Developing an Inclusive National Identity in South Africa through an examination of Belonging using WW Gqoba and SEK Mqhayi

By

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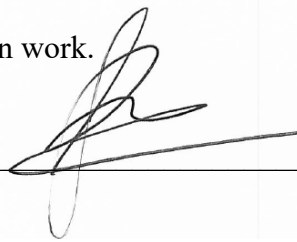
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Abstract

Examining national identity, belonging and a national culture, this study argues for the theorisation of the political reality in South Africa by analysing the literary landscape of the country. By combining a set of interrelated disciplines, i.e., political theory, history and historiography, philosophy and literature, the study makes the case for a reading and theorising of national culture using the works of historical Black/Indigenous intellectuals whose work was developed using one of the indigenous languages of the country, isiXhosa. Fashioning a national identity, culture and a sense of belonging, it is argued, is possible through a systematic engagement with William Wellington Gqoba and Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi. Such a process of theory development facilitates a postliberal conception of democracy that works to hold two competing identities—Black/Indigenous and white settler colonial descendent identities—in tandem.

This study demonstrates the possibilities of articulating contextually situated democratic articulations and contributes to the advancement of the discipline of political theory. This comes as democracy has received a series of critiques from leading intellectuals in the country, on the basis that it undermines the project of mass liberation intended in the promise of democracy. The study concludes by making a case for the systematic engagement of marginal ontologies insofar as we are invested in fashioning a national identity in post-colonial societies. The proposition is that such an engagement can better position political theory intervention, that attempts to understand the conditions that define the political realities of post-colonies and decolonial efforts.

Key Terms

William Wellington Gqoba; Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi; Postliberalism; Ontology; *Amaqaba*; *Amagqobhoka*; Democracy; National Identity; Culture; and Belonging.

6 September 2021

Dear Mr SH Kumalo

Project Title:	Developing an Inclusive National Identity in South Africa through an examination of Belonging using WW Gqoba and SEK Mqhayi
Researcher:	Mr SH Kumalo
Supervisor(s):	Dr FG Wolmarans
Department:	Political Sciences
Reference number:	17403988 (HUM003/0821)
Degree:	Doctoral

Thank you for the application that was submitted for ethical consideration.
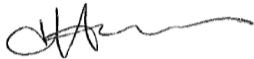
The Research Ethics Committee notes that this is a literature-based study and no human subjects are involved.

The application has been **approved** on 26 August 2021 with the assumption that the document(s) are in the public domain. Data collection may therefore commence, along these guidelines.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. However, should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, a new research proposal and application for ethical clearance will have to be submitted for approval.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely,

Prof Karen Harris
Chair: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
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Finally, and most importantly, I am most grateful to the incredible friendship and intellectual home that I found in the form of a colleague, friend, and confidante Emeriti Professor Naomi Scheman. Your constant support, generosity of spirit and amazing heart made the foreignness of Cambridge, Massachusetts a little less daunting. I have no words to express my gratitude and thanks.

Dedication

To the erased, those written out of history for rejecting colonial imposition. Our histories were always oral, and our people will never be forgotten. So long, as we speak and write our languages.

For isizwe sikaMthakazi – the Ndebele of Zimbabwe:
Amantungw'amahle,
oNdaba,
oMbulaz'abamnyama
izikhali zamaNtungwa
ezawel'iZambezi igcwele!

Ngibonga oMabaso ababasa entabeni
iLanga lishona.
Bona abadl'umuntu bemyenga ngendaba,
Badla bashwabadela neNkomo zakhona

To my mother's people
oNqolo,
oGaba,
oNongawuza
oMahlamb'ehlal'etsheni
ngenxa yokw'swel'ithaula
two decades to complete a genealogy project.
I offer this to you, the children of uS'hleza no maJilajila (umaMthembu)!

CITATION OF CONSTITUTIVE PUBLICATIONS

Kumalo, S.H. 2023. 'Outlining Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi's (1914) Engagement with Belonging and National Identity in South Africa', *International Journal of African Renaissance*. In Press.

Kumalo, S.H. 2022. 'Amaqaba nama Gqobhoka: Working through Colonial Derision of Black Ontology', *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, DOI: https://doi.org/10.3167/th.2022.6917301

Kumalo, S.H. 2023. 'Can *Iqaba* Possess Ontological Legitimacy?', *Critical Philosophy of Race*, 11(2): 378—407.

The papers (as publications) – listed here, are not listed in accordance with their date of publication, but as constitutive of the thesis as a holistic submission.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This study looks to the thinking of two South African Black/Indigenous intellectuals to articulate a postliberal conception of democracy. The thesis of the study holds that their thinking can foster belonging, allowing South Africa to build an inclusive national identity. The suggestion is that a postliberal conception of democracy, so construed, is responsive to context specificities of the global South. Resultantly, the study will focus on the lecture presented by William Wellington Gqoba, to the Lovedale Literary Society, in 1885, entitled 'The Native Tribes, their Laws, Customs and Beliefs'. This text was the only text by Gqoba which was published in English as his *oeuvre* is constitutive of works written in isiXhosa—a local Indigenous language of South Africa. The study will substantiate its claims using his *oeuvre*.

The second scholar, from which the study draws, is Samuel Edward Krune (S.E.K.) Mqhayi. Drawing from a multiplicity of scholarship, Chapter Four—specifically—uses his 'Intshayelelo' (Prologue: History) which was initially published in 1927. The text, to which the study refers – it should be noted – was written in isiXhosa, S.E.K. Mqhayi's *oeuvre* is itself developed in isiXhosa. The translations to the texts used in the study derive from the Opland archive; a tome developed by socio-cultural linguists, locally. To substantiate the claims made about the conclusions reached in the analysis of 'Intshayelelo', the study will draw from other works developed by S.E.K. Mqhayi, wherein he details his thinking about the nature of South African society as was / and continues to be influenced by colonial incursion and social engineering. Such thinking is derived from his writings about the nature

of political life in South Africa and is constitutive of autobiographical publications written about some of the leading political figures in the country, his poetry, and his literary feat in the novel *Ityala Lamawele*, which was published in 1914.

These texts facilitate the analysis and development of work that is dedicated to thinking about belonging and national identity in the country. To use the work of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi in developing a framework of belonging and an inclusive national identity is predicated on the pursuit of developing a postliberal conception of democracy in the country. To write of a postliberal conception of democracy in South Africa is predicated on an understanding of the liberal tradition—as inherited from the recent reviver of liberalism, i.e., John Rawls. When examining the architecture of liberal theory, the way it structures the economy, and distributes power through the underlying rationale of the structure of the state – these ideals are what lead to the call that the constitutionality of South Africa is amoral, as argued by the scholars who are interlocutors of this study (*cf.* Modiri, 2017; Madlingozi, 2017; Ramose 2007 & 2002). To pursue a postliberal conception of democracy, then, suggests an articulation of democracy as it is endogenous to the African continent. Simply, a postliberal conception of democracy would suggest two things. First, the acknowledgement of the ontological legitimacy of Blackness/Indigeneity outside of the coloniser/colonised dialectic. Second, this would mean the structuring of the state in ways that fundamentally agree with the ontology of Blackness/Indigeneity, a case that will become apparent when I discuss the case adjudicated by Maqoma as reported by S.E.K. Mqhayi ([1917/2009: 131)

Belonging in South Africa has been a contentious issue since the arrival of the colonial settler and their progeny. This tension is predicated on the imposition of 'foreign modes of being' that privilege the culture of a minority while denigrating the ontology of

Blackness, who are the majority. In line with this argument, Chapter Three outlines how these modes of denigration are not only applied, but also made manifest in the South African context, while Chapter Four poses the question of the ontological legitimacy of Blackness/Indigeneity in our political landscape. The diagnosis, of a denigrated ontology of Blackness/Indigeneity, will be predicated on the historical political systems (1948—1994) that govern(ed) the country, which were preceded by the legislation that criminalised Black ontology, such as the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895. Focusing on the historical systems of racial oppression and ontological reframing, the study argues that historical legislation continues to have bearing on contemporary political life. This is evidenced in the publications (see Modiri, 2018; Madlingozi, 2017; Ramose, 2007; Ramose, 2002) that contest the moral justifications of the Constitution of South Africa. It is important to stress that while the focus, temporally, is 1948—1994, the legislation considered in this analysis takes into account the historical legislation that preceded this time period.

While this project is not aligned with the thinking of the scholars cited above, insofar as it does not contest the constitutionality of the South African democratic dispensation, it does pursue alternative systems of curating the political landscape. In pursuing a just and equitable political framework that can hold the competing political identities of the country in tandem, this project will pose the question of a postliberal conception of democracy, one that is rooted in the thinking and scholarship of historical Black/Indigenous intellectuals of the country. Plainly, is there a framework of understanding the South African political landscape that does not draw from the liberal tradition?[1] I expect an objection framed in the form of the

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[1] My rationale for pursuing a postliberal conception of a political framework for the country is premised on the detailed and systematic analysis presented in Robert Bernasconi's (2016) 'The Paradox of Liberal Politics in the South African Context: Alfred Hoernlé's Critique of Liberalism's Pact with White Domination', wherein through tracing the thinking of Alfred Hoernlé, Bernasconi illustrates not only the limitations but also the challenges with white liberalism in a settler colonial society like South Africa.

question, is such a project still conceptually and conceivably, democracy—or better put—apt, within the framework of a democratic society? To put it in plain terms, is the pursuit of a postliberal conception of democracy, specifically as such an analysis draws from work that is not contained in the traditional literature of democratic theory, an adequate project in the sub-discipline of political philosophy? This objection highlights that the sources that I refer to, and which undergird the articulation of the analysis to be presented in the study are located in African Language(s)—isiXhosa—literature. The answer to this question will be determined by the examinations that are to be conducted in this study.

To be sure, the link between postliberal democracy, belonging as it fosters an inclusive national identity, suggests the need to think critically about the ontology of the Black/Indigenous subject in the country. As such, we can better articulate alternative conceptions of democracy. A systematic engagement with the ontology of Blackness/Indigeneity facilitates theorising democracy in a postliberal fashion. The objective in such an inquiry lies in broadening the disciplinary ambits of political philosophy, insofar as democratic theory has not, to the assessment of the literature in the discipline, considered 'other(ed)' ontologies in the articulation of democracy. This, the study holds, is a limitation of predicating democratic theory on liberal—theoretical—reasoning. Resultantly, a postliberal democratic pursuit is framed as a subsidiary, if not subordinate question to the articulation and theoretical development of an inclusive national identity that is founded on belonging using the work of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi.

Such a pursuit, of a postliberal conception of the South African political landscape, is aimed at demonstrating the point I make in 'Curriculating from the Black Archive – Marginality as Novelty' (2020c), wherein I argue for an epistemic framework that challenges the concept of "knowledge as valid only insofar as it developed by white scholars" (Kumalo

2020c: 111). Put plainly, this project aims to prove that the systems of organising society that existed prior to the arrival of colonial settlers are still as relevant in the contemporary moment as they were when the country was still organised using these principles. To pursue a postliberal conception of democracy highlights that such an articulation is only possible wherein the denigrated system of being and reasoning are considered when curating the political landscape. Such a predisposition agrees with Kurki (2010) when she writes about postliberal conceptions of democracy that have been neglected in political theory debates. Her thesis holds that since the post 1948 moment, there have been attempts across the globe, to demonstrate the importance of alternative conceptions of democracy – as such conceptions are inspired by context.

Being interested in these principles—pre-colonial understandings of social governance—is influenced by the reality that the current political landscape, of democracy, fails to address the historical ambitions of the majority, who have taken to suggesting that the current political arrangement is unconstitutional on the account that it does not deliver historical justice (*cf.* Modiri, 2018; Madlingozi, 2017; Ramose, 2007; Ramose, 2002). A subsequent objection would be that such a pursuit is parochial insofar as I am after an 'essentialised' pre-colonial conception of society that is not only outdated but antiquated. Responding to this objection requires that my reader take seriously the claim made above, with respect to the notion that knowledge is seen as valid only insofar as it is developed by whiteness. In challenging the notion of knowledge as valid only insofar as it is developed by whiteness, the use of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K Mqhayi's scholarship is not exhaustive of all possible objections to the claim. Rather, the aim is to move away from all essentialised conceptions in the process of the political ordering of society. Shifting the conception of how the South African political landscape is organised becomes a cornerstone in understanding the argument of this thesis.

Addressing this historical tension, this study—which was conducted by publication—examines belonging through an analysis of national identity. This denotes that the constitutive chapters of the work are publications with two of these already published (Chapters Three and Four , which appear with *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, and *Critical Philosophy of Race* – respectively). Chapter Two is presently in press, awaiting publication with *The International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*. This leaves Chapters One and Five as the substantive chapters that contain the constitutive parts of what would be broken up in traditional theses into chapters of their own. That is the first and last chapter are substantially longer than in traditional studies owing to the nature of this study. This is further detailed in the section on the structure of the study.

Using the work of William Wellington Gqoba (1888) and Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi (1914), who have each applied themselves to two institutions that are central to the resolution of this tension, i.e., education and the law – the study suggests that an alternative perspective that defuses this tension can be found in their respective works. The study was conducted by publication due to its novelty in bringing together two disciplinary sets, that is isiXhosa literature to answer a question located in political theory. The justifications for this strategy are detailed further in this introductory chapter, insofar as literature can facilitate deep philosophical reflection on political questions *a là* Felski's (2008) *Uses of Literature* and Roy's (2022) 'Well-Wrought Black Thought: Speculative Realism and the Spectre of Race'. Moreover, such uses of historical Black thinkers, in Political Science, is new, subsequently necessitating a broadening of the disciplinary expertise in answering the question identified and analysed. A contribution of this sort—to novel theory development from South Africa—proved most effective through active engagement with the knowledge economy by subjecting the work to scrutiny broader than the ambits of the candidate and the supervisor.

1.2. Biographical Details of Authors Considered

Prior to developing the conceptual contours of this study, it is useful to locate the thinking of the intellectuals that are identified—by this study—as an entry point into thinking about a postliberal conception of democracy. The thinking of the scholars under examination in this thesis cannot be classified as contemporarily influencing the present political ideology of the ruling party, the African National Congress. The two figures to be examined are William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi. The biographical details of both thinkers, rely on the work of Opland, Kuse and Maseko (2015), and Opland and Mtuze (2017)—owing to the limited research that has been devoted to thinking with and alongside these historical Black/Indigenous intellectuals. This is not to suggest that there is limited work done by either scholar. Merely it is to acknowledge, as has cursorily been indicated in the introduction above, that the use of their work in theoretical developments has been limited. Outside of their writings being brought together in the collections *William Wellington Gqoba: Isizwe Esinembali, Xhosa Histories and Poetry (1873—1888)* and *S.E.K. Mqhayi: Iziganeko Zesizwe, Occasional Poems (19000—1943)*, there is limited research that has ensued from their writings.

Christianity in the lives of the scholars that I will be writing about is a useful lens of analysis, even as it will not constitute the underpinning theoretical work I am interested in, here. Both William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi were born into the Christian faith, after their parents before them, had converted. Their access to the Christian world is what positions them as figures whose thinking facilitates systems of seeing that are in-between; i.e., in-between the Black/Indigenous and white worlds. As will become clear in the detailing of their biographies, both scholars viewed the traditional Xhosa mode of life not only with reverence, but as valid and legitimate in and of itself. It is because of this reasoning that

William Wellington Gqoba comes to the conclusion that the animosities that constitute the two races will be dissolved the more each race learns about the other. That is, he notes similarities between the two groups and forms of understanding—insights which are afforded to him by his proximity to the Christian faith as a convert—that he posits as potential tools that can be deployed in resolving the tensions that define the two groups. In the thesis, this claim will be detailed in relation to the Lovedale Literary Society Address of 1885, given by William Wellington Gqoba. It is this in-betweenness that allows us to glean, from their lives and thinking, a postliberal conception of democracy. That is to say that in their understanding of the two worlds, they are better positioned to mediate the differences that define the raciality that comes to define the South African context, in the modern era. It is in looking to this wisdom that I suggest we can find the postliberal conception of democracy in the country.

1.2.1. William Welling Gqoba

William Wellington Gqoba was born to Gqoba Peyi, with Opland (2015: 13) noting that "In the following commentary and in the notes to the texts, 'Gqoba' will refer to William Wellington Gqoba and 'Gqoba Peyi' to his father Gqoba, son of Peyi." In line with the English custom of a first and last name, once the locals had converted to Christianity and taken a Christian name, it became custom that the name of the father be adopted as the last name of the natives, in the country.

The records of Lovedale compiled by James Stewart, Principal from 1870, claim that Gqoba was born in 1840, (Opland, 2015: 13) "and educated at Tyhume before entering Lovedale in September 1853; in May 1856 he was indentured in the wagonmaking trade and worked in King William's Town for a number of years, before accepting Tiyo Soga's invitation to teach at Mgwali." Lovedale College, (which is also referred to as the Lovedale

Institute) is an institution that was set-up by the Glasgow Missionary Society in 1824. Important to note is that this institution came into existence four years after the arrive of colonial settlers in 1820. It was to become the fore leading institution in Africa, educating the sons or the aristocratic classes, in the 19th century, and those who rose to economic prominence through conversion into the Christian faith and its economy. It preceded the foundation of Rhodes University and the University of Fort Hare, the oldest higher education institutions of the Eastern Cape. Moreover, as a forebearer, Lovedale necessitated the establishment of these two institutions, as further institutions of training were required for those who read at Lovedale. Opland (2015: 13) further details that "Gqoba served at Mgwali, taught for a year at Lovedale, and at the end of 1868 returned to Mgwali." Importantly, (Opland, 2015: 14)

> At Lovedale, Gqoba was active in educational affairs (he was a prominent member of the Native Education Association, founded in 1879, the first known African political organisation in the Eastern Cape) and a keen member of the Lovedale Literary Society.

We can infer that it was his involvement in the Native Education Association that led him to pen the epic poem that inspired the analysis contained in this thesis, that is *Ingxoxo Enkulu Nge Mfundo (A Great Debate on Education: A Parable)*, which was published (initially) in *Isigidimi sama Xosa*, a publication he edited between 1884 until his untimely death in 1888. His observations about education inspired insightful debates about the function of education on the African continent, a matter which was later taken up by Ali Mazrui (1978) in his *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa*. To mention this, seeks to demonstrate that colonial education had such a profound impact on the continent, that two authors who were disparately located and linguistically divergent, wrote about the same institution in extensive

detail, nearly a century apart. In both their writings, both authors take up similar questions and critiques of the institution of education, challenging its uses as well as impact on the continent.

Opland (2015: 15) writes as follows about Gqoba's role in the editorship of *Isigidimi* which is the shorthand that was used to refer to the publication:

> Gqoba was a lively editor of *Isigidimi*, free from the confrontation and controversy characteristic of [John Tengo] Jabavu [father to Davidson Don Tengo Jabavu, who was father to Noni Jabavu], and as editor he presided over an unprecedented efflorescence of literary and ethnographic contributions, many of which he provoked by his editorial comments and his own writings.

Recounting and celebrating the lifetime contribution made to the world of letters, John Knox Bokwe, who was also a colleague at Lovedale said the following about Gqoba's life, but specifically his editorship of *Isigidimi* (Opland, 2015: 16):

> Thus the *Isigidimi* in the fourteenth year of publication was in need of another editor. Happily, Mr. William Wellington Gqoba's services were secured. He was a Gaika [i.e., Ngqika] orator and a poet of no mean ability, with matured experience not only of his own tribe but of other races in this land, having by residence and travel come to be in possession of a fund of historical knowledge, folklore, and interesting anecdotes of nearly every South African Bantu tribe in the provinces and adjacent territories. He was a fluent speaker and writer of several languages. Under Gqoba's editorship *Isigidimi* began to assume a different tone in Sixosa literature. Notwithstanding the fact that the majority of subscribers had been attracted away by the new weekly and secular free lance in King William's Town with its less restricted outlook [i.e., *Imvo*], the *Isigidimi* was gaining respectful and influential recognition when, in the

eighteenth year of publication Mr. Gqoba died after a very short and unexpected illness; and with his demise the *Isigidimi Samaxosa* ceased publication in December, 1888. From that year the Lovedale Missionary Institute has revived no similar vernacular general newspaper. (Bokwe, 1920: 172)

1.2.2. *Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi*

Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi can be regarded as one of the leading Xhosa intellectuals of the 20th century, with his literary work having the staying power of influencing generations of the successive century, the 21st century. This comment comes in view of the reality that his most famous novel *Ityala Lamawele*, which was initially published by the Lovedale Press in 1914, was—in the late 1990s and early 2000s—popularised as a dramatized and televised series on the South African Broadcasting Commission network, bearing the same title, *Ityala Lamawele*.

Born in 1875, in Gqumahashe, east of Alice—in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, S.E.K. Mqhayi began his schooling in 1882 at the age of seven years old. Like Gqoba, he read at Lovedale, completing his studies in 1897, with little regard for the schooling he had received at Lovedale. After completing his studies, he taught in East London (Opland, 2017: xvi) "before returning to the rural Centane district, where he apologised on arrival, '*ndazilandulela apo ukuba andifumananga nto e Diken*i'"[2]. His commitment to the customs of his people was evident from a young age, specifically in his defiance of the school regulations, with his insistence on going to initiation school, with Opland revealing the following from Mqhayi's diaries (2017: xvii):

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[2] "For acquiring nothing at all in Lovedale."

Lo msebenzi ke ndizakungena kuwo, ndiya wazi ukuchaseka kwawo kubafundisi, koko se ndixolele noko kugxothwa, kunokuba ndingabi yiyo le nto ndinga ndingaba yiyo. Ndaye ndinezizathu ngayo loo nto. Engqondweni yam ndedwa, ndandiqonda ukuba ndiya kuba ngumsebenzi kweli lizwe lakowethu lasemaXhoseni—umsebenzi kwizinto zeliZwe; kwezentlalo yasemakhaya; kwezombuso; nakwezemfundo. Kwaamhlophe kum ukuba andiyi kwenza nanye yezi zinto iphumelele, ndingabanga yindoda nje ngabo.[3]

The denigration with which the customs of his people were regarded by his school masters is the reasoning behind the thinking that informs the suggestion of an ontological derision in Chapter Three of this thesis. To be clear, the customs that existed prior to the arrival of the British colonial authority in the Cape Colony, prompted objections against the educational systems that were instituted by the colonial administrators, seen in the thinking and writing of Mqahyi along with Gqoba, as mentioned above.

Mqhayi's actions, in defying the beliefs and ideas of his school masters earned him much derision and scorn, at Lovedale, specifically after he was readmitted into the school. As Opland details it (2017: xvii)

Shortly thereafter, Mqahyi attended a revival meeting, professed his Christian faith and was baptised by Pambani Jeremaih Mzimba. His subsequent career established

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[3] I know how much the ministers are opposed to this act I am preparing to engage in, but still I am content to be expelled, rather than not being able to be what I would wish to be. I had my reasons for this. To my own way of thinking, I believed I was going to serve this land of ours of the Xhosa people – serve the cause of the Word, local custom, governance, and education. It was clear to me that I could not perform these public roles if I were not a man as they were.

him as the pre-eminent figure in the history of Xhosa literature and in his day one of the outstanding figures in the black community at large.

Opland (2017: xx), concurring with my framing of the life of Mqhayi writes as follows, "The young Mqahyi's determination to undergo traditional initiation into manhood despite the opposition of his Christian teachers displays his commitment to an alternative response to the colonial incursion." His concerted efforts to establish what will be termed *ontological legitimacy* in Chapter Four of this thesis, inspired leading political figures like Nelson Mandela, who in the opening chapter of his memoirs *The Long Walk to Freedom* remarks as follows:

> In my final year at Healdtown, an event occurred that for me was like a comet streaking across the night sky. Toward the end of the year, we were informed that the great Xhosa poet Krune Mqhayi was going to visit the school. Mqhayi was actually an *imbongi*, a praise-singer, a kind of oral historian who marks contemporary events and history with poetry that is of special meaning to his people.
>
> The day of his visit was declared a holiday by the school authorities. On the appointed morning, the entire school, including staff members both black and white, gathered in the dining hall, which was where we held school assemblies. There was a stage at one end of the hall and on it a door that led to Dr. Wellington's house. The door itself was nothing special, but we thought of it as Dr. Wellington's door, for no one ever walked through it except Dr. Wellington himself.
>
> Suddenly, the door opened and out walked not Dr. Wellington, but a black man dressed in a leopard-skin kaross and matching hat, who was carrying a spear in either hand. Dr. Wellington followed a moment later, but the sight of a black man in tribal dress coming through that door was electrifying. It is hard to explain the impact it had

on us. It seemed to turn the universe upside down. As Mqhayi sat on the stage next to
Dr. Wellington, we were barely able to contain our excitement.

S.E.K. Mqhayi's life and thinking suggests the need to conceptually articulate and suggest alternative systems of democracy, in what is termed in this thesis, postliberal conceptions of democracy. "He was the author of numerous volumes of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction, biography, autobiography and translation, and in the annal of Xhosa literature his contributions to Xhosa-language newspapers is unparalleled in breadth, scope and volume" (Opland, 2017: xix). Mqhayi's modes of resistance, in accordance with the detailing of his life as we encounter it in the Opland collection (2017: xx), "rejected the options of both militant confrontation and the wholesale adoption of European values, as the early missionaries demanded."

1.3. Clarification of Concepts

The debate on national identity has been defined by a multiplicity of considerations in the literature, and while this study will expand on this discourse in the literature review, it is important to clarify what is intended by the concepts of national identity and belonging, insofar as they are deployed and used in this study. Triandafyllidou (1998) suggests that otherness has been influential in determining the constitution, i.e., the formation of the nation. She writes (Triandafyllidou, 1998: 593) "Despite its long-prophesied demise the nation remains the most pertinent form of collective identity nowadays." In her work on statelessness, Jane-Anna Gordon (2020: 1) observes that "Intersecting rights deficits similarly render a person either literally stateless or incapable of exercising meaningful citizenship." To draw on these two scholars underscores the point of thinking through the possibility of postliberal conceptions of democracy, on the reasoning that liberal state theory is what renders many, across the world, stateless. In the context, under examination in this thesis, the

claim suggested and defended holds that the Black/Indigenous subject—a point that will be developed in more detail in chapters Three and Four—are rendered outside of the purview of citizenship on the reasoning that their ontology has been excluded from the thinking that informs the constitution of political identity in the country.

To draw once more from Triandafyllidou (1998: 594) "The notion of the other is inherent in the nationalist doctrine itself. For nationalists […] the existence of their own nation presupposes the existence of other nations too." Distinguishing between civic and ethnic conceptions of the in-group Rogers Smith (2003: 74) argues that,

> At least since Hans Kohn's 1944 classic, *The Idea of Nationalism*, it has been common for both historians and social scientists to distinguish between "civic" and "ethnic" conceptions of nations and to classify many existing societies as primarily if not essentially one or the other.

The presupposition of ethnic identity in South Africa signalled the ontological split, that is to be discussed in Chapter Three, categorising the nation on racial terms, as Black/Indigenous ethnic identity pitted against white settler colonial identity. This split has radical implications, it is to be argued in the study, and has already been suggested in the biographies of the authors under examination. Such a split has historically meant that the ways of life of the Black/Indigenous being are disregarded. No more does the reader witness such a denigration of the customs and ontology of Blackness/Indigeneity than in the case of S.E.K. Mqhayi's desire to undergo customary circumcision, and the subsequent threat he faced at Lovedale, of being expelled for his commitment to the customs of the Xhosa people.

In this split the implications of the scholarship of Gordon (2020) surface, in relation to those who are rendered outside the purview of citizenship, in the limitations they face with respect to meaningful participation and exercising their citizenship. The ontological

arguments that inform citizenship, and the nation are central in this thesis, inasmuch as the former ontology was replaced by the imported ways of being, to the extent that the thinking of Black/Indigenous intellectuals did not resist the introduction of legislation such as the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895. Simply, the argument being advanced here aims to prove that the importance of the ontological shift that defines the country at the arrival of colonial settlers, bifurcates the social terrain such that Blackness/Indigeneity is itself split in two, a matter that will be examined in detail in Chapter Three. Further still, the reader, under such considerations, bears witness to the notion encountered in Triandafyllidou's (1998) work when she writes about the constitution of the nation using the conceptions of the self as differentiated from the other. It is for these reasons that Wolmarans (2014) comes to inquire about the place of deliberative democracy, wherein the process of understanding the other is central in decision making and the constitution of the polity. Inspired by similar thinking, two centuries ago, William Wellington Gqoba argued that "The deeper investigation goes into Native questions the more interesting they will become, and the two races will gradually understand each other, and all suspicions and grievances as well as all ill-feeling towards one another will be removed for ever" (Opland, 2015: 210). Belonging assumes a central component in the development of the argument of this study, in that belonging precedes the national identity that is to determine and influence the nation.

Belonging and national identity, however, have not sufficiently been situated in relation to how they will be used in a study that is written in the discipline of political sciences, with specific detail being given to the work of theorising such a reality from the disposition of political philosophy. The preceding discussion has sought to demonstrate the centrality of two things. The importance of belonging as it informs national identity, and how the two concepts undergird the argument that is developed in this study.

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To argue that belonging and national identity are two sides of the same coin is premised on the reasoning that the two concepts not only inform one another, but they are central to the articulation of a postliberal conception of democracy, specifically as it might be located in the global South. This argument draws from the thinking found in Bourdieu's (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*, with a detailed analysis of this argument expanded in the concluding chapter of the thesis, wherein I argue for the use of language as a revitalising tool, that not only constitutes the nation, but further acts as a catalyst that fashions national identity. To draw from the work of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqahyi is deliberate in that their thinking eschews the kinds of political theory that the reader might be familiar with, in the suggestion that the creation of the nation necessitates homogenisation (*cf.* Mamdani, 2021; Deutsch, 1966; and Smith, 1986). Their scholarship and thinking is rooted in the necessary and critical embrace of a deliberative posture, to borrow once more from Wolmarans (2014), in that they argue for the importance of thinking about the nation as constitutive of a multiplicity of identities that each require their ontological recognition in order to facilitate a functional state of being.

The relationship, resultantly, between ontology, national identity and belonging is one witnessed in the continued exclusion of the majority from citizenship conceptions in the liberal democratic era. As I argue in the thesis, and has already been intimated in the introduction here, it is not the intention of this study to question the constitutionality of the country. In simple terms, it is not the objective of this study to suggest that the current framework ought to be done away with, as such an argument is futile and nihilistic. Rather the object lies in thinking critically about what is to be found in a conception of democracy that is rooted in the thinking and work of Black/Indigenous intellectuals of the region.

The relationship between ontology, national identity and belonging, is symbiotic in that the recognition of the ontology of the Black/Indigenous subject opens the possibility for meaningful citizenship participation in the country. Calls for decolonisation, constitutional reform, and other democracy interventionist measures, as such calls have been heard from political parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters, civil society, and intellectuals, is predicated—theoretically speaking—on the recognition of the ontology of the Black/Indigenous subject. This is to say that the criticisms that suggest that democracy is not working in countries like South Africa, is not reflective of a systematic diagnosis of the problem at hand. A theoretical analysis, such as the one conducted in this study, suggests that the problem lies not in democracy, but in the imposition of a liberal conception of democracy, with liberalism failing to acknowledge the ontological legitimacy of the Black/Indigenous subject.

Through a systematic theorical examination of the challenges that face the country, a theoretical examination that looks to belonging and national identity as both these concepts foster a sense of an inclusive national identity, insofar as they draw from the thinking of intellectuals such as William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi; theoretical developments in the discipline of political philosophy are advanced. To make such a claim is premised on the thinking that theory generation, under such a predisposition, can be informed by alternative and new perspectives, but more importantly such development articulates the possibilities of postliberal democratic conceptions that are locally responsive.

To put it in the simplest terms possible, the relationship between ontology, belonging and national identity, through a theoretical examination, advances the capacity to respond meaningfully to the claim that democracy is not working in the global South. Adherence to this position means the necessity to accept the position occupied by both William Wellington

Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi when they take up what has been termed in the Opland collections 'Ntsikana's way'. This suggests an integrative approach, one where Wolmarans' (2014) conception of deliberative democracy is not merely theoretically postulated but is taken up effectively as a strategy that fosters and strengthens democratic institutionalisation in regions and contexts like ours.

1.4. Background and Identification of Problem

Belonging—conceptualised as a core component of national identity—is central in this study as it highlights the two critical facets that locate this study in Political Science. These are the debates of '*the state, law and morality*', as one aspect – with second being '*political obligation*'. To be interested in these two components, while they are broad, is deliberate, as the thinking and writing of both William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi considered the impact of colonial incursion on the entire political order of the country. To make such a consideration manageable, the study will treat ontology, for from ontology ensue the arrangement of the state, the governing laws of the state along with the morality that informs the governing laws of the state. '*Political obligation*' examined through ontology edifies how the state compels political obligation from the citizenry on the reasoning that their ontology aligns with the state, its laws and the morality that informs the laws that govern the state. This claim is best witnessed in the analysis of the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895, which will be effectively detailed in Chapter Three.

This study distinguishes itself by using an ontological axiom as the tool of analysis, setting aside the Fanonian psychoanalytic tool, as advanced in postcolonial studies. The question can and, indeed, is posed of how an ontological analysis facilitates an arrival at a postliberal conception of democracy, if not by healing the psychic wounds of the oppressed? The suggestion, as per the argument developed throughout the study is that an ontological

analysis facilitates a confrontation of the political category that existed prior to the political system inaugurated by the imposition of colonial incursion. That is, an ontological examination takes the debate of the ontological legitimacy of Blackness/Indigeneity seriously, without reducing it to a dialectical of oppressed and oppressor categories. This study is after a conception of democracy that takes the category of Black/Indigenous ontological legitimacy seriously, as a political category in and of itself. It is this pursuit that leads to a systematic engagement with the scholarship and thinking of historically Black/Indigenous intellectuals, initially. That is, an ontological analysis that undermines derision takes seriously Blackness/Indigeneity outside of the colonial encounter.

Analysing belonging inaugurates an historical accounting of '*the state, law and morality*', as a first component. Derived from this first consideration, is the notion of '*political obligation*'. I am interested in the question, why ought the majority abide the current social contract, as it has historically signalled the marginalisation and oppression of Blackness/Indigeneity with continued marginalisation seen in the arguments by scholars who challenge the constitutionality of the South African democratic dispensation. Both facets '*the state, law and morality*' and '*political obligation*' are taken from the anthology *Political Philosophy: Oxford Readings in Philosophy* edited by Anthony Quinton (1965). The study resultantly contributes to our conceptions of the state and its formation along with the attendant political obligation that necessitates the respect of the Constitution of the land. Augmenting obeisance of the Constitution is motivated by the critiques that have been levelled in recent years by leading philosophers and legal theorists—who all identify with the decolonial tradition—as indicated in the introduction above, (see Modiri, 2018; Madlingozi, 2017; Ramose, 2007; Ramose, 2002). The critique of the Constitution is premised on the perceived illegitimacy (the unconstitutionality of the constitutional project) of state formation

and the laws of the state, with Ramose (2007) arguing that democratic South Africa is premised on an amoral political framework.

The amorality of our political framework is attributed to the colonial history that is constitutive of South African society, both politically and socially. This history delimited who rightfully can claim belonging in the country. As stated in the introduction, the objective of the study lies in analysing national identity by way of considering the question of belonging. At the promulgation of the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895 (which was predicated on the Witchcraft Act of 1735 of the UK[4]), South Africa—as it would become a Nation State; one predicated on the imposition of colonial epistemic frameworks, an historical fact termed "the unjust wars of colonisation" (Ramose, 2007)—delimited who could rightfully claim belonging. Simply, those who could, historically claim to be South African, were imagined to be of certain historical and cultural descent; i.e. those who were white and Christian.[5] In the Black community, those who forsook their epistemic frameworks and adopted the Christian way of life were considered *amagqobhoka[6] or amakholwa* (i.e.,

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[4] The Witchcraft Act 1735 (which was originally passed in the UK Parliament) repealed former acts, the first of which was enacted in 1542 by the British Parliament, wherein this Act defined witchcraft as a crime punishable by death. This act was repealed in 1547 but was restored by a new act in 1562. In 1604, during the reign of James I, yet another law was passed that transferred the trial of witches from the Church to the ordinary courts. By 1700, from the period beginning 1562, 513 witches were put on trial for the practice of witchcraft in Britain, with only 112 executions. This history is cited in view of the reality that this legislation was introduced to the South African context in 1895 in view of the fears of colonial settlers being confronted by an ontology that was unfamiliar to their own. For a more detailed account of the history of this legislation in the United Kingdom, the reader is directed to the historical record of the UK Parliament (*cf*. https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/religion/overview/witchcraft/).

[5] The function of Christianity as a marker of belonging is taken up by William Wellington Gqoba when he writes about *Ingxoxo Enkulu yomGinwa nomKristu* (*A Great Debate Between a Heathen and a Christian 1887-8*). Importantly, however, this study does not take religion to be the principal reason of the contestations analysed, but rather sees this social institution as a subsidiary of the overarching racial framework that defines our country.

[6] *Igqobhoka* (the singular of *amagqobhoka*) can be understood as derived from the process of "breaking-in" an animal – such as one does a horse. It explains the process—as in the case of taming a wild animal—of those who

converts), while those who clung to the pre-colonial way of life were considered *amaqaba* (those who smeared red ochre on their faces).[7] *Amakholwa/amagqobhoka* could claim belonging owing to their adoption of Christian values. This is to say that Blackness/Indigeneity was legible to whiteness on the premise that it presents itself in the epistemic and ontological frameworks of whiteness, outside of this, this group of society existed outside the purview of the human. In the study, I do not use the concept of Christianity as denotative of Christian ontology, but rather the ontology of modernity. This distinction is important as it is central to the function of education, as engaged with by Gqoba (1888), who demonstrates that *amaqaba* were not in fact 'illiterate', for they had their own modes of knowing, which were replaced by the zealous pursuit of Christian conversion and education that was driven by white colonial settlers. It is for this reason that I frame

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rejected the pre-colonial mode of life and assumed a colonial epistemic framework, by way of embracing Christianity. I appreciate the objection that can be put against such an analysis, and will ask the reader's patience, as I will detail this translative equivalence in the analysis presented in Chapter Four, wherein I demonstrate how this equivalence is made. A*magqobhoka* acquiesced to western epistemic frameworks as advocated by the colonial settler, that is, they became Christian converts (*amakholwa*) – following the colonial settler's mode of life. While this definition differs to the one that the reader will encounter in the isiXhosa Dictionary of Fort Hare, the details concerning how this conceptual move is made can be found in footnote 3 of chapter Four.

[7] The concept of *iqaba* (which is singular for *amaqaba*) has two meanings. In its original sense, it means those who smear red ochre on their faces (*ukuqaba imbola*). This group of Black people clung to their systems of political organization, legal frameworks and a moral code that differed from the colonial settler. Mqhayi's ([1917]/2015: 131) discussion of the lawsuit between a 'white man and a slave' demonstrates this point when he writes: "[*pambi kokuba litethwe ityala u Mhlekazi uMaqoma uvakalise indawo ethi: 'Ke apa ema-Xoseni, asinto ikoyo ikoboka, ke ngoko wosel' esiti elityala alijonge njenge tyala lamadoda amabini amangaleleneyo.*' (Before the case proceeded, His Majesty Maqoma made this point: 'Here in Xhosaland there is no such thing as a slave, so we would regard the case as one between two men who had made a bargain')". In its secondary meaning, which was as a result of this sect of society rejecting colonial modes of being and education, the concept became associated with those who were considered 'illiterate', in the colonial modes of education. Illiteracy as associated with *amaqaba* is predicated on their rejection of missionary colonial education, which was embraced by *amagqobhoka* (those who rejected pre-colonial epistemic frameworks) and became *amakholwa*. The popular and contemporary meaning of *amaqaba* has come to be associated with illiteracy and replaced the first (read original) meaning.

Christianity as a derivative component of the racial hierarchy that defines South African society to the contemporary day.

I must qualify the point of those who were converted to the new religion, as it came with the colonial missionary settlers. Firstly, they were aware of the importance of the customs as well as rites of passage of the way of life as it was held prior to the arrival of colonial settlers. Such a claim is substantiated by the response of Tiyo Soga, when he is confronted by young men who sought to undergo the ritual custom of *ulwaluko*, with this collision of worlds viewed by other converts as a problem to the project of Christian conversion. The system of life that existed prior to colonial conversion into the Christian faith, was seen as threatening the project of civility and Christianity. Opland (2015:8) documents the history as follows, "But, up to a point, Soga was tolerant of Xhosa custom. He was not opposed to circumcision as such, but sought a modification to some of its practices, such as smearing of the face and body with white clay." The custom as it is practiced in the contemporary day continues with the custom of smearing white clay as the initiands are in the initiation school, smearing red clay—*imbola* (ochre)—upon their completion of the rights of initiation. The reader will recall that in the sixth footnote above here, the process of *ukuqaba imbola* (smearing red ochre) is what became definitive of those who rejected the colonial missionary education system, resultantly becoming *amaqaba*, who were further to become synonymous with the notion of illiteracy, insofar as they rejected the ideal of being defined by the written word.

I do wish to pay attention to the Opland's (2015) formulation, however. When he writes "Soga was tolerant of Xhosa custom", the reader is privy to the ambivalence that early Xhosa intellectuals exhibited towards the customs of their people, in relation to how this knowledge intersected with that of the Christian faith. Furthermore, I wish for the reader to

bear in mind the preceding discussion on the fear of white colonial missionary settlers owing to their being unfamiliar with the ontology of Blackness as Indigeneity, in the country, a fear that culminated in the classification of this knowledge as witchcraft. While footnote three traces the history of this legislation as found in the United Kingdom, the actual figures of how many were persecuted and murdered, for the sole reason of being suspected of practicing witchcraft is not clear, in relation to the context of South Africa.

To return, then to the formulation as the reader finds it in Opland, the focus should be on the concept of '*toleration' viz.* the attendant customs of Xhosa people. To contextualise this point of ambivalence, owing to the position to which Blackness was consigned owing to the colonial mode of governance, Opland (2015: 7) quotes from the letters Soga left to his children, which read as follows:

> I want you, for your own future comfort, to be very careful on this point. You will ever cherish the memory of your mother as that of an upright, conscientious, thrifty, Christian Scotchwoman. You will ever be thankful for your connection by this tie to the white race. But if you wish to gain credit for yourselves – if you do not wish to feel the taunt of men, which you sometimes may be made to feel – take your place in the world as coloured, not as white men; as Kafirs, not as Englishmen.

The ambivalence that Blackness/Indigeneity has towards its own customs in view of the white frame of reference that came with the concept of civilising the world, bringing light to the heathens, meant a sense of disillusionment—at the end of Soga's life—with the very system that he had dedicated his life to building. This observation is made in view of the question that was posed at a meeting that Soga convened on 30 October 1861, which inquired thusly,

We have nothing to say; but it strikes me that in reference to this thing (Christianity), the way in which it has come to us is not right. I not see how we can receive it; yet I do not say it is not true. The Owner of it has cut the thing in the middle, and done it by halves. You know that we are the remnants of past generations of Kafirs. Why was the Word not sent to our forefathers, so that we should have received it through them in the natural course of things? We do not like the idea that the thing which is considered so good for us should have been withheld from them. *They* should have received it first; *we* next, through them. (Opland 2015: 9)

Soga's response, to such an inquisition, was as follows (ibid.), "That mode of arguing will not do. We cannot cross-question God's modes of dealing with his creatures." In this response, we witness a commitment to Christianity, one in which the fallibility of God and those who brought the Christian faith to the southernmost tip of the African continent is not questioned. Important to bear in mind is that 10 years later, in 1871 upon his death, there seems to have been a shift in the attitude that he held towards this very "thing" that was held as a crucial component of the enlightenment that the Indigene enjoyed. This shift is seen in his letter to his children, which is cited above. In these instructions, wherein he advises his children to take their place in the world as "Kafirs, not as Englishmen", the sense of political obligation that he exhibits in defending the faith seems to dissipate. Important to note, however, is that even as he makes these comments about the political arrangement, into which his children are born, nowhere in his statement do we see a faltering of his faith and commitment to the teachings of Christianity. That is to say that the scorn with which the Christian faith was regarded by those who were classified as *amaqaba*—a scorn on the basis of the changes that were being instituted by Christianity in the lives of Black/Indigenous people—this scorn is not evident in the final instructions that Soga gives to his children.

In a similar vein, inasmuch as he held the Christian faith in high regard, it is important to note that the systems of arranging the world that existed prior to the arrival of the Christian faith were also held in high esteem, by those who rejected conversion. It is here that the reader first encounters what is called intra-Black conflict in this study. In this respect, intra-Black conflict is constitutive of the warring factions of Blackness/Indigeneity that came up as a result of the differences that would define the context of our society, seen in the work of Zakes Mda (2000) when he pens *The Heart of Redness* wherein the two epistemic systems were competing with one another, as to which one would prevail.

This schema, of Christianity as a qualifying marker of belonging, demonstrates the connection between '*the state, law and morality*' as it facilitates belonging through conversion and the adoption of the imposed epistemic frameworks through colonial missionary education. It highlights the devaluation of the ways of knowing of Blackness – that is the lack of recognition of the ontology of Blackness; of *amaqaba*. It is in the face of this devalued mode of life that the question of whether *iqaba* can be viewed as possessing ontological legitimacy, is examined in Chapter Four. This devaluation is attached to the process that defined *iqaba* as illiterate insofar as *iqaba* (the smearer of red ochre on their face) rejected colonial education. To comprehend this, it is useful to note that the introduction of colonial missionary education established an epistemic hierarchy that prioritised western forms of knowing while undervaluing and dismissing pre-colonial forms of understanding. Decolonialists (see Grosfoguel, 2007 & 2013; Kumalo, 2021; Maldonado-Torres, 2004; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; and Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Zondi, 2016) have critiqued this reality as epistemic injustice. Therefore, Black people who could claim belonging—i.e. citizenship to what was to become South Africa—claimed it on their having converted to Christianity and having been educated in colonial missionary schools as detailed by Gqoba.

The epistemic hierarchy mentioned above here, receives systematic attention in the work of Christopher Miller, in his *Theories of Africans* (1990), when he discusses the treatment of orality, and how it is distinguished from the written word. With *ubuqaba* premised on orality, which is constitutive of orature and moral codes derived from the use of language(s) as it is found and endogenous to our context, Miller (1990) presses us to inquire into the kinds of attitudes exhibited towards this tradition of orature, oracy and orality. While his main point focuses on the realities that define the context of francophone Africa, his analysis is still useful when thinking about the changing moral economies that governed contexts like South Africa, as a result of the split between the oral cultures and the written word. This system of beliefs, which was predicated on oracy, found itself in jarring contradiction with the system of beliefs that were supported and upheld by the Christian faith that prioritised and privileged the written word, seen through institutions such as Lovedale College, which was established by the Glasgow Missionary Society in 1841. The new world that was established by the missionary colonialists sought to displace oracy – which leads Miller (1990) to suggest that if we wish to understand the place and function of orality, we have to look to the society and the attitudes that that society exhibits towards those who are trained in orature and are the keepers of the spoken word. To bring to the consideration of this argument, the attitudes that are held toward the spoken word is founded on the importance of the derision that is directed at Blackness as Indigeneity—as discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. The thinking, systems of life as well the methods of social organisation that are found through an exploration and treatment of the ontology of Blackness as Indigeneity, all reveal the importance of using alternative methods of reasoning when addressing contemporary political questions as they pertain to South Africa. Such a suggestion rests on the realisation that the liberal democratic framework is dramatically challenged by the demand that the lives and political systems of organising the world be

recognised, in line with the project of building a multi-cultural society as we find it articulated by Bhikhu Parekh (2001) when he writes about *Rethinking Multiculturalism*.

It is for this reason that this study uses isiXhosa literature to explore the salient political questions that define South Africa, with George Hull (2020: 33) justifying such a move when he argues that "[…], as I will discuss, the most adequate response to some types of value conflict may well be a *creative act*, value conflict is an area where philosophical [and political] theory and creative fiction can helpfully inform one another." To be sure, he adds (Hull, 2020: 35)

> I argue that the palpable sense of hope at the end of both [*Ingqumbo Yeminyanya / The Wrath of the Ancestors* as written by A.C. Jordan] and *Disgrace* [written by J.M. Coetzee] is explained in each case by the reader's sense of the possibility of compromise which is not purely *instrumental*, but is a *deep*, creative and adequate response to the conflicting legitimate moral claims in play.

In the case of the moral claims in play in this study, I privilege belonging as it is attached to the epistemic hierarchy that was introduced by colonial systems of thought and education. These "conflicting legitimate moral claims" (Hull, 2020: 35), i.e., the competing worldviews of *amaqaba nama gqobhoka* (the smearers of red ochre and the converts), illustrates the case of belonging insofar as who is entitled to claim belonging to the South African polity—which is a question that ought to be reconciled owing to the two competing world views. Reconciling this value conflict addresses the concerns of those who contest the constitutionality of democratic South Africa, by way of fashioning a national identity. More importantly this study makes a contribution to the literature on multiculturalism, the cultural aspects of democratic institutionalism, in the form of suggested ways in which democracy can be intrenched in contexts where such a political system of social organisation—as it is articulated by the west—is in its infancy. To be sure, this project is not invested in saving the

western conception of democracy, rather, it is interested in responding to the local concerns and demands, in view of the unintended consequences of democracy in a country defined by post-conflictual animosities. Such a project aims to ensure that all those who form the constitutive (multicultural) parts of democratic South Africa, feel a sense of belonging in the country. And it is the thesis of this project that the work of William Wellington Gqoba and SEK Mqhayi can assist us in attaining such a sense of belonging, when their work is read in relation to the historical argument we find in Voltaire's (2016) thinking on toleration. Writing in response to an injustice suffered by a French Calvinist (Huguenot), Voltaire's *Treatise on Toleration*, drew heavily from the work of John Locke (1689) when Locke penned a *Letter Concerning Toleration.*

In his introduction to the paperback Penguin edition of the *Treatise on Toleration*, Clarke (2016: xii—xiii) observes:

> The only reason for granting legislative and judicial powers to civil rulers was to protect the property and civil rights of citizens and to resolve disputes impartially. Once a state legislates within those limits – which are not easy to define – it may then require all citizens to equally observe its laws and may compel those who refuse to comply.

In this framework the reader is privy to the notion of political obligation, which is predicated on ontological—ecclesiastical—questions as they concern faith, in the case of Europe and the reformation processes that led to the split between church and state. Clarke (2016: xiii—xiv) continues:

> When combined with independent beliefs about one's duties to others and an obligation to protect divinity from misguided worship this was transformed into what might be called the logic of the Inquisition, which involved the following: the paternalistic coercion of non-members to join the one 'true' church in which alone they could achieve

salvation, and the policing of non-members so that they refrain from insulting God by participating in unorthodox religious services.

When considered against the ontological arguments that are to be advanced in this thesis, and which have already been cursorily reflected upon in the preceding sections of this chapter, the reader is privy to two things. The role of religion as it influenced the shaping of the state in Europe, and secondarily, how such forms of thought were further racialised and weaponised in the colonies. This has more significance in the context of colonial territories, where the concern was not between the Christian faith, reformed churches as they opposed the supremacy of the Catholic church, but where the religious and cosmological practices were altogether different and foreign to those who imposed colonial registers in the colonies.

This consideration is not only important, it is crucial when considered against the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895, which was not resisted by the early Black/Indigenous intellectuals who had converted to Christianity and which promulgated the ontological split discussed as *amaqaba nama gqobhoka* in Chapter Three. Voltaire's treatise is similar to the thinking of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi, on the reasoning that what he proposes to French society is the need to tolerate those who, in religious practice, differed from the dominant Catholic faith that held sway in France during the eighteenth century. Clarke (2016: xxi) commenting on the influence that Voltaire acquires over the course of observing the impact that these differences had on the life of French political reality, observes the following,

> During the course of his life, however, he was persuaded that the theological subtleties that distinguished churches or religions from each other were more like superstitions than genuine knowledge, and that they were mere culturally relative expressions of a fundamental philosophical belief in God as creator of the universe. Thus Voltaire adopted

a form of Unitarianism that was similar to that of Locke and Newton, which rejected belief in Trinitarian divinity.

The similarities, between William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi vis-à-vis Voltaire surface through an examination of how both scholars argued for co-existence in the face of British colonial incursion, but such co-existence, it should be understood, is not at the expense of historical justice, as scholars have called for it (*cf*. Modiri, 2017; Madlingozi, 2017; Ramose 2007; Ramose 2002). To think of the work of Black/Indigenous intellectuals along the tradition of political toleration as it draws from Locke (1689) and Voltaire (2016) is important in substantiating the proposition of theoretical developments in the discipline, driven by locally responsive articulations.

1.5. Literature Review

As this study uses an "in-disciplinary" (Mignolo, 2021: xi) approach, it draws from literary theory—and literary artefacts—as it informs political theory in the service of answering the question of belonging through articulating an inclusive national identity. The framework used in this study, resultantly, is grounded in the critical theory tradition, insofar as this tradition draws from political scientists, decolonial and literary theorists. Insofar as this study brings together a multiplicity of disciplinary views to understand the problem under examination, the reader will appreciate why this literature review takes on an argumentative style.

I begin by contextualising the uses of literary theory, to the extent that the study uses literary hermeneutics in interpreting the two focal texts used in articulating an inclusive national identity that facilitates belonging. While literary hermeneutics is important in arriving at a correct, historical and contemporary reading of the texts under examination in this study, it is a subsidiary component, insofar as it helps us discern the validity in the claim that the works of Gqoba and Mqhayi are interested in holding two competing identities in

tandem. In using literary hermeneutics, I take my cue from Wolmarans (2014) when he makes the case for 'Interpreting the "Other" in Democracy: Towards a Deliberative Ethic'. Using C.S. Lewis and Mikhail Bakhtin's arguments, Wolmarans (2014: 28) contends that "[authentic] deliberation can in fact only follow on from a 'good reading' of the other, based on the actual rather than the interpreted views of the various parties." In capturing the actual views of all parties, this process augments deliberative democracy, which is defined by justified decisions that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible for the purposes of reaching conclusions that are binding, for all citizens. In setting up his analysis Wolmarans (2014: 30) points out that "[deliberative] democratic theory argues that the core of democracy resides in public deliberation between free and equal citizens", while highlighting the constitutive elements that stave off misinterpretation. In his detailing of literary hermeneutics Kalaga (2015) shares similar concerns as Wolmarans (2014: 30) in that "[no] understanding emanates from deliberation without interpretation, and there can be no interpretation without the possibility of multiple (mis)understandings."

Kalaga (2015: 8), using Schleiermacher (1998:23), labours the point that "[m]isunderstanding is either a consequence of hastiness or of prejudice. The former is an isolated moment. The latter is a mistake which lies deeper. It is the one sided preference for what is close to the individual's circle of ideas and rejection of what lies outside it." Similarly, Wolmarans (2014: 32) would argue that in the case of prejudicial judgements of and on a text—meaning the privileging of what is close to the individual's circle of ideas—is symptomatic of one "using" rather than "receiving" a text. The latter (Wolmarans 2014: 33) "entails a process of 'surrender', where we truly determine to 'Look. Listen. Receive', and to '[g]et ourselves out of the way' (Lewis 1961, 18–19)." This signifies a shift in that (Kalaga, 2015: 2) "the art of understanding changes from being a *methodological* discipline to becoming an *ontological* instrument for a redescription of the interpreter's self."

In receiving the text, that is in opening oneself up to learn from the text, both Kalaga's (2015) and Wolmarans' (2014) arguments suggest a deep sense of understanding that enriches the democratic and deliberative process. Such a use of literary hermeneutics facilitates a deep understanding of the thinking of Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi (1914), who were concerned with a multiplicity of socio-political issues that defined the existence of Black life in South Africa. In the process of receiving a text, through deep understanding, the ontological questions that are constitutive of this study will come to the fore, for the reader, and through an engagement with the analysis. That is to say that if we receive rather than use the work of the scholars that are examined in this study, the project of thinking alongside them in curating an equitable and democratic society is not so far gone. I am subsequently interested in systems of reading that allow us to gain insight into and appreciation of the life worlds that existed on the southernmost tip of the African continent, prior to the arrival of colonial settler identities.

Kalaga (2015: 22) makes the point that "Schleiermacher explicitly states that a necessary degree of proficiency is required for a correct interpretation". A linguistic point comes to the fore in such an analysis, which is to say that there is a need for an ability to read the texts insofar as they are developed in the cultural context of their progenitor languages. This point is further stressed by Miller (1990) when he writes about understanding a literary tradition within the context in which it is birthed, necessarily deploying the use of disciplines such as anthropology in instances where there is a chance at misinterpretation. Simply put, in the process of attempting to contemporarily situate the contribution that can be gleaned from the scholarship of Black/Indigenous intellectuals who were writing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there is a need to understand the context in which they were writing.

This assertion is made in view of the fact that Kalaga (2015: 3) seeks to correct Dilthey's conceptual distortion that "reduced Schleiermacher's contribution to hermeneutic studies by ignoring his theories on the relation between language and interpretation." The use of literary hermeneutics facilitates the reading of the texts to be used in this study and such a conceptual tool lends itself to deliberative democracy insofar as we are after understanding, an understanding that undergirds how we engage with one another in the process of deliberation in the public realm. Thus, the study uses two theoretical approaches, in the sense of deliberative democracy as facilitating belonging through the articulation of national identity – as it is discerned from literary interpretation using hermeneutics, which assist in a valid and correct interpretation of the texts under analysis, in this study. A comment on hermeneutic interpretation is necessary here. The deployment of hermeneutics in the study is not merely confined to the interpretation of texts, as in the written texts that used in making claims in this thesis. While this is a fundamental first conceptual move, there is a secondary conceptual move that is itself derived from the thinking of the authors under examination. In looking to William Wellington Gqoba, when he suggests that the more the two culture study one another the less animosities there will be between the two cultures, the secondary hermeneutical device is found. Simply, by examining the actions of the polity, as they are informed by a study of the thinking of the authors used in this study, the suggestion is made that the South African democracy could get to the possibility of post liberalism. Hermeneutics, as deployed in this study suggests the interpretation of texts, that is informed by linguistic competence, that facilitates our ability to study the member of the polity; the ability to interpret the actions that constitute a deliberative democratic ethic.

The thinking around deliberative democracy that informs this study is inspired by Held (2006) wherein he argues for thinking about the uses and importance of deliberative democracy insofar as it is in service of the interests of the citizenry. Previous iterations of

democracy, he argues in his book *Models of Democracy* have their strengths and weaknesses with the concept of deliberative democracy first introduced in the academic literature by Joseph Bessette (1980; 1994). To use a deliberative conception of democracy in this study is intentional in that the argument is not in pursuit of essentialist modes of thinking that cast out what has existed previously. Rather, the objective lies in strengthening democracy, with the proposition that the work of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi will facilitate the attainment of this goal.

Held (2006: 232) argues that deliberative democrats "champion informed debate, the public use of reason and the impartial pursuit of truth." This framing of deliberative democracy is important as it underscores three components that are better aided in our appeal to the work of intellectuals who have, historically been excluded and marginalised. By examining the work of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi, the process of democratic theory articulation, as well democratic deliberation meets the criteria of informed debate. The thinking that informs democratic modelling in our context, and in other contexts of the global South, does not account for the ontologies situated in those contexts. Rather it prizes the importation of theory for the purposes of making claims about the development and articulation of democracy in that locale. In the second instance, as Held (2006) suggests, deliberative democrats argue that this form of democracy is undergirded by the public use of reason. This second component is fulfilled in that through the expansion of the thinking that informs the curation of democracy in our context, the use of public reason is prized for the purposes of arriving at an impartial truth. Deliberative democracy is not only useful, it is crucial in arriving at the destination of receiving the thought and ideas of historical figures for the purposes of thinking carefully and critically about the contemporary challenges, as they shape how democracy manifests in contemporary South African society.

The question that this study, in this framing of the methodology, has to answer –

concerns the consideration of why use texts that are written in isiXhosa in the first instance?

The question is posed in relation to the fact that there hasn't, historically, been the use of such

alternative methods of theorising, in the discipline of political theory and political science(s).

Two points can be made in this respect, the first concerns the theoretical innovation that

comes with using materials that have erstwhile been ignored. As Scina (2002), discussing the

work of S.E.K. Mqhayi through the project of translating this text demonstrates, using

materials that have existed at the margins enlivens our capacity to see and interpret existing

phenomenon through the insights and tools that might be gleaned by and through the

deployment of new and contending categories. In the case of the translation of *Ityala*

Lamawele, the reader is witness to the growth that has surrounded the analyses that have

come with the process of translating this text, giving us the analysis that the reader finds in

the theoretical articulations of George Hull (2020) when he writes about the possibilities that

exist at the centre of such forms of theoretical innovation, when thinking about value conflict.

The case of Scina (2002) and Hull (2020) is useful in thinking with the case of political

theory, insofar as we are interested in the project of substantive democratic participation in

the polity. This leads me to the second point.

In the methodological choice of focusing on the work of scholars who have been

neglected, the intended aim is in demonstrating the point that the theoretical articulations that

we have encountered to date in the realm of political theory are not holding, in terms of

explaining the conditions that are witnessed in the case of South Africa. That is to say, the

theoretical articulations that have attempted to think through the post-conflictual nature that is

South African society have failed to capture the realities of the people who are most affected

by the challenges inherited from the apartheid state. As will be outlined in Chapter Four,

wherein I discuss the work of Mamdani (2021) when thinking through the categories of

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native and settler identities in countries like South Africa, he misses the point of thinking with the Black/Indigenous population, on the premise that the thinking that dominates theoretical developments in the country has always sought to silence the experiences of Black/Indigenous people. While the case can be made that Mamdani's (2021) analysis seeks merely to lay out the context of South Africa without reproducing the styles of writing that I accuse him of in this study, it is important to bear in mind the advice that we glean from J.M. Coetzee's (1988) *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*. The invocation of Coetzee is deliberate in that he diagnosis the problem that I outline in this study with respect to Black/Indigenous ontological legitimacy—wherein it is undermined by being class as incapable of theorising its own socio-political realities.

It is for this reason that in the same chapter, Chapter Four, the argument makes the case that the work of Zoë Wicomb (2018) is not challenging, it is essentially naïve, insofar as she reduces the case of the Black/Indigenous experience to an issue of inter-racial conflict without first having addressed the problems that are wrought by the implications of colonial incursion and conversion to the Christian faith.

Such an analysis, however, already gets us into the theoretical work that is done in the study, whereas I am presently interested in detailing the methodological rationale—inasmuch as it is a derivative of the literature review, presently under examination—that is constitutive of this study. In the use of literary work, the method deployed is textual analysis, and I am interested in the texts developed by Black/Indigenous South Africans on the premise that this knowledge will facilitate new ways of thinking about the state of South African democracy. That is to say, that in paying attention to the literary developments of Black/Indigenous intellectuals, we can begin thinking with the social conditions that are constitutive of our context, while further paying attention to the scholarly criticisms that have been levelled by

scholars like Ramose (2007), Modiri (2018) and Madlingozi (2017). This body of literature has challenged the nature of South African society, by drawing our attention to the status of the inequalities that are definitive of the South African, post-1994, democratic era. In paying attention to historical texts, the reader will begin to see the political constitutional (architectural) decisions that make up the contemporary democratic society, either supporting the arguments found in the cited literature above here, through situating the historical conditions that give rise to it, or challenging this scholarship, by providing us with alternative perspectives.

As indicated, the combination of literature—isiXhosa literature—in answering questions that are situated in political theory is a novel approach, when thinking about South Africa. Save for the work of George Hull (2020) and Marzia Milazzo (2020) in *African Philosophical and Literary Possibilities*, there hasn't been much material developed in the project of thinking about the realities of South Africa as a colonial settler society, in relation to how Black/Indigenous intellectuals have theorised this reality in the past.[8] Thinking about and with Blackness/Indigeneity vis-à-vis their experiences of being culturally marginal, has not been the focus of scholarship in scholarly literature, since the dawn of democracy, in the country. This claim is substantiated when the reader considers my critique of Mahmood Mamdani (2021) who makes the point of the political miracle that is South Africa, without

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[8] Zondi (2020) demonstrates the point under consideration, when she thinks through the contribution made by Wallet Benedict Vilakazi—the social criticisms that he levels against the social conditions of the country during the 20th century—using his poetry. This point is similar to the one made by Kunene, when he thinks through 'The Problems in African Literature' (1992) suggesting that the challenges we encounter in the social setting are derived from a lack of self-awareness, and self-knowledge; a point that is also taken up by S.E.K. Mqhayi to be analysed in this study in Chapter Four. Moreover, Zoë Wicomb (2018) further demonstrates the point of literary figures in the country, thinking with the socio-political conditions that define South Africa. In so doing, this study suggests that new theoretical innovations, for the sub-discipline of political theory and the discipline of political science(s) can be found in the interpretive analyses that come from a detailed investigation of the social conditions as they have been diagnosed and theorised by literary figures in the country.

substantively looking into the constitutive socio-political conditions of possibility that define the country.

Aside from the scholarship found in the thinking of these two cited intellectuals Hull (2020) and Milazzo (2020), there also exists the work of Mobogo Percy More inclusive of titles like *Looking Through Philosophy in Black: Memoirs* (2018) and *Biko: Philosophy, Identity and Liberation* (2017). In instances where the work of a Black Consciousness leader like Biko has been used to think about the situation that defines South African reality, both in the disciplines of political theory and philosophy, this has not been a popular undertaking in the scholarship and warrants correction, which this study does. Milazzo indicates that the work of writers like Miriam Tlali and Steve Bantu Biko is always sidestepped in the development of curricula among university departments of English and philosophy, and yet much of the philosophies and systems of thought that pertain to Blackness/Indigeneity can be found in this material as it is developed by Black/Indigenous writers.

As argued by Quinton (1967: 3), "[many] teachers of political philosophy are in fact students of the history of very general, theoretical, political ideas". Agreeing with Plamenatz (1967: 28), I also hold to the position that the business of the political philosopher "is not to explain how we use language or how we get knowledge or what exactly is it that we are doing when we pass moral or aesthetic judgments or when we are making decisions." The political philosopher "produces a hierarchy of principles, and [tries] to explain how [the polity] should use them to make their choices. This is how [the political philosopher] helps to provide [the polity] with practical philosophy" (Plamenatz, 1967: 28). Any competent philosopher will object, however, to the notion of practical philosophy—as such a concept is a contradiction in terms. Rather what we are after is something akin to political theory, that assists us in better curating the social conditions that are definitive of our context. As outlined

above, the function of literary hermeneutics will aid in the identification of a set of principles, as these are gleaned from Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi (1914) – principles that will facilitate belonging through the articulation of a national identity. By examining the society that both authors envisioned for the country, in view of the changes that they saw we can articulate a postliberal African conception of democracy.

Literary hermeneutics, used in Political Science facilitates, deeper insights into reconciling the competing identities that constitute the South African polity, thus deepening the deliberative democratic process. Such a deepening fosters a sense of belonging insofar as the 'Other' is correctly understood. This obtains what Kumalo (2018) addresses as 'ontological legitimacy'. Recognition, construed as the acknowledgement of the 'ontological legitimacy' of *amaqaba* establishes the equality that is a core characteristic of deliberative democracy, as argued by Wolmarans (2014). By correctly interpreting the work of Gqoba (1885) and Mqhayi (1914), the study, initially, responds to the epistemic hierarchy inaugurated by colonial imposition. Such a response addresses the study's concern with epistemic justice, as it is informed here by the thinking of MacIntyre (1988) when he considers the task of 'Overcoming a Conflict of Traditions' and Mitova (2021) when she writes about 'Decolonising Knowledge without too much Relativism'. Literary hermeneutics, then, assists us in obtaining a sense of belonging by way of correctly interpreting Gqoba (1885) and Mqhayi (1914), who illume the reader about the ontology of Blackness, as theorised and documented by Black intellectuals. Here, Kalaga's (2015) insistence on Schleiermacher's foregrounding of the relation between language and interpretation is substantiated, which is to say that the often recited objection of essentialism in having Black/Indigenous intellectuals theorise the experience of being Black/Indigenous in the world cannot hold if we take seriously the project of interpretation and linguistic competence as intimately interwoven into the process of accurate interpretation. If such an approach

facilitates a correct and valid reading of a text, the process by which we 'receive' as opposed to 'using' a text, such a process augments the objective of articulating an inclusive national identity, that facilitates a sense of belonging through deliberative democratic processes.

1.6.Research Problem

The concern with national identity, in this study, is derived from how South African reality is defined by the kinds of national stories that we tell ourselves. In this respect, the study takes its cue from Rogers M. Smith (2003: 11) who maintains that "[political] scientists have paid far more attention to questions of state structures and issues of the distribution of resources and power than they have to issues of how political memberships and political identities come to exist." Smith (2003: 20) goes further to define what he intends by the notion of political peoplehood when he writes, "I define a group as a political *people* or community when it is a potential adversary of other forms of human association, *because* its proponents are generally understood to assert that its obligations legitimately trump many of the demands made on its members in the name of other associations." Thinking about political identity as it pertains to South Africa is also taken from the work of Zoë Wicomb ([1991]/2018) in the essay that examines how national culture was being constituted in the country at the end of apartheid, 'Tracing the Path from National to Official Culture'. In answering the question of national culture, Wicomb, in yet another essay, demonstrates the relationship between writing and the spoken word, and examines the privileged cultures in the country. The essay 'Reading, Writing, and Visual Production in the New South Africa', gets at the distinctions made between the two methods of knowing, giving us the complex relationship between writing and oracy, as we find it debated, even in the case of the analyses that the reader will encounter in this study. The distinction that was inaugurated by the colonial settler conception of the written word as the only valuable form of knowing and knowledge, meant the devaluation of the spoken word, which also came with the attendant colonially derisive

attitudes towards Blackness/Indigeneity and more significantly in the case the class of Blackness/Indigeneity that rejected colonial systems of knowing and being. It is this distinction that gives us the ontological categories of *amaqaba nama gqobhoka* as discussed above.

With the distinctions that were inaugurated by the devaluation of orature and the institutionalisation of the written word through the introduction of the printing press—a technology that became available in South Africa as early as 1823[9], initially—as part of the debates that are definitive of the story that we tell ourselves, it is useful to trace the modes of writing that are privileged in the country. As a secondary and derivative component, important to note is that with the introduction of the printing press, the development of the languages took on the roman script, seeing developments (orthographically and

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[9] The Lovedale Press was first established in 1823 – three years after the arrival of the British colonial settlers, whose arrival was memorialised – to this day – through the establishment of the 1820 Settler's Monument in Makhanda (formerly known as Grahamstown), Eastern Cape South Africa. This first Press was set-up at the Missionary Station in Tyhume Valley, 5km east of the University of Fort Hare, which was to become another one of South Africa's and Africa's proud and long-standing institutions serving the educational desires of the Indigenous populations of the country and the continent; producing leaders like Kenneth Kaunda, Nelson Mandela, Gatsha Buthelezi and many more. In its initial phase, the Press was under the directorship of Rev. John Ross of the Glasgow Missionary Society, and was unfortunately destroyed during the Frontier War of 1834-5 being re-established in 1839. This second initiative was also destroyed in 1846-7 during the war of the Axe. An inference can be made *viz.* the destruction of the Press in moments of the anti-colonial clashes between the Indigenous communities and the colonial settlers, which is to say that in view of the threat that the written word was seen to pose to the pre-existing life of the Indigene, prior to the establishment of a culture of letters, its destruction served the purpose of attempting to preserve this mode of life. This claim will be analysed in systematic detail in the third chapter. Irrespective of these setbacks, the Press was established with lasting impact nad longevity in 1861 and survived into the 20th century, giving us the works of literati like Tiyo Soga's U*hambo lo Mhambi* (1867), SEK Mqhayi's *Ityala Lamawele* (1914), *An African Tragedy* by RRR Dhlomo (1928) – which was the first novel written in English by a Black/Indigenous writer. After this title, the Press gave its readership the work of A.C. Jordan's *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* (1939), which in the 1990s was adapted as a television series for the South African public broadcasting commission. The mentioned titles are but a small, widely known, selection of texts that the Press produced in the late 19th – into the 20th centuries.

lexicographically), and standardisation. Once introduced, with the development and standardisation of the languages – a process of standardisation that continued well into the era of writers such as W.B. Rubusana and Noni Jabavu[10], the outcome was the dissemination of the Christian faith in the form of the translated bible, insofar as the book appeared in the languages of the Indigene(s).

Footnotes 7 and 8, as detailed above, demonstrates the importance of the written word, how it comes to define the South African landscape and how we are to relate to it in view of the changes that were instituted by those who imposed their ways of understanding in a foreign land. No better are the methods of resistance seen, than in Jabavu's author's note, wherein she demonstrates that the concept of the written word is a new one in our context, and as such—is susceptible to contortions and changes, in line with the dominant tradition in our context; this being the spoken word. For the fact that Jabavu is explicit about the liberties she takes when writing in the English language to express ideas that are innately rooted in her linguistic origins of isiXhosa, is indicative of the reality that even as Black/Indigenous

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[10] Jabavu's author's note to *The Ochre Peoples* (1982), raises a complaint vis-à-vis the changes in the writing of the isiXhosa language. She notes, "May I have a word surreptitiously with Xhosa-speaking readers – *'bite their ear'*, as we say? The present Orthography of the language came into general use after I had learnt its predecessor and I have never become reconciled to it. I dislike the appearance of symbols like "th" for aspirated 't'; marks for tone pitch; double vowels in plural noun-prefixes, verb tenses, demonstratives, ideophones, and so on. This is the reason why, where I have written out a Xhosa sentence, my spelling is erratic. I am among those who, *'eating with the old-fashioned spoon'*, believe that for languages so 'dominantly vocalic in character' […] nothing short of a new script should be devised. The roman is not suitable, and will always make for troublesome – and ugly – reading or writing." In the same note, she also asks her English speaking reader to bear with her form of writing as it borrows from her linguistic origins, which are isiXhosa—she (ibid.) notes: "And may I ask English-speaking readers also to forgive me in their turn? For I have here and there unconsciously inflected a word according to Xhosa rules in trying to convey a non-English thought. When my publishers' reader pointed out that it was an invented construction, I decided to risk letting it remain because it seemed to me that the 'new' word came closer to the meaning I hoped to render than the one which would have been grammatically correct."

intellectuals accepted some aspects of the thinking that came with colonial settler arrival—such acceptance was not wholesale and did not come without subversion.

This returns me to the analysis of modes of writing and the national narrative that such cultures of writing produce. Here, the work of JM Coetzee is not only useful, it is instructive in demonstrating the curation(s) of the national story that makes up the history of South Africa.[11] In his *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* – Coetzee (1988) demonstrates how effacing styles of writing began even prior to the introduction of the printing press, in the 18th century, with the first European voyeurs that were trekking through the country portraying Blackness/Indigeneity as "lazy", "idle" and "indolent". This portrayal was rooted in the Calvinistic culture of *constant* and *unending* labour—that was the culture of the colonial voyeurs. When considering the question of writing in 1976, Nadine Gordimer interrogated the nexus of politics, literature and the place of the writer when writing in a society like South Africa. She (Gordimer 1976: 135) comes to the conclusion that the conditions under which the writer writes have bearing on the kinds of material that they produce, and articulates this as follows: "[it] is certain that political pressures, in the form of a deep sense of injustice and inhumanity existing within [a writers'] society, can cause certain writers to question the luxury […] of writing at all, within a country like South Africa".

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[11] Ian Macqueen's work on historical writing is important with respect to narrative, and how it shapes the nation. In re-curriculating an Honours Course on Historiography, Macqueen's (2019: 12) analysis with his students "explores the role of histories in the consolidation of identities in the fledgling South African state and the ways in which narratives of the past played a legitimating function for competing political claims." Macqueen centres narrative, be it fiction or non-fiction, as necessarily politicised for the purposes of either including or excluding certain groups from categories of legitimate participants in the polity. His work corroborates the points made above with respect to Gordimer (1976 and 1988) and Coetzee (1988) insofar as both are concerned with writing, the political, and the public sphere. In corroborating this point, Macqueen directs us to the importance of addressing the political as it is embedded in the aesthetic (something akin to Drucilla Cornell's (1995) work on an aesthetics that attends to the political through an ethical feminism), stressing the reality that the move to silence politics in aesthetics is a move to maintain the political order as it presently exists—with all its injustices.

Moreover, (Gordimer 1976: 132), "All writers everywhere, even those like Joyce who cannot bear to live in their own countries, or those like Genet who live outside the pale of their country's laws, are shaped by their own particular society reflecting a particular political situation." This initial articulation was to be the precursor to the more systematic consideration of her *Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places* (1988). The production of *White Writing* and *The Essential Gesture* culminated in a critical review essay by Lewis Nkosi, which appeared with *Third World Quarterly* in 1989, wherein Nkosi poses the question of a South African literary culture.

To pose the question of a literary culture in any given society is demonstrative of the point that Rogers Smith (2003) makes when he examines the case of President Akayev of Kyrgyzstan who, in labouring to rebuild the nation, commissioned the curation of the national (hi)story, as a method of forging nationhood. The biggest objection to this project is found in the thinking of Mahmood Mamdani (2021) wherein he makes the point that the idea of sameness, homogeneity is used as the tool to forge the nation. What is striking, however, in the scholarship of the thinkers under examination in this study, i.e., William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi, is their commitment to co-existence and not homogeneity. The attentive reader will notice that their work objects to the notion of homogeneity, on the very premise that they appreciate the diversity that exists in our context. Chapter Three, through a detailed objection to Mamdani's (2021) hasty conclusion that frames South Africa as a post-colonial society, will detail this systematically, by showcasing how their arguments hold the realities of competing identities in tandem. In claiming that Gqoba and Mqhayi appreciate the complexity that is constitutive of their country, it is not to say that they are oblivious to, or dismissive of the prejudicial views of white settlers. Rather their thinking is premised on the principle of democratic participation. One could further add that their resistance to homogeneity, in the process of state formation, is precisely owed to the fact that they were

writing without the influence of a liberal conception of statecraft, which is what the colonial project has subsequently bequeathed to the nations of the colonised.

The saliency of Nkosi's (1989) question concerning a literary culture that is specifically South African, is seen in the continued uptake of this question, by scholars like Njabulo Ndebele (2006) in his collection of essays published with UKZN Press as *The Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Essays on South African Literature and Culture*, nearly two decades later. To say that the question of a literary culture is salient, is based on the argument that has been outlined so far and that will further be developed in the study, concerning the role of a national literary culture as either inclusive or exclusive. By drawing from Gordimer (1988) and Coetzee (1988), this point is argued in this chapter, to demonstrate the importance of writing in and writing out of public memory, the ontology of those who constitute the polity. Moreover, when considering the case of Kyrgyzstan, using Smith (2003) this point will be made clearer for the reader.

Ndebele's pursuance of the question privileges an analysis into the South African novel, and whether such an aesthetic form exists. The response to this question can be given in the affirmative, even as the category has been challenged greatly, which is to say the South African novel exists on the premise of exploring the question of who will inherit the land, in the form of the Afrikaans *Plaasroman* tradition, with pastoral literature by English writers like Olive Schriner's *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) demonstrative of the place of the question of landscape as the reader will find it in the realm of literature. More importantly, the work of AC Jordan when he writes of *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* (1939) is also demonstrative of this point of who will inherit the land, and whether such an inheritance will be premised on the values of the life that once was or the life that is becoming in the form of the colonial state machinery that was taking root, due to the insistence of colonial impositions. Similarly,

in the case of S.E.K. Mqhayi (1914) the reader bears witness to the existence of the South African novel, as it explores the question of the prevailing epistemic framework in the context of the country. My previous analysis on the political function of knowledge demonstrates this point most aptly and clearly, wherein I explore the question of *Knowledge as Political: The PSSA and the Geography of Dissent* (2019).

This debate is demonstrative of the relationship between politics and the aesthetic form, be it music, artworks, works of literature and even poetry. That is to say that in the omission of the political from the aesthetic—as is always the ever present objection from South African white liberal intellectuals—such a conceptual move conceals the place of the political as it has curated the current literary discourses, which influences the curation of the political domain. I am here cautious to heed the suggestion I find in Wolmarans' (2014) analysis when, using the work of C.S. Lewis and Mikhail Bakhtin, he comes to the suggestion of receiving as opposed to using a text. Simply, I am aware of the challenges that come with the crude instrumentalization of aesthetic works, without first having had received them, in understanding the authorial intention – a process that would denote a systematic and careful hermeneutics. Insofar as I am in agreement with this cautionary remark as discussed in the literature, I am also cautious of eliding the place of literary culture and how it has influenced and shaped the political landscape of the country. It is for this reason that t Ngcukaitobi (2018; 2021) has focused on the legal arguments concerning the land question, as such a question has been evaded by whiteness using the logic of separating the political from the aesthetic.

The substantiation of the claim that the political is always present in the aesthetic—especially in the case of South Africa—is found in the work of Pierneef whose artworks depict vast and empty landscape – as part of the narrative that seeks to style the landscape as

an empty abyss, necessarily conquerable and necessitating the invasion that came with colonial settler incursion. As a result of the justifying moves that we witness in Pierneef's work, the work of Dumile Feni (1967) specifically the case of *African Guernica* (charcoal on newsprint), wherein he is making a pointed statement about the state of the colonial invasion and how it has shaped the ontology of Blackness/Indigeneity, is a retort to this form of erasure. Depicting and centralising figures that are in the form of animals atop cattle, as the foregrounded images, with a receding image of human figures, in the background, Feni makes a striking observation and renders a chilling depiction of Blackness/Indigeneity's ontology as decimated by the actions of those who sought to style the land as empty, as a method of justifying their invasion.

Keeping with the question of invasion as it alters the ontology of Blackness/Indigeneity, my previous argument (Kumalo 2022b) on Mbulu's (1978) *Buza*, makes the case that the refracted ontology of Blackness/Indigeneity has implications for the social conditions, insofar as the observation is made by Mbulu and the question is posed in the refrain "*Ndiyabuza abazali bayoyikani inzalo yabo*". Inquiring about how our society has turned into one wherein parents are afraid of their own children, Mbulu underscores the observation that the reader initially finds in the work of Feni, wherein the salient remark is made concerning the nature of Black/Indigenous ontology to the extent that it is no longer recognisable even to Blackness/Indigeneity itself. This point merely seeks to stress the argument as it is made in the scholarship of the Black Archive, wherein I demonstrate how the act of theorising Blackness/Indigeneity continued even as Blackness was excluded from formal sites of knowledge production. And to concern myself with the artistic production of art as it contributes to state formation is predicated on precisely the point argued in this study, of the function of culture, as art, music, literature and poetry in contributing to the constitution of the nation, i.e., the story we tell ourselves concerns itself with how we tell it

and the implications of that telling. Wicomb's (2018), essay on the dilemma that faces the country demonstrates this point most aptly.

Coetzee (1988), corroborating the observations made by Black/Indigenous artists in relation to the erasures that subsequently impact the ontological status of Blackness/Indigeneity, suggests that this process is not by accident, but rather a conscious effort to style the southernmost tip of the African continent as necessarily and justifiably empty – positioning this landscape as the inheritance of Africa's new heirs, whiteness and its progeny. Such an act of clearing happens through the development of the culture of letters, and the function of the arts a s a political tool that creates the image of South Africa as a vast and empty abyss. Moreover, it is for this reason that this study concerns itself with the political as it is always embedded in the aesthetic, challenging the value-free notion that the aesthetic is without political intonations. This point, is itself suggested in the use of the selected works of analysis, that the writings of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi.

Coetzee's (1988) observations come in response to the portrayal of the landscape by Pierneef's paintings. Blackness/Indigeneity, in Pierneef's work, is not merely erased and displaced, the very notion of Indigeneity as belonging to the concept of South Africa is delegitimated and necessarily—framed as dismissible. With such erasures, the attentive reader might inquire into the usefulness of the arguments found in the scholarship of contemporary writers like Modiri (2018) and Ramose (2007), in relation to the validity that contests the legitimacy of the democratic project in the country. The simplest is that I am invested in thinking with a more historical tradition of Black/Indigenous intellectuals, who were not reacting to the contemporary currents of intellectual debates, styling their thinking in the form of Marxist criticism, or the liberal tradition. I am rather interested in the thinking

that prevailed in the country, prior to the epistemic grids that have now come to define global debates on democracy and multi-culturalism. Such an investigation is aimed at demonstrating the contribution that can be made using the thinking and scholarship of Blackness/Indigeneity, insofar as they were concerned with the realities of the Black/Indigenous populations in the face of colonial incursion.

In framing Black/Indigenous ontology as erasable, whiteness does not take note of how such a framework impacts the political conditions of possibility of and for Blackness/Indigeneity. Moreover, there seems to be a limited understanding of how such frameworks impact the lives and possibilities of the polity as an amalgam of the different identities that are constitutive of this society that holds a settler colonial population. The ontology of Blackness/Indigeneity is not only dismissed it is altogether not recognised to begin with, and this lack of recognition culminates in the socio-political quagmire that withholds belonging from Blackness/Indigeneity while styling the country as inherently defined by the culture and the aesthetics that are prescribed by whiteness. My contention is that such a mode of styling is not only dangerous, it fails to account for genuine postliberal futures that institutionalise democracy in the global South. Through an examination of the works of Gqoba and Mqhayi, I intend—in this study—to articulate such an orientation. Simply, postliberal futures that are intended to institutionalise democracy in the global South must be rooted in the political organising logics of the peoples of the global South. This suggestion is made in light of the reality that such a form of institutionalisation could be long lasting as it would be predicated on the cultures of those who institutionalise such democratic models. Importantly, such forms of institutionalisation ought not be seen as a form of substantiating western conceptions of democratic institutionalisation, but rather—as in the spirit of decolonial thinking—must be understood in line with the values that define the given context. It is for this reason that the analyses presented in this study engage and concern

themselves with the thinking of intellectuals who were committed to such a political imaginative process, even as they were speaking from a tradition that had not yet been established, in relation to theorising and thinking about Africa, and the African condition. In such a formulation, we see—yet again—the novelty of this study.

In the suggestion, therefore, that the aesthetic form ought not be sullied with the consideration of the political, such a claim seeks to perpetuate an ethical culpability wherein whiteness knowingly displaces Blackness/Indigeneity, all the while harnessing its labour power to prop up the ill-gotten gains of mineral wealth enrichment, farmlands and the private preserve of the academy as primarily for whiteness. Chapter Three will subsequently interrogate the ontological derision that is directed at Blackness/Indigeneity insofar as this being is interested in pursuing life and interactions in the political domain using a register that is indigenous to their language, geography and context. In view of the challenges that are inaugurated by derision, the subsequent analysis poses the question of the ontological legitimacy of this state of being, which is to say can Blackness/Indigeneity as *Iqaba* be possessive of ontological legitimacy. This question is asked in relation to whiteness acknowledging Blackness/Indigeneity *iff* Blackness/Indigeneity styles itself in the garb of whiteness; recognition of Black/Indigenous ontology is thus a challenge—non-existent and continues to define how Blackness/Indigeneity is viewed and treated when constituting the South African public; with derision and scorn.

This contestation is what characterises the distinction between *amaqaba* (smearers of red ochre) *namakholwa* (and converts). To reiterate, this contestation is not one that privileges Christianity or religious contestation as South Africa's contemporary political tension, but ought to be understood as the derivative result of western colonial epistemic imposition. Put in another way, we come to define South Africa in the ways that we do owing

to the role of having imposed the Christian religion on the Black/Indigenous populations; an imposition that was further accompanied by the devaluation and delegitimation of Black/Indigenous ontology. The contemporary contestation, then, is premised on the raciality of our society, but cannot be understood outside of this historical rift that was instituted by epistemic and colonial imposition, for without such imposition there would be no political tension that contests the morality of the constitutional project in the country. This claim is predicated on the fact that those who came to proposition for political autonomy—and acted even on behalf of *amaqaba*—were those who had acquired (those who were broken-in, i.e. *amagqobhoka*) colonial missionary education.

To the extent that *amagqobhoka* embraced the colonial ways of life, we have Gqoba (Opland, Kuse and Maseko, 2015: 228)—in his address to the Lovedale Literary Society in 1885—claiming that "From what I have already shown, in spite of all the various and *hideous*, as well as *absurd* notions, the natives entertain and their *superstitions*, yet in some respects they are much nearer the light, though they dwell in darkness, than many would suppose." (emphasis added). Moreover, he (Gqoba) maintains:

> May the day soon come when we natives of this country shall have altogether been freed from the power of heathenism in all its forms, and when we in turn shall willingly and out of the same love that prompted the Britons to sacrifice everything for Christ's sake, do the same for our benighted countrymen! (Opland, Kuse and Maseko, 2015: 229)

Gqoba (1885) demonstrates the distinction between himself as *ikholwa/igqobhoka* and *amaqaba*, as this distinction substantiates Smith's (2003) notion of "political peoplehood". In detailing national identity through explorations of belonging, the study analyses the stories of peoplehood that shape South African identity as it is informed by the tension outlined in the

introduction, that is a tension owing to the exclusion of those who did not acquiesce to western colonial modes of being.

1.7. Research Methodology

In the engagement of materials that are written in isiXhosa, necessarily the justification of how the texts—from which the study draws—are not only interpreted but, more importantly, the linguistic competence that informs the claims made in the study, are required. There are three methodological approaches that have been used in this study, in the engagement of this material. First, the linguistic competence of the candidate is proficient to the extent that I read and write in the language, at proficiency level of academic writing in postgraduate research. This component goes back to the relationship that is initially identified in the study by Kalaga (2015) when he writes of the importance between language and interpretation. To be sure, Kalaga (2015) argues that linguistic competence—that is the relationship between language and interpretation—are crucial in getting a correct analysis of the text under examination.

While the language is not my mother-tongue, with isiZulu as the home-language of the candidate, proficiency in isiXhosa has been developed over the course of the candidates engagement with what Kumalo (2020c) terms the Black Archive in scholarship. Second, and more theoretically adept, the study draws from the theoretical developments that have defined the debate on the uses of African languages in the development of knowledge—in higher education in the country. This approach is informed by the socio-cultural linguistics (Vale and Maseko, 2016) debates that have troubled the notion of the intellectualisation of African languages in the development of scientific knowledge.

In a detailed analysis of what Maseko and Vale (2016) call the 'languages of power and the power of language' they trouble the continued denigration of African languages in higher education, in the country. Thirdly, and interrelated to the question of confident and competent use; the materials engaged in the study have been translated through the processes

of opening up such work to wider engagement. The translations of all the texts that appear in this study, in isiXhosa, have been done by socio-cultural linguists like Jeff Opland, Pamela Maseko, Peter Mtuze, and Wandile Kuse to mention a few.

This final methodological approach is contestable, however, if the reader is attentive to the works of translation studies as it has been developed by scholars like Apter (2013), in her book *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* and her earlier work (2006) *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*. More importantly, the work of Nicholas Ostler (2005) further sheds some light on the contestations of translation, insofar as the work of translating in or out of a language is negotiated by processes of ascribing and forfeiting meaning, as such meaning is rooted in the cultural epistemologies of the progenitor text. This challenge is forestalled in the translation work of the Opland collection on the basis of the cultural situatedness of the translators. More importantly, in each edition of the texts that contain the translations of the works, as they are translated from isiXhosa into English, the editors surface the challenges with translation, demonstrating their awareness of the challenges that define this area of scholarship.

This debate is considered in light of the question that arises from Gyasi's (1999: 78) provocation when he suggests that "If one wants to benefit from African culture, if one wants to express the African imagination, one cannot put the aside the African language in favour of an academic European language." This proposition suggests the importance of confronting the tension that is predicated on the epistemic exclusion of Blackness/Indigeneity in the political and intellectual economies of South Africa, and will be treated in more systematic detail, below.

Having traced the problem, and found it to be a tension that is predicated on the exclusion of Blackness owing to their rejection of epistemic impositions, I analyse this tension (that is a tension of who can claim belonging in South Africa) using the work of William Wellington

Gqoba (1885) and S.E.K. Mqhayi (1914). As outlined in the introduction, the informing logic of this study holds that by systematically studying the work of the two Black intellectuals, the tension inaugurated by who can claim belonging to South African national identity, can be illumed and addressed in novel ways. It is important to consider the question of why we are at all concerned with the notion of who can claim belonging in South Africa.

As already highlighted in the preceding argument, the main concern with who can claim belonging is premised on the exclusions from the public and political sphere. The delimitations of who is able to take up a South African identity, insofar as having their culture recognised and respected as a legitimate component of the public sphere, is what brings up political and social tensions. These systems of exclusion have been challenged in the scholarship by legal scholars, philosophers and practitioners of legal philosophy, with the implication being a consideration of what such a contestation entails for the political project of democracy in the country.

In light of this, the study addresses itself to the question of ontology, inasmuch as ontology is an important marker of recognition. The argument pursued demonstrates the place of ontological recognition to the extent that it determines the ways in which national culture is curated, either substantiating the existence of one mode of being or excluding that mode of being from consideration. Historically and contemporarily, such exclusions have been contested by those who have hitherto been included on the premise that they present themselves in the registers that are legible to white settler colonial ontologies and their progeny. The contestation of these strategies of inclusion gives us the principles that we find in the thinking of William Wellington Gqoba who argues for a deferential system of mutual understanding between the two cultures. His suggestion is similar to the challenge posed against the category of incommensurability as we have found it in philosophy (*cf*. Zhang 2007, when he writes about *Unexpected Affinities: Readings Across Cultures* and Mcintyre's

(1988) *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*). In agreement with the work of recent scholars and literature (*cf*. Ndebele, 2006; Twidle, 2019 and Wicomb, 2018), Gqoba made the historical point of the ability for a mutually deferential exchange between the cultures of whiteness and Blackness/Indigeneity, on the premise that such deferentiality is only achievable in the context of mutual understanding.

The evidence, when reviewing historical literature (Gordon, 2021; Ogunaike, 2016; Achebe, [1977]/2019), demonstrates that Black/Indigenous ontology has been historically excluded on the premise that it does not conform to the hegemonic conception of the social order as it is defined by whiteness in the curation of the national story in the country. Demonstrating this point, Coetzee (1988: 5) argues that "If the work of hands on a particular patch of earth, digging, ploughing, planting building, is what inscribes it as a the property of its occupiers *by right*, then the hands of black serfs doing the work had better not be seen." That is, because Blackness as Indigeneity—and having had clung to the historical methods of organising society—rejected colonial modes of education, the written word and the Christian faith, inclusion of this category of being privileges the labour potential of Blackness as Indigeneity, while denying this ontological category substantive inclusion in the public sphere. Put in another way, Blackness/Indigeneity is only merely tolerated in the South African white imagination, precisely because it challenges the epistemic framework(s) that were imposed on the African landscape through colonial incursion.

Resultantly, the scholarship of Black intellectuals has been inadequately engaged with, in terms of developing, theorising and responding to this tension. To make this observation is premised on the reality that Black/Indigenous intellectuals have conceptually done the work of demonstrating how this exclusion impacts the political project of trying to curate an identity that is both inclusive and national, that can hold all the identities that are constitutive of South Africa, equally. Moreover the thinking of W.W. Gqoba and S.E.K.

Mqhayi is apt in responding to this tension owing to the fact that insofar as they were *amagqobhoka* they equally retained deference for the pre-colonial modes of existence that *amaqaba* clung to, even as coloniality attempted to kill off the modes of being that existed in the country, prior to the arrival of colonial settlers.

The retention of a deferential attitude to the life that existed prior to the imposition of colonial economies of being is what interests me in the pursuit of this study. That is to say that I am interested in thinking with an intellectual tradition that does not suffer from the ventriloquist moves that are witnessed in the contemporary erasure of the lives of the people that we ought to be thinking about and theorising (and by ventriloquism, consider Mamdani (2021) when he reduces the lived realities of Blackness/Indigeneity to a system of analysis that elides the complicity of whiteness in the crime of apartheid). By appealing to this historical tradition, I am interested in challenging mainstream theoretical articulations that have done little to think seriously about the act of theorising Blackness/Indigeneity. I am interested in forms of theorising that are in alignment with the project of decolonial futures, in a country that has failed to produce a functional democracy that benefits the lives of those who were historically oppressed.

By existing between two worlds, through a deferential acknowledgment of Blackness and a process of acculturation through missionary colonial education, Gqoba and Mqhayi could give us novel responses to the raciality (understood as political tension) that is the subject of analysis in this study. Resultantly, I use an "in-disciplinary" (Mignolo, 2021: xi) approach that responds and possibly defuses the tension identified above, using the theoretical tools found in the confluence of literature (literary hermeneutics) and political philosophy (argument-based, issue-oriented logical-rigour that gives us terminological precision). In this decision, I follow Hull's (2020) suggestion that literature and philosophy can inform one another when dealing with value conflict. In combining literature and

philosophy, the novelty of this study is demonstrated in our ability to respond to political questions. The study, subsequently articulates national identity, as it inspires a sense of belonging, for all South Africans, using the thought of Black intellectuals, with the question that inspires such an analysis being: How do Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi (1914) facilitate _Belonging_ through the articulation of an _Inclusive National Identity_.

My project is, here, inspired by the thinking that defines decolonial theory, which is interested in developing theory using the tools accessible to us, in our varied and variegated geographies. By applying myself to the South African literary tradition, reading this literature in a philosophical manner, in an attempt to respond to the political problems that have been identified by the study, the objective lies in demonstrating how we can effectively develop theory that attends to our own context(s), without constantly having to borrow theoretical importation from the global north. This explicative method locates the study in political philosophy as a sub-discipline of Political Science.

1.8. Conceptual Framework

As indicated above, there is a dearth of engagement with the scholarship and thinking of Black intellectuals in responding to contemporary political questions in South Africa. This dearth is seen in what has been termed the 'death of theory' by Kumalo (2020b), who laments how a certain sense of paralysis has arrested the contemporary scholar – be they theorists of decoloniality, post-coloniality or post-structuralism. It is for this reason that there are claims propounded that seek to suggest that what we have witnessed in our context has been an epistemicide (see Lebakeng, Phalane and Nase, 2006; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: Ramose, 2014). This claim has been substantively challenged by Kumalo (2020a: 19) when he maintains that in contesting such a claim, one does "not deny the historicity of coloniality, but rather [the aim] is to showcase that the claim of epistemicide only intensifies epistemic injustice." In agreement with Quinton's (1967: 2) observation that political philosophers have

muddied the waters, *viz.* "[it] has been widely held, indeed, that there really is no such thing as political philosophy apart from the negative business of revealing the conceptual errors and methodological misunderstandings of those who have addressed themselves in a very general way to political issues". I suggest that this too can be said of decolonial theorists. Consider the work of decolonial scholars who have added nothing of substantive value other than the critique of colonial power structures (see Grosfoguel, 2007 & 2013; Maldonado-Torres, 2004). While the critique of colonial power structures is useful and insightful, there is a need to move beyond this critique and begin to proffer substantive theoretical propositions that do more to address contemporary challenges; one of which is the question of belonging as it is attached to national identity.

Insofar as a decolonial critique is useful, there is the limitation that such a critique cannot and, indeed, does not give substantive weight to the project of not only imagining but also of articulating a probable framework that could potentially hold these competing identities (those—Black/*amagqobhoka*—who could claim belonging to South Africa owing to their Christian missionary education or were Christians on their arrival—colonial settlers—and those who were excluded, *amaqaba*) coevally and in tandem.

Writing about the work of Magema Fuze and his role in the 1850s, onwards, in developing a coherent conception of Blackness in the country, Hlonipha Mokoena (2009: 596) opines thusly about the constitution of the public as it is understood by Black intellectuals; "[specifically], Khumalo's observation that the term *ibandla[12]* referred to a 'sphere' or 'public' is extended here in my effort to demonstrate how Fuze – in debating, as an *Ilanga* reader and writer, the role of the newspaper's readers – borrowed, constructed and

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[12] The concept of *ibandla*, while denotative of a public sphere, also has a secondary meaning, that of being a religious based organisation or gathering. The contemporary and popular uses of the word, nowadays, solely denotes a congregation (i.e., a religious based organisation and gathering).

attempted to publicise a vocabulary for defining the *ibandla*." Elaborating on the impact that the writings of Black intellectuals had on the life and times of the Indigene, Mokoena (2009: 597) continues, "[many] historians and commentators have followed Cope in depicting the literary products of [*amakholwa]* intellectuals as epiphenomenon of the 'colonial' environment and condition, or a 'clash of cultures.'" What this mode of thinking suggested, and what it continues to suggest is the fact that Blackness has no thoughts of their own and a conception of who they are, outside of the colonial strictures that operate within and through this binary duality of (*amakholwa*) and (*amaqaba*) classifications. As noted in footnote 5, *amaqaba* had their own ways of understating the state, law and morality. This fact is taken up by both Gqoba (1885) and Mqhayi (1914), who—even as they were the products of colonial missionary education—recognised the preceding systems of knowing that existed in pre-colonial Black society. Such a recognition, which mediates the uses of both epistemic frameworks (western and those that were indigenous to Xhosa people prior to conversion, i.e. *amaqaba*), gives us novel and useful ways of responding to the political tension inaugurated by epistemic imposition.

Political theorists (see, for example, Orchard, 2002; Cerutti, 1992; Nederveen Pieterse, 1991; Smith, 1998 and Smith, 2003) have applied themselves to the question of national identity, nationalism and nationhood – as these identities are fashioned through discursive social frameworks and conceptions of belonging. Smith (2003: 9) discussing the uses of national stories in fashioning national identity highlights how such processes inaugurate bitter tensions and rivalries owing to the ends for which national stories are used, when he maintains "[…] the organisation of humanity into particular political peoples seems often to be achieved by questionable if not repugnant means and to provide a breeding ground for some of the most bitter human animosities and vicious conduct." In the case of South African society, this vicious conduct aligned itself with the criminalisation of Black

ontology, through the promulgation of the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895. Prior to this piece of legislation, the epistemic hierarchy established by the colonial missionary education system had—even Black intellectuals, the likes of Gqoba—maintaining that the belief systems of Black people were "hideous and absurd" (Opland, Kuse, and Maseko, 2015: 228).

I must qualify this claim. It must be noted that Gqoba, in this address that styled Black/Indigenous modes of life as 'absurd' and 'hideous', was speaking to the white missionaries at the Lovedale Literary Society. His utterances were denotative of the attitudes of the missionaries. Resultantly, it must be understood that he was playing into the biases and prejudices of the white settlers and these utterances cannot be framed as his own genuine sentiments. This demonstrates the importance of a careful hermeneutics, one in which we are invited to read this address against the rest of his literary oeuvre. To be sure, the systematic reading of his 'The Native Tribes, their Laws, Customs and Beliefs' (1885) is the specific text, to which the study is making mention here. Such a reading will corroborate the position that Gqoba's writing was concerned with the audiences that he was speaking to, as a system of mounting an active resistance against the impositions of colonialists.

To return, then, to an analysis of the South African literary landscape as it helps me think through the political contestations that define our context, it is useful to bear in mind that an analysis of belonging is fraught with numerous contestations and the question of whose mode of life will prevail under the tension inaugurated by the distinguishing categories of *amaqaba nama gqobhoka* further politicises the problem.[13] The two positions, that is

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[13] This question is treated by both Gqoba and Mqhayi, seen in the assertion by Gqoba – made through the character u-Bhed'dlaba – ([1888]/1906: 47) when he writes, *"[uvakele] ekhalima ngobushushu obukhulu esithi, 'Nokuba kukwizindlu ezifundisa amashishini, nokuba kusezikuleni zomthinjana, tu nto yona siyenzelwayo ngoku ngaba bantu. Mna okwam, nindibona nje sendincamile, ingaba nini kabe madoda, nani mthinjana wakowethu eningaba nisakholwa; koko ningengakabaqondi aba bantu kuba nisengabantwana.'"* [With deep emotion he [Bhedidlaba] said: "Whether in trade schools or in schools for youngsters, these people are doing nothing for us. I've lost all hope. I don't know: you might still be satisfied because you're young and don't know these people". In the case

amaqaba nama gqobhoka, as held by Blackness are best captured by the tale of Twin and Twin-Twin in Zakes Mda's (2000) *Heart of Redness*, who highlights a contestation between what has been termed in the literature a contestation between modernity and tradition. This framing is, however, misleading – as it carries with it the implicit assumptions that frame Blackness as "backward, retarded and gradual" (Mudimbe, 1988: 10). The disingenuousness of reducing the political contestation between Twin and Twin-Twin (representations of the categories *amaqaba nama gqobhoka*, respectively) to a mere contestation between tradition and modernity classifies *amaqaba* as backward, retarded and gradual, and is explained in the framework developed in footnote 5 above – wherein I demonstrate how *amaqaba* were merely 'illiterate' according to the imposed western epistemic framework. *Amaqaba* had their own ways of life, state organisation, legal frameworks and morality, which were all displaced owing to the epistemic injustices and colonial violence championed by the colonial settler and their progeny. This contestation then, between *amaqaba nama gqobhoka*—insofar as it is inspired by epistemic injustice and imposition, is seen in the stark contradistinctive positions taken up by Es'kia Mpahlele and Mazisi Kunene. In the work 'Prometheus in Chains' Mphahlele makes the case for the uptake of English as a medium that facilitates the expression of the culture of Blackness. He (Mphahlele, 1984: 90) argues "[we] appropriated these colonial languages, domesticated them in order to express an African sensibility, tradition, modern, rural or urban, political or religious: the ultimate phase of emancipation." As an objection to this position, I appeal to the work of Mazisi Kunene (1992: 32), when he suggests that "[this] language is responsible for the death of many of your Ancestors."

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of Mqhayi, we see similar concerns two decades on when he asserts (1914: v) "[*intetho] nemikhwa yesiXhosa iya itshona ngokutshona ngenxa yelizwi nokhanyo olukhoyo, oluze nezizwe zaseNtshona-langa, oonyana bakaGogi noMagogi*." [The customs and laws of the Xhosa people are dying owing to 'enlightenment' that came with the colonial settler, the sons of George and his principalities."] The debate is taken up in the latter part of the 20th century by some of the leading intellectuals of Black thought, this is a debate that has been raging in our context since the time of the arrival of the colonial settler and his descendants.

Crudely, while Mphahlele embraced the English language and its attendant violence(s), he elided, from his claim of Blackness having domesticated these languages, the violence with which these languages came. It is this violence that inaugurates a double political tension framed in the research question(s) as intra-Black conflict (between *amaqaba nama gqobhoka*) and interracial tension between Blackness and whiteness.

In another reading of the distinction that defines the work of Kunene and Mphahlele, one who is cognisant of Black ontology will note that the two speak from polar oppositional perspectives. The former, speaks from a deep understanding of the implications of language and how it is that language allows one access to culture, for as Fanon ([1952]2007: 2) argues that "[to] speak means being able to use a certain syntax and possessing the morphology of such and such a language, but it means above all assuming a culture and bearing the weight of a civilisation". Kunene (1992: 30), makes the case that "the idea of language as a strategy of power and political control must be kept in mind as a crucial political and social question." The implication of taking on a language along with its attendant civilisation, a fact of which Kunene (1992) is well aware, is expounded upon through the work of Kwaku A. Gyasi (1999: 75) when he maintains, "[because] historically, Africans found themselves placed in this linguistic situation [of imposition] the early African writers started to write in the languages of the colonizers without considering all the implications involved." In this instance, one can be forgiving of Mphahlele owing to the fact that due to the violence of colonial disruption, he comes to make these claims having already grown up removed from culture, a fact that – to an extent – culminates in his fascination with the notion of a double exile that defines his literary *oeuvre* and critique.

When one pays attention to Gqoba's (1888) *Ingxoxo Enkulu Nge Mfundo* and Mqahyi's (1914) *Ityala Lamawele*, they find that the two texts used as the tools that might articulate a sense of belonging through fashioning an inclusive national identity are both

written in isiXhosa. To juxtapose 'The Native Tribes, their Laws, Customs and Beliefs' (1885) against *Ingxoxo Enkulu Nge Mfundo* (1888) is deliberate in the desire to demonstrate the necessity of negotiating the tensions that existed between the two cultures. Furthermore, it serves to underscore the process of corroborating the conclusions reached about each text, which moves the study away from merely 'using' the text, but rather toward the process of 'receiving' a text—as argued in the explanation on deliberative democracy, detailed above. This was deliberate on both their parts (i.e. Gqboa and Mqhayi) owing to the recognition of the political function of language detailed by Kunene (1992) and Gyasi (1999). In the case of Gqoba, there exists only one text written in the English language, and that was his address to the Lovedale Literary Society from which I quoted above. Both their literary oeuvres—which will be used as an elucidating tool for the purposes of analysing the texts under investigation in this study—are developed solely in isiXhosa.

Gyasi's (1999: 78) position on this matter is instructive in the framework it develops for the contemporary scholar, when Gyasi argues, "[if] one wants to benefit from African culture, if one wants to express the African imagination, one cannot put aside the African language in favour of an academic European language." This claim is what gives rise to the concluding question of the study, wherein the study will investigate 'How do the categories of *amaqaba nama gqobhoka* inform contemporary calls for epistemic justice and decolonisation in South Africa?'

The contestation that defines the question of belonging, as it is the primary focus of this thesis, is rooted in the inability of South Africa to reach consensus on the question of national identity. This failure, that creates competing identities, is rooted precisely in the observation as made above here using the work of Kwaku Gyasi. The Indigene in South Africa, has been historically misread, truncated through the imposition of a language that does not belong to the Indigene; a reality that causes Gqoba to take issue with the structure

and function of missionary (colonial education) as far back as the 1880s. As suggested by Mokoena (2009) this angst against colonial impositions dates even further back, to the scholarship and thinking of Magema Fuze in the 1850s. Aligned with the work of Gyasi (1999), what -in fact- we are after is what Coetzee (1988: 9) terms an "Adamic language, one in which Africa will naturally express itself, that is to say, a language in which there is no split between signifier and signified, and things are their names." While there is no school of thought, in literary theory that holds that there can never be a split between signifier and signified, Coetzee—here—is making the point of a literary tradition that is of the landscape and rooted in the cultural and epistemic frameworks (Indigenous) of the land. The framework developed by Coetzee (1988), Fanon ([1952]/2007), Gyasi (1999), Kunene (1992) and a series of other intellectuals who argue the point of language, reveals the initial stumbling block that confronts us in such a project, that being the reality of articulating a national culture/identity as a project that has pre-emptively failed owing to the displacement of the Indigene's language.

From these considerations, what we are due to inquire about is the state as it fosters an inclusive national identity that adequately responds to the historical injustices that are challenged by those who challenge the constitutionality of the country. With Ramose (2007: 310) suggesting that "[the] memory of the original injustice of conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation shall not be erased until substantive justice in the form of recovery and restoration of lost sovereignty remedies the situation", we are invited to think critically about national identity that inspires a sense of belonging. Herein, lies the novelty of this study, as it applies itself to what is seemingly an immutable political tension that merits systematic consideration. While some political philosophers might want to suggest that the formation of states was itself defined by violence, in our context, this violence continues on a daily basis,

defining the lives of Blackness as it once did, when the yoke of coloniality was still pressingly present in our midst.

1.9. Structure of Research

As this study is conducted as a 'thesis by publication', the structure of the research, while classified here as chapters, outlines the publications that are constitutive of the thesis. This thesis consists of five chapters with each of the middle three chapters being an article published in an academic journal. An introductory chapter is added (Chapter One) in which the whole study is detailed, substantiated and framed. Lastly a concluding chapter (Chapter Five) is added to tie together the argument that is advanced in the study from the introductory chapter, through to the last chapter of the study. This last chapter, further considers the role of language in thinking with/about the postliberal conception of democracy, insofar as this aids us in outlining an inclusive national identity in the country.

The study uses one methodological approach that is outlined in the first publication, Chapter Two.

The outline of each chapter is in the form of the abstract for each of the three papers that make up the study. The first article (Chapter Two) outlines how both Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi (1914) analyse and engage the notion of belonging in their work. Such an historical account aims to demonstrate how the political project of creating a South African identity fractured Black ontology to the extent that presently, South Africa—as a State—is considered to be the result of an amoral and unjustifiable political set-up; a claim that is propounded, by at least three leading intellectuals of our time (see Madlingozi, 2017; Modiri, 2018 and Ramose, 2007). With Chapter Two analysing Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi (1914), Chapter Three sketches how the work of both thinkers can be used to potentially diffuse both intra-Black tension and interracial tension. The chapter outlines how both tensions are premised on the colonial impositions of conquest and epistemic injustice. Chapter Four conducts a

reflective analysis that interrogates decoloniality as theoretical tradition, and how it has been developed in South Africa. The principal concern in the chapter deals with the question of decoloniality as facilitating the realisation of epistemic justice through the recognition of the 'ontological legitimacy' of *iqaba*. Thus, the final chapter, Chapter Five ,contextualises this study in these contemporary debates vis-à-vis language, demonstrates how Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi (1914) contribute to the contemporary development of theory, while also showcasing how the thinking of these intellectuals facilitates the articulation of an inclusive national identity. The concluding chapter thinks through the categories of *amaqaba nama gqobhoka*, as informing contemporary calls for epistemic justice and decolonisation. Focusing on the linguistic choices that define the oeuvres of Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi (1914), the chapter outlines internal incongruencies with the notion of *amaqaba* as 'illiterate' masses. Such a move reiterates the original meaning of *amaqaba*, which facilitates a detailed engagement with the concept of epistemic justice vis-à-vis *amaqaba*.

1.9.1. *Chapter Two – Outlining Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi's (1914) Engagement with Belonging and National Identity in South Africa*

As South Africa moved closer towards democracy in the early 1990s, the country was faced with the task of framing national identity, which would be characteristic of national culture. In her collection of essays edited by van der Vlies (2018), Wicomb (1991 and 1995) frames this demand as the South African dilemma. Concerning myself with this 'dilemma' I outline how Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi (1914) engaged with the question of belonging.

Such an outline takes issue with the raciality that came to define South Africa owing to colonial imposition; a raciality that inaugurated an epistemic hierarchy that distinguished between *amaqaba nama gqobhoka*. By investigating how this was analysed by Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi (1914), the aim is in demonstrating how this 'dilemma' (Wicomb, 2018) might be overcome without reproducing exclusionary logics. Such a move responds to the literature

that questions the constitutionality of the Constitution, while evaluating the deliberative democratic systems that yield compromise through mutually agreeable and easily accessible conclusions that are binding on all citizens.

1.9.2. *Chapter Three – Amaqaba nama Gqobhoka? Colonial Derision of Black Ontology*

With the previous chapter outlining how Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi (1914) engage the concept of belonging in South Africa, this chapter is concerned with the question of whether their thinking can be used in diffusing the tension inaugurated by coloniality. Working through the two concepts of *amaqaba nama gqobhoka*, I outline 'ontological derision'. I argue that ontological derision is rooted in intra-Black conflict that leads to interracial conflict, and propose ontological recognition as a resolution to the tensions that exist in the South African political landscape. To reach the postcolonial condition advanced by scholars like Mahmood Mamdani (2021), the modes of life that existed in South Africa prior to colonial imposition need to be recognised as legitimate and worthy of participation in the formation of the public sphere. I argue that recognising this ontology will inform the genuine formation of an inclusive national identity in South Africa. Such a proposal is rooted in the thinking of William Wellington Gqoba, who suggests that the more the two cultures understand each other, the less tensions will exist between them.

1.9.3. *Chapter Four – Can Iqaba Possess Ontological Legitimacy?*

With the previous chapter considering the ontological derision that defines how the Indigene is treated in the political landscape of the country, I am here concerned with how decolonial theory allows for a recognition of the 'ontological legitimacy' of *iqaba*. In this chapter, I think through the recognition of the "ontological legitimacy" of *iqaba*—a concept that is found in South Africa, owing to the ontological split among Blackness/Indigeneity that was promulgated by colonial incursion. I do so using the question: "How will black people, long accustomed to dispossession and deprivation, adjust to a new condition of not being racial

victims," which was initially posed by Zoë Wicomb in the early 1990s. It is a question inspired by the end of apartheid and the looming promise of democracy. I juxtapose this question with a close reading of Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi's "Intshayelelo: Imbali."

Simply, the thesis of this article holds that *iqaba* possesses ontological legitimacy, *iff* they take heed of the instructions outlined in Mqhayi's propositions of the importance of historical self-knowledge. Moreover, ontological legitimacy and an inclusive national identity are two sides of the same coin of recognition.

1.9.4. *Chapter Five – Conclusion: Epistemic Justice for Iqaba*

With the thesis analysing intra-Black tension owing to the discontinuities inaugurated by colonial violence, and interracial tensions that were sparked by the settler's derision of Black ontology, in this concluding chapter, I will consider how the categories of *amaqaba nama gqobhoka* inform contemporary calls for epistemic justice and decolonisation. Simply, the chapter answers the question posed in the thesis, whether the thinking of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi fosters an inclusive national identity in South Africa through outlining belonging. Taking my cue from Kunene (1992) in his analysis of language, I think through the possibility of realising epistemic justice for those who were considered *amaqaba*.

In the secondary move, the chapter considers whether epistemic justice could be the possible bridge that establishes all participants – i.e., *amaqaba*, *amagqobhoka* and the colonial settler – as equal and free citizens who participate in public deliberation for the establishment of an inclusive national identity, through mutually agreeable terms that are binding of all citizens.

CHAPTER TWO

Outlining Gqoba's (1888) and Mqhayi's (1914) Engagement with the Dilemma of Belonging and National Identity in South Africa

2.1. Introduction

I begin by clarifying what is meant by national identity, national culture and how they feed into the concept of belonging, as I use it in this study. These concepts are interrelated, as the reader will note it below, but also stand alone. Moreover, the argument in this chapter does not yet seek to demonstrate the application of the knowledge that it will draw from—that being the scholarship of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi—even as I will do a cursory examination of Mqhayi's work. The project, in this chapter lies in defending the case that alternative sources should be called upon when theorising democracy in Africa. This argument is made considering the suggestion that contemporary democratic theory, as it draws from liberal conceptions of democracy, fails when applied in contexts such as ours. That is to say that this chapter does not seek to advance an argument that already examines how such forms of theorisation are to be done, as the scope of this chapter does not permit such an approach.

National culture—as it is defined by literature and the culture of letters in South Africa, to borrow from Coetzee (1988)—is predicated on the predominant epistemic framework. Kumalo (2021: 2) calls this state of affairs an epistemic hierarchy "…that distinguishes between those who are regarded as having more epistemic authority […] and those whose knowledge is treated as fictitious, mythological, and subsequently, necessarily, dismissible."

National culture is underpinned by national identity, as national identity is defined by the authority of a hegemonic culture. This definition cannot be understood outside the scope

of the 'colonial matrix of power'[1] that establishes systems by which an entire people can and are dismissed—read, erased—from history. These processes of erasure take place through systems of representation encountered in the national literature of South Africa, with some debates concerning the validity of a national South African literary culture (*cf.* Samuelson 2008). National culture and identity – working congruently – define belonging. Excluded cultures are excluded as they do not define national identity and by this, exclusion is meant their existence outside of what was to become the framework of South Africa, after the arrival of colonial settlers. Exclusion was premised on the rejection of the written word, those who clung to the old way of life were excluded not only from the conception of the nation but were further epistemically excluded to through the promulgation of legislation such as the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895.

National culture and identity, then, denote two sides of the same coin that determines inclusion and exclusion (belonging). The problem of inclusion and exclusion[2] highlights the focus of this chapter, which is classed as a dilemma in the development of the analysis. Said

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[1] To speak of a 'colonial matrix of power' is denotative of two things. First the concept is borrowed from decolonial literature, be it within the South African context (*cf.* Mothoagae 2021) or in the tradition of the Latin American decolonial tradition (*cf.* Mignolo 2023 & 2011). In the tradition that combines decoloniality and the epistemic decolonisation movement, Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2018) *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization* has been influential in detailing this conceptual tool. In this first denotation, this study aligns itself with the decolonial tradition. Second, the manifestation of such a matrix is seen in the attempt to control the epistemic, social, ontological, and political conditions of possibility—what I would term, the political—in relation to the lives of the former colonized subjects.

[2] The argument advanced here suggests that the modes of writing encountered in the scholarship of those who question (*cf.* Madlingozi 2017; Modiri 2018) the constitutionality of South Africa, themselves, produce systems of exclusion. What is intended by this suggestion is the reality that when looking to the scholarship of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi, national belonging and identity are framed using a non-exclusionary logic. Their scholarship develops a deep and philosophical consideration of systems of political governance that to hold the competing identities of South Africa in tandem. This is where the claim is found, that their writing could suggest a postliberal articulation of systems of democracy as they are found in contexts of the global South, but more specifically, in the context of South Africa.

dilemma is analysed using the work of William Wellington Gqoba and Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi. As the biographical details of both the authors under consideration have already been detailed in the previous chapter, I will elect to focus on the development of the argument in this part of the thesis, as opposed to recounting the biographical details of the selected authors that I will be dealing with in this study.

To frame the South African question of national culture—and by extension belonging—as a dilemma comes from Wicomb's writing ([1991]/2018) when she thinks through nationhood and identity in her essay entitled 'Tracing the Path from National to Official Culture'. Wicomb comes to think of this dilemma because of the requirement that— at the time, the soon to be democratic—South Africa define itself, its culture and identity. This was done in alignment with the liberation politics of the African National Congress (South Africa's current ruling government); an alignment that sought to shape national narratives about the country, both at home and abroad. While it could be suggested that this is a bold claim, I direct the reader to Wicomb's ([1991]/2018: 37) argument wherein she makes the claim that "Culture is a weapon of the struggle." Furthermore, she argues that "That has for some time been a rallying cry of the [A.N.C.), a slogan for the liberation movement […] since the 1980s." Drawing from Said, Wicomb ([1991]/2018: 43) demonstrates the alignment of culture and the formation of the nation when she writes, "all intellectual or cultural work occurs… on some very precisely mapped-out and permissible terrain, which is ultimately contained by the State." This speaks to the alignment of the nation, culture, and the state, which in the case of South Africa, owing to the competing identities, produces the dilemma under examination, here.

William Wellington Gqoba ([1888]/2015), however, foresaw the problem of an identity crisis, due to the competing cultural values that exist—even to the present day. In having two identities that are vying for hegemonic status, i.e., white colonial settler and

Black/Indigenous identity, there is the question of which of these two will prevail[3]. I come to this analysis of culture and identity on the premise of the question posed by Christopher Miller (1990: 73); "One must try to find out what attitude the society as a whole manifests toward the spoken word and toward those who are its caretakers". The inspiration behind such an enquiry rests on the fact that the challenge of national culture is one predicated on the distinctions between the spoken and the written word. A discussion expanded upon, in chapter 4.

While it might be useful to frame the discussion in consideration of the contribution developed by Fanon ([1963]/2004), there are two points to be made, against such a decision. First, while the Fanonian tradition is useful in thinking about the politics of national culture—with a chapter in *The Wretched of the Earth* dedicated to this very question—this project seeks to make the case for an articulation of the question of national identity using thought that is endogenous to South Africa. There are several reasons to this approach, but the most important is that when considering national identity in South Africa, the thinking of Black/Indigenous intellectuals is reduced to the category of native informant. This very issue is taken up in throughout the study, in the introduction, as well as in the argument to follow as a critique against Mamdani (2021).

Second, is a methodological choice that derives from the first objection—as per the abovementioned. In choosing to predicate the analysis on the Fanonian tradition, the study

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[3] Framing the argument using two competing identities is based on the collaborations seen in the multi-ethnic make-up of resistance against racial oppression and the collaboration between Boer and English identity in the exclusion of Black identity from the Union of South Africa. To reiterate, this chapter is principally concerned with the dilemma of belonging insofar as Black South Africans were excluded from the country of their birth, either through legislative measure(s) or intellectual suppression, which began in 1870 when William Govan—Principal of Lovedale College—was replaced by James Stewart (*cf*. Opland 2015: 2). Stewart "introduced a differential system, with white pupils following an academic curriculum and black students pursuing vocational courses such as agriculture, wagonmaking and bookbinding.

would either pursue a psychoanalytical approach, or a treatment of the question of national identity using the category of violence, therefore, aligning the project with the Fanonian tradition. As a reviewer indicated, the consideration of violence, as it pertains to this study, is not only marginal but of no interest to this project. At least not in the main framework of how the study has been designed. The objective, rather, lies in examining the question of national belonging and identity using the categories of thought established by leading Black/Indigenous intellectuals.

2.2. Writing as Inspirational to Wicomb's Dilemma

This chapter must outline what is intended by the notion of a dilemma, as I find it in Wicomb ([1993]/2018). Wicomb ([1993]/2018: 58) makes the point "[…] that cultural workers, including storytellers, have a central role to play in the reconstitution of the country, and demands that the constitution guarantee cultural rights." The dilemma arises when considering the cultural history of South Africa, wherein there are distinctions between of inclusion and exclusion from the polity. Wicomb ([1993]/2018: 63) observes that "If we think more broadly of culture, the way in which people behave, then it may be more appropriate to talk about our ravaged culture of violence." The dilemma, then, of culture is articulated in question format by Wicomb ([1993]/2018: 59), i.e., "How will black people, long accustomed to dispossession and deprivation, adjust to a new condition of not being racial victims?"

The dilemma is a question concerning the framing of the national story, one which necessitated the response by Ndebele (2006) in the form of *The Rediscovery of the Ordinary*. By this was intended that the spectacle that had been violence, be jettisoned for the simpleness that constitutes the everyday. From this consideration, the project would be to formulate a national literary culture that would hold the realities of the competing identities in the country. Considering this, Wicomb ([1993]/2018: 65) suggests that "We need a radical

pedagogy, a level of literacy that will allow our children to read works of literature that will politicise them into an awareness of not only power, but also of the equivocal, the ambiguous, and the ironic that is always embedded in power."

Writing, as it informs the political is essential in understanding the dilemma that is under examination in this chapter, and what will follow in the chapters to come. To appeal to William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi is, thus, intentional in that they give the reader a way of seeing that is not merely limited to the apartheid framing of belonging and national culture in country. Their contribution being outside the temporal framework of the apartheid state allows us to examine South Africa as a contested political formation without being tripped up by the discourses of the apartheid state. More importantly, this approach is taken on the reasoning that South Africa, not as a nation state symbolised by the union of 1910, deals with the issues of belonging in far more historical terms than the 1910 moment.

Writing then, be it political, historical, or cultural has sought to shape the national culture that defines South Africa. Simply, writing cannot be regarded as apolitical and ineffectual, for it is writing that informs and shapes culture, identity and belonging—as will be made clear in the project, as a whole. To the extent that Kumalo (2021) has already addressed this matter, in so doing, his writing has afforded me the opportunity of brevity in not having to recycle these arguments at length, here. Coetzee (1988), Gordimer (1976), Kunene (1992), and Mphahlele (1984) have each systematically engaged the question of culture, giving us the dilemma that Wicomb ([1991]/2018) diagnoses in her own work. Moreover, it is useful to bear in mind that this framework has already been set-out in the introduction, in the preceding chapter.

To respond to, and analyse the dilemma identified by Wicomb, the study suggests a close study of intra-Black conflict—as an initial step. Understanding intra-Black conflict highlights the importance of the arguments advanced by William Welling Gqoba and S.E.K.

Mqhayi—insofar as we are interested in informing national identity with the experiences of Blackness/Indigeneity. When considering national identity in South Africa, and writing, specifically—the reality is that Blackness/Indigeneity are erased and side-lined from actively participating in the development of their own narrative. Plainly, Blackness/Indigeneity cannot be understood as a seamless monolith (with scholars like Mamadani writing to erase these nuances) as the existence of the categories *amaqaba nama gqobhoka* suggest the ontological quagmire—that is itself constitutive of the dilemma theorised by Wicomb. The Black/Indigenous subject is often treated as a native informant, while colonial settler identities assume the position of the skilled anthropologist theorising the *'native savage'*.

To demonstrate, consider Mamdani's (2021: 17) misreading of our context when he writes, "[instead], by taking a political approach, South Africans reconfigured perpetrators and victims—alongside beneficiaries and bystanders—as something altogether new: survivors. All groups were survivors of apartheid, with a place at the table after its violence." This is a misreading due to three reasons. First, whiteness was the source of violence. White settler identity, be it Afrikaner (which tried to style itself as the inheritors—the new heirs of Africa—as discussed by Coetzee 1988), or English – collaborated. The question to Mamdani is how are sponsors of violence survivors, along the same lines as Black/Indigenous identity? The analysis that sets up this question, while also demonstrating the political nature of the culture of letters in South Africa is take up in the previous chapter, which introduces the entire study.

Second, if we follow through with Mamdani's recommendation we erase the experiences of Blackness/Indigeneity. In styling both identities, that is colonial settler and Black/Indigenous identity as survivors, Mamdani (2021) plays into the very same narratives that erase the experiences of Black/Indigenous peoples, to the extent that such a move corroborates the thinking of Hugh Trevor-Roper who once proclaimed that in Africa there is

no history, only darkness and the history of Europeans in Africa (*cf.* Mazrui 1978). Third, and finally, such a conflation continues to privilege the place of white, colonial, settler identities, maintaining the colonial narratives that do little to get us to a decolonial political moment.

There is an objection that can be put against the duality of reading ours through two identities. The reader could accuse me of reproducing the very challenge that I seek to address, which is to do away with exclusionary logics that do not resolve the political tensions that define the country. In failing to fully understand and analyse intra-Black conflict, one could reproduce colonial settler futurity narratives that dismiss and erase Blackness/Indigeneity. A confrontation with the differences that inform Black/Indigenous and settler identity allows for an adequate treatment of the concerns of both categories without dismissing either. For, if the project lies in credibly outlining a national culture that is symptomatic of an inclusive national identity, we ought not shy away from the inherent contestations that define our world. A failure to confront these realities continues to play into the perpetuation of an anti-black-white-supremacist world, that as Sithole (2020) aptly indicates, must be destroyed.

Mamdani (2021: 17)—for all his problems in his diagnosis of the South African context—gives us a useful way of thinking about the dilemma when he argues that "[only] when the political system is decolonised—that is, when identities are uncoupled from permanent majority and minority status—will it [the political system] be able to secure equity".[4] He (ibid.) comes to make this suggestion having premised his claim on the assertion that "[instead] of identifying and punishing perpetrators, the political model

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[4] "Decoupling identities from minority of majority status" requires some clarification. Present conditions classify identities in view of historical reality, situating those classified in the category of either majority or minority status, as outlined in the definition of how national culture, identity and belonging intersect in creating such a reality. Mamdani suggests that sticking to these categories sustains historical animosities. Alternatively, he argues that both categories be done away with, establishing a new political community, that fundamentally holds all identities in tandem.

attempts to overwrite the institutional context. All survivors—victims, perpetrators, beneficiaries, bystanders, exiles—are included in an expanded political process and reformed political community." Herein lies the objective of treating said dilemma, as it was initially conceptualised by Wicomb ([1991]/2018), that is, how to reform the political community, such that we can arrive at the destination that Mamdani (2021) rushes to in his analysis. This assertion is predicated on the reality that ours is not yet a reformed political community, for it is riddled with a series of problems that were birthed by the lack of justice at the dawn of democracy.

Wicomb's ([1991]/2018: 37) dilemma comes from the fact that "[i]t is [in] this phenomenon of cultural expression [that was formalised through the formation of popular ANC dance troupes—that] the inherent contradictions in cultural renewal [appear]". Hers (ibid.) is interested in this contradiction owing to how "cultural renewal appeals to tradition, [which] not only constitutes a self-definition of a people but [came] to represent the New Nation." In all seriousness, who defines the new nation and on what grounds can this definition be understood as valid, specifically in the context of a nation that is at war with itself, owing to the competing interests that inhere? Let me be clear, inasmuch as a nation is always a result of history and not a product of design, such an assertion is true of the western 'nation' and Europe more generally, where it was history that decided the formation of the nation and not arbitrary borders that necessitated inventive projects of nation-building (against, even) the fact of history. Moreover, the concept of tradition, plays a crucial role insofar as tradition appeals to conceived ideas of peoplehood, that is political peoplehood, *à la* Smith (2003).

The challenge of defining peoplehood is evinced in the debate between Mphahlele (1984) and Kunene (1992), which demonstrates the point of intra-Black conflict—or less critically, disagreement. Mphahlele (1984) invites the critical response from Kunene (1992),

who makes the claim that (as but one example) the English language was responsible for the death of many of our ancestors. This challenge—as it gives rise to the dilemma—inspires the observation by Wicomb ([1991]/2018: 38) that "[to] speak of cultural renewal, then, would be to discuss how, what, and on what basis selection and organisation occurs." These questions are prefaced by Wicomb's (ibid.) poignant focus in the observation that "culture 'is never a form in which people happen to be living, at some isolated moment, but a selection and organisation, of past and present.'" Herein lies the contradiction, that also gives us the dilemma that was faced and continues to be faced by the new South African nation. The contribution of this analysis is in demonstrating how the thinking of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K Mqhayi assists us in resolving this dilemma.

2.3. The Premise of a Dilemma – Violence and Political Identity

The dilemma that is diagnosed by Wicomb ([1991]/2018) is predicated on the jostling(s) of two competing identities that are vying for hegemonic control of the new South Africa. Insofar as South Africa abated the chance of what was fearfully conceptualised as a probable race war that would have left many dead and rendered the nation – another African 'failed state', Mamdani (2021: 15) poses a useful question, "Is nation-building violence a criminal act, calling for prosecution and punishment? Or is it a political act, the answer to which must be a new, nonnationalist politics?" He (Mamdani 2021: 14) asks this question having demonstrated that "[contests] over national belonging are at the heart of extreme violence in the post-independence period. Their bloody confrontation notwithstanding, colonialism and anticolonialism share a common premise: that society must be homogenised in order to build a nation."[5] Political violence, as a marker of a new beginning, is aptly treated by Hannah

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[5] What distinguishes my project from this thinking is the pursuit of an alternative akin to Mamdani's (2021: 18) insofar as he is concerned with the implications that ensued when "South Africans threw off apartheid and replaced it with nonracial democracy", which signalled "the process of rethinking and restructuring the internal political

Arendt (1966/1967: 167) when she observes that "[according] to both our classical and biblical tradition, at the very beginning of history stands a war-like act (Cain slew Abel Romulus slew Ramus) or an actual, though legendary war (the war against Troy, Aeneas' war against Italy)." What one finds in this assertion is the misguided belief that violence is an innate characteristic of state formation to the extent that:

> This oldest legendary notion that a beginning must be intimately connected with violence – that violence, as it were, gave birth to history, that whatever brotherhood [sic] human beings may be capable of has grown out of fractricide, that whatever political organisation men [sic] may have achieved has its origin in crime – has travelled through the centuries as one of the almost unexamined, almost self-evident assumptions of political thought. (Arendt 1966/1967: 167)

Two things subsequently emerge, if the reader is taking this assertion to be true. Firstly, if it is acceptable that violence is what births something new, in this case the new South African nation, why is it that it was jettisoned for something different at the dawn of democracy? Preliminarily, William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi give us a response to such an inquiry, owing to the two traditions to which they both belonged—that is an African, Xhosa, and a western tradition. To say that each belonged to both traditions is premised on the education that they respectively received. With Gqoba educated at Lovedale and one of the early intellectuals of our context, who also heeded the teachings and thinking of Ntsikana

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community [which he calls] the *decolonisation of the political.*" (Original emphasis) Moreover, what I take Mamdani (2021) to mean by the claim that 'colonialism and anti-colonialism' share the same premise of homogeneity is the thinking that both rely on the idea of sameness. To explain, consider anti-colonial resistance, wherein the project of national resistance requires that the notion of nation come to symbolise similarity if not unity—through the same experience of colonial violence—in the struggle against the colonial power. This is best described by Fanon's outline of anti-colonial resistance in his 'On Violence' in *The Wretched of the Earth*'. To use this example does not mean that the study predicates its thinking on the Fanonian conception of the state, as such thinking has already been resisted, for the stated purposes outlined above.

(who died in 1821) who 'foretold the arrival of white settlers [and] urged acceptance of some of the European innovations but only on Xhosa terms, a policy of assimilation by the Xhosa rather than wholesale conversion by the missionaries'; Gqoba responded to the potential uses of violence, through his writing. Similarly, Mqhayi emulates Gqoba, while also being critical—as a counter hegemonic historiographer of Xhosa history—which is to say that both individuals substantiate an objection to the unquestioned assumption that Arendt (1966/1967) analyses in that seminal lecture entitled *Revolution and Freedom*. Their existence in the world that was fast receding owing to the impositions of colonial incursion, allowed them the opportunity of acting as cultural bridges.[6]

Secondly, and going with the assumption that the founding fathers of democracy in the country were informed by this historical awareness (concerning violence in the establishment of the nation), why are contemporary scholarly debates concerned with the notion of historical justice? Contemporary scholarship, then, deals with the ability of righting the initial imposition of colonialism and its aftermath. The response to both questions might be gleaned from Mamdani (2021: 5) whose work is instructive for this project in that he aptly recognises that "[post-apartheid] South Africa could justifiably have replaced white rule with black majority rule. Instead, the new state adopted nonracial democracy. At the same time,

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[6] It cannot go unmentioned that such an approach, however, created what Mqhayi troubled ([1927]/2009] as an educated class that forsook the traditions of Black/Indigenous people for practices of reading and writing. Kunene (1996: 16) highlights that 'Africans did not look at writing with a sense of awe. On the contrary, to Africans, written literature violated one of the most important literary tenets by privatising literature.' As per Kunene (1996: 14) 'The converts, led by their chiefs, aspired to illegitimately constructed positions within their society.' And as such, the address given by Gqoba at the Lovedale Literary Society in 1885 demonstrates the problematic thinking that informed the perceptions of Black intellectuals that were held in suspicion by Mqhayi. However, this attitude cannot be read outside of its temporal context, which is to say that in order to fully appreciate, understand and formulate a response to these attitudes, both the reader and I cannot subject a reading of Gqoba to contemporary intellectual currents, as this would undermine the process of gleaning useful insights from his thinking and render the project open to the objection found in Wolmarans' (2014) formulation, when he writes about the problems of 'using' as opposed to 'receiving' a text.

tribalism persists in South Africa, and so there is more work to be done." Mamdani's suggestion, however, fails when read against Modiri (2018) and Madlingozi (2017)[7], who assert that what we have in our context is nothing new, but rather the continuation of something old that refused to die. To the extent that such a claim is widely held, the recent book by Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh (2021) *The New Apartheid* is a case in point.

The assumption that something new is characteristically defined by violence "has influenced the thinking and ideologies of both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movements, insofar as both agreed that only violence and crime can bring about a new beginning, so that the revolutionists put their trust into violence" (Arendt 1966/1967: 167). Ours then, moves in a different direction, using Gqoba and Mqhayi, insofar as we are in agreement with Arendt—as she suggests that we critically examine the claim that violence can birth something new.

The dilemma that Wicomb ([1991]/2018) diagnoses, therefore, is a dilemma of how to best articulate a new South African identity that does well to jettison the troubles inaugurated by the history of colonial imposition and incursion—which seem to necessitate violence in the unquestioning adoption of the historical thought that violence births something new. She (Wicomb [1991]/2018: 43) surmises it aptly using Edward Said's observation that "'all intellectual or cultural work occurs…on some very precisely mapped-out and permissible

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[7] I must contextually situate the thinking of these two scholars. Modiri (2018) problematises the thinking that praises the post-1994 constitutional framework, by way of suggesting that since the dawn of democracy there was no break with the colonial framework that dispossessed the majority in the country. To better explain what is intended by this claim, a quote in the paper—taken from Nkosi (2016: 149)—sets his charge up as follows, "Much has changed in South Africa. Or not much has changed; depending from what perspective you are looking at our ugly past. What has changed is the physiognomy of white power, which allows a white minority to maintain its hegemony under the guise of non-racialism". Similarly, Madlingozi (2017) writing about the post-apartheid dispensation, characaltises the reality of South Africa as a neo-apartheid reality. His work, here, is predicated on a decolonial critique, wherein he suggests that the framework of poat-apartheid South Africa still suffers from the realities of colonial logics. On the premise of the thinking of these two scholars, even as this study might not agree with them, challenges the reasoning that the reader will encounter in Mamdani'2 (2021) on the premise that these critiques would not exist, if indeed, South Africa achieved the post-colonial reality that Mamdani writes about.

terrain, which is ultimately contained by the State,'". Wicomb (ibid.) continues, "for even in the case of an emergent order, a palimpsestic map already exists and institutions stand at the ready to install their sacred cows." The dilemma, is contained in the reality that (Wicomb [1991]/2018: 45) "culture is a 'system of exclusions legislated from above…by which such things as anarchy, disorder, irrationality, inferiority, bad taste, and immorality are identified, then deposited outside the culture and kept there by the power of the State and its institutions.'"

There are two things that require conceptual explanation in this respect, and they are state power as it intersects with, is undermined, or strengthened by political peoplehood, *à la* Smith (2003), and secondly, the consideration of national culture as it intersects with the question of race—or better put, as it is racialised—in South Africa. Both questions are best articulated, though not in such explicit manner, by Wicomb's ([1991]/2018) analysis of 'Tracing the Path from National to Official Culture'.

First, state power sanctions what is to be inclusive of national culture, in the sense of the curation of national culture through state machinery. This is not to suggest that the two, i.e., state power and national culture should and can be read as denoting one thing, as such a suggestion would be a conceptual conflation. Rather, state power functions under the guise of national culture, while also shaping national culture using its apparatus. When Smith (2003) writes of political peoplehood and introduces the concept by an examination of the state of Kyrgyzstan's attempt to fashion a national culture that breaks away from the Soviet Union, the deletions, embellishments, and additions that are commissioned by President Akayev in the Manas Epos demonstrate the point clearly.

Secondly, is the consideration of national culture as it intersects with the racialisation of nationhood, specifically in the context of South Africa. In the following chapter, i.e., Chapter Three and Four this racialisation will be clearly explained to the extent that it

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informs what is to be considered the preserve of colonial settler identity and the exclusion of Blackness/Indigeneity from the process of forming national culture. It is on this reasoning that the likes of Gordimer (1988), Ndebele (2006) and Nkosi (2016) are important in the development of the argument of this thesis.

Mamdani (2021: 19) subsequently, suggests decolonisation, which "joins the epistemic and the political in a mutually productive endeavour. The epistemic project both yields changes in policies and follows a change in how we see ourselves in the world." Moreover, "[decolonising] the political means upsetting the permanent majority and minority identities that define the contours of the nation-state" (ibid.). Such an orientation would give credence to the claim that at the dawn of democracy, (ibid.) "South Africans didn't give up their cultural identities and reject diversity. They rejected the politicisation of diversity." To get to the decolonisation that Mamdani is suggesting, we need to deal with this dilemma that is diagnosed by Wicomb. We need to address what is to be included and excluded, to the extent that such decisions are wedded to decolonial aims. This process is informed by Gqoba and Mqhayi and constitutes the novelty and contribution made by this chapter of the study.

2.4. Mapping the Road to Political Decolonisation

The first conceptual move analyses the definition of national culture, as said culture is represented in the work of thinkers and the writing of 20th century literati who were concerned with the narrative that South Africa was both consuming and curating with respect to its self-representation. To clarify, when referring to writing, the aim is not to delimit the kinds of writing that are inclusive and denotative of a national story. Put differently and following Hedley Twidle (2019: x) "[when] I left for university abroad, I was surprised to find the immense interest that the global academic community was taking in the South African story, particularly in the question of transitional justice, post-apartheid culture and how creative work might contribute to reimagining the new nation's past and futures"; the

interest lies in exploring the role of writing as it influences public perceptions of the political conditions in the country. In demonstrating that culture is derived from writing, a conceptual link is made between writing (the culture of letters) and the nations' ability to critically examine itself as a unit of analysis. Moreover, there is the recognition that national culture is informed by the literary productions that define a/the national story. Twidle (2019: xi) prizes the written text since his work is premised on the idea "that returning to non-fictions from across the twentieth century reveals how deeply thinkers before us have grappled with questions of representation [and] complicity".

To say that Twidle prizes the written word is a recognition of the two competing ideas that inform how South African society is constituted on the bifurcation between men of letters on the one hand and words on the other. This conceptual split is one that I examine in Chapters Three and Four of this study, while further looking at the implications of such a classification. Through an examination of colonial incursion, with the introduction of the written word, at the expense of the oral traditions that existed prior to this method of knowing and being, there is a clear surfacing of the political function, not only of the written word, but also of literature as a handmaiden to the curation of a national culture and identity in South Africa. The work of Rogers Smith demonstrates this point clearly, by showcasing the factuality of the impact of the story the nation tells itself. Simply, by highlighting the importance of the written word for Twidle, the implication is demonstrating that here are other forms of knowing, which require examination if we are to truly glean the important contribution surfaced from the work of Gqoba and Mqhayi, as is the intention of this study.

The secondary conceptual move lies in surfacing the connection between culture, as a written expression and the uptake of said culture in a political identity that forms around that written expression. Simply, there is a correlation between the written culture and the identity that it informs within a nation. It is for this reason that Van der Vlies (2018) titles the

collection of essays by Wicomb *Race, Nation, Translation* – as the influence of written culture lies in the translation of that culture into political identity.

Smith (2003: 3) theorising political peoplehood, indicates that it "explicitly distances the Manas epos from narrow nationalism, even while it affirms popular self-determination within particular nations or peoples".[8] Importantly, the Manas epos maintained that "Each nation makes its own contribution to the world cultural treasury according to the peculiarities and richness of its talents and creative abilities" (Smith 2003: 3). Smith (ibid. 6) demonstrates how such a project, as a driving force that brings about a sense of "political peoplehood", through the narration of the historical constitutive elements resultantly produced "a set of literary texts, written when literacy had become more widespread in the region, [which] 'dramatically changed what it meant to be an Israelite'" – in the case of the historical uses of culture as a mode of consolidating the political identity of a people. Moreover, and sticking with this point, Smith (ibid.) surfaces how "official national history and codification of laws, customs, and religious practices, [as seen through the inclusion of stories in religious texts, enabled the Israeli nation] to reorganise the national identity around religious behaviour and to some extent to turn national identity itself into a religion."[9]

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[8] Smith (2003) shares Mamdani's (2021: 14) concerns that "Contests over national belonging are at the heart of extreme violence in the post-independence period. Their bloody confrontation notwithstanding, colonialism and anticolonialism share a common premise: *that society must be homogenised in order to build a nation*". (Emphasis added). The contribution made by this study, however, does not aim at the homogenization of society, but rather attempts to curate a condition, wherein, cultures that have long existed at the margins, are able to come to the centre, being equally regarded as those that were forcefully established to the detriment of systems of knowing and social organisation that existed prior to this forceful and violent erasure. To say that Smith (2003) and Mamdani (2021) share similar concerns is predicated on the curatorial moves that inform the process of nation building, insofar as said processes might be predicated on public discourses or – in the case of Smith – the written expression of culture and identity formation.

[9] It is crucial for me to explicitly indicate that in the use of the Israeli examples, as part of my analysis, in no way suggests that this study is morally condoning the unjustifiable occupation of the Westbank and Palestinian territories. To the extent that the Palestinian people share a similar history with the oppressed people of South Africa, I recognize the deep injustice that is unjustifiable occupation of the territories of the Palestinian people.

It is not to say that it is only the written word that has an influence on the formation of political identity, for when Wicomb ([1995]/2018) writes about the connections between 'Reading, Writing, and Visual Production in the New South Africa', she highlights how those who had been excluded from formal schooling – owing to the racialised laws of the country – were participating in the production of culture through the creation and uptake of visual literacies. While South Africa was challenged by the historical fact of Black/Indigenous exclusion from the frameworks of cultural production, a matter that is taken up by Coetzee (1988) to the extent that he reveals the relationship between culture—both in the written form and in its political implications—and literacy, this reality did not exclude those who sought to define the new South Africa from their own cultural locus of enunciation. The well-versed reader might be inclined to note that the thinking of Walter D. Mignolo (2021) corroborates this position when he writes about the connections between method and the ends to which such method(s) is used. The relationship between the 'what' and the 'why' give us the 'how' (method) that ought to be used. In the context of forming a cultural identity—the 'what'— considering a situational context that has deprived the majority of citizens of education, the how—visual literacies—precedes the 'why', as a mode of demonstrating how even those who are regarded as illiterate can and did, indeed, contribute to the 'why'.

This position is further informative of the argument made by Christopher Miller (1991), as such an argument is developed in chapter 4 of this study. Miller's position insofar as he demonstrates the clash between literacy and orature, in his systematic engagement with the pre-colonial literary traditions that we encounter on the African continent, is not only instructional, but also revelatory of the contestations that are constitutive of the competing epistemic positions, with respect to who can define the cultures of Africa and how. As indicated above, this will be examined in more detail, in Chapter Four, of this study.

The secondary conceptual move demonstrates how we transition from concerns about/of the national narrative that South Africa was creating and internalising, about itself. These two moves give us the third conceptual link that ought to be made apparent, if the reader accepts both the first and the second. The third conceptual move concerns the kinds of writing that are available to the extent that both historical and political writing are informed by said writing. It is for this reason that Twidle (2019: 4) demonstrates how "questions of narrative non-fiction can never be divorced from those of power: who has the ability to write about whom; which stories are told across history; what comes to be heard or forgotten, and why." These questions are crucial in demonstrating the concern of the third conceptual move, specifically in relation to what is being treated in this analysis, which is to say; How does the thinking and writing of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi allow us to transcend the dilemma that is under examination?

In further outlining the importance of power as imbricated in the commonly held narratives that a society tells itself about itself, Twidle (ibid.) stresses that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), "Under its 'Concepts and Principles', posited four different modalities of truth-telling: factual and forensic truth; personal and narrative truth; social or 'dialogue' truth; healing and restorative truth." This is surfaced to better answer the question derived from the third conceptual move, which inquires as to the kinds of writing that are available in the process of curating and creating the national narrative that informs the political identity of a nation.

In answering this question, it is here where I turn to the writing and thinking of Gqoba and Mqhayi. Theirs can be understood as a counter historical narrative, insofar as they resisted the misrepresentations of Xhosa identity, culture, and heritage—its distortions and the inventions by those who were tasked with writing the annals of colonial history on the southernmost tip of the continent—owing to the white settler colonial imperative to style

colonial settler identity as the new inheritors of Africa. In detailing how the two resisted these modes of appropriation and internal territorial annexation, what follows is a brief overview of each of their thinking, which is not intended as a systematic engagement, just yet, but rather as synopses that will better situate the motivation behind using their work as a mode of responding to the dilemma diagnosed by Wicomb ([1991]/2018).

2.5. Gqoba's Response to the Dilemma

To better understand how William Wellington Gqoba responds to the dilemma, I will begin by considering another aspect of Wicomb's ([1995]/2018, 67) thinking wherein she asserts that:

> Cognitive claims for literacy have had the effect of downgrading oral cultures, so that, in our era of careful language use, the term "illiteracy" has been replaced by "nonliterate", one which is deemed to be less negative and which hopes somehow not to brand more than half the world's population as incapable of what we call rational thought.

This excerpt demonstrates a useful and important point that informs the overarching analysis in this study, and that is the divide between the written word and the oral tradition. To the extent that the culture of the written word has devalued the place and function of orature in our traditions, it is for this reason that Kunene reasons that "This language is responsible for the death of [our] Ancestors" (1992: 32). This observation was made in view of the pejorative attitudes that were exhibited towards the spoken word, which answers the question of the attitudes that society has towards those who keep (as sacred) the tradition of the spoken word. In the examination of these attitudes, the reader discerns the critical position of how national identity formation, insofar as it is premised on the culture of letters, as outlined above, is predicated on an epistemic contestation, either in favour of the traditions and cultures that existed prior to colonial imposition or against such traditions.

There are three things that we find in Wicomb's reasoning. The first deals with a principal concern that resists the thinking of scholars like Hugh-Trevor who inferred, through his assertions, that there is no history in Africa – only darkness; the concern with rational thought. Wicomb challenges the idea of rationality as something that exists only as premised on the familiarity with western colonial education. One is legible and intelligible to the western tradition on the premise of their mastery of the tradition(s) of colonial imposition. Such intelligibility is what further determines which culture not only influences but defines national culture. That is an oral culture or a written culture.

This first point of entry into her observations about the function of literacy have been well documented in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences by scholars like Ifi Amadiume (1987), V-Y Mudimbe (1988) and Ali A. Mazrui (1978), as but a few examples. All these scholars have demonstrated that there existed systems of knowledge and an epistemic framework(s) that predated western colonial imposition. The arrogance that is attendant to the colonial project—an arrogance that is found in the existence of white scholars who style themselves as the masters of African intellectual traditions, without even functional knowledge of the languages of these traditions—presupposes that the only mode of knowing is that which came with colonial imposition. It is troubling, however, to note the degree to which Black/Indigenous intellectuals have internalised this narrative to the extent that their own intellectual pursuits are often styled in the form of western thinking. This cannot be understood outside of the historical tradition, of scholars who embraced the western form of analysis and methodology, however, a framework that was itself the result of violent coercion and not seamless uptake.

The second concerns the oral cultures of the continent, but more specifically of South Africa, to the extent that Wicomb ([1995]]/2018: 69) comes to the observation that "…it is precisely the lack of literacy [emphasis added] that has allowed such works to escape the

epistemological structures of apartheid, a condition that is not so surprising when we consider the political history of literacy and the central role played by the British missionary press like Lovedale." To be sure, her suggestion seeks to underscore the place of orature, as existing outside the structure of colonial matrices of power, and epistemic control. In existing outside of the colonial artifice of control, the oral tradition inherently retains autonomy and its capacity to self-direct, but the critical response aims at understanding the effectiveness of such autonomy when the tradition is derided—a point that will be taken up in the following chapter.

Literacy—as it is understood through the lens of the written word—undermines pre-existing understanding, being and knowing. To the degree that such understanding influenced earlier Black intellectuals, specifically William Wellington Gqoba, it is noteworthy to pick out one of the salient contributions that he made through his address to the Lovedale Literary Society in 1885. Gqoba's thinking—as influenced by the education that he was subjected to at Lovedale College—culminates in a stance that, while anti-colonial, and a counter historical account, is disparaging and pejorative of the Native's customs, beliefs, and laws. This address is demonstrative of the debates that abound within Black intelligentsia with respect to the deference owed to Indigenous modes of life and thinking that existed prior to colonial imposition. To this end, the reader will recall that above, I have referred to the diametrically oppositional stances taken by Kunene (1992) and Mphahlele (1984), with respect to the use of the English language in our country. Gqoba's position, as detailed in his Lovedale Literary Society Address—which was the only text written in English, a matter that demonstrates the concerns that Wicomb ([1995]/2018) alludes to with respect to the epistemological structures that were imposed by the colonial imperial agenda—is the inaugural format of the thinking and oppositional stances that were to be taken and continue to be taken by Black intelligentsia; what Kumalo (2022a) terms intra-Black conflict.

The third component that we find in the observation by Wicomb ([1995]/2018) deals with the epistemological structure imposed through the establishment of such presses as the Lovedale Press. Here, it is crucial to stress, as do Opland, Kuse and Maseko (2015) that the Black intellectuals who were involved in the work done by and through the Lovedale Press were interested in the development—orthographical and morphology—of the language isiXhosa. Simply put, the interest lay in the standardisation of the language to the extent that the language could command intellectual respect and reputability comparative to the languages that had come from European colonial societies. What Wicomb ([1995]/2018) surfaces as a lack of literacy, is what I elect to understand as the saving grace of the languages, insofar as this saving grace allows the language a space to develop outside the strictures that are prescribed by those who were intent on the inventions of Africa, its peoples, and its languages. To substantiate this point, CM Doke is a useful example, with respect to the standardisation of isiZulu—and the liberties taken by him in the invention of the language, resultantly. Owing to the scope and framework of this analysis, however, this is an area into which I cannot delve presently.

Gqoba, resultantly, occupies a precarious double position that threads a fine line. Those who are critical of the first set of Black/Indigenous intellectuals will be quick to disregard them as collaborators, as individuals who were blindly supporting colonial pillaging of African modes of thinking while benefitting from their association with literacy and the written word. Moreover, said beneficiation could be said to be evidenced in the views that these scholars held with respect to the customs and beliefs of their own people. On the other hand, it cannot, also, go unstated that much of the work that was done by such intellectuals was done with the intention of drawing attention to the unbearable conditions to which Blackness/Indigeneity was subjected in the country. The reader finds this in the composition done by Gqoba in 1888, wherein he takes issue with the systems of education that were rolled

out for the Black/Indigenous majority. Furthermore, said education system was only introduced in the country—at Lovedale—after 1870, when the white minority sought to enslave Black/Indigenous labour through relegating them to the menial tasks of agriculture, wagon-making and bookbinding. The task that the Black/Indigenous intelligentsia set themselves was to resist this inferiorisation by actively staking objections while also developing the languages of their people.[10]

The argument that strikes the reader, apparently – is one that contests the idea that Gqoba was merely a blind collaborator who was not aware of the political machinations that influence and determine the ways in which language and literature—in his case, poetry—are used in order justify the prevailing political systems in the land. It is for this reason that in the introduction, one of the principal questions that is treated concerns the uses of narrative as a mode of justifying the political system.

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[10] As a response to this, however, the reader ought to note the objection that is staked by Kumalo (2022b) when he writes about the nature and form of such claims, suggesting rather that these claims, of developing our languages, play into the further relegation of the contributions that can be found in these languages. Inquiring about the tools available to the decolonial theoretician, in view of the epistemic injustices that the local knowledge systems were subjected to, Kumalo (ibid.) argues for the use of the Black Archive, specifically music in this instance, as a tool that allows the decolonial theoretician to develop work that is not subjected to the epistemic structure and strictures imposed by colonial domination. The precedent for such a move is found in the analysis developed above using Wicomb's work, wherein she suggests that for the purposes of having existed outside the control of the colonial apparatus and framework of thought, orature becomes autonomous in its stylistic and methodological developments. Simply, the objection that is staked by Kumalo (2022b) contests the idea of developing the language, on the reasoning that such a framework of references plays into the western narrative of languages that required capacitation, while decentralising the real focus, which is to say that these languages already contained rich and bountiful knowledge frameworks that were disregarded for the use of the written word. It is for this reason that Wicomb ([1995/2018: 67) argues that "What passes for the testing of literacy is none other than 'the social conventions of a dominant class, rather than universal logic.'" This claim is further corroborated by Kunene (1992) when he writes about the uses of language, arguing that language tends to conform to the prevailing intellectual and cultural interests of the ruling classes.

2.6. Mqhayi – An Avant-Garde Black Intellectual

Having been privy to some of the challenges that were prevalent in the times of writing for intellectuals like Gqoba, Mqhayi becomes one of the country's avant-garde thinkers in his uses of the written word. In the first instance, his was a counter historical narrative, seen in his documentations of the lives of some the leading political and social figures of Black/Indigenous reputability, before and during his life. Mqhayi's corpus, is one that threads the needle in its attempts at correcting the inventions and misrepresentations that the reader encounters in the writings of white historiographers. Consider how some of the contemporary leading intellectuals, Ian MacQueen (2020), take issue with the kinds of historical writing that is excluded from the formal curriculum in the teaching of historiography in the country. To this end Wicomb ([1993]/2019: 65) maintains that "We need a radical pedagogy, a level of literacy that will allow our children to read works of literature that will politicise them into an awareness not only of power, but also of the equivocal, the ambiguous, and the ironic that is always embedded in power."

Mqhayi recognises this assertion to the extent that in the introduction to the text—for which he is highly regarded among the Xhosa people—*Ityala Lamawele* (1914: v), he maintains that "*Intetho nemikhwa yesiXhosa iya itshona ngokutshona ngenxa yeliZwi nokhanyo olukhoyo, oluze nezizwe zase-Ntshona-langa, oonyana bakaGogi noMagogi.*"[11] In the preface to the novel, he demonstrates an awareness of the concerns raised by Wicomb – further – for the reader when he addresses his readership in the following words (Mqhayi 1914: vi) "*Taruni, mzi wenkosi ndiya taruzisa! Namhla nje le ncwadana ndiya phinda*

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[11] "The customs and laws of the Xhosa people are disappearing, bit by bit, owing to the word and enlightenment that came with the arrival of the colonial settlers."

ukuyibeka phambi kwenu. Ndiyibeka namhla se inkudlwana kunokuvela kwayo, enathi ke nina nathetha ngezenzo ukuba ma ibuye ishicilelwe yandiswe nokwandiswa."[12]

In this address, the reader finds that the public, who were engaged in the circulation and reading of this work, were aware of the debates to which it contributed, in the sense of responding to the demand that we find in Wicomb's ([1993]/2019) writing, wherein she implores us to find a pedagogy that reveals the dynamics of power that are at play in the uses of literature and literacy. In plainly addressing his readership, Mqhayi is demonstrating the culture of letters, as it pertains to the lives and experiences of Blackness/Indigeneity, and their own tradition of letters—at the time. This public acknowledgement demonstrates the salient point of two competing traditions that are under examination in relation to the South African context, insofar as such cultures of letters seek to define the nation, and are competing with each other in relation to an ability to do so.

Hlonipha Mokoena (2009) raises this very point when she writes about the uses of the written word in the context of "illiteracy", which was seen to be prevalent among the Black/Indigenous populations of the country. Her contribution demonstrates that even in the face of the unfamiliarity of the masses with the foreign language and the written letters that were brought by the colonial settler, intellectuals continued to publicly participate in the engagement of reading in public fora, which she (Mokoena 2009) aptly described as *ibandla*—an assembly of readers.[13] At this assembly, knowledge was shared freely and

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[12] "Greetings, children of the nation, I greet you! Today, I once more bring this book before you. In so doing, I bring it in expanded form as demanded by you all who requested its republication and expansion."

[13] While Mokoena (2009) is writing about the developments of what the reader will find in KwaZulu, which is where the John William Colenso missionary education station was situated—for it must be kept in mind that the two provinces, while they share similar experiences – have different intellectual traditions that constitute them— where intellectuals like Magema Fuze were working from, we can infer that similar modes of public intellectual engagement were taking place in the Eastern Cape (the Cape Colony). The case of Nontsizi Mgqwetho is one such example, wherein we are confronted by a female public intellectual whose thinking, writing and work influenced

equally with the public. This is to say that the sharing of knowledge – through the institution of *ibandla* – meant elected representatives of the Black/Indigenous groups could base their decisions on the sentiments of those that they represented. This was the case even against the reality of the ontological split that is terms *amaqaba nama gqobhoka* in the following chapters.

Subsequently, when Mqhayi frames the republication of the book as being in line with the fulfilment of the public's desire to engage with the text in expanded form, this should not be read out of context, as suggesting a cultural contradiction, in the sense that the majority were illiterate. Simply, even as most did not engage with the written word of their own accord, a case seen in the education to which Black/Indigenous people were subjected as a matter of course that is critiqued by Gqoba (1888) in his composition *Ingxoxo Enkulu Nge Mfundo*, this did not preclude the majority from a continued engagement with the literature in alternative format; that is through public engagement and debates that were led by the educated few.

Better situating this claim, in his criticism of the privatisation of literature, Kunene's *oeuvre* is drawing from the public status of literature, as it was shared with the public through forms such as public recitation of poetry and oral telling of history in the five literary categories we find in the oral isiZulu tradition, which are *inganekwane*, *insumansumane*, *indaba*, *umlando*, and *inkondlo*. To return then, to the point, Mqhayi is fully cognisant of the recommendation we find in Wicomb's ([1993]/2019) writing, to the extent that we can even suggest that he heralds such a position of a radical pedagogy that reveals power as it is embedded in culture.

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the public perceptions of the polity in their approaches to the political climate that prevailed in the country at the time.

Here, then, is where the reader finds the uses of Mqhayi's work, in that his can be understood as the bedrock that informs the formation of the Black Archive[14], which is geared at understanding the systems used by Black/Indigenous intellectuals in the continuance of work that investigated the *Fact* of Blackness, even as we were excluded from institutions of knowledge production. Moreover, his *oeuvre* attends to the demand of the second generation of Black/Indigenous intellectuals in that they right (through writing) the wrongs of historical misrepresentation that were imposed by colonial historiographers. He attends to the dilemma that is identified by Wicomb ([1993]/2019: 59), who poses the useful question of "How will black people, long accustomed to dispossession and deprivation, adjust to a new condition of not being racial victims?" This question sharpens the focus on the dilemma, which is discussed above, as the dilemma seeks to mediate the reality of holding two competing identities in tandem in the form of an appeal to a culture of letters that is not torn between the two identities that exist in the country. To the extent that my analysis draws from such a question, it is useful to state that this question will be interrogated, critically – in the fourth chapter of this project.

Mqhayi's work attends to this fact of competing identities by demonstrating the complexity that is constitutive of developing such a culture. His writing attends to this matter by way of inquiring into the life that is receding owing to colonial imposition and the life that was becoming, similarly, owing to colonial imposition. His contribution, for the purposes of framing it as the bedrock of the Black Archive, is framed as such owing to the plethora of work that emerges and that applies itself to similar questions; works (words) that became canonical in the Xhosa literary tradition, with the work of AC Jordan (1939) coming to mind, in his seminal contribution through the book *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*.

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[14] The Black Archive is a collection of work (i.e., music, literature, poetry, and art) that was developed by Black Artists and has been dedicated to the project of thinking through the conditions of Black life, in the country.

2.7. Uses of Black/Indigenous Intelligentsia and their Thinking

Now that the work has been laid out, with respect to how Gqoba and Mqhayi demonstrate and respond to the dilemma that we find in Wicomb's thinking, it is useful to respond in more pointed terms, and as a way of suggesting further research into this area of scholarship, how their work attends to the requirement of transcendence that could produce an inclusive national culture that affords all citizens belonging in the country. There are three things that can be said in response.

One, through their occupying a sense of in betweenness both Gqoba and Mqhayi are instructive in how their thinking transcends the crude intellectual bifurcating moves that would delineate between groups; that is colonial settler and Black/Indigenous identity. It is not to say that the two are apologetic and pander to the sustained, unquestioned and uncritiqued existence of white hegemonic settler identity in our context, for their writing takes considered and pointed aim at the challenges that continue to inflect the political realities of the country. This is seen in the questions that their work raises and the considerations that go beyond mere intellectual debates but influenced and informed the political formations that were constitutive of both the educated Black/Indigenous elite and those who were regarded as *amaqaba* – as discussed by Kumalo (2022a). Importantly, while Gqoba (1885) seemingly takes a hostile stance towards the customs, beliefs and values of the Natives, his thinking is not prejudiced to the extent that his writing does not consider the plight of the majority. Importantly to note, also, is the fact that his writing comes to be critical of Black/Indigenous life, on the consideration of the audience that he was addressing. That is to say that in the knowledge that his audience was constitutive of white colonial settlers, in this particular address, his position was intended to placate his white audience, and not as an outright pejorative position towards his fellow Black/Indigenous people. If anything, his writing demonstrates his considered and sustained concerns with the role of education as the

institution that could liberate the majority from the oppressive heel of white colonial domination. The case of Mqhayi threads this terrain carefully, as he is aware of the problems that were inaugurated by colonial imposition, and he constantly writes from a place that seeks to correct these injustices; either by form of counter historical narrative or inventive literary compositions that demonstrate the ontological legitimacy of Black/Indigenous modes of being, prior to colonial imposition.

Secondly, the works that the two intellectuals produce is an *oeuvre* that is cognisant of the political that is always embedded in culture. Both writers are keenly aware that their writing, thinking and engagement with the political question concerning South Africa, can and should be addressed with a dual concern that is also aimed at the advancement of the language, isiXhosa. While the analysis presented above, specifically footnote 10, takes issue with the inference that we get from the notion of the development of the language, which seeks to suggest that prior to the Roman script the language did not exist as a cogent and fully capable mode of reasoning that contained within it, rationality and understanding, it cannot be denied that the introduction of the press played a crucial role in the widespread dissemination of the political ideas that were developed by the two thinkers under consideration.

In being cognisant of the political that influences the uses of culture, the uses of culture as a political weapon of resistance—is here substantiated. Writing, through the development of and engagement with—a development that saw the changing orthographical styles that best captured the morphology of the language—the ideas produced by Gqoba and Mqhayi acted as a system of consciousness raising within and among the Black/Indigenous peoples of South Africa. This engagement, it is useful to reiterate, is not one that erects barriers of distinction between the two identities that exist in the country. Gqoba and Mqhayi sought to better understand how to hold these two identities in tandem and were not engaged

in the English and Afrikaner inventive process of erasure, fabrication and epistemic domination and violence. Rather, what we find is a treatment and confrontation of the realities that plague our society as a mode of better positioning the response given by the Indigene.

The third consideration is in relation to the cultural understandings that both writers bring to our knowledge of the South African condition. Their approach to the question of belonging gets at Mamdani's (2021) proposition of political decolonisation wherein there is the ability to move away from the categories of settler colonial and Black/Indigenous identity. While Mamdani's approach is hasty in its assumptions about the ways in which we arrive at such a point, theirs is useful in its understandings of the intricacies that constitute Black/Indigenous identity. To say that theirs is different is predicated on the fact that each of them, i.e., Gqoba and Mqhayi come to their recommendations on how to deal with the political situation by neither dismissing nor epistemically erasing the subjectivity of Blackness/Indigeneity, which is what the reader tends to find in the writing of those who are quick to suggest this move.

Their work approaches Blackness/Indigeneity with deference. It is treated with a level of obeisance that recognises that prior to colonial settler arrival there were systems of understanding the world that existed. In most of the recent scholarship by white or non-Indigenous scholars, this move is sidestepped—continuing with the colonial hegemonic arrogance of undermining the place of Blackness/Indigeneity in any political system that exists in South Africa. Simply, the recommendation for transcendence that the reader finds in the prevailing scholarship will either be couched in the language of colour blindness or nonracialism, which does not attend to the issue of political justice that has been sought by the Black/Indigenous being. The resulting political arrangement is one that does not recognise the continuance of epistemic hierarchies, while also pandering to white settler

colonial desires of futurity. Gqoba and Mqhayi assist us in addressing this problem by taking seriously the political and ontological legitimacy of the Black/Indigenous being.

In this framework, we must recognise the appropriations and misappropriations of the thinking and writing of Black/Indigenous intellectuals in our country, to the extent that these works have either been erased or appropriated in ways that are unrecognisable to those who are conversant with the progenitor languages of these works. Put in another way, the caution that I aim to raise—in these concluding remarks of mine—addresses the fact that the uses of the writing and thinking of Gqoba and Mqhayi should not be misunderstood as a framework that continues to aid the belief that the Indigene is lacking legitimacy in their political identity. It is in heeding this caution that we can address the problem that is identified by Wicomb as a dilemma. In the recognition of this work, as a corpus that attended/attends to the condition that confronts the Black/Indigenous being, there is the recognition that it is sufficient in and of itself without having to be read through a western intellectual tradition that would distort it to the point of creating something that is unrecognizable – as we have seen in the case of Ubuntu with Praeg's (2014) *Report*. Oftentimes, the thinking and writing of Black/Indigenous intellectuals is appropriated and distorted by white intellectuals, in order to serve their interests in securing white settler futurity while eliding the place of the Indigene. And thus, I must stress that this project is not interested, nor should it be misconstrued as being aligned with such violent aims.

2.8. Conclusion

As a mode of concluding, I have examined the dilemma identified by Wicomb. By dilemma is meant the existence of two identities that seek to lay claim to the definition of culture in a country like South Africa that is defined by fractures, social and political, that are traceable back to the first decolonial moment, the moment of resisting the colonial impositions that came with British imperial rule – on the southernmost tip of the African continent. To

recognise this dilemma sufficiently, the reader needs to understand and appreciate the imbrications that define the uses of culture and power, insofar as the hegemonic identity is the one that determines culture owing to its exertions of power. In dealing with this dilemma, I have appealed to the thinking and writing of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi who each give us three principles that culminate in the resolution of this dilemma.

The first of these is an inter-cultural understanding that transcends the crude bifurcating moves that we find in the scholarship of contemporary thinkers. Owing to their socio-cultural location as the first and second generation of Black/Indigenous intellectuals, their contribution allows us to appreciate both the world that once was and the world that our country became owing to the impositions that came with British colonial imperialism along with Afrikaner nationalism. Secondly, their use of culture as a political resistance tool appreciates the relationship that exists between culture and power, to the extent that their work attended to these issues by drawing out the political quandaries that exist(ed) in our country, owing to the imposition cited in the first move.

The final move lies in their appreciation of the cultural conditions that exist on both sides owing to their being privy to both worlds. This is to say that theirs attends to the position that Mamdani (2021) strives for in his treatise but does so in a way that appreciates the contribution that the Black/Indigenous being brings to the political project. Simply, theirs does not lie in the placation of white settler colonial desires for futurity in a context that is defined by a Black/Indigenous majority. Their contributions take seriously the ontological legitimacy—a recognition that is sorely lacking in the contemporary scholarship that rushes to such a destination—without undermining the legitimacy that the Other brings to the political condition that is South Africa. It is for these reasons that I suggest that Gqoba and Mqhayi give us useful insights into the resolution of the dilemma identified by Wicomb's timeless analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

Amaqaba nama Gqobhoka? **Working through Colonial Derision of Black Ontology**

3.1. Introduction

William Wellington Gqoba (1888) and Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi (1914) engage with belonging in South Africa (*cf*. Kumalo 2022c). I am inspired here to deal with whether their thinking can be used in defusing the tension inaugurated by coloniality. This tension is analysed at two levels: firstly, intra-Black tension (conflict). Such an exploration is aimed at discerning how Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi (1914) responded to the implications of colonial violence and epistemic injustice in real time. This approach establishes the canonical contribution that sustained an intergenerational engagement with Gqoba (1888) and Mqhayi's (1914) work into the twenty-first century.

In the secondary move, I look to interracial tension and at how the texts under examination inform Blackness's response to colonial settler violence and dispossession. This is done in order to consider political action, through tracing how Black institutions such as the Native Education Association responded to colonial laws, derision and violence.

3.2. Conceptually Framing Ontological Derision

In this chapter, the primary focus is on the 'ontological derision' that Blackness/Indigeneity encounter, both at the level of culture and within the political domain.[1] Upon the advice of an

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[1.] At the level of culture, the institution of religion is significant in this analysis. The culture of the Indigene is the premise for their disqualification from the realm of the political, for they do not exist within it as conceptualised since Greek and Roman antiquity, as outlined by Arendt (2018) in Part II of the book *The Human Condition*, wherein she writes about the Public and the Private Realm. Several Black/Indigenous intellectuals of the time participated in the public realm through their conversion to the Christian faith, specifically when Christianity sought to establish itself as the only and leading epistemic framework that organised the lives of the majority. To

incredibly generous anonymous reviewer, I wish to make it clear that my engagement with the concept of derision is aware of the psychoanalytical school that has applied itself to derision. While my own theoretical articulations might make similar points as Denis Vasse on the function of derision "as an attack on difference" (Faÿ 2008: 832) insofar as "derision is [a discourse] which cannot withstand the very notion of difference and, by extension, of otherness" (Vasse 1999: 99), I do not claim to speak from this perspective of the psychoanalytical tradition. More importantly, however, my analysis does take the fact of the abjured state of Blackness/Indigeneity seriously. To the extent that I do not write about derision from the perspective of the psychoanalytical tradition, I also do not merely use the concept in its common parlance form.

Resultantly, I wish to begin by defining the concept of ontological derision. In my previous work (Kumalo 2021), I develop the concept of 'ontological recognition', which denotes the acknowledgement of the Indigene's ontology, conferring epistemic authority on the Indigene to speak. The concept of speaking (with "speaking as but another mode of acting", *cf.* Arendt's ([1966/1967]/2018) lecture on Revolution and Freedom), as I use it, is in line with Arendt's conception of the distinction between the private and the public realm. Such a speech act – which feeds into the debates on epistemic justice – is made in a context where their (Blackness/Indigeneity) epistemic contribution is not only understood, but is appreciated, even as it necessarily differs from that of the *Other*.[2] Ontological recognition in

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this degree, Mqhayi (1914) proffers a warning to the Xhosa people when he speaks of a demise of the life of amaXhosa owing to the customs and traditions that have been brought to our context by missionaries, and this has been discussed above, in the previous chapter.

[2.] I use the word 'Other' as 'Otherness' is denotative of anything and everything that exists outside of the identity that is familiar and known to the speaker – who, in this case, is represented in the form of an Indigenous being. The Indigenous being is a subject who has their own forms of organising the political realm, and exists within the realm of cultural practices that are not dependent on modernity's intervention and coloniality's incursion.

this respect denotes an epistemic framework that extends the analysis that the reader finds in Miranda Fricker's (2007) conception of epistemic justice.

Ontological derision, then, is a concept that denotes how Blackness/Indigeneity is treated, both in terms of analysis as well as in the political realm. Faÿ (2008: 832) gives us a useful explanation, which will deepen my reader's understanding of how I am using the concept in this argument, when he writes:

> Among those linguistic technologies, derision can be found in the widespread and confusing hybrid combination of two contradictory paradigms: communication which seems to encourage subjective openness – through discourse of personal or organizational development – and instrumental rationality, which forecloses subjectivity – through indifferent instrumentalisation, cynical manipulation or reinforced control.

Kristeva (1982) uses the concept of abjection to outline that which is delineated outside of the in-group owing to the responses the abject(ed) object solicits from us at a very base level of human understanding. While the *abject* could possibly be a useful concept to use here, it is jettisoned in favour of *derision* owing to the fact that the same conceptual reasoning, when abjecting a thing, is not found in the context of how we use and treat Blackness/Indigeneity. I will appeal to Vasse through Faÿ (2008: 838) in making the point that

> through a falsely 'true speech' derision calls for subjective consent, only to manipulate and repress following the ego's fantasies, in the a'-a binary logic: 'true

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'Otherness' recognises the Indigene as a legitimate being in and of themselves, without the qualification that might be rooted in colonial understanding.

speech becomes the most deadly of lies; knowledge of the most unjust law of

repression; and the guiltiest science of the body of manipulations.'

The reader must pay careful attention to my use of 'use' above. The abject(ed) is no longer *useful*, if the reader takes seriously Kristeva's (1982) analysis. The abject is non-usable; it sits at the boundary outside of that which is life-giving and life-sustaining, irrespective of whether such properties are manipulated or taken on their own ontological merits. In the case of *derision* we bear witness to the manipulation theorised by Faÿ (2008) owing to the fact that derision abjures difference. This manipulation is categorised by Vasse (1999: 100) as follows: "[such] a language which only leads to the logic of words is a perverse and violent way of retaining repressive and manipulative order through 'a stony discourse that does not let others speak'". The use of 'derision', then, recognises how those who would treat Blackness/Indigeneity with derision are well aware of the usefulness, that is, the life-maintaining properties, of Blackness/Indigeneity, and resultantly manipulate it to maintain the repressive and manipulative order that frames Blackness as Indigeneity as existing outside the pale of citizenship and belonging in the context of South Africa. To say that Blackness/Indigeneity is useful while being derided is premised on their labour quality. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt's ([1966/1967]/2018) analysis of the domestic realm, which is lorded over by the master who keeps slaves, explains what is intended by a derision that still finds Blackness/Indigeneity useful. Importantly, I am not making a Afro-pessimistic argument of the relegation of Blackness/Indigeneity to the role of slave, as my argument analyses Blackness as Indigenous in our context. Rather the point of invoking Arendt is done with the intention of demonstrating what is intended, by the reasoning I aim to convey to my reader.

To elaborate on this point, the first section of this chapter will look at how modes of writing that are steeped in a derisive attitude towards Blackness/Indigeneity affect our understanding of the ontology of the Indigene. And to demonstrate derision, I invite the reader to consider how the customs of Blackness/Indigeneity have been regarded. Looking to the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895, which was later amended in 1957, the reader sees the concept of derision in action. Criminalising the ontology of Blackness/Indigeneity to the extent of imposing a fine and a jail sentence on those who were found to be practising 'witchcraft' is a useful starting point with respect to understanding not only how the concept of derision is used in this analysis, but also what is meant by it. The concept of ontological derision, insofar as such an attitude is held with respect to the life prospects of the Indigene in the country of their ancestors, has not received systematic attention in scholarship – especially, moreover, inasmuch as such an attitude is held by Blackness/Indigeneity itself. Aside from the scholars who have been working in decoloniality, both in the previous century and contemporarily – *cf.* Achebe (2019), Mazrui (1978) and Mudimbe (1988) – attention to the ontology of Blackness and Indigeneity has been elided in the academy. When the lives of Blackfolk are examined and analysed, the analyses merely stop at the level of interracial conflict. This is understandable, however, in a context where the native population posed a threat to the legitimate claim of the colonial settler and their progeny – a claim that sought to style the country as a vast and empty abyss, salvageable only by the efforts of colonial invasion and imposition. J. M. Coetzee has already treated this subject in his *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (1988), and as such, I will not pay it too much attention in my own analysis.

An additional complication is encountered at the level of treating Blackness/Indigeneity with deferentiality, wherein that which defines Blackness/Indigeneity is always taken to be the colonial encounter, as if to say that the Black/Indigenous being was without ontology or history prior to colonial incursion. In analysing this problem, let me begin by drawing our attention to van der Vlies (2018: 5) when, introducing the collection of essays penned by Zoë Wicomb, he writes, "Instead of merely reflecting the spectacle of apartheid – which would effectively allow the state to act as 'author' of their works – black writers might instead insist that their future would make room for the parochial, the quiet, the ordinary". That which is considered to be 'parochial' and mundane is that which (when taken up seriously by Blackness/Indigeneity) is framed as essentialist writing and thinking, and as not warranting a legitimate intellectual project in and of itself (*cf.* Praeg 2014, 2019).

There are two moves that facilitate the delegitimation of the Indigene, leading to the derision exhibited by the general public when it comes to the lives of Blackness/Indigeneity. In the first instance, the lives of Blackness/Indigeneity are only ever analysed in view of the colonial moment. This is due to the work of thinkers such as Fanon (2007), who popularised this mode of analysis when he penned *The Wretched of the Earth*. This first mode of delegitimation is taken up contemporarily by scholars like Lewis R. Gordon (2021: 8) when he argues that "This concluding reflection brings forth an additional element of philosophical concern. The movements from double consciousness to a dialectical relationship with the Euromodern world". In recounting these challenges, the one that is of crucial importance to our analysis concerns "the transformation of whole groups of people into categories of 'indigenous'/'native,' 'enslaved,' 'colonised,' and 'black'" (ibid.). This leads Gordon to the conclusion that "Such people suffer a unique form of melancholia (bereavement from loss or separation), as they are indigenous to a world that rejects them by virtue of making them into

problems" (ibid.).[3] To conclude this first concern around the delegitimation strategies used against Blackness/Indigeneity, insofar as Blackness/Indigeneity ever find validation through displacement by the white colonial encounter, Gordon (ibid.) continues to suggest that "The homelessness of which I speak is not geographic. It is temporal, even where one is geographically in one's home. The African, in other words, struggles paradoxically, as do the African Diaspora, with being temporally homeless at home."

The second conceptual move of delegitimation comes in the form of the claim that the Indigene is being essentialist when they wish to pay attention to their lives, their experiences and their modes of being. Achebe (2019: 2–3) puts it aptly when he writes, "Quite simply it is the desire – one might indeed say the need – in western psychology to set Africa up as a foil to Europe, as a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar, in comparison with which Europe's own state of spiritual grace will be manifest". Achebe makes this remark in his consideration of the racist undertones that inform Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. This brings us to the secondary point on the second move of delegitimation, the reality that much of western thought, along with academe, makes the claim of essentialism on the premise that they are no longer the ones writing about our context. Nowhere is such a claim of essentialism offered more than in Praeg's (2014) defence of his farcical and incomprehensible take on Ubuntu, where his analysis removes the ontology of

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[3.] The question with which the reader is confronted is the notion of 'loss'. In a context where the Indigene has not lost their language and still has an affinity and connection to the land, be that owing to the fact of the Bantustans that were created by the apartheid state or otherwise, how does one make sense of this claim of loss that Gordon is alluding to? The response to loss is found in Sisonke Msimang's *Always Another Country*, wherein she points out the difference between those who have access to the land and their language(s) and the loss that Gordon writes about in his work in terms of those who were stripped of their land, their language and their culture. To defend the claim, Gordon needs to do more, if it is to stand as a claim that holds true even in contexts such as ours, which he claims it does. Moreover, this demonstrates why this analysis focuses on derision and not abjection. Such a realisation comes from an acknowledgement of intra-Black conflict that is spurred by conversion.

Blackness/Indigeneity completely from his treatment of the philosophy. Moreover, other scholars (*cf*. Mamdani 1990) have classified such methods of engagement with Blackness/Indigeneity as a failing nationalist project, which is to say that there has not been a systematic engagement with Blackness/Indigeneity on terms agreeable to what Kumalo (2018a) has previously called the recognition of the ontological legitimacy of the Indigene. Simply, Indigeneity is robbed of the capacity to treat its own ideas on its own terms, while having such treatments come into mainstream analyses of race, political theory and literary analyses.

Resultantly, my analysis will proceed in the following format, as a mode of analysing the context that has been outlined here. In the first instance, I will look to Gqoba's earlier text, which I will use to demonstrate how Blackness/Indigeneity can be accused of complicity in the derision towards Blackness/Indigeneity that now abounds. The first section will thus conduct a very close reading of Gqoba's (2015) 'The Native Tribes, Their Laws, Customs and Beliefs'. This was the only piece penned by Gqoba in English. The address to which I will pay attention was given to the Lovedale Literary Association. The second part of the chapter will look at how intra-Black conflict fuels interracial conflict and violence, with the third and final component looking at how both aspects are dealt with by Gqoba and Mqhayi.[4] This will be done with the intention of demonstrating the existence of thought among Black intellectuals, and the ways that they responded to the reality of colonial incursion, while striving for an inclusive national framework that holds both Black/Indigenous and colonial settler identities in tandem.

[4.] It will also be apparent in the chapter that Gqoba occupies a space of liminality between the world that was and the world that was becoming. It is for this reason that he can be read as chastising some of the ideas and customs that are associated with the Indigene, on the one hand, while also acting as a defender of certain customs within their lives, a matter that we see manifestly in his epic poem on *Ingxoxo Enkulu Nge Mfundo*.

3.3. Intra-Black Conflict and its Catalysts

William Wellington Gqoba, according to the Lovedale history that was compiled by then Principal James Stewart, was born in Gaga in August 1840 "and [was] educated at Tyhume before entering Lovedale in September 1853" (Opland 2015: 13). With any writer, the context in which they are socialised is what informs their thinking, writing and the themes of analysis in their oeuvre. This is to say that what follows aims to demonstrate how such a link is made between the thinking and writing of Gqoba, along with the social context in which he was reared. In footnote 10 of the introductory chapter to the collection of his works, Opland (ibid.) states that

> In the following commentary, and in the notes to the texts, 'Gqoba' will refer to William Wellington Gqoba and 'Gqoba Peyi' to his father Gqoba, son of Peyi. It was acceptable practice at this time to refer to a Xhosa man by his given name followed by the name of his father; the name of the father soon developed into a surname for the European record. Thus, William Wellington took the name of his father, Gqoba, as his surname, as did his children.

"At Lovedale Gqoba was active in educational affairs (he was a prominent member of the Native Education Association, founded in 1879, the first known African political organisation in the Eastern Cape [of South Africa])" (Opland 2015: 14). These biographical details demonstrate how the training to which Gqoba was subjected at Lovedale was to play a crucial influence in the life prospects that he was to enjoy afterwards. Two important points require mentioning. First, and as a reiteration, the contextual specificities in which a writer writes shape the ideas that they explore in their oeuvre. Born into a world that was fast becoming

'modernised',[5] through the repression and violent erasure of Indigenous modes of life in the British Cape Colony – memorialised through the 1820 Settler's Monument in Makhanda (formerly known as Grahamstown) – Gqoba, like Gordimer, as per my analysis in the introduction chapter of this study, is influenced by the social realities to which he is witness. Secondly, to claim, as I do in footnote 4, that Gqoba occupies (and occupied) a space of liminality is predicated on the fact that he was articulately trained in the formal missionary colonial education style, which does not, however, take away from his appreciation of the epistemology of his people – amaXhosa. This claim itself is premised on the fact that he was the editor of *Isigidimi samaXhosa* from 1884 to 1888 (the year of his untimely death), and was a man of letters, occupying a prominent role within organisations such as the Native Education Association (NEA). Moreover, within the NEA and in his role as a man of letters (an educated Indigene), he was critical of both the colonial missionary education system and 'backward' cultural practices such as *ukuthwala* (which I will discuss momentarily, when I conduct an analysis of the *only* work he wrote in English).

Returning, then, to his biographical sketch, as is the case in the Rortean (1991) sense, wherein Richard Rorty talks about education as socialisation, what we see in Gqoba is a man who is socialised into an understanding of the western world. Such socialisation did not take away from the appreciation that Gqoba had for his own people's life and the ways in which they organised society. What is possibly best to say of Gqoba is that his exposure to both

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[5.] I will rely on the generosity of my reader in the understanding that when I propose the concept of a world that was modernising, I am referring to a double process. First, I refer to a world that was gaining access to technology and advances in systems of information dissemination, such as the printing press, seen in the publications *Imvo Zabantsundu*, *Isigidimi SamaXhosa* and *Ilanga lase Natali*. Second, I refer to a world that was being subjected to the modernism (of enlightenment) of the colonial civilising mission. I insert this caveat as it would be irresponsible of me not to situate this reality in view of the missionary, Christian conversion debates that are constitutive of the intra-Black conflict I theorise in this chapter and the project as a whole.

worlds facilitated understanding that was not only critical but acted as a catalyst to systems of evolution in both cultures to which he belonged. Secondly, the influence of the European missionaries was furthermore to play a role, for a number of African liberation leaders were educated in Christian institutions and would thus hold to the values that define the Christian moral economy. The Christian debate as it influences the political landscape under examination is not the focus in this analysis. Inasmuch as this is the case, however, the function of Christianity plays a crucial role insofar as it distinguishes between those who would be classed as heathens and as lesser, even by fellow Blacks. To demonstrate the point of the role of Christianity, Mazrui (1978), in his introduction to *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa*, notes the role that the Christian religion played in the Black/Indigenous community. To the extent that Mazrui was correct, this chapter considers the intra-Black conflict that defines our contexts, resulting in two, seemingly clear, categories of ontology, that is, *amaqaba*[6] *nama gqhoboka.*[7]

[6.] The concept of *iqaba* (which is the singular of *amaqaba*) has two meanings. In its original sense, it means those who smear red ochre on their faces (*ukuqaba imbola*). This group of Black people clung to their systems of political organisation, legal frameworks and a moral code that differed from the colonial settler's. Mqhayi's ([1917]/2009: 131) discussion of the lawsuit between a 'white man and a slave' demonstrates this point of pre-existing legal systems when he writes: "*pambi kokuba litéthwé ityala u Mhlekazi uMaqoma uvakalise indawo ethi: "Ke apa ema-Xóseni, asinto ikóyo ikóboka, ke ngoko wosel' esiti elityala alijonge njenge tyala lamadoda amabini amangaleleneyo*'" ("Before the case proceeded, His Majesty Maqoma made this point: 'Here in Xhosaland there is no such thing as a slave, so we would regard the case as one between two men who had made a bargain'"). In its secondary meaning, which was as a result of this sect of society rejecting colonial modes of being and education, the concept became associated with those who were considered 'illiterate' in the colonial modes of education. Illiteracy as associated with *amaqaba* is predicated on the rejection of missionary colonial education, which was embraced by *amagqobhoka* (those who rejected pre-colonial epistemic frameworks) and became *amakholwa*. The popular and contemporary meaning of *amaqaba* has come to be associated with illiteracy and replaced the first (read: original) meaning.

[7.] *Igqobhoka* (the singular of *amagqobhoka*) suggests the process of 'conversion/converting'. This meaning is taken from the Fort Hare *Greater Dictionary of isiXhosa*, Vol. I, p. 625, and is derived from the act of "piercing or making a hole". The implication(s) of this meaning is that Christianity was seen as a foreign object that had infected the life of the convert by way of getting through their natural defences. *Amagqobhoka* acquiesced to

Risking the challenge of philosophical particularity to the extent of losing my reader, I must answer the question of how these two categories become ontological (or rather, how I come to regard them ontologically). My thinking proceeds from the understanding that pure philosophical ontology is foundational to scientific ontology. The latter allows me to defend my choice vis-à-vis a domain of existent entities. It is in this latter category, that is, scientific ontology, which is predicated on pure philosophical ontology, that we are able to explain the concepts (in this analysis, *amaqaba nama gqobhoka*), either supporting the propositions that are made in their regard or disputing said propositions, owing to the fact that philosophy is a study, in part, of the deepest presuppositions of truth. In treating these two categories, I must make it emphatically clear that my analysis rests on pure philosophical ontology, even as the method of conducting such an analysis might borrow from the form found in pursuit of scientific ontological answers.

In conducting such an analysis, I am thinking alongside Jacquette (2002: 1) when he observes that "Philosophical confusions … lie in wait for thinkers … who have not first clarified what it means for something to exist". My proposition, then, is that the two categories of *amaqaba nama gqobhoka* exist qua being. As a derivative of this claim, the questions that follow need to address the implications of what it means to have both *amaqaba nama gqobhoka* exist, in a context where they have historically been oppositional to each other, owing to their underlying epistemologies as a result of the place of Christianity as it relates to each. In part, I attempt to address this question in the context of the political situation that defines South Africa.

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western epistemic frameworks as advocated by the colonial settler, that is, they became Christian converts (*amakholwa*), following the colonial settler's mode of life.

I wish, then, to return to my analysis. Mazrui (1978: 2) highlights the role of Christianity in relation to one of South Africa's leaders when he notes: "In South Africa the late Albert Luthuli, winner of the Nobel prize for peace and symbol of non-violent resistance to South African apartheid, was a deeply devout Christian."

The function of Christianity also distinguished Black intellectuals to the extent that they became very well respected within the circles of Black intelligentsia. This was due to the fact that an educated Black/Indigenous Christian could also assume the role of priest or minister to the congregation of Black converts, or *amagqobhoka*. Inasmuch as Gqoba did not focus in his writing on ministry in either of the orthodox churches that came to define the landscape of Black life in South Africa, he was well regarded to the extent that the following was said of him upon his untimely death in 1888. His obituaries were published in a series of publications that dominated the Xhosa landscape at the time, namely the *Christian Express*, *Isigidimi* and *Imvo Zabantsundu*, which all praised him as follows:

> *um-Cirha omkulu, um-Xosa wama-Xosa kum-Xosa; i Lawu lama-Lawu kuma-Lawu; um-Lungu kwabateta isi-Lungu; iciko kumaciko; incoko kumancoko; into ebuso buhle kuwo wonke umntu angamaziyo nomaziyo; umxoxi ezincokweni – ititshala ezititshaleni, umshumayeli kuba shumayeli bendaba zika Kristu; umvuseleli we Cebo lombuso wo Sombawo.*[8] (Opland 2015: 15)

[8.] "A great man of the Cirha clan, a Xhosa's Xhosa among the Xhosa, a coloured's coloured among the coloured, a white man among those who speak the language of the white man, a wise man among wise men, an eloquent man among eloquent men, a man pleasant to strangers and those he knows well, a good debater, a teacher among teachers, preacher among those who preach Christ's message, one who revives the law of our forefathers."

He was a well-renowned man among his people and a leader of note within the Xhosa community and beyond, to the extent that he would be one of the leading figures to orchestrate a commendable public debate on many of the issues that affected the Xhosa people at the time; among these, we count the questions of religion and secondly education. One of the debates led by Gqoba concerned the life and customs of the Native in South Africa. The tone that is taken in this debate seems to be derisive and possibly undermines the life and values that are held by the Indigene, specifically towards the end of the debate. Christianity, as an influential institution in Gqoba's formation, is a useful lens through which we can understand his comments. And more importantly, he utters these comments in a crowd that was predominantly made up of white missionaries, which might suggest that he was pandering to their prejudices. In making a case for this reading, it is important to bear in mind the derision that even the elite and educated Black/Indigenous class was explicitly aware of in the governance styles of the white settler colonials, what is referred to as *ikethe* in Gqoba's epic poem *Ingxoxo Enkulu Nge Mfundo.*

This comment, with respect to the derision exhibited by Gqoba in this address, is made in view of how Gqoba was socialised in the context of his education at Lovedale College and his prior training at Tyhume, which subsequently positions him as one of the foremost leading thinkers of Black/Indigenous intellectual society at the time. His work straddles a border of understanding and anguish, to an extent, in the sense that he occupies a role that knows the systems of thought that defined the world that was, and that was quickly receding owing to the world that the country was becoming due to colonial imposition. Such a border position is interesting in the kinds of questions that it inaugurates, in that it allows the reader to be critical, as was Gqoba, of the life practices that were against the intervening moral economy that was taking root in the country. This border position also reveals the

intra-Black conflict that was beginning to define the context of the lives of Black/Indigenous people.

To frame the discussion led by Gqoba as symptomatic of intra-Black conflict is premised on the reality that *amaqaba*, those who were classed as uneducated owing to their rejection of western customs, were seen as something altogether *Other* by those who were educated. Gqoba (2015: 210) himself introduces the discussion as follows, which is to say that he occupies a position that understands both worlds with incredible aptitude: "The deeper investigation goes into Native questions[,] the more interesting they will become, and the two races will gradually understand each other, and all suspicions and grievances as well as all ill-feeling towards one another will be removed for ever." This frame of reference is premised on Gqoba's knowledge of the two worlds, which is to say that he is keenly aware of the similarities, styling themselves as differences, that exist between the two cultures. His suggestion of deeper investigation into both worlds is made in view of the fact that the world of the Indigene is severely understudied and poorly understood by those who have imposed their mode of life as hegemonic in the country. To this end, Goqba is aware of the derision that Blackness (as Indigeneity) faces and encounters in the country. This derision, his thinking seeks to suggest, is premised on the lack of understanding, insofar as such understanding can and must be gleaned from a systematic study of the customs of the Indigene. Such a mode of study would only be realised in the context of the 'ontological recognition' that I have written about previously (Kumalo 2018a).

Gqoba's (2015) thinking, then, is inspired by the desire to end all animosity from either side of the racial divide. This is one of the principal reasons that he is touted as a thinker who can effectively enable us to transcend the racial animosities that define our context, subsequently creating a society that holds competing identities in tandem and

coevally. However, it is crucial to first understand the challenges that define intra-Black relations prior to accommodating alternative identities that are now also constitutive of what has become known as South Africa.

To demonstrate the understanding and appreciation that Gqoba has of his context, I wish to highlight his consideration of the custom of *ukulobola* or dowry. He begins by outlining that "The word *ukulobola* means to exchange one thing for another. To exchange words for instance is *ukulobola* or *ukulobolelana ngamazwi*. *It never meant to buy or sell*" (Gqoba 2015: 218, emphasis added). Highlighting exchange and ruling out buying or selling serves the function of demonstrating the impact that the capitalist economic order had on Blackness/Indigeneity. His analysis also demonstrates the changing function of language and how the concept could change in line with the changing economic system. This is simply to say that he recognises that the languages and the customs, as they are infused, informed and come to life through language, are changing with time. Life and the ways in which it is approached are not stagnant nor untouched by the changes that were defining the country. His consideration of *ilobolo* gives us two perspectives; one that appreciates the function of the custom, and another that condemns the practice as it has bought into perversions of the capitalist market system. He writes:

> Those who condemn *ukulobola*, or the contract under which this delivery and promise takes place, say that it is a contract made without consulting the woman, by which natives may, according to their law, force their children into marriage for a consideration, which becomes the father's absolute property; without creating any future obligation of support in him. (Gqoba 2015: 219)

In his continued analysis, he comes to suggest that:

All evidence however proves that a woman is not the slave for her husband; he has no property in her. He cannot, according to native law, kill, injure, or cruelly treat her with impunity. He cannot legally sell, or prostitute her, and with the exception of paying cattle to her father, as dowry upon marriage, there is nothing to indicate that native law or custom treats the wife as a chattel; nor is there anything in that law that a child is its father's slave, unless it be shown by this contract of dowry. (Gqoba 2015: 219).

In the face of those who would treat some African customs as outdated, ascribing to them even beliefs and practices that are archaic and deserving of public shunning, Gqoba's intervention demonstrates salvageability in how we both understand and approach these customs, 'approach' here denoting the ways in which we practise them. Moreover, the critical stance that is taken by Gqoba towards some of these customs is what has allowed for the culture(s) to evolve and grow, shedding practices that are disagreeable to contemporary cultural currents. To demonstrate the point, consider the custom of *ukuthwala*, which often saw (and sees) young women kidnapped and forced into marriages against their will. Chelete Monyane's 'Is *Ukuthwala* Another Form of "Forced Marriage"?' (2013) analyses the concept, while demonstrating that which Gqoba was speaking out against two centuries ago. This comment is made with the intention of demonstrating the saliency of Gqoba's thinking, even in the contemporary age. How, then, does this lend itself to the notion of ontological derision as it is experienced by the Black/Indigenous subject?

When Gqoba (2015: 224) discusses the doctors of the African context, he applied himself to a series of categories that define the concept (of African doctors, who-unfortunately-become witch doctors in the eyes of westerners) and the way that it was interpreted and understood by the Indigene in South Africa. The fundamental disagreement

that leads to ontological derision is premised on the ways in which the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895, which was itself based on the Witchcraft Act of 1735 of Great Britain, was used as a system of organising how we treat the customs, beliefs and epistemology of the Indigene. This is where the institution of religion assumes an important role insofar as religious organisations were interested in driving a narrative that framed African customs and understanding as primarily heathen, demonic and associated with witchcraft, which was not only criminalised with a fine, but also carried a jail term if one was found to be in contravention of said Act. Put simply, if an Indigene was found to be practising witchcraft[9] they could either be fined, jailed or both, as outlined in the Witchcraft Suppression Act. How, then, are the majority to relate to their ontology, which was not only criminalised but was given negative connotations, and solicited negative attitudes from the leading intellectuals (Black/Indigenous) of the time?[10] While I will not spend too much time

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[9.] To say that someone is found guilty of practising witchcraft is itself a bold claim, for how can a culture that does not understand the customs of those that it has come to conquer classify what is witchcraft and what are understood as practices of healing and attending to the life potentialities of the people? The point, here, is to highlight how the African's ontology was fundamentally crushed and jettisoned in favour of the western Christian conception of the world and how it is organised.

[10.] At this point, the reader might inquire as to whether the claim made in the previous section about the work of Lewis Gordon is not misplaced, in framing such a claim as one that feeds into the delegitimation strategies of Blackness/Indigeneity. There are two ways in which to respond to this question. The first deals with the reality that even as these modes of being were jettisoned by those who occupied prominent positions in the public life of intellectual discourse and debate in the country, these were not the only leading voices in respect to what the people clung to and believed. To the extent that the Black/Indigenous intellectual understood this themselves, the reader must note Opland's (2015: 8) quotation from Donovan Williams, who writes, "Christianity, qua Christianity, did not produce conflict; it was when Christianity attacked the customs and rites of the Kaffirs [*sic*] that it became a menace to Kaffir [*sic*] society and the chiefs in particular." Opland (ibid.), in his own analysis, continues by highlighting that "But up to a point, Soga was tolerant of Xhosa custom. He was not opposed to circumcision as such, but sought a modification of some of its practices, such as smearing the face and body with white clay. Circumcision, he claimed, was 'a civil and not a religious rite'. When boys on his station at Mgwali, including the sons of two of his elders, entered the circumcision lodge, he did not oppose them, but offered them guidelines; as he wrote 'If they wished to be men, they required only to perform the rite, without adopting other degrading customs'." In the knowledge of the reality that their mode of life was not the only one that prevailed,

focusing on this question here, I will return to it when I consider the response to this ontological derision to which Blackness/Indigeneity has been subjected.

Gqoba (2015: 224) discusses the issue of doctors in African custom as follows: "There are at least twelve kinds of doctors, which I shall briefly enumerate. The principal ones are *Izanuse*, or *Abangoma* in Zulu, who profess to have direct intercourse with the spirit world, and to practice divination." He continues, "Though no one, within the boundaries of this and other Colonies, openly accuses another of witchcraft, still there are many heart-burnings and much bitter feeling caused by hints and innuendos" (ibid.: 225). The position taken by Gqoba begins to lay the groundwork for the outlawing of African customary beliefs, to the extent that the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895 was adopted and enforced without much resistance from the Black/Indigenous intellectuals, who were themselves married to notions of Christian conversion that subsequently led to the violence that constitutes intra-Black conflict. Intra-Black conflict is picked up as a theme in the most systematic and apt way by Zakes Mda (2000) in *The Heart of Redness*. The reader will find the first such consideration in Noni Jabavu's *The Ochre People* (1963), although her treatment of the concept of intra-Black conflict is implicit.

Gqoba (2015: 225) begins his derisive comments when he distinguishes between the different doctors that we find in African custom, and states the following:

I may class the *amacamagu*, also diviners or fortune-tellers, *awamashologu*, charmers or seers, *amagogo*, seers, with the above, *viz*. the *izanuse*, so far as their intercourse

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even those who were converted to the Christian faith understood the function of certain customs, to the extent that these customs are still around to this very day. This leads us to the second point. Inasmuch as the customs are still around to this day, the concept of 'temporal homelessness' that we find in Gordon's thinking is not only misplaced, but lacks substantiation in the context of existing languages that are able to root and ground the Indigene in the systems of thought that were primarily treated as lacking any form of ontological legitimacy.

with familiar spirits is concerned, the only difference being in the smelling out which these do not do. *But I think they are a great deal worse, for they infatuate and destroy whole tribes, men, women, and children* [emphasis added]. *Nxele*, or Lynx, *Mlanjeni*, *Nongqause*, *Mhlakaza*, *Nxitho* all belonged to this class.

Stressing the point of conversion that all ministers were concerned with at the time, a concern that sought to advance the Christian mode of life, which was seen as more enlightened than that which existed prior to the arrival of colonial thinkers, Gqoba's concluding remark is the most telling. He (2015: 228) states that

> From what I have already shown, in spite of all the various and hideous, as well as absurd notions, the natives entertain and their superstitions, yet in some respects they are much nearer the light, though they dwell in darkness, then many would suppose.

More concerning is the approach that Gqoba takes towards the role of Christian missionaries in our context. It is concerning specifically in view of the instruction that was given by Ntsikana,[11] wherein he implores all Xhosa people and those who would intermingle with the culture of whiteness specifically to select only those aspects that advance the life prospects of the Indigene, rather than engaging in wholesale conversion. Gqoba (2015: 228) suggests that

> These white men, have out of love and obedience to their Lord and Master and His cause, faced death, being content to count all those things as nothing, provided only

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[11.] As outlined by Opland (2015: 1–2), "Ntsikana is a figure of enduring influence, revered as a charismatic prophet who foretold the arrival of white settlers; he urged acceptance of some European innovations but only on Xhosa terms, a policy of assimilation by the Xhosa rather than wholesale conversion by the missionaries. He stressed the need for the community and the nation to remain as tightly unified as a compressed, compacted ball made of the scrapings from the inside pelt, *imbumba yamanyama*, a phrase that now serves as one of South Africa's national mottoes."

that they may win the souls of us black men and women for Christ, and guide them out of darkness into the marvellous light of true religion.

This is where the reader will encounter the principal challenge of the derision that the Indigene is faced with. The attitudes that were adopted by the first Black/Indigenous intellectuals led to the current conditions that define Black life, to the extent that Gqoba (2015: 229) himself comes to the conclusion that

May the day soon come when we natives of this country shall altogether have been freed from the power of heathenism in all its forms, and when we in turn shall willingly and out of the same love that prompted the Britons to sacrifice everything for Christ's sake, do the same for our benighted countrymen.

3.4. Interracial Conflict as Premised on Intra-Black Conflict

The root of the derision that is faced by the Indigene in South Africa, and at that, the Indigene who rejects or rejected colonial modes of education, is detailed above. The initial divide within the community of Blackness/Indigeneity, a divide that was premised on the incursion of coloniality, inaugurated the transformation of society to the extent that much of the world that existed prior to colonial invasion was drastically changed. Mqhayi ([1933]/2009: 451) has the following to say about the succession of Mpande to the Zulu throne, as a matter of demonstrating the point: "*Lomfo ngunyana ka Senzangakhona, – u Tshaka no Dingana ngabakuluwa kuye; yena wayengowezindlwana ezisemva kanye, engacingeki ukuba angaze ade ongamele ubukumkani bakwa Zulu bakwa Malandela*."[12] This example is used deliberately to showcase the effects that colonialism had on the lives of the Indigene in our

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12. "This fellow [Mpande] was the son of Senzangakhona – Shaka and Dingana are his older brothers; as he comes from a minor house of less significance, it was inconceivable that he could rule the kingdom of Zulu and Malendela."

context. It also stresses the point raised by Kunene (1996) regarding Blackfolk who collaborated only to secure their positions of power within the framework of the changing world. Moreover, we can understand the work of Mqhayi in this regard as a counter-historical narrative that tells the (hi)story of Blackness/Indigeneity from the perspective of Indigenous historiography. Further developing this counter-historical narrative, we see Mqhayi ([1993]/2009: 453) recounting the battle between Pretorius and King Dingana when he writes:

> *Apo ke ngoku u Mpande aze kungena kona ke yena kusemveni kweloduli. Ute ngokupateka kakubi kumkuluwa wake u Dingana wade wacinga ukuba makamkwelele, aye kuzicelela indawo ezintshabeni paya, kuba hleze abulawe ngomhla otile omnye. Ute kuba u Mpande uza nomkhosi ongqindilili wempi engakolwayo sisipato sika Dingana, avuya kakulu nama Bhulu esitsho nokuti yimpendulo yemitandazo yawo. Amlinge ngendlela zonke u Mpande ukuba angaba unyanisile na akayiyo na intlola, amfumana umfana eqinisekile enyanisile ukuba uyazinikela kuma Bhulu.*[13]

In the previous section, the matter comes up as an issue of education – the education that was adopted by the Indigene, the education of the colonial missionary – which came with the agenda of the colonial missionary. Mazrui (1978: 25) identifies three aspects of this conversion agenda, which primarily concerns "the idea of *Christians* leading *pagans* into the *light*". The reader encounters this very comment when they pay attention to the concluding

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[13.] "Only now, after this battle, did Mpande enter the picture. Because of his ill treatment at the hands of his elder brother Dingana, he had decided to leave and seek a place of refuge from his enemies for fear of being murdered one day. Because Mpande brought with him a massed army of soldiers dissatisfied with Dingana's rule, the Boers greatly rejoiced at this answer to their prayers. They tested Mpande in various ways to establish that he was not a spy; they found him a dependable young man sincere in his desire to place himself in Boer hands."

remarks by Gqoba in his Lovedale Literary Society address, to which we have made reference above. In the second respect, Mazrui (ibid.) outlines that missionaries were also concerned with "the idea of a pilgrimage, of a long journey from sin to virtue; from earth to heaven; from the way of Satan to that of God", a matter that also comes up in the coven agreement made by Pretorius to God, in the call to defeat Dingana's army, as documented by Mqhayi's counter-canonical historical writing. This is to say that Pretorius vows that should he defeat the Zulu nation, such a defeat will be a demonstration of God's favour upon him and his people. Thus, Christianity, converting the heathen natives from their barbarous ways, and education are closely interwoven and interlinked. On the defeat of the heathens (i.e. the Indigene), the superiority of the coloniser's belief system is purportedly established and substantiated.

The third aspect under consideration in the Christian conversion agenda is the notion of "separating the material from [the things of] the spirit or the soul; that is separating the material from the spiritual." Mazrui (1978: 25) continues to demonstrate for us what is meant by such a separation when he writes, "When we talk here of the separation of body and soul in our educational institutions we should try as much as possible to relate it to the ordinary school, not the specialised". To the extent that Christian dogmatism played a crucial role in the process of colonial dispossession and the incapacitation of the African subject, "Many schools taught the virtues of obedience instead of the ethos of initiative; they taught the fear of God instead of love of country; they taught the evils of acquisition instead of the strategy of reconciling personal ambition with social obligation" (ibid.: 29). However, it is useful to keep in mind that "colonial education did not merely produce teachers, politicians and administrators. It also produced a new literate culture which affected a much wider range of social variables" (ibid.: 4). Essentially,

During the colonial period in Africa, education served the purpose of creating not only a reservoir of qualified people which the government could use, but also a pool of potential qualified nationalists who came to challenge the colonial presence itself. (ibid.: 1)

This last reality is what we see in the South African context, wherein the educated elite, inasmuch as they held problematic views towards the Indigene, were also driving the quest for liberation, as we see in the case of earlier political organisations such as the Native Education Association in the late 1870s. In this respect, there are two aspects that require our attention vis-à-vis interracial conflict. It is in the devaluation of the ontology of the Indigene by the Indigene (a move that happens owing to the apparent superiority of the belief system of the colonial settler), wherein the educated elite view their western training as superior to that of the systems of education that existed on the continent,[14] that the initial seed of interracial conflict lies. We see the second point of interracial conflict when the elite use their education as the premise from which to mount a nationalist struggle that contests processes of dislodging Blackness/Indigeneity from the country of their birth, inspired by and premised on the initial move of intra-Black conflict. This is to say that the change that introduces two models of education, one with a written practice, is a move that privatises knowledge, as per Kunene's (1996: 16) contention that

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[14.] Mazrui (1978: 35) makes the useful observation that "Education in Africa has been charged, again and again, with being irrelevant to African conditions and incapable of preparing the young for 'what they are to practice when they come to be men'". Discussing the role of a suitable education, which differs from that which came with the importations of western modernity to Africa, he makes the point that "Here we have an example of the kind of education that is three things at once. First, it is relevant to the society in which the child will spend his entire life. Second, it is fun, not agony. Finally, the child does not postpone the process of life till later when he is grown up. He is living fully now and enjoying it" (ibid.: 38).

Written literature by Africans in the earlier period, when literacy was low, had a surprisingly great significance and relevance. The reason was that Africans did not look at writing with a sense of awe. On the contrary, to Africans, written literature violated one of the most important literary tenets by privatizing literature.

Herein, as detailed above, lies the initial problem for the lifeworld that existed prior to the arrival of the colonial settler and their progeny. This initial problem, insofar as it reverberates through time and history, and is called a dilemma by Zoë Wicomb at the dawn of democracy in the early 1990s, inspires modes of resistance against the denigration of the lifeworld that exists in our context. Archibald Campbell Jordan (1939) details this reality very well in the fictional tale *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* (which became known as *The Wrath of the Ancestors* in translated form). To the extent that this clash of worlds had and has defined the lives of Indigenous people on the southernmost tip of the African continent, it has also preoccupied the literary attentions of most Black writers since the late eighteenth century, as evinced in Gqoba's compositions as they are inspired by Ntsikana's teachings; Mqhayi's *Ityala Lamawele* (1914), inasmuch as this book does not treat the theme directly, as other publications do, but continues to inspire the question of the implications associated with the changing world as it was unfolding in front of the Indigene in our context; Magema Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* (1979), which was translated into the English title as *The Black People and Whence They Came: A Zulu View*; A. C. Jordan's *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* (1939); and Noni Jabavu's *The Ochre People* (1963). In more recent times, Zakes Mda (2000) has taken up the theme in his *The Heart of Redness*, joining a litany of literary giants who have sought to think through this problem of belonging and identity insofar as it vexes both intra-Black and interracial relations.

The analysis developed here has focused intensely on the function of education as inspiring intra-Black conflict, which then leads to interracial conflict. The rationale for this lies in outlining the reasoning of the analysis presented in the previous section of the chapter. I do, however, wish to apply myself now to the implications of the interracial tensions insofar as these are inspired by collaborations between Blackness/Indigeneity on the one hand and whiteness on the other. This will be done as an entry point to the next section of the chapter and will use the work of Mqahyi (1928) when he recounts the history of *Idabi lama Linde* (the Battle of Amalinde). The analysis presented above points to the reality that there were Black/Indigenous intellectuals who were convinced of the superiority of the thinking that came with the colonial settler. Mazrui (1978) points out that the chaos that came with colonial incursion saw some natives vying for power, via forms of collaboration with the colonial settler, and in no place is this better demonstrated than in Mqhayi's ([1928]/2009: 125) account of *Idabi lama Linde*:

> *Ngemfazwe yama Linde eyayingo 1818 pakati ko Ngqika no Ndlambe, imikhosi ka Ngqika yayipetwe ngu Maqoma lo ese lirwala. Acitwa kwamdaka ama Ngqika, akalipe kunene, aye ecitwa yinkungu nelanga yakwa Ndlambe, kudibene zonke izizwe zasema Xoseni; wabhungca elijaja ngamanxeba ezikhali no-Maqoma lowo. Kukuze kufe uJotelo uyise ka Soga, no Nteyi uyise ka Tyala, no-Ntlukwana uyise ka Neku, amagora ka Ngqika. Kukuze ke u-Ngqika aye kuhlabela eyomlungu, ize kumnceda, ize ke yona izisikele ilizwekazi elikulu ukuzivuza, imise i-Ngqikayi isiti yenza ukumgcina u-Ngqika* [emphasis added].[15]

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15. "At the Battle of Amalinde in 1818 between Ngqika and Ndlambe, Ngqika's armies were commanded by Maqoma, who had recently emerged from initiation school. The Ngqika fought valiantly but were utterly destroyed, destroyed by the overwhelming numbers of Ndlambe, who had joined forces with all the Xhosa nations; Maqoma narrowly escaped, bleeding from battle wounds. And so Ngqika's heroes fell, Jotelo the father of Soga, Nteyi the father of Tyala, and Ntlukwana the father of Neku. And so Ngqika secretly appealed to the white man

Black/Indigenous society was refashioned by a multiplicity of things, but the factors that emerge in this analysis are as follows. First is education as it is tied to the institution of religion, through the institutions of colonial missionary education. Secondly, we have the refashioning of Black/Indigenous ontology owing to the imposition of the education system established by the colonial settler. Such systems of refashioning Black/Indigenous ontology influence how Blackness/Indigeneity relates to itself, as seen in the case of intra-Black conflict. As a way of resolving this reality, it is useful to consider how Blackness/Indigeneity relates to itself and whether such modes of relationality could resolve the interracial conflict that preoccupies our analysis.

3.5. Responding to the Ontological Derision of Blackness/Indigeneity

In the opening of his address at the Lovedale Literary Society in 1885 (Opland 2015), Gqoba makes the remark that in focusing on the lives and customs of Blackness/Indigeneity, the reader will establish a multiplicity of similarities between Blackness and whiteness, such that the animosities that exist between both worlds can be resolved. While his remarks on the life of the Indigene can be read as derisive, specifically when he disagrees with the cultural and religious practices of the Indigene, there is a sense in which his thinking and attitude are aligned with the quest for sovereignty, as outlined in the analysis we get from Mazrui (1978) nearly a century later. This is to say that Gqoba and his peers corroborate the position that is propounded by Mazrui (1978) when the latter suggests that education also served as the inspiration for organising around a nationalist agenda of liberation, for it is in the literary circles of the time that the reader finds the establishment of the earliest political organisation

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for support, and so the white man excised a large section of land for himself as a reward, and established Ngqikayi, claiming it was for Ngqika 's protection."

in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, the Native Education Association. What the reader establishes from the factors that change the life of the Indigene to the extent that it is redefined forever is the foundational place of education, which necessitates its analysis by both Gqoba (1888) and Mazrui (1978), both of whom take up similar themes even as they were writing in different languages and eras. The place of education is crucial in the way that it not only shapes the political possibilities that are open to the Indigene, but influences cultural values to the extent that some Black members of the historical intelligentsia deride the cultural practices of their people, which they classify as outdated, heathen and worthy of being discarded.

The role of education as it changes the life potentialities and possibilities of the Indigene is crucial in understanding the long-standing frictions between the colonial settler and the Indigene. This is due to the fact that the educated elites are not entirely convinced of the new life they are adopting owing to their conversion to the new form of education brought by the colonial settler. Their education, thus, becomes the place from which they organise and begin to propose wholesale emancipation and self-determination, as seen in the examples of Gqoba and Albert Luthuli. While Mamdani (2021) takes the position that the categories as they have been established, that is, colonial settler and Indigeneity, require abolishment, this conclusion is seen both as rash and as not taking into account the ways in which Black ontology is derided in the colonial state apparatus, which necessarily informs national culture and identity. In order to restore the 'ontological legitimacy' (Kumalo 2018a, 2021) of the Indigene, a confrontation with the constitutive factors that define the derision with which Blackness is regarded is not only necessary, but constitutes the ways in which one can respond to said derision. It is only once we have fully accounted for this derision that a countenancing position can be established from which to curate a truly postcolonial condition, as Mamdani (2021) strives for in his analysis. Denying the variance that

constitutes Indigenous populations, and reading them as a monolithic identity rooted in similar if not singular realities, results in (mis)readings that have created incongruent solutions, owing to the initial misdiagnosis that takes place at the level of silencing Blackness/Indigeneity by reading it in a singular way.

With the reality established by the Witchcraft Suppression Act (1895), a reality that saw the lives of Blackness/Indigeneity suppressed even through the penal code of the country, the question remains: how does Blackness/Indigeneity relate to itself in response to said derision? The answer to this question is found in the preceding section, wherein Mqhayi (2009a) performs two moves: in the first respect, his thinking responds to these systems of derision by establishing a counter-historical canon from which to draw when attempting to establish a nuanced understanding of the historical machinations that brought us to the contemporary situation. To read Mqhayi as a counter-historical canon begins with recognising that the Indigene can and indeed does think, irrespective of the fact that said thought is not developed in the hegemonic cultural framework of the colonial settler. That is to say that the initial move in reading Mqhayi as a counter-historical canon lies in understanding that knowledge is produced and producible in the Indigenous languages of our context. This move suggests a recognition of the ontological legitimacy of the Indigene, which would suggest a truly decolonial approach. In the second instance, Mqhayi's writing, along with that of Gqoba, mounts a nationalist agenda aimed at liberation, especially if the reader accounts for the subtle epistemic resistance frameworks that are embedded in their writing. Simply put, Gqoba and Mqhayi allow us to establish a framework from which to undermine Black ontological derision, by highlighting the key contributing factors that inform the position to which Blackness is relegated. Their writing proposes a liberatory sociopolitical framework by establishing the ontological legitimacy of Blackness/Indigeneity through treating this category of personhood with deferentiality. This treatment is not only

found in the ways that both authors write about and engage with the Indigenous subject, but

also extends to the reader who engages with their writing as a serious academic exercise.

CHAPTER FOUR

Can *Iqaba* Possess Ontological Legitimacy?

4.1. Introduction

Let me begin with conceptual definitions, one of which concerns the term of *iqaba*, in extension of the argument that is presented in the previous chapter on the issues of intra-Black conflict, as it is experienced as owing to the role of christianisation. This is a concept found in the South African context, derived from the designator that was given to those who rejected colonial education and the derivative socio-political arrangements that came with being educated in the colonial missionary system. *Iqaba* (which is singular for *amaqaba*), as Gqoba calls it – *Umginwa*, in his historically poignant and relevant consideration of the debates concerning conversion in the country, has two meanings. In its original sense, it means those who smear red ochre on their faces (*ukuqaba imbola*). This group of Black/Indigenous people clung to their systems of political organization, legal frameworks and a moral code that differed from that of the colonial settler, and their converts (Black/Indigenous followers), who took up western civilization.

Through conversion, the converts transcended the category of 'soulless animals' and became part of the Christian narrative of salvation, civilization, and literacy, in the form of taking to the written word—the bible. Literacy and the written word are important contrasts, as the epistemic system that prevailed prior to colonial imposition was predicated on orature, which was criticized as characteristic of the 'backward' and retarded state of being, under which Blackness/Indigeneity existed, necessitating the civilizing violence of colonial invasion. This logic is critiqued by Miller (1990: 50) when he reminds us of "Hugh Trevor-Roper's characterization of African history as the 'unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant concerns of the globe'". To the extent that this logic is still prevalent in the contemporary academy, noteworthy is the reality that (ibid. 69) "In the

majority of cases in black Africa, to write is to write in French, English, or Portuguese—or in Arabic, which has been in use in certain parts of black Africa for several centuries". Moreover (ibid), "literacy in African languages […] is largely an adjunct to or stepping-stone toward competence in a European language." This critique is substantiated by the reality that contemporary African scholarship, as but an example, cannot treat its own concerns—without having to prove affinities to broader, '*global*', debates—for in treating its own questions, it would be dismissed as parochial and irrelevant.

As Wicomb ([1995]/2018: 67) warns, "Cognitive claims for literacy have had the effect of downgrading oral cultures, so that, […] the term 'illiteracy' has been replaced by 'nonliterate'". By moving away from the contentious concept of *illiteracy* what is intended is the object of "not [branding] more than half the world's population as incapable of what we call rational thought" (ibid.). For we must bear in mind (ibid.) that "What passes for the testing of literacy, is none other than the 'social conventions of a dominant class, rather than universal logic.'" Literacy, as conceived of and used to justify invasion, demonstrates the saliency of the question posed in this analysis with respect to the ontological legitimacy of Blackness as *iqaba*, and returns me to the analysis of South Africa insofar as I find and treat the political category of *iqaba* in this context, with the aim of demonstrating how their (*iqaba's*) divergent political and legal systems challenged the world conceptions of the colonial settler invader(s).

It is also important that I remind the reader that such a consideration, with respect to the role of literacy and the written word assists us in analysing the case of South Africa with respect to the attainment of a truly post-colonial condition, one wherein both the identities of Indigeneity and settler can co-exist in tandem, in the expression of a coherent national identity.

Mqhayi's ([1917]/2009: 131) discussion of the lawsuit between a 'white man and a slave' demonstrates how the group that I refer to as *amaqaba* had a system of preexisting legal frameworks, when he writes: *"[pambi] kokuba litéthwé ityala u Mhlekazi uMaqoma uvakalise indawo ethi: 'Ke apa ema-Xóseni, asinto ikóyo ikóboka, ke ngoko wosel' esiti elityala alijonge njenge tyala lamadoda amabini amangaleleneyo.'"*[1] In its secondary meaning, which was derived from the rejection of colonial education, the concept became associated with those who were considered and classed as 'illiterate'. Illiteracy as associated with *amaqaba* is predicated on their rejection of missionary colonial education, which was embraced by *amagqobhoka* (those who rejected pre-colonial epistemic frameworks) and became *amakholwa* (believers). The popular and contemporary meaning of amaqaba has come to be associated with illiteracy and replaced the first (read: original) meaning, which denoted those who smear red ochre on their faces.

I contend, building on previous arguments of this study, that *iqaba* can possess ontological legitimacy if and only if they are aware of their historical condition(s)/context. The historical conditions that create the categories of *amaqaba nama gqobhoka* (what I defined previously as intra-Black conflict), are the premise of the racial conflict that afflicts the country on the basis that these categories aren't treated sufficiently and are abjured by those who are invested in theorizing the subject of national identity. Part of the reason why this is, is due to Mamdani's (2018) argument, which suggests that the categories are colonial inventions, in his book *Citizen and Subject*. While I agree with the premise of his thesis, the derivative result is that analyses concerning the political 'miracle' that is South African democracy fail to grasp the failure and failings of this 'miracle', which is presently coming

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[1] "Before the case proceeded, His Majesty Maqoma made this point: 'Here in Xhosaland there is no such thing as a slave, so we would regard the case as one between two men who had made a bargain."

apart at the seams, precisely because of the process of silencing the nuances that define the ontological category of Blackness/Indigeneity.

Two points require stressing. First, the realities defining Blackness as Indigeneity in South Africa have long suffered from ventriloquists who benefit from the ordering of our society using liberal (racialized) methods of reading and theorizing that erase the facticity of Blackness as Indigeneity, in its reality of being Indigenous to a land that it continuously is denied access to. As indicated in the introductory chapter of this study, such an assertion does not counter the proposition that much is still required in the thinking developed by Gordon on the notion of homelessness. Taking seriously the category of Black/Indigenous ontology, which is what I undertake in this chapter, necessitates a radical reimagining of the political economy that governs South Africa. Such processes of re-imagination inspire models of national identity that are both inclusive and serve the function of historical justice.

4.2. Intra-Black Conflict and its Conceptual Contours

Above, I refer to the concept of *amagqobhoka*—who defined themselves against *amaqaba* on the premise that they were educated, and Christian converts. *Igqobhoka* (the singular of *amagqobhoka*) is derived from the process of "converting" the heathen into a believer. It suggests that the ontological framework of the converted has been pierced, denoting a form of failure—on the part of the converted—to protect their soul from being captured (pierced) by the Christian faith. In reading this definition against the context of the Christian mission in the new world, the soulless heathens are seen to be something akin to animals, conceptually giving rise to the reading and understanding of conversion and *ukugqobhoka*[2]

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[2] *Ukugqobhoka*, with the prefixal verb designator -uku-, actions the noun that is the signifier of those who are converted, *amagqobhoka* (with the noun prefixal designator being -ama-), subsequently demonstrating the process of conversion. The concept that remains constant, which gives rise to both the process of conversion as action -uku-, and is the marker of conversion in the form of (i)—in the singular—or (ama)—in the plural – is the term

(christianisation) as a system of not only controlling the Black/Indigenous populations of Africa, but salvaging -and redeeming- them from their animalistic nature, heathenous and barbarous ways. In this reading, which goes against the definitions that we find in the isiXhosa dictionaries, but conceptually elucidates what is intended by the notion of *ukugqobhoka*, we see that the concept explains the process—as in the case of taming a wild animal—of those who rejected the pre-colonial mode of life and assumed a colonial epistemic framework, by way of embracing Christianity. *Amagqobhoka* acquiesced to western epistemic frameworks as advocated by the colonial settler, that is, they became Christian converts (*amakholwa*) – following the colonial settler's mode of life.

In framing *amaqaba* as remaining outside of the purview of redemption and the salvageability that comes with Christian conversion, this is not a discourse that is merely limited to the South African experience. Gordon (2021: 1) demonstrates that the project of ontological derision, conceived and carried out by whiteness, can be traced back to the inception of the wars of colonial conquest, "[…] since a well-known prejudice [suggests that] consciousness in Africa was, thus, a supposed import from the [n]orthern East and West."

'*gqobhoka*'. As detailed in the body text, this concept is denotative and symbolic of the process of piercing through an object or the ontology of the being, and in the language—isiXhosa—is written as '*gqobhoka*', with the verb tense being *uku-gqobhoka*, the noun being (i)/(*ama*)-*gqobhoka*; and the signifier being *ukugqobhoka* while the signified is *igqobhoka*/*amagqobhoka*. Christian conversion discourse frames this process as a marker that the Natives (Indigene otherwise defined as a Kaffir, with its implicated negative and racialized connotations) is possessive of a soul. Prior to the piercing of the ontology of the Indigene, this category of being is regarded as soulless and as a result outside of the purview of the human, with written and documented records that equate the non-christian Native (as Indigene)—*iqaba*—to an animal (*cf*. Coetzee's 1988 *White Writing: On the Culture of Letter in South Africa*). With these discourses in mind, the notion of *amagqobhoka* as tame (formerly wild) animals is not far-fetched. And to equate *amagqobhoka* to former animals—who are now redeemable, on the premise of their taking up the Christian faith—is predicated on the thinking of Schweitzer, which is critiqued by Achebe ([1977]/2019: 11) insofar as Schweitzer noted that, "The African is indeed my brother but my junior brother." European thought, therefore, sets up "Africa as a setting and backdrop which eliminates the African as human factor. Africa as a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity into which the wandering European enters at his peril" (Achebe [1977]/2019: 12).

Ukugqobhoka, as a process of conversion becomes more than a mere system in the conversion of souls, but further denotes the process of breaking through the ontology of the convert. Breaking through the ontology of the convert, to place a foreign conception of being and a metaphysics that requires systems of self-hate and loathing, seen even in the criminalization of our customs as witchcraft in the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895, shores up the point that my project defends; that in having to break through said ontology, it had to have existed prior to its displacement. *Ukuqgobhoka*, subsequently connotes the process of the displacement of that ontology, its criminalization and outlawing, by those who are invested in the process of forced conversion.

Ukugqobhoka as a process of being captured (pierced) by the Christian faith underscores systems of belief that existed prior to the imposed Christian faith. To the extent that *amaqaba* rejected the process of being 'pierced' (coerced) into Christianity, they refer to the religious framework as an inanimate object—sacrilegiously (depending on your vantage point)—referring to the religion as "this thing", of which they were suspicious, as detailed in the objections to the faith by Gqoba's composition in his epic poem *Ingxoxo Enkulu Nge Mfundo*, even in the face of Christian ministers such as Tiyo Soga (*cf*. Opland 2015).

This is simply to say that the intra-Black conflict that results from the imposition of the Christian faith, is demonstrative of the reality that Christian conversion did not come without resistance, not only from the political leadership, in the form of the chiefs and headsmen (*amakhosi*), but also from the everyday people who did not want to see the life of their forebears diminished by the introduction of the new faith. The resistance to ukugqobhoka, did not come without consequences, with the decapitation of King Hinsta's head as a tangible example of the extent of the violence that was meted out against those who dared to challenge colonial power and its authority. In the brutal murder and decapitation of King Hinsta, a fact that is also recorded by Toyin Falola (2002) in the case of the traditional

leadership that resisted British colonial imperialism in Nigeria (*cf. Africa: Colonial Africa 1885-1939*), we see the extent to which the British went, in an attempt to break through (pierce) the ontology of the Indigene; that is, to force conversion through the demonstrations of the power of empire.

To be clear, *ukugqobhoka*, which describes the ontological de-legitimation that led to the creation of the class of *amagqobhoka*, is a process by which the Indigene was forced into taking the culture, mores, and values of the Christian faith. Such conversion means that Blackness as Indigeneity splits along the lines of *amaqaba nama gqobhoka*, creating the intra-Black conflict that gives rise to racial conflict, insofar as Blackness/Indigeneity cannot and does not (collectively) resist the racial economy imposed by the colonial settler on the premise that some circles of Blackness/Indigeneity are themselves advocating the process of conversion. Put in another way, the Christian converts-cum-Black-intellectuals negotiate freedom and political liberation on the premise of a false political ideal that is exclusionary, ontologically derisive of the category of the ontology that existed prior to colonial imposition (amaqaba), and this resultantly gives us the contemporary socio-political quagmire that Wicomb dubs a dilemma.

This cultural split that gives rise to two ontological categories in the form of *amaqaba nama gqobhoka*, suggests that the intellectual class – claiming to speak on behalf of Blackness/Indigeneity as monolith – speaks from a position that fails to adequately capture the political ambitions of those who are still aligning themselves with the category of *amaqaba*. A demonstrative example of this argument can be found in the scholarship of Nomalanga Mkhize (2009) when she writes about 'Nicholas Gcaleka and the Search for Hintsa's Skull'. Important to observe in Mkhize's argument are the ways in which the instruments of power and epistemic authority (science and the royal Hintsa family) fail to hold sway with those who, in thinking of themselves as *amaqaba*—a class that is still in

alignment with a historical conception of how the world ought to be organized; insofar as such social and political organization are directed by the validity of the ontological legitimacy of *ubuqaba*[3]—dismiss the claims of both scientific inquiry and the family's position on the return of King Hintsa's skull to Xhosaland.

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[3] *Ubuqaba* is defined, here, as the state of being that the Indigene, who rejects christianisation, embodies. This rejection presupposes two things, the rejection of the written word, which becomes synonymous with notions of the crude bifurcations of (il)/literacy and the rejection of the cultural economy of Christian mores; rejections that become characteristic of how the two worlds (*ubuqaba* and *ukukholwa* -conversion-) relate to one another. *Ubuqaba* is representative of an alternative way of reasoning (epistemology), as this is premised on an ontology that rejected the process of being re-fashioned into a Christian; a rejection that shores up the ontological legitimacy of Blackness as Indigeneity, on the reasoning that there were, and continue to exist, systems of thought that predated colonial incursion and imposition. Raising the point of the pre-colonial state of being is not intended to mislead the reader by essentializing this form of life, as I anticipate such an objection from those wedded to a liberal conception of the political arrangements that govern societies like South Africa. With such a commitment to liberalism being an ideological position that continuously bears witness to Blackness/Indigeneity being sacrificed for the preservation of white settler colonial identity and its imagined society. It, the point of pre-colonial modes of existence, merely seeks to help me in answering the question posed by this analysis concerning the ontological legitimacy of *iqaba* and their state of being, as it exists in post-apartheid South Africa. To demonstrate; in anticipation of the demand at an exposition of this life form; and in agreement with the reasoning found in Miller's (1990: 95) analysis when he writes about the distinctions between orality and the written word, "Silence and secrecy have an ontological status here that is far superior to speech and knowledge. Speech must be controlled and contained if silence is to exercise its powers of truth, authenticity, seriousness, and healing." I use this reference to make the point that the divergence I write about does and in fact—at times—refuses to be named through explanation, for as Miller continues (ibid.) "*Writing is to speech as speech is to silence:* in both cases there is movement *from authenticity to alterity, from truth to tropes*" (emphasis in the original). Demonstrating the dangers of persisting on the notion of positivistic truth, Miller (1990: 97) makes the point clearly that "Any attempt to verify the oral tradition using written sources, archaeology, or any other means, would sacrilegiously destroy the life of orality and reduce it to the state of writing: *dead and mediocre*" (emphasis added). Moreover, and contesting this very notion of truth, he (Miller 1990: 87) inquires, "But whose truth [in the form of this verification] are we talking about? The question of the factual truth value or historicity of the oral tradition may itself be one of those prejudicial [w]estern preoccupations that preordain a distorted answer." Two points must be made in relation to better understanding the state of *ubuqaba*. First, there is a requisite need to think with the forms in which this process of being has been theorized, where orature and orality are the bedrock of ubuqaba (see Kumalo 2018; 2020a). The processes of genealogical tracing, historical telling, and political curation take place through the use of names, a system of not only knowledge acquisition (training in the form of ethical codification and moral revision), but dissemination, and socio-political critique. Second, in this process being intricately linked to the state of ubuqaba, Miller (1990: 73) is once more instructional when he demonstrates that

4.3. Racial 'Victimhood'*?* and its Histories

In view of the challenges that mark the distinctions between amaqaba nama gqobhoka, these are concepts that are situated in South Africa but are ontological categories found in other parts of the world, even as they may be given different names, owing to colonial missionary expansion ambition(s). Racism and the racialisation of the world, as a project of white supremacy, requires the co-option of native life (Indigeneity) into the project of colonial Christian conversion, in the case of South Africa. The famous Spanish debate between Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda and Bartolomé de las Casas – wherein both argued for either side on whether Amerindians had a soul, either justifying their enslavement (i.e. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda) or condemning the inhumanity of slavery (Bartolomé de las Casas) on the premise that they (Amerindians) can be absorbed into the divine mercy of god through conversion—gives us a similar analysis in the case of the Americas. The Iberian Peninsula is yet another example, even as this example is still confined to the register of the Abrahamic religions in the case of Judaism and Islam, which is to say that while it might be a useful example, I will not spend too much time discussing it, owing to the fact that I am concerned with the question of those who existed outside the Abrahamic religions being considered as possessing an ontology worthy of being recognised as legitimate in the register of colonial imperialism. The response given to this question has implications for the racialisation of the world, and the subsequent political conditions of possibility, if this is not yet clear to the reader.

Detailing the case of the Spanish debate vis-à-vis the Indigenous population of the Americas, Ogunnaike (2016: 797) writes:

"[…] African verbal arts, even in an unspoiled traditional context, raise questions concerning the structure of traditional societies, and the manipulation of power in them." This suggests that (ibid.) "One must try to find out what attitude the society as a whole manifests toward the spoken word and toward those who are its caretakes."

Sepúlveda argued that all native Americans belonged to the Aristotelian category of "natural slaves," and thus were not in full possession of the rational faculty and could and should be made useful to the Spanish through enslavement. Las Casas described the native American indigenes as living under Aristotle and Aquinas' "natural law" and invoked the Biblical doctrines of Christian universalism to argue that they were potential converts, and thus fellow human beings.

Reading Wicomb's question then, as one finds it in 'Culture Beyond Color? A South African Dilemma' which was originally published in 1993, one is necessarily invited to respond with an initial criticism. Wicomb's question is naïve insofar as it conceptually fails to account for these processes of dehumanisation that have taken place, since the fifteenth century, not only in the case of South Africa, which shares a global history of the dehumanisation of the Indigenous peoples. In the dehumanisation of Indigeneity, a process that was often accompanied by genocide, the (post)-colonial political arrangement requires more than a mere racial consideration that treats Indigeneity with the reduction to the category of 'racial victims'.

If the theorist is truly invested in fashioning a post-colonial setting (wherein the post is not haunted by the coloniality that necessitates an orthography of (post)-colonial)), the theoretical articulations developed ought to -foremost- address the process of ontological reconstitution; a substantive project in decolonial thinking. To put the question of racial victims at the doorstep of democracy presupposes that the structural artifice of ontological derision will be surmountable by the granting of political franchise to the Black/Indigenous majority. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, however, the concept of ontological derision is one that is deeply rooted in the conception of the world as we find it in the thinking and reasoning of liberal white arrangements of the political conditions that prevail in society. Such an arrangement requires substantive work, which begins with the recognition of

the ontological legitimacy of the Indigene. A recognition of this kind necessarily has implications on the political arrangements of the society under examination. In proffering a pre-emptive response to the question posed in this chapter, the Black/Indigenous being can possess ontological legitimacy, but such a reality leads to little in the face of this ontology being systematically excluded from the curation of the society that claims to recognise this state of being.

This presupposition, as we find it in the work of Wicomb, which is predicated on a liberal form of reasoning, is not only presumptuous but also demonstrative of the continued occlusion of Blackness/Indigeneity, inasmuch as whiteness seeks to style itself as the new heirs of Africa *à la* Coetzee's (1988) critique of white forms of erasure and the culture of letters. This is simply to pose the question, is Wicomb—in the question she poses—borrowing from the very tradition that she has been critical of; a question that is necessary insofar as all non-Indigenous peoples of South Africa are in collaboration, wherein the project of politically displacing Indigeneity is concerned. The fact of displacement is no better demonstrated than in the tricameral assembly that granted political rights to the identities of Coloured and Indian communities, while continuing to erase, displace and occlude Indigeneity.

Opening her essay, Wicomb ([1993]/2018: 59) observes that "the New South Africa is too much like the old and is therefore necessarily a racial affair." In this formulation, the reader can be generous enough to grant Wicomb the benefit of the doubt that her analysis is accounting for the failure to address the historical realities that define our context. However, such generosity fails when the reader continues and encounters this formulation, (Wicomb 2018: 59)

Our chant of we-the-oppressed black-majority with its moral upper hand has at times a curious ring of comfort, since it absolves us from taking responsibility for our own

condition, precisely because our more assertive cries have never had any perlocutionary effect. How will we transform that chant, invent a new language for reconstructing ourselves to replace the fixed syntagms of the discourse of oppression? The reader finds the critical voice in Wicomb (ibid.) when she continues "And will our writing be about these kinds of painful psychological adjustments?"

This observation is what leads her to the question, "How will black people […] adjust to a new condition of not being racial victims?" In his review of Wicomb's (2018) collection of essays, Kumalo (2020b) argues that what we see in the country is 'a dearth of imagination' that subsequently leads to the death of theory. By this, I read him to mean that theoretical considerations have failed to aptly capture the political identity that defines South Africa. Such a failure is premised on the inability to treat Blackness/Indigeneity as legitimate political category in and of itself, for such a treatment would aim at understanding the political registers of Blackness/Indigeneity that exist prior to the imposition of letters—a process of reading that highlights the political that has always been embedded and definitive of the culture of letters. As indicated above, the question of the ontological legitimacy can be settled, however, its resolution does not resolve the derivative question of political curation in the nation.

This is to say that in a context like South Africa, the written word is not an apolitical aesthetic artform. In the literary category of the plaasroman (the Afrikaaner farm novel), which is heavily imbued with questions of belonging and place, the reader is witness to the stylistic forms in which Blackness/Indigeneity is erased to present the vast and empty *veld(s)* of South Africa as justifiably conquerable. With the awareness of the contestations that define belonging as predicated on the written word, some Black/Indigenous intellectuals contentiously navigate two states of being; a missionary colonially educated pragmatism that recognised the legitimacy of the historic customs, rites and systems of education; a fact that is

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substantiated by the argument concerning Gqoba, presented in the previous chapter of this study. In the continued development of such an analysis, Mqhayi acts as an example of this very state of being, with a far more radical disposition than his predecessor Gqoba.

In the context of Mqhayi's—as an example of a Black/Indigenous intellectual who was committed to a joint solution that suggests an enlivened approach to theory (and as such, world-making as argued by Mignolo 2021)—defiance in attending the initiation school – against the instruction of his teachers at Lovedale (Opland and Mtuze 2017: xx), he "displays his commitment to an alternative response to the colonial incursion". Such an alternative seeks to "[reject] the options of both militant confrontation and the wholesale adoption of European values" (Opland and Mtuze 2017: xx). It must be stressed that the position that is taken by Mqahyi is one that was first spearheaded by Ntsikana prior to his death in 1821; Ntsikana who was one of the early Black/Indigenous leaders who foretold of the arrival of colonial settlers in the country. Opland details how "Mqhayi maintained a lifelong reverence for Ntsikana."

The analysis presented above recognises the notion of racial victims cannot be accepted without complication, and what follows is an inquiry into the validity of the question posed.

The analysis presented to this point demonstrates that South Africa as nation, has failed to effectively include the ontological premise from which Blackness/Indigeneity proceed. National culture, as it underpins the concept of the nation, is still predominantly determined by those who revere and uphold imported cultural values and beliefs; amagqobhoka are still regarded as having more ontological legitimacy than amaqaba. The forms in which national culture is organised, still celebrates the value systems that are associated with whiteness, with minor inclusionary gestures through national holidays such as Heritage Day being reserved for the celebration of the cultures of the majority. While respect

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and reverence for the cultural practices of Black/Indigenous peoples might exist within the communities of the majority, this is often at the receiving end of negative public perception by the dominant cultural gaze that informs the national culture of the country; a point that substantiates the derision we write of in the preceding chapter.

To be clear, when these practices are evaluated and judged by those who were constitutive of the tricameral parliamentary assembly, these beliefs and cultural values are viewed with scorn, relegating Blackness/Indigeneity to the category of suspicious 'Other'. The practices of the majority are viewed with suspicion, as backward and gradual, demonstrating the presence (even, as it has been repealed) of laws such as the Witchcraft Suppression Act (1895) in the psyche of the nation. Such views shape the perception that the country lacks an inclusive national identity, privileging rather—the cultural preponderance of values and beliefs that were imported through systems of colonial incursion and oppression. To answer Wicomb's question, on how Black/Indigenous life will constitute itself outside of the classification of racial victim, it is important to first respond to the ontological derision that is exhibited by all the identities that exist alongside Blackness/Indigeneity, which is to say what is required is the ontological recognition of this class of people. Importantly, in making this claim of recognition, is the qualification that while Indigeneity might possess ontological legitimacy, this ought to be accompanied by its recognition, if it is to influence the trajectory of national culture and cultivate a sense of belonging and an inclusive national identity.

To change this perception, I suggest an historical reading; one that is informed by the thinking of a Black/Indigenous intellectual, who had to exist in a time that saw the changes that are now constitutive of the reality of South Africa. This is to say that the valuation of western ontology—a valuation that took place through the criminalisation of Black ontology in the form of the Witchcraft Suppression Act—is premised on the historical erasures that

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result in the lack of self-knowledge. For Black/Indigenous ontology to be regarded as legitimate, even for itself, I suggest that this regard begins in processes of self-knowledge, as argued by Mqhayi, insofar as such self-knowledge is rooted in historical awareness.

4.4. Failing to Adequately Analyse the Raciality that Defines the Nation

The failure of South African theoretical articulations to analyse the race question adequately, is premised on the proposition that most theoretical analyses often approach the question—concerning a possible resolution to the dilemma outlined and treated by Wicomb—using a racial lens that does little to understand what Kumalo (2022a) terms intra-Black conflict that leads to inter-racial conflict. Important to note in this analysis, is that such an inadequacy arises from the failure, in the first instance, to pay heed to the theoretical developments and the counter historical canon of Blackness/Indigeneity, as it has been developed by Black/Indigenous intellectuals in our context. The argument that the reader finds in Kumalo's thinking is that only once we've settled the issue of intra-Black conflict will we come to better understand and respond to the matter of inter-racial conflict. This observation corroborates Mqhayi's (1927]/2009: 29) Prologue aptly entitled Imbali (or History), wherein he writes:

IMFUNDI EZI

Zikolise ngamagwala kangakanana; kungakuba azibaliselwanga nto ngoyise, zaza zati paya ezi Sinaleni nase zi Kolejini zafundiswa urezu lwama bali, enyanisweni zafundiswa ulahleko lodwa, kuba kuzo zonke ezi Sinala sinazo kufundiswa ibali labantu abanye, ama Ngesi qa; ngawo edwa [sic] abantu abane ngqondo, nobulumko, nolwazi, ngawo odwa amak'alipa eli zweni, into ezingange zoyiswe sizwe emhlabeni; zide ziti nezona zazi wayo ukuba aziveli kuwo izinto azixele ukuba zezawo, abe ke ngokwe njenjalo oko exelela izizwe ezingaziyo ukuba ziwoyike ngokungapaya

kwe mfanelo, ziwahlonele ngokugqitileyo entonelweni eyiyo. Yiyo lento siti isidenge

mhla sawaqonda sisuke sesi bhenqa itshoba ukungawazeli nto, sicinga leminyaka

ingaka sinika imbeko kongafanelwe mbeko ingako.[4]

My quoting of Mqhayi ([1927]/2009: 29) at length above here, seeks to demonstrate the point of history and the role of self-knowledge which he stresses as follows:

APO IMPOSISO IKONA

Kwimfundi apa kukuti elixa umuntu afundiswe kakubi kangako, angani saziqulunga

ngamfando [sic] akupuma, asuke nanke eqwayingile, enyalasa ngokungati ngumntu

onento azaziyo, lento ke kutiwa, "Imfundo encinane inengozi."[5]

As Jeff Peires (2009: ix) read the prologue, I too will follow in his assessment when he suggests that,

> Mqhayi here expresses his concern that African political leaders will be unable to defend African rights because they have become ignorant of their own history due to the anglocentric nature of their schooling ("The English … are the only people with intelligence, prudence, knowledge, they alone have national heroes, they have never been defeated by any other nation on earth; they claim as theirs even those things that clearly did not originate with them [...]"

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[4] "THESE EDUCATED PEOPLE| set up none but cowards for emulation, because their fathers did not narrate any history to them, and in those training schools and colleges they are taught a sequence of history, but in fact their education has entirely duped them, because in all our training schools the history of only one nation is studied, the English; they are the only people with intelligence, prudence, knowledge, they alone have national heroes, they have never been defeated by any other nation on earth; they claim as theirs even those things that clearly did not originate with them, and in this way they indoctrinate nations who do not appreciate that their aware of English is exaggerated, that their respect for them is excessive. That is why a fool runs wild when he discovers them to be empty vessels, recalling all the years he honoured them where no honour was due."

[5] "THE GRAVEST ERROR| among the educated occurs when, having been taught so badly, a person makes no effort to correct what he has been taught, but instead struts proudly, claiming knowledge. This is why it is said 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.'"

As argued in the previous chapter, the function of education as it intersects with colonial missionary ideas of what it means to be regarded in the register of the human, as we find it in the Christian conception of person, these factors have an incredible bearing on the subjectivity of a recognisable ontology. In the context of such recognition, it cannot be stressed enough that such a process does not negate the factuality of the existence of Indigenous/Black ontology, irrespective of its recognition by the colonial missionary conception of personhood and its attendant ontology.

To understand Peires, one needs to understand the context that Siphamandla Zondi (2021: 3) lays out in his introduction to *African Voices: In Search of a Decolonial Turn*, wherein he writes "Notions of power, being and knowledge within coloniality/modernity are built on violence – in the form of both genocide and epistemicide." While the concept of epistemicide has been troubled in contexts like South Africa (*cf*. Kumalo 2020a), using the role of language that suggests that there continues to exist knowledge that we can draw from, which might assist us in attending to contemporary societal concerns, the concept is useful in denoting the attempts at annihilating the existence of systems of thought that challenge western forms of reasoning and classifying the world. This is to say that Peires draws our attention to the universalising logics that informed the colonising mission. The Britons styled themselves as the bringers of light, civilisation, and social organisation—in the context of Southern Africa—to the extent that they criminalised all knowledge that seemed to challenge the authority of the empire and its systems of legitimation (*cf*. The Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895). In the context of such forms of erasure and silencing, it is important to consider Wicomb's analysis insofar as her essay held the hope of democracy undoing centuries of colonial derision and the criminalisation of *amaqaba*.

Returning to the question that Wicomb poses in her essay on the adjustment to the "New South Africa", there are two things to be said as a form of giving an answer. In the first

reading, one ought to remain aware of the diagnosis that Wicomb herself states in her analysis when she comes to the realisation and observation that the South African condition remains a racial affair. Put differently, not much has changed in South Africa since Mqhayi penned the prologue to which I refer above. The conditions are such that the raciality that defined South Africa continues to define the country even to this day. In as much as this is the case, the position taken in this argument follows Mqhayi's, in his commitment to "all of South Africa's people to the point where they [can] share in the nation's bounty." Plainly put, the suggestion is that in confronting the multi-layered and nuanced racial realities that define our society, therein lies the possibility of not only confronting said history, but addressing it in a systematic fashion that allows us to get at the possibility of a post-colonial society.

The implicit suggestion here is that if we are still in pursuit of the aspirations that Mqhayi was writing about, of a South Africa that is responsive and cognisant of all the identities that exist within the country, there is a great deal more that still requires to change in the country. This is understood by Wicomb, by virtue of the observations she makes in her analysis. Such a position challenges a seamless reading of South African reality that does not surface the raciality with which we are confronted as a nation. Possibly, what Wicomb was looking to understand was the reality of how the democratic era would impact the lives of the majority in view of the history to which they had been subjected.

In the second and simpler sense, her question is naïve and does not seem to recognise the complexity that is the denial of Black ontology since the inception of colonial incursion on the southernmost tip of the African continent. The naïveté surfaces through a confrontation with the reality that in recognising the centuries of racial oppression and ontological derision, to which Blackness/Indigeneity was subjected, the question posed does not seem to make sense, to any serious reader of the historical realities of the country. What is possibly the takeaway from her analysis, is the reality that she and Mqhayi were/are after

the same objectives in their writing and thinking. Jeff Opland (2009: 27) concludes his introduction to Mqahyi's collected writings by suggesting that

> Mqhayi was passionately committed to the restoration of black rights, to countering the discrimination suffered by black people, but also to the progress of all South Africa's people to the point where they could share in the nation's bounty.

Writing in his own words and continuing with *inshayelelo*, Mqhayi ([1927]/2009: 29) demonstrates that:

> *Umfo ufundiswe ukuba ezi zakowabo inkosi zinto ezi nobuqokolo, akolweyilonto; ufundiswe ukuba lamadoda akowabo makulu zinto ezibayo, amasela, amagwala, amaxoki; akolwe yilonto. Angaqondi ukuba ngokwenjenjalo oko kulahlwa yena ukuba alahle oyise nenkosi zake*[6].

In view of the history, to which Blackness/Indigeneity was subjected, the answer to the question that is posed in this chapter can be given in the affirmative, that the Indigene can and indeed does possess ontological legitimacy insofar as said legitimacy is premised on processes of self-knowledge. Mqhayi answers our question, of the possibility of *iqaba* possessing ontological legitimacy, by way of drawing on this reality and constructing a counter canonical historical archive, developing, and using isiXhosa historiography. By documenting and historically recording the lives of figures such as Ngqika, Ndlambe, Dingane, Cetshwayo and Mpande—his writings contest an English reading of African histories; a project that redeems Blackness for Indigeneity insofar as we are interested in an understanding of Blackness as it is Indigenous to the region. Mqhayi's writings demonstrate how a sense of self-knowledge empowers *iqaba* to claim their rightful place in the political

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[6] The person has been taught that his chiefs are sly, and he believes it; he has been taught that the great men of his nation steal, that they are thieves, cowards, liars; and he believes it. He does not realise that in so doing they are misleading him into abandoning his fathers and his chiefs.

framework of South Africa, and more importantly, a South Africa that enjoys democratic values that are enshrined in the constitution.

4.5. *Iqaba* as Educated – Ironing Out Contradictions

It is important to note two things, prior to developing my analysis further. In the first instance, as we have concluded that *iqaba* is possessive of ontological legitimacy in the political framework of South Africa, the category of *ubuqaba* (as I use it in this analysis) is denotative of being, as it pays deference to the historic epistemologies that ruled our context. Simply, one can acknowledge, respect and uphold historic ways of being and relating to the world all the while, being educated, with the figure of Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi demonstrating the point poignantly. S.E.K Mqahyi was born in Gqumahashe, east of Alice in 1875, and "Two years later, his mother died" (Opland 2009: 3). "A somewhat solitary child, he started attending school at Evergreen, six miles from his home in 1882" (Opland 2009: 3). When he went on to read further at Lovedale College, an institution that was established in South Africa in 1841 by the Glasgow Missionary Society for the purposes of educating Black/Indigenous students, he was not a distinguished student according to the assessment of his teachers. Opland and Mtuze (2017: xvi) note that

> There might have been cause for his teachers' pallid assessments of Mqhayi's abilities in 1894: earlier in that year Mqhayi's thoughts were inclined more towards the traditional customs of his own people than towards the Christian education offered by his missionary teachers, a principled preoccupation that could quite easily have resulted in his expulsion from Lovedale.

His own thinking and concerns with the lives of his people are recorded as follows (Opland and Mtuze 2017: xvii)

> *Lo msebenzi ke ndizakungena kuwo, ndiya wazi ukuchaseka kwawo kubafundisi, koko se ndixolele noko kugxothwa, kunokuba ndingabi yiyo le nto ndinga ndingaba yiyo.*

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Ndaye ndinezizathu ngayo loo nto. Engqondweni yam ndedwa, ndandiqonda ukuba

ndiya kuba ngumsebenzi kweli lizwe lakowethu lasemaXhoseni—umsebenzi kwizinto

zeliZwi; kwezentlalo yasemakhaya; kwezombuso; nakwezemfundo. Kwaamhlophe

kum ukuba andiyi kwenza nanye yezi zinto iphumelele, ndingabanga yindoda nje

ngabo.[7]

In his deep concern for the lives of his people and his ability to tell the stories of his people

from a position that best understands the context of their lives, he was one of the earlier

historiographers who also took to writing said history in isiXhosa. Moreover, his work was

not contained to the life and times of the Xhosa people alone, which culminated in his being

given the name *Imbongi yesizwe jikelele* by Cleopas Kunene—editor of *Abantu-Batho* (a

publication to which he contributed through and with his poetry). To classify Mqhayi as a

historiographer is premised on the reality that,

> Apart from these open conflicts [which included the First World War and the Second
>
> World War], Mqhayi was involved in, and responded poetically to, the internal
>
> political conflicts between black and white in South Africa, the loss of territory, title
>
> deeds and the vote, and the ever-constricting vice-like grip of white control over black
>
> lives. (Opland and Mtuze 2017: xviii).

His writing and thinking were not merely confined to the category of history and

historiography,

> He was [also] the author of numerous volumes of poetry, fiction and non-fiction,
>
> biography, autobiography and translation, and in the annals of Xhosa literature his

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[7] I know how much the ministers are opposed to this act I am preparing to engage in, but still I am content to be expelled, rather than not being able to be what I would wish to be. I had my reasons for this. To my own way of thinking, in believed I was going to serve this land of ours of the Xhosa people – serve the cause of the Word, local custom, governance, and education. It was clear to me that I could not perform these public roles if I were not a man as they were.

contributions to Xhosa-language newspapers is unparalleled in breadth, scope and volume. (Opland and Mtuze 2017: xix)

His thinking and concern with the lives of his people leads him to the keen observation on the institution of organised religion, as it was spearheaded by the colonial missionaries—that:

Nditsho futhi ukuti u Krestu akakashunyayelwa kuti njengesizwe,—into eshunyayelwayo zizitete, namasiko, nenkolo yasema Ngesini,—u Krestu yena, hayi. Site ke ngenxa yalomasikisiko abo, sabamba wona, kuba esiza nabantu abate kuti bazisa u Krestu,—kulapo ke esikufumene kona ukufa kwetu.[8]

Mqhayi's understanding of the colonial project, along with his criticism of wholesale conversion to the Christian faith is what affords me the ability to read him as one capable of giving us a postliberal understanding of societies such as ours. To be sure, my reading is no way suggestive of the fact that he is located in the category of *ubuqaba*, for he was deeply educated in the systems of colonial missionary system, even as he was deeply suspicious of it, and its implications for the lives of Blackness/Indigeneity. Rather the suggestion is that his political analysis and historiography give us an insight into the validity of the category of *ubuqaba*, demonstrating how *ubuqaba* can coincide with the written word, without capitulating to the Christian value economy and epistemic outlook. Mqhayi's register of analysis does not abjure Blackness as Indigeneity, it does not presuppose a system of being that begins to see Blackness/Indigeneity only to the extent that it assumes the style and form of being and culture as it is developed by whiteness and the colonial settler project of invention and invasion.

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[8] I always say that Christ has not yet been preached to us as a nation. What has been preached so far are the traditions, customs and beliefs of the English – and not a word about Christ. Because these customs were different, we seized them, since they were brought by people who repeatedly asserted they were bringing Christ – that was the death of us.

To say this Mqhayi gives us a postliberal understanding of societies like South Africa is predicated on his ability to hold both identities, Black/Indigenous and white in tandem, akin to the suggestion found in Ntsikana's dying wish of appropriating those things that are useful to the Indigenous people of the land. A postliberal framework recognises personhood of the Indigenous African, not in the prescriptive categories outlined by the liberal tradition that has historically distinguished between person and slave—a fact that the attentive reader is invited to witness in the historical account of the lawsuit between the slave and the white man, as arbitrated by Maqoma and detailed above. In the insistence that he matter be treated as two men who have accused each other, we step into a framework that is capable of delivering justice.

4.6. Considering the Political Implications of *Ubuqaba* Possessing Ontological Legitimacy

A series of questions emerge in an analysis that takes seriously the category of *ubuqaba* in the evaluation of the ontological category of Blackness/Indigeneity. The first of these concerns a confrontation of *ukugqobhoka*. In the simplest sense, if we acknowledge that *ubuqaba* can embrace some components of the 'civilising' mission, is it possible for Indigenous Blacks to take seriously the role and function of the historical mode of life that existed in the country, prior to colonial imposition. The response to this can be seen in the political system of South Africa wherein the majority continue to be subdued under the inequality that was inaugurated by the racial economy of colonialism and apartheid. Plainly put, while there has been substantive work done by intellectuals, in advancing the political ambitions of the Native (the Indigene), the net result has not culminated in the incorporation of such identity into the broader political framework of the country.

Framed in another way, what would it mean to take seriously the ontological legitimacy of Blackness/Indigeneity in a country where Blackness is Indigenous? To answer

this question, I must go back to the case of the lawsuit between the white man and the slave, in Maqoma's court. Recounting the matter, Mqhayi ([1917]/2009: 131) writes:

> *Kucacile ukuba wena ndimangele lomfo umbetile, wampáta kakubi, njengoko i-Nkundla yonke ibonayo; ube wena ungenangozi, ungenawo nomad, obonisa ngawo ukuba lomfo ubebufanele obuburalarume umpéte ngabo, kwaye ubufanelwe kukumzisa apa pambi kokuba umenjenje; ngako oko ke lenkundla iti kuwe: Lomfo iyamkulula ukuba makaye apo atande ukuya kona, iyayicita lonto ibinihlanganisile ute wena bubukóboka. Indawo yesibini, hlawula inkabi yenkomo, indleko zalenkundla.*[9]

The white man's response is telling of the historic and current political framework at play in the South African context., wherein the white man refuses to comply with the orders of the course, claiming even that the court was unenlightened in its judgement. Mqhayi (ibid.) records these sentiments thusly,

> *Ibe ngumgqwangwane indoda emhlope yakusiva esisigwebo, yapakama yalwa isiti, "Ayikuyirola nalonkomo, kuba nelityala layo alitetwanga ngendlela; kwaye kunjalonje izinto zokucaca (zempucuko), wena Maqoma, akuzazi, kwa nezisingisele kwimpahla elilungelo lomntu, njengeli kóboka ulahlula nam.*[10]

The failure to recognise the ontological legitimacy of Blackness/Indigeneity by whiteness should not be mistaken as a contention that Blackness/Indigeneity is not without such

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[9] "It is evident that you the plaintiff beat this man, and treated him harshly, as all the court could see; yet you are unharmed, you have no weal to demonstrate that this man deserved such vicious treatment, you should have brought him here before you acted like this. So, this court says to you: It releases this man to go wherever he pleases, it dissolves what bound you, which you call slavery. In the second place, you must pay an ox to cover the court's costs."

[10] "The white man was infuriated by this judgement, and he rose to dispute it, saying, 'There will be no payment of a bullock because the case was not properly conducted; and you, Maqoma, obviously know nothing about civilized evidence, and how to deal with property belonging to a person, like this slave whom you are taking from me.'"

legitimacy. In this instance it is a matter of recognition. In the white man's failure to treat the 'slave' as human, an erasure that is corrected in the judgment of Maqoma's court, we see the possibility that could be in a world where the ethic of ubuntu—as an organising principle with the necessary curative (retributive) recourse—is not only practiced, but also upheld. There is another mode of reasoning at play, however, in the white man's refusal to accept the outcome of the court, suggesting rather "*Kwaye kwakona ndiyakukuxela ku Somerset [Colonel Somerset] u Mongameli wemikósi yeli Pakati, oyakukubonisa yena umahluko pákati kwe xáma ne ndlovu.*"[11]

The flagrant flouting of the court's judgment and the reduction of Blackness/Indigeneity to property in the eyes of whiteness are indicative of the erasure of Blackness/Indigeneity in its own context, which came with the dehumanisation of this category of personhood. While the temporal significance of this historical exchange can be used to demonstrate how other contexts such as ours have faced similar conditions, with Australia, Canada and New Zealand coming to mind, it is important to note that these other contexts have since sought to correct these historical injustices by acknowledging the place of Indigeneity in the political landscape of the country's considered alongside South Africa. This raises the question of the political and moral bankruptcy of whiteness in South Africa, that is, why does this context continue to displace Blackness/Indigeneity and is the mediated ground of Black/Indigenous compromise the solution? Insofar as this question is concerned, it surfaces the aptitude of Wicomb's diagnosis of our context as a dilemma, while revealing the political theory that remains under-examined by the scholarship concerning post-colonial possibilities in South Africa.

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[11] "Furthermore, I am going to report you to Col Somerset, the miliary commander of this province, who will show you the difference between a hartebeest and an elephant."

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

The main question that this chapter must answer, in the form of a synthesis of the study, is a consideration of who belongs to South Africa, and whether William Wellington Gqoba and Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi allow for a postliberal conception of the answer to this question. Simply, has the analysis, demonstrated an articulation of a postliberal conception of democracy as it might be found in South Africa? Put in another way, is there a postliberal articulation of the South African political framework, discernible from the scholarship of the two Black/Indigenous intellectuals examined in this analysis? The study has argued that the national question in South Africa is fraught, defined—in the most part—by the racial tensions that Wicomb (2018) defines as a dilemma. This study has gone further and nuanced the analysis of this dilemma by suggesting that to better respond to it, we require an examination of what is termed intra-Black conflict, in Chapter Three. Resultantly, in this concluding chapter, and as a way of answering the opening question mentioned above, I consider how the categories of *amaqaba nama gqobhoka* inform contemporary calls for epistemic justice and decolonisation. To do so, I take my cue from Kunene (1992) in his analysis of language, which helps me better situate the response to this question and facilitates a process of thinking through the possibility of realising epistemic justice for those who were (and still are) considered *amaqaba*.

This question is considered against the debate of language that has defined literary analyses, in (post)-colonial societies. Boucher (2022: 32) contextualises this debate as follows, "To have so adeptly embraced and transformed the language of the coloniser, especially among literary activists, was nevertheless a tacit denigration of indigenous

languages, and an endorsement of their inferiority." His position embraces Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's who was oppositional to the position championed by Chinua Achebe, in his suggestion of the domestication of colonial languages. In South Africa, Kunene (1992) concurs with Ngũgĩ and Mphahlele (1986)—in his 'Prometheus in Chains: The Fate of English in South Africa' agrees with Achebe's argument, *viz.* the domestication of the colonial languages.

The rationale behind this move—the consideration of epistemic justice as it concerns *amaqaba*—rests on the importance of language, in the analyses of Kunene (1992: 30) when he argues "Consequently, when language becomes an issue of nationalism, the political authority shifts to the masses, reactivating the need for a common language to mobilise the people and to provide the mythical force necessary for national reassertion[,]" and in the argument advanced by Miller (1990).[1] Moreover, justification is found in a systematic consideration of the function of language as the device through which national culture is not only developed but institutionalised. As outlined in the thesis—Gordimer (1980) substantiates this point, through her inquiry into the place of language in the examination of a

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[1] This position aligns with Wicomb's work when she writes about the function of literacy as a perpetuation of the interests of the elite. To remind the reader this position (Wicomb 2018: 67) is articulated as follows: "What passes for the testing of literacy is none other than 'the social conventions of a dominant class, rather than universal logic.'" Boucher makes a similar observation using Paulo Freire, when he writes (2022: 25) "Freire and Macedo argue that to teach literacy in the language of the colonizer is to reproduce a neocolonialist elitist mentality, denigrating indigenous languages as inferior." To think of language in this fashion presses the importance of literacy, language, and liberation from colonial ideals in the (post)-colony, insofar as we are interested in epistemic justice and redress of colonial injustices. Importantly, Boucher's (2022: 24) work underpins this argument, when he writes "The emphasis of some liberation theorists upon the importance of reviving and promoting indigenous languages as integral to national identity, and upon creole as an authentic cultural expression of identities forged in the crucible of colonization and slavery, are both versions of the linguistic relativity thesis." In this chapter, we are interested in the function of language as the premise of national identity, as there have been objections to the use of language on the reasoning that even such languages are the product of colonial contortions, specifically in South Africa *viz.* Indigeneity and its role in the apartheid state.

national culture, an *Adamic language* in Coetzee's (1980) conceptual articulations, that facilitates the capacity for Africa to speak. Nkosi (1989) and Kumalo (2018) take up this notion of an *Adamic language*, which—according to their thinking—becomes an African Vocabulary, from which the national story can facilitate the articulation of both the ontological and epistemic position of the Black/Indigenous subject in the political framework of the country. Importantly, it is useful to remind the reader that this positions is buttressed by the argument advanced in Chapter Four.

Secondly, the chapter considers whether epistemic justice could be the possible bridge that establishes all participants – i.e., *amaqaba*, *amagqobhoka* and the colonial settler – as equal and free citizens who participate in public deliberation for the establishment of an inclusive national identity, through mutually agreeable terms that are binding of all citizens. This thinking is predicated on the first footnote, above, which details the debates of language(s) vis-à-vis the articulation of the national culture. Contentiously, the relationship between practitioners, their pursuit to standardise Indigenous languages and the apartheid state in facilitating this process, could be put against the argument as an objection. To detail the objection, the close relationship between the standardisation of African language(s) and the apartheid state need to be borne in mind. Much of the development that took place in the language(s) was as a result of the directionality of the apartheid state and its apparatus. This is now, however, a debate that we are interested in here. It is merely mentioned to highlight it to the reader, that we are cognisant of its existence, even as the arguments surrounding it might be weak.

In examining these two moves, the chapter will proceed as follows. First, by drawing from the importance of language—as outlined by Kunene (1992)—the chapter will demonstrate the political significance of engaging material that is written in the indigenous

languages of our context.[2] This highlights the "[shifting] political authority" (Kunene 1992: 30) for the purposes of substantiating the claim that (ibid.: 38) "European languages state, observe, describe, detail and formulate an atomised reality, whereas African languages already express an integrated and universalised artistic reality." This defends the methodological choice in engaging material that was produced in isiXhosa—save for the analysis found in Chapter Three wherein the reader encounters the only text that was written by William Wellington Gqoba in English—his Lovedale Literary Society address of 1885.

In the subsidiary move, the chapter will respond to the question, 'is a serious (epistemically just) engagement with the work of William Wellington Gqoba and Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi useful in articulating a postliberal conception that is not only inclusive, but one that contributes to the development and process of building a national identity in the South African context'?

5.2. Language as an Integrating Tool

As a starting point it is important to note that while this study uses isiXhosa as the premise of analysis this is not foreclose other linguistic categories from the project that is pursued in the argument developed in this study. That is to say that isiXhosa, while flexible to make the case for an alternative/postliberal conception of democracy, it is one of many linguistic tools that can help facilitate this process. Importantly, the focus on language needs contextualisation in its consideration as the concluding chapter of this thesis. Two points are important to bear in mind. First, language, literacy and the colonial project are intricately interlinked; a point that is aptly detailed in Chapter Three of this study.. In conversation with Ania Loomba (2015:

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[2] The reader will recall that in the second chapter of the thesis, the question under examination considers the possibility of outlining postliberal democratic theory using sources that have been marginalized. It is in this chapter that the argument is defended in relation to the selection of the texts of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi.

110) Boucher (2022: 25) highlights that "Colonial attempts to classify, record, represent, and educate non-European societies were efforts to re-order worlds that were often incomprehensible to the masters in order to make them more manageable and available for imperial consumption and exploitation." Second, to the extent that such systems of control were enforced, Boucher (2022: 20) observes that "To be silenced through the suppression of one's language and imposition of another is a form of dehumanisation." This claim demonstrates the ontological consideration examined in both Chapters Three and Four. Language, therefore, is a necessary component in fashioning a nationally inclusive identity, and feeds into debates about culture, national identity and belonging (*cf.* Hobsbawn 1996; Simpson 2008; Diko 2019 & 2023). This claim is phrased as follows by Boucher (2022: 26)

> Memmi contends that colonised literature is condemned to die young. Following generations, born in liberty, will write spontaneously in their mother tongue […]. It will […] be an arduous process which may at times appear insular, exclusionary and chauvinistic in placing national solidarity above human solidarity, and even ethnic solidarity above national solidarity.

Concerning Gqoba and Mqhayi, there are two points to be made as a response to the solidarity preoccupations that Boucher, through Memmi (2016) observes. First, that this mode of reasoning is not found in their scholarship, that is the notion of ethnic solidarity that trumps national preoccupations. Their contributions were not confined to ethnic publications. Their publications appeared in *Isigidimi samaXhosa* along with *Imvo Zabantsundu*, which were both of national importance and in conversation with *iLanga lase Natal*—bringing together national contributors and voices of liberation from across the country.

Gqoba's address at the Lovedale Literary Society demonstrates the rejection of the claim of insularity, with his submission being that the focus should be on the study of both

cultures, for the purposes of undermining the animosities that define the Black/Indigenous and the colonial settler communities. The case of Mqhayi surveying the cultures and historically accounting for the realities that went beyond the Xhosa people(s), itself, demonstrates the point that his thinking is concerned with a national culture and a form of understanding that goes beyond the ethnic solidarity of which Memmi writes about. This is most aptly expressed in his consideration of the lives of all those who contributed to the national consciousness, in the obituaries of the leading intellectual figures of his time, penned by Mqhayi. His account of the historical machinations that formed the Zulu kingdom further attests to his concern with national solidarity that contributed to the formation of the nation. It is for these reasons that Memmi's (2016) observation can be challenged when read against the work of Gqoba and Mqhayi.

Secondly, while the debates on language have been defined by theoretical advancements made in the previous century, the realities are such that socio-political conditions in different colonial contexts differ in relation to how they have been experienced. While Memmi's analysis is important in understanding the colonial experience, his anlaysis cannot be read as universally applicable, and this point highlights the precolonial conditions and how they define the colonial and (post)-colonial experiences of specific locales. Ali Mazrui (1978) writing of the cultural denigration that defined French colonialism, while the British colonial experience was defined, overtly, by accentuating racial differences and instilling racist attitudes, substantiates such a claim.

This objections against Memmi (2016) demonstrates the reality that the authors considered here did not confine their work to ethnic publications. Mqhayi was considered a national treasure in terms of the contributions made to national consciousness, and the same can be said of Gqoba, who was considered a national public intellectual, while both strove for

national liberation through their respective contributions to the national discourse, as detailed in Chapter Two of this study. Importantly, both Gqoba and Mqhayi considered language as a crucial aspect of liberation. This inspired the early intellectuals to develop an internally coherent and responsive syntax, orthography and morphology—a reality that has been the subject of debate by the leading sociolinguists of the contemporary academy, seen firstly as Noni Jabavu's (1963) objection to the shifts in the structure of the language – in her author's note to *The Ochre Peoples: Scenes from a South African Life*. She writes as follows:

> May I have a word surreptitiously with Xhosa-speaking readers – "bite their ear", as we say? The present Orthography of the language came into general use after I had learnt its predecessor and I have never become reconciled to it. I dislike the appearance of symbols like "th" for aspirated 't'; marks for tone pitch; double vowels in plural noun-prefixes, verb tenses, demonstratives, ideophones, and so on. This is the reason why, where I have written out a Xhosa sentence, my spelling is erratic. I am among those who, "*eating with the old-fashioned spoon*", believe that for languages so "dominantly vocalic in character" […] nothing short of a new script should be devised. The roman is not suitable and will always make for troublesome – and ugly – reading or writing.

Two important observations emerge, here. First, the reader is confronted with the reality that political liberation and language are intricately interwoven. More so, this debate demands us to think critically about how an engagement with historical texts that are written in the native languages of the country shores up different theoretical conclusions, insofar as this analysis diverges from Memmi's (2016) thinking. This fact highlights the question that was initially posed, in this chapter, *viz.* – can such differences facilitate new systems of analysis that instantiate postliberal realities? In its complexity, this question cannot be exhaustively

answered in these concluding remarks, however, it highlights the importance of taking seriously the thinking found in the repositories of Black/Indigenous scholarship.

Secondly, such an analysis demonstrates the primacy of ontology as a key element in reading the political conditions that define (post)-colonial experiences. Simply, an examination of ontology, as it is inherently tied to language and the political conditions of possibility, inspires new systems of seeing—underscoring the objection to Mamdani (2021), which is found in Chapter Two of this study. The reader will recall that the objection to Mamdani (2021) is premised on the reasoning that he dismisses the realities of intra-Black conflict. That is, his thinking does little to examine the realities that define the Black/Indigenous experience, taking rather—as the first point of departure—the presupposition that the split of the coloniser and the colonised is of paramount importance. As a result, the analyses advanced about the South African experience have done little to contend with the granular realities of Black life. Such an erasure undermines theoretical contributions that attempt to set out a genuine postcolonial reality.

5.2.1. *Articulating a National Identity in a Multicultural Society*

In his analysis of language, *viz.* a literary tradition in South Africa, Kunene (1992: 40) concludes that "Language integrates disparate elements in one's culture and ties them together in a single meaningful expression according to the imperatives of that culture." The question posed in the previous two chapters concerning the colonial derision that subsequently delegitimates the ontology of the Black/Indigenous subject, is important, here. Boucher (2022: 31) argues that "The problem with which the black person was confronted was how to conceive of and project a black self in a language that at best rendered him, or her, invisible, but at worst reviled and denigrated the negro, equating black with impurity, evil and savagery." From this reality, can the ontological category of *iqaba*, possess

ontological legitimacy in the epistemic schema of a historical de-legitimation that is punted as a necessity for conversion? By this is meant the reality of the ontological transformation that is theorised in Chapter Three and Four, wherein the thesis traces the historical modes of de-legitimation and erasure that necessitate conversion, from *ubuqaba* to *ukukholwa*. Kunene suggests the integrating capacity of language, in relation to an earlier claim, wherein he suggests that the imposition of the colonial language (in our context, English) has been responsible for the death of our ancestors (Kunene 1992: 30) to the extent that "…the idea of language imposition as a strategy of power and political control must be kept in mind as a crucial political and social question."

Usefully, and demonstrating the relationship between liberation and language, the reader should recall that the ontological category of Indigeneity was made manifest as the rejection of colonial ontology, through the rejection of colonial missionary education that led to the classification of this mode of life as witchcraft—promulgating the legislative institutionalisation of the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895, see footnote four in the introductory chapter. In response, the ontological legitimacy of Blackness as Indigeneity is not only useful for consideration but of necessity when postulating language as a consolidating tool that integrates the nation. Differently put, what language(s) shall be adopted, for the purposes of cultural integration, in the context where the ontologies and linguistic heritage of the Indigene have been marginalised?

A national language, in which a national identity, culture and systems of inclusiveness that foster belonging, should deal with the linguistic richness that exists in our context. The argument, here, returns us to the work of Bhikhu Parekh (2000) when he writes of the competing interests that ought to be considered in light of a multicultural society. More importantly, such a consideration underscores the concept of political peoplehood that is

encountered in Chapters Two and Three, wherein we think with Rogers Smith (2003) on the question of political peoplehood. Against the reality of the multi-linguistic tapestry that constitutes the South African political landscape, the selection of one language above another can inspire a return to the critique that is considered by Mahmood Mamdani (2021), wherein he writes of the unifying systems that necessitate homogeneity in the polity. That is, if we are to select one language as the one that is the carrier of a national culture, the critique that we encounter advanced by Mamdani (2021) will undermine the project that we are pursuing here.

The objection to Mamdani (2021), is premised on the works under examination in this thesis, demonstrating that both Gqoba and Mqhayi eschew this mode of reasoning, and suggesting rather inclusivity in the national identity of the country. The notion of a homogenous identity as part of the crafting of nationhood is contested by their scholarship, demonstrating the capacity to begin working towards postliberal conceptions of democracy that are endogenous to our context.

To recount, the thinking of William Wellington Gqoba and S.E.K. Mqhayi contests the thinking found in Memmi's claim (2016) about language. Moreover, their writing undermines the thesis propounded by Mamdani (2021) in the suggestion of a homogenising logic in the anti-colonial struggle. The challenge that they—Gqoba and Mqhayi—put against the thinking of Memmi (2016) and Mamdani (2021) indicates that an engagement with their scholarship gives us postliberal conceptions of the world. As outlined in Chapter Two, this is based on the reasoning that they were both writing without the influence of liberal state theory, let alone liberal conceptions of democracy. Their contributions sought, from their initial outlines of their considering the question of South Africa, to hold the two competing identities in tandem. Thus, upholding the thesis of the argument that in appealing to their

work we can begin to outline a postliberal conception of democracy that fosters belonging in the country through an inclusive national identity.

This response does not, however, speak to the question of which language is to be selected when thinking about the integrative strategy to be deployed in working towards a national, inclusive identity that espouses a national culture. This debate is further complicated by the strategy of divide and conquer that was driven by the apartheid state, seen in their demarcation of territories around ethnic identity. Highlighting this complication serves the point of critically examining whose/which language is to be used in taking up the proposition that is found in the work of Mazisi Kunene (1996) when he suggests that language can play a critical role in unifying the nation.

A comprehensive response can be given to this inquiry by re-evaluating the argument considered and developed in the previous chapter, which concluded that the Indigene can possess ontological legitimacy *iff* they are aware of their historical background; a suggestion found in Mqhayi's *Intshayelelo*. Going back to this point is useful for the purposes of demonstrating the visceral modes of political de-legitimation that were inaugurated by the apartheid state. By using the system of divide and conquer, the reasoning was that there would be no union between the various ethnic groups of the country, whereas the writings of the scholars under examination in this thesis have demonstrated that this form of thinking is not only limited it further undermines the potentialities of national identity. To propose historical awareness as the response to the question of which national language ought to be used in fashioning a national identity is predicated on the reasoning that prior to the divides that were instituted by colonial settler arrival in our context, the thinking that had predominated this part of the world demonstrates the arbitrariness of the divides instituted by the apartheid state.

Cultural socio-linguists, anthropologists and archaeologists, the likes of Hammond-Tooke (2004) and Huffman (2004), demonstrate the inter-relationality of the ethnicities that were classified as different, for the purposes of state control by the apartheid regime. These scholars argue for the historical interconnections that define the groups that are nowadays divided using the Nguni / Sotho cultural analyses. Their work underscores the importance of the thinking espoused by Mqhayi when he writes of historical self-knowledge and awareness, as the basis from which to move when mounting resistance against colonial incursion. This does not yet address the question concerning the place of the language that came with colonial incursion, i.e., English.

The attentive reader will inquire as to why I have not included Afrikaans in this category, of colonial languages, and the response to this question is simple. Afrikaans has borrowed from those who found themselves, in the country, as indentured labourers, with the first recorded written texts of the language, written in Arabic (*cf*. Davids 1987; Dangor 2008) by the Cape Malay slave population. The language can be classified as birthed on the southernmost tip of the African continent. Moreover, irrespective of the reality that the language became the main linguistic functionary of an exclusionary governance system, we cannot deny the reality that it continues to be the language of many who, themselves, were excluded from the state apparatus that was apartheid. It is on the basis of this reasoning that the claim of English as the only language of the coloniser is made, in this thesis. Importantly Boucher (2022: 29) argues "The emphasis upon distinctiveness and originality of creole cultures became more pronounced in the 1970s as part of a decolonising ideology analysing the origins of a common creole culture constituting the process of nation building."[3]

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[3] This response is attentive to the realities that define (post)-colonial realities. In the main, this argument has been used for the advancement of thinking that creole, or a hybridity of culture is the inevitable result of the colonized subject. This suggestion is resisted, however, in the face of the continued existence of linguistic heritage that

Two things have to be noted here. First, I am not making the argument for the use of Afrikaans as the national language that expresses the national identity and culture of South Africa. As noted historically, this has been challenged in the case of the June 16 student uprisings, when the language was imposed on the student population as the language of learning, teaching and officialdom. Second, in this defence, situating Afrikaans as indigenous to the country, I seek to demonstrate the thinking behind the inclusion of the language when theorising about the language to be used in carrying the national identity of the nation. Afrikaans, as language, demonstrates a useful point to be considered in giving an answer to the question of which language is to be used as the carrier of the national culture.

As the official language of the state during apartheid, Afrikaans enjoyed considerable support, in terms of the capacitation of the language, developing into a linguistic historical achievement, insofar as it became representative of the national identity of the apartheid state, within less than a century of its appropriation as the national language. This resulted in the contentious debates of the previous century that inquired into the existence of a national culture in the country, with the competing roles of Afrikaans and English, a question that inspired the category of the *Plaasroman* literary genre; a matter already considered in Chapter Three as the basis of suggesting the relationship between literature and politics. The language was established as a contemporary of English, and was aided with resources for the purposes of advancing its development; giving it both epistemic and ontological authority in its deployment as a national language and the carrier of national identity and culture.

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celebrates the lived experiences of the colonised subject. For, it cannot go without stating, as per Boucher (2022: 27) in his engagement with Ngũgĩ (in Ngũgĩ and Hdumbe 1985: 156) that "Language is a carrier of people's values; values are the basis of a people's self-definition – the basis of their consciousness. And when you destroy a people's language, you are destroying that very important aspect of their heritage… you are destroying that which helps them define themselves … that which embodies their collective memory of people."

This system of developing the Afrikaans language further responds to the first conceptual consideration, with respect to the usefulness of engaging texts that are written in indigenous languages for the purposes of pursuing a postliberal articulation of democracy. Simply, in taking up texts that exist outside of the established tradition of the liberal democratic framework, we are pressed to think about alternatives, as these are painfully sought after owing to the challenges staked against the prevailing political system of the country.

The question of what is to be done with the English language has not been answered, however. A response to this question lies in the just given consideration of Afrikaans and the epistemic and ontological authority it enjoyed under the apartheid regime. To make mention of this reality once more is predicated on the fact that both languages achieved national and international recognition, in their use as the languages of the nation. English as one of the national languages of the country cannot be avoided, specifically in the context of our existence in an intricately interconnected world that uses English as a global means of communication. Briefly considering the role of Afrikaans and English serves the point of answering which language ought to be used in the expression of national culture, with the response suggesting that the elevation of historically marginalised languages is an important and crucial first step in answering this question. Put in another way, that returns us to Kunene (1996), the capacitation of the languages, through their use, the establishment of prizes and national cultural celebratory events that centre the use of the languages of the Indigene, becomes crucial in answering the question of which language is to carry the national culture. Moreover, this consideration is further instructive in the importance of a coaeval(ness), a shared cultural significance as it pertains to both languages; English and Afrikaans. The

coaeval(ness) shared by English and Afrikaans, inspires careful consideration of the potentiality of establishing such shared recognition with historically marginalised languages.[4]

To return, then, to the question of which language ought to be prioritised when thinking about the formation of a national and inclusive identity in our context, the constitutional framework of South Africa provisions for the recognition of 12 official languages, with an exceptional few enjoying hegemonic status even as these languages ought to exist coevally in the national cultural framework. This reality demonstrates two observations, one—as we find in Wicomb (2018: 67) when she notes—"What passes for the testing of literacy is none other than 'the social conventions of a dominant class, rather than universal logic.'" The second comes from Kunene's (1992: 30) useful observation: "In pursuit of its power and in an attempt to protect that power, the aristocracy actively participates in and encourages the arts as long as they affirm (and do not challenge) its position." The simple response, as I will endeavour to explain it in what remains of this section, is the fact that all these official languages ought to enjoy a coaeval status in the development and expression of national culture, if we take seriously the suggestions we encounter in Parekh's (2000) work.

The reader will recall that in the third chapter of this analysis, Miller (1990: 69) is insightful insofar as he demonstrates the point that "literacy in African languages […] is largely an adjunct to or stepping-stone toward competence in a European language." Moreover, (ibid.) "In the majority of cases in black Africa, to write is to write in French, English, or Portuguese—or in Arabic, which has been in use in certain parts of black Africa

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[4] Such a preoccupation is premised on the reasoning that (Boucher 2022: 27) "'a specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality but in its particularity as the language of a specific community, with a specific history. Written literature and orature are the main means by which a particular language transmits the images of the world contained in the culture it carries'".

for several centuries". As detailed in footnote nine of the introductory chapter, local resistance to the written word, in the destruction of the Lovedale Press, makes the point more clearly—demonstrating, it should be argued—the reverence that Indigeneity bestowed upon the oral tradition, that is oracy, orature and orality. Remaining unanswered, is the question concerning the language that is to be adopted in fashioning a national culture.

The interest concerns the claim of language being a social tool, as per Kunene's (1992: 30) analysis. By this is meant that language can be conceptualised and function as a rallying tool, a concept through which the nation comes to express itself, its identity, culture, and heritage. The multiculturalism that defines South Africa augments the objection that a monolinguistic approach could potentially subvert the aims of a nationally inclusive identity, one that gestures towards postliberal conceptions as advanced in the preceding chapters. This is particularly important in relation to the claim found in Mamdani (2021), wherein he makes the argument that the process of forging the nation often takes on exclusionary logics that require, and in effect demand homogeneity—as detailed and discussed in Chapter Two. In the previous chapter the response to this objection was given by way of demonstrating that the thinkers under examination sought to highlight the importance of a culture that sufficiently holds the competing identities of the country in tandem and coevally. To the extent that such a reality is achievable, the previous chapter further makes the claim for the use of historical awareness that Mqhayi advocates in his work '*Intshayelelo*'. Simply, without this historical awareness, the nation is without the capacity to stake a claim for the ontological legitimacy of Indigeneity, in the first instance, and in the second instance continues the historical marginalisation of the Black/Indigenous being.

To be sure, the strategy advanced, here, attempts to establish a political condition wherein historically marginalised ontologies and their epistemic foundations can be included

in the process of the formation of the nation. Language, in this context, presages an important consideration that was initially considered by Lauretta Ngcobo, in her timeless fictive biography *And They Didn't Die* (1990). When considered carefully, the question arising from the use of language and the social capacity that it has in contributing to the consolidation of the nation—producing a national culture—examines the distinction institutionalised by apartheid spatial planning. By focusing on the lives of rural women, who were exclude from the national metropoles of apartheid South Africa, Ngcobo (1990) demonstrates an adeptness that even the cultural workers of the post-apartheid era paid little attention to. To make mention of Ngcobo (1990) is deliberate and serves to underscore the point already made with respect to engaging materials that exist at the margins of social development. By looking to those who were excluded, potential exists in fashioning a postliberal conception insofar as we are interested in the lives of those who did not advance, defend and postulate a liberal conception, as the alternative to the totalitarian regime of the apartheid state.

In his work *Rediscovery of the Ordinary*, which is discussed in Chapter Three, Ndebele (2006) points to the potential of highlighting the reality of everyday South Africans, and therein finding the literary tradition of the country. That is, by moving away from the spectacle and focusing on the mundane that defines the everyday life possibilities of the citizenry, in the case of Ngcobo – with such an analysis paying attention to the lives of rural women, we can imagine a literary tradition that goes beyond the inheritances of violence, trauma and the spectacle that was apartheid. In choosing to focus on the life possibilities and realities of rural women, Ngcobo (1990) centres an ontology that has been displaced, while demonstrating the ample multiplicities that exist in the examination of those who have been erased, underscoring the importance of an inclusive national linguistic framework, one in which the languages of all are taken to be expressive of national culture.

The attentive reader will note that such a strategy is already under development in the expressions of cultural production—witnessed in the stories that the nation tells itself. When looking to national and international productions like *Justice Served* – a fictive story, wherein a group of gorilla armed struggle veterans takes charge of court proceedings – the reader will note the deployment of a multiplicity of languages that define the nation being deployed in the series as an expression of the people that define South Africa.[5] This is reminiscent of Thabo Mbeki's *I Am an African* speech wherein he stitches a collective tapestry that holds all the constitutive identities of South Africa together – as the nation adopted the democratic constitution that continues to be hailed as the most progressive in the history of modern democracy.

This debate arises from an engagement with the texts of Black/Indigenous intellectuals who wrote the majority of their *oeuvre* in isiXhosa. That is to say that the consideration of the scholarship of Gqoba and Mqhayi underscores the importance of Ndebele's (2006) suggestion of the rediscovery of the ordinary. The significance of such a rediscovery of the ordinary is telling insofar as it holds promise for the development of new theoretical articulations that go beyond the given postulations of (post)-colonial societies.

5.3. A Postliberal Society through the Recognition of Language

To argue for the importance of alternative systems of theorising (post)-colonial reality is deliberate, insofar as the critiques have demonstrated, the contemporary social conditions that define South Africa are coming apart at the seams, as outlined in the previous chapter. This presses the importance of a postliberal articulation, in the wake of the failures of liberalism

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[5] This is a Netflix, limited series, that sought to examine the possibilities that lie outside of the post liberation discourses wherein the ideals of democracy are undermined by a failing corrupt government that does little to advance the needs and concerns of its citizens.

since the previous century, with Bernasconi (2016) highlighting this in his detailing of the debate between Hoernlé and Xuma. Interrelated components must be considered in their influence of the demand for a postliberal tradition. The critique of liberalism from the South African perspective, should not be taken to mean the death of liberalism in countries/contexts where such a system is conducive and functional. Rather, in the wake of substantive decolonial claims—across former colonial territories—the pursuit of alternatives requires substantive engagement. That is, in contexts where liberalism has worked to undermine the realities of the people, alternatives must be pursued. This suggestion comes in light of the recognition that the liberal framework foisted ontological transformations upon Indigenous communities. Hodgson (1986: 189) highlights such an ontological transformation when she details:

> Under Soga's leadership, Ntsikana's followers settled at [Tyume] and all but became absorbed into the missionary framework. "Civilisation" and Christianity went hand in hand and they [the converts who were Ntsikana's followers] wore western dress, built square houses, had one wife, attended church and school, were baptised, took English Christian names and followed the protestant ethic of hard work and right living.

Much can be challenged in the above quoted passage, but the focus, for the purposes of this analysis, will be the notion of "right living". In the true colonial sense, the mode of life that existed prior to the arrival of "civilisation" was against what can be understood as right living. The extent to which coloniality disagreed with this mode of life, we see it outlawed, with little to no resistance from some of the earlier intellectuals of the time, as has already been demonstrated in Chapter Three.

As outlined in the previous section, and in agreement with Ngūgī (Ngūgī and Hdumbe 1985: 156) "Language is a carrier of people's values; values are the basis of a people's self-

definition – the basis of their consciousness." To go back to this claim rests on the desire to answer the question of whether we can attain a postliberal reality through the recognition of language. Continuing with his thinking Ngũgĩ outlines that "When you destroy a people's language, you are destroying that very important aspect of their heritage". In South Africa, we can make the case that language destruction did not succeed, and this claim can be predicated on the continuing production of culture in the local languages of the Indigene, not only cultural production, but further scientific knowledge, seen in a series of higher degrees awarded in the indigenous languages of the country, such as isiXhosa, isiZulu, Tshivenda and Sesotho. This has not merely been contained to one institutional site, as such developments have been witnessed at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Rhodes University, and the University of South Africa. Further still, the objection to epsitemicide given in the analysis developed in Kumalo's (2020a) analysis holds, on the reasoning of the languages that continue to exist and influence the trajectory of the knowledge development.

What cannot be dismissed, however, is the impact of language denigration on the ontology of the Black/Indigenous subject *à la* Dalvit and de Klerk (2009); Soudien 2010; Spaull 2016; and Alexander (1999). That is to say that the disregard of indigenous languages has often meant the dismissal of Black/Indigenous ontology, substantiating the claim that the liberal constitutional framework does little to advance the interests of the majority in the country. This is not, however to suggest that the constitutional framework ought to be disregarded, as has been advanced by some scholars in the country; and this debate has been extensively tabulated in the introductory chapter. Rather, what we are after is a postliberal framework that does well to recognise the ontology of the Indigene/Black political subject in the country, with the main argument in this thesis being that such an articulation can be gleaned from the work of Gqoba and Mqhayi.

In this set-up, the argument seeks to suggest that in centring the languages of the Indigene/Black political subject, through establishing a coeval language status of the linguistic richness that defines South Africa, we can establish the premise for the ontological recognition of Blackness/Indigeneity in the country.

5.4. Epistemic Justice Attained through Linguistic Recognition?

As a concluding analysis, I must answer the question concerning the recognition of indigenous languages, through the establishment of parity among the languages of the country, and whether such a framework marks the facilitation of epistemic justice for the Black/Indigenous subject. A couple of conceptual moves were examined in the preceding analysis. First, we examined the question of the potential that lies in engaging with materials developed in the indigenous languages of the country. This engagement surfaced the question of which language is to be prioritised as the language of national culture, officialdom—in the secondary consideration. In examining such a context, the analysis surfaced the reality that the contemporary set-up in the country highlights that the languages of South Africa ought to enjoy equal footing if we are to realise the suggestions found in the work and thinking of both William Wellington Gqoba and Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi. That is, if we follow their thinking as that which gives us the answer to resolving the liberal framework that defines the country, a postliberal schema would equally recognise the languages of the country, as they are all recognised, constitutionally, as the official languages of the nation.

As such, the languages of a national culture, should be inclusive of all those who are constitutive of the nation and this takes seriously the work of Parekh (2000) along with the work of Gqoba and Mqhayi. The derivative position, to which we arrive, in the third sense, in following such a mode of analysis, is one that forestalls the necessity for homogeneity—as advanced by Mahmood Mamdani (2021), while further taking seriously the contributions of

this project insofar as we are looking to alternative political frameworks using the thinking of scholars who are local to our context. Such an engagement means taking seriously the project of local responsiveness in the political frameworks deployed in theorising and understanding the context of South Africa.

As detailed in the previous section such systems of thought allow us to get to the recognition of the ontology of the Indigene/Black subject, on the reasoning that language is a hallmark of identity; a repository in which we find the values of a people, their culture and their beliefs *viz*. their understanding, classification of and engagement with the world. Language becomes the vehicle through which both the ontological—as expression of political identity—is recognised, suggesting the conclusion that we might arrive at epistemic justice, through the curation of a social condition that is cognizant of the varying identities that make up the nation. This is to say that the work of William Wellington Gqoba and Samuel Edward Krune Mqhyi can facilitate new methods of theorising the political through a systematic engagement with their contribution. A suggestion of this nature might surface postliberal conceptions of democracy that are domestic to the African continent, specifically in a world where the liberal tradition has been exclusionary, while being further seen as acting against the interests of the majority.

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