," a call for "honest acknowledgement of the stark divisions and inequalities" still experienced daily by the majority of South Africans. Her words suggest that only by remembering and reckoning with these legacies can we move forward and finally build a new "house" on foundations of equity and inclusion.

Piesang River - The Bay of Content

"Bay of Content" is the name Plettenberg Bay once held (Storrar,1978: x). The name alone whispers of abundance and harmony, a place where peace threaded itself into the very fabric of life with whispering sounds of trees and birds, layered by the sound of the ocean in the background, heavenly. Storrar (1978) and Tapson (1961) have captured this majestic essence of Plettenberg Bay with references like "a land where the grass would always grow green, their children and cattle grow fat, farming interests could prosper" (Storrar, 1978:4), and the "numerous streams and rivers, the giant trees, the types of soil for cultivation" (Tapson, 1961: 154). Painting rich scenes of landscapes where forests thrived in green abundance and wildlife. They roamed freely from elephants, leopards, and buffalo to buck (Storrar, 1978; Tapson, 1961).

Referring to its former name as the Bahia Formosa, Tapson (1961:156) writes:

> Around the southern coastline, seeing in the distance the hanging palls of smoke over a high mountain range to which they gave the name Estrela (these were the Outeniqua Mountains)[46], and the lovely sweep of the bay in the foreground which they named Bahia Formosa, the Bay Beautiful. The highest peak in the range they called Pic Formosa (Tapson, 1961:156).

The community lived with such ease that bartering was second nature: 'I have rice, and you need rice; I give, and you give back', the families told me during many conversations. An

[46] These are still Tapson's words.

account matched by Storrar (1978: 4), who refers to the story of John Whittle, who died in Plettenberg Bay in 1835, "he had no property, no worldly goods of any kind and had been clothed in his last years "by the Charity of the Fisherman of this Place". Today, what is now called Piesang Valley was once simply "Piesang Rivier" to its former residents, a name spoken with familiarity and fondness in their interviews. For families like the Van der Westhuizens, whose home once stood where the Plettenberg Bay Country Club now sprawls, this land is thick with memories of displacement and loss. Their forced removal is a testament to the sweeping reach of the 1950 Group Areas Act, which paved the way for privileged White settlers to profit extensively from property deals on land that were violently taken from these Coloured families, land that once held the weight of lives now scattered (Platzsky1985: 102). Building on Bennett's (2021: 243) work, memory emerges as an essential tool for reclaiming narratives and resisting the silencing of marginalised histories. Bennett (2021: 119) argues that memory within displaced communities, such as those affected by apartheid-era removals, serves as a narrative "counterpoint" to the official accounts that often exclude or distort their lived experiences. She positions oral histories as vital in keeping these stories alive, emphasising that memory is not merely a personal recollection but "a means of embedding identity within a community's shared past" (Bennett, 2021).

Christina (2024), who grew up watching the seasons change in Piesang River, beams as she recalls life in the valley: "Groen, en die lewe was goed op Piesangriver" (Green, and life was good in Piesang River).

She vividly describes a landscape alive with shades of emerald and jade, where trees and grasses filled the hills and riverbanks of Piesang Valley.

> Ons view het op die see gekyk. En as ons in ons voorkamer gestaan het, die eerste mense wat uit Piesangrivier, Bodrift en ek weet nie waarvandaan oral getrek het nie, het ook hier gebly. As ons in ons huis gestaan het, dan kyk ons binne in New Horizon, ons kon bo op 'n aunty se huis gekyk het. Ons het 'n view gehad, ons kan na New Horizon toe gekyk het na die hoër gedeelte, en dan kan ons ook na die see opgekyk het (Kamfer, 2024).
>
> *Our view looked out to sea. And if we were standing in our front room, the first people who moved from Piesangriver, Bodrift, and I don't*

> *know where everywhere moved from, also stayed here. If we were standing in our house, then we were looking inside New Horizon, we could have looked at my aunty's house. We had a view; we could have looked up to New Horizon to the higher part, and then we could have looked up to the ocean as well.*

For the Van der Westhuizens, life in Piesang Valley was abundant, steady, and filled with garden harvests. Christina's sister, Hester, 65, (2024) recalls:

> My pa het land gehad, hulle het geplant, my pa het varke aangehou, groente geplant, en 'n blomme tuin gehad en patats geplant. My ma se pa was vissers mense, hulle was lief vir visvang. Hulle het uitgegaan op bote, my pa was ook 'n man wat op Robberg vis gaan vang het. En dit het ons aan die lewe gehou. My pa het alleen gewerk, my ma het ook gewerk, maar later het sy na die kinders omgesien en huisgehou. My pa het gewerk by die Ohlsons, hy het jare gewerk eers by die steen oonde in Piesangrivier (Jantjies, 2024).
>
> *My dad had land, and they planted. My dad kept pigs, planted vegetables, had a flower garden, and planted sweet potatoes. My mother's father was a fisherman. They loved fishing. They went out on boats; my father was also a man who went fishing on Robberg and that kept us alive. My father worked alone, and my mother also worked, but later, she cared for the children and kept the house. My father worked for the Ohlsons, hy also worked at the stone ovens in Piesang river.*

Figure 23:Hester holding a picture of her late mother Estha (Daniels, 2022).

Hester's first-hand account explains how food practices were deeply embedded in the community's identity, evidenced by the men who were fishermen and the family planting vegetables. It reflects a way of life that is independent and self-sufficient, able to cater to the necessities of life comfortably. This sense of autonomy that would later be taken away by land dispossession. Reflecting on Marianne Hirsch's (2008: 1) theory of "postmemory," Hester shows how cultural practices maintain a link to ancestral traditions across generations in reference to her mother's father. Postmemory, as Hirsch (2008: 103, 107) describes, refers to the connection that later generations have to the experiences, memories, and traumas of their forebears, even if they have not lived through them directly. In Hester's case, the theory applies in a nuanced way; it's not about the transmission of memories from events she didn't experience as she knew her grandfather, but rather about the continuation and reshaping of those memories after his passing, as they are embedded in her identity and cultural practices. The practice is also deeply tied to O'Connell's (2012: 140) idea of the space between "oral and textual forms of history and memory" as it relates to "orality and visuality". Descriptions of

the pigs, the vegetable planting, and the fishing on Robberg become a visual scene in the mind's eye, with orality providing a framework for recalling and passing down these images. Just as O'Connell (2012: 131) argues that photographs capture more than just a visual record, visual memories narrated orally work similarly. They work intertwining sensory and emotional experiences. This connection, where families could not afford a camera, allows memories to be "seen" in the imagination and "heard" through the voice, oral histories, preserving the textures of everyday life (O'Connell: 167).

Taking me through a day in the life of Hester during her childhood, she says:

> As ons die oggend opstaan, dan baie keer dan gaan ons hout haal, dan sorg ons dat daar genoeg hout is vir die naweek. Ons het altyd gespeel as kinders op die land, daar was altyd basaar gehou wanneer iemand verjaar, en dan het hulle gesing met die blik kitaar. Dit was baie lekker gewees, ons het ons altyd in die rivier gewas. Ons het geswem daar in die rivier. Baie keer as die rivier oorvol is, dan moes ons oornag daar waar ons was, want dan kan ons nie deur gaan nie. Wanneer dit baie reen, dan het die dam en die rivier oorvol geword (Jantjies, 2024).
>
> *If we get up in the morning, many times then we go to get wood, then we make sure that there is enough wood for the weekend. We used to play as kids on our land. There was always a bazaar when it was someone's birthday, and then they would sing with the tin guitar. It was a lot of fun, we always washed ourselves in the river. We swam there in the river. Many times, when the river was flooded then we had to spend the night where we were, because then we can't go through. When it rains a lot, the dam and the river become flooded.*

In Hester's recollection, her "performance of memory" brings her childhood vividly to life, engaging us with the routines, joys, and challenges of her past (Julius, 2008: 12). Through detailed descriptions, collecting wood, playing on the land, swimming in the river, and celebrating with the "tin guitar." Hester doesn't just recount events; she reanimates them, performing her memories as a lived experience that captures the spirit of those days. The

sensory details and her rhythmic storytelling create an immersive narrative that conveys not only what happened but how it felt (Julius, 2008: 118).

This narrative also reflects an example of "cultural memory" (Assmann, 1995:129), where shared skills, traditions, and practices preserve a community's collective identity and heritage. Berkes & Folke (1998: 2) define indigenous knowledge (IK) "to mean local knowledge held by indigenous peoples, or local knowledge unique to a given culture or society." I remember, when Hester explained how they made the "blik-kitaar" (tin guitar) I was struck by her ability to recall every detail - placing each string on that old oil can with such care and precision. Her memory transported me, and I could almost imagine myself enjoying the music and observing the skill required to make an instrument from these "ordinary" materials. My husband also recalls his "oupa" (grandpa) playing a "blik-kitaar" in his youth, saying, "I know how to make it." South African academic and writer Njabulo Ndebele (1991) argues for a "rediscovery of the ordinary", reminding us that those details from everyday routines or norms, like gathering wood or washing in the river, are not trivial but rich with cultural history and meaning, rooted in IK systems. The tin guitar known as the 'ramkie' or the 'township guitar' the African Music Library explains in an article titled "The Ramkie Guitar - from Gourd to Oil Can":

> During the 18th century, the pastoral tribe living in the Cape of Good Hope known as Khoi-Khoi (or Khoe), (meaning: "men of men" or "the real people") were the creators of the ramkie guitar. The date Ramike was created is unknown. It is believed that the Khoes developed this unique type of guitar based on the guitar the slaves from the Malabar Coast of India brought to their land. Initially, this traditional guitar, which the Khoes also called "blik kitaar," was made from a gourd, with a bridge or neck and strings for strumming (Onasanya: 2023).

Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson's work in "The Oral History Reader" (1998: 9, 53) details how memories and "narrative history" of community life are shared across generations, creating a sense of belonging and continuity. This is embodied in Hester, who, though older than Tyrone, shares the same traditional knowledge, each memory a thread connecting them to a shared past (Perks & Thomson, 1998: 9, 53). For those who have been physically displaced

from their ancestral lands, such oral histories of everyday life are a lifeline, preserving what remains unseen and often unspoken (Perks & Thomson, 1998: 77).

While my husband's maternal family lived in Piesang Valley, his paternal family lived at Keurboomstrand and were also forcibly removed in the 1970s. The river known as "Keurboom" traces its name back to the French explorer François Le Vaillant, who named it during his travels in 1782 (Storrar 1982 cited in Duvenage and Morant, 1984: 1)). This name originates from the indigenous Virgilia divaricata, commonly known as the keurboom or "choice tree." Found on the fringes of forests, the keurboom is notable for its striking blooms. In Afrikaans, keur translates to "choice" or "pick," describing the common name "pick of the trees" (Duvenage and Morant, 1984: 1).

> In September 1927 a new low-level bridge across the Keurbooms River was opened by the Administrator of the Cape. This bridge was swept away during a flood in 1931, in the 1980's remains of this bridge still partially block the riverbed just downstream of the existing roadbridge (Duvenage and Morant, 1984: 2).

Marthinus Booysen, 67, is my husband Tyrone Booysen's uncle and the brother of the late Michael Booysen, my husband's father.

> Ons het by Keurboom Strand gebly. Die huis wat ons ingebly het was 'n groot huis, 4 vertrek huis, dis 'n steen huis, dit staan nog steeds daar. Om by die huis uit te kom, moet jy afgaan tot by die restaurant, daar is 'n hek, en aan die linkerkant, daar sal jy sien, daar is vriendelike ouens wat daar bly, maar ons het aan die een kant gebly en die wit ouens aan die kant. Dai witmense het nie al die jare daar gebly nie. Daar het wit ouens gebly, maar hulle het ook vertrek, maar nou weet ek nie of dit dieselfde ou mense se kinders wat daar is nie, of dit heel vreemde mense is nie (Booysen.M, 2024).

> *We stayed at Keurboomstrand. The house we stayed in was a big, four-room house. It's a stone house, and it's still standing there. To get to the house, you have to go down to the restaurant; there's a gate, and on the left, you'll see there are friendly guys staying there, but we stayed on one side and the white guys on the side. That white people didn't stay there all those years. There were white guys staying, but they also left, but now I don't know if it's the same old people's children who are there or if they're just strangers.*

Mathinus' recollection of Keurboomstrand shows the complex layers of memory and attachment that shape his relationship with this place. His description of the "stone house" and the familiar route through "the gate, and on the left" reflects more than a simple geographical orientation; it is a map of belonging, one woven with years of lived experience (Bennett, 2021: 130). Yet, as he speaks about the presence of "friendly guys" and his uncertainty about the current residents, Marthinus' memory is tinged with a sense of loss and displacement. This ambiguity around, whether those living there are "old people's children" or "just strangers", illustrates how memory is unsettled by the shifts in ownership and occupancy that mark South Africa's post-apartheid landscape (O'Connell, 2018: 12). Through Marthinus' narrative, we see how personal and collective histories collide with the physical changes in place, echoing Bennett's observations of memory as a "fluid and malleable process", impacted by the erasure and alteration of familiar spaces (Bennett, 2021: 189). This memory dissonance marks a broader theme: the fragility of place-based identity in a landscape marked by dispossession (O'Connell: 2018: 4). Marthinus' words convey both a longing for continuity and a quiet recognition that this continuity has been fractured, a reminder that the past is not simply remembered, but actively redefined through the present realities of who occupies the space (Bennett, 2021: 84, 248).

Hester (2024) tells of the materials they used to build the home:

> Ons het misvloer gebruik, ons het nie tapyt gebruik nie. Misvloer is beesmis waarmee ons die vloere gesmeer het. Hier was klei gate, en ons het rante gemaak van die klei, ons het verskillende kleure gekry,

soos pienk en oranje. Die klei was gebruik vir die grond en om die huise te verf, en ons het dit gereeld gedoen, vernaam kersfees tye, en ook soos die mis vloere afgeloop word. Die dak was van plaat gemaak. Ons het nie ‘n ceiling gehad nie. Afhangende van die grootte van die huis, ons seuns het hulle eie kamer gehad, en die meisies het almal saam geslaap. Ons het stretches om op te slaap daardie jare gehad, waar ons die onderste gedeelte uit getrek het. Wanneer ons kuiergaste oor gehad het, het ons beddens gemaak, met ou komberse, kussings, miskien ‘n ou matras. Daardie jare was dit die Coir (Klapperhaar) matras, dis soos rooi gras, jy kan ook die potte met dit geskuur het. Daar was nie pot skrapers nie, so hulle het dit gebruik om die potte te skuur met vuur as (Jantjies, 2024).

We used manure flooring; we didn’t use carpet. The manure floor is cow dung, which we have smeared on the floors. Here were clay holes, and we made paint out of the clay, we got different colours, like pink and orange. The clay was used for the soil and for painting the houses, and we did this regularly, especially at Christmas times and as the manure floors were run off. The roof was made of sheet metal. We didn’t have a ceiling. Depending on the size of the house, our boys had their own room, and the girls all slept together. We had stretches to sleep on those years, where we pulled out the bottom section. When we had visiting guests over, we made beds, with old blankets, pillows, maybe an old mattress. Those years, it was the Coir mattress; it’s like red grass, and you could also scrape the pots with it. There were no pot scrapers, so they used them to sand the pots with ash from the fire.

Hester’s account of using manure for flooring, clay for painting, and coir for cleaning reflects cultural memory, where physical objects and practices become vessels of heritage, preserving collective identity through sensory and embodied experiences (Assmann, 1995). These materials and routines serve practical purposes and symbolise a deep-rooted cultural continuity, embedding memories within the everyday. As O’Connell (2012) argues, oral histories and material practices like these create an alternative archive outside institutional confines,

preserving knowledge through lived memory rather than formal documentation. Hester's home, filled with these traditional practices, becomes an "archive of memory", a living, dynamic record of cultural heritage maintained through the materiality and actions of daily life (O'Connell, 2012:125). By preserving heritage through living memories and the materials and routines of everyday life, oral histories ensure that cultural knowledge remains alive and accessible outside institutional confines (O'Connell, 2012:125).

In the face of climate change and the prevalence of toxic chemicals in modern household products, practices like using manure for flooring and clay for house painting represent a form of heritage that is not only deeply personal but also functional and ecologically resourceful. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is defined as "knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment" (Berkes & Folke, 1998:5). Hester's (2024) account echoes what Izak van der Merwe (2002:137) describes in "The Knysna and Tsitsikamma Forests: Their History, Ecology, and Management", where the Khoikhoi of Outeniqualand and Tsitsikamma lived "in harmony with nature," drawing sustenance from what the land provided. Hester reference to use natural materials, such as clay for painting and manure for flooring, reflecting traditional ecological knowledge that uses locally abundant and sustainable resources. These practices passed down through generations, illustrate an enduring relationship with the environment rooted in sustainability and adaptability.

Berkes and Folke (1998) argue that traditional practices based on ecological knowledge contribute to managing resources without depleting them. However, Schlosberg and Carruthers (2010: 12) discuss how indigenous communities often struggle for environmental equity, seeking to maintain access to land and resources amidst competing interests and historical dispossession. This is explained through the Plettenberg Bay Country Club in Piesang Valley, requiring membership, which costs R7400 for "No restriction to playing times, preferential tee times & advance online booking" (Plett Country Club, n.d.) and the luxury tourist style establishments[47]. These establishments are largely inaccessible to the former residents, especially from an affordability point of view[48]. Even a World Heritage site like Robberg Nature Reserve, which Hester (2024) mentions was a place where her grandfather used to go fishing, is promoted from a tourism angle. It is part of the community's history and heritage

[47] These include The Plettenberg Hotel at R 9 120 for a double room and R 40 410 for a 3 bedroom lookout villa during peak season 2024.
[48] See figures on unemployment rates in Plettenberg Bay chapter.

but is now "gated" in the name of conservation and has a cover charge, making it largely inaccessible to them because of poverty[49]. Families like those discussed in the study must prioritise basic survival needs and not everyone has a car. The promotional video for Robberg, again, sells nature as tourism. It features only White people talking about why they chose it for the December holidays, "We chose Robberg Reserve because we're in Plett for our December holidays, and Plett can get quite busy. So, we always try and work in one or two weekends here at the shack[50]". Where are the town's indigenous inhabitants, and what is being done to change their lives? For the financial year ending March 2023, CapeNature[51] recorded a total revenue exceeding R300 million, driven by eco-tourism, provincial allocations, grants etc. The Bitou LM, which has several conservation areas, faces stark socioeconomic disparities, with a considerable percentage of its population, particularly Coloured residents, living below the poverty line. While CapeNature notes that its revenue supports conservation efforts, I hypothesise the impact on communities like New Horizons in Plettenberg Bay remains limited, raising questions about equitable distribution and local community benefit.

The lives of the Van der Westhuizens were not just routines but echoes of generations, holding wisdom that lived on in each piece of clay, each spread of the manure floor. Their household practices do more than serve as practical solutions; they root individuals in a legacy of resilience and ecological awareness, creating a tangible link to the past while offering sustainable alternatives for the future. Researchers like Bhatt and Dani (2024), Fisher and Naidoo (2016), and Ferraro & Hanauer (2014) have highlighted the need for alternative conservation models that prioritise community benefit. They discuss ideas around "equitable benefit-sharing" (Fisher and Naidoo, 2016), and participatory approaches that prioritise local voices and community engagement. In the case of Rooibos, Natural Justice supported the National Khoisan Council (NKC), including the Cederberg Belt Region's Rooibos[52] indigenous farming communities, to conclude a Biocultural Community Protocol (BCP) in 2013 which ultimately "set out a basis for negotiations with the South African Rooibos Council, which the Department of Environmental Affairs oversaw, and a benefit sharing agreement was reached in 2019" (Natural Justice, 2020).

[49] See statistics on poverty in Plettenberg Bay chapter.
[50] The shack is a little wooden house on the beach which can be booked for holiday accommodation.
[51] CapeNature manages Robberg Nature Reserve.
[52] Rooibos is a herbal tea made from the leaves of the *Aspalathus linearis* plant, which is native to South Africa. Known as "red bush" in Afrikaans, rooibos grows naturally in the Cederberg region of the Western Cape and has been traditionally consumed by Indigenous Khoisan people for centuries

> In terms of the Bioprospecting, Access and Benefit-Sharing (BABS) Regulations, all funds from the Traditional Knowledge (TK) levy on Rooibos is paid into a government management fund of which 50% are paid to the San community and 50% to the KhoiKhoi community as per a memorandum of understanding between the KhoiKhoi and San, (Natural Justice, 2020).

Further research could delve deeper into these issues, exploring equitable alternatives that balance ecological preservation with socio-economic empowerment for marginalised communities. The study of IK systems within the Coloured community of Plettenberg Bay could also offer significant insights and value.

In another rich account of the "ordinary," Christina (2024) brings Plettenberg Bay's past to life, inviting me to imagine a day spent with her during her childhood. I wondered how we would have filled the day and what fun awaited Coloured children in Plettenberg Bay back then. She responded:

> Ons gaan swem, loop 'n bietjie op die strand rond. Ek het n baie goeie vriendin gehad, wat op die dorp gebly het, hulle het ook naby die see gebly, ek het haar altyd gaan kuier, ons het bicycle gery op die parking lots van die see. As dit somer tyd was, het ons so teen 6 uur die namiddag huistoe gegaan. Dit was baie veilig gewees, want almal het almal geken, (Kamfer, 2024)
>
> *We go swimming and walk around the beach a bit. I had a very good friend who lived in town; they also lived near the beach, and I always went to visit her. We rode bicycles in the parking lots of the beach. If it was summertime, we would go home around 6 o'clock in the afternoon. It was very safe because everyone knew everyone.*

This description captures the ideal day of freedom, simplicity, and a deep sense of belonging. Christina's retelling is more than a simple recounting; it is a performance of memory where the act of narrating shapes and brings the past to life, each detail breathing familiarity and intimacy into her recollection (Julius, 2008: 12). Through her words, the scene is reconstructed with a vividness that transforms the memory into an almost tangible experience. Her longing is palpable, evoking a life that feels like a cherished holiday, filled with the peace and unspoken security of knowing the people and places around you. The performance of memory here does more than share a nostalgic day; it serves as a bridge, connecting her past experiences with her present reality and highlighting a shift in Plettenberg Bay's social fabric. These spaces, once integral to her childhood, are now primarily occupied by White residents, reshaping the lived experience of this place. Her emphasis on safety, a theme woven through many of the stories shared in my interviews, reveals how foundational this sense of security was to her feeling of freedom. In her memory, safety is not simply the absence of danger but a profound and comforting connection to a familiar, close-knit community (Bennett, 2021: 113). This absence, and the yearning for it, forms a poignant thread in the narratives of displacement, where memory becomes a powerful act of reclaiming a once-lived sense of freedom and belonging.

Law, Not War, as Tools of Displacement

The dispossession of millions of Black South Africans was justified through the "law, not war" - an extremely restrictive legal framework that weaponised policy to seize land and privilege "whiteness" (Plaatjie, 1916: i). Though conservative estimates put the number at 3.5 million forced removals, Professor Ben Cousins contends the actual figure may reach 10 million or more (Platzky & Walker, 1985; O'Connell, 2020). While Ndebele adds:

> The mass removals of people; the spate of draconian laws passed with the spectacle of parliamentary promulgations; the luxurious lifestyle of whites, servants, all-encompassing privilege, swimming pools, and high commodity consumption; the sprawling monotony of architecture in African locations, which are the very picture of poverty and oppression, (Ndebele: 1994: 32, 33).

The restriction of land ownership and control over non-white populations in South Africa began under colonial rule and later intensified with the apartheid regime. Colonial authorities in the Cape initially established this system of control with laws like the Hottentot Proclamation of 1809, which targeted the Khoikhoi community by restricting their freedom of movement and employment. This law required Khoikhoi individuals to carry passes to confirm employment, embedding a racial hierarchy into labour and movement within the Cape Colony. Building on this foundation, the Glen Grey Act of 1894 further targeted Black landownership and laid the groundwork for broader land dispossession laws. As Bennett (2021: 37) explains, "The government of Prime Minister Cecil John Rhodes established a system of land tenure and a labour tax to force Xhosa men into employment on commercial farms or in industry".

After the four former British colonies - Cape Colony, Natal Colony, Transvaal Colony and Orange River Colony became a union in 1910, the new government conceived the Natives Land Act of 1913, expanding these restrictions nationwide (Platzky & Walker, 1985: 83).

The Natives Land Act of 1913 restricted Black South Africans to designated "native reserves" that comprised only 7% of the country's land (Platzky & Walker, 1985: 83). Concerning the passing of the Act, Sol Plaatjie, in "Native Life in South Africa", tried to appeal to British and international audiences to recognise the injustices faced by Black South Africans under colonial rule, describing the "black man's burden" (Plaatjie, 1916: 1):

> Includes the faithful performance of all the unskilled and least paying labour in South Africa, the payment of direct taxation to the various Municipalities, at the rate of from 1s[53]. to 5s. per mensum[54] per capita (to develop and beautify the white quarters of the towns while the black quarters remain unattended) (Plaatjie, 1916: 1).

Regarding the origins of this system when the country became a union, Roman-Dutch law expert and scholar Robert Warden Lee (1923: 224) wrote in Law and Legislation in the Union of South Africa:

[53] In old British currency notation, the "s." was for shilling
[54] Per month.

> Seldom have the courts of any country enjoyed the opportunity which the courts of South Africa now enjoy, of moulding the laws to their will, inspired but not hampered by tradition, aided but not checked by the legislator (Lee, 1923: 224).

Alongside the Natives Land Act of 1913, numerous discriminatory laws were enacted before the formal apartheid era, shaping a foundation of racial segregation and control. For example, the Mines and Works Act of 1911 reserved skilled jobs for White workers and the Urban Areas Act of 1923 aimed at "influx control"[55] restricted Black people's movement in cities (Cavanagh and Veracini, 2017: 295). Subsequent policies increasingly formalised racial segregation and restricted access to resources. The Population Registration Act of 1950[56] exemplified this progression, introducing official racial categories: "White," "Black," "Coloured," and "Indian"- which dictated access to land, employment, and services based on racial identity (Bennett, 2021). Building on this, the Group Areas Act of 1950 enforced strict racial segregation in residential areas, forcibly relocating non-white communities into designated, often under-resourced, areas distant from economic centres (Bennett, 2021: 37). Then came the introduction of pass laws again like in the 1800s,[57] through the Pass Laws Act of 1952 and separate amenities for different races through the Separate Amenities Act of 1953. Remembering the consequences of the Population Registration Act on her life, Mureedah, 68, said:

> In the Apartheid era, we had no rights. My first ID, I was white, I was 16 years old. I had to accept it, and that's why I'm alone to this day because I wasn't allowed to be with my people (Beydon, 2024).

Scholars (Dubow, 1992; Smith, 1992) have noted that apartheid was upheld by a vast, intricate network of legislation so pervasive it touched every facet of life, creating a complex structure of control that reinforced racial segregation and oppression. Together, these apartheid laws

[55] Influx control was about keeping urban areas predominantly white, limiting black South Africans' economic and social opportunities.
[56] The Act will be further discussed as it relates to its impact on identity in a chapter about colouredness.
[57] See the Hottentot Code earlier in this section.

institutionalised a racially segregated landscape, embedding deep economic and spatial inequalities across South African society. In "The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanisation and Social Change in South Africa", Smith (1992: 179) captures how apartheid laws shaped the lived experiences of ordinary people, manifesting in countless daily inconveniences and indignities:

> The racial restrictions were not only demeaning, they were also a great inconvenience. Travellers hurrying about their daily tasks would have to hunt down the racially correct entrance to railway stations and then find the appropriate ticketing counter and staircase. Those needing to make a quick taxi trip would have to be certain that they summoned one which their pigmentation entitled them to hire. Bus passengers would have to queue at stops designated for their race group and could not simply board the first vehicle that appeared. The inconvenience was always greater for Blacks than it was for whites: apartheid on public transport never entailed complete duplication of all services (Smith, 1992: 179).

In his book, "The Strange Alchemy of Life and Law", retired Constitutional Court judge and anti-apartheid activist Albie Sachs (2009: 126) explains that "As bureaucratic authoritarianism had been intrinsic to apartheid; people simply did not count as human beings, hence the squalid housing and inferior education for the majority". Sachs's observation that apartheid's bureaucratic structure rendered people "less than human" is essential to the cumulative effect of these laws and how they worked together to make life hell for the Black majority. The apartheid system wasn't merely a series of individual laws but an entire legal apparatus designed to create a racially segregated and hierarchised society. Every law worked in tandem to ensure that Black South Africans would remain marginalised, deprived of their rights, and under constant scrutiny. In such a framework, daily life became a "prison-like existence," where freedom was continually curtailed, and every facet of life, from education to residence, employment, and social relations, was controlled.

Sachs's (2009: 21) insights emphasise that apartheid's bureaucratic authoritarianism was not just repressive but deeply "dehumanising", as it legally enforced a system that saw Black

people as expendable subjects. Michel Foucault's (1980: 122) extensive commentary on power relations, particularly in contexts of domination and exploitation, offers a potent lens for analysing police violence under apartheid. During this period, the police wielded violence as a means to enforce racial segregation and stifle opposition, a tactic embedded in apartheid's structure of control. Shielded by sweeping security laws, they detained activists without trial, employed torture, and acted with impunity, acts that not only subjugated individuals but also reinforced the pervasive grip of apartheid on Black people (Sachs, 2009: 67).

South Africa's colonial and apartheid eras were marked by an extensive array of laws that entrenched a discriminatory political and legal landscape. Two specific laws - the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act, were particularly instrumental in enforcing the forced removals of families like the Van der Westhuizens and the Booysens. The Group Areas Act can be seen as a form of "settler colonialism," a mode of domination that is an ongoing phenomenon:

> Settler colonialism is premised on the realisation that colonialism does not always arrive on boats and that settlers typically act on their own behalf, not as agents of distant metropoles (Cavanagh, 2017: 2).

Framing the Group Areas Act as more than just a historical artefact; instead, it represents an enduring mode of domination that reinforces settler control over land and resources (Cavanagh, 2017: 299). By systematically displacing Black and Coloured people and restricting their access to urban and economically prosperous areas, the Act enshrined spatial and racial segregation in law, fixing a hierarchical structure that favoured settlers. Bonita Bennett (2021: 29), former director of the District Six museum, whose parents were victims of forced removals, emphasises the cultural and emotional toll on communities forcibly removed, as documented in her studies on District Six, where thousands of people were displaced.

Forced Removals - Ek is Nou Nog Bang vir n Man Met n Hoed (I am *Still Afraid of a Man With a Hat)*

> *"Stories of people that have been kicked out of their houses; you have no idea the emotion that it stirs. Today people will weep, they will sit at my table and weep. It is a pain that is complete. The effects of it are vast and incalculable," Michael Worsnip, chief director of Land Restitution Support for the Western Cape, in O'Connell's film, "Impossible Return" (O' Connell: 2020).*

To speak of forced removals is to open a space for memories that refuse to fade, as Caruth (1996: 61) discussed in "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History" about the effects of a traumatic experience that appears like "a waking memory," the person is "fixated" to this trauma. A persistence of memories that refuse to fade due to their emotional and psychological impact. This is particularly relevant for events involving violence, displacement, and other forms of personal or collective trauma (Herman, 1992: 20; Caruth, 1996: 66-67). The trauma experienced by individuals and communities, uprooted from the very spaces that defined their identities, inscribes itself indelibly upon them (Bennett, 2021: 98). This trauma, which transcends borders and cultures, resists the passage of time as if each memory were an act of resistance against erasure. In places like District Six and Sophiatown[58], and far beyond South Africa's borders, in Gaza and the West Bank, Palestine, the struggles over home and land echo a global pattern of displacement that compounds pain with each generation (Bennett, 2021: 133). Displacement, as in these cases, becomes not merely a matter of physical relocation but of psychological and cultural dislocation.

Christina and her family, the van der Westhuizen's and the McCallum's, were forcibly removed from Piesang Valley in Plettenberg Bay in the 1970s. The forced removals experienced by the communities of Piesang Valley were more than simple displacements; they were acts of violent upheaval[59] that signalled the "death" of a way of life (Bennett, 2021: 29). Mureedah recalls:

[58] In 1955, thousands of residents from Sophiatown were forcibly removed to Meadowlands in Soweto under the Group Areas Act.
[59] I use the term upheaval as it refers to a sudden, intense disruption or change that deeply unsettles established ways of life.

> Ek sal nooit vergeet nie, die man met die hoed op die kop, in die trekker, (ek is nou nog bang vir ‘n trekker), hy het bo-op die trekker gesit, toe sê hy vir die ouens stoot, stoot. net die kaggel van die huis het oorgebly. So het hulle my pa se huis afgebreek wat hy self gebou het. Die huise was voor ons afgebreek. Net die huis wat aan die bokant was het bly staan, hulle gebruik dit as kantore by die golf course. Al die wit mense was toegelaat om te bly, net ons huise was afgebreek (Beydon, 2024).
>
> *I’ll never forget the man with the hat on his head in the tractor; I’m still afraid of a tractor now. He sat on top of the tractor, and then he told the guys to push, push; only the fireplace of the house remained. So they demolished my father’s house, which he had built himself. The houses were torn down before us. Only the house that was at the top remained standing, they used it as offices at the golf course. All the white people were allowed to stay; only our houses were demolished.*

Mureedah’s description of the “man with the hat…in the tractor” and her lasting fear of tractors reflect psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk’s (2014: 243) ideas on “trauma triggers”. In “The Body Keeps the Score”, Van der Kolk (2014: 58, 83) explains that trauma imprints itself on the brain, often causing seemingly ordinary sights or sounds to evoke intense, sometimes irrational, fear long after the event. The tractor, in this case, symbolises her traumatic displacement, so deeply ingrained that it persists as a lingering fear even decades later.

For Christina (2024), being told at age 14 that her family had to move due to the development of a golf course meant abruptly abandoning the self-sufficient life they had known. Her memory of displacement resonates with Hirsch’s (2008: 103) concept of “postmemory”, as it reflects a loss that her family carries beyond one generation, a cultural disruption that persists in the collective:

> Ek kan onthou ek was 14, want ek was in graad 7, my pa het net een aand by die huis gekom, toe sê hy ons moet trek, en die huise wat hulle

> in New Horizon gebou het is klaar, want teen dai tyd, was hulle alreeds besig om die golf course te develop. Want die mense wat golf gaan kom speel gaan nie gelukkig wees, as hulle daar is nie, want hulle is mos bang, want die mense moet mos rivier toe gaan vir water, en die rivier is waar hulle die golf course gaan bou. So ons moes maar trek. My ma was nie gelukkig nie (Kamfer, 2024)
>
> *I remember I was 14. My dad just came home one night and said we had to move. The house in New Horizon was done. By then, they were already developing the golf course. Because the people who are going to come and play golf are not going to be happy when we are there, because they are scared, because the people have to go to the river for water, and the river is where they are going to build the golf course. So, we just had to move. My mother was not happy.*

Forced removals under apartheid not only stripped communities of their homes but also imposed a collective trauma, severing ties to their ancestral lands and reshaping identities (Trotter, 2009: 49). Bennett (2021: 29) suggests that "loss of home is akin to a death," a sentiment echoed in Christina's account of her family's forced removal, which she endured as a child. Hirsch (2008: 112) describes how children of parents with "collective trauma" inherit an "unknown, unknowable past," a dynamic evident as Christina recalls both her own pain and her mother's grief. This layered trauma is deepened by Bennett's experience as a child of District Six[60] parents, where memories blend "pleasure and affection with bitterness and anger" (Bennett, 2021: 200; Hirsch, 2012: 85). Her mother was visibly distressed, while her father, perhaps, was either relaying the official reasoning he had been given or attempting to shield the family from the full impact by framing it in a way that might seem more understandable. As a child, she found herself absorbing her parents' pain, carrying a weight she couldn't fully comprehend. This fragmented recollection softened or blurred by the passage of time, leaves me wondering if it represents the entirety of her memory or if parts remain obscured, buried beneath the trauma (Van der Kolk, 2014). Van der Kolk (2014: 299), refers to this phenomenon as a "survival strategy," the mind's way of protecting the person from fully reliving the pain. The forced removal of Coloured families from Piesang Valley to create the country club

[60] Also a site of forced removals because of the Group Areas Act.

underscores the workings of settler whiteness, which, as a structure, exercises judgment over who belongs and who is deemed "out of place" (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2017; Wolfe, 2006). Why was the presence of indigenous families using the river, as they had for generations, deemed "undesirable"?

Settler colonialism, with its intrinsic drive to dominate, replaces indigenous lifeways with spaces of privilege, land that once sustained generations now repurposed as playgrounds for "White society." (Wolfe, 2006: 396, 397). Here, "who gets to judge?" (Bourdieu, 1984: 11; Foucault, 1980: 122) is pivotal: within this framework of settler "whiteness," judgment belongs exclusively to those who wield power, determining whose history is preserved and whose is erased. The families' connection to the river, a vital ancestral bond, is disregarded, their displacement justified under settler norms that perceive their presence as dispensable - an expression of what Australian historian Patrick Wolfe (2006: 388) identifies as the core of settler colonialism, "territoriality". This "logic of elimination" aims not only at the dissolution of indigenous societies but also at the construction of a new colonial society upon the expropriated land (Wolfe, 2006: 388). Settler colonialism, as Wolfe (2006) argues, operates with both a destructive and constructive mandate: it removes indigenous presence while simultaneously establishing a racialised order of belonging. Here, the ancestral connection to land and river is erased, further entrenching a structure of dispossession in which invasion becomes a structure, not an event.

An account by the late Magdalena McCallum[61] (as cited in Daniels, 2022), who was 76 when she shared her account of what happened during my Honours research, recalled the threat of violence and the fear, being much older than Christina at the time they were forcibly removed.

> One afternoon, this white man from this farm came and told my mother if she doesn't move tomorrow with these children, then he will come with the bulldozer tomorrow and throw our house down because we can't live there anymore because he bought the land. That morning early, we had to leave (McCallum as cited in Daniels, 2022).

[61] Christina's cousin.

This account shows the layered violence of dispossession under apartheid. The threat of bulldozing the family's home with the children, a physical manifestation of their safety, memories, stability, and sense of belonging - exemplifies the sheer brutality of forced removal. According to Platzky & Walker (1985: 133) bulldozers were common practice: "Their houses are demolished by bulldozers, and they are prevented from entering certain areas, all in terms of the law". Bennett (2021: 45) adds, "On 11 February 1966, it was declared an area designated for 'whites only', and over approximately 15 years, homes were bulldozed to make way for the new white neighbourhood to be built on its ruins".

Christina (2024) relayed that her father had to break down his house. The demands for people to leave were not merely a directive; it was a coercive act of control, demonstrating how ownership and access to land, once belonging to Coloured families, were seized through power dynamics upheld by both societal norms and legal structures (Foucault, 1982: 791). This is also demonstrated by Platzky & Walker's, (1985: 280) findings from typical responses on whether people would move or oppose the government, "We will move. We cannot refuse." The words from the "white man" carry an implicit reminder that resistance would only lead to more significant harm. The violence in this scene lies in the immediate threat and the implications that underscore it. The act of a stranger, backed by his racial identity and legally sanctioned authority, to not only order but intimidate a family into abandoning their home reveals a profound disregard for their humanity; in the words of O'Connell (2018: 13), "the oppressed were supposed to be, as victims and as non-human subjects." As Platzky & Walker. explains:

> People who are removed from their homes without their consent, let alone their choice, suffer a degree of abuse that is impossible to quantify. Their basic human right of control over their own lives has been denied. They cannot understand what has happened or why (Platzky & Walker., 1985: 380).

On how the family felt about the threat and being forced to leave their homes, McCallum's (as cited in Daniels, 2022) account echoes Platzky and Walker's (1985) findings:

> We had to be happy. It was because of the municipality we ended up in (New Horizon) that everyone had to leave. We didn't have a choice, especially my mom; she didn't have a choice; she was scared of the "boer[62]" He was rude, and he didn't care about people. She thought of her children. Everyone who lived there had to leave the land because we didn't have a right to be there. That morning early, we had to leave. We had cats, dogs and chickens. We had to leave the animals just like that. It's just the dogs that came with us. The cat we left and the chickens. Later, my mom found a sneaky way to get in to get some of the chickens back because they were beautiful hens. But I don't believe they got many of them back.

The phrase "We had to be happy" (McCallum, 2022, as cited in Daniels, 2022) speaks to a powerful expectation placed on those displaced: that they should accept their forced relocation with gratitude or at least without resistance (Platzky & Walker., 1985: 146). This forced compliance was social and intensely psychological, internalising a form of acceptance under duress. As Frantz Fanon (1967: 45, 67) argues, such psychological manipulation is a hallmark of oppressive systems, embedding within individuals a conflicted sense of obedience that quiets natural resistance. This demand for contentment under coercion reflects a strategy of psychological colonisation, where even legitimate grievances are silenced, and displaced individuals are pressured to adopt a facade of satisfaction, further entrenching their "subjugation" (Fanon, 1967). For the family, there was no choice but to leave, especially for the mother, who felt bound to protect her children in the face of an intimidating "boer" who showed no regard for their humanity. The image of leaving beloved animals behind - cats and chickens, which were a big part of their daily lives and routines - highlights the depth of the disruption caused by this forced move. The mother's later attempt to return and reclaim the chickens reveals a small yet poignant act of defiance and connection to the life they were compelled to abandon. This illustrates the emotional and cultural violence of dispossession, where even cherished animals were left as collateral damage in the upheaval of forced removals.

[62] The term 'boer' refers to an Afrikaner farmer.

The characterisation of the "boer" as "rude" and indifferent emphasises the dehumanising treatment they received - reducing their homes, their animals, and their lives to dispensable elements in the broader landscape of settler priorities. This analysis resonates with how archetypal settler characters, such as the "boer," symbolise and enact broader colonial power dynamics (Fanon, 1963). Fanon (1963: 15, 217) explains how dehumanisation under colonialism leads colonisers to view themselves as inherently superior, relegating indigenous lives and livelihoods to subordinate or expendable roles, thereby enforcing compliance through fear and psychological control.

Scholar Samantha Vice (2010: 323) builds on this with her work on the internalised impact of apartheid structures on the psyche of White people in South Africa, including the role of Afrikaner figures who enacted state power and enforced racial divisions. Her work highlights the moral and psychological complexities within the settler mindset, showing how many internalised a sense of dominance while simultaneously experiencing moral discomfort and denial (Vice, 2010: 330). Vice suggests that this acceptance of dominance involved psychological mechanisms of disavowal, allowing White South Africans to suppress or justify the oppressive systems they upheld (Vice, 2010: 330). By focusing on these processes, Vice (2010) shows the moral cost of racial hierarchy on the oppressor's psyche, where maintaining supremacy requires an ongoing rationalisation of inequality and violence.

According to McCallum (as cited in Daniels, 2022), they moved in with her oldest sister, who "only had a two-roomed place for my mom and us five children. We lived there for a long time before we moved to New Horizons. As the houses were built, they put us in according to the list" (McCallum, 2022, as cited in Daniels, 2022). The family's initial move into a cramped, two-room space with her oldest sister is evidence of the abrupt loss of stability and the makeshift conditions that displaced families endured. This transition highlights physical displacement and a significant loss of autonomy, as families like the McCallum's had no control over their next steps (Low, 2006:127). The bureaucratic way they were eventually assigned housing - "according to the list" - emphasises how forced removals turned once-independent communities into dependents of an impersonal system.

As Marthinus said, they were forcibly removed from Keurbooms. The Keurbooms River Nature Reserve, located near Plettenberg Bay, is a protected area renowned for its ancient yellowwood trees lining the dark waters, fish eagles soaring above, and Knysna turacos flashing their crimson wings amidst lush green forests (Ramsay, 2020).

> The dense, mostly silent forest has an air of eeriness and timelessness about it. If those trees could talk… they would be able to tell some story! Yellowwood trees in the Knysna forest nearby have been dated for over 1000 years, and I wouldn't be surprised if some of the yellow woods in the Keurbooms area are almost as old. Old man's beard – a type of yellow lichen – grows thickly on the forest trees. As part of a designated World Heritage Site, the reserve hosts river tours and conservation efforts (Ramsay, 2020).

Most writings on Keurbooms, including research (Hosking & Du Preez, 2004; Peard, 2018; Schumann, 2019) are focused mainly on natural elements like estuary floods, sedimentation, and sea animals, with little attention paid to the former human inhabitants of the area. This absence creates an impression that the region was "discovered" by colonial descendants, effectively erasing the presence of indigenous Coloured people and reinforcing a colonial perspective that views the land as vacant or uninhabited until claimed by settlers. (Tuck and Yang, 2012: 12). As Cameroonian historian Mbembe (2001: 4) argues, "Africa thus stands out as the supreme receptacle of the West's obsession with, and circular discourse about, the facts of "absence," "lack," and "non-being," of identity and difference". Like Piesang Valley, the Keurbooms area is now embedded in the eco-tourism industry, where its scenic beauty is promoted but often overlooks the land's more profound cultural and ancestral significance.

Recalling the repeated forced removals they were subjected to, Mathinus said:

> Die boere[63] was so gewees, as hulle daar gekom het, dan het hulle gesê, dis ons grond díe, ons soek julle nie op die grond nie. So was dit in die apartheid jare. Ons gee julle soveel dae, dan moet julle weg wees. Ons het so baie plekke gebly daar, en elke keer het hulle ons weggejaag, en gesê, wat soek julle hier, dis ons grond, ons soek julle nie hierso nie. En dan moet ons trek, so ons het vir jare in Keurbooms gebly, maar nie op een plek nie, want ons was altyd weggejaag van die grond af. Die

[63] In this instance he could be referring to Afrikaners in general, the term is also sometimes used in that context.

> een huis waar ons in grootgeword het, het ons vir jare ingebly, maar toe kom die boer ook en sê julle moet nou trek (Booysen. M, 2024).
>
> *The white farmers (or Afrikaner farmers) were like that; when they got there, they said, that's our land; we don't want you on the land. That was the case in the apartheid years. We give you so many days, and then you must be gone; that's what they said. We stayed there in so many places, and every time, they chased us away, saying, what are you doing here? This is our land; we don't want you here. And then we have to move, so we stayed in Keurbooms for years, but not in one place because we were always chased away off the land. The one house we grew up in, we stayed in for years, but then the white man also came and said you have to move now.*

The repeated use of the term "boer" in these accounts emphasises not only a specific group of individuals - the White Afrikaner farmers - but also the collective power and authority they represented during apartheid. For the families being displaced, "boer" became more than a term for a white farmer; it symbolised the oppressor figure who had the legal and societal backing to enforce displacement and control land ownership (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Vice, 2010).

The experience described here illustrates how White farmers asserted their dominance through what Mbembe (2001: 4) terms "symbolically structured language." This use of language reflects a worldview in which White settlers claimed ownership over land inhabited by generations of Coloured communities. Casual yet commanding statements like, "This is our land" and "We don't want you here" embody a refusal to recognise the indigenous presence and reduce people's connection to the land to something temporary and dispensable. Such language acts not only as a verbal assertion of control but as a form of verbal abuse, positioning settler power as the ultimate authority over who belongs. As a theorist of Latin American studies, Mary Louise Pratt (1992: 31) calls it "out of the picture," - reinforcing a colonial hierarchy rooted in exclusion and denial of indigenous rights.

This repeated reference to "boer" also reinforces the sustained trauma and fear experienced by these families, who faced relentless displacement by those holding unchecked authority over land and people's lives. The theme of systematic displacement and the erasure of indigenous presence is also prominent here. The repeated chasing away of families from their homes, with

the limited time frames given to "be gone," created an environment of perpetual insecurity and fear (Platzky & Walker., 1985: 166, 207).

Repeated removals were also not uncommon during apartheid, as Platzky and Walker (1985: 373) note:

> Many have been moved more than once as different government departments require the land or as policy changes in government. Many who have already been moved by the central are threatened with removal by the Bantustan authorities (Platzky & Walker., 1985: 373).

The dispossessions described in these accounts are as if the government of the day anticipated the end of apartheid and was making haste to take as much as they could as fast as possible. As Platzky & Walker (1985: 120) write:

> The government's policy of relocation is part of a policy of deliberate dispossession of black South Africans, of excluding them from their birthright. The people who are removed are almost entirely black. They are moved out of what is claimed to be white South Africa into small, impoverished and separate (areas) (Platzky & Walker, 1985: 120).

Marthinus (2024) adds that they were the last people to move after their neighbours were loaded on trucks to The Crags:

> Ons was die laaste mense wat op Keurbooms gebly het. Die ander het na Crags vertrek, hulle het mos 'n lokasie op die Crags gebou. Die lokasie was gebou in 1974 of 1973 daar in die Crags. Toe kom hulle en laai net die mense se meubels op met die trokke en sê dat hulle het 'n plek vir die mense daar bo. En die mense moes net gaan, hulle het nie 'n keuse gehad nie. Daar was baie mense wat daar gebly het in

> Keurbooms, want ons het ‘n sokkerspan gehad. Ek kan die plekke gaan vir julle gaan wys eendag. Daar was ‘n klomp mense wat saam gebly het, maar die huis waar ons in gebly het, staan nog steeds. Dis so toegegroei, daar het ‘n pad afgegaan, daar waar die ou winkeltjie was, daar is ‘n restaurant nou daar, as jy afdraai Keurboom straat, daar gaan ‘n pad regaf, maar dai huis is toegegroei. Ek en my twee broers was eendag daar gewees, toe kon ons net ry tot by die huis waar ons gebly het, verder af is dit, toegegroei. Maar daar is ‘n pad wat daar afgaan, tot onder, dit kom in daar waar die teerpad ingaan (Booysen.M, 2024).

> *We were the last people to stay at Keurbooms. The others left for Crags; they had built a township at the Crags. The location*[64] *was built in 1974 or 1973 there in the Crags. Then they came and just loaded up the people’s furniture with the trucks and said they had a place for the people up there. And the people just had to go; they had no choice. There were many people who stayed in Keurbooms, and we had a football team. There were a lot of people staying together, but the house we stayed in is still standing. It’s so overgrown, there’s a road going down, there’s a little shop there, there’s a restaurant there now if you turn down Keurbooms, there’s a road going straight down, but the house is overgrown.*

Marthinus’ words, “We were the last people to stay on Keurbooms,” emphasise the finality of their displacement, marking them as the last witnesses to a way of life that once thrived in this area. Why? How? These are the only questions I’m left with at the thought of the sheer cruelty. Mbembe’s (2003: 11) concept of “necropolitics” describes how colonial and apartheid systems exert control by “dictating” who can live with dignity and who is subjected to dispossession, displacement and death. The subsequent forced relocations to a new “location” at Crags, with belongings hastily loaded onto trucks, illustrate the lack of choice and “autonomy” for those removed (Christman, 2017: 11). This involuntary relocation shows how Coloured people were

[64] Often used to describe a township.

systematically stripped from their homes and forced to reassign their lives to government-designated areas with no regard for personal or historical ties to the land (Bennett, 2021: 37).

Marthinus reference to the community bonds once held at Keurbooms, particularly through the football team, sheds light on the deep social connections that were dismantled by these relocations (Bennett, 2021: 48). Football, an activity that brought people together, reflects a shared community life that was interrupted, dispersing friends and family across new, unfamiliar locations and weakening community cohesion. The description of the abandoned house, now overgrown, symbolises the erasure of these former lives.

As these first-person accounts reveal, life before apartheid's forced removals were deeply rooted in community, self-sufficiency, and a profound connection to land and heritage. Families like the Van der Westhuizens and the Booysens lived interconnected lives in Piesang Valley and Keurbooms, their daily rhythms woven into the natural landscapes of Plettenberg Bay. Their memories show lives characterised by happiness,[65] shared history and cultural continuity, grounded in generational practices and relationships to the land. Similar stories of community-centred lifestyles across South Africa illustrate how traditional practices formed an integral part of Black families' identities, as Skelcher (2003: 762) details in his description of Lake Bhangazi's communal way of life:

> The idyllic life at Lake Bhangazi was a communal life of farming, grazing cattle, hunting, and gathering. The men speared fish from the freshwater of Lake Bhangazi and harvested the Indian Ocean. Men smoked tobacco or sniffed it as snuff. They also smoked hemp, insangu or dagga. Men and women gathered fruits and nuts while young boys tended the cattle, which were a measure of wealth and power. Men needed the cattle also for lobola or the bride price (Skelcher, 2003: 762).

The displacement of these communities was more than just physical - it was a deliberate attempt to dismantle cultural identity and social cohesion. This connection to land, culture, and community in Plettenberg Bay represents a generational heritage of its indigenous Coloured

[65] In this context I speak about happiness as a sense of well-being, fulfilment, and contentment.

people that apartheid policies sought systematically to erase. Fanon (1963: 14) touches on the intentions behind this separation:

> Violence in the colonies does not only have for its aim the keeping of these enslaved men at arm's length; it seeks to dehumanize them. Everything will be done to wipe out their traditions, to substitute our language for theirs and to destroy their culture without giving them ours (Fanon,1963: 14).

Life in New Horizons - No New Beginning

The impact of the forced removals was severe, both the "painful emotional wounds" as referred to by South African psychologist and scholar Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (2003: 95) and in practical terms as Plaatjie (1916) refers to taxes that still needed to be paid even after people had lost so much. Christina (2024) recalls how authorities only preceded to act even harsher after they were relocated to New Horizons:

> Baie van die mense wat bymekaar gebly het in Piesangrivier, het bymekaar gebly in New Horizon. Soos die mense wat langsaan bly, ons het hulle geken, want hulle het ook uit Piesangrivier gekom. En die mense wat aan die oorkant gebly het. Net 'n paar van ons, nie almal het naby ons gebly nie. Baie mense kon ook nie die huur bekostig het nie, want ons moes huur betaal het. En as jy nie die huur betaal het nie, dan het hulle jou uitgesit uit die huis uit. Dan moes jy by mense gaan bly, totdat hulle weer besluit het om jou 'n huisie te gee, wat by jou sak pas. My aunty het haar huis verloor. Ja hulle het letterlik gekom, die munisipale mense het gekom, en dan sluit hulle jou deure toe, en jy kon nie ingaan voordat jy die geld betaal het nie, en dit nadat hulle vir ons uitgegooi uit, uit ons eie grond uit. Dit is hoe hulle hier was. Partykeer het hulle sommer jou furniture ook uitgesit (Kamfer, 2024).

> *Many people who stayed together in Piesang River stayed together in New Horizons. Like the people who live next door, we knew them because they also came from Piesang River. And the people who stayed on the other side. Just a few of us, not all of them, stayed close to us. A lot of people couldn't afford the rent either, because we had to pay rent. And if you didn't pay the rent, then they evicted you from the house. Then you had to stay with people, until they again decided to give you a house that fit your pocket. My aunty lost her house. Yes, they literally came, the municipal people came, and then they shut your doors, and you couldn't go in until you paid the money, and this after they threw us out, off of our own land. That's how they were here. Sometimes they put out your furniture as well.*

The Van der Westhuizen family had already been reduced to poverty, with Christina (Kamfer, 2024) describing her mother as a domestic worker and her father as a gardener, roles historically imposed on indigenous people due to colonialism and legislation like the Hottentot Code, which institutionalised servitude and severely restricted economic opportunities (Dooling, 2005: 50). Before apartheid forced removals, they lived on expansive lands with room to play, relax, and cultivate a sense of freedom; residents' accounts demonstrate they were self-sufficient. Now, that land has been transformed into a golf course, a symbol of the freedom they lost, accessible only to a select few - while their new cramped settlement mirrors the dispossession policies of the Group Areas Act and Native Lands Act. Christina lives on a 156m² plot, accommodating her three-bedroom house, a backyard dwelling, and a small front yard for eight people, including her sister-in-law, her two daughters, and their children. This setup reflects what American geographer Edward Soja (2010: 27) terms "spatial injustice," with policies that relegated Black families to overcrowded spaces while reserving vast, open landscapes, now repurposed as a site of leisure, for White people (Platzky & Walker, 1985: 376). This transformation was more than just a physical relocation; it represented a complete overhaul of their way of life. As the account in "Surplus People" (Platzky & Walker, 1985: 376) highlights the relocations shocked the system, especially for residents who had previously relied on subsistence farming and small livestock to supplement their incomes. Now thrust into a cash-based economy, they faced high living costs they were unprepared for, losing access to land where they could grow their own food. As Platzky & Walker (1985: 378) notes, families

once self-sufficient are now "reduced to a total dependence on cash incomes," left vulnerable without the "small stock like chickens" they once kept sustaining themselves.

Christina's description of municipal officials aggressively collecting rent - even evicting people without mercy - illustrates how these policies stripped away any remaining autonomy[66] (Christman, 2017: 7).

The impact on daily life was colossal. In one account, a resident describes the new reality of urban life: "You have to pay for everything here - for fuel, for food, rent and taxes, even for a place to be buried" (Platzky & Walker., 1985: 378). Another observation is how Christina (Kamfer, 2024) refers to her father's employer paying his rent and deducting it from his salary.

> Dis wat ons mense gekry het hier in New Horizons. Tensy jy nie vir goeie mense gewerk het wat jou huur betaal het nie. Soos die mense wat my pa voor gewerk het. Hulle het elke week van my pa se salaris afgetrek, en so het hulle ons se goed betaal. Dis waarom ons nooit uit ons huis uitgesit was nie (Kamfer, 2024).
>
> *That's what our people got here in New Horizon. Unless you didn't work for good people who paid your rent. Like the people my father worked for. They deducted from my father's salary every week, and that's how they paid our stuff. That's why we were never evicted from our home.*

Christina's (2024) account of her father's employer deducting rent directly from his salary is a reminder of the total economic control imposed on their lives. This dependency on low-wage labour and lack of land forced the Van der Westhuizen family and countless others into a cycle of poverty with limited options for self-sufficiency. The cumulative effect of these policies stripped them of their ancestral lands and systematically eroded their economic and social independence, leaving little room for autonomy in their lives. Their experience resonates with Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben's concept of "bare life" (1998: 4). Agamben (1998: 106) argues that modern power structures reduce individuals to a state of "bare life", where their

[66] It will be discussed further in this chapter.

existence is stripped down to survival, with autonomy and self-determination surrendered to the control of bureaucratic and economic forces. This account comes across as a collaboration between the government and the White employer. It begs the question, who is the employer in this story because why are they deducting the rent instead of the person not just being paid and paying their own rent? It is as if reducing the person to a child and removing their agency. Again, one can draw on the slave-like relationship as the "owner" becomes responsible for the enslaved person, bringing into question the idea of autonomy. Which Christman (2017: 7) argues requires "independence from the control of others":

> The major conditions of self-government are these: mental abilities that allow a person to form and act on her intentions and plans; independence from coercion and manipulation; and an adequate range of options (Christman, (2017: 7).

Said's (1978: 7, 247) concept of the "childish primitive" in relation to the European ideas of the Orient can be applied here to show how the autonomy of Coloured people is systematically undermined, treating them as incapable of self-governance and as inherently "backward." According to Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Gyekye (1997: 54), autonomy is rooted in an individual's capacity for "self-assertion, will of one's own, that enables one to determine at least some of one's own goals and to pursue them, and to control one's destiny." Allowing people to make independent choices about their goals and life plans while remaining connected to their community (Gyekye, 1997: 54). He argues that the creation and development of human culture emerge from this capacity, as individuals exercise autonomy not only to pursue personal goals but also to contribute meaningfully to their social context (Gyekye, 1997: 24). However, Christman (2017: 11) contextualises how conditions like those under colonial and apartheid policies, marked by racism, exploitation, and segregation, are incompatible with genuine autonomy. As he notes, "discrimination, segregation, and exclusion plague many persons and groups in advanced democracies despite the general commitment in those societies to equality of opportunity and formal anti-discrimination" (Christman, 2017: 11). According to Christman (2017: 11), autonomy requires "affirmative policies of recognition and respect" to counteract these oppressive social structures, as marginalised individuals need both material and social resources to pursue identities and ways of life free from imposed dependencies.

The conditions discussed by Christman were not available to the victims of these apartheid-era forced removals; there were no policies in their favour. Instead, the policies were explicitly designed to marginalise and exploit them, creating favourable conditions only for the privileged few. In this context, individuals were deprived of the autonomy necessary to shape their own lives and forced instead into structures that reinforced dependency and control.

Christina further recounts how another family member, with a husband who was mentally ill and unable to work, eventually lost their home. This example underscores the vulnerability imposed on marginalised communities, where any inability to conform to rigid economic expectations, such as the capacity to work, could result in total displacement.

> My auntie Lettie, sy kon nie werk nie, haar man is deurmekaar, haar rent het agter geraak. Haar man was mentally siek, ek weet nie wanneer hy so geraak het nie, toe ek maar groot raak toe sien ek hy is siek . Hy het somtyds deurmekaar geraak en hy het nie gewerk nie en sy vrou het ook nie gewerk nie. Kyk hulle het by my ouma gebly, toe sterf my ouma, voordat ons New Horizon toe getrek het. My ouma se huis was ook afgebreek in Piesangrivier. Dit was nie lekker nie, want my aunty moes toe by Tyrone se ouma gaan bly het, want hulle was uitgesit, toe lank na lank, toe kry hulle weer ‘n drie vertrek huisie om in te trek, wat minder geld is, toe kon hulle dit bekostig. Toe gaan haar man Valkenberg[67] toe, en toe kon sy gaan werk (Kamfer, 2024).
>
> *At that time, my aunty Lettie, couldn’t work, her husband was confused, her rent had fallen behind. Her husband had a mental illness, and he didn’t work, and his wife didn’t work either. Look, they stayed with my grandmother; then my grandmother died before we moved to New Horizons. My grandmother’s house was also torn down in Piesang River. It wasn’t nice because my aunty had to go and stay with Tyrone’s grandmother because they had been evicted. Long after that, they got a 3-room cottage to move into, which was less money so that they could*

[67] Hospital for people living with mental illness.

> *afford it. Then, her husband went to Valkenberg, and she could go to work.*

Using the rationale of privilege and oppression, in "Privilege in place: How organisational practices contribute to meshing privilege in place", scholar Lucia Crevani (2019: 1) problematises the "naturalness" of privilege, which comes through when reading the descriptions of the golf course and the lodge and almost any tourist marketing. One has to consider the traumatic violence these sites hold of dispossessing people, enabled by state-sponsored policies, to make way for luxuries afforded to some. The "invisible packaging" of white privilege that lay behind the words, Crevani (2019) notes:

> Privilege thus means having a position that is constructed as natural and that allows access to rewards and resources. Mobilising 'nature' has powerful effects since 'nature' suggests that something has an essential character, immutable and fixed, but also that there is a 'plan' or 'force' that makes things the way they are ('Mother Nature'), and that such things are genuine and given, not constructed by 'culture'. Hence, naturalising current situations in which people have different access to resources and benefits contributes to maintaining privilege (Crevani, 2019: 1).

Sociologist Jacob Boersema (2022: 13), in his work "Can We Unlearn Racism? What South Africa Teaches Us about Whiteness", explores the concept of "whiteness" through the lens of South Africa's sociopolitical landscape. Boersema (2022: 13) examines how whiteness operates as an identity imbued with privilege and social power, which is reinforced through historical and systemic structures in society, "Even to whites without power, money, or influence, whiteness offered the psychological benefit of feeling superior and secure."

Drawing from American historian Barbara Fields, Boersema (2022: 22) adds that "whiteness must be analysed in the context of society's racial order and the work that is being done by white people to maintain it". "Whiteness" thus functions as a social construct and system of power that confers unearned privileges, advantages, and often invisibility to people classified

as "White," especially within societies historically shaped by colonialism and racial hierarchies, like South Africa (Crevani 2019: 1). Dr Annika Teppo (2017), in her critique of "Waste of a White Skin" by Tiffany Willoughby-Herard (2015), emphasises that "whiteness" in South Africa comprises varied "shades and hues," encompassing a range of ethnicities and cultural identities (Teppo, 2017: 645). Specifically, she notes distinctions between Afrikaners and English-speaking White people, highlighting historical tensions such as "Afrikaners' deep historical resentment of and bitterness towards the British - particularly in the inter-war era" (Teppo, 2017: 645). While this diversity within "whiteness" shows that it is not a monolithic identity, I would argue, as Boersema (2022: 24) suggests, that these differences do not negate the overarching privileges associated with being classified as White in South Africa. Boersema (2022) argues that, despite internal distinctions, whiteness as a social structure continues to confer collective privileges. This is evidenced by the economic disparities in areas like Plettenberg Bay, where structural advantages have been afforded to those recognised as White, reinforcing a system of racial privilege that transcends intra-racial divisions (Teppo, 2017: 646; Bitou LM, 2023). Hence, while South African whiteness is multifaceted, the societal benefits it grants remain collective and pervasive.

As DST-NRF South African National Chair in Critical Diversity Studies Melissa Steyn (2018: 9) argues on the eve of a democratic South Africa: "The negotiated settlement secured the economic position of White South Africans. This meant that there was no simple reversal in power relations, despite the end of white supremacist rule." Therefore, I hypothesise while whiteness may include internal ethnic divisions, it remains a powerful structure of privilege in South Africa that often supersedes these differences when it comes to maintaining racial hierarchies.

In New Horizons, every street name relates back to the past. Melkhout is reminiscent of the indigenous yellowed tree. There is also Piesang River Street on the corner of my mother-in-law's street and a Redbourne Street, which takes them back to primary school.

Positioning place names as expressions of "identity, power, location, and culture" (Williamson, 2023:4), this phenomenon of naming streets in New Horizons after historical and natural references to the region's past reflects a process of colonial toponymy. Where place names are seen as artefacts, a tool of memory and power (Williamson, 2023:2).

> European colonialism sought to inscribe order and meaning on non-European landscapes through the process of place naming. Naming or renaming was fundamental to the extension of imperial control over physical and human environments (Williamson, 2023:1).

By embedding street names with historical and ecological references in these "sites of meaning," history through memory, "takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things" (Nora, 1989: 9). This naming system effectively ties the physical landscape of New Horizons to a specific colonial narrative, often emphasising settler histories and resources tied to the exploitation of indigenous land and people. The resonance of names like "Piesangrivier" and "Redbourne" naturalises colonial history, subtly embedding legacies of dispossession within the community's everyday life. By mapping these colonial references onto streets in New Horizons, this toponymic practice reinforces a specific historical perspective, binding the community's spatial experience to a colonial past that often marginalises indigenous histories (Williamson, 2022). This can create dissonance for residents, as it subtly enforces a narrative of colonial "civilisation" and dominance, while indigenous identities and memories risk being relegated to secondary status.

Lyfpynstraat - Forced Removals, the Aftermath

Just before the dawn of democracy and during its infancy, life in Lyfpyn Straat felt like an uncanny prison, a place engineered to confine and control rather than nurture. For my husband, born in New Horizons in 1986, this was his only reality; violence was "all-encompassing", woven into the fabric of everyday life. "It was all around you," he recalls, his memories shaped by Casspir[68] police vans patrolling the streets, taverns flowing with alcohol, fighting, armed officers firing rubber bullets at children. This was a harsh world, far removed from any sense of safety or freedom, making childhood itself a lesson in fear and boundaries. According to Ralph Ziman, who leads a project on the Casspir's history, these vehicles were "designed in South Africa in the late 1970s and brought into service in the early 80s" by the apartheid police

[68] Casspir van were used to intimidate demonstrators in apartheid South Africa

and defence forces, becoming "the ubiquitous heavy hand of apartheid oppression in South African townships, its mere presence a form of terror" (Ziman, n.d.).

Bennett's (2021: 77, 99) analysis of memory and trauma within spaces of historic violence provides a layered understanding of the impact of state-sanctioned oppression on communities. Bennett (2021: 42) notes that trauma not only exists in these spaces but can also be passed down "intergenerationally". Tyrone, therefore, experienced this trauma in two layers, first through the lingering pain of his mother, father, and grandparents, whose own memories of forced displacement and confinement carried echoes of violence and loss. Then, he faced it directly in his own childhood reality, where violence was constant and material. According to Bennett (2021: 191), these spaces of historic trauma become embodied memories, where past wounds are constantly re-lived and transformed into present-day experiences, making Lyfpyn Straat a place haunted by both inherited and immediate trauma.

Tyrone further adds that they lived right next to a graveyard, literally surrounded by "death".

> The Casspir would come in the street and close it off on both sides, even post-apartheid. Till I was 16, that used to happen often there because of those two taverns in our street. We used to be shot with rubber bullets as kids. I remember one of my friends they shot in the eye. They shot me in the back badly; I think I was about 11 or 12, and this was a regular occurrence. I once witnessed a lady chop a man with an axe in the face to the point that the axe got stuck in his face. I witnessed my counsin get stabbed to death and the man that stabbed him he was out of jail after in five years but he stabbed my cousin to death, after already killing other people. Lyfpyn straat was filled with violence as a child and it was all-encompassing, it was all around you. Now I can only imagine how traumatic that must have been for my mother them knowing where they come from, from a place of peace, a place of life, a place of community where people lived with respect among each other and nature (Booysen.T, 2024).

Applying Van der Kolk's (2014: 43, 64) theory Tyrone's memory of growing up provides a robust framework to analyse the impact of sustained violence on one's sense of "safety and home." The thought of the reality of this memory leaves me speechless. What kind of childhood is this? It takes my mind straight to the children of Gaza. How are they making it through each day?

Van der Kolk (2014: 13) argues that trauma disrupts both a person's inner sense of safety and their relationship with familiar spaces, including home, which ideally serves as a sanctuary. By eroding one's internal security, trauma makes distinguishing between safety and danger difficult, even in spaces meant to provide refuge (Van der Kolk (2014: 142). Anthropologist Shelley Mallett (2004: 71 -75) describes this idealised "home as haven" model as a space where people can withdraw from the outside world, protected by the nurturing care within. In this vision, the home offers both physical shelter and emotional support to be yourself and feel free. This notion extends beyond just physical comfort to include the essential need for protection, a place where one can sleep and be vulnerable yet safe from harm and shielded from external elements (Mallett, 2004).

Yet, in situations marked by violence and instability, the ideal of home as a haven is shattered. Trauma and violence transform home into a place of false safety, a paradox of security permeated by fear and instability. As Van der Kolk (2014: 13) highlights, trauma distorts perceptions of safety, making even the familiar feel dangerous. The home becomes a safe and secure space on the surface yet remains vulnerable, unable to provide absolute protection or comfort. In such environments, home becomes an extension of external chaos, a place that can no longer offer peace or genuine sanctuary like the families once had in Keurbooms and Piesang Valley.

"I would have loved a simple life, where I could catch the biggest fish in the world, but that's not my life" (Booysen.T, 2024). This powerful statement from Tyrone brings to mind his mother Christina's yearning for a return home to Piesang Valley. Both express a longing for a world where simplicity and familiarity reign, where life is filled with the comforts of peace in nature. This idyllic vision, captured by both mother and son, is marked by what freedom means to them, "a rediscovery of the ordinary", and a deep sense of belonging (Ndebele, 1991). This shared yearning between mother, and son highlights a profound theme woven through their stories: the feeling of safety and belonging intrinsic to their idea of home, which has been lost to apartheid displacement and societal shifts. The longing for their real home is not simply a

nostalgic desire but a reclaiming of a life marked by freedom, peace, and authentic connection. In their narratives, "home" becomes more than a physical place; it is an ideal of refuge and comfort, embodying a freedom that feels more significant in its absence. In contrast, New Horizons speaks to a sense of "denial of freedom" (Lalu, 2009: 106). Through the "performance of memory", Christina and Tyrone bridge the past with imagined present realities, reclaiming the sense of belonging and community that was once integral to their lives past (Julius, 2008: 12).

Apartheid-era forced removals were more than relocations; they were acts of Lalu's (2009: 21) idea of "erasure", severing families from the lands, traditions, and identities that had long anchored their lives. The name New Horizons can be seen as an "unfulfilled" promise (Lalu, 2009: 14-20) instead of a brighter tomorrow, delivering only hardship and disorientation. "New Horizons" carries a bitter irony, suggesting opportunity but concealing the reality of economic marginalisation and privilege consolidation among White residents (Boersema, 2022: 3). So the name "New Horizons" instead represents a reminder of the trauma, of violent erasure, devastating "land expropriation, forced migration, and coercive employment" suffered by the indigenous Coloured community at the hands of two racist systems of "White supremacy," colonialism and apartheid (Boersema, 2022: 4-30).

Conclusion

This chapter shows the contrast between the life of simplicity, autonomy, and beauty that existed before forced removals and the violence and systemic oppression that followed. Before the removals, indigenous Coloured families were owners of prime land in Plettenberg Bay and had a sense of freedom, enjoying the river, the ocean, deeply connected to their heritage. The introduction of laws like the Group Areas Act, enforced through brutal violence and coercion, shattered this way of life, stripping people of their homes, autonomy, and sense of belonging. Through narrative inquiry, this chapter illuminates the profound personal and communal losses caused by apartheid's forced removals in Plettenberg Bay, as well as the enduring scars left in its wake. Systemic inequality, fractured communities, and cultural dislocation became the hallmarks of life for generations of the Van der Westhuizens and the Booysen families. Yet, despite the devastation, this chapter also captures the resilience of these Plettenberg Bay residents, who adapted and put one foot in front of the other as they continue to navigate the long shadows of these life-altering events. By exploring these histories through the intertwined

lenses of law, violence, and lived experience, this chapter draws attention to the urgent need to confront and address apartheid's ongoing legacies, paving the way for a more just and equitable future.

Pictures of street names in New Horizons, a constant reminder of what has been lost.

Figure 24:Melkhout reminder of the trees (Daniels, 2024)

Figure 25: Reminder of the mission school the Van der Westhuizen family attended in Piesang Valley (Daniels, 2024).

Figure 26: Right on the corner of Kiepersol is Piesangrivier street (Daniels, 2024

Chapter Four - Food

Overview

This chapter delves into how food serves as a medium for cultural heritage and identity, within the Van der Westhuizen and Booysen families of Plettenberg Bay. Exploring their food practices through a historical lens, the chapter examines the continuity of indigenous, earth-to-table sustenance methods that persisted through the colonial and apartheid eras. It further investigates how traditional cooking techniques, local ingredients, and gender roles shaped food preparation, drawing comparisons between past and present practices. The chapter will also highlight shifts in foodways due to forced removals, economic pressures, and changing societal values, addressing the families' reflections on organic eating, food accessibility, and hospitality.

Ons was 'Organic' - From Earth to Kitchen Table.

According to Latoch, Stasiak, and Siczek (2024: 3), identity is often expressed through food as a form of cultural heritage. Viewing the Van der Westhuizen family's table from Plettenberg Bay through this lens situates their food traditions directly within the colonial and apartheid eras, where indigenous people maintained an earth-to-table approach to sustenance. As Hester (Janjies, 2024) recalls, "Daai tyd het ons nie spices gehad nie" *Those days, we never had spices*, while Christina (Kamfer, 2024) adds, "Ons het organic ge-eet" *We ate organic*.

> My ma het gekook, ons het baie afval geëet, pens, en ons het baie vis geëet, vis was ons favorite, dan het ons patat, som tye het my ma vir ons patat in die oond gesit. En dan het sy vir ons vis gesteam met die patat. Die mense noem dit nou 'n sloesie. Dan het ons vis en patat geëet. Op 'n Sondag sal sy vir ons groente gemaak het, met hoender, en as sy afval gemaak het of sy het kerries gemaak, dan het sy brood geknie, dan het sy dompelings gemaak vir ons. En dit was ons se kosse. Soos ek sê, ons het baie organic dai jare gelewe, so ons het als vars produkte, vars vis uit die see uit. Ons het nie rerag spices gebruik nie, al wat ek van weet, was kerrie, peper en sout. Ons het nooit spices gebruik nie.

> In my kindertyd, het ons nooit spices geëet nie, ons het nou begin spices en goed doen (Hester, 2024).
>
> *My mom cooked, we ate a lot of offal and tripe, and we ate a lot of fish. Fish was our favourite, and then we had sweet potatoes. Sometimes, my mom put our sweet potatoes in the oven. And then she steamed fish for us with the sweet potatoes. The people now call it a 'sloesie'. Then we ate fish and sweet potatoes. On a Sunday, she would make us vegetables with chicken; if she had made offal or curries, she would knead bread and then make dumplings for us. And those were our foods. As I said, we lived much more organically during those years, so we had fresh produce and fish from the sea. We did not use many spices; all I knew of was curry powder, pepper and salt. We never used spices in my childhood; we never ate spices, but we started to do spices and do things now.*

What stands out is the pastoral lifestyle synonymous with the Khoikhoi and the fishing practices of the "Strandloper," both of which resonate with the subsistence patterns of indigenous people in pre-colonial times and beyond (Erasmus, 2017: 71). Snyman (2012: 91) notes that before "developing a national cuisine", the only culinary tradition that existed in South Africa included: "Khoikhoi herding fat-tailed sheep, San (Bushmen) hunting game, and Strandlopers living off the sea". Sara Wilhelmina Erasmus and Louwrens Christiaan Hoffman (2017: 71) in "What is meat in South Africa?" posit that for most South Africans "a meal without meat is considered not to be a meal at all."

> Reminiscent of the Khoisan who fire-roasted and air-dried meat, South Africans are well known for their barbecue (called braai in Afrikaans) (Figure 1) and biltong (a dried preserved meat product) (Erasmus, 2017: 71).

Meat was an integral part of life for the Van der Westhuizens and the Booysens. Main dishes consisted of meat and vegetables or fish and vegetables with "vis en patat" fish and sweet

potatoes, ranking as a firm favourite. They also ate vegetables grown and harvested from their land, a practice maintained by the Van der Westhuizen and Booysen families before forced removals. Christina (Kamfer, 2024) describes how dishes were adapted based on the seasonality of vegetables and fish[69], recounting how her father would harvest sweet potatoes when in season[70] and leave them on the roof to ripen, allowing them to "draw sweetness." This practice highlights some traditional methods used in food preparation. She also vividly remembers her mother cooking these red sweet potatoes in the oven[71], recalling how, when the skin was peeled off, it became crispy, releasing a "sweet oil" that seeped from the potatoes, a sensory detail that captures the rich, caramelised flavour and texture of this family favourite.

Hester (Jantjies, 2024) also remembers that their household was run, reflecting traditional gender roles within the family, where food preparation, care work, and managing the household's daily needs largely fell to women. The commonly used ingredients were homemade leaven from flour, water, yeast, and sugar. The family also prepared fermented porridge called mageu[72].

For Marthinus (Booysen, 2024), perhaps because he is male, his recollection about food, was brief, mainly remembering his mother's cooking and generosity. He explains that there were no refrigerators then, "so if you bought meat, you had to make it, right at the same moment". In describing his community's lifestyle during apartheid, foodways poverty theory offers insight into the reliance on affordable, accessible options like "canned food" during that period. Stews were a staple throughout the week, while meat was reserved for Sundays, making it a special occasion. He said:

> My ma het bredies gemaak, en ook somtyds vis disse gemaak. Maar my ma het die meeste gehou van mince disse. Op 'n Sondag het ons 'n stukkie vleis gekry. Sy het mince bolletjies gemaak met rys en mielierys. My ma was 'n baie goeie mens gewees, as daar iemand kom iets vra, dan deel sy dit, (Booysen.M, 2024).

[69] She mentions the seasonality of different fish like Galjoen, Kolstert and Leervis.
[70] October to December.
[71] They used a wood-fired stove with oven.
[72] A non-alcoholic, fermented drink made from maize meal that is a traditional part of Southern African culture

> *My mother also made stews with mince and sometimes fish dishes. On Sundays, we had a piece of meat. My mother was very generous; if someone asked for something, she would share. Food remains central to showing hospitality*.

This illustrates how economic constraints shaped food practices yet also carried values of generosity and hospitality. Hester also explained a similar pattern: meat was mainly for Sundays. They also bought from the butcher and bartered vegetables and fish among one another. When her father did slaughter an animal, it would be shared among the community, "wanneer hulle geslag het, het hulle vir almal uitgedeel, hulle het mekaar altyd gehelp en vir mekaar gegee, hulle het patats, uie, wortels en pampoene geplant," *when they slaughtered, they handed out to everyone, They always helped each other and gave to each other, they planted sweet potatoes, onions, carrots and pumpkins*. She also describes a type of "stone soup" or "klipsop", which consisted only of vegetables and herbs, shallots, thyme, parsley, and celery, in the gardens. Magdeleen van Wyk and Barton (1993: 13), in the "South African Cooking" cookbook, refer to stock as a means of adding flavour, "The constantly simmering stockpot was a prominent feature of every kitchen in days gone by. Into it went every scrap of leftover meat, as well as bones and vegetable trimmings - in fact, virtually everything that could help to improve the flavour of the stock." Van Wyk and Barton (1993: 12) observe that "even the humblest kitchen relied on a good soup to stimulate appetites." They also suggest that the minced meatballs recipe may reflect the influence of settlers: "Frikkadels, which were extremely popular in Holland during the 17th and 18th centuries, were introduced here by the Dutch settlers" (Van Wyk and Barton, 1993: 71).

Offal, Identity, and Sustainability

Although offal was once a dietary staple for the Van der Westhuizen family, it is now consumed only on rare occasions, raising questions about changing perceptions and usage. In their study, "Edible Offal as a Valuable Source of Nutrients in the Diet", Latoch et al. (2024: 3) argues that the "optimal use of offal in processing and catering can significantly benefit human life in areas like diet quality, food security, and conservation of natural resources," especially given the high

demand for meat globally. They observe that the consumption of animal by-products, including offal, varies globally, shaped by factors such as customs, culture, and religion.

The Wiley Encyclopedia of Food Science and Technology by Frederick Francis (2010: 35) defines these animal by-products as "edible" or "inedible," with edible offal, including heart, liver, tongue, oxtail, kidney, brain, sweetbreads, and tripe, often categorised as "variety meats". These products are a high source of "high-quality protein and fat" (Francis: 2010: 35). Francis (2010: 35) further explains that economic pressures on meat processing plants, coupled with the cost of managing waste, necessitate the efficient use of by-products.

However, Latoch et al. (2024: 3) suggest that the "variety meat" classification of offal might contribute to an "unfavourable association" among consumers, potentially leading to its avoidance despite its nutritional and environmental benefits. It can be hypothesised that access to offal became less feasible as the Van der Westhuizen family moved away from subsistence farming. Offal can be seen as having dual significance, serving as both a cultural food rooted in indigenous traditions and a product of economic necessity. Colonial and apartheid-era socioeconomic structures, along with the "othering" of Coloured people, could have contributed to offal's association with poverty. Kamies's (2018: 21) ideas on shame and respectability are particularly relevant here: for Coloured communities, offal signifies resilience and cultural tradition, yet it could also be laden with a sense of shame, as its ties to economic hardship and the marginalisation of Coloured identity cast it in a light of inferiority. As communities seek social acceptance and "respectable" identities in a post-colonial society, distancing from offal can also reflect an effort to align with modern, middle-class dietary norms, moving away from foods historically associated with poverty or "inferiority." However, because offal is also a cultural heritage food, avoiding it also acts as a distancing from tradition and identity itself. Thus, the shift away from offal illustrates the tension between cultural heritage and the quest for social respectability, showing how food choices can embody both a rejection of past stigmatisation and a complex navigation of modern identity. As a child in our Manenberg home, I remember watching my grandmother make offal with a sceptical eye, a general feeling of "strangeness" associated with it, squinting my eyes at the offal and thinking, "What is this?". The smell alone was enough to put me off. My grandmother did not make it often; it acted almost like a treat or a delicacy, and I would only be willing to take small bites. It was not until I tried it in a curry dish that I started to appreciate it, though it required an open mind to accept the unique texture. When cooked long enough, it became soft and chewy, but if it was not cooked properly, it turned out tough, and I remember disliking that texture. Now I wonder how

my grandmother felt from my reaction. Was I "othering" what, at the time, I did not know was part of my own cultural heritage?

Edible by-products, which make up nearly 40% of an animal's carcass weight, hold significant potential to drive sustainability in meat consumption (Francis, 2010: 35). As Latoch et al. (2024: 3) emphasise, maximising the use of these resources can mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, reduce food waste, and help address global hunger - a vital goal for both industry and science. However, as Crowley, Jackson, O'Connell, Karunarthna, Anantasari, Retnowati, & Niemand, (2022: 1) argue, the path to sustainability and resilience requires more than optimising resources; it demands the integration of cultural heritage into adaptation strategies to strengthen community resilience, especially within underrepresented regions of the Global South. Crowley et al. (2022: 1) note that cultural heritage, which shapes identity and builds local resilience, is often absent from conventional risk assessments, leading to gaps in resilience strategies and limiting adaptation opportunities. They advocate for participatory, community-centred approaches that capture diverse cultural values, urging that future frameworks for climate risk and resilience recognise the importance of heritage alongside sustainability. Together, these arguments suggest that sustainable practices, whether through efficient use of animal by-products or inclusive risk assessments, must reflect ecological and cultural priorities to achieve resilience in a globally diverse context.

A Taste of Heritage - Uncovering the Diverse Roots of South African Cuisine

Baderoon (2004: 102-108) characterises John Coetzee and C. Louis Leipoldt as influential early voices framing South African culinary identity. Their works, such as Coetzee's "The South African Culinary Tradition" (1977) and Leipoldt's "Cape Cookery" (1976), present Cape cuisine primarily through a European lens, emphasising the Dutch, French Huguenot, and German elements introduced by settlers. This approach largely viewed Cape cooking as an extension of European influence within the Cape Colony, adapting continental recipes to local conditions but still privileging a European ethos. Allyson Ang (2015: 8) challenges this Eurocentric framing, noting that many dishes deemed characteristic of Cape Dutch cooking originated with enslaved Malays. Van Wyk and Barton's South African Recipe Book (1993) also reveals significant indigenous influence, with recipes like "Curried Snoek Head Soup."

"Slouzie," or fish head in stock, a popular dish in Coloured households, further exemplifies these indigenous and local adaptations.

Snyman (2012: 91) critiques the historical neglect of Black cuisine in South African culinary research despite "shipwreck survivors' accounts" of African communities practising agriculture and food gathering. As Highfield notes (2017: 20) notes about "Food and Labour" in South Africa, white women in South Africa who managed households during colonial times relied on "black cooks to negotiate markets and to utilise local ingredients." Baderoon (2004: 102-108) further highlights the transformative role of Cape Malay cooks, crediting their distinct use of spices and culinary innovation as pivotal to South African cuisine's development. However, she notes that this Malay culinary heritage was often framed by an outsider gaze, reducing it to an exoticised, static "other." For instance, "The Cape Malay Cookbook" by Faldela Williams (1988), while preserving culinary tradition, also seems intended for a broader audience, with terms like "exotic" spices and references to the "Malay" identity in the third person (Baderoon, 2004: 102-108). Such language Baderoon (2004: 102-108) argues - reflects a process of "othering," which commodifies Malay culture rather than acknowledging its dynamic history and contributions to resilience and identity formation.

Snyman (2012: 91) credits dishes like "bobotie, pickled fish, sumptuous curries and bredies, and syrupy-sweet koeksisters, all of which have become synonymous with South African cuisine," all stemming from a Cape Malay influence. Baderoon (2004: 107) maintains that Cape Malay is "Food from Africa."

> Indigenous Khoi and San people, who during the colonial period themselves experienced labour conditions like slavery (the Muslim population also expanded rapidly through a high rate of conversion to Islam by indigenous people and non-Muslim enslaved people), shared their knowledge of indigenous food resources. This combination of ingredients, histories and traditions makes "Cape Malay" cooking a "food from Africa" (Baderoon, 2004: 107).

Learning to Cook by "Catching with the Eyes"

In Snyman's (2012) article "South Africa's Rainbow Cuisine," there is a picture of Coloured men gathering "waterblommetjies at Voëlvlei Farm at Piketberg, South Africa." This takes me right back to my grandmother's kitchen. Watterblommetjiebredie[73], was one of my grandmother's special dishes for the family. It was only made occasionally, maybe because she was far from the rural town she once called home. Unfortunately, the families had no recipe books preserved from the past. They noted this was because the method of teaching and passing down the recipes to generations was "hands-on" through sight and practice. Christina (2024) said:

> Ons het gevang met die oë, ons het gekyk wat ons ma doen, en dan het ons self dit gedoen. So het ons geleer kook ook. Ek maak nog die jelly en custard, wat my ma altyd gemaak het, en ek maak nog die afval, ek kan dit nog onthou. Ek het nou verlede keer die afval gemaak. Die vis kos kan ek maak. So die resepte was onthou deur memory . Alhoewel ons boeke en penne gehad het, het ons nooit daaraan gedink om die resepte neer te skryf nie. Want ons was so, jy moet hier staan, wanneer jou ouer 'n ding doen, dan moet jy sien hoe word dit gedoen. En oor twee of drie dae dan moet jy dai ding doen (Kamfer, 2024).

> We caught with our eyes, watched what our mother was doing, and then did it ourselves. That is how we learned to cook, too. I still make the jelly and custard, which my mom used to make, and I still make the offal; I can still remember it. I made the offal last time, the fish food I could make. So, the recipes were remembered by memory. Even though we had books and pens, we never thought about writing down the recipes. Because with us, you must stand here when your parent does a thing, then you have to see how it is done. And in two or three days, you must do that thing.

[73] Waterblommetjiebredie is a stew. It is Afrikaans for 'water flowers stew'. It is made of meat, stewed together with the waterblommetjies which are found in the dams and marshes of the Western Cape.

This was like me wanting to learn from my grandmother. I did not necessarily isolate the time for this participatory learning but would observe her casually when talking in the kitchen. It did not help me master any recipes then, but I could gather the basics of the ingredients that went into her dishes. These often included onions, cauliflower, potato, meaty bones, salt, pepper, and chillis. When I moved out of the house[74] my mother spent at least two weeks teaching me the basics of running a household. This role was gendered, but growing up, my grandpa helped my grandmother with things, mainly cooking, which involved his favourite dishes, one of which was fried snoek.[75] The practice of passing down recipes through observation and practice, like Baderoon (2004: 111) says, "stealing with the eye", Fabricius, Scholes, and Cundill (2006) add can be seen as the transfer of "local knowledge". Fabricius et al. (2006: 168) explain that local knowledge "constantly evolves through generations of hands-on experimentation and is carried over from one generation to the next."

> Local knowledge is seldom documented (except through intermediaries, such as researchers, writers, and journalists) and is mostly tacit. Local knowledge is used in everyday situations. Its main value lies in helping local people cope with day-to-day challenges, detecting early warning signals of change, and knowing how to respond to challenges. It is extensively used by local practitioners to develop natural resource management strategies, to set rules that govern the use of ecosystem services, and to make day-to-day decisions, such as knowing which medicines to use, where to find food and water in times of crisis, and which plants and animals are best avoided or best to use, (Fabricius et al., 2006: 168).

It suggests that when they lived in Piesang Valley as children, the Van der Westhuizen family learned, as Christina (Kamfer, 2024) says, "catching with the eyes" by observing and imitating others, especially within family or community settings. Cooking skills were learned by imitating their parents' actions, a method rooted in the hands-on practice of "local knowledge"

[74] I lived with my maternal grandmother for a time during my childhood.
[75] Snoek is a popular food fish in the Western Cape. In Cape Town it could often be found at the Hout Bay harbour or we would buy it from the back of bakkies from men parked in the Athlone area.

and memory rather than written recipes. Since the families in Plettenberg Bay lived farther from Cape Town, which was a hub of cultural exchange during the colonial period, influences like Cape Malay cuisine may have been introduced later. This could have happened when people moved to the city and returned, or when newcomers brought new culinary ideas to the area. While Cape Malay cuisine is not mentioned in the accounts of life in Piesang Valley, these dishes in general have become popular dishes enjoyed in the family today.

On their communal activities, Christina (Kamfer, 2024) shares about community game nights on Fridays, where food was also a central part of the show. They played a game called Ringboard[76]. It is a game like darts but played with rings instead. They would play for prizes at the gathering- tinned food brought by three or four families. Christina's aunt, known for her baking skills, also prepared cake as a treat. "My antie was die bakker en baie goed met bak. Sy het altyd gesorg vir patty pans, soos hulle dit nou noem cupcakes en tee," *My aunty was the baker and very good at baking. She always took care of the patty pans, as they now call them, cupcakes and tea*.

Alongside these, there were homemade bread sandwiches. Bread making could include oven bread and pot bread. The preparation of potbread was a cultural activity in itself. They would prepare the dough and place it in a pot, then set it among warm coals from an outdoor fire, carefully surrounding the pot to bake the bread evenly (Kamfer, 2024). Her mother was not an avid baker but she did make a scrumptious "poeding"[77] like "asyn poeding," "vinegar pudding" which she describes as similar to malva pudding, a popular South African dessert known for its golden-brown, caramelised crust and moist, spongy texture in sugary syrup.

Growing up, they had not made much of what is seen as special occasions today like Christmas and birthdays - the simplicity of life often outweighed such celebrations. The adaptation of food practices and the heightened significance of special occasions like Christmas, weddings, and 21st birthday parties, came later. Kamies (2018: 134) suggests that the elaborate celebration of these events served as an assertion of "respectability and status," allowing displaced families to reclaim a sense of self-worth and social pride. Forced removals uprooted families from Piesang Valley, stripping them not only of land but also of the cultural and communal connections that grounded their identities. Over time, for families like the Van der Westhuizens and Booysens, these events became powerful acts of resilience and cultural

[76] It appears to have Irish roots, so it's not clear if it was introduced by settlers during colonialism or what.
[77] Dessert.

reclamation. Although not wealthy, their wedding photo from New Horizons captures efforts to elevate the occasion through careful attention to clothing, a special photo of the cake, and other details that signal the day's importance.

Foodways Post-Forced Removals - From "Organic" to Processed

Most of what the family cooks now was learned through observation, as they noted that they no longer had space or land to grow food or keep livestock. Also, because the price of meat has increased, it is not as accessible or used as often as it used to be. Despite rising food prices and low income, chicken is still eaten often, albeit not daily.[78] As noted by Businesstech (2024) in an article titled "Trouble for braai lovers in South Africa":

> In October 2024, the average cost of the Household Food Basket is R5,348.65. Month-on-month, the average cost of the Household Food Basket increased by R92.97 (1.8%) from R5,255.68 in September 2024. Year-on-year, the basket increased by R51.07 (1.0%), from R5,297.58 (Businesstech, 2024).

On my first day of interviews, my mother-in-law prepared a lunch of sausages, burgers, and eggs, reflecting a marked shift from traditional foodways in Piesang Valley. As Snyman (2012: 93) observes:

> With urbanisation and improved interracial harmony has come a re-evaluation of long-fragmented traditions. Urban Blacks have adopted aspects of the Western diet, which has led to the demise of some indigenous ingredients, traditional dishes, and cooking methods. Frying, for example, has usurped the time-honoured roasting of meat; maize meal is bought in packets, no longer ground between two stones, and the younger generation seldom asks its elders for advice on

[78] See Plettenberg Bay chapter for information on income.

> traditional foods. Cross-cultural edibles are popping up on more and more restaurant menus. Alongside ethnic eateries featuring Italian, Portuguese, Greek, and Oriental cuisines, restaurants specialising in ethnic Black and glorious Cape-Malay cuisine appeal to locals as well as to foreign visitors eager for a glimpse of the changing face of the new South Africa". This could reflect the globalisation of the broader food system, and globalisation in the movement of people, or at least cultural influences through the media and social media etc, (Snyman (2012: 93).

While living in Piesang Valley and Keurbooms, families like the Van der Westhuizens and Booysens perceived their lifestyles as modest, often remarking that "die geld was min," or "money was scarce." They were living in extremely oppressive times, so I understand where their perceptions might come from. Their diets were simple and resourceful, with recipes focused on affordable, locally sourced ingredients. Over time, however, after forced removals, new influences entered their cooking, bringing dishes like vegetables with creamy sauces, fried potatoes with cooking oil, and pasta. With sausages and burgers now on the menu, it also shows a move to more processed food options, which was not part of their previous lifestyle.

Suddenly, the "organic" lifestyle, which they thought was modest and a sign of poverty, has been repackaged through the lens of whiteness, branded "green juices," "health café," and "organic chicken" to take the price up a notch, almost exclusively carved up for the wealthy. With rising food prices and a growing awareness of the health risks associated with processed and ultra-processed[79] foods, I believe there is a renewed appreciation for their original way of life, especially on the side of the Van der Westhuizens. My mother-in-law's mention of "organic" and her sister saying "ons het gesond ge-eet," *we ate healthily*, signifies this realisation: she now sees the inherent value in her earlier lifestyle's wholesome, unprocessed foods. Recognising that what once seemed like modest fare is now associated with health and sustainability. It is like a reverse classism, where traditional, resourceful food practices are now viewed through the lens of privilege.

[79] See "Dietary intake of low-income adults in South Africa: ultra-processed food consumption a cause for concern" by Frank et.al (2024).

In “Foodways of the Poor in South Africa,” Florian Kroll (2016: 11) notes, “Because a healthy diet is 69% more expensive than unhealthy choices, poor people in South Africa cannot afford a healthy diet.” Kroll (2016: 12) further explains that for the wealthy, purchasing local organic food conveys a socially conscious lifestyle, while for the poor, it represents an exclusionary expense, marking a boundary that places healthy, organic food out of reach for much of the population. Kroll (2016: 11) also observes that supermarket expansions in developing nations like South Africa have reshaped food systems, making energy-dense, ultra-processed foods more accessible and affordable. These experiences make it clear that forced removals had consequences far beyond the immediate loss of land and communal ties; they directly impacted access to healthy food, resulting in a shift from nutrient-rich, organic foods to inexpensive, processed staples high in carbohydrates and low in nutritional value. Apartheid-era forced removals did not merely relocate indigenous families but stripped them of their autonomy to grow food and support themselves independently. This ongoing transition invites further research, especially regarding the food systems of marginalised rural communities’ post-apartheid-era forced removals.

Despite these changes, hospitality remains a deeply ingrained cultural value, as evident in the welcoming offerings of tea and biscuits or a lunch spread prepared for visitors. As Kamies (2018: 48) suggests, hospitality reflects a quiet defiance, using “respectability” to counter shame. “Take a seat, relax, let me make you some tea” becomes more than a phrase. Even amid scarcity, these gestures embody resilience and pride. Sharing a meal, however simple, continues to be a way to create memories and maintain a sense of dignity. Through the lens of food and the kitchen tables of the Van der Westhuizen and Booysen families, one sees the lasting impacts of colonialism, apartheid, and forced dispossession on these marginalised Coloured families in Plettenberg Bay.

Figure 27:Hester and Christina having a cup of tea (Daniels, 2022).

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that food practices are a powerful lens for heritage preservation, resilience, memory, and cultural identity within displaced communities. The Van der Westhuizen family's culinary traditions show how subsistence practices have been significantly lost due to apartheid-era forced removals. While economic pressures have shifted diets from organic, homegrown foods to more processed options, a renewed appreciation for traditional foodways emerges. Through these shared meals, values of hospitality, cultural memory, and identity endure, highlighting food as a connection to heritage and a response to evolving social and economic landscapes.

Chapter Five - Conclusion and Recommendations

This study provides many answers but also leaves many questions. There is a pressing need for inclusive benefit-sharing initiatives that address both conservation and the economic use of land in Plettenberg Bay. As it stands, the wealth generated by luxury properties, high-end tourism, and conservation efforts do not benefit all communities, particularly the indigenous Coloured population, who were forcibly removed to make way for these developments. A structured benefit-sharing initiative could help provide genuine upward mobility for the Coloured community, ensuring they receive a fair share of the wealth generated by the land that was once theirs.

Research should focus on designing and implementing benefit-sharing programs that support economic opportunities for the Coloured community. These programs would allow for improved livelihoods, skill development, and greater inclusion in the region's economic growth. These initiatives should explore models such as community-based tourism, local employment preferences, and profit-sharing in luxury developments, which would contribute to a more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities.

However, effective implementation of such initiatives requires more than just economic frameworks. Deep-seated issues of white supremacy and systemic racism must be addressed first. Long-standing attitudes of white privilege and perceptions of Coloured and indigenous inferiority continue to create barriers to meaningful collaboration. The community must address these underlying prejudices to cultivate an environment where all stakeholders see one another as equals, equally deserving of the land's benefits and beauty.

Additionally, to pave the way for genuine reconciliation, healing processes for the Coloured community should be prioritised. Many of those who were forcibly removed still carry the emotional scars of displacement and dispossession. Establishing healing workshops for residents who directly experienced these traumas, as well as for younger generations who have inherited these struggles - could foster a sense of community resilience. These workshops might focus on storytelling, community-building, and cultural revitalisation, helping the community reconnect with their identity and heritage while promoting healing. By addressing these economic, social, and psychological factors in tandem, a more inclusive and just future for Plettenberg Bay and other affected communities can be envisioned.

Further research is essential in areas such as restitution, reconciliation, and economic justice.

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Addendum: Historical Pictures of Plettenberg Bay

Figure 28: A bridge over Piesang River (Pletthistory.org, n.d.).

Figure 29: This picture of the child without shoes reminds me of Kamies' notes on slavery and the lack of shoes as a sign of it. I don't know the story behind this picture, but the details tell their own story with power or social dynamics (Pletthistory.og, 2024).

Figure 30: Fisherman and what looks like holidaymakers in Plettenberg Bay (Pletthistory.org, n.d.).

Figure 31: A picture of Plett's main street (Pletthistory.org, n.d.).

Figure 32: A moment back in time (Plethistory.org, n.d.).