



- **Why did South Africa develop the racial order that it did?**
 - **What part did ordinary white people play in this?**
- **Why did racialisation, segregation and apartheid come into existence?**
 - **How did changes occur and the democratic transition happen?**
- **How did white people represent black people and 'race' to each other?**
 - **How did they write about this 'in private' in their letters?**

The Racialising Process explores how white people from the 1770s to the 1970s in South Africa depicted whiteness and its racialised Others of black, coloured, Indian Chinese and other groups, focusing on their letters. It discusses many detailed examples drawn from a wide array of letters and explores the complexities in what people wrote and how to interpret this. It shows that there has been a long term racialising process with distinctive features organised around regulation and categorisation, making the South African experience significantly different from the 'de/civilising process' that the sociologist Norbert Elias identified in Europe.

The Racialising Process is concerned with how it happened that South Africa developed the racial order that it did and how this changed over the period from the 1770s to the 1970s. It is concerned with theorising letters, over 50,000 letters, and using this to show the importance of letter-writing for understanding how white people saw and represented their lives and Other people 'back then' because acting as an index of wider changes occurring. And it is concerned with engaging with, using and where needed departing from, the theoretical and methodological ideas put forward by Norbert Elias for understanding change in Europe and making these work as a way of thinking about South Africa and its racialising process.

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Liz Stanley is Professor of Sociology at the University of Edinburgh. She has been doing research about South Africa's past since discovering the political essays of Olive Schreiner. Since 1994 she has lived for extended research periods in Grahamstown, Cape Town, Pretoria and Bloemfontein. Previous books on South African topics include *Mourning Becomes... The Concentration Camps of the South African War* (2008) and *The World's Great Question: Olive Schreiner's South African Letters* (2014).

And For More...

For more on 'Whites Writing Whiteness' in their letters, additional examples, analyses of more letters and other documents, editorial information, and a searchable research database, please go to the WWW website at <http://www.whiteswritingwhiteness.org>