Black People in Post-Colonial South Africa

A Genealogical Analysis of Dominant and Plural Narratives of Black People in 20th-21st century

By

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Summary

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This disquisition is an inter-disciplinary investigation into some dominant hegemonic narratives of black people in 20th-21st century South Africa as they are found in public discourses. I contend that there exist hegemonic narratives of black people which can be seen within the African Nationalism debates in South Africa. While not all hegemonic narratives of black people are African nationalist discourses, I illustrate how nationalism is a proverbial vehicle for the dissemination of a 'truth' and or a 'unitary' understanding of black people in South Africa over others. To be sure, the African Nationalism debates evinces the power/-knowledge dynamics imbued in the meaning, functions, and performances of black people This is with the aim to foreground the less dominant everyday lived experiences and narratives of black people. I do this with the use of the genealogical method of analysis so as to suspend historiographies and/or approaches to historiography that essentializes and advance absolute origins surrounding discourses on black people in South Africa. I aim to throw the fault lines of these dominant narratives into relief by way of a genealogical reading of various different and alternative historiographies, which include the works of black authors, black philosophers and black thinkers. Certainly, a genealogical analysis will aid me in foregrounding the plurality of Blackness. Conversely, my study aims to consider the degree to which these singular lived experiences, those that counter dominant hegemonic narratives, reflect sectors of black society rather than just individual particularities so as to further understand the post-colonial black condition.

KEYWORDS: History; Black people; Blackness; Genealogy; Power/-Knowledge; Post-Colonial South Africa; Plurality; Narratives; African Nationalism

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Introduction

This research is an interdisciplinary investigation grounded in a philosophical research method as genealogical analysis. This is an investigation into dominant historiographies of black people in the post-colonial recent past and present in South Africa as they are found in public discourses. I contend that these historiographies create a continuous and seamless relation to the past in the present. If South Africa's past is taken as something uniform and linear such that it gives us a consistent 'truth', the effect is the constant exclusion, silencing or reduction of narratives and subjectivities that do not 'fit' into the neat story purported by thinkers of these dominant historiographies. Furthermore, these stories function to exclusively link the South African past to an overly biased and slanted history which is supposedly anchored and expressed through the concept of blackness. I therefore seek to unsettle monolithic conceptions of black people with a particular focus on African Nationalism debates in 20th-21st century South Africa. Therefore, I aim to dispel the normalization and taken for granted nature of dominant meanings, functions and performances of black people and black subjectivity in public discourses. This approach will function to suspend historiographies and/or approaches to historiography that essentializes and advance absolute origins surrounding discourses on black people in South Africa. I aim to throw the fault lines of this narrative into relief by way of a genealogical reading of various different and alternative historiographies, which include the works of black authors, black philosophers and black thinkers. To be sure, a genealogical analysis will aid me in foregrounding the plurality of black people. Certainly, such an exercise will seek to turn the readers gaze towards historical consciousness in its everyday functions of life-orientation (and not scientific historiography).

This work is not a critical negation of the dominant narratives and the attended anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles and experiences. Rather, this study aims to evince that the way in which we think about black people in public discourse today is as a result of contingent turns of history, not the outcome of rationally inevitable trends. These contingent turns of history are governed by different power relations that inform the cause of a transition from one way of thinking of black people to another. This work then is a careful account of experiences and their connections, emergence, ruptures and disappearance surrounding conceptualizations of black people.

In **Chapter 2**, given that I take my work to be subject to the same processes as that of Foucault (and Nietzsche), I discuss Foucault's genealogical method of analysis. I begin with a broad overview of the debates surrounding blackness in African Philosophy so as to contextualize the discussion. I then move

on to discuss the term post-colonial and explicate why I characterize 20th-21st century South Africa as post-colonial. Having contextualized the discussion on blackness in the existing theoretical horizon, I lay out the methodological framework within which this research which the contentions of this research will be interrogated. In the main, my understanding of a genealogical method of analysis is drawn largely from two of Foucault's texts as 'Nietzsche, Genealogy and History' (1971); 'History of Sexuality, Vol 1: Method' (1978). Thus, Genealogy is the critical interrogation of historiographies to establish what has not been recorded, the conditions of possibility of official accounts so as to uncover the reality of history as event(s) – history without origin or telos, incoherent and haphazard (Hofmeyr 2019). I also utilize Foucault's work on power/-knowledge as found in *Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the College de France* (1976) and his text entitled *Discipline and Punish* (1977) to unearth the relation between knowledge and power. The discussion on power/-knowledge will aid me in demonstrating how we come to accept some historiographies over others. Furthermore, it will allow me entry into the paradoxical function of historiographies in South Africa as that which excludes, represses and conceals but simultaneously produces necessary and positive sources in society (Foucault 1978: 92-101).

In **Chapter 3**, I contend that there exists hegemonic dominant narratives of blackness in post-colonial South Africa best seen within the African Nationalism debates. My argument has three constitutive parts:1) instantiate that these hegemonic narratives political objectives bolstered by a nationalist historiography as its proverbial vehicle; 2) elucidate that there exists dominant hegemonic narratives of Blackness in 20th-21st century South Africa and lastly, 3) argue that although well intentioned, the hegemonic narrative, much like any narrative, makes less visible other conceptions of Blackness. I begin by defining what I take to be Nationalism. Thereafter, given that the South Africa case of African Nationalism draws its impetus from decolonial movements across the continent I discuss African Nationalism in general on the continent. Finally, I discuss the African Nationalism debate in South Africa in the 20th century and proceed to critically interrogate them with the help of various thinkers.

In **Chapter 4**, I analyse selected narratives of black authors; intellectuals; activists and thinkers, that are 'anomalous' and/or immutable so as to counter the hegemonic narrative outlined in Chapter 3. In particular I foreground the heterogeneity of blackness through some obscured, occluded and 'less talked' about narratives surrounding blackness through the genealogical analysis of the works of Nontsizi Mgqwetho; Jacob Dlamini; Can Themba; and Lewis Nkosi. What one foregrounded is the areas of inconsistency, the contradictory, the elsewhere of blackness that has been silenced by dominant hegemonic narratives in public discourse. The idea was to discuss blackness in its many

forms and modes i.e. family, class, gender, colour boundaries, in different spaces etc and not just a concept that represents mass unity of black people with only political objectives.

Chapter 5, concludes the research wherein I summarize the ideas discussed in this research. I critically reflect on the efficacy of this work in aiding us with dealing with the political concerns of post-colonial South Africa by raising some questions further research such as the relationship between theory and political praxis; justice and ethics of black plurality. Finally, I contend that at the least this work makes a valuable contribution to public discourse and perhaps African philosophy in South Africa.

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Foucault's Genealogical Method of Analysis

Introduction

There are two aims in this chapter, the first of which is to discuss the tool of analysis, as genealogy, which I will employ to interrogate hegemonic and often taken for granted conceptions of black people in post-colonial South Africa. This is the mode of analysis which I will employ to show that these hegemonic and often taken for granted conceptions of black people occupy public discourses on history in general, to which historians may have made contributions but in which they have no special position. A genealogical method analysis will further aid me in my second aim which is to I will define the regime of power/-knowledge that sustains the hegemonic conceptions of black people in South Africa. In taking this thesis to be a historiographical work subject to the same processes I will identify in the works of Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault, I use the genealogical method as a theoretical framework to gain entry into these different historiographies. The exercise would then be a critical interrogation of historiographies to establish what has not been recorded, the conditions of possibility of official accounts so as to uncover the reality of history as event(s) – history without origin or telos, incoherent and haphazard. Using the genealogical method as a tool of analysis will aid me in accounting for the fact that black people are being spoken about; to discover who is doing the speaking; the positions and viewpoints from which they are speaking; and to ascertain the institutions that prompt people to speak about it, which store and disseminate what is being said (Foucault 1978: 11).

Before delving into a further clarification of the genealogical method, I will begin by providing a broad overview of the theoretical approaches in which blackness and black people have been discussed within African Philosophy. In discussing these approaches, I will underscore their strengths, weaknesses and where I imagine the kind of historical consciousness oriented towards everyday life of black people could contribute to the conversation. In discussing these approaches, and where I imagine this research contributes to the conversation.

Current Debates Around Blackness in African Philosophy

Under the evocative history of the term black, the modern imagination has "swirled in an endless enervating flow of meaning" (Lushaba and Lategan 2018: 619). Lushaba and Lategan have argued that the term black has authored its own "peculiar rules of signification wherein at the instance of the encounter with meaning it coerces the latter to exhaust itself, to move to its opposite or outside. At the enunciation of the term Black, meaning and meaninglessness both appear instantaneously"

(2018: 620). Thus, its productive capacity is seen where meanings seem to end, in inability to be fit into neat epistemic categories; and invokes an endless play of signs and meaning refusing to fix itself anywhere. Conversely, this term guarantees fixity, facticity; and determines structures of being. To be sure, throughout modern history it is the same term black (at other times read as Africa) that has given coherence to the desire for self-determination so as to energise "the impulse to recover the humanity of the [b]lack from the void of the term (Lushaba and Lategan 2018: 619). This concept has been the means with which to dehumanize a people but has also simultaneously been a container for emancipatory consciousness. How then are we to make sense of the meanings and functions of this concept? There exists two main approaches to blackness or black subjectivity in African Philosophy as Afrocentric thinking, to originate, produce and reproduce over time the Black/African as a subject of political, social and economic denomination" , and Constructivism, a spirited attempt to "re-symbolize the black into the a full signifier (subject) capable of giving meaning to its existence" (Lushaba and Lategan 2018: 620).

I will begin by discussing the first of these approaches as Afrocentricity. Spillers, in 'The idea of Black Culture' (2006), highlights that the most persistent refusal of nuance of blackness comes from Afrocentric thinkers. The irony is not lost on me here as the basic tenant of Afrocentrism is precisely the radical embrace of difference in confrontation with Eurocentrism. The idea of radical embrace of difference is echoed by Amina Mama[1] who protested that we are being asked to think "beyond identity", when for many of us identity remains a quest, something in-the-making (Mama as quoted in Lamola 2018: 2). This is reflected in the work of Biko wherein he declared:

> Merely by describing yourself as black you have started on a road towards freedom, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a submissive being (1971:52)

It is a call for a socially grounded understanding of Blackness grounded in black self-affirmation and self-definition in the face of the denial of the black self by the white racist environment. Certainly, Afrocentric thinkers seek to place "African ideals at the centre of any analysis that involves African culture and behaviour" (Asante 1987: 6[2]). Given these aims it seems odd to

[1] Speech at the Nordic African Institute Symposium under the theme *Identity and Beyond: Rethinking Africanity* (1995)

[2] Elsewhere Asante re-establishes the centrality of the ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) civilization and the Nile Valley cultural complex as points of reference for an African perspective in much the same way as Greece and Rome serve as reference points for a European world(9). Asante traces his own intellectual ancestry back to W. E. B. Du Bois (the

appeal to a universality of black people. Spillers argues that this is where the problematic of Afrocentricity lies in that these thinkers leave all other understandings of blackness "so sutured, so sewn up" in Afrocentricity that the ideas of blackness in the Diaspora and of the continent become, by negligible detour, a single project, or "inhabitants of the same theoretic continent" (Diouf and Mboji 1992: 118).

But, as Lamola argues, emanating from this crisis and confusion, "in a quest to situate the dilemma of African existence in this self-reconstituting world" (ibid), came the work of Kwame Appiah post-racialism (1992) and cosmopolitanism (2007), together with Achille Mbembe's Afropolitanism and racial relativism [3]. We are cautioned by thinkers of this kind to not indulge in a kind of "parochial social anthropology, racial essentialism and jingoistic race-based provincialism" (Lamola 2018: 2). In allegiance to this task Mbembe (2006), in the article 'On the Post Colony: A Brief Response to Critics', laments the rise of anticolonial African postcolonial theory with these words:

> By insisting too much on difference and alterity, this current of thought has lost sight of the weight of the fellow human (le semblable) without whom it is impossible to imagine an ethics of the neighbour, still less to envisage the possibility of a common world, of a common humanity. (p. 153)

In trying to elucidate a counter archetype to that outlined by the Africanists, Mbembe further posits, in *The Critique of Black Reason (2017)* an alternative discourse to the discussion on blackness as constructivism. To be sure, these thinkers are against essentialism. Mbembe provides a history of the racialization and instrumentalisation of the African as being merely an imagination and invention of blackness by the European colonial discourse on Africa. Thus, blackness is a sign, "a mere indicator of something else" (Lamola 2018: 4) for Mbembe. Mbembe further argues that the word black was something employed by the Europeans and colonists for the purposes of subjection and

intellectual parent of divergent positions on blackness and Africanity) and Cheikh Anta Diop, Senegalese thinker and politician, who, following certain cues laid down by the classical writers—Herodotus, eminent among them—places ancient Egypt in a parental relationship to Greece. Martin Bernal's two-volume Black Athena systematically examines the research protocols of the eras of European scholarship that place Greece in the forefront of European civilization, and it is a matter of interest that Asante appears to accept the Hegelian provenance of Greece as it is unfolded in The Philosophy of History.

3 Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason* (2017:11) 'In fact, race does not exist as a physical, anthropological, or genetic fact. [*It is*] just a useful fiction, a phantasmagoric construction, or an ideological projection'.

exploitation of the black man (Mbembe 2017: 20). In the end, blackness is a neurotic invention of the racializing European mind (ibid: 113). For Mbembe it is something of the "fantasies…of the west" (ibid: 39). As such, blackness does not exist for Mbembe, it is something which is "constantly produced" (ibid:18). He surmises by way of conclusion that the idea of blackness or race has never been fixed but have always been open to a myriad of signifiers. Lamola suggests that we must read this position in light of Mbembe's objective to construct a social ontology of Afropolitanism. This Afropolitanism rejects the victimhood it finds inherent in Africanity and opts for a pan-African non-racial consciousness on the question of Blackness (2018: 5). This "epistemically advocates an African consciousness that is open to the world and is briskly trading culture with the rest of the world. Ontologically, it aims for a supra-African consciousness that projects itself in the world without regard for the pain and humiliations of Africa of yesterday and today, living out the *eschaton* of a non-racial future" (ibid: 5).

There are of course weaknesses with this kind of position, in particular Mbembe's postulations here. Firstly, Mbembe has a predisposition to begin history of Africa and/or black people from the Atlantic slave trade. He takes this as a kind of originary moment or site at which the idea of blackness begins or is created as a racialized subject. This leads him to the erroneous assumption that slavery sutures black experience/blackness. However, before black people got onto slave ships they had long been constructed as subjects of race (Lushaba and Lategan 2018: 622). This leads us into a whole other realm of discussion for those who remained on the continent, their integration into circuits of capital, and their articulations of the broader category of race which took a different trajectory. For example, Lushaba and Lategan wonder what an analysis of blackness or black experience that looked at different loci of enunciations as "cultural forms as ancestral or indigenous [practises]" would look like in conversation with Islam and Christianity as both of these are containers of black identity (ibid: 623). Thus, one wonders what kind of black subjectivity would be unearthed if Mbembe focused less on the "Western Consciousness of the Black" (ibid: 623) which sees the black as lack or void already.

Secondly, it seems to be a tendency of Constructivists in African Philosophy to place an "over-moralising critique' on Africanity thinkers who place emphasis on "race as the basis of solidarity and constructing a sense of community" (Lushaba and Lategan 2018: 623). There is often very little recourse to appreciate the place from which these thinkers speak. Tembo (2018) rightly points out that there were certain political concerns of these thinkers that Mbembe now describes as theories of "victimhood" (Mbembe 2017: 178). It is an attempt to put forward a subjectivity of a dehumanized

people. But in the same vein, implicit in a Constructivist approach to blackness in African Philosophy is an assumption that black people are no longer subject to this dehumanization today such that Africanity approaches no longer have any theoretical purchase. I would like to suggest that this is simply not true and perhaps constructivists would need to truly unpack what the nature of the relation between black people and white people is today given the past and some noted changes in the present.

So, there seems to be two sides of the debate which are best illustrated in the archetypes of Mbembe and the explanation of Africanity offered by Spiller. Though these two sides are not mutually exclusive, it seems that on the question of blackness we are either left uneasy or hesitant with ethnically specific knowledge bases and the other side which seems to be preoccupied with a quest for a restorative African consciousness. How are we to write a discourse of black people and/or blackness that is not the sum of its philosophical, anthropological, cultural, historical and political parts but simultaneously of their presence? How do we mitigate this problematic where we are left with either social death or social life as our options?

I argue that, it is precisely the move towards placing primacy on lived experiences, historical consciousness that is life-oriented, and genuinely listening to black people's everyday stories which will elucidate the fact that the two sides of this debate are not only unhelpful in being separate but also both exist at the same time in one body. To be sure, a subject is both fluid and stagnant, changing and unchanging. Trying to take a strictly Africanist or Constructivist approach to blackness and/or black people means that one would miss 'the stuff' of black existence. Thus, I am hesitant in even suggesting a look towards lived experiences in African philosophy as a middle way between these two sides but rather I am suggesting that going back to the lived experiences is perhaps a third way of looking at black people. This third way, I contend, lies in the use of a genealogical method of analysis.

Barbara Christian in the 'The Race for Theory' (1987) argues that the very nature of this approach to blackness is prompted by the rejection of a unified and/or universal conception of blackness. Thus, I stand in agreement with Christian in that theorists concerning themselves with Blackness ought to look towards "narrative forms, in the stories we create, in riddles and proverbs, in the play with language, in dynamic rather than fixed ideas" (ibid). It is an orientation that begs of us to remain open to the intricacies of the intersection of language, class, race, and gender. To be sure, it is a call to move away from 'Biblical' exegesis and/or gross generalizations of cultural phenomenon. It is a move akin to that of Njabulo Ndebele in *The*

Rediscovery of the Ordinary wherein he implores us to move away from what he takes to be "obscene social exhibitionism" (2006: 31). The hegemonic serves to conceal nuances and provides an avowal of singular meanings of a past that was marked by plurality rather than by a politics of a 'simple, single formulation' that may work to erase variations in Blackness (ibid: 51). To be sure, one must 'return' to the ordinary in representations of black experience (ibid: 31–53). Ndebele argued for a move away from the discourse's reliance on 'spectacle'. Rather, he advocated for a move towards a commitment to the "interiority of the everyday" (ibid: 31 – 53).

Let me not give the impression that by advocating for the move to look more so to narratives and the everydayness of black people that I ally myself with ideas that the everyday is neutral. By neutral I mean to say that I do not imagine that the everyday is absent of political themes. The subject matter is of people who have been denigrated for centuries and I do not deny that blackness, by necessity is political. However, a genealogical method of analysis will allow me to illustrate that even under the most "oppressive of conditions, people are always trying and struggling to maintain a semblance of social order" (Ndebele 2006: 48) that does not resort to social death but that is life invigorating. We are not speaking of a one-dimensional entity but rather a plural one.

Defining Post-Colonial

The term post-colonial is beset with problems. This is in part because of its attended ambiguity as no few words have been more elusive to me. There is a constant slippage between "significations of an historical transition, a cultural location, a discursive stance, and an epochal condition" (Parry 1997: 3). In part, it is also because of the supposed assumption of the globalized world we live in that post-colonial theory functions under, it has the effect of eliding local histories and particularized circumstances. As McClintock argues, it leaves the world in a binary position of either colonial or post-colonial (1994:292)- thereby also effacing pre-colonial history. The result can often be the tendency adopt a "panoptic…view [of] the globe within generic abstractions voided of political nuance" (McClintock 1994: 293). Moreover, the prefix 'post' seems to imply that colonial domination ended.

These positions highlight some issues with the term post-coloniality but these are largely conceptual or definitional problems. Post-colonialism is itself hardly a unified field by any stretch of the imagination. De Kock echoes this sentiment by arguing that we often tend to "agglomerate various

approaches in the 'post' mode" and create "a historicized monolith of essential knowledge" (1993: 45). But I heed to the concerns outlined above, especially given the South African context. To be sure, any tool of analysis that leaves the agent entirely constituted by discourse is no doubt problematic as it denies the oppressed a voice with which to speak of their resistance. Mishra and Hodge highlight this issue as a replacing of "political insurgency with discursive radicalism" (2005: 378) Notably, critics such as Ahmad (1992) go so far as to say that a post-colonial characterization of our present dispensation is susceptible to political regression and further points to the problematic institutional location of some of its leading theorists. The implied critique is that a post-colonial characterization is largely the product of the intellectual work of the "privileged and deracinated elite who have appropriated European high theory for their own purposes" (ibid).

But the South African context is neither completely polarized nor completely fluid and I think this is generally true of any place in the world. Interventions such as that of Njabulo Ndebele (*Rediscovery of the Ordinary)* were, in part, concerned with addressing this problematic. Nuttall (2004) has suggested that one needs to acknowledge that there are "no "pure" cultures, that identity (especially, perhaps, in the colonial situation) is necessarily complex, and that both sides of the racial divide are (or were) internally fractured in various ways" (in terms, for example, of origin, or language, or ethnicity, or lineage, or class, or gender). Nuttall further argues that there have always been striking imbrications of multiple identities in South Africa-identities that mythologies of apartheid, and of resistance to it, tended to silence. To be sure, despite the attempt of the colonial enterprise and apartheid alike to cover these nuances they were always there. Be this as it may, it does not retract from the grim realities of political marginalization of non-whites in this country by white people. To clarify, I mean to say that black people were constantly creating their own subjectivity in the segregated space while all the while still being defined in a fixed way by the apartheid system and experiencing the effects of racial hierarchies. For the sake of brevity, I will say here then that this is how I see South Africa today as having the effects of the past remain in the present as it were. We are negotiating between a starkly polarized society and a dialogical existence. Despite the attended problems with a post-colonial characterization of the present I do not think it leaves us just with discursive radicalism, nor does it describe a move away from the questions of colonialism and apartheid. Rather, the characterization, which should be taken merely as a description of the present, precisely affords us the chance to genealogically investigate and analyze blackness and hegemonic narratives of black people in South Africa.

Post-colonial South Africa is no stranger to this phenomenon. Divergent people have borne "historical testimony to the exigency of the continuous and ever renewed interrogation of particular historical

presents" (Hofmeyr 2019: 4)- and how this affects our relationship to ourselves, in effect who we are. Foucault referred to this as a "historical ontology" of ourselves and/or a "historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying" (1984: 115).

Foucault's Genealogy as Critique

One of the core concerns of Foucault's work can be taken to be the question of "who are we today" (May 2006: 2). It would be fair to say that how Foucault argues we go about this question is through a philosophical reflection of our present. The idea of a "history of the present" sounds paradoxical and may suggest a form of presentism (Garland 2014: 367). A presentism would be a methodological fault for Historians- the moral sin of anachronism- as one would be projecting modern values meanings onto the past that may well have been constituted quite differently. Be this as it may, one would be mistaken in concluding that Foucault is engaged in presentism. A history of the present is not a reading back into the past with present day social arrangements or cultural meanings or claiming to find phenomena today that also existed in the past. To be sure Foucault stated to an interviewer in 1984 "I set out from a problem expressed in the terms current today and I try to work out its genealogy. Genealogy means that I begin my analysis from a question posed in the present" (as cited in Kritzmann 1988: 262). Hofmeyr (2019: 3) highlights that it was Kant who approached the question of a philosophical consideration of the present in a way that would be more instructive than had been the case in the past. To be sure, for Kant a critical interrogation of one's own present is not an attempt to find how it diverges from the past "following some dramatic event" (ibid) nor is it an interrogation of the present to foreshadow a future event (Foucault 1984: 33). Kant specifically omits such concepts as 'origins', 'progress', or the 'internal teleology of historical processes' as his concern is with contemporary reality. Foucault takes this on as an attempt to be governed less by some objective understanding of history- "how not to be governed ***like that***, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such an objective in mind and by means of such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them" (Foucault in Lotringer (Ed.) 2007: 44).

This being the case, history can be a starting point in understanding "who I am". Foucault posits that history is not just a matter of discrete events or movements that happen to have preceded us. To conceive of history in this way is to subject it to principles outside of the specific moment of its events. Thus, history would need a principle that dictates the nature or the direction of its movement. History would be subject to a transcendent principle outside it and/or an immanent principle that determines it (May 2006: 15). If this were the case one would have to make of history something that does not exist

on its own terms but an expression of something ahistorical. But, this is not to say that history creates itself rather that it is not created by some transcendent, overarching or underlying principle. It does not necessarily progress or regress.

Thus, a genealogical analysis seeks to engage history, not as discipline or science but as events hence my analysis of Post-Colonial South Africa would embark on "the excavation of the *Entstehungsgeschichte* [history of the moment(s) of emergence] of such events[4]" (Nietzsche as quoted in Hofmeyr 2019: 4). A history of the moments of the emergence of such events precisely seeks to avoid discussions on origins and purpose but "critically engages a locale in the midst of an *effectives* history, in which the effects of the past remain effective of the present" (ibid).

The object of genealogical analysis is history. However, Foucault does not take history as a mere recitation of 'facts'. On the contrary, there is no one unified history for the thinker but rather multiple histories which are an expression of someone's loci of enunciation. The very recitation of 'facts' is a historical practise in that the very act of recitation is not enacted by an ahistorical self. This speaks to a fundamental situatedness of the self, which is not a recent insight. To be sure, the situatedness of the self has been explicated by many African philosophers and is by no means a recent insight of Foucault. All the same, this recitation of 'facts' produces knowledge-claims. Given that a particular person is speaking, certain discourses are produced and that has unfolded in specific character in a particularized way (Foucault as discussed in May 2006: 9-10) over others. The question here then, is how does something come to be established as so-called 'fact', such that other enunciations are silenced, denied and/or discredited?

In what follows I will discuss how knowledge-claims are produced. I do this precisely because there are attended meanings, functions and performances of black people which are an expression of knowledge-claims about black people. To be sure, the aim of this disquisition can be summed up as an attempt to analyse knowledge-claims about what it means to be a black person as it relates explicitly or implicitly to power/-knowledge relations. To be clear, this is not the kind of analysis of power/-knowledge relations that is based on juridical and institutional models and/or other universal models. Rather, following Foucault, I focus here on the concrete mechanisms through which power penetrates the very bodies of subjects and thereby governs their forms of life (Foucault 1982: 92). This will bring

[4] Cf. Nietzsche's 1874 *Untimely Meditation,* "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" (Nietzsche 1997: 57-124) as well as Foucault's 1971 essay, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in Rabinow (Ed.) 1984: 76-100.

[5] According to Foucault's reading, Nietzsche referred to *wirkliche Historie* in opposition to traditional history. The former should be understood as an historical tracing that 'deals with events in terms of their most unique characteristics, and their most acute manifestations. As such an event is "the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power" (Foucault 1971: 88).

to the fore multiple modes of discipline and political techniques that universal categories cannot sufficiently explain. Here, as Foucault posits, one is necessarily looking to the normalization of knowledge-claims which characterizes disciplinary power, as opposed to the system of rules that define it (Agamben 2009: 12). Therefore, by power Foucault does not mean "institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state…; [or] a mode of subjugation, which in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule; [and, finally he] does not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another" (Foucault 1978: 92). This turn to Foucault's notion of 'power/-knowledge' will serve to specifically explain the process that occurs in the production of knowledge-claims, which will subsequently enable us to analyse how we have come to speak about black people today. What is of concern to me here, is the material conditions or the mechanisms that allow for the production of particular knowledge-claims or 'facts'; and the process that led to some 'facts' being known and accepted as such as opposed to other ideas contending for the status of 'fact'. In other words, I am looking to uncover the mode of existence or the conditions of possibility of certain Blackness. This will allow me to uncover shifts in conceptions of black people in South Africa from the 20th-21st century (ibid: 68)

Foucault's Conceptualization of Power/-Knowledge

Foucault implores us to understand power as the

> *"*multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies" (ibid).

This being the case, power cannot be understood as having a central point from which it is exerted, but must be understood as a 'force' that is everywhere. This is not a statement about its omnipotence or omnipresence as though it has the privilege of controlling everything under one single unity (Taylor 2011: 15). It must be understood as a multiplicity of force relations precisely because it comes from everywhere. Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it alluding to physical strength. Rather, as conceived by Foucault (1982: 93), it refers to the complex relations of particular societies.

Foucault asserts that power is not in any instance a possession or something that can be held or lost by a singular entity which exercises it; rather power is "exercised from innumerable points" (1978:94). The implication of this assertion is that there can be no one singular possessor of power.

These relations are not in a "position of exteriority" (Foucault 1978: 94) with respect to other types of relations but are the immediate effects of "disequilibrium, divisions [and] inequalities" (ibid). Foucault argues that power relations cannot be identified as exterior to other kinds of relations because all these relations are imbued with power already. Power is not exterior to these relations and these relations are not exterior to power (ibid). If power relations are inherent in a complex relation; then power cannot simply be reduced to a mechanism used by the oppressor to oppress the powerless. This would wrongly entail a dualistic structure of power. Therefore, there exists no all-encompassing binary positions between ruler and ruled at the heart of power relations.

Paradoxically, power relations are both intentional and non-subjective. They are intelligible, not because they exist in causal links with other instances, but because they are laden with calculations in so far as "there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives" (Foucault 1978: 94). However, this does not mean that power is the result of the choices of individuals. Foucault is positing that no kind of power can be enacted without an intention or aim that accompanies it without this intention being a subject-directed intention as the latter notion may be understood from a phenomenological perspective. Taylor (2011: 23) argues that there exist certain "tactics" which serve to intentionally preserve and reinforce certain power relations. So, although intentional, power is not "applied onto the individual, rather it moves "through" them (Foucault 1976: 29). Furthermore, Foucault asserts that power is without an author. If power moves through the individual, then it follows that the individual is "one of power's first effects" (ibid., 30). The individual can only be an *effect* of power if this individual is subjected to a particular exercise of power. The individual, as an *effect* of power, may be said to be implicated in a particular exertion of power that is *non-subjective* devoid of the intentions or the control of the or any individual (Taylor 2011: 25-27).

The aforegoing might be better understood once it is clear that for Foucault there is no power without resistance provided that one does not turn this into a determinism of salvation. This resistance is never exterior to power because power is strictly relational in nature. There is a multiplicity of resistances which are "possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, sacrificial" (ibid: 96). Resistance is, as it were, polymorphous and multi-layered (Foucault 1978:96). This does not mean that

resistance is mere reaction. To be sure, if this were the case, resistance would always be subject to eradication or elimination, as a kind of passive *other* to power (ibid.). Rather, resistance for Foucault is an essential and active facet of power-relations, which is also active in the restructuring of social life (ibid). For Foucault, where there is power, there is resistance; domination is no longer power since the possibility of resistance would become impossible. This being the case, knowledge-claims can be produced.

From power, Foucault leads us to a discussion on power/-knowledge. It must be noted that these two concepts as power relations and knowledge-claims are not mutually exclusive precisely because they reproduce each other. This understanding of power, as always already there, can further be elucidated by taking a look at Foucault assertion that power and knowledge are inherently imbricated. Foucault describes knowledge-claims as being a conjunction of power relations knowledge construction process which he terms "power/knowledge" (cf. Foucault 1980). In a 1975 interview with J.J. Brochier titled 'Prison Talk', Foucault outlines that it is not possible for power to be enacted without congruent power such that it is impossible for "knowledge to not engender power" (Mills 2003: 69). This being the case, knowledge is an integral part of power, though I focus specifically here on power in the political space and how political discourses, perceptions and 'facts' are produced and legitimated. Additionally, in producing knowledge one is making a claim for power. By this I mean to say that by mere virtue of knowledge-claims being produced power is implicated. In the end, power and knowledge are dependent on one another.

Foucault defines power/-knowledge as an abstract force which determines what will be known [and what will be validated as worthy knowing since it aspires to be construed as 'factual', legitimate and valid]. He asserts that

> "the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of fundamental implications of power/knowledge and their historical transformations. In short, it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant power, power/knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it, and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge" (Foucault 1991a: 27-28).

To be sure, it is power/-knowledge which produces 'facts' such that the body is simply the site of knowledge which is being produced. Foucault refers to the set of procedures that produce knowledge-claims as "*épistèmé*" (Foucault 1981: 55). In each historical period, these procedures serve as tools for thinking about what counts as factual change. The kind of conceptual tools he refers to here are a "will to know" (ibid) which characterizes the *épistèmé*. For example, "Westerners in the colonial period imposed systems of classification of the colonized countries which they proposed as global objective systems of knowledge, but which were…formulated from a Western perspective with Western interests at their core" (Mills 2003: 72). Therefore, Foucault urges us to be suspect of knowledge which is produced as it may be assuming two positions as adding to the sum of human knowledge or to be playing the role of maintaining the status quo and the affirmation of current power relations.

Knowledge then is not a 'pure' pursuit for so-called 'truth' or 'facts'. It goes through a process of ratification to be deemed 'fact' by those who have positions of authority. The problem with the pursuit of 'truth', which he outlines in the *History of Sexuality. Volume I: The Will to Know* (1976), is that the very act of doing so is also a moment of power being exercised over the one pursuing knowledge. He posits that "if I tell the truth about myself…it is in part that I am constituted as a subject across a number of power relations which are exerted over me and which I exert over others' (Foucault 1988c: 39). In producing knowledge about yourself, as in constituting yourself as a subject, you are making of yourself an object of discourse i.e. an object of power/-knowledge. Rather, 'truth' is produced by virtue of "multiple constraints" (Foucault 1979: 46). Each society has its own "regime of truth" (Mill 2003: 74), that is, the kind of statements that can be made by authorized people and accepted by society as a whole, which are then distinguished from 'false' statements by a range of different discursive practises. Thus, 'truth' is kept in place by a complex web of social relations, mechanisms and prohibitions (ibid). As Foucault posits, being aware of these mechanisms is not a "matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which is chimera for truth is already a power) but of detaching power of truth from the forms of hegemony[6], social economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time" (Foucault 1980b: 133). The hegemonic nature of truth causes people to take on ideologies unwittingly which leads to them accepting their position as natural or for their own good. This truth is kept in place by a wide range of strategies which supports and affirms it and which exclude and counter alternative versions of events. However, in questioning one particular truth does not take away from the fact that the very perspective that one seeks to purport as truth, alternative versions of events, seizes to be equally fictional and constructed. This is not to say that one should not counter the types of 'knowledge'

[6] Hegemony can be broadly defined within the following terms: "hegemony is a state within the society whereby those who are dominated by others take on board the values and ideologies of those in power and accept them as their own; this leads to them accepting their position within the hierarchy as natural or for their own good" (Foucault as quoted in Mills 2003: 75).

which have been disseminated to us by authorities because it is important to critique information. Rather, Foucault argues that even this type of information is not exempt from the workings of power/-knowledge. Thus, every instance of production of knowledge, every instance where someone seems to be speaking on behalf of someone else, no matter how good their intentions are, needs to be interrogated.

Having given conceptual clarification of power/-knowledge, let us return to the focus of this dissertation as hegemonic conceptions of black people in post-colonial South Africa. What we can now understand from this discussion in relation to conceptions of black people is that this form of power, as hegemony, applies itself to the everyday life of the individual, which characterizes the individual, marks the individual by their own individuality, attaches him/her to his/her own identity, imposes a law of truth on them which they must recognize and which other must recognize on them (Foucault as discussed by Butler 2002). It is a "form of power which makes individual subjects" (Foucault 1982: 781).

There are two meanings of the word "subject": "subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject" (Foucault 1982: 781). It does work simultaneously to 'subordinate' or 'reduce'[7] what it means to be a subject and it is productive therein that it creates or conjures the subject. Does this suggest that subject-formation is both empowering and subjugating? In addition, does it suggest that subject-formation is both externally imposed and internally ascribed?

It would certainly seem to be both cases of empowerment and subjugation according to Butler's (2002) reading of Foucault's understanding of the subject in 'Bodies and Power, Revisited'. Butler ascertains that for Foucault the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body (*'s'il est à la fois corps productif et corps assujetti).* Power imposed on a body is to be understood as a part of the political technology of the body, exercised in the form of strategy. A strategy is not to be understood as a "unilateral imposition of power, but precisely an operation of power that is at once productive, diffuse, various in its forms" (Butler 2002). One must discern this strategy in a "network of relations" (Foucault 1975:26). Thus, strategy works on and through the body, both which have to do with the status of the body. This functions under the auspice of two disclaimers that Foucault outlines, discussed earlier, as on the one hand, "a strategy will not be appropriated, and so not be that which a subject takes on or take up" (Foucault as discussed in Butler 2002). On the other hand, a strategy will be "an operation of power that is not possessed

[7] This is simply colloquialisms I use for the sake of the discussion. To be sure, power is not something one can quantify because if one does so it becomes something that is akin to a numerical system or something which one can measure. One cannot measure power, one can merely see the effects of power and/or the level of effects of power. Doing so, as in quantifying it, would it make it something that can be exchanged and be taken which is not possible in Foucaultian discourse.

by a subject. So, the subject is left behind as the relation of power to the body emerges" (ibid). This is embodied in the following quotation:

> This power is not exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those who 'do not have it'; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure up on them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them [*prennent appui à leur tour sur les prises qu'il exerce sur eux*] (Foucault 1975: 27)

So, power is something that is neither possessed or not possessed by the subject. To be sure, one is both invested in power and in a struggle against it (Butler 2002). It is not something internally ascribed, an abiding interiority but a feature of power itself. It is best described as existing in different modalities of "constant tension" and "activity" (Foucault as discussed in Butler 2002).

Conversely, these different modalities can be seen at three sites[8] : "either against forms of domination (ethnic, social, and religious); against forms of exploitation which separate individuals from what they produce; or against that which ties the individual to himself and submits him to others in this way (struggles against subjection, against forms of subjectivity and submission)" (Foucault 1982: 781). These struggles encompass, as aforementioned, a complex relation with a plurality of mechanisms. This kind of struggle has occurred because of the state, according to Foucault. He posits that the state's power is both an "individualizing and a totalizing" (ibid: 782) form of power. There seems to be an ambivalence with these opposite 'state-functions' that allows them to exist simultaneously. These struggles indicate to us, through 'state-function', the ways in which power serves to modify others. But it does not act directly or immediately on others because it acts upon their actions. Thus, in a power relationship it necessitates the recognition of the other as an end which acts, and; faced with said power, they are going to react in multiple sets of ways. This does not mean that power does not happen in the absence of consent or violence, rather that it can happen in other ways too (ibid: 792-794). In this way, this serves to explain how the individual navigates themselves within group dynamics. Given that there is an ambivalence, this ambivalence occurs within the group, it would seem then that the group becomes a catalyst for state exertion. To be sure, the group becomes the object for state exertion. I suspect, that the group is the only site for this kind of occurrence as the simultaneity of being both an individual and being without individuality. It is exactly in that ambivalence that the state can navigate group dynamics (how groups are seen, how individuals within a group see each

[8] To say it is a site is to offer a temporal process, though it is not reducing the spatial to a temporal metaphor (Butler 2002).

other, how individuals within a group speak and speak about each other, and most importantly what they are discussing). If this ambivalence is the way in which networks of power relations (in the group) manifests themselves then it must follow that the same ambivalence determines what is said in the group i.e. what knowledge-claims emerge. This is precisely because of the inseparability of knowledge and power.

Now that I have discussed power/-knowledge and the creation of the subject so as to elucidate how contemporary practises-the use, function and meaning of blackness- emerged out of certain struggles, conflicts, alliances and power relations, many of which are often taken for granted today, I have enabled the genealogist to suggest, "not by means of normative argument", some problematic associations and lineages (Garland 2014: 372). Thus, I return to the discussion on a history of the present. At present in South Africa we have certain conceptions of what it means to be black, what blackness is, how it functions etc. There are many understandings of the formation of black subjectivity and/or blackness that can either be understood as a response to a dominant discourse of blackness generated by a host of actors of European descent or that in fact blackness is a long standing idea, subjectivity etc. that has occurred despite the colonial encounter. All the same, the idea of a genealogical analysis is to disturb these present-day understandings (ibid: 371). If genealogical analysis shows the descent and emergences of a concept and how the contingencies of this process continue to shape the present we are engaging in questions as, which are Nietzschean in inspiration, "[w]hat is happening today? What is happening now? What is this 'now' in which we all live and which is the site, the point, from which I am writing?" (Kant as quoted in Hofmeyr 2019: 17).

The point of genealogy is not to search for origins. The aim is not to take conceptions of black people today and link them to some corresponding idea in the past. To be sure, the aim is to show the erratic moments of blackness, to evince the struggles, displacements and historical conditions of existence upon which present-day practises depend. In what follows I will focus on the historical concerns of a genealogical exercise.

A History of the Present

I identify three main influences from Nietzsche on Foucault's idea of history as present. The first of these is the idea that human beings are historical. In particular it is the consequence of this assertion, as their historicalness if you will, which is the burden of human beings. This is especially the case given the often life stultifying manner in which we engage with the past. To be sure, history tends to take primacy over life though it is an important enterprise in the life of a human for Nietzsche. We remember our own past achievements and iniquities, which leads us to distinctively human moral reactions like pride, shame, guilt, regret, and dissimulation. Humans, unlike most or all others, are capable of getting so hung up on the past that they cannot embrace the present or move towards the future because of this historicism of their time (cf.

Nietzsche 1874). However, Nietzsche does not leave us in despondency having forced us to reckon with this human weakness as he states that history functions like a horizon. Though we cannot transcend the fact that we are in history and therefore contingent to it, it is from this very vantage point from which creation and imagination is possible and occurs. We do, after all, have the ability to make choices and will/steer/direct/influence the course of our lives.

In the second place, the historicism of his time finds itself seeking some form of scientific/objective truth. For Nietzsche, historical actors, by virtue of their horizon, create history simply because they are committed to a particular manner of seeing the past. Thus, this creative capacity is exercised under the assumption that some kind of objective truth can be discovered. Unknowingly these historians create and offer their society myths of origin. But for Nietzsche, this objective historicism fails by virtue of the need to represent the past as it truly was. Thus, for Nietzsche, "there are no facts only interpretations" (Nietzsche as quoted by Walter Kauffman 1954: p. 458).

Lastly, Nietzsche and his genealogical orientation serves to oppose the teleological and progress-oriented reading and writing of history which dominated the scholarly endeavours of his time. This opposition refers to Nietzsche's explication of the dangers of Hegelianism and its consistent influence on the way in which history is considered (1874: 104). In this Hegelian view of history, every historical event and figure is rendered imprisoned by his unknowing service to the process of "world-history" and its completion (ibid.). From this view, every period, event and individual serves as part of the process, and ultimately the progress of *world-history*. An entire "generation" of individuals, in light of this teleological view of history, may merely submit themselves to what they believed to be the *process* of history; and by so doing, a dependence on the "power of history" becomes entrenched in them (ibid: 104-105). This *power of history* (history as ongoing, linear process) serves as a view of history as a progressive endeavour which ultimately stands as "factual" and irrefutable (ibid: 105). The progressive-teleological view of history, and its mistakenly viewed irrefutable nature, may serve as the first version of history as a construct. Foucault takes up Nietzsche's critical engagement with the "metahistorical" applications that are superimposed on the notion of history (1971: 77). Foucault attempts to show that the genealogist's investigatory endeavours does not seek to unearth in history an "essential" feature, but what is rather sought is the conflictual, multi-original nature of history (1971: 78). Such an *essential* feature of history which genealogy seeks to undermine, is the search for origins, and perhaps also a search for the *telos* or ultimate goal of history. Genealogy however suspends any belief in any kind of essential and absolute "origin" (Foucault 1971: 77).

The need for genealogy as critical counter-methodology in both Nietzsche and Foucault, may imply that history is more complex and multi-layered than the account presented by the teleological and origin-oriented

view of history as posited by conventional thought and investigations in public discourse. Foucault, in his essay titled 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' (1971) adopts Nietzsche's rejection of the search for an origin and a teleological history. He does this because he also adheres to the idea that "it is wrong to reduce history to a linear development" (Foucault 1971: 76). Rather we should look at the "singularity of an event" (ibid., p. 76) as opposed to conceiving historical events in terms of a progressive continuity. Foucault rejects "meta-historical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies" (Ibid., p. 77), in essence rejecting the search for origins seen in Hegelian historical thought (ibid.). He posits that there are no "purest possibilities [or] protected identities" (ibid., p. 78) as historians of his time would have it. Foucault engages with Nietzsche's conception of the search of origins and the various understandings of the origin as how historians have been engaging with the past. Genealogy will then be used to "dispel" (ibid., p.80) these myths of origin in written history. This is Foucault's critique of the way we engage with history.

Foucault outright offers us genealogy as a critical alternative to the preceding dominant historicism. Thus, in using genealogy as a method, one would seek a history that provides complex, mundane, inglorious origins — in no way part of any grand scheme of progressive history. We look at history as something that arises from constellations of historical conceptual and political praxis. This conceptual and political praxis has definite meaning that was informed by the spirit of the time in which it is written. It could also be informed by a specific conceptual paradigm of that specific age. In order for us to understand these dynamics of history we need to look at history in its relatedness as opposed to searching for a single fact or meaning. This history would be one that is perspectival. From the above, Foucault offers us an alternative to the historicism he critiques as "effective history" (ibid: 87-88). He describes the type of history as one "without constants". If traditional history, for Foucault, depends on rediscovery and gives a homogenous view, then effective history would be the opposite, heterogeneous, without an end and divided (ibid.)

The emergence of an historical *anything* is the object of study when the genealogist considers the *Entstehung* of historical events (Foucault 1971: 81). This notion of *Entstehung* refers to the moment of emergence which cannot be reduced to a continuous process (ibid.). Emergence is rather a consistent case of interruption or friction between forces and constitutes an event of struggle between such forces (ibid: 83-84). The second term that is linked to *Entstehung* which Foucault adopts from Nietzsche's work is that of *Herkunft*. *Herkunft* is used by Foucault to designate the bodily "descent" of a group of individuals and the investigation into this concept considers the "race" or "social type" of such a group (ibid: 80). Foucault emphasises that an investigation into *descent* is not necessarily the same as an emphasis on conventional racial markers (1971: 81). Rather, such an investigation seeks to show the indistinct and "subindividual" features that happen to interact as a complex structure; this signifies racial markers for Foucault (ibid.). When an investigation into *descent* is conducted by the genealogist, certain features of this descent's possibility come to light; in this

case, genealogy attempts to show the constructive forces, events and elements that made certain descent-related concepts possible (ibid: 81). Foucault further argues that the investigation into the nature of possibilities that make up a particular descent disrupts the very homogenous fabric of what was considered to be stagnant in historical identity (ibid: 82). It is important to note that the playground of descent is the constitution of the body; the particular attachment to a group (racial or social) and the previous erroneous behaviour of the ancestral members of said group invests itself in the body (ibid.). This is why Foucault argues that genealogy takes up the task of showing the inscription of descent-as-history on the body of individuals and the "destruction" of such bodies by the influence of history. (ibid: 83).

Conclusion

In summation, Foucault argues that descent is ultimately a product of the potency or impotence of drives and the investment it makes in the body; emergence becomes the moment of "confrontation" (ibid: 84) between groups of bodies which allow for a "domination" or stultification that constitutes history (ibid: 85). Furthermore, human interaction is invariably linked to the consistent imprinting of various violences into a "system of rules", which allows for the supplanting of one form of domination by another (ibid: 86), especially in terms of the unjust nature of knowledge-production. Both descent and emergence for Foucault, with their respective but interrelated functions, serve to construct history as a history constituted by conflicting bodies. This is the case because the body is the vehicle through which events are made possible. This Foucaultian theoretical template of investigation into emergence and descent provides very open-ended instruments of analysis regarding the nature of the historical. It is open-ended because it is not a stagnant and specific template; the template seems malleable regarding the diversity of conflicts that may bring about the construction of history.

I have now provided a methodological framework, a genealogical inquiry, as informed by the work of Foucault. The point I wish to emphasize here is that a genealogical inquiry is an analysis that allows for a history of the present. I am, after all, concerned with concrete functions, meanings and performances of black people in post-colonial South Africa. This method of analysis is perhaps most apt in trying to interrogate such a discursive practise or phenomenon as blackness as it does not seek origins, does not subscribe to ideas of absolute domination and absolute resistance; it allows one to seek out the incoherent and the fault lines. In the following chapter I will now employ the method of analysis towards a critical interrogation of dominant hegemonic conceptions and/or narratives of black people in South Africa. In particular I will look at the African Nationalism debates in post-colonial South Africa.

3

Dominant Narratives of Black People

Introduction

South Africa, having entered the second decade of its democracy, has seen an increase in some having begun to challenge the notion of a seamless story of its history. This has included the reanimation of the land question; increasingly volatile service delivery protests; episodes of xenophobic violence; protests on university campuses (Collis-Buthelezi 2017: 7) and women's marches directed towards the inadequacy of the state in dealing with violence directed at their livelihoods. The current political climate in South Africa bears "historical testimony to the exigency of continuous and ever renewed interrogation of our historical presents" (Hofmeyr 2018: 3)- and how our relationship to the present and the past affects our relationship that we have with ourselves. This seamless story can be useful despite its effects in silencing and hiding other stories of the South African past. To be sure, it allows us to make more visible the often hidden and perhaps unattended stories surrounding post-colonial South Africa. Furthermore, it places us in a position to discuss the place of Blackness in contemporary South Africa, in particular the plurality of discourses on Blackness. I therefore argue that any attempt to do so requires attending to the dominant hegemonic conceptions of Blackness first. It would therefore seem to be a worthwhile exercise to investigate the events, what I take to be history, that have led a particular group of South Africans, black people, to constitute themselves and to see themselves as subjects of what they are "doing, thinking, [and] saying" (Foucault 1984: 115). To be sure, this is an exercise, although not exhaustive, in trying to find out the ways in which the concept of Blackness functions, is performed and/or expressed in the 20th-21st century. To be clear, I do not mean to say that it is only since the 20th century that black South Africans have seen themselves as subjects. This has of course been the case long before this period but the 20th-21st century is the focus of my genealogical analysis.

The making of history, as elucidated in the previous chapter, takes place in an intricate field of production. Which history it is that eventually 'matters' depends on who is doing the speaking, who is heard and for what reasons. In the previous chapter, I argued that engagement with history should be

as event(s) and hence genealogy embarks upon the excavation of the history of such events. I set out from the Foucaultian assertion that genealogy is a "historical ontology of ourselves" i.e. "a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying" (1984: 115). More precisely, genealogy seeks to engage with history not as discipline or science [*Historie*], but as event(s) and hence it embarks upon the excavation of the *Entstehungsgeschichte* [history of the moment(s) of emergence] of such events[9]. A history of the moment(s) of emergence does not seek to uncover the point of origin or a teleological progression, but critically engages a present locale in the midst of an effective history[10], in which the effects of the past remains effective of the present in unpredictable and indeed untimely ways. The moment(s) of emergence is therefore not to be understood as a culmination, or the final term of a historical development. Instead, "they are merely the current episodes in a series of subjugations" (Foucault 1971: 99).

Given the above methodological framework, the aim of this chapter then is not to find the origins of the conceptions of black people or to connect the present day to the past. Rather, my aim is to investigate the ways that a specific group of people think about the concept black; what they take to be the central truths about black people; under what circumstances they apply their ideas about black people; and what consequences follow from this. It is to attempt to answer specific questions that I have around the concept of blackness as: How did a hegemonic narrative of black people emerge? How did it come to be that ideas of black people in South Africa is most dominantly recognized in its racial and/or political conception? Who comes up with the criteria for blackness such that all others can be deemed to not be acting 'black enough' or 'inauthentically black?' Who uses the concept of black and to what end? My intention is to problematize the present by revealing the power relations upon which the conceptions of black people depend and the contingent processes that have brought them into being.

In attempting to address these questions I will make an argument that has three constitutive parts:1) instantiate that these hegemonic historiographies have political objectives bolstered by a nationalist historiography as its proverbial vehicle; 2) elucidate that there exists dominant hegemonic narratives of black people in 20th-21st century post-colonial South Africa and lastly, 3) argue that although well

[9] Cf. Nietzsche's 1874 *Untimely Meditation,* "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" (Nietzsche 1997: 57-124) as well as Foucault's 1971 essay, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in Rabinow (Ed.) 1984: 76-100.
[10] According to Foucault's reading, Nietzsche referred to *wirkliche Historie* in opposition to traditional history. The former should be understood as an historical tracing that 'deals with events in terms of their most unique characteristics, and their most acute manifestations. As such an event is "the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power" (Foucault 1971: 88).

intentioned, these hegemonic narratives as seen in African nationalist historiographies, much like any narrative, makes less visible other conceptions of black people.

I think it would be wise before moving forward to provide a brief discussion, precisely because one can develop a whole thesis on this issue alone, which clarifies some concerns over the question of Coloured people in South Africa i.e. where I place Coloured people in the discussion of blackness. The more obvious answer is that the distinction is simply there. In South Africa, this is the way that people interact with one another owing to our history i.e. this is 'the way that it is'. Thus, anyone who does not fully agree with racial classifications in South Africa would have to obviously deal with them i.e. take them as a point of departure. But this is exactly where the problem starts with the questions of coloureds and Indians in South Africa. Hence the concern of what to do with Coloureds who identify as Black and other times as Coloured etc. I presume that this kind of concern is a referential concern. By this I mean one would want to know specifically who it is that I am referring to when I speak about black South Africans. In clarifying this concern I think it most prudent to deal with it on two levels: as a historical concern and then a political concern.

The idea of these racial classifications is to allocate individuals into racial groups (Soske 2012), and it is the case even today, as a means to dehumanize those who are taken to be hierarchically 'lesser white'. The concept of race was particularly proliferated during colonization and further into the apartheid era. During the apartheid era, there were numerous legislations that were introduced based on these ideas of race classifications. Such legislations were the Group areas act of 1950 which put an end to diverse areas and determined where one would live according to race; the Population Registrations Act 1950 which divided South Africans by three main racial groups as Whites, Natives (blacks), Indians and Coloured people for political, economic and social purposes; The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953 which legalized the racial segregation of public services, premises and other amenities which resulted in separate hospitals, schools and universities etc.; and the Bantu Education Act of 1953 which legalized the racial separation of education wherein separate universities were created for Black, Indian and Coloured people in 1959 (Johnson-Castle 2015). Though these are not all the legislations that were enacted during this time I think it would suffice to say that racism in South Africa was directed towards non-whites owing to the "distinct, stigmatized social stratum between the dominant white minority and the African majority" (Adhikari 2013: ix). The colonial state played an important role in demarcating social identities that would impose racially based legal categories and segregatory policies on the population" (ibid). However, the fact that racial categories are as a direct result of colonial imposition does not make them bereft of existential reality. The

colonial enterprise as well as apartheid used these ascriptions to place people in different sociological and material conditions. I therefore argue that coloured people and black people have different social ontologies historically.

In the book *Burdened by Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa* Mohammed Adhikari highlights that the term 'coloured' has a specialized meaning, in terms of apartheid legislation, that denotes "a person of mixed racial ancestry" (2013: ix) rather than one who is black because of their partial descent from European settlers. Furthermore, Adhikari argues that in South Africa the term denotes people who are "phenotypically diverse…descended largely from Cape slaves, the indigenous Khoisan population and a range of other people of African and Asian origin who had been assimilated into Cape colonial society by the late nineteenth century" (2006: 143). In addition to this racialized attribute which defines 'colouredness' in the popular mind, it is the marginality of the coloured identity which was a central tenant to the manner in which the identity is manifest. Adhikari (ibid) further notes that other common features which have historically marked the coloured community are their claim to an intermediate position in the racial hierarchy, and the negative connotations that are associated with racial mixing which would be otherwise taken to be pejorative. Though these were much more pronounced under white supremacy; these characteristics, held by the majority to be real, are still prevalent today (though usually in more modified, veiled and symbolic forms, in the post-colonial environment) (ibid: 148).

I am not positing that 'coloured' identity and/or people have not undergone some form of change under white rule such that it is something fixed and not fluid. On the contrary, I can concede to the fact that there can be *similarities* between coloured and black social ontologies. However, what I am suggesting is that 'colouredness' operates under fairly clearly defined parameters throughout the period under review in this disquisition and that the changes experienced during this time did not fundamentally change the ways it functioned as a social ontology. The same I hold to be true for the category black. Thus, "coloured identity functioned in very much the same way it did at the time of the inauguration of the Union in 1910 despite radical changes in the social and political landscape. This particular perspective allows clearer insight into the nature of coloured identity and more accurately reflects the social experience of the coloured community under white domination" (Adhikari 2006: 473). I will briefly outline some of the characteristics that Adhikari identifies as stable in 'colouredness' below.

The first of these is "assimilationism" (ibid: 475). It may seem paradoxical to instantiate that wanting to associate with whiteness is a key feature of 'colouredness' but it was an "impulse of acculturation" (ibid) in an attempt to seek acknowledgement of their worth. For example, in the early 20th century

with the overtly political body APO or the professional association of the teachers' league of South Africa which advanced the interests of coloured teachers[11]. Fred Hendricks noted during this time that the members of these groups were seeing themselves as distinct which promoted segregationism:

> *the language of the coloured man is the language of the European; his forebears are Europeans; his mode of living is that of the European and what he has achieved thus far has been in collaboration with the European. Only idle fancy of a warped imagination can visualise for the coloured people of South Africa a set of qualities or ideals entirely distinct from those of the European* [12]

This so-called white mindedness fed into ideas of taking whiteness to be better while actively distancing themselves from Blackness, "whether it be in the value placed on their fair skin and straight hair the prizing of white ancestors in their lineage or taking pride in their assimilation to white culture" (Adhikari 2006: 479). This informed their understanding, and the perceptions by white people, of coloureds occupying an intermediary position. I think sociologist Zimitri Erasmus explained this best when he said: "*For me growing up coloured meant not knowing that I was not only not white, but less than white: not only not black but better than black."*[13] Thus, coloured people had significant privileges relative to black people.

With intensifying segregation and the concomitant failure of APO coupled with the rise of the "better educated, urbanised sector of the Coloured community in the mid 20th century one saw the rise of the South African Coloured People's Association (SACPO) which was founded in 1953 and affiliated with the ANC led Congress Alliance. The political grouping organized, in particular, protests and demonstrations against the removal of Coloured people from the voters roll. However, organised opposition to apartheid from within the Coloured community was effectively stifled following the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 and only resurged in 1976 (Adhikari 2006: 147).

From the latter half of the 1970s onwards, starting with the popularization of Black consciousness ideology, the Coloured identity became a "contentious issue as increasing of educated and politicised people who had been classified `Coloured' under the Population Registration Act rejected the identity"

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11 Adhikari, 'Not White Enough' (pp. 72-8, 82-3, 92-4).

12 Educational Journal, April 1939.

13 Kies, Background of Segregation, p. 5; A. La Guma, A Walk in the Night and Other Stories (London, Heinemann, 1967), p. 114.

(ibid). This is perhaps where the concern for who I refer to as black becomes more contentious especially given that BCM's dealing with "indians" and "coloureds" has been (at least at some stage) to simply include them and some such intellectuals started to self-identify as black e.g. Adam Small. Although I cannot go into detail about the role of the Coloured identity in the BCM, suffice it to say that the Coloured identity was viewed, by Coloured people in the BCM movement, as an artifical categorisation imposed on the society and any recognition of the Coloured identity was viewed as a concession to aparthied thinking (ibid). It may seem like Coloureds in the BCM movement poses a problem for the question of Blackness but I think the answer lies precisely in the history of the politics of these different race classification groupings. Given that the political climate had effectively been quelled by the aparthied government, their involvement is a strategic political move not an indication of their social ontological standing. To be sure, the BCM movement was advocating for a shared oppression, with recognition of varying degrees of said oppression, not a shared social ontology.

I have now delimited the conversation to the racial classification of Black as proffered by colonial and apartheid thinking through various legislature by briefly addressing the question of Coloured people in South Africa. I will now discuss the first part of my three part argument of this chapter: instantiate that the hegemonic narratives of Blackness in South Africa are located in political objectives bolstered by a nationalist historiography as its proverbial vehicle. I will begin by discussing African identity and nationalism on the continent as movements on the continent precede those of South Africa but also form part of the intellectual influences of black authors, thinkers and intellectuals in South Africa. Thus, I seek to highlight the hegemonic processes that coalesced towards the creation of a particular kind of nationalism that sought to create a stable African identity, although not succeeding in doing so. I will briefly discuss the central aim of African nationalism which was to try to forge stable identities of Black people on the continent by "negotiate[ing] and blend[ing] together diversities of races, ethnicity, religion, gender, class, language, culture and generation" (ibid). This act of negotiation and blending in the civic and plural forms of African nationalism descended into "nativism and Afro-radicalism" (Mbembe 2002: 629).

Nationalism

The making of African nations and black identities relied quite heavily on the ideology of African nationalism. African nationalism can be characterised as oscillating between civic principles founded on the slogan of "diverse people unite to narrow, autochthonous, nativist and xenophobic forms that breed violence" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2017: 281). Malšević and Trošt (2018: 3) define nationalism as an "ideology built around ideas and practises that recognize the nation as the central building block of

group solidarity and the only legitimate unit for the sovereign territory of political rule". This being the case, nations are perceived to be culturally unique expressions of collective being, and are, as such, regarded as the natural and best units of social organization. For the proponents of nationalist ideology, the ideology stands above all other group allegiances, and not "expressing loyalty to one's nation is regularly understood to be a type of moral alienation" (Malšević 2013; Anderson 1983). It is premised on the idea of propagating cultural-distinctiveness; mysticism; and the affirmation of a collective heritage and shared past. In order to link nations to states, ethnic nationalists appeal to shared cultural tradition. Additionally, nationalism has a "meta-ideological nature" (Malšević 2018: 4) dimension. It is often perceived as non-signifier and/or a free-floating discourse. I presume that this is precisely because nationalism co-exists with other political positions i.e. right-wing nationalists, left-wing nationalists etc. Moreover, nationalism is used by democratic, authoritarian, fascist etc. leaders. This has led some thinkers to see nationalism as a non-ideology. These thinkers argue that nationalism does not offer distinct answers to questions of social justice, for instance, in ways that other ideologies address.

In response, Malšević argues that this kind of perspective places too much emphasis on the intellectual constructs that underpin specific ideological messages while giving insufficient attention to the sociological features of nationalist ideologies. To be sure, they are not 'thin' ideological discourses and one can see this from the ability of nationalist discourses to permeate everyday life- schools, mass media, family life, friendships and neighbourhoods. Indeed, nationalist discourses pervade "micro level modes of solidarity" (ibid). This infiltration of nationalist discourses functions on the level of the "normative" and the "operative" (ibid: 5). The normative level refers to the doctrines of the nation where the operative layer refers to nation centric understandings of social reality. It is the operative realm that is crucial for the continuous reproduction of nationalism as well as for the legitimacy of any particular modern political order. This is because the strength of nationalism often resides in its public invisibility: nationalism is embedded in institutions of the nation state and is constantly being reproduced in the everyday practices of modern societies. Nationalism therefore functions to bind the contemporary nation and its people together.

Nationalism also requires a particular understanding of history. As defined in the previous chapter, history is merely an event described through the individual lived experiences of a subject, communities and political organizations (Foucault 1971). This is what Hugh Raffles refers to as "intimate knowledge" of the past (Soske 2002: 58). Intimate knowledge derives from "direct personal involvement; it is embodied in individual relationships (and therefore possesses an affective dimension) and it incorporates the knower within that which is known" (ibid). Although intimate

knowledge draws from lived experiences, it is not "local in character" (Soske 2002: 63). Intimate knowledge connects and mediates different scales of phenomena so that even the most abstract of entities, like the nation, can "develop a meaning that is both relational and embodied" (ibid). It is intimate knowledge that causes people to invest in the construction and maintenance of particular historical representations. It can reproduce older conflicts and divisions as a struggle over the significance and the parameters of a historical narrative.

Though nationalisms are unique, and I therefore tread carefully in categorizing them the way I do here, they have much in common. Thus, this is an exercise in being suggestive not exhaustive so as to provide the context for the South African case.

African Nationalism on the Continent

The twentieth century intellectual tradition in Africa began with the widespread appeal of cultural nationalism which would later blossom into political and radical nationalism. In this case, leaders were using ideas and power to understand themselves as African people, imagine a future, and seek dominance in the socio-political and economic arenas. These thinkers mobilized a powerful characteristic, as race, which would lay the ground for enunciations of nationalism to follow. Even formerly enchanted thinkers of the 19th century who 'supported' colonialism changed their tune and therefore adopted anti-colonial nationalism. In Francophone countries for example thinkers adopted nationalism expressed in Négritude.

African thinkers, intellectuals, authors and philosophers constructed an antagonist: "Europeans who had denied members of Africa mobility in the church, the civil service, and the lucrative import-export trade" (Falola 2001: 57). Thus, both in reality and perception, these African thinkers felt that they were losing privileges in the church and civil service, and the trade business was becoming less and less lucrative for them. It was during this time that Europe was consolidating its political control and culture, indirect rule, by using Western education, creating and expanding a new African educated elite, enforcing the use of European languages as *lingua francas,* promoting the European mode of dressing and social habits, introducing western architecture and transport systems and presenting Europe as the place for Africans to aspire towards. African people reacted to this cultural hegemony in different ways. While some were originally accepting of it, some seeing themselves as European citizens in adopting high culture while others saw this as a strategic and necessary postulation so as to access the economy and civil service, others rebelled against it choosing rather to look inward to Africa.

African Nationalism is the proverbial laboratory within which African identities were created. In the process of this construction, thinkers, intellectuals and politicians had to contend with the historical realities on the ground and try to homogenise "ethnic, racial and religious differences" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010: 286) leading to the production of Africa today and African identities. Africa and African identities became "states of being and unbecoming" (Zeleza 2006: 19). This would make of African identities something more easily susceptible to being claimed by various people residing in and outside the continent. Ivor Chipkin (2007: 2) argued that Africans, as in different national identities, emerged "primarily in and through the process of nationalist resistance to colonialism". Hence, the statement earlier that nationalism is a making of "people-as-nation and nation-as-state" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009a). African nationalism was therefore an effort to transform imperial subjects into nationals of specific states. To be sure, those that saw themselves as being members of these national identities were not always united in their ideas, "panaceas for change", and attitudes towards Europeans. Responses varied from radical to conservative with themes of "the progress for Africa, the emergence of new identities, and the relevance of Africa's past to the present" (Falola 2001: 59). These ideas embodied contradictions and tensions of different types in constructing dichotomies such as black and white; Africa and West; educated and illiterate; city folks and villagers; Christians and Muslims; tradition and change; past and present (ibid). Amina Mama argues that "it was during the nationalist period that African redefinitions of what Nkrumah refers to as "the African Personality" and what it means to be black were thrust into the international arena to fuel the existential and philosophical crises that the demise of colonialism provoked in the Western world" (1995: 34). Thus, African nationalism did not only function in the political sphere but brought together issues of theory and politics in the form of challenging dominant white supremacist ideas of subjectivity, culture and identity that fuelled colonialism. Furthermore, Mama argues that African Nationalism became a way of "expressing the concern with celebrating the collective African past as articulating a collective will and vision for the future. Within it, personality was both a philosophical and political concept" (1995: 34-35).

The South African Case

African Nationalism in South Africa, much like on the rest of the continent, was given impetus by the anti-colonial movements through-out the African continent. Central to the African nationalist project in South Africa, much like the rest of African thinkers on the continent, was to posit a different history, subjectivity, culture and identity to that of the colonial enterprise.

Often there is a tendency in the conversation on resistance by black people in South Africa to colonial and apartheid rule, to begin the conversation at the African National Congress (ANC) or their affiliated thinkers. This is perhaps owing to the problem that Ndebele outlines in *Rediscovery of the Ordinary* of the habit, in discussing black South African social formation, to call upon the "highly demonstrative…spectacular…brazen" (2006: 31-32) aspects of our history. This tendency reinforces the conception that the ANC is the hero of black liberation in South Africa (Dlamini 2006: ii). However, there were many forms of resistance pre-dating the ANC, which stretched from the battle led by Autshumayo in 1658 to the Battle of Isandlwana in 1879, Umkhosi Wezintaba, Abasetsheni, The Nongolozas, the Ninevites to the Bambatha rebellions etc. To be sure, black South Africa history does not begin with the ANC nor does resistance to white rule begin with these Victorian leaders (Mangcu 2016). Furthermore, nationalism could be identified in its early stages in the Eastern Cape around about 1836 led by Jan Tshatshu, and in 1880 with the emergence of Imbumba Yama Afrika which advocated African unity (as opposed to religious denominational diversity) (Ngculu 2005). As SN Mvambo declared in 1883

> "for the black man makes the fatal mistake of thinking that if he is Anglican he has nothing to do with anything suggested by the Wesleyan, and the Wesleyan also thinks so…Imbumba must make sure that all these three are represented… for we must be united on political matters. In fighting for national rights, we must fight together." (quoted in Meli 1988, South Africa Belongs To Us)

This was important for me to note lest I also feed into this problematic. But, as I stated earlier in this chapter, the dominant hegemonic narratives are a good entry point for this discussion on nationalist historiographies.

With the imposition of apartheid rule, African nationalist sentiments grew stronger culminating in political/ideological movements/organizations. However, African nationalism in South Africa, much like the discussion on African nationalism on the continent, was never a monolithic body of thought that could have produced a stable post-apartheid national identity. To be sure, I place black South African nationalists into the following categories: proponents of non-racial liberal democracy that dominated the ANC; advocates of black republicanism and the ideology of 'Africa for Africans' that formed the PAC which can be understood as Africanism; Black Consciousness Movement ideologists; Afro-Marxists that dominated the South African Communist Party; ethno-culturalists that were represented by the IFP and many others who co-existed uneasily within the main nationalist movements (Soske 2015: 3).

From these moments in African nationalism, one can ascertain ideas of blackness and conceptions of black people. I argue that they are hegemonic in nature. Furthermore, these conceptions of black people are embedded in political meanings. The meanings are represented here in political/ideological movements/organizations that formed the anti-apartheid and even the prior anti-settlements/ anti-colonial protests. Throughout this time one can see the use of different terms such as 'African' and specifically 'Black African' in the African Nationalism debates which I locate primarily within the ANC and the PAC, and the IFP. However, one saw a shift in 1968 onwwards with the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement which sought for the redefinition of the word Black, and this was manifest in different ways ideologically and organisationally in the UDF/AZAPO. The end of the struggle ruptures all of this in a confusion of rainbowism and the search for new identities. In what follows, I will discuss the conceptions of black people in the African Nationalism debate through the conversation evident in three movements as the African Nationalist Congress; The Pan-Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Movement.

The African Nationalism Debates

The African National Congress

Before the Union of South Africa came into being in 1910, small groups of politically conscious black people had been established in all four of the provinces at the time. Africans who had obtained some property and specific levels of education were eligible to vote and could stand for office in the Cape Colony (Lodge 1945: 1). These educated black people formed part of an elite group of missionary educated black thinkers, intellectuals, authors etc. which were committed to the cause of non-racialism owing to their Christian background, mid-Victorian Liberalism and ideas they had drawn from the Negro struggle in America. However, racial pride and the insistence on African agency were central parts of the ANC's political tradition from its inception (Anciano 2014: 38-39).

Soske argues that in trying to determine what was truly meant by non-racialism during this time, one would have to first accept the "semantic dependency" (2015: 2) that the term draws from 'race'. Not only does race have its own complex issues, it is an unstable concept, a discourse that "both naturalizes and organizes inequality" (ibid) and it resists systematic definition (and refutation). But, what we can agree on is that 'race' is a terrain of domination and contestation of identities and a space where cultural practises are produced. All the same, the aspiration for non-racialism is not a recent one and has "arose from ideological commitments and social milieus; it was embodied in organisational structures and

diffuse mentalities; it animated collective political projects and remained deeply personal" (ibid: 3). At various moments individuals expressed their desire for a world without racial oppression through Marxism, feminism, Christianity, liberalism and of course African Nationalism. The ANC (then it was the SAANC) embraced this hope in its founding conference in 1912. But the bifurcation of the term non-racial lies precisely in the confusion as to whether this meant the elimination of racial inequality towards a fundamentally African society where black people, as the majority could shape the national identity or was it the case that they were advocating for the removal of minority and majority distinctions altogether? Moreover, what was their conceptualization of Blackness thereof?

It needs to be said that the primary impetus for adopting a non-racialism by the ANC came from outside the country. To be sure, at the end of the 1950s the political and intellectual struggles in South Africa were interwoven with broader discussions in Southern, Central and East Africa regarding African Nationalism amongst other issues. It was Julius Nyerere and Tom Mboya who advanced the ideas of African democracy and non-racialism. Soske argues that the collapse of the "Kenya's Lyttelton constitution, the split of the Africanist current from the ANC, and the All African Peoples' Conference in Accra – all events that occurred in 1957 to 1958 – forced the ANC to clarify its position on group rights and articulate its philosophy in broader, Pan-African terms" (ibid: 4). Luthuli and other ANC leaders adopted the phrase 'non-racial democracy' in response to these changes. Luthuli's ideas was to adopt a "multiracial society in a non-racial democracy" (ibid). This was a pragmatic recognition of the racialized identities in South Africa. It was not a multi-racialism based on biological conceptions of race but as an essence. It would be a conception that recognizes not only people's racial experiences but also their contestation and reformulation of imposed racial essences to create new identities.

Decolonisation across the continent further propelled this vocabulary. To be sure, African "new nations" defied the idea of a unitary state and/or a unitary national subject that propagated Western ideals of civilization but offering difference of the African people and placing emphasis on African interests. Many thinkers, politicians and activists during this time wanted direct African representation. Governments would not be made up of 'partnerships' as it were but rather *real* collective representation as an alternative to white domination so that no one group had power over the other.

In the aftermath of the 1936 Hertzog Bills[14] the idea of multi-racialism proliferated within the ANC as a result, in part, of the ideas advanced by Hoernlé in *South African Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit*

[14] When the Pact Government under J. B. M. Hertzog came to power in 1924 it set about dealing with the 'native problem'. The solution for this 'problem' was seen as segregation. Herzog introduced Bills that sought to remove the Cape and Natal black population from the common voters' roll and

(1939) wherein he argued that the government's nativist policies at the time constituted an incoherent mixture of "assimilationist and separatist elements" (ibid: 5). To be sure, his assertions were that the domination of European rule, which resulted in a racial caste system, while appealing to classical liberalism i.e. "a political community based on shared interests and expressed in a common loyalty to a national identity" (ibid) was inconsistent. The question that arose was how liberal institutions were to thrive in such circumstances? According to Soske this question brought the problematic of a multi-racial society in the 20th century. The concept brought to the fore the problematic of how four racial groups- White, African, Indian and Coloured- are to interact with one another in South Africa. Where theories preceding Hoernlé had suggested a homogenous nation, he suggested a heterogeneous nation that would understand 'race' in terms of culture, biological, economic, social and legal dimensions much like his contemporaries today. However, in understanding that "biological and social assimilationism and parallelism" (Soske 2015: 6), Hoernlé endorsed separation as a desperate recourse that white people would accept.

As Paul Rich observes, it was at this moment when there was a change from individual politics in South Africa to a discourse of group identities (Rich as discussed in Soske 2015: 7) owing to the separationist stance from Hoernlé. This change is seen through a review of Hoernle's Phelps Stokes lectures in the *Race Relations* Journal of 1940 by Prof Z.K Matthews. Prof Matthews, a founder of the ANC and a black academic/intellectual, argued for the racial group of African's interests to take primacy. He argued that this is because

> The Native people do not object to separate schools as such, but to the fact that the needs of the schools receive scant attention, especially from the devotees of the segregation faith. The same applies to other separate institutions for non-White groups. At the same time, they have learnt that the mere being together with White people in the same institutions is no guarantee that even-handed justice will be meted out to them. (1940: 37)

established a national system of political representation for black people, entailing a separate form of parliamentary franchise. He also launched Bills to release more land for black people and to gradually extend voting rights to the Coloured people in the Transvaal, Natal and the Orange Free State.

In the end Matthews figured that the net result here was no difference for the African whether one adopts segregation or one removes. This is precisely the case because Africans would be left suffering from "injustice or White Domination" (ibid). Matthews therefore posited that Hoernlé's ideas deserved serious attention if one is to advance African interests. To be sure, Matthews was perhaps trying to find a way to build a "universal fellowship within a racially divided country" (ibid). This was further echoed by some Christian writers in 1949, at a three day conference Christian Council of South Africa entitled 'The Christian Multi Racial Society'. In particular, these sentiments of group identities towards multi-racialism were echoed by Albert Luthuli, future president of the ANC, who was a speaker at this sitting.

After the second world war historian Leonard Thompson, in a paper present to the South African Institute of Race Relations in 1949, revised the ideas of Hoernlé posing a different set of questions in light of the multi-racial situation in South Africa: "the adjudication of political claims made by 'ethno-cultural groups' at a similar stage of development and the reconciliation of groups of uneven capacity (the 'civilised' and 'uncivilised') in the political process" (Thompson 1949: 5). In response, Thompson suggested Hoernlé's parallelism which would see the power of Africans increasing with their level of civilization. This would ensure that white supremacy is not undermined because Thompson argued that this would keep intact the "rule of Europeans and the spread of Western Culture" (ibid: 9). However, Thompson rejected the primacy of race in the conversation which Hoernlé drew heterogeneity from and rather opted for the "universalization of bourgeois civil society" (Soske 2015: 7). Matthews and Luthuli thus posited that this kind of a view mean that Africans could meaningfully contribute to civilization by "assisting in its expansion" (ibid: 8). In this way, education became a very important aspect of the civilizing project as African political activity grew stronger.

Matthews argued that "[n]ot only do [South Africa's] racial groups differ in number and in racial stocks, but they differ in cultural background, in the languages they speak, and in the level of their cultural development in terms of modern Western Civilization" (1953: 514). The central issue would be to try find ways to interweave these groups towards a nation with common interests and values. But again, Matthews and Luthuli, especially given the ideas they drew from the negroe movements in America, understood the importance of uplifting black people and advocated for their centrality. Thus, the term multi-racial for Matthews and Luthuli can be construed as advocating for the interests of black people first but also including several other racial groups in the question of freedom.

It must be noted, however, that the terminology used by the ANC changed by the time of the Defiance campaigns in 1952. In the early stages the ANC generally used the rhetoric of "co-operation" (Soske 2015: 13) in describing the relationship between the four racial groups: African, Indian, Coloured and later White. However, by and large this co-operation was described in terms of race relations: "the harmonious relationships between South Africa's separate groups" (Luthuli 2012: 47). Luthuli developed a philosophy of African nationalism during this time leading up to the campaign for the Freedom Charter. He described the philosophical basis of African Nationalism for the ANC as "broad or inclusive" (1954: 86). The idea was to allow for the preservation of separate identities but also their common development in the quest for a shared future (Soske 2016: 14). Luthuli envisioned an African nation-building project co-existing with and enabling a broader patriotism which in turn would add to a Pan-African future i.e. "Zulu within African, African within South African, and South African within Pan-African" (ibid). This unifying form would no longer be strictly race but shared ideals developed through struggle and sacrifice.

The Freedom Charter embodied this idea of the collective will of the four-group alliance and in turn these leaders took it that this was the will of the people. The Charter was to provide South Africans with a common ethos that is absent from "South Africa's caste society]" (New age 1955) which would allow for "people from all walks of life…[to] meet as equals, irrespective of race, colour, and creed to formulate a freedom charter for all people in the country" (Luthuli as quoted in Mandela 1965: 55). Thus, the ANC was propagating a kind of civic nationalism though it left certain questions unanswered: What would be the status of racial groups in South Africa within a new state? Would a single ethno-cultural identity develop from these ideas given South Africa's multi-racial nature? The African National Congress's nationalist politics has appealed to many South Africans and the African diaspora at large because of its remarkable mobilization in the fifties and perhaps most of all because of its liberal non-racial ideology (Walshe 1973). The ideology largely appealed to whites, as in more whites approved of it, and it seemed to be all-inclusive which would sustain white rule. In times of global fascination- in which social movements proclaim their purity on account of their consonance between their practise and the social regeneration they herald- one can see why this narrative still holds so much discursive power, albeit the reality of its shortfalls and/or the lack of a sturdy thread since its inception. The ANC in the 1960s repeatedly held a non-racialist stance amid continuous disagreement over where non-racialism is placed within blackness given the country's diversity and the parties African nationalist stance (Barchiesi 2001: 124).

It seems the Freedom Charter only provided contradictory positions which was noted by political parties at the time such as the PAC (Pan African Congress) and the NEUM (Non-European United Movement). These groups argued that the ANC "downplayed the demand for African majority rule and used language that left open the possibility of a power sharing agreement" (Soske 2015: 16). In particular, one can see the rejection of the terms multi-racial and non-racial within the NEUM publications in the 1950s and later the PAC. I will discuss the position of the PAC further on in this chapter.

Thinkers of NEUM posited that the very tenant of democracy is the rejection of the very concept of 'race' (The Torch 1956). To be sure, the NEUM had not developed a clear philosophy of non-racialism at this point (Adhikari 2005: 405). Rather, they adopted a more non-European solidarity which is embodied in the assertions of Isaac B. Tabata. Tabata argued that African political identity must be defended and the use of African languages was an essential form of defence against white hegemony (1948:6). Arguably, Tabata understood that the position of the ANC was a strategic manoeuvre so as to avert "white fears" of black domination (Everatt 2009) as their stance could be interpreted in two ways: Africans must participate as equal partners or that equal partnership is a stepping stone towards African Majority rule (Soske 2015: 17). But Tabata found it to be a poor strategic move and this is seen in a letter he wrote to a young Nelson Mandela wherein he stated that,

> Principles are the backbone of any Movement. To put it another way: any organisation which is not founded on the rock of principles is a prey to every wind that blows. It was the failure to recognise this important fact that was primarily responsible for the fall of so many of our organisations in the past. We have had large organisations which were at first hailed with enthusiasm. But they have vanished away, leaving no trace behind.

Tabata tended to agree that the basic ingredients of African Nationalism in South Africa during the 1950s were white domination and African assertion. African assertion took on the form of Black scholars, political thinkers and missionaries devising an identity premised on collective and common heritage which included long years of defensive measures against White encroachment, materially, intellectually and spiritually. Though in the end the idea was to 'let go' of these racial categories. But Tabata, and thinkers of the NEUM, found that multi-racialism and non-racialism was simply not a principled position and could not lead to unity of the African people. In fact, Tabata tended to agree more with the politics of the Youth League than that of African National Congress. To be sure, he

went so far as to say he found Mandela's allegiances to the Congress to be strange and implored him to advance Youth League politics to ensure the primacy of African people.

The African National Congress Youth League

The Youth League was fostered in direct response to the inadequacy that the contemporaries of Luthuli in the ANC identified. In particular, they found the ANC at the time to be liberal in their approach to white domination. These young black intellectuals, thinkers and activists found that Luthuli and his predecessors to be adopting wholesale the "foreign ideologies" (Mda 2018) which are unrelated to their context at the time. To be sure, they did not differ fundamentally with the adoption of European ideas. Rather, the problematic lay in the adoption of methods and tactics which they felt would not advance the struggle of African people. They tended to agree with Luthuli in that the land belonged to the African people, black people, but found that Luthuli and his predecessors failed to fully articulate African Nationalism. Thus, they found their predecessors to be using "pseudo-African Nationalism" so as to "mask or buttress [their] reactionism" (ibid.). In turn, they sought to create a definitive African identity in line with the politics of space in defining the African and foster African unity in South Africa. To be sure, they sought to advance 'new ideas' to build the eventual democratic society that would cognisant of the dehumanization and underdevelopment of African people. Arguably, there is perhaps no difference in substance between the mother body (ANC) and the Youth League (Ngukaitobi 2009: 258) but a difference in strategy. I would perhaps argue that although both of these bodies aimed for a non-racial future, the Youth League was much more radical in their confrontation with white rule and had a much more clearly articulated idea of African Nationalism and the black nation.

The Congress of Youth manifesto, the youth wing of the ANC at the time, stated that the South African problem is the "contact of the White Race with the Black which has resulted in the emergence of a set of conflicting living conditions and outlooks on life which seriously hamper South Africa's progress and more importantly the progress of Black people" (Lembede 1996: 12-13). They understood the White man as possessing superior military strength and at the time possessed superior organising skills. This allowed the white man to gain ownership of land and invested themselves with authority such that South Africa would become the white man's country. For these young black "class of 44" (Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Jordan Ngubane, Ellen Kuzwayo, Albertina Sisulu, AP Mda, Dan Tloome and David Bopape) they felt as though the "old guard" was not equipped to deal with the problem aforementioned (Lembede 1996: 11, 89-91) as their stance was too liberal. To be sure, AP Mda, in his selected writings *Africa's Cause Must Triumph (2018),* argued that congress suffered from defects both in form and matter precisely because they utilized imperialist forms of organization. Thus,

for as long as the ANC remained the same they could not "(i) create an effective machinery for waging a national liberatory struggle (ii) have a central creed of African Nationalism which could be a rallying point for the teeming millions of Africans, and be a cementing in consolidating the African Nation in the course of the liberatory struggle" (Mda 2018). In the end, they found the leaders they were critiquing at the time to be falling prey to the problems of 1912 in that they "failed to grasp the material forces which had given birth to the situation, and they therefore not only failed to give the organization clear content and substance, but they totally failed to grasp the significance of African Nationalism in the struggle, not only against segregation, but against white domination" (ibid).

These young black intellectuals understood the African as regarding civilisation as the common heritage of all Mankind and claims as full a right to make his contribution to its advancement and to live free as any White South African. Furthermore, the African can claim right to all sources and agencies to enjoy rights and fulfil duties which will place him on a footing of equality with every other South African racial group. These thinkers take it that the African is inherently and almost naturally communal in nature, this is why they are able to seek and attain equality. It is also because of the communal nature of the African that they sought to take on the social responsibility of the struggle for freedom as it were. Finally, the posited that the African National Congress was the symbol and embodiment of the African's will to maintain a united front against all forms of oppression to advance the national cause to establish an African Nation. This they understood to be attainable through African Nationalism (Lembede 1996: 127).

African nationalism was adopted in an attempt to foster the spirit of nation and racial pride. To be sure, Mda argued that the adoption of African Nationalism is echoing a pre-historic position which states that "Africa, was, has been and continues to be black and Africa is a black man's continent" (ibid). In turn they understood Europeans as those who now occupy large tracts of Africa and dispossessed land from Africans by force of arms, and began to exploit the labour power of the Africans as well as the natural resources of Africa for their own benefit (ibid). African Nationalism for Mda and thinkers of the Youth League took it that African Nationalism is the "militant outlook of a dispossessed people; a people oppressed in their own country, on the grounds of their being the rightful owners of the land, on the grounds of their belonging to a group with a particular colour. In short, a group that is nationally oppressed" (ibid).

Let us briefly look into what they understood to be African i.e. blackness. They understood Africa to be the mother of all continents from which America and Australia, according to their geological and geographical evidence, broke away from. This is because they understood that non-whites were able

to live in all other climates, temperatures and frigid zones, and were therefore physically superior to the other races which could only live in particular temperature zones. Moreover, Africa's geographical position was taken to be able to produce men and women of balanced minds which drew from the more scientific side of the West and the more spiritual side of the East. In bolstering the efficacy of African nationalism Lembede always alluded to the "sterling qualities of [South Africa's] national heroes" (1996: 128). He mentions thinkers such as "Hintsa and Ntsikana who had tried to fight for years, fighting against superior weapons, to hurl White men into the sea. He goes on to highlight that King Shaka Zulu had tried, by means of the sword, in much the same way as Napoleon, to unite the Black races of Southern Africa. Further he cites King Moshoeshoe of the Sotho people whom Lembede describes as a strategist, who attempted by means of kindness, to unite the BaSotho tribes into one strong nation" (ibid). In citing these 'great' leaders they aim to advocate for the rejection of what they understand to be western ideologies that do not fit into their culture. Mda further argued that Africans, black people, are the "greatest single group and are the key to the movement of democracy" (Mda 2018). He argued that this is the case not only because there are "teeming black millions on the continent" but the sheer strength of their numerical force could alter the struggle in South Africa. Furthermore, Mda argued that the differences in tribes and languages in South Africa matter very little given that we all have "one common and cultural background" (2018). In the end these thinkers hoped that black people would come to look more and more towards their common national interests than their sectional and tribal interests. Thus, despite the multi-racial character of South Africa, Mda argued that black people suffered a particular kind of oppression on account of their colour. In the end, Africans should adopt a "powerful national freedom movement led by the Africans themselves which is imbued with an African Nationalistic spirit; which should act as its cementing and driving force" (ibid). One can deduce that it is from the postulations of blackness that these thinkers provide an understanding of African Nationalism. It must be noted that these thinkers were of the view that they should concern themselves only with the question of black people first and foremost. This being the case, all other racial groups, Coloureds, Indians and Non-Europeans, should concern with their own masses.

For these thinkers of the ANCYL there are two brands of African Nationalism: the first of these is what they took to be an "extremist and ultra-revolutionary" (Mda 2018) position which advocated for the removal of all Europeans from South Africa in particular and Africa in general. Mda posits that this position advanced the idea that "Europeans must quit Africa, and that all white men are to be thrown into the sea" (ibid). Mda argued that the Youth league should take a more moderate kind of African nationalism.

In an article written to Ilanga lase Natal (24th February 1945), Lembede outlined the basic principles of moderate African nationalism. He posited that its philosophical basis is taken from "a materialistic conception of History that conceives of Man as essentially an economic animal-Communism- and the biological interpretation that conceives of him as a beast of Prey-Nazism- are false". For Lembede, man is body, mind and spirit with needs, desires and aspiration in all three elements of his nature. Furthermore, he understood history to be a record of humanity's striving for complete self-realisation. Therefore, he quotes Paul Kruger who stated that "Wie zich een toekomst scheppen wil, mag het verleden niet uit het oog verliezen" ("Whoever wishes to shape the future should not forget the past". Lembede understood these to be words of deep human wisdom because "we, as Africans, have still to erect monuments to commemorate the glorious achievements of our great heroes of the past e.g. Shaka, Moshoeshoe, Hinsta, Sikhukhuni, Khama, Sobhuza, Mozilikazi etc" (ibid: 130). As stated earlier, they took these leaders to be instances of "lives of great men" (ibid). Thus, Lembede was celebrating those he took to be great leaders, a celebration of the history of Black people, as a means of liberation. Thus, moderate African Nationalism was completely opposed to white domination and to foreign leadership of Africans; but they took into account the concrete situation, and recognized the racial differences that existed in South Africa at the time. Therefore, the 'goal' of moderate African Nationalism would be to ensure the National freedom of African people towards the inauguration of a "people's free society where racial persecution and oppression will be abolished" (Mda 2018). In the end the class of 44 wanted an African nationalism that would build a strong and confident black nation in South Africa.

Critique of ANC and ANCYL

It seems to me that these thinkers, intellectuals and politicians wanted to foster a nation towards unity in the hopes of the eventual removal of racial categories and oppression in South Africa albeit in varying ways. They seemed to be very aware of the historical script that they were being written into as black subjects at differing points in the South African story they wished to advance (Lalu 2011). But the question still remains as to whether there was or has ever been black unity in South Africa as these dominant narratives, at various points of the ANC story, leads one to believe? Did African Nationalism succeed in creating a nation? Did this nation ensure black unity?

These nationalist discourse focused on a single organization, however broadly based it may be, such that it distorts the spectrum of black South African responses to colonial and apartheid rule. I am under no illusion that this was a strategic move in order to ensure the freedom of a disenfranchised people. But as I stated in chapter 1, invoking Foucault, all narrative no matter how well intentioned must be interrogated and I do not think the African nationalism stances of the ANC escape this kind of scrutiny.

The kind of historiography these thinkers adopted remained in this dichotomous paradigm that only lets us into a sole expression of black people as the response to or reaction to whiteness despite the attempts of the ANCYL to curtail reactionism. Though this may be symptomatic of the power relations between black and white people in the past, the preservation of this seamless narrative even today warrants suspicion. We are given a picture of black south Africans as one mass that does not speak to social stratifications as rural and urban blacks; gender disparities etc. These thinkers of the ANC, in speaking, are heard because of their position. There is taken to be legitimate knowledge to the detriment of other enunciations of Blackness. Mangcu (2016) argues that their ability to speak, be heard and have their version of African history and the identity of black people proliferate is precisely because of their Victorian liberal roots which allowed for their authoritarian and elitist postulations.

Mangcu highlights that these thinkers have always seen themselves as a class apart from all others even though they saw themselves to be championing and speaking on behalf of black people i.e. the masses. To be sure, he argues that the prerogative to "speak for the people translated into a culture of entitlement" (2016: 786) and lack of "internal dissent" at various moments (ibid: 787). Suttner argued that the power dynamics in the ANC are as a result of the underground nature of the movement and notes that the "qualities and requirements which have been suggested as characteristic of underground work ran counter to the normal practices of open, democratic political activity – but of course they were dictated by unusual circumstances" (2008: 88). Thus, there was no room or time for consultative processes and it required a "high degree of centralized authority, stability, continuity, and homogeneity of values" (ibid). I am not sure one can completely agree with these sentiments. The ANC began as a result of elite disenfranchisement, the concern was not for the politics of space of all black people but of a few black people. The ANC was formed in response to the Union of South Africa, which formalized the exclusion of elite black people as mentioned earlier in this section. The same logic holds for the Youth League. Whether these thinkers were more moderate African Nationalists or of a more liberal variety they "viewed themselves as above ordinary masses of people" (Mangcu 2016: 788). This arguable changed in the 1950s following the Defiance Campaigns but there was already a culture instilled in these thinkers, intellectuals and activists that they were a different kind of black.

Historian Peter Limb cautions against this line of argumentation as he posits that it is a kind of class reductionism (2011). To be sure, Limb argues that racial oppression was something that spanned across all black people. Further, this line of argumentation lends itself to ignoring the eventual "horizontal growth" of the ANC (Limb 2011: 11). Lastly, Limb argues that these leaders themselves were working class black people and had no privilege as the argument would suggest. I am not sure that Limb averts

the very argument he purports to be problematic. In fact, he reduces the class of these leaders himself. Moreover, I think Mangcu provides us with a characterization of these thinkers that at the least, if one does not want to take it seriously, must at least consider in trying to understand how these black leaders' voices came to eclipse all others if black people indeed as Limb argues all experienced racial oppression?

By the second half of the twentieth century, Black leadership had shifted to "overseas-trained barristers and medical doctors" (Mangcu 2016: 792). They sought no more than to find themselves, as civilized men, in the political system at the time. This is further evinced by the critiques of Mda of the Congress. To be sure, one of the founding leaders of the ANC went so far as to distinguish themselves from other Black people, those he referred to as Natives,

> Unless there is a radical change soon [regarding the grievances of the Africans] herein lies fertile ground for hot-headed agitators among us natives, who might prove to be a bigger menace to this country than is generally realized. Let us all labour to forestall them: that is my purpose in life, even if I have to labour single- handed (Cited in Gerhart 1979: 48)

Mangcu argues that these thinkers were "pandering to white interests" because of their experience of direct disenfranchisement but also their fear that the "hoi polloi" may spoil their attempts at attaining access to that which was taken from them (2016: 794). It is perhaps here where the problematic stems from in that these thinkers occupied two positions as "functionaries of the colonial government and as progressive nationalist liberators" (ibid). Even as radical as Mda and Lembede were at the time, they also held on to what Mangcu describes as "Victorian ideals",

> The question, therefore, is not whether the Bantu should develop a new civilization. The question is whether or not the Bantu are capable of assimilating western civilization upon the background of their historic past. The question is one of capacity rather than one of rate. I argue that the Bantu, in partnership with other people of the earth supposed to be primitive, have an infinite capacity for assimilating 'any' civilization at 'any' rate provided they are given the right environment. (Cited in Gerhart 1979: 66)

A further problematic that perhaps led to the kind of meaning, performance and understanding of black people in the ANC was the kind of leadership structure that the ANC had at the time which was overwhelmingly male. To be sure, women were "auxiliary members" of the ANC and were denied direct membership to the movement at the time (Limb 2011: 119). Limb goes so far as to say that

women were seen as "tea and cake ladies" when it came to political spaces wherein they were expected to organize catering and venues and not participate in the intellectual activities of the day (ibid). This was of course not limited to just the black community as it was wide spread throughout South African politics e.g. white women were only granted the right to vote in 1930 and only as a political manoeuvre to neutralize the Coloured vote in the Cape (ibid: 121). It was in this environment that the likes of Charlotte Maxeke emerged as leading forces. I will discuss the place of Black women further in chapter 3 wherein I will foreground the silenced voices in South African history as a result of hegemonic narratives of blackness. The point is still significant to make here though because it begs the question of whose political agency was being championed in the name of African interests if women were relegated to the position of 'tea and cake ladies'? To whom then does the struggle for freedom refer to? Whose blackness is being described by these black intellectuals, thinkers, writers and activists? To be sure, as Premesh Lalu posits (2011: 272), in South Africa critical orientation towards the nationalism was thwarted by the pre-occupation with a definition of 'the people' which underestimated how "nationalist discourse punctuated [other projects], often in selective ways, that ultimately contributed to the subjection of agency".

In addition, the manner in which the history is told is such that the internal heterogeneity of the political understandings of black people are mired in homogeneity. It keeps in place this notion that blackness and black people's experiences are strictly tied to struggle and pain i.e. it is a signifier for absence due to the disenfranchisement of black people from the political landscape in various ways. Be this as it may, are we to assume that this is all there is to blackness and/or black subjects? It leaves one wondering if the joy and optimism expressed and performed by black subjects is accidental or somehow a negation of the very real political struggles that black people have faced and continue to face in South Africa. It is a seamless and continuous history that assisted the ANC in achieving their political objectives at the time and aids them in doing so quite well even today.

The political objectives of the ANC have left us with only the political to speak of here in relation to blackness and black people. African nationalism created an exclusively political black subject- "the colonized African as a human actor of production and civil society" (Barchiesi 2001: 131)- suitable to conflict and recognition in relation solely to whiteness. As a consequence, "[South] African politics excises a more antagonistic, intractable, and unpredictable blackness" (ibid). This allowed them to build an imagined African nation with productive attributes, work discipline and behavioural norms. Indeed, there is a mode of power that is works through the individual by keeping the conversation of blackness within the realm of the political. This form of power applies itself to the everyday life of the individual, hence the building of behavioural norms for instance, which "characterizes the individual,

attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on them which they must recognize and which others must recognize on them" (Foucault 1982: 781). This is a form of power which subjects one to someone else by control and dependence; and leaves the individual tied to his own identity by a self-knowledge. As Foucault argues, this process of being made a subject happens precisely where there is struggle, in this case a struggle against subjection and exploitation.

This is all the more perverse in the case where, as aforementioned, these black leaders have had some form of state power in the early 20th century and then 'full' state power in 1994. I say that it is perverse because there seems to be an ambivalence towards state functions. Though people have voiced disdain towards the ANC because of the protracted crisis within the liberation movement turned political party, the majority of people still remain loyal to the ideas espoused by it. To be sure, through state function the narrative of the ANC of blackness modifies others, but it does so on their actions. Post-apartheid nationalism allegorizes the anti-apartheid struggle as the genealogy of the present, and therefore subtly incorporates earlier versions of liberation history into the state's foundational myth. This presentism—the compulsion to invent an historical foundation for the immediate exigencies of government—requires that it continuously erase an archive of partially realized desires, vanquished aspirations, losses, and personal as well as political defeats (Soske 2012: 68) as well as the social life of black people. This has been met with resistance by some thinkers which has resulted in an explosion of intimate knowledge into the public sphere. In effect, the post-apartheid state's symbolic capacity—its hegemonic claim to embody a diverse and contradictory range of historic aspirations—has begun to erode, and a significant number of individuals, communities, and political factions have responded to this process by injecting their experiences into the debate over the country's future. The most visible example of this phenomenon is the profusion of memoirs, autobiographies, local histories, and family narratives that have become the dominant mode of post-apartheid historical production. Important books by authors such as Koleka Putuma, Njabulo Ndebele and Jacob Dlamini, have provoked widespread discussions of issues like family secrets in anti-apartheid struggle, nostalgia for the community and everyday experiences of the black township during apartheid, and betrayal in the struggle underground (Soske 2012).

The Pan-Africanist Congress

As mentioned earlier, wherein I briefly highlighted some key critiques of the ANC's multi-racial stance, the NEUM and what was to be the PAC differed quite strongly with the ANC description of its views of multi-racialism. To be sure, Sobukwe argued that the ANC leaders never fully embraced this ideal which gave way to the Congress being premised on race. Before, spanning all the way to the

work of Tiya Soga, the ANC and its leaders had advocated for an Africa for Africans. The turn to non-racialism thus led to the Africanists split from the ANC during 1958-1959. The ANC leaders saw these thinkers as "careerists and black fascists" (Soske 2016: 25). Ultimately, Sobukwe simply could not conceive of how the ANC could posit that the future of South Africa lay in democracy while advocating for racial groupings. To be sure, Sobukwe argued that "...[fu]rther, multi-racialism [of the ANC] is in fact a pandering to European bigotry and arrogance. It is a method of safeguarding white interests, implying as it does, proportional representation irrespective of population figures. In that sense, it is a complete negation of democracy" (Sobukwe as quoted in SAHO 2011).

The All-African People's Conference of 1958[15] lent "tremendous authority" (Soske 2016: 23) to Sobukwe on this matter as he held the position that multi-racialism would not lead to a Pan-African future. This is precisely because the use of race, for Sobukwe, is predicated on the same ideas as that of apartheid philosophy. Sobukwe rejected the notion of race on scientific and ethical grounds: "there is only one race to which we all belong, and that is the human race" (Sobukwe as quoted in Soske 2016: 25). Sobukwe found multi-racialism and non-racialism to be kinds of "truism grounded in experience" (ibid) that confused the experiences of other African people on the continent. This is precisely because Sobukwe felt that racial groups in Africa, and in South Africa in particular, could simply not be equal (ibid) and thus advocated for the rights of individuals not groups.

Sobukwe stated that the African is "everybody who owes his loyalty only to Africa and accepts the democratic rule of an African majority" (Sobukwe as quoted in Soske 2016: 25). These sentiments differ from the Freedom Charters assertions that South Africa belongs to all who live in it. To be sure, the PAC advocated for an Africa for Africans. When the PAC was launched in 1959, the movement stated that its goal is to "unite and rally the African people into one national front on the basis of African nationalism and overthrow white, racist, settler colonial domination in order to establish and maintain the right of self-determination of African people for a unitary, non-racial democracy" (As found in Kondlo 2009: 64). Ultimately, the PAC argued that they,

[15] The A. A. P Conference met to "chart a way forward on how to achieve continental freedom. The agenda of the conference entailed anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-racialism, African Unity and non-alignment. Other issues discussed at the conference included colonial boundaries, the role of the traditional and religious leaders and regional groupings. The Conference emerged with some few resolutions. The Conference undertook to use no violence in all endeavours to achieve independence in African continent. This commitment was put into practice when the conference refused to support the Algerian armed struggle to achieve its independence from France" (SAHO 2011).

> " [A]im, politically, [for] government of the Africans by the Africans, for the Africans, with everybody who owes his only loyalty to Afrika and who is prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority being regarded as African … Socially we aim at the full development of the human personality and a ruthless uprooting and outlawing of all forms or manifestations of the racial myth" (Sobukwe, 1959/2014: 480).

In contrast to the ANC, Sobukwe and Africanists alike argued that there were three national groups in South Africa which were defined by "geographical origin and historical experience" (ibid: 26) as Africans, Indians and Whites. The Africanists rejected the idea that Coloureds were not African. The African majority was "united by a common experience of oppression which is the driving force against white supremacy" (ibid). African nationalism would then be a means with which to bind the heterogeneous group together as a self-aware political movement. To be sure, Sobukwe's idea of African Nationalism drew out a subject which was exploited and shared the same kind of material conditions. It was this system of oppression as racist which would force this heterogeneous group to assume a racial form. It is this reality which Sobukwe argued would not allow for white people to form part and parcel of the PAC on the grounds that "the material interests of minorities led them to seek guarantees that undermined African nationalism and, therefore, the basis of revolutionary unity" (ibid). This position was questioned by on lookers especially John Ngubane (who represented the Liberal faction of the PAC. Ngubane observed that the PAC had two distinct groupings as the "non-racialist majority" and the "anti-white minority" (Ngubane 1959). Ngubane argued that it seemed the PAC was predicated on ideas of a "future national identity and post-apartheid constitutional structure" (ibid). Sobukwe posited that this simply was not the case, as anyone was allowed membership into the movement towards the development of a true African Culture (Soske 2016: 26). Furthermore, Sobukwe urged Ngubane to look towards the PAC manifesto which stated that there was a difference between a racialized anti-colonial subject for nationalism and the individual citizen of post-colonial politics. The PAC manifesto stated that African nationalism "upholds the material, intellectual, and spiritual interests of the oppressed peoples" where Africanism is "a social force that upholds the material, intellectual and spiritual interests of the individual" (1959: 44).

Sobukwe's idea here is that the idea of the nation is an African one in where the first step towards its realisation is reconciling an individual and collective liberation from "psychological, political, and economic dependency" (Delport 2016: 39) towards attaining Pan-African South Africa. Part of attaining this future would be the development of the African personality, which was part of a larger

project across the continent. Amina Mama (1995: 34) argues "[i]t was during the nationalist period that African redefinitions of what Nkrumah refers to as 'the African Personality' and what it means to be black were thrust into the international arena to fuel the existential and philosophical crises that the demise of colonialism provoked in the Western world and which ultimately led to the emergence of poststructuralism". The idea was to challenge dominant understandings of culture, subjectivity and identity (Delport 2016: 40). African nationalism and African personality were used to celebrate an African past so as to foster a collective will and a picture of the future. Africanists were trying to affirm an excluded humanity and postulate a humanness (Mama 1995: 35). The PAC further asserts this position in its manifesto

> "how man shall live with his fellowman in fellowship; in harmony and peace. Man moves and has his being in a social environment. In the absence of social life the social question would fall away. Man's relation to his fellowman is determined by his primary needs. The social question, whose structural foundations are to be found in economic determinism, arises within the framework of social relations … [the human is] a social being and not an economic animal. To live in harmony with his fellowman, man must recognise the primacy of the material interests of his fellowman, and must eliminate the tendency on his part to uphold his own interest at the expense of those of his fellowmen" (Manifesto for the Africanist Movement 1959: 484-485)

This quote asserts a way of life of African people, who are fundamentally social beings. It states that African people must live together based on notions of historical memory: a way of life which can be used as a form of resistance against exploitation associated with colonialism and apartheid (Delport 2016: 50).

Sobukwe further states that

> "For the Africanists, the struggle is both nationalist and democratic, in that it involves a restoration of the land to its rightful owners – the Africans – which fact immediately divides the combatants into the conquered and the conqueror, the invaded and the invader, the dispossessed and dispossessor. That is a national struggle. It has nothing to do with numbers and laws. It is a fact of history. And both sides are each held together by a common history and are, in the struggle, carrying out the task imposed by history. That task is, for the whites, the maintenance and retention of the spoils passed on to them by their forefathers and, for the

> Africans, the overthrow of the foreign yoke and the reclamation of 'the land of our fathers'" (Sobukwe 1957: 465).

Sobukwe presents us with his ideas of the antagonist and the protagonist i.e. the invader and the invaded. Furthermore, he clearly defines the problematic of his time as colonisation which creates opposing sides. Lastly, he states the national struggle is a *fact* of history. Thus, it is something that constitutes the nature of "being-black-in-the-world" (Delport 2016: 44). African nationalism would therefore have to engage with a history that was otherwise attempted to be erased by the colonial enterprise in South Africa (ibid). Sobukwe had a specific historical understanding of his present and the future of the country based on how he related to the past. As we see in the present, calls for decolonisation and the return of the land to 'indigenous' people' in the name of this imagined community, one comes to understand that Sobukwe and Pan-Africanists historical memory is comprised of dispossession, violence and subjugation. Sobukwe understood this to be affecting the material conditions of South Africans today. In an exploration by Terrblanche Delport, he posits that this is the case because "the construction of identity and subjectivity in the present cannot be separated from its history" (2016: 49). Thus, Africanists were actively engaged in positing a completely different imaging of social past, present and future. The central tenant of the Pan-Africanist stance is to have an idea of the present which draws on the past so as to envision a future for black people. It therefore requires political praxis: imagining a political space which is not manifest yet. This would require the affirmation of the past in order to liberate the African people. Sobukwe was against the pragmatics of the ANC and advocated for a historical imagination of the African people (ibid).

Critique of PAC

What one can see here is an instance of cultivating the past so as to "look back to whence he has come, to where he came into being" and still retain a sense of piety and "give thanks" (Nietzsche 1884: 72). This is an example of antiquarian history. The understanding here is that is a black person can only be fulfilled and have a sense of a good life only if they retain something of their roots hence the emphasis on pre-history before 'contact' with the rest of the world. Therefore, one calls upon their ancestry in a way that makes them venerate their homelands and/or their origins. It gives the past a kind of solemn significance that fits into a grand historical narrative. Note that one is called to look back onto these great leaders in a way that makes of them very mythical entities, almost demagogues. This is done uncritically, hence making them demagogues, to demonstrate a past unaffected by white values. The image of the African past is painted as an "idyllic golden age uncorrupted by white culture" (Gqola 2001: 136). However, one calls upon only the 'good' parts of the past failing to mention all the violence

(dispossession, rape etc.) enacted by these great leaders on fellow black people, especially violence on women. Sobukwe and contemporary Pan-Africanists in South Africa, offer no explanations or recognition for the lack of complete peacefulness in pre-colonial Africa.

The language used to tell the story, on behalf of all black people, evokes an emotion of intimacy which gives way to meaning and purpose. This is seen in the projection into the future using the past. This gives a local and time bound explanation of 'we' black people. However, as Nietzsche posits, no passage of time can confer authoritative status over a group of people. Too often, people become so enamoured with the past such that they forgot that history must serve to invigorate them not paralyze man of action because it remains dictated by a specific past (1884). At the same time, one can see a kind of monumental history here. Monumental history serves to illustrate to people the greatness of their potentiality by calling upon images from the past. Writers of this kind of history preoccupy themselves with humanity's highest achievements. In this case, we the evoking of images of great leaders who were kings and queens whom fought great battles. They are being presented as historical models worthy of emulation precisely because they take it that the greatness of these thinkers is everlasting. However, this every action can serve to impede this greatness and destroy it. Why bother with wanting to change the lives of black people if it will pale in comparison to these great leaders of the past? We can indeed learn from these thinkers, but not if one worships them as seen by thinkers of the BLF for example. Nietzsche also warns us of the danger of the fanaticism that comes along with this kind of historicism. As I mentioned earlier, one is being told this pre-history absent of political context, who was speaking, and who they enacted violence on as well etc.

The second problematic, is the teleological or purpose driven understanding of blackness propagated through the notion of an African personality. This kind of critique can be extended to the idea of a South African future that is seen in the ANC narrative and will be shown in the BCM narrative. I highlight it here more poignantly because it is one of the main tenants of Pan-Africanist thinking but it is of course not unique to this kind of thinking. PAC thinking already accords blackness a purpose, a predefined understanding which is drawn from their understanding of pre-colonial Africa. It begs the question if it is truly possible to create within an already pre-supposed framework? Is Pan-Africanism not already delineating the horizon of possibility beyond the scope of the historically concrete? Are PAC thinkers proposing the idea of a pre-subjected individual? I think Foucault would argue that PAC thinking indeed limits the horizon of possibility and inadvertently gives us a pre-subjected black subject. Although there is an attempt to create a history of the present on the part of Pan-Africanists it already delimits an epistemic and normative framework in that one is already given the heroes and the

villains; there is already a notion of the future of Africa that does not come from context but is projected as a utopian ideal of African unity; and lastly, it simply limits possibility of an alternative future.

The Black Consciousness Movement

On the 21st March 1960, the PAC and the ANC, owing to their rivalry, organized a march against the pass laws in South Africa enacted by the National Party. The march, although intended to be non-violent, was met with violence from the apartheid regime resulting in the murder of "69 people and 180 injured" (SAHO 2011). As a result of the marches, the ANC and the PAC were banned by the apartheid government. This led the ANC and the PAC to move underground forming the MK and POQO respectively marking the turn to full armed resistance against white rule. As a result of the banning of the ANC and the PAC in 1960, following the Sharpeville massacre, emerged the Black Consciousness Movement in the 1970s. Initially, it was white young progressive students at liberal university campuses that had formed the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) with the aim for all students to oppose apartheid. However, the black students who formed part and parcel of this organization argued that it was a white dominated organization that could not ensure the interests of black students. In 1969, black students broke away from NUSAS and formed the South African Students Organisation (SASO) led by Stephen Bantu Biko (SAHA 1988) leading up to the popularity of the BCM movement in 1970.

During this time activists reignited the struggle against apartheid under the leadership of Biko. This movement sought to consciously counter the negative signs associated with blackness in modern western colonialist discourse which affected black people in South Africa owing to the power structure of the world system. Biko argues that the logic of white domination works to "prepare the black man for a subservient role in this country" (Biko 2004: 30). To be sure, it is a process of dehumanization which Pityana referred to as a system that made black people "inferior; wiped out our past; and presented it in such a way that we feel shame" (Pityana 1992) Additionally, he posited that, although explicitly avoiding engaging with the matter directly, the black leaders before him failed to change this system. Here one can assume he is referring to the ANC because he goes on further to say that "they looked on with awe at the white power structure and accepted what [they] regard as the inevitable position" (Biko 2004: 30). But at the same time, he speaking to the general condition of the black "manhood" at the time as he observes black people enacting violence on each other while all the while being obedient to white men that they curse behind closed doors (ibid: 30-31). This is truth that Biko argues the black man must reconcile himself with so as to "pump life back into their empty shell" but also show them their "complicity" in their condition (ibid: 31). Pityana goes so far as to say that "the

real black people are those who embrace a positive description 'black' rather than the negative description" imposed by others who "set themselves up as the hallmark of value" (Pityana 1992).

To do this, as in 'pump life' back into black people', it meant advocating for a black subjectivity in which blackness would have positive value so as to counter the ideas of "barbarism; dark continent; ideas of religious superstition; the reduction of Africa as a series of tribal battles" and over "negative images" of blackness that make the African child "find solace in white society" (ibid:31-32). Thus, they drew from existing historical enunciations of black pride so as to resuscitate black pride. They often utilized examples from history to strengthen their idea with references of anti-colonial struggles from other African countries. Their definition of black undermined apartheid categories by grouping all oppressed people under the category black but I will discuss this shortly. Ben Khoapa defined blackness as "something other than an emotional outburst- it speaks of a newly found self-love and self-affirmation" through the search for a "black identity, self-awareness, self-esteem and the rejection of white stereotypes and morals" (Khoapa 1972). In this way, it is a matter of looking towards the "attitude of the mind" and "awareness" (Pityana 1992). In the end, Biko implores us, much like Sobukwe, to "seek to rewrite the history of the black man and to produce in it heroes who form the core of the African background" (Biko 2004: 32). It is a kind of nationalist activism which sought to resolve issues concerning the social, political, and economic empowerment of black communities and people, especially to resist assimilation from the white world. This will result in the affirmation of the worth of the black man towards a true humanity.

This kind of affirmation results in group solidarity. Given that Black Consciousness is an attitude of the mind, it can be an expression of group pride for Biko (Biko 2004: 101). It allows for the black man to rise and attain the "envisaged self". Biko posited that the basic problem in South Africa identified by some, in particular "white liberals", (Biko 2004: 99) was wrongly taken to be apartheid. To be sure, he can agree with this sentiment to a certain extent. Biko states that "apartheid is obviously evil" and [n]othing can justify the arrogant assumption that a clique of foreigners has the right to decide on the lives of a majority" (ibid: 29). But, for Biko this diagnosis propagated by "white liberals", is only aimed at offering blacks "integration as the ideal solution" (ibid). Black consciousness thinkers diagnose the problem differently. Biko asserts that the problem is "strong white racism" as the thesis that must countered by strong "black solidarity" as the antithesis so as to reach a true humanity (ibid: 99).

In a paper produced for a SASO (South African Student Organization) Leadership Training Course in December 1971 by Steve Biko, one can begin to understand how the BCM's historical understanding

informs their meaning of Blackness and their use of the concept thereof. Biko state that they define blacks as those who are by "law or tradition or politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a group in the South African society and identifying themselves as a unity within the struggle towards the realisation of their aspirations" (Biko 1971). To be sure, being black is not a matter of pigmentation as it is a reflection of a mental attitude. Much like Garvey posits, the very act of calling yourself Black is akin to emancipating yourself. In this way, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a mark that renders one immediately subservient. The term black here is not used in an inclusive sense i.e. "the fact that we are not all white does not mean that we are all black" (ibid). For example, one can have the aspiration to be white, however, their phenotypical-pigmentation inhibits them from doing so, then that person is non-white for Biko. But even this person is problematic for Biko because "black people-real black people-are those who can manage to hold their heads high in defiance rather than willingly surrender their souls to the white man" (ibid). The BCM differed from the ANC and the PAC in that liberation was not taken to be a distant utopian ideal but as an immediately realisable goal. They aimed then to challenge the ideological underpinnings of apartheid. Barney Pityana characterised Black Consciousness as a "meta-narrative of liberation that was unifying rather than particularising" (Pityana 1992).

It is worth noting that BC thinking was not accepted wholesale by black leaders, intellectuals and activists at the time although it was an immensely popular movement in Urban areas, especially amongst young people. Their intellectual and activist predecessors took task with the postulation of these young black intellectuals and activists. Most of those who did not agree with BC thinking understood it to be an American import which reflected the problems of the "negroe not the problems of the Kaffir" (Macqueen 2018: 54) . Some ANC leaders incarcerated on Robben Island asserted that black unity occurred way before the black consciousness movement. The lack of reference to the intellectual ideas before these BC thinkers struck them as odd. Nelson Mandela in particular noted that this kind of thinking would have an ideological polarisation of the masses. He stated that, "in a cosmopolitan environment where common sense and experience demand that freedom fighters be guided by progressive ideas and not by mere colour, the ideology of the BCM remains embryonic and clannish" (Mandela as quoted in MacQueen 2018: 12).

Mandela's analysis of this embryonic ideology was that the concept of Black Consciousness advocated by the BCM is imported from America and swallowed in a lump without regard to our concrete situation, in which progressive whites, including Marxists, liberals, missionaries, professionals and businessmen form part of the liberation movement and fight the enemy with the most militant methods (MacQueen 2018). Mandela saw this movement to be ideologically divisive and nothing more than a

rehashing of Garveyism (Macqueen 2018: 12-14). Moreover, given that the ideas that BC thinkers had lacked strategic purchase, Mandela and his counterparts argued that this paradigm would be incapable of fully grappling with the black condition and finding a solution for the future. But suffice it to say that the critique Mandela levels towards Biko, is the very thing the Congress is also guilty of and many movements during this time. It seems to me that it had very little to do with the ideas themselves than ensuring that they keep political popularity/power. But I digress, and would rather like to turn to a critique of the definition of blackness that the BC movement offers.

Critique of BCM

I would like to begin by interrogating the oscillation of black women's narratives by the dominant voices of thinkers such as Biko, or rather the male voice that Biko represents, within the BCM space. Much like the earlier conversation on the ANC, still here we see women being taken to be additives to the larger struggle for black liberation in South Africa (Hassim 1991: 66). This is problematic precisely because the endeavour to provide black people with positive images and inculcate pride in their blackness excluded women. Mamphele Ramphele posits that,

> "[I]t is important to realise that the Black Consciousness Movement came in a cultural environment where women, whether they were Black or white, didn't matter. It wasn't a peculiarity of the Black Consciousness Movement to focus on men…. The language didn't have space for women partly because it was a language borrowed from a culture, English culture, which never accepted women really as full citizens" (Ramphele 1991: 92).

Ramphele further asserts that women were involved in the BCM because they were black not and gender as a political issue was not raised at all (1991: 215). Thenjiwe Mtintso, another woman of the BCM, further highlights related concerns: "they do want you to be political, to be active, to be everything, but they still need a compliment of women who are subservient (Mtintso as quoted in Wilson 1991: 60). Ramphele further notes that at times, especially when the question of militancy arose, they were taken to be "honorary men" who were supposedly different from other women because of the way they participated in debate. Their actions were not taken as status quo. Rather, they were considered to be "exceptional women", though "they were not [necessarily] aware of this contradiction [at the time]" (1991: 138). Ramphele noted the disregards for "special problems women experienced as a result of sexism both in the private and public sphere. Women were important as wives, mothers, girlfriends and sisters, in fighting a common struggle against a common enemy. Scant regard was given to their position as individuals in their own right" (ibid.: 216). It must be noted that

although these 'special problems' were ignored it was not all women who would be willing to speak out on them. Mamphele stated that the environment was hostile,

> "I soon learnt to be aggressive towards men who undermined women, both at the social and at the political levels. Socially one had to cope with being regarded as available to men, because one was single. One was also constantly told and reminded that one was an exception to the male assumption that beauty and brains do not combine. One fell prey to the flattery implicit in such remarks and began to see oneself as different from other women. A major part of the process of being socialised into activist ranks was becoming "one of the boys"" (Ramphele 1991: 218)

Perhaps the problem begins precisely in placing emphasis on select form of oppression as racial subjugation. Selecting this kind of oppression already "leads to the repudiation of all other forms of oppression" (Gqola 2001: 134). This is of course contradictory for a group of activists who sought to rid South Africa of injustice. Kimberly Yates (1997: 16-17) argues that Black Consciousness was always already susceptible to this problematic precisely because they had available to them a "ready-made masculinist discourse that had been used by many black nationalist struggles in other parts of the world". To be sure, it is not necessarily foreign imposition, as Ramphele suggests, that led to women not being accepted as full citizens. Rather, this was a culture so to speak, was infused in ideologies of black pride which black South African activists were reading at the time.

Ultimately, the BCM movement represents a refusal to reckon with the idea that the black community is not a monolithic whole i.e. that experiences can differ within the same community (Gqola 2001: 135). Gqola argues that Black Consciousness proponents actively avoided taking a "critical stance in relation to others outside BC fighting in the struggle against apartheid" (ibid). Thus, there was a tendency to not engage with the differences between Black people proved to be one of the "biggest weaknesses for BC" (ibid). Moreover, the quest for Black unity took precedence over criticizing other Black people and other organizations. Gqola cites the SASO newsletter of 1972 to further drive this point home,

> With the political climate as it is today saso expects the various polit- ical groups that operate outside the system to speak with a united voice against the present regime but not to waste time discrediting their fellow Black brothers and sisters

Criticism was taken to be divisive and unity was lauded to be the better option that trying to find strength in difference. Thus, in its attempt to foster unity the BCM denied the existence of alternative views and experiences of blackness and/or the black condition. This in turn had adverse effects on the definition of blackness in that only the BCM definition reigned supreme. The BCM gave preferences to and gave voice to specific Black experiences of oppression (Gqola 2001: 135). It presupposed that all black people experience racism and to that effect experienced racism in the same way. It further assumed that "race is the chief and perhaps the sole oppressive force in South Africa" (ibid).

This was further evinced when it came to the question of class. Ramphele posits that it "could be argued that it was our privileged position in society that gave us the space to play this role" (1991: 215). This statement highlights the fact that BC thinking was voicing a specific form of oppression of relatively educated blacks. This is what I alluded to earlier with the critique of ANC leadership by Xolela Mangcu. There was no exploration of the position from which these thinkers were speaking on their part which resulted in numerous incomplete speculations about the black condition and I argue that the same holds true for the BCM. Now, one cannot experience all aspects of the black condition, this would simply be impossible. However, it can be argued that the very makeup of SASO gave way much easier, without serious consideration, to homogenizing black people. Gqola argues that because SASO members were predominantly university educated students they were "not fully representative of the broad spectrum of South African black people" (2001: 136).

In summation the BCM negated the diversity of experiences of the Black community in terms of gender and class. These thinkers claimed the right to speak on behalf of all black people, to speak about them and to know their experiences. In the end, the space for the discussion of all other issues and experiences of black people fell outside of Black consciousness and blackness in particular.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I tracked and analysed the complex processes that combined and coalesced the formation of hegemonic meanings and functions of the concept of Blackness in the post-colonial recent past. Given the though the scope of this dissertation, I selected the main hegemonic dominant narratives of the 20th century as the African nationalism debates embodies in the ANC, PAC, and the BCM. This thesis did not allow for an expansive treatise of these hegemonic narratives but I aimed to highlight how we have come to accept the different kinds of knowledge surrounding blackness that we

often deem to be legitimate, valid and true. To be sure, I interrogated these narratives of blackness so as to draw attention to often neglected issues, evident in power relations, of public discourses of black people.

What this chapter illustrated is that these historiographies were informed by the political objective of creating a nation. Furthermore, these historiographies was linked exclusively to a slanted understanding of history. While there is nothing inherently wrong with these historiographies, as they were answering questions and problems of their context, they had adverse effects on the narrative of others. This is of course the nature of all historical narratives as they serve to exclude, include, make subjects of people, produce a truth and speak on behalf of others. But, these political narratives purported themselves to be in fact attempting to do the opposite i.e. speaking on behalf of all black people and not mire these narratives in homogeneity like white European discourses had done. However, I have shown that this simply not the case.

In the following chapter I am most centrally concerned with the issues of lived experiences, meanings, performances and perhaps the emotional complexities of Blackness which I will analyse genealogically. I aim highlight the multiple and heterogeneous understandings of non-political Blackness and its composite meanings and performances. Thus, I hope to evince that the story of the anti-colonialism, anti-apartheid struggle, and nation, which I take to be constructions of history like all others, are one of many truths as opposed to 'the truth' of post-colonial South Africa.

4

Towards Non-Monolithic Narratives of Black People

Introduction

Thus far, I have utilized the genealogical method of analysis to contend that there exists a hegemonic narrative of blackness in 20th-21st century South Africa. I have argued that these hegemonic historiographies are expressions of narratives of black people which have enjoyed authority among the South African population because of African nationalism as discussed in chapter 3. I take it that nationalism is an ideology that gives primacy to the nation in building group solidarity. Nations are cultural expressions of an imagined community herein being the black community. Nations are maintained in different ways through the use of language, tradition, religion, women, customs, literary and artistic modes of production and behaviour to name a but a few. These symbolic guards are performances, expressions and functions of conceptions of black people. In order to link the nation to states, these black South African nationalists appeal to shared symbolic guards. People contribute to the maintenance of historical representation at different moments as result. Historical representations are by no means distinct given the non-monolithic nature of nationalism in South Africa. Rather, they must be understood as overlapping.

I further argued that these hegemonic historiographies expressed through the vehicle of African nationalism make of the black population a homogenous mass toward a particular political objective. As a result, it cannot be taken to be a 'pure' pursuit for 'facts' or 'truth'. This knowledge about black people has gone through a process of ratification by those who have positions of authority over it. In turn these historiographies produced a kind of black subjectivity that placed primacy on race to the subjection of agency of all other performances; functions; and meanings of black people. This power-knowledge acts upon the actions of black people in their everyday life; seeks to characterize the individual in a particular way and imposes a truth on them which they must recognize and which others must recognize on them. Thus, the hegemonic historiographies, were produced and accepted as such,

as opposed to other ideas contending for the status of 'facts', under different mechanisms and conditions which allow for them to be produced.

Understanding the web of relations that keep a 'truth' about black people in place allows us to detach power from its hegemony. This is the concern of this chapter- to reveal the complexity and richness of the experiences; meanings and functions of black people in 20th-21st century post-colonial South Africa. African nationalist historiographies in South Africa would "have us believe that black South Africans, who populate the liberation narrative, experience the world in the same way, suffer the same way and fought the same way" (Dlamini 2009: 18). To be sure, the political view, though purported as wholly unified in strategic ways, has never had this kind of stronghold vertically nor horizontally on black people. Though my aim in this chapter is to foreground the plurality of black people, I seek to alert the reader that there is no endless proliferation of difference. The plurality which I wish to foreground exists within black peoples and not elsewhere as some of the hegemonic narratives discussed in chapter 2 suggest. All of these exist under the banner of blackness and it is the very 'elsewhereness' given to some of these narratives that I wish to dispel. Black people should not be perpetually caught in a world of difference and absolute otherness amongst each other. This is precisely because one cannot limit black subjectivity into neat epistemic categories. Thus, as mentioned in chapter 2 and 3 we must read the texts and listen to the narratives (Gasa 2007: 132) of the entirety of the black community so as to highlight the issues colour boundaries, gender, class, ethnic, age, urban and rural differences amongst black people.

If I am correct in the assertion that there is a plurality of black people, then it is impossible to excavate the full breadth of the heterogeneity of black people in South Africa in this thesis. I tread carefully and heed the critique of de Kock (2001: 263) who argues that those who study black South Africa- origins, language, culture, history and nationalism- often "apologise for attempting the impossible and then go ahead anyway". My discrete undertaking seems in part to justify the above undertaking as it both a pragmatic concern (to do with considerations of space in this thesis) and the specificity of black narratives in South Africa. To be sure, I am seeking out lines of difference, the non-cohesive and non-convergent, alongside nodes of convergence. I do this precisely because I take these narratives deadly seriously. This being said, I can discuss a few examples but it will serve to lay bare the proverbial 'loose threads' rather than the logically unfolding historiographies offered in the moments above by black South African nationalists. Accordingly, I will be analysing selected narratives of black authors; intellectuals; activists and thinkers, that are 'anomalous' and/or immutable so as to counter the hegemonic narrative outlined above. In keeping with the understanding of the plurality of black people, when reading these texts, one cannot take these narratives to be objective or neutral. As argued by

Foucault, knowledge is always "knowledge for" regardless of whether that aim is directly linked to the author or its utility is for another individual or grouping (Foucault 1988c: 39). Therefore, these narratives by black people are not to be taken as "reliable or authentic representations of their people's experiences" as this would make one fall back into the trappings of viewing black people as a homogenous mass. Rather, we should view these texts, as Ndebele argues (2006: 26), in anticipation of the assertion that "[black people] do have information about themselves as the actual sufferers". Though I would not use the term suffering, as black people have other life experiences, the point is made in that these are subjective narratives and are a reflection of instances of performances, functions and meanings of blackness, despite their occlusion from the dominant narrative. Thus, the effort to discuss the particularities of subjectivity need not result in homogenising identity politics.

A number of black intellectuals have sought to inject their experiences into the South African narrative so as to interrogate and counter the hegemonic narratives of black people. The most visible example of this phenomenon is the profusion of memoirs, autobiographies, local histories, and family narratives that have become the dominant mode of post-apartheid historical production (Soske 2012). It is these narratives which I will discuss in this chapter so as to counter the dominant narratives in the African Nationalism debates. I will begin by discussing the narratives of black by women in the 20th century. In particular I will discuss the work of Nontsizi Mgqwetho and the participation of women in politics despite the patriarchal organizational structure of the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid movements. I further complicate this picture by briefly discussing the ways in which these politically active women understood their blackness i.e. placing primacy on race and the national movement, on women's emancipation and rights. Thereafter, I discuss the work of two thinkers as Jacob Dlamini *Native Nostalgia* (2009) and Can Themba 'Requiem for Sophia Town' (1959). In doing so, my analysis is subject to the same kind of thinking in the work of Njabulo Ndebele's 'Rediscovery of the Ordinary' (2006) that implores us to look to the complex ordinariness of living in a civil society in order to understand our worlds better. These narratives will open way to a discussion as to what extent these individual particularities of black people reflect larger sectors of the black community.

Black Women In and Outside the Political Space

Andre Odendaal, in tracing the history of the African National Congress, dedicates a chapter of his work to a discussion of 'Women in the Struggle' (2016) wherein he highlights the "invisibility of women" (Masola 2019: 2) in the nationalist movement,

> Women have generally been absent from South African narratives of nationalism and the nascent struggles for democracy before 1912. It has been accepted that those who started 'the

> Struggle' and the ANC were men, the 'founding fathers' to use the language of patriarchy, and that women's involvement in politics postdates 1912 (Odendaal 2016, 213)

Some have argued that it is in fact a deliberate exercise to erase the political work of women in nationalist movements (Walker 1982) but this is not the case that black women are not spoken about. This is perhaps the case because, for example, black women's historiography has been discussed within the purview of ANC historiography, rather than within other organizations or struggle movements (Masola 2019: 5). I refer this as the ANCification of the black archive and South African historiographies or what Baines (2007: 284-286) refers to as the "ANC-sanctioned social memory". To be sure, "[w]hile scholars have generally characterized women as marginal to African nationalism during this period, women were in fact only marginal to the realm of male-dominated political groups" (Healy-Clancy 2014: 482). In the end, the absence of women's narratives within these historiographies must not be a sign of their absence from the political arena (Ginwala 1990: 78). Masola (2019: 2) argues that the very idea of political visibility, what she refers to as "publicness", is so deeply embedded in patriarchy such that publicness "often privileges [masculinity], because in patriarchal societies the domestic was the place of women, while the public realm of culture, politics and the economy was seen as the sphere of men". As discussed in Chapter 3, "gender is often silenced by race, as it is so often because of nationalism, apartheid and colonialism" (Daymond *et al.* 2003: 2) thus removing the possibility of looking at the specificity of black women's experiences. McClintock attributes the silence of gender to the gender bias in African Nationalism (1991: 104) which she understands to be an attribute common to all nationalisms. This is serves as a further reason to rethink the grand narratives of our past and what they occlude in public discourses.

We must therefore be weary of these meta-narratives precisely because they do not allow us to hone in on experiences like that of Mgqwetho, which I will discuss below. I think, it is also an important exercise in general as it helps us rethink the tools of analysis with which we use to discuss black people in general and whether they truly help us understand not only the details of our history but our present as it relates to actual people.

My intention here is not to repeat previous accounts of the resistance of women[16] as important as these are, such as the defiance campaigns of the 1950s.[17] My preoccupation here is not with a feminist exposition of the patriarchal system evident with the African Nationalist's discourses of 20th-21st century post-colonial South Africa. There has been ample research on this with thinkers such as Nomboniso Gasa; Pumla Gqola; and Frene Ginwala as well as their white female counterparts. Rather, I would like to excavate the conditionality of black women in the political space and outside of it. In particular, I will discuss a black woman, Nontsizi Mgqwetho. She is of particular interest to me precisely because she is spoken about less in public discourse. By this I mean to say that she enjoys a certain kind of "publicness" (Masola 2019: 5) which is different from other black women. The women that are mentioned in nationalist historiographies, are mentioned only in light of the value of their contributions to the political objectives of the time. For instance, Charlotte Maxeke is mentioned as the ANC Women's League President; a woman of a certain class, religious background and education; and very often as having testified on behalf of the League at the Inter-Departmental Pass Committee (Limb 2010: 242). Interestingly, Masola (2019: 5) notes that other black women testified alongside Maxeke such as "Daisy Nogakwa, M. Manana, A. Sishuba, C. Moloi, A. Mebalo, N. Dhlamini, M. Pitso,and Grace Lentaka" but very little is known about these other women as members of the league. Moreover, we are given only a league based understanding of Maxeke's experiences as a black woman. Mgwetho is therefore interesting because she was also doing political work, particularly in her writing, like other female activists but she does not enjoy the kind of visibility that Maxeke; Winnie Madikizela or Ellen Khuzwayo would in public discourse but why is that?

Mgwetho is interesting for a second reason as she complicates the erasure of black women in the public sphere. Certainly, Mgqwetho holds a certain holds a certain positionality and is an educated women. The very notion that she is erased from the public sphere feeds into an ideological bias that forces us

[16] With the 1948 victory of the National Party, the Populations Registration act of 1952 was applied leading to men and women of all races having to carry an identification card. The Native Law Amendment Act of 1952 forced every black woman, man and child to have a special permit to be in an urban area for longer than 72 hours (Wells 1993: 102). The final nail on the proverbial coffin for black people was the Natives Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination Documents Act of 1952. This replaced the previous identification documents and black people were forced to carry this wherever they were at all times. "Emboldened by its electoral victory in 1953, the National Party announced its intention to introduce passes to African women from 1956, on a voluntary basis" (Wells 1993). It is against this backdrop that one sees the unprecedented scale of emergence of women within the political arena. The emergence of this nature is especially the case between 1954 to 1958, where one saw the mass mobilization of black women across South Africa towards political campaigns protesting the pass laws. In general, women led political campaigns were split along racial and class lines and were structures exclusive to women with independent identities from the male dominated structures of the Congress Alliance and of white party politics (Sturman 1996).

[17] Baard (1986), Joseph (1986), Walker (1991), Wells (1993), Sisulu (2002)

to accept at face value what is visible and what is not. The public sphere is a contested space and one cannot fall prey to privileging a kind of visibility over another. Mgqwetho propagated ideas, meanings and performances of black people that have her remain in relative obscurity today compared to other women in the political resistance who enjoy "hypervisibility" (ibid). The aim is to bring to the fore the complexity and nuance of this black woman in the political space and some of the significances of her narrative of as a black person in relation to race, gender, class, sex and white supremacy to understand why that could be the case in the relation to the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Nontsizi Mgqwetho

Nontsizi Mgqwetho spoke out fervently against white rule and the apartheid system in general. However, she was not venerated in the same manner as other black leaders, intellectuals and activists. This persists even in present day South Africa. Mgqwetho is of interest because she embodies many other black women's narratives that simply did not make it to public discourse. I argue that this is because the very idea of politically involved women is premised on a particular understanding, that as highlighted in chapter 3 privileges certain symbolic guards over others.

Much like many other black activists in the early 20th century, Mgqwetho wrote articles in the newspaper *Umteteleli Wabantu.* As discussed in the previous chapter, black activists did so, so as to have black people assert themselves into the political space as an "alternative to white rule in liberalism" and create an alternative discourse in the form "African nationalism, socialism and Garveyism [towards] ignit[ing] new African identities and dreams for the future" (Limb 2012: 13). It was therefore necessary to confer power to lived experiences of black people. Yet, it is the writings of some, over others, which remain at centre stage in regards to the rejection of colonial and apartheid South Africa. Thus, there is a kind of publicness afforded to some black South African thinkers over others.

Mgqwetho wrote in isiXhosa where her counterparts wrote in English. This brings to the fore the nature of the publicness of certain kinds of performances of blackness. Given that in this time period more emphasis was placed on the modern identity of the African as Western "educated" (Van Robbroeck 2008: 214) and divorced from 'primitive' African identity, the kind of blackness that Mgqwetho espoused would be 'silenced' and excluded from the public. All the while, she could write in these newspapers despite the fact that she did so in a world that did not recognise her as worthy of citizenship and having no political power i.e. being an auxiliary member of political organizations and/or movements. Masola highlights quite extensively, the fact that Mgqwetho was speaking directly to the problems experienced by black people in her time.

Mgqwetho has been described as,

> "Fearless, outspoken, committed, pious, anguished and often despairing, Nontsizi Mgqwetho eloquently articulates in her passionate poetry the political and social aspirations of black South Africans in the 1920s[18], and their bitter frustrations. A line that recurs in her poetry, punning on her own name, reads "Hayi usizi kwizwe lenu, Nontsizi' (Ah, the grief that seizes your country, Nontsizi!) (Opland 2002: 3)

As a poet of a known body of 95 Xhosa poems and articles appearing in black newspapers between 1920 and 1928, she was aware of the importance of the print press in articulating her conditionality as a black woman. She spoke of the economic subordination of black people with emphasis on the plight of the working class stating that black people were merely "ladder[s] that others ascend" (Brown 2004: 49). Mgqwetho was against the "labour system, modes of power, knowledge and social organisation" that were enforced by white rule (ibid). Therefore, she was quite critical of the ANC because she argued that they are dividing the black opposition. For this thinker, the black people who made up these cohorts seemed to be complicit in white rule especially given their stance that the "liberation movement is not anti-white in seeking full scope for African progress", rather that it was "working for the good of all South Africans, working to promote ideals of Christianity, human decency and democracy" (Xuma as quoted in Walshe 1973: 384). Furthermore, she held that their views fragmented black people. To be sure, she found the actions of her black intellectual counterparts to be hypocritical. She constantly berated them for being "Christians by day, and wolves by night" (Mgqwetho as quoted in Brown 2004: 48). She wrote extensively of their promiscuity and alcoholism which she found to be both un-African and un-Christian.

Part of this berating was an attempt to place black women and ruralitarian narratives at centre stage, which she felt were being excluded by urban black people in the public space. Let us first discuss the question of placing black women at the centre of this nationalistic moment. The church provided upward mobility for black men, and to a lesser extent black women of a certain particularity (Charlotte Maxeke). By certain particularity I mean to say black women who were the children of pastors, or who were missionary educated. Where black women did have a voice, which was largely contested, in the *manyanos* (mothers' unions). This was a place of alternate discourse within the church. This kind of grouping still exists today and is the "oldest, largest and most enduring and cohesive of all African

[18] This is what she considered to be important from her point of view i.e. her understanding of what she considered the most important typical aspirations

women's organisations in South Africa" (Brandel-Syrier in Gaitskell 1983: 253). *Manyano*[19] were away from the direct rule of the male clergy. Mgqwetho was highly critical of male hegemony and this was expressed through this church grouping.

Manyano is understood to be the 'indigenous' black Christian woman's alternative space premised on motherhood. In the past, *Manyano* have been understood to be "generally conservative and apolitical in nature" (2004: 5-6). It has been argued by many thinkers within gender studies that this is a space of resistance populated largely by women who were domestic workers at the time (Epprecht 1996). These were the same women who made up the Herschel movements in the rural areas. These women defended the rights of women to brew beer; they protested against the expropriation of black owned property and forced removals; and they protest against inferior education for black people (Kuumba 2002). While simultaneously they preached a conception of womanhood linked to domesticity and traditional family structures. One woman, Cynthia Phakathi, said that "they teach us to be good women, and to our husbands, and all the family. We learn not to drink…and we tell stories on how to keep your house" (Ally 2009: 168). Furthermore, they located the hardships that they experienced in their everyday lives to "other-worldly" (ibid) sources, rather than in structures of oppression. The response to this kind of oppression would therefore be collective pray as a kind of action. Furthermore, these women took it that the state was attacking their families and social roles. Indeed, the protest against pass laws in Bloemfontein 1913, were these women "fighting to remain housewives" (Gaitskell 1983: 225). This is an expression of an acute pain for the black mothers, and black domestic workers even today in South Africa, their inability to remain present mothers to their children.

Now let us turn to the question of black ruralitarian narratives. What Mgqwetho also allows us access into discussing is the often overlooked blackness of black people in rural South Africa. As a result of apartheid segregation and work migration policies Black imagination i.e. representations of blackness and black spaces, has largely been pre-occupied with urban spaces. This is perhaps owing to the large populations of black people in urban areas but it cannot be that the 'where' from which black people speaks remains couched in urban areas. The black person has been joined to the contemporary urban 'civilized' areas in ways that cannot be easily reversed and in ways that not only profoundly affect black people in urban areas, but also black people who live in semi-urban areas or rural South Africa. For if the black imagination only exists in urban South Africa, then the reality of blacks who live in

19 *Manyano* groups were created in various church denominations as "groups solely for women to meet and pray. They are mostly associated with the Methodist Church in Southern Africa" (Masolo 2018: 97)

other areas is rarely represented or imagined. There is a black urban normativity that is kept in place that results in violent ignorance pertaining to rural South Africa

While the moral basis for political resistance by Mgqwetho was informed by the very same Christian biblical faith of the men she criticized she saw herself as speaking out against the "heresy of the white man's gospel" (Brown 2004: 38). She said in a prose introduction to a poem on 28th March 1925: "*Has any African minister ever preached in a white church? Why not, when there is only one God of love? Pay attention to these things*!" She frequently points to the hypocrisy of the mainstream churches: "there's persecution right in the churches" (Mgqwetho as quoted in Brown 2004: 39). Further, she links Christianity to colonial oppression and in so doing she points to the meaning imbued in the text. She held that the bible is a text that black people can engage with critically and fruitfully. To be sure, she was more so concerned with the impact, its denial of the agency of black people, of the text as opposed to the text itself. This is especially a matter of concern for Mgqwetho because she argued that African Christians were largely responsible for the exceptional spread of the religion. However, she never rejected Christianity as a mode of belonging for a lot of Africans at the time. She argued that the bible is dialogic and is not a monolithic text. Therefore, the bible can speak to the lived experiences of black people (Kimble and Unterhalter 2012: 17-20).

Today, in public discourses on South Africa's past in relation to Christianity, one finds that there is a perception that black people accepted Christianity unwittingly and uncritically and by extension the ideological doctrines of the white man. It is certainly true that missionaries often encouraged the jettisoning of all prior ('heathen') belief and being; it is another thing entirely to claim that black people were uncritical of Christian beliefs and organizations. Mgqwetho argued that it is perfectly compatible to be Christian and black (Brown 2004). She saw Christianity as an "integrating force in developing a supra-ethnic African Nationalism" (Hodgson 1997: 86-87) even though she identified that there was an issue in its use for the political oppression of black people.

One can see the embodiment of different particularities in Mgqwetho- politics, religion, gender and rural spaces (Opland 2007: 180). One can take it that Mgqwetho holds incommensurable positions. While her views may be at odds with one another-calling for more socially progressive leadership while lamenting for the erosion of black people's traditional beliefs and systems, while simultaneously rejecting a religious system that informs her own values-I think it is all too simplistic to relegate these contradictions to cognitive dissonance as it were. Rather, I argue that we must view this as not only an indication of the plurality of her black conditionality but also the impossibility of being consistent in the 'real world'. Is this not the reality of being-black-in-the-world? Furthermore, Mgqwetho evinces

the struggle of attempting to not privilege particular lived experiences over others. Thus, there is no easy resolution to these contradictions and I am not entirely convinced that there should be. What one would see as an equivocation in her work should be understood as a complex attempt to determine both herself and engage with a world, a 'we', that has a specific character while all the same trying to develop your own subjectivity.

Alternative Narratives: The Everydayness of Black People

Native Nostalgia

Native Nostalgia is intended to be an enunciation of a counter-voice "stressing form-hybridity and placing itself with careful evasiveness" (Jones 2014: 111). Indeed, Dlamini posits that this work is "neither a memoir or indeed even a cultural biography of Katlehong. But it contains elements of both. [It] is best understood as a gathering of fragments of memory, souvenirs of the imagination. I have collected these fragments into a fractured whole through which I hope to look back at a life, a childhood, spent under apartheid" (2009:62). He aims to draw specifically on the kind of literary techniques implement by Walter Benjamin in *Arcades project (1999)* wherein one retrieves fragments in a way that is non-sequential, so that the reader is compelled to apparently non-linear stories that are not seamless and neat. The idea in the end is to uncover how a particular black subject is constructed and in turn counter a hegemonic narrative of black people. In particular, Dlamini is aiming to counter the hegemonic narrative of the ANC and the liberation movements in general. He argues that these leaders have purported the liberation history to have been given to black people in a "gift box from Lusaka" (Dlamini 2009: 13).

Native Nostalgia is configured into eight different parts, each of which explores the forging of subjectivities in the township by discussing the body through a series of objects and interactions- "music; the feeling of bank notes in ones hands; the sight of a mattress on the floor of a mourning family; the smell of dust whipped up by the brooms of housewives in late August." (Jones 2014: 113). Dlamini asserts that his emphasis on sense when speaking about the township he grew up in is perhaps the best way he can write with feeling and in human terms about where he grew up (2009: 118). In this way, Dlamini stains the official demarcations of the township and allows us access into the ordinary things that make up township life in his childhood. The sort of ideas he espouses here have a lot of Foucaultian inflections which can be applied to the greater black community. The historiographies in chapter 3 posit an over determination of social scripts on black people. I do not think that it is the case for black people as apartheid and colonialism did not make up the entirety of black experiences. Susan Stewart posits that this kind of exercise, like of that Dlamini, offers us an

evocation of a "world of things" (1984: 54). In her own study of the interplay of cultural forms, nostalgia and social intention Stewart states that everyday narratives "rupture linearity" and world of things can open itself to reveal a secret life – indeed, to reveal a set of actions and hence narrativity and history outside the given field of perception –is a constant daydream . . ." (ibid). Dlamini affords us access into the thick textures of the township which I discuss below.

Jacob Dlamini provides us with an endearing text on a time in South African history that is generally taken to be quite "dark" in detailing his lived experience in Katlehong during apartheid. Dlamini posits that his is an exercise in "restorative nostalgia" (2009: 17). He posits that nostalgia tends to have a negative connotation as it may indicate some sense of "loss and displacement" and /or be "an affectionate insult at best" (ibid: 16). This is all the more problematic when uttered in the same breath as apartheid. It is the seemingly unresolvable contradiction wherein black South Africans might recall their lives under apartheid with affection which Dlamini leads us to consider most doggedly. Certainly, the self is "constituted by a multiplicity of sites and feelings that are sometimes in alignment and sometimes in friction" (Jones 2014: 112). Kopano Ratele and Kharnita Mohamed refer to this tension as a kind of "temporal split" wherein the black subject has to "produce [itself] as a post-apartheid subject, and constitute the self through the memorialisation of racial oppression, Black subjects are required to imagine themselves in a before and after" (2012: 292). To be sure, these thinkers understand nostalgia as a kind of dystopian site of fracture and silence: For black men and women who grew up under apartheid, the tensions between a childhood self whose subjectivity was denied and an adult self-asserting its value and belonging in the contemporary moment, produces a schism which is breached by blame on the parent" (Ratele and Mohamed 2012: 282-293). So, for these thinkers this exercise is a wholly traumatic process but is this the case for Dlamini? Is his recuperative nostalgia an elision of the dangers and difficulties faced by black South Africans? (Jones 2014: 114)

I think wholly accepting Ratele and Mohamed's position would be trying to foster a unified black self. Moreover, it would be an attempt to integrate the black subject by creating a link between the past and the present. Dlamini's project is less about integration than it is about tracing lines of difference and reductive thinking. Rather, I take it that he is attempting to provide a history of the present because it is "about present anxieties refracted through the prism of the past" (ibid). Dlamini invites us to consider nostalgia as something other than a reactionary sentiment. To be sure, he argues that there is a way to be nostalgic about the past without removing the very real issues surrounding it. He therefore proposes "restorative nostalgia" (Dlamini 2009: 17) as a means to "rebuild the lost home and patch up the memories" (ibid). Thus, it is a project of truth for Dlamini that must be taken "dead seriously" (ibid: 18). In the end, he aims to challenge the facile accounts of black experiences under apartheid that paint

the 46 years in which the apartheid system legally existed as a "moral desert, with no social orders" and as if "black produced no art, literature or music; [and] bore no morally upstanding children" (ibid:19).

I do not understand Dlamini to be advancing an argument that there was no poverty, crime or moral degradation amongst black people. To be sure, it is not a vindication of colonialism and apartheid. Quite the contrary, it is a matter of being aware that none of this shapes, or for that matter continues to shape the totality of black people's experiences. Rather he attempts to "[gather] fragments of memory [and] souvenirs of the imagination" (ibid: 62). I aim to use Dlamini's text as an entry point to discuss all of the narratives that exist in elsewheres such as the townships in South Africa. Dlamini's narrative allows me to discuss the interesting personal experiences of Candidoise Themba and Lewis Nkosi alongside his own.

Townships as Places of Multiple Elsewheres

Katlehong

To speak of Katlehong is to broadly paint a picture of South Africa's black urban history. It is a history that extends far beyond that of the apartheid moment. As Robert Hughes posited "all cities are shaped by politics" (as cited in Dlamini 2009: 45). Katlehong is a "scientific city" (ibid) that was built on a farm in 1949 bought by white people from Germiston. Dlamini describes it as being "unlike the slums that preceded it- Sophiatown and Alexandra, Tembisa and Soweto" (ibid: 46) because it was 'properly' laid out in a grid with wide open roads where the other townships were maze like and densely populated. To be scientific meant that the houses were more modern and were considered to be unlike the urban slums that characterised urban black life since the introduction of the Industrial Revolution in South Africa. It was surrounded by an "Indian Township (Palm Ridge), a Coloured neighbourhood (Eden Park) [and]…a white parent city (Germiston)" (ibid) which was characteristic of apartheid urban planning. In accordance with the group areas act of 1950 Black, Coloured and Indian people were forcibly removed from the metropolitan areas to the outskirts of the city (SAHO 2011) where they would 'border' each other.

As a result, Katlehong is a place of multiple elsewheres in that it was not just a cite of everyday social encounters and individual group influences. Rather, it was subject to the same local, national and international currents that have bigger cities such as Johannesburg which was "30kms away from [Katlehong]. To be sure, it was not a zone of lack in the margins of the global political economy. It was a city in flux with buses and railways moving through it constantly when people were travelling

for work. The 'in-flux' nature of this city further highlights that it was not a "bounded unit" but would be "formed through relations and connections with dynamics at play in other places" (Hart as quoted in Dlamini 2009: 61). This is especially important given the injunction by Verwoerd who would call for the separation of black people by tribes. Black people of Katlehong were exposed to black people outside of this their tribal groups and by "blind luck" (ibid). Dlamini and his family would not be housed amongst Zulu's alone, and the legacy of this policy was quite limited in this area. Though the idea of the townships was, amongst others, to provide labour it was not merely a place to house those who "service white needs" (ibid: 157). One can also see this kind urban planning in Soweto as detailed by Eskia Mphahlela in *Down Second Avenue*,

> "As Orlando spreads into Meadowlands, Mofolo, Dube, Jabavu, Moroka, Molapo, Moletsane, holding more than 200 000 souls altogether, it also develops ulcers in the form of shanty towns . . . still the black metropolis grows, meeting other townships of refugees who have been removed from western towns which like Africans only as labourers. Faction fights must be a source of amusement to some white supreme chief of the Bantu who decided to force people into ethnic compartments "(2006:193)

But there is a marked difference between how Dlamini describes Katlehong and how Mphahlela describes Soweto. Are we to assume that that which Dlamini is describing of his township is describing does not apply to Soweto? Are we to accept this kind of social determinism underlying the claim made by Mphahela here? Perhaps, what remains problematic with the narrative espoused by Mphahlela is that it keeps the conversation on black people still in the "orthodoxies of spatiality" (Jones 2014: 109) in that the black person still remains overwhelmed by "spatial oppression of the state, or fashioned into absolute opposition" (Mbembe 2004: 19) such that it is either a question of resistance or suffering. Within Mphahlela's understanding we cannot imagine any kind of interaction amongst lack people across ethnic lines which of course happened frequently in townships in South Africa. What differs with Dlamini's narrative is that it inserts agency back into ordinary experiences and affirms the complexity of not just the day to day but of black subjectivity. Townships were imbued with plurality in ways that allow us access into black narratives that counter the idea of unitary experiences of black people.

An interesting example that Dlamini alludes to is the Afrikaans language within townships that makes up everyday colloquialisms. He argues that Afrikaans is a language of nostalgia for many black South Africans despite it being the oppressors language. He alludes to music and Afrikaans grammar that a white Afrikaans person may simply have no access to. For example, songs with phrases such as 'Waar

was jy', which invoke a litany of fond memories. This is not to deny the oppressive resonance of the Afrikaans language. On the contrary, Afrikaans had interesting effects on the township landscape such as music and tsotsi t*aal* (tongue). This is an interesting complexity of this time, that persists even today, which we can understand better if as Dlamini asserts, "we treat townships as places to be experienced not as sites" precisely because places like this in which black communities exist are hardly one dimensional (Dlamini 2009: 105).

This flexible relation between space and place that Dlamini offers us allows us to discuss identity in a way that does not reduce space to place. He avers to the class distinction that were present during this time. Social distinction is a key historical feature of black life which, although was formed by a state that did not care to distinguish between a black doctor and a black teacher, allowed Dlamini to be aware of his social betters long before he knew what they were. He states that it was in fact the black teachers at the bantu schools that would prove themselves to be fervent and rigid defenders of these class distinctions. He describes these racial distinctions as being seen even in seemingly arbitrary things such as people's names. For example, those with black names found themselves in the same class where those with Christian names found themselves in a separate class. The kids with black names were off springs of "doctors, nurses, teachers and government clerks" (2009: 78) where those with Christian names were the off spring of working class parents. The children of elite blacks were seen to be future members of the community nobility and were therefore treated as such. One of the key distinctions that Dlamini remembered as a child was the difference in music that the class groups would listen to. Where the black elites listened to classical music, the working class listened to *isicathamiya* and *mbaqanga* which were taken to be more "proletarian sounds of black urban South Africa" (ibid: 82). This would make the children of working class parents, children from the township, be seen as something diseased and unhygienic. The children from townships had different clothing which were mostly associated with *Tsotsi's* or *Amapantsula* .

This depiction of class identity in Katlehong can be extended to black communities in general. In highlighting the strong consciousness of his own class identity as a child through the types of houses people had; expressions of class culture and the material items that people had. Anthropologists Khunou and Ridge (2013) highlight the difficulty that some black people have in articulating their class positionality given the gender and class differences which were "underplayed" in an effort to create a "united front against apartheid's racial oppression. Often, in an attempt to bring these nuances out in black experiences, they were expressed in "contextual and situational relationality" (ibid). Thus, depending on the context and to whom one is speaking to one may stress being black yet in another relation one may stress being of a certain social class. It seems to me that this is the very textured life

history that Dlamini affords us here. Black people were clearly not one mass as it were as there were very interesting nuances in how different class groups expressed their blackness as evinced above. These nuances foreground themselves in interaction within different contexts i.e. in a classroom, music and naming processes. Your class clearly carried with it ideas of upward mobility and racial authenticity which is contrary to the ideas that the African nationalists seemed to suggest. It is one thing to suggest that this is as a result of racial capitalism, which I do not necessarily discount, but there is clearly agency on the part of black people to try and create a subjectivity even if the impetus is from white domination.

Dlamini also details his experiences with anti-black racism. He posits that "long before we had met a white man, we knew we did not want to be dark skinned" (2009: 83). Even without having direct experience of racism, they had already learnt that there were hierarchies amongst black people. Thus, "anti-black racism does not need white agents to make itself felt" (ibid). What this indicates is that the phenotypical similarity of people does not translate into automatic political agreement. This was of course surprising for Dlamini as it was the teachers who would nickname students with derogatory terms such as *Mantsho* (Darkie). Essentially, power cannot be reduced to an oppressor (white) and the oppressed (black). I wish to argue that if we think of power relations in this way, not top down analytics, we will be less 'surprised' at this kind of phenomenon occurring.

Requiem for Sophiatown

Candodoise Daniel Themba (Can Themba), was born in 1924 in Marabastad, Pretoria Transvaal now known as Gauteng (SAHO 2011). Better known as the 'shebeen intellectual' (SAHO 2011), the *Drum* writer turned editor documented the voices, images and values of urban black culture, which he argued was struggling to assert permanence and identity post the industrial expansion of South Africa (Themba in Chapman 1989: 19). One can sense the injustice he feels in the identity crisis of black people, in his text 'Requiem for Sophiatown' (1959). In it he details his disdain towards the demolition of the "black spot" (Themba 1959: 49) wherein black people were being forcibly removed as a result of apartheid laws. He goes onto assert that he "accepted that Sophiatown is a slum... [but he is] itchingly nagged by the thought that slum-clearance should have nothing to do with the theft of free hold rights" (ibid: 50). Themba argues that the township became a slum because, after the war, people were seeking work in Johannesburg "and some hole to sleep in at night" (ibid). He laments for the destruction of his favourite shebeen "Thirty-Nine Steps" (ibid). Clearly, as Dlamini argues, "not everything black people did during apartheid was in response to apartheid" (2009: 23).

Despite Themba's particular love for the shebeens and the night life, he affirmed that Sophiatown was also "as dreams are made on" (ibid). It is in these very same slums, Themba argues, that morally upstanding children were raised.

Themba goes on to describe the political situation in the township at the time. He states that he had always felt uncomfortable with the label of "future leaders of people" and being termed a "young stalwart who [is] supposed to solve the problems of our harassed world" (Themba 1959: 51). What is of particular interest in discussing Sophiatown is the political views Themba details from black people in the township, some of which I quote below:

(1) *"Not political unity, we need; "our society is too diverse and unwieldy for that. Just a dynamic core of purified fighters with clear objectives and a straight- forward plan of action. That is all"*

(2) *"No! We must align ourselves with the new forces at play in Africa today. There already is the dynamicity. The idea of a one Africa has never been put as powerfully as at Accra recently. You see, Africans, wherever they are, have not a territorial, a local loyalty: they don't feel that they belong to a South Africa or a Federation or a Tanganyika or a Kenya or a West Africa; but with Africans in the whole of Africa. In fact, many of us are wondering if Arabs and Egyptians are also Africans. They probably are…*

(3) *"To us, if a witchdoctor says he'll bring rain, we not only want to see the rain fall, but also the crops sprout from the earth. That's what a rainmaker's for, nay? If the bone-thrower says he'll show up the bastard who's been slinging lightning at me, I expect him to swing that bolt of lightning right back. So, if the priest says God's on my side, I'd like to see a few more chances and a little less white man's curses."*

Themba argues that this is the magic of Sophiatown inherent in its difference and the individualism which it allows. He describes this as the "tang" (ibid: 53) of this township. One can choose to be themselves, listen to the music you wish to and even "walk a Coloured girl of an evening down to the Odin Cinema, and no questions asked" (ibid). To be sure, Themba, felt that he could partake in the "little Paris of the Transvaal" (ibid) without heresy either from the white man or from black people.

But it is in this very same space in Sophiatown that Themba's intellectual counterpart, Lewis Nkosi, felt the least at home. Nkosi' somewhat nomadic lifestyle makes him a very interesting black subject to discuss especially given that he forms part of a generation of exile writers.

The Burden of Identity

Nkosi described himself as "tyrannically free" (Nkosi as quoted in Gall 2012: 66) which meant that he would struggle with crippling identification in political spaces wherein he had no affinity to any "political party, from prejudice, bigotry and blind adherence to dogma" (ibid). Gall describes him as striving to have "an open mind to prevent himself from being chained to anything to which he [does not] pour his heart, and to guard against elevating creeds above enduring values" (ibid). Unlike Themba, Nkosi constantly alluded to the difficulty of tying himself to a place. Lewis Nkosi left South Africa in 1961 on permanent exit visa on his way to Harvard. He describes this time as "denying his homesickness (because he had no home) to feeling it acutely (because he had no home)" (Gall 2012: 65). He longed for home during this time because he remembered his mother and all that she represented to him "rest, comfort, and nourishment' (ibid.: 67). However, he did not feel at home in South Africa given that his mother was no longer there. But he never truly spent time anywhere long enough to feel at home anywhere.

What is important about this, is that Nkosi much like many black people at the time did not have a home and stated that he "would not kiss the ground when he returned home"(Nkosi in Gall 2012: 73) from exile. He did not have land in the rural areas, he had no affinity to the township and felt like a stranger in South Africa. Moreover, he describes himself as feeling guilty for the privilege and exclusivity he had in being educated and the enjoyment he would sometimes have being in Switzerland or London (ibid: 68). He was fully aware of the racism of the white world but given that at times that space allowed for sharing of interests across racial lines it enabled him to "escape a gratuitous identity with any mass" (ibid: 92). This is counter to the idea of the absolute belonging that black people have in South Africa propagated by grand narratives. Moreover, it complicates the idea that all black people want to belong to South Africa and by extension call South Africa home. Again, here we see how a personal narrative muddies homogenized conceptions of black people.

Conclusion

Having discussed the narratives of Mgqwetho and these three men, as Dlamini, Themba and Nkosi one gains access into a plurality of blackness through a detailing of their ordinary experiences. To be sure, one gains access into "urban place-making in townships [which] are ongoing processes that often involve hidden and subtle forms of spatial inscription, where local people define, reclaim, [reject] and connect spaces against the grain of dominant discourses" (Nuttall 2004).

Unsurprisingly, Dlamini's text has received a lot of critique. Compared to its thematic counterpart, *Down Second Avenue*, it was much more provocative (Jones 2014: 110). In response to these critiques,

Sarah Nuttal posed the question of "[w]hat would it mean to write too revealingly of the black self...What remains unspeakable?' (2004: 185). It seems that there remains something unspeakable for some thinkers such as Eric Miyeni who stated in the Sowetan newspaper, "Dlamini wrote Native Nostalgia, a book the premise of which, that growing up in apartheid-designed townships was fun, I find so sickening I decided never to read it" (2011). Miyeni likened Dlamini's exercise to a "Jew writ[ing] a book about how much fun he had had growing up in a Gestapo-designed ghetto during the Jewish holocaust years, and then seek to obtain a doctorate on the subject" (Miyeni 2011). Miyeni argues that seeking something positive from this time period runs the risk of "reducing the debt that humanity must for its transgressions" (ibid). He further asserts that he finds that it gives way to the argument that we should be happy now as black people now that apartheid is over (ibid). If I am correct in my understanding of Miyeni's assertions, it seems the thinker is fearful that restorative nostalgia reduces the guilt of White South Africa. Miyeni's critique of course extends to the aims of this dissertation, does the turn to particular lived experiences of this nature undermine collective experiences of black people?

To assert that this exercise is one that expunges the pain of the past is to make of one's experiences something of the imagination in my view. To be sure, both the pain and the joy of black people occurred as our narratives do not exist outside the social world. But perhaps let me not allow myself to be too quick in dismissing Miyeni's critique. Inherent in this kind of approach by Dlamini is a kind of revisionism which involves the inclusion and the exclusion of certain discourses and events. Dlamini's texts makes no mention of the political events of the time he is writing about as the 1960s and onwards. This is a very deliberate omission on the part of Dlamini which on the one hand is allied to the aims of his own project but on the other hand perhaps lacks context in detrimental ways. There is a further problematic in his revisionism as Dlamini has no commentary on the relationships between black people from the rest of the continent and South African blacks. Again, Dlamini is speaking to his lived experiences and he may well have not been aware of these kind of encounters in his childhood. But the fact that he alludes to the engagements between" neighbours and strangers, [as] mostly friendly, but sometimes violent, even deadly' (Dlamini 2009: 54) makes his undertaking suspect. This is precisely because it indicates that Dlamini purposefully sought out positive definitions of townships. Whether this is the nature of his experiences or a slanted view of townships remains about to interpretation of course. Despite some of these weaknesses I still find the kind of critique Miyeni levels against Dlamini to be wholly misplaced.

There seems to be a constant effort, despite clear utterances to the contrary, to deny alternate discourses of black people so as to keep in place only one version of the apartheid moment. We, black

people, are left in an either or position wherein seeking to speak about the joy of black people is a legitimation of an immoral political system. One gets the sense that Miyeni believes that there is a right way to remember and by extension one must have 'correct' memories of black people. The sort of conception of black people and blackness that Miyeni, and those who subscribe to a unitary idea of black people, subscribes to is prescriptive. Dlamini therefore assists us in "disarticulating" (Jones 2014: 112) presentations of the black self which rely only on narratives of opposition and/or suffering.

One of the "truisms" about black writing – at least since the late 1960s – has been that this writing is inescapably "political" and oppositional (Gaylard 2008: 16). As seen with the narrative of Dlamini (2009) above, this is not the case. This is seen further in the narrative of one Can Themba.

This is otherwise inaccessible in the grand hegemonic narratives discussed in chapter 3. The hegemonic serves to conceal these nuances and provides an avowal of singular meanings of a past that was, as evinced above, marked by plurality. Dlamini's detailing of his childhood; Themba's detailing of his experiences of Sophiatown; and Nkosi's expression of the weight of hegemonic black identity and the problematics of space all seem to echoe Njabulo Ndebele's infamous call for a return to the ordinary in representations of black experience (2006: 31–53). Ndebele argued for a move away from black discourse's reliance on "spectacle" because it will invariably lead to an "alienation effect" (ibid: 41). Rather, he advocated for a move towards a commitment to the "interiority of the everyday" (2006:31 – 53). Mbembe argues that this would entail grappling with self-formations and modes of thinking about subjectivity that are all encompassing so as to bring out the nuance of the self. It requires a move beyond what Paul Gilroy describes as "signs of sameness" (2001:101). Although Ndebele's essay was written much earlier than Dlamini's, the "revisiting of the ordinary suggests that the paradigm of 21st century South African blackness" (Jones 2014: 116) continues to be defined by the politics of a 'simple, single formulation' that may work to erase difference (Ndebele 2006: 51). What these narratives do for the discourses on black people is to remove problematic fixity from the hegemony of the dominant narrative.

5

Conclusion

I have sought in this work to advocate for a history of the present. I argued that this would entail the interrogation of the grand narratives of black people in 20th-21st century post-colonial South Africa through the use of a genealogical method of analysis. This was an interdisciplinary exercise that drew on theories and approaches from philosophy, cultural studies and cultural history, political sociology and historicism. It was important to interrogate these hegemonic narratives, as found in African nationalist historiographies, because they occluded all other enunciations by black people of their lived experiences. In the end, I sought to foreground the plurality of black people so as to alert the reader to the diversity characterized by micro-narratives i.e. the ordinary and the everyday experiences of black people.

In **Chapter 2**, I outlined, given that this work is subject to the same processes as specific works of Foucault (and Nietzsche), what the genealogical method is and how these grand narratives are produced via a discussion of power/-knowledge. Furthermore, I discussed historicism for Foucault and the dangers of certain historiographical approaches. This chapter was largely philosophical and served as a theoretical framework of this study so as to contend that there exist hegemonic nationalist historiographies produced by black South African nationalists which result in dominant narratives of black people as fund in public discourses.

In **Chapter 3,** through a discussion of the African Nationalism debates in 20th century South Africa I discussed the problematic effects of grand narratives of conceptions of black people which largely lay in the homogenizing effect of black people. I contended that these narratives are teleological in nature resulting in a pre-defined subjectivity; had an uncritical view of the past; that African Nationalist historiographies, and their resultants conceptions of black people, had adverse effects on black women in the political sphere as they were silenced and excluded in differing ways; and lastly, that there existed class biases amongst these leaders which both allowed them to speak on behalf of other black people but silenced and/or occluded nuance of experiences of black people. This chapter drew largely from political sociology and historicism.

In **Chapter 4,** I sought to orient discussions and conceptions of black people towards a historical consciousness that is life oriented i.e. focused on the everyday and the ordinary in black communities. I looked at particular narratives of black thinkers, activists and writers/intellectuals so as to counter the grand narratives discussed in chapter 3. It was also my aim to highlight how these particular experiences can be extended to the black community. My aim was to reject the absolute and that which leads us away from complexity towards non-monolithic narratives.

There are three main theoretical implications of my study which I wish to address here, the first of which is a point that has been laboured in a myriad of ways in the social sciences: black experiences are worthy of intellectual endeavours. Black experiences are significant precisely because they add to the humanization of the world. Given the nature of this programme- African European Cultural relations- it is important to decentre Europe and its provincialism. Indeed, turning to stories of people of the South, especially black people, will help all of social science in understanding the human condition in ways that grand theories and turns to sameness simply cannot do. This is beneficial for parties both sides of the proverbial ocean because Africans must also seek out nuance not just sameness of experience.

The second implication is to do with historical methods, so as to describe and analyse relations that have black people as their focus. This study also showed the efficacy of genealogical analysis as a method of historical enquiry. The ideas of power/-knowledge as espoused by Foucault are perhaps best suited in discussing a discursive practise such as blackness precisely because there is a radical openness that it allows. To be sure, the benefit of genealogy lies perhaps in its refusal to accept certain assumptions as opposed to proposing new narratives. One does not have to create a new subjectivity or new modes of existence because this method shows us that they are always there it is simply a matter of excavating them. This is something I think African philosophy can benefit greatly from in moving away from ideas but focusing on people. Whether it will remain to be philosophy having done so is a whole other thesis altogether.

The third implication of my study lies in the idea of the lack epistemic categories for black people which is of benefit for cultural studies and African Philosophy. Focusing on the intra-relations of black people rather than the interrelations of racial groups foregrounds the political, sociological, economic and historical dimensions of black people and subjects in general. Moreover, it emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary approaches to black people and their lived experiences.

Now, at the conclusion of this thesis I would like to discuss the practical relevance of my study which may speak to some weaknesses of this approach. I had to truly ask myself having entered into many discussions about the nature of this study, if I had not provided some kind of "Oprahesque 'triumph of the human spirit over adversity'" (Mangcu 2011) type of argument such that I have concealed and driven the conversation of black subjectivity away from suffering in a way that does not aid the very people which I claim I am most concerned with. To be sure, black people are not unhappy today because of a history that is no longer present but they continue to be dehumanized in various ways precisely because of this past. I think a reading of this study that would see this exercise as 'Oprahesque' would of course be an unfortunate interpretation. All the same, one has to ask themselves if we have we really grappled with the issues of white privilege such that we can turn to the non-political and the everyday as I suggest here.

In our current dispensation, we are reminded again that the past and present are deeply contested in particular the question of blackness. To be sure, we see that history has become a valued strategic terrain with which to assert claims to the present, evident in the overt linking by students during the Fees Must Fall Movements of the story of the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid past (Macqueen 2018: 1-2). To be sure, the question of blackness is complex in South Africa because where one sees black students rallying together towards a social cause is precisely the site of high levels of intraracial tensions. Given that post-apartheid South Africa was forcibly re-entered into the global capitalist system (Macqueen 2018: 231), coupled with a process of denationalization and renationalisation as Hart (2013) observes, the ideals of the ANC/PAC/BC hold a very dubious place in the political space at present. Indeed, students constantly alluded to their disillusionment with the ideals of the struggle heroes of the past and advocated for a complete overhaul of the system in some cases. But at the same time one found that students held quite narrowly essential understanding of black people, an almost extreme appropriation of the ideas of black thinkers of the ANC/PAC/BC e.g. which languages are native and express black authenticity, what one should wear, colourism etc.

If the reader would indulge me, I would like to paint a picture of how I felt as a black student during the must fall movements. This is a feeling I describe as being essentially in 'limbo'. I describe this 'limbo' as a condition wherein black students find themselves subscribing to ideals of black excellence. Ideals of black excellence can differ from community to community of course but the general sentiment is that as a black person you must strive to display great qualities and abilities which reflect well on other black people i.e. getting a university education, black travel, black activism etc. It is an idea which is very much borrowed from Black Consciousness and Pan-African thinking to foster positivity and black pride to rectify the negative imagery of black people so as to inspire other black

people to come after you. Education is one of the avenues for black excellence and is supposed to be the means to exit the historical condition of black people i.e. a lack of access to such spaces as Universities. But, there is so much anxiety that comes with this access as the proximity to whiteness, Universities and the surrounding areas, which exacerbates the reality of one's distance from privilege. Conversely, there is anger amongst young white South Africans who cannot get jobs, who might see a black student from elite private schools getting jobs, and not experiencing the kind of privilege they grew up thinking race can bestow on them. Even as a black student who went to an elite private school, thus escaping the brunt of white contempt because of my parents economic positions, I still continue to have race define my life in fundamental ways which are often negative. It is a 'limbo' that is difficult to *name* in the same way we are able to identify the violence of open racism of white bigots (Mangcu 2015).

So, one clings to the Zuma emblazoned yellow t-shirts or the EFFs story of a black South Africa or the neo-liberal pandering of the DA even though one is aware that these political parties continue to use black voices as protest, a kind of dehumanization that is hidden in plain sight. But it is in these spaces where one often sees 'struggle Olympics' play themselves out. By struggle Olympics I refer to the phenomenon of having to appear as oppressed and disadvantaged as possible as a black subject so as to legitimise one's struggle or to have others resonate with it more. As a black student involved in student politics I would often argue that while I am black, I feel my oppression most poignantly as a black woman and I do not find these concerns to be mutually exclusive. In turn, I would be told, often by black male activists, that '*we are all black in the end so let us deal with the concern that speaks to all of us cadre. We have to deal with the question of race first, then we will start looking at other issues'.* One further seeks to find refuge in these political ideas precisely because racism refuses to go away as it as the doors of corporate establishments; beaches; social media; in syllabuses; incidents at restaurants; and it comes in the form of your liberal white friend who keeps saying that '*there is only one race, the human race and there is no difference between you [black friend] and I'* when you begin to talk about the issues the black community faces in historically white Universities.

I paint this picture precisely because in this dissertation I sought to argue these contestations, this limbo, the grappling with meaning, space and functionality are all indications of the multiplicity of black people. But, perhaps what I have done in this project is merely described the nature of the black subject-something which oscillates between essentialism and constructivism-while all the while creating a binary between "social death and social life" (Kralova 2015: 235) of black people. By social death I am referring to "alienation, the loss of social identity, loss of concreteness, social exclusion" where social life refers to the "positive images of being black" (ibid). And perhaps, this strife is internal

to black studies, a strife which is perhaps a question of normativity and the deconstruction of norms; essentialism vs constructivism; an issue which is not unique to the discourse of black studies but also to discourses in the everyday life of black people. The question then is, could we be able to recognize what blackness is if it encompasses just about everything and anything? Additionally, I am wondering given the socio-cultural heterogeneity of black people I proffered in this thesis if it is possible to gain justice for black people collectively while still maintaining an open horizon of possibility i.e. their particularities? Are we to only discuss the positive values i.e. the social life of black subjectivity and what of social death? What should happen if there is a clash of understandings of blackness?

I think these are important questions and perhaps open up the space for further study that considers what an ethics of pluralism would be for heterogeneous blackness. Moreover, I think it would be interesting to see how one can marry a theory of blackness as plural with political praxis without falling prey to the problematics outlined in chapter 3. But suffice it so say, I think this study adds a valuable dimension to the discussion on black people socio in public discourse. To be sure, we cannot have an ambivalent approach to power/-knowledge in the material, symbolic, political exclusion in intraracial groupings. Thus, I argue that this kind of study allows for a contextual engagement that privileges lived experiences and fosters a hermeneutical universe of alternative discourses which could better help us to understand post-colonial South Africa. Moreover, I think this kind of methodological approach to blackness could be of value to African philosophy. The mainly white academy in South Africa with their "socio-cultural horizon and dominant class location have a greater control over what passes for philosophy in South Africa" (Lamola 2016: 503). This invariably brings out the question of the hegemony of certain epistemologies over others and the attended philosophical agenda of the "ruling intellectual force" (ibid). Thus, this kind of characterisation speaks to the urgency of not only the voices of black people but specifically the counter hegemonic conceptions of black people, specifically the stories of those discussed in chapter 4, as perhaps another way to add to the struggle against white rule. Therefore, I recommend that further research can be done as to the efficacy of privileging this ideological approach in African philosophy so as to look at the place of the everyday and the organic generators of blackness.

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