The ‘Other’ Here and the ‘Other’ There: Encountering the (Re)(De)construction of My Racialized and (Trans)national Identities

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Abstract

Through examining key family narratives and selected personal experiences in this article, I reflect on how I began to rethink and (re)frame the representation of my racialized and (trans)national identities as a hyphenated, South African-Canadian citizen. The article summarizes my experiences of visiting Cape Town, South Africa (for the first time), when I engaged in a semester-long, secondary school teaching internship, conducting in-class action research while teaching Grades 9 and 10 History and English. I was sure that I was not just going to teach—I was going to discover myself. To borrow Derrida’s term, the “edges” of my identity continue to become blurred in relation to the shifting social and economic contexts.

Keywords: Reflections, family narratives, mixed-race, hyphenated Canadian, antiracist educational researcher

Introduction

I was taught at an early age that we need to experience and learn from the world. Where the world is a classroom and the life it offers is our education. Cliché as this may sound, I have always taken it to heart. When I applied to my Master of Teaching (MTeach) Degree in Australia¹, part of the reason I sought my degree there—aside from visiting the beaches—was because the university afforded students opportunities to conduct their program-required action research projects in classrooms anywhere in the world. Most of my classmates in the MTeach Program, all of whom were from Canada, completed their research through teaching internships at schools in Australia, New Zealand, or Canada. I requested to do my action research in a secondary school in Cape Town, South Africa.

For most of my classmates, gaining access to a school research site was a happy occasion, as it meant they were progressing to a new stage of their work, but it was ultimately just another box checked on the list of degree requirements. For me, receiving the email that confirmed I was accepted by the secondary school in Cape Town, to conduct my internship and research, was a moment of elation. I would soon be encountering the land of my maternal family that I had spent my life hearing and learning about, but had yet to see or experience. I was sure that I was not *just* going to teach. Rather, I was also going to discover myself. What I encountered now frames how I consider myself and my research in antiracism is, that I did not, and could not, discover who *I am*. I came to grapple with how I become (re)(de)constructed by myself and by others while existing in

¹ I have decided not to identify any schools by name, and will instead identify them by location.

what I refer to as the *multiple socials* organized simultaneously in relation to me. To borrow Derrida's term, the "edges" of my identity that I previously relied on for certainty, of my being, became blurred. Through examining key family and personal narratives in relation to selected experiences while in Cape Town, applying a poststructuralist, anti-essentialist epistemological lens to the finite identity labels I attempted to adopt, by engaging with theories of culture, "race," and place as (re)constructed in this article, I reflect on how I came to rethink and (re)frame the representation of and relationship between my racialized and (trans)national identities as a person born in Canada but with both Canadian and South African familial origins.

Pieces of Me

I recognize myself as a hyphenated person. I am not alone in this designation. And, by no means isolated in experiences of grappling with the hyphen. For example, there are documentaries (See Nakagawa's (2005) *Between: Living in the Hyphen*), written publications (See Yu's *Living Hyphen* (2018) magazine), and scholarly articles that delve into the complexities of living hyphenations (See Ng-A-Fook, 2009; Ng-A-Fook, Radford, & Ausman, 2012). In many ways, all people are hyphenated, consisting of experiencing multiple identities at once. However, some hyphenated identities carry more complex meanings than others. For example, using simplified traits, I could identify myself as a balding, male, PhD Candidate. In turn, there are likely to be enough people who share these traits that we could form a community of sorts. And yet, the chances are small that such traits will become new checkboxes added to a national census questionnaire. There tend to be certain categories such as racialized and national labels where the hyphen is more than just a suturing of multiple identifying features. They are made finite, seen as permanent with the effects of representing who a person is, where they come from, and what meanings they carry. While categories and discourses of identity become (re)produced in various and differing social contexts involving changing groups of people and spatial settings, I preface my examination of categorizing identities by introducing a first social network: my parents.

My mother was born in Cape Town. She moved to Canada at age 10 with her parents and two siblings. My maternal family is racialized as 'Coloured' in South Africa, and were labeled as second-class citizens during the country's Apartheid era. The Apartheid government in South Africa imposed a systemic racialized hierarchy that, put simply, placed white as dominant, followed by Coloured or non-white (i.e., people racialized as Asian), and Black at the bottom. For my Oupa (another name for 'grandfather'), this racialized label was a precarious one. His skin was lighter in colour, to the point that the Afrikaner-led Apartheid government once informed him he was eligible to *become* white and experience the societal privileges it brought. My Oupa declined the option to become white. He chose to face the challenges of being lower on the hierarchy, to live as the person he felt himself to be, which allowed him to marry my grandmother and have my mother, uncle, and aunt, none of whom had skin light enough in colour to be given the *offer* to become white.

My mother, her two siblings, and my grandparents were restricted in many facets of their lives, including where they could live, which beach they could visit, in what train car they could ride, and with whom they could socialize. To this day, the sound of an Afrikaans accent makes my mother uncomfortable, and I have adopted this discomfort. I know many Afrikaners are probably wonderful people, and I try interacting with them without prejudice, but because Afrikaners formed the Apartheid government that treated my family as it did, I instinctively see

Afrikaners as racist until they prove otherwise. This was the discomfort (to put it mildly) that my grandparents wished to take my mother and her siblings away from by moving to Canada.

Their move to Canada was in search of a life without racist government policies. As my family discovered, Canada was and is not without its own forms of systemic and individual discriminations. Adding to the challenges of navigating these culturalisms and racisms was the fact that the 'Coloured' identity was not recognized by most Canadians. Shortly after arriving in Canada in 1966, feeling freedom from their restriction of movement and activity, my family went to a movie theatre where the tickets included assigned seats. As the usher in the theatre showed my family to their seats, they discovered a racialized white family sitting in my family's seats. After being told by the usher to move to their assigned seats and while shuffling past my family, one of the white family members muttered, "Damn Jamaicans! Go back where you came from!" This is but one example of the many racisms my mother and family experienced in Canada. However, rather than work through the list of confrontations, the part I want to emphasize from this particular story is the uttered ascription of racialized and national identities.

While my family did not stop to ask, they knew that by being called Jamaicans, they were being racialized as Black, which exemplifies some of the challenges between ascribed and self-proclaimed identities. To my family, they were Cape Coloured and, although from South Africa, had become part of Canada. The racist speaker imposed a racialization and a nationality upon my family that was not their own. The speaker's short and abrasive statement was packed with meanings that suggested the white speaker had the right to determine the identity of people of colour, that my family's racialized identity was somehow a catalyst to the white speaker's feeling of being inconvenienced, and that to be from Canada and to be Canadian requires being white. Long before I began contemplating the (re)(de)construction of myself, which I will more specifically address below, the racialized and national identities held by my maternal family—part of what produced me—were shown to require qualification and justification in relation to different transnational contexts. In Canada, they identified themselves one way, but were racialized differently and without question by others. They felt themselves to be part of Canada, but were assumed to be from somewhere else because they were not white. This fluctuation does not occur, or at least not in the same way, for people who identify as white in Canada.

My father was born and raised in southern Ontario, Canada, identifies as white, and acknowledges Scottish and English ancestry. I am happy for these origins and what they cause my paternal family and, therefore, me to contemplate. If nothing else, the bagpipes are tolerable and sometimes even pleasant to hear, and watching the British television show *Coronation Street* with my grandmother is an act of observing her ancestral pride. But there is also an understanding of 'Canada' and 'Canadian' as being in connection to the United Kingdom, Scottishness, Englishness, and for some family members, the British monarchy. I remember walking around Parliament Hill with family members visiting Ottawa. When we approached the statue of Queen Elizabeth II sitting on a horse, one commented, "Look at Liz in all her glory. Just so beautiful." When I questioned whether or not Canada should maintain its ties with the monarchy as Canada's head of state, the response was: "Of course we should. It's tradition!" I do not mean to paint my paternal family as monarchy fanatics. They are supportive, intellectual, and critical people, and much more dynamic in terms of their views of the royal family. However, these views exist, nonetheless. And they embrace a perspective of Canadian national identity shaped by and aligned with British settler colonial legacies. More to the point in this discussion,

they play a role in the identity (re)(de)construction that I must recognize in order to understand the work they did in my learned relationships with Canada.

This side of the family has certainly overcome certain challenges. We all experience barriers. However, experiencing racialized and nationalist exclusions in Canada is not part of their lived experiences or history narratives. My father, his siblings, and my grandparents have never been questioned about their belonging to a Canadian citizenry. Indeed, they all identify themselves as Canadians without qualification. The members of my paternal family each have various identities, as all people do. Nonetheless, their racialized and national identities are seen as *the norm* in Canada (Kobayashi, Cameron, & Baldwin, 2011). So, they are rarely subjected to their transnational identities being questioned. It makes sense, then, that challenges to my sense of national belonging were not addressed by my paternal family. To my family, I remain one of them. And for them, they are Canadian without question. So, I must be as well. Over the years, I have problematized this position of automatic national identity. I have highlighted to my paternal family the complexities of my transnational hyphenated identifications. Never wishing to denounce any part of my relations with my paternal family (there is a lot of love and support between us), but wanting to help them recognize and understand how my identities and experiences differ from their *norm*, I needed to first find ways of understanding myself.

In considering myself, one major element of identity that I continuously contemplate, is how I become racialized. I understand “race” as socially constructed (Goldberg, 1993). It is always being (re)created through the process of racialization (Fanon, 2008; Miles, 1989), where mediated historical meanings (Wertsch, 2002) are applied to a person’s features and are in turn given a label. I identify as a mixed-race South African-Canadian, born and raised in a small, agriculture-centred town in southern Ontario. Now as an adult, I am most often ascribed a white identity. Sometimes, I am given quizzical looks from those who see something *racially ambiguous* about me but do not know my family’s migratory history, or how I now identify myself. Both being ascribed the racialization of whiteness and having people see me as something to *figure out* silences certain aspects of my hyphenated lived experiences. While I recognize that racializing myself with the label of “mixed-race” is a social construction, my self-racialization aids me in forming a basis for my antiracist endeavors and navigating sociohistorical geographies of racism that contributed to and now shape my existence (See Kobayashi, 2005, p. 36). Racism affects how and with whom people interact. It also shapes and is shaped by where those interactions occur (Razack, 2002).

My sense of elation, upon receiving approval to teach and conduct research in South Africa, was not simply because of the beauty of the country or the hospitality of the people I was taught about while growing up. It was because I grew up feeling that I never quite “fit” or “belonged” in relation to a Canadian context. I was often told by members of my hometown community, “I thought you were Chinese.”² Or asked, “So what are you?” with the underlying meaning that I was *different*. Rather than downplay that difference, I usually embraced it and showed pride for my South African-ness. It was my way of trying to proclaim who I *am*, rather than attempting to silence my family history for the sake of finding sameness with my

² To some, my adolescent facial features suggested that I have some elements of Asian ancestry, but I suspect that this classmate was not actually observing what some might claim are Chinese-specific features, and rather they were using ‘Asian’ and ‘Chinese’ interchangeably.

classmates. I am a product of that family history, complete with privileges, discriminations and injustices. Ignoring it would be to ignore a hyphenated part of myself. I did not want to be ascribed any cultural identity or racialization that I did not feel I represented or represented me. That being said, I was always eager to enter a space where I did not need to clarify my identity or justify my presence by choosing which familial origins to side with. When I travelled to South Africa to teach, I was sure I would not have to choose and would simply find my place in South Africa.

Arriving to South Africa

In January, 2010, I travelled to Cape Town for my semester-long secondary school teaching internship to conduct in-class action research while teaching Grades 9 and 10 History and English. Reflecting back on my preparation for departure, I am reminded of a joke by Indian-Canadian comedian Russell Peters. He talks about how he felt leading up to his first trip to India, thinking that he was *so* Indian that he was going to show the Indian people how to be Indian. However, once arriving, he immediately became *so* Canadian. The internal struggle of who I *am* is something I have experienced and continue to examine. Before traveling to South Africa, it was something I believed could be rectified through finally engaging with the place of origins of my South African side. In a sense, I was seeking a feeling of purity or authenticity in order to stabilize my ambiguous identity as a way of navigating a hyphenated transnational identity, in terms of prior and future positive and negative lived experiences. I expected that what I was looking for would simply come over me like a wave of identity. Because I had grown up not feeling fully Canadian, I felt like I was *so* South African. My thoughts were that I must simply be a displaced South African, born in the wrong country, and I hoped that being in Cape Town would verify a feeling of being fully South African.

When I first arrived in Cape Town, I had feelings of, “This is where I’m meant to be. These are my people. I’m home!” For all of the surety I had about finding my place and being home in South Africa, I quickly realized that there was something different about me in South Africa as well, and, ironically enough, it was through my own doing that I was identified as not South African. Before beginning my teaching, I attended a school event where the students and their parents were introduced to the new teachers, of which I was one. In my attempt to use humour and present myself as approachable to both students and parents, when I stepped up to the microphone in front of an auditorium full of people, the first words out of my mouth were, “Good evening. It’s nice to meet you all. If I sound a little funny to you, it’s because I’m from Canada.” I later informed my students of my familial origins being based right there in Cape Town, but they were not interested in my feeling of our mutual South African-ness.

My initial national identification as being from Canada suddenly made me a Canadian ambassador in the eyes of the students. I was asked several times over the semester questions about Canadians and our society. I was not recognized for the South African identity which I felt to be at the core element of my sense of being in the world. If my accent was bound to maintain my position as Canadian in nationality, I wanted to at least be recognized as connected to South Africa through my racialized make-up, the very Cape Coloured racialization unique to being South African. Some did recognize it. Most did not. I felt the need to continue identifying myself by way of my mother’s racialized identity, so much so that after being in Cape Town for a few weeks, a friend I met there who identified as Cape Coloured eventually said, “Ok, we get it.

Your mom is Coloured.” At that moment, I realized it was my mother who was Cape Coloured, and not me. But then who and what was I? The confusion that ensued in my mind put me on a path that set aside my quest for finding which identity box I fit into and took me a step back to look at how and why the boxes are created in the first place. And, how they *work* in changing contexts.

Identity Through Multiple Socials

For many years, I thought of the hyphen that I recognize in myself as the link between two equal and fixed parts that made up who I am. I was half South African and half Canadian. I was half Cape Coloured and half white. In some circumstances, I still do claim this sort of split, but now always intentionally rather than as a default. How I label myself is in relation to *the social* with which I am engaging. Gregson (2003) argues that notions of ‘the social’ as “grounded in no more than inclusion/exclusion (and therefore rejection, if not always abjection)” fall short in addressing the context in which it is organized and reproduced (p. 43). Following this, while there is often one dominant understanding of social structure that, as Goldberg (1993) states, becomes discursive in a given context, I contend that there can be multiple socials—the understood organizing of communities and interactions, whether “official” protocol, formal etiquette, or casual kibitzing—existing at once and relating to each other, even with one form of social structure being seen as *the* social structure.

In varying contexts, there becomes increased or decreased emphasis on the meanings that are made in connection to my national and racialized identities, and the meanings themselves are never set in stone. They are always being (re)made in relational ways because meaning applied to a given setting or person is actually “a central presence which was never itself, which has always already been transported outside itself” (Derrida, 1970/1993, p. 225). Here, my interpretation of Derrida is that any sense of identity—racialized, national, or otherwise—that I hold to myself never provides meaning in isolation. Understood meanings become influenced and created through the lived experiences we have in relation to the world around us, and when presented to the world, the meanings are then only carried forward through mediation with and in relation to other already-understood negotiated meanings. As a simple example, at times when I identify myself as mixed-race, white people commonly respond with “I knew there was something different about you.” They claim to recognize features like my eye shape or dark hair as something other than white. Alternatively, they tell me, “no, you’re white,” because they decide that my skin is not dark enough to match how they understand “mixed-race,” which is often assumed to be a combination of Black and white. Hall (1997) says, “Identities are never completed, never finished; that they are always as subjectivity itself is, in process” (p. 47). The “edges” of identity categories become deconstructed and reconstructed over and over and over. Negotiating understandings of what it means to be “never finished” continues to provoke vexing moments, creating challenges to notions of long-term certainty, but also comes with realizations around the ways all people become (re)(de)constructed, thereby problematizing notions of fixity for racializations and nationality.

I can recall an interaction with a fellow university student a few years before I travelled to South Africa, when we were viewing the display of Terracotta Warriors at a conference in the Chinese city of Xi’an. While I do not remember the topic of our conversation, my colleague, who was white, thought it fitting to ask, “So, are you white or not?” My response: “Whatever

makes the joke funnier.” While there is room for humour as part of the examination and processing of one’s identities, in that moment, I relinquished acknowledgement of my relational position in the creation of my identity, and I essentially opened the door for my colleague to ascribe me a racialization that would provide others with entertainment. I had grown tired of trying to explain my identity boxes to people, most likely because I spent most of my life taking the boxes for granted and assuming them to be valid, so to speak, and so I struggled to understand the boxes myself.

That was the last time I willingly put my identity in the hands of anyone else to ascribe. I decided I was going to situate who I felt myself to be, how I would represent myself—a sort of ‘pick-n-stick’ approach. Those who understood it understood it. Those who did not did not. The boxes would be the social constructs of what I made them. And I felt so sure and proud of who and what I was claiming as my “fixed” hyphenated identity that I made an appointment and marked myself with a tattoo of national symbols: a leaping springbok (South Africa) against the background of a maple leaf (Canada). Unfortunately, as I learned during my time in South Africa, and as discussed by Hall (1996), identity is not that simple or static, and my certainty of the labels I used to represent myself were in need of critique.

(Re)searching to (Re)(de)construct Myself

Discovering that my identity is a complex thing finally struck me during that first trip to South Africa. This is not to say that I ever considered people’s questions and challenges to my national and racialized identities to be simple experiences. For many years, however, I chalked each encounter up to an experience with an ignorant person. I did not consider them in terms of their relationships to wider societal systems of nationalist exclusions (Hage, 2000; Stanley, 2016). I began to find ways of understanding these encounters and of unpacking myself through delving into works that helped me develop a poststructuralist, anti-essentialist epistemological lens, particularly applied to antiracist, national, and cultural analyses, in an attempt to recognize the social construction of the racialized and (trans)national boxes I placed myself within and concomitantly the effects and affects they had/have on my sense of place.

Poststructuralist epistemology only acknowledges beginnings, endings, and boundaries as constructed (Munro Hendry, 2011; Peters & Burbules, 2004). The development of knowledge is in the analysis and challenging of those created boundaries or “edges” (Derrida, 2017). Weedon (1997) sees poststructuralism as “a way of conceptualizing the relationship between language, social institutions and individual consciousness which focuses on how power is exercised and on the possibilities of change” (p. 19). Hall (1997) posits it is not that there is nothing without language, but that there is nothing meaningful without language, and meanings develop knowledge. As language changes with context, so does knowledge and power. Through my understanding of the literature, I frame poststructuralist epistemology as the belief that knowledge—such as who and where we know ourselves to be—is socially constructed, contextual, in flux, contingent and in turn influences the meanings (re)created through the discourse and discursive practices utilized in a given context.

In order to make use of an anti-essentialist lens for examining my own (re)(de)construction, I first had to grasp the elements that constitute the lens. Anti-essentialism is thought, by some, to be unhelpful because it does not acknowledge specific contexts and dynamics. This argument assumes that anti-essentialists ignore the relationality of human existence and oversimplifies the

complexities within the language exchanges that create knowledge. People can experience shared meanings developed through common identities or encounters without there being some sort of inherent quality to who they are. Admittedly, because identifying those who are privileged and those who are not is complex and can change in relation to different contexts, there are, as Spivak (1988) and James (2015) suggest, merits to using “strategic essentialism.” This use of essentialism is not an admission of “hidden essentialisms” (Fuss, 1989, p. 13), but rather an acknowledgement that people sometimes operate *as if* essences of groups and knowledge exist. In this sense, for the sake of examining (re)(de)construction, it becomes helpful to group people based on how they operate as racialized and (trans)national people in related to different social and/or historical contexts, but not as essentialized categories of who they *are* or might become.

Following the idea that the categories people operationalize are constructed, and that part of the way I categorize my identity is as a mixed-race person, I find discussions of the construction of “race” important when thinking about my (re)(de)construction. The investigation of “race” has taken place in different forms for over a century (for examples, See Arendt, 1944; Barzun, 1965; Donald & Rattansi, 1992; Du Bois, 2008/1903; Essed & Goldberg, 2002; Hall, 1980). And, although the debate over which comes first, “race” or racism, has yet to be settled, there is an overwhelming stance that “race” is a constructed category. Stanley (2011; 2016) outlines that for a racism to occur, a person or group must first be racialized, and then excluded, where they experience significant negative consequences as a result of the exclusion. What this means is racisms do not just create “race” by imposing essentialized meaning upon differences, and continue to re-create “race” in relation to changing contexts (Stanley, 2016) and do so in support or justification of acts of division and exclusion (Goldberg, 2009; Miles, 1989). Here Goldberg (1993) emphasizes that present-day social contexts stem from historical social contexts and also that the dominant social—what I read as Whiteness—becomes discursive, appearing to be the *norm*, in turn silencing and marginalizing those who do not *fit*. Antiracism, then, is about naming, countering the normalization of, and ending racist exclusions (Stanley, 2016). In many ways, my insistence on highlighting my mother’s racialized identity, as part of myself, validates and reifies the racialized categories imposed by the Apartheid government for the purposes of structuring racist exclusions. In other ways, however, I am—or I hope I am—calling out racisms of the past, historicizing racisms of the present so as to understand how they *work*, and recognizing the lived experiences of racism that contribute(d) to my existence in different and changing social contexts. The poststructuralist, anti-essentialist lens that I employ for examining my racialized identity extends to complicating perceived relationships between racialization and nationality, and to problematizing constructed lines of national identity. Recognizing national identities as linked to structured sociohistorical geographies of racism shapes the ways I now understand the (re)(de)constructions of my (trans)national identities.

Premdas (2008) sums up transnationalism as a feeling of being “here and there at the same time” (p. 3). Perhaps an oversimplification, but his view triggers an effective and necessarily complex course of thought when coupled with the notion of the multiple socials connected to one location. The question of *where* ‘here’ and ‘there’ are can be answered fairly simply: Canada and South Africa. The question of *what* ‘here’ and ‘there’ are, asks for a more problematized response that incorporates a poststructuralist lens to see different ways national identity boxes are produced and used. What Canada is and what South Africa is depends on temporal and racialized relationships a person has with each place. When growing up in Canada, I felt a relationship to a South Africa I had not visited and, in some ways, would never visit, because while I was and am

always being (re)(de)constructed, so is South Africa. My understanding of South Africa was through racialized understandings of the country, and through a lens shaped, in part, by my experiences in Canada. In the same way, my interaction with Canadian spaces was and will always be through my identities that include connections to South Africa and the racialization of Cape Coloured. I exist through and in the socials that I understand to be connected to these nationalities and racializations. In this sense, whether I desire it or not, I will always be here and there at the same time. My view of ‘here’ and ‘there’, however, is always relational, meaning they and I are forever being (re)(de)constructed in context.

Concluding Where I’m At, Nor Now

About five years after my first trip to South Africa, my mother, accompanied by my father, returned to her country of birth for the first time since moving to Canada as a 10-year-old girl. I was excited for her, wondering how she was thinking about herself going into this trip, and curious about whether or not she felt any sense of *going back home*. Before she left on the journey, she told me that she was intentionally positioning herself in her mind as a tourist. At first I was disappointed, feeling as if my mother—the person who provided my connection to South Africa—no longer felt her own connection to the country, aside from it being a lovely place to take a vacation. She was born there, still has relatives there and raised me, in part, with a family whose pride for South Africa is integral to who they show themselves to be. I was confused by her positioning of herself as a tourist, until she told me that although she still felt her identity as a Cape Coloured person, who was born and partially raised in Cape Town, to be at the core of how she understands herself, the South Africa she was about to visit was not the same one she left. She kept alive the social imaginary of the historical, political, social, and national contexts she was born into. Moreover, it continued to be part of her identity while articulating the multiple socials she experiences here in Canada. The idea of multiple socials carries forward in my contemplations of the relationship between the South Africa that I experienced during my teaching internship and the South Africa I grew up believing to be inherently part of what constituted my hyphenated transnational identity.

Returning to Premdas’s (2008) idea of transnationalism being here and there at the same time, the ‘there’ I imagined myself to be displaced from was a preconceived community I assembled in my mind through my own social imaginary (Ibrahim, 2014). Such a transnational social imaginary was pieced together through representations and understandings I gathered through family stories. In doing so, I had essentialized (not strategically) the labels of South African, Canadian, and Cape Coloured. Being South African and Canadian both meant being able to identify a direct link to each country by way of parental birth. Cape Coloured was thought to be a “race” created through the hybridization of numerous other “races” (Bhabha, 1994). My understanding, in my youth, was that “race” was simply about one’s skin pigment, and Cape Coloured was recognized when people’s skin is too dark to be white but too light to be Black. The process of racialization, and in turn racializing a person was not known to me, let alone recognizing the ways that I contributed to maintaining relationships held between racialization and nationality.

Now I seek to understand, question, and trouble the complexities of identity. I am not fixed. My racialized and (trans)national identities being ever influx does not mean they become some sort of free-for-all, affording me to lay claim to any identities I wish. Additionally, this

migratory flux should not be seen as a turn to pluralism, where the belief is that everyone experiences the world as themselves. And, there can be no shared experience and no real sense of community. My self has become one of relationships, always existing in relation to other people and the spaces I travel through, stay a while, or call home. I continue to be (re)(de)constructed in relation to contextually employed meanings of Canadian, South African, white, Cape Coloured, and many other identities of gender, sexuality, ability, spirituality, etc., that are connected to but go beyond racialization and (trans)nationality. For now, I identify as a mixed-race South African-Canadian. To do so, recognizes that this positions me differently in relation to multiple socials all at the same time.

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