UNIVERSITY *of the* WESTERN CAPE

The Social Semiotics of Hair: Re-Constructing Cape Coloured South African Female Identities- The Transition

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Linguistics, University of the Western Cape

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I. Declaration

I declare that *The Social Semiotics of Hair: Re-Constructing Cape Coloured South African Female Identities- The Transition* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name: Anoesika Jansen

Signed:

Date: 06 December 2022

II.   Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents Amanda and Charles Jansen for being my constant. Always believing, always pushing and always praying. Thank you mom for being my shoulder to cry on and dad for letting me grow at my own pace.

Thank you Prof Banda for your guidance and confidence in my ability.

And thank God for His unmerited grace and favour!

III.

The Social Semiotics of Hair: Re-Constructing Cape Coloured South African Female Identities- The Transition

By Anoesjka Jansen

Cape Coloured women have been misrepresented and misunderstood for generations as a result of apartheid and the deeply rooted ideologies at play during that time. The Coloured body was subjected to the colonial ideals of the time and these strained standards had adverse effects on the relationships these women had with their identity wrapped up in their hair. The aim of this study is to highlight the effects apartheid beauty norms had on their identity, to showcase the narrowed view of the media and their ill representation of Coloured women and their hair by providing Coloured women with an outlet to retell their hair stories of transitioning from the ridged colonial past into a decolonized present and future. Through the methodological approach of the Narrative inquiry, data was collected through interviews. Further data was collected via Media and Social Media platforms. The theoretical framework of Critical Multisemiotic/Multimodal Discourse Analysis was used to unpack and analyse the data alongside Analytical frameworks of identity. The major findings suggest that through transitioning back to natural hair, Coloured women are restoring relationships with their hair and as a result now have the ability to re-construct their identity through decolonizing their hair. It is concluded that identity is a complex and fluid entity that can be presented and represented in various spheres of being including that of hair. Hair is a marker of identity, a form of expression that, for women in this case, is a complex factor of their identity and no matter how you may phrase it, as a result of the wretched past, hair unfortunately is not "just" hair.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction and Background

"I am not my hair, I am not this skin, I am the soul that lives within" (India Arie) and, in an ideal world the frivolities of hair, among other things, would not be considered as a decisive human trait or a means for categorization, classification, or classism, to name a few. However, history has made thorough use of the physicality's of our human structure to construct, define and divide societies for centuries by assigning to us particular identities. Identity is a deeply personal and intrinsic human feature but is influenced and upheld by dominant ideologies in society. As a result of the infamous 'pencil test', hair texture became a defining characteristic that did not just signal race but also assigned identity traits to those who 'failed' this test. Many Coloured women of the Cape who had been subjected to this type of imposed identification, took it upon themselves to 'correct' their natural hair with a variety of harmful chemicals and heat mechanisms designed to straighten their 'different' hair in attempts to belong in a society that had limited space for them. However, women have now begun to ditch this state of mind and transition back to their 'natural' hair, telling their stories of transition from conformity to liberation as they begin to take up space.

Although hair styling may seem just a style choice, "Women use their hair to establish both a group identity and as a form of everyday resistance from social norms established by dominant culture." (Manning 2010: 35). In its vast array of textures, colours, lengths and sizes, hair is a semiotic resource loaded with meaning and its multimodal nature requires investigation through Multisemiotic/Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis to unpack the social and

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cultural meanings tied up in it. The aim is thus not to debate the injustices of the Coloured Female body at the hands of past political structures as a whole, but rather to investigate if the placement of certain non-negotiated identities based on western ideals of hair and beauty trapped Coloured women in a distorted version of themselves. Additionally it is also to uncover how the new natural hair 'trend' and transitions have impacted or transformed their identity as well as to investigate the possibility of the Decoloniality of hair as these women begin to redefine and repossess their natural Cape Coloured hair.

For many Coloured girls of the Cape, hair was a catalyst for taunts, as their hair was not kinky or curly, nor was it sleek and straight. . It was something in-between; in-between and not "beautiful". Hair, scientifically is just as a result of genetic production, it is "primarily a vestigial structure and appendage of human skin" (Bertolino 1993 cited in Pergament 1999: 42) but through systematic societal associations it has become a means of stylization, identification and grouping. According to Synnot (1987: 381), "Hair is perhaps our most powerful symbol of individual and group identity- powerful first because it is physical and therefore extremely personal, and second because, although personal, it is also public rather than private" and this public display is open to interpretations based on its value in society. "Writers of poetry, fiction and drama create knowledge about hair just as medical anatomists do", often defining beautiful and healthy hair as possessing a 'standard' texture and abundance there of (Snook 2015: 23). This specific characterisation however has always been created to uphold dominant ideologies of various time periods and have subjected certain hair textures and types to ill description based on the "othered" (see Jensen 2011) individual that adorned it. In the apartheid era of Southern Africa hair and race was defined by the narrative of the infamous "pencil test", "if a pencil placed in one's hair fell out, he or she was white. If it fell out with shaking, ' Coloured', and if it stayed put, he or she was 'black'." (Thompsell A 2018). The movement of a pencil would ultimately determine which side of the line of privilege and

beauty you would have to endure life from, bearing in mind that these tests were created to uphold dominant principles and impose the label of 'other' towards anyone that dared to differ. Thus, in the apartheid era, a non-negotiable 'abnormal' identity was imposed on them as a result of their non-standard hair texture and unapparent aesthetic. The Coloured Female body was not thought to consist of beauty as it did not uphold western ideals and their hair was no exception.

A women's hair has become one of her most significant identity features as "hair is malleable, in various ways, and therefore singularly apt to symbolize both differences between, and changes in, individual and group identity" (Synnot 1987: 381). This declaration of their identity to others through their hair is a way in which they develop an emotional attachment to it as their hair is meant to signal conformity to a group in fervent hopes of belonging and creating human connections. The imposition of 'othered' identities on the Cape Coloured South African Female has not only disqualified them from co-creating their identity by their standards, but their attachment to their hair is completely different to those that have had the opportunity to take part in their identity creation. For most Coloured women, their hair has not always been the 'flower crown' they were comfortable and proud to adorn. Rather it was a 'crown of weeds' that needed to be uprooted and de-branched if they had any hopes of being accepted into society (Teteh, Montgomery, Monice, Stiel, Clark and Mitchell 2017). The world however, has over the last decade begun to not only embrace but also celebrate the seemingly 'odd' and fortunately hair as also been caught up in this current positive trajectory. Many women who have subjected their hair to being burned and chemically altered into some form of 'perfection' have ditched the chemicals, chopped off the westernized shackles of beauty and have begun to transition back to their natural hair state. Even though some "are ashamed to admit that such trivial concerns-to do with the physical appearance, bodies, faces, hair and clothes- matter so

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much" (Wolf 2002: 9), disregarding these does not make them non-existent. This study is therefore in aid of addressing seemingly trivial concerns of hair in an attempt to unearth deeper complications brought on by these physicalities and their meanings in society.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Identity is a delicate essential human feature but is influenced and upheld by society. The inner workings of a society establishes particular ideals individuals have to uphold to be considered 'standard' individuals. Dominant ideologies bring forth structures that uphold these ideals and highlights all that knowingly or unknowingly goes against this 'law of normalcy'. In the apartheid era, people of colour were seen as deviant to many western 'norms' and were to be treated and labelled accordingly. As a result of the infamous pencil test, hair texture became a defining characteristic that would not just signal the race of the individual but also the identity an individual ought to possess during the apartheid era of South Africa.

From a young age, Coloured girls have often had a complex and complicated relationship with their hair as a result of "particularly narrowed aesthetics (according to dominant culture)" (Bromberger 2008: 379). For most women and girls, hair is a definitive means of asserting their identity and thus "they are socialized to accept this connection to hair at an early age and develop an emotional attachment to their hair" (Manning 2010: 35). Unfortunately this emotional attachment is oft unhealthy as the connotations surrounding Coloured women and their hair were more often degrading than beautiful in light of western criteria. This study, however, is not as a means of 'othering' those Coloured women with naturally 'sleek' or straight hair in their omission, but rather it is to focus on those women who chemically straightened or altered their hair in order to reach a standard their natural hair did not meet. We

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now begin to realise that '"Beauty" is not universal or changeless, though the West pretends that all ideals of Female beauty stem from one Platonic Ideal Women…" (Wolf 2002: 12).

Now this is not to debate the injustices of the Coloured Female body and issues of race in their entirety, but rather, it is a movement towards unlearning ill social practices and rediscovering or reclaiming the self. It is to explore how the previous placement of non-negotiated or imposed identities through the 'pencil-test' based on colonialist ideals may have trapped Coloured women in a distorted version of themselves for decades. Additionally it is to investigate whether the new natural hair 'trend' and hair transitions have afforded them with the opportunity to re-possess, transform and re-fashion their identity.

1.3 Objectives
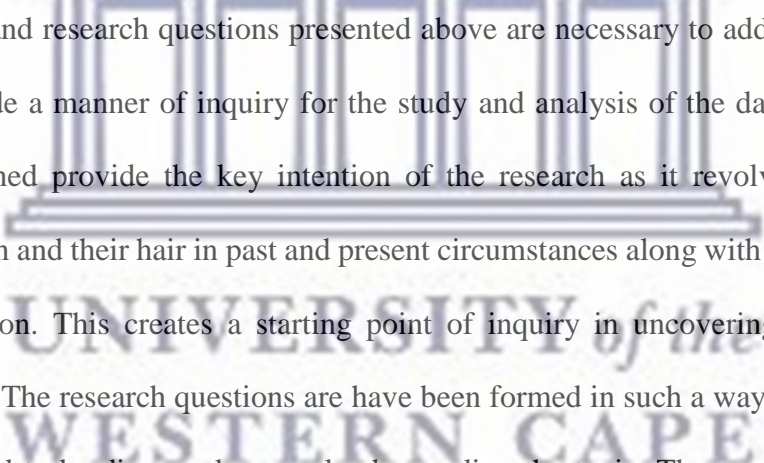
1. To explore narratives of hair as experienced by the Cape Coloured Females during and post-apartheid.
2. To uncover the extent to which Cape Coloured women's hair is a marker of identity.
3. To discover to what extent the hair process of transition is as of a result of or results in mental liberation of sorts.
4. To analyse the changing identities of Cape Coloured women associated with changes in hairstyling in space and time.
5. To investigate the role of media and it's representation of Coloured women's hair.

1.4 Research Questions

1. Are typical narratives of mental liberation among Cape Coloured women who have chosen to transition their hair?

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2. What role has society played in the historical and present conceptualization of hair as an identity marker?

3. To what degree does the transition process allow Cape Coloured women to re-fashion, establish and negotiate their identities in a post-apartheid South Africa?

4. What constitutes hairstyle as performance and defining quality of Cape Coloured women's identities?

5. To what extent does media representation play a role in upholding dominant ideologies surrounding Coloured women's hair?

1.5 Rationale

The objectives and research questions presented above are necessary to address the research topic and provide a manner of inquiry for the study and analysis of the data collected. The objectives outlined provide the key intention of the research as it revolves around Cape Coloured women and their hair in past and present circumstances along with the role of media and representation. This creates a starting point of inquiry in uncovering the underlying systems at play. The research questions are have been formed in such a way as to bring-forth matters that need to be discussed or resolved regarding the topic. These questions allows a rational flow of inquiry from the data collection to the analysis as the paper addresses the topic.

1.6 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: This chapter serves as the introduction to the study and lay out necessary background information regarding hair and identity of the Cape Coloured women. The

various frameworks used in this study will further be mentioned along with the aims and objectives for the study as whole.

Chapter 2: Will provide an in-depth discussion surrounding the literature consulted as means to relay specific insights and understanding of hair, hair transitioning, performative identity and as well as notions of self-liberation.

Chapter 3: It will further provide an account of the theoretical and analytical frameworks that will be used in assessing and understanding the data collected.

Chapter 4: Here the methodologies used in collecting and analysing the data will be discussed a long with the reasoning behind the participants chosen in this study and how this may impact the data.

Chapter 5: This chapter will analyse and discuss the data collected by use of the methods aforementioned. It will focus on analysis of Cape Coloured women's hair as a marker of identity.

Chapter 6: An analysis focusing on the changing identities of Cape Coloured women and its association with changing hairstyles will be provided in this chapter.

Chapter 7: This chapter will focus on the Media and the importance of 'correct' representation. It will unpack the influence media has on the masses and how it upholds dominant ideologies.

Chapter 8: This final chapter will be in conclusion by providing a summary of the findings pertaining to the data collected and relate this to other associated studies. It will also suggest any recommendations as well as improvisations needed.

1.7 Summary

This Chapter serves as the introduction to the study through the background information. It introduces the study and unpacks the field and follow of inquiry to take place as it addressed the statement of the problem and the steps to be taken to resolve this in the coming chapters.

Chapter 2

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

"It is far more difficult to murder a phantom than a reality" (Virginia Wolf); these words echo the sentiment of this investigation as it navigates the lasting effects of colonialist ideological influences and its role of ill and misguided social practices in society. It is therefore necessary to review various literary works pertaining to the theories of sociolinguistics specific to that of hair as semiotic material, a performance of identity and a socially loaded resource in society in order to academically strengthen and support the perspectives made in this investigation. Nayar (1986: 866) reasons that attempting to comprehend language apart from its "socio-cultural and communicative context" is to some extent incomplete as many theorists have come to conclude that language is not an entity that exists apart from its speakers but it relies on the social, economic, political and cultural environment of the society to add value to it. Hair, like the various notions of style, gestures and other 'paralinguistic' features have often been secondary and understood as "non-verbal communication" (e.g. Pennycook 1985). Pennycook (2004) in a critical inquiry on performativity and language studies suggests that these 'paralinguistic' features should instead be understood as "an integrated understanding of the body as interlinked with other social and semiotic practices" and not as an addition to the 'superiority' of verbal communication. Hair is thus not an addition to verbal communication but is essentially of meaningful communicative value in a society.

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Throughout history hair has played a major role in society from a symbol of status of the Victorian era (See Ofek 2016), an identification of 'tribal' belonging, a matter of religious covering, glory and power in the Bible (See 1 Cor 11: 15) and the shaving of slaves heads as a means of stripping their identity in America (Bellinger 2007) among many other happenings. Depending on the society, hair has held various socio-cultural, economic and political values at the dispose for those in power. Thus, as many factors in a society, these notions have been intricately constructed by socially powerful and enforced through the institutions at its control. Classification by genetic pigmentation does not seem out of place with regards to scientific measures. However, it is the objectionable root of western manufactured ideals of 'purism' that negate variation. This has left many in diaspora searching for themselves after decades of having been told who they were; having identities imposed on them with very little room for the opportunity of negotiation.

For many women, particularly Cape Coloured women in this case, hair has in some form or the other become a burden as for decades society has deemed their hair 'irregular'. However, since we are said to have an inherent need to belong, many women took it upon themselves to 'regulate' their hair in an attempt to belong in society. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) note that we perform certain behaviours that signal our desire to be accepted as part of the group we wished to belong to thus the behaviour they resorted to was that of chemically straightening their hair as a means of conforming to the norm of society as "the production of identity is in the doing" (Pennycook 2004: 14).

2.2 Challenging "Narrowed" Hair narratives and representations

Many argue that the discourse surrounding hair is irrelevant in society and deem it "just hair" and is often followed by comments stating that there are more important issues than what comes

out of our heads. Historically hair was used as means to determine individual's juxtaposition to "whiteness" by South African standards. Thus, hair had gained meaning beyond the "stuff" that grows from our heads. It had now had specific meaning attached to it; it had the power to class you as apart from 'white' and it was added to the lists of irregularities that made you abnormal in the European standard of normal (Eurocentrism). This narrative of what constitutes as 'normal' against what was not was reinforced through the institutions and regimes that controlled society. It was so deeply embedded in society that hair that was not 'normal' was labelled as unprofessional, was advertised as problematic and unruly and was policed in educational institutions as anyone who had the audacity to divert from 'normal' was seen as rebellious in not endeavouring to meet Eurocentric values.

Unfortunately, when apartheid ended in physicality, it remained embedded in systemic and institutional structures. So much so that in September of 2020, Clicks, Tresemme and Unileaver retailers sparked nationwide outraged through an advertisement released depicting women of colour's hair as "dry, dull and damaged" alongside the image of White women's hair depicted and described as 'normal'. Again, some were quick to try and invalidate this outrage as unnecessary because it was "just hair", however for many women of colour, this was an all too familiar struggle that once again labelled them as not 'normal' almost 3 decades after the end of apartheid. For them it is not "just hair", it is this stringent narrative that apparently still counts them as anything but 'normal'. It is the all too clearly visible remnants of colonialist beliefs in a post-colonial world. It is the fact that we are in the 21st century - as political waves begin to turn- (Moraga & Anzaldua, 2022), an era where women are beginning to unlearn and reject these norms and have spent so much time and money trying to change this narrative (so much so that international natural hair communities have expressed their dismay). It is the fact that for many women of colour, hair has always been a complex topic having to face constant discrimination in too many spheres of life from professional to educational to the media and its

constant depiction of these women as far away from accepted beauty as possible. It has not just struck a nerve but has opened our eyes to the systemic racism still prevalent in society as well as revealing the lack of understanding surrounding overt attempts to normalize racism as a result of this systems still in place. It is thus pertinent to know and understand how past structures have and still impact society today. It is not enough just wish it away, push people to move forward from the past or invalidate struggles that we may not personally be faced with. To change the ill narrative surrounding women of colour and their hair, it is important to uncover and note how this ill narrative came to be, who were and still are affected by it, why it is still present in society and what we can do to educate others and enable change. It is often said that we are not what is on our head and rather what is inside our head, which granted, is true. However, when society has already labelled women according to the hair on their heads before even beginning to unearth the endless genius inside their heads, then it will have to be up to us to re-create the twisted narrative society has attached to our hair so that one day the essence of who we are will be parallel to that which flourishes on our heads.
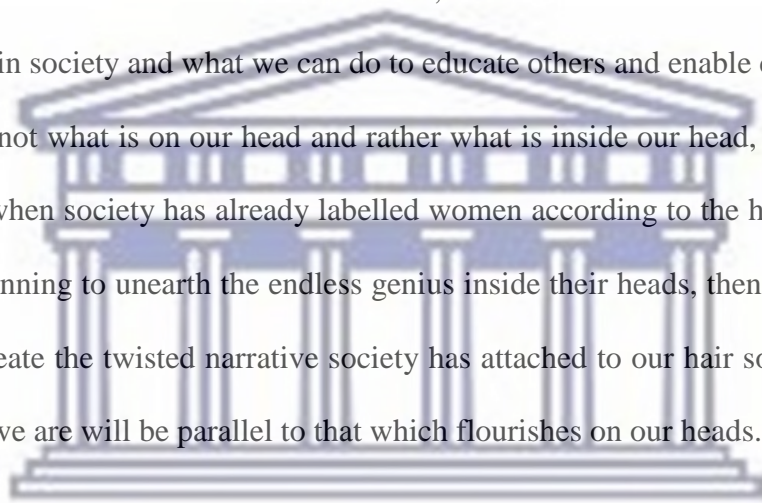
2.3 "Good" Hair : Straightening VS Transitioning

We are socialized into various social and cultural practices and though these practices have shaped us into who we are constantly becoming, not every practice is necessarily positive despite being passed down through generations. Alteration as a means of conformance has far too long been our feckless crutch. Change not for a greater good but to appear "good". Chemical alteration and thermal processing just to have "good" hair.

The two main ways of straightening is through various methods of chemical straighteners like relaxers and through "temporary" heat straightening done with various hair irons, combs, etc

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(Miranda-Vilela, Bothelo & Meuhlmann 2013). The most infamous way of chemical straightening among Coloured women is that of the relaxer found in a variety of brands but with one ultimately damaging goal in mind: "good" straight hair. "A hair relaxer is a lotion or cream that makes the hair easier to straighten or manage. It reduces the curl by breaking down the hair strand and chemically altering the texture" making it more 'manageable' by certain standards (Gonzalez, 2010 cited in Shepheard 2018, Sishi et al 2019). It created deep longings of assimilation from early on in life where hiding your "natural tresses and damaging your real hair for the sake of a desired "look"…" was a norm that in fact "should not be taken lightly" (Thompson 2009). Eurocentric ideals surrounding hair traversed the globe as women of vast races and cultures have faced the same ordeal regarding their natural hair variations and resorted to chemical alteration of their hair. The most concerning part of this is the incessant obsessions with straightening ones hair begins at an early ages as women recall their misplaced excitement to burn and scar their scalps in conformance as social acceptance was in high as a demand as these products were. Brenda Randle (2015) shares her fixation in her article *I Am Not My Hair: African American Women and Their struggles with Embracing Natural Hair!*

"I became obsessed with the thought of one day having the straight appearance

"relaxing" my hair would offer…make my bad hair appear good".

"Good hair"; hair texture that most resembled western hair texture (Johnson & Bankhead 2013). This was not just a standard but a goal for women whose hair did not meet the criteria of "good". Thus women, of all ages, whose hair was "not good" took it upon themselves to find means to achieve this standard through harmful chemical and heat straighteners.

Chemical straightening is when "excessively curly hair is straightened in an irreversible way, by use of relaxers or texturizers formulated in a cosmetic emulsion and contain high PH"

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(Randle 2015). A study conducted at a UCT lab investigated *The pH of lye and no-lye hair relaxers, including those advertised for children, is at levels that are corrosive to the skin*. The study revealed that "relaxers are toxic and do not belong on anyone's skin" including the still developing skin of children as no one should be exposed to such high pH levels (Sishi, van Wyk & Khumalo 2019: 941). They further found that those who use relaxers are "exposed to pHs in the hazardous and corrosive range". The harmful effects of these chemicals manifest in various ways, including hair breakage, scalp irritation, burns, scarring (Sishi, van Wyk & Khumalo 2019), scalp and hair disorders, damage of the hair shaft, itching, hair loss as well as various allergic reactions to harmful chemicals (Miranda-Vilela, et al 2013). Despite the scientific proofs now readily available along with its warnings against the ongoing hazardous use of these straightening chemicals, this, including the many lived experiences of those undergoing these various treatments, Sishi et al (2019) noted that somehow women continue to use it regardless of the warnings. Indulging in these practices for decades may have somehow clouded judgements regarding these products that despite the warnings, women will still subject themselves to chemical burns and scaring from straightening processes as their processed hair has become part of a skewed norm in society. The Natural Hair Movement as this known as, is "a form of deviance and self-empowerment…it gives women agency over their identity and beauty ideals by challenging dominant, cultural norms" (Roberson-Dancey….:19). This movement is a means of not just offering a different narrative but allows the creation of inclusive narratives that allow women view themselves wholly without a particularly homogeneous lens.

Aside from the danger of chemicals and heat, women and girls alike, have fallen into the thought that appearing to be something you are not, is somehow better than who you naturally are; a recurrent societal pressure and cycle that needs to be uprooted to release generations to

come in proving to them that our society is not monolithic or homogenous. Again, as much as it is necessary to note the historical influences that have erected these unreachable narrow standards which have left people in diaspora, this inquiry is to somehow find ourselves breaking these misfit moulds, finding our natural selves and re-imagining a "new world where little girls will not have to spend years unlearning narratives about beauty that have harmed their self-image and confidence" (@MegVgreen repost- @crownworkshop 2020)

All women have relationships with their hair. At young ages we are socialized into various social and cultural practices passed down from generation to generation. Hair practices are no different in that they are social practices that stem from established communities of practice that have developed over generations. With the western 'policing' of reckless 'non-straight' hair, "the curl of the hair was used to justify subordination of Africans, which initiated the tension between hair and people of African descent" (Banks 2000). The natural curl found in hair had subjected individuals to tense relationships with their 'wild' hair. Many women past and present have various stories involving prejudices surrounding the notion of hair that transcended stringent western ideals. These narratives traverse social, religious, institutional, educational, economic and political cases. Hair "holds 'emotive qualities' which are associated with lived experiences" (Marco 2012). 'Lived experiences'; these are personal knowledges based on real-world happenings in a supposedly 'liberated' world. Women and girls alike are becoming more aware of the many systemic voices and not-so-hidden structures that still govern the hair of people from "African descent" today. This however, is no longer just a recognition of past 'shackles' in present times. It is not just a shift from harmful hair chemicals and straighteners to organic curl enhancing products. It is a transition that breaks the mould of western ideals in a manner that not just embraces who they are 'organically' but also enhances

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various facets of their identity that has been systematically/systemically supressed for far too long.

2.4 The Transition back to Natural
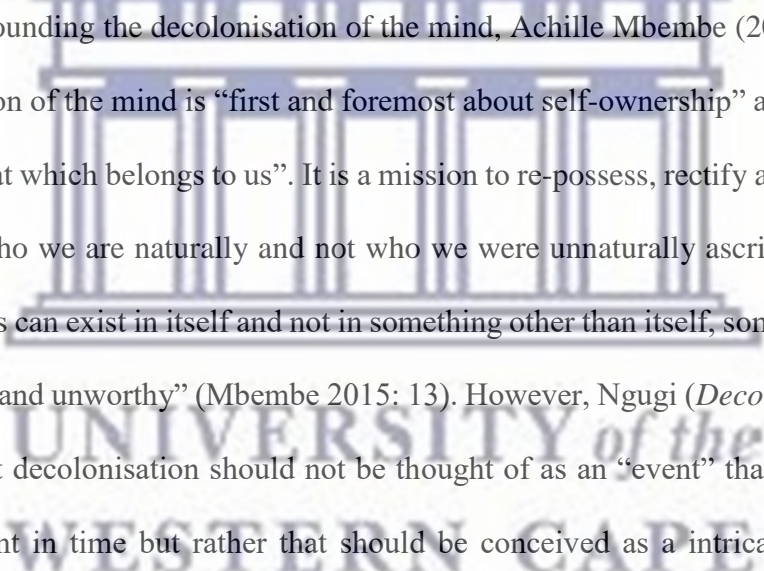
Transition: a movement, development, or evolution, from one form, stage or style to another (Merriam-Webster n.d.). According to Urban Dictionary (2021) in relation to hair, Transitioning is chemically-processed hair that is purposefully being replaced by allowing one's natural, virgin hair, to grow without further chemical treatment. To transition is to make a deliberate change; it is a purposeful progression towards something better and a movement away from the far-reaching "ideal" of women " as if she were a non-negotiable commandment" (Wolf 2002). When it comes to hair, transitioning may seem as though it is just a change from one style to another but it is vastly more complex than that. Although the hair transition movement seemed to gain more recognition in last decade, its origins precedes current trends and can be seen in when well-known activist Malcom X who "Upon transitioning from Malcolm Little to the more self-aware, race conscious, social activist, El Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, he removes his "conk" (chemicals) from his hair to indicate a physical, social, political, and spiritual transformation" (as observed by Johnson & Bankhead 2013.). Transitioning symbolises transformation that occurs on both external and internal levels and is a joint release of the past and embrace of self-pride. Malcom X's experiences goes to show that it is not only women who transition, the process of transition exceeds that, however, we focus on women who are proven to have more intricate and complex relationships with their hair. The women who undergo the transition back to natural may have similar experiences that Malcom X had in undergoing both an external change in their hair styling and an internal change in the way that they see themselves in relation to the world and its customs.

For too long, Coloured women have had to deal with questions and stereotypes attached to their hair. These inferences were designed to force them to call into question their identity and character and fix what was 'wrong'. Transitioning may seem to offer alterative views than these entrenched prejudices. It is not just as a means of changing hair, but transforming our identity so that "when someone questions us, uses our hair against us, we will no longer look into the mirror to see what we have done wrong" (Wolf 2002). Malcom X believed that we have a "much-improved mentality" when we begin to accept what God has naturally given us in that we finally reach a place of enough self-pride to "have that mess clipped off"; literally and figuratively. It is active forward motion towards a self that is no longer confined, constricted and contradictory. It is past the acknowledgement of consequences and harms of past political and societal structures as this is fact. It is a recognition of the scabs and scars left by regiment structures and finding various significant routes that move us into action; action that heals, that provides re-imagined narratives, that broadens narrow "aesthetic" roads and that finally allows us to confidentially take up space we've been etched out of. It is nowhere near the utopian experience we dream about, but it does give us the freedom to at least dream.

2.5 Decolonising the Mind: Distortion of Self

"As long as the mind is enslaved, the body can never be free" – Martin Luther King, Jr. Though we find our self in a post-colonial era, many who find themselves in the forefront of social scenes are seeking to find answers to why there are still so many colonial structures at play in a post-colonial world. Pyke (2010: 551) explains that those who were previously colonised are often trapped in a 'colonised mentality' as a result in of constant conformance to idealized western indoctrinated beliefs. Fannon (A renowned theorist concerned with the

psychopathology of colonization) concurs with this as he states that it is imperative to inspect those trapped in the "psychological effects of colonialism" over the "juxtaposition" of one race against 'others' (2008: xvi, 14). The apartheid system has not just left many to endure life on the wrong side of the line of privilege but it has severely distorted the identity and the essence of humanity for many. This distortion of self and society has consequently highlighted an intrinsic need for the decolonisation of the mind as decolonisation is "not merely political independence" but requires an invasive removal of benign colonialist beliefs (Oelofensen 2015).

 In a speech surrounding the decolonisation of the mind, Achille Mbembe (2015: 12) explains that decolonisation of the mind is "first and foremost about self-ownership" and the "struggles to repossess…that which belongs to us". It is a mission to re-possess, rectify and fully embrace the essence of who we are naturally and not who we were unnaturally ascribed to be so that "that which exists can exist in itself and not in something other than itself, something distorted, clumsy, debased and unworthy" (Mbembe 2015: 13). However, Ngugi (*Decolonising the mind* [1981]) adds that decolonisation should not be thought of as an "event" that takes place at a particular moment in time but rather that should be conceived as a intricate and "ongoing process of 'seeing ourselves clearly' and coming out of a state of blindness or dazziness". This is a central thought behind the purpose of this investigation regarding hair and the identities attached to the South African Cape Coloured Female. The transition process can be seen as a manifestation of the decolonised mind as it is a process that requires a re-shaping of identity and finally beginning the process of 'seeing ourselves clearly'. This transitioning and decolonising of the mind is "turning human beings once again into craftsmen and craftswomen who, in reshaping matters and forms, need not" conform to socio-politically ascribed identities of the past (Mbembe 2015:12-13).

Biko, a South African anti-apartheid activist and a forerunner in the Black Consciousness Movement, stresses that it is not possible to deal with the social and psychological consequences in present South African societies if the severe effects if racial classifications formulated under the apartheid systems are ignored (2004 cited in Oelofsen 2015). These classifications were designed to separate and therefore should be regarded as weapons for the colonisation of the mind as, again, it is far more difficult to murder the intangible (Virgina Woolf). The "existence of some …racially oriented physical characteristics make certain parameters more obviously prominent in a multi-racial society" (Nayar 1986: 687) and people of colour were taught to think of themselves as inferior as a result of their varying 'racial' appearance. Oelofsen's (2015:132) account of the necessity of decolonisation of the mind in a South African context provides insight on the reasoning behind the need of decolonisation beyond political perspectives and forward to understanding that the "…the colonial and apartheid context affected how people learnt to think about themselves and others" and that this inferior practice of self-ownership needs to be unlearnt and re-taught. Identity is a multi-faceted concept deeply rooted in a society and therefore relies on society to provide accurate and adequate space for it to develop and transform.

2.6 Hair as a Performance of Identity

The concept of identity, over time, has been afforded various perspectives in the complexity of its understanding from the *essentialist perspective* of identity as "viewing the self as continuous and fixed" and often thought of as 'static or innate' (Weber and Horner 2012: 84) to other and more preferred perspectives theorists such as Edwards (2009), Gee (2001) and Tabouret-Keller (1997) support. They argue that identity is not an unchangeable fixed entity within us but it is

ever changing and constantly influenced by our social, cultural, political and economic surroundings. Furthermore the scholarly works of Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) on identity and power introduced an identity framework suggesting that identities are either *imposed, assumed* or *negotiable.* The focus of this study will include negotiable identity as negotiation "is viewed as a transactional interaction process, in which individuals attempt to evoke, assert, define, modify, challenge and /or support their own and others' desired self-images" (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004:4). This negotiation of identity however is performed through a series of *identity acts* (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985) that are used to produce the desired identity. An understanding of identity performance is thus relevant to this investigation as identity is not a static entity but it is developed through carrying out particular behaviours that signal and are significant to the group the identity wishes to conform to or diverge from. Since it is in the doing (Pennycook 2004), it is necessary to examine the manner through which this 'doing' takes place and can be identified as such.

Traditionally, the linguistic understanding of performativity relates to speech acts and the manner in how an utterance of the words is in fact the act that is performed (Hall 1999). However, it has since been revisited as the reference to linguistics works apart from the complexity of its socio-cultural context is not complete. Bourdieu (1991) concurs with this thought as he states that "the linguistic focus on competence lacks social and historical dimensions treating language as an autonomous object", which it is not. Pennycook (2004: 8) proposes that performativity should be noted as "the way in which we perform acts of identity as an ongoing series of social and cultural performance rather that as the expression of a prior identity." Klein et al (2007: 30) advances this thought with specifying that this performance is a "purposeful expression (or suppression) of behaviours relevant to those norms conventionally associated with a salient social identity." Klein et al (2007) however make specific mention

that these performances or acts of identity are in fact performed with "purposeful" intent of diverging or converging in association or dissociation to a group. Identity performance could be comprehended as combination of both of these thoughts in that these performances are part of an ongoing series of purposeful behaviours through which an identity forms. It is ongoing as Butler (1999) states that "identities are a product of ritualized social performatives calling the subject into being…" as well as purposeful as it is not just a "free play", "theatrical self-presentation" or performance (Butler 1993).

Hair, just like identity, is malleable (Synnot 1987). As Bromberger (2008) succinctly puts it: "It is uniquely suited for expressing status difference, relations among kin, group membership, and both the submission to and refusal of predominant social, political, and religious norms" (p. 379). Thus hair is not just a tactic to follow the latest fashion trends but is a deeply social, political, religious and economic element. It allows those who adorn the styled hair to make particular statements that can support or challenge the status quo like that of the "large 'Afro' hairstyles of prominent African American radical activists like Angela Davis" as a means of defying dominant ideology (Pergament 1999:41), the Native Americans traditional long hair as cultural symbolism or the "long flowing tresses of white youths" that were commonly associated with the Hippie Movements among other illustrations (Pergament 1999:41). Therefore hair in all its flair, is extremely embedded in our lives as it is a "medium of significant statements about self and society and the codes of value that bind them, or do not" (Joseph-Salisburry and Connelly 2018). It is therefore of the greatest challenge to uproot and detangle freedoms that have been so firmly embedded in society and pinned right down to the conscious, subconscious and unconscious minds.

2.7 The Social Semiotics of Hair

The body has always been at the mercy of society. Blackman (2008) in her work on *the body* argues that we have limited the essence of the body to the notion of a "container to the self" as though it were that simple. She stresses that it is quite more complex and it should be understood as always being connected to "other bodies…to practices, techniques, technologies and objects" that all have the ability to produce different meanings in society. Merle (1987 cited in Joseph-Salisburry and Connelly 2008) agrees with this as she argues that hair should not be regarded as "merely a natural aspect of the body". In other words, it should not just be considered as natural occurrence of the body detached from the investigation of sociolinguistic studies but that it should be conceived as a site and resource of mean-making as it has been socially constructed to "have meanings" and as a result creates phenomenon's like an identity (McMurtrie 2010). Banks (2000: 26) suggests that hair is a "physical manifestation of our being that becomes loaded with social and cultural meaning" and, although I do agree that it is a physical manifestation of who we are, I'd like to consider that this 'manifestation' does not "become loaded with social and cultural meaning" but rather that this exhibition is as a result of the social and cultural influences surrounding choices we make in conformance or divergence. Pergament (2007) concurs this as she states that hair actually has played an immense role in the "development of social constructs about the body". It is thus not just "a practice of self-expression" but also an "embodiment of cultural norms and expectations" (Joseph-Salisburry 2018).

2.8 Summary

Hair has been socially constructed to have different meanings that is subjected to interpretations dependent on its value in society. Although semiotic resources like hair "do not inherently possess a value" in society, these resources can be chosen and be specifically fixed into discourse for particular social purposes (McMurtrie 2010: 403) i.e. their value is dependent on the manner in which a society attributes meaning or communicative value to it. Additionally Kress (2010) states that communication in all semiotic performances is a social process since meaning arises from and through social practices in their social contexts. This focus on the meaning of resources in context to a situated practice of communication needs to be investigated from "both historical and cultural contexts and the manner in which society interacts with the resource" (Van Leeuwen 2005: 3). Thus the historical and cultural accounts of hair as semiotic resource will allow particular insights on the value society has placed on it historically and culturally that has led to the manner in which it is interpreted in society today and as Pergament has contended, hair may also "signal changes in social ideologies" (1999: 44).

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Chapter 3
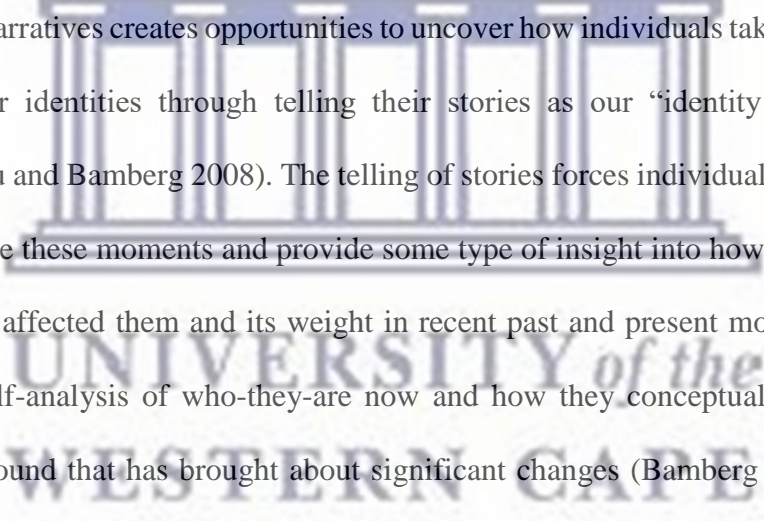
3 Theoretical and Analytical Frameworks

3.1 Narrative Inquiry: Episodic Interview

According to Bamberg (2012), a narrative is "one of the cornerstones for the construction of identities" as it provides insight into the manner in which individuals use discursive and linguistic practices to perform and navigate between their various identities. Narrative practices are therefore unique in its purpose as it attempts to 'understand what speakers tend to accomplish when breaking into narrative and making use of narrative performance features" (Bamberg 2012). Narrative enquiry can be achieved through semi-structured interviews, narrative and episodic interviews. Episodic enquiries however been designed to "elicit participant memories pertaining to these episodes" and are brought forth in 'short stories' or narratives in a dialogic interview (Mueller, 2019). This particular method of data collection "yields context-related presentations in the form of a narrative, because these are closer to the experiences and their generative context than other presentational forms" (Flick, 2009: 185).

Identity and Language have been firmly bonded theories in that they operate within realm of social constructivism as it "has become a dominant paradigm in linguistic theorization about identity" (De Fina & Geogakopoulou, 2012:157). This notion of identity formation being linked to communicative and discursive processes is one we have all come to understand as fact. Therefore, these narrative enquiries are more intrigued with how past social constructs or happenings may have contributed to or impacted particular identity formations. De Fina and Geogakoupoulou (2012: 159) concur that, it is the "assumption that the telling of stories allows the teller to bring to light the co-ordinates of time, space and personhood into unitary frame so

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that the sources "behind" these representations can be made empirically visible for further analytical scrutiny in the form of identity analysis." It is the idea that these narrative accounts bring the past into the present by allowing particular events/sources/resources to resurface for present investigation. This would prove useful information in investigations that require comprehensive comparisons of the past and present. Thus narrative analysis may open the door to identity analysis. In their article, *Transforming Transcripts Into Stories: A Multimethod Approach to Narrative Analysis*, Nasheeda et al (2019) provide interesting insight regarding the variability of narrative analysis and advocating for researchers to become more creative with the ways they provide an analysis from the stories found in the transcripts.

The analysis of narratives creates opportunities to uncover how individuals take the opportunity to establish their identities through telling their stories as our "identity is a life story" (Georgakopoulou and Bamberg 2008). The telling of stories forces individuals to mentally and emotionally relive these moments and provide some type of insight into how past experiences and people have affected them and its weight in recent past and present moments (Bamberg 2012). It is a self-analysis of who-they-are now and how they conceptualise their identity against a background that has brought about significant changes (Bamberg 2012). Narrative inquiry relies on past experiences and how individuals come to make sense of these incidences and re-fashion a sense of self in the present as a result the occurrences present in the narrative. The episodic interview fits into the research process according to Flick (2009) "is the social construction of reality during the presentation of experience". This type of analysis presents itself as an adequate means of analysis as the nature of this topic requires individuals to recall past experiences brought upon by the apartheid system and dominant ideologies that have influenced social meaning surrounding hair and to now construct a sense of self in this present not apart from the past but as an attempt to restore the future.

3.2 Critical Multimodal/Multisemiotic Discourse Analysis

Critical Multisemiotic/Multimodal Discourse Analysis (CMDA), focuses on the manner in which discourse is communicated through a variety of semiotic resources and modes. Critical aspects is what will be foregrounded to make sense of the narratives from participants and other meaning making hair semiotics around these women's' identity articulations.

Machin (2013) lays claim to the fact that the world of multimodality has made room for discourse to be experienced in a fun way with the likes of 'paralinguistic' features of style, gesture and facial expression (to name a few) and that this has and still is often "taken for granted" as a part of everyday experiences and deemed lesser than the power of language. Traditionally, language is understood to be a most powerful and effective method of communication. However, with our world being in a constant state of flux, this is no longer the case according to Kress (2010: 36). Communication has transcended the bounds of verbal language and entered into a realm of endless modes (semiotic resources) that have been loaded with social meaning; modes that are verbal like writing, speech and non-verbal in image, gesture, gaze, posture, music, colour and so on and these various modes are thus just as important as language (Bock and Mheta 2014). This study relies on various modes from the verbal language of the interviews to the non-verbal instances of intonation, hair, colour, image, style etc. to be able to most accurately capture and analyse the identities brought forth in the narratives. The 'critical' part of MDA is to account for semiotic (linguistic and non-linguistic) structures of coloniality/decoloniality, attitudinal and ideological foundations in the participants' narratives of hair (cf. Van Dijk 1989; Fairclough 1992; Wodak 2000).

3.3 Identity and Identity Performance: Sociolinguistic Approach

3.3.1 Identity

The concept of identity is constantly being researched as identities are frequently altering as a result of a continuously changing world. The need to belong is frailly yet wholly human and wanting to identify with and be accepted into a group significantly influences our behaviours from our speech utterances and style choices to our religious beliefs and ideologies. Individuals wanting to belong to a certain group will perform certain identity acts to strengthen their connection to the "in-group" (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985) .These acts include all behaviours including linguistic choices. Linguistic 'acts of identity' are "attempts at strengthening in-group linguistic connections" (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985), so these dancers perform different language acts depending on which group they wish to 'belong to' at a given time. According to Eckert (1997) certain individuals however will perform identity acts that diverge from the in-group in a positive way in attempts to maintain their difference. They will display their divergence as a means of asserting differences or different identities depending who they are presenting themselves to and for whichever desired effect. Although identity is a development of self it is not developed just through personal needs and desires but it is a "co-construction" of self through others. Identity is therefore not just an internal phenomenon but individual and group identity behaviours demand attention not just on individual internal psychological processes but also external social pressures and factors and how these affect identity creations (Klein et al 2007).

Identity is not a phenomenon that haphazardly occurs on its own but is a notion that is as a result of interactions that is influenced by surrounding factors. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) break this approach into five particulars that reveal how these factors come into play in the creation, assimilation and performance of identity. Firstly, they believe that identity is a product of interaction that does not just occur as a psychological phenomenon but that it is greatly influenced by and practiced within social and cultural spheres. Secondly, identities transpire in macro and micro level demographic categories depending on the context of situation and interaction. Thirdly, identities can be indexed through linguistic labels, systems, and styles. Fourthly, they believe that identities are 'relationally constructed' or "co-constructed" i.e. it is not a self-creation but is deeply impacted by others and society. Lastly, they argue that identities occur on various awareness levels that may range intentional, habitual and subconscious performances. This approach highlights how identities are created, upheld and influenced by a variety of factors. These identities are displayed through the performance of context specific identity acts in interactions.

3.3.2 Identity Performance

What most researchers seem to agree on is the fact that every act done in a performance is purposeful. Thomas and Wareing (1999) believe that "people switch into different roles at different times in different situations". Klein et al (2007) stipulate that "identity performance is purposeful expression (or suppression) of behaviours relevant to those norms conventionally associated with a salient identity". Identity performance is therefore not a 'knee-jerk' reaction that takes place when we are faced with different situations but it is a purposeful display of identity markers specific to a social group to show correct and direct affiliation with a group. Identity performance, just like any performance, requires audience presence and interaction for

a successful performance. Klien et al (2007) stress that social identities are "performed" with a particular audience in mind i.e. identity acts of language and other notions like hair are purposefully chosen for presentation to the audience according to what appeals to and is valued by the group. Identity performance further encapsulates how salient behaviours associated with a particular identity are intentionally performed. Thus, acts of identity are chosen with the intention and motivation of being consider as being accepted into a particular social group. These approaches allow investigation into how identities are products of interaction that is influenced by social and cultural demographics. It will further permit us to identify possible identities or attempts at assimilating desired Coloured culture identities through analysing various verbal and non-verbal performances.

3.4 Summary

The importance of the conceptualization of this study lies in the particular manner in which the data is presented by the participants. It allows the interviewer to produce topical questions that best present the subject at hand while still allowing the interviewee the freedom to choose their narratives and present their stories freely. Thus the theoretical and analytical frameworks mentioned will serve as the most suitable vehicles for enquiry.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4 Methodology

4.1 Overview

This investigation is a qualitative study in the form of a Narrative inquiry approach, also considered as autoethnographic and biographical approaches. A personal narration of life events allows for a varied pool of qualitative material as participants construct meaning from their memories. Merriam (2002) states that qualitative research "lie with the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world". This approach is interested in the various interpretations by individuals of their varying worlds and is thus considered to be *interpretive* in analysing "first person accounts of experiences told in story form" (Merriam 2002: 9).

4.2 Description of Population and Sample Size

For the purpose of this study, transitioning to natural hair should be understood as hair that has gone from chemical straightening or alteration back to the hair individuals were naturally born with. The design used to identify participants is known as the snowball sampling design and is also called the referral design. This design is often used to identify hard to find potential participants, as few identified subjects are asked to point out acquaintances, in this case, who had also undergone the transition. The researcher then approached these individuals to request for video interviews initially through an email or phone call. Through this research design three (3) to five (5) Cape Coloured women within the Cape Town area who have undergone the

transition process were requested for live video interviews and permission for images of their pre and post- transition hair needed for the study. They ranged between the ages of 25-60 years as women in this age category have personal knowledge of both pre and post-apartheid hair experiences. They were each requested to take part in a video interview call at a time most suited to their schedule. With permission, each participant was visually and verbally recorded via the Zoom or Google Meet video recorder. Notes were made with pen and paper throughout the interview to track any specific or unique moments, and in situations where the interviewee does not want to be recorded. All interviews were thereafter be transcribed and stored digitally. This investigation analysed the hair narratives of the three to five different Coloured women and although this sample may seem small, Marshall (1996: 522) advocates for this approach in studying smaller samples as the qualitative methods "aim to provide illumination and understanding of complex psychosocial issues and are most useful for answering humanistic questions of 'Why?' and 'How?'". Thus these stories were critically analysed through narrative and multisemiotic critical discourse approaches. This study is not meant to be a means of 'othering' those Coloured women with naturally 'sleek' or straight hair in their omission, but rather it is focuses on those women who chemically straightened their hair in order to reach a standard their natural hair did not meet

4.3 Data Collection and Procedure Analysis

The data was collected via visual and audio recordings of the interview that took place. Each of the women were interviewed separately as they each be shared their personal accounts. The collection of the data was done through video call platforms Zoom and Google meet via the devices of participant and researcher respectively. The visual and video recordings of the interviews was then analysed and used as a means to identify linguistic markers, non-verbal

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communication and other modes that signal their attempts at identity performance during the interview and the telling of the relevant transformation in the respective narratives.

4.4 Ethical concerns

As a result of COVID-19, strict social distancing and safety protocols need to be adhered to. Thus all participants were assured that they were not required to have any physical contact with the researcher thus, the interview process was conducted via video call platforms most suited to participants' needs and add no further strain regarding Covid-19 safety measures. This study made use of personal accounts of participant's history through storytelling which were visually and verbally recorded, all participants needed to be willing and consenting adults and were required to sign the necessary consent forms, which was sent to them via email, with the option of remaining anonymous should they wish to do so or consent was through audio or video recorded consent (whichever acceptable). It stressed that any participant had the right to withdraw at any stage. The participants were thoroughly briefed about the nature of the study, my interest in the topic as well as their role in the investigation after which I answered any questions they may have. As this topic is focused on Cape Coloured Females who have lived during and post-apartheid and have undergone the hair-process known as the transition, the participants needed to meet the criteria to be eligible. The names of the participants were anonymised, and where pictures of hair are taken the faces were blurred to ensure their identity is not revealed. In cases where participants did not want images of their hair used in the analysis such images were removed and destroyed. All information and images provided by participants will be destroyed after 5 years as per university ethics guidelines.

A note on social media and copyrights

As stipulated by the Copyright Act, thoroughly explained in Dario Milo and Pamela Stein's A Practical Guide to Media Law (2013), all 'works' are protected by copyright when it subsists

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in a material form and was initially published in South Africa or any other country which abide by the Berne Convention – which aids in controlling copyright procedures in all member countries. According to this act, the party or parties involved in the production of a work (literary artistic, journalistic, computerised etc.) will hold all copyrights. A work that is covered by these copyrights may only be reproduced (referred to, quoted, used as illustration or as an example, reprinted, and reposted) in the following instances: – Where accessible, an author's consent has been given and consent is subject to reasonable conditions thereof. – When an artistic work, photographic piece(s), broadcasting works or published editions are used for private, academic study and research. – When a work is used for review or criticism. However, all reproducers must mention and reference source of the work which he or she is commenting on or critiquing. – When a journalist uses a work to conduct reports on current events. The source of the work must be mentioned and referenced adequately. – In the event that an author's written word is being quoted. In this instance, reproduction of an author's work(s) must be limited (work must only be used where necessary for its purpose) and non-defamatory.
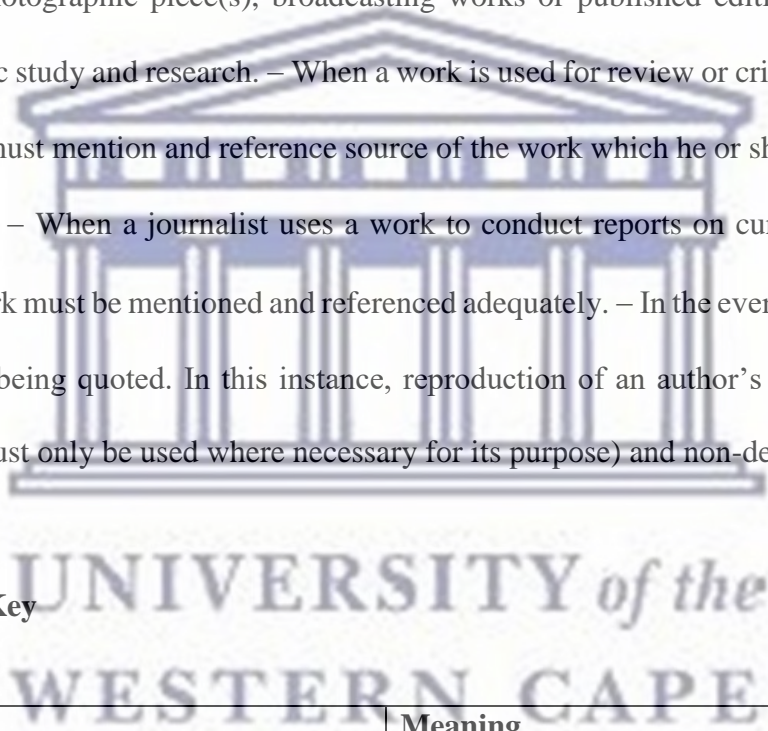
Transcription Key

Key	Meaning
…	Short pauses
(5.0)	Pauses longer than 5s
-	False starts
[]	Paralinguistic features
^	Tone
CAPS	Loudness in CAPS
(English)	Translation
-------	Next question

4.5 Chapter Summary

Above the necessary methodological outlines and guides were elaborated on. The methods

mentioned provide the researcher with the data needed to then be analysed accordingly. The

current descriptions and population size provide insight on the type of data to be collected

from the successful participants. Ethical concerns are a necessity to remain within

university's standards and human rights.

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Chapter 5

5 Coloured Hair-itage

5.1Introduction

This chapter investigates the cultural practices and narratives of Coloured women and their hair and how this relates to identity formation overtime as identity is a performance. Within any group the group members and aspiring members will behave in accordance to the group values so to be identified as a group member. Thus in the past, generations of women relaxed their hair and passed it down Coloured culture as a marker of their identity and wanting to assimilate to the societal in-group i.e. apartheid norms of the time. However, now in a changing South Africa the practices are also changing within the culture which ultimately change identities. Coloured women now modify their behaviours to adapt to the current and constantly changing Coloured culture. Hair as much as it is a hairstyle, is a salient identity marker in society. Thus this section will further explore decolonization of the mind through the changing of hair and hair narratives in a post-apartheid world.

5.2Coloured Culture Community of Practice and Identity Performance

According to Dunn (2008) culture and society are systems of relations, and culture as a tool shows social diversity. Hence, every action is of cultural significance and can be socially interpreted. People make use of their actions in order to position themselves with regards to the individual or the collective and also to distinguish themselves from others. Interactions with cultural practices also show acts of trying to signal identity with the group as identity

performances go beyond the basic forms of 'linguistic utterances' (Bhaktin 1984) as Klien et al (2007) found that this performance encapsulates "varieties of forms, such as physical action and manipulation of physical appearance…as well as the verbal expressions". Thus cultural practices including hair practices are indicators of identities in practice through the application of these particular performances e.g. the practice of relaxing young girl's hair as a result of the older women who've done these practices over the years. A community of practice is established overtime and those who wish to belong to the group assimilate accordingly e.g. women straightening there to form part of the Eurocentric norms of the time. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992:464) refer to a community of practice as "an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations-in short, practices- emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour". It is thus believed that "individuals can learn by observing and modelling other people" (Li, Grimshaw, Nielsen, Judd, Coyte and Graham 2009: 3) similarly individuals will perform identity acts that diverge or converge from the in-group in positive ways to maintain their difference or strengthen their desires to form part of the desired group (Eckert 1997):

HP 1: **"when I came out of the water my hair was not like the tv (^) people** [hands indicating length and sleekness, eyebrows raise]…and I was in the bathroom [frowns] at this braai crying because I couldn't put my hair into a pop-pom! …..and I was really excited about the process because ek het nou mos lang hare gehadt (I now had long hair) there's my straight hair but that was obviously a completely different time uhm…"

HP 2: "[looks away] but I have a little sister and she is Zulu so she has [shakes head] 4c hair and…**I remember one day she ask me that she wants her hair straight** and we…wanted her to be proud of where she comes from right [hands emphasize right] and we wanted her to love her hair as it is and I was thinking to myself, here I am… struggling to to decide to go natural…"

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HP 3: "up-until- all my life up-until I was 13 14 I started doing my own hair because I was much [air quotes] older pre-teen so I'm a teenager at that time…and my mom my mommy was always working so she didn't always have the time to do my hair and the only reas- the only steps and processes that I learned from her and also because we were like 7-8 women so it was me my sister my cousins my aunt my grandmother uhm…**so the only way I knew how to look after my hair or care for my hair was…what I saw (^) and what I saw and what I knew was relaxers, flat ironing and blow drying**…"

HP 4: "uhm I had quite a bush uhm and I needed my hair straight like my friends uhm and I think primary school is when I started to to experiment with relaxer and things uhm so I dno what age is that? Grade 4 what is grade 4 10 years old…I'm not sure uhm so yah **I started relaxing my hair from that time already mainly due to being influenced by what I'm seeing and what I'm surrounded by uhm**…the process of relaxing your hair OMG it's the worst thing ever…"

In their varying narratives and reflections on times past, all four women have moments when they realised that there was a certain narrative and culture of practice at the time that they had to strive towards because of what they saw around them in media and in society. HP 1 explains "**my hair was not like the tv (^) people**" which is once again indicative of the influence of media in the distribution of dominant ideologies in society and how they should be upheld and aspired to. HP 2 recalls that "**I remember one day she ask me that she wants her hair straight**" during a moment a younger sibling desired the same straightness of hair that her sister had even though it was not in its natural state with HP 3 explaining this pattern as "**the only way I knew how to look after my hair or care for my hair was…what I saw (^) and what I saw and what I knew was relaxers, flat ironing and blow drying**…". HP 4 furthers this thought saying that "**I started relaxing my hair from that time already mainly due to**

being influenced by what I'm seeing and what I'm surrounded by…" We are greatly influenced by what we see in society as most of us desire to belong as it is one of the most needed human traits and therefore it is important that what we see from media, society and cultures are patterns and practices of inclusive and diverse ways of being so that we do not have another generation longing to fit a space that has no place for them. La Mar (2018) believes that these "norms" are quite harmful and increasingly detrimental to minorities as representation matters and false representations leads to false senses of identities. These Coloured women share these misrepresentations in common which further indicates that communities of practice are influenced by the society around them which in turn influences the individuals who form part of this community. These episodes within narratives reveal moments in time that these Coloured women are able to recall. Thus they bring forth past events into the present along with how the effects of the past have had an impact on their present as well as future selves. They now aim to create new stories and practices to pass down to the next generation of Coloured women and inspire a re-constructed Coloured hair-itage.

5.3 Re-Constructing Kroes Hair Narratives

Kroes hair in society, as a result of apartheid norms, has often been surrounded with negative narratives e.g. having kroes hair was 'bad hair' and not a hair type to be envious of or endeavour to wear. Historically women of colour's natural hair was not considered the norm and thus women have been trying to 'correct' something that was never wrong to begin with. Kroes hair even had a reputation when it came to professional life and schooling with natural hair often being described as 'unkempt', 'not neat' and not 'professional'. There are many stories of girls like Zulagha Patel who had to had to fight school 'regulations' and the institution as a whole for criticizing her natural afro kroes hair. Other women also share how they had to hide their

natural kroes hair in interviews to come across as 'professional' and secure the job after which they would then wear their natural hair. These negative narratives however seem to be shifting and women of colour are changing the narrative by telling their stories and changing practices that in turn have been Re-Constructing the narrative surrounding kroes hair.

Figure 1 Tweet reposted on Instagram

This above tweet was reposted on Instagram and sums up how most Coloured women grew up thinking that "straight hair is good hair", this is not to say that those who dawn straight hair have bad hair but rather to show how much straight hair standards have been enforced in the past that many women grew up thinking their curls were bad when in fact as the tweet explains "curls go HARD" which essentially mean curls are just as good as straight hair despite what the old narratives suggest. The negative Kroes hair narratives can no longer be accepted as the norm as many naturalists and those who support the movement are going about changing it in the same way it was created and that is through re-creating practices and telling their own stories about their own hair from their own personal experiences. This shift in narratives is so as to change the way people associate Kroes with bad or unruly hair, to expel narratives created by communities who do not have natural hair yet tend to want to write Coloured hair-stories

and to teach the new generations to follow that we are more than what a pencil-test had to say about us. This is what we desire to accomplish in changing the narrative:

I imagine a new world where little girls will not have to spend years unlearning narratives about beauty that have harmed their self image and confidence... #blackhair #naturalhaircare #selflove #selfimage

1:43 PM · 7/13/20 · Twitter Web App

View Tweet activity

Figure 2 @Tweet

The Twitter user in figure 2 tweets that she imagines a world where "little girls will not have to spend years unlearning narratives about beauty that have harmed their self-image and confidence". This is the sentiments shared by many who have gone natural and aim to now unlearn the narrowed narratives of the past and even present. They now aim to present the next generation with a new and inclusive blueprint of beauty that includes Coloured kroes natural hair as beautiful. In the *Semiotic work: Applied Linguistics and social semiotic account of multimodality* Kress (2015: 69) concurs with this thought in explaining that we in communities need to:

> "acknowledge the fact that I have been shaped, and have shaped myself in the social worlds-in the communities-in which I have participated: having been agentive in my engagement with the resources of socially shaped, culturally and semiotically specific communities using the tools-of whatever kind-shaped by generations of those engaged before me, in my new shaping of resources, in my use of them"

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Figure 3 Instagram Post

The Instagram post in figure 3 retells the story these women have experienced in their childhood in a humorous post with the Coloured child between the legs of their mother or guardian having the task of fixing their natural hair which seems to be a tussle. An experience many women of colour my recall. Although all women may have similar stories of their moms, aunts, sisters etc. doing their hair, this community of practice however is widely more common with women of colour because of the natural state of their hair. As Kress (2010) has stated, we all form part of and simultaneously add to the cultures we form part of as we all have personal inputs and are agents of the semiotic resources we make use of and put out culturally. Thus these various resources reveal age old patterns of semiotic resources being used to bring meaning to and make meaning of the diverse signs and symbols found in our Multisemiotic world.

5.4 Decolonization of Hair

5.4.1 Introduction

Our world's history is heavy laden with Eurocentric and western cultural ideals as a result of the colonial and apartheid regimes enforced upon people who did not have their 'established' cultural customs. As a result many people of colour have found themselves with deformed identities and ways of being as they were not allowed to be who they were before colonialism but had to force their bodies into a space that they naturally did not fit in. However, there seems to be a shift in the thinking of people of colour everywhere in that they are now beginning to throw off their colonial masks and are taking up their natural space in society by unlearning imposed identities through now negotiating their identities and learning who they are apart from western culture. There is now the audacity of choice and "if we don't do it, we can keep our identities" (Wolf 2002: 258) or rather we can re-imagine and re-construct our identities according to our own choices.

5.4.2 Distortion of Self: Identity

Many women have found themselves with a distorted identity as a result of the West's ideals and what they had to live up to as "The beauty Myth tells a story: The quality called "beauty" objectively and universally exists: Women must want to embody it…" (Wolf 2002:12) and the past ideals were not forgiving of those who did not want to 'embody it'. Women of the 21st century however, are taking a stand against a frigid universal norm and are Re-Constructing and re-defining their identities free from colonial and apartheid embodiment:

The concept of redefining is imperative for the human psyche. We must not allow what we were told by the the people who meant to control us to remain to true to us.

Figure 4 Twitter Post

In the following post on twitter the writer explains: "The concept of redefining is imperative for the human psyche. We must not allow what we were told by the people who meant to control us to remain true to us". In this twitter post the user explains the importance of re-defining to free oneself from the control of others; others being those who enforced past colonial and apartheid standards. They further state that it is within our control, for the sake of our own mental states to be able to free ourselves from these untrue narratives; in essence we need to decolonise our minds. Decolonization of the mind presents itself in varying ways for example:

yes, i have
curly hair.
no, i don't wish
that it was
straight.
Anymore

@cute_curly_coffee

690 likes
cute_curly_coffee *Ooh how the tables have turned*...more
9 hours ago

Figure 5 Instagram Post

The above Instagram post where the writer addresses the fact that although she may have desired straight hair in the past "no, i don't wish it was straight. *Anymore*". There seems to be a shift in her thinking and an embrace for self as is when she claims her hair saying "yes, i have curly hair." The women who participated in the narrative interviews had the following to say about how going back and accepting their natural hair is indeed having an effect on their thinking and way of seeing themselves now:

> HP 1: yah, again not a particular moment but a series of events that led up to these types of things where...uhm…**you get past the point of comments** but you're feeling yourself uhm…I never used to take a lot of pictures before, you know you taking picture you looking leeeeker[flips 'hair' action] and uhm [looks down] and uhm you notice your confidence changes and of course this also is because you coming into your own uhm and there is literally nothing anyone can say to you when you are comfortable with yourself. That is also something that is big for me because that journey, **I see it in a lot of my clients [gestures lot] and people's hands who I'm holding through this journey…they CHAAANGE (^) and they become who they probably are supposed to be uhm…and it's not necessarily arrogance…it's just something women should've been doing before…in the past people would critique women for flippen just breathing you know what I mean? But [shakes head] it's the world that's changing and I'm happy to be part of the people who add to that by making you feel confident in your hair** (^) because hair hair plays a big role in in your appearance [looks away] uhm I think this is coupled with body[shows 2 fingers] positivity…okay I'm only tackling [smiles] the one issue but it come…you know…It changes you, I'm sure you in yourself have experienced the change so yah…

HP 1 retells that it has been a process to get where she finds herself now and reflects back on how she had to "get past the comments" of people who questioned hair natural hair choices but

that she does not regret it because of the positive changes she sees in herself as well as her clients saying "**I see it in a lot of my clients [gestures lot] and peoples' hands who I'm holding through this journey…they CHAAANGE (^) and they become who they probably are supposed to be uhm…and it's not necessarily arrogance…it's just something women should've been doing before…in the past people would critic women for flippen just anything you know what I mean? But [shakes head] it's the world that's changing and I'm happy to be part of the people who add to that by making you feel confident in your hair".** She concurs the notion that women would be critiqued for anything in the past but notes that the world is changing and that she is happy to be part of the people who make women now feel confident in their natural hair when they originally weren't because of the past.

HP 2: …with my hair…**I stand out man**…I come and there's a whole bunch of young people and only me would have an afro so I'm standing out [shrugs] (^) so that's…I'm an introvert and I don't really like all the attention and standing out I would much rather be a 'muur-blommetjie' (wallflower) and stand at the back of the crowd but now with my natural hair when people come into the flats and they look for me because they most of the people don't know my name is HP2 but now someone I work with or someone at varsity only knows me as HP2 so they would come here and ask where does HP2 stay and the kids won't know but when they say the girl with the curly hair man, and then immediately they would know they must come to our door[smiles] **so now I'm different because I'm the only one the girl with the curly hair and everyone knows me like that the girl with the afro and immediately they would know [smiles]…**

In the past world of blending in to the norm and fear of standing out HP 2 now embraces that she goes against the norm saying **"I stand out man"** and as someone who is known for being a 'muur-blommetjie' (wallflower), she now was recognizable as the one who was different but

that no longer seemed to be a problem for her as the world begins to embrace their natural selves. HP 2 concludes that **"so now I'm different because I'm the only one the girl with the curly hair and everyone knows me like that the girl with the afro and immediately they would know [smiles]…"** She now smiles as people identify her as the "girl with the afro" where in the past this would not be something you'd want to be known for because of the standards but more and more women of colour are embracing this new way of thinking.

> HP 3: [sighs, smiles, looks away] yes definitely…for me it's almost like…espec…okay…as a Coloured woman or just as a Coloured girl growing up I think we were always taught that anything African was baaaad (^) and inferior and not worthy and so (5.0)…it was almost like being called an African or being called black was bad it was like you were second rate or you a second class citizen you a second class human being uhm and again…**anything white was [raises hand above head] that was the standard that was what you were stri striving towards so ugh gosh!**

HP 3 recalls how "we were always taught that anything African was baaaaad (^)" she raises her tone emphasising the 'bad' they were taught; the ways of apartheid and colonialism. She furthers remember how "**anything white was [raises hand above head] that was the standard that was what you were stri striving towards so ugh gosh!**" once again reinforcing how these past standards were something people of colour were taught to strive towards and away from anything naturally African. Decolonization requires that we address the past and who we were identified as before so that we can re-construct who we want to be and essentially always were. HP 4 retells her story as:

> HP 4: yah uhm so I think when I started straightening my hair uhm the aim was really just trying to fit in with the crowd that I was surrounded by uhm…and as soon as I cut my hair and turned natural it's almost like now you standing out, **you not moving with**

what society is telling you, you are not fitting in with a specific crowd uhm…you look different…

I think this journey has taught me that uhm **my aim should should not have been trying to fit in uhm it should not have been trying to look like the next person it should be try and be identified as who I am, trying to look like me, trying to look like * uhm and now surprisingly my family tell me no that afro is you, it is what we identify you with uhm that is just who you are uhm** and I had I had a wig on a couple of weeks months months ago when I was in Cape Town and my family was like no uh uh just get the afro back on please just get the afro back so…yah uhm…I think I think it's throughout the journey I'm now I'm not a totally different person but I've just identified with myself more than before so yah I think that is what the journey does to you it makes you realize that you are different but that is totally okay uhm that is totally fine…

She recalls that she was no longer **"moving with what society is telling you"** and is no longer fitting into the norms of the past and that being different is okay. She explains how she no longer tries to fit in and that she is now identified by her afro but she is not a totally different person now and tells how she experiences this as being "identified with myself more than before so yah I think that is what the journey does to you it makes you realize that you are different but that is totally okay uhm that is totally fine…". For centuries we have been taught that our different is abnormal and that we should be changing ourselves to fit into a society that had no space for us. As we embrace our unique difference we are learning that we are more than normal in our own skin with our afro kroes hair. The concept of identity is constantly being researched as identities are frequently altering as a result of a continuously changing world and a constantly changing world results in fluid and ever transforming identities.

5.5 Chapter Summary

The focuses of this chapter included, Coloured culture and hair practices, narratives and the decolonization of the mind through the decolonization of hair. Coloured communities have long passed down particular practices through the generations and as a result of apartheid many colonial influences governed these practices and narratives. As these practices and narratives were drenched in colonial after-shocks, the colonization of the mind that ruled became clear. Thus decolonization of the mind became a necessity.

Chapter 6

6 Cape Coloured women's Hair: A Marker of Identity

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the analysing and discussing the data collected by use of the aforementioned methods (Narrative and Critical Multisemiotic Discourse Analysis) in investigating Cape Coloured women's hair as a marker of Identity. It will make use of the concepts of resemiotization and remediation from the Multimodality Framework as a way of unpacking how Coloured women's hair has become a marker of their identity over time and space as identity is a phenomenon that is under construction and transformation as we experience the world and are changed by it.

6.2 Changing Hair and Changing Identities

In the apartheid era a standard of beauty -including hair- was enforced based on dominant colonial ideologies of that time which included hair norms as straight and sleek and other types of hair were othered. The othering occurred not only with regards to the types of hair but more accurately those who had these 'other' types of hair. This included mocking, bullying, naming calling and other measures of 'othering' and discrimination. This stems from the apartheid norms and imposed identities (Bock & Mheta, 2014) of the era. Jensen (2011: 65) states that "othering concerns the consequences of racism, sexism, class or a combination hereof) in terms of the symbolic degradation as well as the processes of identity formation related to this degradation". Thus the identities formed during times of degradation as a result of racism,

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sexism and class seemed to have a stench of the imposed degradations of the time. Post-apartheid however it seems that Coloured women are now negotiating their identities through changes in narratives and culture of practices as identities are "constructed in active processes of identification and self-understanding, seeking or eschewing commonality, connectedness and groupness (Leppanen, S et al, 2013). This positive convergence and divergence is a vital technique of flowing between individual and social identities as it allows women who desire to be part the community with opportunities to showcase the adjoining attributes.

Three of the four narratives state some kind of degradation through othering because of the 'unusual' state of their hair at the time:

*HP 2: okay so [head on hand, looks away] …I remember there was one time we played outside as kids you know those 'intwantjies' (curly roots) you get in the kitchen and we were playing outside and there was this one girl she had very stright nice hair soft hair and **she would start mocking me she'd be like 'jy't pitte, dars korreltjies da agte it moet gerelax word' (you have pips, there are "kernels" at the back it must be relaxed) and you** know I think that was most of the time in your childhood **it is when those type of comments are made from outside that you realise that you there's a difference in hair textures [hands move up and down] out all over the world and like…***

*HP 3:…uhm and then she was teasing me and she said… "Oh you relax your hair hey?" and I said no I don't relax my hair and she said no I can see you relax your hair because here your true hair is showing out and **she said something to the effect of 'nee jou duk hare wys nou uit' (no your thick hair is showing) and [sighs] I said no I don't because is my mind I said if I say yes I'm still gna be teased so I might as well just lie***

*HP 4:...**2019 people still (^) were trying to convince us that kroes and having no hair having a pixie cut or having a bald head is ugly and uhm I think it still happens today hey in 2021 it still happens today***

All three participants state in some form that having kroes hair somehow made them different and stand out from the crowd in a negative way as degrading comments and thoughts still plague our society today. Some participants remembering incidents from school days and even how Miss Universe Zozibini Tunzi was mocked and bullied through social media for wearing her hair natural and having the audacity to try and compete in Miss SA and Miss Universe competitions. Othering seems to have an impact on identities as these women have had to 'comply' to the standards of the time to fit into the world that literally had no 'space' for their hair. This means of discrimination is still live an active on media and social media platforms as seen in the following Clicks, Tresemme and Unilever advert of 2020:

Figure 6 Maroela Media Facebook Comments

Figure 7 Maroela Media Facebook Comments

Figure 8 Maroela Media Facebook Comments

Figure 6: Comment 1: 'aag wat klae die kroeskoppe al weer' (urgh these kroes-heads are complaining again).

Figure 7: Comment 1: 'Nou het hulle gelieg??' (Are they telling lies then??)

Comment 2: Daleen: 'Als is in elk geval die waarheid hul soek hare

Soes wittes, sien altyd sleg in alles raak'

(Everything is the truth anyway they want hair just like

White people, always seeing something wrong)

Figure 8: Comment 3: 'Hulle het kroesie hare wie se skuld Is dit jy kan niks met daai plastiek

kroesies uit rig nie net one way en dis kroesies :D'

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(They have Kroes hair whose fault is that you can do nothing with that plastic kroesies just one way and that's kroes)

Each of these comments echo the mocking and discrimination found in the narratives of the participants but have just changed context and means of platform from narratives to Facebook comments under media pages. Figure 6 the commenter labels women with natural hair as 'kroes-heads' where Daleen in figure 7 figures that "they" all want hair like white peoples'. These indicate othering not only by referring to these women as "they' and "kroes-heads" as apart from us and non-kroes-heads but also shows how people still believe that others desire to be like 'white' people and want to conform to their standards of beauty. Sias in Figure 8 states that kroes hair is like plastic and nothing can be done with plastic. This is just another form of using degradation as a means to belittle and only highlights the negative thinking surrounding kroes hair on Coloured women as well as other women of colour. It is noted that "hair, within the context of apartheid body politics, played a crucial role in the subjugation and marginalization of the Coloured body, inflicting on it the most humiliating and degrading form of symbolic violence" (Erasmus 2001 cited in Meyerow 2006: 10). The Coloured body from apartheid has been subjected to its regimented structures that came with humiliation and the need for it to be 'fixed' or transformed into the standards of the time. However, Coloured identity and culture that developed from the separation into particular race groups meant that patterns were established and identities emerged. Since identity relies on performance acts, the imposed identities of the past have become the negotiated identities of the future where women of colour are now performing identity acts that diverge from the apartheid identity of the past and converge to the new natural hair identities that are constantly in transformation in the future (Bock & Mheta 2014). The Ctnaturally Instagram post addresses the negative comments surrounding kroes hair in a manner that converges to the narrative that kroes hair is no longer

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a means of degradation by addressing the fact that kroes is not a 'bad' word as it also is not adorned by a seemingly sub-standard people that it used to be associated with in the past (figure 9):
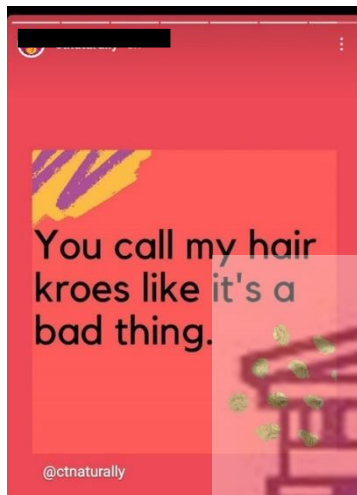

Figure 9 Instagram story

Figure 9 signifies how resemiotization has taken place from one context and resource to another. From the beginning of the narratives of Coloured women retelling their stories from the past of being mocked to the social media platform Facebook and the Maroela media group whose followers echoed this mockery through posting comments in real-time to an Instagram post addressing this naming-calling and mocking. Ctnaturally through this post seem to address the century old 'bad' hair vs 'good' by stating "You call my hair kroes like it's a bad thing'. This Instagram story post was posted in relation to the Clicks advert of 2021 and the backlash kroes hair faced when those who dawned kroes hair were ridiculed for tackling the adverts creators' as individuals whose perspective is still ruled by the systemic problems of the past in a post-apartheid South Africa and the Instagram story post in figure 10 responded saying "MY HAIR DOESN'T NEED TO BE FIXED SOCIETY'S VIEW OF BEAUTY IS WHAT'S BROKEN".

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Figure 10 Instagram story

This post once again highlights society and its narrowed view of thinking that women of colour's hair is the problem when that in fact is not the case. It is however the social constructs of beauty, women of colour and its association of beauty with European aesthetics. Women of colour who wear their natural hair are often told that their hair needs to be fixed as though it were broken however how can what grows naturally from your head be broken. The narratives of these Coloured women share how their hair was seen as broken or something that needed correcting like relaxing or straightening to 'fix' their hair:

> *HP1:… uhm…even my mother she'd even still **make comments like "nou gaan djy jou hare soe los?"** (are you going to leave your hair like that) or you'd get to a party **and its "ooohhh why didn't you blow out your hair?"** so uhm those thigs were the reason that I kept at it…*

> *HP 2: okay so [head on hand, looks away] …I remember there was one time we played outside as kids you know those 'intwantjies' (curly roots) you get in the kitchen and we were playing outside and there was this one girl she had very stright nice hair soft hair and she would start mocking me she'd be like **'jy't pitte, dars korreltjies da agte it moet gerelax word' (you have pips, there are "kernel" at the back it must be relaxed)**

> *HP 3:…**then she was teasing me and she said… "Oh you relax your hair hey?"** and I said no I don't relax my hair and she said no I can see you relax your hair because here your true hair*

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is showing out and she said something to the effect of 'nee jou duk hare wys nou uit' (no your thick hair is showing) and [sighs] …

*HP 4: yah uhm [looks away] I think uhm when I think back to 2017 when I decided to cut my hair and I hear my family going **no your hair's kroes you can't do that**, that means in 2017 this is only 4 years ago we were still believing this narrative and we were still believing we were uhm still matching kroes with being not normal or being ugly uhm you know not pretty and…this it being 27 2017 you'd think that people'd realize…we've moved on from that…*

All four participants recall moments where their kroes natural hair was deemed as something wrong or 'ugly' (HP 4) that needed to be fixed. HP 1 remembers family members asking her why she opted to not straighten her hair while HP 2 retells of how she was called out for her natural hair growing out and was told to relax it. HP 3 recalls how she was teased for relaxing her hair as her natural hair too was beginning to show, while HP 4 was told by others what her kroes hair should and should not be able to do or be worn as. A recurring theme seems to be the voices of others that still think of kroes hair as a problem and this constant repetition helps establish and continue a negative discourse surrounding Kroes hair. Whether it is comments from strangers on the internet, bullying in school or uncalled for commentary from family and friends, it is clear that kroes hair in the hands and mouths of those who do not wear it is still laced with the confines of Eurocentric and apartheid societal norms. When it comes to the way language is used to create this discourse created in face-to-face or online conversations, Labov and Fansher (cited in Richards and Schmiddt 2013) state that conversations are a ground for utterances and actions that are unavoidably fixed together by a network of understandings and reactions. These conversations that are being had regarding kroes hair stem from various understandings about it and thus different reactions towards it are created in discourse. It is however now in the hands of those who are wearing their natural hair to change this discourse

so that the conversations encompassing natural hair no longer only reflect negative understandings but show an educated reaction to the choices made by those who chose to go back to natural.

6.3 Taking up Space: Identity Performance

Identity performance is in the doing; it is performed through the creation and production of traits needed to assimilate to a specific group (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985). Pavelenko and Blackledge (2004) explored their framework of identities as imposed, assumed or negotiable identity. Imposed identities are those which result in the "way we are constructed by others or are the identities others ascribe to us" (Ferris, Peck and Banda 2014) they are identities that are placed on us from others based on image, race, class, hair etc. as we are often socialized into these identities without question. Assumed identities are those we practice and perform daily as we have accepted them as our identity. Whereas Negotiable Identity is that which we can contest when we do not wholly accepts them to be true based on the identity we want to portray of be identified with. There are various markers of identities that come across through the performances and acts we associate with a particular group. However, historically certain identities were placed on people based on how they were seen in society and these identities were often imposed on them hence the imposed identity. This can be seen in the way Coloured people were thought of as having unruly identities when their hair did not meet 'neat' western standards. This identity was imposed by others and made to be the norm of a society. However, women in the 21st century have begun to start negotiating their identities in the way they are no longer accepting the imposed identities of the past but are leaning into negotiable identities to assert their preferred identity. The following Coloured women have begun to do this in the way that they have chosen to re-construct the identity attached to their hair through

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accepting their natural hair, changing the narratives of kroes hair meaning unruly people as the pencil-test suggested and performing certain acts, hair-acts in this case, that is allowing them to transform their colonial identities and take up space in a post-apartheid world both figuratively and literally.

Figure 12 After Transition

Figure 11 Before Transition

Figure 13 After Transition

Figure 14 Before Transition

Figure 16 After Transition

Figure 15 Before Transition

Figure 17 After Transition

Figure 18 Before Transition

The left-hand side displays the women when they conformed to the norms of the society as they tried to form part of a world that needed them to have straight, flat ironed or chemically processed hair to achieve the straight hair they dawned. It is also noted how their hair here barely takes up space as it was forced to fit the flat status-quo. On the right-hand side they have fully transitioned back to natural and now wear their visibly voluminous kroes hair with pride. Their hair begins to take up space both literally and figuratively as they cut ties with the imposed identities of the past and are Re-Constructing their identities through performing acts that suit the Coloured kroes hair community. Through now wearing their kroes hair and no longer hiding it they have made space for generations of Coloured women to be able to walk in the path they have carved out for them in history. Kroes hair no longer needs to hidden under chemicals and heat irons but is now allowed to flourish as nature intended

6.4 Summary of Chapter

This chapter focused on Coloured women's hair and identity and identity performance. Apartheid influences have entrenched the notion of hair being a means of identification and

unfortunately in a post-apartheid world, some people still hold that ill view. Identity is not fixed and cannot be chained to individuals despite apartheids attempts thus as Coloured women begin to change their hair so their identity begins transform change. However now, in present times, identities are allowed to display the fluidity they possess.

Chapter 7

7 Media Influence and Representation: Tresemme, Clicks and Unileaver Hair advertisement

7.1 Background Information

In September of 2020, Clicks, Tresemme and Unilever retailers sparked nationwide (even international mention) of an advertisement displaying white women with blonde hair as having fine and flat "normal" hair in comparison with women of colour whose natural afro's were labelled as dry, damaged, frizzy and dull i.e. not "normal". Further, it was reiterated on the Tresemme website that "normal" hair was seen as professional and anything else was not. This advertisement was regarded as a clear signifier of institutionalised racist ideologies at its core. Many took to social media to voice their opinions so much so that the level of noise had to be accounted for. Various news and media platforms also took this opportunity to voice their opinions. However, these views were once again those from unaffected individuals attempting to invalidate the lived experiences of others and believed that these people would just "get over it". The media playing its game of cover up and obeying its institutionalised racism ladder had once again downplayed minority issues. Social media however, seemed to be at its most useful in providing a public platform and outlet for those personally affected by it to voice their experiences. This is where people were allowed to express exactly why this is not just an issue to "get over".

7.2 Social Media enforcing Dominant Ideologies

When the advertisement was released in 2020 it caused a stir on the affected communities namely those who associated with Coloured and black culture. Social media and media as a whole as often been used as a tool of conveying dominant ideologies and social constructs that are standard of specific communities and as a result it provides us with a rich field of resources used in its creations available for investigation. Sergeant and Tagg (2014:3) concur that "in social media, it is the semiotic constructions and processes of indexing or eluding community, connectedness and groupness which are available for investigation". Thus social media can index *groupedness* or connections with those who control and produce media from government, stakeholders and the public as well as those who form part of the greater community that receive the information and the various groups they would like to be associated with. When the associated brands released the advert, many rightly assumed their connection to past regiment thinking apart from those who were its consumers as "new communication protocol breaks away from traditional clear cut separation between producers and consumers of texts " (Sergeant & Tagg 2014:4):
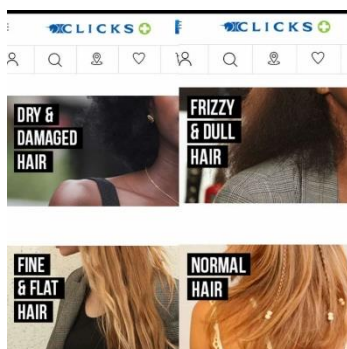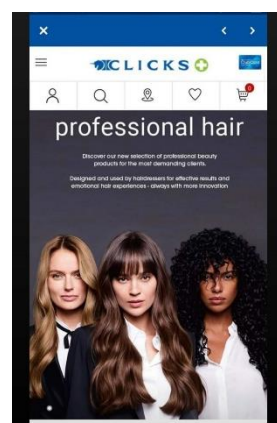

Figure 19 Clicks Advertisement

Figure 20 Clicks & Tresemme Advertisement

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Figure 19 shows the labelling and comparison of the hair of four different women where the white women seen on the advert have hair labelled as "FINE & FLAT HAIR" as well as "NORMAL HAIR" and the women of colour are labelled as having "DRY & DAMAGED HAIR" and "FRIZZY & DULL HAIR". Simultaneously the Tresemme advert only labels certain hair types as 'professional'; a common means of classifying professionalism according to the hair on their heads. "The media tells women what they should look like and who they should aspire to be, while at the same time often representing women in a stereotypical, biased and discriminatory way" (La Mar 2018). However, with social media being an active platform, consumers are allowed to respond to advertisements and other media and are able to challenge, interpret and or critique the information they are given as soon as the news breaks. This played a significant factor in the way this advert was dissected by its viewers and allowed them to challenge the information they were receiving as fact from these brands.

> "…Marginalized groups have increasingly sought fair and unbiased representation and recognition, dominant ideologies and frameworks (…) have come under fire for being too narrow, limiting or contradictory" (Kippie 2019: 3)

It thus called in to question how the advert was allowed to be released and whether or not our various cultures are adequately represented in the systems and companies that govern the information we receive and consume on a daily basis by challenging their apparent biases and off-brand (for some) perspectives and interpretations of the cultures in South Africa. Kippie (2019: 3) in her thesis *The effects of social media on the revitalisation of feminism and Coloured women's identity politics* states that there is a "lack of contemporary knowledge surrounding Coloured culture, it's community and its women in current society" and the horrible misrepresentation they have faced in this ordeal provides concurrent evidence in this case.

The narrative of 'professional' hair has also been one of many standards that women's bodies were held up for comparison and complacency to frigid rules. Thus their identity, already being tied up in their hair, was now also up for investigation of professionalism. The various pieces of evidence below indicate how this issue transcends various semiotic resources yet convey the same problem surrounding professionalism and women's identity. Again as Naomi Wolf author of *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Use Against Women* (2002: 59) writes that "cultural stereotypes women to fit the myth by flattening the feminine in to beauty-without-intelligence or intelligence-without beauty" as if women are not allowed to encompass both and that hair somehow has become a qualifier of intelligence when women can in fact encompass both beauty and a beautiful mind:
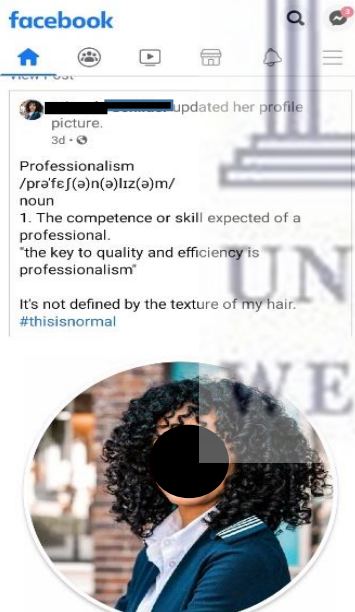

Figure 21 Facebook Post

Figure 22 Twitter Post

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Figure 23 Instagram post

Figure 21, 22 and 23 show how the idea of professionalism is rooted in the idea of having straight hair so much so that women would end up "interviewing with straight hair then popping up on the first day with natural hair or braids" twitter user in figure 22 tweets. The same reference was made using various semiotic resources via Facebook as well as Instagram in which case all platforms allow for public interaction e.g. the heart likes of the Instagram post in figure 23 showing "Before you get the job" the cartoon (well-known Cartoon Network cartoon) is pictured with straight hair where "After you get the job" the cartoon is pictured with natural hair. The Facebook post in figure 21 states the definition of Professionalism as a Noun "the competence or skill expected of the professional" which has no mention of hair type and Micaela concludes this buy stating that "It is not defined by the texture of my hair" accompanied by her in nursing uniform with natural hair. The notion of straight being hair associated with professionalism is semiotically remediated across these 3 varying media appearing in their well-known multimodal capacities i.e. The imagery of Instagram, the writing and imagery of Facebook and the black and white text of twitter even though all three have the means to transcend these bounds. A critical component in semiotic remediation is Repurposing as most of the text we are exposed to is a result of re-purposing and re-performing as means evolve with context. According to Prior and Hengst (2010) semiotic remediation is critical to understanding cultural and communication. It is therefore of necessity to note how professionalism has been linked to hair in the Clicks Advert and how the public who have been criticized have responded via various modes of communication and media. Wykes and Gunter (2005: 39) explain that "Meaning is therefore always intra-textual- a single new image cannot resonate unless it fits that history of the subject/viewers meaning experiences". One thing that is clear is that the past historical systems in place in institutionalized settings need to be unlearned and done away to become more inclusive to our diverse populations.

7.3 Citizen Journalism Responds to Misrepresentation

7.3.1 Introduction

Coloured women and women of colour are not ignorant, we know that out hair can be frizzy and dull and damaged but that is not the issue. The issue is that that very 'frizz' or 'texture' was used as a means of racial classification and if you have the esteemed privilege to not understand these implications then you cannot invalidate the experiences of those of who are affected by it. This was illustrated in the consumer's response to the advert and to those individuals who needed to be educated on the historical implications and impacts of the advert. Many took to social media platforms to immediately voice not only their dissatisfaction but also the various impacts this had on their culture and identity.

7.3.2 Citizen Journalism

With social media already breaking the confines of mainstream media production and publication processes, it comes to no surprise that the manufacturers of media have transcended media houses and has become an open floor for participatory journalism for those who take part in the social media phenomenon. This has various advantages with the most salient one being that of media discourse creation now being in the hands of every day individuals. O'Keeffe (2011: 31) believes that media discourse is a "public, manufactured, on-record, form of interaction" and because it is an on-record form of interaction it is available for critique and modification especially on social media platforms. However, in a world where information is so readily available in the age of technology, there can be no excuse for misrepresentation or uneducated media productions:

Figure 24 Facebook Post

Figure 25 Facebook Post

Figure 24 shows a Facebook post where the writer calls out people who have called the outburst of voices addressing the Clicks advert as "dripped in hypersensitivity" and suggests that people "stop invalidating the voices of those who have been criticised. Many people who found the advert as laughable seemed to show their insensitivity to topics that they may not be directly affected by and this writer was keen to point it out. She further states that "if you have not been made felt like you're less than because of your hair, please take a seat" which reiterates the degradation women of colour were faced with because of their hair and to have to deal with insensitive individuals in the 21st century drained many affected. In figure 25 the post writer agrees with this saying "BUT a lot of you have never been made fun of because of your hair texture, criticized for your hair not being straight enough…or more importantly felt ugly because of your type of hair, and it's really starting to show". Each Facebook post shows the interactions of other social media users through the display of emoticons, comments or sharing of these posts. The sharing of the participatory journalism posts is important as it shows that "networked distribution is no longer exclusive of corporations" (Adami 2014: 224) and thus illustrates that the "nature, location and dynamic of discursive power in social media, or

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broadly speaking the participatory web, is fluid, changeable and non-static" (KhorasviNik 2017: 582).
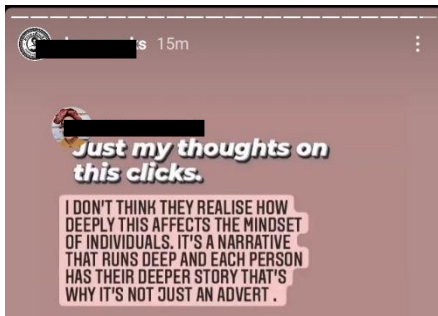

Figure 26 Instagram story reposted to another Instagram stories.

Similarly, this same message is reposted from one Instagram user's story via a different users Instagram story. This method of semiotic remediation shows how semiotic acts are re-presented across a variety of modes and chains of activity as well as texts in new contexts. The Instagram user posts that "I DON'T THINK THEY REALISE HOW DEEPLY THIS AFFECTS THE MINDSETS OF INDIVIDUALS. IT'S A NARRATIVE THAT RUNS DEEP AND EACH PERSON HAS THEIR DEEPER STORY THAT'S WHY IT'S NOT JUST AN ADVERT". They once again touch base on the fact that this old narrative has deeper effects on those criticised and that this advert cannot merely be put aside as a mistake but that there are people behind these images of representation with stories and experiences that cannot be overlooked. This tweet suggests the following:

Figure 27 Tweet

In a twitter post the writer explains that "We cannot allow Black & Coloured to be defined the way the colonizers wanted it. If we allow these terms to fade away as nothing but derogatory and without positive meaning, it will haunt our people forever and then colonialism win." This twitter post intricately shows the power of sharing information across an array of resources to bring about the same or similar messages regarding the deeper and historical implications and meanings of the advert consequently shows as Adami (2014:224) concludes that:

> "…online environments foster remediation to an unprecedented extent; their multiple and interconnected platforms afford multimodal…at the cost of a (sharing) click; any text can be linked to another, forwarded into another space, embedded in some other text"

Only few, if any of us are unaffected by media and its discourse. Media has replaced our older institutions as a primary source of information and understanding. It is thus important to note how the media provides "inhabitable discourses that form the substance of culture and experience" (Talbot 2007). Citizen or Participatory Journalism allows the public thus the opportunity to impact the discourses mainstream media put out. Social media has the creative power to make use of visual and linguistic resources that enable its users to insert themselves in discourses and Talbot (2007: 3) echoes this as she states "reality exists outside, but it is constantly mediated by and through language; and what we can know or say has to be produced in and through discourse". It is therefore necessary that citizens have the capacity to influence and change discourses as many discourses have been made hazy as a result of conversations and theories created apart from the people it makes use of in its discursive practices. Talbot in Media Discourse: Representation and Interaction reveals that "media serves a vital function as a public forum" (2007:3) and through these social media participatory means it allows for a

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forum to take place and not be a mainstream media affair. These users above have shown how citizen journalism uses media public platforms to create an open forum to challenge nuanced media discourses pertaining to women of colour and their hair. They reflect on the negative representations made known by media and the public and educate those connected on their particular views.

7.4 Summary of chapter

The media has and always will play an intricate role in society and in the past the role was used as a means of upholding ill ideologies alongside misrepresentations of its diverse communities. As a result, social media platforms have allowed media to become exactly that, social. Where media in the past and still ever-present constantly find a means to dehumanize minorities, social media has allowed those minorities as place to instantly critique and question the media fed to them. Citizen journalists have taken up this vital public forum and now see fit to create and distribute information from the mouths of those whom do not benefit from the media's incessant need to uphold colonial ideals. The need for citizen journalism is evident as the participants make mention of how they still do not see enough correct representation of Coloured women and their hair in this the 21st century.

Chapter 8

8 Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

The following chapter will provide an overview of the study as well as an overview of the research findings i.e. Objectives and Research questions. It will then provide recommendations for the study and draw its conclusion.

8.2 Overview of Study

This study aimed to answer questions regarding the re-construction of Coloured women and their identity marked by their hair throughout history. It endeavoured to provide answers to various objectives and research questions in an attempt to solve the problem identified. It aimed to challenge the stereotypical identities and norms of the past and attempted to re-introduce kroes hair narratives through the retelling of stories from those who dawn kroes hair and not those who had opinions on matters they had no experience with. It wanted to give Coloured women a space to voice their hair journeys and tell the hair stories and practices as passed down through generations. It further meant to show the impact of the media and how they convey dominant ideologies through their creation, production and distribution of information.

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8.3 Overview of Research fFndings

8.3.1 Objectives

1. To explore narratives of hair as experienced by the Cape Coloured Females during and post-apartheid.

Each narrative seemed to follow a similar pathway from the hair practices in childhood to the disgust and disappointment of the media in the 21ˢᵗ century. Recalling their experiences in apartheid the narratives centred on their practices with relaxing and/or straightening their hair. From their retelling, this process caused more harm and distress then the joy of the straight tresses they would eventually adorn. These women recall how they followed this hair process because of what they had seen passed down through the generations of the women in their families. During the apartheid time, they were mocked and ridiculed when their natural hair would creep through their relaxed hair process. This, along with what the media had presented to them as beautiful, only deemed their hair as irregular in society. However, in a post-apartheid world, they each seem to be finding their own way as society begins to shift. What is of utmost importance in this regard is that these stories of overcoming the stringency of the past and the affects it had on their identity only carries the weight is does because it comes directly from those who experienced it. For too long Coloured women and their stories have been told for them which resulted in misrepresentations of them. These narratives as experienced by Coloured women are told by Coloured women for Coloured women.

2. To uncover the extent to which Cape Coloured women's hair is a marker of identity.

With the introduction of the pencil-test as means of identification of race, the matter of hair being a marker of identity was solidified. This means of classification was a means of

separation of the diversity South Africa holds thus its means of identification was to serve the apartheid time. Although its use was abhorrent in nature, it does conclude that hair is of such nature that it holds the capacity to be a marker of identity in more ways than one. The participants recall various moments when their hair marked who they were both during and post-apartheid. The difference however was that during apartheid they carried an ascribed identity from which there seemed no room to expand from. What we have come to know is that identity is not fixed but a fluid entity that is developed in community. Therefore, in a now post-apartheid world Coloured women have the opportunity to negotiate and transform their identity as the society around them transforms from old to new e.g. A participant explains how a Female family member watched as she assimilated to the standards around her by relaxing her hair and wanting to do the same, to being the girl that everyone identified as the one with the big afro that everyone wanted. Hair standards out, it carries meaning and is a marker of identity.

3. To discover to what extent the hair process of transition is as of a result of or results in mental liberation of sorts.

The key to the process of the transition is not going natural but rather going *back to* natural. It is rooted in the idea of returning to an unsullied state of being before becoming diluted with colonialism. The transitioning process echoes the ideals of decolonization in that it shares ideas of returning to the self, recognizing the past and embracing recreation of the self for a better tomorrow however cliché. The participants have retold their experiences of being trapped in a world where only having relaxed standard hair meant they were worthy in society. They felt as though straightening their hair was not an option as it was a practice passed down from generations that formed part of the etiquette of the apartheid regime. The participants note how mental liberation has taken place for them since transitioning. Hair Participant 1 (Hereafter noted as HP 1 through 4 respectively) notes that in the past women were just expected to go with what they were told but suggests that as the world is changing she is happy to see her

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clients change as they go through this process and that they are in essence becoming who they were meant to be. HP 2 explains how she was the shy girl who walked with her head bowed low but after transitioning back to natural she stands out as the 'girl with the hair' and is no longer afraid to embrace who she is. These participants have seen a change in how they view the world after embracing their return back to natural. The transition process is not to erase the past but rather to ensure future generations of mentally liberated Coloured women who are no longer chained to the past. This process further allows them to recreate their identity in a post-apartheid world.

4. To analyse the changing identities of Cape Coloured women associated with changes in hairstyling in space and time.

Identity being a fluid and dynamic entity means that it is never truly fixed no matter how much a dominant ideology may try to hold it captive. In the past, hair was used as a means of classification and identification of men and women who did not assimilate to the western beauty standards of the time. Thus, as times changed, these identities have no choice but to transform as well as they now serve similar but more fluid roles. Coloured women and their hair have had complex relationships as a result of the past but present times have allowed for them to take up space where space was previously not available to them. These identities changed from be associated to the ascribed irregular identities associated to the Coloured body during apartheid to the ever changing liberal identity the Coloured body currently assumes. The participants recall how they had to assimilate to the times and that their Coloured hair was seen as unruly and so were they. Yet in the more liberal present they are able to style their natural hair according to the identity they wish to assume. They have progressed from staying tangled in the ascribed identities of the past and have untwined themselves into a free and dynamic present that allows them the opportunity to recreate who they are now from who they were told to be then.

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5. To investigate the role of media and it's representation of Coloured women's hair.

The role of the media on society is ever present but misrepresentation of Cape Coloured women and minorities as a whole is abhorrent. It was evident that the media has not caught up to the 21st century in some regard with the way it handled the Clicks, Tresemme and Unilever saga of 2020. The participants and citizen journalists a-like were disgusted by the apparent faux pa which resulted in the age old idea of "white" being the yardstick all are to strive to reach. As media continues to drive ideologies and information to communities it has shown that there is a clear need for regulation by society as it still does not meet the current wave of transformation. For too long media has misrepresented or straight left out minority groups which have had a negative impact on those minority groups and the generations that have followed. Some participants even note how they do not recall seeing women who looked like them or embodied their culture in the past and having seen an advertisement released in such distaste in the 21st century only reminded them of how entrenched those past structures still are in media. As a result, it is now up to society to decide what is acceptable in media as social media platforms have given them a space to counter media that no longer goes with the liberal and inclusive society it aims to become.

8.3.2 Research Questions

1. Are typical narratives of mental liberation among Cape Coloured women who have chosen to transition their hair?

According to the participants, they have experienced various forms of mental liberation since transitioning back to natural. HP1 explains the confidence she saw in herself and her clients who went through this transition, "...you notice your confidence changes and of course this

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also is because you coming into your own uhm and there is literally nothing anyone can say to you when you are comfortable with yourself. That is also something that is big for me because that journey, I see it in a lot of my clients [gestures lot] and people's hands who I'm holding through this journey…**they CHAAANGE (^) and they become who they probably are supposed to be uhm…and it's not necessarily arrogance…it's just something women should've been doing before**". She concurs the idea that this process has allowed women to become who they were supposed to be as stated in the arguments above. In essence they are now able to transform into who they were meant to be as the past identities available to them restricted their fluidity as ever-changing beings. HP 1 retells, "I had asked my mom after that to please just (^) sort this out before I go to high school…and I was really excited about the process because ek het nou mos lang hare gehadt (I now had long hair) there's my straight hair but that was obviously a completely different time uhm…and then also trying to figure out your self-confidence you know all of that and I think [looks away]…psssht!...**falling in line and getting the straight hair was where my mental state was then [smirks] I think that was so different to now you know**…". HP 2 recalls similar moments where confidence in themselves grew because of how they now understood their hair. It allowed them to view themselves as full as their afro hair and no longer hide behind the façade of comfort relaxed hair gave them. HP 3 sums it up saying "yes definitely…for me it's almost like…espec…okay…**as a Coloured woman or just as a Coloured girl growing up I think we were always thought that anything African was baaaad (^)** and inferior and not worthy and so (5.0)…it was almost like being called an African or being called black was bad it was like you were second rate or you a second class citizen you a second class human being uhm and again…anything white was [raises hand above head] that was the standard that was what you were stri striving towards so ugh gosh!", "And I've learned that Africa is so rich and uh Ellen Johnson- cerleaf said ***"Africa is very rich, we've just been poorly managed"…..***And also

as a Coloured woman cause I'm a Coloured and I've got black blood in me as a Coloured woman also too…ugh…we've been colonised our minds have been colonised so much as a Coloured woman having growing up on the Cape Flats being raised by a single parent that I don't have to stick into that box…I don't (^)…..". HP 3 addresses that as a result of colonialization Coloured women have been taught to see themselves in particularly skewed notions where striving towards 'whiteness' seemed an innate response. However, several means of decolonising the mind continually become made known and those who choose mental liberation begin to see themselves 'outside of the box" they were put in as the come to terms with and take control of their decolonization.

2. What role has society played in the historical and present conceptualization of hair as an identity marker?

Historically, society played an extensive role in classing and classifying people according to physical traits and this did not exclude hair. The infamous pencil-test was historically used to class people into various race groups and particular stereotypical labels were placed on these racial groups. Western Culture has long been treated as the 'right' way and everything that differed was deemed as 'left'. Thus communities in society attempted to conform to their standards to be able to fit into society and hair became a marker of identity. The participants recall moments where society played a role in the conceptualization of hair as an identity marker in the past and present. In the past the participants recall school rules that governed the 'whiteness' of their hair, family members entrenching 'corrective' hair practices and the lack of representation in the media among many other instances. As hair was further etched in as marker of identity by the 'pencil-test', even though it played a deranged role in apartheid, it does support the claim that identity does lie within hair among other things. However, for

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Coloured women, it is the present that allows them to re-conceptualize hair as a marker of identity as it is far more than a divisive label but holds within its roots the essence of who the strive to be as the re-create their identity. We now have the ability to re-write the norms or what is seen as acceptable in society and broaden it to be more inclusive than the narrowed vision of Western Eurocentric culture.

3. To what degree does the transition process allow Cape Coloured women to re-fashion, establish and negotiate their identities in a post-apartheid South Africa?

The transition back to natural has had various impacts on the participants yet each mentioned that they have achieved mental liberation of sorts as they now are allowed to re-fashion their identity in a post-apartheid world. Identities are fluid and ever-changing and as such it allows individuals the opportunity to negotiate their identities and perform acts that help establish their desired identity. It is however an ongoing process as society has to unlearn the confines of the past and be taught the inclusive visions of the future. We have to transition, just as their hair has gone through different processes to reach the stage they are at now, so we will have to change our ways of thinking and lean into the diversity we have been blessed with. This transition process has allowed all the participants to grow in confidence as the world allowed them to take up space figuratively and literally when it comes to natural hair. HP 2 describes how she was known as the shy girl who kept her hair and head down to being identified as the girl with the big hair who holds friendly conversation , "I remember that day I walked out of church and I looked up [lifts head with finger] and I walk down the street and I look up because I decided that I'm going to look at you so that when look at me and you wna smile at me because you appreciate my crown [shows space around hair] and I will smile back at you and it made people in the road walk into church no one would talk to me right because I always

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look like this [looks down] but I came back and walk with my head up high and I looked at people… **that made me realise you know what my crown being up there means that my head also has to be up there [lifts head high again]…**" Her big hair allowed her room to grow into her big personality as she embraced her natural hair and self. HP 4 reflects, "…throughout this journey I think this journey has taught me that uhm my aim should should not have been trying to fit in uhm it should not have been trying to look like the next person it should be try and be identified as who I am, trying to look like me, trying to look like me **uhm and now surprisingly my family tell me no that afro is you, it is what we identify you with uhm that is just who you are**…". Through this reflection it is evident that re-fashioning ones identity lies in fully embracing who you are but it also relies on the societal view of what is 'accepted'. Thus the transition seems to be taking place not just within those who undergo the process but also within those within their community which allows this re-fashioning and negotiating of identities to take place.

4. What constitutes hairstyle as performance and defining quality of Cape Coloured women's identities?

Hair is a means of performing identity acts in an attempt to converge to the desired group. Hair is a complex concept when it comes to women and their identity, particularly Coloured women. When the pencil-test defined Coloured individuals according to their hair type, it became a marker of identity. Thus hairstyle not just a hairstyle, it has a meaning in society and means various things for those who dawn their diverse styles. It is a performance of identity as it is not something that haphazardly happens but it is a choice that is consciously made and performed. From the choice of straightening hair to wearing your hair natural, they all have different impacts on the identity. It is therefore not just Hair. HP 1 embodies this as she recalls how hairstyle is a performance and defining quality in Coloured women's identities, "…I have a picture!...this beautiful dress uh African style

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heart, boob-tube what what what! A gold uhm choker vibe **annnd even though my mini afro was still out I looked like a flippen Queeeeeeeeen! (^) That moment!, that was the moment where I was just like, it was probably my wedding more than it was the girls' [smiles] cause I was just liiike [flips 'hair'] you know…"**. She displays this moment through showing how her hair made her feel that day and performs her identity as she relives that moment. Hair is an embodiment of who we are and hope to be seen as.

5. To what extent does media representation play a role in upholding dominant ideologies

Representation matters and the incorrect representation of minority groups have a direct impact on society. Media plays a vital role in the way a society upholds dominant ideologies and misrepresentations have consequences especially in the 21ˢᵗ century where media is no longer a one-sided affair. People now have the ability to challenge media outputs through citizen journalism as misrepresentations are no longer acceptable in the age of technology. Media maintains negative narratives and stereotypes in the way they create and produce content on their platforms from extremely narrowed perspectives. HP 4 elaborates this, "…so in that moment it was to me like that's just it's this view [hands show narrow view] that people have you know, they people prefer to look like horses like this, they only see this type of view and if you don't has a person as an individual broaden your view, then that's all you're gonna see…". HP 3 recalls working in media and suggests that the media have no excuse to be producing and distributing inaccurate under-represented narrow-minded information, "how in the name of history how in the name of data that we have available with ALL (^) of this information…history…you are supposed to know the continent you supposed to know the country the background all levels so you supposed to do a whole pestle analysis…" Media plays a vital role in how society interprets the world around them. It has the power to influence

millions at a time and the responsibility that goes along with possessing this kind of influence is not taken seriously enough.

8.4 Recommendations

The data present is unfortunately insufficient to make bigger generalisations although it does provide evidence for the problem addressed. I however believe that further research should be done regarding hair and Coloured women as the data available is far too little for such a large part of our population. Further inquiry on narratives of Coloured women would allow an extensive exploration of their stories and generational practices passed down through the years. This would allow for years of missing data on this population to start to take further shape. I also suggest that the Coloured identity post-apartheid should be investigated as a whole and that this identity is to be seen and investigated as fluid and ever-changing in a post-apartheid world.

It is further recommended that interviews be done face-to-face after covid-19 or in the place of stringent protocols as the online meetings were met with connection, sound and various other technological problems that have impacted my data as some interviews could not be used as they were not of good quality due to connections etc.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented conclusions to the objectives and research questions situated within the study. It also provided an overview of the study and recommendations for a future route for the social semiotics of hair as well as the Cape Coloured community.

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10 Appendix- Ethics Documentation