

## Prejudice is no longer a black and white affair. To the younger generation, it is more nuanced

BY HELEN GRANGE  
Senior feature writer

**T**IMES have changed. Apartheid is dead, and racism faced by our parents' generation is illegal, and mostly gone. But, say many, it's been replaced by a subtler prejudice.

The phrase "fog of racism" was coined by US writer and cultural critic Touré, in his thought-provoking book, *Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness*, released in the US toward the end of last year to much furore.

In it, Touré attempts to unpick modern-day racism and define what it is to be black today. He explains: "With this form of racism, there is no smoking gun. There is no one calling you a nigger to your face. There's no sign saying you can't enter this building. It's subtle, it's blurred, but more often than not, it's there."

In the book, the writer asks 105 celebrated African-American figures the simple question: "What is the most racist thing that has ever happened to you?"

He found that the older generation recounted experiences shaped by naked racism. For the younger generation, it was a more nuanced form.

In SA, the country of once institutionalised racism, it is still sometimes quite blatant, as in ex-SuperSport Darren Scott's racist outburst at a former colleague, calling him by the "K" word, or ANC Youth League's Floyd Shivambu's blurting out "white bitch" to journalist Carien du Plessis.

But on the whole, racism today is harder to pinpoint – as evidenced by the recent Twitter spat between singer Lindiwe Suttle and DA leader Helen Zille.

"No matter how famous/rich you are, you're still a 2nd class citizen if you're Black in Cape Town. When's the change you spoke about happening?" tweeted Suttle, to which Helen Zille responded: "What complete nonsense."

A flurry of to-ing and fro-ing between the two followed, and musician Simpiwe Dana entered the fray, asking Zille if she disputed that Cape Town was a racist city.

Eventually Zille tweeted to Dana: "You're a highly respected black professional. Don't try to be a professional black. It demeans you." This remark intensified the brouhaha, with some tweeters clearly of the opinion that the comment indicated Zille's racism. Zille strongly denied this, of course, and refused to engage further.

This unpleasant exchange exemplifies the race-based divisions that still pervade SA society.

Some black South Africans say racism lurks just below the surface of everyday niceties – in attitudes, in conversations behind closed doors, in actions and in non-actions. It's in a glance, a refusal to make eye contact, or to serve you timeously in shops and supermarkets.

White South Africans counter that their countrymen are too quick to cry racism whenever they feel themselves slighted. Many who contributed to the Cape Town Twitter row said Capetonians tended to be snotty to all out-of-towners.

To make matters more complicated, according to Lebo Motshego, founder of Foshizi, an agency that researches black consumer trends, there is an insidious form of black-on-black racism.

"For instance, when there is a white or Indian shopper in front of the same queue as a black customer, the till lady will greet them properly and give them attention and good customer service. When it's the turn of the black customer, they will start talking among themselves," he says.

We decided to ask a handful of well-known black South Africans the question Touré posed in his book: What is the most racist thing that has happened to you?

Happily, a few reported experiencing no racism – glamorous Yfm Twinz, DJs Hlelo and Ntando Masina, replied: "We have not encountered anything."



**REUBEN RIFFEL**  
Celebrity chef and owner of Reuben's restaurant in Franschhoek

I was playing in a golf tournament in a small farmers' town a while ago. My local priest was playing with us and he is quite good. We realised that we had a good chance of winning, but also realised we would be attracting attention.

Some guys were quite angry and mumbled that we were cheating, saying "How can these coloureds come and win our tournament?"

The dominee was quite upset, and the tension between the groups escalated. Nothing happened, but it made me aware that some things may never change.



**LEBO MOTSHEGO**  
Founder and MD of Foshizi

While on holiday in Cape Town, the owner of a restaurant thought I was an international tourist and so wouldn't take offence when he said the beach in Hout Bay on New Year's Day looked like a taxi rank, and that the beach sand was hardly visible because of the huge number of people on it. I still remember his words: "This is Africa, a wild animal."

Last year during the local elections, I was at a convenience store in Bryanston. I was walking past the newspaper section when an old white man grabbed me by the hand to point out the newspaper headlines. It was something to do with corrupt officials. He said: "Look at your government. This is who you are voting for. Look, look!"



**FUNEKA PEPPETA**  
Idols finalist in 2010

I met this white guy in college. He was from Pretoria and had lived a very sheltered life, but I didn't see a problem with befriending him and so a lovely friendship started. As time went by, he developed a liking for me and pursued me quite aggressively.

Eventually, when I decided to accept his advances, he gave me the talk and it went a little something like this: "Even though I like you and you're a nice girl, Sussie" – that's what he called me – "I will never be able to take you home to my parents. I need you to understand that I can bring you home as a friend and they'll be nice, but I can never introduce you to my father as my girlfriend. He would never accept or allow it." I was crushed! It opened my eyes to how prejudices never end.

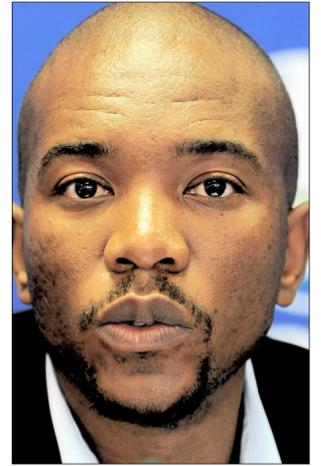


**KGOMOTSO CHRISTOPHER**  
Isidingo actress and model

I attended an annual "international" girl guide camp in Kimberly when I was 11 years old. The camp was a gathering of various groups from around SA and other neighbouring countries, including Botswana. It concluded with a cultural evening where the various nationalities and groups would perform or give a presentation.

Having arrived with the SA group, I assumed I would be part of their presentation, but I was told to join the "Tswana" group, as that is my ethnic group in SA.

So off I went, but when I arrived I was told that I couldn't be part of that group as I'm not really Tswana, given that I'm not from Botswana! So, ultimately, I did not participate in the cultural evening.



**MMUSI MAIMANE**  
DA national spokesman

The constant verbal abuse and disapproval I receive is perhaps not the worst, but one of the more difficult things that happen to me on a daily basis. Let me come out and say that my wife and I are of a different race.

So while she was out hanging clothes one day, a guy who was working on the electricity at my house asked me whether she was my wife. I told him she was my maid. He was shocked and said that I must be wealthy and powerful to afford a white maid. I have come to realise that as black people we still think of ourselves as "less than" and thus the worst kind of racism is in the way we see ourselves.

# What's the most racist thing that has happened to you?



**DJ FRANKY**  
Popular music show host on 5fm radio

I was in a hardware store in Melrose in 2009, buying a few items with a white friend. As we were making our way to the tills we heard a commotion in the store. Security guards were manhandling a black guy who was trying to shoplift.

I was the only black customer in the store. When I told the store manager to make sure that the thief didn't get away with stealing, he looked at me and said "That's rich coming from a k...". He didn't finish his sentence, but it was quite obvious what he intended to say.



**ELANA AFRIKA**  
TV and radio presenter and actress

I was dating a white guy and, at dinner with his family, one of his relatives mentioned they were a bit worried about the fact that if we had kids, the kids would probably be black.

What was most hurtful was the fact that while they did not "mind" that I was black, they clearly did not want to be related to anyone who was.



**LINDIWE SUTTLE**  
Singer and songwriter (and daughter of ex talk-show host Felicia Mabuza-Suttle)

The most racist thing that's happened to me is when Helen Zille responded with the word "nonsense" to my tweet that raised the issue of racism in Cape Town. I think refusing to acknowledge racism is what keeps racism alive. This denial makes the problem worse. You cannot work on a problem unless you accept that it exists... People died for us all to enjoy a free South Africa. Freedom of speech is essential to carry out that legacy.



**ISAAC MOGOTSI**  
Executive director of the Centre of Economic Diplomacy in Africa

In 2003, in the company of my kids, an irate young Afrikaans guy shouted "Khaffir!" at me. He felt I cheated him out of a Menlyn mall parking slot, but sped off when I confronted him about it.

Also, I have never experienced anything like the racist rants from bloggers to my Politicsweb articles on DA's Lindiwe Mazibuko and Helen Zille.



**UYANDA MBULI**  
Style icon, founder of Diamond Face Couture in Rosebank and occasional actress

I've come across a few a\*\*holes, as I prefer to call those who are racists, mostly on public roads, caused by their lack of respect for other road users.

Sometimes they resort to making it a racial issue and end up calling me the K-word. I always tell them to snap out of their misery because times have changed and they don't have a future in the new SA.

## Noise of the lambs... and Cannibal Horner

**I**N DECEMBER I invited readers to parody nursery rhymes, offering a R200 prize for the best and R100 for each of two runners-up. It has resulted in one from Huairo District, Beijing, China, from where Graham Hughes sent the following.

*Mary had a little lamb,  
She also had a bear.  
I've often seen her little lamb,  
But never her bare...*

I say! Cough. Cough.  
Oh yes, Stoep Talk is read in all sorts of funny places. Even Durban North, from where Peter Roderick submitted this:

*Mary had a chimpanzee  
Its shape was statuesque  
It's taking ballet lessons and  
Can do the arabesque.*

And this:  
*Mary had a unicorn  
It's very fresh and frisky  
She'd like to try to ride it  
But that big horn makes it risky.*

I liked this parody of "This little pig went to market" by Ivan Israelstam, a Randburg labour law management consultant:

*This little pill's from the market  
And this little pill's for the runs  
This little pill's for fast relief  
And this little pill's for the tum  
And this little pill's so I don't  
wee wee wee all the way home.*

He also sent this:

*There was crooked man  
Who walked a crooked mile  
And was drafted into government  
Where he made a crooked pile*

David Walley in Sandton comments on the police recently targeting pavement hawkers.

*Hickory Dickory Dock  
The police have run amok!  
They are closing down  
All the stalls in town  
You can't even buy a sock!*

### STOEP TALK

JAMES CLARKE



Children love horror, so nursery rhymes can be ghoulish. Aimed at adults, they're even worse

Contact Stoep Talk Fax: 011-465-4564  
Write to: Box 876 Lonehill, 2062  
e-mail: jcl@onwe.co.za,  
BLOG: <http://stoepstalk.wordpress.com>

In the 1990s, when I launched a similar competition, Brenda Wilson of Illovo sent in several quite brilliant ones, but then became threatening with:

*Mary had a little lamb  
He also had a goat  
If there's one more Mary parody  
I'll cut your bleeding throat!*

But she has succumbed to the new challenge as I knew she would:

*Jack and Jill went up the hill  
To fetch a pail of water.  
They soon got busy with hanky panky,  
And things they sure didn't oughter.*

Alistair Butchart, "pote lauriate" of Walkerville, asked, "Does this sound funny to you?" (It certainly tasted funny.)

*Little Jack Horner,  
Sat in the corner,  
Eating a dead human pie,  
He pulled out a thumb,  
And a cheek of the bum,  
Which he ate with the liver and eye!*

If you think it's over the top you should read *Monster Goose*, an American collection of nursery rhyme parodies for children by a retired American school ma'am named Judy Sierra. They are so ghoulish that children love them. Well, remember how as a child you enjoyed the story Hansel and Gretel in which an old witch caged and fed two little kids until they were oven-ready. Children like being shocked.

Judy Sierra renamed Little Jack Horner, Cannibal Horner:

*Cannibal Horner  
Sat in a corner  
Eating a people potpie.  
He bit his own thumb  
And cried, "Oh, yum, yum,  
A tasty young morsel am I!"*

Her cunning Mary was also into vampire bats:

*Mary had a vampire bat.  
His fur was black as night.  
He followed her to school one day*



*And promised not to bite.  
She brought him out for show-and-tell;  
The teacher screamed and ran.  
And school was cancelled for a week,  
Just as Mary planned.*