My paper title: Legacies of Enslavement in the Cape: Schemata of Black Life in the Archive

Abstract: The main thesis presented in this paper explores the possible historical links of how black life figures in the archive and how these figurations experience an afterlife, made apparent through unequal access to proper health care. The long game is to account for how current health challenges are divided disproportionally along racial, income-level and geographic realities. The interlocked nature of historic violence and race-based discriminations in the practice of medicine, will account for why critical omissions in basic care persist. Presently, there is no synthesized compilation of work that sets out to account for the kinds of intersections mentioned above. These intersections are important to recognize especially if any meaningful social transformation is intended.

The contribution this body of work presents is an exploration into variations of schemata of Black life as observed in archival research. In a sense I am presenting snapshots of dark matter within which worlds of politicocultural representations of difference lay bare the weight of racist ideology over time, thus signalling the import of radically attending to efforts of transformation within multiple sectors of society. What is argued in this paper is that at the centre of these politicocultural representations is a largely unchecked racial discriminatory loci that predominates all sectors of life in South Africa. With this premise in mind, I present a rudimentary discussion into concepts of whiteness and critical black studies. In previous months I have been presenting and thinking critically around presentations of whiteness (Ahmed 2007; Diangelo 2018; Lewis 2004) choosing quite specifically to centre white supremacist ideology (hooks 2013; Peté; 2021) as the counterpoint of structural violence in South Africa. It has been a useful exercise in mapping terrains of opacity (Glissant 2010), terrains of push-back, terrains of resistance to sociocultural and political methodologies that would have me render black bodies in one instance as an object to be pathologized, srcutinised and catergorised and in another cast aside and made obsolete (Bond, Singh and Tyson 2021). However, whiteness is not the only vehicle that lends itself to the debate. I have also worked alongside iterations of Black thought/studies encountered continentally and within the diaspora (Kehinde 2020; Kelley 2020; Moten 2018) in order to

anchor into a more productive space to think through ideas of postcoloniality and decolonisation in medical care in South Africa. As a medical anthropologist my scope of interest lies in researching issues that undergird the structures of global encounters in Africa, whilst engaging directly with how health and well-being have been constructed as methods of control and surveillance. Thinking through arising debates in health and development help us begin to imagine a transdisciplinary map of ideas that become essential in designing emerging health futures in South Africa. What I offer in this paper is an approach to the archive that searches for links that will then enable us to understand health as a complex compilation of interlocked systems that are both personally and publicly lived through and more worryingly continually surface racialised discrimination that show clearly the long and protracted history of racial violence formed in the early Cape settlements of South Africa.

To begin with, let me briefly point to a couple of health realities. To gauge the health and wellbeing value of the South African population, I refer to the mortality records. According to Statistics South Africa, "Black Africans and coloureds are faced with the quadruple burden of disease while profiles for Indians or Asians and whites are dominated by non-communicable diseases" (StatsSA). In attending to sex differentials, it is recorded that for females, diabetes mellitus was the leading cause of death over the 3-year period 2016 - 2018. Indeed, "for females, deaths due to diabetes mellitus have been on a steady increase, accounting for 7,2% and 7,3% in 2016 and 2017 respectively, increasing to 7,7% in 2018" (StatsSA). For males, the leading cause of death of the same period was Tuberculosis. Furthermore, "the effect of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis has been greatest in black Africans", a telling statistic that alone is exemplary of inherited systems of a lack of care provided to the majority of inhabitants in South Africa. Additionally, in a dazzling array of insights, Alan Jeeves' (2001) account of the building of the Public Health system in South Africa, uses the decades of South Africa's Syphilis Epidemic in the 1930s and 1940s to detail the breaches in health and human ethics of care aggregated along racial lines. In one account, gleaned from his work in the archive he says the following,

> "The mine workers were the lucky ones. Other employers also dismissed workers when they became sick, offering no treatment at all. Black miners who failed the state-mandated mine medical examinations - termed 'mine medical rejects' - found work, if at all, among the country's worst employers such as the

> Zululand sugar estates and the railway contractors there. Typically disabled, emaciated or merely chronically sick, those workers, when completely unable to function, were simply ejected from the compounds. They died in numbers along the public roads and in railway stations and carriages. The DPH's senior official in Durban termed these unfortunates 'human trash' and objected when their treatment was charged to public funds." (Ibid.:80-81)

Taken together - *the coupling of higher mortality rate amongst black Africans and the inherited racially constructed health care system* - it would be negligent to discard the importance of race in the experience of health care dissemination in South Africa. The exercise then, would be to dig further into South Africa's early white settler archive in order to establish a continuum of racist aggression that continues to enjoy an afterlife in current health outcomes for black people.

Regarding this specific archival framing both Frantz Fanon and Charles Mills' work has been instrumental in placing the needle in the right direction. In *Black Skin, White* Masks' Fanon reminds us that

> "Beneath the body schema I had created a historical-racial schema. The data I used were provided not by "remnants of feelings and notions of the tactile, vestibular, kinesthetic, or visual nature" but by the Other, the white man, who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, and stories" (Fanon 2008: 92).

Later Fanon mentions how "the Other, the white man, …had no scruples about imprisoning me" (Ibid). This imprisoned identity is immediately and always under threat, it is at once, captured, figured and tortured. Necessarily, violence is the language of this Encounter. Under no circumstance must we forget this fact, because the haunting of this violence remains. Indeed, the boorishness of white settler ideology that wrought havoc on black life, and more specifically on black bodies has remained. Thus, the formative progression of the ideas presented in this paper firstly map a brief health profile of South Africa and secondly, locates this mapping within a wider landscape of racial difference and race-based geographies of apartheid. I then draw on studies in whiteness, showing how continuities of unequal care follow patterns and rules of engagement long established. By showcasing snapshots of black experience (i.e. Black life) as made manifest in the careful recordings held within the Slave Office Records, I account for the prevalence of violence metered against black bodies and the concomitant ideological praxis that incentivises these registers of violence.

South Africa's health profile is pockmarked with stark social inequities, which translate into a high occurrence of premature mortality, and a marked increase in health inequities across its regions/provinces. For example, estimates of the infant mortality rate (IMR) from the 2011 Census in the predominantly rural Eastern Cape Province is captured as 40.3 per 1 000 live births – double that of the Western Cape with an IMR of 20.4 per 1 000 live births (StatsSA). Furthermore, there are also significant differences within provinces. For example, it is recorded that in facilities, the maternal mortality ratio is 56 per 100 000 live births in urban Cape Town and 371 per 100 000 live births in the rural district of the Central Karoo in the same province. These differences are nothing short of disastrous and signal a festering cavity in what ought to be a uniformed experience of health care. Thus, over two decades ago, South African policy makers hedged their bets on the adoption of a primary health care (PHC) approach. The 1997 White Paper for the Transformation of the Health System in South Africa set out to level the outcomes field in terms of access to quality health care. Central to this commitment to PHC, was a focus on the social determinants of health, which as a matter of due diligence was ratified in the Health Act (61 of 2003). These developments have shifted the experience of health and care for many people in South Africa (Coovadia et al 2009), however to attend more directly to the festering cavity, more work needs to be done to rectify, transform and universalise the experience of health in South Africa.

The rot lays not only in a disfigured and unequal current health system but rather in an age-old replication of the what Mills, in his 1997 book calls the racial contract. The titling of his book - *The Racial Contract* - is useful in subverting the idea of the social contract - an idea of social organising that is heralded by lingering European scholastic giants, like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacque Rousseau, and Emmanuel Kant that in its basic analysis, argues for the utility of accepting the state as the moral agent in determining the right courses of action in terms of governance and social organising. The relationship between the state and the individual is mutually beneficial to maintain law and order. Services are rendered and those that are primed to thrive do so, and those that are designed to fail, do so exquisitely and are subsequently banished from civilised grouping. This is Mills, departure point. He deftly presents the corruption at the heart of the organizing of society. What he says, is that the Social contract in fact is inherently racist, for the social contract only really

was conceived with the European white man as the starting point of organising. He says, "…the peculiar contract to which I am referring, though based on the social contract tradition that has been central to Western political theory, is not a contract between everybody 'we the people') but between just the people who count, the people who really are people ("we the white people") So it is a racial contract." (Mills 1997: 3)

Make no mistake, Mills is not seeking to discount the validity of the idea of the social contract. Rather he signals an important interrogation, that the "obfuscation of the ugly realities of group power and domination [if not supplemented with additional analysis and reading, becomes] a profoundly misleading account of the way the modern world actually is and came to be" (Ibid.). Mills indicates that his inspirations emerge from Carole Pateman's feminist work, *The Sexual Contract*, that in effect reveals the mechanisms and makings of patriarchal domination justified by a malecentric gaze and fortified through a normative logic that seemingly rationalises "the inconsistencies…and evasions of the classic contract theorists" and the subsequent "world of patriarchal domination their work has helped rationalize" (6). Mills draws a parallel, presenting a compelling argument about how race and racism fundamentally shapes socio-political organising and more dangerously how it shapes a political personhood.

The intersection of whiteness

What I detail in this section is a working thought-pattern, a sociogeny of sorts about an ontology of whiteness read through a critical African studies lens. This understanding has enjoyed wide attention within feminist discourse, gleaned from the teachings of Patricia Hill Collins, Sandra Harding, and Donna Haraway in their arguments about the partiality of knowledge production. In addressing whiteness, some of the features that may occur as familiar to some, include what Mills has articulated as an epistemology of ignorance by which I understand to suggest the implicit and explicit ways in which claims to racist ideology and practice are denied and cloaked, as a systematised tool to maintain law and order (remembering that the very ideas of political subjecthood is a fabrication of race-based occlusion and exclusion). Thus, many white people struggle to understand what structural racism is, what it looks like in the everyday, and how any claim to innocence of perpetrating structural racism is exactly part of the problem. This white blindness/innocence/ignorance is

a common feature in black writing. bell hooks, W.E.B Dubois, James Baldwin, and Ralph Ellison amongst others have written about this. Indeed, the denial of complicity in white violence against the black other is decidedly about knowing the craft of ignorance, the craft of refusing to know, which in effect is a systematic and structured art of knowing that we learn to construct through mechanisms of silencing, marginalising and gaslighting. These absence created means that the world as it is figured is an apparition of reality. These absences justify enslavement, it justifies, colonialism, and it justifies unchecked capitalist progression.

The arrival of democratic rule in 1994 is heralded as the hallmark of the demise of apartheid, where the tenets of the Constitution are thought to have put in place the dismantling of systems of discrimination, and more importantly a shattering of racist ideologies. These efforts, whilst commendable in their aspirational quality to forge development trajectories along ideas of non-racialism, were not adequate in levelling the sociocultural landscape of recourses to healthy lives. The pursuit of vitality remains locked into oppressive systems that continually demote black life and reward those in close proximation to white supremacist ideologues. What is argued is that mechanisms of racial discrimination are imbricated/braided into systems of inequality. Indeed, as Ndumiso Dladla outlines, "This has in actual historical terms not only meant the installation and development of white supremacy as an ordering principle within the political sphere, it has also seen its realm of influence extend over all human experience in South Africa"(Dladla, 2017: 40). What Dladla pursues in his work is a much-needed focus on the systemic applications of racism and its proximity to white settler ideology in South Africa.

The idea of systemic applications becomes evermore relevant when we cast our understanding of the world as composing itself around an intricate web of connectivity. We are in essence a hive of possible merges, divergences, and complex interactions. These complex interactions themselves are made up of a myriad layer of meanings that as a society we (co)create, (re)imagine, and (re)instate repeatedly through the ages. It is this relationality that I am interested in. From time to time I think about the dynamic between the European Other and the African. I am always left wondering if those enjoying the spoils of this violence, who are living in close approximation to this opulence have any idea where their sense of

freedom, comfortability, and vitality stem (in part) from. The scholarship on whiteness is extensive so, in the interest of brevity, let me call upon the work of Aileen Moreton-Robinson. Robinson is an Australian academic, Indigenous feminist, author and activist for Indigenous rights. Included in her extensive archive of Australian critical race scholarship, is her attention to the study of whiteness. She contends that part of the imaginarium of the white politic is a preoccupation with a possession of land, bodies, and knowledge vis a vis the terra nullias logos. She articulates this "white possession" (Moreton-Robinson 2006: 384), which she elaborates on in her 2015 seminal text 'the White Possessive: Property, Power and Indigenous Sovereignty'), using a Foucauldian logic. She cogently argues that "White possession, as a mode of rationality, functions within disciplinary knowledges and regulatory mechanisms, defining and circumscribing [Othered peoples] sovereignty in particular ways" (Ibid.). Thus she uses Foucault's conceptual framework, as developed in *Society Must Be Defended* (2003), threading ideas of race, sovereignty and war into how systems of subjugation and violence are part and parcel of a politics of possession, conquest and erasure. This is an important cog in my thinking and pulls focus toward an idea put forward by Rosa Amelia Plumelle-Uribe, in her text '*White Ferocity: The Genocides of Non-Whites and Non-Aryans from 1492 to Date'*, in what she describes as, "the banishment of Blacks from the human family". She says,

> "during the three and a half centuries of mass deportation and enslavement of Africans, one conspicuous feature stood out from the start, then developed and gradually became an element of culture. This was the eviction, the banishment of Blacks from the human family, for which the White race became the gold standard on a planetary scale. To evict a group from the human family is to annihilate it. When a group is banished the victims are seen as belonging to a different species and the process of annihilating them can proceed in a climate of almost utter indifference." (1).

Plumelle-Uribe surfaces the close relationship between the ideologies of white political supremacist thinking and the physicality that these closures engender. Thus registers of epistemic violence are staked into a preoccupation of the possession of the corporeal. The idea of epistemic closures have been thoroughly explored and examined by scholars like

Gayatri Spivak (1998) - regarded as the scholar who coined the term - and Kristie Dotson (2011) as epistemic violences/injustices. I maintain that it is through these closures that faulty towers are built and maintained and subsequently we continue to produce corrupted systems of globalised knowledge.

Why and how do these epistemic absences and closures occur? Part and parcel of these closures, is the persistence of a quality of violence. My thinking here builds onto the epistemic violence already so robustly articulated by the above mentioned scholars. Indeed, the register of violence I mean to communicate is the proximity of corporeal imperial and colonial violence against black bodies next to power, privilege and whiteness. The history of these violences is well accounted for in Fanon's work (amongst others – Du bois, Kenyatta, Nyerere to name a few), but in particular I focus on Fanon's text *The Wretched of the Earth*, where he accounts for the atomised and dichotomised nature of European violence perpetrated through colonial rule, negotiated transitional freedom (a clumsy phrase that I am still working on) and the subsequent messiness of collapsing states, exploited people and entrenched poverty. Usefully, he also brings into focus the dynamism of European selfhood as it relates to African exploitation. Fanon says,

> "European opulence is literally a scandal for it was built on the backs of slaves, it fed on the blood of slaves, and owes its very existence to the soil and subsoil of the underdeveloped world. Europe's well-being and progress were built with the sweat and corpses of blacks, Arabs, Indians, and Asians. This we are determined never to forget." (Fanon 1963:53)

In thinking through this dynamic between the European Other and the African, I am always left wondering if those enjoying the spoils of this violence, who are living in close approximation to this opulence have any idea where their sense of freedom, comfortability, and vitality stem (in part) from. You may want to charge me with what Cameroonian scholar Achille Mbembe has regarded as a victim complex of blackness, or recreating essentialist notions of being (that the post-modern liberal canon of thought would have me labelled as). These variations on liberal critiques of identify formation are misinformed, parochial in their assessment of striations of blackness and miss the necessary affective turn that actually is a

normal and healthy response to a history of violence that extends into current time, where absences and closures appear. To aid in my unpicking of the intentional nature of the violence against African bodies and Africa's land, I am reaching into the archive into the early tracings of European settler encounters with Black life in the Cape.

My reaching for the archive aids my effort in presenting the continuities of particular sets of racial violences and also focusses attention on the possibility of integrating an understanding of race as an "ethico-political device" (da Silva 2011:138), that uses manifestations of racial cultural difference within a framework of biopolitical imaginations. I showcase these snapshots, seen below, unadorned from analysis partly as I am still grappling with how best to locate an analysis within a larger critique supported by Africanist arguments that position the problem of "unfreedom" as symptomatic of a bilious state created to sustain racist, neoliberal capitalist orientations at the peril of Black life. In addition, I would like to create room so that the gravity and weight of the atrocities lay claim to the readers senses. In creating that kind of a space, I am mindful to not curate an exhibition of Black Life as Black Pain. This awareness is articulated succinctly by Yasmin Ibrahim in her article, *'The dying Black body in repeat mode: the Black 'horrific' on a loop'*. In speaking of the "reality of 'Black death' as a recurrent banal encounter" (Ibrahim 2021:1) she positions a cautionary argument around the conditions under which we construct black life. Her paper proceeds by exploring the historical resonance of figurations of horrors wrought against black bodies that have over time rendered black pain as banal, normative and acceptable. This would be anathema to an exercise that seeks to show that the archived history of black life have often featured violence and that this violence is both abhorrent, unacceptable and reflective of a social contract gone awry. Thus my effort has been to (re)index schemata of black life in the archive in order to trace where slippages in health care originate. It must be acknowledge that medicine and the practice of health care in South Africa is racialised. When concepts like whiteness are applied to discourses of power, inequality and health care a critical layer of intelligibility emerges. This intelligence sounds a clarion call that becomes impossible not to head. By troubling archival geographies, we can recast critical players in lived-sites of our shared histories. The archive is porous. It is note mute.

Flashes of Record

AGE	BIRTH PLACE	BY WHOM OR ON WHOSE BEHALF MADE	AS WHOSE PROPERTY REGISTERED	SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT OR APPLICATION (DATE)	RESULT
18	In this Colony	Paulina	Peter Wahl	*10th October 1829* Complained that her Master was going to sell her after having cohabited with her Three Years and therefore requested the Guardian's interference	
15	In this Colony	Eva	W. Lotter	*29th October 1829* Claims the freedom of her child, her Master being the father.	Manumitted
16	In this Colony	Freja	S.J Holhman	*19th January 1830* Complained of having been illegally punished by her Mistress's brother	Dismissed as groundless
17	In this Colony	Annetta	J van Breda	*19th November 1829* Complains of having been severely beaten with a cane by her young Master P.G van Breda without she knows what for.	
18	In this Colony	Anna	Anna Kotze	*4th February 1830 and again on 16th March*	*Fined 5 pounds both times*

				Complained of having been illegally punished by her old Master	
		Loryn	(Free Malay)	*Same Day – 4th February 1830* Requested the Guardians Assistance in order to enable him to purchase the freedom of his daughter and grand daughter.	Effected through the Guardians Influences
19	This colony	Wilhelmina	W. Jacobse	*5th February 1830* For the Guardians influence in order to prevent her master from selling her into the country.	Settled to the satisfaction of the slave
27	This Colony	Leentje	W. Smith	*10th February 1830* Complained of having been assaulted and struck in the face by her mistress without any just cause	Settled to the slaves satisfaction
22	This Colony	Seida	Widow F Preller	*23rd February 1830* Complained of having been illegally punished	Dismissed as groundless

				by her young master at her mistresses request.	
11	This Colony	Salira	D G Asperling	*7th June 1830* Complained of having been severely beaten by her young mistress who is married to Mr De Vos .	Dismissed as groundless.
14	This Colony	Willem	Gideon Gose	*6th July 1830* That he had been punished with a Lance Twig by his Master.	

WCARS (Western Cape Archives and Records Service)

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