Indo-Caribbean African-isms: Blackness in Guyana and South Africa

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Abstract

In an attempt to close the gaps between diaspora and regional studies an Afro-Asian comparative perspective on African and Indian identity will be explored in the countries of Guyana and South Africa. The overlying aim of the ethnographic research will be to see whether blackness can be used as a unifier to those belonging to enslaved and indentured diasporas. Comparisons will be made between the two race models of the Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean worlds. A substantial portion will be set aside for a critique of the concept of Coolitude including commentary on V.S. Naipaul. Further, mixing, creolization, spirituality and the cultural politics of Black Consciousness, multiculturalism, and dreadlocks will be exemplified as AfroAsian encounters.
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Introduction:

It’s never too AfroAsian

Paralleling the literary and ideological movement of a global black diasporic identity of negritude (Cesaire, 5); is there (as proposed by Mauritian poet Khal Torabully) such a concept as coolitude – a shared identity amongst the indentured South Asian diaspora that originates from the sea passage that is akin to ‘Creole’? Regardless, in what ways is contemporary racial and ethnic identity constructed in both the African-ascended peoples and the indentured South Asian diaspora vis-a-vis each other according to a South-South paradigm in the context of Guyana and South Africa? More specifically, how is the concept of “blackness” imagined, produced and enacted between the two (albeit heterogeneous) groups and what role does it play in the conflicting claims towards authenticity; be it “Africanness” or “Indianness”, on one hand and the push for Afro-Asian unity on the other?

Although biases may surface in research investigations, this study did not intentionally place greater focus on one group than the other. The interest of research study is primarily in Guyana but prevails upon South Africa for comparison purposes and to help inform and enrich the data. Ultimately, the study aims to theorize and propose a model of anti-racism between South Asians and Africans in Guyana that transcends the generally accepted understanding and knowledge of ‘race-relations.’

The research project is informed by independent field research carried out in Guyana and South Africa via dual ethnographies within the township of Chatsworth, Durban of Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa, and in Albouystown, Georgetown in Guyana. Interviews are conducted to
inform the project along with academic resources from the library archives of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of Guyana. For the purposes of clarity, this project is informed by the aforementioned data as opposed to being specifically referenced within the thesis; therefore, it is theoretically inclined rather than ‘applied.’ Theories founded in black post-modern cultural studies are grounded with a South-South lens to help frame the comparative design of the research.

Theoretically, a South-South framework is a broader field of the newly emerging Afro-Asian studies. South-South studies refer to the 'classic' sociological theory mainly from post-modern scholars. South-South studies attempt to find a point of analysis within 'area' studies (i.e. African and Asian Studies) while actively resisting the decidedly Northern approach of international relations and development that are heavily invested in political science and economics. South-South explores common relationships of the South through the North (North-South). A South-South lens primarily employs theories from the South countries to allow analysis beyond ‘comparative studies’ and uniformity of theories. It includes theories centered on the Indian Ocean Studies (EngSeng, 216) and Black Consciousness, a major South-South connection point, despite being used as an Afro-Asian movement in the United Kingdom (Sandhu 42). This theory will be engaged beyond its original intent in terms of transnationality. Exploring coolitude will involve a larger number of Indian scholars to facilitate a ‘cross-talk’; as Indians are not the dominant ‘creole’ in their respective countries, they must engage black subjectivities to position themselves theoretically. This thesis addresses and critiques both coolitude and the adjacent créolité movement associated with Torabully and Glissant (2000).

My research will analyze class-based bias and reference a more post-modern Black
Atlantic. Indian Ocean studies are a relatively new field which parallel and/or counter the studies on the Atlantic experience. Neither of these positions will be debated, but instead will argue for a better binary than ‘black-Indian’ (Black Atlantic and Indian Ocean Studies) and explore the limitations of this ‘two-model system.’

My research engages in many scholarly fronts, but mainly studies on South Asian and black diasporas, with a critical focus on the relatively new field of Afro-Asian studies. A well-known scholar and pioneer in the field is Vijay Prashad whose work deals with global black and Asian diasporas. His vision led to the Afro-Asian conference in Bandung in 1955 where a call for greater AfroAsian unity was made. In a global context, Afro-Asian studies incorporate Asia and Africa, and the diasporas within these continents.

Yet, for the literature of AfroAsian Studies it has no real ‘canons’ except works related or in reference to Vijay Prashad. Prashad’s seminal writings (2000, 2002) are mostly historical and thereby shows how historiography of AfroAsian thought have been obscured. Likewise other works that concentrate on AfroAsian studies are historically derived and seem to be meant to encourage contemporary writers to look backwards at an Afro-Asian century (separated to show the oneness of AfroAsian is not present) in order to encourage an AfroAsian century. Examples of historical analysis’ include, influence of Marxism in the Caribbean, Americas, Europe and China as well as other famous African-American writers and their experiences and writings that deal with Asia - like DuBois’s *Dark Princess* (1928). It is my hope that my research can go beyond the so called liminal ‘in-between’ third space of post-coloniality (Raphael-Hernandez and Steen 2) regards to blackness/whiteness. In doing so, I wish to extend and enrich debates of Asian and Africana studies both methodologically and epistemology.
Luckily, it appears the calls are being heard and interdisciplinary AfroAsian ‘cross-talk’ is beginning to move to a more critical contemporary position instead of a more historical and political stance. Further, Asian and African studies as a whole has moved to a more solidified studies ‘status’ that goes away from the broadness of ‘ethnic studies’. Namely, Dr. Raphael-Hernadez and Shannon Steen argue that their edited book *AfroAsian Encounters* (2006) appears to be "the first interdisciplinary anthology to treat AfroAsian encounters" (ibid 2). However, the discipline continues in the same path of a North American (mainly American) model of race despite trying to not do so. Simply due to the reason that the majority of the writings are based within diasporas within the West - namely America and Canada. There is only a small amount of writings that are dealt in other areas of the Americas like Guyana. It is because of this fact that AfroAsian studies generally lacks a South-South framework focus.

Although this study can be classified as South Asian studies, it is far removed from the canons of South Asian studies because it only examines the indentured and enslaved diaspora. The main reasoning behind this is it’s problematic to presuppose the position of “Asian” (as it has been conceptualized in the Global North and Asia) will have the same or similar meanings in the Caribbean and Africa. Indeed, the uniqueness of the system of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade positioned South Asians in South Africa and Guyana in such a way that their ‘race’ is tightly connected to the African diaspora of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. With this understanding it becomes clear the South Asian indentured diaspora does not function as the same ‘race’ as the (more recent) non-indentured South Asian diaspora.

Thus, my departure from the canons of South Asian studies will be to look at “AfroAsian” through a South-South lens that looks to understand the terms of “Afro” and
“Asian” as they were constructed vis-à-vis each other. Which in more detail was constructed in flux through the Ocean passage of the European slave trades - as opposed to a disciplinary locked focus (geographically or ideologically) such as Caribbean or South Asian studies. The nature of the study means the use of a theoretical, disciplinary and ‘classical’ South Asian Studies framework well not be used in the slightest. Simply since my focus is strictly in a diaspora that predates the formations of South Asian Studies as it is known in the academy today. Rather my literature in AfroAsian studies come from a wide variety of disciplines, most notably Trans-Atlantic Studies, black Studies, and Diaspora Studies.

Obviously, because of the comparative nature of this research, it is somewhat off center of the main debates in the field of African studies and Caribbean studies (especially in terms of ‘race-relations’ as it is typically called). Thus I go beyond ethnicities that are grounded in geographical regions and in particular nation states. However, a pressing issue in African studies has been issues of ‘ethnic conflicts’ as it has been in South Africa. Race relations is perhaps the greatest focus in South African Studies, however, this is largely to do with white-black relations with hardly any research on Indian-South Africans. In the last decade there has now been work put out on Indians in South Africa, yet, it is largely in the field of literature. More importantly it is centered on a South Asian Studies perspective and is lacking a critical diasporic analysis. Additionally, if there is a race discussion it is within a white-Indian paradigm. Aside from Jon Soske's work (2009) and a couple of journal articles on the subject there is a general lack of debates on Indian-African dynamics. Therefore, my research will enter new ground and push for new literature on Indian-African dynamics in South Africa, away from the white-black models of South African Studies in general.
In the Caribbean, there have been much debate on race-relations between Indians and Africans, especially in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. There has not been many research attempts on finding solidarity and cultural fluidity, instead most research ends up coded as squarely Indian or African Caribbean scholarship. As of yet there has not been effort to gain insight on Indian-black relations in the Caribbean through a comparative analysis between other black and Indian demographics elsewhere. The closet so far has been on Indian diaspora labour anthologies or encyclopaedias. While these bring to attention the different experiences and diversity among the diaspora it does not adequately show a distinct indentured identity and history. Coolitude (2002) is the only known work which tries to conceptualize an identity among the diversity of the South Asian indentured diaspora akin to what has been done in the African diaspora within a black studies framework. Although parallel work has been done on Afro-Asian relations in the Global North, particularly in America, by authors such as Nikhil Pal Singh (2012)¹. My work wishes to take coolitude a step further and continue ‘cultural politics’ by bringing coolitude beyond the Atlantic paradigm of ‘race’.

**Methodology**

This part describes and explains the methodology deployed in this study and at the readings which informed my choice of research methods. This study is a practical project grounded in field research.

*Establishing the focus of the study*: This was relatively straightforward as it stemmed from my interest in trying to bring about the end to circular debates on racial violence in Guyana (where

¹ See *The Problem of Color and Democracy* for a current look at AfroAsian scholarship in an American context.
my family is from). Comparative research on diasporic ethnic groups in different locales has become one of the more nuanced ways of understanding diasporic communities and race formation. South Africa was the country I chose to do a comparative study with Guyana because of the broad similarities in both countries in terms of having a South Asian indentured and black population.

**Identifying the specific objectives of the study:** In South Africa and Guyana 'race' has caused many socio-political conflicts. Yet 'race' itself is not the problem in of itself. Rather, the lack of questioning/troubling what race is, in both countries, is a problem. Thus, doing so will lead to a better understanding of how to re-look at bringing about greater instances of Afro-Asian unity. Background reading and the literature review was an ongoing process. Initial readings on sociology theory, critical-race studies, Caribbean and Diaspora Studies influenced the formation of research objectives while readings on African and South Asian Studies were mainly to help prepare for field research. Field research was brief in Guyana lasting only couple weeks and was mainly used to gather literary data. The majority of the time doing field research (a few months) was spent specifically in South Africa due to having no formal connections to the country. Therefore field research in South Africa had a significant impact on my work and need to be explained in more detail in order to be as self-reflexive as possible.

**Selecting the research method:** I found that selecting the research methods was a crucial element in the research process. I decided to use a variety of complementary research methods which were largely qualitative: interviews with teachers and observations and examination of documentary evidence in order to form case studies. Statistics were not used past the preliminary research stages as some initial quantitative research was used to gather background evidence of
teachers’ experience and attitudes, in order to prepare for interviews and field research.

*Describing the research methodology:* The main research instruments used in South Africa was field research and interviews. Initially I was set to live with one family for the duration of my trip, however, as I befriended more people I also was able to do stays with different families around the Durban metro area. The families were of different racial backgrounds: white, black, Indian, and ‘coloured’. The next stage was 15 different in-person interviews with academic and political Indian and Zulu community leaders. Because I used my field research only to inform my research the details of each participant cannot be elaborated. I also like to note here I support the view that a major advantage of the interview is its adaptability.

*Collecting the data:* The fieldwork period took place in May and June 2011 and was a distinct and discrete phase of the investigation. The interviews (conducted in both countries) were used to gather information about participants experiences and opinions on: Indian and black relations, the willingness of the government in acknowledging race in self-proclaimed ‘post-racial’ societies, and their visions and plans for the future with regard to black economic empowerment policies.

*Ordering the data:* I paid a visit to the archives at the University of Guyana and the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Where I gained temporary access to archival documents which impacted subsequent analysis of field notes. Field notes were written up based on the interviews and live-in and daily trip observations.

*Analyzing the data:* The data collected is not formally acknowledged in the thesis due to time constraints with the Ethics Board. Yet much of the content in the following chapters are
informed by my specific field research experience in order to make generalisations and interpretations on the literature. Finally, the findings from my research are compared to findings from my background reading.

Enabling dissemination: It was important to research an aspect of South Asian and African studies that was topical and relevant to today’s educators. It was an important part of the research process that the findings be made available to a wider audience outside of the academy in order to influence future developments and strategies.

This thesis is arranged with this introductory chapter (chapter 1) followed with three chapters as briefed below:

Chapter 2: Black Like Where?

The first chapter looks at the conception of blackness as it is constructed within the two countries. The focus is not necessarily on who can be black per se, instead, on what blackness can mean in a given social context and what are its common bonds (and differences). In other words trying to answer the question of “black like where?” will be a central focus in this chapter.

The chapter subscribes to a more ‘post-modern’ cultural studies reading of blackness as noted by scholars such as Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall among others, although the chapter looks at critiques by other schools of thought within black studies. A central focus will be to look at the policies and laws used to ‘create’ and ‘space’ race.

Key insights into the ‘race wars’ amongst the ‘non-whites’ in South Africa stems from the tiered system of apartheid and its legacy. Thus, gaining an understanding of a socio-legal connection between policies and political categorization of ‘race’ will illuminate how Indians
and Africans live, resist, and conform in the ‘post’-apartheid area. Guyanese and South Africans peoples both resisted the totality and strictness of a race-based categorization and its subsequent meaning-making by championing the Black Consciousness movement. Guyana`s Black Consciousness (BC) movement started with Marxist trained Walter Rodney`s writings (1981) and political activism. While Rodney helped in the spread of BC, Steve Biko founded the Black Consciousness Movement which would empower and mobilize much of the urban black population in South Africa. The political orientation of BC (as opposed to a cultural identity) is discussed in order to make suggestions for future of BC. Because BC is a political identity critics point out that it has no real salience amongst the peoples outside of tour du show politics. Critics also state BC has become outdated and alienated in the same way as BC has become in the US (Pal Singh 45). Therefore part of the chapter will examine how BC is articulated. BC is divided into two groups the academics and intelligentsia are one group and the other is the working-class.

However, the chapter’s overarching theme is on the debates between the Indian Ocean World and the Black Atlantic. There is brief mention to other countries in the Indian Ocean World and their differing conceptions of diaspora to ultimately give a better understanding of how race is constructed. While the research is mainly focused on KwaZulu-Natal (Durban), blackness in general in South Africa is a fallacy as it is largely defined regionally like in other areas such as the Cape.

I also critique Glissant and other scholars in the créolité movement in terms of their idea of what ‘creole’ or mixing is and how that idea conflicts with Anglo-Caribbean writers. Specifically, how créolité conflicts with Derek Walcott’s idea of ‘diaspora’, fragmentation and creolization. Thus, attempts will be made to push ‘beyond the binary’ of capitalist race formation.
where Asians are labour and blacks are inhuman/slaves. I engage in what it means for Asians to be considered ‘in-between’ black empowerment and white imperialism. This is an important concept that is compared in both countries to show how racist ideology is utilized in different ‘black’ (Caribbean and Southern Africa) contexts. The role of Islam is also be significant in this chapter when looking at how the “Indian Question” is framed along with blackness and criminality.

**Chapter 2: Coolitudinal Waves**

This chapter attempts to answer the call for diaspora studies (in particular Asian diaspora studies) to expand its ideological reach. Thus chapter revolves around Khal Torabully’s concept of coolitude. I devoted a detailed analysis of coolitude because coolitude attempts to challenge Western historiography of labour diasporas by recentralizing the ocean voyage and corporal memories as the central point of reference. I move away from the concept of negritude and coolitude to that of Glissant’s créolité. I critique créolité movement to see whether it continues or ends the status quo of the creole society. I address the critics of coolitude and show how coolitude works in somewhat contradictory ways. This is done by comparing identity politics in Guyana and South Africa.

Coolitude makes a grand claim that all indentured Indians share a common identity. Land claims, indigenousness and tiresome debates of slavery vs. indentureship play central concerns in the both countries. The chapter shows how understanding Indian identity leads into debates on authenticity. These debates are critical to understanding current political and social movements in both nations.

Special mention is given to Naipaul. The chapter critiques his stance in terms of
coolitude. Next the chapter engages with the role language plays in the diaspora in terms of naming conventions. Another pillar of the chapter will be Gandhi and the historiography in creating his narrative. An AfroAsian lens is used to show how national Indian independence is a diasporic formulation. This chapter answers the question what is ‘authentic’ and more pressingly how does Indianness function within coolitude (let alone blackness) and why does it matter? The ending of the chapter looks towards the future of the term and how a critiqued coolitude will be useful in expanding the scope and conception of AfroAsian studies as well as studies involving Asian or black diasporas.

It is within this part of the chapter that an analysis of the ‘multiculturalism’ model is critiqued. Both countries have similar multicultural models currently. An evaluation on how these models promote certain understandings of culture and how they position certain subjectivities as absent or foreign is forwarded. I argue that these models help continue the old ‘divide and rule tactic’ amongst race and class lines, yet, attempts to hide racial discrimination in favour of class differences in order to boast the ideology of a ‘post-racial’. In more detail I look at how the Caribbean has functioned to naturalize black peoples by creating the ‘Creole Nation’ and what exactly that means.

**Chapter 3: Dreaded Afrindians**

The concluding chapter will build upon the previous chapters but focuses on understand mixed-race metaphors. This section uses a case study to bring all previous chapters to a general conclusion. The first part of the chapter concentrates briefly on South Asian/African mixed-race peoples (called *dougla* in the Caribbean). By using identity formation of mixed-race black/Asians as a focal point of the overlap between black and South Asian diaspora studies; I
document how notions of blackness and Indianness is re-conceptualized, mediated, suppressed, and performed. Therefore this chapter answers the question posed by Betty Govinden: why is there a large mixed population of South Asian/African peoples in the Caribbean and only a marginal number of South Asian/African peoples in South Africa? (Govinden 36).

The chapter devotes most of its attention to dreadlocks and how it articulates blackness. Specifically, on what that blackness means in an AfroAsian context in reference to Indians in Guyana and Africa itself. Further the chapter details the cultural politics of how race is spaced and made accessible (for who and by whom?); how this differs between countries and what capacity is held within this space to challenge dominant modern (often nationalist) narratives on race and ‘post’-coloniality. The chapter then points out what is the role of spirituality in social justice work. Borrowing from Richard Iton the chapter critiques the lines and boundaries of what is deemed as the ‘arts’ such as fashion (dreadlocks) and what is considered to be politics or ‘social justice’ orientated. That is to say, displays of Afro-Asian unity result from assumed ‘politic’ and ‘cultural’ connections as opposed to coordinated and more genuine forms of grassroots unity and solidarity. Thus, it becomes important to be able to envision new ways of understanding ‘politics’ and ‘culture’ that move away from ‘culture’ as both the solution and the problem to oppressed peoples.

Explorations of these types of cultural/political binaries need to be accounted for against the grain of formal (academic or political) calls for unity. If knowledge is proposed to be located within the body then it is within these moments of arts, such as dance and music, that South-South encounters are perhaps at their most lived and embodied. Therefore the chapter will focus on how these practices transfigure the parameters of a particular medium to showcase
interconnections of Indian and African diasporas.

Finally, I end the chapter by rethinking, and (re)challenging the results of my research. Also, I suggest other opportunities for further research possibilities. Ultimately, my aim is to provide new insights to debates in AfroAsian Studies, Mixed-Race Studies, Diaspora Studies, Black Studies, South Asian Studies, amongst others. To develop a case for greater Afro-Asian unity by disrupting and transfiguring the normative canons and representations of “India” and “Africa”, as well as, (re)imagining conceptions of racial categories towards models of anti-racism. Ultimately, my research seeks to find itself within the ‘here and now’ which is to say while I suggest findings that may be useful – the main focus is decolonizing. I do not attempt to resolve the duality of race paradigms or solve ‘racial conflict’. Rather, hope my research presented will, in of itself, support a clearer understanding of ‘AfroAsian’ in a Guyanese and South African context.
The first section of this chapter looks at how Indians have been and can be included into a black identity. The second section attempts to move beyond the canons of Africa and India in terms of knowledge production and the systems that account for it. It entertains the idea that the emergence of “AfroAsian” studies seeks to move beyond the perceived geographic and national limitations of African and Asian Studies.

Black Consciousness

In South Africa, the displays of Afro-Asian unity are strongly along political and class lines. Because Indians and Africans mobilized together against apartheid it then comes as no surprise the pre-apartheid and apartheid eras had the most political alliances and displays of Afro-Asian unity (Naidoo, 84). Of course, a political alliance is mainly an alliance of like-minded politicians and activists, meaning the vast majority of either racial group may not have similar views. So, a small group of Black Consciousness intellectuals and activists worked together regardless of race. Yet, the working-class blacks and Indians never formed a bond that went beyond the bounds of class politics (Soske Wash Me, 43). Post-apartheid and 'post-racial' South Africa means the majority of Black Consciousness and anti-apartheid activists are no longer active, and additionally, are now dying off. Meaning there is little interest in Afro-Asian currently in South Africa by the newer generations (Naidoo 88). This is reaffirmed by the older generation who lament that the younger generations no longer have any substantial engagement with political and social activism that goes across racial lines.

Statistically, this can be shown through voting patterns: each racial group (i.e. white,
Indian and African) have parties that appear to espouse ethnic and racial elitism. For instance, there are many different ethnic African groups in South Africa; the largest is the Zulu, followed by the Xhosa. In the last national election (at the time of my research) that took place mid-2011, the majority of Zulu’s (in the Zulu province) voted for a Zulu nationalist party. Likewise the majority of Xhosa’s voted for the current ruling party of the ANC (which is due to strong ANC ties to the Xhosa. I.e. Nelson Mandela is a Xhosa) (Marais 79). The Zulu’s actually never voted in the majority for the ANC until the current president Jacob Zuma (a Zulu) ran for leadership of the ANC (Marais, 204). Interestingly enough, the whites have differing pro-white parties (i.e. an Afrikaner nationalist party) and the coloureds vote in a similar manner. The Indians vote in vast majority for a pro-Indian party - unlike in the past where many voted or were in support of the ANC (Moodley 102).

Ultimately, a purely political alliance cannot translate into genuine friendship, cultural exchange, solidarity and unity. Especially if the alliance is only between a certain political class. Understandably, a narrow-minded view on race and an absolute focus on politics by the majority of the working-class is justified considering the role of politics in bringing down apartheid (Shava 29). However, a less boxed-in idea of politics needs to be encompassed in South Africa in order for true racial unity. The idea of politics as a particular mode of thought and form of practice needs to be pushed aside in favour of politics as a manifestation of social justice activism that spans the arts, and grassroots community development to the point where identifications resists strict boundaries and corporeality (Iton 22-3).

In both Guyana and South Africa, there were shaky instances of racial solidarity like in the 1950’s with the PPP and Cheddi Jagan (Jagan 42) and the 1940’s in South Africa with the
infamous Doctor’s Pact (Soske Wash Me, 112). Again, because these movements were mainly political, it is difficult to fathom true unity anytime soon. This is especially true in South Africa after such instances as the Durban Riots. The ‘Durban Riots’, as they are often called, occurred in 1949 after a scuffle between an Indian merchant and a Zulu customer. Masses of Africans destroyed and pillaged Indian stores and homes, raped Indian women and murdering Indians (followed by an immediate Indian retaliation of armed gunmen and shootings) (Naidoo 63). The Durban riots would quickly polarize and ghettoize the African and Indian working-class. The result: ethnic nationalism and chauvinist politics are now more easily accepted on both ends.

Furthermore the Durban Riots resulted in the destruction of basically all racially mixed (Indian-African) townships and shantytowns like Cato Manor (Moodley 97). The riots to date have become the focal point for Indian-African race relations, and for the Indians, a psychologically tormenting experience. To make matters worse in 1950 the Group Areas Act (GAA) came into play. The GAA forced people to live in designated areas according to race which segregated Africans and Indians from each other to this day.

Indeed, in numerous occasions in the 70’s and 80’s (and even during the present post-apartheid period) threats of violence between Indians and Africans generally conjures up talk of the 1949 Durban Riots and/or fear of anti-Indian violence. Many Indian writers who discuss the riots, such as Aziz Hassim in his book The Lotus People, depicts Indians as victims of a state-orchestrated plot to disrupt an emerging non-European unity and to maintain white control (217). Broadly, the majority of Indians and a minority of Africans believe the time period of the GAA and the riots especially have disjointed the two communities to a point of no return and destroyed a long history of political friendships and alliances. On the flip side, while some Africans share
the same view with the Indians, other Africans believed the riots show the truth: a classic example of an African liberation struggle against Indian exploitation. Ringing true to this narrative is the popular Zulu artist Mbongeni Ngema’s recent song *Amandiya* (isiZulu for “Indian”) in which he called the Zulu’s to arm, unify and forcefully remove the exploitative Indians from Durban (Flint 1). Still, while both groups see themselves as victims, the fact remains that while the Africans are sharply divided on their views of the riots, Indians more or less unified through fear of anti-Indian violence. Altogether the lack of trust between the two camps has resulted in a sharp racial divide that permeates today.

However the Caribbean, (due to its social-geographical location) has the advantage over Africa in terms racial acceptance. This is mainly due to the ability of the Caribbean to create mixing metaphors both theoretically and empirically. In the Caribbean “mixing” is often marked as “callaloo,” or “creolization,” and at times as “miscegenation’.’ Whatever the terminology it is this mixing that is expressed “diffusely through numerous articulated metaphors through which people make abstract and static concepts concrete and dynamic as these metaphors are brought to bear on specific events or experiences and thereby explain them, memorialize them, or define them.”(Khan 226).

Although indentureship and slavery took place broadly in both areas at similar times amongst similar racial groups, the geographies of each area had an enormous impact in causing differing social histories. The Caribbean is unique in terms of its position in the current capitalist economic world market as it was essentially created by Euro-Western colonial imperialism, not just physically, but conceptually as well (Britton 3). The creation of the so-called New World (Order) and all the finer workings that would enable it to thrive (i.e. the Trans-Atlantic slave
trade) was all embedded into the Caribbean. It is within this socio-economic climate that African slavery into the Caribbean takes place. Walter Rodney provides an excellent framework for understanding relations between Africans and the incoming indentured Indians. Rodney’s work furthers the arguments made by many Caribbean scholars such as Eric Williams who proclaim that slavery took place amongst African peoples firstly due to economic rather than racial reasons (E. Williams 32).

Rodney, however, diverges by arguing that it is only with the advent of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and specifically the creation of the plantation society that a race-based framework is established. A framework that argues the entire system of production is an institutionalized rationalization where race is utilized as a mode of production (48). In other words capitalism (by means of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade) was responsible for two things. One: the institutionalization of race as a category in determining how people had access to the means of production and the involvement of race in the production relations. Two: the spreading of racist ideology that would be needed to maintain the capitalist system of production (ibid 51).

Brackette William’s asserts, that Indians and Africans in Guyana come to know each other through their capacity or (incapacity) to see each other through their racial stereotypes of each other’s ways of ‘making life living’ (65-6). Indians and Africans internalized race in the both Africa and the Caribbean; disallowing solidarity built on commonalities. For example, both groups were composed of mostly unskilled workers living in conditions either below or barely meeting subsistence level (Freund 42). Because Rodney’s thesis holds true in both hemispheres this suggests that race and race-relations is still erroneously intact and tied to labour today and

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2 On a side note Brackette Williams’s hypothesis resonates well when applied to Indians and Africans in Natal (South Africa).
that the legacies of the capitalist plantation economy and society must be dismantled in order for true emancipation to occur in a way that is not coded in racial terms.

The very foundations of Afro-Asian unity in the Caribbean and perhaps globally is dependent on how race can not be removed from this legacy of the plantation economy as race itself has become an economical category itself. For example, the terms “Creole”, “Indian” and “African” is tied to a particular set of economic and social limits and boundaries that were engineered into the plantation and present day society (Misir 88). Therefore, the task is to find possibilities to disengage racist ideology that is not just embedded but continually and voluntarily perpetuated into the capitalist superstructure by those that benefit (Rodney 89). In less abstract terms, there are many mentions to Indian-African conflicts within the Caribbean but race is always seen as the primary factor in causing a problem. The problem with using race as the forefront of an analysis masks the socio-economic factors that cause race to be constructed socially. Likewise, the same can be said for ‘tribal conflicts’ (as they are often termed) that occur in Africa. This leads us to some questions: what information and knowledge is lost or sidelined when race is pushed to the forefront? How does this discourse that forefrents race continue to divide people by race itself? What can be done again racist ideological superstructure that is deliberately manipulated as a mechanism to promote capitalist production?

Racist ideology is needed to keep intact this capitalist system of exploitation, as evident by various groups (such as politicians) who use race-based slogans to reinforce race as the primary feature of social life i.e. a common saying amongst Indians in Guyana during the first few elections was apen jaht (Hindi for vote for you own) (Birbalsingh 12). The fact that these sort of race-based politics exists shows exactly the point that continued conflicts (that are
promoted as purely racial) are fostered by racial underpinnings and are created and maintained by the capitalist ruling class. Furthermore it proves that in contemporary times that this capitalist system is dependent on using race as a means to production. If this was not the case, there would not be, as in the case of Guyana or South Africa for that matter, the ‘advancement’ of the certain segments of the peasantry and/or working class. Advancement is used precariously as it is debatable whether joining the petite bourgeoisie (that inherits the control mechanisms of a racist capital-driven ideology and then use it to their class interests) at the expense of the common people is advancement or not (Misir 95).

As Rodney points out, free Indians, free blacks and ‘coloureds’ had similar concerns and interests despite their lack of understanding of one another. These groups were essentially fighting for better working conditions against the newly indentured Indians in Guyana (Rodney 184). Clearly, issues of race were second to issues of labour (class issues). The whites were always a small population in Guyana and functioned more as ‘overseers’ as opposed to settlers like in South Africa. Eventually the whites in Guyana preferred a control structure of ‘absentee’ landlords. The absence of whites is crucial in understanding differences in Guyana and South Africa. In South Africa, the presence of the whites would enable racialized peoples to have a much more corporeal way of rejecting colonialism. Thus the white presence in South Africa allowed for the Black Consciousness Movement to more easily mobilize as compared to in Guyana. In the Guyanese scenario, a white absence did not mean that whites were absent. In fact instead there was a “white” presence albeit existing only in the Guyanese mindset. While the whites were not as visible in Guyana (as they were in South Africa) it does not mean that a white space was not present. It is naive to believe that for many post-colonial countries (Guyana
included) that it cannot still be a white settler colony (as compared to a white settler society like Canada). History shows that in former colonies whites settled as a plantocracy before becoming absentee landlords. Regardless, they did settle nonetheless and in turn formed the basis for a creole society - which is inherently a white settler colony.

Créolité (to want European values to coincide with one’s own non-European values – usually African) means to dream of reaching European civilization as dictated through the development model. Thus in Guyana despite the absence of whites, the coloureds (Black/white biracial peoples) fits the perfect ‘ideal’ of créolité (or creole) and did indeed fill the white space left by the planter class (Allahar 148). Creole identity is largely to do with territory, to claim a ‘white space’ while being ‘black’. The result is a constant, never-ending quest for authenticity, that is, to master European culture and emulate it in a non-European environment. Yet, white privilege is still existent in such an environment, even without a white presence, although most certainly bolstered by it. Paradoxically light-skinned people of colour cling to their supposed closeness to whiteness as markers to make claims of their dominance over a ‘creole’ society (a society geared towards European normalcy) (ibid 150). In this way, despite it being a social construct, race remains a core issue when discussing the idea of créolité or ‘Caribbeanness’ in so far as the nationalist creole culture denies race due to its ‘hybrid’ racial character. This denial continues racial and ethnic roles of the population, as Sylvia Wynter notes, this hybrid or 'creole' character of the Caribbean did not take in the full human condition as creole nationalism was only for “those categories of people who attain to our present middle-class or bourgeois conception of being human.” (157). Moreover, Indians, despite first entering the country as low-level indentured workers, and despite being seen as outsiders, have risen due to their ability to
integrate into the tiered creole system. Naipaul argues this is because Indians maintain an ideal of British ‘values’ (as being above Africans and thus closer to Europeans) whilst losing their ‘outsider’ character due to their creolization or taking on ‘African characteristics’ and therefore representing a group similar to the ‘coloureds’ or ‘creoles’. (Naipaul 80).

Indeed, Percy Hintzen argues that créolité or creole society is the basis of Caribbean culture. Créolité signals who is Caribbean and who isn’t, however, it must be noted créolité is founded on a very particular African-European spectrum in which the ‘black’ Africans are at the bottom and the whites are at the top (12). Because it is a spectrum, créolité exists on the basis of constructing blacks as lacking civilization and whites as civilized. Therefore for a white and black to be on the same spectrum they need to either be (to certain degrees) losing civilization (for whites) and gaining civilization (for blacks) (ibid 15). The ideal creole then is someone who retains an Africanness about him yet is geared towards European cultures and civilization. Thus the French Caribbean’s créolité movement in Hintzen’s view is reclaiming European civilization but for Africans (ibid 21). Ironically, this causes the créolité movement to “substantiates the self-location of the creole at the center of a new globalization of the Europeanized North Atlantic” (ibid 20). In this sense then despite the national ‘creole space’ in Guyana, the French Caribbean or elsewhere in the English Caribbean, the push of creole identity is towards Europe and ironically not towards Africa. In this way, creole society "more closely resembled classical European nationalism (which) was founded on a concept of common history and culture rather than race and, as in Europe, obscured the conflation of class with race” (Thomas 55) and therefore race is ironically made a non-issue despite the idea of a creole being a racial construction.
The high miscegenation of Indians and Africans has called for a ‘douglaiization’ (more so in Trinidad than Guyana) (Munasinghe 85) to end the creole hierarchy. The dominant ruling class wanted to maintain their status as ‘creoles’ against the emergence of ‘non-creole; Asians (Chinese and Indian) into the Caribbean. Ironically the supremacist creole culture eased Asians into the society because by adhering to the 'Europe is first and Africa is last' creole spectrum left Asians sitting in between, ending with a large Asian middle and upper class (Hintzen 26). Due to Indians being the majority in both Trinidad and Guyana, Indians sometimes claim they are the saviours of the country (a view in line with white supremacist thought of Asians as the ‘model minority’) both economically and politically by the virtue of being ‘Indian’ or ‘Chinese’ and in doing so they are able to resist Afro-creole nationalism. However, they are simply displacing the already displaced “African” part of the creole spectrum for an ‘Asian’ one in pure essentialist fashion. Resulting in continuing creole hegemony and indirectly the acceptance of white ‘creole’ Atlantic cosmopolitanism.

In fact, in the case of the Indians in Guyana, (and the same scenario applies to South Africa) Indians were pegged as the penultimate codification of Asians in a capitalist world market: labour (Prashad xix). Situated in this system as indentured labourers on the plantation Indians then were restricted only to labour as means to achieving accumulation of capital. A restriction of this kind meant that in order to advance class-wise they would have to do so by using (exploiting) labour of their own race. Interestingly enough Indians profited most from the exploitation of other Indians (and not Africans) by using and becoming dependent on the very thing (labour) that shackled and dehumanized them to the capitalist system (Rodney, 182). This was even more extreme in South Africa which had a small elite class of passenger Indians (not
found in the Caribbean) along with the indentured Indians. The passenger Indians, such as Gandhi amongst others, came as free men and controlled their services (such as for example controlled the distribution of goods through shop-keeping) to the majority of indentured Indians (Ebr-Valley 33). Ironically this practice bounded Indians tighter to capitalist exploitation as the number one stereotype in South Africa (and less so in Guyana) continues to be that of the sneaky, wealthy, merchant - which is an identity based on labour roles.

To take it a step further, racist ideology must be maintained in this plantation-legacy society be it in Guyana or South Africa. The Indian elite continues to cling to ‘race’ as the primary reason as to why they should take leadership roles (and hence roles of power) in the community. Many prominent Indians were well-regarded in cultural fields, such as religion, but at the same time were always the leading people to promote or defend “Indians” or Indian rights vis-à-vis their black counterparts (Rodney 162). In doing so, this masks the multitude of subjectivities of Indians, be it Hindu or Muslim, queer or disabled, indentured or passenger etc. Make no mistake; this is rhetoric is quite abundant among other groups in Africa and globally. Unsurprisingly, in South Africa there is no one more pro-African or pro-Indian then those who are exploiting their own people the most.

Currently, the home province of the Zulu’s is amongst the poorest of all provinces in South Africa, yet the current president appeals to his Zulu ethnicity for the lion share of his votes in this province (Bond 16). Similarly, per ratio, Indians have the highest amount of representatives in government considering their size. Roughly 85% of Indians are located in the same Zulu home province of KwaZulu-Natal. The vast of majority (over 80%) of Indians are still working-class or working-class poor and thus have been neglected the most by their fellow
Indian government officials, but stand by them in a steadfast manner (Desai 58). In keeping dissent based on race, instances of Afro-Asian unity are often reconfigured as post-racial. This goes against South Africa’s famous history of nonviolent civil disobedience campaigns against apartheid. Speaking of which, civil disobedience in South Africa was in fact distinctly South African Indian in origin - via *Satyagraha* (Huttenback 6) - and was a core port of the African anti-apartheid struggle.

Despite its shared history, knowledge was deliberated attempted to be codified racially in South Africa by both Africans and Indians. Leading ANC leaders, such as Oliver Tambo, vigorously defended the ANC’s strategy of nonviolence protests (that would get Nelson Mandela and others in prison but ultimately end apartheid) as not being akin to the Indian’s passive resistance campaigns. Instead ANC leaders insisting that they used ‘aggressive pressure” as opposed to “passive reaction” (used by Indians) against the white government (Freund 103). In describing South Africa’s nonviolent civil disobedience against apartheid the ANC was very specific in never mentioning Gandhi’s Indian passive resistance campaigns as well as denying any aspiration from the National Indian Congress (NIC) (Soske *Wash Me*, 218-19). Because of the emphasis of racialized knowledge production by the ruling elites, race and ethnicity will continue on (or at least be conceptualized) as the primary source of conflict in both Guyana and South Africa unless the working-class peoples form bonds non-racial political bonds.

One way to theorize authenticity could be to see how closely it matches to its original source. The problem with this reasoning is that it leads down a slippery slope as everything comes from somewhere. Thinking in this direction then comes down to a question of perspective that’s based on perceived values. The result: race fails to move beyond a social construction. In
other words race is only as real as the importance attached to it. I, however, argue that blackness and Africanness are two different concepts in South Africa and that blackness is perceived as a lesser Africanness while the opposite is true in Guyana.

Undoubtedly the most notable instance of “blackness” between Guyana and South Africa is the Black Consciousness (BC) movement. Using a comparative South-South lens I will start with Rodney’s BC in a South African context. South Africa’s BC is a showcase of the power of civil disobedience against a stringent legal political system where race exists as a socio-legal phenomenon (Durrheim et al. 15). Race in Guyana (and for much of the Western hemisphere) is conceptualized in a similar vein as the one-drop rule in America, however, mixing in Guyana is not be defined so simplicity. Guyanese hold an idea of “all a’ we is mix up” (B. Williams 98) in other words Guyanese understand race not in terms of simply biological race but as a spectrum of socio-cultural beliefs and stereotypes. Further, within the category of black lies further intra-marginalization. Blackness is therefore not monolithic as it is often assumed but instead a tiered identity where one can be “too black” or not “black enough”.

South Africa retains the tiered system of blackness but rids of the one-drop rule in favour of a socio-legal designation regardless of the ‘racial characteristic’ approach found in Guyana. With this in mind it becomes clear why BC was strongly political: because political means racial in South Africa (Frenkel, Reconsiderations, 7). Therefore, going against the government’s politics means going against the racial status quo. For example, people are first tiered into four race categories in South Africa: white, black, Indian and Coloured and then further sub-tiered i.e. Cape Malay Coloured. Because of the diversity of the many races and ethnic groups in South Africa an accurate racial legal policy is difficult to achieve. Indeed, as with any law, change
comes from resistance in the form of manipulating and/or breaking the laws. Thus, for example, some Coloureds were able to resist the laws by ‘passing’ as white and effectively became white. Same goes for some ‘blacks’ that tried to ‘pass’ as Coloured. This type of resistance created fractured families when successful but this example exemplifies the reality in South Africa – race is intrinsically connected to the legal system as socio-political phenomenon (ibid 5). This is why civil disobedience was the only answer to end apartheid. The civil disobedience campaigns most famously championed by Nelson Mandela was strongly grounded in BC thought. The political aspect of the BC movement was BC’s greatest strength, however, it also was its greatest weakness. A weakness because “Colonialism and apartheid on the one hand, and Black Consciousness on the other, both caught in the same binary of opposites” (ibid15). Put another way BC’s absorption of Indians as ‘black’ prevented Indianness from to existing in the public eye beyond a solely political identity.

Black consciousness was ultimately stronger in South Africa, which perhaps was due to the need for a unified front against apartheid and its policies such as the Group Areas Act (GAA). Under Rodney’s leadership the WAP (which followed Black Consciousness), did not fare as well and was largely ignored by the majority of the population. Despite this, the WAP was deemed a threat by the government and Rodney was assassinated by the black-majority government (Spencer 52). This shows that the elite black class in Guyana believed only in a certain absolute kind of blackness that could not be shaken or critiqued (let alone have it incorporate Indians which Rodney advocated for). Furthermore, this also meant to keeping of a certain view of Indians in relations to cultural purity. Rodney largely based his ideas through a Marxist-class analysis. However, he used the commonality of injustices and work that was done on the
plantation as common grounds for Afro-Indian unity. In other words Indians enter a certain kind of blackness through their connection with labour akin to how African slaves became black (Rodney 121). The question then becomes how has African slave labour caused ideas of blackness today? Undoubtedly, the foundations of Western blackness is tied to dehumanizing labour. I argue that particular ties to land have caused a distinction between Indian and African labour. Africans themselves were deemed as property by slave owners whereas Indians were not. In Western ideas of land, real estate (property ownership) is important because Europeans, such as John Locke, placed emphasis on controlling property in order to develop ‘civil society’ (Uberoi 67). In this sense during slavery Africans are equated to being commodities: the slave owner owns and controls Africans as his property. Indians were not seen as being a permanent owned property. Any owner of real estate would not want to lose his property as that would affect his net gains. So, slave owners did not want to lose their slaves for that would mean losing property/ownership but this did not apply to Indians. Indentured peoples were seen as commodities not property, and therefore they were expendable ‘resources’ which were replaced when their raison d’etre (labour) expired (Mangru 104). The Indians were then seen as temporary, while the Africans were as seen as Homi K. Bhaba mentions through “The power of the eye to naturalize” (295) in which they were naturalized to the land.

As outsiders from the proposed Eden and the Caribbean, Europeans at the time of Caribbean colonization could have only imagined what Edenic culture actually was like. So the Caribbean was attributed this quality by default of its assumed hedonic nature as Grove argues “the tropical environment was utilised as the symbolic location for the idealised landscape and aspirations of the Western imagination” (Grove 3). The end result was that the enslaved
inhabitants became naturalized as part of the environment both in regards to their racialized bodies and their supposed Edenic culture, so Caribbean people, particularly black bodies became part of the spaces belonging to the natural landscape. Viewed as a paradise found, Europeans then saw the Caribbean as the place in which sensual pleasures were in wide supply as the locals were avatars of sensual stimulation, corruption and looseness (Sheller 24). Indeed, the very essence of the Caribbean at the time was its embodied character within the locals. As they were recorded to apparently be lazily sleeping, eating, having sex, and living happily as if they had no care in the world (Grove 33). In desiring to be part of the bodily pleasure of existing in the Caribbean, Europeans yearned to settle, although weary of the (what was believed to be) risks of moral corruption by entering an Edenic culture. Daniel McKinnen, was not the only European at the time (1804) in his opinion when observing early local white settlers in Barbados as “lacking the integrity of the British moral character… [because] the climate, and perhaps their association with the blacks” (Sheller, 26) indicating that there was a moral danger in not just the landscape itself but also with the proximity with the dark-skinned body.

Judith Butler speaks of cinematographic philosophy in which, (in this case) the white body cannot be imagined as part of the ‘picture’ of the Caribbean in the eyes of the European (179). Thus the white settler in order to fit into the picture can only exist through a creolized existence, in other words an existence that is no longer belonging to that of a ‘white’ body (ibid 178). This is because the picture perfect landscape was not complete without the bodied presence of a local, the local whom was no longer human in ‘its’ racialized excess, put in other way, his or her body was dehumanized to be a natural part of the landscape in the picturesque Caribbean.

For example, John van Dyke wrote the following in his visit to the Jamaica in 1932:
Male and female after their kind they belong to the landscape as much as the waving palm or the flowering bougainvillea or the gay hibiscus. They are exotic, tropical, indigenous, and fit in the picture perfectly, keeping their place without the slightest note of discord. (Sheller 32)

Ultimately, the imperialist tourists are guilty of the what Lee Anne Bell calls ‘white blindness’ (Bell, 12) in that they claim not to see race and therefore not racist despite their racist behaviour towards West Indians when, in fact, they go to the extreme that they cannot even see the dark others as human beings. Today, the flourishing tourism (and sex tourism) of the Caribbean suggests that the dark-skinned bodies are still visualised as natural to the landscape and that they are natural commodities no different to a coconut tree or a grove of oranges. Lastly, it shows that the since its fabled discovery, the Caribbean is still too beautiful, too much in bliss, too much a fantasy, or as Jamaica Kincard puts it: “The unreal way in which it is beautiful now is the unreal way in which it was always beautiful“ (80).

Blackness is troubled in South Africa because it is not in the diaspora. In mainland Africa there are different indigenous identities meaning a black identity (that was born in the diaspora) is used amongst South Africans ‘blacks’ who are not classified as ‘African’ (Singh 9). Indian identity in South Africa appears to be more straightforward, however, this is not entirely the case. Indians in South Africa are heterogeneous and can be divided on ethnicity, class, and religion (Govinden 4). But how do Indians fit within BC? The BC movement was moderately successful at the time of its use against Apartheid. In terms of racial alliances this meant that a black identity that included those of South Asian descent was workable and possible, but of course, not infallible. This shows two things. First, that a conception of black identity that is not strictly ethicized is possible and therefore expands any perceived limits of blackness (Rastogi, 19). The second is that the failure or ultimately the decline of a black identity through the BC movement
occurred because of limits placed on black identity. In more concrete terms, BC was an act of civil disobedience – that included defying South Africa’s socially constructed categories of race. Mac Maharaj, a long-time ANC member of high stature of South Asian (Tamil) descent, is a former jail mate, friend, and writer of Nelson Mandela’s autobiography (O’Malley 5). Maharaj went to Robben Island as a self-proclaimed black due to being part of the BC movement. Yet he was classified by the government as Indian during his imprisonment meaning he was denied his self-advocated blackness in lieu of his “Indianness”. This example shows a real lived embodied experience in which a man was imprisoned due to this blackness (involvement in the BC movement with Mandela) yet, ironically in prison, was denied the very same identity that imprisoned him. Therefore in his limbo status in prison Maharaj was Indian not because Indianness and blackness are incompatible rather that the limit of blackness, as it is constructed by the South African racial systems, would not allow for such a dynamic and progressive black identity. This example shows that the limits and subjectivity of a black identity stems from an unwillingness to see beyond a biological understanding of race (Austin 214).

As Fanon makes it clear: when it comes to control in colonial societies whites cannot think outside of racial lines (Fanon 169). The removal of whites physically would cause a ‘vacuum’ of ‘white space’ that would need to be filled as aforementioned in terms of the creole society. Sadly, this occurred in Guyana and the solidarity amongst the workers along class lines would break down into racial terms (Spencer, 60). Regardless, class remained as the central aspect of racial stereotypes. As with any racial structure, a hierarchy is formed, Brackette Williams argues that racial stereotypes are made in Guyana specifically on basis of how one works. Indians live to work while Africans work to live. For example, individuals are interested
with maintaining and substantiating their ethnic identity claims in a way that will match their ways to live. So, ethnic stereotypes cause Indians to be considered “extremely well organized, efficient in gaining financial stability, and capable of progressing by using the available income-producing activities” (B. Williams 60).

Again we can see how these racial formations are based on white understandings of racial groups as well as their class standing. In this way these issues in Guyana isn’t due to a cultural or racial ‘clash’ but where one’s race stands relative to whites on a class basis. This is why Portuguese are called specifically Portuguese as opposed to whites (Dutch, British etc.) because they come to serve within a different position of society (Jackson 107). The Portuguese are conceptualized as a ‘race’ but in reality they are just a separate tier of workers. This has kept the racialized process intact. An interesting phenomenon has occurred due to the race and class equalization: race becomes ‘static’. Class manifests as an ‘empirical material condition’ as opposed to dynamic and changing social construction like race. Upwards or downwards class mobility simply means to ‘pass through’ different race positions. This has caused Indians and blacks not just to internalize racist thinking against the other group but to also internalize racist thinking from the other group as their own (B. Williams 102) as such the system of creole society and its particular labour roles will continue to plague Guyana.

On the other hand the legislative focus of South Africa will ultimately be its downfall. In keeping race strictly in terms of a structured political activism, mainly from the top-down causes most work to be done as ‘race-relations’ which is often facilitated in workshops and other government sponsored initiates. For instance the aforementioned song *Amandiya* even ushered a

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3 Portuguese, all from Madeira, did not come to Guyana as colonists like their fellow Europeans rather they came as labourers similar to the indentured Chinese.
15 billion rand ANC plan to help improve race relations in Kwazulu-Natal. Part of the plan included having the Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa (IDASA) hold a two-day talk workshop (Hlongwane 41). One of the hundred-plus participants was the Indian activist, Vivian Reddy. He walked away feeling that the dialogues had been positive, however, the historian, Hassam Seedat was more sceptical…saying that he was "not impressed by such meetings", and expressed instead "a need to get down to the nitty-gritty" (ibid 42).

Sticking to the ‘race as absolute law’ in South Africa causes a giant gap to be left out: memory and remembrance. The youth in South Africa are surprisingly unaware of their history and activism building up to and during the apartheid era due to the effort of politicians trying to fast-track the nation away from the ‘racial problem’ into a multicultural rainbow post-racial nation (Meskell 37). This has caused a lack of respect for Africans and the continent (especially before colonization) and due to the national racial hierarchy – Africans are left as the perpetual lazy underachiever and Indian as apolitical labour (Hlongwane 42). The result is there is both respect and contempt from Africans in their view of Indians. Indians are seen contradictorily as both hard-workers and exploiters of African labour. The same is not true for Africans as there is general lack of respect for Africans by Indian youth (Durrheim et al. 111). More so, Indians lack unified respect for themselves as ‘real’ Africans. “They see themselves firstly as Indians and most of them have never seen India.”

"There's a problem, there's a space, a divide, that settles uncomfortably with Indian youth of today. They don't have a sense of being South African, generally speaking. At the same time, I don't think that Indian youth identify with India as a motherland as such. They see South Africa as their country.” (Hlongwane 42).
Black Oceans (*Kali Pani*)

The central point of this second part of the chapter will be examining the two model approach employed in Black Studies. Generally, (especially in regards to the black Diaspora) there are two models: the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean (sometimes including the Pacific) (Toledano 2). Guyana clearly rests in the Atlantic Ocean while Durban is on the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean Word (IOW) as it is sometimes called is debated in terms of its reach but generally it includes the Mediterranean as well. The IOW can be largely characterized on its Islamic ‘backbone’ as opposed- a Judeo-Christian binding found in the Atlantic (ibid 5). Considering the enormous amount of the world’s population found in the IOW it may be surprising that research of the IOW is only now becoming its own in the last few decades. For our purposes we need to take into account the IOW has had African communities and slave trades well beyond the time of the Atlantic black/white race formation (Jayasuriya & Pankhurst 8). Despite this, racial and ethnic identities in this region (especially African communities) are still somewhat in limbo. There continues to be fierce debates in the IOW in defining communities, i.e. African, Arab, and Muslim. (Rangan & Kull 59).

Indian Ocean Studies (IOS) is undoubtedly racially charged just as the Atlantic is racially charged (i.e. the Black Atlantic). Interesting to note, the IOS is often noted for its vagueness in terms of race. I argue that race in its supposed ‘absence’ is all the more important. In other words race is conspicuous in its absence. This denial of race shows two things. The first being that racial hybridity has come to such a point (i.e. Madagascar where many people are of ‘Afro-Asian’ descent) that the social construction of race within the IOW is not so much focused on race as it as on unified ideology (Jayasuriya & Pankhurst 11). Like national identity – generally
those considered to be on the bottom of the racial hierarchy are to be forgotten in an attempt to create a more globalized liberal identity free of inequality. For instance in Sri Lanka, remnants of African slaves sent there in the days of Ceylon have left their mark through the music called *Kaffrinha* that is played by the Luso-Sinhala population and it is distinctly a fusion of Portuguese and African elements yet no one on the island except for only a select few academics in Sri Lanka will admit of any African influence on the island’s culture (Alpers 67). Similarly, in Mauritius the national music of *sega* owes its roots to the African Creoles is constantly devalued as Creole (black) and instead appropriated as nationally “Mauritian” (ibid, 80). Atlantic comparisons can be made in regards to the appropriations of African-American musical forms classified as “urban” music or to Afro-Brazilian’s samba viewed as Brazil’s national music.

However, the point of convergence from the Atlantic world that I wish to make is that in the IOW race is largely between an Afro/Asian circular racial system (‘circle model’), which, unlike a black/white schism found in the Atlantic, is not a binary. I argue that as a circle model of race there is a degree of connection between people of colour (i.e. “black” “Arab”) that is fluid. This is also because their lived histories differed from Europe due to the IOW’s position as contained within the Global South (unlike the Atlantic or Pacific) (Houbert 177). The circular idea of time is also included in the IOW as opposed to a ‘progressive’ and linear idea of time found in the Atlantic. Circular time is present in certain African and other indigenous frameworks throughout the IOW. Circular time is hard to understand for those used to a linear concept of time. Therefore I turn to a quote which I feel best describes the current flow of the IOW as expressed by Munshi Abdullah: “The very jungle becomes a settled district, while elsewhere, a settlement reverts to a jungle.” (Subramanian 154). Time is important because it
includes memory – memory of forced migrations (such as slavery and indentureship) is critical as longing, desire and awareness of the forgotten or stolen is central to many concepts of diaspora (Cohen xii). Therefore, time has a great effect on diasporic identities. In fact, it can be argued that it is through our concept of linear time we have reduced our abilities to understand fluid identities that don’t necessarily fit onto a spectrum. In the IOW, African and Arab can mean the same thing or can have completely different meanings or even mean something in between. This is what I mean by a circle model where such meaning-makings are always moving in a circular pattern and always more than just the connection of its parts.

This is very different from a binary and linear model. In such a model the middle ground or ‘mixture’ is seen as a crossroads, or, where identities are stable/rigid enough that one cannot ‘cross’ over from one ‘side’ to the other side. Despite the fluidity of ‘race’ as it is in the IOW (as opposed to the Atlantic) there is a very real subjectivity that is different depending on where one is positioned both in regards to lived experience and in the power of labelling.

“Moreover, addressing the tensions between the poetics and politics, the economics and epistemologies, of particular hybridities would enable us to address ways in which the colonized might be able to seize the structures and institutions of modernity, including the nation, and hybridize them. Such acts of hybridization are conspicuously absent from contemporary theorizations of hybridity.” (Puri 25)

In short, AfroAsian encounters in the IOW profess to a be in a flux ‘neutral’ space that has its share of shortcomings and triumphs yet as Paolo Freire noted that being ‘neutral’ is to side with the oppressor (146).

An example of the cyclical time of race in the IOW can be found in the island of Reunion which had African enslaved peoples and Indian indentured and enslaved peoples. In Reunion some African slaves were freed before Indians slave were. Some of the freed Africans would
then become Indian slave owners. While some historians such as Eric Williams argue that a confusion towards race and an apathy towards race was due to the pursuit of the best economy policies. It was flat out not the case in the IOW where class (slave status) had a greater effect on linguistic variation in terms of labelling (Vaughan 73). In more detail, there was confusion on what was “Afro”, “Indo”, “Malagasy” (hence ‘mixed’) and so on that allowed for a wide degree of ‘racial mobility’ (that was not the case in the Atlantic). Thus, subsequently the conceptions of race in the IOW allowed for “free African Negroes” to own “enslaved Indian Negroes” and so on (ibid 123). The racial ambiguity is reflected in the French words for ‘negro’ such as a “negresse Bengalie” (Bengali Negro) (ibid 155) that was found in Reunion and other neighbouring islands such as Mauritius. The subtlety and nuance around race is not as apparent in Reunion and Mauritius as they now share a racial divide in a distinct Indian vs. African flavour more similar to the Atlantic racial binaries, however, ambiguity of race is still apparent in the IOW and in the ‘cultural politics’ on the island.

I like to note two apparent IOS distinctions can be made here in comparison to the Atlantic Ocean Model. First is that French itself is significant. The Atlantic (Anglo) Diaspora model where it was and is very concerned with the socio-political (with an increasing and ironic focus on nationality). While IOS is less focused on nationality because it finds its origins in the French-Caribbean literary créolité movement (Police-Michel 31). The focus on language in the IOS is certainly important but not the central focus, as language itself is not what is in contest. Rather it is the ability to re-arrange the identity categories and boxes that manifests through the language be it French, English, or Arabic creoles etc. Moreover the emphasis of IOS as an extension, and perhaps adjacent, to the literary movement of créolité highlights the value of
expression over the political (ibid 32). This emphasis of expression (i.e. racially) has perhaps had an effect on Black Atlantic scholars who now are being tasked with moving beyond a Black Atlantic paradigm. On the flip side, this has caused scholars more schooled in historical materialism to assert a stronger Afrocentric definition of identity as former Afrocentric radicalism was seen as a highpoint of black political life (Austin 175). Thus the resolution of the debates in black studies on the Atlantic will inevitably become co-dependent on the debates taking place within IOS, however, whether a resolution is even wanted or even possible remains to be seen considering the heavy political power of an African-American gaze on black studies (ibid 189).

The second distinction that I liked to note is the power relations between the Atlantic Model and the Indian Ocean model. The IOW has not had much effect on the Atlantic model of race so far. While Atlantic social constructs of race in the age of globalizing empires is now influencing other constructions of race in other parts of the world such as in the Indian Ocean. The Atlantic model is in effect causing a ‘double racial’ system of consciousness’s in IOS. By that I mean to propose (in terms of the IOW) that in a “looking-glass mirror” version of self that one racial system continues just as strong alongside another race model. In more basic terms the Atlantic racial system are now part of the framework in which IOW understands itself normatively (Frost 90). This occurs since one cannot perform judgement without comparison. This parallels a cultural studies argument of the ‘medium is the message’ (McLuhan 7).

The medium to understand one’s place in the IOW’s racial systems is tied to Black Atlantic racial systems. And this is nowhere more apparent than it is in South Africa. While Durban is firmly on the Indian Ocean, South Africa is also bordering the Atlantic on its east coast
and even has a major city (Cape Town) settled practically in between the two oceans. In fact this is a trait shared by no other country and because of that South Africa’s history is unique both in terms of the Middle Passage but theoretically in terms of following an Indian Ocean and Atlantic Ocean ‘two-model’ system. Further, despite its cities having vastly different histories, South Africa has constructed itself as a whole nation state with a shared history and culture. In this light, South Africa serves as a place to understand the concept of blackness in different contexts as movement around water routes has shaped the contours of the nation. More so, Southern Africa is neither a global port of a littoral society or concretely an outcast community (Jamal 167) instead it remains, borrowing from Glissant and Gilroy, rhizomophic and transcultural.

Case in point, Islam is important for it was once identified with the ‘Zanzibaris’ (who themselves were of questionable racial origin) as they were labelled eclectically as “black’, ‘Asiatic’ or ‘Coloured’ in South Africa (Kaarsholm 232). The Zanzibari Muslims, though black and Swahili speaking, refused assimilation into the Zulu culture and were at times a part of the Indian Muslim community and at other times ‘Coloured’ (ibid 226-7). Yet, a recent resurgence of the appeal of Islam amongst Zulu youth has caused Islam to lose its Indianness due to Islam now being revered as pan-African (ibid 231). Throughout its history in South Africa, Islam then has always been a counter to the infamous fixed racial categories exclusive to South Africa and opens up a wider debate in IOS that has been scarcely researched (Glassman 753). Debates in which ideas of a diasporic community become multiple and without clear entitlements makes South Africa a reminder. A reminder of the rich history of a longer process of transnational citizenship along Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean that goes beyond the limited scope of this paper.
The merchant class in South Africa being Gujarati Muslims is significant. Muslims in South Africa have a long history of being ‘black’ yet ‘foreign’; Islam shows the limits of black and Asian identities. The two major Muslim groups in South Africa are the Cape Malays and Muslim Indians (Moodley 95). While they are arguably part of the South and Southeast Asian diasporas, South Africa branded the Cape Malay Coloureds, while, Indians ranged from coloured to Indian⁴. The grey matter surrounding this is best explained through the black Muslim Canadian (Toronto) experience of the last few decades. For black Muslims in the Canadian imaginary, and official multicultural policy, they are put into a rigid system where a particular sense of belonging is the sole identity of a group and this removes intersectionality from the equation. Black Muslims in Canada are also locked into a precedence of a conservatism that continually privileges English-French authentic ‘founding father’ patriarchal myths (Mansur 64-5). Either you are part of this narrative and thereby are mapped within the nation, or, you are rendered outside the nation as ‘foreign/immigrant’ (Case 34-5). For this group (namely Eastern Africans like Somalis) they face a double jeopardy in Canadian multicultural discourse by being negated as black-Canadian (which is espoused as ‘African-Caribbean’ in Toronto) on one hand and as ‘outsiders’ as Muslims/pirates/terrorists (Walcott 125). This only compounds any other layer of oppression (i.e. triple jeopardy: LGBTQ Muslim Somalis) therefore becoming more and more unimaginable under the non-intersectional Canadian multicultural discourse.

In South Africa, Indians were conceived to be outside the nation's imaginary in regards to citizenship yet their history of slavery and indentureship in the country positions them as an underclass similar to Africans. The end result was that Indians became stereotyped through the

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⁴ Indian slaves into the Cape were classified as Coloureds along with the Cape Malays while indentured Indians into Natal were classified as Indians/Asians.
rhetoric placed upon a very particular class of Muslim Indians (Soske *Navigating Difference*, 203). Indians therefore became, on one hand, foreign and considered to be outside the nation yet, on the other hand, the reality of their existence within the nation pushes them into blackness where they then are able to be conceived as violent criminals (especially during the anti-apartheid struggle). A key distinction here is that Islam is used both to otherize and to manage blackness. As Sugata Bose indicates Islam was a way of identifying against national, racial and class lines thus this transnational quality was especially important for indentured Indians who often were sent to or brought from Mauritius, elsewhere in Africa or the Indian Ocean (Bose 33). This was not due to Indians having the luxury of travel, rather it was out of necessity and even at times forced due to confusions with the contract regarded family or work and payment. Yet, the increase of mobility (in comparison to ‘tribal Africans’) caused the state to attempt to brand Indians as nomadic to make 1: Islam dangerous and barbaric. 2: to attempt to make a distinction between Islamic criminality and ‘black’ criminality. 3: to place Indianness as Orientalist and thus foreign.

The concept of AfroAsian is far from foreign in Islam as Islam served as catalyst between Africa and Asia and this is well known even in the Atlantic; a classic example is the Nation of Islam in which African-Americans subscribed to an Asiatic identity since according to the Nation of Islam the Original Man is the Asiatic black Man (Austin 28). For the Nation of Islam to be black was to refer to those belonging to descendant communities of the “Original Man”. Admittedly, the Nation of Islam had its fault in privileging Asia over Africa (as it saw Africa as a part of Asia) and that the idea of Africa was merely a white invention to breed disunity (ibid 29). So, they tried to create a faux African-Asian relationship such as the sending handouts on the
links between Africa and China in terms of Islam and trade and society (ibid 33). The Nation also claimed to be ‘Asiatic’; even Malcom X listed this as his race (ibid 35) because as Elijah Muhammad stated “There is no such thing as a race of Negroes.” (ibid 46).

As discussed, blackness differs based on location, but does “Indianness” (in regards to the indentured diaspora) operate on similar terms, or not? Even within the Caribbean, Indo-Caribbean identity is still a proof that is lacking. For instance, Suriname’s history has been one of isolation amongst the Dutch, African, Indonesian, Indian and other groups. Due to this Suriname presents an interesting counter to the rest of the Caribbean’s and Atlantic’s theory of ‘creolization’ (where each group may live together) as there is a strong preference for self-segregation in Suriname, furthermore, in the Netherlands even with other ‘first’ diaspora South Asians, Indo-Surinamese continue this behaviour (Lynnebakke 245). Although bordering Guyana, Indo-Surinamese reflect a stronger affinity to South African Indians in terms of ‘cultural retention’ than to next door Guyana (ibid 241).

The French Caribbean, notably in Guadeloupe and Martinique (but also in French Guiana) the focus is on assimilation. Because of France’s myth of ‘post-racialism and religion’ ethnicity and religion is not accounted for and because Guadeloupe and Martinique are overseas ‘departments’ of France they also follow in this regulation (Chivallon 115). Indians in the French Caribbean were actually homogeneous and not heterogeneous as they were virtually all Tamils from the same areas of the former French India. The Afro-Creoles saw the Tamils as the perpetual foreigner – their presence was not accepted as all aspects of their culture (religion, language, food) were seen as dirty and diabolic and decidedly “Eastern” in contrast to the ‘civilizing character’ of the “Western” French Christian culture and language (Boswell 299).
Martinican scholars such as Cesaire and Fanon were questionably silent about the Indian presence considering ‘Indianness’ was widespread in the island as the Christian saint of the Martinique is actually a deviation of a Tamil Hindu deity; likewise Colombo is a curry dish that is the signature dish of the island (Carter & Torabully 145). Regardless of being South or East Asian, Asians have occupied a certain space of the “perpetual foreigner”. For Glissant, this goes against créolité as it is seen as a dynamic and unstable identity (Glissant 31) – in turn créolité goes against Stuart Hall’s idea of new and old ethnicities (Hall 44). For Glissant they are one and the same because what is old is new again and what is new will be old – in this way accepting Asians in the Caribbean reflect the fluidity of time and space of a creoleness or more correctly a “Caribbeanness”.

Memory is not static and is fluid, memory also is embodied as memory refracts (meaning it goes through and is modified through the generations of people) though our ancestors. Thereby cultural memory and ways of remembrance brings respect to the past in way that is both dynamic and lived. Critical would be that in doing so always creates a sense of longing as well as a feeling of displacement – even in one’s ancestral lands. This discourse removes the competition aspect of suffering and thereby while history and precedence is remembered, concepts of ‘newness’ and ‘oldness’ are not in collision which other, which results in memory itself becoming diasporic (Walcott 39-40). If memory is diasporic so too is the body – which makes sense considering humanity itself has always been on the move. This assumes knowledge is embodied so that a romanticized return to the Motherland will never be ‘complete’ be it India or Africa because as Thomas King says once stories are told they can never be forgotten (King 3). Once we understand that we will never quite be at ‘home’ and that this was also the case for our
ancestors and will be so for future generations then the idea of Asians as the “perpetual foreigner” has no meaning. Minutely, this means that the schism between Indians and blacks in Guyana is fundamentally not due to simply a question of suffering but a question of how that suffering is remembered.

The ‘foreigner syndrome’ of Asians manifested differently depending on the colonial rule. In the French Caribbean, Indians were seen as foreigners indefinitely, basically as non-citizens and strangers and were ignored (Chivallon 127). The Indians in the British West Indies had aspects of this but they were considered to be as Benedict Anderson noted an imagined community (B. Anderson 12) – there were a nation within a nation – as each group vies for their own idea of what a nation should be. The imagined community echoes what Fanon (1963:248) predicted “when dealing with young and independent nations, the nation is passed over for race, and the tribe is preferred to the state.” (Quoted in Jackson 113) However, Creole Guyana or black Guyana is the dominant culture to date despite an Indian numerical majority and government. The term East Indian is still commonly used by blacks in Guyana and denotes they are not creole or creolized, although blacks are increasingly using the term Indian in close circles. Sometimes even nigga and coolie may be used and this shows a growing unity and acceptance of Indians by blacks. The newness of Asians also play into expansionist notions such as Indian arrival day, Arrival day or Asian Arrival Day (depending on the country). Compared with the localism of the word creole (Munasinghe 82-3) these 'Arrival Days' have similar notions of ‘the immigrant’ as if South Asians are recruited to provide their labour as ‘objects’. Their ancient “Asian” civilizations are imagined in an Orientalist fashion as a Far-Eastern and culturally locked despite the fact there are “quite a few overseas Indians who were not interested
in re-connecting with the homeland” (Oonk 1).

Going back to similar claims made that Indians in Guyana want to be simultaneously Indian and Guyanese allows us to see the differences in Atlantic vs. Indian Ocean studies. Munasinghe argues in Trinidad (like Guyana), Indians are very against being thought as Creole or thought of as having gone through a Creole process as it means an Africanization of their identity (Munasinghe 202). She is correct, Indians, like any other racial group want to be recognized for who they are, however, to argue that Indians in Trinidad can have an ethnicized creole identity is problematic as it is contradicting to the concept of “Caribbeaness” mentioned earlier. If anything, Indians want to be Indian because they feel marginalized by the dominance of the Afro-Creole state (ibid 49). Akin to African-Americans, if Indians were really accepted as Trinidadian they would not feel or be forced to hyphenate their names as Indo-Trinidadian. In doing so can alone lead to the continuation of ethnic nationalism and essentialism that trouble the region.

Indeed, many revivalist or attempts by Afro-Trinidadians or Afro-Guyanese to connect with their roots or to push African elements of their culture rarely stirs controversy and questioning of their citizenship as Caribbean peoples. It is only because Indian cultures are sidelined as the “Other” that causes the alarm to go off when Indians push for their own connections to their ‘roots’. Thus, like everyone else Indians should remain proud of their ancestry but will only face a losing battle if they advance their position from the point of the “Other”. An argument for equality based on claims of competing or incompatible ethnic nationalism is ultimately flawed to begin with and is doomed to create further polarization. Vijay Prashad argues that race-relations and specifically AfroAsian studies is positioned as “ethnic”
and/or cultural studies and that this is incorrect because it suggests that the problem with the Global South is its own culture be in codified in racially or religious terms etc (Prashad, xviii). Certainly, it is not Guyanese culture alone that has created strained race-relations rather it is through the belief that culture is an issue that makes it an issue. A solution is by focusing on the movement of peoples and by articulating culture and politics in a more blurred fashion. Richard Iton argues by doing so we allow for comments that speak through the human body as knowledge such as the following by Chinese-Trinidadian dramatist James Lee Wah “Although we are not jumping up to the same band in the carnival, it’s nice to know that we are all playing ‘mas’! (Munasinghe 274).

South Africa as part of both the Black Atlantic and the Indian Ocean World marks globalization before European expansion and needs to be re-centered as central in the narratives of globalization because South Africa did not open Africa to India; rather the Indian diaspora in South Africa opened the Indian subcontinent to Africa anew (Soske Navigating Difference, 197). This is the first and most crucial issue stressing IOS – the role of Africa. Africa has long been seen as a fault line to the IOW. The second issue in IOS is the issue of India and China whose economic might will undoubtedly change the playing field in terms of South-South Studies (Hofmeyr 99-100). The new role of India and China alone break from typical understandings of area studies and models of analysis (anti-colonialism etc) in which the sea becomes a lacuna for a better understanding of cultural studies yet most scholars in IOS are bringing their areas studies with them (Wigen 2). To not fall into this trap, Coolitude may seek to rectify our rethinking on the subject of the Indentured Indian diaspora in Africa which will be discussed in the next chapter. The pattern here is there is no ‘middle space’ or decentering as India and Africa are seen...
as a bipolar relationship of either solidarity movements or ‘ethnic confrontations’ (Hofmeyr 102)

Put another way, questions of liminality and negation are central and can therefore be read as
distinctive to the situation of Africa and India (Frenkel *A History*, 323). The constructions of
India and Africa is then symbolically undone through such cultural configurations, because
liminality, as a state of being, does not constitute a new mix like hybridity does, but rather
questions the logic of such classification by means of multi-directional memory.

Indian Ocean studies or the Indian Ocean World for that matter has always been
underscored by EuroAmerican ideas of race centered on the Trans-Atlantic while at the same
time scholars have emerged through the geo-compartmentalized ‘Asian’ studies. The Asiacentric
scholars therefore end up locked into the same binary they are trying to remove by re-asserting
globalization through a ‘silk road’ framework (Campbell 171). Likewise so too have Afrocentric
scholars claiming it was because of entrepreneurial African cultures of 2000 BCE to 1500 that
globalization has occurred (ibid 177). Yet the notion of “Asian” and “African” studies limits the
possibilities of dialogue on Africa’s key connection as in-between both the Atlantic and Indian
Ocean worlds (ibid 182). Thus it is within this paradigm that redefinition against regional studies
will allow for fully appreciative scholarship of Africa and Asia and it is only then that Africa and
its diaspora can be fully understand as pluralized term that is more than just ‘Africa’s’ but an
undefined Afro-Asiatic nexus.
Coolitudinal Waves

The condition of African slavery has led to a large amount of research over the decades on the African Diaspora. Great work has been done to show the connectedness, survival and resistance strategies of the African diaspora globally. Originally, this work was more anthropological focused and locked into an African ‘survivalist’ lens. Over time this changed to a distinct black Studies or black Diaspora studies that is less concerned with finding ‘African survivalist’ cultural patterns but more about exploring cultural and political positioning of blackness as well as to map where the future may lead in terms of social justice of the black community (Henderson 60-1). South Asian Diaspora studies have not been studied in such depth as the African Diaspora, while an obvious reason is due to the generational difference, where for the large part, the African Diaspora predates the Indian Diaspora. The South Asian diaspora studies however is still largely in the same situation as African diaspora studies was when it was viewed as simply an extension of African anthropological studies; that is to say, largely, geographic and monolithic (C. Anderson 104).

Further, South Asian studies have become more decidedly focused on the “South Asian” diaspora which for the most part assumes a more recent “first diaspora” of continental Asians. This has caused the South Asian indentured (and enslaved) diaspora to be locked into equally limiting regional studies (i.e. Caribbean) (Jain 170). For instance, Peter Manuel an ethnomusicologist has received many awards for this excellent work documenting certain Indo-Caribbean music in the Anglo and Dutch Caribbean (namely chowtal) as a distinct evolution of an Indian music found in Northern Indian provinces of Bihar and Utter Pradesh (Manuel 52).
Manuel has also demonstrated a uniqueness of similar music found amongst Indo-Fijians. While this work is certainly needed and deserves to be documented as Manuel's work is a great achievement it does show the lack of an established difference in scholarship between the 'new diaspora' of South Asian Studies and of the 'old diaspora' of South Asian indentureship. In short, the South Asian indentured scholarship is still intimately tied to South Asia and the Indian subcontinent as a central reference. I believe this exposes the fault lines between groups of migrants who resolutely refuse to “share” the usual markers of an “Indian” identity (Teelucksingh 149). This leads to the main question of this chapter: what is coolitude (explained below) and does it even exist? Khal Torabully – descendent of a ‘lascar’ (a Trinidadian Indian sailor) and an Indo-Mauritian mother coined the term coolitude using negritude as it basis – including an attempt to reclaim ‘coolie’ as negritude tried to reclaim Negro (Carter & Torabully 2).

Torabully says he follows the same reasoning as Cesaire did in his effort to reclaim the negative term of Negro as the indentured coolie was the replacement for the Negro slave. Torabully, however, cautions that coolitude is not the Indian version of Negritude or ‘Creole’ (ibid 144). The aim of coolitude is “in its broader definition, the possibility of building a composite identity to ease the pain and enrich culturally the lands in which {the coolie} he/she settled.” (ibid 144). Nor is it essentialist as it refers to those demarcated as coolies (regardless of race) as opposed to a strict racial term. So, coolitude can be seen as a verb instead of a noun; it is a process and way of being in the world. Yet considering the vast majority of the coolies were from the Subcontinent it also strongly recognizes a very Indian face that emerged through indentureship (ibid 157). Thus for Torabully, India is a reference, but not an origin point, for
Torabully he sees India as *Indias* (a mosaic of diversity in which coolies each came to know or imagine different *Indias* or Indies) but it is just one of the plural references considering indentureship took place from Europe, China and Africa (ibid 145-6). Theoretically, coolitude, while burrowing from Negritude, is more akin to *Créolité* or creoleness. Finally, another aim of coolitude is to foster a greater sense of community with the enslaved peoples of African descent who shared similar histories a la negritude despite the fact that the two groups were often put into positions of conflict (ibid 163).

To make better sense of coolitude is it important to understand Glissant’s *metissage*. Glissant’s *metissage* is a form of uneasy and diverse eclectic mixtures of memory and folklore (Glissant 211). Glissant’s idea on the process of creolization is noteworthy also for to him creolization is a continuous flux state that expresses poetics of the Caribbean islands that envision the Caribbean’s subjectivity as relational geographies of different islands and different peoples thereby dismissing calls for racial purity, origin or authenticity (Britton 5). Glissant’s idea of creolization differed from others in that it included elements of African, Asian, European and Native that blend to create something completely new yet completely unpredictable (Glissant 181). Another aspect of Glissant’s creolization is that by placing creolization at the center of relations (as opposed to being ‘rooted’) means no one group can lay exclusive claim to the land nor can a group cling to ethnic essentialisms or chauvinisms (ibid 93).

Basically, Creole people and creolization is native to Caribbean people (but not necessarily native to the Caribbean) regardless of race. However, this is not to say that creoleness itself is not debated and claimed. Currently fierce debates are centred on this aspect as many see Creole as equal to black and therefore at the detriment of other races. Antonio Rojo
metaphorically states that the Caribbean is scarred by giving birth to the Atlantic (Rojo 5); the postmodern Caribbean experience is a complex site for negotiation of Creole identities that are far from harmonious and can seem at times fragmented and jaded.

Nevertheless, in defining coolitude, Cesaire himself was receptive to the term. Cesaire believed it beyond the more essentialist term of negritude in that it pluralizes Africanness as a starting point for other cultural references that resulted from the same tragedy of forced migrations. Thus after Torabully explained coolitude to the late Cesaire, he replied by saying “Now I can die in peace, coolitude is the poetic force I was waiting for…” (Carter & Torabully 144). Cesaire also understood the desire to make peace between Indians and Africans. So upon entering Martinique’s town hall in Fort-de-France with Torabully, he drew attention to others in the building and held Torabully’s hand and exclaimed ‘Ladies and gentlemen, what do you see? A coolie and a Negro? Isn’t that great? It is coolitude’ (ibid 150). For Torabully (and perhaps Cesaire) this was seen as an act of reconciliation between coolies and Negroes. The reconciliation between Afro-Asian peoples shows that ‘incompatibility’ is in fact the building block of solidarity in regards to AfroAsian Studies (Prashad, xxi).

Another key point of coolitude is the marine aspect of the middle passage. Torabully defines this as the metaphor of a `coral memory`. A coral can be both hard and soft, malleable to shifts of the waters but also within the coral is the echoes (of memory) (Carter & Torabully 151). Torabully saw this as happy medium between Cesaire’s ‘rock’ (negritude is my rock) and Glissant’s rhizome of creolization (ibid 152). However coolitude needs to overcome the very troublesome aspect of cultural hybridity in which ‘plural’ or ‘multietnic’ become binaries as the source of inequality or in Shalini Puri’s words:
“[B]inaries are neither the source of social inequality...nor the exclusive provenance of the West. It is only by misunderstanding opposition as a static, rationalist relationship between monolithic, abstracted forces that so much contemporary theory can condemn it wholesale. Political opposition is better thought of as a contingent, conjunctural, and critical action people take after weighing the complexities and contradictions of their particular circumstances.” (38)

Nonetheless, Puri believed coolitude was firmly a working-class identity that shared common visions as well as necessary conflicts between the enslaved and indentured labourer (ibid 219). Although, some critics like Brinda Mehta disagree and believe that coolitude is lost in poetic theory and loses its ancestral voice (unlike the adamant negritude) and therefore becomes apolitical and lacks agency (Mehta 56). This instability or decentering of identity may be seen as a weak post structural position in which only an assumption on identity can be made by diasporic peoples in relation to the imaginary. Critics such as Paget Henry believe this is coolitude’s downfall as he believes seldom have such decentering have been able to overcome imaginary inscriptions nor result in an desired (Henry 2003). Henry’s view is that

“Torabully’s use of post structuralism, as well as Glissant’s, remains caught in this dilemma. It assumes and strives for, but never interrogates the nature of the power or the mode of production of the normative freedom and openness of the free floating signifier.” (ibid 2003)

Henry may be correct that coolitude will not solve the inter-cultural problems of plural post-colonial societies that share histories of indentureship and slavery. But that doesn’t mean, as Tripathi reminds us, it is only ‘lost in the imaginary’ as while it may not even exist it nonetheless opens a new space for dialogue on a topic often silenced (Tripathi 162-3).

Hybridity may be seen as polarizing in terms of being an abstract principle that appears to remove social forms from any local context due to its unpredictability. Glissant states

“creolization is unpredictable. One can predict or determine metissage, but one cannot predict or determine creolization” (89) Indian and African ‘consciousness’ are not at war with each (as for
instance via Du Bois’s idea of double consciousness\(^5\) rather the “Indian element”, as Cesaire puts it, is needed for black identity just as much blackness is needed for any group identity in the Caribbean in order to have a complete sense of self. Instability is not a bitter confrontation and in fact allows for many postcolonial diasporic peoples to thrive; which will be explained in greater detail in the final chapter.

V. S. Naipaul while Trinidadian and not Guyanese is still an important man to examine as he is a Nobel laureate and the most famous Indo-Caribbean writer. Interestingly, he is one who appears to go against all of what coolitude stands for as he clung to England and India as his home and motherlands respectively and did not have much good things to say about his birth land of Trinidad or its peoples (Ajay 3). Yet, Naipaul’s works shows that coolitude is very much a real and relevant concept because Naipaul himself represents a proof of a decentered hybridity that is local. First of all, Naipaul is of Brahmin (high class) top caste linage despite his father coming to Trinidad as indentured cane-cutter. Brahmin status shaped Naipaul as young boy as he always wished for a more grand presence then the relatively simple rural presence of his family in Trinidad (ibid 4). The disjunction with his reality and lineage would create a strong sense exile and yearning to be outside and free of Trinidadian nationality. Thus his writings are very much concerned with movement. Naipaul himself has admitted that the Voyage is central to his writings (Carter & Torabully 202). Eventually Naipaul would go to India yet he would find out his return was romanticized and that India was not a ‘center’ point; which is another element of coolitude: that crossing the *Kali Pani* (dark waters) meant there would be no return.

\(^5\)“It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” (Du Bois, 12)
In travelling Naipaul practiced a coolitude by placing himself in the voyage as central thereby redefining his relation to India and Trinidad. Naipaul’s writings in some ways represent an ‘anti-coolitude’ in that his worldly travels came from not his unjust hate for his fellow coolies of Trinidad but from his vision of himself. A vision where he saw himself to be placed as the coolie, at the margins of Atlantic history in which he revolted (ibid 208). A revolt that had him forsake Trinidad and head to England where he would reside to date as a British national (Casanova 2001). His chaotic writing of his identity and dismissal of his ‘Caribbeanness’ does not mean that he does not represent coolitude. Since while he may politically reject Trinidad, his writings cannot reject his Trinidadian subjectivity, as it was in through indentureship to the Caribbean that bestowed him the awareness of being the ‘other Indian’ in a diasporic sense and the ‘other Trinidadian’ in Creole sense. His ‘double other’ status together was the driving force behind his travels, writings and his anti-coolitude. Or in opposite terms coming from an Indian national “I am what I am because of who the East Indian woman in Trinidad is” (Niranjana 20).

Naipaul also shows the dangers of actively trying to resist coolitude in an intellectual sense. A common theme in coolitude as well as for any diasporic peoples (but more pronounced for any involuntary diaspora) is the sense of rupture that cannot be trespassed, that one has a paradoxically existence so that exile becomes ‘home’. Naipaul refused to accept exile from the Voyage (and all that came with it – i.e. the destruction of the caste system and a socio-cultural sense of lost from India) and instead harkened to India (Naipaul 38). But by not accepting and trying to ignore the ‘coolie’ aspect of his character (of which is natural from the Voyage), Naipaul would ultimately become a ‘high-caste Englishmen’ in lieu of an Indian Brahmin, thus

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6 Naipaul is formally addressed as Sir V. S. Naipaul because he was knighted by the British having received a Knight Bachelor.
creating a false equivalence whereby the rupture and loss of status is restored albeit in an imperial colonized fashion.

Naipaul, however, while holding extremely linear and problematic views on Indians and Africans in the Caribbean (ibid 80) also shares a view held by many ‘coolies’, in that there is a sense of recoil in the memory of Voyage and that the recoil of memory is too painful to even overcome and should be forgotten for upwards mobility (Samaroo 38). The recoil of this memory is still central to coolitude and in the end; Naipaul’s rejection of Trinidad was more than that: Naipaul discarded Trinidad for the world, a trade so to speak. In doing so, Naipaul kept with the paradigm of coolitude in that he exemplified these key characteristics of coolitude: that there is long traumatic memory associated with the Voyage that has the painful capacity to envision a double or contradictory consciousness that is decidedly based upon new relations of movement.

Salman Rushdie notes (as does another Caribbean another Nobel laureate Derek Walcott) that Naipaul has ‘Olympian disdain’ for Indo-Trinidadians for failing to ‘uplift’ themselves from Afro-Trinidadians since Afro-Trinidadians are ‘simple Negroes’ (Casanova, 2001). Torabully argues that Rushdie represents an ‘Indies’, or a pluralized Indian, that has displaced Indianness and has become part of the Indies as opposed to India and therefore he would consider Rushdie a coolitude writer (Carter & Torabully 212-3). It is also interesting to add that Rushdie shared with Naipaul a “colonized self-flagellation, exhibited for the benefit of Western audience” (Govinden 336) and therefore Rushdie may be an interesting foil to Naipaul in terms of the directionality of coolitude. This is where perhaps I part ways with Torabully in terms of defining coolitude. Firstly, bringing together the ‘old’ and ‘new’ diaspora muddles the basis of what coolitude is (a distinct ‘old’ or indentured and enslaved diaspora based on the Voyage) thus a fault of coolitude
may be the distinction is less clear between first and old diasporas (C. Anderson 102). Another is while Rushdie has elements of coolitude he is lacking in what I believe is a necessary (as opposed to optional or relational as defined by Torabully) African or black element that was a crucial part (whatever unifying or dividing) on the coolie’s memory.

I argue, however, that part of the AfroAsian aspect of coolitude is actually the resistance to coolitude or lack of solidarity between Africans and Indians. Both African and Indian communities still feel the legacies of a societal structure in which Indians benefited from the white master at the expense of the African due to the mere presence of Indians. This has caused both groups a sense of victimization and egotism. Relative deprivation has made Indians view themselves as being attacked by both sides (white and blacks) as Indians seem themselves to be constantly put down by whites and untrusted by blacks (Puri 173). This sense of exile and discontent is central to the memory of coolitude, further, it has influenced how the African diaspora and African peoples have come to define their negritude. Africans have been dependent on the overlapping memory of coolitude in post-slavery colonial societies (Ghosh & Goodall 165-6). Ultimately, having respect for life means having respect for oneself and that respect can only be born from taking the suffering memory of two fates and bringing them together to a regenerative beginning. Paulo Freire states the oppressed are also oppressors themselves (144). Thus only through recognizing the plight of the black peoples as a struggle that has been both denied and accepted by Indians can coolitude provide a sense of comfort to turn melancholia into emancipation.

Perhaps, a way to move beyond the ‘colour line’ is to think of the word coolie literally. ‘Coolie’ appears to have an Atlantic diaspora phenomenon in regards to remaking of language.
The word coolie is not used in self-identification anywhere else that Indian indentured immigration occurred (although it was used by some South African Indians for political reasons) (Desai, 1996). Even in Mauritius (and South Africa) where coolitude was coined, coolie is still largely a fighting word where it relegates an outsider status much unlike creole which is assume a national flavor in the Caribbean and in the IOW (Boswell 298). Negative European branded terms for people of African descent (Negro, black, nigga etc.) are used throughout by people of African descent yet the term coolie as aforementioned is only used as a term of endearment and pride in the British West Indies. While the naming may not seem important, as already addressed, the ability to name oneself and one’s community is indicative of the meaning-making apparatus and the power structure of the dominant, especially, when accounting for historical otherization and Orientalism under a postcolonial Eurocentric gaze. As cited by Gilroy in the Black Atlantic, a ‘black’ identity makes the local global as the shared experience transcends national boundaries of differing conceptions of blackness due to certain basic elements of blackness and black subjectivities amongst the black diaspora (207-8).

Aside from the English, Dutch, French Caribbean and South Africa, indentured Indians have been able to retain their languages. This is very important difference from the black diasporic experience in which black ‘creole’ language becomes the quality of a counter diasporic modernity. In other words, the performance of black language works against dominant political cultural arts and enable identities that are both modern and subaltern (Boufoy-Bastick 206). What is noteworthy is that there had to be a disjunction - a loss - that ended up creolized for diasporic blacks to enable such languages. So, what does it mean when diasporic indentured Indians retained their languages in terms of creolization? Language becomes not just political but
how does the performance of language reflect one’s own performance as creolized peoples without a destruction of language? Like the word nigger which has been reformulated to nigga, it is usable in-group. Indians call themselves coolies but usage by other groups is seen as offensive (except in close circles occasionally). Additionally, like the word nigger/nigga, the term is not unanimously accepted by African-Americans (and in other select black populations like Canada) and there are fierce debates onto whether it continues to be a harmful slur or if it has been reclaimed (Austin 107-8). Cornel West states ignoring the uglier parts of black history in America (i.e. lynching) by blacks and whites is a way to promote an idea of equality in tune with the idea of a post-racial America (West 6).

Dick Gregory named his autobiography *Nigger*, to highlight this argument in question, and to bring attention to the suffering and experiences that blacks went through in which he claims that race is touted by the American government as a ‘finished project’ especially with the advent of a black president Obama, allowing for silencing of anti-racist language (Gregory 15). This has set the argument that blacks are in 'the closet' in America while gays are 'out of the closet' by arguing that terms such as queer (i.e. queer studies) are now used openly as a positive term by gays and straights alike despite it being rooted as a negative slur (Mass 120). Furthermore, terms such as faggot, and others are now used openly in the LGBTQ community without a huge debate as if doing so is okay which is unlike the unease associated with the word nigger. Although, it is to be debated if the term nigger and faggot are really equivalent terms. The fact that these terms are used voluntarily by groups who were oppressed by these terms suggests an acceptance of suffering and a sense of community precisely because of said suffering in the face of a society that pushes for further marginalization.
Applying this to the Caribbean, it is notable that despite being called East Indians or Indians, Indo-Guyanese have claimed the term of coolie and many, particular the youth, would prefer to be called coolie than “Indian”. Nigger/nigga was a term made in America and is a diasporic identity in counter to ‘African’, and so too is coolie created in opposition to Indian. Both terms have embedded a sense of oppression in a white dominant society. In the Caribbean, those who identify as coolie do so to create greater distance between India and the diaspora – it is not a denial of ancestry but an understanding that they were community that has suffered and born from that suffering in the diaspora (Wilson 78). The linkage to India and to the ancestors is important but so is the sense of exile and disconnect. A coolie identity is much like Derek Walcott’s idea of fragmentation – that is to say, being dispersed, scattered and fragmented does not mean all hope is lost or that coolies and Afro-Creoles are ‘incomplete’ or ‘invalids’ instead that they are ‘born from the ashes’ (Hanna 498). It becomes interesting to note that because Guyanese articulate a ‘coolie’ identity they seek a connection to other coolies or other indentured Indians on the basis of being coolie or diasporic. Meanwhile Indians in South Africa connect to other indentured Indians (say Guyana) on the basis of the common motherland of India. Yet, (as will be discussed) this does not detract from the possibility of coolitude as a concept but instead allows for a greater range and understanding of what the concept entails.

Boufoy-Bastick points out to David Dabydeen and Louise Bennett whose literary work uses ‘creole’ or ‘Patois’ which has strengthened Jamaican and Guyanese cohesion by revaluing creole/patwa and forging a transnational linguistic identity (206-7) - echoing the late West Indian federation. More specifically, considered the dominance of creole (or as some scholars claim ‘Afro-creole’) it is vital to note that Dabydeen is Indo-Guyanese while Louise Bennett is Afro-
Jamaican meaning language politics shows the move away from ethnic ‘oppression studies’ and towards performativity studies: to study of how ‘minorities’ remake themselves and in the process remake entire societies.

One of the principals of negritude was that it tied a common origin to Africa but it also already included a diasporic identity of black and/or Creole (Ropero 71). Whereas a coolitude that uses “Indian” instead of “coolie” is not diasporic. The next question then becomes what is Indianness? Can one reject the idea of being a coolie in lieu of Indian and still have a strong mimetic connection to India and still embody coolitude? In examining Indianness we see that Indianness in South Africa is very important; the food, dance, music and religion is quite similar to what is found in parts of India and not of the fusion style of music, food and religion found in the Caribbean (Hlongwane 42). For instance, in Guyana chutney music is a localized Indo-Caribbean style while in South Africa Indian Bollywood is performed. Yet, many Indo-Caribbean cultural features such as Siparia Mari in Trinidad are often pigeon-holed as ‘black’ or “Caribbean” and not considered strictly Indian or Asian. The music in Guyana that is seen as ‘African’, i.e. Soca/Calypso and reggae/dancehall has many aspects of Indianness to it, much like other cultural forms such as dreadlocks (Chevannes 23). For example, in Jamaica, the word ganja is distinctly a Hindi word yet reggae and rastafari is viewed as a strictly African discourse, (ibid 45). While rastafari is very much an Afro-diasporic movement it does have AfroAsian elements in it meaning that to attempt to find an “Indianness” alongside or running parallel to a “blackness” in the context of the indentured diaspora (which are all considered ‘black spaces’ Africa, Fiji, Jamaica etc.) would be to run the error of ethnic essentialism or ethno politics (Wilson 153-4).
For example, one of the Caribbean’s greatest strength is its transnational and transcontinental character which is reflected in the ability of its artists and yet Afro-influences are most valued (due to cultural developments with African-American culture) but Asian influences are largely pushed to the sidelines (Rajan 127). Rajan notes that Poupeye’s in her review of Caribbean art mentions:

“La Divina. As she is popularly known, is a wooden statue of a black Virgin Mary in the town of Siparia in southern Trinidad that is venerated by Hindus and Roman Catholics alike for its purported miraculous powers. As a sacred sculpture of uncertain, probably Hispanic or Amerindian origin, La Divina embodies the syncretism of Creole Caribbean culture. Although the “bride” seems reluctant, her “marriage” to Lord Krishna challenges the perception that the East Indian population of the Caribbean has retained its own culture and does not participate in the creolization process.” (127).

Rajan then argues a reading like this is needed for Indo-Caribbean art, instead of being read as strictly “Asian” or antagonistic to Afro-Caribbean art (ibid 128). My own insight would be that in moving away from reading ‘Asian’ art as antagonistic to Afro-Caribbean also moves away from mimicking the rivalry between Indian and African petite-bourgeoisie. Two groups who exploit each other in a similar yet different ways in their pursuit of hegemonic status. I.e. the state is still read as a (African) Creole state (despite an Indian ruled government) that has control over certain aspects like coercive force (the military) and cultural capital (i.e. the arts), yet Guyanese national capital, comes from its farming (sugarcane, rice) amongst other industries which are mainly Indian owned (Spinner, 148).

The division of what is ‘African’ or what is ‘Indian’ brings us back to créolité. Créolité thinking however is not just limited to the Caribbean as it spread in the Indian Ocean as well (Nirsimloo-Anenden 14-5). This goes against Percy Hintzen’s idea of it being the marker of Caribbeanness but it does mean that créolité is instead a more global phenomenon and
challenges what it means to be Caribbean. Perhaps the connection between the ‘Ocean Worlds’ through créolité shows the ability of Caribbean people to have a right in claiming being citizens of the world. Regardless, the fact that créolité is a fundamental troupe in theorizing coolitude (from a Mauritian author) needs to be analyzed. Since créolité like negritude is not without its problems, it then follows that coolitude has serious issues as well. Before that is considered, créolité must be first in a critique. Créolité or the creole spectrum exists in the Indian Ocean World and that includes South Africa. It becomes easy to see in terms of a white and black history of the country but in terms of Indians and Africans, much of the same that occurred in the Caribbean is applicable to South Africa.

There are some divergences, the obvious ones are the white presence and the ‘free passenger’ Indians (Gandhi included) both of which prized European civilization and norms thereby increasing the pressure of Indians or ‘Asiatic’ peoples to aspire to Europe and away from Africa (Glassman 746). Another is the non-diasporic character of the continental African blacks which would mean the African-European spectrum of creole has a different dynamic because the destruction and regeneration of the Passage is not wholly applicable. With no sign of blacks claiming creole identity in South Africa, Indians were effectively cut off from trying to maintain an equilibrium between the two ‘cultures’ to claim creoleness, instead there was a strong appeal of pan-Africanism which allowed for Indians to be accepted Indians as ‘Africans’ due to their geographic position in the true spirit of pan-Africanism (Edgar & Luyanda 92). But this movement also rendered race invisible much like in nationalist Caribbean creole culture, further this movement also ironically became an (ethnic) African nationalist movement thus Indians were ‘de-Africanized.'
The next major point of departure from Guyana is that Indians are but a small population in South Africa and for the sake of pan-Africanism only a tiny and (now mostly expelled) group from elsewhere on the continent. So, while Indians in the Caribbean were able to maintain the myth that they were the ones to build the country to adequate levels of functionality simply due to their Indian racial status so too unsurprisingly have Indians in South Africa (Mukherji 4). Yet due to their majority numbers in Guyana, Indians are taken seriously their claim that they are changing the ‘creole’ society to something else, whatever they believe it to be, the opposite is true for Indians in South Africa as they most certainly are not changing the face of Africa (Maylam 22). Race is rendered invisible officially in a ‘post-racial’ country in terms of official policy of the national consciousness. Indians in South African are then left to ‘authenticate’ ‘Indianness’ in the only way available to them – though India, yet, while the older generation may believe this to be feasible the younger generation do not (Lotter 129).

This is where coolitude can be seen in South Africa as indeed the Indians represent a ‘creole’ identity but not one that is recognized racially under the idea of créolité. Indians (especially the youth) come to imagine Indian identity as a sense of belonging in both South Africa and India. Both are terminal points not quite here or there in accepting South African Indians and this precisely because memories of the voyage mean they will always be on the move – albeit with an African spirit that continue that challenge the meaning of race and Indianness (ibid 135). In this sense in true Africanist fashion Indians of the Voyage should be free to move around Africa and for that matter alongside black Africans overseas if willed. Much like the movement of the African diaspora (be it intra-Caribbean or in America or between the two and so on), so too, must South African Indians see themselves as belonging to this tradition
of movement, in doing so it brings about coolitude because it paves the way to respect their fellow Africans as well as creating a sense of self that has been repressed for the sake of purism for centuries.

In problematizing créolité we must also do the same with coolitude. If créolité exists in both Guyana and South Africa in some form but is ultimately flawed in its promotion of Eurocentric ideals at the expense of the various forms of African thought. Coolitude must then be seen as part of the créolité system of dominance that dictates who is ‘authentic’ and is who is not in a system of racist capitalism in which the purity of race is something lost that can never be regained (Hintzen 29). Instead of coolitude being a romanticised peaceful fix to ‘créolité’ or negritude we should instead see coolitude as occupying a space of insider/outsider simultaneously whereby a sense of connection accompanies a sense of loss that puts hybridity and the uncomfortably silent feeling that is attached to it to the forefront.

For instance some Afro-Trinidadians claim that “long ago” Indians had Indian names but now they have ‘Creole’ names and this is no good because this is causing confusion by taking away the meaning of a creole name and making it Indian (Puri 187). The Indian with a Creole name needs to cause confusion not just for the Creole but for the Indian – in which case hybridity causes both to be confronted with the colonial legacies of language as a unifier but also as a divider. In this sense we should keep in mind that coolitude should be considered a flexible identity of hybridity as it imagines utopian egalitarian pluralistic societies (Brudzinski 210). For Puri the way in which hybridity can be re-politicized is by reemphasizing the importance of localizing hybridity. Thus I wish to point out that Guyana and South Africa conceptualize coolitude in very different ways, and that the specificity of each site in the Indian diaspora retains
its localness even as it is being globalized.

Debates around the local and global have been expertly done by Deborah Thomas who points out that in Jamaica modern blackness goes beyond créolité or the faux multicultural creole society in which a sense of ‘Jamaicanness’ is really a sense of Atlantic blackness "modern blackness of the late-twentieth century…is urban, migratory, based in youth-oriented popular culture, and influenced by African American popular style" (229). This culture is decidedly lower-class and dark-skinned (as compared to the wealthy whites or ‘brownings’ (black/white biracial people). Thomas argues while the upper-class races might try to distance themselves from the lower-class the essence of Jamaicanness or modern blackness is emanating from the working-class and therefore have a shared blackness that is bottom-up as opposed to a top-down créolité. Yet, the question of authenticity or purity, the central problem of créolité is still there: i.e. who is ‘very Jamaican’ versus ‘not Jamaican at all’ (ibid, 1). This has led Verene Shephard to say that Indo-Jamaicans are unable to bypass creole society into ‘Black Atlantic’ modernism due to their inherent outsider presence as being Asian and therefore coolitude in Jamaica is problematic at best (37). She, however, reckons that coolitude is starting to show signs, although on a very small scale, as there is a characteristic lack of fusion between the European, Asian, and African as a tri-angulation in a Brathwaitian sense (ibid 38).

Considering the transnational nature of blackness in Jamaica as according to Thomas I argue the concept of ‘coolitude’ (namely an ‘Indian’ diasporic identity) is still very much a work in progress both in defining itself and also in losing itself. As coolitude is an identity centred on embodiment and enactment of memory, it thereby will be in full focus when it exists as only a memory. Currently, Indianness and Africanness is very much empirical as it is theorized,
meaning that our task is to not to find peace or unity but to remove the need to find such a synthesis. So that we can come to terms with the haunting memories of the past in order to liberate hybridity from romanticized exclusion.

Haunting and memories is a large part of the situation in Fiji, Indo-Fijians still feel a sense as though they are shipwrecked, haunted and trapped by the past (Lal 26). Indo-Fijian’s sense of being in exile seems to be the more common feeling amongst the Indian-indentured diaspora (with the Caribbean being an exception). A common mistake that many historians and other scholars make is that one can only be exiled from one’s ancestral land. India and Africa are not homogeneous. In reality, these are huge areas of land with diverse sets of people, who even in their own ancestral lands can self-marginalize and self-segregate each other regardless of colonialism (Kaviraj 8). As such India should be better thought of in plurals, as should *Africas* - to highlight commonness and fluidity. Thus, there is no guarantee that those who were metaphorically shipwrecked in the Indian indentured diaspora were not already exiled from the subcontinent itself. Naturally, people move and to limit that movement is to limit their humanity. Therefore, the better explanation would be that the shipwreck’s most dramatic event was to land the ship itself and displace the movement of Indians, be they ‘coolies’ or ‘lascars’ and at times ‘Negros’. In other words, Indians are exiled from the ship voyage and not the Indian subcontinent.

Pavalli Rastogi argues that coolitude doesn’t exist (in South Africa), she reasons that Indians have a distinct Africanized Indian identity (Rastogi 8). Rastogi’s argument goes beyond a debate of what is Indianness or an indentured identity as her research shows that a dialogue is possible on the concept of an Indian indentured diaspora. More importantly a debate of what is
an ‘African-Indian’ or Indian-African expands black studies. The overwhelmingly evidence points to an intersectional analysis that is AfroAsian in the sense that Indian-African ‘relations’ are not occupying separate and non-concomitant spaces. Therefore it is impossible to make the Indian indentured diaspora a studies that is strictly South Asian or black (Raphael-Hernandez & Steen 4-5).

There is a stake here akin to the debates between ‘post’-modern and Afrocentric schools in black studies. Precisely because they disagree on the same issues of what black and blackness is the reason they can be a studies. The Indian indentured diaspora has been scattered to ends of the earth which makes contact unlikely and research difficult (Wilson, 9). The Tri-Atlantic slave trade was more unified and allowed for easier travel for blacks (i.e. Jamaica to America) which occurred in decent numbers. The inability to have a dialogue on the matter of coolitude has led to research that has been squarely shaped as regional studies. Indentured Indian research has started to surface but a coolitude identity has not been discussed seriously because there has not been dialogue due to disconnection across the diaspora. The idea of shipwreck however, a central pillar of coolitude, is a constant theme throughout literature of the indentured diaspora be it Dabydeen, Naipaul, Hassim, Lal, Torabully etc. Academic wise this leads to a problem since knowledge has become departmentalized in the academy (Steen 181). Indentured Indians defy categorizations both in terms of racial systems nationally and geographic academic boundaries because Indentured Indians are located in all major bodies of water: the Pacific (i.e. Fiji) Indian Ocean, (Mauritius) Atlantic (Guyana) Caribbean Sea (i.e. Jamaica) etc. Considering coolies are located in far-flung areas of the world and difficult to research comparatively, it would follow that in search of identity, it would be difficult for Indians to find a ‘coolitude’, especially if
Indianness is seen as geographically tied to India and not connected to the marine element of Voyage.

For many South Africans, saying that they are South African only refers to ethnic nationalism in which they are more Indian or “pure” than Indians in India. This is not to say this is unique to South Africa, perhaps it is just more apparent, as it is seen throughout the Caribbean like in Guyana but is more well-known through the works of Naipaul and his rejection of Trinidad as aforementioned. Indo-Fijian Brij Lal notes indentureship and the voyage is a past many do not wish to remember despite the fact they are haunted by this history (Lal 9).

Therefore it is not surprising that South African Indians use the fetishism of India to simply reaffirm a diasporic sense of being or in Thomas Hansen’s words “a lie that works” (Hansen 119). Rastogi’s ethnography provides fruitful examples to this end:

“The older generation cling to the fantasy of return to mythologized India, the younger generation although confused and even disaffected do acknowledge they are South African. “India became a source of diasporic retrieval following the end of apartheid. Indian is present everywhere in South African Indian life. In Durban where a “Bollywoodized” Indian identity proliferates. I saw young Indian women wearing the latest Kurtis, listening to Indian music, and watching Hindi movies that I – Indian born and bred and a voracious Bollywood fan – had not even heard of, let alone seen.” (164).

One thing that sticks out, unlike in the Caribbean, is that Indians and Africans do not run in the same circles therefore the ideal of ‘douglasization’ for unity like in Trinidad (Puri 190) is nonexistent in South Africa. “Paradoxically, ethnic pride proliferates among Indians, regularly manifesting itself through an exclusionary existence, racism toward black Africans, the mythologizing of the rags-to-riches history of Indians, and the “Bollywoodization” of Indian identity.” (Rastogi 165). Since the Indians are heterogeneous in many aspects, the blacks are not the only ones singled out. Indians in South Africa are divided amongst a semi-awareness of
ethnicity and additionally sharply divided among religion, mainly the Muslims and Hindus, although this is more for show in the public sphere and the divide disappears in the domestic space (Hansen 115). This is a paradox because it mirrors the subcontinent schism of Hindus vs. Muslims yet the schism in Indian occurred in the past yet splits that occurred here are more recent coming from an effort to attain a more “pan-Indian” identity. Thus the irony is that the divisions have become stronger due to a mimicry which is based off a romantic and imaginary identity which can only be dreamt of through an exclusionary existence.

In spite of the fetish of ‘Mother India’ for South African Indians Dr. Teelucksingh critiques Niranjana in her description that normative Indianess is part and parcel of Bollywood’s construction of modern femininity and masculinity. Teelucksingh states it is a flawed generalization and mentions “Certainly, other factors such as religion, caste, family upbringing, and class would also be determinants of gender identities” (Teelucksingh 149). This is especially evident in South African film which by Niranjana logic, Indians there should be trying to emulate Indians in India yet this is very different as Indians and South Africa deal with issues of alcoholism, adultery, teenage pregnancy and other issues that are practically taboo in India and therefore are not belonging from India fetishism and depict a different cultural reality (Lotter 122).

Mauritius may a hold a key to understanding the Indian experience in South Africa. The harshness and brutality of white minority rule from before and after Apartheid has caused Indians in South Africa to be ‘closed’ to the rest of the world which lead to a more direct Bollywoodization of identity (Rastogi 171). This may be argued as being too close in a geographic sense to India, that allows for Indians in Durban, (on the Indian Ocean) to still have a
connection and a ‘foot’ in India while the rest of the indentured diaspora has been cut off. Yet even closer to India, lies the Island nation of Mauritius which had both black African slavery and Indian slavery and indentureship, like was the case in South Africa. In Mauritius, an Indian identity is present but it is not dependent on India as found in South Africa. Yet like South Africa, the Indian identity in Mauritius is more ‘intact’ or rather the cultural lost and sense of exile is not as great as in the English Caribbean (i.e. loss of language) (Vaughan 268). This proves that geographic distant while may be a factor is not the only factor; this also builds a strong case for ‘AfroAsianness’. AfroAsianness based on the fact that the creolization that occurred amongst black Creoles in Mauritius played a central aspect of the forming of Indian identity in Mauritius (Boswell 295).

This is shown through the créolité literary movement that occurred in the French Caribbean by Afro-Creoles; it was not taken up by the French Indo-Caribbean but instead by Indo-Mauritians as seen through Khal Torabully’s pioneering of the concept of coolitude. Torabully claims identity is an echo of creolization from the sea voyage to slavery to indentureship to present day (Carter & Torabully 184). The ideas of mixing, or mestizaje, is part of Mauritian culture although the unfortunate result has been to place Afro-Mauritians on the sidelines of national culture as has been in most cases of the African diaspora (Alpers 77). It definitely shows that a proximity to India and Africa geographically does not excuse the ‘Bollywoodization’ that is taking place in South Africa which must be pegged down to simply the scope of white rule in South Africa. Yet even then Mauritius plays a pivotal link in understanding if ‘coolitude’ exists in South Africa as an AfroAsian identity. As shown there are definitely elements of coolitude found in Mauritius considering the author of the term is from
there. I differ from Torabully in that I believe that Indianization of the South Asian indentured diaspora is also an AfroAsian dynamic as I take a more post-modern stance on the view of race as a social construction. Yet, what does this mean for South Africa, the Bollywoodization of Indian identity, and the AfroAsianness of coolitude? For that answer we must turn to Gandhi.

The first point to Gandhi is his contradictions. M.K. Gandhi, heavily influenced by the British in his formative years as a lawyer, spoke of South African Indian returnees to India as ‘descendents born from uncultured, dis-Indianized parents…social lepers’ (Shepherd 34) and that any Indian returning to India would soon want to go anywhere but India. Again this was not because indentured ‘colonial’ Indians were too ‘Westernized’ but rather they have become too Africanized or black. This is an important distinction to make in regards to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade in which when Africans returned (i.e. Freetown) in the past and in contemporary times they concluded a general feeling of hospitality and admiration (with hiccups here and there) between them as the diaspora and with those of the continent. Not to say that the African diaspora can make the impossible return voyage and that Indians cannot but rather to highlight indentured Indians come from a mosaic tradition of plural or ‘mixed-up’ societies. Societies that incorporate an AfroAsianness as the de facto and that it appears to be at odds with Indian purity found in the subcontinent (Chandra 177). Indeed, Gandhi was very vocal that indentured Indians should be kept away from Africans in South Africa despite both groups needed each other’s support to begin to dismantle the colonial government via non-violent activism for these reasons that blacks would ‘contaminate’ Indians (Huttenback 44).

Perhaps the ultimate irony of all of this is that Gandhi is symbolic to coolitude as it pertained to South Africa as despite his contempt for the indentured Indians he ultimately choose
to identify with them: Gandhi changed from an British dressed gentlemen on his arrival to Africa
to someone much different when he said farewell to South Africa as he “wore Indian dress for
the first time in his adult life.”(Bose 164). Therefore it was in South Africa where Gandhi
decided to embrace his Indian heritage and identity. South Africa was also the place where
Gandhi brought back to India not just new techniques for freedom fighting, but also achieving
Indian unity that was both respectful of internal cultural differences and able to transcend them.
Perhaps it can be argued that Gandhi appropriated the struggles of the ‘coolie’ indentured
workers since while he identified with them he was not himself one. As mentioned his views on
the indentured was negative but it was the very same negative opinion was the source of his
strength (Bhana & Pachai 124). As it was through their negative status and negative condition
that he was both inspired and empowered to rise against white colonial rule in South Africa and
ultimately to liberate the subcontinent itself (and not just India) and to even imagine India into
being (Samuelson 310).

Therefore, Gandhi left not just representing the downtrodden masses of the rural peasant
class in India but more important representing the coolie for which he had no acknowledgements
for. To this day the ‘coolies’ of South Africa are painted as outside of the liberation of South Asia
despite their central role. Not to forget, these ‘coolies’ were admittedly too schooled in the ways
of the so-called ‘kaffir’7 (or African) to be formally acknowledged and thanked by subcontinent.
But this brings up a greater point of coolitude being AfroAsianism. South African Indians
entered into the struggles of black liberation movements on the African continent and the Indian
passive resistance campaigns paved the way to the nonviolent anti-apartheid struggle that would

7 Arabic derived negative slur (meaning ‘disbeliever) used against blacks in South Africa. It has a similar
connotation as the word ‘nigger’ in America.
bring down the final curtain of colonial rule in Africa. Put another way, it was through Africa (and not just the coolies as in fact separating the two would go for one be impossible and two go against the vision of coolitude) that Gandhi would learn to be in the both Indian and diasporic and what it meant to be a ‘coolie’ (Bakshi 97).

The image of Gandhi is paramount to Indo-South Africans but what is not emphasized in terms of historiography is that while Gandhi was a brilliant man in almost infinite amount of ways he still was just one man. Gandhi himself knew this and he was open about his role as a “Great Man” and a leader stating that the source of his strength was from the people (Gandhi 447). The people in this case were indentured Indians in South Africa and also to much lesser degree and not consistently: black Africans. In was through indentured Indians and Africans in South Africa that Gandhi reawakened as an Indian.

This is important not just for the historiography of India and South Africa as a nations but also for coolitude. South African Indians themselves do not see the African or black flux of their identity which was critical in conceptualizing nonviolent, resistance of Satyagraha, even though Gandhi himself admitted that it was in Natal that the seed of Satyagraha movement comes from (ibid, 40). This can again be pointed to the dominance of creole, or put more amply, creolization of thought in which the Africanness of AfroAsianness is shunned in favour of a framework almost wholly in the exploitative nexus of (white) colonialism and imperialism. Thereby keeping intact ethnic chauvinisms or the ‘race card’ as the principle reason for strife.

Rastogi speaks of her experience in trying to use the documentation centre for her research and states it “…functions as an archive and museum. It contains rare artifacts from the indentured past … was almost unusable…Nothing was catalogued” (166). This is symbolic to the
state’s view of South African Indians: a selective amnesia to the indentured past in which they were relatively powerless, disarrayed and poor. This lapse is the mantra of the ‘Rainbow Nation’\(^8\) of South Africa, which is trying to hide the continued consequences of colonialism and apartheid through the ideology of reconciliation (Highfield 144).

While South Africa attempts to hide the ‘Indian Question’ it is the opposite case in the Caribbean. Caribbean Popular music such as that from Lord Superior often put the question of the ‘Indian problem’ out to public (Puri 184). Perhaps it is for this reason that Indians, while still otherized in the Caribbean, have ironically become welcomed due to their efforts in debating their claims for a local homeland through popular music. This differs from South Africa where even in recent times Indians are still talked about in a foreigner like manner (Hlongwane 41). South Africa is struggling to come to grips with its black and white history. Therefore it would follow that South Africa as a national entity has not truly begun to accept its history of Indians as the nation still clings to a ‘worker/merchant’ narrative (Meskell 44). Thus the “Indian Question” in the contemporary imagination and politics of South Africa highlights the Rainbow nation as a failed decolonization project or in Meskell’s words

“*Rainbow Nation-ness is this very lack of attention to history that fuels repeated ethnic and racial tensions and misunderstandings in post-democratic society. Instead of unraveling and making public the complexities of the deep past, the state would rather revel in the glories of re-enchanted history, on one hand, while simultaneously projecting them forward as exemplary models for progress on the other. South Africans are being educated through various cultural productions about what is best remembered and what is best to forget.”* (45)

Basically, there is a fear, an uncertainty, over the Indians; even currently in post-apartheid South Africa the Indian issues are being addressed in political circles as “The Indian Question”. The

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\(^8\) South Africa’s government officially nicknamed the country the Rainbow Nation in attempts to push for state orchestrated multiculturalism.
fear, however, is not from the whites but from the majority Africans. Mandela himself said in 1999 in addressing Indians “Indians should not think like a minority, but to become part of the majority” (Ebr.-Valley, 8). In other words, there is an African anxiety over the Indian as a minority and therefore should become part of the majority (Meskell, 44). Perhaps this thinking resonates with Appadurai who states the smaller and weaker the minority the greater the rage of the majority to 'assimilate' them (Appadurai 53).

In South Africa, the multicultural official policy put in place after apartheid stems from Rainbow Nation rhetoric that all racial groups in South Africa share a common destiny and that the ‘worst’ is behind them and thus not worthy of serious discussion. This resonates with Lynn Meskell who quotes Binyavanga Wainaina “Always end your book with Nelson Mandela saying something about rainbows or renaissances” (Meskell 35). Much like the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, the idea of a Rainbow Nation in fact privileges white South Africans because it extends an ideal that everyone is equal when there is still vast inequality mainly along racial lines (Durrheim et al. 112). Further it tries to ignore the historical inequities of the white government in South Africa as whites are green lighted with a ‘fresh start’ via the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) success. The triumph of the TRC is testament to the belief of ‘post-racialism’ despite that fact that the TRC did not problematize cultural memory of trauma (McCann 129). In this way, South Africa’s historiography is modified to make the actions of all its peoples ‘innocent’ within the nation.

In patriotic fashion, Rainbowism allows for the peoples of South Africa to become part of the nation despite their origins, yet the omission of origins is a tactic of multicultural discourse akin to Canadian multiculturalism (Case 53). In Canada, the official English and French
Bilingualism is a marker of a privileged multiculturalism. A multiculturalism that is based off the exclusion of peoples not mentioned and that in this exclusion is actually a good thing because certain peoples are not worthy of neo-liberal citizenship – mainly Muslims (Mansur 172-3). This is why the propaganda of reconciliation is so important because acknowledging the black presence in any white settler colony causes strain on the national imaginary. The national imaginary is built upon a denial of black peoples thus acknowledging them is a transformative process (Case 144).

Multiculturalism also is an unassumingly ‘pure’ identity that puts those labelled as diasporic as fixed and rigid identities due to the onus of ‘ethnic’ performance of their diasporic’ origins. Thus diasporic peoples are in a sticky situation in where they are limited in who they can be as the must fit within their allotted ethnic ‘culture’ (Walcott 120). South Africa owes its apartheid system on the Indian Act in Canada and has currently officially sanctioned multiculturalism in the wake of post-Apartheid South Africa. Starting with the Indian Act, which bases a notion of citizenship through white supremacy and otherization to the point of erasure (Ty 60).

BC movement against apartheid showcased how blackness ushered in diasporic elements in the face of blackness. Both Natives and blacks have and are continued to be defined in their lack of absence in Canada. Their absence has been formulated in different ways as Natives and blacks have been racially ‘spaced’ differently – blacks are to be policed and Natives are to be contained – although there has been considerable overlap. This occurrence falls in line with the idea that power in multicultural democracies must retain a covert surveillance presence in order to maintain the notion of a ‘free-moving’ mosaic. Thus disciplinary observation becomes the
norm, yet, while Outsider bodies are continually seen they never become part of the nation but instead remain as a perpetual “object of information” (Foucault 200).

The narrative of the nation is often made official precisely because in doing so certain groups can be rendered invisible and thereby forgotten. Canada uses its position of an invisible empire to subtly police diasporas as compared to the more overt America, where the black/white divide is very much part of the public eye, invoking certain historical narratives (and therefore policies) onto diasporic peoples (Pabst 114). Likewise, Rainbowism is used for similar reasons in South Africa Memory is an important aspect in this regard as it can challenge a nationalist assertion on bodies of communities that are marginalized and currently framed as ‘lapses’ of memory (Mengal et al. 156-7).

Asians and Africans have naturalized the belief that they are incompatible or that they exist on a plane so different from each other that there can be no solidarity or fruitful exchange. The ideal of AfroAsian goes against this belief, scholars of AfroAsian studies argue that there AfroAsian studies is both relevant and necessary to go beyond the binary of race (Raphael-Hernandez & Steen 4-5). AfroAsian positions both ‘blackness’ and ‘Asianness’ in the same space even if that space is not a ‘safe space’. The fluidity of African and Indian identity found in Guyana and South Africa also reflects a shared history of slavery an indentureship. This labour relationship is a legacy of the master and slave dynamic through which the identity of being black is made, or as Fanon sees it; a condition made to be rehabilitated – controlled, invented through the power of white supremacy. As a tool or ‘labourer’ both Africans and Indians performed ‘race’ as they were forced to do so. While this is most apparent through people enslaved during the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade, Indian indentureship also dealt with a similar
situation at a lesser intensity. Either way, both groups must not only respond to the performance of blackness they also must be tasked with responding to each other’s performances (Willie 153).
Dreaded Afrindians

This chapter seeks to show that metaphors of mixing in a purely biologically sense (aka the douglaiization) may work in Guyana but will not be the case in South Africa. Although it does not mean that Indian and African subjectivities are heading in opposite directions. Thereafter the chapter shifts to how distinct diasporic Caribbean worldviews manifest blackness through a disability lens. Dreadlocks are used as an example of re-thinking the ways in AfroAsian unity can be embodied.

Historical from the 16th century onwards the Caribbean (due to European imperialist expansion) became a key player in the stage of colonialism. As Aisha Khan notes “the notion of mixing would be an organizing principle of this region, inflected toward an emphasis on racial and religious identities, and the cultural qualities they have been assumed to signify” (222). This reason alone may be enough for some to explain why mixing has been so widespread in the Caribbean (and in our case, between South Asians and blacks) but a more nuanced explanation is needed.

It is well documented that historically in the Caribbean, between Indian and African communities, that the group that looked down on mixing the most were the Indians. Obviously, the name used for Afro/Indian peoples, douglas (which loosely means a bastard child) is linguistically of Indian origin supports this fact (Mangru 75). Afro-Creoles have often been open to race mixture, and the heterosexual black male desire for Indian women (and will be elaborated in greater length later) is something unheard of in black South African circles. While dated, Leo
Kuper’s study in South Africa revealed that out of those he interviewed most rejected miscegenation, the majority citing the need to maintain of racial purity (Kuper 302). This may be an extremely important aspect of why the racial mixture of ‘Afrindians’ is quite rare in South Africa.

Again, Brackette William’s insights are useful in a South African context. Indians hold the problematic Insider-Outsider position to Africans in more ways than one and this is because Africans view Indians both from their perspective and the Indians perspective at the same time. On one hand, in the context of an indigenous vs. invader Africa, the Zulu’s pride themselves in being in their Motherland and hold themselves superior to Indians who they see as descendants of an inferior ‘slave’ class (Soske *Wash Me*, 53). On the other hand, Zulu’s also view Indians as (contradictorily) coming from both a superior ancient civilisation as well as being closer to white or British culture and thus superior. The latter view is simply mirroring Indians own view on Indians themselves, as they believe their civilization to be more civilized then African civilizations. Because of the contradictory view Zulu’s have on Indians, it follows that their reactions to them are also quite contradictory. Zulu men (like Afro-Creoles) express a desire for the seemingly unattainable Indian women yet ultimately are repulsed (ibid 129).

As Shalini Puri notes in the Caribbean context, this type of ideology in fact deploys the same ideal of the Indian woman as a symbol for Indian cultural nationalism: the secluded, sexually modest bearer of Indian tradition (Puri 177). Considering almost all domestic workers are black women in South Africa and that the servant-master relationship replicates the racial hierarchy it wouldn’t be too farfetched to believe Indian men sexually exploit black women. Additionally, certain groups of transgendered or gay black men have gained the name
isihabhnaba (Soske Wash Me, 59) due to their behaviorisms of crossdressing as domestic black female workers in order to gain sexual access to Indian men in their household. The queering of the domestic space in this way suggests Indian men take advantage of the domestic space through lapses of gender, race, and sexuality. Therefore, for many Africans, the domestic realm is the prime place to pigeon-hole Indians into labels – Indian men are exploitative thrifty hypocrites while the Indian women are secluded, aloft and culturally ‘Indian’.

For the Zulus this represents the end of Zulu traditional patriarchal society, utter humiliation via the continuation of black stereotypes of the lazy angry man and the promiscuous black female as well as the denial of a Zulu or black nation (Bond 2) (akin to the idea of an African-American nation). As exemplified in this quote:

“*They paint their lips, straiten their hair, and to complete the outfit most favorable for attracting [other] races...At this stage they can then be able to respond to invitations to cocktail parties specifically arranged for them in the backyards of a Mr. Smith or most commonly a Naidoo.*” (Soske Navigating Difference, 190).

In fact, for the above reasons, many working-class Zulu’s and other blacks see the Indians as a greater threat then the whites and have deeper grievances against them to date (Flint 4). In both Guyana and South Africa the principal mechanism for reproducing these communities was the control over marriage: women assumed the material and symbolic responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the community.

In the Caribbean, however, Indians are not seen as a threat due to the dominance and stability of the Creole nation. For blacks in the Caribbean, Indians are not seen as causing cultural loss nor do Africans fear mixing as a sign of denigration, instead it is seen as a Caribbean cultural trope of mixing whereby mixing is lived and purity is idealized (Khan 136). Thus, for black men, Indian women in the Caribbean can be married to black men as the child
and the couple remain safely part of the Afro-Creole culture, however, for the women she will generally be looked down upon and thus the relationship will not be accepted as whole-heartedly on the Indian side (Samuel & Wilson, 100). African women and Indian men do not have this same problem as according to Birth when a dougla child is born to an Indian father and an African mother, the child and couple is usually encouraged and welcomed to maintain connections with both racial groups (Birth 591).

Unlike South Africa, where Indians males are deemed attractive to African women, in the Caribbean however, Indian men are deemed as unattractive for various reasons. Sharma states that Creole women tend to reject Indian men due to stereotypes of the Indian men as wife-beaters and that they are ‘soft’ in terms of masculinity in comparison to stereotypes of black male masculinity (Sharma 38). Regardless, there are plentiful interracial couples in the Caribbean, this supports the idea that the overall idea of mixing within the Caribbean permeates over the tensions of race or gender. While rejection of miscegenation is present amongst Indians and Africans in South Africa, the Caribbean differs in that the Afro-Creoles were and are willing to form interracial relationships with Indians in the Caribbean, furthermore, Indians while not as open as their Afro-Caribbean counterparts deem mixing okay, in fact, in a recent Guyanese study 77% of Indians cite marrying blacks as okay but not preferred (Samuel & Wilson 109).

The discourse of mixing is not automatic in the Caribbean, and is still (and will most likely always be a work in progress). Moreover, Indian/African mixed peoples (dougla) are considered to be the most attractive and desirable by both black and Indian groups in some instances in the Caribbean (Sookram 136) although for some any racial mixture with blacks means loss of Indianness (Puri 193). While human agency does play a roll, it’s arguably second
to the socio-cultural process\textsuperscript{9} that occurs in the Caribbean. Mixing does fall within a racial hierarchy. In a study by Samuel & Wilson to see the views of marriage based on race in Guyana, all groups preferred marrying races ‘closer to whiteness’ then ‘closer to blackness’ when marrying outside of their race (Samuel & Wilson 99). For example, Indian men would prefer Indian women over Black women as well as Chinese women over black women. While this quantitative study should not be seen as scientific fact, it can be used to suggest that whiteness is preferred to blackness (Birth 600). Although it must be noted in a comparative study of Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana, Stacey-Ann Wilson commented that the ethnic divide is less to do with race and more to do with resource scarcity for sheer survival (Wilson 153). Therefore, transplanting this theory to South Africa brings another factor for a lack of ‘Afrindians’: it is perhaps due to the corporeality proximity of whiteness and blackness. There is a large powerful white community, larger semi-affluent Coloured community, a huge relatively poor African community.

The end result would be that in South Africa both African and Indian alike would prefer a white partner when forming familial linkages way before they would ever considering the prospect of doing the same with each other because whites will enshrine better resources and class status (Govinden 208). This idea is especially understandable when South Africa’s explicitly racist laws such, as the former apartheid, formally discouraged race-mixing in order to keep the tiered system of white, Indian, Coloured and black in order but informally encouraged ‘race-climbing’ in terms of racial ‘passing’ for the aim of racial (generally white) privilege (Frenkel Reconsiderations, 62). In the end douglaization is a racial identity more so than an ideology and therefore keeps essentialist attitudes that while politicized seem posed to repeat

\textsuperscript{9} Note this process is not uniformly smooth either as a romantic ideal of racial harmony in the Caribbean is a fallacy.
ethno politics. In a more empirical sense then we must look for another example of AfroAsianness. In which case dreadlocks will be the next case study.

**Undreaded**

Distinctions are clearly made between identities but as McRuer argues minority identities were never identified in that complete absolute identities of a particular group over time and space have never existed and are not possible (McRuer 151). Put another way: “the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity…it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image.” (Bhabha 64).

Further, Leonard Davis says that disability can help us critique postmodern thought and ‘dismodern’ the world (McRuer, 149). So when it becomes possible to see an African body as a body that exerts blackness but in certain amounts (thus the idea of ‘excess blackness’) this allows for instability or crisis. Kobena Mercer notes that one thing is at least clear which is that “identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis” (Mercer 259). Indeed, identity and particularly racial identity is always in crisis since identity formation is in constant battle over power and domination.

If identity is a social cultural phenomenon and thus in flux, by assigning and normalizing static identities (alongside static definitions) such as “Indian” and “African” we have then appropriated the very concept of identity itself. Indeed, an Indian male with dreadlocks (a hairstyle that is recognized as highly African) in a racially tense country such as Guyana then becomes an easily visible source of ‘identity crisis’. By examining this particular form (Indo-Guyanese deadlocks) of ‘identity crisis’ through lived experiences, disability, social theory, music, and rastafari spirituality, I aim to reconceptualise and reconfigure dreadlocks in relation to
blackness. I assert in a Western context that dreadlocks add a disability on top of already racialized black body in that it symbolizes excessive blackness. I make this distinction through the ‘description’ for a disabled body that through its excess it is real as much as it is unreal as James Porter says “the disabled body seems somehow too much a body, is too real…[yet] too little a body…[and] not real enough” (Deutsch 197). Crisis or instability is part of disability but instability doesn’t equate to disability rather it allows disability to flourish as it is most stable when instable. Disability operates in an instable or unknown manner, and when race becomes disabling or ‘dismodern’ as in the case of dreadlocks it can’t be predicted and this causes fear and whatever we fear we must put a stop to it by gaining control over it (Mitchell 20).

Dreadlocks have a long history in the West and have always been associated with blackness. The meaning of dreadlocks have historically been associated with the Gorgon myth since ancient times and there are a plethora of examples throughout the centuries, however, one example I found particularly useful was that of the Medusa who apparently had ‘normal’ hair until she committed sins that caused her dread to become symbolized through her hair as dreadlocks which furthermore became snakes (which have long biblical ties with sin such as the snake that tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden) (Frank 49). Thus, dreadlocks have been constructed as a physical manifestation of dread and have been chronicled throughout Western history as such (ibid 51). With this in mind it then becomes important to note the negative association with the name dreadlocks itself since the word literally means locks of dread thus the name should be rethought to be more positive since it is used in the same manner as with words used for disabled people; a word that often suggests the person is a disability more than a person.

Furthermore, dreadlocks being in the same vein of a disability often become recognized
as the sole identity of a person. I often hear people saying that they know ‘a dread’ and some people with dreadlocks even introduce themselves as ‘a dread’. In this way it is easy to see the phenomenon of how dreadlocks are intrinsic related to blackness in excess. Dreadlocks then have the ability to become the foremost identity in same way Fanon mentions that a black man is black before he is a man (Fanon 110) this explicitly apparent in the case of dreadlocks, in that it heightens the sense of blackness attributed to the black individual to the point of excess that most people cannot see them beyond their dreads. This creates the myth that dreadlocks belong to an all-inclusive community that is defined entirely by their hairstyle. Because this identity seems to be so inclusive it also then becomes easily manipulated to tokenism which it then becomes no surprise to see someone such as Bob Marley becoming the ‘representative’ for all dreadlocked peoples and thereby implying peoples with dreadlocks are foremost rastas (and indirectly implying stereotypes that they are of African ethnicity, they smoke weed, like reggae, are promiscuous, are Jamaican or West Indian etc.). This articulates the concern over who has the power over the apparatus of image-making. This concern comes from the invisible demand to ‘speak for’ a minority or racialized community, however, as Kobena Mercer notes is always a “numbers game” in effect: “if there is only one black voice in the public discourse it is assumed that that voice ‘speaks for’ and thereby “represent” the many voices and viewpoints of the entire community” and tokenism becomes the result (Mercer 91).

It cannot be understated that dreadlocks have strong connections with the Caribbean and this connection must be noted as it crucial element for how dreadlocks are represented in the West but even in Africa as well. Due to associations with rastafari’s (mainly Bob Marley) dreadlocks become a ‘clash’ of civilizations in that the ‘meaning of blackness’ becomes the
meeting point for different views. Since the Caribbean exists as a paradox to the Western mind, too beautiful yet at the same time too luxurious primitive or put in another way there is a contradictory need for the Caribbean to function as a sign of both a hedonic like utopia (for tourists and touristic voyeurs) and a dystopia (for IMF and “developers,” seeking to impose discipline on an “untamed” Caribbean) (Frank 47). The paradoxical construction of the Caribbean in the imagination of the West shows how that even a seemingly solid term of blackness raises questions of stability in the Western gaze. This question is key and by using dismodernism we will begin to fathom that blackness relies on its existence as an oxymoron to be stable definition.

In the Caribbean, there are two competing sources of how dreadlocks entered Jamaica, one is that some Hindu East Indians that came to Jamaica as indentured labourers already had dreadlocks due to religious reasons (Chevannes 101) and it caught on with the rastas as symbolically representing the lion’s mane (which represents the Lion of Judah). The other is that there were some ‘derelicts’, (although more likely to disabled) poor, homeless Jamaicans living in the slums that grew their hair long and didn’t wash it which eventually became dreadlocks and were thus noticed by and adopted by early rastas (ibid 154). Regardless of which source dreadlocks came from, both groups (be it the Hindu Indian holy man or by the ‘derelicts’), however, were considered to be deviants on the edge of society. Although the debated origins of dreadlocks between Indians and Africans showcases that in the end regardless of how it is conceptualized (i.e. an ‘African hairstyle) dreadlocks are indeed a South-South encounter: a fusion of memory of one’s heritage articulated in coolitude. In colonial and post-colonial societies, bodies that are considered too black become a threat, and dreadlocks signified this threat to white normalcy (i.e. striving to be ‘British citizens’ of the empire and to uphold ‘British
values’). That is, dreadlocks suggest something of the romantic notion of true beauty containing aspects of the terrible (terrible beauty). These early rastafari’s when adopted the hairstyle even named themselves “Dreadful Warriors” as a term of empowerment (ibid 158). They were to be feared because they were black at the same time there was something very exalted about them that demanded love and pride.

The resistance caused by the rastas go along with many other pan-African movements but the aesthetics of the dreadlocks itself compounds itself with the resistance of the phrase “black is beautiful”. Of course, in this discourse for blackness to be beautiful it inherently must rely on the Western construction where blackness is not beautiful (Schreuder, 13). Akin to the idea of the noble savage, dreadlocks is blackness in excess and in its excess it is unstable and paradoxical as it is both noble and a savage, in other words dreadlocks has become rooted in an expression of freedom from escaped Africans who revolted against the plantations in the Americas and for similar reasons along the lines of indentureship may be adopted by Indians. Dreadlocks assert blackness beyond the embodiment of a black body, it symbolizes a historical reminder of Afrocentrism and rejection of the white civilization and its ‘white is right’ norm (Daniels 82). The transformative and instable or ‘rejective’ identity of excessive blackness in the form of dreadlocks is indeed both terrifying and fascinating and appears to match the ‘description’ for a disabled body that through its excess it is real as much as it is unreal as proclaimed by James Porter.

Rod Michalko mentions in Western societies (due to Enlightenment influences) there is the idea that we can separate between society and nature but alongside this idea is that because our bodies are natural we can control our bodies thus normalcy seeks to reproduce itself by
trying to control or bodies so that deviations (disability) does not occur and if they do somehow they must be rehabilitated (Michalko, 14-5). With that in mind as well as the idea that disability is a social phenomenon that occurs from an impairment (Swan 288) means that dreadlocks themselves in its corporal sense are not a disability but the phenomenon that groups them together with excess blackness causes it to be a disabling. Dreadlocks become in the same way a disabled body invokes staring by turning the person being stared at into a spectacle (Garland-Thomson 56-7). We in our society like to think we know what is blackness so while a black person may be stared at and become a spectacle they do not cross into the realm of disability, however, when a black person with dreadlocks is stared at and become a spectacle they enter a disabling space. Because dreadlocks itself invokes staring because it represents blackness, but that is not enough to be a disability it is the fact that it is re-cognized as blackness in excess. Due to the inherent Eurocentric assumptions about the black body with dreadlocks places them as the “Other”, a spectacle, along with other inaccurate representations which render them as disabled.

The construction of dreadlocks in unison with the rastafari community as an ‘ethnic’ group is not limited to those in the black diaspora. Even in some parts of Africa where, certain groups and movements like the Mau Mau have employed dreadlocks the overlying causal relation is to a rasta and/or Jamaican (and to that extent Caribbean) ‘ethnicity’. Jean Daniels a dreadlocked African-American professor who spent an extended trip in Ethiopia recalls being called “rasta” and “Jamaica” even after denying this accusation (Daniels 84). Daniels also admits the attitudes about her hair was so blatant that she became a ‘spectacle’ to be laughed or shunned at (particularly amongst the women) yet this attitude and perception disguised the most humble and respected members of that community: the priests and monks who living deeply in the
woods sporting dreadlocks (ibid 85). It is important to stress that Jean Daniels got dreadlocks to showcase a sense of pan-Africanness which was born out of Caribbean identity and she herself was from elsewhere in the Black Atlantic (America) despite her roots being from Africa (Uganda). In this sense dreadlocks, when helmed by diasporic people of colour has the ability to unite like-minded socially conscious peoples but it also carries with it a sense of black empowerment that is grounding in Caribbean worldviews – that post-coloniality is way of being that both privileges black livity\textsuperscript{10} but does not exclude difference (Paul 100) which decenters origins into a state of being and is composite in nature – a trait envisioned by Gilroy and Torabully.

Blackness in its Western construction relates it to violence, aggressiveness, in other words ‘hyper-masculine’ traits that are accumulated into the “angry black man” Therefore it should be noted that excessive blackness also has an engendered element as excess blackness becomes an essentialized singular identity. Firstly, for a black woman to have dreads she may be seen as entering a “masculine zone” unfriendly to the spectrum of gender expression. Monica Arac de Nyeko says when she first started wearing dreadlocks her friend commented “But you are a woman not a man!” (32) Secondly, male privilege also plays a key role (ibid 33) as males are often viewed as threatening when they promote cultural values (in terms of aesthetics) while on the other hand when a woman does the same thing she will be seen usually as simply being fashionable or aesthetic pleasing.

This is why dreadlocks become a spectacle to the West; either dreadlocks are used to signify blackness as something fascinatingly deceptive but exotically innocent, fun and rebellious as is the case with Bob Marley and his legendary ‘cult’ status (Farley 41). On the flip

\textsuperscript{10} Livity is a word used by the rastafari to refer to the energy or life-force that flows through all living things.
side, while a rasta may be accepted due to his celebrity and musical abilities, a simple
dreadlocked person (who is not a rasta) is often not accepted as they are seen as being dirty,
unruly, and mentally amiss drug addicts showing the duality or instability of dreadlocks as it
functions as both terrible and beautiful on a black body.

These representations are readily exploited in the media, especially television and film,
which are a crucial element in the sociology of race. For example in the movie *Predator* (1987),
the killer (the ‘Predator) was even acknowledged to be a “Rastafarian warrior” (McTiernan
1987) by the filmmakers thereby dreadlocks become a destructive force to the norm. Often these
characters are not black racially but the hair is deemed good enough to account for this
exemplifying how the ‘rasta’ troupe and worldviews associated with it become depoliticized. The
case of the rastafari ‘predator’ is not surprising considering that the media (especially television
as bell hooks writes is “The medium used to colonize the black mind …socializing black folks to
passively accept white supremacy thinking” (hooks 147). Further examples include the film
series of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* (2003) where the main character Jack Sparrow as a white
man dons dreadlocks (Verbinski 2003). In doing so causes romanticism of the idea of a pirate
being both charmingly fun and rebellious dangerous (note that as a white man the blackness of
dreadlocks does not have the power to make him a ‘bad guy’. However this is not the case with
black bodies as in the same movie the sole black minor character, a female sea monster that takes
the form of a female human named Calypso (which is actually an indigenous form of music
created by mainly Afro-Caribbean peoples) also fashions dreadlocks which unlike other
characters in the movie turn to snakes (ibid 2003). Calypso’s snake imagery along with her race
is used to capitalise on the medusa image of dread and of excessive blackness as inhuman or
away from the norm. The imagery also (re)produces instances of black criminality and thereby a desire for policing which means a desire to limit a diasporic Caribbean worldview as only Afrocentric and regional (Perkins 200).

In celebrity fashion magazines controlled by the white mainstream media often tries to assert that dreadlocks on white bodies are purely aesthetics and that there are no racial qualities to hair. In Entertainment Weekly, Kyra Panchenko, a Hollywood hairstylist says. "As far as hair is concerned, anything goes right now. There are no black hairstyles or white hairstyles." (Tharpes 2000). Fashion designers seem to play into this idea that style is devoid of racial elements, despite Eurocentric ideals of beauty being prominent in the global fashion industry in an effort to ‘forget race’ and its attached power and privilege (Roediger 604). One example being Michael Lau, a Hong Kong fashion designer who used dreadlocks to try and show “fashionable hip-hop culture” in his new fashion line with his philosophy that it “is just like a uniform -- people in Hong Kong and Britain and the States all look the same.” (Lubow 25). This shows how the power of whiteness appropriates black cultural symbols into something that now ironically unites (“all look the same”) and helps frame whiteness as ‘neutral’ in that hairstyles in the media are simply related to class and not race despite the power of class plays in the reproduction of racism (Solomos 98). This popular ideology results in depoliticizing the resistance qualities of dreadlocks that are articulated from its original perspective of blackness into a ‘minority discourse’ (Nettleford xiv).

Furthermore, bidirectionality must be taken into account when discussing dreadlocks and its excess of blackness but on a white body. While it is in itself disabling it is not be enough to disable the white body, as the white body still controls and creates blackness for its own purpose
as Fanon points out (Fanon 35-6) thus whiteness being in a higher position of power means that blackness is not in a position to *take away* from whiteness while it is the opposite when a black person has dreadlocks they become in complete and utter excess of blackness. Dreadlocks have also been hailed as purely aesthetic fashion statement that one tries to use to rebel or reject and to “to feel more secure about themselves, to show off” (Arac de Nyeko 33). The duality of dreadlocks in terms of bidirectionality is further shown here, in that many blacks wear dreadlocks to have a stronger sense of African pride yet for whites dreadlocks become a way to try to “Otherize” themselves in attempt to show they are disbanded from white normalcy. In doing so a sense of achievement and pride occurs as in their act of domination, it becomes apparent that despite using black identity symbols blackness does not impose over their white privilege which aids in feeling secure about their power. The white dreads stay white, yet their dreadlocks stays on them as separate, (like a tool or a ‘servant’) whilst the black body with dreads is seen as being one whole being. This is evident in the demand for dreadlocks or getting cornrows by many white tourists who come to the Caribbean on holiday, this voyeurism is a way of ‘going native’ by having their hair done in Afrocentric ways yet this ‘souvenir’ shows that locks then function as a visible reminder of ‘darkness’, power, pleasure, white control and mystery (Kempadoo 25).

On a side note, dreadlocks are just heavy matted coils of hair which form by themselves eventually fusing together to form a single dread. This is possible in all hair types, if the hair is allowed to grow naturally without combing or using conditioner for a long period of time. However, they can also be intentionally formed as well through various techniques. In this sense dreadlocks are natural to humanity. The fact that dreadlocks are natural to humans but are instead
‘cured’ or amputated because society rehabilitates our hair so that we will both consciously and unconsciously try to keep our hair from becoming dreadlocks showcases the fear of blackness. Another factor is because scientific racism has constructed straight ‘European’ hair as ‘good hair’, ‘nappy’ ‘woolly’ hair has been constructed as ‘bad’ hair and this totalizing racism has historical been explicitly targeted against African peoples (Mercer 77).

Studies have shown relaxers and other chemicals actually can damage hair, while, having hair grow naturally until they become dreads has no harmful effects (Khumalo & Gumedze 148). Yet, there is a multi-billion dollar hair ‘care’ industry that insists that hair must soaked in various chemicals daily to become ‘healthy’ and ‘natural’. Either we keep our hair short or if or hair is long then we make sure to keep or hair straight or if it does curl or coil we make sure it is done in a way that they doesn’t result in it having the possible of becoming ‘black’ and at worse black hair in its zenith: dreadlocks. This exposes that whiteness continues to assert itself by creating limits on blackness and thus dreadlocks are excessively black to the norm of black beauty with straight hair and other Eurocentric attributes (Roediger 601). In fact, our society has rehabilitated our hair to not become socially constructed symbols of blackness that it becomes almost unanimous that one has dreadlocks consciously does so (often due rebellious or anti hegemonic political or fashion aspirations). In others words, we have normalized whiteness and thus dreadlocks are positioned in our society similar to a disability on the fringes of normalcy. Also, of importance is that dreadlocks seem to have a medical aspect of it similar to the medicalization of disability.

Ideas of the rational Western mind are also implicit, as someone wearing dreadlocks is viewed as having something ‘amiss’ mentally to even fathom to grow dreadlocks because it is a
inconceivable action to Western rationalism. Arac de Nyeko points out that her friend said people who wear dreadlocks don’t have sense, it’s only when the person with the locks speak that “the sense comes out” (34) blackness, however, does make sense but is not accredited for its dynamic character when hidden or covered. Yale Law Professor Kenji Yoshino states that covering is different from passing. The underlying identity is still known during ‘covering’ while the underlying identity during ‘passing’ is unknown (Hamilton 24). Durban’s only reggae club is one of the few places where Indians and Africans might come together solely based on the atmosphere but continue self-segregation. In segregating themselves they continue to ‘cover’ their commonalities due to racial differences for the sake of ‘passing’ as Caribbean or pan-African or even perhaps as global citizens. Thus blackness must continue to ‘pass’ through the limitations of white supremacy (Scott 125) and in doing will continue to be at the forefront of anti-racism in which the diversity of black peoples are accounted for and such a diversity that includes AfroAsianess as no longer a ‘liminal space’ but as embodiment of anti-racist multiculturalism par excellence.

As noted earlier, hair can often signifies blackness second only to skin. Dreadlocks is an issue in that it differs in its embodiment and that it goes beyond simply the corporeal in that it represents and signifies Afrocentric embodied ways of knowing and this must be re-centred in through spirituality. The abandonment of spirituality in social justice movements has not only undercut the movements themselves but it has also allowed “these colonizing forces to pervert and distort…visions of truth and justice which lie at the core of different spiritual traditions” (Fernandes 72). Therefore spirituality must decolonized and be reclaimed within social justice movements and similar stances such as wearing dreadlocks in white America; and there needs to
be a change to the discourse around spirituality (i.e. needs to be practical, real, and accessible) it’s not utopian but our social and moral responsibility

A dreadlocked person of colour then ruptures this tokenization but it also can fall into the same trap by creating a new brand of tokenism as is present in the case of Dutty Flex an Indo-Guyanese dreadlocked reggae artist (who was formerly a DJ). Dutty Flex by virtue of being an Indo-Guyanese with dreadlocks in the media has the chance to change the meanings associated with dreadlocks, however, through his music (such as through his song “My Gal”) he implies all of the already stereotypical associations with dreadlocks, he ends up reaffirming the tokenism created by the Bob Marley persona except it is now reconfigured to apply to Indo-Caribbean as opposed to Afro-Caribbean and does not reconfigure the Indian male as masculine as is often not the case in calypso (Puri 185).

A key difference between Dutty Flex and the tokenism already present is that Dutty Flex is not a rasta, and thus by resubmitting the same stereotypical notions surrounded dreadlocks (i.e. he sings in a Jamaican like accent) he causes himself to appear as if he is imitating and because mimicry never leads to equality he ends up coming off as the dreadlocked Indo-Guyanese who is for a lack of a better word a ‘rip-off’. This sentiment appears to be the general public opinion as the comments on his videos on YouTube are mostly along these lines such as: “this nigga b hangin wit some goof ball ass niggas, stick to remixin' indian songs”, “is this a joke or something?”, “he sounds like a Sean Paul wannabe not to say sumting is wrong with sean p but Sean is a sell-out”, “remember the industry already has a sean paul” and “man you a sean paul wanna be--why you country boyz disgracin us—GT [Georgetown] man run tingz always” (YouTube 2008).
Dutty Flex comes off as ‘forced’ and lacking because he seems to forget that dreadlocks are a cultural practice that has become politicized, thereby in using his dreadlocks for purely fashionable reasons he has depoliticized dreadlocks. Indo-Guyanese family members I know tell me they take on dreadlocks because it represents not a practice but a way of making living. Dreadlocks are a way of living not a lifestyle. There may be creative spiritual artist types who have dreadlocks or rastas who have dreadlocks, no matter which of the two one may belong to they are both unified in spiritual terms (J Niaah & S Niaah, 139). On the flipside, a person who just takes on dreadlocks for its coolness or popularity factor does not have that spiritual connection or the ‘vibes’ going on.

Adding to this in my recent trip to Guyana I befriended some rastas (African and Indian) and I spent some time with them during a jam session where they spent the time making music and smoking weed and they seemed to connect with the ‘soul of beat’. In this jam session while they maintained a strong sense of brotherhood throughout, the point of the session seemed to be of losing themselves in the art and in the music as to connect on even stronger spiritual terms. Indeed, it seems the spiritual dreadlocked way of living (be it rasta or not) seemed to rest upon letting go of attachments to external forms of identity, and deeper ego-based attachments to power, privilege, and control (Fernandes 71) But not just in a negative process of detachment but also creating a new form of self, based on the spiritual understanding of ourselves both as individuals and as a part of a larger interconnected world thus creating an interconnection that is not confined by the limitations and temporary security of identity (ibid 70). Through this way of knowing an Indo-Guyanese dreadlock represents through spirituality a force that stands for Afro-Asian unity as black people in Guyana as a spiritual successor of Black Consciousness and
therefore provides an interesting proposition to BC in South Africa in moving beyond the political realm.

Blackness can be a disabling if it is socially written upon a body in excess. Dreadlocks do this and the results are striking parallels to disability because “the enactment of an appearance relies on the sensible intelligible production of meaning” (Titchkosky 22) and the meaning that we construct of dreadlocks are meanings related to race a decentered or postmodern sense of self. Dreadlocks, is a paradox in the Western mind it valorizes the black body in excess just because it has been devalorized in excess as an imaginary identity, (Memmi 130) an identity that is a source of equality but also an identity in which social and cultural hierarchies are reinforced. Dreadlocks then represent a powerful way in which mixing occurs that is representative to a multicultural coolitude in its ambivalence to the desirability of belonging to the multitudes of what is considered ‘creole’. Indeed as Kobena Mercer state that “in the arena of black cultural politics it is now imperative to emphasize the importance of speaking to each other, rather than attempting to speak for the diversity of Afro-Asian experiences.” (251).

Elaborating on this statement I turn to the Black Atlantic and the Kali Pani (black Waters) and to the one thing they share in common for certain: water. Water is transparent as it is fluid, yet, defining as it is disconnecting. Like the horizon, water is limitless yet surrounded by water, we have made limits and narratives to our condition of modernity. In other words why can we distinguish between a province, a territory, a state, a nation, a sea, etc.? Why is Africa a continent and the islands in the Indonesian sea a nation? It is within this context that there exists many ‘worlds’ or ‘globes’ be it the ‘Global South’ or the ‘Third World’ and to where my work is concerned with. What happens when this connection is crossed i.e. from one Third (world) to
another Third (world)? Do we remain in the Third (world) or do move into another Third (space)? Is that coolitude? While an answer may never be clear we can start by acknowledging all of the aforementioned questions presuppose Western discourses and that it forces us to try to make certain we have arrived at a given conclusion. Removing the conclusion and the meaning it was made from, we are left with only ourselves – whether at that rupture we see or listen to each other anew will depend on which direction the water flows.

“[The] white American Sailor…sees everything, but he learns nothing...He carries abroad with him everything that he should have left back home.” (Stephens 192)
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