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Postcolonial Homiletics? A Practical Theological Engagement with Postcolonial Thought

By

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Abstract

This thesis engages postcolonial theory for homiletics in South Africa. The theoretical presumption lies therein that South African homiletic theologians have yet to consider postcolonial theory for preaching explicitly. That does not, however, mean that such attempts have not been made in practical theology.

The first movement of this thesis is a genealogical tracing of Black Theology of Liberation (BTL), which is deemed in practical theological circles as postcolonial insights. Through the genealogical tracing, BTL can indeed be called a postcolonial theology. However, BTL's epistemological framework seems to be thoroughly colonial, and it is thus far unable to move beyond a fixed epistemological centre.

Hereafter, postcolonial insights are engaged as a theoretical framework for engagement with homiletics. This thesis proposes three main focal images as postcolonial: 1) Decolonising the mind; 2) Moving the centre; and 3) The postcolonial subject. The first is a lingual and mental naming and transcending of the status quo. The second is an epistemological movement of perspective which takes cognisance that a plurality of centres is possible. The third is a contemplation on identity and the shift to an understanding of the subject as decentred and fragmented.

With these three focal images in mind, this thesis contemplates homiletics, liturgy, and hermeneutics as pillars of the homiletic endeavour. Returning in conclusion to the conversation with South African homiletic theologians, this thesis finds that postcolonial insights have been implicitly prominent in the aesthetic movement of South African homiletics. Finally, this thesis proposes future homiletic endeavours built upon the ideas of postcolonial thought.

Key Terms:

Postcolonial Theory

Moving the Centre

Postcolonial Homiletics

Postcolonial Hermeneutics

Prophetic Preaching in South Africa

Decolonising the mind

The postcolonial subject

Postcolonial Liturgy

Black Theology of Liberation

Aesthetic Homiletics in South Africa

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You must go on. I can't go on. I'll go on.

Samuel Beckett

To the friends I have gained, to the friends I have lost, and to the strangers I've met. To the family who received me with my faults and to the one which could not accept me. To those who have been my home and to those who have ceased to be my home. All of you, in ways no-one can fathom or comprehend, have been the many faces of hope and love in my life. I am and will forever be grateful for the influence you have had on me.

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For Zakkai and Joshua

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Introduction

As far as I am aware, postcolonial insights have only been taken into consideration within homiletics in a handful of North and South American literature (see Jiménez 2005; Travis 2014; Pui-lan 2015; Valle 2015). In South Africa, there has not been any homiletic work which has explicitly worked with postcolonial insights. Thus, postcolonial theory is an unexplored space within South African homiletics which should be engaged.

However, from the very onset of this engagement with postcolonial insights, I take cognisance that different meanings (often contested) are included under the label 'postcolonial'. Even more, concepts such as 'decolonisation' and 'decoloniality' are used interchangeably with 'postcolonial'. In my understanding, there is a consensus that decolonisation refers to the historical and political resistance to colonisation and subsequent liberation of colonies after World War Two (Said 1994:198; Mignolo 2007:503). However, this definition does not exhaust what decolonisation entails. Theorists of both decoloniality (Mignolo 2007:452) and postcolonialism (Said 1994:209) claim to be busy with epistemological decolonisation. This is thus decolonisation of the mind or a secondary, ideological resistance against colonisation.

Mignolo (2007:452) places the difference between decoloniality and postcolonialism as follows: “The de-colonial shift… is a project of de-linking while post-colonial criticism and theory is a project of scholarly transformation within the academy.” Thus, Mignolo (Ibid., 452-453) contends that decoloniality goes beyond postcolonialism's scholarly transformation. It is a "delinking that leads to de-colonial epistemic shift and brings to the foreground other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding

and, consequently, other economy [*sic*], other politics, other ethics" (Ibid.). However, Lartey (2013:ix-x referring to Edward Said) proposes that postcolonialism as a form of scholarly criticism is not a-practical, and thus not merely an academic endeavour. In a similar vein to Mignolo's decoloniality, Lartey's postcolonialism is "life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse, its social goals are non-coercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom" (Ibid.). At the same time, Bhabha (1994:4) is adamant the *post* in postcoloniality "only embod[ies] its restless and revisionary energy if [it] transform[s] the present into an expanded and ex-centric site of experience and empowerment".

Although there is thus ambiguity between 'decolonisation', 'decoloniality', 'postcoloniality', and 'postcolonialism', my choice for the term *postcolonial* is a choice for academic, systemic, and conscious decolonisation. In other terms, I could have chosen one of the other terms, but choose to focus on the *post* of postcolonial as a transcending of, and a moving beyond, the colonial.

2. My Location of Culture

At the same time, I believe it is important to state my own subjective and historical location of culture (see Bhabha 1994) or positionality for this endeavour of engaging postcolonial thought. After all, as a white male in South Africa, my positionality could be perceived as problematic in this endeavour. Moreover, as Vuyani Vellem (2017:1) proposes, an excellent place to start is to "'disclose your location and assumptions upfront', in order to contribute with humility and responsibility".

When South Africa became a democracy, I was three-and-a-half years old. My family benefitted from apartheid, and until the age of ten, I lived on a farm in Vrede, in the Free State province. I have sometimes endeavoured to determine how the land in

Vrede came to be under the ownership of my family. However, I have been met by both uncertainty and hostility for engaging in such a line of interrogation. Because of financial difficulties on the farm, family tensions, and the prospects of making a better life elsewhere, my parents moved to Standerton at the beginning of 2001. In all aspects my childhood was normal for a young white boy of those years; my friends were white, I called older white people *Oom* (uncle) and *Tannie* (aunt), and I understood black people to be of a different class, not part of *my* community.

However, a fundamental change in my lived experience took place in 2009, my first year as a theology student at the University of the Free State (UFS). With the implementation of racial integration in the UFS residences, I became the only white resident in the Villa Bravado residence. To be clear, I was not the only white student placed in Villa Bravado; I was the only one who showed up and lived there.

In retrospect, my journey towards the moment I moved into Villa Bravado and the subsequent three years of calling it my home, seems almost as if out of a novel. When I received the letter that I had been placed in Villa Bravado at the end of 2008, I was bombarded with warnings from elders and peers: "It is a black residence, you cannot live there". My parents, time and again, warned me, begged me, and proposed alternatives. My answer consisted of certainty that I was going to live there: after all, I had been given accommodation on campus, it was close to my classes, and my Christian understanding was that all people are equal before God. Villa Bravado subverted all the expectations of my parents. I was treated with respect and dignity by the seniors students in Villa Bravado. I was included in all the residence activities, and after my culture shock subsided, I stopped thinking about racial differences. In my second year, I served on the Residence Committee, six months as Vice-Prime and six as Prime.

In all honesty, my presence in Villa Bravado made very little difference to the process of integration. At the end of my first year, I was able to recruit three other white students to live as seniors students in Villa Bravado, and we were able to recruit twenty white first-years to become residents in Villa Bravado. For perspective, Villa Bravado has the capacity to accommodate 160 students. Although the white first-year students showed up, they all left by the second semester. This phenomenon was an unfortunate experience for the whole of Villa Bravado. During those times, it was understood as a failure of the residence when integration did not work. I cannot recall exactly what happened in my third year, because I distanced myself from the management of the residence. However, integration worked very well. And by my fourth year, when I no longer lived in Villa Bravado, the residence received an award for the best strides in integration.

Irrelevant of the exact implications my stay in Villa Bravado had on the residence, it had a significant impact on who I became[1]. For the first time in my life, I made friends

[1] On contemplating my journey within Villa Bravado residence and the academic environment, I wonder about the possibility of a white (male) South African transcending the mindset, experiences, and expectations of the white community without an experience similar to the immersion I experienced in Villa Bravado. I think there are two sides to the influence this immersion had on me. Firstly, who I became was only possible because of this alternative space. Secondly, I was not the only one with the opportunity to be immersed in this space. Others were also given the opportunity but never embraced it. The first represents, on the one hand, the need for such spaces. Without alternative spaces, spaces of negotiation, we cannot transcend our upbringing. The second represents the (un)willingness to participate in these spaces. The existence of these spaces does not automatically bring forth the desire to participate therein. Stated differently, there is a Catch-22 to the issue of whiteness in South Africa.

with people whose lived experiences were completely different to my own. I heard stories of suffering and survival which I did not think possible. I became invested in the lives of my fellow housemates, irrelevant of cultural, lingual, and racial differences. I relinquished so many prejudices about those I once thought were subaltern to myself, whom I had been told were primitive. I came to a deep realisation that all people were merely trying to make their way in this world.

Looking back, my experience in Villa Bravado paved the way for me to forge an identity outside of the confines, loyalties, and expectations of my race. In 2014, I chose to do a mini-dissertation for my Master's in Divinity on the theology and sermons of Allan Boesak (Wessels 2014). From Boesak, I learned a deep appreciation for Black Theology of Liberation, specifically the contextual and biblical hermeneutics from the starting point of the marginalised, weak, and excluded. Along with the influence the Confession of Belhar had on me, in 2016 I decided to accept a call to the Uniting Reformed Church (URCSA) Immanuel Standerton; once again working against my white privilege by associating with those who would be perceived as "others" by some white people. I served as Minister of Word and Sacrament at the Immanuel URCSA congregation in Standerton for two years.

However, my association with the experience of poverty was always in a proxy fashion. Some of the members of Standerton's URCSA congregation lived in extreme poverty, while I lived, along with my wife, in relative comfort. I saw poverty, I experienced its effects on the bodies of others, but I was, to a great extent, a mere observer. That is, until the end of 2018. As I am writing this, exactly a year ago, I lost everything. My marriage ended, I resigned from my position at the church (subsequently losing my legitimation status), and were it not for the unconditional friendship of colleagues in the academia, I would have opted out of theology. For the first time in my life, I

experienced failure, fear, trauma, and poverty. I lived with my family for a couple of months, sleeping on a bed in the living room. I experienced the suffering of unemployment, the depression of having no purpose, and envy for those whose lives seemed to be going well. At the same time, however, I was able to achieve more than I expected of myself. I was welcomed by friends and strangers, not as a failure, but with love, and I became a more empathic human being.

My self-understanding changed rapidly. With the experience of failing so miserably in life, I was unable to associate my theological training with my lived experience. Even though I knew about grace and often spoke about grace in sermons (claiming that God's grace was for everyone, even the drunkard, the criminal, and the gambler), I never genuinely expected that I would be in need of God's grace. In my mind, grace was intended for others, not for me. And I thought I would be able to live my life in such a way that my righteousness would surpass the need for grace. However, it was only in my lived experience of being utterly forsaken by God, through my shortcomings, that I realised how much I indeed needed, and will always need, God's grace.

Nevertheless, I am aware of white privilege and the tendency that white tears receive a lot of empathy. It is not my intention to propose that my suffering is equal to the suffering of black people during apartheid or even now, with the legacy of apartheid still with us. Neither is it my intention to invalidate the suffering of others. I take cognisance of Steve Biko's (1987:20-27) critique against "white liberals", and in his words, I want to "serve as a lubricating material so that we [can] change the gears in trying to find a better direction for South Africa". In the words of John De Gruchy (2019:8-9) stated at *The 8th Steve De Gruchy Memorial Lecture* on 30 April 2019, "Is It Possible for a White South African Male to Enter the Kingdom of Heaven?":

> White South Africans cannot change in isolation from black South Africans. You cannot become a champion of justice if you are not enabled to see injustice through the eyes of those who experience it; you cannot become a worker for liberation if you do not experience something of the pain of oppression. You cannot really hear the gospel in a life-changing way if you only hear it from white voices. You cannot overcome fear of the other if you never meet and come to know the other… There are lots of them, young, white male South Africans willing to engage in shaping a better future, and willing to share what they have received for the benefit of us all. (De Gruchy 2019:8-9)

I hope that my contemplation of postcolonial thought for preaching will simultaneously be an openness to learning from scholars who are different from me, and my attempt in trying to shape homiletics for preaching which seeks out a better future for South Africa.

3. Dominant Homiletic Thought in South Africa

This brings me to the current state of homiletics in South Africa[2]. For my 2016 Master's thesis, I researched the trends in South African homiletics from 1974 to 2015 (Wessels 2016). The research was published in a chapter co-written with Reverend Martin Laubscher as *A Prophetic Word on Studies in Prophetic Preaching*[3]*? Re-visioning*

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[2] Throughout this thesis, I mostly focus on homiletic theory in South Africa. I do, however, take cognisance of the lacuna of contemplation on scholars of New Homiletics. I envision a comparative study for the future between the postcolonial homiletics I have espoused and New Homiletics.

[3] I take cognisance that there are a variety of interpretations of what constitutes prophetic preaching.

Prophetic Preaching's (Post)Apartheid Condition. Herein we (Laubscher and Wessels 2016:182) claimed that prophetic preaching has become dominant in South African homiletic thought since the early 2010's[4]. We traced the coinage of prophetic preaching in South African homiletics back to Hennie Pieterse's 1995 book, *Desmond Tutu's Message: A Qualitative Analysis* (Ibid., 178). The definition we attributed to prophetic preaching was: "prophetic preaching is conceived in South Africa as preaching which is keenly aware and takes serious[ly] the ethical-political-societal dimensions of preaching" (Ibid.).

I

From this understanding of prophetic preaching, the agenda for academic homiletics in democratic South Africa became poverty relief through development.

> [L]iberation theology and prophetic preaching should guide the churches' contribution to the struggle for LIBERATION FROM POVERTY [*sic*] through reconstruction and development.
>
> Hennie Pieterse (1995:97)

Pieterse (2002:557) builds upon this agenda by proposing that the goal of preaching

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Within the fraternity of South African homiletics since 1995, prophetic preaching has been understood as preaching which is political in nature. Another interpretation, with which I firmly disagree, is to propose that prophetic preaching is seeing the future. However, in my (see Wessels, 2016) contemplation of prophetic preaching, I have suggested that prophetic preaching is merely to proclaim what the text has said. Stated differently, as the prophets proclaimed what was heard from God as revelation, so the prophetic preacher proclaims what was heard from the Bible as revelation.

[4] It should be noted that prophetic preaching never became part of the consciousness of the church, and was therefore almost never practised.

is “to inspire the faithful with hope, and the courage to tackle the situation of poverty, and work for a better future”. Furthermore, there is a need for a type of “missionary diaconate”, where the “church *for* the poor” [*sic*] is to aid the “church *of* the poor” [*sic*] in this endeavour of poverty relief[5] (Ibid., 559). Although, in more recent years, Pieterse (2013:5) entertains the possibility that all preaching is prophetic “in general terms”, he returns to the proposal he made in 1995, that prophetic preaching is “from the angle of the poor… in terms of their need for justice and righteousness” with the “hermeneutical orientation” of responding to “the prevailing situation of poverty”.

Similarly, Cas Vos (2005:302) locates the hermeneutical starting point of preaching as the position of the poor, whereby “all ideologies that weaken and jeopardise the position of the poor” should be called out. Furthermore, preaching’s goal should aid in such a manner that “listeners are able to respond obediently and transform their situation [of poverty] positively and through action” (Ibid.).

So too proposes Allan Boesak (2014:1060) that preaching should be an “embrace of

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[5] Unfortunately, this study will not include a thorough contemplation on ecclesiology. If anything is said about ecclesiology, it will be in passing. That being said, Pieterse’s differentiation between rich church and poor church is hugely problematic and speaks more of the legacy of apartheid than anything else. At the same time, I appreciate that Pieterse tries to incorporate the insights of BTL. However, he is merely unable to propose the incorporation of BTL which transcends the cold realities of the division of churches and the worship service on a Sunday. An alternative proposal for ecclesiology is that of Orlando Costas (1974:33), who proposes that the church should be the church *with* the poor: “The Church is faithful to her witnessing vocation when she becomes a catalyst for God's liberating action in the world of poverty, exploitation, hunger, guilt and despair by *standing* in *solidarity* with people, by *showing* them with *concrete actions* that God cares and wills to save them and by *helping them* to *understand* the material and moral roots of their situation.”

the struggles of the poor and the powerless". However, Boesak's proposal does not include the idea that the goal of preaching becomes poverty relief, either by the rich for the poor as charity, nor as self-development of the poor. He instead opts to speak against the capitalist system, claiming that it is a kingdom in opposition to the kingdom of God. Therefore he claims, "the world as it is is *wrong*" (Boesak 2015:122). Instead, he proposes that Christians should participate "in acts of liberation and justice in the dreaded places of fear and trepidation where the powers believe they hold sway" (Ibid.).

II

Other scholars in South African homiletics choose to take a position which is harder to pinpoint, in my opinion, because their chosen position tries to be *neutral*. However, as far as I am concerned, they propose the same paradigm as playing by the rules of capitalist development and poverty relief.

Ian Nell (2009:571) proposes that preaching, in a theodrama paradigm, should aid the church "to live (i.e. act out) the story of salvation for the world". He places two markers for this goal; that the church is "the stage where God's drama is played out" and that Christians must, as a responsibility, participate in this drama towards the renewal of the world (Ibid.). Nowhere is there an explicit or implicit questioning of systemic injustice, or the legacy of apartheid. Instead, there is merely a comment that the theodrama "applies equally to the challenges facing the churches within the current South African context" (Ibid., 572). Which challenges? For which church(es)?

In 2017, Nell (2017) contemplated the theodrama paradigm once more. This time his starting position was the proposal of the British theologian, David Ford, that "the dramatic and therefore performative aspects of Christian theology" should be

privileged for the future of Christian theology (Nell 2017:309-310). Firstly, I wonder how relevant Ford's proposal is to the South African context. Once more, Nell (Ibid., 318) proposes the theodrama as an answer to Ford's call; theodrama as God's invitation to the Christian community to "partake in the drama of life". Yet, nowhere does he clarify the hermeneutical pointers of interpretation for what he means by the drama of life. Whose theodrama? He could claim it is God's drama, but who is then responsible for interpreting what is part of God's drama and what is not? Is this God of drama neutral? Or does this God choose sides? Is it merely *our* (whoever our group or enclave is) drama of life? What about the drama or lived experiences of the *other*? Moreover, even if he proposes that God is the primary actor, who decides what we have heard from God as the primary plot of the drama? What are the implications of the silence on matters of contextualisation? And if there is silence on contextual matters, what does salvation mean within the theodrama?

In a similar vein, De Wet and Kruger (2013:1) contemplate prophetic preaching in general, neutral terms, stating: “Preaching that ministers the Word of the eternal God to a society in need of change and destined for change can be defined as prophetic preaching”. What exactly is meant by change? Moreover, they believe prophetic preaching should equip “Christians to… [refocus] the world on its destiny in a restored relationship with God” (Ibid., 7). Once more, is it possible to make such bold claims in a neutral manner, especially as white South African males who both trained and wrote theologically during the apartheid years? Moreover, is it possible to make such claims as if in a neutral manner from the positionality of the North-West University’s Potchefstroom campus? Or at least, how is it possible to take a neutral stance without even naming your own positionality, today and historically?

In another article, the late Fritz de Wet (2015:8) proposes that prophetic preaching

should be an increasing awareness of "God's vision for this world" from the hermeneutical orientation of a "heart that is in the process of being purified by God's grace". From this awareness and orientation of the heart, De Wet (Ibid.) believes reality can be named for what it is, and a prophetic vision for the future can be preached. In my opinion, this proposal of De Wet represents the most esoteric proposal for prophetic preaching. How is this awareness determined or underpinned? How is it determined whether or not a process of purification is taking place? Is not all preaching then prophetic, irrelevant of all matters, when God is actively purifying the hearts of all the faithful? What about explicit and implicit agendas on the pulpit, even of people with seemingly pure hearts? And should we then even contemplate preaching? From another perspective, what is the pedagogy for teaching preaching in such a manner?

My discomfort with a neutral position when it comes to academic homiletics is twofold. First, I do not think such a thing as a neutral position exists and to claim such a position is a myth. Secondly, a neutral position, in my opinion, merely underscores the status quo. If there is no explicit contextual analysis, then it implies that the prevailing systems must be acceptable at best and God-ordained at worst. Either way, neither preaching will shy away from the political and the public. It will be private and spiritualised.

III

One scholar of homiletics, Johan Cilliers, has been able to contemplate preaching without becoming entangled in blind assimilation of prophetic preaching as poverty relief and capitalist development.

During the time in which prophetic preaching became an essential concept in

homiletics, Cilliers wrote *The Living Voice of the Gospel* (2004). Herein Cilliers (2004:32) developed a theory for homiletics which he summarises as follows: "Preaching takes place when God's voice is heard through the voice of the text, in the voice of the time (congregation context), through the (unique) voice of the preacher. When these four voices become one voice, then the sermon is indeed *viva vox evangelii*". Cilliers (Ibid.) builds his homiletic theory around these four aspects of preaching: theology, hermeneutics, contextualisation, and the person(ality) of the preacher. This study of Cilliers, in accordance with earlier work (see Cilliers 1996), focusses on the ethics of preaching, how preaching can either be the living voice of the gospel, giving life and speaking the good news or moralism, binding life and instilling fear. In a 2018 interview, Cilliers made the following remark:

> I started out with a fascination for the worlds and dynamics of written texts, in particular also for the destructive elements thereof. So, I started to discover how dangerous for instance, preaching can be – if it creates and defends destructive agendas such as apartheid. Moralism could also be linked to texts that bind and judge, that instil fear and create enclaves; that enslave within the rigid laws of some forms of religion. (Cilliers 2018:7).

What Cilliers does when it comes to prophetic preaching, rather than following in Pieterse's footsteps, is to interpret Black Theology of Liberation for himself. He comes to the understanding that Black Theology of Liberation's image of God is one who stands next to the weak in society and showcases God's foolishness and weakness, and claims that the preacher should follow in this foolishness of God (Cilliers 2008:14-16, 2009:198, 2010:90). The implication hereof is that the political status quo, even democracy, cannot merely be interpreted as God's will, nor can anyone state that

preaching is supposed to cling to the agendas of poverty relief and development. After all, God's association with the poor, marginalised, and subaltern represents a foolish subversion to the status quo. In my opinion, Cilliers, albeit in an implicit manner, represents a postcolonial direction within South African homiletics.

With his focus on the ethics of preaching, Cilliers goes on to interpret a sermon of Allan Boesak in a completely different way to the expected conclusion that it is a prophetic sermon. He starts by stating that the sermon "could justifiably be called *prophetic preaching that strives to address a concrete situation*", but concludes that the situation of apartheid overpowers the gospel in the sermon and turns the sermon into a moralistic exercise (Cilliers 2013:9). Cilliers makes the following claim:

> This then becomes [Boesak's] intention with his sermon: to bring God back into the picture, and the way to achieve this is by calling on the Christians in South Africa to act in such a manner that God can again be (experienced as) present in the South African situation. (Cilliers 2013:9).

Once more, in this demonstration of Cilliers, so-called prophetic preaching can be just another form of moralisation. Put another way, if God is taken out of the picture of a sermon, even if it is political and speaks against injustices in society, only the human endeavour of bettering the world remains. After all, the exact opposite is also true; if ethics and human responsibility are taken out of the picture, the status quo becomes equated with God's will.

His most striking critique against prophetic preaching (and some other types of moralising sermons), however, are these words:

> God in fact... is changed by the sermon from present and active to absent and inactive. This *image of the absent and inactive God* is underlined by

> the stereotypical structure of religious activism (see Cilliers 1996:98) [*sic*], which would be described in a nutshell as follows: 1. God did (in the past) 2. God wants to (in the future) 3. We must (in the present). (Cilliers 2012:5, original italics).

Again, for Cilliers religious activism exterminates God from the pulpit[6], irrelevant of the perspective from where the sermon is preached, be it to sustain the status quo or to dismantle the status quo.

Fortunately, Cilliers does not only critique prophetic preaching. He also proposes a definition of prophetic preaching, which takes God seriously as the primary actor in all of life. Cilliers (2015:378-379) states that prophetic preaching is the evoking of the experience of anticipation of new creation breaking forth within the old creation, through what God does and will do[7].

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[6] Here I am explicitly referring to Cilliers' (1996) book, *Die uitwissing van God op die Kansel* [The Extermination of God on the Pulpit]. Herein he goes on to show how God is abolished from the pulpit through the analysis of sermons broadcasted over the radio. The idea that moralism (religious activism) exterminates God already came to the fore in Cilliers' DTh thesis (1982), *Soos woorde van God* [Like words of God], which was later revised and extended as *God for Us?* (2006). Cilliers' discomfort with moralism (religious activism) is palpable throughout his writings.

[7] As I understand Cilliers' homiletics, he is deeply concerned that God should be the primary actor within the sermon. However, with regards to how this primary action interacts with ethics and the church's interaction within South African social realities, much is left unanswered. What is the relationship between preaching and human agency, especially that of the faith community? What about the liturgy after the liturgy? What is the relationship between moralism and ethics? Furthermore, what would be the relationship between the God-event of Cilliers' homiletics and human agency in society; if any?

IV

The dominance of prophetic preaching as poverty relief and development in South African homiletics, speaks of an academic colonisation of Black Theology of Liberation (BTL).

In the conclusion of this study, I will converse more thoroughly with the current academic thoughts in South African homiletics. For the time being, however, I would like to propose that prophetic preaching as the dominant system of thought for South African homiletics is a form of academic colonisation of BTL.

There should be no question about the intention of homiletic scholars in South Africa with regards to prophetic preaching. I am convinced their intentions are indeed pure. However, as the academic environment endeavours to be a space of scholarly negotiation, and is always open to critique, I am convinced that the proposal of prophetic preaching is problematic, even colonial.

It is undoubtedly true that homiletic contemplation on prophetic preaching tries to be transformative within the context of democratic South Africa. However, beneath the good intentions of the homiletic academia, white scholars have been attempting to position themselves in such a manner as to maintain advantage "in a situation in which black people have legally and legitimately achieved political power" (Steyn and Foster 2008:26). Again, without admitting that BTL was ignored during the apartheid years, and (even) explicitly condemned (see Smith 1987), the homiletic fraternity embraces BTL as *the paradigm* for preaching in democratic South Africa (see Laubscher and Wessels 2016). Moreover, with an agenda for poverty relief and development, which does not take the radical claims of BTL seriously, we seem to be misrepresenting

BTL[8].

In an attempt to be generous with regards to studies of prophetic preaching, De Oliveira Andreotti *et al.* (2015:26) help to make sense. They (Ibid.) propose that epistemological transformation could take on the character of soft-reform where the emphasis is on “the rights and responsibilities of individuals to determine their own success or failure, as measured by the values of the existing (and taken for granted) system". In this sense, the rules of the dominant system are not questioned, and there is a mere proposal that success is dependent on the individual’s ability to pull themselves up from the bootstraps.

As De Oliveira Andreotti *et al.* (2015:26) shows, the difference between what has happened in South African homiletics (soft-reform) and what has been called for by Black theologians (radical-reform) “is a recognition of epistemological dominance". The first does not recognise, while the latter recognises epistemological dominance. Nowhere does post-apartheid South African homiletics identify or contemplate epistemological dominance. Radical-reform, in opposition, calls for “a more drastic interruption of business-as-usual” (Ibid.).

4. Postcolonial Preaching?

Returning to the study at hand, I endeavour to engage with postcolonial theory from a practical theological position with a focus on homiletics. My central research question is: What would a theory of homiletics which takes postcolonial theory seriously possess? Or, in short: Postcolonial Homiletics?

[8] With the implication that the *people* are not embraced by South African homiletics.

In endeavouring to answer this question, I have divided this thesis into seven chapters. This chapter is the first as introduction.

In the second chapter, I endeavour to articulate concretely what I mean by *postcolonial*. It is, therefore, a chapter dedicated to defining concepts. I begin with Black Theology of Liberation (BTL), as it already retains postcolonial ideas. At the same time, I have delimited where postcolonial theory deviates from BTL.

In the third chapter, I contemplate homiletic theory in conversation with postcolonial theory. The first movement is the contemplation of some homiletic theories. Thereafter, as second movement, I place a preliminary postcolonial theory for homiletics on the table. Lastly, I attempt a postcolonial sermon.

In the fourth chapter I look at the potential of a postcolonial liturgy. This is also a conversation between current streams and thoughts about liturgy and postcolonial thought as I delimited in chapter 2. From here, I place route markers for a postcolonial liturgy. Lastly, I attempt a postcolonial liturgy.

In chapter five, I contemplate postcolonial theory and hermeneutics with regards to the interpretation of the Bible for postcolonial preaching. Taking Acts 10, I consider three focal images of postcolonial thought to shift the centre of hermeneutics and open new possibilities of interpreting the text.

In the sixth and final chapter, I return to the landscape of South African homiletics. Here I endeavour a postcolonial reflection on the two major streams in South African homiletics: prophetic preaching and aesthetics. Hereafter, I contemplate the book of Sarah Travis, *Decolonizing Preaching*. Finally, I pinpoint possible future directions for

South African homiletics as postcolonial endeavours.[9]

[9] Within this thesis, no empirical research was undertaken with the rationale that the theoretic foundation adequately carries the proposed postcolonial perspective on homiletics. In other terms, the purpose of this thesis was to suggest a postcolonial perspective on homiletics without empirical underscoring of such a perspective. This also means that no ethical clearance was needed.

Chapter 2: Genealogical Comparison between Black Theology of Liberation (BTL) and Postcolonial Thought

1. Introduction

At the annual conference of the Society of Practical Theology in South Africa in 2017, with the theme *Decolonising Practical Theology in South Africa*, I was struck by the experience of repeatedly hearing Black Theology of Liberation (BTL) equated with decolonisation. Bowers Du Toit (2018:33) stood out as a prominent example herein. She claimed that her "paper highlights the manner in which BC [Black Consciousness] and Black Theology could provide the opportunity for decolonised praxis that recognises the importance of indigenous identity and self-reliance, centres the local community and forms part of larger movements for justice and liberation" (Ibid.).

Stated differently, BTL was identified as the epistemological carrier of decolonisation. However, at the same time, postcolonial thinkers such as Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said, Aníbal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Frantz Fanon did not feature in the conference.

The first question which came to my mind was: Is there a difference between BTL and postcolonial thought? The second: What would it mean to consider postcolonial scholars who have been excluded in the practical theological conversation seriously? I will try to answer these questions through a genealogical overview of BTL on the one hand and postcolonial theory on the other.

2. Black Theology of Liberation – Genealogical Overview

To give a historical overview of Black Theology of Liberation (BTL), I have decided to focus on BTL in South Africa, taking cognisance that South African BTL's relation to

the global movements of Liberation Theology is both similar and different. However, a scope of global Liberation Theology is merely too much for this project. I will give this overview by tracing thoughts in the Journal of Black Theology in South Africa from 1987 to 1989, as well as some Black Theological thought since the dawn of a democratic South Africa.

2.1. Black Theology of Liberation during Apartheid

Maimela (1986:101-112) proposes that BTL during Apartheid emphasised four themes: “The World is in Conflict between the Oppressor and the Oppressed”, “Theology must take a Preferential Option for the Oppressed”, “Salvation as Historical Social Fact”, and “The World is History-in-the-Making”. From a different perspective, but also essential to take notice of, Motlhabi (1986:41) names four sources for BTL: “the Bible, the black experience, the black church, and the influence of African culture”.

In my attempt to present a manageable tracing of BTL during apartheid building upon Maimela and Motlhabi (notwithstanding the apparent shortcomings any manageable tracing will have), I propose three markers for BTL during apartheid. One, the black experience as the hermeneutic point of departure. Two, a commitment to BTL as theology which takes the black experience seriously as the hermeneutic point of departure. And three, real-world socio-economic liberation for the black community.

2.1.1. The Black Experience as the Hermeneutic Point of Departure

The first task of BTL is the hermeneutic position of culture, concretely placed in the context of the black lived experience. Within the black experience as the hermeneutic point of departure, I distinguish three aspects. The first, a concrete and thoroughly contextual naming of the reality of the black experience vis-a-vis a white world. Secondly, a theological interpretation of God and the church as participants in the

black experience. Thirdly, the black experience calls forth a rethinking of the relationship between African culture and Christianity.

I

The black experience as the hermeneutic point of departure beckons a concrete and thorough contextual naming of the reality of the black experience vis-a-vis a white world.

> Black people have been dispossessed of their land which is the basic means of all production and subsistence as well as a source of power.
>
> Takatso Mofokeng (1987b:24).

> Black theology's starting point, therefore, is an economically, politically, culturally and morally dispossessed people. It carries with it the morality and social assumptions of a people who have suffered the hypocrisy of a supposedly superior civilization.
>
> Itumeleng Mosala (1987:32-34)

Naming black experience in its contextual reality is firstly a naming of the oppression of black existence. Even more, this naming of reality thoroughly is understood in BTL as a crucial task to "hear the 'new word of God' in the present" (Ramose 1988:19). Thus, the position of the black experience as the hermeneutic point of departure is from the outset a theological task.

BTL clearly and concisely names oppression as a systemic “domination of black people” by the white oppressor and the apartheid government-sanctioned violence through "rubber bullets and buckshot… handgrenades and petrol bombs” (Mofokeng 1987a:1). Ngcokovane (1988:27) rightly shows that this situation is a situation of people being robbed of freedom by massive structures of society. Once more, there is no space for generalities; to consider the black experience seriously is to concisely and particularly interpret and name the context. Mofokeng (1987a:10) goes on to show

how the land has "forcibly and illegally [been] stolen" from black people. Furthermore, this dispossession is an economic activity which determines the oppression, lack of means of production, and powerlessness of black people, as well as the economic flourishing of whites (Mofokeng 1987b: 24).

From the position of the black experience, there is a clear vision that capitalism creates chaos, destroying products which could have been used by the same people producing these products. However, in the interest of ascertaining profits, this does not happen (Mosala 1989:33).

Motlhabi (1987:4-5) opines that the “so-called black problem” consists of three main questions for the white government; how to dispossess black people of their land without regression, how to exploit black labour without reasonable compensation, and how to tax black people without political representation. “All this amounted to wishing that black people were mere zombies who provided all the needs of white people but remained dispensable in all other respects” (Ibid.). All forms of social services and services administrated by the government followed this trend of being exceptionally backwards, and inadequate for black people (Sizwe 1988:51). At the same time, black as a term in the South African context is also an overarching term for all indigenous South African people. Thus the black experience is an experience of a colonised people (Ramose 1988:21).

Even within religion the rules are different from a position of blackness, there is no "covenant with their Creator and enjoy[ment] of God's blessing[s]", there is only a life of "concrete misery and constant reminder that they are… non-persons" (Maimela 1987:44). From birth, black people are made to understand that they are not made in God's image but God's "negative image… their life is a negative anthropology itself" (Mofokeng 1989:45). It became the church’s role in South African society to legitimise

“the sociopolitical and economic interests of whites at the expense of the oppressed Black majority” (Maimela 1988:18). Even the missionaries who would sometimes stand up for indigenous South Africans, would not hesitate to use violence when they thought it necessary to punish African kings who did not want to adhere to their agendas (Mofokeng 1988:35). Moreover, the missionaries used the Bible in such a way as to oppress black people in South Africa, with the conviction that biblical texts sanctioned such oppression, and made better slaves of black people (Ibid., 46). Mofokeng (Ibid.) furthermore, admits that the Bible is a problem for BTL, exactly because it has been, and can be used to justify oppression.

Once more, Mofokeng (1989:38) showcases clearly that the theology of Afrikaners underscored and fostered colonialism by locating election and covenant amongst Afrikanerdom as if they were the new Israel who were not only led by God but also led towards the new promised land - South Africa. This implied that Afrikaners’ Christian mission endeavours amongst black people were always that of superiority and unequal relations (Ibid.). Conversely, the existence of oppression, discrimination, and exclusion from white Christianity brought forth the understanding that black people and black people "alone are indeed born in sin and are not worthy of the love and grace of God" (Mofokeng 1989:45). Again, Afrikaner theology has created a "system of self-justification, self-salvation and self-preservation on the basis of which White people are given life in all its fullness while Blacks are condemned to intolerable socio-political existence” (Maimela 1989:7).

The effect of Afrikaner and white theology on blackness has been severely traumatic. As Khabela (1989:23) points out, black communities have not only been disrupted, but the black religious experience is fraught with stress, strain, negative influence, fear, and ambivalence, “resulting in a fragmented self… in a perpetual conflict of insecurity

in society". Furthermore, black Christians in mainline churches ("white churches") have traumatic doublethink, where they are neither black nor white enough (Ibid., 34). This results in a situation where identity is lost without an awareness of the loss of identity.

Yet, and this, I believe, is paramount, the black experience in a white world is not only that of being oppressed. Black people, even within oppression, find power through movements, organisation, and struggle. Stated differently, the black experience is also an experience of concretely working towards a change in the context and situation. One such understanding of living as a struggle is intertwined in the secular philosophy of Black Consciousness (Mohlabi 1987:9). BTL too intertwined this understanding, under the influences of Black Consciousness (Mosala 1988:3; Muzorewa 1989:57). Furthermore, the knowledge of the identity of black people changed, black people were now seen as workers, and thus the struggle moved beyond a struggle against racism, towards a struggle of human, social, political, and economic rights (Mofokeng 1987b:24).

Once more, BTL's insistence that the contextuality of the situation of the black experience is paramount is not a knee jerk reaction or being overwhelmed by the situation; it is a theological imperative. As Mofokeng (1987a:3) states: "Conversely by being true christians of our time and our locality, we are being true to the legacy of the New Testament communities. And conversely, by ignoring our time, our locality and its challenges we are being unworthy heirs of this noble christian tradition".

II

The black experience as the hermeneutic point of departure brings forth a theological interpretation of God and the church as partakers in the black experience.

God has not just become man. God has become oppressed man [*sic*].

Takatso Mofokeng (1987a:15)

From the black hermeneutic point of departure, there exists a vociferous understanding that God reveals Godself as "the poor Jew from Galilee" which translates in the South African apartheid context as "black in South Africa" (Mofokeng 1987a:15). Thus, God's revelation is understood not merely as God partaking in the human condition, but God participating in a specific type of human experience, one of the poverty, oppression, and suffering of the "bodies of black people of this country" (Ibid.). Moreover, as Mofokeng (1989:46) proposes, if we would like to understand what is “happening to God and to Jesus in South Africa today”, we should look at how black people are mistreated, even crucified. Stated otherwise, God becomes so intertwined in the black experience, that God’s very existence in the present becomes and is that of contemporary black suffering under apartheid.

Furthermore, in what I believe is an exceptional, contextual naming of who the church constitutes, black hermeneutics shows that the church is indeed a black church. The majority of members of mainline and independent churches[10] in South Africa (with the

[10] Maimela does not take cognisance of Charismatic and Pentecostal churches. I do not know why he does not, whether it is the limited influence of such churches during apartheid or merely not recognising their importance. Either way, they are ignored with regards to Black theology’s interpretation of who

exception of the Dutch Reformed Church) are black (Maimela 1988:16). However, and here comes the crux of the matter, theologically and structurally the power of the mainline churches is concretely in the hands of white people (Ibid.). This implies that "the Black church is thus a colonised and dominated church theologically and culturally because it has inherited all the theological slogans and expressions from our white mentors" (Ibid.). What BTL endeavours for and what Maimela (Ibid.) calls for is the construction of a new theology which takes note of the experiential nature of the church as oppressed and impoverished.

From a different perspective, the understanding of BTL is that hermeneutical similarities exist between the black church and the communities spoken of in biblical revelation to such an extent that the black church should be privileged in interpreting the Bible (Mofokeng 1988:40). Even more, this contextualisation of the black church is a reclaiming of "the basic tenets of Christianity" (Goba 1988:33). The positioning of God amongst the black community and claiming the church to be black is, in essence, a matter of an orthodox interpretation of Christianity and the Bible.

III

The black experience as the hermeneutic point of departure calls forth a rethinking of the relationship between African culture and Christianity.

> Christianity must have a truly African character if it is to remain in Africa, and be the religion of Africa.
>
> Sigqibo Dwane (1987:21)

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constitutes the church.

From the onset of theological engagement from the black experience, it is quite clear that a rethinking must take place with regards to the relationship between African culture and Christianity. The Christianity which, at this point, has been promoted in Africa is a Christianity which carries with it European culture. No, it insists that to be Christian is to be European. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that Mofokeng (1988:36) opines that African traditional religions can no longer endeavour or claim to be hegemonic because Christianity has become such a driving force amongst Africans. Put another way, albeit that Christianity came to Africa through the western missionary movements, it will be part of the future of African religion. He shows that two directions have been followed historically with regards to the interaction between African traditional religions and Christianity. One, the course of African Independent Churches where a compromise has been struck between the Bible and African religion (without proper assimilation between the two). Two, the direction of mainline Churches where African religion has been obliterated, and European culture has been promoted as Christian.

From the black experience, however, theologians have been able to name the inconsistency of such an understanding of Christianity. A conversion to European Christianity has been merely the conversion to a theological language in support of the conqueror (Mofokeng 1989:39). The proposal is instead that Christianity and African culture should go through a process of assimilation, much as it has gone through assimilating European culture (Dwane 1987:20). Stated differently, to be genuinely African Christians, black Christians should understand “that there are riches in [their] own heritage, and [learn] to appreciate them” (Ibid.).

Goba (1988:35) states that a hermeneutical grounding of Christianity within African culture is the only way the church can be authentically Christian in Africa. Dwane

(1987:25) agrees, saying that a concrete and indigenised Christianity is the only way the church could be universal. Its universality lies in taking root in the particular culture of blackness, not through the forced conversion to a supposedly global European culture.

2.1.2. Black Theology of Liberation

The second practice of BTL is the delimiting of what BTL is. I distinguish three tasks of delimiting BTL. These are firstly, the task of distinguishing BTL from white theology; secondly, the task of apologetics, claiming that BTL is a Biblical imperative; and thirdly, the task of constructing BTL as explicitly public and political.

I

Black Theology of Liberation explicitly and concretely distinguishes itself from white theology.

> In fact, it is possible that this is what makes First World theologians restless when they hear the term "Liberation Theology." The term frightens many of them because they want to be in control even if it means not listening to the Holy Spirit.
>
> Gwinyai Muzorewa (1989:55)

BTL takes an explicit, concrete, and unapologetic stand against white theology through showcasing its theological understanding vis-a-vis white theology. As the first movement of this theological system breakage, BTL showcases the discomfort white Christians and theologians have with understanding Jesus as poor (Mofokeng 1987a:15). After all, from a Black Theological perspective, it seems white theology insists that Jesus' position of culture has to either coincide with a bourgeois background and the white social class, or Jesus must be colourless and neutral (Ibid.). According to Mosala (1989:35-36), there have been a significant number of attempts

by what he calls "liberal scholarship" (white theologians) to prove that Jesus was not revolutionary. Mosala is convinced that Jesus' politics are "a fundamental socialist ethic" (Ibid.). In the Lucan understanding of Jesus, doing good is "service for the victims of the structures of society and nature that shapes the vision of a liberated future" (Ibid.).

Along with this, white theology is plagued with its historic understanding of Christianity, where black people have been reduced to "inferior beings… to nothingness" (Jordaan 1987:42-43). This reduction of black people and the introduction of an economy of black slave labour have been fundamental in the partnership between colonialism and the Christian missionary endeavours in Africa (Mofokeng 1988:34). Through all of this, black Christians find themselves in a situation where faith and their lived experiences are incompatible. As Khabela (1989:26) states, a "schizophrenic religious feeling" exists amongst black Christians, where racial discrimination and cultural denigration is divinely ordained. For white theology, religious pluralism and African culture are entirely incompatible with Christianity, however, for BTL there is "an open and dynamic view here that religious identity is something innovative and creative" (Goba 1988:33). Yet and despite white theology, BTL has given black people the ability and power to disallow myths of inferiority, and instead to give hope within the situation of oppression and exploitation (Jordaan 1987:42-43).

Furthermore, as Maimela (1988:18) understands the existence, history, and method of white theology, there is a direct linkage between white theology and the “church allowing itself to be hijacked and taken over by the ruling class” since the Constantinian era. The dislocation of justice and faith further underscores this; a dislocation Maimela (Ibid.) believes lies in a breakage of the relationship between the church and the poor. This dislocation is an inevitable outcome in white theology as

right believing and right doing are also dislocated. BTL, however, insists that there is no right believing without right doing (Ibid., 24). BTL is, as Lamola (1989:2) defines it, “an epistemologically self-defined theological system, a phenomenon which is secondary to a consciousness of the reality of being black in a white racist world”. In other terms, a world created by white theology, with a normative stance for middle-class whiteness, creates the climate for BTL to protest against such a world. A contextual and situational interpretation of Christianity is paramount for BTL within a context of “suffering, estrangement, induced self-debasement and struggle of the Black people in South Africa” (Lamola 1989:3).

Once more, the situational location of doing theology is not only paramount for BTL but stands directly against white theology's insistence that the context should not overwhelm dogma. In this sense, BTL is ahead in understanding that doctrine (and the hermeneutics of systematic theology) is always dependent on a subjective position of perspective. Therefore, to do BTL is to “approach Scripture in search of what and how to think and articulate what is happening to them and their world” (Mofokeng 1987a:2). From the experience of oppression and exploitation, black Christians could do nothing else but translate these experiences theologically (Mofokeng 1987a:8). It was a necessity to create a theology which could liberate people from white theology within the context of the black lived experiences (Muzorewa 1989:52). Thus, to do BTL is to search for theological insights, even within white theology, of value for the problems black people face in the context of apartheid (Maimela 1989:2). In this personal, contextual experience of God, it can only be understood that God is not neutral, God is the God who takes sides; the side of "oppressed, the downtrodden, the poor, and God acts violently against those who perform degrading acts of oppression" (Jordaan 1987:44).

Moreover, since the Bible was given to black people, they have appropriated and interpreted the Bible within their situation. And to be precise, their hermeneutics has always been of selective use of the Bible; as far as the Bible was useful in the liberation of the black position (Mofokeng 1988:40). Interestingly, Mofokeng (Ibid.,37) is under no illusion that the Bible is liberational in essence, such that white theologians have misinterpreted the Bible. Although he states that some texts have been misinterpreted, he clearly understands that others have been interpreted correctly and that those texts serve an oppressive agenda (Ibid.). Thus, the imperative is to identify liberational texts and use them "to the exclusion of others [texts]" (Ibid., 38).

The difference between BTL and white theology goes even further. Words and concepts have different meanings within the two theological constructs. As Maimela (1987:43) claims: “In short, even the word gospel will have different meanings for black and white churches”. When BTL speaks of liberation, it is both a response to human existential need and a word about redemption (Ngcokovane 1988:27).

Furthermore, the concept of sin is not about the personal sin against God for BTL; sin is structural violence and the breakage of relationship amongst members of the community (Maimela 1988:16). Maimela (Ibid.) goes as far as to claim that “western definitions of what constitutes salvation should not be accepted”. For instance, Luther's *justification by faith alone* which speaks about assurance of forgiveness and everlasting life should not be accepted without "heavy qualifications", because life after death is neither an African problem nor a problem facing the Black church in their context (Ibid., 23). The placing of concerns over hell as central is thus detrimental to the ministry of the Black church in context (Ibid.). But even more, as Maimela (1989:5) correctly shows a bit later, Luther’s concept of *justification by faith alone* meant that “now life was no longer open to the few, the successful achievers who please God.

Instead, life was now open to the weak, the poor, the powerless and the unsuccessful". In Black Theological terms within the South African context during apartheid, *justification by faith* means "all human beings are unworthy, unacceptable, and sinners before God, and therefore that no race or group of people is any better than another" (Ibid., 7), and that all are accepted and allowed life only because of God's grace and mercy (Ibid.). Furthermore, Maimela (Ibid., 11) showcases that justification and social justice are linked in Luther's thinking, and thus *justification by faith* is a call to work for justice in South Africa.

II

Black Theology of Liberation understands itself as a Biblical imperative. To do BTL is to be obedient to the Bible.

> It is based on the historical fact that Jesus of Nazareth chose the side of the underdogs in society, lived a life of solidarity of the kingdom of God with the poor, the weak and the despised.
>
> Takatso Mofokeng (1987a:4)

> God has not just become man. God has become oppressed man. God has come as the black in the scarred and bleeding bodies of black people of this country.
>
> Takatso Mofokeng (1987a:15)

BTL understands that to do BTL is an obligation laid by God through the Bible upon the lived experience of struggle in South Africa. Stated otherwise, from a Christological basis, BTL must be done. Jesus as the poor man incarnate, the one on the side of the poor, the weak, and the despised is God's "historical act of solidarity with man" (Mofokeng 1987a:4). Thus, in apartheid South Africa the scriptural revelation in conversation with the lived experience, and position of culture of the black community is that "Jesus the poor Jew from Galilee is black in South Africa" (Ibid., 15). Mofokeng speaks of God as "the oppressed poor God… [and] the black in the scarred and

bleeding bodies of black people" (Ibid.). Even more, the suffering of Jesus enables the ability to "critically understand the suffering of the innocent in human history" and evokes rage for this suffering, as well as the command to work against human suffering (Mofokeng 1989:47).

As Moila (1989:21) states, Christology is militant. It is a call for revolutionary action of faith (Ibid.). It is a call for an orthopraxis of “solidarity with the poor in fighting misery, oppression and injustice” (Ibid.). It is a call for both the black community and all churches (Ibid.) For BTL, the Christocentric understanding that Jesus as God with us (Emmanuel) is an understanding that Jesus is with the struggle against apartheid (Khabela 1989:36). Loyalty for BTL is a loyalty only to Jesus Christ. No racist state, no worldly power, and no human authority will triumph over "the commands of the living God" (Ibid.).

Once more, BTL understands itself as the theology which God’s Word necessitates. It recognises that to be Christians means unity in a “reconciled diversity” (Dwane 1987:23). It means to “challenge racist oppression on the basis of our faith in Jesus Christ” (Goba 1988:35). It means to “develop a critical consciousness, one which exposes the contradictions of our society” (Ibid.). It means a commitment to struggle for liberation, and the dismantling of the systemic injustice of apartheid (Ibid.). BTL is thus a theology of the truth: an attempt to articulate “what God is saying to, and doing for the despised, the marginalized, the exploited and the oppressed” (Muzorewa 1989:54). Even more, it is God who energises the struggle; because of God the struggle exists, the struggle continues, and the struggle has come as far as it has (Ibid., Khabela 1989:36).

However, this obligation of doing BTL is only visible from a historical, socio-political hermeneutical reading of the Bible. My understanding is that BTL explicitly

incorporates a socio-political interpretation of the Biblical text, which is absent in western historical exegesis. Thus, Mosala (1989:35-36) claims that "Jesus describes doing good in terms of service for… the victims of the structures of society… that shapes the vision of a liberated future". Jesus' cross at Calvary, for BTL, is not some emotional cross *all must bear*, but "the suffering and crucifixion of black people of South Africa" (Mofokeng 1989:46). Once more, to speak of God is to speak and think of the One who is socio-politically oppressed (Ibid.). This hermeneutic sees the human experience as revealed in the Bible as the predicament of oppression, inequality, and enslavement. At the same time, Jesus is the liberator from this situation of socio-economic oppression (Moila 1989:15).

Mofokeng (1988:38) shows that the early church was socio-economically located in a similar position as "our people" (black people in South Africa), and found the message of the Bible to be one of "survival, resistance and hope". After all, it was the weak, the poor, the neglected, and the marginal people of Jesus' time who found appeal in Jesus' preaching (Ibid.). Or as Mofokeng (1987a:14-15) shows in another instance, Galilee's population "was suspected of racial and religious impurity… Indeed Jesus came from an oppressed and exploited province in a colonized country". Again, the implication is that God in Jesus of Nazareth becomes "our own flesh and blood" (Dwane 1987:22). The lived experience of the majority of people in the Biblical narrative of Palestine was one of utter poverty, "starvation, sickness, imprisonment, homelessness, separation from family and friends and persecution from authorities" (Mosala 1987:31-32). Interestingly enough, for BTL, there is an overwhelming opposition against hidden agendas with regards to the book of Luke when the experiences of poverty are turned into virtues for the rich. As Mosala (Ibid.) says: "By turning the experiences of the poor into the moral virtues of the rich, Luke has effectively eliminated the poor from his

gospel".

From the point that BTL is an imperative of reading the Bible with a socio-political hermeneutic, BTL proposes the hypothesis that black oppression during apartheid is similar to the socio-political oppression in the Bible. Thus, the imperative of doing BTL is also an imperative of showcasing the similarity between the Biblical context and the contemporary context. At the same time, God's liberation in the biblical witness is a liberation towards the affirmation of the humanity of the oppressed (Mofokeng 1989:44). Thus, for the oppressed under apartheid, to be liberated by God was also the right to have power, and to wield influence as an assumption of responsibility of living in the socio-political world of the present (Ibid., 45).

III

Black Theology of Liberation understands its calling to be a theology which is explicitly public and political. Moreover, this understanding flows from the conviction that the experiences of the oppressed are essential. From such a perspective, everything is public and political.

> When a government is guilty of tyranny, when it denies human rights to some of its people, and when it commands what is forbidden by God, or forbids what God commands, then christians may disobey or resist such a government knowing fully well what the consequences may be since governments have the power of life and death over their subjects.
>
> Mnyama Sizwe (1988:50)

Ramose (1988:37) understands BTL's explicit nature because BTL articulates what has been implicitly preached in black churches. Put another way, BTL's public and political nature is the task of scholarly expression of black preaching. The first explicitly public and political act of BTL is the critique of apartheid. As Muzorewa (1989:53) reasons, BTL reflects upon "the socio-economic, ecclesiastical and political context of

the Third World peoples in Africa"; not only as an act of speech but also as a call to action against the tyranny of apartheid – even if such activity is illegal and possibly fatal (Sizwe 1988:50).

With regards to the first act of BTL as public and political speech against apartheid, Mofokeng (1989:46) is convinced that BTL must critique the basis of capitalism (which was very much part of the apartheid system); “surplus extraction at the expense of workers here and abroad”. At the same time, BTL critiques an appropriation of the Bible, which leads to the justification of apartheid. After all, according to Mosala (1988:4), it is a contradiction to include black people in God's love, yet propose apartheid as an ideology “directly [derived] from the Bible”. Furthermore, BTL critiques the church’s glorification of poverty, stating that it brings forth the endurance of misery with the hope of reward in the afterlife (Maimela 1988:19). This critique, within the apartheid context, is public, as the Dutch Reformed Church's theology had a significant influence on public opinion – and thus also the tolerance of poverty.

Maimela (Ibid., 21-22) goes on to reinterpret sin, not as something personal between God and the individual, but “in terms of the life of individuals who suffer injustice, oppression and destruction at the hands of their fellows". Thus, political ideology and systems which "threaten[s] the life of one's fellows" are a sin against God (Ibid.). Once more, BTL's specific public and political task is the task "to challenge racist oppression on the basis of our faith in Jesus Christ" (Goba 1988:35). It is the development of critical consciousness and the exposure of the lies of apartheid (Ibid.). It is a commitment to struggle and to bring an end to apartheid (Ibid.). Maimela (1989:12) goes as far as to claim that to be a Christian in apartheid South Africa, means the experience of being called towards public and political involvement in the struggle against apartheid.

The second explicitly public and political task of BTL is the public act of working towards the transformation of society. As Mosala (1988:7) states, “its task is performed in the service of a transformed and liberated social order”. Lamola (1988:9), in a similar vein, understands BTL as a genuinely African public endeavour in the development of “African self-pride, self-reliance and service to humanity”. Furthermore, BTL endeavours to change the understanding of the Bible for social structures within society. Mofokeng (1988:39) showcases that the communism of the first church should be understood as a "tolerance of economic disparities, with the proviso that the poor should not suffer from their lack of material possessions". Khabela (1989:32) goes as far as to state that BTL has the potential to reconcile black churches, both mainline and independent, to form an alliance with great political potential.

2.1.3. Black Liberation

The third task of BTL is the real-world, socio-political, liberation of the black community. In my opinion, two aspects can be discerned with regards to this liberation. The first is that this liberation is a witness to the Gospel. The second is that this liberation is a change in the way society exists and operates.

I

Socio-Political Liberation of the Black Community is a Witness to the Gospel.

> Or as the present writer likes to say, black oppressed and exploited people must liberate the gospel so that the gospel may liberate them. An enslaved gospel enslaves, a liberated gospel liberates.
>
> Itumeleng Mosala (1987:39)

For BTL, to work and struggle towards socio-political liberation is a witness to the gospel. Firstly, the nature of the gospel is under negotiation – “An enslaved gospel enslaves, a liberated gospel liberates” (Mosala 1987:39). Whereas a breakaway from

the enslaving gospel of western Christianity is summarily rejected (by western Christianity) because there is no salvation outside the church, BTL opens a space for negotiation both within the mainline churches and for independent churches (Lamola 1988:8).

Moreover, BTL points to the way the gospel has been corrupted through the phenomenon that oppression is routine, precisely because the gospel's imperatives for socio-political liberation and reconciliation have been ignored and made ineffective (Maimela 1988:17). That being said, for BTL, where God stands is essential. It is only through God's mercy, salvation, and choice to and for the marginalised that all people receive mercy, salvation, and are chosen (Mofokeng 1989:48).

From this position of negotiation, Mofokeng (1987a:9) speaks of the struggle for liberation as a witness to “the victorious presence of Jesus Christ”. Maimela (1988:25) is convinced that the gospel is “the promotion of justice, peace and reconciliation in society”, and our calling is to “make the Kingdom of God more visible and present… through the social structures [we] create”. In the context of BTL, the “cause of Jesus Christ [is equal] with the cause of social and political revolution” (Moila 1989:22). In this understanding, faith is an active force of resistance against unjust structures and people (Ibid.); and in the apartheid context, resistance against the “oppression of blacks” (Ibid.). At the same time, as Mosala (1989:30) opines, socialist politics, and the structuring of society through a socialist ideology are part and parcel of the biblical witness, especially as interpreted by the progressive Christian traditions. Even more, capitalism, as existing in apartheid, is against the gospel (Ibid.). Muzorewa (1989:54) agrees with this sentiment, proclaiming: “Christ came to save! Suffering cannot continue when God in Christ steps into the situation to save the creature!” Furthermore, peace is vital for BTL, and "peace is the active presence of justice, the

well-being of all" (Khabela 1989:37).

II

Black Liberation is a Pursuit of Changing the Operation and Nature of Society

> [Black South Africans are] committed to reordering the state in order to establish a just society. Indeed, black South Africans do not see white South Africans as enemies to be eliminated, but as fellow citizens who need a change of heart. Moreover, black South Africans want a non-racial society, and do not believe that the state is a product of social conflict and violence.
>
> Mzingisi Ngcokovane (1988:32)

For BTL, to work and struggle for socio-political liberation is the concrete pursuit of changing apartheid society towards a non-racial society which is inclusive of all people (Ngcokovane 1988:32). Khabela (1989:37) warns that reconciliation has too often meant that black people must suffer and give themselves up for the sake of others, instead of leading towards liberation. Christian reconciliation amongst black and white in South Africa should mean "political, social and economic justice" (Ibid.). For Mofokeng (1987a:9) black culture in itself is a culture of "subversive protest against material, political and social dehumanization of black people" which has been incorporated into the very fabric of BTL. In such a sense, black culture is actively working towards the complete liberation of the black experience.

Mosala (1987:34) takes a strong oppositional stance against capitalism while reminding that apartheid is a capitalist system. "[The] content of the goal of BTL is to be struggled for from the totalizing hold of modern capitalism" (Ibid.). Furthermore, economic liberation is also a land issue. Ramose (1988:30) suggests that land is essential to all of human life, and thus inclusive land reform is fundamental to liberation in South Africa.

Interestingly enough, BTL is aware of the trapping of independence without liberation, stating clearly that "a progressive economic system" needs to be set up (Mosala 1989:29). Mosala (Ibid., 30) goes as far as to state that capitalism is no option for liberation, indeed if “we do not go socialist we can only go barbaric”. Thus, Mosala (Ibid., 34) claims that “the content of the goal of BTL is to be struggled for from the totalizing hold of modern capitalism”.

2.2. Black Theology of Liberation since Democracy

There can be no question about the fact that Black Theology of Liberation (BTL) took a hiatus when South Africa became a democracy in 1994 (Molobi, 2010:2). This was because the most prolific academics in BTL: “Itumeleng Mosala, Takatso Mofokeng, Simon Maimela, Smangaliso Mkhatswa, Frank Chikane and others… [became] all manner of administrators and state functionaries” (Maluleke, 2000:194). At the same time, I believe, South Africa experienced a euphoria with the emergence of democracy which proponents of BTL were merely unable to circumvent in contextual analyses of the new situation.

In an attempt to adequately propose the position of BTL since democracy in South Africa, I offer the following three markers[11]. First, BTL since democracy endeavours to integrate with African Theology[12] and African Independent Churches (AICs). Second, since democracy, BTL has reemphasised its tasks of contextualisation and biblical hermeneutics. Third, since democracy BTL has become deeply aware of the

[11] Taking note that these markers are reductionistic and that these markers are by no means understood and researched homogeneously.

[12] I take African Theology to mean theological thoughts of African Indigenous Religion.

agency of Africans.

2.2.1. Integration of Black Theology of Liberation with African Theology and AICs

Molobi and Saayman (2006:327) opine that democracy in South Africa brought with it the need for a new alignment of purpose for African theological thought – as an integration of BTL, African Theology, and the theologies of AICs. At the time of writing, they discerned a lacuna with regards to focal images for mission in Africa, even though there were calls for contemplation on "endemic violence, the collapse of black family life, the abuse of women and children… [and] poverty and HIV/Aids" (Ibid.). Furthermore, according to Molobi and Saayman (2006:330), the differences between African Theologians, Black Theologians, and AICs started to dissipate in the late 1980s with the rise of "issues such as neo-colonialism, corrupt leadership, and the oppression of indigenous voices of protest". West (2016:354) opines that inherently all African Theologies, including BTL, African theology, and the theology of AICs, are liberation theologies. Thus, no longer could African Theologians be concerned only with the renewal of African indigenous culture and religion. Neither could Black Theologians focus solely on liberation (Molobi and Saayman 2006:330). At the same time, a less “schizophrenic relationship” between African culture and Christianity has emerged, giving way to more nuanced “translatability” of Christianity within the African context (Maluleke 2000:203).

Molobi and Saayman (2006:332-335), in consideration of the realities mentioned above, propose three focal areas for the integration of BTL, African theology, and AICs in democratic South Africa: Liberation, Ecclesiology, and Christology.

I

Along with the new era of democracy, new forms of oppression and persecution have come to the fore, from which liberation must be sought.

> Suddenly, not everything smells of roses, because in many African countries repression and endemic corruption are still the rule rather than the exception.
>
> Victor Molobi and Willem Saayman (2006:332)

The point being made by Molobi and Saayman (2006:332), seems to me to be: although colonisation (and apartheid) is historically over, it is still everywhere, in new forms, and liberation still evades the structures of South Africa. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012:48) calls this Coloniality "an invisible power structure that sustains colonial relations of exploitation and domination long after the end of direct colonialism". Thus, neither African theology nor AICs can ignore the necessity that Africans need to obtain and experience liberation in its fullness. At the same time, BTL can no longer be convinced that liberation is merely political liberation. Thus, Molobi and Saayman (2006:332) propose a holistic liberation, whereby Jesus of Nazareth inaugurated a new and liberating community differing greatly from the earthly systemic structures of oppression, which still exist in the democratic context of South Africa.

Maluleke (2000:204) shows that other theologians have explicitly chosen to replace the concept of *liberation*. Jesse Mugambi instead speaks about reconstruction and includes the inculturation of African theology therein (Ibid.). Charles Villa-Vicencio speaks about critical solidarity with the democratic powers (Ibid.). At the same time, however, there are definite voices of critique against the abuses of the new elites in South Africa (See Maluleke 2000:205; De Wet and Kruger 2013; Wepener and Pieterse 2018).

For Vuyani Vellem and Allan Boesak, reconstruction and development cannot take place without liberation. Vellem (2007:131) proposes that liberation must be "the framework within which reconstruction and development" takes place. Boesak (2014:1057) showcases how liberation is still absent in the democratic context; claiming that the struggle after democratisation has merely evolved into more magnificent beasts, "into global struggles, against new forms of global apartheid, new and renewed struggles for justice". He specifies four areas of struggle for liberation; firstly, the poor and their ability to live in the contextual realities, second, human sexuality and gender justice, third, pluralism and its implications, and fourth, globalisation and the influence it has on all of life. I will get to the idea of the importance of the agency of the marginalised for BTL a bit later; yet, as Maluleke and Nadar (2004:8) show, some theological reflections have proposed that liberation is only possible when the oppressed are the agents of liberation.

II

An essential contribution to Black Theology of Liberation in partnership with African theology and AICs since democracy is the simultaneous critique of western forms of ecclesiology and the possibilities of new ecclesiologies.

> In the first place, the church in Africa must experience the presence of God not through documents and traditions, but through the existential communal realities marking the rhythm of natural life: birth and death, sowing and harvesting, thunderstorms and road accidents, celebrations and mourning.
>
> Victor Molobi and Willem Saayman (2006:334)

> We argue first that the more there is change, the more things stay the same. Stated otherwise, we argue that if there is democratic dispensation in South Africa, it is more likely that the church stays the same.

Molobi and Saayman (2006:333) propose Western ecclesiologies are "basically ecclesiologies without any missiology". Their counter-proposal calls for an understanding of the church in the African context as "the disfigured body of Christ" which takes seriously the economic injustices which have historically caused (and still cause) "poverty, hunger, unemployment and disease" (Ibid.). Thus, an authentically African ecclesiology will practise theology from the position of existential realities within the African context (Ibid., 334). Vuyani Vellem (2015:2) interprets the church within democracy to be same as the church in apartheid. With this, he means that the church is shacked by a "colonial legacy", as "as instrument of cultural dominance", and "compla[cent] with a life-killing capitalist exploitation" (Ibid., 5). To counter these realities of a church which has stayed the same, Vellem proposes the church as "the Church of the Struggle" (Ibid.). In this line of thought, "the church in South Africa is the black poor person's lived experience" (Ibid., 4) and from the perspective of the poor in South Africa, struggle is a daily existential reality. Moreover, what Vellem foundationally calls for is a unshackling of method, of combining classical understandings of the church with the lived experience of struggle: "the subversive character of the church is in the memory of the miserable, the condition of blackness" (Ibid., 5).

However, in Molobi and Saayman's understanding:

> The AICs can make a valuable contribution here, primarily as they already exist as African ecclesiastical institutions free from Western apron and purse strings. The structured theological reflection on important issues such as inculturation, Christology, etc., which has already been undertaken by African Theologians is of equal importance.

> Also, the strong emphasis among Black Theologians on analysis of the social, political and economic contexts within which the African church must carry out its mission is of equal importance. (Molobi and Saayman 2006:334).

III

The third aspect for integration of Black Theology of Liberation, African theology, and AICs is the call for a Christology which takes seriously the existential questions African Christians have.

> Christianisation can therefore no longer be equated with westernisation, and the white Christ of mission history has to be replaced by the black Christ of Africa.
>
> Victor Molobi and Willem Saayman (2006:334)

Molobi and Saayman (2006:334) are very critical with regards to how Christ has been introduced in South Africa by colonial missionaries and theologians, claiming that questions and matters of Christology have been proposed by them which are irrelevant to the African experience. Inculturation of African culture and African dignity must take place within a genuinely African Christology, which Molobi and Saayman (Ibid.,335) are convinced is possible through the convergence of BTL, African theology, and the theology of AICs, especially in relating Christ to the understanding of ancestors. The missiological knowledge of Jesus as the cosmic Christ, the head and beginning of the cosmos, should aid in describing the universal presence of the ancestors as the "guardians of life in Africa" (Ibid.).

An exciting proposal for Christology in South Africa comes from Tinyiko Maluleke, who (according to Urbaniak 2018:180) “locates Jesus’ body in the bodies of his fellow Africans”. Maluleke (1994:57) makes the argument with regards to Christology that

the western understanding thereof has been centred on talking about Jesus as ‘Christ'. According to his case, the title of Christ locates Jesus at the right hand of God. In contrast, Jesus of Nazareth is located as walking "the streets of Tyre, Sydon [*sic*], Galilea and Jericho" (Ibid.). Christ calls for worship and adoration, while the Jesus of the streets is human, crying at the sign of losing his friend Lazarus (Ibid.). He goes on to say that African Christology is still developing; however, in my reading of Maluleke, I am convinced that he wants to privilege a Christology which is interested in the social location of Jesus of Nazareth for the African context. Maluleke (Ibid., 62) concludes with the proposal that an understanding of Christology is already being "enacted" in Africa. AICs are already vocalising their experience of Christ in healing ceremonies, and BTL and African theology are theologising about Christ as "healer, the Black Messiah, the ancestor, the elder brother, the crucified one and the master of initiation" (Ibid.).

Furthermore, as Urbaniak (2016:134) proposes, Maluleke's African Jesus is a Jesus "with unresolved issues". A Jesus who suffers as African people suffer, albeit the Healer; this Jesus does not offer answers, but suffers alongside the African poor; even more, endures as the African poor (Ibid.). As Maluleke (2000b:84) suggests, African theologians “have noted the emphasis on the crucified and suffering Christ as opposed to the risen and victorious Christ”. This has brought with it a Christology of tragedy, where joy is experienced amidst pain and strength in suffering, for “Christ appears daily in war-torn African villages… resides in the squalid slum-cities of Africa… [and] is being crucified in the emaciated and flea-ridden bodies of Africa's starving, dying children” (Ibid., 83-84). At the same time, however, Maluleke (Ibid., 85) reasons that the "identification with Jesus is never total". There is always an apparent otherness of Jesus, even within the oneness and identification with Africans (Ibid., 86). In an

exciting turn of events, this understanding that human beings cannot be like Christ in fullness has given African women leverage against the dominance of patriarchal structures in Africa. Once again, Maluleke (Ibid.) is persistent in reiterating, this time from the thoughts of Desmond Tutu, that “God’s image and glory resided in and was reflected on all the despised, exploited and suffering people [during apartheid]". My interpretation hereof is a simultaneous dialectical understanding: Jesus is the African poor, and Jesus is utterly other than the African poor: Jesus is the wholly Other and reflected in the eyes of the Africans who suffer.[13]

2.2.2. Biblical and Contextual Hermeneutics

> This choice of interlocutors is more than an ethical commitment, it is also an epistemological commitment, requiring an interpretive starting point within the social experience and social analysis of the poor and marginalised themselves.
>
> Gerald West (2016:354)

Maluleke (2000:206) believes that the most longstanding influence of BTL is its biblical hermeneutics. According to West (2016:353-354), both BTL's acute contextualisation and its Biblical hermeneutics stem from its interlocutors; that is, those who God has preferentially chosen as interlocutors: the marginalised, the poor, and the subaltern.

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[13] Emmanuel Katongole (2017:114), although not a South African theologian, has a different take on the association between God and those who suffer. Taking the African-American religious expression as an example, he shows that the slaves identified their "own suffering with Christ's forsakenness on the cross" (Ibid.). And through this identification, they found strength and hope in active resistance to the injustices experienced. Katongole, in my opinion, represents a perspective not from where God is, but from the lived experience of the subaltern. This implies further that the subaltern takes upon herself the responsibility to identify with the suffering (of) Christ.

However, Vuyani Vellem (2012) shows that BTL's interlocution changed after democracy. Because of the black church's critical solidarity with the governing party (African National Congress) after 1994, Vellem (Ibid., 4) proposes that the interlocutors for this "critical solidarity" became "a black middle class person rather than the poor non-person". Vellem (Ibid.) goes on to show that the loss of the non-person as interlocutor has the implication "the poor are left alone". Thus the struggle of the subaltern is ignored, and the struggle moves to other spaces. In other words, with the loss of BTL's interlocutor in democratic South Africa, the authenticity and viability of BTL should be under scrutiny.

Allan Boesak (2014:1056), however, argues that the non-person is still the interlocutor for the hermeneutics of BTL[14]. He proposes, therefore, that BTL is "the prophetic witness" and "theology at the edge" (Ibid.). For Boesak (Ibid., 1057), BTL in democracy tries not to be relevant, but instead gives the necessary tools to reflect "intellectually and with integrity on the people's struggles… it means [that] we are informed".

In my contemplation on Boesak, I am convinced that Boesak is the utmost proponent of BTL which theologises in the same manner now as during apartheid[15]. I have

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[14] I am not aware of any contemplation of Boesak with regards to a change in interlocution after democracy. Furthermore, Boesak's location of culture during democracy may be suspect as to his relationship with the *non-person*.

[15] This being said, Allan Boesak by no means has the same influence as he had in the '80s and '90s. Today, his voice is constrained to academic spaces, not because of a new strategy, but merely because he does not have the public platform he had during apartheid. Moreover, his political career within the ANC may have forced him to return to the fundamentals of BTL as practices during apartheid. In a very real sense, he became disillusioned with the realpolitik of the ANC (see Boesak 2009).

proposed that Boesak's simultaneous understanding is that the "Bible has specific sociopolitical relevance" in the current context and that the evil of the context should be named explicitly (Wessels 2017:203).

On the one hand, Boesak underscores the contextual and biblical hermeneutics of BTL. Still, on the other hand, this implies an underscoring of the hermeneutical superiority of colonial theological thought. Vellem (2017:1) believes this repeating of BTL as it was practised during apartheid "takes the gains of the school [of BTL] backwards". Irrelevant of the exact implication of this tradition of BTL, others are convinced of the necessity of acute, intense, and accurate contextualisation as the tradition of BTL during apartheid dictates (Manala 2010:519-529; Wessels 2017:190-192).

Maluleke opines that there is no consensus on the question of which hermeneutics is most appropriate and liberating for Africans in the context of democratic South Africa (Maluleke 2000:206). What has, however, become clear is that African theologians cannot pretend "that the Bible, the gospel or the 'Christian faith' interprets itself" and that things go wrong only when misinterpretations of the Bible take place (Ibid.). The implication hereof, at a conservative estimate, is that hermeneutical innocence is not at all a possibility for the future of BTL. Viewing it from the perspective of a liberal evaluation, the future of Black Theological hermeneutics will turn to sources other than the Bible for the liberation of Africans.

An exciting development for BTL is the movement away from portraying the poor as helpless victims. Maluleke (2000:205) shows that there is a movement towards an understanding that the poor are active agents who, in a myriad of ways: politically, economically, and spiritually, have participated (and continuously participate) in life.

2.2.3. The Agency of Africans

> Behind most notions of agency is the basic suggestion that human beings, even the most oppressed, marginalized and seemingly destitute among them, have the potential, possibility and even ability to act as (moral) agents of transformation and change in their own lives and in the lives of others.
>
> Tinyiko Maluleke and Sarojini Nadar (2004:7-8)

Maluleke (2000:205) claims that BTL since democracy (and post-Cold War) has ceased to interpret "the poor as conned and helpless victims needing to be roused from their slumber". Instead, there has been a movement towards discovering, exploring and interpreting the agency of the African poor respectfully. As Maluleke and Nadar (2004:6-7) aptly state, there has never been a doubt about the agency of people from the upper and middle classes, as well as whites. Now, after all, BTL is acutely aware of the agentic potential of the poor, marginalised, and subaltern.

For Maluleke (2000:207), all emerging schools of BTL after apartheid are in one way or another “a rediscovery of the agency of African Christians in the face of great odds”. Molobi and Saayman (2006:328) are convinced the agency of Africans has always been present, even during the time of the colonial missions. They opine that Africans were never just objects without agency but always subjects exercising their agency, albeit in subversive ways (Ibid.). Maluleke and Nadar (2004:8) articulate the discourse on agency thoroughly in their contemplation. For them, the “most wretched victims of oppression” have found ways of survival even if these tactics of survival seem ineffective to outside observers; even more, it is often the academic observer who is at fault for misapprehending the techniques of agency (Ibid.). Furthermore, the “idea that the oppressors (can) have total control over the potential, desires and direction of the oppressed ought to be radically modified if not abandoned altogether” (Ibid.).

An exciting contribution Maluleke and Nadar (2004:7) make to the agency discourse is their caution with regards to who conducts the conversation. They show that the current discussion on agency is mostly driven by white men, which leads them to propose that the function of the agency discourse may be "exclusion and control" (Ibid.). Since white men (academics) are the most removed from the existential realities of the interlocutor as marginalised people, the danger is paramount of creating "an imaginary agent interlocutor in some imaginary South African township" (Ibid.)[16]. At the same time, however, Maluleke and Nadar (Ibid.) are not ignorant of the positional problems of black and women academics when it comes to the agency discourse.

[16] I have much appreciation for Johan Cilliers' (2008) article, *Worshipping in the Townships.* He converses adequately with the likes of Abraham Berinyuu and Gabriel Setiloane. I agree with Cilliers' proposal that the space of worship in the township is a liminal space, although I would opt for a space of negotiation. However, I disagree with Cilliers that the three keywords of township worship are: “anti-structural (prophecy), new community (communitas), and possibility (imagination)” (Cilliers 2008:81). Prophecy, communitas, and imagination can be associated with any place of worship. However, in conversation with Vellem (2018:277), I would contend that *liberation* should at least encompass Cilliers’ keywords, and therefore *struggle* - economic and political - is quintessential to worship in the townships.

3. Postcolonial Theory – Genealogical Overview

In this second part of the chapter, I will contemplate postcolonial theory. Unlike BTL, my contemplation on postcolonial theory will not be localised to South Africa. Thus, there is no localised historical moment of disruption, which is not to say there are not different schools of thought. My original plan was to focus exclusively on African postcolonial scholars. However, I have decided to include international scholars because I thought it would aid in the quality and comprehensiveness of this study. I have thus decided to expand this genealogical overview of postcolonial thought to be more global. However, some constraints will still stand. Only postcolonial scholars who have written in English (or whose work has been translated into English) will be considered. At the same time, I have to make choices of focal images, because the study cannot adequately contemplate every aspect of the sources to the full.

Thus, I have made three choices. Firstly, I will focus on the following postcolonial scholars as primary sources (with the knowledge that some of these scholars choose to speak about decoloniality instead of postcolonial[17]): Homi Bhabha, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Emmanuel Lartey, Frantz Fanon, Walter Mignolo, Steve Biko, Aimé Césaire, and Achille Mbembe. The second choice is a choice of focal images.

I have delimited three themes in postcolonial thought, which I will use as focal images for a genealogical overview of postcolonial thought. These are: 1) The irrational myth

[17] The differences between postcolonial and decoloniality have been touched upon in the first chapter. I think that these differences, albeit nuanced, are outside of the scope of consideration for this study. I will thus consider them as different schools of thought within Postcolonial Theory and borrow with due consideration of differences.

and the decolonisation of the mind; 2) Moving of the centre; and 3) A decentred, fragmented subject (the postcolonial subject). The third choice is to seriously consider Walter Mignolo's proposal that the postcolonial "struggle is for changing the *terms* in addition to the *content* of the conversation" (Mignolo 2007:459, my italics)[18]. Thus, throughout my contemplation of postcolonial thought, I will consider how the terms and content interplay within the three focal images.

3.1. The Irrational Myth and the Decolonisation of the Mind

> De-coloniality, then, means working toward a vision of human life that is not dependent upon or structured by the forced imposition of one ideal of society over those that differ, which is what modernity/coloniality does and, hence, where decolonization of the mind should begin. The struggle is for changing the terms in addition to the content of the conversation.
>
> Walter Mignolo (2007:459)

I

Postcolonial thought's first task is the naming and deconstruction of the irrational myth of colonialism in all of its forms; that is, as historical colonialism, but also as modernity, and the (neo)colonialism[19] intertwined in contemporary democratic capitalism.

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[18] My preliminary intuition about the difference between BTL and postcolonial thought is that BTL has been accurate in changing the content of the conversation but lacks in changing the terms of the conversation.

[19] I use brackets with (neo)colonialism to indicate the porous nature of the coloniality of the past. The newness of (neo)colonialism is not that new and the break with the colonial past is not that clear-cut. See Hook (2013:5) for more on the idea that the present realities are not definitive breaks with the past.

Postcolonial scholars are insistent in naming, unveiling, and deconstructing (neo)colonialism thoroughly. This task is a critical reading of the context of what Mignolo (2007:454) calls the “irrational myth”[20] of (neo)colonialism. Mignolo (Ibid.,450) shows that there is a kind of spell at work, where neo-liberalism, along with modernity and democracy, is promoted as the all-encompassing solution and salvation to life’s problems. Yet, at the same time, in the interest of expanding this myth (and this is where the myth becomes irrational), there is "justification for genocidal violence" (Ibid.,454). This means that colonialism brings forth wounding of those on the receiving side of the irrational myth. It is "wretchedness, emptiness, squalor created by Eurocentric colonialism and apartheid" (Vellem, 2017:2). Vellem (Ibid.,7) is correct in proposing that colonial logic chooses elimination instead of persuasion.

Moreover, this irrational myth is entirely present in all colonial logics of salvation, whether it be "Christianity, civilization, modernization and development after WWII or market democracy after the fall of the Soviet Union” (Mignolo 2007:463-464). Thus, any structure which imposes a “one ideal of society over those that differ” (Ibid., 459) is the irrational myth of colonisation. From a contemporary context, wherein Brexit and Trump are realities, Vellem (2017:2-3) includes imperialism, racism, and neofascism as colonial logics. For him, the emergence of Brexit and Trump showcases a manifestation of (neo)colonialism in narcissistic form, aided by "psychological and ideological confusion” (Ibid.,3).

Moreover, in the South African context, there has existed, and still exists, sympathy

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[20] Others have coined this the “colonial abyss” (An Yountae) and the “colonial death project” (Julia Suárez-Krabbe) as quoted from Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018:75).

with the core values of racism which has led to a democratic government reimposing trauma and violence on black people (Vellem 2017:5). Even after apartheid and in the new democratic dispensation black people are still "an oppressed and suffering group of people… coping and dealing with the scars of white oppression" (Ibid.). Even after emancipation projects (i.e. the struggle against apartheid), global, imperial, and colonising logics enjoy epistemological privilege. The new historical decolonial dispensations repeat the violence of colonialism (Mignolo 2007:459). Fanon (2004:12) is even more pronounced in his judgement of new governmental powers after emancipation, claiming: "[The] Spoiled children of yesterday's colonialism and today's governing powers, they oversee the looting of the few national resources… Their doctrine is to proclaim the absolute need for nationalizing the theft of the nation".

Another important unveiling in postcolonial thought is the unveiling of Christianity's part in colonisation. Vuyani Vellem (2017:8) shows that the Christian understanding of creation out of nothing brought with it the dual understanding that "black people were reduced to nothingness [and] white people [were upheld] as creators". Fanon (2004:6) equates Christianity with pesticides, claiming that similarly, Christianity understood its part in colonisation as the rooting out of all forms of existence, knowledge, and practices which were interpreted from a western perspective as "heresy, natural impulses, and evil". He goes on: "The Church in the colonies is the white man's Church, a foreigners' Church… It does not call the colonized to the ways of God, but to the ways of the white man, to the ways of the master, the ways of the oppressor" (Ibid., 6-7).

Similarly, Ishmael Tetteh (2001:25) shows how Catholic and Protestant Christian mission forcibly attacked African culture and religion in the past. Currently, this attack has been taken up by Pentecostal and Charismatic Christian movements (Ibid.). Even

African languages were incorporated in this attack on African culture by Christianity. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986:67) shows that African stories were colonised to carry a moral message with the implication of "revealing the unerring finger of a white God in human affairs".

I want to return once more to postcolonial thinkers' unveiling of the violence of coloniality. Mbembe (2001:25) believes colonial violence is threefold. First, it is the founding violence of justifying conquest, both in creating its right to conquer and denying the right of those captured. Secondly, coloniality created its own authority, thereby "converting the founding violence into authorizing authority" (Ibid.). Thirdly, it is violence which maintains, spreads and makes permanent the authority of coloniality (Ibid.). This final violence is appropriated through an imagination which creates the illusion that society cannot exist without coloniality (Ibid.). The first violence can be described as military conquest and the second as a political dictatorship. However, the third violence is defined by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986:16) as the domination of "the mental universe of the colonised, the control, through culture, of how people perceive themselves and their relationship to the world".

Another aspect of the third form of violence is the superiority of western values. Not only are western values understood and proposed as superior, but they are enforced with such violence until the colonised "have proclaimed loud and clear that white values reign supreme" (Fanon 2004:8). Furthermore, the violence of colonising the imagination and mind is reinforced in colonial education. As Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986:56) states, colonial education works against the possibilities of creating confidence and mastery in overcoming life's obstacles, but rather "make[s] them feel their inadequacies, their weaknesses and their incapacities in the face of reality". Put another way, colonial education binds the agency of the colonised, making people

unable to participate actively in their futures.

In a concluding unveiling of the irrational myth of colonisation, Mbembe (2001:2) shows how the body of "the stranger" and the recognition that their body is like my body, is a problem for "Western consciousness". Or as Mignolo (2007:455) opines, the foundations of western knowledge are both limiting and dangerous. A call then stands for "border epistemology" (Ibid.), the decolonisation of the mind (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986:108), and an understanding of development which brings forth an enrichment of the consciousness of workers (Fanon 2004:141).

Or as Mignolo (2007:463) so eloquently states, there should be an "affirming [of] the modes and principles of knowledge that have been denied by the rhetoric of Christianization, civilization, progress, development, [and] market democracy".

II

Before turning to the call of decolonisation of the mind, there should be due consideration and contemplation on the postcolony; that is to say, how politics in the postcolony showcases itself after political liberation.

> "And what should the book be about?" I asked Max [du Preez]. "About the people that Zuma surrounds himself with. The Shauns and the Mdlulis and the Ntlemezas and the Jibas and the Nhlekos and the Hlaudis and the Zwanes. But also about the faceless, nameless bunch behind them that play a vital role to keep him in power." "And out of prison," I added. "Precisely," he said. "And don't forget that they also enable him and the family to make money," I said. "Just think about his son's links to the Guptas and illegal tobacco smugglers."
>
> Jacques Pauw (2017:22)

In Jacques Pauw's 2017 book, *The President's Keepers*, Pauw has a conversation with Max du Preez about the writing of the book. In the South African context, where the conversation takes place, South Africa is a country which has had over 20 years

of freedom and democracy. However, the then-president, Jacob Zuma, has administrated his presidency in such a way that he, his family, and his friends could benefit through corrupt means. In a recent news article Mashele (2019) has claimed that the current president, Cyril Ramaphosa, has continued on a similar trend, albeit not as publicly scandalous. Mashele (2019) continues:

> As for the poor and the unemployed, the waiting continues. They see on television men and women dressed in suits, gathered in much-vaunted investment jamborees that promise to grow the economy and create jobs. While the poor and the unemployed don't understand economics, they know that investment conferences are meaningless to them, for they have never seen one job coming to their village or township because of a meeting held in Sandton. (Mashele 2019).

This brings forth a nagging question about the inability of the "postcolony" to become what it has envisioned itself to be: a place of liberation and prosperity. This is, as the postcolony has seemingly been liberated from the colonial powers of yesteryear. Put another way, why does democratic South Africa so closely reflect the power abuses to the benefit of the few of colonial times? Why has the struggle against apartheid not brought forth the dreams and hopes of the Freedom Charter?

As Achille Mbembe (2001:105) shows, there is a façade in the postcolony at work, where the new elected leaders, often of one overwhelmingly majority party, find ways of repressing dissidents. The governing party becomes society, and whatever benefits the party and the president, becomes "state legitimacy" (Ibid.). Frantz Fanon (2004:12) is far less reserved with his judgement of such a situation. He calls the newly elected governing powers "spoiled children of yesterday's colonialism". He claims that they are only interested in preaching nationalisation to steal the national resources for

themselves.

It is important to note that liberation is not merely one struggle, that of political and economic decolonisation, but also "epistemological decolonization" (Mignolo, 2007:454). Let me turn to the call of decolonisation of the mind.

III

After the deconstruction of the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation, postcolonial thought calls for a decolonisation of the mind.

> Decolonization of knowledge shall be understood in the constant double movement of unveiling the geo-political location of theology, secular philosophy and scientific reason and simultaneously affirming the modes and principles of knowledge that have been denied by the rhetoric of Christianization, civilization, progress, development, [and] market democracy.
>
> Walter Mignolo (2007:463)

As Mignolo (2007:463) shows in the above quote, there is not a linear movement of deconstruction and unveiling and then the decolonisation of the mind. Instead, this is a constant circle, maybe even the postcolonial circle, of decolonising the mind. Mignolo's understanding of the decolonisation of the mind is the affirmation of "modes and principles of knowledge" denied by the colonial way of thinking (Ibid.). Once more, decolonisation and postcolonial thought go further. An awareness of the need for political and economic liberation, as well as epistemological decolonisation, exists. Liberation is incomplete if both are not present (Ibid.,454). There is the need for a "delinking that leads to de-colonial epistemic shift and brings to the foreground other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding and, consequently, other economy [*sic*], other politics, other ethics" (Ibid.,453).

Vuyani Vellem (2017:8) makes use of the isiXhosa word *Umoya* (meaning wind,

breath, and spirit) to convey his understanding of decolonisation of the mind. He understands the current (neo)colonial context to be one of “breathlessness”, but with the Umoya, the breath of God comes into play, arising the spirit of the black person to "reject the finality of the West" (Ibid.). In a similar movement as what I deem the postcolonial circle, Vellem’s (Ibid.) umoya rejects history, politics, and economics skewed in favour of Europe, and calls for acknowledging the agency of Black Africans, both in history and in the present. No more will Black Africans be seen as “pathological objects of the periodisation of the West” (Ibid.).

Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1986:16) shows that political and economic colonisation was never possible without "mental control". There was thus, on the one hand, complete subjugation of the culture of the colonised, "their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature" (Ibid.); and, on the other hand, an elevation of the coloniser's culture and language (Ibid.). “The domination of a people’s language by the languages of the colonising nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised” (Ibid.). The breakage of colonisation is therefore only possible once this lingual colonisation and the concomitant disassociation from “the immediate environment” (Ibid.,17) is broken and the mind is liberated from it. However, in my reading of Ngugi wa Thiong’o, I do not believe he calls for a specific language to replace English (as an example of a colonial language). What he calls for instead is "the rediscovery of the real language of humankind: the language of struggle" (Wa Thiong’o 1986:108).

The language of struggle, to my mind, strongly resonates with BTL during the apartheid years, and the ideas that the black experience should be the hermeneutical starting point, reading the Bible with an eye for the liberation of black people, and constructing a public and political struggle for liberation (see Mofokeng 1987a; Mosala

1987; Goba 1988; Maimela 1989; etc).

Steve Biko's (1987:28) interpretation of the colonisation of the mind is just as chilling. When he speaks about the colonisation of the mind, he calls it “spiritual poverty” and asks this about the black person in South Africa:

> What makes the black man [*sic*] fail to tick? Is he convinced of his own accord of his inabilities? Does he lack in his genetic make-up that rare quality that makes a man [*sic*] willing to die for the realisation of his aspirations? Or is he simply a defeated person? The answer to this is not a clearcut one. It is, however, nearer to the last suggestion than anything else. (Biko 1987:28).

If then the black person under apartheid, and still in democratic South Africa (see Vellem 2017:5), is a spiritually (and consciously) defeated person, Steve Biko's proposal of what a decolonised mind entails is of interest. Biko (1987:70) proposes that decolonisation of the mind is the black person who overcomes the inferiority complex bestowed upon him or her by colonisation; herewith opening the possibilities of rediscovering identity and grooming a genuinely African culture. Furthermore, there should be a recommitment to valuing human relationships, and having "high regard for people, their property and for life in general; to reduce the hold of technology overall and to reduce the materialistic element that is slowly creeping into the African character" (Ibid.,70-71).

In a similar vein, yet with a warning, Frantz Fanon (2004:142-143) proposes that the nationalistic consciousness of struggle should change into a social and political consciousness to safeguard "our countries from regression, paralysis, or collapse”. In other terms, revolutionary leadership without an explicit appropriation of

consciousness by the people is without the necessary virtues of bringing about a society laden with a decolonised consciousness (Ibid.).

From a different perspective, a call for a decolonised consciousness is a call to a decolonised epistemology. In what I believe is a significant contribution to postcolonial thought in Southern Africa, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (2018:3) writes in his 2018 book, *Epistemic Freedom in Africa*, that "Epistemic freedom is fundamentally about the right to think, theorize, interpret the world, develop own methodologies and write from where one is located and unencumbered by Eurocentrism". Thus, a decolonised mind is about, in an African context, "the African search for… self-rule, self-regeneration, self-understanding, self-definition, self-knowing and self-articulation of African issues after centuries of domination and silencing" (Ibid.,16).

Part and parcel of this decolonised epistemology is the need for "decolonial attitude" within the academia (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018:78). The first aspect of a decolonial attitude is the "love of humanity" manifested in the credence that "all human beings were/are born into valid and legitimate knowledge system [*sic*]" (Ibid.). The second aspect is thus the ability to be concerned about epistemological dependence on the western epistemology (Ibid.). Thus, those concerned with decolonisation are rational human beings who can see the crisis with regards to epistemology, but also the more extensive system at work (Ibid.). After all, in the current market economy of capitalism, education "has become a very expensive commodity" laden with conflicts of affordability (#MustFall) and outsourcing (Ibid.). However, if Gayatri Spivak (1988:271) is to be taken seriously, "Western international economic interests" have always been part and parcel of western epistemology. The decolonisation of epistemology will have to include a de-economisation of education. A third aspect of the decolonial attitude is awareness and unmasking of what Berenstein (as quoted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni

2018:79) calls “epistemic exploitation”. Ndlovu-Gatsheni elaborates:

> In the face of decolonial struggles, the beneficiaries of the status quo degenerate into epistemic deafness and continuously ask the same questions over and over about what decolonization means. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018:79).

Epistemological decolonisation as a decolonised attitude is, therefore, the embracing and developing of analytic tools to deconstruct the epistemic exploitation of so-called normative methodologies (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018:79).[21]

IV

Before turning to the next section of this study, I want to contemplate for a moment the terms of violence Frantz Fanon adds to his understanding of the decolonisation of the mind.

> In its bare reality, decolonization reeks of red-hot cannonballs and bloody knives. For the last can be the first only after a murderous and decisive confrontation between the two protagonists. This determination to have the last move up to the front, to have them clamber up (too quickly, say some) the famous echelons of an organized society, can only succeed by resorting to every means, including, of course, violence.
>
> Frantz Fanon (2004:3)

I am convinced that Frantz Fanon’s understanding of decolonisation as espoused in

[21] In Tinyiko Maluleke's (1996) contemplation on Black and African Theologies in democratic South Africa, he suggests, in similar fashion, that alternative epistemological foundations for theology should be laid in South Africa. He believes that theology should take note of the alternative economic and social structures which are practised within Africa and follow suit in a theological manner (Ibid.,16-18).

The Wretched of the Earth, both in the physical and mental universe, is impossible without violence. In the above quote, he seems to propose violence as the final act for decolonisation (Fanon, 2004:3). In another place, he states quite clearly that work towards decolonisation is "to work towards the death of the colonist" (Ibid.,44). Once more, violence for Fanon is the means and terms through which the "colonized man [*sic*] liberates himself" (Ibid.). Again, Fanon claims that the work of those who have been colonised is to "imagine every possible method of annihilating the colonist" (Ibid.,50).

The implication of Fanon's radical violence, which I have not found in other literature of postcolonial thought, poses a couple of problems. If he is correct in proposing that decolonisation cannot take place without such radical violence, can decolonisation ever take place? If I would take seriously the idea that both the colonised and coloniser require decolonisation in its fullness (see Césaire 1972:41), does that mean the coloniser can only be decolonised when killed? Furthermore, does the violence promoted by Fanon not bring forth a similar brutalisation of the colonised as violence brutalised the coloniser? Moreover, and I do not want to claim that violence is inherently immoral, how should homiletics go about contemplating the radical call to the violence of Fanon?

Or maybe Fanon helps with the *terms* of postcolonial homiletics; that postcolonial homiletics is a call to violent preaching (see Wepener and Pieterse 2018) and violent Biblical hermeneutics (see Wepener 2015). Furthermore, a call to violent preaching and violent hermeneutics is a call to the truth about the contextual realities. However, I will return to these ideas in the chapter on homiletics.

3.2. Moving the Centre

I

In postcolonial thought, there is the deliberate dislocation and movement of the centre. This means a double motion of unveiling the centre of (neo)colonisation and moving the centre. I will first consider the unveiling of the centre.

> In the sixteenth century, the emerging hegemonic imaginary of modernity was built around the figures of orbis and, more specifically, orbis universalis christianus.
>
> Walter Mignolo (2000:726)

> [T]he Eurocentric basis of seeing the world has often meant marginalising into the periphery that which comes from the rest of the world. One historical particularity is generalised into a timeless and spaceless universality.
>
> Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993:43)

As is evident in the thoughts of Mignolo and Wa Thiong'o, colonisation proposed the centre of the world, of epistemology, of civilisation, and of perspective to be Eurocentric, Christian (a western interpretation of Christianity), and in its nature universal to all people. Thus, to think legitimately within the (neo)colonial framework is to centre yourself in the perspective of the West. From the location of culture of those who are white, male, and from European descent, this comes most naturally. As Cornell and Seely (2016:123) show, the irrational myth of modernity is built on the concept of "Man" as rational self – thus, maleness, Europeanness, whiteness. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993:24) is one of many who showcases that Joseph Conrad (the Polish-British writer) "wrote from the centre of the empire". Stephen Ellis (2009:9) suggests that the West became the universal centre because of the type of control they exerted through the particular way colonisation played out, with a specific vision of development. In other words, Europe came to the faith that its institution and systems

were the most advanced while transmitting that belief to the indigenous peoples (Ibid.).

Writing from this centre brought forth (and still brings forth) misrepresentation of the other. An instance of misrepresentation takes place in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Herein, from the perspective of Defoe, Crusoe (the western hero) confers humanity unto Friday (the non-western stranger whom Crusoe meets) through teaching Friday the English language (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1993:33). However, Friday was not without humanity nor a language before Crusoe arrived; it is only from the perspective of the empire that such a misrepresentation is both possible and acceptable. Never is Friday able to learn the language of revolt against the imagination of Crusoe's colonisation (Ibid.,34). Friday is thus representative of the colonised as portrayed by the perspective of the coloniser's centre. In this way of thinking, the colonised can only become legitimately human when they privilege the coloniser's centre.

As Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993:50) states, the colonised are "made to look, to a distant neon light on a faraway hill flashing out the word EUROPE [sic]. Henceforth Europe and its languages would be the centre of the universe". When I was first confronted with the unveiling of the irrational myth that the West is the centre of the universe, it seemed to be such an obvious error in perspective. However, and that is the point, the irrational myth is of such power to colonise the mind, that taking a perspective which is simultaneously not your own and actively working towards harming you, has been normalised. Even more, it has been proposed as the only legitimate perspective for making sense of the world. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993:22) is convinced that the problem of colonisation arises, not when a centre's vision is proposed (even a Western centre), but rather, when "people tried to use the vision from any one centre and generalise it as the universal reality".

An interesting example of how centred the European world was during historical colonisation is the poem of Hendrik Marsman, De Zee (1940):

> ‘Wie schrijft, schrijv' in den geest van deze zee
> of schrijve niet; hier ligt het maansteenrif
> dat stand houdt als de vloed ons overvalt
> en de cultuur gelijk Atlantis zinkt;
> hier alleen scheert de wiekslag van het licht
> de kim van het drievoudig continent
> dat aan ons lied den blanken weerschijn schenkt
> van zacht ivoor en koolzwart ebbenhout,
> en in den dronk den geur der rozen mengt
> met de extasen van den wingerdrank.
> hier golft de nacht van 't dionysisch schip
> dat van de Zuilen naar den Hellespont
> en van Damascus naar den Etna zwierf;
> hier de fontein die naar het zenith sprong
> en regenbogen naar de kusten wierp
> van de moskee, de tempel en het kruis.
> hier heeft het hart de hooge stem gehoord
> waardoor Odysseus zich bekoren liet
> en 't woord dat Solon te Athene sprak;
> en in de branding dezer kusten brak
> de trots van Rome en van Babylon.
>
> zoolang de europeesche wereld left
> en, bloedend, droomt den roekeloozen droom

waarin het kruishout als een wijnstok rankt,
ruischt hiér de bron, zweeft boven déze zee
het lichten van den creatieven geest.'[22] (Marsman 1940:79).

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[22] Whoever writes, writes in the spirit of this sea
or does not write; here lies the moonstone reef
that lasts when the flood hits us
and culture sinks like Atlantis;
here alone is the wing beat shaves from the light
the horizon of the triple continent
that gives to our song the white light
of soft ivory and carbon black ebony,
and mixed with the fragrance of the roses
with the ecstasies of wine.

Here is the night of the Dionysian ship ripples
from the column to Hellespont
and wanders from Damascus to Mount Etna;
here is the fountain that jumped to the zenith
and threw rainbows to the shores
of the mosque, the temple and the cross.

Here is the heart that has heard the high voice
whereby Odysseus was charmed
and the word that Solon spoke at Athens;
and broke in the surf of these coasts
the pride of Rome and of Babylon.
As long as the European world lives
and, bleeding, dreams the reckless dream
in which the cross ranks like one vine,

II

After having unveiled the centre. And understanding that Western civilisation is promoted as the centre of the universe with such violence that no other perspective is permitted, postcolonial thought moves the centre.

> But it did point out the possibility of moving the centre from its location in Europe towards a pluralism of centres; themselves being equally legitimate locations of the human imagination.
>
> Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993:26)

> Let's assume then that globalization is a set of designs to manage the world while cosmopolitanism is a set of projects toward planetary conviviality.
>
> Walter Mignolo (2000:721)

From the above quotes, it immediately strikes me that moving the centre is not to dislocate the Western centre and to replace it with a specific alternative centre. What is proposed is instead "a plurality of centres" (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1993:26) or "a critical cosmopolitanism" (Mignolo 2000:723) which opens the way to a myriad of legitimate and life-giving locations for imagining the world. My expectation for a movement of the centre was towards a new centre which would have been the new normative. However, and I concede that my perspective presupposes the need for a normative understanding of life, a movement to a new legitimate centre would have been merely a new form of colonisation, under a different name.

Returning to the plurality of centres, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993:40) by no way means these centres to be exclusive of one another. On the contrary, he is quite keen on

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murmurs here the source, floats above this sea
to lift the creative mind. (my translation).

borrowing and mutual give-and-take from one culture to another. Even more, whether it be language or knowledge, Ngugi wa Thiong'o is convinced that an embrace of "mutual fertilisation" is beneficial to unleash a more significant potential for human imagination (Ibid.,40,47). With a plurality of centres, and the idea that the centres do not need to be, but instead, must not be exclusive from each other, I ask once more, wherein lies the movement of the centre?

As Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993:27) shows, the point of moving the centre lies in the manner of "absorbing the world", about being in the world, about thinking about the world, about perceiving reality, and thus about epistemological perspective. After all, is it not more legitimate to view the world from one's location of culture as the centre? And from here ask the question of how one centre (and one's centre) relates to other centres (Ibid.)? Thus, the "question was not that of mutual exclusion between Africa and Europe but the basis and the starting point of their interaction" (Ibid., 27).

What Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993:44) is in effect speaking about is the "process of cognition". He claims it begins not with universal principles, but rather with looking at the particular contextual realities and forming from the specific that which is universal (Ibid.). This can, however, never be taken as universal, and the process of cognition must take place time and again, in every centre and as every centre changes. At the same time, through this process, the newly found universal should be tested in the particular to see whether it can hold its own (Ibid.). Ngugi wa Thiong'o (Ibid.) thus calls for a "recovery of the philosophy of practice". In practical theological terms, he calls for the recovery of the theology of practice, a theology of the context, of the people, of the particular centre.

It interests me how Ngugi wa Thiong'o's proposal might be read next to Richard Osmer's (2008) methodology for doing practical theology. As is well known in South

African practical theological circles, Osmer (2008:4) asks four questions: "What is going on?", "Why is it going on?" "What ought to be going on?" and "How might we respond?". His methodology begins with the particular. However, normativity flows from the universal to the specific in the third question. The presupposition is that the Bible (or rather a Reformed interpretation of the Bible) is normative for practical theology. And from this universal normativity, a practical solution is to be found for the particular context. However, if the legitimate centre is moved towards many centres, depending on one's location of culture, this methodology is impossible. Mignolo (2000:722) concurs, stating that a micronarrative is problematic and the “crucial point is… why and from where [the beginning is located]”. Stated differently, and once more, any interpretation of the Bible (and Christianity) which proposes a normative narrative wherein life must fit or be made to fit, is problematic. Questions must, therefore, be asked of any interpretation of the Bible. Why is this the interpretation of a text? Who stands to benefit, and who is excluded? From where (which perspective) is this text interpreted? How does the centre from where this text is interpreted, relate to other centres?

At the same time, it would be short-sighted to propose that all theologians (and homileticians in particular) are aware of their positionality within coloniality and uncritical about such a positionality. With regards to the first, I've already touched on the importance of stating one's position (see Vellem 2017). With regards to the latter, there are a myriad of scholars within the colonial perspective who are and have been critical of the state of theology during their times (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus, Karl Barth, Allan Boesak, Johan Cilliers, Walter Brueggemann to name but a few). I would go as far as to claim that responsible theology searches for new avenues of thinking. However, as Mignolo (2000:723) reasons, a postcolonial understanding of homiletics

will have to consider the possibility that criticism of coloniality from within the framework of coloniality does not move the epistemological centre. In other words, criticism of Reformed Christianity through the usage of historical Reformed sources and epistemology is unable to bring forth a plurality of centres. Instead, from such a position, the centre stays the same. Even more, and I think this is a feature of BTL, proposing another hermeneutic centre (for BTL the experience of the black oppressed) is merely universalising another centre. By so doing, BTL commits the same epistemological wrongdoing of a Christianity which proposes Europe and European culture as the centre of Christianity (also see Vellem 2017).

One could even criticise postcolonial study's fundamental endeavour of moving the centre beyond colonialism, and yet, at the same time being stuck with the language and ideas of colonialism. As Simone Drichel so eloquently states:

> It seems that postcolonialism is informed by contradictory impulses: it needs both to move 'post-*the other*' to be properly *post*-colonial and yet at the same time to maintain the other as its foundational or, perhaps more appropriately, undeconstructable concern. (Drichel 2008:588).

In other words, and I think this is important, as much as postcolonial thought calls for a movement of the centre, a call to be off-centre, the question is not only whereto, but also in which manner. Once again, it is not only the content which is essential for this endeavour of forging postcolonial thought for preaching but also the terms (see Mignolo, 2007:459). Returning to Drichel, if *the other* is an essential concern for postcolonial thought, yet *the other* is only other because of a centralised western perspective, how would postcolonial thought reconfigure *the other* to incorporate a plurality of centres adequately?

3.3. A Decentred, Fragmented Subject

The third focal image I have delimited from postcolonial thought for this study is a decentred, fragmented subject (a term I borrow from Homi Bhabha 1994:216). As I have already alluded to, postcolonial thought has taken *the other* as an essential concern. However, *the other* as concept supposes a colonial perspective, a view *towards* those who are deemed illegitimate. In other words, *the other* is an object perceived from a western centre. Thus, the same question again: how would postcolonial thought reconfigure *the other* to adequately incorporate at least an alternative centre as location of perspective?

In postcolonial thought, there is a myriad of images which I believe are essential for the understanding of a decentred and fragmented subject: agency, hybridity, border identity, mimicry, creativity, and improvisation. All of these images are intertwined and interrelated in a bodily manner for a decentred, fragmented subject. Not just in the perceiving of (the other's) bodies, but firstly in the having of bodies. However, I would like to contemplate a decentred, fragmented subject in three movements. 1) The relationship between the decentred, fragmented subject and time. 2) The concept of hybridity. 3) The body of the decentred, fragmented subject. 4) A critical evaluation of academia and the decentred, fragmented subject.

I

In an attempt to contemplate the decentred, fragmented subject, I will simultaneously consider how the subject of postcolonial thought has been objectified within colonisation and how postcolonial thought reinterprets and remakes the position of the subject: that of the decentred, fragmented subject. To do this, I will focus on the concept of time.

> Only a non-exposure to time – as that which brings about change – can produce a representation that is 'arrested' and 'fixated'.
>
> Simone Drichel (2008:589)

> And, paradoxically, it is only through a structure of splitting and displacement… that the architecture of the new historical subject emerges at the limits of representation itself.
>
> Homi Bhabha (1994:217)

From the Western centre of coloniality, the person who is not like the normative "Man" (Cornell and Seely 2016:123) is perceived as an object of brutality, unsophistication, and backwardness. In the best of cases this other person is a subject with her history and perspective, but still *the other*. In the worst of cases, this other person has no history, no culture, and no human value. Thus, viewed from a colonial centre, she is not as one should be. She is therefore devoid of existence except through the stereotypes laid upon her by the Western gaze. She is what the Western centre perceives her to be, and she will always be such. Alternatively, as Drichel (2008:589) suggests in the above quote, the Western gaze upon the other without exposure to time brings forth a representation or stereotype which is arrested and fixed.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993:34) shows that the Western perspective is in its very being a racist perspective. It depicts the African either as good, once they have accepted and incorporated the Western perspective for themselves, or evil when they refuse the colonial perspective (Ibid.). Once more, the other is conceived either as human (yet a second-class citizen) when siding with the colonial powers or savage when standing against colonisation.

There is, however, another layer of representation from a colonial perspective. Vuyani Vellem (2017:1) is deeply critical of the western epistemological thought which is often present in BTL. A case in point is the insistence that God stands on the side of the

poor, the marginalised, and the oppressed (see Mofokeng 1989:48, Boesak 2014). Here we find a depiction of a-temporal stereotypes even though BTL wants to make the point that these people represent the place where God stands. However, concepts such as poor, marginalised, and oppressed presupposes a fixed identity which can seemingly neither be changed (or at least not changed by the labour of those deemed to be poor, marginalised, and oppressed) nor reinterpreted. Once more, even as BTL tries to move beyond the stereotypes of colonialism, it uses the same stereotypes to make its point. And therein the point becomes lost, because the gaze is still a Western gaze, a gaze from a colonial power, an a-temporal representation.

Homi Bhabha (1994:217) proposes that the postcolonial world, with its delinking from western historical myths, perceptions, and the emerging awareness of cultural diversity, has brought forth new possibilities of being in the world. He proposes that "the new historical subject emerges at the limits of representation itself" (Ibid.). Stated differently, only once the western representation of the other reaches its limit within the existence of a decolonised consciousness, can the new historical subject emerge. It is here where I propose Homi Bhabha's (1994:216) "decentred, fragmented subject" as an adequate first movement into a new representation of the postcolonial identity.

Once more, I reiterate the importance of time for the postcolonial identity. A decentred and fragmented subject is a timeous subject; ever-changing, dynamic, never an a-temporally represented stereotype. A decentred and fragmented subject may even move beyond ideas of decentring and fragmentation, towards a chosen centre and structured identity. Nevertheless, even a movement towards a new identity underscores the fact that the postcolonial identity is timeous and not constructed to any one representation. Even more, after having constructed and presented the postcolonial subject, such a representation is already dated.

II

Moving onwards in contemplating the decentred, fragmented subject relating to temporality, I will consider the concept of hybridity.

> In other words, we do not need to move 'post-*the other*' only because this other – as hybrid other – stands in relation to temporality.
>
> Simone Drichel (2008:589)

Simone Drichel (2008:593) proposes that culture as a concept of delimiting any individual or group is a colonial endeavour of "othering", holding one captive to the terms of a culture with its traditions and customs of the past. She goes on to show that the delimiting of culture presupposes that the only truly universal human nature is that of the European. The point she makes is that the label of culture (and race and ethnicity) placed on any subject produces colonial categories to withhold certain people from "an assumed universal human nature" (Ibid.). Her proposal in counteracting the stereotyping of the colonial perspective is to propose a hybrid identity for the postcolonial subject (Ibid.,589).

However, in an attempt to ensure that hybridity does not become the new fixed centre for thinking, Drichel (2008:605) speaks of a hybrid identity as *"c/entre"*. Take note of the slash, which Drichel (Ibid.) understands as "a silent reminder… that this centre is decentred, both split and double". Drichel (Ibid.) takes cognisance of Derrida's description of ever-changing fixed centres, thereby heeding the warning of making hybridity the new fixed centre. I believe BTL has done precisely this with the privileged position of the marginalised, poor, and excluded. The positionality of the marginalised became the proposed new fixed position of doing theology, and all other centres, mainly European, western, and white theological centres were abdicated as illegitimate. On the one hand, there is truth in the critique of white theological centres,

but the critique should have been focussed on the fact that, to a large extent, white theology proposes one centre as normative. Put another way, when the position of the Black theological centre as the hermeneutical privileging of the black experience became *the sine qua non* for interpreting the Bible and doing theology, the proposal was merely to shift the centre to a new fixed position.

Returning to the hybrid identity, what is meant by a hybrid identity? What would such an identity entail? Where is hybridity to be found? And what does hybridity bring to the table for a decentred, fragmented subject?

In Homi Bhabha's (1994:38) contemplation on hybridity, he proposes, following Fanon, that the formation of a hybrid identity becomes possible during a disruption in the spatial realities of fixedness. This implies that during, for instance, the struggle for liberation, a newness in space emerges, a discontinuity in time, bringing forth the possibility (rather certainty) of negotiation and translation (Ibid.). The implication is a third space, no longer the colonial space, and not yet that which is envisioned as the goal of liberation, but a third space of possibilities. Herein, the identity of the people is formed, anew. Even more, the cultural preconceptions and stereotypes are dislodged from their a-temporality, and the people are “free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities” for themselves (Ibid.).

However, the possibility of the formation of new identities does not automatically lead to hybridity. As a case in point, in the South African context, Desmond Tutu called for a hybrid identity in 1994, the so-called “Rainbow Nation”. What played out was the emergence of some hybrid identities and communities. However, by 2020 it seems that racial and cultural disparities are once more the order of the day, most alarmingly amongst the so-called “born frees” (those who were born after 1994).

Nevertheless, Bhabha (1994:38) is optimistic about the possibility of an emergence of “an *inte*rnational culture"; a culture which incorporates both what has been inherited through colonisation, by the indigenous culture(s), and what has anew come to fore through the process of negotiation in the third space. Furthermore, this hybridity needs not to be limited by a temporal presentation of identity but is open to becoming "the other of our selves [*sic*]” (Ibid.,39).

Emmanuel Lartey's (2013:59) contemplation of a public ritual in Elmina, Ghana sheds some light on what hybridity may entail in a liturgical context. A first insight was the ecumenical nature of the liturgy. Adherents of three faith traditions partook in the liturgy – Christians, Muslims, and adherents of traditional African religion (Ibid.). A second important aspect was the inclusion of libation in the liturgy (Ibid.,60). Although Christian missionary endeavours have been significantly antagonistic to libation, within this liturgical space, it was not only tolerated but justified as essentially honouring one’s father and mother as ordered through the Law of Moses (Ibid.). Thirdly, the liturgy's political implications brought forth a new formation of identity. On the one hand, a recognition of culpability by the rulers, albeit culpability of their ancestors (Ibid.). This recognition brings forth an identity of self-critique, which I believe fits better with a hybrid identity than that of a fixed and normative centre. On the other hand, the liturgy involved the cleansing of both the culpable and the victims (Ibid.,60-61). Lartey (Ibid.) is convinced that this cleansing is the only way to transcend the stereotypes of the past “for both time and space to be transfigured”.

III

From the position of a hybrid identity, the body of the decentred, fragmented subject is of extreme importance; especially with regards to a renewed appreciation of the decentred, fragmented subject's body as an active agent in the world.

> Indeed, any formulation of theological anthropology that takes body and body marks seriously risks absolutizing or fetishizing what can be seen (race and sex), constructed (gender), represented (sexuality), expressed (culture), and regulated (social order)… But what makes such risk imperative is the location and condition of bodies in empire; what makes such risk obligatory is that the body of Jesus of Nazareth, the Word made flesh, was subjugated in empire.
>
> Mary Copeland (2010:56-57)

From the above quote of Mary Copeland, I take the queue to contemplate the body as an essential aspect of the decentred, fragmented subject for a postcolonial point of departure. She makes the point that it is a Biblical imperative to contemplate the body with regards to its relationship with empire (or modernity/(neo)colonisation). Her reasoning is linked to the identity of Jesus of Nazareth; that his body was subjugated to empire, thus theological contemplation is imperative. However, from a postcolonial perspective, the imperative of contemplation of the body does not require any theological forerunner. The contemplation of the body for the decentred, fragmented subject of postcolonial thought flows quite seamlessly from the reality of (neo)colonisation within modernity. That the body is of importance is without a doubt. No one exists without the existence of a body; and the power and injustices of the irrational myth are centred on a European gaze of the body of the other. This is always in the light that the west is the centre of thought, and all other locations of cultures must be integrated into the western centre.

However, with the breakage of the irrational myth of modernity, the body of the new subject becomes of great importance. Emmanuel Lartey (2013:126-128) proposes three actions associated with the postcolonial identity: mimicry, improvisation, and creativity.

With regards to mimicry, the postcolonial subject mimics the actions of the coloniser (Lartey 2013:126). With mimicry, there is a double goal: firstly, to showcase that the abilities of the coloniser are not beyond the abilities of the postcolonial subject. Stated differently, the activities of the coloniser can be mimicked (Ibid.). The second goal is to mock the coloniser. Herein mimicry plays the coloniser to be a fool. It is repeating the activity of the coloniser but with a humorous twist (Ibid.). However, I believe a third aspect is essential for the insights already revealed in this study: mimicry as assimilation, inclusion, and borrowing of knowledge from other centres (see Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1993:40). In this instance, mimicry serves to be inclusive and positive with regards to alternative centres. Here, the decolonised conscious has already been reached, and a position of equality is presupposed amongst centres.

The second action is that of improvisation. According to Lartey (2013:127), improvisation is the act of making do with what is available. I think the point is quite clear, from a location of identity which is decentred and fragmented, that the normative methods of existing in this world do not apply. A hybrid identity cannot but have to improvise within a world still constructed by a western gaze. This, I reckon, is especially true with regards to how globalised capitalism currently exists. As Thomas Piketty (2014:336) shows, wealth inequality has been brought on by the increased disparity between capital/income ratio. In other terms, activity in the form of labour is unable to create wealth in the same manner and to the same degree as capital can. The postcolonial subject moves towards dislodgement or breakage of this western

capitalist system. However, both in the daily struggle of existence and the political implication of daily existence, improvisation acts as a manner of subverting the status quo of the current system. Moreover, a new way of thinking, new politics, and new economies can be born out of the improvisation of the postcolonial subject.

As a case in point, we may look at the African American Jazz singer Cab Calloway who performed in Harlem, New York during the 1930s. Nate Sloan (2019:392) states that Calloway was both able to mimic white singing, and able to improvise a new type of singer, which came to be known as the “Harlem voice”. Interesting, however, is the fluidity of Calloway’s identity. As Sloan (2019:393) claims, “Calloway resisted a uniform identity” wherein he incorporated a multiplicity of vocal approaches. Interestingly enough, Calloway was not considered black enough as he had a lighter skin colour, which both added to the fluidity of his identity, and brought forth a decentred identity as others questioned his exact racial location (Ibid.,394). The third action of the postcolonial subject is that of creativity. Emmanuel Lartey (2013:128) is

Source: Tshabangu, *Andrew Tshabangu: Footprints, 69*

convinced that creativity showcases the epitome of the postcolonial subject's agency. Through creativity, the postcolonial subject emerges as free being, confident and void of anxiety about the western gaze (Ibid.). The creativity of the postcolonial subject sprouts forth the moment of realisation that she is fully human and equal with all people. Furthermore, it is in creativity that the postcolonial subject realises that she has truly been made in the image of God; for as God is creative in the act of creation, so too, the postcolonial subject is *imago Dei* in the act of her creativity.

This photograph is of a midnight mass at Ngome, Kwazulu-Natal, taken by the South African photographer Andrew Tshabangu (2017:69). I consider that this photo showcases the creativity of the postcolonial subject with regards to religious practices. Unlike the bodily constraints of worship in churches of western centres, here rhythmical movement and the expression of movement are paramount to worship. These movements showcase expressions of freedom, which is often restrained by the injustice of daily life, taking place in the alternative space of worship. These movements house "the desire to be transported to an otherworldly life of ease" (Jayawardane 2017:176) and yet, this otherworldliness is not a-contextual. As Neelika Jayawardane (2017:177) proposes: "Tshabangu understands that willing the self to be transported to a more just world is not a docile act". Instead, in the creation and expressions of these religious practices, we find that ordinary South Africans refuse to be reduced to labouring objects. Rather "prayer [is practised as] a contravention; far from being the last resort of the powerless, it provides those who live in dehumanising conditions a conduit to authoritative re-construction of their persons" (Ibid.). I propose it is in this collective, spiritual desire (through bodily expression – even if religiously unorthodox from a western centre) for a more just and beautiful world that innovative and creative religious life comes to its paramount fore.

IV

Through mimicry, improvisation, and creativity, the agency of the postcolonial subject is presented. However, the critical question must be asked: Can the academia speak for the postcolonial subject?

> Indeed, the concrete experience that is the guarantor of the political appeal of prisoners, soldiers, and schoolchildren is disclosed through the concrete experience of the intellectual, the one who diagnoses the episteme.
>
> Gayatri Spivak (1988:275)

> Furthermore, the danger is always that the agency discourse becomes removed from the real contexts where people are expected or seen to be agents. If the agency discourse remains only and mainly a 'Whites only and males only' discourse, with Blacks and women merely supplying the raw material and the case studies and the anecdotes, the danger of constructing a fantastic, artificial and romanticized agent is there.
>
> Tinyiko Maluleke and Sarojini Nadar (2004:7)

Taking the cue from Spivak, Maluleke and Nadar, as quoted above, the postcolonial subject's representation within the academia should be negotiated continuously. However, can academia represent the postcolonial subject? How do we represent the postcolonial subject? Within the confines of the historically created South African academia as a mostly white fraternity, can the postcolonial subject be represented?

Moreover, especially in the context of South African homiletics, which I believe is most representative of a white fraternity in South African theological circles, how do we think about preaching and the agency of the postcolonial subject? Even more, how do I place something on the table as a white man myself, without misrepresenting the postcolonial subject? Or am I representing the postcolonial subject in my own image?

To return to Spivak (1988:275), Maluleke and Nadar (2004:7): their opinion with

regards to the representation of other persons by the academia, and more specifically by the white academia, is negative. I do not think there is a solution for whether it is indeed viable or not. Instead, I think the paradox must remain. Yes, on the one hand, representation of the postcolonial subject within the academia is problematic. On the other hand, the academia should be an open and experimental place to move beyond normative representations, even if representations of the postcolonial subject may be problematic. The point should be that with the failures and mistakes of representation, new avenues should be sought with the goal of moving towards a more accurate representation of the postcolonial subject.

4. Conclusion

At the onset of this chapter, I asked two questions: How do BTL and postcolonial thought relate to one another? What would it mean to consider postcolonial scholars of theology seriously?

Through my genealogical tracing (albeit reductionistic) of both BTL and postcolonial thought, I propose the following three markers to delimit the relationship between BTL and postcolonial theory. 1) BTL is an authentic theological endeavour in postcolonialising. 2) However, BTL falls short in its attempt of postcolonialising, both in its epistemology and in its promotion of a new normative centre of perspective. 3) Postcolonial thought opens some exciting avenues of theologising, both for BTL and my endeavour within homiletics.

I

Black Theology of Liberation, both during apartheid and in democracy, has moved beyond the confines of western-centred theology.

BTL's insistence of working from a different centre than western theology, I am convinced, showcases a postcolonial movement. In the change of perspective to the lived experience of black people during apartheid, BTL could innovatively and creatively transcend the hermeneutics of western theology — both with regards to contextual realities and biblical interpretation. At the same time, this change of perspective or centre brought forth new imaginations of the future, of how the world could be constructed, and how politics and economy could be more just.

Since democracy in South Africa, BTL has become more ecumenical in its self-understanding; another postcolonial endeavour, to become more inclusive of the African heritage as espoused by African theology and AICs. There is an apparent move away from normative theological understanding, towards the lived experience of the African, including their position not as victims, but as active agents in the world.

II

However, Black Theology of Liberation dangles very closely to a position where it is still confined to the epistemology of western thinking.

This is especially the case with regards to proposing the black experience (specifically the black experience as a marginal, poor, and excluded location of culture) as the new normative position. As has been shown in this chapter, the representation of subjects as a fixed identity presupposes a western way of stereotyping. Put another way, in an endeavour of promoting the position of the black experience of oppression, the epistemological confines of western thought have captivated BTL to such an extent

that BTL has not yet defined adequate methods to move beyond western limits. Yet, during democracy, there have been strides in locating the black experience outside of oppression, such as in the agency of black people.

From a different perspective, the late Vuyani Vellem make enormous strides in dislocating western epistemology for BTL through the insights of postcolonial thought. Yet, I am unconvinced that Vellem's enterprise has taken root in the larger South African movements of BTL. Hopefully Vellem's legacy will produce excellent black theologians who are capable of both taking BTL seriously, critiquing its shortcomings, and moving beyond to new avenues of thought for human wellbeing and liberation.

III

The postcolonial ideas I have delimited in this chapter open some interesting avenues both for Black Theology of Liberation to consider and for South African homiletics.

I have delimited three main themes in postcolonial thought. These are: the unveiling of the irrational myth and decolonising the mind; moving the centre; and the postcolonial subject. These themes, I have suggested, produce a new way of thinking, not only in content but also in form. Within the following chapters, I will endeavour to find ways in which these three themes can be integrated within the studies of homiletics, liturgy, and hermeneutics. After all, a contemplation of the study of homiletics is lacking, in my opinion, if it does not consider the whole spectrum of the worship service within the lived experience of the congregation.

Chapter 3: Postcolonial Preaching? Contemplation on Postcolonial Thought and Homiletics

1. Introduction

The current South African situation is one where issues of decolonisation are ever-present. Decolonisation is under discussion in formal settings such as parliament with regards to policies on land expropriation (Makinana 2018) and theological education at the university with regards to visions of decolonial syllabi (Kaunda 2015:75-92; Naidoo 2016:1-9; Venter 2016; Wepener, Dreyer and Meylahn 2017:146-151). Decolonisation is further under discussion in informal settings: insourcing protests at tertiary institutions, ritual offerings in the backyards of the rich (Maphanga 2018), and the #FeesMustFall movements (Chirume 2019).

At the same time, South Africans are very religious, with 85,6% having indicated in the 2013 General Household Survey that they are Christians (Statistics South Africa 2014:12). Moreover, 5% affiliate with African Traditional Religion (ATR), 2% with Islam, and 1% with Hinduism (Ibid.). All in all, 93,6% of South Africans affiliated themselves with a religious tradition. Thus, in the same context of underlying decolonial discourse, thousands of sermons are preached and heard every week. Preaching is indeed a practice which plays a significant role in the lives of South Africans. As homiletic endeavour within the South African context, the question I must ask is this: What would a form of preaching entail which seriously considers postcolonial thought?

To answer this question, I will contemplate four movements for this chapter: One, a delimiting of markers for homiletics. Two, a proposal for a preliminary definition for

postcolonial preaching using the insights gathered in chapter 2 of this study. Three, contemplation on rhetoric for postcolonial preaching; and four, a sermon as an attempt at postcolonial preaching.

2. Delimiting the Markers for Homiletics

I

Before I delineate the markers for what constitutes homiletics, I believe it essential to contemplate why one would preach and why preaching must be done.

> Inasmuch as it *is* anything, preaching is a radical, foolish act of faith–and I particularly appreciate Richard Kearney's conception of faith as "knowing you don't know anything absolutely about absolutes".
>
> Jacob Myers (2017:8, original italics)

In my understanding of postcolonial thought, there is no reason to propose that preaching needs to take place. Moreover, the proposal that preaching is an imperative "in the service of God to strengthen the church" (Wilson 2008:XXV) cannot hold water for postcolonial homiletics. After all, too many presuppositions exist within such imperatives. Firstly, that there is a normative imperative for living in the world: *in service of God*. Secondly, the existence of a community known as the church and its continued existence is paramount. Thirdly, that preaching has the ipso facto goal of strengthening the church, whatever that may imply.

Thus, my first question in contemplating postcolonial homiletics is merely this: why preach? And why preaching? Stated otherwise, there is no apparent reason for the act of preaching. When taking into consideration the postcolonial endeavour of moving the centre (see Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1993; Mignolo 2007; Vellem 2017 etc.), there is no

reason to take the act of preaching as an undisputed absolute. From the postcolonial perspective, as I have delimited in the previous chapter; the church, the ministry, the Bible, and even faith are all disputable. However, from the contextual analysis of the South African situation, especially with regards to the Christian religion, faith is a reality. In my reading of postcolonial thought, the context must be taken seriously, not only in the sheer number (quantity) of religious people, but also in the influence religion and preaching has on the lives of people (quality).

Furthermore, as per Jacob Myers (2017:8), preaching's existence does not necessarily flow from a normative position, it flows merely from the view that people have faith and have the need to act on their faith, also through preaching and in the worship service. In his understanding, preaching is not centred in truth, certainty, and absolutes, but rather in uncertainty, fluidity, and foolishness through the faith people possess (Ibid.). Thus, why preach? Because faith is an essential aspect of the South African context.

However, why preaching? Why not religious speech? Why do I contemplate preaching? Stated otherwise, as I have shown in chapter 2, the centre of thinking moulds the perspective from which theologising takes place. For postcolonial homiletics, the centre of thinking must be moved, and contemplation cannot sprout from certainty or a fixed centre, far less a western centre as normative (see Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1993:26; Mignolo 2000:721). However, at the same time, my choice to seriously consider preaching as an act of faith within the Christian faith community sprouts from my own belief that preaching is indeed essential. I thus make a choice to centre preaching, both as the focus of this study and as important practice in the Christian community alongside other Christian practices.

However, will it be possible to centre preaching without centring western theological thought? In Johan Cilliers' (2004:18-21) introductory contemplation of why preaching is essential, his interlocutors are Martin Luther, the Bible, and Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Cilliers (Ibid.,20-21) concludes that preaching is vital for it is words which have been entrusted to preachers which must be spoken. Although he does not indicate who has entrusted these words, I believe his understanding is that God has entrusted these words to be preached. From a postcolonial perspective, I cannot take the same concrete stance with regards to what God has supposedly given to be said, and that preaching must, therefore, take place.

However, as I have shown in the previous chapter, Black theologians and postcolonial thinkers may help as interlocutors for a postcolonial raison d'être for preaching.

II

I propose preaching as a language of struggle. Thus, preaching's existence sprouts not from the imperative that preaching must exist, but rather from the location of culture where struggle is the reality of everyday life.

> The call for the rediscovery and the resumption of our language is a call for a regenerative reconnection with the millions of revolutionary tongues in Africa and the world over demanding liberation. It is a call for the rediscovery of the real language of humankind: the language of struggle. It is the universal language underlying all speech and words of our history. Struggle. Struggle makes history. Struggle makes us. In struggle is our history, our language and our being.
>
> Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986:108)

> I am suggesting that preaching Jesus Christ means preaching liberation and transformation… This kind of preaching deals with poverty, fairness, justice, humility, and other social, economic, and moral problems that face the church and society.
>
> James Harris (1995:37-38)

> Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me.”
>
> Exodus 8:1 (ESV)

> From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
>
> Matthew 4:17 (ESV)

From a postcolonial perspective, preaching is the supreme act of struggle within the religious community. Taking Wa Thiong’o (1986:108) and Harris (1995:37-38) seriously, two markers are of importance. Firstly, struggle is born out of a particular location of culture. It is not from the position of comfort and power, but from a position of powerlessness and discomfort[23]. Thus, for preaching to be a language of struggle, a decolonised consciousness[24] must exist, where the irrational myth of modernity is broken time and again, and where the identity of our common humanity as postcolonial subjects has already taken shape (see Chapter 2).

In other terms, postcolonial preaching is a truly human endeavour, where we are honest with the reality of our existence. We are not the "Man" of modernity (Cornell and Seely 2016:123), who is capable of all things through his injustices. But we are the postcolonial subjects, struggling thoroughly for the formation of an inclusive identity through contextual struggles with “poverty, fairness, justice, humility, and other

[23] Struggle can also be born from a place of working against one's position of privilege, comfort, and power.

[24] This decolonised consciousness needs to be present in the mind of the preacher firstly, but it must be prevalent also in the minds of the congregants.

social, economic, and moral problems that face the church and society" (Harris 1995:37-38).

In the Biblical texts I have quoted above, the idea of struggle is paramount. The first is from Exodus 8:1. It should be mentioned that these words are words spoken to the mighty Pharaoh, the human king. Thus, in the commission to speak, there is a political aspect within it. Secondly, the words, "Let my people go, that they may serve me" is repeated throughout Exodus 7-10. This repetition signifies the nature of struggle: not being heard, yet speaking, not breaking through, yet struggling. This idea of struggle is portrayed in the struggle between Moses and Pharaoh, and the God of Israel and the Egyptian gods. As Allan Boesak (1984:81) shows, Black theology during apartheid understood the call of "joining the struggle for human liberation in Africa". For postcolonial preaching, there should be a similar struggle, yet entirely different — the struggle for a decolonisation of the mind. As I have shown in chapter 2, this is an ideological struggle against the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation as portrayed by modernity (see Mbembe 2001; Mignolo 2007; Vellem 2017). Postcolonial preaching calls for the struggle towards the service of God through the decolonisation of the mind. And by the decolonisation of the mind, I mean a deconstruction of the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation. But this decolonisation of the mind is never complete, for the irrational myth keeps on creeping into the minds of people.

The second Biblical text is the first sermon Jesus preached or at least the theme for the first couple of sermons. This theme coincides with the preaching of John the Baptist in chapter three. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). After the call to repentance, we are given the reason for it - because *the kingdom of heaven* is close. The term *the kingdom of heaven* should be understood for its

political nature. It is a call towards a new realm, that of heaven, i.e. the kingdom of God.

Furthermore, the kingdom of God is filled with righteousness and justice, for the king, Godself, is righteous and just (Psalm 72). In this kingdom, there is prosperity, deliverance for the suffering, defence for the poor, and the crushing of injustice. Thus, to call attention to the kingdom of heaven is to imagine a better world. The call for repentance is then a political act, an act of loyalty to another imagination than that of the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation. It is a call of relinquishing socio-political commitment to the status quo and struggling for the coming of the kingdom of heaven.

Or as Jürgen Moltmann (1996:323) understands the kingdom of heaven: “In history and in this life believers experience 'the servant form of God's kingdom' in the suffering Christ”. Is the suffering of Christ not also the struggle of Christ, of God? Is our lived experience of suffering not also our struggle for a more just and righteous world? Moltmann (Ibid.) goes on to claim the kingdom of heaven's existence is in the joy of our existence, along with the joy of God's existence. This joy sprouts into thanksgiving, praise, and the celebration of life (Ibid.). But what joy is there when we close our eyes to the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation? What joy is there when our bodies are broken to sustain the privilege of the minority? Or what joy is there when we are the privileged minority who do not know the joy of the human community? Is the most excellent joy not the work of struggle, the work of hoping and "dreaming to change the world" (Wa Thiong’o 1986:108)?

III

If preaching is then an act of faith for the faith community and the language of postcolonial preaching is that of struggle, what would constitute the markers for a postcolonial homiletic theory?

> *Preaching takes place when God's voice is heard through the voice of the text, in the voice of the time (congregational context), through the (unique) voice of the preacher*. When these four voices become one voice, then the sermon is indeed *viva vox evangelii*.
>
> Johan Cilliers[25] (2004:32, original italics)

In Johan Cilliers' contemplation on a working theory for preaching, he chooses, in conversation with his interlocutors, to claim four voices as paramount for the act of preaching: God's voice, the text's voice, the congregation's voice, and the preacher's voice. Although I have much respect for what Cilliers places on the table with this definition, I am weary of the nuances thereof. How is it possible for God's voice to speak without the subjective interpretation of what constitutes God's voice as interpreted from one's location of culture? How can the text be interpreted without contemplation on the privileging of interlocutors, each with their location of culture and historically influenced perspective? What is the voice of the congregation if it is uncritical with regards to the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation? If the congregation

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[25] I have only chosen a few interlocutors who are South African homiletic scholars: Johan Cilliers, Hennie Pieterse and Cas Wepener. I have added Allan Boesak as well, although he is not considered a homiletic scholar. I also refer to the work of Ian Nell, but with a critical reflection on one article he has published. Other South African homiletics scholars I have contemplated in chapter 1 are ignored in this chapter. The reason for this is because they showcase, in my opinion, no feel for postcolonial thought or the postcolonial context.

is loyal to the irrational myth, does that mean the irrational myth should be promoted on the pulpit? After all, there are indeed colonial hermeneutic methods which could be used to promote the irrational myth (see Lartey 2013:102; Travis 2014:109). What if the congregation is untoward the preacher who deconstructs the irrational myth? There are after all real-life dangers for such a preacher and her livelihood. And what about the preacher? Can a person whose mind is colonised by the irrational myth be just as viable a preacher as the one whose mind has been decolonised? Or what about the lived experience; especially the experience of living as a decentred and fragmented person? Those who live without the security of the irrational myth; those who have not been privileged by the unjust gains of capitalism, past and present; those who have lost everything because of war; and those who have never had anything but the minimum for a meagre survival? Those who struggle day by day for what they need to live, physically, mentally, and spiritually. But also the privileged, the so-called centred person. Their lived experience is just as important, especially with regards to their exclusion from the human community.

Once more, with due respect for Cilliers' proposal, I think postcolonial preaching needs to delimit markers differently. Black theology has already shown its commitment to the black experience as the hermeneutic point of departure for both contextual analyses, the interpretation of God's revelation of God's identity, and Biblical interpretation (see Mofokeng, 1987a:15, 1987b:24; Mosala 1987:32-24; Maluleke 2000:206; Boesak 2014:1056; West 2016:354). However, a postcolonial theory of preaching cannot propose one centre of thinking (as Black theology does). Postcolonial thought, as I have interpreted it, suggests three markers: the deconstruction of the irrational myth, moving the centre, and the postcolonial subject (see chapter 2).

Thus, I propose the following three markers for the contemplation of postcolonial preaching: One, contextual analysis as the deconstructing of the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation and the promotion of decolonisation of the mind (the voice of the faith community within the glocal context). Two, the location of culture of the faith community as the *hermeneutical centre* in relationship with other centres (the voice of the text through the interpreting community). Again, the hermeneutic centre cannot become absolute. Three, the postcolonial subject, decentred and fragmented, as privileged subject – including God (the voice of the S/subject). Privileging the postcolonial subject implies privileging identity and faith formation towards moulding postcolonial subjects.

3. Postcolonial Preaching: a Preliminary Definition

Before turning to a preliminary definition for postcolonial preaching[26], I will consider one more definition of preaching, that of Karl Barth.

I

In conversation with Karl Barth's Emergency Homiletic[27].

1. Preaching is the Word of God which he himself speaks, claiming for the purpose the exposition of a biblical text in free human words that are relevant to contemporaries by those who are called to do this in the church that is obedient to its commission.

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[26] I choose to think of this definition as preliminary for two reasons: firstly, because all interpretations are inherently preliminary. Secondly, I am convinced that the study of postcolonial thought for homiletics (and theology) is still an open field. And this study is merely too reductionistic to propose anything other than a preliminary definition.

[27] *Emergency Homiletic* is a term I borrow from Angela Hancock (2013).

> 2. Preaching is the attempt enjoining upon the church to serve God's own Word, through one who is called thereto, by expounding a biblical text in human words and making it relevant to contemporaries in intimation of what they have to hear from God himself.
>
> Karl Barth[28] (1991:44)

From this definition of preaching, Barth (1991:47-86) contemplates the following aspects from the definition: revelation, church, confession, ministry, heralding, scripture, originality, congregation, and spirituality. Barth's proposal for preaching is thus more extensive than that which Johan Cilliers has laid on the table. For instance, Barth distinguished between the church and the congregation; the first being the event where the sacraments and preaching come together to conform to revelation (Ibid.,56-57) and the latter being the contextual situation of the congregation, including "a feeling for *kairos*" (Ibid.,84-85).

Returning to Barth's definition of preaching in conversation with postcolonial thought; some crucial aspects must be underscored. One, Barth's conviction that revelation comes from an external divine source must be questioned. Two, with regards to the exposition of a biblical text, postcolonial preaching must ask about interlocutors and location of interpretation. Three, Barth's insistence on "relevance to contemporaries" should be underscored, but with the condition that the contemporary subject is understood as the decentred and fragmented subject within the disenfranchisement of the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation. At the same time, Barth's (1991:85)

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[28] My contemplation of Barth's contribution to homiletics stems from a deep appreciation of his *Predigtvorbereitung* classes during 1932-1933, at a time when the freedom to preach in Germany was greatly restricted under the Nazi government. Although Barth's homiletic theory finds its centre in normative sources of authority (God and the Bible), I still think he is an essential partner in conversation.

proposal that the preacher has to have "a feeling for the *kairos*" of the context should be underscored.

II

Revelation and postcolonial homiletics.

> I would say He has no *one* face. In other words, God is not reducible to one person, or to the unique.
>
> Richard Kearney (2004:3, original italics)

Unlike the perspective of Barth, postcolonial homiletics is unable to rely justifiably on a divine source of revelation. This does not mean that postcolonial homiletics cannot say anything about God, or cannot believe in God. On the contrary, a postcolonial faith can undoubtedly speak about God from a centred perspective, without, however, nullifying other ways of talking about God.

In what I believe is a strong postcolonial and African movement of the centre of revelation, Ishmael Tetteh[29] can be found. When Tetteh (1999:34) contemplates who God is, he deconstructs seven beliefs about God. These are: 1) That God is the God of a sect who rejects people of all other sects. 2) That God is a judgemental God, whose anger flares more than that of humans and who has created a place called hell. 3) That God is a semi-powerful God with a nemesis, who can contest God for the souls of people. 4) That God is a gendered God, who has a preference for one gender above

[29] Ishmael Tetteh by no means represents mainstream Christian thinking and does not uphold the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ. However, when considering the postcolonial impetus of decentring revelation, Tetteh is a vital interlocutor from which we can learn the practice of relocating the centre of revelation with the caveat that other centres must also be taken into consideration.

another. 5) That God is a remote control God who exists far away from the world, yet controls what happens in the world. 6) That God is a racial God, who has a preference for one race of people, and their culture, above others. 7) That God is a bloodthirsty God who requires the sacrifice of his only Son for the forgiveness of humanity's sin.

I propose that these rejections about God which Tetteh proposes are a rejection of a western-centred view of God, or rather, a colonial view of God. However, the postcolonial task is not yet done, as after the deconstruction of the location of revelation, Tetteh places the following interpretation of God on the table:

> This 'God' is the very energy of life, present in all things as the substance of all things. He [*sic*] is a Father-Mother God, balanced as the polarity of sexes. He-She embodies the entire universe as its substance, energy, law and cohesive love. All things dwell and have their existence in Him-Her. He-She is the only power, wisdom and presence there is. This is my God. (Tetteh 1999:35).

This is, after all, merely an example of perceiving God differently because of another centre of perspective. Once more, Tetteh's proposal cannot become the new centre. Thus, a postcolonial understanding of preaching will open new spaces of negotiation for an understanding of revelation and God's being (see Bhabha 1994:38). Other ways of thinking about who God is should be welcomed with open arms by the postcolonial preacher. However, all ideas about God which promote the irrational myth, the colonisation of the mind, and absolute ways of perceiving and living in the world should be rejected.

In postcolonial preaching, God becomes the one with many faces, whereby God is liberated from the possession of one centre of thinking towards many potential

encounters with God in the faces of people, very unlike ourselves (Kearney 2004:4). Cas Wepener (2018) proposes that some of the biblical texts on what God does and who God is, showcase God as robust in the sense of unpossessable, hard to handle, and queer[30] in identity. In postcolonial preaching, God can move beyond our definitions of order, clean, correct, and regular. Nancy Eiesland (1994:89) speaks of God in the following way, "in a sip-puff wheelchair… Not an omnipotent, self-sufficient God, but neither a pitiable, suffering servant… I beheld God as a survivor, unpitying and forthright". God as disabled: what are the implications thereof? Or what about God as the suffering poor (see Maluleke 2000b:82)?

The point is clear: postcolonial preaching, in its source of revelation, in its articulation of the divine, and in its relationship with other ways of interpreting revelation, is an endeavour of decentring interpretation and articulation without absolutising a particular perspective.

III

Postcolonial preaching must ask the question about interlocutors for the interpretation of texts. The legitimacy of interlocutors depends not on their academic learnedness (although decolonised academic perspectives are paramount) but rather their location of culture and attitude of interpretation.

> I would portray postcolonial preaching as a locally rooted and globally conscious performance that seeks to create a Third Space so that the faith community can imagine new ways of being in the world and encountering God's salvific action for the oppressed and marginalized… Preaching as

[30] Also queer in the sense of sexually queer.

> performance does not concentrate on the preacher, but calls for greater focus on context and the rich convergence of performer, situation, setting, audience, and society.
>
> Kwok Pui-lan (2015:11)

From Pui-lan's definition of postcolonial preaching, I propose a privileged position of a view of hermeneutics which centres "the rich convergence of performer, situation, setting, audience, and society" (Pui-lan 2015:11). With this hermeneutics, I mean both hermeneutics for the sacred text, the Bible, and the texts of everyday life, the context. Thus, the hermeneutics for preaching should privilege the location of culture of the postcolonial subject.

I reckon that there must be a second movement with regards to hermeneutics. Firstly, privileging interlocutors whose lived experience is that of the postcolonial subject, decentred and fragmented; and secondly, a decolonised consciousness of the preacher. And yet, postcolonial homiletics must go even further. What about transcending the preacher as the one who represents the postcolonial subject as an interlocutor? Could it be possible for the postcolonial subject to be the preacher? What if the postcolonial subject were to represent themselves in the worship service, and in the academia? Stated differently, postcolonial preaching calls forth a rethinking of who can and cannot preach within the faith community. Who can legitimately preach? And where does the legitimacy of preaching a postcolonial sermon lie?

A case in point is the *Sermon of the Layperson* initiative which took place in the Western Cape in 2013. Ian Nell (2015) contemplates this endeavour. However, as Nell shows, the preachers were chosen because they are "people with influence in society through their participation in public debate" (Ibid., 3). Supposedly these people also had "a 'prophetic voice' and... neither hesitate[d] to address problems (vulnerabilities) in society nor fear[ed] criticism" (Ibid.). However, what came out of this endeavour was

merely people from a privileged (capitalist) position in society, proposing solutions for those who do not have their privileged position through espousing a neoliberal capitalist understanding of the world (Ibid., 3-9). I appreciate the endeavour of the project, and by no means gripe about the solutions offered by the preachers. From their perspective and lived experience, these may well be legitimate or seem legitimate. However, much was lost in this endeavour by not welcoming the voice of decentred and fragmented subjects. What if the subaltern was asked to preach: the marginalised, the excluded, the black woman, or the gay immigrant? What would the voice of the postcolonial subject bring to the table?

Once more, the problems of misrepresentation of interlocutors by the preacher are on the horizon. I have yet to come to an adequate proposal for this phenomenon. Vuyani Vellem (2017:1) has proposed that the academic, and in this case the preacher, should "disclose [their] location and assumptions upfront". But even this disclosure would presume a consciousness which is aware of colonial discourse and the necessary means to work against coloniality.

As prime example in the inability to disclose location is Hennie Pieterse. In the 1995 book, *Desmond Tutu's message*, Pieterse et al. (1995:55) use Desmond Tutu as interlocutor for proposing a new[31] way of (prophetic) preaching with a "vision for the South African society which is… based on his Christian interpretation of the reign of God". Pieterse (1995:96-97) goes on to propose that preaching in conversation with Tutu and the new democratic context dictates that "liberation theology and prophetic

[31] *New* for the white academic fraternity of South African homiletics. What Pieterse et al. find with Tutu as interlocutor has been proposed by Black theology since the 1960s.

preaching should guide the churches' contribution to the struggle for LIBERATION FROM POVERTY [*sic*] through reconstruction and development".

In a more recent articulation and development of Pieterse's (2013) thoughts on preaching in a context of poverty, he is exceptional in his usage of interlocutors. He listens both to social commentators who write about the situation of poverty in South Africa (Ibid.,1-3) as well as with the poor through the use of written interviews (Ibid.,3-4). So, yes, Pieterse makes an effort to hear the position of the poor, the unemployed, the suffering; and this is profound. However, and herein lies my discomfort, Pieterse is unable to disclose his location of culture, and his assumptions. This means that certain assumptions are so overwhelming in Pieterse's proposal for prophetic preaching. Nowhere does he question the systemic and global capitalist centre which directly influences poverty in South Africa. Nowhere does he question his assumptions on poverty and the church's role therein. Nowhere does he ask whether what is necessary to be done may be something completely different than neo-liberal capitalist development.

Maybe Frantz Fanon's (2004:141) idea of development could assist in deconstructing Pieterse's assumptions. For Fanon, development is not job creation through government aid or international aid, but the development of a decolonised consciousness, where whatever is created in the market is "the product of the citizens' brains and muscles". Or what about Steve Biko's (1987:28) insights about the real problem being "spiritual poverty… [of] the black man [*sic*]"? Pieterse's interlocutors are the poor who stand in a line, waiting to be aided by a government programme. What if these are merely those whose minds are caught in the "logic behind white domination… to prepare the black man [*sic*] for the subservient role in this country" (Ibid.)? Is proposing that the church, or the government, or any other organisation

should aid the poor not merely the strengthening of the neo-colonial structures already in place (see Boesak 2005:200)? Is government aid not merely the new "benevolent paternalism" David Bosch (2011:286) so adequately critiqued in the colonial paradigm of mission? In other words, Pieterse notes the existence of poverty, and without a doubt, it is troubling. Still, he is unable to conceptualise the nuances of the greater capitalist system, including the fact that its existence depends on great numbers of unemployed people (see Piketty 2014; Terreblanche 2014). Once more, in Pieterse's thought, no space has yet emerged from imagining a different world outside of the borders of neoliberal capitalism, and he is unable to see this.

Returning to the conversation about the choice of interlocutors for postcolonial preaching, a more nuanced view can be found in Hans Leander's (2010) thoughts on Mark 11:1-11. From the very beginning of his contemplation, Leander (2010:309) understands that the political nature of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem will have to be interpreted in relation to Roman imperialism. At the same time, he adequately articulates his suspicion that biblical scholars who exclude this relationship to Roman imperialism do so because of their "social location" (Ibid.,310). Returning to Leander's contemplation on Mark 11:1-11, he firstly contemplates the commentary of Ezra Gould, whose location of culture is that of Britain in the late 19th century (Ibid.). What Leander finds in Gould's interpretation is rather lurid:

> The Protestant identity formation, of which Gould's interpretation was a part, was somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, it could be characterized as non-worldly and non-political. On the other hand, it was part of a social practice (Christian mission) that both legitimized and resisted a highly political and worldly colonial expansion. Despite the complexity of its discursive location, however, Gould's image of a 'purely

> spiritual Jesus' that does not interfere with the state could quite clearly be labelled pro-colonial and acquiescent. (Leander 2010:314).

Gould, as interlocutor, is thus an antagonist in contemplating the interpretation of the text in a postcolonial fashion. However, he is not the only one. Leander also considers the insights of Richard Horsley. Leander finds that Horsley represents an anti-colonial stance, where Jesus stands with the people in opposition to the rulers, with the goal of political liberation (Ibid.,315). Leander concludes with the following about Horsley:

> In my final reading of Horsley, therefore, his interpretation of Mark quite clearly represents a typical anti-colonial position… Although an anti-colonial reading such as Horsley's could be appreciated as a challenge to the comfortable, acquiescent readings of Mark, it nevertheless lacks tools for accentuating the subtlety and complexity that I will argue is typical of Mark's way of re-inscribing and subverting Roman power. (Leander 2010:317).

In Leander's (2010:319) interpretation of Mark 11:1-11, he takes cognisance that triumphal entries were quite common in the ancient world. However, what distinguished Jesus' entry into Jerusalem in Mark 11:1-11 is the end of the pericope. Usually, processions of entry end in a ritual taking place at the temple, however, in Mark 11:11, there is an anti-climax: "when [Jesus] had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve" (Mark 11:11, ESV). In conversation with Homi Bhabha, Leander understands the anti-climax at the end as mimicry: "a parodic undermining of imperial notions of power" (Ibid.,323). This parodic mimicry thus opens a third space of negotiation, undermining the meaning and underlying discourse of the act of triumphant entry (Ibid.). Leander concludes:

> The profound threat to imperial hegemony does not lie then, as one would perhaps assume, in an oppositional contrasting of the Lord Jesus and the Lord Emperor, but rather in the somewhat playful and ambivalent subversions of its very notions of strength and triumph. (Leander 2010:330).

I therefore return once more to my earlier statements, that certain interlocutors must be privileged, and the preacher needs a decolonised consciousness[32]. Leander helps in this endeavour, but we must go further in the South African context, especially in the context of preaching. Postcolonial preaching will have to develop, one, the means of listening to interlocutors from the margins of society; and two, terms of understanding with regards to the interplay between (neo)colonial discourse which is alive, and postcolonial consciousness emerging from the cracks of society. Once more, I think Pieterse has done immense work in listening to alternative interlocutors, yet, he is thoroughly unconscious about colonial discourse.

IV

This brings me to the third aspect, the relevance of postcolonial preaching for contemporaries. Put another way, postcolonial preaching must have a feeling for the kairos of the context.

[32] A decolonised consciousness for the preacher must at minimum be an awareness of colonial discourse within the text and context. At the same time, a decolonised conscious is not a destination, but rather a journey in which the preacher (as well as the greater faith community) recurrently moves away from colonial thoughts towards the content and terms of postcolonial thought.

> [The colonial] worldview of opposing and antagonistic binaries… continues to hurt both colonizers and colonized peoples by keeping them divided and engaged in cycles of oppression.
>
> Lis Valle (2015:28)

During apartheid, Black Theology of Liberation (BTL) was on the forefront and cutting edge of interpreting the kairos of the moment. With this, I mean that BTL was able to concretely name the social, political, and economic injustices intertwined with apartheid. As Sizwe (1988:50) shows, the apartheid government is "guilty of tyranny, when it denies human rights to some of its people". In a similar vein, Mofokeng (1989:46) critiqued the capitalist system of apartheid, which does not differ much from our own (see Piketty 2014), "surplus extraction at the expense of workers here and abroad". So too, the Confession of Belhar (1986) rejects the apartheid ideology "which legitimate[s] forms of injustice". This is not to say that everyone agreed that apartheid was against the gospel. Allan Boesak's (2015:40) contemplation on the theological interpretation of apartheid showcases both white theologians for (Koot Vorster) and against (Beyers Naudé) apartheid, as well as the black church's underlying white theology which did not question apartheid and the theological struggle against apartheid within the black church.

However, since democracy, and maybe because of the perception that democracy brings with it justice, the feeling for kairos dissipated. Firstly, prominent theologians in BTL during apartheid were absorbed into administrative positions in the new democratic government (Maluleke 2000a:194). Secondly, constitutional democracy as national liberation was understood as the gateway to addressing all forms of injustice in South Africa (Dolamo 2016:44). And thirdly, the church saw national liberation as the opportunity to return to the so-called real work of the church, the spiritual and moral guidance of the faithful (Boesak 2009:8). A fourth reason for the lack of kairos is not

so much the mistiming of kairos, but the importance the prosperity gospel had started playing in politics since 1994 (see Boesak 2014:55-56). During the presidency of Jacob Zuma, the National Interfaith Leadership Council (NILC), led by the televangelist, Ray McCauley, played a central role in advising the president. During this same time, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) publicly criticised the governing party's corruption but was side-lined by Zuma (Pillay 2017:4). The combination of these reasons made it an impossible task for BTL to engage in continues and pioneering analysis of the new struggles in democratic South Africa.

At the same time, some stood strong or instead reiterated the insights of BTL during democracy. In my opinion, Allan Boesak[33] is the forerunner of this movement. In both his writing and sermons since democracy (more accurately, since the end of his political career) he has been adamant that nothing has changed; that apartheid, although supposedly over, is everywhere, alive and well (see Wessels 2017). On the one hand, Boesak has an acute feeling for kairos:

> In the global community today we are facing serious challenges across the world in terms of our constitutional democracies, political integrity, spiritual authenticity, political moral authority, and our prophetic

[33] However, much must be asked about Boesak's location of culture after 1994, especially with regards to his (critical) solidarity with the African National Congress (ANC). Are Boesak's interlocutors the same during democracy as they were during apartheid? Or have his interlocutors changed, no longer the poor, but the middle class (see Vellem 2012)? It is interesting, for instance, that Boesak is the preacher for the 2012 centenary celebration of the ANC (Boesak 2012). Although he includes the ideas of BTL, and the need for justice in democratic South Africa, his critical solidarity with the ANC is a dislodging from the location of the subaltern in democratic South Africa.

> faithfulness. In our day, in our presence, struggles for justice, freedom, human dignity, and the integrity of creation are sweeping across the globe. (Boesak 2015:92).

I have much regard for Boesak's insistence and feel for kairos. However, I am unconvinced of his underlying hermeneutics. I think Boesak is merely anti-colonial. His feeling for kairos brings him to repeat the insights of BTL during apartheid, that hermeneutic privilege should be given to the location of culture of the subaltern, and that this hermeneutical positionality is the normative and correct place of God's justice (Boesak 2015:92). However, his relation to other centres is a mere oppositionality thereof. Furthermore, he does not question how much of an influence an anti-colonial stance has had and may still have in repeating and strengthening colonial sentiments which divide people, rather than restore relationships.

Lis Valle (2015:28) proposes an entirely different approach. She is acutely aware of the injustices still prevalent in the colonial worldview "of opposing and antagonistic binaries" (Ibid.). However, instead of repeating those oppositions from an anti-colonial position, she proposes "a worldview of 'complementary dualities'" (Ibid.). In this proposal, the coloniser and the colonised are not seen as opposites - the one to be overcome, subjugated or even killed; and the other the bearer of truth and justice – depending on your perspective. Both are understood as kept divided by the colonial worldview and trapped in cycles of oppression.

Aimé Césaire (1972:41) concurs with this understanding, stating that colonisation has been both detrimental to the minds of the colonised and has brutalised the coloniser, dehumanising them, and alienating them from the common humanity. A feeling for kairos as a postcolonial practice is a feeling for the methods and means of transcending the dualities of the colonial myth. Valle (2015:30) goes on to propose

that a worldview of complementary dualities means: "In short, opposites need, constitute, and complement each other". For Valle (Ibid.,32) postcolonial preaching is a journey of proclaiming imagined fragments[34] of "a completely different reality, a different way of being in the world, and of relating to each other". This imagination is not governed by colonisation, nor is it anti-colonial, but transcends the colonial dualities towards complementarity. And through this complementarity of dualities, the possibility of negotiated space breaks open where colonised and coloniser can be what they indeed are; equal and dignified human beings (Ibid.). Valle's point is that the status quo is not all there is, therefore (neo)colonisation is not all there is:

> There is something else, something that the community must build using the prophetic imagination of prophets in the Old Testament and of current theologians, in addition to their own. (Valle 2015:32).

At the same time, a feeling for kairos cannot ignore the economic realities. Fanon (2004:9) convincingly states that land is an issue in the African context. For Fanon, the land is not only about sustenance, but dignity (Ibid.). And without dignity and trust in oneself and the greater community, what sustainable economy is possible? Furthermore, the land is currently a contentious issue in South Africa, with a clear indication that the ANC and the president, Cyril Ramaphosa, are pushing for land expropriation:

> We're calling for the amendment of section 25 of the constitution, and it was agreed that the ANC must embark on an intensive programme to

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[34] The idea of imagining fragments of a different world comes from the 1993 work of Walter Brueggemann, *Texts under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination*.

> popularise and explain its position on the amendment. The lekgotla endorsed that the power related to issues of expropriation of land without compensation should reside in the executive. (Pres. Cyril Ramaphosa during the ANC lekgotla of 2020, as quoted by Bhengu 2020).

However, and this is where the postcolonial interpretation of kairos comes into play, should the issue of land not be a conversation on human wellbeing? Should there not be an imagination of alternatives, rather than the duality of expropriation of land, which is merely taking from the one and giving to the other? And who receives land? Or is land expropriation merely a façade whereby the new elite monopolises land, and once more land is in the hands of the few? Is there an alternative imagination when it comes to the land issue? Can there be? But, also, can we imagine different economies? And different ways of economic relations in South Africa, other than the racially clouded dualism inherited from colonisation and apartheid?

At the same time, a postcolonial feeling for kairos knows that economies do not develop from the top down. Neither are economies independent from human relations, everyday struggles, and our bodies. Wa Thiong'o's (1986:108) call for "national, democratic and human liberation" is a call for struggle both in understanding the intricate workings of our time and calling for the imagination of lingual, mental, and physical struggle against the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation. It is the naming of contemporary sites of struggle and imagining fragments of a different world by which humankind can be united in the struggle for liberation from (neo)colonial structures. For Harvey Cox (2013:151), kerygma in its essence is "the language of specific announcements about where the work of liberation is now proceeding and concrete

invitations to join in the struggle." He goes on to show that certain powers[35] govern the world, powers against which there must be struggled (Ibid., 152-154) and that the Christian in the secular, postcolonial age must be a person who takes responsibility "in and for the city of man, or become once again a slave to dehumanizing powers" (Ibid., 157).

V

And thus I now turn to a preliminary definition for postcolonial preaching. I propose two simultaneous definitions:

1) Postcolonial preaching is the language of struggle through three voices. One, the voice of the glocal context by means of decolonising the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation towards the promotion of a decolonised consciousness. Two, the voice of the scriptural text through the location of culture of the faith community as the hermeneutical centre in open relation to other centres. Three, the voice of the postcolonial S/subject as privileged identity.
2) Postcolonial preaching is the queering of revelation through the decentred and fragmented interpretation of the postcolonial S/subject. This interpretation is dependent on interlocutors with the identity of the postcolonial subject, discerned through a decolonised consciousness. Postcolonial preaching has a feeling for kairos through naming the colonial myth and imagining fragments for transcending said colonial myth.

[35] For postcolonial preaching, the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation is the focal understanding of the powers governing the world.

4. Postcolonial Rhetoric

In this chapter, I have so far only touched on the subject of language. However, preaching not only has to do with the content of language (what), but also with the terms of language (how). The question must then be asked, what would postcolonial rhetoric entail? I propose three focal images for postcolonial rhetoric: struggle, foolishness, and anger.

I

The Rhetoric of Struggle.

> [This book] is a call for the rediscovery of the real language of humankind: the language of struggle. It is the universal language underlying all speech and words of our history. Struggle. Struggle makes history. Struggle makes us. In struggle is our history, our language and our being.
>
> Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1981:108)

> Hope makes herself known *in encounter* with suffering and struggle.
>
> Allan Boesak (2014:70, original italics)

Earlier in this chapter, I contemplated the content of a language of struggle. However, a language of struggle is also rhetorical; it has to do with the how of preaching. In my understanding of struggle as rhetoric, I would like to propose that postcolonial preaching is always en route to the destination of a decolonised consciousness. This means that to preach in a postcolonial manner is to struggle to speak, while the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation is thoroughly developed within its rhetoric form and marketed through social media, television channels, and word-of-mouth (not to mention its stronghold on politics and the economy). The rhetoric of postcolonial preaching is an attempt at transcending the irrational myth and imagining a different world.

Once more, the decentring nature of postcolonial preaching brings forth rhetoric which inherently is to struggle against the rhetoric powers which absolutise and centralise the ideology of the irrational myth as fundamental to existence. At the same time, any centralised ideology must be struggled against. This means that the fundamentalism within faith communities is just as problematic in its rhetoric as the irrational myth. Furthermore, where fundamentalism believes that by its missional effort (and rhetoric of such missional effort) it can bring forth the kingdom of God (Stockwell 2012:268), postcolonial preaching knows that such bringing forth of God's kingdom is impossible. The breaking through of God's kingdom is only in fragments (see Valle 2015). To preach postcolonially is to struggle, and to accept that our lives and our words are those of struggle.

Returning again to the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation, Walter Brueggemann (2003:336) makes the following claim: "Empowered and humbled by the mandate of scripture, the preacher must counter the rhetoric of popular patriotism and witness to God's sovereignty over nations." Writing from the United States of America, Brueggemann focusses on how the irrational myth has revealed itself in that context, popular patriotism. Taking the queue from Brueggemann, postcolonial preaching should rhetorically counter the rhetoric of the irrational myth. Furthermore, the last part is essential, "witness to God's sovereignty over nations" (Ibid.). This witness to the ultimate power of God and the reminder of penultimate power of nations (under the spell of the irrational myth political entities wrongly believe that they are ultimate) has to be repeated time and again. To witness is to struggle. The world and the powers under the irrational myth do not listen and do not hear. The task of postcolonial preaching is to speak and speak again. And even if not heard, to keep on speaking, preaching, struggling.

Brueggemann goes on to propose: “We may then move beyond analysis to alternative, and finally set our hearts and minds on the evangelical task of empowering the faithful to alternative forms of citizenship” (Ibid.). Yes, indeed so too for postcolonial preaching. The decolonisation of the mind is the goal towards which the postcolonial preacher moves. However, in speaking and in preaching, postcolonial preaching is not unaware of the struggle against the irrational myth towards the decolonisation of the mind. If anything, this movement from the one to the other is merely an attempt, a process. The postcolonial preacher does, therefore, not work with the rhetoric of certainty, but the rhetoric of uncertainty. She is attempting to say something which moves the mind and heart towards postcolonial thought—trying to propose a different way of seeing the world. Words such as "I think", "maybe we should look at the text from this perspective", and "let us think together" are not outside the framework of postcolonial preaching as the rhetoric of struggle, and struggling together to make sense of the world in conversation with the faithful within their context.

II

Finally Comes the Fool.

> The gospel is foolishness. Preaching is folly. Preachers are fools. The foolishness goes all the way down, encompassing finally the rhetoric of preaching. Preaching fools employ a rhetoric of folly. Like preaching fools themselves, this rhetoric interrupts the conventions and rationalities of the old age and creates a liminal space at the juncture of the ages; it seeks to reframe perspective and invites discernment of the inbreaking new creation.
>
> Charles Campbell and Johan Cilliers (2012:181)

Closely related to the rhetoric of struggle, but with a different emphasis, is the rhetoric of foolishness proposed by Campbell and Cilliers (2012). For Campbell and Cilliers (2012:181) the idea of preaching as a rhetoric of foolishness revolves around the idea

that preaching is unable to "control the gospel in rigid figures or forms". Thus, preaching can never be a centralisation of an agenda, an ideology, a location of culture, or a centralised perspective. Thus, in my attempt to reframe Campbell and Cilliers' idea of foolish preaching, postcolonial preaching is the Holy Spirit decentralising and fragmenting the preacher's rhetoric.

This folly of preaching is an interruption of the irrational myth. Even within the Christian religion, the irrational myth requires that it be expanded. I am convinced that this expansion is proposed, on the one hand, through fundamentalism and the ensuing gospel of capitalist prosperity (see Stockwell 2012), and on the other hand, through nationalism, be it Afrikaner nationalism (see Cilliers 2008) or African nationalism with the cry that the African National Congress (ANC) will reign until Jesus comes (see Ngoepe 2016).

Campbell and Cilliers' rhetoric of folly proposes that the gospel is itself a decentred and fragmented subject; always in flow, reforming, reframing, and fragmented with regards to any attempt at rhetoric of absolutes.

III

Angry preachers, preaching righteous anger.

> It is a righteous anger because of injustice done to others, the refusal to meekly accept what is wrong, because it is a wrong done to someone created in the image of God. It is anger against the arrogance of power, against the sinful cowardice of feigned neutrality while benefiting from the fruits of injustice and exploitation. It is anger that refuses to give in to hopelessness and resists what drives us to despair. It is the anger of injured but unbowed dignity.
>
> Allan Boesak (2014:51)

> South Africans are angry and the nation has indeed reached boiling point… As a nation South Africans should not be cured of their anger, but should rather be assisted to embody and through

> embodiment express their anger in meaningful ways. Acts of aggressions should be condemned; by way of comparison an expression of anger can also be a sign of hope showing that people still care.
>
> Cas Wepener and Hennie Pieterse (2018:404-405)

In the previous chapter, I contemplated Frantz Fanon's (2004:3) insistence that decolonisation cannot take place without violence. As postcolonial preaching has to do with the decolonisation of the mind, and faith, I propose that the violence of Fanon should be espoused in the rhetoric of anger for postcolonial preaching. This is not a novum movement within South African theology or homiletics. Both Boesak (2014:51) and Wepener and Pieterse (2018:405) have proposed that anger is necessary as part of the rhetoric of preaching contextually in South Africa. But, what is the implication of anger for the rhetoric of postcolonial preaching?

The three voices I have proposed within my theory for postcolonial preaching showcase themselves in the South African context within the location of culture of those who are most likely to be angry at the situation. It is the poor who have been promised the world and received nothing. It is the location of struggle where the most anger lies against the status quo. Reading the scriptural text from the positionality of those whose lives have not gone according to their dreams and hopes showcases the deep frustration and should come to the fore through a rhetoric of anger.

No longer can the preacher, nor the congregation, tolerate preaching which ignores the contextual realities, claiming “peace, peace”, when there is no peace. No longer can the preacher, nor the congregation, act as if the status quo, which implies the suppression of reality, is the will of God. No longer can the preacher preach as if the world is not burning, as if there is no struggle, as if our people are not under constant

economic and political pressure for mere survival. No longer can the preacher claim that Jesus is only the Lord of our hearts.

Angry preaching is a rhetorical call to realism and empathy to experience, name, and live within the reality of the South African condition. It is the expression of the lived experience of the postcolonial subject in its most concrete terms. In anger, we are found to be most human and honest about the South African situation. In the words of Eusebius McKaiser (2016:9-10): “I am angry. I am fucking angry. I am angry… [we] often pretend we [see the moral stains of the society we live in] – a charity run here, fake integration projects there, and so on – but the structures of our society remain monumentally unjust.”

Wepener and Pieterse (2018:415) propose two more route markers for angry preaching. One, angry preaching should be accompanied by angry listening (Ibid.). In postcolonial terms, there should be an open, third space, where angry preaching is welcomed and not subdued or opposed. Two, angry preaching should stand alongside angry liturgy (Ibid.). I want to propose that this should also include the liturgy after the liturgy. Angry preaching should be heard in the workplace, on the streets, in the townships, and in the marketplace. The anger of postcolonial preaching should not stay in the place of worship but ought to take hold everywhere the church is present.

IV

What I have been trying to propose in the rhetoric of postcolonial preaching is, in essence, the rhetoric of being human. Of speaking as we are. Of preaching not with the voice of religiosity, but with human voices, within human experiences of suffering, struggle, and survival. Postcolonial rhetoric is the secularisation of Christian rhetoric.

> In short, for us, being Christian means to be truly human rather than being religious in any narrow sense of that word; it also means striving to become more fully human in solidarity with the rest of humankind in the struggle for a more humane, just and peaceable world that respects human dignity and freedom, as well as the integrity of creation.
>
> John de Gruchy (2018:57-58)

I propose that postcolonial rhetoric for preaching concurs with De Gruchy (2018:57-58). In a rhetoric of struggle, foolishness, and anger, the point of relation is being human; speaking as human beings within the contextual realities of our world, as we are: angry, struggling fools. At the same time, postcolonial preaching is not about already having arrived, but rather, as De Gruchy rightly says, "striving to become more fully human". The postcolonial preacher strives through her rhetoric of struggle and foolishness to become more articulate of the human condition, to speak more clearly against the irrational myth, to call more clearly for a decolonisation of the mind, to preach more certainly the good news for the poor from the position of disenfranchisement, decentring, and fragmentation.

Adam Neder (2019:26) proposes that to follow Christ is "the summons to discipleship [as] a summons to live with the grain of one's identity in Christ rather than against it". I have proposed in this study that the human identity to which we are called is the location of culture of the postcolonial subject, decentred and fragmented. This means

for the acceptance of our humanity as we are, seeing the systems we have built as the false securities they are and ourselves as fragile, decentred, and fragmented. Even as we cannot understand ourselves completely, this also means that none of us is superior to another, nor inferior (see Biko 1987).

Neder (2019:27) goes on to propose that "His call for you to become who you are is not identical to his call for me to become who I am." On the one hand, I agree. We each find ourselves in different locations of culture and must rise to the call to become fully human in different ways. Nevertheless, our being fully human is not found without each other. Our rhetoric cannot become an individualistic journey of self-discovery without the rootedness in Christ interpreted from the position of the postcolonial subject. Once more, I do not propose that the individual's journey of becoming human falls away, I am merely calling for a hybridity of rhetoric which includes our common humanity in search of human freedom and dignity.

Once more, the rhetoric of humanity for postcolonial preaching is the rediscovery of our shared humanity, and the terms by which all of us, irrespective of our location of culture, or even our faith, or lack thereof, can be united in this shared humanity.

5. An attempt[36] at a Postcolonial Sermon[37]

Arise, shine, for… the stranger has come.[38]

5 January 2020 (Second Sunday after Christmas Day)

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm 72:1-5

Someone once said that to leave home and to return is a comedy, but when we do not return, it is a tragedy. No-one leaves home if they do not need to. We leave home only when forced, when we have to, when economic, political, or personal reasons coerce

[36] I choose to speak of an attempt, as I am convinced that postcolonial preaching is never a completed endeavour. Neither is this sermon without its shortcomings and colonial discourse. At the same time, I have tried to keep as close to the verbatim expression (albeit translated from Afrikaans to English) as I used it during the sermon. I have also chosen not to interpret the sermon, but leave it open to interpretation of its postcolonial consciousness (or lack thereof).

[37] This sermon was preached on 5 January 2020 at the Soutpan Dutch Reformed Church in the Free State, South Africa. It is my opinion that the congregation is, on the one hand, disenfranchised because of their location of culture in a very rural area of the Free State. The membership is minimal. At the same time, the members are all white and Afrikaans, and the system of thought is that of Afrikaner Nationalism. When I spoke to some of the members before the worship service, there was a strong feeling of both sadness because of the small membership, and resentment of people who are of different cultures/races. The sermon was preached in Afrikaans, and this version is a translation afterwards.

[38] In the South African homiletic community, Johan Cilliers has pioneered the tradition of ending chapters on homiletic thought with a sermon which he showcases the ideas he has set forth in the chapter (See Cilliers, 2004, 2016b, 2019).

us. But when returning, whatever happened, whatever sorrow, whatever pain, it is all gone. It is a comedy. But when you do not return home, it is a tragedy.

I

You have heard, and so our text witnesses again today: "Shine your light!" These words are nothing new to us. In a sense, it has already been spoken many times and we have heard it many times, in many forms throughout generations. To Abraham God said, "I will bless you… so that you will be a blessing" (Gen 12:2, ESV). This was a calling of public being to the inclusion of others. To Israel, in words we hear today, "Arise, shine, for your light has come". In other words, after the night of exile, comes the light of the Lord's glory, and it is Israel who is called to shine that light. We have heard these words for the disciples: "in the same way, let your light shine before others" (Matt 5:16, ESV). These words were for the disciples and the church, and so too for us, "Let your light shine!"

And it is correct what we have heard; that we must live our lives in such a way, in an ethical way, so that those who see what we do will see our good works and give praise to God. We should be the people who exist differently in this world.

II

However, Isaiah 60, this morning does not speak about *our* light. It does not talk about the light as our good works. No. The light in our text is "the glory of the Lord [which] has risen upon you" (Isa 60:2). During certain times, from the perspective of the faithful, the Lord's glory was nowhere to be found. But now, it has arisen. Now it is Emmanuel, God with Us. Now, it is the child in the manger who has come. Now the Lord's glory is here, and it must be shone to the world!

Who is this child, born not in Medi-Clinic, or Rose Park, or even in Pelonomi Hospital? Who is this child born in someone's garage? Is he the light? Is he the glory of the Lord's presence? Let's think about this together. He is not born in the place of power, and yet, he is the expected king. He does not live in comfort, and yet, he brings peace and wellbeing. He does not lead a revolution, and yet, his kingdom has come.

If this child is the glory of God's presence, then the shining of our light is to point to this child, to proclaim him and what he has done. Is it to point to what he did and said. His first sermon was this: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt 4:17, ESV). And today we have heard of the king in Psalm 72: the defender of the cause of the poor, the deliverer of the children of the needy, the crusher of the oppressed. All these words are political, and we must hear them in this way. This child, this man from the poor Nazareth, this man amongst the oppressed, is the king of a new kingdom, a new politic, a new economy, a new society.

Put another way, there is a place of righteousness and justice. There is a kingdom of equality, and for all to have enough. There is a city, a republic, a society which includes and welcomes. The aggrieved, the widow, the orphan, the stranger, and us; all welcome.

Let your light shine! This light.

III

But a question we seldom ask is: What happens when this light is shone into the world?

"And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising." (Isa 60:3, ESV).

Imagine that. But in reality no imagination is necessary. This is very normal. To be drawn to light is very normal, very human. And in our text, people from all nations

come "to your light". To this place. To the site where the king is proclaimed. To the kingdom which is different from the kingdoms of our world; different to the places of injustice, of selfishness, of economies of abuse, and of politics of violence.

Again, strangers come to the light: people of different cultures, people of different languages. *The other* comes to the light.

Let's be honest with ourselves, we the Afrikaners. We are not very good when it comes to strangers. We struggle to welcome those who look different. We struggle to have relationships with those who believe differently, who speak differently, who smell different. We struggle with those who love differently. With those who worship differently.

But, if we were to take our text seriously, then God loves diversity. God welcomes diversity. To let our light shine is also to welcome the stranger. To let our light shine is to sit with the other at the table of communion. Not so we can change them to become like us. But just to sit with them as they are, strangers.

To let our light shine is to let the stranger be themselves. The stranger comes to the shining light as they are; with their abundance, and with their wealth (Isa 60:5). This wealth is first of all economic wealth but is also more than that; it is a cultural abundance. Stated differently, the stranger comes with the abundance of their language, of their worldview, of their religion, of how they think, and believe, and do, and live.

And it is at this moment, not before, but when the stranger has come with all she has, that *they* “shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord” (Isa 60:6).

In other terms, we cannot praise God and enjoy God all the days of our lives on our own. We cannot shine our light on our own; but only once the stranger has come, with the stranger amongst us.

IV

To leave home and to return is a comedy. To leave home and never return, is a tragedy. As the faithful, we understand and believe that to be in the presence of the Lord is the grand homecoming. To enter the kingdom of Heaven, the house of the Lord, the new Jerusalem.

However, if it is a tragedy when we do not return home, what is it if we are excluded from the house of the Lord just as we stand at the entrance? What is it if we are excluded because of who we are or where we live? Is that not the epitome of tragedy?

May we shine our light! And may we keep the doors of the Lord's kingdom open.

Amen.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I delimited three markers for postcolonial preaching: One, the voice of the faith community within the glocal context; two, the voice of the text through the interpreting community; and three, the voice of the S/subject.

I

The faith community within the glocal context as postcolonial community is both aware of the (neo)colonial myth which invades our lives and minds and struggles towards a decolonial mindset. From this decolonial awareness, the faith community transcends the dualities between people towards a worldview of complementaries where new ways of relating break open. The voice of this faith community comes to the fore in preaching both as a gift and a task. A gift for preaching as a community which is open to hearing the truth about the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation and open to pursuing new ways of thinking and relating to all people. And it is a task for preaching to strive concurrently towards the formation of a postcolonial faith community wherein the gift is possible.

II

Through this faith community en route and struggling towards a decolonised mind, the hermeneutic possibilities of the voice of the text change. The faith community becomes the local hermeneutic key for interpreting the text. However, postcolonial preaching is aware that *a* faith community cannot become *the* faith community. In other words, postcolonial preaching is mindful of the existence of other faith communities with other locations of culture, asking thus what relationship exists and should exist between differing hermeneutical keys. Thus, the voice of the text becomes more nuanced in postcolonial preaching as hermeneutical relations are sought throughout.

III

Thirdly, and yet interrelated, I proposed that the postcolonial subject should be privileged in postcolonial preaching. The postcolonial subject is inherently the reimagining of all of us, irrelevant of our location of culture. It is breaking away from the idea that any person is fixed and centred in time and space. All people in character and identity change towards otherness in the experience of different spaces, different people, and different times. In postcolonial preaching the knowledge of the subject as decentred, fragmented, and always reforming will be the privileged subject for viewing the art of preaching.

IV

Lastly, in the attempt of a postcolonial sermon, three images came to the fore: One, the political nature of the text; two, God's love for diversity; and three, the blurring of lines between the in-group (the listeners) and *the other*.

Chapter 4: Postcolonial Liturgical Contemplation

1. Introduction

> Liturgies are powerful actions that tell us what and how to think, what (not) to do, how and what (not) to relate to, what to avoid, and so on. Liturgical religious movements shape bodies, minds, spirits, politics, economies, and nation-states.
>
> Cláudio Carvalhaes (2015:3)

In this study on postcolonial preaching, I have endeavoured to name some markers for postcolonialising preaching. However, the sermon does not stand alone (see Wepener and Klomp 2015). No sermon is preached without the accompaniment of some sort of liturgical movements. Even the complete absence of liturgy has liturgical implications. And no liturgical action is without its impact on shaping how people interact and live with each other in this world. As Cláudio Carvalhaes (2015:3) acutely proposes, liturgy within the faith community has an impact on shaping the whole of human existence.

As Walter Mignolo (2007:452-453) opines, postcolonial theory brings forth other ways of understanding, thinking, relating, and existing in this world, politically and economically. Thus, just as preaching is part and parcel of the worship service, part of the liturgy of the faith community, so too must this study contemplate the implications of postcolonial thought for the whole of the worship service. Once more, when doing homiletics, I also want to busy myself with the liturgy. When contemplating postcolonial thought for preaching and the homiletic community, I too must consider postcolonial thought for the liturgy.

Put another way, a chapter on liturgy within this study of homiletics, to my mind, is wholly justified. How we worship transcends the confines of the Service of the Word

and takes place in the whole liturgical experience. This being said, the liturgy precesed the Service of the Word and the latter is part and parcel of the former. Furthermore, the worship service continues in the world, the liturgy after the liturgy.

For my contemplation on postcolonial liturgical practice, I will interlock with the three focal images I delimited in chapter two: The irrational myth and the decolonisation of the mind; moving the centre; and a decentred, fragmented subject (the postcolonial subject). The last two focal images will be contemplated together. At the same time, Mignolo's (2007:459) insistence that the postcolonial "struggle is for changing the terms in addition to the content of the conversation" must be considered.

2. The Irrational Myth and the Liturgy

> At its heart, liturgical/ritual dynamics are deeply related to power, either maintaining or opposing powers already in place. Whoever holds religious power defines, allows, authorizes, and demands the proper practices/behaviors of the faith—a flight from the first liturgical sense of the *work of the people* to the work of specialists done *on behalf of the people*.
>
> Cláudio Carvalhaes (2015:4)

From a postcolonial perspective, as Carvalhaes (2015:4) indicates, liturgy must be considered within the framework of power relations. In chapter 2, I delimited the overarching power structure of the postcolony as the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation embedded in global capitalism. However, before turning to the relation between the irrational myth and liturgy in the contemporary context, a short historical reflection between liturgy and power within the broader societal context is necessary.

I

Liturgy as the transformation of societal values and the unintended consequences of the Reformation:

> The leadership of the church in the fourth century realized that the church had to transform the values of Roman society. Liturgy was one of the means by which the values of the kingdom of God would be proclaimed and expressed in preaching and sacramental celebration.
>
> Frank Senn (2010:42)

After the Christian religion became a legal cult in the Roman Empire during the fourth century, as Senn (2010:42) adeptly shows, the liturgy played a fundamental role in the attempt at transforming the society towards the understanding of life per the kingdom of God. In a sense, the power dynamic at that time was, for the first time in Christian history, at such a juncture that an endeavour of liturgy as part and parcel of political life could take place. However, as Brad Gregory (2012:367) reasons, by the late Middle Ages, the idea that the church could transform society towards the kingdom of God "fell gravely short" of being realised.

Stated otherwise, as much as the church was in a position of power, attempts of bringing about God's kingdom did not pan out in reality because of the "widespread failures of secular and ecclesiastical authorities to find nonoppressive ways of exercising power consistent with *caritas*" (Gregory 2012:367). It was at this juncture that the Reformation took place, however, bringing with it a twofold complexification of the problem of bringing the kingdom of God in any real-world terms:

> The unintended problem created by the Reformation was therefore not simply a perpetuation of the inherited and still-present challenge of how to make human life more genuinely Christian, but also the new and compounding problem of how to know what true Christianity

> was. "Scripture alone" was not a solution to this new problem, but its cause. (Gregory 2012:368-369).

Gregory proposes that the solution for this unintended problem bought on by the Reformation came to the fore through the Dutch Republic:

> Especially in the maritime and mercantile province of Holland, a distinction was in effect being drawn between public and private life, and "religion"—understood largely as a matter of belief, worship, and devotion—was being individualized, privatized, and separated from political and economic life. So long as one obeyed the laws that provided for common security and stability, one could believe whatever one wished and worship in private however one pleased. (Gregory 2012:373-374).

If Gregory is correct, privatisation of worship has had an immense influence on the power dynamic between the church as the herald of the gospel and the political implications of the gospel. Once more, I opine that this privatisation is paramount to the irrational myth. Herein the lived experience is colonised by proposing body and spirit, economy and church, life and religion have nothing to do with each other. In this line of thought Carvalhaes' (2015:3) proposal that liturgies "are powerful actions" which inform our very existence in this world, personally and politically, seems a bit far-fetched. After all, if liturgy is merely private and has nothing to do with public life, how can it have any power in shaping civic life? Has the irrational myth trumped the political and social implications of the liturgy even before the service has started?

Yet, Carvalhaes is not alone in proposing that liturgy has a profound influence on human existence in the world. In like manner James Smith (2013:151) is convinced that liturgy (and Christian education) recruits "hearts and minds of the people of God"

for public participation in bearing God's image within the world, for the benefit of all creation. However, how has this mission of the church played out in the real world?

In the South African context, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), convinced of their understanding of the gospel and the implications thereof for the wider society, endorsed apartheid in 1949:

> In 1949, the Cape DRC synod gave a slightly more circumspect endorsement of apartheid. Its main argument was based on historical precedents. It referred to the 1857 DRC synod decision to condone segregated worship, to the segregation of schools, and to the church's mission policy laid down in 1935. Apartheid, the synod declared, did not mean oppression or black inferiority but a 'vertical separation' in which each population group could become independent. As Richard Elphick remarks, the church leaders were enthralled by their utopian vision of separate people, each with their own mission, and would continue to justify the unjustifiable, thus paving the way for the politicians. (Hermann Giliomee 2003:383-384).

It is interesting to note Giliomee's last sentence, "paving the way for the politicians". This implies that the irrational myth as maintained by the political institutions is more than willing to justify governmental policies by showcasing that the church underscores such policies. Thus, from a political point of view, the church does not influence society on the church's terms, nor does the church bring about complete privatisation of religion. However, the influence of the DRC's choice to separate the Lord's Supper on the grounds of the "weakness of some" (see Wepener 2005:617) certainly had an impact on the social landscape of religion with the establishment of different churches on racial grounds. Thus, rather than complete privatisation or a

thorough public mission of the church, the influence of the church in society is on an ad hoc basis, but not to the extent of a transformation of societal values. Even more, liturgical actions which underscore the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation will be privileged over and above liturgical actions which move in a counter-cultural direction.[39]

At the same time, the example of apartheid could showcase the exact opposite. It could be that the liturgical separation of people in 1857 was not based on Christian liturgy, but on the greater colonial worldview of the people. Then, it was not the liturgy which shaped society, but instead society shaping liturgy. In this instance, the liturgy seems only later to justify the injustice of the irrational myth of apartheid. Inherently, it is both culture which has an influence on cult, and cult which has an influence on culture.

Important questions thus arise. What influence does the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation have on and within Christian worship today? Once more, in which manner is the liturgy shaped to represent the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation today?

I propose three ways in which the irrational myth (lex gratum vivendi[40]) shapes the

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[39] In James Smith's (2009:36) contemplation between the relationship culture and liturgy, he opines that culture's influence on liturgy is always present and vice versa. However, he insists that there should be "an ecclesial center of gravity" with regards to the interaction (Ibid.).

[40] By changing the oft-used concept of *lex vivendi* to *lex norma vivendi*, I am proposing that there should be a differentiation between the law of living (which could be many laws of living) to the normative centre which the irrational myth deems itself to be – thus *the obliged law of living*.

liturgy (lex orandi) today: 1) Privatisation translated into political quietism. 2) Individualism and the table. 3) The economic parody of the collection.

II

The liturgy is a vessel of the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation: privatisation translated into quietism of the political imperatives of the gospel within the discourse of the liturgy.

> [I]n every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed… In a society like ours, the procedures of exclusion are well known. The most obvious and familiar is the prohibition. We know quite well that we do not have the rights to say everything, that we cannot speak of just anything in any circumstances whatever, and that not everyone has the right to speak of anything whatever [*sic*].
>
> Michel Foucault (1981:52)

Michel Foucault (1981:52) proposes that discourse, and thus discourse in the liturgy, is ordered by what is excluded and prohibited (also see Stringer 2005:120-149). Foucault (Ibid.) goes on to suggest that the themes most tightly controlled by the social system of thought are politics and sexuality. Unfortunately, the scope of this study does not include contemplation on sexuality and liturgy, although I suspect a prohibition on sexual discourse within the liturgy is indeed prominent (see Douglas 1984). With regards to politics, I am convinced that the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation prohibits such speech because the Christian liturgy, so it is understood, has nothing (or should have nothing) to do with the political.

In a recent second-year university class about Jesus' proclamation of the Jubilee, I was not surprised to hear that the students were unaware that the confession *Jesus is Lord* is political. In the discussion, I asked about the meaning of this confession. The students all claimed that this confession meant a type of personal lordship over their

hearts and lifestyles. The implication thereof was that only those who have some sort of personal faith in Jesus are under his lordship. Yet, the confession *Jesus is Lord* speaks of the political implications of Jesus as Lord, King, and President over all of life, whether faith is involved or not (Boesak 2005:142). In this line of thought, leaders of all nations are under the dominion of Jesus.

As a case in point between the political content present and the prohibition of discourse on political content in the liturgy, I will look at the Confession of Belhar. Dirkie Smit (2012:186) explains that the Confession of Belhar was born in a historical moment of need for adequate proclamation of the gospel given the socio-political context; the context being apartheid. Thus, the Confession of Belhar came to the fore. And it confessed within the societal context of justification of apartheid by the DRC. Yet, as Smit points out, the theological truths of the Confession of Belhar transcend the historical context in which it was born to speak, often surprisingly, in new settings (Ibid.,187).

Smit shows that the introduction of the Confession of Belhar had already laid the political implications for the church, that the church is understood not in coalition with or loyalty to the political ideology of apartheid[41], but political allegiance with the reign of Jesus Christ (Ibid.,189). This allegiance with Christ's reign is identified through three focal images: unity, reconciliation, and justice.

With regards to unity, Smit (Ibid.,191) opines that Belhar implies the unity of the church to be visible. Thus, instead of apartheid's political system of separation of people, Belhar calls for the inclusion of diversity and such inclusion in a visible manner. This

[41] By implication, not in coalition with any political ideology of any time or place.

has political implications for a world of separation. And, I opine, the myth of (neo)colonisation is in a similar (yet different) way built upon the separation of people; not separation according to race, but according to class. In the South African context, this separation according to class often translates into a separation according to race. This is because apartheid was inherently capitalism on racial grounds, which has turned into white privilege. Thus, when Belhar speaks of visible unity, there is a call to the church to be a politically different community.[42]

With regards to reconciliation, Smit proposes that Belhar calls for reconciliation to be played out in history, to be realised, to be practised, and to be embodied (Ibid.,193). This, once more, is what constitutes the political: the embodiment of ideals within the polis. Lastly, with regards to justice, Smit firstly shows how justice is something which God does (Ibid.). It is the Biblical God who brings justice to those who experience injustice. It is this God who helps those who are without help. It is this God who is faithful to the covenant, upholding his love and promises. It is this God who sees and who saves from sin and suffering. It is this God who stands next to the suffering, the poor, and the aggrieved (Ibid.). And it is this God who calls his church to follow in this endeavour of justice (Ibid.,194). This is the third political imperative of Belhar. Smit goes on to say:

> The church belonging to this God is called to stand where this God stands. This means that the church will witness against injustice and against all the powerful who selfishly search purely for their interests even

[42] As Smit (2012:191) shows, and I agree, the unity to which the church is called to cannot be forced upon the church; it must exist in freedom.

> though these actions are disadvantaging others. (Smit 2012:194; my translation[43]).

This, I propose, is the political imperative of the Confession of Belhar for the liturgy *par excellence*: the witness against injustice, the witness against the powerful, the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation, within the liturgy. However, as Martin Laubscher (2019:2) correctly shows, Belhar is "underplayed and underdeveloped… in the church's[44] worship and liturgy". Once more, in my opinion, the liturgical discourse does not allow for Belhar to be articulated, or when indeed articulated; to be taken seriously for its political implications.

Laubscher goes on to show how liturgy has often followed the status quo: "*the way we lived became the way we believed and eventually the way we prayed*" (Ibid.,3; original italics). Returning to the way liturgy functioned in apartheid, Laubscher determines (in line with Jaap Durand) that the "actual problem with apartheid" was "that it functioned as a theological doctrine (read: heresy) that believed in the irreconcilable nature of humanity" (Ibid.). It is without a doubt that Laubscher has a favourable view of the liturgy and the function of the liturgy of worship to influence the liturgy of life. This sentiment is shared by many scholars (see Barnard & Wepener 2018; Carvalhaes

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[43] "Die kerk wat aan hierdie God behoort is geroep om te staan waar hierdie God staan. Dit hou in dat die kerk sal getuig teen onreg en teen alle magtiges wat uit selfsug slegs hulle eie belange sou soek al word ander daardeur benadeel." (Smit 2012:194).

[44] Laubscher is specifically referring to the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) while lamenting the DRC's inability to accept the Confession of Belhar as gift. It is important to note that ministers from URCSA have also observed and researched the lack of liturgical interaction with the Confession of Belhar (see Mofokeng 2017).

2015; Smit 1997, 2002; Smith 2009, 2013).

However, as Laubscher shows, these sentiments are not without an awareness of how Belhar has been marginalised because of a narrow view of theological and baptismal identity within the DRC (Ibid.,5). From my own experience as Minister of Word and Sacrament in URCSA, I have found that Belhar is also marginal in URCSA identity, at least at a grassroots level in congregations. Elvis Mofokeng (2017:133-139) empirically researched the attitude of URCSA members towards the Confession of Belhar and found an ambiguous relationship, ranging from knowledgeable understanding of Belhar to complete ignorance:

> From the respondents one can notice that the ministers of these congregations are trying to do something about the Belhar Confession by teaching and instilling it in the liturgy. However, there are challenges that the church as a whole need[s] to work on so that the Belhar Confession is taken forward… [S]ome of the members ended up thinking that Belhar is the name of a person… In both congregations one can notice that church council members have more knowledge [about the Confession of Belhar] than the rest of the church members. That is why one respondent advised that the study should give back a report and provide ways in which young people can also gain better knowledge about the Belhar Confession. (Mofokeng 2017:139).

Returning to the earlier statement, I would like to propose that the lack of liturgical identity formation around the Confession of Belhar is founded on the political discourse of Belhar. If my line of thought is accurate, the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation has colonised the liturgy. Therefore, the political discourse which Belhar brings to the table is quieted and prohibited.

This idea that the radical intent of speech is subverted, prohibited, quieted, appropriated, and altered is something Allan Boesak (2012:136) finds has happened with the utterances of Desmond Tutu, especially during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) years. Boesak goes on to say that Tutu's message was always "confession, forgiveness, and reparation" (Ibid.,138). However, because of the distortion of the political implications of reparation, the reception of the TRC, especially amongst white people, ignored the "*capacity of the wrongdoer to make a new beginning on a course that will be different from the one that caused us the wrong"* (Ibid.,136; original italics).

As I have proposed in chapter 2, the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation feeds on the idea of ridiculous boundaries and exclusion of people. De Gruchy goes on to make the following point:

> My understanding of the church as an inclusive community is contingent precisely on the rejection of false boundaries determined by ethnicity, gender, class or sexual orientation. (De Gruchy 2018:60).

The moment of decolonisation of the mind comes when the liturgy explicitly breaks down all barriers which exclude. For some, this means to be open to welcoming the stranger. For others, this means to be welcomed as the stranger. And for all, it means to be open to the dynamics of relating to the other.[45] Liturgically, there should be an

[45] As Miroslav Volf (2002:15) shows, identity formation is dynamic, and we are shaped by the relationships we have with those who are different to us. He goes on to show that an exclusive identity does violence both to the other and to us. However, he does take cognisance that the embrace of the other should not endanger oneself (Ibid.,23). Thus, embracing the stranger must be a voluntary action

inclusive language of socio-political implication beyond the worship service. Martin Laubscher proposes an excellent liturgy using the Confession of Belhar as source document. I quote only the welcoming:

> Welcome in the name of Jesus Christ!
>
> In Christ we share the gift and goal of visible *unity* within the new human community.
>
> In Christ we embody *reconciliation* by embracing people who are often socially excluded and exploited.
>
> In Christ we practise *justice* by standing where God stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged.
>
> To the stranger in need of community, the estranged who longs to embrace the other, and to all who hunger and thirst for justice and righteousness, this congregation opens wide its doors and welcomes all in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. (Laubscher 2019:8, original italics).

Laubscher's proposal is a movement towards the decolonisation of the mind. As I have proposed in chapter 2, the naming of the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation is simultaneously a call to the decolonisation of the mind (see Wa Thiong' o 1986:16; Biko 1987:28; Mignolo 2007:463; Vellem 2017:8). In the liturgy by Laubscher above, the postcolonial cycle of naming the irrational myth and decolonising the mind takes place. On the one hand, the socio-political and economic exclusion of the irrational myth is called out. On the other hand, such exclusion is transcended through the faith

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which does not neglect self-care and self-preservation.

community's inclusion on the grounds of the Confession of Belhar. Thus, the postcolonialising insights of Belhar are used to decolonise the minds of the faith community. A world is imagined, and a community created, which rejects the false boundaries and epistemology of the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation.

III

The irrational myth of (neo)colonisation flourishes on the individualisation of the human community. In my opinion, this individualism is in a particular way visible at the table of Holy Communion.

As I write this sentence, the University of the Free State, along with universities around South Africa, has suspended contact sessions with students because of the worldwide Covid-19 outbreak. Currently, South Africa has 62 confirmed cases with a total of 182,413 worldwide (CSSE at JHU 2020). With regards to what the liturgy will be like during the time of this pandemic, Cas Wepener and Nicolas Matthee (2020:2-3) contributed the proposal of virtual liturgies which, on the one hand, already exist in online gaming and on social media, and on the other hand, could be a possible solution to worship during this time. Their contemplation starts not with what is happening at the moment, but with the Spanish Flu of 1918 (Ibid.,1).

Interestingly, as Wepener and Matthee show, the Holy Communion was transformed during the Spanish Flu (Ibid.). This transformation was the incorporation of small chalices instead of using a communal cup. And indeed, this was an essential and ethically responsible manner of going about the Holy Communion during the Spanish Flu. What interests me, however, is that these small chalices were not dispensed with after the pandemic but continued to be part and parcel of many Reformed churches' worship even today. What is the underlying myth for keeping the small chalices instead

of returning to the cup? Is it mere convenience? Or is there an underlying myth of individualism which promotes the small chalices?

Furthermore, for the current context of Covid-19, will the movement of the worship space from physical to virtual (as proposed by Wepener and Matthee 2020) promote virtualisation of the worship service for the future?[46] [47]

Returning to the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation and the liturgy, I propose that the individualisation of Holy Communion as individual chalices and pieces of bread inherently showcases a western value system of individualism (see Wepener 2005:626-30). This individualism is scared of the body of the other and builds borders

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[46] Although I do not contemplate the implications of virtual worship in this section, I agree with Johann Rossouw (2020) that virtual communion is merely an imitation and longing for physical fellowship in a world of liturgical poverty. That being said, although I concur with Rossouw that the body is important, it does not mean that I condone his understanding of Christian orthodoxy. In a sermon I recorded (in audio format) for Uitsig DRC (Bloemfontein) on 22 March 2020, I referred to Patricija Jurkšaitytė's 2014 painting of the Last Supper (Jurkšaitytė 2014). In her portrayal of the Last Supper, everything is precisely as in Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper, except that the table is empty. My interpretation of this emptiness is the reality of an absence of fellowship in the subsequent lockdown imposed in South Africa. On the one hand, the painting portrays loneliness, absence, and forsakenness. But within the emptiness, there is the possibility, even the expectation that community and feasting will commence once more in the future.

[47] Nicolaas Matthee (2018:218-220) speaks of "storied bodies" and "experiences in cyberspace as encoding our physical bodies", which I must agree is compelling for making sense of the relationship between the virtual world and the physical body. He further understands the space of cyberspace as "narratively constructed" (Ibid.,220). Once more, a compelling argument. A more thorough conversation between postcolonial thought and cyberspace is certainly a possible future direction.

around oneself (see Mbembe 2001:2; Fanon 2004:8; Mignolo 2007:455). Once more, in specific contexts, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, caring for the bodies of others means setting up borders around oneself. But, outside of such settings, these borders and fears for the intimacy afforded by drinking from the same cup and eating from the same loaf, one body in Christ, does not make much sense without the realisation that the irrational myth dictates individualism[48].

If James Smith (2009:17-18) is correct in proposing that what we learn in the liturgy forms the way we live in this world, then individualism is bred at a table where individual pieces of bread and wine are handed to each person; resulting in contemplation and usage of the Holy Communion in a personal fashion. It is interesting to note that research which was done on three South African churches in the Charismatic tradition came to the following understanding of the way Holy Communion is practised:

> Gathering from the responses from the respondents, it seem [*sic*] as though the atmosphere varies from church to church. It seems that everyone had a unique experience and that no real atmosphere is created for the members. As we understand it, everyone is left to create their own atmosphere and experience. This is clearly depicted in two of

[48] My understanding of individualism revolves around the myth of man as the rational self (Cornell & Seely 2016:123) who is capable of complete autonomy. This myth can be seen in films which underscore such individualism, such as the James Bond films, Batman, Superman, and Iron Man. The overarching theme is of a European man who is autonomous to the degree that the whole world depends on him. Granted, there are fims which have female (Wonder Woman) and black (Black Panther) protagonists. Even as gender and race is questioned and subverted, the myth of autonomy lingers on (see Dargis, 2018; Scott, 2017).

> the churches where tables with the elements are made available and one can partake as one wishes. (Denny and Wepener 2013:6).

In these practices, the Holy Communion is quite frankly left to the impetus of the members. What transpires is not a counter-cultural formation of a human community, but a strengthening of the pervasive values of the western, globalised world founded on the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation. Or as Denny and Wepener (2013:7) opine: "The empirical-descriptive data presented in this article confirms that a culture of consumerism and individualism has clearly entered these worship services".

Denny and Wepener (Ibid.) go on to show that the Holy Communion is meant to be a moment of communal participation in the body of Christ as the fellowship of believers. I concur with their proposal. Furthermore, as Desmond Tutu (2011:21-22) opines, to exist in community is a fundamental African understanding of life:

> In Xhosa, we say, "Umntu ngumtu ngabantu." This expression is very difficult to render in English, but we could translate it by saying, "A person is a person through other persons."… For us, the solitary human being is a contradiction in terms. *Ubuntu* is the essence of being human. It speaks of how my humanity is caught up and bound up inextricably with yours. It says, not as Descartes did, "I think, therefore I am" but rather, "I am because I belong." I need other human beings in order to be human. The completely self-sufficient human being is subhuman. I can be me only if you are fully you. I am because we are, for we are made for togetherness, for family. We are made for complementarity. We are created for a delicate network of relationships, of interdependence with our fellow human beings, with the rest of creation. (Tutu 2011:21-22).

Building on Tutu's ubuntu as the interdependence of humans in relationship, I want to propose that the postcolonial Holy Communion ought to facilitate the formation of ubuntu. The postcolonial liturgy is thus far from a twofold call of liberation from privatisation and individualism. This liturgy moves towards the decolonisation of the mind, which is a transformation for public life towards a more inclusive and communal understanding of existing in this world (Iso see Resane 2017:92-113; Sakupapa 2018; Siwila 2015).

IV

Closely related to the table of Holy Communion is the collection of gifts. Both the table and the collection speak of the formation of a new economy. However, the collection has merely become a parody of the economic implications of the gospel.

> The reconciled and redeemed body of Christ is marked by cruciform practices that counter the liturgies of consumption, hoarding, and greed that characterize so much of our late modern culture. As a result, the ekklēsia is distinguished by very different procedures and criteria for the distribution of goods and wealth. In this sense, the church's mad economics anticipates a kingdom economics… Sadly, in many contexts of worship in North America, the offering in worship is little more than a parody of such an alternative economics.
>
> James Smith (2009:204-205)

It is interesting to note the insistence of James Smith (2009:204-205) that the liturgy of the collection is supposed to counter the economic realities of the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation. At the same time, he laments the fact of the collection having become merely a parody of its real purpose (Ibid.). From this perspective, the collection is supposed to be for those in need, as is evident in the appointment of the deacons in Acts 6 and the apostle Paul's collection for the needy in Jerusalem in 1 Corinthians 11

(Meyers 2014:185).

Not only is there a theologically unsophisticated dealing with the collection as liturgical act, but with the wider economic system. Walter Mignolo (2007:463-464) is convinced that Christianity is in cahoots with the capitalist market democracy, which underscores the *parody* of the collection. Ishmael Tetteh (2001:25) proposes that the system of commerce within Africa was laid there by the missional activity of colonial Christianity, while today, neoliberal capitalism is maintained by the Pentecostal and Charismatic Christian churches (Ibid.). At the same time, it would be short-sighted to ignore the racial disposition of the capitalist system, with white people overwhelmingly included and black people excluded from said system because of the historical realities of apartheid and slavery (see Vellem 2017:5). As Takatso Mofokeng (1988) has shown, these economic disparities were born in the Christian missions' partnership with colonialism. This includes economic inequality between the white church and the black church, which perseveres to this day.

Be it as it may, postcolonial thought calls for "de-colonial epistemic shift[s]" which can imagine other ways of existing in the world, "other economy [*sic*], other politics, other ethics" (Mignolo 2007:453). Thus, the collection as liturgical practice ought to speak of an imagination of other economies. The first step in imagining other economies is in naming other economies. This is the heart of the postcolonial call to decolonise the mind. As Vuyani Vellem (2017:8) indicates, the decolonisation of the mind is a "reject[ion of] the finality of the West". This rejection includes a rejection of the finality of the Western global economy which states that without money, nothing is possible. This brings the collection to new possibilities. Yes, the collection must be named for its immediate effect of charity for those who require resources in the present, but it must also be more.

At the same time, we must beware of the implications of charity. David Bosch (2011:286) and Allan Boesak (2005:200) have adequately critiqued charity. After all, charity colonises the minds of both the receiver of charity, making them reliant, and the giver of charity, underscoring a superiority complex. Thus, the collection must move beyond the booby trap of charity towards justice. This means that the resources of collection should aid the vulnerable, the poor, and the excluded in such a way that other economies are built which are more sustainable than the economy we currently have.[49] In this line of thought, justice goes beyond (without excluding) the immediate needs of people, towards systems, organisations, and movements which struggle for sustainable living and working conditions for the most vulnerable people. The imagination of collection becomes a moment of imagining local resources as a force for change, not just in a temporal manner, but sustainable to the benefit of all of humanity[50].

[49] The irrational myth is not unfamiliar with charity. It was not long ago that the term philantropreneur was coined to indicate those who can merge neoliberal economic strategy with humanitarian aid, often to a great financial benefit for the philantropreneur and with little impact at grassroots level.

[50] The history of the offering shows a close association with work for the wellbeing of those who are excluded and impoverished by the status quo (see Cilliers & Wepener 2004; Wepener 2010).

3. Moving the Centre of Liturgical Practice towards the Lived Experience of the Postcolonial Subject

> The basic question was: from what base did African peoples look at the world? Eurocentrism or Afrocentrism? The question was not that of mutual exclusion between Africa and Europe but the basis and the starting point of their interaction… [K]nowing oneself and one's environment was the correct basis of absorbing the world; that there could never be only one centre from which to view the world but that different people in the world had their culture and environment as the centre. The relevant question was therefore one of how one centre related to other centres.
>
> Ngugi wa Thiong' o (1993:26-27)

At the 2019 Theological Day of the University of the Free State, the theme was *The Church and Violence against Women and Children*. The liturgy (compiled by Reverend Martin Laubscher) embodied anger and lament through the readings of Suzanne Vega's song *Luka* and Paulette Kelly's poem *I Got Flowers Today* performed by female students. There was a twofold moving of the centre taking place within this liturgy. Firstly, a movement towards the voices of the vulnerable decentred and fragmented subject, and secondly, a shift towards the inclusion of secular culture (even politicised secular culture) within sacred space. Both of these are essential postcolonial movements.

More traditional liturgical practices are confounded to the usage of scriptural texts. This is apparent in a quick overview of liturgical proposals within *Woord en Fees*[51] (Orsmond *et al.* 2019) as well as in *The Worship Sourcebook* (Titcombie Steenwyk

[51] *Woord en Fees* is a yearly compilation of liturgical recommendations and commentaries within the Dutch Reformed Church based on the liturgical year and Revised Common Lectionary.

and Witvliet 2016). The point could be made that biblical sources are neither religious nor western. However, the history of interpretation of the Bible in Africa is a spiritualisation and westernisation of the biblical text.

With regards to the postcolonisation of liturgy, I want to propose the lived experience of the postcolonial subject as the c/entre[52] of the liturgy; thus, the lived experience of the postcolonial subject as important interlocutor of the liturgy.

I

In a privatised and western understanding of Christian worship, privilege has often been given to religious experiences unknown or foreign to the lived experience of colonised people. In moving the c/entre of liturgical practice, lived experience will be an important interlocutor for the liturgy.

Questo è il fiore del partigiano,
o bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao ciao,
questo è il fiore del partigiano
morto per la libertà[53]

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[52] I borrow "c/entre" from Simone Drichel (2008:605) to indicate that the centre should be decentred in itself. As I have indicated in chapter 2, the moving of the centre for postcolonial thought does not place a new centre as normative, but rather asks how different centres relate to one another (see Wa Thiong'o, 1993:26-27). Thus, movement is towards a plurality of legitimate centres in relation and interaction with each other.

[53] "This is the flower of the partisan,
oh bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao, ciao, ciao (*Goodbye beautiful*)
this is the flower of the partisan
who died for freedom" (*Bella ciao* 2020)

In the Spanish television show, *Money Heist*[54], the protagonists sing an Italian resistance song called *Bella ciao* (Pina 2017). Irrelevant of the storyline of *Money Heist*, the documentary which followed showcases how this protest song became world-renowned to the point where refugees entering the European Union would sing *Bella ciao* upon arrival (Alfaro and Lejarreta 2020)[55]. To put it differently, those who find themselves in a position of vulnerability and disenfranchisement associate strongly with this song. The song calls forth the Italian Resistance of the partisans against the invasion of Nazi Germany (*Bella ciao* 2020). The final strophe speaks about the death of the partisan who died in the resistance for freedom (Ibid.).

From the lived experience of the postcolonial subject, the incorporation of songs which become essential to the lived experience of the disenfranchised could benefit postcolonial liturgical practices.

In Emmanuel Lartey's (2013:38-64) book, *Postcolonializing God*, he contemplates a liturgical practice which he deems postcolonial. What is interesting about the description of this postcolonial liturgy is that it is secular to its very being. Although there are fundamentally religious practices, the liturgy was organised by the government of Ghana in 2007 (Ibid.).

Three things are of great interest in tracing the postcolonial aspects thereof: The music, the inclusion of prayers from three religious traditions, and the involvement of

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[54] Originally in Spanish: *La casa de papel*.

[55] According to the documentary, there have also been a wave of crimes imitating the uniform used in *Money Heist* (Alfaro and Lejarreta 2020).

descendants of both victims of slavery and collaborators of slavery.

The band Osibisa was responsible for the intro music (Lartey 2013:47). The song they play is called *Welcome Home,* and the lyrics are as follows:

> You've been gone for far too long; you've been gone – it's an empty home,
>
> Come on back where you really belong, you are always welcome home, welcome home.
>
> You've been kept down for much too long, stand up please and say 'I am free', don't forget you are always welcome home.
>
> (*Refrain*)
>
> Come with me on this happy trip back to the promised land. All will be happy and gay.
>
> Come on back, to where you really belong, welcome home; don't forget you are always welcome home. (Osibisa's *Welcome Home* as referenced in Lartey 2013:47-48).

The song speaks of a longing for home and, in this context, returning home from the African diaspora. Two things stand out for me. One, the music is thoroughly secular, and it speaks to the lived experience of those who were taken as slaves during colonisation. Two, the welcoming also includes the collaborators of colonisation. The welcoming becomes a joy for both those who were sold into slavery and those who collaborated with slavery. The joy lies in welcoming, being welcomed, and the subsequent healing of relationships.

The second crucial postcolonial practice of this liturgy lies in the prayers of invocation

by religious leaders from three different religious traditions: Christian, Muslim, and African Traditional Religion (Lartey 2013:49-50). This inclusion of interreligious prayers underscores the lived experience of the postcolonial subject who finds herself within the global community of religious pluralism. Furthermore, the integration of other religious traditions opens the opportunity for empathic interaction in society through "encounter with the religious other" (Cornille 2015:221). At the same time, the pouring of libation was included as part and parcel of the prayers (Lartey 2013:49). Libation here underscores the African spirituality whereby recognition of both evil and good spiritual forces takes place. However, this recognition seeks blessing from the good forces (Ibid.). Once more, I want to emphasise that postcolonial liturgies should be grounded in the context where they are practised.

The third postcolonial aspect of this liturgy is the interaction between the descendants of Africans who were taken into slavery and the successors of African traditional rulers (Lartey 2013:51-53). The first interaction between these two groups is the declaration of guilt by the president of the Ghanaian National House of Chiefs (Ibid.,51). Herein the president confesses the injustice of both Africans and non-Africans with regards to colonisation and slavery. Furthermore, the confession states that the future requires repentance so that such injustice and inhumanity never take place again (Ibid.,52). It is at this moment where the traditional leaders step down from their positions of privilege to wash the hand of the diasporic Africans, thus adding action to the confession (Ibid.,52-53). It should be noted that African traditional rulers never do menial tasks in public settings (Ibid.,53). This liturgical action is thus a reversal of roles.

As I have already mentioned in chapter two, the postcolonial subject is acutely aware of the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation. She endeavours the decolonisation of the consciousness, albeit as a journey. In other words, all those who participate in the

attempt of decolonising the consciousness are essentially fragmented and decentred subjects. Thus, even from the position of the power of the traditional leaders, there is a decolonised consciousness which moves towards the imagination of different relationships. They choose to participate in a decolonised consciousness, a choice which their privilege affords them to make. However, Africans from the diaspora, in this context, are forced to live in the location of decentring and fragmentation. They do not have the privilege to choose this participation, yet herein lies the blessing: they started the decolonial journey before others could have chosen it. In both instances, the lived experience of liturgical acts of imagining a new future is participation in postcolonial imagination.

From a South African, and Afrikaans context, but in a similar manner, Cas Wepener (2015) proposed in his book *Kookpunt!*[56] the usage of angry poetry as liturgical practice. Wepener is convinced that the South African lived experience is that of anger at contextual realities of injustice, poverty, corruption, police brutality, racism, poor leadership, and a lack of service delivery (Ibid.,14-17). Once more, this lived experience is not restricted to a particular population group within South Africa:

> Poor people are angry, rich people are angry. Coloured people are angry, black people are angry, and white people are angry. Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and atheists are angry. It is a fact the people in South Africa have reached a boiling point or are at least quickly en route to reaching a boiling point. The examples are too many to name. (Wepener 2015:16,

[56] Kookpunt! was published in English as “Boiling Point!”

my translation)[57].

Wepener proposes that Ingrid Jonker's poem, *Die kind wat geskiet is deur soldate by Nyanga*[58], captures the spirit of anger in South Africa:

> Die kind is nie dood nie
> die kind lig sy vuiste teen sy moeder
> wat Afrika skreeu skreeu die geur
> van vryheid en heide
> in die lokasies van die omsingelde hart
>
> Die kind lig sy vuiste teen sy vader
> in die optog van die generasies
> wat Afrika skreeu skreeu die geur
> van geregtigheid en bloed
> in die strate van sy gewapende trots[59] (as quoted in Wepener 2015:158).

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[57] Original text: Arm mense is kwaad, ryk mense is kwaad. Christene, Moslems, Hindoes en ateïste is kwaad. Dat mense in Suid-Afrika kookpunt bereik het of ten minste vinnig op pad is daarheen, is 'n feit, en die voorbeelde is te veel om op te noem.

[58] "The child who was shot by soldiers at Nyanga" (my translation).

[59] The child is not dead
the child lifts his fists against his mother
which Africa screams screams the scent
of freedom and heather
in the townships of the surrounded heart

The child lifts his fists against his father
in the march of the generations

Wepener goes on to show that the child is inviting us to follow him in simultaneously meaningful anger and the lifting of our fists against oppression and corrupt powers in this world (Ibid.,158). In my opinion, Wepener showcases two crucial aspects of the lived experience of the postcolonial subject and the interaction with liturgy. The first is an acute awareness of the contextual situation, both taking cognition thereof and moving towards working for a better future. The second is the incorporation of secular literature for the liturgy. Herein there is an awareness that liturgy is not without human and worldly experience. Liturgy is fundamentally conceived within life and named by the poets of our communities.

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which Africa screams screams the scent

of righteousness and blood

in the streets of his armed pride (my translation).

II

The reorientation and disintegration of community.

Figure 1: "This year's Easter Passover Seder" by @MythAddict

On 25 March 2020, MythAddict (2020) tweeted the above photoshopped picture of the Lord's Supper taking place on Zoom, the video conference platform. This picture was circulated across social media platforms, both as satire and representation of the lived experience of the online Christian community. In the replies to this tweet, a church leader asked to use the picture for online church activities (Heerema 2020). Another person asked to use it in a religious blog (Degnan Barth 2020). Others enjoyed the

Easter eggs[60] within the picture (Peldi from balsamlq 2020) as well as augmenting it with satiric comments (orthonormal 2020).

I found it rather amusing. However, I could not grasp the religious connotation of community and communion through online platforms without taking cogniscance of the complexity of this new contested space within the global Covid-19 pandemic context: the complexity to relay bodily experiences of community to cyberspace[61], the complexity of access to the internet[62], the complexity of the fatigue of cyberspace.

What I believe is more interesting for the South African context and the greater context of the postcolonial subject, is the following painting of Patricija Jurkšaitytė (2014):

[60] Easter eggs are hidden items which are found by close investigation.

[61] According to Nicolas Matthee (2018:193) a complete reorientation of understanding of community takes place within cyberspace, one which he deems to be a liminal experience of community. In this line of thought, cyberspace may represent a fruitful field of research as postcolonial space of negotiation.

[62] Access to the internet is also open for debate. Most people in South Africa have low-level data access which means they have access to messaging services such as WhatsApp. However, access to Youtube videos is another story.

Figure 2: The Last Supper according to Patricija Jurkšaitytė

Within this painting, the communion table lies bare. No-one is present, and the table is not set for supper. The image evokes the experience of loneliness and the active absence of God. Johan Cilliers (2012:189-190) contemplates a similar idea and proposes that the fact that the table is clear brings forth "a space of expectancy" and showcases the presence of God in the absence of God. I want to propose that the same is applicable with regards to the faith community as physical community. The absence of community in the time of Covid-19 brings forth the possibility and anticipation of a more profound experience of community. For the postcolonial subject, in the lived experience of decentring and fragmentation, the experience of community is found in the struggle for survival[63].

[63] Excellent research in this regard has been put forward with regards to social capital formation through rituals within a context of African Independent Churches in South Africa (see Wepener, Swart, Ter Haar, *et al.* 2019). An interesting contribution of Wepener (2019:176-177) comes to the conclusion that rituals could indeed be a funnel through which social capital could be built towards a communal struggle for

To a certain extent, Covid-19 has brought the experience of the postcolonial subject closer to those whose lives have never been decentred. In this shared lived experience, the liturgy would do well to incorporate a postcolonial awareness of communal loss and anticipation for a new community, borne on the decolonised consciousness. In this line of thought, the welcoming could be explicitly aware of the outsider, while decentring insiders to see themselves as equal to the outsider. Within this line of thinking, the postcolonial welcoming beckons anticipation for welcoming the stranger, and becoming the stranger for others, finding a new community, but also realising the inability to fashion such a community; always en route to the welcoming of the other and being welcomed by the other.

III

The South African myth of governmental paternity.

With regards to this new myth emerging in South Africa, that of the government as

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wellbeing. Unfortunately, the message with regards to the congregation that was studied is this: "The strongest message is probably that bridging and linking capital are to a large extent absent in this community" (Ibid.). Another example of an African Independent Church where the communal struggle for survival was paramount was amongst the Ibandla lamaNazarehta (Church of the Nazaretha). As Cabrita (2010:63) shows, their struggle was one of both identity formation and agency: "Apartheid-era African agents read and created texts in ways that reinvented, shifted, and distorted the official bureaucratic repertoire". Stated differently, the Church of the Nazaretha understood their Christian identity and agency to correlate strongly with a "collaborative, spoken mode of literacy against the individualized literate accomplishments of modern *amakholwa* [educated Zulu Christians]… as a miraculous gift bestowed by God" (Ibid.,65-66). In this instance the struggle is both for survival and as a response to the colonial approaches to scripture.

provider for all things necessary by the citizens of the country, I am convinced that such thoughts should be firmly withstood. Decolonisation of the mind, as I have showcased in chapter 2, calls for the language and epistemology of struggle against all forces which restrict or deny the humanity of people (see Wa Thiong'o 1986:108; Mignolo 2007:463; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018:79). Furthermore, in Steve Biko's (1987:49) understanding of the self-realisation of the oppressed, he is adement that communal agency is paramount "in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude". Has the democratic South African myth of governmental paternalism outsorced the agency of the oppressed to the government only to bring forth different structures of enslavement?

At the same time, there are ways in which South Africans are acting subversively with regards to the restrictions of their freedoms during the Covid-19 pandemic. One such method is through mimicry. As Homi Bhabha (1994:91) shows, mimicry splits the colonial discourse, both underscoring reality and undermining reality. "[M]imicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal" (Ibid.,86). Thus, to my mind, mimicry uses the myth to undermine and disavow the myth.

In the current context of the nationalist myth of paternity in South Africa, a liturgy of mimicry has developed around the comments Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma made with regards to smoking. Her direct quote was turned into a song by the artist Max Hurrell (2020) and an unofficial music video on YouTube by The Kiffness (2020). The song in itself mimics the comments of Dlamini-Zuma, representing it as both absurd and satiric. The chorus goes as follows:

> When people zol
>
> They put saliva on the paper, and then they share that zol

It means they are also shari- [*sic*]

When people zol

They put saliva on the paper, and then they share that zol

But also they are moving saliva from one to the other

Eh and then they share that zol

When people zol

And then they share that zol (Hurrell 2020)

From this song, there has emerged a cultural liturgy of mimicry on the online video sharing platform TikTok (Best TikTok Africa 2020). In these videos[64], South Africans choreograph dance moves to Hurrell's song (Ibid.). I reckon that this cultural liturgy of mimicry showcases a disavowal of the myth that the South African government can make adequate decisions on behalf of its citizens with regards to their freedom and safety. This online liturgy serves as an emerging way of protest against the inadequacy of the government of South Africa during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a more global context, a liturgy of mimicry is to be found in the recent #BlackLivesMatter movement. During protests against "the chokehold killing of a black man" (Okri 2020), protesters positioned themselves face down on the ground with their hands at their backs, chanting: "I can't breathe, I can't breathe" (NowThis News 2020). With this bodily and vocalised expression, protesters are mimicking the last moments of black men who were victims of what Ben Okri (2020) calls "racism… [which is] depriving [black men] of the right to air itself". Okri goes further - and maybe the

[64] It must be admitted that other videos of the kind have been explicitly racist; by no means do I condone online liturgies which are discriminatory.

protesters too - claiming that the mantra “I can’t breathe” encompasses the current “condition of the world”; the condition of Covid-19, the condition of impending climate change, and the condition of the #MeToo movement where women find themselves “in situations where they can’t breathe” (Ibid.).

Back in South Africa, the ANC government calls upon South African to support the #BlackLivesMatter movement, but as Herman Mashaba (2020) acutely notes:

> [W]hy are South Africans being called upon by our government to support a movement on the other side of the world, when this same government of ours has killed poor black people with callous disregard for decades?

Mashaba goes on to name the killing of poor black people in South Africa: the denial of HIV/AIDS, Andries Tatane in 2011, mineworkers at Marikana in 2012, the death of 143 vulnerable patients in 2014, and 11 deaths at the hands of law enforcement during the Covid-19 lockdown (Ibid.). Poor black people in South Africa cannot breathe. But it is a more painful breathlessness, magnified by the lies of liberation, freedom, and a better life for all.

The postcolonial liturgy would do well to take note of mimicry for its praxis.

IV

Following on the lived experience of the postcolonial subject, liturgy's formation aids in the c/entering of ecclesial formation as decolonisation of the consciousness.

In James Smith's (2009:158) book, *Desiring the Kingdom*, he describes the Christian liturgy as the present time, which hopes for the future and remembers the past. Borrowing from Charles Taylor, he uses the phrase “higher times” to describe the culmination of the past, present, and future in the liturgy of the church (Ibid.). At the

same time, this description stands in opposition to what he calls “CNN-ized time” which is “an orientation to what’s coming that lacks hope; instead, it simply records the onslaught of events” (Ibid.,159).

Building upon this understanding, he moves to the congregation as those who are called in the present time to participate in worship (Ibid.,159-161). There are two aspects of his understanding of the church as those who are called which I find inspiring. Firstly, his awareness of how the church falls short of being the church of all people: “our current not-yet gatherings will have to constantly confess their failures” (Ibid.,161). This awareness opens spaces for welcoming the *present* lived experiences of the postcolonial subject as greater inclusion of all those who have been called to gather. Secondly, Smith understands that being called in community as a task and vocation is the call to be human, and human within the lived experience of culture: “We are commissioned as God’s image bearers, his vice-regents, charged with the task of “ruling” and caring for creation… unfolding and unfurling its latent possibilities through human making – in short, through *culture*” (Ibid.,163 original italics). Thus, the lived experience from the location of culture of the postcolonial subject must be allowed (even sought) to aid in the endeavour of meaning-making within the liturgical space. The vocation of being called as human beings is thus a call to welcome and embrace the myriad of cultural expressions of all people within the liturgy.

As Smith (2009:164) goes on to show, it is not only about being called to bring one's culture to the liturgy but also being called to form culture through the liturgy. There is thus a double movement of cultural influence on the liturgy and liturgical influence on culture (see also *Chicago Statement on Worship and Culture: Baptism and Rites of Life Passage* 1998; *Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture* 1996). I am convinced, however, that this movement from culture to liturgy to culture cannot be understood

epistemologically as two completely different worlds. The liturgical influence on culture may bring with it a formation of Christians, but that does not mean this formation goes radically outside and beyond the system of thought of the culture. In other terms, other ways of thinking, imagining, and dreaming, as already present in postcolonial epistemologies, will also bring new liturgical formations of society.

Thus, the postcolonial liturgy, which draws on the lived experience of the postcolonial subject, anticipates the formation of culture in a c/entered manner. Herein the liturgy is formed to welcome other ways of seeing, relating, and existing in the world through the lived experience of the postcolonial subject, while respecting alternative centres of thought. Once more, the postcolonial subject is a complex term which, as I have shown in chapter 2, encompasses many persons of decentred and fragmented experience. Furthermore, the postcolonial subject comes to the fore in the process of the decolonisation of the mind. Thus, the postcolonial liturgy is the participation in the process of decolonising the mind as ecclesial formation.

4. An Attempt[65] at a Postcolonial Liturgy[66]

In this section I will endeavour to propose a liturgy which takes seriously the insights form this chapter. Stated differently, I will attempt a postcolonial liturgy which is aware of the divisions of the irrational myth, working against it towards the wellbeing of all people through the lived experience of the postcolonial subject.

I

GATHERING[67]

† Call to Worship:

Liturgist (L): Praise the Lord, all you nations. Extol him, all you peoples.

Faith Community (C): For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.

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[65] I choose to speak of an attempt, as I am convinced that postcolonial worship is never a completed endeavour. I do not foresee my attempt being without shortcomings and colonial discourse. However, I believe through my lived experience and what I have proposed thus far in postcolonial homiletics that I am at least capable of imagining a liturgy en route to the postcolonial.

[66] Although I considered taking the Covid-19 situation as context for this liturgy, physical distancing, regulations, and health risks brings about too much complication for the scope of this study. The presupposition of context is thus explicitly blurred, merely as a liturgy in South Africa.

[67] In this liturgy I will be following the five movements proposed in *The Worship Sourcebook*: Gathering, Proclamation, Response to the Word, The Lord's Supper, and Sending (Titcombie Steenwyk and Witvliet 2016:25).

L: The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

C: In our suffering and struggle; in our poverty and sorrow; in our homelessness and hunger; in our flight from danger: The Lord has done great things for us.

L: Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Praise the Lord! (Based on Psalm 117 and Psalm 126, NIV).

† Welcoming:

L: Whether we are old or young,
whether we are first-time or long-time worshippers,
whether we come full of doubts or confidence, joy or sorrow,
whether we are privileged or not, struggling or thriving.
In this place we are all family,
along with the church in every nation around the world.
Although we may be different in race, class, culture, and language,
In Jesus Christ, we are united.
Welcome to all of you today.
The Lord be with you!
(Based on Titcombie Steenwyk and Witvliet 2016:60).

† Prayer of Adoration:

L: Father-Mother God, present in all things as the substance of existence; you embody the entire universe in material, energy, law, and cohesive love.

C: You formed us, love us, and sustain us in all we need.

L: Mother-Father God, all things find their existence in you, and you are the

only power, wisdom, and presence.

C: **You have given us the privilege of participating in your very existence as community.**

L: In your presence, we are because you are.

C: **And together, we exist with each other and for each other, to wield power and wisdom for the benefit and wellbeing of all our brothers and sisters.**

L: Great-Father Great-Mother God, for your gracious love for us, we praise you.

C: **Amen.**

(Based on Tetteh 1999:35-36 and Tutu 2011:21-22).

† Lament:

A Reading of Jacques Sprenkie Mateya's (2012) poem: A Colonized Mind of Africa.

Don't call my Africa a moron!
After stealing its means
Poisoning its food
Larcenous its resources,
And made it to look poor, like a church mouse
My African? Your mind is still colonized even today!

Africa you are now monotonous
With fake accent of colonization
Look! What colonization have done to your bright thoughts

I didn't know that it will last during your lifetime.

'Africa your mind is still colonized even today'

You use to have sharp shooter mind

You were in depth and independent

And now you are forever broke and in debt

You are breast feeding your children with disease-ridden milk

And your generation is mislaid generation,

Shorn of self worth and delicate identity

African children are on denial

They have give-up their Africanism 'Ubuntu'

They size their short hair with extensions

And paint their skin with this!

What is this? On African daughter?

Africa you are not yourself

Why? Who gave you food poisoning again?

When I gaze at you I see America!

When I take a glance at, you are Europe!

Your pregnancy with colonization

Was supposed to be miscarriage

Then I will approve death

A vital misfortune of your expectation

Your TB affects your children

Your infections give them a running bowel

They don't know which is which

Africa can I brain wash you?

And give you a medication for this infection.

'Africa your mind is still colonized even today'

† Confession:

L: The painful injustices of the past still haunt us today. We are the children of the colonisers and colonised, the slave traders and chiefs who sold their people, the architects of apartheid and those who did not speak out.

C: Lord, have mercy.

L: We are a people who, even today, live in the shadows of injustice. We often fail to name evil, to do the good we can do, and to uphold the hopes of our democracy.

C: Christ have mercy.

L: Lord, you have commissioned us to love one another as we love ourselves; to search for righteousness; to bring about the good news of your salvation and love for the whole cosmos; and to care for the vulnerable, the poor, the marginalised, and the stranger. So often we have failed.

C: Lord, have mercy.

† Assurance of Pardon:

L: Community of the Lord, hear the good news. Although we have erred in our ways; although our minds have been colonised by the powers of the past and present; we can be assured that there is another King whose kingdom is that of justice and righteousness; a kingdom where those who work will

have their fill and peace will exist not merely in political slogans. Through this King, our Lord Jesus Christ, freedom is proclaimed to you. He refreshes our souls and leads us on the right paths.

(Based on Isaiah 65:21-25, Acts 13:39, and Psalm 23:3).

† The Law:

L: We respond to God's pardon of debts by pursuing a consciousness which envisions human life as rich with possibilities of thinking, understanding, relating, sharing, and living with one another.

C: God's command lies not in any one correct way of existing, but in the manner in which we relate to one another.

L: Thus, our Lord Jesus Christ has said: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another just as I have loved you."

(Based on Wa Thiong'o 1993:26; Mignolo 2007:453 and John 13:34, NRSV) .

† Song of Dedication:

Redemption Song by Bob Marley (1980)

Old pirates, yes, they rob I
Sold I to the merchant ships
Minutes after they took I
From the bottomless pit

But my hand was made strong
By the hand of the almighty
We forward in this generation

Triumphantly

Won't you help to sing
These songs of freedom?
'Cause all I ever have
Redemption songs
Redemption songs

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery[68]
None but ourselves can free our minds
Have no fear for atomic energy
'Cause none of them can stop the time

How long shall they kill our prophets
While we stand aside and look?
Uh, some say it's just a part of it
We've got to fulfil the book

Won't you help to sing
These songs of freedom?
'Cause all I ever have
Redemption songs
Redemption songs

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[68] What intrigues me in this song is the close association of decolonisation of the mind and the agency of the postcolonial subject. The dedication proposed is thus not merely a dedication to God without an understanding of what such a dedication means. It is rather a dedication to active decolonisation of the mind which, to my mind, could rightly be called *a mission* of the postcolonial faith community.

Redemption songs

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery

None but ourselves…

† Service of Baptism:

Words of Institution

L: Community of faith: Through Christ's work of reconciliation, we have been reconciled with God and with one another. This reconciliation means a unity which binds us together in the Spirit of the Lord. No more is there place for separation, enmity, and hatred between people, either physically or mentally. The only condition for membership in the community of faith is true faith in Jesus Christ. And so, we welcome [*Name(s)*] as part of this community through the initiation of baptism.

Presentation – For the Baptism of Infants

L: In presenting your child for baptism, you are announcing your faith in Jesus Christ.

We/I do.

Presentation – For the Baptism of Adults or Older Children

L: In having heard God's promise and commission, do you desire to be baptised?

I do.

Profession of Faith

L: Do you believe that God's Spirit has given us the gift and obligation of unity

and that this community is the church for, with, and of all humanity?

We/I do.

L: Do you believe that Christ has brought reconciliation between God and humanity and that we are called to participate in this reconciliation?

We/I do.

L: Do you believe that God has revealed himself as the one who wished justice and peace among people and that this community is called to struggle for justice and peace?

We/I do.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

L: Mother-Father, God of the destitute, the poor, and the wronged: You free the prisoner and restore sight to the blind. You support the oppressed, protect the stranger, help orphans and widows, and block the ways of the wicked. We thank you, Father-Mother of all, for welcoming us into your very being; for standing with us when we were wronged, impoverished, and miserable; for reconciling ourselves with you, uniting us with each other, and wishing justice and peace for us in your ongoing work in the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. May this moment of participation in baptism be a witness to our involvement in reconciliation and unity, and may your Holy Spirit fill our hearts and minds with a renewed commitment to justice and peace for all of humanity. Jesus is Lord. To the one and only God, Parent, Son and Holy Spirit, be the honour and glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Baptism

L: [*Name*], you are baptised in the name of the Father-Mother, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Blessing

L: [*Name*], in baptism you have become part of the one holy, universal Christian church, the communion of saints called from the entire human family. **Amen.**

Welcoming

L: Sisters and brothers, today we receive [*name(s)*] into Christ's church. Do you welcome [*them*] in love, and do you promise to pray for, encourage, and help nurture [*them*] in the faith?

C: We do, God helping us.

Intercessory Prayer

L: Gracious God and Mother of all. We thank you for your gathering, protection, and care of this faith community and your church throughout the world, in every nation, of every culture, and through every language. We pray for [*name(s)*]. Bless and strengthen [*them*] daily as active agents of your unity, reconciliation, and justice in this world. Uphold [*them*] through your Spirit. Unfold to [*them*] your love and grace. Deepen [*their*] faith. Keep [*them*] from the power of evil. And enable [*them*] to live a holy and blameless life until your kingdom comes. **Amen.**

(Based on 'Confession of Belhar' 1986 and Titcombie Steenwyk and Witvliet 2016:260-288).

II

PROCLAMATION

† Prayer for Illumination:

L: Lord God, our Father and Mother, protector of the innocent and vulnerable and strength for the weak; by your Holy Spirit and Word, lead our minds from slavery to liberation and open our thoughts to your will. Through Jesus Christ, we pray. **Amen.**

III

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

† Prayers of the People:

L: Our Parent in heaven, in the place of power over all of the universe.

C: Our loyalty belongs to you alone and not to any earthly power.

L: Hallowed be your name in your community of faith's conscious remembrance of what you have done for all of humanity.

C: You have liberated us from all forms of oppression towards a life of peace amongst each other.

L: Your kingdom come in our minds and imaginations through other ways of relating, existing, and living in this world.

C: Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

L: Give us and them today our daily bread. May we have enough to live with well-being in this world, but not more than we need.

C: May we never be a begging people, nor greedy people.

L: And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

C: Fathom in us an understanding of a more just economic way of relating to our sisters and brothers from every sphere and position of life.

L: And lead us not into the temptation of abusing power, negating other ways of perceiving and understanding the world, and being quiet about injustice.

C: But deliver us from the evil inside ourselves, which works against the well-being of all of humanity and creation.

L: For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. **Amen.**

(Based on The Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:9-13, NIV).

† Invitation to the Offering:

L: The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. When Israel was given the Promised Land, they were told that there need not be any poor people amongst them, for the Lord had blessed them in abundance. However, provision has been made for the unequal distribution of God's abundance by means of tithing. A tenth of all produce was to be set aside for the foreigner, the orphan, the widow, and all the vulnerable who do not have enough to live. Let justice flow like a river and righteousness like a never-failing stream!

(Based on Psalm 24:1, Deuteronomy 15:4, 26:12 and Amos 5:24, NIV).

† Offering Prayer:

L: Blessed are you, God of all creation; through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service

of your kingdom.

C: **Blessed be God forever. Amen.**

(Titcombie Steenwyk and Witvliet 2016:240).

IV

THE LORD'S SUPPER

† Declaration of God's Invitation and Promises:

L: Jesus said: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28, NIV).

C: **Here at this table, we all come from our places of suffering and struggle, from poverty and uncertainty, from weariness and a hope for the future.**

L: People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. (Luke 13:29, NIV).

C: **Not just some are welcome at the table. Not one culture, or language, or class, or race, or gender, or sexual orientation, or any other characteristic defines our worthiness to be at this table.**

L: All are invited and welcome just as you come.

† Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:

L: It is truly good for us to glorify you, Mother-Father, and to thank you. You alone are God, the living and beautiful one, dwelling in the place of absolute power over all of creation from before time and forever. You are the fountain of all life and the source of all existence. You made all things and fill them

with your blessing. You created them to rejoice in the splendour of your very being. (Based on Titcombie Steenwyk and Witvliet 2016:318).

C: **Lord, you are the greatest artist.**
To whom no one can compare,
Streaking sunsets very beautiful,
Painting rainbows in the air. (Udia (witness to Yah) 2016)

L: Almighty God, Parent of all, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Saviour. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, he lived as one of us, yet was without sin. To the poor, he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. To fulfil your purpose, he gave himself up to death and, rising from the grave, destroyed death and made the whole creation new. (Titcombie Steenwyk and Witvliet 2016:320).

C: **Christ has died,**
Christ has risen,
Christ will come again.

L: Almighty Father-Mother, we thank you for your Holy Spirit, your first gift to all who are part of the faith community. You have given us and your church everywhere your Spirit to participate in your work of reconciliation, unity, and justice in the world, and to bring to fulfilment the sanctification of all. (Based on Titcombie Steenwyk and Witvliet 2016:321).

C: **May your Spirit lead us on these paths of righteousness to the honour of your name.**

L: Lord, you have given us this meal of remembrance and liberation. You have

called us to eat and remember your body as particular liberation for us all. May we so also be reminded of other bodies; the bodies of the poor who suffer in the cold, the bodies of women who are vulnerable to abuse, the bodies of the disabled who are often excluded, the bodies of men broken by unjust economies. May we see your body in the body of our neighbour, and your face in the face of the vulnerable.

C: **Through your body, we are a new family, not of race or bloodline, but the family of God.**

L: You have called us to drink this cup of covenant sealed in your blood, which is for the forgiveness of sins. Through your forgiveness of our debts, all human divisions are made null and void. All human judgement is suspended, and all complexes of inferiority or superiority made invalid.

C: **May we be reminded at this table that you included the excluded and welcomed the other. Amen.**

† Passing of the Peace:

L: Thanks be to God: Christ makes us one.

The peace of Christ be with you all.

As part of our call to reconciliation, unity and justice, we have been commissioned to make peace with one another. Jesus has taught us to first reconcile with those who may have something against us before we gather in worship (Matthew 5:23-24). Thus, before we gather together at the table, let's take this opportunity to greet each other with the words: "Peace to you".

[*The community of faith are to all greet each other with the passing of the peace and gather around the table in a circle*].

† Preparing the Bread and the Cup

L: [*Breaking the one loaf of bread*] The bread that we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

C: We who are many are one body, for we all share the same loaf.

L: [*Pouring the cup*] The cup for which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

C: The cup that we drink is our participation in the blood of Christ.

(Titcombie Steenwyk and Witvliet 2016:309).

† Communion:

Invitation

L: Hear the words of our Lord:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-29, NIV).

All is ready at this table. Come and be welcomed.

C: We come not because we must, but because we have been invited. We come not because we are holy, but because we have received grace. We come not because we are powerful, but because God is with us in our weakness. We come not because we are pure, but because we are welcome even in the fragmentation of our diverse identities.

(Based on Titcombie Steenwyk and Witvliet 2016:342).

Distribution

[*As the bread and cup are shared with one another*].

C: **The body of Christ, given for you.**

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

† Response of Thanksgiving:

L: Lord God, our Parent, our Mother, our Father, our Sustainer, our Caregiver, in gratitude and joy for this moment of participation at your Table, with these people and your church all over the world, we give all we are to you.

Lead us to live in this world as participants in your mission of reconciliation and justice. We have shared the living bread; we cannot leave unchanged.

Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, encourage many through us.

So, Lord, may we live in ways which glorify you, as people of this earth and these earthly kingdoms, yet as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. **Amen.**

(Based on Titcombie Steenwyk and Witvliet 2016:345-346).

V

SENDING

† Call to Service:

L: Go into the world: dance, laugh, sing, and create.

C: **We go with the assurance of God's blessing.**

L: Go into the world: risk, explore, discover, and love.

C: **We go with the assurance of God's grace.**

L: Go into the world: believe, hope, struggle, and remember.

C: **We go with the assurance of God's love. Thanks be to God!**

(Titcombie Steenwyk and Witvliet 2016:354).

† Blessing:

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. (2 Thessalonians 3:18, NIV)

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I looked at the intersection between liturgy and postcolonial theory with regards to: 1) The irrational myth of (neo)colonisation and liturgy, and 2) the postcolonial subject as interlocutor for liturgy.

I

I have showcased how the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation (lex gratum vivendi) shapes the liturgy (lex orandi) in our current context.

First, I have exhibited the influence of the irrational myth to quiet the political insights of the Confession of Belhar and possible avenues in which the Confession of Belhar can break the chains of prohibited discourse. Secondly, I have contemplated the influence of individualism, especially with regards to Holy Communion and interlocked with African thinkers who believe the communion table should underscore Ubuntu. Finally, I considered the irrational myth and the collection, displaying how the liturgy has not taken the implications of the collection seriously for the economic wellbeing of all people.

II

Furthermore, I endeavoured to show how the secular lived experience of the postcolonial subject is a valuable source for the liturgy.

Herein the postcolonial subject and the collective struggle for survival played a fundamental role. Finally, the postcolonial subject as decentred and fragmented subject is the ability to perceive that all subjects are inherently decentred. This implies that lines are blurred between the insider and outsider and between oneself and the other. This idea underscores the relationship between culture and liturgy and how

postcolonial insights from a lived experience will influence the liturgy and vice versa.

III

Finally, I attempted a postcolonial liturgy which seriously considers this movement of interlocutor from the irrational myth to the postcolonial subject.

In this chapter, I realised that much of my theory exists in liturgical thought; however, not with the language of postcolonial theory. In other words, my contribution lies in the integration between liturgical thought and postcolonial insights with a change of language and expression towards newness entering the liturgical space.

Chapter 5: Contemplating Postcolonial Hermeneutics

1. Introduction

In this study, I have discussed postcolonial thought, as considered in chapter 2, for both homiletics and liturgy. However, I opine that the homiletic endeavour should not be regarded as adequate without contemplation on hermeneutics. After all, to preach is to interpret the Biblical text within the broader socio-economic and political context of our positionality. Thus, it is my intention in this chapter to contemplate postcolonial hermeneutics for the practice of postcolonial preaching.

In chapter 2, I proposed three focal images for postcolonial homiletics: 1) The irrational myth and the decolonisation of the mind; 2) Moving the centre; and 3) A decentred, fragmented subject (the postcolonial subject). In this chapter, I will consider each focal image in conversation with postcolonial biblical scholars[69]. Hereafter I will contemplate each focal image as a hermeneutic lens for the text of Acts 10[70], the meeting between

[69] I am aware that a myriad of postcolonial biblical scholars exist. However, the scope of this study does not make it possible to converse with all of them.

[70] Acts 10:34-43 is the Lectionary text for Easter Sunday of 2021. I was asked to do a sermon study of Easter Sunday of 2021 for the 2020-2021 issue of *Woord en Fees* and opted to further contemplate Acts 10 in this chapter. Thus, I did not choose the text to showcase its postcolonial insights; rather the text chose me. In other words, I did not endeavour to showcase my preconceived notions of postcolonial insights for hermeneutics; rather leaving the possibility open that any text could be interpreted through the postcolonial hermeneutic I have proposed.

Peter and Cornelius.

2. Hermeneutics for the Decolonisation of the Mind

> Decolonization of knowledge shall be understood in the constant double movement of unveiling the geo-political location of theology, secular philosophy and scientific reason and simultaneously affirming the modes and principles of knowledge that have been denied by the rhetoric of Christianization, civilization, progress, development, market democracy.
>
> Walter Mignolo (2007:463)

In chapter 2, I concur with Walter Mignolo that the decolonisation of the mind is a double movement. I made two claims of the twofold movement of the decolonisation of the mind. The first claim is: Naming the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation as a myth which violently privileges western values as all-encompassing logic for salvation, propounded through the co-operation of colonial Christianity and economy, and still prevalent in the global (neo)colonial imperialism of today (see Wa Thiong'o 1986:67; Mbembe 2001:25; Tetteh 2001:25; Fanon 2004:6; Mignolo 2007:450,459,463-464; Vellem 2017:5).

The second claim encompasses the decolonisation of the mind through the affirmation of and struggle for the de-economisation of education and affirmation of other ways of knowing, thinking, theorising, relating, and interpreting the world without being hindered by epistemologies proposing western epistemic privilege or finality (see Wa Thiong'o 1986:108; Biko 1987:70; Spivak 1988:271; Mignolo 2007:463; Vellem 2017:8; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018:3).

I

Naming the irrational myth within the interpretation history of the Biblical text.

> Under postcolonial theory, theologians argue that biblical texts have been marked as powerful

> rhetorical instruments of imperialism. But at the same time, biblical texts have also been proclaimed in colonial settings and therefore contain a voice of justice that energises faith to challenge injustice committed against the weak.
>
> Lazare Rukundwa (2008:340)

As is evident in the quote by Lazare Rukundwa (2008:340), the naming of the irrational myth within the Biblical text itself has already enjoyed the privilege of being taken seriously. In conversation with a myriad of African thinkers, Rukundwa deconstructs western hermeneutics as "foreign hermeneutics [which] are incapable of explaining the harsh realities of inequality, oppression and exploitation that are often experienced in tricontinental countries" (Ibid.,344). To be clear, Rukundwa understands the Bible as "a cultural product in time and space" where the questions of authority should be directed not to the Bible[71] itself but to "the authority of biblical interpretation" (Ibid.). In similar vein, Rasiah Sugirtharajah (2012:14) shows that one of the activities of postcolonial criticism is the "rereading and reinterpreting [of literary productions], and exposing the revisions or reinforcements of colonial or national history".

For homiletics, the question immediately emerges, what would the exposing of colonial interpretations of a Biblical text encompass? How would one go about naming the irrational myth within a given interpretation of a Biblical text?

In F.W. Grosheide's (1941:167-171) commentary on Acts 10, two things are of importance to note. Firstly, he strongly proposes that this text underscores the new reality in Christ that God makes no distinction between people. In Grosheide's words:

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[71] In the line of thought expounded by Rukundwa, questioning the authority of the Bible itself would be nonsensical as its raison d'être does not rest on divine production.

"Petrus stelt vast, dat God geen aannemer des persoons is"[72] (Ibid.,168). However, and this is the second important aspect of his interpretation, irrelevant of God's lack of distinction, Grosheide underscores the gatekeeping persona of Peter. He claims that Acts 10 is inherently about the "bijzondere taak der apostelen"[73] to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Ibid.,169); the implication being that Cornelius' inclusion into the faith is dependent on this preaching. Grosheide proposes an interesting interpretation of verse 44, where Peter is interrupted by the Holy Spirit falling on these Gentiles. He merely claims that Peter had said everything which needed to be said, and that nothing more needed to be said. He asks rhetorically: "wat had Petrus nog meer moeten prediken in deze omstandigheden?"[74] (Ibid.,171).

Grosheide's interpretation of Acts 10 and his focus on the gatekeeping persona of the apostle represents a westernised centre of Christianity. This idea that faith needs the preaching of centres where the authority to preach the gospel has been established, along with the confession that God makes no distinction between people, fits comfortably into the colonial missional paradigm. As David Bosch proposes about this paradigm:

> [The Protestant] mentality often hardly differed from that of Rome; where the Catholic model insisted on "outside the *church* no salvation," the Protestant model adhered to "outside the *word*, no salvation" (Knitter 1985:135). In both these models mission essentially meant conquest and

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[72] Peter determines that God is not an endorser of persons (my translation).

[73] Special task of the apostles (my translation).

[74] What more should Peter have been preaching in these circumstances? (my translation).

> displacement. Christianity was understood to be unique, exclusive, superior, definitive, normative, and absolute (cf Knitter 1985:18), the only religion which had the divine right to exist and extend itself (Bosch 2011:491, original italics).

It would not be far-fetched to take Grosheide's proposal and preach a sermon which claims that, although God makes no distinction between people, non-Christians should receive the Gospel through the sanctioned traditions of church or word. Such a sermon may go as far as to propose adherence to the western ecclesial and per implication, western cultural ways.

Thus, in an attempt to name the irrational myth in the interpretation history of Acts 10, one could question how Peter, as the bearer of normativity, is understood. The fact that Cornelius was the one who initiated the meeting might indicate a reversal of roles. Or when the Holy Spirit interrupts Peter (verse 44), this may suggest that God silences Peter, as if he should listen rather than speak. Grosheide also ignores the fact that Peter was staying at the house of Simon the tanner (Acts 9:42). Simon the tanner would have been considered unclean in Jewish understanding as his occupation expected of him to work with dead flesh (see Jennings 2017:101). Thus, from the very onset Peter's normative centre is impossible. Furthermore, myth that Christian faith comes from a normative, western mythos is thus deconstructed and new possibilities are opened.

II

Once the irrational myth has been named, new possibilities of interpretation should align with the decolonisation of the mind.

> However, if in the framing of postcolonial hermeneutics it is in the final instance not concerned with the "truth of the text" but rather with the central issue of the texts' promotion of colonial ideology (Sugirtharajah 1998a, 19), its usefulness on the African continent where the Bible is still highly valued for many reasons, becomes a concern. If the Bible is studied only for identifying "those intrinsic textual features which embody colonial codes", and when the value of studying these texts for their own sakes or for theological and spiritual inspiration are secondary at best, it remains a question whether postcolonial hermeneutics are [*sic*] not short-circuiting itself, in Africa, but also elsewhere.
>
> Jeremy Punt (2003:71-72)

From Jeremy Punt's (2003:71-72) quote and my contemplation on decolonising the mind, there should be a movement towards the construction of the Biblical text which promotes well-being through theological, spiritual, and mental liberation. Thus, in the interpretation of a Biblical text which moves towards the decolonisation of the mind, the question should be asked with regards to other ways of knowing, thinking, theorising, relating, and interpreting the world which transcend western epistemology. One such possibility, as Rasiah Sugirtharajah (2012:15) proposes, is "[t]ransgressing the contrastive way of thinking". The hermeneutic method here would be to question dualistic thinking which is so prevalent in the irrational myth, proposing instead that there are overlapping and intersectional similarities between coloniser/colonist, centre/margin, religious/atheist etc. (Sugirtharajah 2012:15). Lis Valle (2015:28) calls this idea "a worldview of 'complementary dualities'", while the same idea is prevalent in Aimé Césaire's (1972:41) thought on how colonisation is detrimental to both the colonised and the coloniser. Thus, the identities and lived experiences of supposed

opposites overlap and intersect. Valle (2015:30) goes even further, proposing that opposites need each other, complement each other, and are intertwined in identity formation.

Returning to Acts 10, the interpretation of Willie Jennings (2017:109-114) transgresses the dualities laid by the irrational myth in two locations. Firstly, the site of the relationship between Jew and Gentile:

> God has pushed [Peter] over the line that separated Jewish bodies from Gentile bodies, holy bodies from unholy ones and pressed Peter to change his speech acts by never again calling anyone unholy or unclean. (Jennings 2017:110).

Unlike the immense commitment the irrational myth has shown for assigning and maintaining separation, Jennings indicates that God's action in this text eradicates such separation. Furthermore, for Jennings, the speech act within the text overlaps and intersects. Even more, it breaks with the idea that the gospel comes from the apostle to the Gentiles. Not only is Peter's speech act changed in the transgression of boundaries, but "Peter listens and hears the word of God in new and unanticipated places" and only then does he speak his truth (Ibid.,111). The point Jennings makes is that, from the outset of the meeting between Peter and Cornelius, the Gospel first comes to Peter. The first to speak when Peter meets Cornelius is Cornelius, explaining why he has called for Peter (verses 30-33):

> Listening for the word of God in others who are not imagined with God, not imagined as involved with God, but whom God has sought out and is bringing near to the divine life and to our lives. (Jennings 2017:111).

Only then Peter speaks. Only then Peter realises ultimately that his speaking can no

longer be found in the dualities of holy/unholy, clean/unclean, or Jew/Gentile (Ibid.). Only here does he deeply realise that “God does not show favoritism” (Acts 10:34, NIV).

But even this is not the end of the reversal, and Peter is not the last to speak. At the end of his sermon, Peter is interrupted by the Holy Spirit and those with him are “astonished” (Acts 10:45, NIV) that the Gentiles are now speaking in tongues. According to Jennings, and I quote:

> Nothing prepared them for this witness. Nothing suggested that this was coming. They certainly imagined their witness to the world of the diaspora, maybe even to a world beyond that diaspora, but never a witness *from the Gentiles to them*. The Gentiles speak in tongues, and Israel hears. (Jennings, 2017:113, italics in original).

This is the par excellence transgressing of the dualities of the irrational myth and proposing another way of interpreting the text towards decolonising the mind. Roles are reversed, and the activity of God comes not from the authoritative location of the apostle, but from the unexpected action of the Holy Spirit through the mouths of the Gentiles. It is interesting to take note of Virginia Burrus' (2007:147-148) understanding of heteroglossia within Luke-Acts. Making use of Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of heteroglossia as “polyglot consciousness”, Burrus proposes that the speaking in tongues represents alienation and denaturalisation of speech (Ibid.,147). In the context of Acts 10, the polyglot consciousness represents the decolonisation of authority and the location of culture from whence God’s revelation may, can, and does come.

The second transgression of the irrational myth within Jennings’ thought is found in

the person of God. Jennings (2017:110) claims that Acts 10 is about "divine transgression". It is God who, against the Old Testament laws, longs for the integration of bodies and refuses the separation of bodies (Ibid.). When Jennings makes this point, Godself is decolonised from the colonial Christian understanding that salvation is brought through a closed systematic theology where God cannot change and has already preordained the world within the dualities of the colonial worldview. This worldview was instrumental for the underscoring of colonial oppressions, such as racism, apartheid, and the eradication of alternative knowledge systems (see Wa Thiong'o 1986:16,56,67; Mbembe 2001:25; Tetteh 2001:25; Giliomee 2003:383-384; Fanon 2004:6; Mignolo 2007:463-464; Vellem 2017:8).

Just as God is decolonised, so too does God's decolonised personhood open the possibilities of alternative consciousness. If Godself participates in transgressing the colonial myth, it is no leap to propose that the faithful, having committed to the journey of the decolonisation of the mind, should also participate in God's transgressive actions[75]. From this interpretation it is plausible and imperative to bring "to the foreground other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding and, consequently, other economy [*sic*], other politics, other ethics" (Mignolo 2007:453).

[75] Black Theology of Liberation used Black Consciousness as conversation partner in the restructuring of consciousness (See Motlhabi 1987:9; Mosala 1988:3; Muzorewa 1989:57).

3. Moving the Centre for Hermeneutics

> But [the literature of struggle] did point out the possibility of moving the centre from its location in Europe towards a pluralism of centres; themselves being equally legitimate locations of the human imagination.
>
> Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993:26)

In chapter 2, I contemplated moving the centre as a movement from the unveiled centre of (neo)colonisation as Western and European towards a plurality of centres (see Wa Thiong'o 1993:26,43; Mignolo 2000:726). The following points came to the fore with regards to unveiling the European centre: 1) The European centre is represented by maleness and whiteness (see Cornell and Seely 2016:123). 2) The European centre is the centre of empire and promotes itself through violence as universal truth and the only legitimate perspective to view the world (see Wa Thiong'o 1993:24; Mbembe 2001:25; Ellis 2009:9). 3) There is a close relationship between the European centre and the Christian faith (see Ellis 2009:9). 4) And, from the European centre, the *other* is misrepresented (see Wa Thiong'o 1993:37).

With regards to the movement of a plurality of centres, the following came to the fore: 1) A myriad of centres of knowledge can exist as "legitimate locations of the human imagination" (Wa Thiong'o 1993:26). 2) Mutual circulation of knowledge and ideas between the myriad of centres is encouraged (see Wa Thiong'o 1993:40,47). 3) Hermeneutic questions should be asked related to each centre with regards to perspective, motives, and interests.

I

Unveiling the European centre of interpretation.

> The historical-critical method employed by biblical studies largely depends on the study of words. But the work of biblical scholars is principally confined to dry and technical details and is written as if the study of words has no contemporary or ethical consequences. Most of their work is driven by *religious motive and confessional interest*, and as such there is a failure to note the varied colonial contexts which provided the language for biblical texts.
>
> Rasiah Sugirtharajah (2012:23-24, my italics)

The endeavour of moving the centre presupposes the language to name one's centre of perspective (Vellem 2017:1) while simultaneously formulating relationality with other centres of perspective (Mignolo 2007:459). For Biblical hermeneutics, this implies taking the study of words seriously in conversation with one's centre of perspective and other possible centres of perspectives. As Sugirtharajah (2012:23-24) correctly proposes about the historical-critical method of hermeneutics, an inherent flaw lies in the "religious motive[s] and confessional interest[s]" which are upheld by the colonial language of the historical context within the text. Thus, without taking explicit note of the pervasiveness of colonial discourse, an interpretation of the text as *Reformed* and *intellectual* will merely reiterate the dominant forms of a colonial-centred knowledge system. Thus, the call of moving the centre is:

> Decentering of dominant forms of knowledge which envisioned the world from a single privileged point of view which simultaneously elevated the cultures of the colonizer – religions, arts, dances, rituals, history, geography – and undermined those of the colonized. (Sugirtharajah 2012:15-16).

In Charles Barret's (1994:495) interpretation of Luke 10, he proposes that one decisive

and clear element is present in the text, “the expansion of Christianity into the non-Jewish world”. He goes on to show that the understanding that God does not show favouritism (Acts 10:34) indicates that “non-Jews are welcomed into the people of God” (Ibid.); the implication being that Peter as “chief actor” is the one who welcomes these Gentiles (Ibid.). Barret makes an interesting preposition by claiming that Peter is the one who is converted in the text; however, his conversion is merely the inclusion of other bodies into the epistemological centre from whence he comes (Ibid.). Thus, in this line of thought, although Peter is *converted*, he does not need to take seriously the alternative centre which Cornelius represents and contributes. However, it is not that Barret understands Cornelius to represent an alternative centre at all.

In Barret’s interpretation of the person of Cornelius, he focusses on Cornelius’ closeness to the synagogue, fear for God, and piety (Ibid.,497-498). He goes on:

> That [Cornelius] had faith is proved by the fact that he prayed, which no one does unless he believes… What Luke means is that God judges men fairly in accordance with their opportunities. Cornelius is not to be condemned for not believing a Gospel he had never heard; he is rather to be rewarded for having lived up to the opportunities he had had by being allowed to learn more and to believe more. God looks with favour upon those who so far as they know him fear him, and so far as they know what righteousness is practise it. (Barret 1994:498).

In this line of thought, Cornelius becomes merely an extension of the normative Jewish cult. His perspective is and becomes more legitimate to be accepted by God, the closer he can get to the Jewish centre. Furthermore, this becomes the only reason God, through Peter, includes this Gentile, because Cornelius is already centred in the Jewish perspective, or at least as close as possible (also see Pelikan 2005:132). This

interpretation leaves no room for surprise or the unexpected. There is only one universally acceptable and legitimate centre from where God can show mercy.

II

Moving to a plurality of centres.

> This moment schools us in divine transgression. God brings Peter to one outside of the covenant, transgressing God's own established boundary and border.
>
> Willie Jennings (2017:110)

In Jennings' interpretation of Acts 10, any centre which claims superiority or universalism is denied. Even the idea that Godself can stand as some sort of normative and correct location of truth is moved towards other possibilities. Godself becomes legitimate from different perspectives because God transgresses boundaries and borders (Jennings 2017:110).

With regards to Peter, Jennings claims that Peter does not grasp the depths of what he is saying when he claims that God does not show favouritism (Acts 10:34). "What matters is that [Peter] has been driven to this place by sheer divine desire and not his own desire" (Ibid.). The change of speech which Peter undergoes and the actions which lead him to Cornelius, are by no means a standard extension of the Jewish cult. It is something new, unexpected, and unanticipated. He goes on to say the following about Peter:

> Peter is at the threshold of revelation. That revelation is not of God's wider palette for people, but that Peter's range of whom to love and desire must expand until it stretches beyond his own limits into God's life. God is pressing Peter's aesthetic toward death and resurrection—the dying and rising to new desires is now the call emerging for him. This revelation,

> however, is beyond Peter. God at this moment is pressing him to his limits. (Jennings 2017:111-112).

In this line of thought, Peter's understanding of what God is doing is beyond his epistemological and lingual centre. Peter is unable to fathom or name this movement to new possibilities.

Jennings, unfortunately, does not contemplate the location of culture and perspective of Cornelius. William Willimon (2010) makes two important observations. Firstly, he takes seriously the fact that Cornelius is a Gentile to his very core, falling before Peter to worship him (Ibid.,97); and secondly, the third space of negotiation created in the house of Cornelius (Ibid.). Cornelius is not a blank canvas on whom another centre of perspective can be written. He comes as he is. At the same time, this contested space expects a conversion or change of centre by both Peter and Cornelius (Ibid.,96). Thus, this space is the third possibility, neither that of Peter nor Cornelius, but the newness which enters within their interaction. Furthermore, in this contested space, the Gospel is preached from both the location of Peter and the location of Cornelius (Ibid.,98-99). Moreover, Cornelius' inclusion into the church does not take place in an attempt or rule to become like Peter; it takes place within the gift of heteroglossia from the Holy Spirit as the alienation of the normative centre where newness breaks through (see Burrus 2007:147-148).

It is at this junction of space and identity that I turn to the postcolonial subject.

4. The Postcolonial Subject and Hermeneutics

> Cultural globality is figured in the *in-between* spaces of double-frames: its historical originality marked by a cognitive obscurity; its decentred [and fragmented] 'subject' signified in the nervous temporality of the transitional, or the emergent provisionality of the 'present'.
>
> Homi Bhabha (1994:216, original italics)

In chapter 2, I delimit the postcolonial subject (a decentred, fragmented subject) in four movements. For this section, I will only focus on the first three movements: 1) The relationship between the decentred, fragmented subject and time, 2) The concept of hybridity, and 3) The body of the decentred, fragmented subject.

To summarise, I discerned that 1) the western gaze has arrested the relationship between the postcolonial subject and time. This means that the west-centred perspective has delimited *the other* within fixed categories such as savage, unsophisticated, and backwards (see Drichel 2008:589; Cornell and Seely 2016:123). When, however, *the other* co-opts the western perspective, they (merely in a proxy manner) are integrated and conceived as human by the stalwarts of the western perspective (see Wa Thiong'o 1993:34). Furthermore, Black Theology of Liberation failed to transcend this western gaze fixed in time even as it sought to liberate those oppressed by the western gaze (see Vellem 2017:1). Finally, the postcolonial subject as decentred and fragmented emerges where the limits of the western gaze are reached, both in time and space (see Bhabha 1994:217).

At these limits, 2) I place a hybrid identity on the table as an alternative centre[76] to the

[76] Drichel (2008:605) uses c/entre to indicate that in the act of moving the centre of the subject towards

fixed centre of the western gaze (see Drichel 2008:593). However, hybridity enters the world in the disruption of the spatial realities of fixedness (see Bhabha 1994:38). Thus, hybridity is the convergence of space and time beyond colonial fixedness, but not yet complete liberation. This place is the third space where stereotypes are dislodged, and freedom exists for each person to negotiate their identity (see Bhabha 1994:38). Finally, 3) the postcolonial subject's ability to negotiate identity is tightly wound with her human agency in the world (see Akper 2013:115). The agency of the postcolonial subject comes to the fore in mimicry, improvisation, and creativity (Lartey 2013:216-128).

I

The decentred and fragmented subject: Peter, Cornelius, and God.

> Representation is one of the major rhetorical devices by which colonial ideology exercises its power… Colonial caricatures generate two types of representation. One is the misrepresentation of the colonized, and the other is the affirmative presentation of the colonizer.
>
> Rasiah Sugirtharajah (2012:161-162)

Returning thus to Acts 10, I will be looking at how the interpreters of the text portray the three principal characters: Peter, Cornelius, and God. Once more, my attempt is a close reading of time, space, and agency within the text. The endeavour of taking the postcolonial subject seriously is one of "[i]nterrogating colonial and contemporary practices of representation of the "other " and *the power relations* that lie behind the production of such knowledge" (Sugirtharajah 2012:15, my italics). Thus, not only is the endeavour of the postcolonial subject one of identity but inevitably of power

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hybridity the / is "a silent reminder… that this centre is decentred, both split and double".

relations.

Earlier in this chapter, I opined that Grosheide (1941:169) understood the identity of Peter as a gatekeeper and normative conduit for the Gospel to the Gentiles. In this understanding of Peter, Peter becomes a-temporal. His identity when meeting with Cornelius, delivering the sermon, and being interrupted by the heteroglossia of the Holy Spirit through the Gentiles does not influence or change Peter's identity as the one with the "bijzondere taak der apostelen"[77] (Ibid.). From this point of view, nothing new comes into the world, and the fact that these Gentiles have now heard the Gospel is merely the expected "expansion of Christianity into the non-Jewish world" (Barret 1994:495).

If, however, the power dynamics of the western normative centre are dismantled and Peter's identity can be taken seriously not as a-temporal, but as constantly changing, and developing, three aspects come to mind. 1) Because of the pericope of Acts 10:9-22, Peter dislodges his identity from the Jewish law, which forbids association between Jew and Gentile, and he enters into the home of Cornelius (Acts 10:28). 2) Peter only attempts to make theological sense of God's revelation to the Gentile Cornelius. Peter's speech act is not normative, but only an attempt. As Willie Jennings claims:

> This revelation, however, is beyond Peter… Peter can only locate in these historic unprecedented actions an ethic of divine acceptance… Peter is saying that if any Gentile does what is right and fears the Holy One, they will be acceptable to God. But there is much

[77] Exceptional task of the apostle (my translation).

> more going on here. (Jennings 2017:113-114).

Indeed, there is much more going on! The text is ambivalent. Did the Gentiles come to faith because Peter preached? Or was Peter brought to this space of negotiation to be interrupted so he could listen? There is no sure answer, yet the interruption (verse 44) and the astonishment of the Peter group (verse 45) showcase hybridity with regards to Peter's positionality. Any possibility of Peter as gatekeeper ought to be questioned. Instead, his identity is decentred and fragmented by the contested space of Cornelius' home. 3) But it is in verse 47 where Peter discloses to the greatest extent the negotiation of identity in this space: "Can anyone keep these people from being baptised with water?" (Acts 10:47, NIV). This rhetorical question is loaded. At stake is the very identity of the Christian person and Peter himself. As Jennings (2017:116) so aptly claims, what happens is not merely the acceptance of the Gospel, but "the joining of Jew and Gentile". With the proposal on Peter's lips that these Gentiles have no alternative but to be baptised and the criticism which will follow for this action (Acts 11:2), Peter's identity and perspective have radically shifted.

I now turn to the person of Cornelius. Barret (1994:498) represents Cornelius as a pious person close to the Jewish cult, with a fear of God. He relentlessly claims this persona as the reason why God looks with favour upon Cornelius and welcomes him into the Christian community (Ibid.). However, Barret seems to ignore the characteristics of Cornelius, which would contradict and disgrace the personification of Cornelius as pious. Willie Jennings, on the other hand, does not:

> [Cornelius] is a man of war, bound to the Roman state. He is a master, an owner of slaves. He is a ruler, a leader of men. He is what so many men and women in this world aspire to be and what so many peoples want to be defined as—a strong self-sufficient people who look to the

> world like one unified, strong, self-sufficient man. Cornelius is an aspiration, but he is also an anomaly. He is a God-fearer. He is one who stands at the door of Israel and knocks, praying the prayers of God's people as though he is one, following the gestures of worship and life of God's people as though he is one, embodying the hopes of God's people without them knowing it. Cornelius is thusly a living contradiction. He is in the old order, but his actions are preparing him for the new order. (Jennings 2017:105).

Jennings is expecting a movement from the old order to the new, but I want to propose that no such expectation is necessary. The identity of Cornelius does not cease to be hybrid at the end of the narrative. Cornelius is not baptised and then ceases to be a centurion or expected to change his career. At least, no such mention is made in the text. He is still a living contradiction!

Furthermore, how Acts 10 ends leaves the question open with regards to Cornelius' agency as a participant in the expansion of the Christian community. On the one hand, the narrator gives no agency to Cornelius beyond Acts 10.[78] On the other hand, in imagining Cornelius' interaction with others beyond the Biblical narrative, an improvisational and creative tone might best represent how he participates beyond the text. Indeed, it is speculation, and yet, the narrator does not have the urge to tell the reader that Cornelius had to submit to rigorous theological training under Peter to get

[78] Sugirtharajah (2012:163) proposes that a denial of agency to the marginalised and poor exists within the writings of Luke. Thus, although Luke seemingly champions for those on the margins of society, they lack agency within the Lukan narratives.

his theology *just* right.

Lastly, God as subject. In my reading of Grosheide (1941:159-173), I am convinced that he only locates God as subject within the preaching of Peter. In other terms, God as subject is found in the revelation that God does not show favouritism (Ibid.,167). For Grosheide, God is not active beyond what Peter says in the Biblical text. However, Grosheide does not understand this revelation to Peter to be something new in the world; on the contrary, referring to Romans 10:12, all nations stand equal before God (Ibid.,168). For Grosheide, there can be no identity formation, movement, or hybridity in God. His reference to Romans 10 is also problematic, for Romans 10 could only have been written because God transcended the laws which excluded *all nations* from entering the faith community. Thus, Grosheide attributes a static, a-temporal identity to God.

Similarly, Barret (1994:491) locates God's identity in fixedness. He correctly lays claim on the participation of God in the narrative, through the angels and the Holy Spirit, yet sees God's activity as "the final critical stage in the extension of the Gospel and the expansion of the church" (Ibid.). Once more, nothing out of the ordinary takes place: no newness, no surprise, no strange new world. Even more, he goes on to claim that while the Christians opposed the Gentiles' inclusion in the faith community, "God overruled their objection and himself brought the Gentiles in" (Ibid.). That God included the Gentiles is undoubtedly true. But it was not merely an overruling of the objections of the Christians which took place. Barret makes it sound as if the exclusion of the Gentiles was because of the Christians' personal tastes, rather than God's law. Stated

otherwise, the text is not about God overruling the Christians[79]; it is about God overruling Godself.

It interests me why both Grosheide and Barret want to defend an image of God which is fixed. Why must the proposal be that God is static? What are the power dynamics behind an understanding of God as predetermined, inflexible, and unchangeable? Do these characteristics of God underscore the irrational myth of our world as not subject to change? Or even to the possibilities of questioning the way things are?

In Jennings' (2017:109) contribution with regards to the identity of God, he makes mention of God's action in transgressing borders and boundaries in intimate spaces where the Jew and Gentile should not be together. Once more, it is not just any boundaries and borders God transgresses, but God's established boundaries and borders (Ibid.,110). He goes on to make the following claim: "Divine touch is always unexpected and usually unconventional" (Ibid.,111). From this perspective, the agency of God moves beyond the confines of fixedness and predetermination. God brings forth a newness, unexpected with regards to how the world is.

Furthermore, this newness is facilitated within spaces of negotiation. In this line of thought, God's own identity is fluid, for the security which the law has brought can be eliminated. This elimination of security brings forth the risky and arduous struggle for new relations and ways of being in the world.

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[79] Jennings (2017:107) claims that Peter is not disobedient when resisting the command to kill and eat but calls the whole movement from exclusion of the unclean, to inclusion, "the birth pangs of the new order".

And yet, one more subject must be considered; the reader of the text.

II

The decentred and fragmented subject: the reader.

> [B]iblical interpretation has yet to integrate various historical biblical readers from different points in the Christian history of the last nineteen hundred and ninety-six years. In short, the question of how different flesh and blood readers have acted out the biblical story in history, and how their act illumines some meaning of the text needs to be integrated into the academic biblical studies.
>
> Musa Dube (1997:12)

What Dube (1997:12) brings to the table is a further contemplation on the subject. Although thorough consideration of the reader as subject is outside of the scope of this study, I think it essential to take note of her critique and proposal. Biblical interpretation is not restricted to the academia, and thus the postcolonial endeavour should take notice of "flesh and blood readers" and how they have enacted Biblical stories (Ibid.). There is a need for empirical research with regards to how different subjects read and live the Biblical narratives[80].

Dion Forster (2017) did an important study on the impact of location of culture[81] and the interpretation of forgiveness in Matthew 18:15-35. In the study, Forster found that the differing locations of culture brought forth differing understandings of forgiveness as portrayed in the Biblical text. With regards to the first group which partook in the

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[80] I am aware of the Intercultureel Bijbellezen project in the Netherlands and contextual Bible study project of the Ujamaa Centre at UKZN, but more must still be done.

[81] In the South African context where the study took place, the divide of location of culture is on the grounds of race.

reading and interpretation of the text, Forster has the following comments:

> Thus, the predominantly Black Christian grouping understood forgiveness in Matthew 18.15-35 in a collective manner. Forgiveness is understood as an expression of the restoration of social harmony in the community (LL) with clear expectations of social, economic and political transformation (LR). (Forster 2017:184).

When it came to the second group, predominantly white Christians, Forster concluded:

> The majority of the group tended to understand forgiveness as an individual spiritual phenomenon that was enacted between the sinning party and God. Thus, they found it difficult to identify with the pain and struggle of others (the persons sinned against) as a condition for forgiveness. (Forster 2017:189).

However, an unusual exception took place in the second group. There was an individual who was aware of the hermeneutical influence white perspective has on the interpretation of the text and recognised the responsibility of visible reconciliation within the South African social fabric (Forster 2017:188). Forster suggests that this individual's ability to transcend hermeneutical constraints stems from the fact that the "participant had worked in a predominantly Black educational setting" (Ibid.).

Thus, within the lived experience of decentring and fragmentation within the space and time of secular life, this reader could interpret the Biblical text from a vantage point of consideration for different centres. Furthermore, although Forster himself does not claim this, in my reading of the quotations of this individual, I find that this participant is grappling with the relationship between the differing centres:

> I know, I know, I agree with you, I'm say [*sic*] we need to maybe it [*sic*]

> take it to a different level to say, 'we recognise their pain and that hurt and then... our response needs to be different. (Forster 2017:188, underline in original).

This idea of "a different level", I believe, represents the moment of recognition of 1) time wherein the *other* can be, exist, and change beyond one's own centre, 2) spaces where different *others* can and need to have communal lived experiences, and 3) the agency of the *other* to be different than oneself.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I endeavoured to show what a postcolonial reading of Acts 10 may entail. The three focal images I have delimited as the decolonisation of the mind, the moving of the centre, and the postcolonial subject certainly converge throughout this chapter. Yet, the division helps to fathom a sensitivity for these three focal points from where the Biblical text can be perceived. With regards to the book of Acts, Willie Jennings has shown to be substantial in proposing other ways of thinking, perceiving, and relating within the Biblical text. His work should certainly be followed for any theologian serious about considering postcolonial Biblical commentary. At the same time, it is possible to posit that Grosheide, Barret, and Jennings represent the tone and spirit of their time, notwithstanding their individual contributions.

Furthermore, even beyond the homiletic imperative of relating between differing centres, there is an ethical necessity for readers to be able to discern the relationships between different centres within the greater interpreting faith community. The idea of the Round Table Pulpit needs new insights from a postcolonial perspective for the manner in which we preach, hear, and live together in South Africa.

Chapter 6: Conclusion[82]

1. Introduction

As concluding chapter, I will return to the South African homiletic landscape. Here I will reflect - from a postcolonial perspective - on the two most significant movements: prophetic preaching and aesthetic homiletics. Thirdly, I will dialogue with Sarah Travis' work, *Decolonizing Preaching*, which is a North American perspective on postcolonial theory and homiletics. Lastly, I will pinpoint future directions for South African homiletics.

2. Prophetic Preaching

In 1995 Hennie Pieterse published a research project, *Desmond Tutu's Message*, which focuses on the anti-apartheid sermons of Desmond Tutu. Three important points are made: 1) Pieterse (1995:96) names Tutu's preaching steeped in Black Theology of Liberation (BTL), "critical prophetic preaching", 2) Pieterse, Scheepers and Wester (1995:55) propose that these prophetic sermons were underscored by a "vision for the South African society, which is… based on [Tutu's] Christian interpretation of the reign of God", and 3) Tutu's sermons rose above the politics of apartheid (Pieterse, Scheepers and Wester 1995:48).

At the intersection of these three points, Pieterse makes the following proposal for a

[82] Part of this chapter was published as an article - "On Justice and Beauty in Recent South African Homiletics: a Post-colonial Reflection" – in Acta Theologica Suppl 29: Beauty and Justice (October 2020).

model for preaching in democratic South Africa:

> [L]iberation theology and prophetic preaching should guide the churches' contribution to the struggle for LIBERATION FROM POVERTY [*sic*] through reconstruction and development. (Pieterse 1995:97).

This sentence represents the watershed moment where BTL is coined as prophetic preaching: "preaching which is keenly aware and takes serious [*sic*] the ethical-political-societal dimensions of preaching" (Laubscher and Wessels 2016:178). Prior to this, BTL is univocally practised from the perspective of black oppression as "a relevant gospel to the Black community" (Boesak 1984:29). In the apartheid context, BTL empowered black people, claiming that God is amongst them in their struggle for freedom (see Mofokeng, 1987:4,15).

However, with Pieterse's proposal, a change takes place, and newness enters the homiletic landscape. Pieterse grapples earnestly with the global neoliberal economy South Africa became part of in 1994. Moreover, this endeavour envisions an intersection between the insights of BTL, the potential of preaching, and the parameters of neoliberal capitalism. This is essentially a novum and notable contribution. Furthermore, Pieterse's study is the first instance within South African homiletic thought where BTL is considered in a positive light. Prior, BTL was either wholly ignored (see Vorster 1992:451-463) or vehemently opposed (see Smith 1987:106). Internationally, on the other hand, there is a tradition of prophetic homiletics which has contemplated the ethical, political, and societal aspects of preaching (see Brueggemann 1978; Harris 1995).

Something exciting takes place in the historical development of prophetic preaching since Pieterse's coinage thereof. At first, Pieterse singlehandedly contemplates

prophetic preaching as socio-political preaching steeped in BTL within the democratic context. I want to propose that Pieterse is the only homiletic theologian who considers prophetic preaching up until the second decade of this century. In this time, Pieterse's idea of prophetic preaching develops through at least three discernible stages: 1) The situation of poverty within economic globalisation; 2) Rich church, poor church; and 3) Speaking out against corruption.

In Pieterse's 2001 book, *Preaching in a Context of Poverty*, he outlines a rather positivist description of the global economic system and liberal democracy within the new South Africa. The hope for a better future in South Africa revolved around job creation in the public and private sectors as endeavours to curb the problem of poverty (Pieterse 2001:64-68), although Pieterse also reasons that informal job creation through faith community networks have played a role worth mentioning (Ibid.,69). When it comes to prophetic preaching, Pieterse underscores the homiletic and hermeneutic process with the caveat that the "preacher must be existentially familiar with the local context of poverty" (Ibid.,92). In my opinion, Pieterse sets the stage for prophetic preaching as hyper-contextual preaching. With this, I mean that prophetic preaching becomes contextual to the point where the context is so all-encompassing and overwhelming that an imagination beyond the context of poverty becomes impossible for prophetic preaching.

It is from this point of departure that Pieterse moves to the work of the rich church and the poor church. To be clear, Pieterse uses the terms "church *for* the poor" and "church *of* the poor" (Pieterse 2001:112, 2002:559, italics in original). In an attempt to constitute relationality between preaching, poverty, and this dualistic church, Pieterse (2001:121) outlines "a theory which combines prophetic preaching with diaconal community development". This implies a "missionary diaconate" where the rich church

aids the poor church, in collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organisations, in the endeavour of poverty relief (Pieterse 2001:118-120, 2002:559). Although Pieterse calls for equal cooperation amongst these churches, the duality unintendedly invalidates egalitarian collaboration. Furthermore, Pieterse's prophetic preaching must inevitably lose all possibilities of imagination beyond the contextual limits and becomes a hyper-contextual ecclesiology of development and poverty relief with sermons underscoring this agenda.

Already in *Preaching in a Context of Poverty,* Pieterse (2001:90) opines that prophetic preaching will expose all forms of power abuse which "weaken and jeopardise the position of the poor". When Pieterse wrote these words, he made no mention of any corrupt dealings within the government and spoke mostly in a positive tone about the administration of South Africa (Ibid.,60-69). However, since the presidency of Jacob Zuma, a myriad of homiletic theologians started contemplating prophetic preaching as preaching which exposes corruption (see De Wet and Kruger 2013; Pieterse 2013; Tubbs Tisdale and De Wet 2014; Cilliers 2015; Kruger and Pieterse 2016; Wessels 2017; Wepener and Pieterse 2018). I consider that this overwhelming contemplation on prophetic preaching was sparked by the convergence of understanding that prophetic preaching exposes power abuse with the contextual realities of corruption in democratic South Africa. To be clear, homiletic theologians are not in exact agreement as to what prophetic preaching entails. Tubbs Tisdale and De Wet (2014:4-8) determine at least four visions for prophetic preaching in South Africa. There are even more today, but the point remains, within the context of political corruption, prophetic preaching as exposing corruption becomes the perceived be-all and end-all of homiletic thought.

3. Reflecting on Prophetic Preaching's Pursuit of Economic Justice

As I have mentioned, the endeavour of Pieterse to integrate BTL and the democratic context through prophetic preaching is remarkable. At the same time, when prophetic preaching becomes the trend of homiletic thought during corruption, thorough reflection becomes necessary. Moreover, later movements in BTL and new contemplation on postcolonial theory paint a complex picture with regards to the relationship between liberation and economic globalisation. Once more, prophetic preaching as endeavour to pursue economic justice must be scrutinised.

In Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1986:108) book on literature, *Decolonising the Mind*, he concludes that his endeavour is "a call for the rediscovery of the real language of humankind: the language of struggle". In later contemplation on the insights the language of struggle brings to the table, he makes the following comment:

> But [the literature of struggle] did point out the possibility of moving the centre from its location in Europe towards a pluralism of centres; themselves being equally legitimate locations of the human imagination. (Wa Thiong' o 1993:26).

The point being made by Wa Thiong'o is both the necessity for speaking (and perceiving) the world from the location of struggle. Thus, there is a movement from a fixed and normative centre of location (the western centre) towards locations of culture of struggle. However, this movement does not propose a new fixed centre, but rather the possibility of pluralism of locations of culture from whence the world can be perceived (also see Mignolo 2000:721; Drichel 2008:605).

Although BTL is a theology of struggle and rightly so a postcolonial theology, its hermeneutical centre must be critiqued. For BTL during apartheid, the hermeneutic centre is the location of culture of black people as oppressed and colonised in South

Africa (see Boesak 1984:29; Maimela 1987:44; Mofokeng 1987a:10, 1987b:24; Mosala 1987:32-34; Motlhabi 1987:4-5; Ramose 1988:21). In Gerald West's (2016:353-354) opinion, the marginalised, poor, and oppressed are still the interlocutors for the hermeneutics of BTL in democratic South Africa. I opine that the moving of the location of culture of interlocutors for BTL is essential and profound. This is a hermeneutical move Pieterse (1995:79, 2001:92) correctly makes.

However, from a postcolonial perspective, this movement of hermeneutical perspective proposes that the location of culture of the poor should become the new fixed and normative centre. This is problematic for three reasons. First, it underscores western epistemology which works with the concept of a normative centre excluding all other centres. Two, it undermines the existential limits of one's location of culture, proposing that anyone could ipso facto imagine and experience the location of culture of *the other*. And three, it becomes blind to changes in interlocutors.

With regards to the first, a new fixed centre excludes other epistemological possibilities, which undermines the struggle for human liberation, privileging some locations of culture over others. Secondly, the possibility of misrepresentation enters the endeavour (see Bhabha 1994:217; Drichel 2008:589). And thirdly, as Vuyani Vellem (2012:4) proposes, the interlocutor in democratic South Africa for BTL is "a black middle class [*sic*] person rather than the poor non-person".

Returning to prophetic preaching, all three of these critical points are reasonable critique for prophetic preaching as well. If prophetic preaching should be from the perspective of the poor, what is the relationship with other locations of culture? Secondly, is it possible, for example, for a middle-class religious leader to understand the existential experience of poverty? And are the poor in reality the interlocutors of prophetic preaching?

I deem that the interlocutor of prophetic preaching in a context of corruption is a middle-class white person rather than the poor non-person. This change of interlocutor influences all three points I have raised above. But first, let me interrogate the interlocutor of prophetic preaching in more detail.

The first and most obvious indication of a change in the interlocutor is the timeframe in which prophetic preaching became the normative conversation amongst South African homiletic theologians: at the height of governmental corruption. At the same time, the goal of prophetic preaching becomes that of exposing corruption:

> Every preacher should discerned [*sic*] the content of our prophetic preaching in contemporary South Africa in the specific context of the congregation. General issues that can be addressed are corruption by officials administering state funds, maladministration of state funds and unskilled people in crucial positions in the private sector who cannot do the job, but are there because they are ANC cadres due to the policies by the government to redeploy people to other positions after they are found guilty of corruption or maladministration in a previous government position. (Pieterse 2013:5).
>
> In our view, the essence of prophetic preaching is that it proclaims the biblical message critically in a society that tends to deviate from its God-given form and destiny, in the process equipping Christians to radiate the light of the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness revealingly and energisingly with a view to refocusing the world on its destiny in a restored relationship with God. (De Wet and Kruger 2013:7).
>
> But the main issue is still how Christians and Christian leaders can start

> to act against corruptive practices. It is clear that it will be irresponsible if churches remain silent. (Kruger and Pieterse 2016:90).
>
> As noted earlier, one of Boesak's leitmotivs in his theology is that evil is real. He is of the opinion that the evil in the world should be named. Naming evil is the moment when the church becomes aware of the calling of God to participate in the mission of God to abolish all evils. (Wessels 2017:198).

The point I want to propose is this: prophetic preaching only becomes the focal point for homiletic thought once the white middle-class person's livelihood is in jeopardy because of government corruption. From this insight, *the poor* become merely the proxy interlocutor to petition for the rights and privileges of the white middle class. In other words, prophetic preaching within homiletic thought only uses "an imaginary agent interlocutor in some imaginary South African township" (Maluleke and Nadar 2004:7) to advocate on behalf of the white middle class.

The acute perceiver of the situation would realise that the positionality of the poor in the current South African context, whether corruption is prevalent or not, is a non-person without agency or value. To state it in the words of Vuyani Vellem:

> I wonder if there is anything moral or ethical about capitalism or neoliberal capitalism… The restoration of the authority of the people means the restoration of identity-sustaining narratives and their compatible logically coherent ethical arguments with the feasibility of the planning of courses of action. It means that the victims of colonization and apartheid become in charge of the *terms* of economics, not just the critique of the *content* of economic justice. (Vellem 2018:10,12, italics in original).

Thus, in prophetic preaching's pursuit of economic justice, the epistemological underscoring of the status quo as neoliberal capitalism as well as the actual interlocutor of prophetic preaching becomes a stumbling block for contemplation on justice. Under these conditions, adequate representation of the poor, the struggle for justice, and the poor as genuine interlocutors for prophetic preaching become questionable.

4. Aesthetic Homiletics

Although I am convinced of the overwhelming presence of prophetic preaching within recent homiletic thought, another important focal image is that of aesthetic homiletics. Johan Cilliers has by far the largest body of work on aesthetics, but Ian Nell and Cas Vos' contributions will also be contemplated.

4.1. Convergences of Aesthetic Homiletics and Prophetic Preaching

Aesthetic homiletics and prophetic preaching converge at the intersection where aesthetic homiletics attempts to re-envision prophetic preaching.

Johan Cilliers (2015) questions whether the term *prophetic preaching* is helpful. He reasons that the manner in which prophetic preaching is understood within homiletics reveals "a theological[ly] unsophisticated" comprehension (Ibid.,373; also see Cilliers' (2013, 2019:100-103) interpretation of one of Allan Boesak's sermons). He goes on to show that prophetic preaching becomes merely the blending of political and eschatological language on the pulpit anywhere on the spectrum of political alliance (Ibid.,374). Thus, certain preachers can understand their prophetic task as a challenge to the political status quo (also see Cilliers 2019:99-145), others as the preservation of the status quo (also see Cilliers 2006), and still others as complete silence on the

status quo (also see Cilliers 2019:42-64).

As alternative, Cilliers (2015:378-379) reinterprets Desmond Tutu's preaching as anticipation for God's eschatological-political future through imagination inherently relativising the status quo of the present. Thus, the present becomes penultimate and God's future, ultimate. Themes Cilliers identifies in Tutu's sermons are: 1) An inclusive rhetoric which transgresses the boundaries of the status quo (also see Cilliers 2016:30-31); 2) An invitation into the eschatological-political future of God already breaking through in the present; 3) Humour which underscores the penultimate nature of the present; and 4) God-images which surprise and do not adhere to preconceived motifs of God (Cilliers 2016:31).

The alternative which Ian Nell (2009:571) places on the table in conversation with prophetic preaching is "a theodramatic paradigm". What the theodrama brings to the table is the insight that not only right understanding and preaching are important (which Nell believes prophetic preaching indeed possesses), but also right living through acting out the drama of God (Ibid.,572). In this line of thought, the pastor becomes the director of the church as prophetic community "by acting as a community of love and justice" (Ibid.). From here Nell turns to the Confession of Belhar to aid in making meaning for the theodrama within the context. He proposes the taking of hands, the embrace of one another, and giving back the bicycle[83] (Ibid.,574-576). He coordinates these three acts with unity, reconciliation, and justice:

> [One,] to reach out with open arms and cross the many different divides

[83] Giving back the bicycle refers to restructuring of economic system to rectify past injustices such as land redistribution.

> between people… [Two,] The preaching process should create spaces where people feel safe to bring the victims and victimizers into authentic relationships… [And three,] Throughout this process [of justice in theodramatic terms, the prophetic community] become witnesses to society in general of the ways in which each and everyone can play these roles [of justice] with integrity. (Nell 2009:574-576).

4.2. Divergences between Aesthetic Homiletics and Prophetic Preaching

I consider that aesthetic homiletics is always explicitly and implicitly in conversation with prophetic preaching. Furthermore, the point where aesthetic homiletics diverges from prophetic preaching is on the point of moralism/religious activism. According to Johan Cilliers, religious activism is the postmodern development of moralism (Cilliers 2012:4, 2018:8). The moralist/religious activist sermon will:

> [State] what God has done [in the past] and what God will do [in the future], but more importantly: what people must do to activate God's deeds now. (Cilliers 2012:5).

In Cilliers' earlier works, he traced moralism in South African sermons thoroughly and proposed an alternative homiletic theory (see Cilliers 1996, 1998, 2002a,b,c, 2003, 2004). He has also called out prophetic preaching for being religious activism. He has shown prophetic preaching to be "theological[ly] unsophisticated" (see Cilliers 2015:373) and that a prophetic sermon of Allan Boesak displays moralistic tendencies (Cilliers 2013:10-11, 2019:114-115).

It is from these impetuses that he moved towards aesthetic homiletics:

> But, later on, as I was searching for alternatives, I started to appreciate aesthetics as a space which does not circle the wagons to form enclaves,

> but rather a space where creativity and playfulness are no strangers. In this regard, my German *Doktorvater*, Rudolf Bohren, played a major role, teaching me that moralism and aesthetics are in fact the exact opposite. The one clamps down, the other opens up. (Cilliers 2018:7, italics in original).

With this idea that aesthetic homiletics *opens up,* I want to propose three focal images where aesthetic homiletics diverges from prophetic preaching to bring forth newness in the world: 1) The person of the preacher. 2) The identity of God. 3) Inculturation and the human spirit.

I

The Person of the Preacher.

In their 2012 book, *Preaching Fools*, Charles Campbell and Johan Cilliers remark:

> Preachers are fools. Preaching fools. At the deepest level this characterization is inescapable. For preachers proclaim the foolish, disruptive gospel of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.… Just as Jesus, like a trickster, crosses boundaries, breaks taboos, and speaks disruptive words, so preaching fools interrupt the social and religious—and homiletical—status quo. (Campbell & Cilliers 2012:153-154).

The perspective of Campbell and Cilliers brings forth an image of the preacher which transcends and hybrids the preacher. Unlike the perception of the preacher as sage who knows God's will for society (see De Wet & Kruger 2013), the fool both in persona and actions decentres, fools, plays, breaks open new possibilities, and fragments reality. The point Campbell and Cilliers (2012:163) make is that playing the fool and fooling with the play (of life) breaks open forms of existing in the world which have

become stagnant; be they political, socio-economic, or religious. The idea of play could be brought in close relation to Ian Nell's idea of the preacher as director in the theatrical play of God (see Nell 2009, 2017). Although Nell (2009:573) explicitly shies away from contemplating the person of the preacher, the ideas Campbell and Cilliers place on the table could aid in the relationship between the theodrama of the past and the contextual theodrama. In the words of Campbell and Cilliers:

> In this way [the preaching fools] constantly remind us that what is needed is not a repetition of old paradigms, but a re-creation of them—not a cloning of what was, but a clowning for what could be. (Campbell & Cilliers 2012:163).

This moves Nell's proposal away from a repetition of the past (see Nell 2009:573-576, 2017:317-318), towards the possibility of newness entering the world. This reframing of the person of the preacher has the implications of changing the understanding of all people. Now, the identity of persons is open for negotiation. Space and time, which underlie human identity, are absorbed into the "eschatological fluidity" of the fool's gospel (Campbell & Cilliers 2012:168).

Ian Nell (2015) researched an exciting project named *Sermon of the Layperson*. In the project, five laypersons were selected to preach a sermon each. The criteria for selection was that "the preachers should be people with influence in society through their participation in public debate", with a feel for the plight of the vulnerable (Nell 2015:3). This project fundamentally plays with the persona of the preacher, opening space and time for new voices and perspectives to be heard. In the future, it would be interesting to see what other voices, such as people without influence in society, would bring to the table. Furthermore, in conversation with Campbell and Cilliers (2012:156-157), the space of the pulpit becomes negotiable with regards to allowing bodies

previously excluded from the pulpit because of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or any other bodily attribute.

II

The Identity of God.

With regards to the identity of God, amongst a rather large variety of God-images, I want to focus on three: the vulnerable God, God of the dance, and the absent God.

In Johan Cilliers' (2008:16) contemplation on the Belhar Confession, he reads from the fourth article God's weakness, brokenness, and vulnerability. For Cilliers the words "in a world full of injustice and enmity … God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged" speaks of God's choice of becoming (and being) poor, marginalised, and wronged (Ibid.). From this perspective, contemplation on the identity of God as weak opens both the possibilities of how God is feeble and how broken people relate to God. The images Cilliers proposes as vulnerable God are: God as a quadriplegic in a sip-puff wheelchair, a crucified donkey, a victim of a xenophobic attack, and a man with AIDS (Cilliers 2008:17, 2012b:169). In the vulnerability and brokenness of God, there is a certain ugliness, about which Cilliers has the following to say:

> Beauty, understood in theological-aesthetical sense, is not annihilated by the ugly and horrific. On the contrary, the beauty of God is often revealed exactly under such circumstances: the ugliness of the cross is the strange 'beauty' of God, *par excellence*. (Cilliers 2012b:63, italics in original).

Furthermore, these contemplations on the vulnerability of God are truly contemplations on the vulnerability of humans. For Cilliers (2012b:146), aesthetics is to locate the activity of God within the lived experience of human beings, including

suffering and struggle.

When it comes to the God of the dance, Cilliers (2012b:120-121) integrates bodily movement, dancing as anticipation for harmony, and the trinitarian perichoresis:

> But this glorious godly choreography – this is the wonder of grace – does not remain locked up in the Trinity… The circular dance is thus opened up, in that God as Creator, Saviour and Consummator, as it were, opens up God's arms for all of creation to come and join in the joy, to come and dance with God. (Cilliers 2012b:122).

In this vision of God as dancing, Cilliers breaks the boundaries between God and human, body and soul, mundane and beautiful. The aesthetic imagination of dance blurs the lines between the sacred and secular, between embracing the O/other and being embraced by the O/other, between the included and the excluded:

> A liturgy that participates in the dance of the trinity has open arms: it embraces those who have been marginalised, stereotyped, stigmatised by society; it welcomes Aids sufferers and homosexually orientated people; it receives the poor, the powerless, the vulnerable and the voiceless. (Cilliers 2012b:175).

Lastly, Cilliers contemplates the absence of God. In his thoughts on space and how the event of preaching becomes "a space for grace" both as gift when "God enters, transcends and fluidises our spaces" and as creation of preaching (Cilliers 2016b:31), he considers the possibility of God's absence in spaces. He considers the lived experience underscored by Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Ben Williken's *Last Supper*, where the table is completely empty (Ibid.,42-45). In this interaction between these interlocutors, Cilliers proposes the possibility that God can be a

combination of absent, hidden, and elusive; one as well as another. Still, whereas Beckett's play is a tragedy of waiting, Williken's painting brings forth a "*hermeneutics of expectation"* (Ibid.,43, italics in original). The point Cilliers makes is that God's absence makes it possible for newness to enter the world. The expectation for what is to come at the empty table opens spaces for a new understanding of faith, of God, of each other, of the Holy Supper, and of life. At the same time, the empty table speaks of the presence of the absent one through the Holy Spirit (Ibid.,44). There is thus both the absence of God and the presence, and the expectation of the one to come who is already there:

> This table waits upon the arrival not of Godot, who never comes. This table waits upon the arrival of God, who has already come. (Cilliers, 2016b:44).

III

Inculturation and the Human Spirit.

A third important image in aesthetic homiletics is inculturation. In Cas Vos' (2014:5-7) contribution to aesthetic homiletics, he proposes a myriad of possible usages of secular poetry, novels, art, songs, theatre, and films within the sermon to open the dialogue between sacred and lived experience. Inevitably, Vos calls for the inculturation of the event of preaching as a critical reciprocity between cult and culture (Ibid.,7). Although he is rather restrained in his inculturation, underscoring the need of a responsible virtue ethics for the church (Ibid.), his point of the possibility of Christianity overcoming the barriers between religious and lived experience through aesthetics is of critical importance.

In a sense all of Johan Cilliers' aesthetic work is inherently inculturation. His insights

into visual art particularly underscore the close association between preaching, aesthetics, and inculturation. In one of his contemplations of a painting of Willie Bester, *Township Plight*, Cilliers (2016a:32-33) shows acutely how the lived experience of oppression flows through myriad forms of aesthetic expression within the struggle for justice. And over against the destructive heritage of the apartheid past in South Africa – symbolised by inadequate houses, a gun and bullets, and fearful faces – Cilliers finds the "triumph of the human spirit, the (colorful) transcendence of the raw realities of the South African history of Apartheid" (Ibid.,33). This idea of the human spirit which triumphs over injustice envisions newness entering the world. No, in fact it is newness already entering the world. Yet, this newness is the encultured expression of human struggle towards transcending the unjust.

5. Reflecting on Aesthetic Homiletics

I am convinced that aesthetic homiletics[84] showcases strong postcolonial tendencies. Although there does not seem to be a direct influence of postcolonial thought on aesthetic homiletics, there are two points where aesthetic homiletics corresponds strongly with post-colonial theory: 1) Decolonising the mind. 2) The subject as decentred and fragmented person.

5.1. Decolonising the Mind

[84] It should be noted that Johan Cilliers and Cas Vos were influenced by Henning Luther and the likes in their aesthetic homiletics. This brings forth the interesting possibility that focal images in postcolonial thought is alive and well in what is deemed by some as colonial and European epistemology. Certainly, a comparative study ought to be undertaken in the future.

Walter Mignolo (2007) proposes that the decolonisation of the mind takes place in a double movement of exposing an overarching myth which privileges western values as all-encompassing logic of salvation and affirms that other ways of thinking, knowing, and existing are possible (also see Biko 1987:70; Fanon 2004:6; Mbembe 2001:25; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018:3; Spivak 1988:271; Tetteh 2001:25; Vellem 2017:8; Wa Thiong'o 1986:67,108).

In the convergence between aesthetic homiletics and prophetic preaching, aesthetic homiletics questions the overarching myth of prophetic preaching, thus deconstructing it. Furthermore, aesthetic homiletics places alternatives to the restricted understanding of justice as neoliberal democratic participation on the table. Insights from thinkers throughout many disciplines, worldviews, and locations of culture are considered, breaking open new possibilities for thinking and living.

5.2. The Subject as Decentred and Fragmented Person

In Homi Bhabha's (1994:216) understanding of the subject, he proposes that a new subject emerges as decentred and fragmented at the transitional location of in-between space and temporality. This stands in direct opposition to a fixed gaze or epistemological centre which arrests the subject in time and space; either as good and righteous (the western man), or backwards and savage (the other) (see Cornell & Seely 2016:123; Drichel 2008:589; Wa Thiong'o 1993:34).

In the endeavour of aesthetic homiletics, as I have shown, the identities of the preacher and God are decentred and fragmented in a myriad of ways. This hybridity of identity opens new spaces, pregnant with possibility for new relationships and interpretations of the agency of the subject. I do, however, think there is still a lack of contemplation on the agency of the most vulnerable in society. In other words,

although the identity of the preacher and that of God have undergone thorough reflection, the character of the poor and vulnerable seems to still be fixed in time and space. Further contemplation of inculturation may be able to dislodge this rigid identity.

6. Engaging Sarah Travis: Decolonizing Preaching

For the scope of this study, I want to both take cognisance of Sarah Travis' *Decolonizing Preaching* and briefly engage her work within this concluding chapter. Although a thorough engagement of close reading is outside the scope of this study, I want to focus on two points where I agree and intersect with her work and two points where I deviate. With regards to the first: 1) Decolonised discourse and 2) the identity of the subject. With regards to the latter: 1) The third space and 2) The Bible.

The first two parts of Travis' book are about the movement of naming "colonialism/imperialism" towards an alternative discourse (see Travis 2014:15-16, 79-80). In her understanding of what I have deemed the irrational myth of (neo)colonisation, Travis (2014:16) endeavours "to cast a critical eye over the colonial and imperial systems as they exist in both past and present". This has opened the way for her reflection and naming of the irrational myth. After that, her thoughts move towards the development of an alternative discourse as a response to "colonialism/imperialism" (Ibid.,55). With Gayatri Spivak as interlocutor, Travis shows how discourse influences the mind and self-understanding of the subject (Ibid.,79-80). Thus, her movement towards an alternative discourse is broached. This idea corresponds with what I have deemed the decolonisation of the mind, which is intrinsically linked to language (see Wa Thiong'o 1986).

The second intersection of my work with that of Travis is with regards to the postcolonial subject. Similarly, Travis has shown that the identity is a crucial factor

which has been questioned by postcolonial thought: “Identity, in the wake of colonialism/imperialism, is a fluid concept” (Travis 2014:131). I have demonstrated my understanding of the postcolonial subject as decentred and fragmented thoroughly, which shows the hybridity of identity.

However, I am not in complete agreement with Travis’ proposal with regards to the third space and the Bible. In Travis’ thought on the third space, she locates third space within the perichoretic space of God’s very being (Ibid.,55). I have much respect for her imaginative proposal of the perichoretic space as third space, claiming “Trinitarian love provides both an archetype and a living space in which to engage in the process of decolonizing preaching” (Ibid.). However, my understanding of the third space (see Bhabha 1994) is that such a space is third in the sense that it is not part of the colonial space nor a perfect, utopian space. Stated otherwise, the third space represents a location of negotiation which could turn out to be either life-giving or life-taking. Everything is open for negotiation, and the proposal that it will bring forth love is not a given.

When it comes to the Bible, Travis makes the following remark:

> The Bible—sacred and beloved—is unsafe and problematic insofar as the biblical texts, as much as any other work of literature, encapsulate the interests and agendas of those who have produced and interpreted them. (Travis 2014:111).

In this study, I have deviated from Travis’ understanding in two ways. Firstly, I have shown that the Bible is by no means either colonial or anti-colonial. In other words, the Bible indeed has colonial tendencies and does underscore agendas of this kind. The Bible can also be interpreted as postcolonial; in both instances it depends on the

hermeneutics employed in interpretation. Secondly, I have proposed that hermeneutic critique should be aimed at the authority of interpretation rather than the Bible itself.

7. Future Directions

The question must be asked: what possible future directions have been unlocked in this study? I want to propose three possible future directions for South African homiletics with the caveat that these directions are not exclusive of one another: 1) Local lived experience as interlocutor, 2) Postcolonial biblical hermeneutics, and 3) The relationship between epistemological centres.

I

The local lived experience as interlocutor will be a descriptive task of what is going on in different faith communities/epistemological centres with regards to homiletics. As I have shown, the scope of South African homiletics has been unable to research differing locations of culture as interlocutors for preaching. Two converging ideas may be possible in this direction. The first idea encompasses the influence of lived experience on in-depth descriptions of preaching in different faith communities, including contemplation on how language aids/dissuades the decolonising of the mind. My second idea relates to research on how different faith communities relate to one another through lived experience as interlocutor for preaching.

II

A second future direction is a dire need for biblical hermeneutical contemplation in homiletics; there is indeed a lacuna. Furthermore, postcolonial hermeneutics shows exciting avenues for biblical interpretation. Thorough reflection on postcolonial biblical hermeneutics for preaching is indeed open for exploration.

III

Finally - and in my mind, this is a larger project for theology and ecclesial communities - the relationship between epistemological centres. The broader societal, ecclesial, and academic mood is exceptionally polarising. It would be necessary for the future not only to ask questions which divide and polarise parties, but also to ask why such issues separate us and what the relationships between differing epistemological centres may be.

8. Postcolonial Homiletics?

I started this study with the question of whether postcolonial theory and homiletics could be brought into fruitful conversation; thus, postcolonial homiletics? I have shown three focal images from postcolonial thought as interlocutors: decolonising the mind, moving the centre, and the postcolonial subject. In conversation with preaching, liturgy, and hermeneutics - as a holistic approach to homiletics - I have indicated in theory and practical attempts, the possibilities in which postcolonial thought can influence and intersect with homiletics. In other words, it is indeed possible to propose a theory for postcolonial homiletics. Even more, what I have proposed in this study does not by any means encompass the depths and extent of postcolonial thought; thus, further interaction between postcolonial thought and homiletics ought indeed to be researched.

Again, I am convinced that this study opens new avenues for thinking not only of preaching within the confines of the status quo, but as an endeavour of asking questions of epistemology, location of culture, hermeneutics, lived experience, and most importantly, the relationship between seeming opposites with regards all these aspects. The call of this study is for homiletics which imagines new and different ways

of being in the world, without a romanticised notion of newness. For even as newness seemingly enters the world, such newness could underscore the same paradigms of the colonial past. Thus, my call is a call for relentless vigilance and re/formation of thought within each new context as struggle for the livelihood and wellbeing of both the oppressed and the oppressor. This study is a call for forging paths in which we can see ourselves as human, and the other as ourselves. Thus, in ourselves becoming the other of ourselves as human beings, neither greater nor less than any other person.

Still, as I conclude this study, I hope that it is an open conclusion; an incomplete Amen. Rather than an answer to the question: “Postcolonial homiletics?”, rather more questions of how homiletic theology may endeavour for newness to enter time and space in the presence of each other and the Wholly Other.

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