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What it Means to be Black in Post-Apartheid South Africa.

Mosa M. Phadi

920306980

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Supervised by

Professor Peter Alexander.

Co-supervised by

Professor Grace Khunou.

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Abstract

As the state of South Africa matures, questions attached to meanings of being 'Black' have become more pervasive, and the promised freedom is embroiled in sharpening contradictions and paradoxes. The *construction* and *reconstruction* of Blackness developed within capitalism, which is the cornerstone of structural racism. Inferiority complexes emanate from the process of *construction*, and the overlap between old and new structural contexts *reconstructs* Black ontology. Moreover, I argue that neither sociology nor Marxists have yet fully understood Blackness and structural racism, especially its political relevance.

This dissertation highlights the importance of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois' theoretical and methodological contribution in conceptualising the *reconstruction* of being Black, which is valued in South Africa and elsewhere. Seminal writers Frantz Fanon and Bantu Stephen Biko also inform my conceptual framework. However, the dissertation attempts to go beyond Du Bois' concepts by connecting theoretical articulations with empirical evidence on how structural racism permeates and interacts with capitalism, in shaping what it means to be Black in South Africa today.

Expanding on Du Bois' methodology, this dissertation uses Conversation Analysis; I engaged with eight 'elites' and forty-six 'ordinary' people. The dissertation illustrates similarities and differences between the 'elites' and 'ordinary' people. 'Elites' are those who influenced the intellectual and political landscape, and the term 'ordinary' is used not in an ignominious sense, but to distinguish this category from the 'elites'.

A key empirical finding is that Blackness embodies *multiple consciousness*. I argue that being Black has multiple folds which interact and disrupt the collective history of oppression. Various dimensions such as childhood memories, language, culture, and 'small freedom' shape the *reconstruction* of Blackness. Among the 'elites' these dimensions were often articulated through a theoretical framing of what it meant to be Black. Among 'ordinary' people, the meanings attached to being Black were more fluid. Their articulations differed depending on class background, occupations, and where they went to school. This dissertation makes an original contribution by focusing on empirical evidence to show that Blackness goes beyond Du Bois' *double consciousness*, and is embedded in *multiple consciousness*.

Contents

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Chapter 1
Finding One's Self:[1] An Overview and a Problem Statement

1.1. Locating the Research

This dissertation seeks to evoke a broader conversation on how the *construction* and *reconstruction* of being Black[2] is understood. These debates are seldom provoked in sociology, but are often situated in philosophy. The aim of this dissertation is to investigate how people articulate Blackness. Despite the significance of Blackness for an understanding of contemporary South African sociology, there is almost no literature on the subject which investigates what definition ordinary people give to the meaning of Blackness. The research question is: **What does it mean to be Black in post-apartheid South Africa?** The sub-question is: **How do Black South Africans articulate Blackness and how does this relate to their socio-economic class positions?** Blackness is loosely defined in order for people in various contexts to articulate their own definitions.

Moreover, I seek to contribute to the Marxist tradition, and will illustrate that it has abandoned thinkers such as William Edward Burghardt Du Bois who later orientated his work to advance the tradition. Let me begin by explaining the concepts *construction* and *reconstruction:* these terms, which appear throughout this dissertation, were originally used by Du Bois, who argued that during the expansion of capitalism, with slavery as its cornerstone, Black people were created to be non-human or 'beasts' without any rights. Structurally locating Black people as inferior *constructed* the ontology of Blackness. I extend this concept in the South African context by arguing that apartheid also *constructed* being Black by excluding it politically, socially and economically. To emphasise this process, I also use the

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[1] In 1995 Moses Taiwa Molelekwa released his first album called *Finding One Self*. The album showcases the processes of coming of age and re-inventing a new space within the tradition of Jazz. I found the title fitting in this dissertation as an introduction to the coming of age in re-thinking Marxism and sociology.

[2] Black, when not in a citation, is capitalised to place emphasis on the importance of its location.

theoretical framing of Frantz Fanon and Stephen Bantu Biko who both add to the notion of the non-being status of Blackness in their analyses.

Reconstruction (1935) meant, Du Bois noted, that after the abolition of slavery, Black people brought democracy to the world. Responding to their struggle to be seen as human, capitalism, which is embedded in structural racism, found mechanisms to assimilate some of their demands. In this new context, there were 'freedmen' and those who were still locked in conditions that perpetuated new forms of slavery, namely exploitation and living in poverty. Even among the 'freedmen', it was still necessary to fight for land and some liberties and opportunities which should inherently have been part of their freedom. In this context, Blackness became *reconstructed*. In my interpretation, *reconstruction* contains the paradoxes and contradictions which come with liberties. On one level, legally, Blackness is not inferior, and some people have been incorporated into the structural racism of capitalism. On another level, some have remained locked in poverty and still have to sell their labour at cheap wages - hence exploitation continues. *Reconstruction* demonstrates class differences among Black people as liberties became more nuanced, yet also shows the struggle to break away from the ties of *construction* as remnants of collective oppression still shape the current context. In the context of opportunities and liberties, the interaction of old and new formations of Blackness creates *reconstruction*. In South Africa after 1994, the process of *reconstruction* of Blackness came into being. *Construction* and *reconstruction* as conceptual terms are seldom referred to in theoretical analysis, and are therefore used in this dissertation to rethink ways of being Black in the world.

It is within this context that my dissertation explores the meaning attached to being Black. I used Conversation Analysis as a means to tease out various perspectives in understanding what it means to be Black. At the outset, the notion of being Black was loosely defined to allow people to inform and contribute to the theoretical conceptualisation of the term. I divided people into two categories, namely 'elite' and 'ordinary'. The reader will notice that when I refer to the two categories, I used inverted commas as a means to distinguish them from other similar terms. In other words, 'elites' with inverted commas refer to people with whom I engaged, and without inverted commas it refers to the understanding of the term in general literature. The 'elites' in my category are defined as a group of people who have social and political influence. This group of people frequently participate in writing their opinions in newspapers, academia, and academic publications and influence debates about

race on a broader platform. The term 'elites' is not based on wealth but on wider intellectual impact. The term 'ordinary' is used not to demean the importance of this group of people, but for the reader to distinguish this category from 'elites'. This category of people varied and included people from a range of careers such as cashiers and students to professionals.

Returning to my other point, sociology and the Marxist tradition hardly unpack *construction* and *reconstruction* of Blackness. Like philosophers such as Rabaka (2010), I lament the problem in both sociology and Marxism which begins with a disregard of the work of Du Bois as an entry point in rethinking what it means to be Black. Rabaka (2010: 348) notes that Du Bois subverted the 'conventional academic disciplines' and sought to insert 'radical thought' and 'revolutionary practice' into sociology, which enabled him to think critically about the ontology of Black in relation to the social structures. This dissertation takes Du Bois' approach seriously and aims to expand on his methodology, especially from later in his life when he became a Marxist - which is what I consider myself to be. It is important for the reader to note that when I began this dissertation, my knowledge of Du Bois was limited. In the process of doing research and theoretically maturing while completing the dissertation, Du Bois became central to my findings. As will be shown through archival evidence, he was greatly influential in shaping the South African and African political landscape. He was one of the main writers of the Pan-African manifesto, and taught and engaged with key figures who were fighting for Black emancipation in South Africa. From the archival evidence, his relationship with South Africa dates as far back as 1904 until his death in 1963. As part of breaking the normative theoretical framing of sociology and Marxism which seldom refers to Fanon and Biko in thinking about the expansion of capitalism, these writers will be used to add to the scholarship and to foreground the link between the *construction* of Blackness and capital accumulation.

This dissertation is not only situated in the theoretical approaches of these authors, especially of Du Bois, but also uses empirical findings to expand on their conceptual framing. I conclude that regarding *reconstruction* in the current democratic state, Blackness has to be regarded as a *multiple consciousness*: that being Black in South Africa has multiple folds. The *construction* of Blackness permeates its *reconstruction*. My empirical findings will demonstrate that being Black has a collective history, but due to liberties and opportunities that came with the new configuration of South Africa, various dimensions disrupt the unity that this collective bestowed. These

dimensions include biographies of people. As will be emphasised throughout the dissertation, individual biographies may be used to assess the historical context of this epoch. Moreover, language will show the contradictions of the fact that being fluent in English *reconstructs* the meanings attached to Blackness. Culture, a concept which people invoked to refer to both values and practices of rituals, is preserved and scorned at the same time. The contestation of culture is based on heteronormative elements which are still retained in the name of culture. Even though gender is not a dominant thread in the dissertation, the empirical findings indicate that what becomes important in the preservation of - or reservations around - culture is divided by gender. A remarkable work by Benya (2015) strongly emphasises the need to understand the relationship between being Black and being a woman in the sphere of labour, especially in the mining context. Ethnicity also plays a role. It is important for the reader to be aware that ethnicity here is based on whether one is umuZulu or moTswana, for instance.

Multiple consciousness uncovers a temporal small freedom: the temporal joys that Black people experience which assist them to suspend structural and internal violence. Structural violence is the oppression inflicted by capitalism embedded in racism. And internal violence manifests itself through ethnic tension in historical spatial segregation, which was based both on race and ethnicity. Moreover, the ontology of being African and Black is also evoked in conversations. With few exceptions, my findings show that being African and being Black were used synonymously. I argue there are two explanations for this: first, Black is used as a political assertion against Afrikaner[3] and white people generally, who might also see themselves as African; second, a difficulty lies in the fact that South Africa was isolated during apartheid: the ontology of being African is insular and parochial and the option is therefore to affirm a strong alignment with Blackness. These dimensions are important in understanding the making of what it means to be Black.

As already indicated, Marxist activism and scholarship have largely ignored or hardly focused on unpacking the dimensions of being Black. There are of course exceptions in this tradition such as contemporary writers like Marable (1984) and Robinson (1983), who have used their analyses of capitalism to understand Black oppression, freedom and experiences, and how its origins are rooted in structural

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[3] See http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/broederbond-norman-levy.

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racism. In the same vein, I foreground what it means to be Black in South Africa to detail that the *construction* and *reconstruction* of Blackness is underpinned by capitalism entrenched in structural racism. This dissertation aims to revive this small part of Marxist tradition, which started with Du Bois, by linking structure and daily experiences. In other words, how do structural conditions shape the Black ontology and vice versa?

The notion of what it means to be Black and how systematic oppression shapes Blackness is negated by the Marxist tradition in general. As a result, an understanding of the *construction* and *reconstruction* of Blackness, which denied 'basic human dignity for hundreds of years' (Marable and Mulling 2009:xxii)[4], seldom manifests itself practically and intellectually in Marxist movements as we chant rhetorical slogans to fight capitalism.

Marxism in South Africa today has been fundamental in providing a 'powerful critique of capitalism', and here I am not referring to mainstream Marxists such as the South African Communist Party (SACP). Although Bonacich and Esbenshade (2011:141) write in an American context, their arguments point to one of the dominant South African Marxist analyses: 'how the capitalist system creates a non-owning working class and how that class's labour is exploited and alienated'. Insightful intellectual scholarship about the political economy of capitalism can be seen in the work of Bond (2000 and 2004) and Ashman, Fine and Newman (2011) among others. Their work explicitly demonstrates how Black politically connected elites have assimilated and adopted state policies which have perpetuated capital accumulation which has salvaged white capitalists and benefitted these few Black elites. Scholars in the Marxist traditions have thus called for revolutionary changes which will assist the broader working class. These scholars, including myself, see the 'capitalist system as incapable of true reform. Thus, radical change in the relations of production is required, whereby the small ownership class is removed from its position of power and productive property is owned collectively' (Bonacich and Esbenshade 2011:141). However, even in their in-depth analyses of class, political economy and capitalism, scholars and activists have not yet developed a rigorous theory about the ontology and the making of Blackness.

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[4] Across the dissertation, quotes will be transcribed exactly as found from the source, keeping their language style.

In the next section, I use my own biography not only to locate myself, but to link it to the historical narrative which has *constructed* and *reconstructed* Blackness. The reader will notice that some of my experiences were also narrated in various ways by the people I engaged in terms of collective oppression, spatial segregation and how people remember their experiences. My biography is also used to show how my experiences might have shaped the perspectives in this dissertation. In all research, positionality affects the research approach, but if a researcher is aware and rigorously reflects on her or his own location, it can assist in testing hidden assumptions. The following section critically engages with my position, and uses my biography as a signifier to think about past and present realities of the South African context.

1.2. My Position

I grew up in Kagiso, a former squatter camp for mine workers, established in the 1920s west of Johannesburg. The township expanded from the 1950s onwards into various sections, most of which are ethnically divided. My early experiences find resonance with the words of Baldwin (1998): 'The story of my childhood is the usual bleak fantasy, and we can dismiss it with the restrained observation that I certainly would not consider living it again.' In 1992, my township was attacked by residents of hostels two kilometres away from my house. Allegedly, the individuals were members of the Inkatha Freedom Party[5]. In the predominantly Setswana speaking section of the township, the hostel residents were labelled *amaZulu*[6]. Seeing hostel residents as *amaZulu* has not changed. In my quest to try to understand the attacks in my area, the only conclusion I can reach is that the apartheid regime was the catalyst in the violence I remember so vividly. A few years before the political transition in 1994, there was a lot of ethnic violence erupting in most townships. Most people I engaged with confirmed that the violence was funded by the apartheid regime.

Hostels still provoke fear in many people: 'You do not go there unless you want to die'. The year 1992 tarnished my humanity and innocence. I saw a man killed in front of my house. Aside from this violence, Kagiso has been described by 'outsiders'

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[5] A political party often associated with amaZulu ethnicity.

[6] Because they spoke IsiZulu and were usually migrants from Kwa-Zulu Natal.

as a 'boring', 'quiet' and 'farm-like' (*diplaasi*) township. Krugersdorp is the nearest, predominantly Afrikaans-speaking, main town where most people work, shop, and pay their bills. Surrounding areas include Chamdor which comprises factories and is a workplace for some people in my township. However, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, most factories shut down. Luipaardsvlei, now known to include poor to low income whites, is about five kilometres from my township, and close to the local train station.

Mining is still part of the fabric of the area. About 800 metres from my house there is an open-cast mine. In 2014, a huge protest erupted against the opening of the mine, but it nonetheless has become a permanent feature of the area. The wealthy suburban areas include the new Feather-Brookes Estate, approximately ten kilometres from Kagiso. The spatial segregation of apartheid has remained in place: whites live in the suburbs and Black people in the township. Some Black people have moved to nearby suburbs since 1994, but the majority have remained in the township.

My biological mother died when I was five years old and I was raised by my aunt whom I call mother. She was a domestic worker and never finished primary school. She hated, if not loathed, most of her employers. When I was young, she taught me a rhyme: *'Afrikaaner, vrot[7] banana, goes to bed without a shower'*. The hatred was intensified by the deaths of her two siblings who were killed by the apartheid regime. One sibling's body was recently discovered after being missing for 35 years. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) noted that my uncle was shot four times and subsequently bombed. We buried his remains in September 2015. The Black condition of oppression and what the apartheid regime did to my family haunts and shapes my every day.

For my undergraduate studies, I went to the University of Johannesburg (UJ), which then was known as Rand Afrikaanse Universiteit (RAU). Afrikaans culture was embedded in the institution, but the mediums of teaching were both English and Afrikaans. Familiar white Afrikaner faces from the West Rand whom I would occasionally see in town were enrolled at RAU. My selection of a University was based purely on economics: RAU was cheaper than the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). The culture of *die tradisie[8]* dominated my first-year experience. With the

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[7] Afrikaans term for rotten.
[8] Afrikaans term for tradition.

difficulties of being Black in that space, few of us managed to complete our studies: while most dropped out in their second semester or second year, others are still trying to complete their degrees. Luckily I got funding for my Honours degree, and since I did not have a job, I decided to complete it. The same thing happened with my Master's degree: I was offered a job which came with conditions to study further, and so I enrolled. During my Master's studies, I worked in a research project which sought to understand class in South Africa. A book titled *Class in Soweto* (Alexander et al, 2013) was produced from the project, and I was one of contributors and editors. I was also the main researcher for the production of a research documentary film titled *Phakathi*: *The Middling Class.* My Master's dissertation was also aligned to the project, and explored the concept of being middle class in Soweto. Working in the project informed my perspective on thinking about class critically.

I had never entertained the possibility of doing my doctoral degree until I received funding for it. I received grants for the first two years and during that period my proposal was approved and I started doing fieldwork. Towards the end of my second year I was told I was no longer eligible for funding since the then Dean of Humanities was under the impression that I was doing my Master's. As a result I only received funds for two years. Ironically, the same dean had attended my Master's graduation ceremony.

When my mother fell ill, fighting for a degree was not a priority. Being a breadwinner was more pressing. For the past three years, I have been moving between jobs to sustain myself and my mother. I have seen many people like myself become alienated in the academic world. For me, it took one white administrator to derail my doctoral studies. Yet this also occurred because the university system emboldened him to exercise such powers.

My childhood and class background highlighted different shades of Blackness. The conceptual meaning of the term and my own engagement with it motivates me to force Black people to be critically introspective about who 'we' are and who 'we' are becoming. In 'our; different shades, have 'we' achieved the freedom 'we' seek? This dissertation aims to stretch and explore these questions.

1.3. Chapter Outlines

Chapter 2: This chapter addresses how Du Bois, Fanon and Biko conceptualise Blackness. Du Bois' initial conception of Blackness was based on *double consciousness* which has multifaceted meanings. The first impression of the concept is a process during which a person wrestles with being Black and being American. However, my interpretation of *double consciousness* is far more complex: it is a process in which Blackness has to submit to or rebel against structural racism. As Du Bois' writing matured, he no longer explicitly referred to *double consciousness*, but a sense of 'two-ness' was always present. He expanded his work to include how capitalism was crucial in the *reconstruction* of Blackness; Blackness is integral to capital accumulation. This chapter also presents archival evidence of the relationship Du Bois had with South Africa - an aspect of Du Bois which is absent in most academic writing, even in South Africa.

The chapter further discusses how Du Bois' idea of *double consciousness* influenced Fanon, especially in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952)*.* In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Fanon outlines the process of achieving universal humanity. Decolonisation is a violent process in which Blackness confronts the oppressor and fights for humanity. He argues that this revolution will be deflected because of different class interests among Black people.

The chapter also argues that the 1960s were characterised by a splintering of ideas: Black movements and intellectuals were highly critical of Marxism, and the definition of what it meant to be Black was strong. This era, I argue, influenced and explains some of Biko's conception of Blackness; unlike Fanon and Du Bois, Biko advocated for Black Consciousness as the answer to Black emancipation.

Chapter 3: This chapter begins with the period following Biko's death, one in which sustained protests erupted nationally, and eventually led to the defeat of apartheid. In the 1980s, the Freedom Charter - originally penned in 1955 - re-emerged and became a key document which outlined the vision of freedom. However, the interpretation of the Charter was construed to mean that power should be located in the state. During the political transition, indeed, self-determination was framed within the Constitution and human rights discourse. In the democratic state after 1994, Black people's self-determination was incorporated into the organs of a Black-controlled government. This led to a contradiction in the process of *reconstructing* of Blackness

as it never gave Black people the freedom they wanted. Freedom is understood as non-interference, using Arendt's (1960) terminology. These contradictions sparked the rise of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). I argue that their manifesto is a modern version of the Freedom Charter. The party invokes Fanon to diagnose problems facing the conditions of Blackness in the current epoch.

University students, whose protests significantly escalated from 2015, have also re-visited Biko to imagine alternatives to present realities and paradoxes in the *reconstruction* of Blackness. I conclude the chapter by placing Du Bois at the centre in understanding the present South Africa. His work is important in showing the contradictions of capitalism in the *reconstruction* of the democratic state and Blackness.

Chapter 4: Drawing from Du Bois' approach to empirical research, this chapter explores Conversation Analysis as the best method to answer my research questions. It enabled me to have in-depth dialogues with people - conversations in which they could shape and define the meanings they attach to their Blackness. Moreover, Conversation Analysis allows a process in which theory and empirical data inform each other.

Chapter 5: Here I present the findings from conversations I had with eight 'elites'[9]. As discussed, the term refers to people who shape political discourses of race in the public arena. Most of the 'elites' I engaged with came from middle class backgrounds and were raised by teachers. The chapter argues that Blackness is characterised by *multiple consciousness.* Most of the 'elites' used theoretical acumen to define their Blackness. Being Black was often defined as a political and philosophical orientation. In some cases Fanon and Biko were cited. The most contested dimension in the *reconstruction* of Blackness was language: the fluency of Black children in English and their inability to speak African languages. In referring to culture, gender dynamics played a role in which aspects of culture to retain and which to disregard. Biographies and childhood memories indicated how the *construction* of Blackness during apartheid still shapes the *reconstruction* of the present.

Chapter 6: This chapter shows the dynamism of 'ordinary' people in the expression of Blackness. The term 'ordinary' was used to distinguish from the 'elites'. Among the cashiers and unemployed, being Black was understood as currently living

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[9] Remember that elites in inverted commas refers to the people I spoke with.

in poverty and struggling. Among those of the middle class[10] I spoke to, I identified three broad strands: the first strand was second- and third-generation middle class people who defined their Blackness by narrating how their family discussions shaped meanings of Black ontology; the second strand was first-generation middle class people who narrated their Blackness through growing up in poverty; the third strand referred to their individual achievements as part of narrating their Blackness.

Students narrated their parents' occupations as markers of aspiration - they wanted to do better. Those who went to township schools did not question their Blackness. In contrast, for those who went to formerly white schools, their worth was in a permanent state of interrogation. Their multiple folds of Blackness consisted of constant interactions with language, ethnicity, class and political events. For them *multiple consciousness* was not informed by theory, but based on everyday experience.

Chapter 7: The concluding chapter summarises the empirical findings. It interrogates *multiple consciousness* and what it means, both theoretically and empirically. The chapter sits on the shoulders of a giant, W. E. B. Du Bois, by adding to and going beyond his notion of *double consciousness* and what it means to be Black. I argue that Du Bois was a Marxist who wanted to link the abstract to the concrete by seeking political change for Black people. Although I disagree with his version of socialism, his work shows the need for structural change in the process of emancipation.

This dissertation makes an original contribution by focusing on empirical evidence to show that being Black goes beyond Du Bois' *double consciousness*, and entails *multiple consciousness.*

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[10] I use middle class loosely here. In my Master's dissertation, I argued that the term is contested and, depending on people's class position, different meanings are attached to the identity.

Chapter 2

Du Bois, Fanon and Biko: Thinking Blackness

2.1. Introduction

As a Black Marxist, the struggle and emancipation of the working class defines both my intellectual and activist work. Since I reside in South Africa, the liberation of the Black working class from the chains of oppression is important to me: I identify with Black Marxism. The alienation and exploitation of the working class is a global phenomenon. There is, however, a particularity to being Black and working class in a context where structural racism has been the cornerstone of alienation and exploitation. Countries such as South Africa, Brazil and the United States, for example, manifest different trajectories of what it means to be Black. The concern in this chapter, and this dissertation as a whole, is to theoretically expand how the realities of being Black were *constructed* and *reconstructed* in such contexts. As demonstrated in Chapter 7, the political relevance of these realities forms part of my research.

Similar to Africana critical theory, the aim of this chapter is to use the work of Black intellectual activists to demonstrate a dialectical relationship between intellectual work and the struggle for emancipation. Moreover this chapter seeks to trace histories of ideas as a way to locate the making of being Black. Rabaka (2010:20) identifies 'thought and texts of Africana intellectual-activist ancestors as critical theoretical paradigms and radical political points of departure, because so much of their thought is not simply problem-posing but solution-providing where the specific life struggles of persons of African origin and/or descent (or, if I must, 'black people') are concerned'. As a result, their intellectual contribution goes beyond the academic framework. Rabaka (2010:20) argues that 'critical theory cannot be situated within the world of conventional academic disciplines and disciplinary divisions of labour'. Their 'radical thought' is embedded rather in 'revolutionary practice' (Rabaka 2010:20).

Rabaka forms part of the discussion throughout the chapter. Primarily, I tend to agree with most of his arguments. However, as a Black Marxist, I go a step further than Rabaka (2010). The central idea of Black Marxism is a strong call for social change - revolutionary socialism. Revolutionary socialism is a 'revolution in humankind' (Draper 1978:24) which can only be achieved through 'socialism from

below' (see Draper 1978). In other words, 'the emancipation of the working class must be conquered by the working class itself' (Barker 1987:218). Marxism is used to develop, draw lessons from, and find ways to advance the struggle 'within the world' of the working class. Revolutionary theory is drawn from the milieux of working class struggles and is practised when 'we must come to terms with both the possibilities and histories of our own period' (see Barker 1987).

Rabaka's revolutionary practice as an Africana critical theorist emphasises the extraordinary theoretical contribution of Black intellectual activists. However, I argue that drawing on the theoretical contribution of Black intellectuals without locating it in the consciousness of the Black working class can be counterproductive. In other words, theory should not be too far ahead of those it seeks to liberate. It is crucial that the abstract and the concrete reinforce each other. Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrate how the concrete can enhance theory. The reader will notice that this chapter and Chapter 3 are based on theory while Chapters 5 and 6 are grounded in empirical evidence. This chosen style is to illustrate points of convergence and divergence between theory and the concrete in the process of conceptualising Blackness.

Without a clear conception of capitalism, the *construction* of Blackness often gets reduced to daily encounters of oppression and discrimination. To understand the daily experiences of Blackness, capitalism needs to be understood as well. Unlike Rabaka (2010), the aim of this chapter is to analyse debates on Blackness by linking them to Marxist tradition. For the most part, Marxism has been pre-occupied with capitalism, and a 'class struggle which for orthodox Marxists makes the essence of history' (see Robinson 1983). This logic has led most Marxists to 'underestimate a force which did not easily fit into their ideas, and which at the same time was clearly contrasted with the ideals of the class struggle' (Robinson 1983:62). Blackness and its roots are not neatly confined to an understanding of capitalism and the emancipation of the working class. In the struggle for liberation, Marxists need to understand, first, what is meant by Blackness, and second, how capitalism shapes Blackness. Capitalism did not only create classes - racism was an important component in its formation. In fact, structural racism legalised and legitimised a dispossessed race which was and is still defined as non-human.

Over centuries, Black people as the oppressed have been able to collectively mobilise to fight for some reforms. The emancipatory project of Black people remains a battle and a formation of Blackness centuries later.

This chapter draws on the seminal work of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, Frantz Fanon and Stephen Bantu Biko for its theoretical analysis. Their work is fundamental to the theoretical framework of Blackness. These intellectuals and activists base their ideas on the racial character of capitalism. As I illustrate, these scholars were central in 'stretching' Marxism to consider the ontological position of being Black, and their intellectual and activist work still influences some of the current critical debates on race, capitalism and gender. The 2015/2016 South African student protests, for example, have provoked consideration of the meanings attached to being Black in former white universities.

The outline of this chapter is as follows: I give brief biographical histories of Du Bois, Fanon and Biko to demonstrate the link between these authors' intellectual and activist work. The Du Bois section is much longer than those devoted to the other writers because he lived longer and generated an enormous amount of written work. Archival material highlights the fact that he was advisor and teacher to many prominent members of the anti-apartheid movement[11]. The chapter also traces how Du Bois' work influenced Fanon, even though Fanon did not cite him. There is an absence of secondary literature on how Fanon engaged with South African movements although his work permeated Biko's thinking and the thinking of contemporary movements, which have used his ideas to shape tactics.

This chapter examines how these intellectuals and activists defined Blackness, and their proposals of how to achieve Black freedom[12] and, thus, emancipation. As a result, both the Du Bois and Fanon sections give in-depth accounts of these issues. The chapter then deviates slightly by focusing on the 1960s. The rationale of the deviation is to illustrate that this period was crucial in the making of anti-Marxist ideas. The era signifies the bureaucratic nature of the Soviet Union, which became oppressive leading to its eventual decline in the 1980s. This period in the Soviet Union enabled a new wave of politics and reconfigurations. I argue that Biko's rejection of Marxism might be informed by the historical events which occurred in the Soviet Union. There is no evidence that Biko cited Du Bois, but he certainly used Fanon's work to inform his intellectual framing. Biko's section is different from that of Du Bois and Fanon because a new era of politics and consciousness was born.

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[11] This refers to a number of political organisations collectively forming a front.

[12] See Chapter 3 which discusses freedom as a term in detail.

2.2. Introducing Du Bois

> …the most complex theoretician… was William Edward Burghardt Du Bois.
> A social scientist who reluctantly entered politics, Du Bois was preoccupied
> with the relationship between race, class, and democracy throughout his
> long and productive life. He was an intellectual driven by his Calvinist up-
> bringing and deep democratic ideals, who frequently opposed the dominant
> currents of his times. A cultural pluralist and Pan-Africanist who expressed
> 'a New England conscience on a tropical heart', Du Bois embodied the
> tensions and paradoxes within America's cultural fabric (Marable 1986:1).

Du Bois was born on 23 February 1868, five years after the Emancipation
Proclamation 'which began the freeing of American Negro slaves' (Du Bois 1968:6). In
his autobiography, he recalls his birth: it was a year when 'freedmen of the South were
enfranchised'. He was born in Massachusetts, on Church Street in the village of Great
Barrington, the son of Alfred and Mary Du Bois. Alfred was born in Haiti in 1825 and
served in the Union Army for a short period. After leaving the army with 'little money,
few skills, and no job', he met Mary and they got married (Marable 1986). Mary's
parents opposed their marriage. A year after Du Bois' birth, his father left in search of
a permanent job and never returned, leaving Mary depressed and living in poverty.
She had a paralysed leg but worked as a domestic worker to fend for her herself and
her son (Marable 1886:2-3). Du Bois was the first black graduate of his village school,
and later obtained a doctoral degree from Harvard University (Marable 1986:7-11).

Rabaka (2009a:38 and 2010) reflects on Du Bois' complexity:

> For many he represents one of the most critical and contradictory race
> theorists of the twentieth century. Another host argues that he is 'the father
> of Pan-Africanism' and a pioneering architect of anti-colonial theory and
> praxis. For others, such as Cedric Robinson (2000) in *Black Marxism*,
> Du Bois was one of the most sophisticated Marxist theorists in American
> radical history, though 'his work had origins independent of the impulses of
> Western liberal and radical thought (Rabaka 2009a:38).

Du Bois' publishing career spanned seventy years. He wrote on topics dealing with
'race and anti-racism, Pan-Africanism and anti-colonialism, critique of capitalism and

critical Marxism and, most recently, anti-sexism and male-feminism' (Rabaka 2009:38). Rabaka (2009:39) further adds that:

> Du Bois's philosophy of race offers objective interpreters and critics of race and racism an opportunity to analyse a theoretically rich and thoroughgoing series of ruminations on race and racism by a pioneer critical race theorist who almost infinitely harboured a hardnosed scepticism toward the supposed scientific and/or biological bases of race.

At the centre of his theoretical precision, Du Bois advocated for grounded theory: a science which starts from where people are, not from where they wish to be; he started from possibilities and limitations available at that particular period, and through those conditions evaluated methods to advance the struggles confronted by Black people. This dissertation similarly seeks to ignite a South African scholarship of Blackness which is rooted in the present realities and experiences of people. I use Conversation Analysis (see Chapter 4) to expand the Marxist tradition which I argue, has failed to properly situate Blackness both politically and intellectually.

Robinson (1983:185) praises Du Bois as being 'one of the finest historians' of his generation. He produced the most rigorous research and 'systematic development of Black Studies', informed by both his intellectual and activist engagement. At the beginning of his career, he taught at the University of Atlanta. He later became an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), then a writer and later an editor for its propaganda magazine, *The Crisis.* Robinson (1983:186) laments the fact that Du Bois' contribution to scholarship is neglected in the academy. Morris echoes this sad reality in his book, *The Scholar Denied* (2015):

> There is an intriguing, well-kept secret regarding the founding of scientific sociology in America. The first school of scientific sociology in the United States was founded by a black professor in the historically black university in the south. This reality flatly contradicts the accepted wisdom.

In the South African academy, I have yet to encounter academics who rigorously use Du Bois' work to understand the present context. This tragic reality is worth lamenting, especially since his work strongly informed some of the prominent

intellectuals in the African National Congress (ANC). For example, he was Charlotte Maxeke's teacher. Pixley ka Isaka Seme also used some of Du Bois' ideas in his most cited speech 'The Regeneration of Africa' (1906). Drawing from Du Bois' 1897 article, 'The Conservation of Races', Seme argued for a more Pan-Africanist approach, and asserted the limits of so-called scientific measures of race:

> I have chosen to speak to you on this occasion upon 'The Regeneration of Africa'. I am an African, and I set my pride in my race over [and] against a hostile public opinion. Men have tried to compare races on the basis of some equality. In all the works of nature, equality, if by it we mean identity, is an impossible dream! Search the universe! You will find no two units alike. The scientists tell us there are no two cells, no two atoms, identical. Nature has bestowed upon each a peculiar individuality, an exclusive patent from the great giants of the forest to the tenderest blade.[13]

In *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* (1920:32), Du Bois expands on the ideas of Seme by emphasising the importance of Africa to the world:

> Nearly every human empire that has arisen in the world, material and spiritual, has found some of its greatest crises on this continent of Africa, from Greece to Great Britain. As Mommsen says: 'It was through Africa that Christianity became the religion of the world'; it was through Africa that Islam came to play its great role of conqueror and civilizer.

This political and intellectual relationship between Du Bois and Seme signifies a prolonged engagement Du Bois had with numerous activists in South Africa. The following section, through archival evidence, cites the correspondences Du Bois maintained with South African movements and some key political players over the years.

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[13] http://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/regeneration_of_africa_by_Pixley_Seme.pdf.

2.2.1. Du Bois in South Africa

The consistent denial of Du Bois's work persists even in South Africa. What is seldom recognised is that from his earlier career to his later life, Du Bois was enmeshed in the South African struggle as an ally and an intellectual supporter. In 1920 he alerted the world to the Native Land Act: 'A recent law of the Union of South Africa assigns nearly two hundred and fifty million acres of the best natives' land to a million and a half whites and leaves thirty-six million acres of swamp and marsh for four and half million blacks' (1920:33). Archival material shows that he was frequently communicating with some of the prominent members of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) which later became the African National Congress (ANC). Fredrickson (1995:117) for instance, argues that Seme's 1906 speech, 'The Regeneration of Africa' was influenced by Du Bois' article of 1897, 'The Conservation of Races'. Seme was one of the co-founders of the SANNC and the first Black lawyer in South Africa.[14] Like Du Bois, Seme affirmed that Black people have a role to play in the world:

> [A]mong black men of pure African blood [are] those who could repeat the Koran from memory, skilled in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldaic - men great in wisdom and profound knowledge - one professor of philosophy in a celebrated German university; one corresponding member of the French Academy of Sciences, who regularly transmitted to that society meteorological observations, and hydrographical journals and papers on botany and geology; another whom many ages call 'The Wise', whose authority Mahomet himself frequently appealed to in the Koran in support of his own opinion - men of wealth and active benevolence, those whose distinguished talents and reputation have made them famous in the cabinet and in the field, officers of artillery in the great armies of Europe, generals and lieutenant generals in the armies of Peter the Great in Russia and Napoleon in France, presidents of free republics, kings of independent nations which have burst their way to liberty by their own vigor. There are many other Africans who have shown marks of genius and high character sufficient to redeem their race from the charges which I am now considering.

---

[14] He studied law at Jesus College, Oxford. Then he went to Mt. Hermon School in Massachusetts where he received his B.A. degree from Columbia University in the US (Fredrickson 1995: 117).

Du Bois wrote a letter in 1908 to Seme, who was a student at Oxford University at the time, persuading him to join the Niagara Movement. Seme opted for the African Movement instead. But even though Seme disagreed with Du Bois on some tactics, Du Bois remained highly supportive (see Letter 1). According to Jaji (2014:29) Seme was strongly influenced by Du Bois. Jaji notes:

> Seme… attended secondary school in Mount Hermon, Massachusetts, then Columbia University in New York, followed by law school in Britain. Du Bois's distinguished erudition was a model many in Seme's generation aspired to. (2014:30).

Apart from the political interactions, Seme and Du Bois were quite close, often sending each other casual letters such as 'New Year best wishes' (see Letter 2).

Letter 1: From Du Bois to Seme 1908:
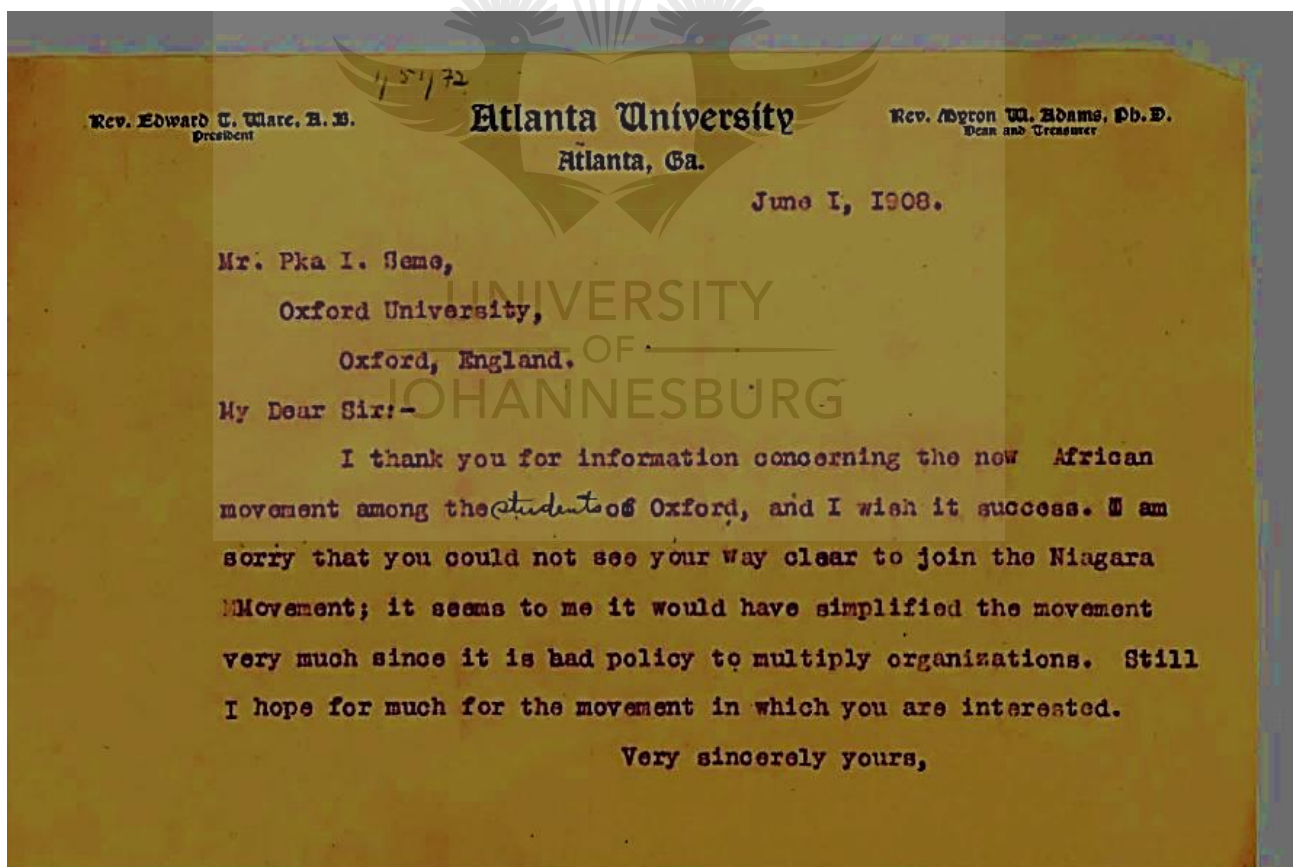
Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to P. Ka Isaka Seme, June 1, 1908.
W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Letter 2: From Seme to Du Bois 1914:

P. KA ISAKA SEME, B.A.,
SOLICITOR.

P.O. Box 4700

TELEPHONE No. 3402.

COURT CHAMBERS,
RISSIK STREET,

JOHANNESBURG, 28th January 1914

C 97/14

Professor W. E. B. du Bois (Crit),

Atlanta University,

Georgia.

Dear Sir,

Please accept my compliments and best wishes for a happy New Year.

Yours faithfully,

Ka I Seme
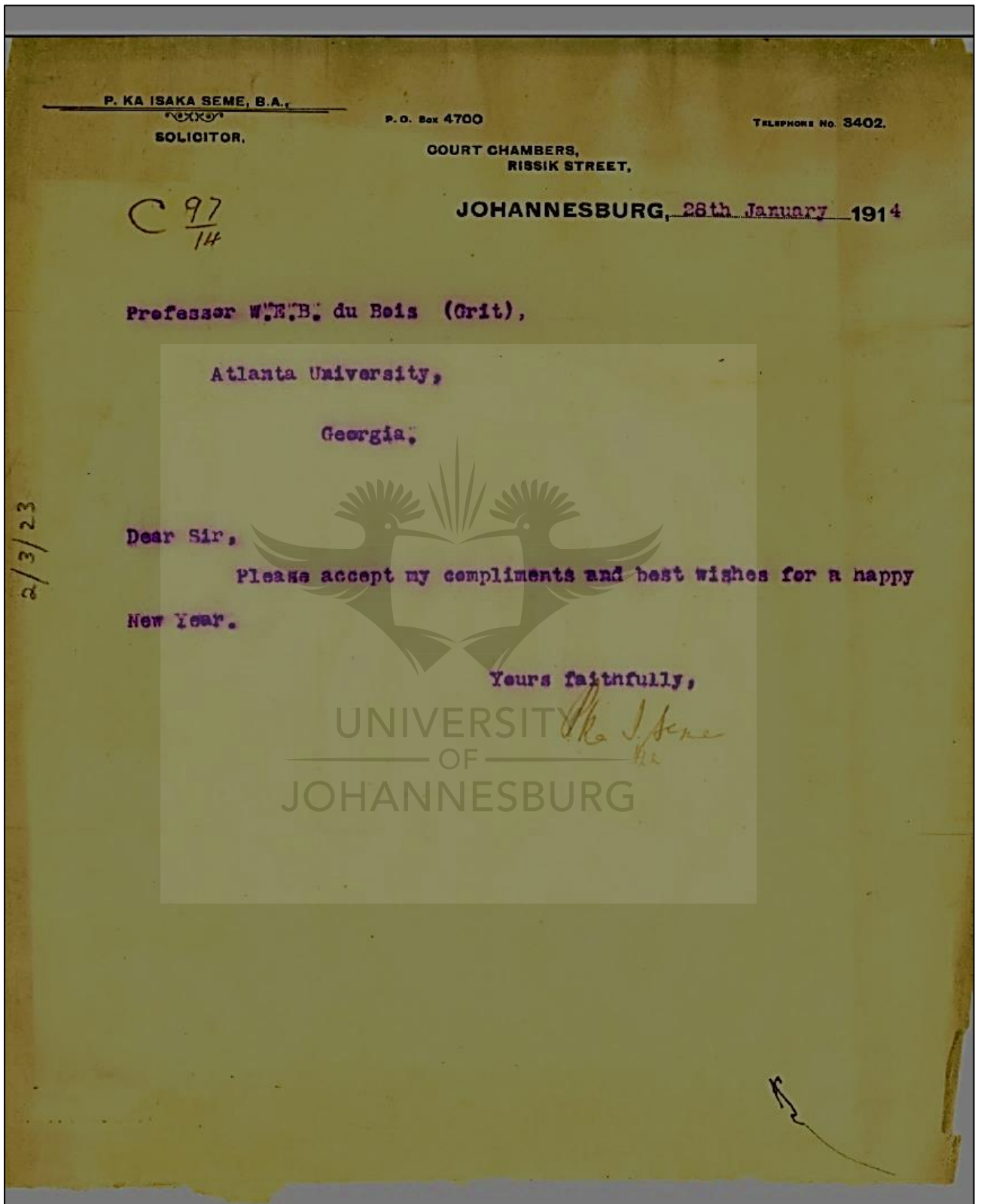
Letter from P. Ka Isaka Seme to W. E. B. Du Bois, January 28, 1914.
W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

The influence of Du Bois within the leadership of the SANNC was not without contradiction. Jaji (2014:30) notes that while Du Bois' ideas had an influence on Seme, some members deviated from them explicitly. For example:

> [To] Seme's cousin [John] Dube, however, Du Bois's characterization of manual work did not ring true. Dube had supported himself with manual labor for years during his studies in Ohio at the Oberlin Preparatory School, and then received practical training for the ministry at Union Theological Seminary. Dube gravitated to Booker T. Washington's view that skilled manual labor was the ideal entry point for full economic participation in modern industrialized modes of production...

Although Du Bois did not strongly influence Dube, he did play a critical role in documenting and publishing the South African struggle. Sol Plaatje, for instance, was clearly influenced by Du Bois. Jaji (2014:58) observes: 'At the end of the prologue to *Native Life [in South Africa]*, Plaatje cites W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls* of *Black Folk*, which may have been a template for both the montage like genre and the political purpose of Plaatje's work.' Yet, I argue, Plaatje cited Du Bois not only for political purposes; Du Bois had played a role as a mentor during Plaatje's publication phase. In Letter 3, Du Bois warns Plaatje about publishers and the costs of book distribution. Du Bois also often communicated with South African activists, asking them to send copies of photographs and information about events so they could be published in *The Crisis Magazine.* John Tengo Jabavu, the founder of the journal *Imvo Zabantsundu* and a staunch supporter within the ANC,[15] argued that Africans with 'civilised' attributes should be permitted to vote, and sent material to Du Bois (see Letter 4).

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[15] See more at http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/first-black-sa-newspaper-imvo-zabantsundu-black-opinion-published-king-williams-town-ten#sthash.28QtUwYq.dpuf.

Letter 3: From Du Bois to Sol Plaatje 1922:
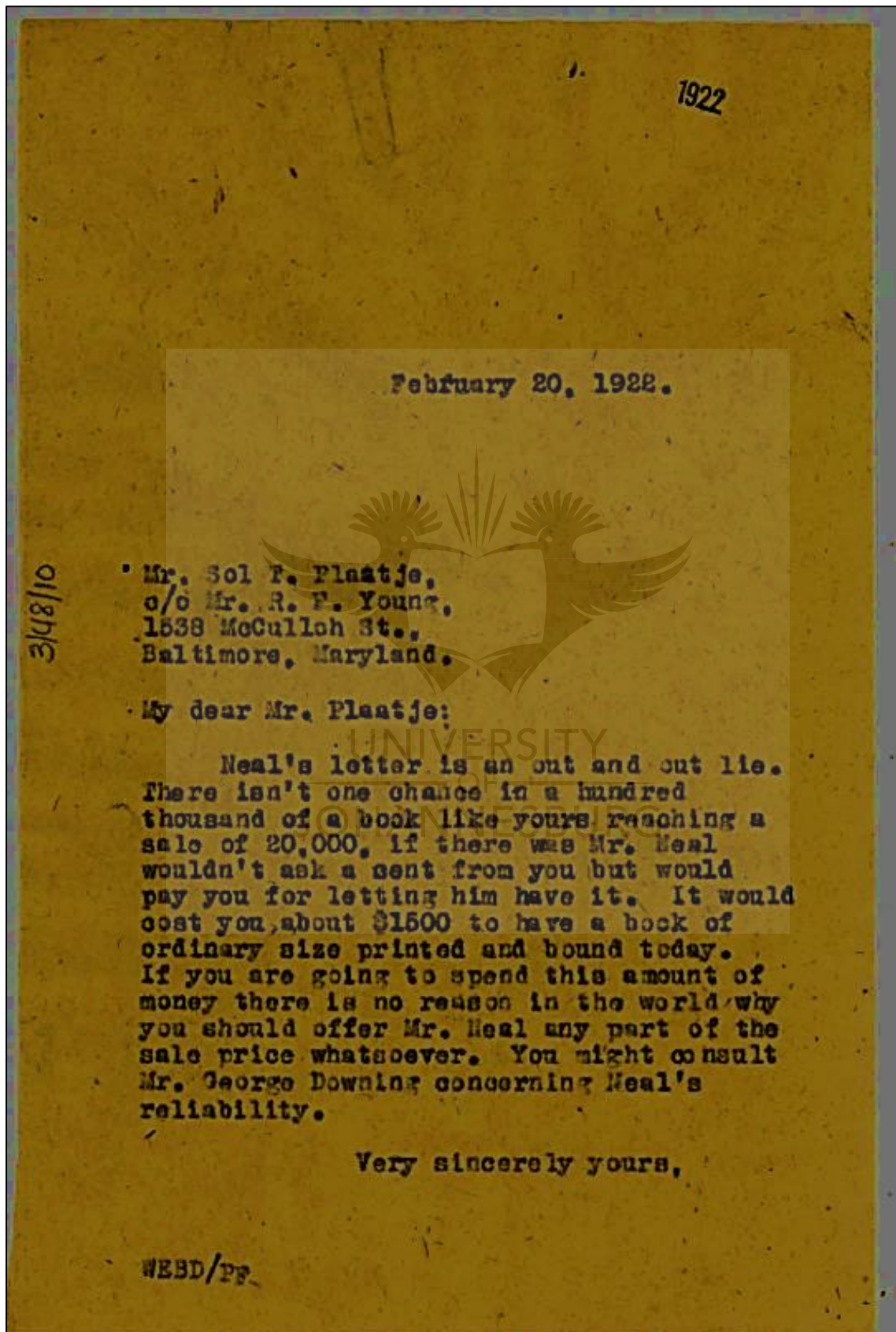
February 20, 1922.

Mr. Sol T. Plaatje,
c/o Mr. R. F. Young,
1538 McCulloh St.,
Baltimore, Maryland.

My dear Mr. Plaatje:

Neal's letter is an out and out lie. There isn't one chance in a hundred thousand of a book like yours reaching a sale of 20,000, if there was Mr. Neal wouldn't ask a cent from you but would pay you for letting him have it. It would cost you about $1500 to have a book of ordinary size printed and bound today. If you are going to spend this amount of money there is no reason in the world why you should offer Mr. Neal any part of the sale price whatsoever. You might consult Mr. George Downing concerning Neal's reliability.

Very sincerely yours,

WEBD/PF

Letter 4: From Du Bois to Jabavu 1928:

Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to Davidson D. T. Jabavu, October 3, 1928.
W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.
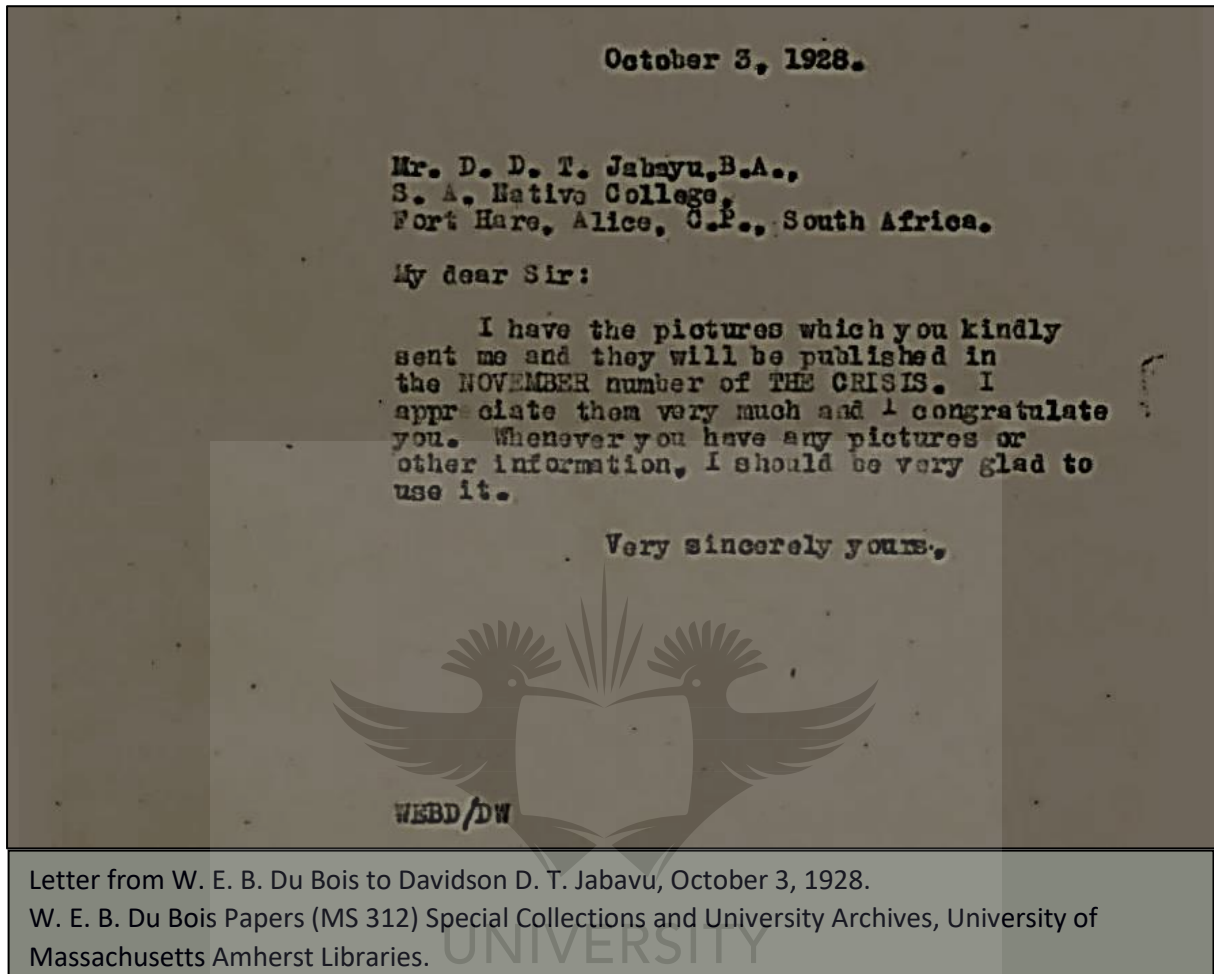
With the information he received from various activists in South Africa and across the continent, Du Bois expanded his mission: he wanted to create an encyclopaedia about Black people. The *Encyclopaedia of* the *Negro* became one of the major projects which Du Bois embarked on and worked on until his death. Due to funding constraints, he died without completing it. The project was meant to be the collaborative work of activists and intellectuals to write Black people's histories which confronted and challenged normative narratives. From South Africa, he invited contributions from activists, scholars and journalists who were allied to the Black struggle (see Letter 5).

Letter 5: From Du Bois to Dube & Co.1937:

Sent to:

John Dube
Z. I. Matthews
D. D. T. Jabavu
D. Mtimkulu
A. Abdurahmann
A. Desmond
A. Lazarus
I. Shapera
Monica Hunter
W. Hoernle
G. P. Lestrade
Krige, J.
W. M. Eiselen
E. G. Malherve
Bernard Huss
Bishop Lea
Edgar H. Brookes
R. E. Phillips
P. R. Kirby
R. F. Hoernle
J. D. Taylor
W. G. Ballinger
Professor Goodwin

Enc. of the negro

April 16, 1937

My dear Sir:

I am enclosing two leaflets concerning the proposed Encyclopaedia of the Negro which was initiated by the Phelps-Stokes Fund and is under the control of a board of directors whose names appear on this sheet. Among the other scholars who have lately given their promise of cooperation are: Professor Malinowski of the University of London, Professor Labouret of Paris, Professor Woelfel of the University of Vienna, Professor Hamburger of Paris, Professor Leo Frobenius of Frankfort.

The financial support of this project is not yet assured but seems probable. I am writing to ask for your sympathy and cooperation, and if we have that I should hope later to take up with you the matter of your collaboration in some of the articles in the Encyclopaedia.

Very sincerely yours,

W. E. B. Du Bois

Dr. John Dube
Ohlange Instituc
Phoenix, Natal
South Africa

Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to John Dube, April 16, 1937.
W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Du Bois was also a teacher. He taught Charlotte Maxeke, the founder of the ANC Women's League (see Jaji 2014). As Maxeke's teacher, Du Bois was influential in ensuring funding for her to travel and pursue her studies. In Letters 6 and 7 below, Du Bois writes to Maxeke seeking clarity about the wrong ticket purchased for her by the ministry school, and whether the cash difference was reimbursed:

Letter 6: From Du Bois to Maxeke 1929:

December 20, 1929.

Mrs. Charlotte Manye Maxeke,
P. O. Box 61,
Boksburg, Transvaal, South Africa.

My dear Charlotte:

I hope this will find you in good health. Mrs. Du Bois joins me in best wishes.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I received from Bishop Gregg. I am sure he is wrong, and I want to answer him, but I want to be sure of the facts. I shall not, of course, mention your name. But is it not true that you had difficulty in getting the money for your return passage, and the passage was bought Third Class without your consent? Of course, I can well understand that after it was bought you may have preferred not to change. But was the difference between that passage and a better passage given to you in cash? Please do not hesitate to tell me the facts of the case and I will protect the source of my information in every way.
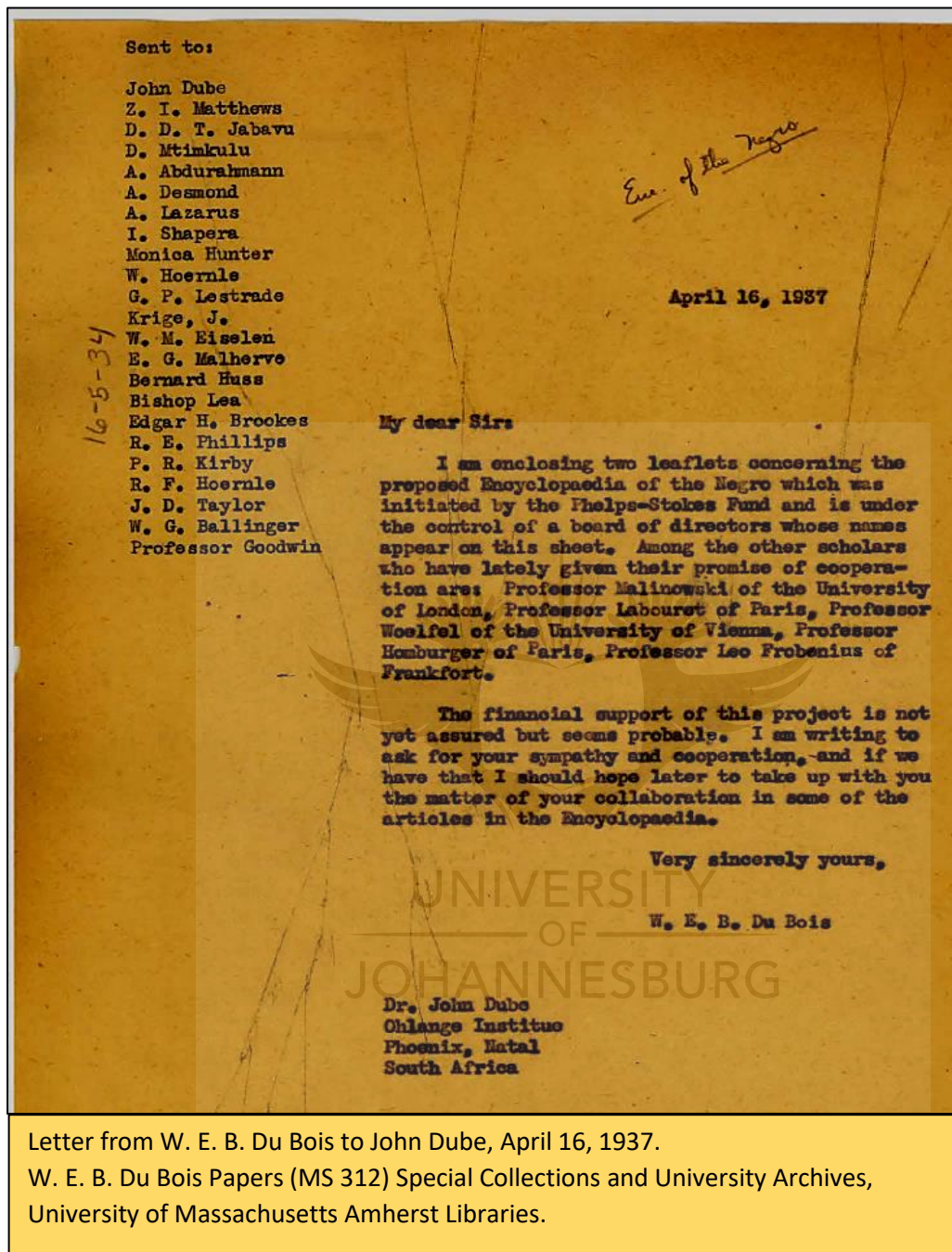
With best wishes.

Very sincerely yours,

WEBB/DW

Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to Charlotte Manye Maxeke, December 20, 1929.
W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries

Letter 7: From Du Bois to Maxeke 1930:

April 23, 1930.

Mrs. Charlotte M. Maxeke,
P. O. Box 1011,
Johannesburg, South Africa.

My dear Charlotte:

I am very glad to hear from you and I
shall follow your wishes to say nothing further
about the matter of the church. I wish,
however, that you would be careful to send
me any facts and newspaper clippings and pictures
you can get hold of. I shall be very careful
not to reveal their source. I have made two
or three white friends from South Africa. They
all speak very enthusiastically of your work.

I am sending you herewith twelve sample copies
of the Crisis for distribution.

Very sincerely yours,
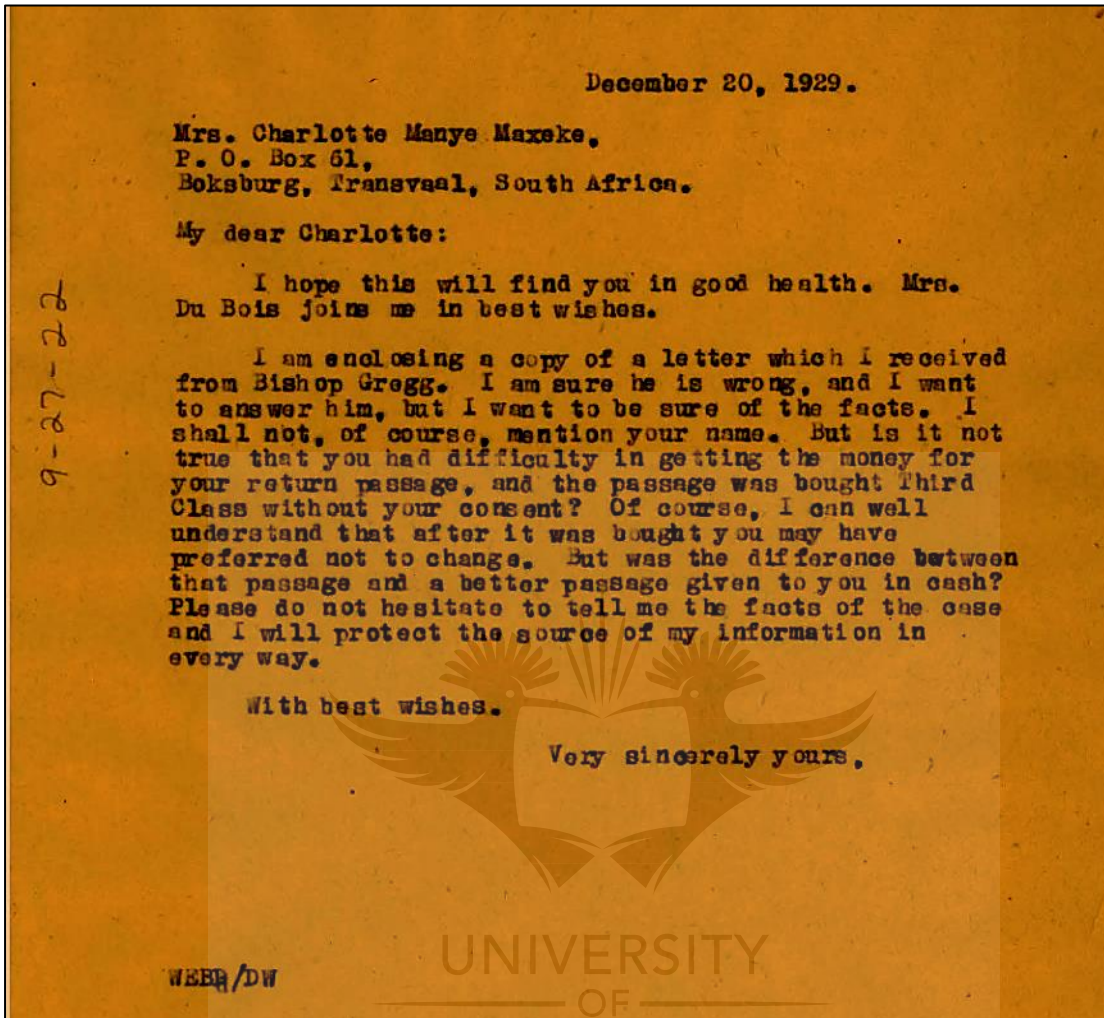
WEBD/DW
Encl. herewith

Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to Charlotte Manye Maxeke, April, 1930.
W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives,
University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Du Bois was also an advisor to various political organisations active in the fight for liberation in South Africa. The Industrial & Commercial Workers Union of Africa (ICUA), for example, shared its vision for freedom as a trade union with Du Bois (see Letter 8):

Letter 8: From ICUA to Du Bois 1937:

INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL
WORKERS UNION OF AFRICA.

Established January 1919

Branches throughout the
Union of South Africa and
South-West Protectorate

All Correspondence to be
addressed to the Secretary.

Official Organ: "THE WORKERS HERALD."

· HEAD OFFICE
16. MARKET STREET, JOHANNESBURG.

PHONE NO. 1062 CENTRAL
TELEGRAPH ADDRESS "ISEEYOU". JOHANNESBURG.

NATIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BUREAU.
16th May, 1927.

Dr W.E.Du Bois,
   The Crisis,
     69 Fifth Avenue,
      NEW YORK. N.Y.

Mr dear Sir,

Your letter of the 13th April, 1927, arrived in our Office
in the absence of Mr Clements Kadalie, the National Secretary of this
Union, who sailed yesterday from Cape Town to attend the International
Labour Conference at Geneva. Among his plans, he is to reach the United
States of America.

I am at present acting in his place and I have taken much
interest in your letter. Mr Kadalie and myself have taken interest in
the American papers, irrespective of their political opinions. It is
very unfortunate that your kind letter arrived only a minute late for
Mr Kadalie to collect the Photos as many as he could. I have no doubt,
that you will meet him there in the near future.

I am sending your letter to Mr Kadalie in England and I
have no doubt, he will be able to deliver our message that we would like
the American Negro to know about the African races in Africa. Your name
has been well read in South Africa, and as far as we are concerned, we
are looking upon the American Negro as our brothers in the field. And
we only hope and trust that one day through God's mysterious hand the
members of the African races will be able to live together happily as
never before and that the dividing seas shall never affect the desired
mutual spirit that must exist between us. The life of your African
Brothers in Africa can not be described in the letter of this kind.
Parliament has taken steps against our Organisations.Our fate is indis-
cribable.

I enclose my photo and my little biography which was
published by one of the papers also an interview that I once gave last
year to one of the Representatives of the Press. Unfortunately I can
not lay my hand on Keable 'Mote's photo. We have five Bills in the House
of Assembly all directed against our welfare.

"Our desire is that our brothers overseas should interest
themselves with our sufferings in South Africa. We have men here in the
European owned farms who are no better than slaves. The position of our
Native Affairs Officials is that of uncrowned Kings.
                                                     They/

Letter to W. E. B. Du Bois from the Industrial & Commercial Workers Union of Africa, April 13, 1927.
W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives, University of
Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL WORKERS UNION OF AFRICA.

Established January 1919

Branches throughout the Union of South Africa and South-West Protectorate

All Correspondence to be addressed to the Secretary.

· HEAD OFFICE

16. MARKET STREET, JOHANNESBURG.

PHONE NO. 1062 CENTRAL

TELEGRAPH ADDRESS "ISEEYOU", JOHANNESBURG.

NATIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BUREAU.

Official Organ: "THE WORKERS HERALD."

(2)

They hold what is known as absolute power. This decision is not appealable. Most of the Officials hold not high education except that their positions', qualifications is to speak our Native languages.

Most of our persecutors are those who speak our language. When simple Officials known as Sub-Native Commissioners have powers that can not be questioned in any appeal Court in a civilised country, What must be the position ? To show how much high is the tide of oppression a black man, Medical Practitioner qualified in Scotland caused a sensation after practising for many years; when, the European staff of Nurses refused to attend to his patients and were supported by the members of the Hospital Board, but in the absence of the legal authority the Government advised the nurses to return to work pending legislation to protect them.

Only recently our Native families were forced by a proclamation to remove from the whole Urban Area of Johannesburg to go any where. This proclamation was challenged by the Indian Landlords and was declared unreasonable to the joy of our men. There are two kinds of established Courts of Justice in South Africa, the Native Administration Courts and the Ordinary Courts of the land. If the Native is charged in the Native Court he has no hope. As the decision of this Court is not appealable.

There have been laws in the different parts of South Africa which provide for the relief of certain deserving natives from the operation of Native Law. Making it possible for the native to work his position as high as he can. But under the new Bill in the House of Assembly, these laws are to be repealed. So we have to be forced back to the Administration of the Native Law irrespective of our qualification. Our earnings will not allow any native man to send his children to high schools with very few exceptions.

We have the Mining Industry in South Africa and I give you the pamphlet which speaks for itself. In a word I would say - If the slaves were emancipated in America - we who live in Africa have been driven to slavery.

Yours very sincerely,

AW Geo Champion

ACTING NATIONAL SECRETARY.

Encls.

AWGC/BG.

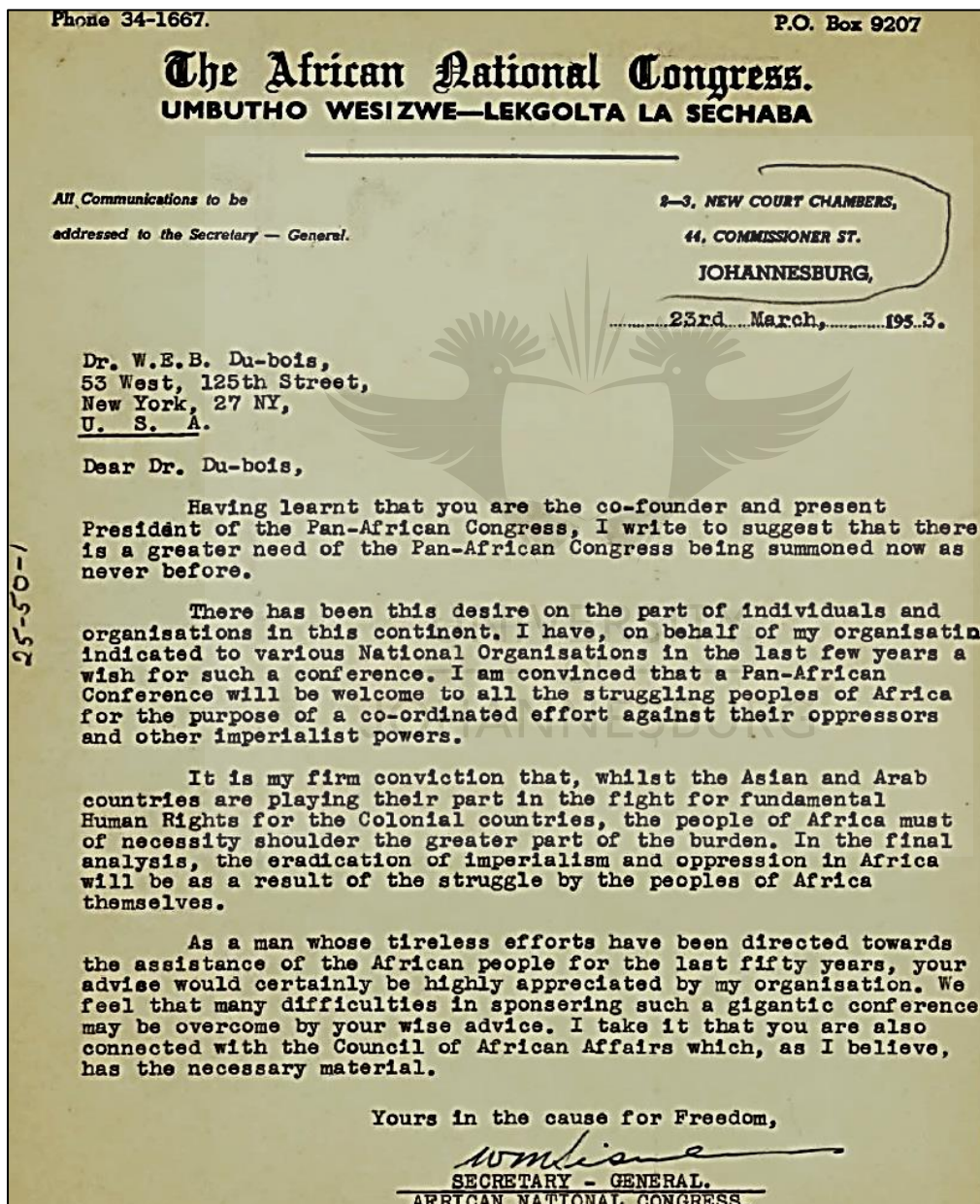Page two of a letter to W. E. B. Du Bois from the Industrial & Commercial Workers Union of Africa, April 13, 1927.
W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Du Bois was one of the main organisers for the Pan-African Congress. He even drafted the manifesto for the Congress.[16] The ANC wrote a letter to Du Bois welcoming his initiative in organising the Pan African Congress (see Letter 9):

Letter 9: From the ANC to Du Bois 1953:

Phone 34-1667.   P.O. Box 9207

The African National Congress.
UMBUTHO WESIZWE—LEKGOLTA LA SECHABA

All Communications to be
addressed to the Secretary — General.

2—3, NEW COURT CHAMBERS,
44, COMMISSIONER ST.
JOHANNESBURG,

23rd March, 1953.

Dr. W.E.B. Du-bois,
53 West, 125th Street,
New York, 27 NY,
U. S. A.

Dear Dr. Du-bois,

Having learnt that you are the co-founder and present President of the Pan-African Congress, I write to suggest that there is a greater need of the Pan-African Congress being summoned now as never before.

There has been this desire on the part of individuals and organisations in this continent. I have, on behalf of my organisation indicated to various National Organisations in the last few years a wish for such a conference. I am convinced that a Pan-African Conference will be welcome to all the struggling peoples of Africa for the purpose of a co-ordinated effort against their oppressors and other imperialist powers.

It is my firm conviction that, whilst the Asian and Arab countries are playing their part in the fight for fundamental Human Rights for the Colonial countries, the people of Africa must of necessity shoulder the greater part of the burden. In the final analysis, the eradication of imperialism and oppression in Africa will be as a result of the struggle by the peoples of Africa themselves.

As a man whose tireless efforts have been directed towards the assistance of the African people for the last fifty years, your advise would certainly be highly appreciated by my organisation. We feel that many difficulties in sponsering such a gigantic conference may be overcome by your wise advice. I take it that you are also connected with the Council of African Affairs which, as I believe, has the necessary material.

Yours in the cause for Freedom,

SECRETARY - GENERAL.
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

Letter from African National Congress to W. E. B. Du Bois, March 23, 1953
W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives,
University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

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[16] See W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. *The early beginnings of the Pan-African movement*, June 20, 1958

Du Bois regularly read and wrote about South Africa.[17] His intellectual and activist work was not only based on writing about Blackness in the US; he understood that the fight for Black freedom needed to happen across the globe. The Black freedom he proposed was fought on two levels: intellectually and in practice. Intellectually, by documenting Black histories and teaching activists; and in practice, by advising movements on tactics and by coordinating organisations through the Pan-African Congress which brought various African leaders together to discuss ideas.

The next section looks at how Du Bois theorised Blackness. I argue that his conception of Blackness began with an argument of *double consciousness,* and that he later evolved the term and linked it to the foundation of capitalism.

2.2.2. Du Bois on Double Consciousness and Blackness

The 'denied' scholar Du Bois, throughout his life, was concerned with the dialectic of oppression and emancipation. Black people were at the centre of this dialectic. His first article which emerged from his doctoral dissertation questions the contradictions of civilisations which on one level seek to give freedom, yet at the same time continue to de-humanise Black people. His argument on the contradictory nature of civilisation[18] was framed around Jefferson Davis, a soldier who became a national hero after a war which killed thousands of Indians in a US global mission of giving freedom to other countries. Du Bois notes that civilisation has created a notion of individualism which can normalise Davis as a hero after murdering people. The idea of freedom is codified around the concept of individualism. This freedom does not give a path to self-determination - it is dictated by others. As a result, people can never achieve genuine liberty:

> I wish to consider not the man, but the type of civilisation which his life
> represented: its foundation is the idea of the Strong Man - Individualism
> coupled with the rule of might - and it is this idea that has made logic of
> even modern history ... It made a naturally brave and generous man,
> Jefferson Davis - now advancing civilisation by murdering Indians...and

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[17] See W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. Unidentified speech fragment on South Africa, 1955; and New Africa volume 7, number 3, December, 1948.
[18] Du Bois was referring to the Western notion of civilisation which has defined the global South as uncivilised.

finally, as the crowning absurdity, the peculiar champion of a people [that] fight to be free in order that another people should not be free. Whenever this idea has for a moment escaped from the individual realm, it has found even more secure foothold in the policy and philosophy of the state (Du Bois 1890:17).

The theme of the contradictory nature of civilisation runs throughout his work. He asserts that the central principle of this type of enlightenment enforces superiority of one race over another. In the end, the inferior race becomes ruined. This brutalising of one race by another is legitimised as 'civilisation'. Civilisation also creates other forms of paradoxes. A Black person 'met civilisation and was crushed by it' (Du Bois 1890:18).

The contradictory nature of civilisation not only crushed Black people, but, Du Bois argues, also gave Blackness two embodiments. Black people could either be submissive or rebel. The contradiction is always dialectical in this relation which shapes Blackness. It is the first time Du Bois (1890:19) alludes to the two-ness of Blackness. The two-ness is rooted in the contradiction of civilisation. He looked at:

...the Negro[19] as the peculiar embodiment of the idea of Personal Submission: either, alone, tends to an abnormal development – towards Despotism on the one hand which the world [has] just cause to fear, and yet covertly admires. Or toward slavery on the other which the world despises and which, yet, is not wholly despicable.

Du Bois expands this two-ness in the nature of Blackness which co-exists within civilisation. I argue that if civilisation was not based on brutalising and enslaving Black people, Blackness would not have to deal with this two-ness. The two-ness, as Du Bois

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[19] Note that when Du Bois refers to Negro he uses capital 'N'. He never justifies why he chooses to do this. However, I argue that he wanted to humanise the Negro people. He wanted to centre Negro people as an important part of history even though they are 'crushed' by civilisation. Du Bois believed that Negro people are the primary agents in determining their freedom. I see the capital 'N' as confirmation of the emancipatory nature possible for Negro people. He later uses black instead of Negro, which in my reading of his work is synonymous. However, when he uses black it is without capital letters. I argue that black was a new term for him. Even though Black played a significant role as Negro, he still conflated the usage of these terms. I use capital 'B' when referring to Black people to emphasise the historical importance of the term and to help bring the human back to Black.

notes, is a fight to either remain oppressed or to fight the system which denies one's humanity. In this sense, the two-ness of Blackness not only explicitly shows the contradiction of civilisation, but also implicitly exposes the internal turmoil Black people have to undergo in finding their humanity. In the 'The Conservation of Races' (1897), Du Bois affirms that civilisation has brought race to the fore. As a result, Black people can never reconcile with the fact that one's destiny, status and abilities can be determined by one's race:

> The American Negro has always felt an intense personal interest in discussions as to the origins and destinies of races: primarily because back of most discussions of race with which he is familiar, have lurked certain assumptions as to his natural abilities, as to his political, intellectual and moral status, which he felt were wrong. (1897:20)

According to Du Bois, this perplexity with which Black people experience race is understandable because even scholars of race cannot reach consensus on what constitutes race. Ideas on race and its criteria are often contradictory and proven false. Racial categories are typically based on predominant scientific thinking at any given time:

> Many criteria of race differences have in the past been proposed, as colour, hair, cranial measurement and language...Unfortunately for scientists, however, these criteria of race are most exasperatingly intermingled…While these subtle forces have general [sic] followed the natural cleave of common blood, descent and physical peculiarities, they have at other times swept and ignored these. At all times, however, they have divided human beings into races, which, while they perhaps transcend scientific definition, nevertheless, are clearly defined to the eye of the Historian and Sociologist (1897:21).

Even though Du Bois states that racial criteria are not solid science, he strongly argues that 'He who ignores or seeks to override the race idea in human history ignores and overrides the central thought of all history' (Du Bois 1897:21). Race has become important as it has constrained Black people's abilities to showcase a fundamental role they can play in civilisation. The 'message' Black people have for the world has been muted as they have found themselves brutalised by civilisation instead. Rabaka

(2010:113) and I have a similar reading of Du Bois' 'The Conservation of Races', namely that races 'simultaneously deconstruct and reconstruct' (Rabaka 2010:113). Rabaka argues that 'The Conservation of Races' is an almost ideal essay to engage with Du Bois's sociology of race because he maintained and routinely revised many of the views he espoused here throughout his career. In this sense, 'The Conservation of Races' not only serves contemporary critical race theorists as an entry to Du Bois' sociology of race, but it apparently served a similar function for Du Bois himself as well' (2010:114).

I argue that the article not only allowed Du Bois to enter the debate on race, but was his first attempt at theorising Blackness and *double consciousness*. The brutal ideas of civilisation have created two-ness of Blackness, and Black people have to choose which destiny to follow. He advocates for Black people to take control of their destiny: 'not absorption by white American[s]' (Du Bois 1897:23). The two-ness results in either being submissive or wanting to rebel. In 'The Conservation of Races'*,* he pushes for the militant side of Blackness to prevail. The militant side of the two-ness of Blackness needs to create 'Negro colleges, Negro newspapers, Negro business organisations, a Negro school of literature and art, and an intellectual clearing house, for all these products of the Negro mind, which we call a Negro Academy' (Du Bois 1897:25). This militant side was always informed by the firmly held belief that Black people can contribute to civilisation and humanity. The article therefore goes beyond ideas of race, to put forward propositions for a kind of 'rebellion Blackness'.

In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Du Bois articulates more clearly that race has positioned Black people as a 'problem' in the twentieth century. He narrates this 'problem', first, through personal encounters:

Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly reframing. All, nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, how does it feel to be a problem? they say I know an excellent coloured man… (Du Bois 1903:7).

Rabaka affirms that:

> Du Bois's contributions to the sociology of race in *The Souls of Black Folk* revolve around the dilemmas and dualities or, rather, the conundrums and complexities of what it means to be black in a white world - what was commonly called at the turn of the twentieth century, the 'Negro Problem' (2010:133).

Although I argue that Du Bois was demonstrating the complexities of being Black, Rabaka does not expand on this 'conundrum' of Blackness and instead interprets Du Bois' work through a dialectic between these binaries - Black and white. He notes:

> *The Souls of Black Folk* should be seen as part of his ever evolving and often intricate answer or, rather, his synoptic solution to what could be called the 'White Problem' or, rather, the 'Problem of white folk' - that is, whites' problematic, (hyper)racial colonial approach to black lifeworlds and black life struggles. (Rabaka 2010:138)

I, on the other hand, argue that in his construction of being a 'problem' as a Black person, Du Bois explored how civilisation historically deprived Black people of available opportunities. By only focusing on the binary between Black and white, it becomes difficult to unpack how Du Bois conceptualised Blackness, especially how it manifests itself in structural racism and how to fight that. In Du Bois' analysis, I argue that he was always advocating for Black militancy. Under the present configuration of civilisation – modern capitalism - Black people are withheld from self-determination. He noted that Black people have to wrestle for those 'dazzling opportunities' which are reserved for the *other*[20] race:

> [F]or the worlds I longed for, and all their dazzling opportunities, were theirs, not mine. But they should not keep these prizes, I said; some, all, I would wrestle from them. (Du Bois 1903:8)

In the fight to be included in order to contribute to civilisation and humanity, Blackness once again finds itself torn. Black people have to carry two embodiments

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[20] I use *other* to emphasise white supremacy which constructed Black people as different. *Other* therefore emphasises the *other* world prohibited from Black people.

which are 'peculiar' to their nature. Blackness is torn apart by an internal turmoil - the two-ness of being Black *and* American, a *double consciousness*:

> [I]t is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, - an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Du Bois 1903:9).

This notion of *double consciousness* is the quotation most cited from Du Bois' scholarship. The term has evoked controversy. Most scholarship has been struggling to comprehend what Du Bois meant when he asserted that Blackness constitutes a two-ness which is the consciousness of being Black and of being American. 'What, precisely,was Du Bois' concept of double consciousness?' asks Allen Jr. (2003:25). In his attempt to answer this haunting question, he argues that the term is rooted in Du Bois' conflicting Black and white ideals and his need to accomplish them (2003:32). He further argues that these different ideals have 'moral authority', as *double consciousness* is profoundly concerned with 'the ability of black people to hold ideals' (2003:32).

I strongly disagree with Allen Jr. on the question of 'moral authority'. When one reads the inception phase of the two-ness of Blackness, Du Bois first and foremost locates *double consciousness* in a civilisation which is based on individualism and the brutalisation of Black people. I argue that Du Bois' conception of civilisation is not based on morals; rather he is pointing to the fact that Blacks are disposed of in that system. Du Bois conceptually highlights that the creation of civilisation lacks 'moral authority' when it comes to Black people. As a result, Du Bois was against a particular civilisation which was based on individualism and brutality, and sought a world system which included and gave people equal freedom. But, since this reality was impossible, Black people were left with two choices: to be submissive or to resist. He advocated for the latter, and education became fundamental in that struggle. He called for the fostering of the 'Talented Tenth', a group of educated Black people who would use their education to drive the struggle and assist the Black collective to fight for emancipation. He envisaged the Talented Tenth as a selfless cadre who had an opportunity to study, were part of the community, and a force which fights together with

the people. The notion of a Talented Tenth can be partly construed as middle class aspiration, especially if it is not contextualised. When, however, one sees it in a context where there were a limited number of educated Black people, education then forms part of an alternative way to better the collective. I argue that Du Bois (1903) saw education as a form of Black revolt.

Du Bois framed *double consciousness* in two ways. First, he used it to illustrate that civilisation is contradictory and inherently limited. Second, he showed that these limited options have forced Black people, who are already defined as a problem, to wrestle with a limited number of opportunities. Reforms institutionalised by civilisation were not sufficient to emancipate Black people. Thus the struggle needed to continue. In such circumstances, being Black was equivalent to being a 'problem', and being American was recognised as human. In a context of civilisation, the antagonistic relation of being Black and American has forced Blackness to fight for their human status.

Lyubanksy and Eidelson (2005:3) argue that the origins of *double consciousness* are located in a 'repressive culture'. I argue that the term culture negates Du Bois ideas about civilisation. Culture is one element, but overall Du Bois was referring to systematic structures which have produced an ideology of individualism. This ideology has enabled a country to structurally manufacture a system which murders and enslaves people. This structural, systematic order became the roots of racism. In other words, Black people in such a system are faced with 'baffling and contradictory' realities (Rabaka 2003b:401). *Double consciousness* is an irreconcilable reality which is perpetuated by civilisation that fails to recognise Blackness. Ciccariello-Maher (2009:378) argues that *double consciousness* has to be read from an understanding of the *veil*. He defines the *veil* as 'formal and informal racialisation and segregation'. *Double consciousness* 'permeates' the *veil*. *Double consciousness* is not a stand-alone concept - it is embedded in the structure which has legitimised and legalised the alienation of Black people.

Double consciousness also encapsulates a dialectic between Black oppression and emancipation. Du Bois noted that some reforms might occur in the system, but reminded the reader that reform will not give Black people freedom:

> …the freedman has not yet found his promised land. Whatever good may
> have come in these years of change, the shadow of a deep disappointment

rests upon the Negro people - a disappointment all the more bitter because the unattained ideal was unbounded save by the simple ignorance of a lowly people (1903:11).

He noted that even when Black people succeeded in their fight for the right to vote, it would only provide partial freedom because the system of civilisation is incapable of resolving the *construction* of being Black. The material conditions for Black people are structurally cemented to evoke self-questioning and self-doubt for Blackness: '…we are diseased and dying, cried the dark hosts; we cannot write, our voting is vain…' (Du Bois 1903:13). Du Bois acknowledged that voting as a reform resulted in change, but the changes still lock Blackness into two-ness. This trap exists because the reforms are incapable of changing the logic of civilisation which alienates Blackness from humanity:

[A] Negro must live… as a Negro and as an American… The worlds within and without the Veil of Color are changing, and changing rapidly, but not at the same rate, not in the same way; and this must produce a peculiar wrenching of the soul, a peculiar sense of doubt and bewilderment. Such a double life, with double thoughts, double duties, and double social classes, must give rise to double words and double ideals, and tempt the mind to pretence or revolt, hypocrisy or radicalism. (Du Bois 1903:143)

Du Bois advocated that the militant side of two-ness could assure some freedom, and that this could be partly achieved through education which would enable Black people to change their material conditions. Furthermore, Du Bois conceived education as a gateway for Black people to be recognised and be perceived as significant role players in the world. Thus, education was envisioned as a part of the process of making Black people see themselves as human and self-developed:

The function of the Negro college, then, is clear: it must maintain the standards of popular education, it must seek the social regeneration of the Negro, and it must help in the solution of problems of race contact and cooperation. And finally, beyond all this, it must develop men.[21] Above our

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[21] 'Men' in this context refers to a people.

modern socialism, and out of the worship of the mass, must persist and evolve that higher individualism which the centres of culture protect; there must come a loftier respect for the sovereign human soul that seeks to know itself and the world about it; that seeks a freedom for expansion and self-development; that will love and hate and labor in its own way, untrammelled alike by old and new (Du Bois 1903:80).

In a world where freedom and humanity are located with the *other* race, Blackness needs to find ways to claim its own humanity. *Double consciousness* is a process of either choosing submissiveness or rebellion. This process operates in a contradictory manner similar to the system which has created Blackness. Du Bois advocated for Black people to choose the rebellion side of the two-ness even though it is constrained by the structural system in which Black people find themselves.

2.2.3. Du Bois' Shifting Politics

After the *Souls of the Black Folk,* the term *double consciousness* no longer appears in Du Bois' writings. Allen Jr. (2002b:21) argues that the reason Du Bois 'dropped' the concept from his later work is that it became 'apparent that no one but Du Bois seems to have experienced 'double consciousness''. Allen Jr. (2002b:25) also notes that there was no 'logic' to the concept and that it was not empirically verifiable. He asserts that it was 'an intellectual indulgence at worst' (2002b:29). However, I suggest that these critiques are unwarranted. I acknowledge that Du Bois did not use the term after 1903; however, he continued to use analogies throughout his work which referred to the two-ness, or the doubleness of Blackness in a contradictory system. I concur with Reed (1997:97-8) who asserts that Du Bois shifted from the term, but that it would be 'blindness' to remove the term from its historical roots. It would disarticulate the importance of *double consciousness* from its meaning and ideas; the term was a reflection of its context. Even though Du Bois does not use the term in his later writings, it found expression throughout his work.

Another clue as to why *double consciousness* largely disappeared from Du Bois' work after *The Souls of Black Folk* is suggested by the fact that he joined the Socialist Party in 1911. Although he resigned from the party in 1912, and re-joined again in 1961, it demonstrated Du Bois' shifting political ideas. His ideas of militancy and the barriers which constrained Black people were changing as he encountered

new sets of political ideas and questions. He affirmed that 'for the next twenty years', following his 1912 resignation,

> I tried to develop a political way of life for myself and my people. I attacked the Democrats and Republicans for monopoly and disenfranchisement of Negroes; I attacked the Socialists for trying to segregate Southern Negro members … (Du Bois 1961:74).

Indeed, his politics shifted after *The Souls of Black Folk*. The most apparent change was his position on Africa. Although he mentioned Africa in his previous work, in *The Negro* (1915) publication, he was more precise about the need to incorporate Africa into the history of Black people. Again, using the two-ness analogy, he described Africa as the 'most romantic and the most tragic of the continents' (1915:5). He argued that in Europe, Africa is seen as the 'Dark Continent' and a 'land of contrasts.' But he disrupted this assertion by stating that one cannot 'write universal history and leave out Africa' (Du Bois 1915:5). 'Africa is the land of the Blacks.'[22]

He noted that every single Black person across the globe is familiar with Africa which represents their ancestry and origins, and is the place from which most Black slaves originated. Europeans and the modern world construct Africa as backwards in order to reconcile with the brutality of this history. 'Even though there is enough evidence that Africa was once four centuries ahead of Europe [as a] civilisation' (Du Bois 1915:6), the modern world needs to mark Africa as inferior. In doing so, it can justify the rationale that Black people remain a predicament in their civilisation (1915:7).

The modern world has gone to extremes to find the so-called 'ugliest' Black person from Africa to demonstrate their point, but failed. Du Bois argued their attempts have been faced with contradictions, since the 'typical Negro is a rare variety even among Negroes' (1915:15). Black people, whom Du Bois defined as dark people from the African continent, are varied, 'not fixed', and the contradiction facing the modern world is their permanent - yet always unsuccessful - search for a fixed Black person.

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[22] Here he uses the term Black rather than Negro, and I have noted that Black and Negro in my reading have the same meaning in Du Bois' work.

Du Bois' Pan-African position illustrated a sophisticated view of the world. He understood that Africa is central in the development of the world and the civilisation rationale ignores this fact. There are continuous attempts to complete the logic of civilisation founded in structural racism, but this further exposes gaps within the structure; attempts to solidify the idea that Black people are inferior remain incomplete. Black people through resistance have exposed the uneven and contradictory nature of civilisation embedded in racism.

The second shift appears in his book, *The Gift of Black Folk* (1924). This book was more concerned with Black 'labor, unskilled and to some extent skilled' compared to his earlier work which motivated Black people to get their education, and inversely placed importance on the role of the Black middle class in the struggle. In *The Gift of Black Folk,* he turned his focus on the Black working class and their role in bringing democracy to the world. Here, he noted that the 'Union' would not have existed without the active 'participation' of Black people in the civil war. Black people are therefore a 'central thread of American history' (1924:133). The role of the Black working class as soldiers and doing menial work was essential in the expansion of civilisation which he later conceptualised as capitalism.

He moreover asserted that Black people were the ones who 'raised a vision of democracy'. Democracy, he affirmed, was neither envisioned by Americans nor Europeans; it was Black people who rebelled to obtain some liberties and pushed the modern world to implement democracy (1924:135-8). It was the struggle in which Black people engaged for economic and social privileges which caused civilisation to adopt democracy:

> It is usually assumed in really American history that whatever the Negro has done for America has been passive and unintelligent, that he accompanied the explorers as a beast of burden and accomplished whatever he did by sheer accident; that he labored because he was driven to labor and fought because he was made to fight. This is not true. (Du Bois 1924:138)

Du Bois argued that the modern world would not have considered freeing the slaves if Black people did not fight (1924:138). As a result, democracy and its creation cannot be fathomed without thinking about Black struggles. According to Du Bois, Black people forced the modern world to face its contradictions and reveal to it a new world

order (1924:186). Freedom and citizenship in a democratic order are synonymous with the Black struggle.

In this debate, Du Bois illustrated that Black people were the agents of their freedom. Even though democracy is by definition limited, Black people were able to change the discourse, for instance around the struggle against slavery. Again, the dialectic of oppression and emancipation is firmly grounded in his articulation of the role Black people played in bringing about democracy.

2.2.4. Du Bois and Capitalism

In his 1935 book, *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880*, Du Bois reminded readers that '[s]laves were not considered men. They had no right of petition' (1935:10). Locating his analysis within the binaries of Black and white, Rabaka argues that the book shows:

> Someday, someway, and somehow white America and the wider world must come to or be brought to the realization that black folk are not racial real estate or pieces of white people's property, neither during their enslavement nor post-Emancipation period, but rather African Americans, past and present, are humble human beings who have long expressed their autonomous human agency and capacity for human creativity, both of which have undeniably contributed to the United States' history, culture, society, and conception of democracy. (Rabaka 2010:160)

I, however, argue that *Black Reconstruction* shows a clear radical political shift in Du Bois' ideas. He moves beyond a description of democracy, decisively links the rise of structural racism to capitalism, and shows the contradiction in capitalism. The contradiction is defined in a manner similar to Ticktin (2011:505): a contradiction in Marxism 'involves an entity that contains two poles in a process of movement that interact and interpenetrate one another'. Du Bois understood the emergence of slavery in relation to the development of capitalism. The growth of the cotton plantation and primitive accumulation[23] in the US was tied to slavery. Unlike in the West Indies, where

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[23] The term used loosely here to mean the origins of capitalism, in this case the US cotton plantation and slavery as an early mode of accumulation.

it was profitable to kill slaves, in the US it was necessary to 'conserve' and 'multiply' slaves to expand the economy (Du Bois 1935:2). As the economy increased and Black workers were 'integrated into modern industry', the political economy also expanded beyond the cotton plantation (Du Bois 1935:2).

Profits grew enormously for those who owned the means of production and slaves; industries ballooned and new cities were built. But this expansion came with its own contradictions, Du Bois (1935:3) asserts. The *construction* of Blackness which took place in this period of plantation slavery was based on the rationale that Black people were inferior and not to be regarded the same as whites. Slavery was constructed to be a 'matter of race and social condition' (Du Bois 1935:3). Increases in land monopoly and political power brought contradictions to a world labelled the 'free world' among white people. Those who owned the means of production had to start creatively maintaining the illusion that everyone had equal opportunities while expanding their own fortunes (Du Bois 1935:3). They implemented new laws, acquired cheap labour via slaves, and found methods of controlling the slaves. Slavery consequently 'grew to a system and the Cotton Kingdom began to expand into white imperial domination' (Du Bois 1935:5).

Slavery and its meaning were configured not only to mean working a twelve-hour job, or the abuse of human rights. It was far worse than that: a psychological process of making the slave feel inferior:

…the calling of another Master; the standing with hat in hand. It was the helplessness. It was the defenselessness of family life. It was the submergence below the arbitrary will of any sort of individual (Du Bois 1935:7).

Slaves were not humans; they had no rights to demand alternatives to the acts imposed on them. In addition to the psychological abuse of systematically being made to feel inferior, Black people were stripped of economic, social and political liberties:

They could own nothing; they could make no contracts; they could hold no property, nor traffic in property; they could not hire out; they could not legally marry nor constitute families; they could not control their children; they could not appeal from their master; they could be punished at will. They could not testify in court; they could be imprisoned by their owners,

and the criminal offense of assault and battery could not be committed on

the person of a slave (Du Bois 1935:8).

Slaves were denied the right to education and any white person could punish them at will. Their survival was based on the 'humanity and decency' of their white owners as the law simply did not apply to them. They were merchandise to be sold to the highest bidder. The expansion of capitalism was therefore not only about capital accumulation and domination. For Black people, the structure of capitalism was interlocked with what it means to be Black; their suppression interacted and interpenetrated with capital accumulation. Those who had monopoly over power maximised their profit by dehumanising Blackness.

The basis of capitalism is exploitation: forcing Black people to provide cheap labour was required to increase profits. Policing this cheap non-human labour was therefore critical, and poor whites were used to guard the slaves. White elites had to make concessions to the white poor to maintain the rationale of accumulation. Part of this strategy was to distribute concessions and giving poor whites the authority to discipline Black revolt and guard against Black dissent (Du Bois 1935:10).

This process of *constructing* Black people into non-beings persisted even after slaves fought against slavery. After the abolishment of slavery, Blackness was *reconstructed*. This *reconstruction* entailed a variation in Blackness in terms of class and opportunities. Some of the 'freed' Black people attempted to develop themselves into a capitalist class, but were 'driven back into the mass by racial prejudice before they had reached a permanent foothold' (Du Bois 1935:13). The inability of the Black masses to arrive at the same levels as whites, even after the end of disenfranchisement, came as a result of capitalism and its structures which are embedded in racism. After the end of slavery, Black workers still remained the most exploited people because capitalism and the monopoly of wealth had been organised around race prejudice (Du Bois 1935:13). Black people were permanently excluded from the process.

Not only did Black people have to fight for democracy in order to re-define the economic structure of capitalism, but they also had to forge a brutal fight to free themselves from slavery. The foundation of capitalism consisted in the *construction* of Black people as non-human. Even with some reforms and the implementation of democracy, the operational basis of capitalism remained intact; exploitation of labour

sits at the core of profit accumulation. Black people remain the most exploited and non-human beings because the fundamental logic on which the expansion of capitalism is based was never destabilised (Du Bois 1935:13).

In the publication *Bound by the Color Line* (1946), Du Bois continued to emphasise that the 'Negro' problem cannot be understood without the 'history' of capital expansion. He stated that this 'central thread of our history' is the main factor which hinders progress. 'Thus we Negroes insist that there can be no attack upon social problems by free democratic methods because we have neither freedom nor democracy' (Du Bois 1946:194). Rather, the global expansion of capitalism has systematically denied Black people their freedom across the world, as the US state allied with 'colonial imperialism and class dictatorship in order to enforce the denial of freedom to the colored peoples of the world' (Du Bois 1946:194).

In *The Negroes and the Crisis of Capitalism in the United States* (1953), Du Bois expanded his notion of the paradox of capitalism. Here he presented arguments on the class formation which was maturing among Black people, namely the *reconstruction* of Blackness. During the 1950s, class distinctions among Black people in the US became more visible. Du Bois started by asking a fundamental question: 'How 'free' was the black freedman in 1863?' (1953:34). In answering the question, he stated that when the freed slaves acquired 'so-called freedom' they had 'no clothes, no home, tools, or land;' and as a result had to plead with the government to give them a piece of land. After that, Black people engaged in a prolonged battle for the right to vote. When they eventually succeeded, this right was given primarily to 'force the white South to conform to the demands of Big Business in tariff legislation and debt control' (Du Bois 1953:34). When the South appeased these requirements, Black voting rights were quickly revoked.

The population was once again split between Black and white: '…each hating and fearing each other to a degree that persons unfamiliar with the region cannot begin to imagine' (Du Bois 1953:35). This split became more pronounced and new forms of slavery re-emerged. In the process of *reconstruction,* it was imagined that capitalism could maintain the present and future by building 'on the poverty and ignorance of its disfranchised lowest masses - and these low-paid workers…' (Du Bois 1953:35). The expansion of capitalism not only rested on the exploitation of workers, but also entailed de-skilling and replacing specific work with machinery. In the end, workers were too poor even to afford the goods they were producing. The capitalist priority remained

making a profit by reducing labour costs; cheap labour to maximise profits was the main rationale.

The demand for goods was increased through '[The] monopoly of news gathering and distribution; concentrated ownership of radio, cinema, and television; and financial control of publication' (Du Bois 1953:38). The propaganda in the media divided Black people even further. Different classes among Black people started to respond differently to capitalism; the class divide started to *reconstruct* responses from Black people. Among the Black elite and middle class, when some people started losing their jobs because of machinery and deskilling, panic and fear erupted. They became fearful of losing their fortunes and property, and became key advocates in opposing any acts which could render their fears real. They became complicit in silencing the voices which were against job losses, and smeared the voices as 'communist'. Moreover, they started to align themselves with 'Big Business' and 'distinguished capitalists' (Du Bois 1953:38).

In the *reconstruction* of Blackness, class differences sharpened and the logic of capitalism reproduced itself. However, the logic of capitalism could never escape structural racism. Even where there are class differences, racial oppression binds Black people. Du Bois, elaborates that rich Black people, for example, may:

> travel with less annoyance; they may stop in the higher-priced hotels and eat in the more costly restaurants; the theatres and movie houses in the North and Border States may let down the bars. Beyond that, because of constitutional law and mounting costs, the wall of segregation in education may be breached. But with all this, what results? The color bar in this nation will not soon be broken. Even as it yields in places the insult of what remains will be more deeply felt by the still half-free. (Du Bois 1953:39)

In other words, racial oppression is a factor which collectively remains in the experiences of Black people in spite of class differences. Educated Black people might have relocated to white areas; however, 'the educated well-to-do American Negro is firmly bound to his powerful group. His memories are memories of its oppressions, insults, and repressions' (Du Bois 1953:39). Du Bois argued that this unifying factor among Black people due to racial oppression shows the crisis of capitalism. The crisis of capitalism has demonstrated that it 'cannot today abolish the color line despite its promises. It cannot stop injustice in the courts based on color and race. Above all, it

cannot stop the exploitation of black workers by white capital…' (Du Bois 1953:41). Black people should therefore fight for 'economic emancipation, because otherwise they cannot themselves be free' (Du Bois 1953:41). The conditions under capitalism are gradually forcing Black people to find socialist solutions. He noted that economic emancipation could occur in a socialist state, and that socialism would allow Black people to be revolutionary agents able to determine their destiny, freedom and humanity (Du Bois 1953:40).

In 1960, Du Bois proclaimed 'Democracy has so disappeared in the United States that there are some subjects that cannot even be discussed' (Du Bois, 1960). Du Bois made this statement a year before he rejoined the communist party. He noted that he had been attacked for advocating that Black people join a socialist party, and stirring Black people to socialism so they could fight for both political and social equality:

> I was criticized as being bitter, as seeking not simply political but social equality for Negroes, for favoring the teaching of Karl Marx and for joining the Socialist Party. These accusations were true. But largely as a result of my work and the work of others the Negro made progress toward equal citizenship. Progress but not complete success (Du Bois 1960).

The crisis and the collapse of capitalism after World War I, he argues, created 'poverty, unemployment and distress' (Du Bois 1960). Capitalism is unable to resolve these problems, and people are told to work harder. However, this rhetoric cannot reconcile with the fact that working class people cannot afford land; and that their low wages coupled with racism cannot uplift them from their poverty and 'disease' (Du Bois 1960). The class structure among Black people has divided them into 'haves and have-nots', and made it possible for 'more successful Negroes to join the forces of monopoly and exploitation and [to] help victimise their own classes and any other lower classes that were possible' (Du Bois 1960).

To resolve the problem, Black people must realise that they need to emancipate themselves. They need to fight for economic emancipation, and it can happen through socialism. At the moment people may not know what socialism is but they do know that 'Negro education must be better, that Negroes must have better opportunities to work and to receive a wage which would let them enjoy a decent standard of life' (Du Bois 1960). Initially Du Bois did not fully define what a socialist world would look like.

He argued that socialism was firstly based on consumer cooperation - the ability of Black people to organise their own buying power so that they can create employment and invest in their communities as a collective. However, he soon realised that this type of organising could not be an individual activity and that 'without the power of the government it would fail' (Du Bois 1960).

Inspired by his trips to Germany, the Soviet Union and China, he became a firm believer in the idea that communism is the solution to the emancipation of Black people. He firmly asserted that it was no longer enough to only have 'legal rights': Black people needed to have access to decent wages and decent lifestyles (Du Bois 1960). The socialism he wanted for Black people was:

> …more and more widely to insist upon the legal rights which are already theirs and then to add to that increasingly a socialistic form of government: an insistence upon the welfare state which denies the further carrying out of industry for the profit of those corporations which monopolize wealth and power. The stopping of a government of wealth for wealth and the returning of governmental power to the individual voter with all the freedom of action that can be preserved along with an industry carefully organized for the good of the masses of people and not for the manufacture of millionaires (Du Bois 1960).

When he joined the Communist Party in October 1961, his mind was more settled and he believed he had embarked on the correct path. He confessed that when he first joined the party in 1911, he 'knew nothing' about its 'practical socialist politics' (Du Bois 1961:74). This time around, however, he was more confident that his tours around Soviet countries had given him direction and he was well aware that the only solution for Black people was communism. Du Bois states: 'Capitalism cannot reform itself; it is doomed to self-destruction. No universal selfishness can bring social good to all' (Du Bois 1961:74).

With greater clarity on communism compared to the previous years, Du Bois drafted a call for the following demands:

1. Public ownership of natural resources and of all capital.
2. Public control of transportation and communications.
3. Abolition of poverty and limitation of personal income.

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4. No exploitation of labor.

5. Social medicine, with hospitalization and care for the old.

6. Free education for all.

7. Training for jobs and jobs for all.

8. Discipline for growth and reform.

9. Freedom under law.

10. No dogmatic religion (Du Bois 1961:74).

This turn to communism took place after Du Bois' quest of many years for Black emancipation and freedom. Capitalism continuously mutated, and reforms gained by Black activists were never enough to emancipate them fully.

Capitalism was able to create certain changes but it never smashed structural racism which constructs Blackness as non-being, cheap labour, and disposable - and which, as already stated, is at the core of accumulation and exploitation. Educated Black people soon realised that their success in capitalism had a ceiling beyond which lay the preserve of those who created capitalism and rendered the ontology of Blackness inferior. Du Bois thus turned to communism because he reached the conclusion that capitalism could not be reformed. Communism was a new way of re-thinking a world which could liberate Black people.

Capitalism is fundamental in the construction of Blackness. The next section on Frantz Fanon explores how Blackness in an alienated world moulds Black people. We once again see the impact which capitalism with structural racism had on Blackness while Black people act as revolutionary agents at the same time. Similarly to Du Bois, Fanon gives a dialectic analysis of the conception of Blackness, and discusses the contradictory nature of Blackness as it pursues liberation.

2.3. Introducing Fanon

Du Bois' concept of two-ness, I argue, was also key in Frantz Fanon's analysis of Blackness in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Although Fanon did not cite Du Bois, there seems to be a continuity in thinking about the formation of Blackness as a process of doubleness. Black (2007: 393) makes the same observation: 'There is a connection between Frantz Fanon's work and W. E. B. Du Bois' concept of double consciousness.' Fanon strongly asserts that Blackness has two dimensions which emerge from conditions created by the alienating world. Like Du Bois, Fanon affirms that race, Black

inferiority and white supremacy are 'problems' in that world. Part of this section demonstrates there are similarities between Du Bois' and Fanon's thinking about Blackness. These similarities are more explicit in *Black Skin*, *White Masks*, and less so in *The Wretched of the Earth*. These two publications are my main sources for tracing Fanon's articulation of what it means to be Black. The former offers elaborate, philosophical, everyday evidence-based experiences about the ontology of Blackness, while the latter offers a dialectical approach to the possibilities and limits of revolutionary Blackness. The dismantling of the systematic structure which is embedded in the creation of Blackness as inferior is at the core of Fanon's analyses. Both books are situated in a critique of capitalism, but *Wretched* of *the Earth* overtly shows its mechanics. Fanon is neither a Marxist nor a phenomenologist, although his work speaks to some of these arguments. As Sekyi-Otu (1996:19) notes, 'Fanon rewrites three narrative genres or generic stories - the Hegelian-Sartrean narrative of conflictual recognition, the Freudian narrative of desire, and the Marxist narrative of social relations of production - in terms of a revised master code, that of race.'

Fanon died on 6 December 1961, almost a year and eight months earlier than Du Bois, who passed away on 27 August 1963. His death, according to Robinson (1993:79), amplified his work - both admirers and critics started to be drawn to his ideas. There was an attempt by those who opposed his work to 'diminish his political history and contribution.' Fanon, however, was not only a trained psychiatrist, but also 'pioneered the psychological, social and political investigation of anti-colonialism and what he took to be the "Negro",' (Robinson 1993:80).

He was born in 1925 in Fort-de-France, the capital of Martinique. He grew up in a middle-class household; his mother, Éléonore, owned a store and his father, Félix Casimir, was a customs inspector (see Zeilig 2016:19, Gibson 2003:4 and Macey 2000). He grew up speaking French which was a marker of middle-class status in Martinique (Gibson 2003:4). In *Black Skin*, *White Masks,* he reflects on how the middle class only spoke their indigenous language when addressing their servants. In his teens and young adulthood, he was influenced by Aimé Césaire. Césaire was a poet who played a major role in *negritude* thought. In high school, Fanon took classes with Césaire (Gibson 2003:4). He went to a French University to pursue psychiatric training (Zahar 1974:vii), and after obtaining this degree, took a position in Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital in Algeria. A year into his post, the Algerian war erupted after

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which he resigned and participated in the war by becoming a full-time revolutionary and the editor of *El Moudjahid* (Gibson 2003:5).

Five years after his death, Fanon emerged as the preferred theorist in the Black Power Movement in the US. More importantly, co-founders of the Black Panther Party, namely Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver and Huey P. Newton, used his writing to extend their Marxist-Leninist ideologies (Zeilig 2012). (Later sections discuss the Black Panthers in greater detail.) Zeilig cites Dan Watts, the editor of the radical newspaper *Liberator,* in 1967, who affirms that Fanon's books and thoughts were the 'bible' of the era:

> You're going along thinking all the brothers in these riots are old winos. Nothing could be further from the truth. These cats are ready to die for something. And they know why. They all read. Read a lot. Not one of them hasn't read the Bible… Fanon… You'd better get this book. Every brother on a rooftop can quote Fanon.

In the 1960s and 70s, Fanon was conferred the status of an important thinker in most revolutionary movements. Movements pursuing revolution used his predictions that revolutions would take place in colonial contexts and become a reality. Intellectuals in these revolutionary movements incorporated his assertions that trade unions and urban labour forces were not to be trusted (see Zeilig 2016). As a result, some focused their strategies for emancipation on the countryside, enlisting peasants as key revolutionary agents. However, the revolution which these movements envisioned became riddled with 'pitfalls', and failed to emancipate Black people from oppression. In the 1980s and 1990s after the fall of the Soviet Union, his thoughts were co-opted into the academy. Various academic scholars started to label their abstract concepts as Fanonism - books, articles and career escalation became a norm when studying Fanon. With the rise of cultural critics and postmodernists scholars, his work was 'decontextualised', and 'shorn of history': 'Here he was with his revolutionary urgency (and heart) ripped out' (Zeilig 2012 and 2016).

According to Zeilig, 'The academy's adoption of radical thinkers is always a sanitising process, turning revolutionary action into passive reflection, analysis into academic pontification' (Zeilig 2016:5). Since his arrival at the towers of the academy, there has been an increasing need to remember Fanon. Sekyi-Otu (1996:10) argues that Fanon should be remembered 'in the context of life lived as "postcolonial subject"

on the outskirts of the body politic's affections, a life lived in the archetypal and auspicious estrangement of "minority discourse"'. Sekyi-Otu (1996) further notes that Fanon was a 'global theorist', who not only tackled the colonial context but whose analysis opened up practical questions. His work, Sekyi-Otu (1996) asserts, focused pertinently on the changing world, especially after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and apartheid, and the expansion of globalisation. His 'work is also unique in the manner in which it marshals empirical detail, poetic language, and a theoretical engagement with major metanarratives of human bondage and freedom to fashion a critical account of colonialism and of the postcolonial condition' (Sekyi-Otu 1996:12). There is a need for greater post-colonial analysis and for a wider grasp of Fanon's work since he answers some of the world's challenges. Even though race was central to Fanon's work, Sekyi-Otu (1996) argues that he was seeking the universal.

In Chapter 3, I show how Fanon's work is used in contemporary political debates in South Africa. Unlike Du Bois, there is no archival evidence which proves that he was in conversation with South African movements or activists: his work seemed to start appearing after Steve Biko cited him (see below). It is not possible to track, as with Du Bois, reflections on Fanon and how his politics shifted. I however argue that there are continuities between *Black Skin, White Masks* and *Wretched of the Earth*. The next section looks at how Fanon understood the *double consciousness* of Blackness.

2.3.1. Fanon and Double Consciousness

The purpose of my readings of Fanon, Du Bois and Biko is to locate their conceptions of Blackness. On one level, being Black in the world cannot be understood without understanding whiteness. Rabaka (2010b:54) asserts that '[Fanon] importantly emphasizes that blackness is dialectically inextricable from whiteness…'. As much as Rabaka's claim might have merit, I strongly disagree that this is not the only binary conceptualisation of Blackness. I argue that Blackness can also articulate itself outside whiteness. My reading of Fanon and the other two intellectuals supports this notion, and shows that Blackness is dynamic and complicated. In structural racism which is interlaced with capitalism, the *construction* and *reconstruction* of Blackness has different manifestations, and my interest lies in understanding how these authors read Blackness and its development in the structural racism of capitalism. Unlike Rabaka,

who poses questions on what it means to be Black in his writing about Du Bois and Fanon but does not adequately answer the question, I use their work to illustrate the complexities, paradoxes and contradictions they propose in their conceptualisations of Blackness. Being Black and being agents of change formed the foundation of their analyses in the fight for freedom.

In seeking the universal where every person is seen as human, Fanon positioned his work in *Black Skin, White Masks* by trying to understand Blackness. At the beginning of the book, Fanon argues that Blackness is suffering from an inferiority complex and is in a state of despair. Citing Césaire: 'I am talking of millions of men who have been skilfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, abasement' (Fanon 1952:9). In contrast to Rabaka, who notes that *Black Skin, White Masks* would not be welcomed by white or black readers, I argue that Fanon was deliberate, and that his book targeted a particular reader; one who is not ready to receive it and who has not asked him to write the book: 'Why write this book? No one has asked me for it. Especially those to whom it is directed' (Fanon 1952:9). From my perspective Fanon is writing to Black people, since he is trying to understand the 'color problem.' Similar to Du Bois, this colour problem has shaped how people view the world and each other; it has stripped Black people from being human in a context which has made a Black man 'not a man'. The problem, he further expands, has made Black people:

 a zone of nonbeing, an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, an utterly
 naked declivity where an authentic upheaval can be born. In most cases, the
 black man lacks the advantage of being able to accomplish this descent into
 a real hell (Fanon 1952:10).

In both Fanon's writing and the early work of Du Bois, a tone is set: Black people are 'crushed' (using Du Bois word) in their contexts. There is continuity in both writings; the perpetual erasing of Blackness in their present realities. Similar to Du Bois, Fanon advocated for the rebellion side of Black people. Du Bois always argued that Blackness within its two-ness can either submit or rebel. Fanon however asserted that '[m]an is not merely a possibility of recapture or of negation' (1952:10). Both writers have a strong dialectical approach to emancipation and oppression. Similar to Du Bois, Fanon noted that this dialectic shapes consciousness, and this

consciousness is a paradox which 'is haunted by the problems of love and understanding' (1952:10).

This paradox which makes Blackness a 'shell' arises from a universal ideology which wants to remove Black people. It is 'rooted at the core of a universe from which he [Black] must be extricated' (Fanon 1952:10). Du Bois also emphasised that a denial of Blackness is embedded in the toxicity of civilisation. Later, he described the flawed nature of civilisation, and in his old age described the limits to reforming capitalism. Fanon expands the idea by arguing that the world is structured around removing Blackness. Not only does the world divide itself into two camps, namely 'white and the black', it also forces Black people to fight for their survival: 'I propose nothing short of the liberation of the man of color from himself' (Fanon 1952:10). The problem of race has created a complicated and hybrid world for Blackness.

In an alienated world, Black people seek to be white. Seeking to be white is affirmed by Du Bois in *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* (1920:20). He notes: 'The one virtue is to be white', and people rush to the inevitable conclusion, 'Kill the "nigger"'. Fanon adds that this desire and assimilation of wanting to be white results from a world in which 'The white man is sealed in his whiteness. The black man in his blackness' (Fanon 1952:11). Following the reasoning of Du Bois (1920:24) that '[t]he European world is using black… men for all the uses which men know. Slowly but surely white culture is evolving the theory that darkies are born beasts of burden for white folk.' Fanon notes that the alienated world has made 'white men consider themselves superior to black men' (1952:12). In this complex structure, Black people find themselves between two poles. Either they must prove to white people that they are also equally capable of thought and intellect, or they must accept that there is 'only one destiny. And it is white' (Fanon 1952:12).

Even though he does not use the term double consciousness in a similar manner to Du Bois, Fanon acknowledges that the alienated world has created a 'double process' in Blackness. This double process is 'primarily, economic; subsequently, the internalization or, better, the epidermalization of this inferiority' (Fanon 1952:13). This double process is furthermore historical, systematic and structurally embedded in the social, political and economic composition of the alienated world which affects the 'objective level as [well as] the subjective level' of Blackness. Fanon, in the first chapter of *Black Skin*, *White Masks*, dedicates a great amount of time to examining the context and the conditions of an alienating world

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which aims to remove Blackness. In that world, Blackness is both an objective and a subjective phenomenon. The 'zone of non-being' of Blackness is created because Black ontology has been socially, economically and politically alienated. At the same time, Fanon asserts that even under those conditions Black people still have the potential to fight for freedom. It is this complex structure which shapes the consciousness of what it means to be Black. The objective and subjective levels in the construction of Blackness are manifested in various forms.

Language is one modality in which Blackness is *constructed* and *reconstructed*. The politics of language is one of the major findings in this dissertation. Chapter 5 and 6 show how the battle in speaking English *reconstructs* the notion of being Black. It is 'one of the elements in the colored man's comprehension of the dimension of the *other,'* Fanon notes (1952:15). Again, Du Bois' notion of the two-ness of Blackness permeates his argument, but from a different perspective. He argued that language - which is usually seen as a way of communicating, a 'syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language' but is actually a means 'above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization' - has made Black people behave 'differently with a white man and with another Negro' (Fanon 1952:15). Thus, language has caused Blackness to be torn into a two-ness which has forced Blackness to wrestle with the concept of language; the colonial language. The ability to speak the colonial language, in Fanon's case French, makes Blackness feel closer to whiteness. Since whiteness in Blackness represents being human, the 'mastery of the French Language' (1952:16) elevates one's state of consciousness.

The '[m]astery of language affords remarkable power' (Fanon 1952:16). In a world where Blackness has an inferiority complex, there is a tendency to bury its own local culture and to seek a language which is closely associated with people who are defined as civilised: 'The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle' (Fanon 1952:16).

There is a sense of 'honour' in this mastery. The honour 'radically changes' Black people who are fluent in the colonial language. The changes manifest themselves in their mannerisms and how they carry themselves. This phenomenon is more acute among the Black middle class. Their schooling teaches them to 'scorn' their own language which is only used when they give instructions to their 'servants'

(Fanon 1952: 21). Speaking the colonial language is associated with being white: 'He talks like a white man' (Fanon 1952:21).

Language in an alienated world is used as part of removing Blackness. Fanon (1952:22) laments that in the process of making a person into 'nothing' he or she 'surrenders' their being to the *other*. The mastery of the colonial language is one way in which the processes of Blackness surrender their ontology to the *other* and become a 'zone of non-being'. Language supports this process of 'dislocation and separation' (Fanon 1952:25). Blackness is disassociated from its culture by adopting and assimilating oneself into a world which has been constructed as human. This separation of Blackness, as already mentioned, is more pronounced in the Black middle class:

> … the Negroes' inferiority complex is particularly intensified among the most educated, who must struggle with it unceasingly. Their way of doing so, he adds, is frequently naive: 'The wearing of European clothes, whether rags or the most up-to-date style; using European furniture and European forms of social intercourse; adorning the Native language with European expressions; using bombastic phrases in speaking or writing a European language; all these contribute to a feeling of equality with the European and his achievements' (Fanon 1952:25).

Blackness is a hybrid of the two-ness, 'toward the world and toward himself' (Fanon 1952:41). The dialectical relations of Blackness are central to Fanon's analysis. The consciousness of Blackness has 'two components' (Fanon 1952:41). These two components, apart from language, manifest themselves also - with regard to who one loves. Fanon uses a heterosexual framing of love by elaborating on the relationship a Black woman has when she loves a white man. He notes that in a 'disalienated' world, love should be seen as 'authentic;' however, in the conditions of an alienated world, love between two races is complex. An inferiority complex is inserted. A Black woman 'loves a white man to whom she submits in everything. He is her lord. She asks nothing, demands nothing, except a bit of whiteness in her life' (Fanon 1952:42). Love, for a Black woman, is a contradiction and a conflict, as '[o]ne is white above [a] certain financial level' and, white people 'possess beauty and virtue, which have never been black'' (Fanon 1952:43-5).

A similar process reproduces itself for a Black man who falls in love with a white woman. Being loved by a white woman, a Black man feels he has transcended his Blackness: 'By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man. I am a white man' (Fanon 1952:63). Loving a white woman re-assures a Black man that he is closer to whiteness. He 'grasp[s] white civilization and dignity'. This grasp is another process in which Blackness becomes an empty shell - a process in which disassociation from Blackness occurs, and the separation creates a conflict, as the Black man is '[u]nable to be assimilated, unable to pass unnoticed…' (Fanon 1952:65). The attempts to disassociate from Blackness inversely pushes one into Blackness. In a world where Blackness is structurally constructed to be inferior, the limits of disassociation are confronted by the fact that Blackness is not seen as human. When this happens, he seeks 'proofs from his partner' as his confidence is eroded. The Black man, full of doubt, starts to ask 'in spite of my color, would you agree to marry me if I asked you?'' (Fanon 1952:77).

The ontology of Blackness in an alienated world is very clear: one is a 'dirty nigger!' Tracing Du Bois again on how civilisation *constructed* and *reconstructed* Blackness*:*

Darker peoples are dark in mind as well in body; of dark, uncertain, and imperfect descent; of frailer, cheaper stuff; they are cowards in the face of mausers and maxims; they have no feelings, aspirations, and loves, they are fools, illogical, idiots - 'half-devil and half-child' (1920:24).

This reality becomes impossible to escape regardless of how close one is to whiteness. The ontology of Blackness is manifested when 'I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects' (Fanon 1952:109). Blackness remains 'sealed into that crushing object-hood … running over my body suddenly abraded into nonbeing' (Fanon 1952:109). Fanon argued that Blackness not only remains 'sealed in a non-being zone', but also becomes fragmented. After the fragmentation, another process has to take place, namely putting together the fragmented pieces (Fanon 1952:109). Being Black in an alienated world is, at its core, the breaking of a human being and the *reconstruction* of broken pieces. The result is that Black 'ontology is made unattainable in a colonized and civilized society …' (Fanon 1952:109).

'For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man' (Fanon 1952:110). A Black person has 'no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man' (Fanon 1952:110). Blackness is 'wiped out' and it is this reality which *constructs* the Black person's world; a burden of conflict and irreconcilable antagonism shapes Blackness and consciousness of Blackness. The consciousness becomes a 'third-person':

> A slow composition of my self as a body in the middle of a spatial and temporal world - such seems to be the schema. It does not impose itself on me; it is, rather, a definitive structuring of the self and of the world, definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world (Fanon 1952:111).

This third-person consciousness is a process in which one is 'moved toward the other…and the evanescent other, hostile but not opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared…' (Fanon 1952:112). Here Fanon moved beyond Du Bois' two-ness. Blackness becomes divided into three dimensions: 'I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors' (Fanon 1952:112). The triple dimension, I argue, shows that Blackness in its current *construction* could never become a human being. Fanon tried to demonstrate this truth even on the subjective level where there is a distortion of Blackness. When Black people try to become assimilated either through language or marriage, they remain inferior. The space in which Blackness lives could never permit the possibility of reaching human status; the Black body and history have structurally negated Blackness. Thus, being Black remains to be seen as a 'beast', 'half-devil and half-child' in its *construction* and *reconstruction*.

As Du Bois would argue, the rationale of capitalism has 'loopholes' and Black people will 'revolt' (1920:25). Fanon also believed that there are conditions for potential revolt: 'I resolved, since it was impossible for me to get away from an inborn complex, to assert myself as a BLACK MAN' (Fanon 1952:113). In this revolt, Fanon argued that there is one solution for Black people: 'to make myself known.' Revolution is the only alternative to the making of Blackness. He claimed that the world has shown it has rejected Black people on irrational and unreasonable measures of race. Therefore, Fanon argued that he will use their own terms to assert being Black in the world:

> I had rationalized the world and the world had rejected me on the basis of color prejudice. Since no agreement was possible on the level of reason, I threw myself back toward unreason. It was up to the white man to be more irrational than I (Fanon 1952:123).

He notes that the current context has negated Blackness, even '[a] normal Negro child, having grown up within a normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the white world' (Fanon 1952:143), and he refuses to be 'amputated' into an empty shell of nonbeing.

In his refusal, Fanon states that Blackness will not be saved through assimilation or hatred. The universal journey is the salvation from a particular *construction* of Blackness:

> As I begin to recognize that the Negro is the symbol of sin, I catch myself hating the Negro. But then I recognize that I am a Negro. There are two ways out of this conflict. Either I ask others to pay no attention to my skin, or else I want them to be aware of it. I try then to find value for what is bad - since I have unthinkingly conceded that the black man is the color of evil. In order to terminate this neurotic situation, in which I am compelled to choose an unhealthy, conflictual solution, fed on fantasies, hostile, inhuman in short, I have only one solution: to rise above this absurd drama that others have staged round me, to reject the two terms that are equally unacceptable, and, through one human being, to reach out for the universal (Fanon 1952:187).

Fanon advocates for social revolution, and Chapter 7 explores the meaning of this term. Citing Marx, Fanon argues that revolution is not about going back to the past nor about erasing history. Rather, revolution is about creating a new world which breaks with current structures which have alienated Black people. This new world should not be based on middle-class tendencies which find expression in an environment in which the 'air is tainted, in which ideas and men are corrupt' (Fanon 1952:224). The new world calls for a process of disalienation. Disalienation is the refusal to be 'sealed' and defined by present constructions of Blackness. Fanon cites Karl Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852):

The social revolution…cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself before it has stripped itself of all its superstitions concerning the past. Earlier revolutions relied on memories out of world history in order to drug themselves against their own content. In order to find their own content, the revolutions of the nineteenth century have to let the dead bury the dead. Before, the expression exceeded the content; now, the content exceeds the expression (Fanon 1952:223).

Similarly to Du Bois, Fanon believed that the emancipation of Black people would happen through struggle - through fighting for a world which breaks away from oppression. This world, both asserted, needs Black people to revolt. Regarding the current context which alienates Blackness, both writers were adamant that it could not be reformed. A revolution needs to occur for Blackness to be free. Black revolution must be based on Black people winning and determining their own freedom. The dialectic between emancipation and oppression is evident in both Fanon and Du Bois. Both writers locate Blackness in a structural analysis. Without an understanding of structure, Blackness is reduced to subjective everyday experiences. Structural analysis enables us to see how structural racism *constructs* and *reconstructs* the objective and subjective realities of Black people. Blackness is thus not an individual matter, but part of how capitalism has functioned for centuries. Black revolt[24] should break this structure which has amputated Blackness into 'nothing.' The next section discusses how Fanon expands on the need to understand the structure during Black revolt. He warns that if it is not understood, Blackness will not find freedom.

2.3.2. Fanon and Capitalism

In his later life, Du Bois advocated for socialism as the only way to achieve Black emancipation. Fanon's solution was a social revolution which would bring universal humanism. In order to reach this universal humanism, decolonisation ought to occur. Fanon also warned that decolonisation is a 'violent event'; a total disorder which radically changes the consciousness of the Black oppressed. It is a process is in which

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[24] Revolt here is used more in a generic manner to mean: to break away from or to rise against constituted authority, as by open rebellion.

one 'species' is substituted for the other; in which two 'antagonistic forces' confront each other in an alienated world - in this case, the colonial context (Fanon 1961:2):

> Decolonization never goes unnoticed, for it focuses on and fundamentally alters being, and transforms the spectator crushed to a nonessential state into a privileged actor, captured in a virtually grandiose fashion by the spotlight of History. It infuses a new rhythm, specific to a new generation of men, with a new language and a new humanity (Fanon 1961:2).

This radical change of the world order is a process where "[t]he last shall be first" (Fanon 1961:2). He noted that decolonisation happens in a 'compartmentalised world.' Here, he expanded his idea of an alienated world from *Black Skin, White Masks*. In *Wretched of the Earth*, he argues that the 'compartmentalised world' is 'superficial'. It is constructed between two camps: 'native' towns and European towns' (Fanon 1961:3). The European town is always guarded by 'barracks' and 'police stations'. These European cities are 'built to last', they have 'trash cans constantly overflowing with strange and wonderful garbage, undreamed-of leftovers' (Fanon 1961:4).

The 'native towns' are made up of 'shanty towns.' 'You are born anywhere, anyhow. You die anywhere, from anything. It's a world with no space, people are piled one on top of the other, the shacks squeezed tightly together' (Fanon 1961:4). Because of these material conditions, the consciousness of Black people is aroused by 'envy' and 'lust'. They seek to have privileges similar to those living in European towns: 'Every type of possession: of sitting at the colonist's table and sleeping in his bed, preferably with his wife. The colonized man is an envious man' (Fanon 1961:5). In these conditions, it is clear that race matters; those with privileges are of a particular race – white - and those with nothing belong to the other inferior race - Black. Fanon strongly asserted: 'You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich' (Fanon 1961:5).

It is under these conditions where decolonisation has the potential to take place. Blackness is permanently reminded of its inferiority. The physical geography and material conditions are constructed in such a manner that Blackness cannot escape. Fanon argued that Marxist analysis needs to be expanded to capture how capitalism works in these compartmentalised contexts: 'This is why a Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched when it comes to addressing the colonial issue' (Fanon

1961: 5). At a particular point in history, Black people are then forced to either assimilate or destroy this system. 'To destroy the colonial world means nothing less than demolishing the colonist's sector, burying it deep within the earth or banishing it from the territory' (Fanon 1961:6). By starting with the meaning of decolonisation, Fanon illustrated that he had reached a climax in which Black people must refuse their given 'non-being' status and become revolutionary agents. Black people must fight for their freedom and demolish the alienated world, in this case the colonial world.

Decolonisation is staging a war zone, a war which needs to be combated to bring Blackness into humanity. This humanity is not about being equal to whiteness, but about structurally destroying even the possibility which allows the idea that humanity means being assimilated into whiteness. He strategically elaborates that in order for Blacks to win this war, Black people must not lose sight of what this war is about and why fighting is crucial. This social revolution is not only about destroying capitalism, but about defeating capitalism which is embroiled in structural racism. I argue that he sees the expansion of capitalism as embedded in racism.

He was aware that when this war begins the colonists will see a 'threat' and find ways to derail the ambitions of the war. Some of the tactics which will be used by the colonists would be to create 'Symposiums on Culture' to spell out the specificity and richness of Western values (Fanon 1961:8). During the process of decolonisation, the colonists will claim that revolt is 'unreasonable.' They would argue that the demands create a 'regression' of their civilisation. In an arrogant manner, the colonists would further affirm: 'We made this land.' He is the guarantor of its existence: 'If we leave, all will be lost, and this land will return to the Dark Ages'' (Fanon 1961:14-15).

He pleaded with the colonised, which I have interpreted to be referring to Black people, to take cognisance of these tactics which, he warns, will divide Black people by class background. He stated that the intellectuals will be the first to betray the struggle for decolonisation because they occupy a privileged position in the alienated world, and are to some extent instrumental in upholding the system. They are the people who tried to become assimilated into the system. As a result, the intellectuals have 'adopted the abstract, universal values of the colonizer [and] is prepared to fight so that colonist and colonized can live in peace in a new world' (Fanon 1961:9). However, the intellectuals fail to comprehend that Black people in their fight are not seeking to compromise their demands by living peacefully with their oppressors. The consciousness of Black people who are invested in the struggle has been radically

transformed: they no longer fear the oppressor. In fact, their consciousness has reached a point of: '…to hell with him. Not only does his presence no longer bother me, but I am already preparing to waylay him in such a way that soon he will have no other solution but to flee' (Fanon 1961:9). The intellectual is out of touch with this consciousness. Instead, he has mastered the knowledge that 'that the individual must assert himself'. This means that the consciousness of the intellectuals has not reached a stage where they realise that their theory and what they have been taught is actually false (Fanon 1961:11).

This consciousness of the intellectuals permeated the nationalist parties. The nationalist party during decolonisation acted in opposition to the mission of the war. Rather than wanting to overthrow the system, they called for reforms (Fanon 1961:21). 'They are violent in their words and reformist in their attitudes' (Fanon 1961:21). Its leadership was quick to admit the 'violent words' are rhetorical, and ideally, they are seeking reforms. These oppositional acts by the nationalist party also showed in the composition of the party. Their leadership and supporters, Fanon argued, are urban-based, including 'workers, elementary school teachers, small tradesmen, and shopkeepers' (Fanon 1961:21). The majority are middle-class people who have benefitted from the alienated world. Fanon argued that after independence, these middle classes will be 'pampered' by the new regime which would have compromised the struggle.

The class which will compromise the struggle and take over the new regimes would be the national bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie are 'aided and abetted in the pacification of the colonized by the inescapable powers …' (Fanon 1961:28). During decolonisation, the bourgeoisie are inevitably bought by the oppressor and the process of betraying the struggle will start, reformulating the demands of the oppressed. The demands will then be formulated into a national framework, vague enough to obliterate the substantive political and social agenda (Fanon 1961:28).

After they take over the regime, the bourgeoisie 'lulled itself into thinking that it can supplant the metropolitan bourgeoisie to its own advantage' (Fanon 1961:98). Their strategy in trying to revive an underdeveloped country was to concentrate 'capital, and their occupations as traders, landowners and professionals' (Fanon 1961:98). In this process, they were attached to the rhetoric of nationalisation. However, Fanon noted the call for nationalisation by the bourgeoisie simply aims to 'transfer into indigenous hands privileges inherited from the colonial period' (Fanon

1961:100). The end result is not the eradication of the alienated world but the creation of a nationalist bourgeoisie to 'serve as a conveyor belt for capitalism, [while being] forced to camouflage it' (Fanon 1961:100).

One of the reasons why the decolonisation process becomes derailed is because there is a gap between the above-mentioned classes and the masses:

> These reflections on violence have made us realize the frequent discrepancy between the cadres of the nationalist party and the masses, and the way they are out of step with each other. In any union or political organization there is a traditional gap between the masses who demand an immediate, unconditional improvement of their situation, and the cadres who, gauging the difficulties likely to be created by employers, put a restraint on their demands (Fanon 1961:63).

Another reason is that the people who have had considerable potential to ensure that decolonisation was achieved were the peasants, to some extent. The peasants were left 'out of most of the nationalist parties' propaganda' (Fanon 1961:23) because the nationalist parties could not understand their consciousness. The peasants are the most 'underprivileged' and exploited class and their consciousness is community-minded. However, their potential to see decolonisation through is limited because they 'distrust the town dweller', and they are 'staunch defender(s) of tradition' (Fanon 1961:67). As a result, they are not willing to break away to create a universal humanity.

Since the struggle for universal humanity has not yet been achieved, Fanon still believed that there was only one class with the ability to forge and rescue the project of decolonisation, namely, the proletariat who, in a colonised context, has 'nothing to lose…' (Fanon 1961:64). He was, however, specific about who the proletariat was: the *lumpenproletariat*. They are the masses who reside in urban shanty towns and include 'starving men, divorced from tribe and clan' (Fanon 1961:81). According to Fanon, these classes are the 'most spontaneously and radically revolutionary forces of a colonized people'. As a result:

> The formation of a lumpenproletariat is a phenomenon which is governed by its own logic, and neither the overzealousness of the missionaries nor decrees from the central authorities can check its growth (Fanon 1961:81).

I argue against Fanon's claim that the lumpenproletariat will emancipate Blackness and create a new humanity because it is inconsistent with his argument about how capitalism works. He notes that capitalism in its expansion phase used workers in the colonies to extract raw material which they sold in 'developed' countries for profits. Yet another gap was then identified to enable greater profitability, namely the underdeveloped word. In addition to mineral extraction, refined minerals could be sold in the colonies to white settlers and the Black middle class. This means that in addition to the exploitation of cheap labour to extract minerals in the colonies, the 'developed worlds' could refine the minerals and sell them back to both developed and underdeveloped countries for maximum profits.

Capitalism is aware of its own contradictions; the underdeveloped world, seen as a buffer and a mediator in times of economic crisis, is crucial to the system. Whenever capitalism oversupplies mineral resources to its markets, and the system is unable to make enough profit, cheap labour and the exploitation of Black people in the colonies are used to remedy these economic crises and to stabilise profit margins. Fanon argued that the system was not 'A blind domination on the model of slavery' but neatly incorporated within capital accumulation (Fanon 1961:26). Workers who are exploited and paid low wages are thus integral to the expansion of capitalism. In my view, since capitalism is embedded in structural racism, it cannot function without Black exploited workers, Black workers are important in defeating capitalism. Fanon (1961) does not seem to make this link, and only advocates for the lumpenproletariat to become revolutionary agents.

According to Fanon (1961) capitalism also needs military intervention to discipline dissent, and to ensure that the production and extraction of minerals are aligned with market demands. Capitalism is a global system incorporating other global players: political and diplomatic organisations are complicit and involved in the making of this alienated world (Fanon 1961:26). The global system is entangled in the ideology of structural racism. Thus, when an upsurge against racism and national liberation began, capitalists and their organisations were not taken by surprise since they believed their oppressive machinery to be intact. They were convinced the fight was 'purely and simply controlled and masterminded from 'the outside'' (Fanon 1961:39). Capitalism then tried to use 'psychological warfare' (Fanon 1961:40), but failed as they were still not able to persuade the lumpenproletariat who have their own logic.

I, however, do not agree that the lumpenproletariat will be crucial in defeating capitalism and creating a new world. I argue that the working class is important in the making of profit by selling their labour and it has the potential to cripple the system. The creation of the inferior Black was tied to profit accumulation, from my interpretation of Fanon. This system and its logic developed globally. It needed to be violent in order to maintain profitability, and in moments of insurgency it finds ways to metamorphose into a new form without breaking its foundations. Fanon argues that the foundations of capitalism in the new regime of the national bourgeoisie did not break the roots of structural racism and capitalism because decolonisation did not occur.

Unlike Du Bois who advocated for socialism, Fanon was cautious of both socialism and capitalism. He strongly asserted that in the underdeveloped world, the struggle is not about choosing either system. The underdeveloped world needs to create a new regime which relates to their context:

> It was commonly thought that the time had come for the world, and particularly for the Third World, to choose between the capitalist system and the socialist system. The underdeveloped countries, which made use of the savage competition between the two systems in order to win their national liberation, must, however, refuse to get involved in such rivalry. The Third World must not be content to define itself in relation to values which preceded it. On the contrary, the underdeveloped countries must endeavour to focus on their very own values as well as the methods and style specific to them. The basic issue with which we are faced is not the unequivocal choice between socialism and capitalism such as they have been defined by men from different continents and different periods of time (Fanon 1961:55).

In understanding Blackness, Fanon initially used the term Black to illustrate the inferiority complex. However, later in his work he emboldens Black to mean revolutionary agent. Since Black was a refusal of non-being status, he urged Black people to fight against a system which created Blackness to be non-human. This process was called decolonisation, a new creation of humanity which sought to be universal. However, when he realised that there are class divisions among Blacks, he warned that the struggle would be deferred. He elaborated on how each class would deflect the revolution. It is important to note that Fanon was not advocating for

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socialism, but rather for a universal humanity. The next section attempts to locate reasons for this departure which differs from Du Bois.

2.4. The 1960s and Black Power

In attempting to understand why Du Bois and Fanon reached different conclusions about the strategies of Black emancipation, I found it fitting to draw on some debates which occurred in the 1960s. As I argue in this section, the period ruptured ideas and ideologies and created a hybrid of alternatives regarding approaches to the Black struggle. The first point I want to argue is that Du Bois opted for a socialist solution primarily because of his earlier exposure to the conception of the Soviet Union state. The creation of the Soviet Union made an impression on Du Bois, and he projected some of the idealism of its achievements on the trajectory the US was taking. He notes that: 'I saw the rise of the social democratic party; my repeated visits to England and France in the first decade in this second century. My visits to the Soviet Union in 1926, 1936 and 1949' (Du Bois 1960).

Disappointed with US democracy, Du Bois thought the Soviet Union composition of the world would be best in achieving Black freedom. I further argue that the socialism which he envisioned was profoundly influenced by Stalin - later coined Stalinism. Fanon, on the other hand, did the opposite. He wanted universal humanity which was framed neither within capitalist nor socialist ideologies. I argue that at the time Fanon was writing, there were obvious contradictions within the Stalinist Soviet Union. This section starts by analysing how Stalin's notion of socialism was part of the reason Fanon's position regarding Black emancipation broke with that of Marxism. Second, I show how Blackness began to be used as a term which asserted human dignity rather than victimhood or oppression during this period. I suggest that these ideas of Blackness permeated Fanon's later work.

In the 1950s scholars were already writing about the contradictory nature of the Soviet Union which faced economic crisis and corruption (see Cliff 1996). More importantly, the decaying state failed to emancipate the working class. From 1917 onwards it marked itself as the alternative to pervasive capitalism; Marxism was the founding principle of the Soviet Union under the leadership of Joseph Stalin. Compared to countries where capitalism was based on structural racism, the Soviet Union offered alternative modernity which aimed to achieve Marxist ideas through a

communist state, and paraded visions of emancipating the working class plus equal distribution of wealth. However, these visions were never attained, and terms like 'crisis' and 'terror' were increasingly attached to the Soviet Union. Wheeler (1957:634) notes that there was a 'deeper crisis' brewing in the Soviet Union, and adds that the crisis could be attributed to the fact that 'traditional institutions are for one reason or another incompetent to solve present problems…' The Soviet Union became bureaucratic and authoritative: a dictatorship under Stalin who 'systematically employed terror to achieve its political and economic goals' (Wheeler 1957:640).

The Soviet system was highly bureaucratic, and the working class was not in charge of determining its destiny as initially envisioned. Wheeler (1957:640) illustrates this lack of democratic practices when:

> …'grass roots' covered up a problem… As problems percolate up through the successive stages of the party hierarchy, they are increasingly collected and synthesised. When they reach the party apex they are like the product of the upward movement of staff recommendations in any large bureaucracy. However, once the party apex gets those issues and decides party policy on them, there is no longer allowed any substantive debate on the validity of the decision, its wisdom or accuracy.

The bureaucracy destroyed the ability of the working class to freely participate in decision-making and solve their own problems. Even though the Soviet Union argued that there were no classes in their system, a rigid hierarchy of authority saw the top ranks of the party imposing their ideas on the rank and file, and the working classes more broadly. Those who dissented from the 'top brass' instructions of the Party were either imprisoned or murdered. During Stalin's rule, approximately 2.9 million people were imprisoned and 'between one million and one and a half million persons' were executed (Flewers 2011:272). The working classes were coerced to either accept unilateral decisions which came from Stalin or be labelled 'counter-revolutionaries' of the socialist state. Stalin's regime was repressive and paranoid. This was exacerbated by increasing mismanagement of the economy and industrialisation:

> Stalin wished 'to accumulate political capital' by means of 'deliberately forcing tension in the country to silence his critics'. He sought to terrorise the party and the people, to create an emergency situation, thereby to allow

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himself, the 'warrior' and 'saviour' of the state, to concentrate more power in his own hands; he also needed to blame 'enemies of the people' for the political and economic difficulties that still existed in the Soviet Union… (Flewers 2011:283).

Part of the reason Stalin built an authoritarian state was because he thought that socialism could only occur in the Soviet Union, and did not see the value of international socialism. In the process he wanted to create and maintain an enclave of socialism which needed to fight its enemies and protect itself. By having a highly bureaucratic system which was obedient and loyal to the system, I argue that Stalin thought his regime would prevail. Any sign of criticism from his people was interpreted as betrayal and violently dealt with. In addition, because the Soviet Union did not want to spread socialism internationally, it isolated itself and could not withstand the pressure of highly developed capitalist countries; its isolation spiralled into economic disaster.

Leon Trotsky, who was murdered by Stalin's regime, predicted the limits of the Soviet Union in 1927. He coined the term 'Stalinism' to describe a regime based on 'undemocratic practices [of] the leadership' (Twiss 2010:547, also see Haro 2011, Ticktin 2011). Trotsky lamented the manner in which Stalin contradicted the principles of Marxism, especially Lenin's visions, through:

…increasing [the] selection of party officials by appointment rather than election; the selection of economic workers on the basis of their support for the leadership majority rather than for their skill or initiative…; restrictions of the right of all party members to appeal their differences to the party through the party press and at party meetings; limitations upon the right of party members to familiarize themselves with all conflicting viewpoints within the party; the use of distortion and slander against political opponents instead of a comradely discussion of differences; the forcing of party members to vote under threat of repression for the positions…; and the actual repression of party dissidents by political reassignment, exile and termination of employment (Twiss 2010:547-8).

In the years between 1956 and 1968, after failed efforts by the Soviet propaganda machinery to suppress reportage, the brutality of the Soviet

became visible to the international public. The propaganda at the time projected an image of a regime attempting to reform their bureaucratic system and economy (Pitty 2009:99). However, terror and oppression had already affected all parts of the regime. Stalin and his successors managed to deflect a working class revolution. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was the final signifier of Soviet collapse.

It is against this background that I argue that Stalinism as an alternative model was tainted. It is important to note that not all Marxists subscribed to Stalinism; Trotsky, as we have seen, was highly critical of the regime. Drawing from Trotsky, I believe that the emancipation of the working class can only happen in a democratic socialist society which enables equal distribution of wealth under conditions where Black people can determine their own destiny. Socialism, furthermore, cannot happen in one country alone: there has to be an international rupture of the current system. When Fanon was writing, the mask of the Soviet Union as a worker's state was eroding. I suggest that this became the main reason why he advocated for universal humanity rather than socialism. I further argue in the later section of this chapter that when Biko was writing, he also saw the terror of Stalinism, and this was part of the reason that he was highly critical of Marxism.

This episode in history ushered in a new wave of politics. Coinciding with the rise of a bureaucratic and authoritative Soviet Union and the beginnings of the apartheid regime, Lodge (1983:1) argues that the 1940s was 'a watershed' in South African Black politics. At the time, a massive expansion of Black labour and an influx into urban areas radicalised Black people, many of whom joined trade unions. This radicalisation led to the formation of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) in the 1940s under the leadership of Lembede with the slogan 'black man's country' (see Fredrickson 1995; Fatton 1986). The 1940s were further accompanied by a 'repressive social and political climate' with the victory of Afrikaner nationalism which emboldened structural racism (Lodge 1983:33). The extension of the repression intensified in the 1950s:

In 1953 the Nationalist Party consolidated its position in a second electoral victory. More confident of its long-term prospect of ascendancy it began to quicken the pace of social restructuring, implementing with greater alacrity the measures enacted in the previous parliament. Urban influx controls were now compulsory in all municipalities,

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and the flow of labour was to be regulated and channelled through an extensive network of labour bureaux (Lodge 1983:67).

The unintended consequence of a repressive state was deepened Black revolt. The demolitions of freehold suburbs such as Sophiatown in Johannesburg, and events like the Sharpeville massacre, erupted into civil disobediences and women's protest movements (Lodge 1983). After the Sharpeville crisis there was an upsurge of militancy. The ANC and its breakaway movement, the Pan African Congress (PAC), formed the military wings *Umkhonto we Sizwe* and *Poqo* (see Lodge 1983). The militancy of the late 1950s spilt over into the 1960s and was coupled with the imprisonment of key ANC and PAC leaders on treason charges.

Simultaneous with these events, there was a rise in Black Power movements in the US. When the movement began in the early 1960s, most of them were critical of Marxist analysis. Boggs (1963:205) broke away from the Marxist tradition of the kind espoused by C. L. R. James, and noted that the Marxist slogan 'Black and White, Unite and Fight' did not fully comprehend the Black struggle: 'blacks and whites were never struggling for the same things nor were they united in the same cause even when they were fighting side by side.' Even though Boggs (1963) recognised that there were class differentiations among Black people, he was still adamant that Marxist analysis did not understand the notion of being Black, although some Marxist arguments were useful. He notes that Marxist class struggle arguments failed to acknowledge that the most economically oppressed individuals are Black people and that capitalism is tied to structural racism which firmly relies on the exploitation of Black people more than of other races. The class struggle negates Black oppression and exploitation, and Marxists were hesitant to recognise this point (Boggs 1963:212). Additionally, he argues, in most working class struggles, capitalism managed to incorporate some of the working class demands. However, in the process of assimilation, Black people found themselves excluded from the reforms achieved (Boggs 1963:212).

Malcolm X, on the other hand, barely referred to Marxism. He firmly galvanised Black people to unite and fight the oppressor. Black was used in two folds, Black as the oppressed race, and Black as revolutionary agent: '…we are all black people, so-called Negroes, second-class citizens, ex-slaves. You are nothing but an ex-slave' (Malcom X 1963:219). Thus, 'We have a common enemy. We have this in common: We have a common oppressor, a common exploiter, and a common discriminator. But

once we all realize that we have this common enemy, then we unite on the basis of what we have in common' (Malcom X 1963:219). This period clearly asserted the term Black. Being Black became a double concept which represented those who were historically oppressed and at the same needed to fight for their freedom. I argue that even though Du Bois' analysis was not vigorously used, that his ideas of the two-ness of Blackness were subliminally present in these movements; his ideas found practical rather than theoretical expression in the organisation of the movements.

In drawing from both Du Bois and Fanon, the Black Power movements emphasised the need to use Blackness as revolutionary agent, in practice and in theory, which supports my argument. Malcolm X's definition of revolution shows that Fanon's ideas were more visible in their context. There are acute similarities between South African ANC and the Black Power movements' tactics in the 1960s. Both adopted a militant strategy and rejected non-violent tactics. Paraphrasing Fanon, Malcolm X argued that 'revolution is bloody' and 'hostile.' Black people were seeking land, because '[l]and is the basis of all independence. Land is the basis of freedom, justice, and equality' (Malcom X 1963:223).

The popularity of the word Black increased, and a rigorous definition of the term became more noticeable in the late 1960s. Stokely Carmichael, who invigorated Black people to define themselves, was the catalyst of this phenomenon. He wanted Black people to call themselves Black so they could 'reclaim their history, their culture, to create their own sense of community and togetherness' (Carmichael, 1967:37). He claimed that the word Negro was no longer useful because it was associated with oppression and the image of the oppressor. Being Black meant reclaiming one's Blackness.

Some of Carmichael's arguments were drawn from Du Bois' analysis of the character of civilisation, although Carmichael does not cite him. About 'racism', Carmichael writes, 'The word has represented daily reality to millions of black people for centuries, yet it is rarely commonplace… By 'racism' …we mean the predication of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining control over that group' (1967:3). He notes that racism occurs in two forms - covertly and overtly. The overt forms of racism manifest themselves through violence, for example, when a Black person is publicly murdered. Covert racism is more subtle but far more destructive because it is institutionalised; it is embedded in policies and structural systems which reinforce exclusion and the

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exploitation of Black people (1967:4). Using the word Black allows the following: '(1) questioning old values and institutions of the society; (2) searching for new and different forms of political structure to solve political and economic problems; and (3) broadening the base of the political participation to include more people in the decision-making process' (Carmichael et al 1967:39).

Marxist ideas were not entirely abandoned by the Black Power movements. Rather, the term Black was incorporated into Marxism. The Black Panther Party was fundamental in combining these two ideologies. In the late 1960s, the Black Panthers acknowledged that Stalinism was in conflict with itself. Hence, 'The world of Marxism-Leninism has become a jungle of opinion in which conflicting interpretations…' have erupted (Cleaver 1969:320). Marxism needed to be stretched which meant that Black people could not solely depend on Marxist ideas because 'many Marxist-Leninists of our own time are also racists' and are 'class-egoists' (Cleaver 1969:323). The Black Panthers used Marxist-Leninist ideas in building their party - a party which could organise Black people whom they referred to as the lumpen. Paraphrasing Fanon, 'The Lumpenproletariat are all those who have no secure relationship or vested interest in the means of production and the institutions of capitalist society' (Cleaver 1969:325).

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers also used the analysis of Marxism to forge Black workers' struggles. It noted that the League was

> …dedicated to waging a relentless struggle against racism, capitalism, and imperialism. We are struggling for the liberation of black people in the confines of the United States as well as to play a major revolutionary role in the liberation of all oppressed people in the world (League of Revolutionary Black Workers 1970:407).

The 1960s as an era was marked by plurality of ideas. The authoritarian nature of the Soviet Union opened up new ways which combined new and old ideas. Black struggles in this era were militant, and this militancy found new ways of expanding what it means to be Black. I argue that the nuances of defining Blackness displayed continuities from the ideas of Du Bois and Fanon. Du Bois is the least cited, but I argue that his notion of the two-ness of Blackness was present in this era: submission or rebellion form an intrinsic part of these movements' ideas. The two-ness, in a new

form, was used to demonstrate that Blacks are historically oppressed but have taken rebellious forms to fight for their emancipation. Du Bois' analysis that capitalism and its expansion is embedded in structural racism also featured in these movements. Fanon was overtly cited, especially by the movements which wanted to expose the flaws in Marxism where it failed to relate to Black struggles.

In the late 1970s, the term Black became popular in South Africa. I argue that Biko was essential in defining the term Black for the South African context:

> Whites first encountered Bantu-speakers in the Eastern Cape in the 16th century, and in the central interior at the beginning of the 19th century. W. H. I. Bleek first used the word 'Bantu' in about 1856 as a classificatory name. In the earlier apartheid period (the 1960s), it replaced the word 'Native' in official government usage in South Africa. The Department of Native Affairs changed its name to the Department of Bantu Administration and Development, and the word became despised by Africans as it was associated with apartheid and inferior treatment. From 1977, the term 'Bantu' was slowly replaced by 'Black'.[25]

Highly influenced by the Black Power movements, Biko drew most of his ideas from these movements. Unlike some of these movements which attempted to combine Marxism with their arguments, Biko was very hostile to Marxism and rejected its ideas. I argue that the rejection of Marxism by Biko can be traced back to his rejection of Stalinism, but it may also be traced to how he viewed white liberal roles in the Black struggle. The next section looks at Biko and his ideas of Blackness.

2.5. Introducing Biko

The 1960s was characterised by a wave of splintering ideas - an environment which called the two reigning ideologies, Soviet communism and Western capitalism, into question. The contradiction and violent acts of the Soviet Union forced the Black struggle to rethink Marxism and what it meant in their fight for freedom. In the early 1960s, some of the Black Power movements rejected Marxism, and in the process strengthened the notion of being Black in reclaiming historical oppression but also

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[25] See http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/bantu.

asserting revolutionary agency. These movements, however, lost sight of the need for a rigorous interrogation of structural racism and how it is embedded in capitalism. The alternative solutions to their struggle were therefore more aligned to reform than to demolishing the structure. In the late 1960s there was a return of Marxism, reshaped to fit new forms of the Black struggle. The Black Panthers, for example, claimed affinity with Marxist-Leninist and Fanonian thought. It was a re-imagination, re-incorporation, reshaping and disrupting of old ideologies by imposing new ways of thinking about them.

In South Africa, Biko also re-shaped and interrupted the mode of operation in the Black struggle. He strengthened the call for Black people to determine their own destiny through Black Consciousness - the ideas of which were a clear break from Marxism. By forming a Black only organisation for example, I argue that he demonstrated a rejection of the typical Marxist slogan 'Black and white must unite'. He was highly critical of white lefties and liberals, primarily because he wanted Black people to take their revolutionary status seriously and fight against white racism. Woods (1978:33) argues that the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) rose after a political lull: 'With Mandela imprisoned and Sobukwe banned, there was for some years a leadership vacuum in South African black politics. It was filled toward the close of the 1960s by Bantu Steve Biko.' Woods notes that '[t]he idea behind Black Consciousness was to break away almost entirely from the past black attitudes to the liberation struggle and to set a new style of self-reliance and dignity for blacks as a psychological attitude leading to new initiatives' (1978:33). Fatton (1986), similar to Woods, historicises the formation of the Black Consciousness Movement and also concludes that the rise of the movement came after the arrests of the key leaders of the ANC and PAC. Fatton (1986:3) argues:

> Any consideration of Black Consciousness must begin, however, with an analysis of the different strands of African nationalism which developed in the first sixty years of the twentieth century and gave rise to the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC). Since their inception, these two movements have embodied the two fundamental approaches which characterise African nationalism…The Black Consciousness Movement contributed to such a surge of moral anger; its radicalisation became an indispensable spur to black revolutionary activity. The development of Black Consciousness as a counter-consciousness,

channelling the unified opposition of the black population to the dominance of the white core, became a fundamental and necessary ingredient in the process of challenging white supremacy. (Fatton 1986:40)

Steve Biko was the key leader of the Black Consciousness Movement. According to Bernstein (1978:5), Biko 'was the forty-sixth political detainee known to have died under interrogation by the security police in South Africa since the first 'no-trial' detention laws were introduced in 1963. His death attracted 'world-wide attention that has not, in the past, been focused on these other deaths'. Woods, who was a close friend of Biko's, states in his biography:

I had to look up the basic details of Steve Biko's short and stormy career. Born in King William's Town on December 18, 1946, he had begun his schooling at Brownlee Primary for two years, continued at Charles Morgan Higher Primary for four years, then moved on to Lovedale Institute to prepare for his matriculation. He was at Lovedale for only three months when school closed down as a result of strikes by senior pupils. He then moved to Marianhill in Natal, a Catholic institute where he did very well. In 1966 he enrolled as a student at the University of Natal to study medicine, but after initial academic success became so involved in politics that his grades suffered and he was barred from further study. His father, Mzimkhanyi Biko, had died when Steve Biko was four, and he had an elder brother and sister and a younger sister. In 1970 he had married Nontsikelelo (Ntsiki) Mashalaba of Umtata, and they had two sons. (1978:55-6)

In his biography of Biko, Mangcu (2012) emphasises that Biko's ideas emerged and were influenced by a long line of Xhosa intellectuals who fought against colonisation. Mangcu offers a vivid landscape of where Biko grew up, and remarks that Biko was rooted in his community. The biography, however, does not give an in-depth detail of who Biko was, or give a sense of how he was exposed to various intellectual traditions.

His ideas currently live on in South Africa, and are highly influential in the protests which have been recurring in the last ten years. His thoughts have also been captured by the academy, and theorised in different forms. At times, however, scholarship has washed out the radical origins of his work. His ideas still shape how Black South Africans see and define their Blackness. The next section looks at how

Biko defined Blackness. Different from Du Bois and Fanon, Biko used Black Consciousness to articulate his Blackness. The next section thus introduces under Biko a title which highlights his difference from the other two authors.

2.5.1. Biko and Black Consciousness

Biko created a Black-only student organisation with the aim of forcing Black people to self-determine their destiny. The creation of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) was to push the agenda of Black students - to galvanise them to 'collectively' solve their embroiled problems. Moreover, SASO aimed at strengthening Blackness by giving Black students an identity which confers dignity and respect, and eventually confidence (Biko 1978/2005:4-5). He firmly asserted that the organisation was *not* to give 'black visibility but real participation'.

In forming the structure, Biko was highly critical of white people who opposed the idea. Rightly so, he argued that interracial organisations did not reflect the South African context. His approach to the Black struggle was similar to that of Carmichael, even in his style of writing. Carmichael wrote much earlier than Biko, and both were students when they wrote most of their ideas. However, the similarities do not negate Biko's originality. As I argue above, between the 1960s and 1970s, new ideologies were shaped and re-configured, and Biko did the same in the South African context. Both Biko and Carmichael were concerned about building a movement which would spread Black radicalism. Biko, like Carmichael, concluded that a Black organisation was needed for Blackness to flourish. Also, similarly to Carmichael, he believed there was a need for Black pride, and that Black organisations were fundamental in that creation. Finally, there was a need for Black people to define and determine their identities. Redefining the term Black as revolutionary agent was crucial in this process.

Drawing the same conclusions as Carmichael, Biko broke from the Marxist tradition which argued that Black and white working classes must unite; Biko heavily criticised 'non-conformists', 'liberals', and 'lefties'. He opposed the liberals and lefties as they often claimed they were 'not responsible for racism' or the country's 'inhumanity to the black man'. He continued, 'these are the people who claim that they too feel the oppression just as acutely as the blacks and therefore should be jointly involved in the black man's struggle for a place under the sun' (Biko 1978: 21).

According to Biko (1978), this attested to the 'arrogance' of white liberals and lefties. Moreover, by supporting multiracial organisations, white liberals and lefties ignored the 'complexes of superiority and inferiority and these continue to manifest … even in the "non-racial" set up of the integrated complex'.

Apart from advocating for a Black only organisation, and breaking from radical whites, Biko noted that the erosion of Blackness also comes with culture. He argued that 'acculturation' which he defined as a 'fusion of different cultures' (1978:45) needs to be evaluated in the construction of Blackness. This 'acculturation' has led Black people to be compared to whites. In other words, European culture has made itself superior which has conversely made Black people doubt their own cultures (Biko 1978:45). He was, however, cautious about making Black culture fixed and static, and warned:

> I am against the belief that African culture is time-bound… I am also against
> the belief that when one talks of African culture one is necessary talking of
> the pre-Van Riebeeck culture.

Culture evolves, it is not fixed. But culture is important as it centres Black people and strengthens the collective nature of Blackness. Biko (1978:46) argued that it is this collective character which indicates that the capitalist approach is inherently anti-Black. The rationale of capitalism is based on individualism which is the opposite of Blackness (1978:47).

A communal approach to culture also links to religion. Biko (1978:47) noted that religion and the appreciation of God are integral to Blackness. 'We had our own community of saints'. Religion was not a 'particular building' or set of institutions. Rather, Black people worshipped God as a collective and communicated freely outside a structure. Black people believed that God was 'everywhere and anywhere' (Biko 1978:47). In addition to culture and religion, Blackness found expression in music: '…when soul struck with its all engulfing rhythm it immediately caught on and set hundreds of millions of black bodies in gyration throughout the world' (Biko 1978:50). Music created by Black people captured the wounded Black soul and enlightened it. Like Du Bois and Fanon, Biko argued that part of Black culture manifests itself through struggle. Fighting for Black freedom and finding a sense of pride in the world needs to occur.

Biko (1978:52) advocated the need for Black people to preserve the beautiful elements of Black culture. White racism has created conditions which have made a Black person 'a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity' (Biko 1978: 31). Being Black is not about 'pigmentation'. In a racist South Africa, Black people are socially, politically and economically excluded (Biko 1978:52). However, Black people have the ability to change this reality, and Biko, like Du Bois and Fanon, believed that Blackness can emancipate itself from the 'shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude' (1978:53). Black people need to regain their Blackness. Black consciousness for Biko meant a process of overcoming the 'subservient being'. He notes: 'Black Consciousness, therefore, takes cognisance of the deliberateness of God's plan in creating black people black. It seeks to infuse the black community with new-found pride…' (Biko 1978:53). The:

> first step therefore is to make the black man come to himself; pump back life into his empty shell; infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil supreme in the country of his birth. This is what we mean by an inward-looking process.

This process of Black Consciousness occurs in the 'Third World'; the Third World context created the conditions in which Black people were oppressed more than anywhere else (Biko 1978:53). Structural racism is tied to colonial settings. White people in the Third World cemented their supremacy, and Biko (1978:54) asserted that Black Consciousness aims to eliminate the logic of white racism. Furthermore, he stated that Black Consciousness seeks to eradicate the 'Class Theory' rationale. The notion that class matters more than race was highly contested by Biko.

According to Biko, class theory ideology was based on 'twisted logic' (1978:54). White racism is an 'unnerving totality, featuring both on the offensive and in our defence' (1978:54). Hence, Black emancipation cannot be based on class, but requires a destruction of white racism. In thinking about the South African context, he argued that the fact that 'apartheid has been tied up with white supremacy, capitalist exploitation, and deliberate oppression makes the problem much, much more complex' (Biko 1978: 30). However, he did not expand on the idea of structural racism and how it fosters, and is fostered by, capitalism. Rather, he decisively noted that

'dialectic materialism' is an 'antithesis' (1978:55). Under conditions of white racism, Blacks and whites cannot live together. Black Consciousness must seek to 'produce at the output end of the process real black people who do not regard themselves as appendages to white society' (1978:55). Black Consciousness will also confront and challenge knowledge which is produced about Black people in white racist societies.

White racism has attempted to portray Black people as 'evil'. The system has built media institutions which spread the propaganda that Black people are inferior. It has constructed homelands for Black people with the aim of removing them from urban areas (Biko 1978:67). Moreover, the racist system uses violence to intimidate and victimise Black people. Under these harsh conditions, Black Consciousness as an inward reflection of Black people, is the only way to emancipate Blackness. It is a change of the mind which allows Black people to return to their humanity, and to see themselves as human. A change in the mind-set of Black people will give them the opportunity to acquire a different attitude and consciousness (Biko 1978:71-75).

Black Consciousness can be achieved by rejecting the 'legacy of colonialism and white domination'. Biko argued for a Black market where Black people can create their own businesses and sell goods in their communities, resulting in the creation of the 'Buy Black campaign' (Biko 1978:78). He noted that true freedom consisted in Black people having the ability to determine their own destiny (1978:101). This collective approach, he believed, would give Black people a sense of Black pride.

Black Consciousness ruptured ideas about what was considered radical, for example critiquing Marxism. Biko, drawing on the radicalism of Fanon, sought to do more than simply change the face of governance by Black people: 'if we have a mere change of face of those in governing positions what is likely to happen is that black people will continue to be poor, and you will see a few blacks filtering through into the so-called bourgeoisie' (Biko 1978:169). He wanted state intervention to participate in key industrial sectors such as mining, and 'complete ownership of land' (Biko 1978:170). Thus, in 'blending of the two systems, we hope to arrive at a more equitable distribution of wealth' (Biko 1978:70). However, he could not fully grapple with the foundation of capitalism which manifests itself in structural racism. Biko believed that freedom for Black people was located in the state. He thought that participation by the people could be guarded by electoral system, 'entirely one-man, one-vote' (Biko 1978:171). In many respects, Biko appealed to and appreciated a liberal approach. Aspects of his vision of emancipation were incorporated into the democratic state after

1994. Voting, for example, as a tool for mass inclusion, was used to inform and influence who controls the state.

His ideology was inward-looking and involved changing of attitudes; changing how Black people see the world and their conditions is important in mobilising the mind towards action and revolt. However, without a rigorous analysis of the structure which *constructs* and *reconstructs* Blackness, solutions to the problems confronted by Black people modify rather than destroy the system. Changes in attitude can occur under conditions where contradictions are sharpened, but without a thesis isolating the foundation of oppression, it is difficult to destroy racism. Only emphasising the everyday experiences of the ontology of being Black can pacify a radical programme. There is a need to link both structure and everyday experiences and how they manifest themselves.

Black Consciousness was able to solidify the daily manifestations of structural racism, which is crucial to radicalise the oppressed and to move them from having an inferiority complex to becoming revolutionary agents. However, the analysis of everyday experiences cannot end there. The next step in the struggle is to understand how the daily encounters are tied to capital accumulation, especially within class divisions among Black people. By linking structural racism to the production and reproduction of capitalism, Black emancipation struggles can eradicate a system which is not only based on reform but on Black freedom.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the breadth and depth of Du Bois' intellectual work, and his importance in influencing and being influenced by the activists and events which occurred in the South African struggle. His initial conception of Blackness was based on the notion of *double consciousness* - a term with multiple meanings. In unpacking the concept, the first impression shows a process in which a person is wrestling with being Black and being American. On closer evaluation, the term becomes far more complex: I interpret *double consciousness* to mean a process in which Blackness is forced to submit to or rebel against structural racism. *Double consciousness* advocates for the rebellion part of Blackness as the ultimate alternative in a world where civilisation has brutalised Blackness.

After *The Souls of Black Folk*, *double consciousness* did not appear explicitly again in Du Bois' work. However, the contradictions and paradoxes of Blackness within capitalism, which is founded on structural racism, continued to run throughout his work. He noted that capitalism *constructed* Blackness as inferior, a 'beast', and 'evil'. But, as reforms were put in place, for example the abolishment of slavery and the implementation of civil rights legislation, Blackness was *reconstructed*. The *reconstruction* of Blackness created class differentiations among Black people, and allowed capitalism to assimilate and incorporate some of the demands of Black people. In essence, the *reconstruction* of Blackness failed to negate capitalism which still remained laced with structural racism. Influenced by the developments which occurred in the Soviet Union, Du Bois came to the conclusion that capitalism needs to be destroyed and that socialism was the solution to Black emancipation.

I have shown that Fanon's conceptual framing of Blackness in *Black Skin, White Masks* was influenced by Du Bois. Du Bois' book: *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil,* in particular, permeates most of Fanon's arguments and his understanding of what it means to be Black. Fanon asserted that in an alienated world, Blackness is *constructed* as non-being. This non-being ontology is both subjective and objective. The subjective and objective elements are apparent in language, love, and everyday encounters with the world. Context was important in Fanon's analysis of Blackness: hence he talks of an 'alienated world' which has socially, economically and politically excluded Black people.

The humanity of Black people can only be *reconstructed* in a new world if it is universal. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon outlines how to achieve universal humanity. Decolonisation is a violent process in which Blackness confronts the oppressor and fights for humanity. He argues that this revolution will, however, be deflected because of different class interests among Black people, and gives a vivid yet grim picture of each class and their role in derailing the decolonisation process. In the end, he argues that the lumpenproletariat have the capacity to forge a revolution as they have 'nothing to lose but everything to gain'.

Fanon did not advocate for socialism or capitalism as alternatives to Black freedom, but for universal humanity. I argue that his outlook was shaped by the crisis of the Soviet Union which in the 1960s was becoming highly bureaucratic and authoritative. Marxism as an alternative was questioned, and emerging movements either rejected or modified some of the traditional ideas. The definition of what it means

to be Black provided new forms for the *reconstruction* of Blackness, in an environment which persisted as capitalist and structurally racist.

Biko, unlike Fanon and Du Bois, advocated for Black consciousness as the answer to Black emancipation, which can be traced back to Carmichael's ideas of Black pride. For Biko, in a similar manner as for Fanon, being Black was beyond pigmentation. He linked the *construction* of Blackness to the social, political and economic exclusion of Black people. White racism has created a Black person who is a 'shell.' His solution is therefore for Black people to acquire human status by building Black-only organisations which give Black people self-determination and pride and mobilise the mind to revolt.

In this chapter, unlike most critical theorists (such as Rabaka), I did not interpret Du Bois, Fanon and Biko through their understanding of race and the binary of Black and white. Rather, I have shown that these intellectuals and activists held a conception of Blackness beyond these binaries. Blackness can exist on its own, and *construction* and *reconstruction* is tied to structural racism under capitalism. Since we are still living in these conditions, we need to understand Black freedom. In the next chapter, expanding on the work of Du Bois, Fanon, and Biko, I pose the question: what does Black freedom look like under capitalism and is it possible to have freedom?

Chapter 3

When We Were Black:[26] Present Realities and the Importance of Du Bois

3.1. Introduction

Chapter 2 outlined the seminal work of Du Bois, Fanon and Biko, and gave an in-depth reflection on the meaning of Blackness and how it is structurally embedded in capitalism. The chapter demonstrated that Blackness in its most advanced and radical form is a collective struggle seeking to dismantle the inferiority complex. Capitalism, through structural racism, *constructed* and positioned Blackness as non-being. Blackness, therefore, cannot be understood outside of the context of expanding capitalism and the ontology of Blackness which is reproduced by structural racism. Biko's ideas in South Africa emboldened Blackness to self-determine and paved the way for a more militant struggle which led to the collapse of apartheid and a new democracy in 1994.

The 1976 Soweto uprising marked this militancy among Black students, and the insurgency was crystallised in sustained protests across the country, especially in Black urban areas. The student uprising was followed by '[c]onsumer boycotts, which impacted on white businesses, [and] proved particularly difficult for the state to counter' (Beinart 2001: 249).

These protests in the late 1970s further pushed the apartheid regime to make concessions, hoping to contain the Black revolt. Amongst the reforms introduced were 'tentative schemes for black private property in the urban areas' (Beinart 2001: 245). The apartheid regime drew some of its ideas from global trends that incorporated free-market ideologies, and more specifically, started to combine 'liberal economic policy

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[26] The title was inspired by a television series directed by Khalo Matabane. The series is based on the 1976 uprising. '*When We Were Black* is an initiatory journey of a teenager who is trying to become a man by learning the art of seduction within a revolutionary context.' (see https://newafricancinema.wordpress.com/2012/04/25/south-africa-when-we-were-black-khalo-matabane/).

and conservative social philosophy' in order to remedy the country's problems (Beinart 2001: 245).

The state's strategy expanded from entrenching homelands[27] to cultivating an 'urban black middle class' (Beinart 2001:246). The creation of nominally independent, ethnically-defined bureaucratic administrations was used as a means to control the influx of Black people, and reinforce the geographical separation between Black and white people. Black people were integrated into various positions of governance. In local government, for instance, Black people were appointed as councillors in township[28] designated municipalities.

In the 1980s employment was also created in the private sector (see Beinart 2001 and Southall, 2006 and 2016). The banking sector started to recruit Black people in previously white occupations such as human resource personnel and administrators. Moreover, a single education system was implemented[29] (Beinart 2001:249).

The implementation of these reforms, however, did not pacify Black people's fight to self-determine their destiny. The next section shows how after the death of Biko, the struggle intensified. The chapter theorises the limits of a democratic state and the Freedom Charter. This is followed by a discussion of how contemporary scholars situate Biko and Fanon in the post-apartheid context. I unpack how the Economic Freedom Fighters' (EFF) 'Seven Non-Negotiable Pillars for Economic Freedom in our Lifetime' constitutes a modern version of the 1955 Freedom Charter. Du Bois is absent in most debates concerning South Africa. However, I advocate for his renewed importance and locate him in relation to some of the discourses we are still battling with in the quest to find solutions.

3.2. After Biko's Death

> …black opposition in the 1970s paved the way for political change, the insurrection… made the process very difficult to reverse…. (Beinart 2001: 254).

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[27] Homelands, also known as Bantustans, were Black 'independent' states, established in the 1960s
[28] Urban areas designated for Black people.

[29] Prior to the 1980s, the white and Black education systems were separated.

The death of Biko in 1977 shaped the trajectory of the politics which followed. On many levels his death was both a blessing and a curse. It was a blessing since it paved the way for a sustained and emboldened Black revolt across the country (Beinart 2001:251), but weakened the ideologies of the Black Consciousness Movement. Many of its cohort activists fled the country; some got arrested, and others joined new formations (see Gibson 2008). During the 1980s, uprisings were propelled by a renewed ideology premised on the Freedom Charter. Originally drafted in 1955, the Charter re-emerged in the 1980s as a central component of the political imagination of many movements. According to Burnham (2005:23), 'The momentous events of the late 1980s and 1990s were influenced by the Freedom Charter experience…'. The document and its principles governed the established movements of the era. In 1983, the United Democratic Front (UDF), a national coordinating body of various grassroots organisations across the country, was formed. Its political philosophy was oriented around the 'non-racial tradition of the ANC and also drew on Congress's Christian heritage' (see Seekings 2000). In 1985 the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was established - an amalgamation of 'independent unions' under one federation (Beinart 2001: 261).

The Freedom Charter, adopted by the Congress of the People in 1955, was a 'common programmatic statement of the liberation alliance comprising the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the South African Congress of Trade Unions' (SACTU) (Jordan 1986:159). Jordan (1986) argues that the events which eventually led to the production of the document in Kliptown, Soweto, came out of this context of a compromise between the elites and working class. The history of the ANC is marked by a continuous reinvention of its politics. In contextualising the ANC and the development of the Freedom Charter, Jordan (1986:146) notes that the ANC structure, initially established to protect the interests of the 'Black elite' in 1912, transformed itself. The limits of the ANC's approach of protecting Black elites were starkly confronted as it could not traverse the reinforced structural racism embedded in capitalism. Class 'objectives and ambitions, were [found to be] contingent upon the status of the Black community as a whole' (Jordan 1986:147).

The concrete reality of the 1950s demonstrated a need for the ANC to realign its political orientation. The ambitions of the Black elites in the ANC to be incorporated into a racist form of capitalism was challenged by the growth of the Industrial and

Commercial Workers Union which had organised unskilled Black workers (Jordan 1986:148). As a result, a new outlook emerged within the ANC to appeal to this particular working class, and the ANC amended its political orientation towards a 'Pan-African vision'. This vision embraced 'the whole continent and peoples of African descent in the new world'. (Jordan 1986:148) It encompassed struggles from various parts of the world which were fought against imperialism. Following on this Pan-African vision, a 'call for a "Black Republic" [became] a central political demand' (Jordan 1986:150).

The Black Republic idealism was to create a state and institutions which incorporated the majority. Even though the framework was not clearly articulated, the idea forged a pathway to what became known as 'African Nationalism'. As already mentioned in Chapter 2, the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) - established in 1944 with Anton Lembede as its leader - expanded the call of the Black Republic (Jordan 1986:151; and see Lodge 1983) by advocating for African Nationalism. African Nationalism emanated from the Youth League's 1944 Manifesto which argued for the self-determination of the African people - which, it argued, could only be defined and achieved by Africans (see Lodge 1983). Thus, the ANC '[had to] be the personification of the aspirations of the people' (Jordan 1986:151). As a strategy, the ANCYL campaigned to delegitimise the sovereignty of a racist South African state, and supported the following idea: 'Since power will not be willingly conceded, [we] need to employ whatever means are necessary to wrest power from the White minority regime' (Jordan 1986:151). In their call for action, the ANCYL defined the need for National Freedom:

> By National Freedom we mean freedom from White domination and the attainment of political independence. This implies the rejection of the conception of segregation, apartheid, trusteeship, or White leadership which are all motivated by the idea of White domination… (Jordan 1986:151, also see Neame 2015).

The 1950s were defined by mass strikes and civil disobedience (see Chapter 2), and the theoretical underpinnings of the Black Republic and African Nationalism were incorporated in the drafting of the Freedom Charter. According to Jordan (1986:159),

the central features of the Freedom Charter embraced the historical transformation of ANC politics since its establishment:

> …the demand for majority rule, institutionally expressed as an adult suffrage; the abolition of all forms of racial and national domination, to be embodied in statutory rights for all national groups; the transference of the key centres of economic power to the ownership of the people; the dismantling of the White minority's monopoly over the best agricultural land; and civil liberties for all…

Burnham notes that in June 1955, multiple formations from grassroots organisations to labour movements congregated at Kliptown under the umbrella of the Congress of the People to draft the Charter. 'Du Bois sent President Truman' as part of the delegation (This once again shows the important role Du Bois played in shaping South African politics); the Charter, however, remained an underground document until it re-emerged in public discourse in the 1980s (2005:1-11). During thirty years of hibernation it had managed to be protected from the state's attempts to destroy it, and received international praise. The ethos evoked was an 'expression of human rights in South Africa' (Burnham 2005:8). The document embraced a world of non-racialism, and the Africanists who split from the ANC during the Congress of the People opposed this position of non-racialism. According to Burnham (2005:13), they felt that the documents were too aligned with Marxist ideology - which contradicted ANC tradition. The mission of 'Africa for Africans' was doomed to failure by the integration of white people in their fight for liberation.

Nonetheless, non-racialism in the 1980s captured most political imaginations. The document conceptualised 'an ideal society as one that is prosperous, free, and equal' (Burnham 2005:8). The Charter proposed an inclusive democratic society, not a socialist programme. Burnham (2005:14) notes the call for nationalisation in the Freedom Charter was intended to 'dismantle white hegemony' rather than oppose capitalism. In essence, the document was drafted for the majority to have access to the liberties which apartheid denied them. Majority inclusion would inherently change how the state worked and ultimately coerce capitalism to adjust to a new configuration. However, the Charter did not challenge the fundamental principles of capitalism or the role of the state. In other words, the document was geared towards dismantling white supremacy (structural racism) without dismantling the exploitation which was embedded in a capitalism.

The Charter clearly advocates for a society of inclusiveness for both Black people and whites, insisting that '…South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people' (Freedom Charter 1955:44). The notion of non-racialism thus became the ultimate foundation. A vision for equal rights and opportunities was to be achieved through a 'democratic state' as opposed to a socialist programme. The *democratic state* would sustain its core functions and the institutions of the *democratic state* would incorporate the majority: 'Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate for all bodies which make law' (Freedom Charter 1955:44). The electoral system was envisioned as a means to facilitate the inclusion of the majority in a *democratic state* which would also aid that 'The national wealth of our country, [and] the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people' (Freedom Charter 1955:45). Moreover, the Charter takes into consideration that there are different social classes. As a result, the *democratic state* would be required to allow all these various classes to flourish. For example, 'all the land [will be] redivided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger. The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers' (Freedom Charter 1955:45). The Freedom Charter did not oppose the exploitation of workers. Rather, it permitted workers to freely affiliate themselves with their chosen trade unions: 'All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers' (Freedom Charter 1955:46). The *democratic state* was envisioned through a legal and international framework: 'South Africa shall be a fully independent state, which respects the rights and sovereignty of all nations' (Freedom Charter 1955:46). As Mazibuko (2016:11) points out, the Charter confined the liberation of Black people within the legal framework of the state and blindingly ignored the 'history of pillage and plunder; fire and murder; dispossession and humiliation' which accompanied the ontology of being Black.

The Freedom Charter was adopted by the UDF and COSATU as their guide in fighting apartheid. At the height of a Black revolt which was seeking self-determination in the streets of South Africa, a new kind of politics started to emerge within the UDF and the ANC: 'The language of democracy, black advancement, and human rights was more strongly emphasised' (Beinart 2001: 274). The popularity of the Charter in the 1980s also gave a new outline to the meaning of self-determination. This meaning deviated from that of Biko (see Chapter 2). Sachs (1985:49), for example, entangles

self-determination with 'themes of national liberation, democracy and civil rights.' His definition and arguments about the Bill of Rights confirmed, and were aligned with, the ideals of the Freedom Charter. Using a legalistic framework, Sachs argued that South Africa is a racist state, but an independent state nonetheless because international organisations recognised it. It is racist because the majority are excluded from accessing human rights. A state which only includes a minority is not sovereign. A legitimate state is based on the majority accessing liberties:

> South Africa is not just one more of the many states in which the people have no effective say in government; nor is it merely one of the many states in which racism is practised. South Africa is an explicitly racist state, in which racist domination is as expressly built into the legal order as colonial domination was built into the now dismantled Empire. (Sachs 1985:53)

According to Sachs (1985), the apartheid system contravened international laws; the majority had not 'elected' members of the state. Therefore, he noted, the mission for the liberation movement was to transform a racist state into a *democratic* one with a 'non-racial constitution and anti-racist in its activities' (Sachs 1985:55). He added:

> A democratic state will replace a racist supremacist state not simply because it is good in itself, but because it is the only means of redressing the great historic injustices brought about in the past by invasion, conquest and domination, and institutionalised today by the network of apartheid laws. (Sachs 1985:55)

Sachs (1985) locates people's power in the state. In other words, for Black people to regain their freedom, the solution is the state. A *democratic state* in the mould of the Freedom Charter is seen as the vehicle that will deliver self-determination, not the people themselves. Therefore, liberation and the achievement of a *democratic state* were equivalent in the same struggle.

By equating liberation with the achievement of a *democratic state*, self-determination is confined to legalistic and human rights language. The ontology of Blackness and the dismantling of structural racism are nullified by the Constitution and subsequent processes of 'state building'. As a result, capitalism, still the cornerstone

of *constructing* and *reconstructing* Blackness as inferior, was accommodated. The proposed alternative was the Bill of Rights. Sachs (1985) noted:

> … it could be a valuable instrument in promoting national reconstruction, in particular of harmonising the social programmes necessary for the restoration of the land, wealth, dignity and general social rights of the dispossessed, with the legitimate personal needs and anxieties of all the individuals who make up the South African people (Sachs 1985:58).

Suttner (1985:82) on the other hand, argued that the Freedom Charter was a revolutionary document. It gave people the power to govern. Unlike the Black American who sought to be absorbed into the system, Suttner asserted, 'the demand to vote in an undivided South Africa is part of a national liberation struggle. It is part of a struggle for sovereignty, because the people have never governed South Africa' (Suttner 1985:82). Indeed, people needed to govern themselves. However, in his statement I read a contradiction: sovereignty and the right to vote are based on state formation. Hence, the notion of 'the people shall govern' is once again reduced to a *democratic state* taking charge of self-determination.

His inconsistency is more evident when he notes that the Freedom Charter 'is not a program of the working class alone, it nevertheless primarily reflects its interests' (Suttner 1985:82). My reading of that statement is that the society envisioned was to accommodate various classes but not to fully emancipate the Black working class from their chains of oppression. The antagonistic relationship between the working class and the bourgeoisie would remain, which in essence means that capitalism and exploitation would be intact. He affirms this by stating that 'the democratic gains will deepen into socialism' (Suttner 1985:88). How can democratic gains deepen socialism when capitalism is not smashed? How can democratic gains deepen socialism when the power of the people is located within the *democratic state*? How can democratic gains deepen socialism when the Freedom Charter only '*reflects'* working class interests? A reflection, it should be remembered, is no more than the casting of light - a mere *acknowledgement* that the Black working class is part of the equation. Reflection does not mean that their ontological position is entrenched in the ideology or enactment of the programme.

Mafeje (1986) reminds us that when analysing the apartheid regime, one needs to take into account the subjective and objective phenomena confronting Black people.

Thus, '…universal history need not be the same as those [minority] which are used for deciphering local history' (1986:95). My reading is that Mafeje signals a clear position: universal norms of a *democratic state* codified on international laws do not always mean freedom and liberties. Without the eradication of capitalism, Black oppression will remain. Mafeje's version of democracy, in opposition to Sachs', advocates for socialist democracy:

> Socialist democracy is on the agenda precisely because of the unreliability
> of bourgeois democracy under conditions of imperialism and monopoly
> capitalism. These are the objective conditions under which all contemporary
> liberation struggles are being conducted (Mafeje 1986:119).

Even though Mafeje does not refine his notion of socialist democracy, he sees it as a way to retain the people's power. He problematised the interpretation of *democratic state* to mean self-determination. Self-determination, as discussed in Chapter 2, cannot be handed over to a reformed state apparatus to control. A *democratic state* with elected members, yet without people's power, could never give Blacks their universal goal of being human.

Despite these warnings by Mafeje, the international legal framework of a *democratic state* embodied in a constitution won the rationale in the Black struggle. During the transition from apartheid, the Freedom Charter became 'the starting point for consideration of the substance of a new constitution' (Burnham 2005:25). In the Bill of Rights, the ANC used the Freedom Charter as guideline: 'We reiterate our adherence to the principles of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa as enshrined in the Freedom Charter' (Burnham 2005:25). Moreover, the Freedom Charter was used to justify the ideological shifts in approving and maintaining capitalism - which barely changed ownership - and the capitalist class (Burnham 2005:25). Nationalisation of land was abandoned and the protection of minority property rights adhered to (Burnham 2005:26-7).

The Freedom Charter was responsible for bringing the Bill of Rights and the Constitution to the majority. At the same time, it paved the way for the *democratic state* to continue facilitating the interests of a capitalist class whose mission was to make a profit by exploiting the labour of the Black working class (Alexander 1985:10-11). The racist society of apartheid which divided 'white' and 'black' people remained

(Alexander 1985). The process of capital accumulation which privileges whites and compromises the freedom of Blackness was 'enshrined' in this Charter.

When apartheid collapsed, it gave rise to a *democratic state*. The majority voted to elect members to lead and govern a *democratic state* in 1994. This victory:

> …successfully consolidated representative democracy, [in which] the rule of law is upheld by an independent judiciary and a highly progressive and laudable constitution, and it has (in the main) stabilised and grown its economy to an extent inconceivable during the late 1980s and early 1990s. (Hamilton 2011:357)

Racial domination was partially dismantled. The majority were given access to liberties on paper, but capital accumulation remained intact in a *democratic* South Africa. Capital accumulation, as defined by Bond (2000:8), is based on producing 'commodities for the purpose of exchange, for profit, and hence for the self-expansion of capital'. The expansion of capitalism embedded in 'systematically' exploiting workers was never removed. Structural racism which *constructed* Blackness as non-being was never challenged – during the transition rather it *reconstructed* Black people. The expansion of capitalism under a democratic gaze gave Black people legalistic human rights, but not the power to self-determine.

In 1990, Nelson Mandela (who would become the first president of a *democratic* South Africa in 1994) was released from prison, and the liberation parties were unbanned. According to Bond, the period was marked by uncertainty. Two discourses were at play. Firstly, Mandela 'insisted that the "Freedom Charter demands the nationalisation of mines, banks and monopoly industries is the policy of the ANC and a change or modification of our views in this regard is inconceivable"' (Bond 2000:15). Secondly, other leaders within the ANC were reinforcing a 'neoliberal framework.' By 1993, even COSATU started using neoliberal terminology such as 'pacts', 'compacts', 'accords' and 'social contracts' (Bond 2000:55). Bond asks a pressing question: 'How did mediocre hucksters of neoliberalism flatter and cajole so many formerly tough-minded working-class leaders and progressive thinkers into abdicating basic principles?'

Bond (2000) notes that by the late 1980s and 1990s, a machinery of consultants was in discussion with various militant parties, brainstorming 'scenario plans' of the

future. Remember, at this time, the world order had changed fundamentally: the days of the apartheid regime were limited and the Soviet Union was collapsing. The fall of the Berlin Wall signified, for some, the 'end of history' (see Fukuyama 1992). The universal two modernities no longer existed (see Chapter 2). The collapse of the Soviet Union created a world where 'there [was] no alternative' but capitalism (see Bond 2000). In that changing world, the logical conclusion was to conduct scenario planning for the adoption of a liberal democratic state model - now ostensibly proven as the 'universal' political form - and plans were proposed for 'universal' problem-solving.

These plans became a bargaining method for the elites to reach a compromise with opposing parties, especially those who wanted to dismantle capitalism. For the organised working class (in this case the trade unions), the scenario plans were used as a compromising tool: Marxism as an ideology was losing legitimacy after the fall of the Soviet Union (Bond 2000:65). Moreover, state scenario planners endorsed a neoliberal framework to underpin a non-racial and *democratic state*. Bond notes, 'The state would step in both to force capital to follow a long-term rational, non-racial capitalist logic, and also to facilitate access to basic goods and services, to environmental and consumer protection, or to industrial and technological development' (2000:92). However, this logic of using a *democratic state* for progressive gains produced contradictions and materially did not emancipate the working class from alienation and exploitation. Questions of what it means to self-determine and what freedom means still remain.

The next section gives an introduction to how Biko and Fanon's work is interpreted in a *democratic state*. I argue that a *democratic state* which was inspired by the Freedom Charter failed to liberate the *reconstruction* from the confines of structural racism embedded in capitalism.

3.3. The limits of a democratic state

The year 1994 saw the majority exercising their democratic voting rights and electing a Black president into power. Representatives from the ANC occupied positions in the new *democratic state*. Through these representatives, the power of the *democratic state* shifted from the white minority to the Black majority. Almost two decades after the death of Biko, some victory was obtained. A *democratic state* came with new aspirations, opportunities and limitations. Nevertheless, the new context and its

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achievements, as Alexander (1993b:6) writes, entails that people 'decide what exactly this means. How does it help us to determine ends and means? What are our time frames? How long are our short, medium and long terms?' Even though Alexander wrote a year before 1994, he notes that the insurrections of the 1970s to the 1980s coerced the racist capitalist state to find methods to reform its system. What transpired was, however, not an ideology to destroy the state. Rather, the hegemony which dominated and eventually led to a *democratic state* was a rationale of class alliances. In other words, the exclusive white minority domination, which later incorporated a few Black elites, was *reconstructed* to involve the 'bourgeoisie, the black and white middle classes and some sections of the white working class' (1993b:7-8) in the new reformed system. A democratic South Africa allowed certain freedoms without dealing with the fundamentals. These liberties gave the illusion that occupation of a *democratic state* is equivalent to a situation in which 'we [Black people] have in fact taken power' (Alexander 1993b:10).

I agree with some of Alexander's assertions: the period signified 'deracialised capitalism'; it brought 'universal franchise [in terms of] civil and political freedoms of speech, press, assembly and organisation that are necessary to political debate and the conduct of electoral campaigns' (1993b:80 and see Shapiro 1993: 2–3), and South Africa now praises itself for having the most progressive constitution in the world (see Hamilton 2011). These liberties are indeed an important achievement. However, I argue that the process of emancipating Black people cannot be solely based on the Bill of Rights and the constitutional framework. A *democratic state* in its current formation cannot change the traditional *construction* of the ontological position of Blackness. The eradication of poverty and inequality does not coincide with achieved legislated human rights (see Hamilton 2011). Rather, the exploitation of the Black working class was entrenched. As a result,

> …relatively poor citizens are left out of the economic loop in two ways: (a) they fail to prosper from a generally prosperous economy and (b) they therefore have relatively little or no means of influencing their political and economic representatives, in particular with regard to the macroeconomic decisions that will affect whether or not they could be free and active economic agents in the future… (Hamilton 2011:358-9).

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In this growing inequality, the *democratic state* did however sustain economic growth and provided some essential services to millions of Blacks, such as water and housing (Southall 2007:1). Nonetheless, more millions are still without services, unemployed and living in acute poverty (see Southall 2007, Desai 2002 and Alexander 2016). Over the last ten years, service delivery protests have intensified across the country. Peter Alexander (2014) has labelled South Africa the 'capital of protests.' The Black poor are rebelling and seeking services (see Van Holdt 2011 and Sinwell and Dawson 2014). Naidoo (2010:440) argues that in some circumstances the protests are given a 'voice' by the middle class, thus also negating poor and working class struggles. Even with the emergence of politically connected elites and the Black middle class, the majority of Black people remain poor and have yet to self-determine their destinies.

Adding to Neville Alexander's argument, the problem with the *democratic state* was its prolific ability to incorporate deracialised capitalism. I go a step further, however, to argue that the *democratic state* failed entirely to give Black people self-determination. A certain logic of self-determination was built through this *democratic state,* but the conception of a free country did not include what it takes to genuinely liberate Blackness. Drawing from some of the US literature, Black freedom is not only about giving and reforming rights. Being Black is a battle to be regarded as human and to self-determine. Contemporary authors, such as West (1993) for example, maintain that the position of Black people has not changed. The new configuration of democracy still perceives Black people as inferior. Change in government policies does not necessarily mean freedom for Black people. West notes:

> No other people have been taught systematically to hate themselves - psychic violence - reinforced by the powers of state and civic coercion - physical violence for the primary purpose of controlling their minds and exploiting their labour for nearly four hundred years (West 1993:vii)

He argues that through the mutation of capitalism, it has become, to some extent, deracialised. But while it now includes Black elites, the middle class has not been able to break the effects of structural racism. I argue that a similar process is prevalent in South Africa. New forms of capitalism based on capital accumulation are integrating a small section of Black people into the capitalist class (Shawki 2006). Contestations have become sharper, and the meaning attached to being Black is interlaced with class

differentiations in Black communities. Mullings (2008:11) notes that while Blackness has remained inferior, 'The modern color line is not only imposed from above but also becomes a site of contestation from below' (also see Sampson and Wilson 1995). As a result, the *construction* and *reconstruction* of Blackness has expanded the 'monolithic' concept of being Black (Brunsma and Rockquemore 2002:102):

> Black has been used to signify a collective structural location typically associated with restricted opportunities, economic disadvantages, and community disorganization; however, the opportunity structure has altered significantly over the past three decades and the socioeconomic status of black individuals is now quite varied.

The *democratic state* is at odds with itself. Its complexities have opened up to some opportunities and class mobility. At the same time, however, the 'ontological position' has not changed, especially for the working class. The position of being anti-human, 'generally dishonored, perpetually open to gratuitous violence, and a void of kinship structure…' remains (Wilderson 2010:11). Roediger (2010:x) further argues that when Black people take over the state, the assumption created is that 'race doesn't matter'. These discussions however totally disregard, '[d]ifferent opportunities with regard to wealth and poverty, confinement and freedom, citizenship and alienation…' (Roediger 2010:xi-xii). Capitalism manages to assimilate and adapt to new conditions. New forms of structural racism are developed and validated. He notes: 'White supremacy persisted not only by working against the forces of freedom, of openness, and of economic rationality… but also by working through them'. '[This process] validates, creates and recreates' the logic of racism (Roediger 2010:xv). Being Black remains a political signifier, around which, for some, a common and public inclusive agenda which surpasses the overcoming of material resource inequalities and fragmentation could coalesce (Pihos 2011:471). It is a 'dynamic collective reservoir' marked by time and power (Vargas 2006:476). The creation of Blackness arises from political and historical processes such as subjugation, colonisation, dispossession and violence (MacDonald, 2006:119, see also Loomba 1998), which are linked to the expansion and mutation of capitalism. Blackness is more than a biological category; it is a 'political and ethical' construct (Mangcu 2001:18). Even with changes of social position and class among Black people (see Seekings and Nattrass

2005), race 'remains a basis of division, exclusion and the preservation of privilege' (Erasmus 2005:14 and see Mngxitama 2009). Erasmus (2005:14) also posits that an over-emphasis on class inequality obscures the fact that 'race continues to be a barrier to opportunity'.

It is against this background – the post-apartheid *reconstruction* of Blackness - which I firmly hold that the Freedom Charter has served as a blueprint for the present ill-conceived notion of Black emancipation. The *democratic state* did not free Blackness, but locked it within some rhetoric of human rights, numerous legislations and policies which most people can barely influence directly. However, this limited space has rejuvenated new thoughts through the reinterpretations of Biko and Fanon. Scholars and activists have evoked their work once again in attempts to 'decide what this context means'. The next two sections will look at how Biko and Fanon are used in the *democratic state*, highlighting the lack of use of Du Bois' ideas in contemporary South Africa.

3.3.1. Interpreting Biko in a Democratic State

Mngxitama, Alexander and Gibson (2008) boldly avow that *Biko Lives!* In many respects, his ideas have lived on and are influencing some of the protests occurring in our present context. His ideas live on because the *democratic state* has left the majority of Black people destitute. Mngxitama et. al. (2008:2) note that 'over 80 percent' of the country's land is still white-owned. South African home-grown multinational companies are also still white owned. The creation of Black elites through 'Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) schemes' has not negated the reality that whites control economic and social power. The Black majority still resides in informal settlements and faces acute poverty. The present context to some extent mirrors Biko's assertion that the 'kind of capitalism that emerged in South Africa was fundamentally anti-black and that it could not be reformed to serve black interests' (Mngxitama et.al. 2008:4).

More (2008:49) notes that Biko's thoughts arose from daily encounters of being Black and living in a world that confines Blackness to non-human. In that context, two consciousnesses co-exist: 'being-white-in-the-world (white consciousness) and being-black-in-the-world' (More 2008:49). Black Consciousness was thus a reaction to white consciousness. White consciousness is the recurring domination of white supremacy

in all facets of existence. In many ways, this power has not disappeared in the *democratic state*. The continuous struggle for Black power therefore needs a 're-appropriation of black self-consciousness from the clutches of an appropriative and dominating white consciousness, a rediscovery of the black self which lay buried beneath white consciousness imposed on blacks by cultural, political, economic, linguistic, and religious domination' (More 2008:50). Being Black is a collective political identity which has sought to fight 'racism and exploitation' (More 2008:55). In order to achieve Black liberation, More notes that Biko wanted Black people to break away from 'white society'. Assimilation into white norms cannot attain Black freedom: 'The black who tries to assimilate is inauthentic because s/he wants to deny her racial and social identity' (More 2008:59).[30] The conditions of a *democratic state* have created a 'quasi integration' which coerced Black people to conform and remain inferior.

Extending from More (2008), Gordon interprets Black Consciousness as 'not premised upon biology or birth but social and political location' (Gordon 2008:83). The present-day *democratic state* is not based on 'Biko's political designation'. The current configuration does not include Black people politically, socially and economically; thus, it is anti-Black. Biko's political orientation compelled Black people to collectively 'empower' themselves (de Wet 2013:303). The collective nature failed, and a clear demonstration is the high co-efficiencies of inequalities. The gap between the rich and poor is enormously bigger than in most countries. Gibson (2008:131) argues that Biko's political vision of Blackness was not accomplished because Black Consciousness was not active as a movement during the 1980s. The dominance of the UDF and other formations weakened its ideology which was dismissed as 'petit bourgeois' with no realistic strategic response to the conditions of the time. Because of the pressure to stay relevant, its leaders altered the movement's political orientation by adopting some Marxist philosophy. For instance:

> In 1980 the external wing of BC, then chaired by one of its original founders, Barney Pityana, created a unified organization, the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, committed to the 'historical, political and organizational experience of the black working class,' and adopting 'the theory and practice of scientific socialism to guide it in its struggle'. (Gibson 2008:139)

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[30] More's interpretation of Biko is similar to the arguments I present in Chapter 2

The transformation of the movement and its ideology took many trajectories. Cooper alongside Alexander introduced the concept of 'racial capitalism' to Black Consciousness (Gibson 2008:140). Black Consciousness, even in its attempts to acclimatise to various contexts, failed to be influential (Gibson 2008:142). The strength of Biko's intellectual contribution was not meticulously developed. In defence of Biko's ideas, Mngxitama (2008:3) insists that Biko wanted to create a new world that would not be confined within capitalism or socialism. Black Communalism was 'based on a nonstate concept of democracy indigenous to some parts of Africa. Contained in his conceptualization is an important critique of African nationalist politics that saw the goal as taking over the colonial state' (Mngxitama et.al. 2008:3). These ideas however, were lost in the formation of a *democratic state*. What transpired in the process was various translations of Biko's Black Consciousness. A case in point is the former ANC and South African president Thabo Mbeki's use of Biko's work. Mbeki (2007:5) notes that Biko fought against the apartheid regime to '[give] birth to the reality of today's free and democratic South Africa.' The assumption that Biko envisioned a similar *democratic state* to the current structures of governance, is contested. Mbeki points out that Biko was a 'freedom loving' individual thereby construing that Biko's freedom and his own are conceptually the same.

Mbeki acknowledges that Biko was instrumental in the insurgencies which saw people barricading streets across the country. Black Consciousness gave Black people confidence and self-worth to fight for their destiny (Mbeki 2007:10). However, in Mbeki's estimation, the problem facing the present reality is 'an entrenched value system centred on the personal acquisition of wealth at all costs and by all means, including wilful resort to corruption and fraud' (Mbeki 2007:14). The solution to this problem, he argues, is 'moral regeneration'. By fixing people's values and morals, there will be greater 'social cohesion' and 'human solidarity' (Mbeki 2007:14). For Ndebele (2000:44), South Africa's post-apartheid order represents a 'dream deferred'. The inspiring vision which came with new policies and a wave of activism has been dampened. The Black elites are preoccupied with accumulating 'instant wealth.' The Black majority have state power but 'limited capacity to do anything more significant about the situation at hand than drawing attention to it' (2000:47). An inferiority complex has swallowed Blackness. Institutions, especially those of the state, have failed to shift the orientation and to rethink the freeing of Blackness. 'Because the state

was primarily constructed around meeting the needs of its white citizens', it is presently failing the Black poor (Ndebele 2000:50).

Ndebele's solution, which I disagree with, is that the country needs complex 'public policy interventions'. These responses require 'fifty-year planning scenarios involving, at its centre, high-quality social planning which stress the creation of functional and productive living environments' (Ndebele 2000:51). His solutions give power to the state again and are not at all a radical shift away from the plans that the ANC already made at the dawn of democracy. There have been plans upon plans to try to fix the crisis in this country. These ideas, however, seem not to shift away from the perception that capitalism is the cornerstone of transformation alongside the state as facilitator. As I have argued above, Blackness cannot be freed by capitalism and the state which accommodates it. The belief in capitalism and the state of this position has been challenged by student protests in the last two years. Southall (2014:333) argues that liberation movements such as the ANC have 'betrayed' the revolution. Their inability to negate white supremacy have created 'disappointments' which have drawn the new generation towards Fanon and Biko in their quest to understand the pitfalls of liberation.

The rise of the #FeesMustFall protests across the country's universities since 2015, for example, illustrates some of Biko's claims, and the fact that 'Biko lives'. On 9 March 2015, students at the University of Cape Town (UCT) embarked on a campaign to remove the statue of Cecil John Rhodes from its campus. The protest about the statue symbolised how Blackness remains inferior in the current configuration. According to a statement published on Facebook by the students on 25 March 2015: 'This has brought to the surface the existing and justified rage of black students in the oppressive space cultivated and maintained by UCT, despite its rhetoric of 'transformation'. In a similar vein to Biko's articulation of white racism during apartheid (see Chapter 2), the students argued that the existence of the figure exemplified 'broader dynamics of a racist and patriarchal society that has remained unchanged since the end of formal apartheid' (UCT RhodesMustFall 2015). The statue furthermore, they argued, showed the complicity of the institution in preserving the alienation and exploitation of Black people.

Students felt that the racist institutional culture of UCT has dehumanised Blackness. Similarly to Biko, they argued that Blackness 'includes all racially oppressed people of colour'. Black was adopted as a collective identity which sought

to bring liberation and fight white supremacy (UCT RhodesMustFall 2015). Citing Biko directly, the students articulated the present reality of South Africa as follows:

What I have tried to show is that in South Africa, political power has always rested with white society. Not only have the whites been guilty of being on the offensive but, by some skilful manoeuvres, they have managed to control the responses of the blacks to the provocation. Not only have they kicked the black but they have also told him how to react to the kick. For a long time the black has been listening with patience to the advice he has been receiving on how best to respond to the kick. With painful slowness he is now beginning to show signs that it is his right and duty to respond to the kick in the way he sees fit … The (white) liberal must understand that the days of the Noble Savage are gone; that the blacks do not need a go-between in this struggle for their own emancipation. No true liberal should feel any resentment at the growth of black consciousness. Rather, all true liberals should realise that the place for their fight for justice is within their white society. The liberals must realise that they themselves are oppressed if they are true liberals and therefore they must fight for their own freedom and not that of the nebulous 'they' with whom they can hardly claim identification (UCT Rhodesmustfall 2015).

However, they took Biko's project a step forward by adding 'intersectionality' to their approach. 'We are not only defined by our blackness, but … some of us are also defined by our gender, our sexuality, our able-bodiedness, our mental health, and our class, among other things' (UCT Rhodesmustfall 2015). By adding intersectionality, these students recognise that Blackness in a *democratic state* is not a monolithic concept. Blackness is shaped and ruptured by various facets which are both historical and current.

The movement demands a decolonial institution. The debates over a decolonial University have sparked a national call for free, quality and decolonised education under the umbrella of #FeesMustFall. In April 2015, students in eighteen universities across the country started to protest for #FeesMustFall. The students claimed that the first step towards a decolonised university could be achieved when all the statues which represented white supremacy were removed from campuses. The removal of these figures, they demanded, must be accompanied by the renaming of buildings and replacing 'artworks that exoticise the black experience (by white, predominantly male

artists) which are presented without context, with artworks produced by young, black artists' (UCT Rhodesmustfall 2015). A change in curriculum should focus on African and Subaltern Studies, including changes of language and methodologies which affect teaching and learning. Moreover, the student demands embraced various classes. They advocated for sub-contracted workers to be permanently employed by universities, as well as for an increase in Black academic staff and research funds (UCT Rhodesmustfall 2015).

The adoption of Biko's ideas by students emphasises their belief that the *democratic state* is incapable of smashing features of racist apartheid capitalism. Democracy has not given Blackness the self-pride and worth to self-determine which Biko envisioned. Reforms, even those made at universities such as the increase of enrolment of Black students in previously white institutions, have not eradicated this inferiority complex. The Freedom Charter and its implementation assumed that human rights would free the ontology of Blackness. Capitalism, which incorporates a small section of Black elites, was assumed to be part of finding freedom. Rising protests show these assumptions have been incorrect. Students are using Biko to radically change universities. However, the solutions proposed by the students are still aimed at radical reform but the debate has not yet escalated into exploring the purpose and usefulness of university institutions. Do we need universities? If so, what are the consequences for Black emancipation? If not, what would replacements look like? What would it mean for Blackness?

Fanon is also being reinterpreted in the current context. The next section looks at how the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) use Fanon and how they have positioned themselves as an alternative solution for achieving Black freedom.

3.3.2. Interpreting Fanon in a Democratic State

The reading of Fanon in South Africa follows a similar trajectory to that of Biko. Blackness in a *democratic state* is still understood as locked in inferiority. Sithole, for example, records Fanon as a 'figure of the Black subject' (2016:47). He argues that Blackness in the contemporary context has not broken from its historical, ontological condition. Black people long for and desire true liberation. The world is still constructed to dehumanise Blackness. 'The concept of the Black subject in Fanon essentially means that the politics of interrogation is the route to making existential demands and

to allowing the emergence of the Black subject as ontologically living' (Sithole 2016:38).

Arguments which emphasise the perpetual state of Black inferiority were further explored by the Afro-pessimist tradition. Sithole's (2016) analysis is influenced by some aspects of this tradition, which conceptualises the ontology of Blackness through the positionality of slavery. According to Hartman and Wilderson III (2003:184), a slave 'occupies the position of the unthought'. The unthought position of a slave is a 'space of death'. Even in attempts to radically escape the space 'these acts that are sometimes called suicide or self-destruction,… are really an embrace of death' (Hartman and Wilderson III 2003:187). Hence the positionality of a slave could never attain freedom:

> [When] you realize its limits and begin to see its inexorable investment in certain notions of the subject and subjection, then that language of freedom no longer becomes that which rescues the slave from his or her former condition, but the site of the re-elaboration of that condition, rather than its transformation. (Hartman and Wilderson III 2003:185)

The space of social death cannot be escaped; Blackness in essence is shaped and confined in the positionality of slavery. The Afro-pessimist intellectual tradition in some respects highlights the limits to reforming capitalism. Even though the tradition does not use this terminology, my interpretation of their overall argument is that the position of Black people will remain the same if the solution is framed within the existing social order, with which I agree. The problem with their analysis, however, is that the social death of Blackness negates all the centuries of efforts which have been made in the fight for Black freedom. Although the ideal freedom is yet to be achieved, there have been some meaningful reforms over the years. The agency of Black people has not diminished – people are still rebelling with the hope to eventually assert emancipation. Afro-pessimism undermines people's agency and their ability to imagine an alternative world. I find that Sithole's reading of Fanon only emphasises the erosion of Blackness in an alienated world but does not show that Fanon also advocated for the possibility and potential of Black people to fight (see Chapter 2).

Von Holdt, on the other hand, uses Fanon to understand the overt violence which manifests itself during protests. He (2012:113) uses Fanon to argue that in a

colonial context, in our case South Africa, violence was used to overthrow white domination and it is a 'practice which liberates the colonial subject from a sense of inferiority'. As a result, Von Holdt (2012:116-126) reads Fanon's notion of violence in the present context of a democratic state as 'a much deeper turbulence related to rapid processes of class formation, the emergence of new and unstable hierarchies, and new lines of inclusion and exclusion'. Gibson (2008:684-702) argues that Fanon is important in democratic South Africa because the 'Rainbow Nation' which Mandela envisaged never materialised. The South African liberation project is 'incomplete' since whites still control the economy and the majority of Black people are still poor.

In July 2013, the expelled ANC Youth League President, Julius Malema, and various other actors formed a political party called the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).[31] The EFF, like the Black Panther movement (see Chapter 2), claimed the political orientation of the party to be Marxist-Leninist-Fanonian. For the purposes of this section, I focus on how the EFF interprets Fanon. In their founding manifesto, the EFF cites one of Fanon's most popular quotes: 'Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it' (EFF Manifesto 2013). The party's declared mission is to fight for the economic emancipation of the majority, situating the struggle within the historical conditions of Blackness: 'Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) locate the struggle for economic emancipation within the long resistance of South Africans to racist colonial and imperialist, political, economic, and social domination' (EFF Manifesto 2013). Unlike other contemporary scholars of Fanon, the EFF asserts the emancipatory part of Blackness. Similar to Fanon, the non-being status of Black people is used as potential agency to fight for freedom.

The party acknowledges that some of the struggles on which Blacks embarked yielded partial victories. As a result, the party draws strength 'from the gallant fight those who came before us have mounted, generation after generation, against the superior firepower of the colonists' (EFF Manifesto 2013). Since the struggle is incomplete, the intention of the Party is to continue fighting for complete liberation and to achieve economic emancipation. Twenty years into democracy, the Manifesto (2013) notes, the majority of Black people still live in severe poverty, without land and without employment. 'South Africa like many other colonies is still trapped in the colonial division of labour as supplier of primary commodities to the coloniser nations'

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[31] The events which led to his expulsion will be detailed in Chapter 4.

(EFF Manifesto 2013). This position is similar to that of contemporary scholars of Biko and Fanon who articulate some of the problems confronted by *democratic state* as originating from historical racism and the economic power still held by a white minority. White domination and exploitation of the working class have not changed even though people strive to abolish this system. The foundation of capitalism which is embedded in racism and dehumanising Blackness continues in the current configuration:

> The reality, nonetheless, is that the political freedom attained symbolically in 1994 through inclusive elections [has] not translated into economic freedom, which must empower and assist the oppressed and exploited people of South Africa to be liberated from economic and social bondage. (EFF Manifesto 2013)

The victory of democratic South Africa was political power, but it never translated into economic power. Rather, the *democratic state* emboldened white-supremacy, and the state apparatus has become corrupt. 'Prosecutions have been selective and used for political vendettas and agendas, while billions of Rands are redirected from the state to the self-enrichment and self-gratification of politicians' (EFF Manifesto 2013). The Black elites who are politically connected are using state resources to self-accumulate wealth and subject the majority to disempowerment and poverty. Mechanisms such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), which were meant to give the broader majority economic power, are merely 'cosmetic' reforms. Echoing Fanon's description of racialised distinctions in living conditions, the EFF points out that the apartheid infrastructure and urban landscape has remained intact while service delivery to the Black poor is deteriorating.

The ANC does not have ideological alternatives to fix these challenges since they have adopted policies and plans which are incoherent and incapable of addressing the problems let alone rectifying the issues. The integrity and popularity of the ANC is gradually declining (EFF Manifesto 2016). Along slightly similar lines to Fanon in their class analysis, the EFF is highly critical of trade unions. They argue that trade unions which claim to be the vanguard of the working class are compromised and complicit in the anti-poor agenda of the ruling party, in particular COSATU. Following Fanon's trajectory, the EFF discusses the different roles each class will play when the ANC declines. According to their analysis: (a) independent trade unions will emerge (b) the middle class will abandon the ANC (c) service delivery protests will

intensify (d) social movements will swell but will not be able to contest in elections, and (e) the youth will be more disgruntled with the ANC (EFF Manifesto 2013).

The EFF defines itself as a 'radical, leftist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movement with an internationalist outlook anchored by popular grassroots formations and struggles' (EFF Manifesto 2013 and EFF Constitution). Their analysis and solutions are thus inspired by a Marxist-Leninist-Fanonian approach (EFF Manifesto 2013). They claim to be the vanguard of 'community and workers' struggles', and their solution is to foster the fight for economic emancipation. To this end, the EFF proposes 'seven non-negotiable pillars':

1. Expropriation of South Africa's land without compensation for equal redistribution in use.
2. Nationalisation of mines, banks, and other strategic sectors of the economy, without compensation.
3. Building state and government capacity, which will lead to the abolishment of tenders.
4. Free quality education, healthcare, houses, and sanitation.
5. Massive protected industrial development to create millions of sustainable jobs, including the introduction of minimum wages in order to close the wage gap between the rich and the poor, closing the apartheid wage gap, and promoting rapid career paths for Africans in the workplace.
6. Massive development of the African economy and advocating for a move from reconciliation to justice in the entire continent.
7. Open, accountable, corruption-free government and society without fear of victimisation by state agencies.

At first glance, the seven EFF pillars look progressive, especially since people have been enduring the uneven and disappointing policies of the ANC. However, on closer examination, one realises that the proposed pillars are a modern version of the Freedom Charter. The first pillar advocates for the expropriation of land, echoing a similar call of the Freedom Charter: 'the land shall be shared among those who work it'. Where the Freedom Charter argues that 'the people shall share in the country's wealth', the EFF wants to nationalise all key strategic sectors. Where the Freedom Charter declares that 'there shall be houses, security and comfort' and 'the doors of

learning shall be opened', the EFF seeks to provide free quality education and houses. The Freedom Charter claims 'there shall be work and security'. The irony is that the EFF is not deviating too much from the Charter's claims for industrial development to secure employment for the majority. Relating the Freedom Charter to the current context, they also want a corruption-free government which will not depend on procuring outsourced contracts.

In essence what the EFF seeks to achieve in the battle for economic emancipation is to implement the Freedom Charter. The party alludes to anti-capitalism but does not give a framework for how this will be accomplished except that the state will facilitate the distribution of wealth. Moreover, the ontological position of Blackness is paraphrased through the lens of exploitation and alienation. Yet, it wants to increase employment opportunities which are entangled with selling labour for a wage - exploitation of the working class. Once again, the notion of what it means to be Black and free is centred on the state. In many ways the EFF is simply repeating the same ideological options the ANC presented in the 1950s and 1980s. Furthermore, as I already demonstrated, Blackness and freedom cannot be based on reforming the state and its policies. Although he was not referring to the South African context, it is useful nonetheless to draw on Gilroy (2008:110):

> There's something in that experience which articulates a conception of freedom which is not Freiheit; it's not Liberte. This is a different freedom. This is not the freedom of the ancient Greeks; this is not the freedom of the Prussians; this a distinctive conception of freedom which is won from an experience of suffering - not the redemption of that suffering, but the product of it.

Freedom is not simply 'a sum of component liberties' (Hunt 2001:133) which the *democratic state* of South Africa hoped to give to the majority. Even for parties such as the EFF which seek freedom, the term has neither historically nor currently been developed in our context. To problematise the concept, especially in thinking about Blackness and freedom, I draw some of my analyses from Arendt (1960) and Berlin (1958). Berlin (1958) acknowledged the history of capitalism. In his case, modernity dramatically altered the 'social and political doctrines' of freedom across the world. To have unfreedom is if one is:

prevented by others from doing what I could otherwise do, I am to that degree
unfree; and if this area is contracted by other men beyond a certain minimum,
I can be described as being coerced, or, it may be, enslaved. Coercion is
not, however, a term that covers every form of inability... Coercion implies
the deliberate interference of other human beings within the area in which I
could otherwise act (1958:3).

One could draw on this citation to describe how unfreedom is fundamental to the
construction and *reconstruction* of Blackness. Black people's lives throughout history
are a continuum of interferences. Additionally, the ontology of Blackness is an
antagonistic position between radicalism and submission (see Chapter 2).

Interference partly manifests itself through economics. The structural nature of
economics in return shapes daily experiences. Berlin (1958:3) argued that it is:

… very plausible that if a man is too poor to afford something on which there
is no legal ban - a loaf of bread, a journey round the world, recourse to the
law courts - he is as little free to have it as he would be if it were forbidden
him by law. If my poverty were a kind of disease which prevented me from
buying bread, or paying for the journey round the world or getting my case
heard, as lameness prevents me from running, this inability would not
naturally be described as a lack of freedom, least of all political freedom.

Unfreedom is loosely defined as a situation (a) when one human interferes in another
person's life directly and indirectly; (b) when one does not have the economic power
to shape one's reality; and (c) when one experiences the 'frustration which wishes' to
attain freedom. Berlin (1958) noted that ascertaining freedom is a process whereby 'I
mean not being interfered with by others. The wider the area of non-interference the
wider my freedom.' The non-interference[32] which Berlin is advocating links to Du Bois'
and Fanon's conceptualisation of Blackness (see Chapter 2). In their work, there is an
aversion towards subordination and a perpetual inferiority complex; hence a call for
Black rebellion and self-determination. I argue that implicitly understood unfreedom

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[32] Non-inference here is not based on a liberal notion, which often argues that capitalism can thrive
in conditions of non-interference. Liberals often conclude that a profitable capitalism will lead to
individualism, thus freedom. Non-interference here is based on a radical approach where Blackness
is free of exploitation, alienation and oppression.

also means interference, and that the Black struggle ought to break loose from these ties. As I have already shown, breaking these ties is not about situating people's power within a *democratic state* as South Africa has done.

Arendt (1960), unlike Berlin, emphasised the interlinkage between freedom and politics. 'Whether we know it or not, the question of politics is always present when we speak of the problem of freedom; and we can hardly touch a single political issue without, implicitly or explicitly, touching upon an issue of man's liberty' (Arendt 1960:28). The conceptual process of what ought to be freedom is embedded in the nature and ideology of politics. As already mentioned, the road to post-apartheid was compromised. Self-determination expressed on the streets was constrained by the type of society which was envisioned. In the process, a *democratic state* with elected members won. As a result, legislative human rights were institutionalised and capital accommodated. It did not, however, solve the ontological position of Blackness which has historically been locked in the expansion of capitalism. Arendt reminds us, 'The *raison d'être* of politics is freedom, and its field of experience is action' (Arendt 1960:28).

Arendt (1960:28) noted that the notion of freedom is 'historically a late phenomenon'. It is a process of looking inward. Arendt warned that looking inward is not an individualised process nor a self-indulgent process:

> [Inwardness] must not be mistaken for the heart or the mind, both of which exist and function only in interrelationship with the world. Not the heart and not the mind, but inwardness as a place of absolute freedom within one's own self was discovered in late antiquity by those who had no place of their own in the world and hence lacked a worldly condition which, from early antiquity to almost the middle of the nineteenth century, was unanimously held to be a prerequisite for freedom. (1960:28-9)

Furthermore, freedom is a process of non-interference: 'We first become aware of freedom or its opposite in our intercourse with others, not in intercourse with our selves' (Arendt 1960: 29). According to Arendt (1960: 29):

> …freedom was understood to be the free man's status which enabled him to move, to get away from home, to go out into the world and meet other people in deed and word. This freedom clearly was preceded by liberation: in order

to be free, man must have liberated himself from the necessities of life. But the status of freedom did not follow automatically upon the act of liberation.

Patterson (2000:41) warned us that non-interference is not based on some liberalism which positions the state as the enemy and capitalism as the only way to implement freedom. Non-interference in freedom should be a system which is collective and individual (Patterson 2000).

Liberation has failed to give Blackness freedom because the politics adopted erased people's power and replaced it with state apparatuses which interfere in and mould their realities. Liberation was not wrested from the unequal distribution of resources and structural racism. Freedom cannot be separated from past and present politics. Democratic South Africa shows that 'freedom did not follow automatically'. Arendt (1960: 29-30) emphasised:

[f]reedom needed in addition to mere liberation, the company of other men who were in the same state, and it needed a common public space to meet them, a politically organised world, in other words, into which each of the free-men could insert himself by word and deed.

Du Bois, Fanon and Biko argued that a new universal world is needed. The non-human status of Black people cannot be eradicated by mutating what already is. Freedom is the creation of the unknown. Black freedom needs to make the unknown possible. Reforms in capitalism do not free Blackness but lock it in unfree conditions.

Arendt (1960:46) concluded by noting:

In the history of mankind, the periods of being free were always relatively short…. We have always known that freedom as a mode of being, together with the public space where it can unfold its full virtuosity, can be destroyed.

Again, to emphasise my point, reforming a system can amount to only short-lived interventions; a permanent solution is required. Gilroy (1993: 122) reminds us that finding freedom is an 'untidy' but important affair. It is not a linear process; alternatives for freedom cannot be achieved through reform, but with the abolition of capitalism and re-configuration of the state. I argue that Du Bois and his call for socialism can be useful to understand a new world order. His thoughts are sadly absent in South Africa,

and I am advocating for activists and scholars to remember Du Bois as he might be helpful in thinking about new politics and a new reality. The next section recognises Du Bois and how his thoughts can assist South Africa.

3.3.3. Revisiting Du Bois in a Democratic State

How do we think of Du Bois in a contemporary context? What can we draw from his work, apart from the famous *double consciousness,* that can assist our understanding of the present realities of a *democratic state*? After a rigorous search to find scholars who have positioned Du Bois in South Africa, I found a few publications by authors such as Chrisman (2004). In her article, she quotes and critiques Du Bois based on *The Souls of Black Folk.* She notes that the book influenced 'African National Congress (ANC) founder member Sol Plaatjie, and Pan-Africanist Peter Abrahams' (Chrisman 2004:18), but as I already stated in Chapter 2 and above, Du Bois' influence went beyond only two activists. His impact on South Africa consisted of a long and sustained relationship with various movements which fought against apartheid. He also mentored and asked activists to contribute to the magazine he edited, *The Crisis*. Despite these facts, Chrisman (2004:19) argues: 'Du Bois was not prepared to engage publicly or in print with the ideas or activities of the ANC.' I show the opposite in Chapter 2, referring to archival material which indicates that Du Bois aspired to write an encyclopaedia about Black people, and wrote to various activists to contribute to this project. Moreover, as the archival evidence shows, activists would send him information and pictures of events which he would publish in the magazine. He also assisted people like Maxeke with travel expenses, and advised Plaatje on publishing and distribution rights (see Chapter 2).

The aim of this section is not to repeat the importance of Du Bois in South Africa which dates back to 1904 until his death in 1963 (see Chapter 2). My conundrum is that we have a great scholar who had a long relationship with South Africa, and who died a Marxist. Yet at present we neither find his intellectual contribution broadly interpreted nor used by South African Marxists to explore South African politics. Where are the Du Bois scholars in South Africa? Can we use his work to situate South Africa? If we can locate his scholarship, how can we do it?

After months of trying to resolve this dilemma, I returned to his book, *Black Reconstruction* (1935), as an attempt to situate him within contemporary South Africa.

Through this analysis, I can begin to open a new wave of returning the intellectual solidarity he gave to South Africa. How do we understand some of the arguments he made in the book in relation to our context? I argue that Du Bois was critical in guiding us to see that the function of capitalism was vital in the *construction* and *reconstruction* of Blackness (see Chapter 2), and wanted to use his scholarship as a counter-attack on the ahistorical knowledge which posed Black people as invisible in the making of history.

In *Black Reconstruction,* under the chapter entitled 'Counter-revolution of Property', Du Bois argues that the logic which was pervasive after Black people were freed from slavery is that some of the freed slaves had access to 'education, economic opportunity and the protection of the ballot … while the mass would make average labor' (Du Bois 1935:580). The central thread in this statement indicates that the *reconstruction* of racist capitalism is not to give Black people freedom, but rather to mutate it by incorporating a few into the elite class. In many ways, similar phenomena occurred in the *democratic state*. In the process of *reconstruction*, an 'unprecedented scramble for this new power, new wealth and new income ensued' (Du Bois 1935:580). *Reconstruction* is a process in which racist capitalism conceals and adapts to some of Black people's demands. The process is untidy, and Black people have fought for democracy and reconstructing capitalism.

The *reconstruction* of capitalism, 'broke down old standards of wealth distribution, old standards of thrift and honesty' (Du Bois 1935:581). Following his argument, in 1994, capitalism in South Africa had to reconfigure itself to include the few political classes into the capitalist class. Thus, these political elites became shareholders in white-owned companies and acquired non-executive positions.

Moreover, over the years, some of the Black elites started to use the state to accumulate their wealth. The political transition of South Africa coincided with the process of decentralising procurement - a move inspired by international governance paradigms. As a result, the state starting to outsource most of its core services through competitive contracts commonly known as 'tenders' (see PARI 2014). This process was shaped to allow Black business people more opportunities to participate in the market.

Du Bois details how government pays for resources, which in the *democratic state* I interpret as a process similar to procurement contracts, which hence form part of the *reconstruction.* Although he was writing about this process at a different time

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and context, he noted that: 'The governments, federal, state and local, had paid three-fifths of the cost of the railroads and handed them over to individuals and corporations to use for their profit' (Du Bois 1935:581). In the case of South Africa presently, a similar pattern has emerged. Through these contracts the state and private business collaborate in the process of *reconstruction*. New forms of allocation, distribution and accumulation take an innovative shape. 'All of the national treasure of coal, oil, copper, gold and iron had been given away for a song to be made the monopolised basis of private fortunes with perpetual power to tax labor for the right to live and work' (Du Bois 1935:581). In this context, this process has created an elite which uses state contracts for accumulation and their self-enrichment. Some scholars have argued that there has been an emboldening of a 'parasitic' elite class which uses corrupt activities to acquire these state contracts, while the poor are abandoned (see PARI 2017).

As the sophistication of private fortunes is kept under individual and corporate control by the assistance of the state, corruption expands. The result is that officials and public sectors are bribed and are 'on the payrolls of corporations' (Du Bois 1935:582). In addition, '[T]he whole civil service became filled with men who were incompetent and used to paying political debts' (Du Bois 1935:582). Even though he gave an example about the *reconstruction* of capitalism in the railroad in South Africa, the process of collusion between capitalists and public servants has permeated most state institutions. The call by the EFF, for example, for a corruption free society speaks to the gravity of the problem. Du Bois affirms that corruption is part of the nature of capitalism as it attempts to assimilate Blackness. He gives a scenario of how this widespread corruption occurs. The scenario replicates some of the events happening in the current context, in relation to our present President:

> …Vice-President; a late speaker of the House of Representatives marketing his rulings as a presiding officer; three Senators profiting secretly by their votes as lawmakers; five chairmen of the leading committees of the late House of Representatives exposed in robbery; a late Secretary of the Treasury forcing balances in the public accounts; a late Attorney-General misappropriating public funds; a Secretary of the Navy enriched or enriching friends by percentages levied off the profits of contracts with his departments; an Ambassador to England censured in a dishonorable speculation; the President's private secretary barely escaping conviction upon trial for guilty complicity in frauds upon the revenue; a Secretary of War

impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors - the demonstration is complete. (Du Bois 1935:582)

This complicity involves both the state and private interests. It runs across party and class lines, and the whole nation is affected.

Both Black and white elites only care about making themselves wealthy. In justifying poverty and inequality in society, they negate their greed and instead blame 'Negro suffrage' (Du Bois 1935:582). The dominant response by oppositional capitalists and political elites to this behaviour is a plea for a 'new morality.' There is a perceived need to break down the 'monopoly of raw materials and the privileges of special laws and exclusive techniques' (Du Bois 1935:582). In many ways, this oppositional response seems quite similar to what the EFF proposes in some of their seven pillars. Du Bois warns us that this response by the oppositional party is also located in the *reconstruction* of capitalism. It would not be long before they too taste the 'rewards of monopoly and privilege… and the powers bestowed so tremendous' (Du Bois 1935:583). Their concern and rhetoric is a new plan to concretise state power and a new form of capital. They are however not willing to surrender power into 'the hands of labour or of the trustees of labour'.

Nonetheless, Du Bois writes, the elites seek to create a state which wants to control new capital and corporations, and aim to make social contracts with the established and emerging middle class by 'guarant[eeing] them reasonable and certain income from their investments', while once again leaving the majority of poor Black people behind. To avoid revolt in the working class, they pursue additional contracts with trade unions, first by dividing unions according to skills, and second by promising them that the new industries will share profits by giving them 'higher wage and other privileges' (Du Bois 1935:583). Again, a careful reading of the EFF manifesto indicates that this could be the next possibility in South Africa since the current elites are failing to re-shape and curb corruption.

In the *reconstruction* of capitalism, two worlds co-exist. Du Bois explains that one world has given Blackness some slight freedom by allowing them access to some rights. But, the majority of Black people remain 'without personal freedom, land and education' (Du Bois 1935:583). There is over-reliance on the exploitation of cheap labour and accumulation of profits for the few. In the other world, the other side seeks freedom by advocating for industrial competition through the uprooting of 'tariff-

nurtured monopoly and civil service reform which would replace knavery and selfishness by character and ideal in public office' (Du Bois 1935:583). However, this world is narrow-minded about how best to eradicate poverty and give power to the working class. It wants individual wealth under the disguise of 'national prosperity' and 'equal economic opportunity for all.' Both sides of the world are robbing and deceiving resources which ought to develop the 'mass of the nation - that is, of the labouring poor' (Du Bois 1935:585). In the end, the alternatives proposed by oppositional elites form part of a 'new capitalism and a new enslavement of labour' (Du Bois 1935:634).

Du Bois' work allows us to see that when racist capitalism is forced to change by Black revolt, it is able to transform the distribution and accumulation of wealth in a process of *reconstructing* itself. In the process, a few Black people will be incorporated, and the rationale of private ownership facilitated by those who occupy state power. The collaboration between business and the state is blurred, and corruption expands. When this collaboration becomes unbearable, a new formation within the elites proposes alternatives. At first glance, this proposal seems radical and progressive. Nevertheless, Du Bois warns us that the alternatives are merely part of the *reconstruction* of capitalism. Unless the masses - comprising workers and the poor - are given full power, none of the alternatives will refute individual wealth.

As part of the *reconstruction* of capitalism, the *construction* and *reconstruction* of Blackness as non-being continues. The knowledge produced in this configuration maintains the narrative of Black people as inferior. It is important that capitalism retains this logic because its cornerstone is racism. Du Bois (1935:711) notes that one of the arguments in capitalism embedded within structural racism is to claim that 'All Negroes were ignorant.' The discourse associated with this case was, 'Although the Negroes were now free, they were also ignorant and unfit to govern themselves.' The world was not built to view Black people as equals. Thus any slight mistake is attributed to their non-human status, leading to the recycling of statements which never seem to go away, such as: 'The Negroes got control of these states. They had been slaves all their lives, and were so ignorant they did not even know the letters of the alphabet. Yet they now sat in the state legislatures and made the laws'' (Du Bois 1935: 711).

The second statement which is dominant in the *reconstruction* of capitalism is: 'All Negroes were lazy, dishonest and extravagant' (Du Bois 1935: 711). Whenever Black people acquire material wealth these narratives are affirmed:

These men knew not only nothing about the government, but also cared for nothing except what they could gain for themselves… Some Negroes spent their money foolishly, and were worse off than they had been before. (Du Bois 1935: 711-2).

Du Bois mentions other narratives which suggest: 'Negroes were responsible for bad government…' (1935:712). These narratives which still depict Black people as inferior continue in a new form under the *reconstruction* of capitalism: 'Foolish laws were passed by the black law-makers, the public money was wasted terribly and thousands of dollars were stolen straight' (Du Bois 1935: 712). These re-occurring narratives result from the fact that Black people have and could never be seen as equal. There is continuous doubt about the ability of Black people. How capitalism manifests itself becomes nullified when Black people participate in a manner similar to their counterparts who happen to be white. Criticism of Black people is viscerally used to affirm how non-human they are, even when they are given access to liberties and opportunities. Du Bois (1935: 714) argues that this ahistorical knowledge needs to be corrected. It starts from the logic that Black people are not the creation of their own histories and the world. This ahistorical view is used to emphasise that Black people are invisible, non-human, ignorant and unable to think.

The narratives are designed to make us think 'that it is the white man's mission, his duty and his right, to hold the reins of political power in his own hands for the civilisation of the world and the welfare of mankind.' (Du Bois 1935: 719). It is the duty of Black scholars to write histories that counter these facts and show that they are fallacious and flawed. 'Negroes have done some excellent work on their own history and defence' (Du Bois 1935: 724). Black people brought democracy to the world. The accurate history should not portray Black people as angels, rather simply '… to establish the Truth, on which Right in the future may be built' (Du Bois 1935: 725). If the truth is not established in sociology and political history, we might not be capable of drawing lessons from the past and making the future better for the Black poor. As a result, if we find ourselves in leadership which depends on compromises, Blackness will remain compromised in the future (Du Bois 1935: 727).

Liberation for Black people includes giving the masses the power to determine the distribution of wealth of their country which presently is yet to materialise. In the crisis of *reconstruction* of capitalism, alternatives will be proposed, but Du Bois warns

us that if people's power is not at the centre of the debates, then it is a new form of capital accumulation. I find this assertion highlights what has gone wrong with the ANC in its governance of a *democratic state*. But, it also demonstrates the dangers of the EFF alternatives which at the moment might appear radical.[33] More importantly, access to liberties does not negate how we narrate Black people's knowledge, and mutation of capitalism does not change how Black people are portrayed.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that after the death of Biko, sustained protests intensified nationally, which eventually led to the defeat of apartheid. Biko's death emboldened Black people to fight for self-determination. However, this quest to define Black people's own destiny was co-opted by the re-emergence of the Freedom Charter in the 1980s. The Charter was interpreted to mean that power should be located in the state; indeed, self-determination was framed within the Constitution and a human rights discourse. Throughout the democratic transition to 1994 and up to the present, the country has been plagued with the majority living in poverty and only a few Black people incorporated in deracialised capitalism.

Contemporary scholars of Biko note that the dreams of Black consciousness were not realised in post-apartheid South Africa, primarily because the movement was not active in the 1980s and did not have great influence across the masses. However, with the current protests across universities, his intellectual work has emerged as the analytical tool in understanding the pitfalls of the current context.

Fanon's work has also maintained relevance in post-apartheid South Africa. The EFF has used his work to propose alternatives to the ANC government. I, however argue that the party's manifesto is a modern version of the Freedom Charter.

Du Bois' thinking has not been applied even though he has a long history with South Africa. I argue that his work is important in showing the contradictions when capitalism *reconstructs* itself to include Black people, and offers lessons regarding

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[33] This dissertation does not engage with the Democratic Alliance (DA) party politics. Even though the party is complex, their manifesto is based on entrenching capitalism, which I have shown will not emancipate Black people. Although DA has a Black constituency, I sought to engage with the ANC as a historically positioned liberation party, and the EFF on its manifesto because their next phase of the revolution is to free Black people from the continuous economic dispossession.

what we ought to look out for in that process. His work demonstrates the important point that freedom only occurs when the Black poor can drive the system. Moreover, the knowledge produced in the *reconstruction* of capitalism still sees Blackness as inferior. There is thus a call to correct this history. As part of correcting history, the next chapter looks at the methodology I used to give voice to Blackness, to show how people are analytically wrestling with the current *democratic state,* and how it shapes their Blackness.

Chapter 4

Bucket List:[34] Reflections on Methods

4.1. Introduction

Post-apartheid South Africa came with high expectations. The constitutional framework which included the majority inspired hope and the belief that freedom was finally achieved. Black people had liberties to access spaces and opportunities once restricted to whites. The post-apartheid era dawned with a Black president and a promise of 'a better life for all'. A few years later, a significant group of liberation leaders became millionaires and billionaires because Black empowerment gave political elites the opportunity to become shareholders in previously white-owned firms. The ones who were not equally fortunate started to access state resources through procurement deals to accumulate wealth; the emerging Black middle class and their consumption patterns became headline news. South Africa was indeed a changed country. The 'Rainbow Nation', a term coined by Tutu and Mandela, was becoming a reality. The 'best' constitution in the world was seen to have given all people claim to their human rights.

However, two decades into the *democratic state* the euphoria has dissipated and cracks of the rainbow nation began to show. Some Black people were able to gain upward mobility whereas most remained in acute poverty with high unemployment rates. The rainbow nation was sundered. Black people were divided between the haves and have-nots. Contradictions appeared, showing that access to legislated human rights was a luxury and not meant for the majority. Being Black and free was limited. Human rights did not translate into freedom. Most Black people still have to sell their labour for low wages, and exploitative conditions are still embedded in a *democratic state*. The ontology of Blackness as the oppressed and as people struggling to find freedom is become more vivid as democracy is maturing. Being Black still matters. It is against this background that I embarked on my research. Questions

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[34] The title is inspired by an album called *Bucket List,* by the musician Saba. The conceptual framing of the album is based on interludes in which he asks people to list their wishes. He then writes each song around the meaning they attach to a particular wish. I thought it was a fitting title for this chapter as I also reflect on the definitions and meanings which people attach to being Black.

which highlight the contradictory nature of democracy have become public discourse. Frustration and anger are looming in the air. Media commentary and journal articles capture the disappointments. Increasing service delivery protests across informal settlements signify the deferred dream of democracy.[35] The period I am specifically referring to is between 2011 and 2012 when I conducted conversations with various Black people.

I note that the work of Du Bois, the forgotten scholar, is not a theoretical analysis of Blackness (see Chapter 2 and 3), but that he transcended theory and merged it with empirical research. As already mentioned, Morris (2007) argues that Du Bois was the founder of sociology. He used an empirical scientific approach to interact with and triangulate multiple effects, to show the *construction* and *reconstruction* of Blackness. Du Bois moved from a literary style in *Souls of Black Folk* to the use of secondary sources in *Black Reconstruction*. In *The Philadelphia Negro*, he applied a 'cold empirical scientific study where [he] appears to be only interested in social facts that allow him to make the case against American racism' (Morris 2007:182). Moreover, Du Bois' work and his research methodologies do not directly fall in a particular school of thought. He pushed the boundaries of science (see Henry 2008) by using a combination of surveys, archives and conversations with Black people.

The Philadelphia Negro used surveys and interviews to establish the geographical distribution of Black people living in Philadelphia. The research shows the daily life, occupations, households and organisations which shape Blackness (Du Bois 1899:1), and the study took fifteen months to conduct. He argues that he wanted to carry out research which dismissed some of the inaccuracies which other sociological studies had been producing about Black people, and eradicate the 'errors' continuously generated in that research. These errors, he laments, not only occur in the statistical data but also in the observation methods. There is 'some personal bias, some moral conviction or some unconscious trend of thought due to previous training', which to a degree distort the picture, in his view (Du Bois 1899:2-3). He passionately advocated for research that investigates and 'attempt[s] to solve' world problems. The process should be based on fairness and 'an earnest desire for the truth despite its

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[35] University of Johannesburg, Centre for Social Change, for example, has over the past decade been documenting trends and patterns of protests across various township. Currently, they have embarked on a major project called the *Rebellion of the Poor.*

possible unpleasantness' (Du Bois 1899:3). The quest to find the truth, even the inconvenient truth about Black people, is part of the rationale of this dissertation.

In writing about Blackness, there are usually two findings which re-occur. The first is that Black people are conspicuous consumers. This narrative is frequently evoked in the analyses of post-apartheid Black elites. The second is that Black people are ignorant and live in perpetual poverty cast by crime and cheap labour (Du Bois 1899:5). Even though there are some elements of accuracy in those findings, most people fail to scientifically inquire how race and capitalism in a *democratic state* like the present South Africa *construct* and *reconstruct* Blackness. He notes that a complete study must:

> …not confine itself to the group, but must specially notice the environment; the physical environment of city, sections and houses, the far mightier social environment, the surrounding world of custom, wish, whim, and thought which envelops this group and powerfully influences its social development.
> (Du Bois 1899:5)

Indeed, part of the narrative of Blackness is the historical conditions of poverty and living in slums. Du Bois (1899:6) argues that this reality is not a simple fact; scholars need to take the facts a step further by investigating the complicated realities which democracy brings about in the *construction* and *reconstruction* of Blackness. One also needs to think about class: the Black elite and middle classes are relatively much smaller and less resourced compared to their white counterparts. We also need to 'acquire social questions and conditions which must receive the most careful attention and patient interpretation' (Du Bois 1899:7).

A careful analysis cannot ignore class, even though better-off Black people are numerically smaller and less resourced. We still need to ask how educated, well-off Black people shape and re-shape Blackness. How do their social problems and challenges *construct* Blackness? What solutions do they suggest to liberate their Blackness? By ignoring these questions, we can mistake their precarious privilege and translate it to mean they are free (Du Bois 1899:7-8). Scientific research yields many 'misapprehensions and misstatements' about the ontology of Blackness. As scholars, it is our task to analyse a 'complicated mass of facts' (Du Bois 1899:7-8) which constitutes Blackness:

That such a difference exists and can now and then plainly be seen, few deny; but just how far it goes and how large a factor it is in the Negro problems, nothing but careful study and measurement can reveal. Such then are the phenomena of social condition and environment which this study proposes to describe, analyse, and, so far as possible, interpret. (Du Bois 1899:8)

Taking into account Du Bois' purpose of why we do science, I had conversations with small sections of Black 'elites' as well as with 'ordinary' people. Chapter 5 and 6 are based on solid empirical narratives about how people understand Blackness. Du Bois used surveys and some observations, but none of his studies solely focus on narratives and the meanings people attach to Blackness. I extend his landmark research by using conversations to understand the *reconstruction* of Blackness in post-apartheid South Africa. The next section looks at the methodology used in the understanding of being Black, followed by a discussion which shows the context, and how it shaped some of the conversations. Context moulded some of the answers I received from the people I engaged in conversation. Selection criteria and ethical considerations are briefly highlighted in the chapter.

4.2. Conversations

At the time I conducted my research, the definition I used to select the 'elites' was Black people who had regularly written in or been mentioned in newspapers, were interviewed on radio, and/or were active in academic seminars and publications around issues of race. This group of people varied from flamboyant business elite Kenny Kunene to Mmusi Maimane. In total, I managed to have dialogues with eight of these people. Gaining access to the majority of the 'elites' whom I wished to have a conversation with proved to be difficult. Mikecz (2012: 482) would argue that:

interviewing elites represents unique methodological problems when compared with non-elite interviews. Whereas locating elites might seem relatively easy due to their high visibility, getting a foot in the door and obtaining their personal accounts of events can be very challenging.

I managed to have several conversations with people whom I labelled as 'ordinary.' Ordinary is a loose term to differentiate them from the 'elites.' By using this term, I am not in any way reducing their importance in participating in and shaping the public discourse. Rather, for the sake of clarity, when discussing the findings in the next two chapters, these terms will be used to assist the reader to follow the arguments. In total, I spoke to forty-six people. Out of the forty-six people, twenty-one were women and twenty-five men. These people varied from business executives to homeless people to cashiers. My research was located in Johannesburg, South Africa. Individuals I spoke to reside in the neighbourhoods of Bedfordview, Melville, Westdene, Sandton, Alexandra, Soweto, Katlehong/Thokoza and Kagiso.

The research design was based on both meta-analytic and conceptual questions. According Babbie et al. (2001), meta-analytic questions are informed both by context and key debates at the particular time. Conceptual questions seek to define meanings attached to a concept. As already discussed, meanings attached to being Black are important to this dissertation, and this research seeks to show how context both in the present and past play a role in moulding definitions and shaping these meanings.

The methodology used was Conversation Analysis. Black, as a term, was loosely defined from the outset of the discussion. I asked individuals for their own definitions. My conversations with them served to elicit their own connotations of the phrase. These conversations also enabled me to ask questions about various current affairs which touched on being Black. This approach aimed to: 'develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action' (citing Fereira Lorenzetti, Azulai and Walsh 2016:205). The method draws 'on approaches ranging from the phenomenological and experiential to the positivist and experimental' (Speer 2002:784). It enabled me to provoke individuals' own understandings of the concept, since my main aim was to encourage them to 'assert their own interpretations and agendas' (Speer 2002:784). The methodology allowed individuals to use their own 'language, meanings and vocabulary, their opinions and conceptual worlds' (Speer 2002:784).

Conversation Analysis moves away from traditional modes of conducting research and gathering data. It gives individuals agency to shape the research, because the interviews are conducted in 'their 'natural' settings, in courtrooms, at the dinner table, on the telephone, and so on' (Speer 2002:784-5). In the process, the

researcher aims to avoid imposing his or her own definitions. Conversation Analysis seeks to show that individuals are active role-players in their contexts. It further illustrates ways in which people mould and are re-moulded by their social conditions,

> grounded in contingent, embodied, ongoing interpretative work – an interest in how people do social order, rather in how they are animated by it, in how everyday reality is produced by those engaging in it (Kitzinger 2000:167).

The method focuses on everyday conversations and how these conversations are used to construct realities and views about the world.

The use of conversations to probe the meanings which people attach to terms is not an uncritical process. The method is used to understand people 'not simply as victims of an all-powerful social order but also as agents actively engaged in methodical and sanctioned procedures for producing or resisting, colluding with or transgressing, the taken-for-granted social world' (Kitzinger 2000:168). In short, the method is centred on meaning-making. This meaning-making process permits a researcher to gain an 'enormous understanding of the way humans do things and the kinds of objects they use to construct order in their affairs' (Clifton 2012:49, also see Sacks 1995). Conversation analysis is a talk-in-action method.

The approach was formulated by feminists who study women considered as the 'other' and who have less privilege (Speer 2002:784). Some feminists are, however, critical of the method, noting that the researcher can become uncritical of the interpretations individuals give, especially when people use embedded sexist notions in reflecting on their world (Speer 2002:784).

In the process, researchers use analytical tools. Kitzinger (2000:164), on the other hand, argues that there are productive tensions in using this approach, and the method is interdisciplinary in nature. It encompasses a 'theoretically and methodologically distinctive approach to understanding the social world'. It broadens normative sociological approaches. It enables the researcher to link various variables such as power and oppression. Moreover, the approach is cumulative empirical research. Unlike other methods, the conversation approach aims to obtain interest in, as noted above, 'how people do social order, rather in how they are animated by it, in how everyday reality is produced by those engaging in it' (Kitzinger 2000:166). How

people *do* social order is not about understanding language, it is about what people *do* with the talk.

In other words, the meanings people give are part of the analytical creation. The approach is not to view Black people as victims but to locate their agency and ability to rebel and overcome power relations. Moreover, the method allows individual narratives to be located within a collective, and to understand how both reinforce each other. I had face-to-face conversations with various people around Johannesburg. Uneven, non-standardised questions were formulated and reformulated depending on topical issues and the natural settings of the individuals.

Conversation analysis as a method goes beyond collecting data by having talks with people about the meaning they attach to concepts. It can also be used to track online social media conversations which are shaping current debates. Steensen (2014:1199) used the method to conduct an online social media content analysis by tracking different variables which were coded, to draw patterns. From these patterns, he 'selected sequences in order to get an in-depth understanding of the findings of the content analysis' (Steensen 2014: 1199). In the next section on context, I follow a similar process. I analyse newspapers and Facebook content which I perused to gather trends on topical issues which have shaped debates on Blackness.

The methods have their own limitations. Some feminists argue that this is an oxymoronic approach since it assumes that definitions given by individuals are without prejudice. Thus, 'respondents are not always in a position to "see", and thus problematize, their own oppression' (Speer 2002:785). This objection from feminists might be valid. However, I argue that with this method the researcher may still be able to critically analyse the construction of meanings. It is the duty of a researcher to employ analytical tools to assess the origins of the definitions. Moreover, the method gives ordinary people the ability to influence normative academic concepts. The next section, for example, aims to illustrate that meanings attached to Blackness do not occur in a vacuum, and there have been debates about what constitutes being Black in the public sphere. These are debates which might also have an impact on the meanings people use to define being Black.

4.3. Context

In 2011 many newspaper articles, especially opinion pieces, were published about being Black and what it means. On the 17th of January, for example, The *Mail and Guardian online* on the published Sandile Memela's opinion piece*,* '*Black South Africans are more European than African'*. In the piece, Memela (2011) argues:

> Not too many years ago I used to call some black people, especially those
> of African descent, 'coconuts'.[36] In practical terms, it meant that they had
> bought completely into the notion of white cultural superiority and allowed
> themselves to be brainwashed to believe that to be somebody they had to
> speak, dress, behave and think like white people….

Debates about what it means to be Black were frequent during this time. They were further complicated by the narrative of the flamboyant owner of the ZAR Lounge Kenny Kunene (the Lounge is in Sandton, one of the richest areas in Johannesburg). Photos of a party he gave were published in the newspapers. In the photos, he was eating sushi off women's naked bodies. This depiction created outrage in most quarters of society. The contested issue was that it foregrounded conspicuous consumption of the Black bourgeoisie. The outrage even led to the ANC Secretary-General Gwede Mantashe and the party's Women's League raising concerns. It was reported that 'they condemned the serving of sushi on the bodies of scantily clad women'.[37] 'Mr Sushi,' as he later became known, reportedly responded by stating that 'If the ANC had not spoken, I would have had Indian and Chinese girls in Durban. I just wanted to change the plates to see how the sushi tastes from one plate to the other…', at which he is said to have 'burst into laughter'.[38]

In March 2011, questions of what it meant to be Black became much more complex. At the time, the Democratic Alliance (DA) was in strong opposition to the ANC and commonly associated with white people in terms of leadership and voters. It

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[36] This is a slang word referring to Black people who are white on the inside and Black on the outside. The word is to emphasis Black people who have assimilated to the white world.

[37] http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/ANCWL-condemns-sushi-on-womens-bodies-20110201.

[38]Ibid.

elected the 30-year-old Mmusi Maimane as the party's mayoral candidate for the City of Johannesburg. According to Timeslive (2011) reportage, Maimane commented that 'I feel that, if I joined the ANC, I would be working towards liberating black people only, whereas with the DA I am potentially liberating everyone and building a non-racist, non-sexist society.' Maimane's appointment brought to the fore the variations of Blackness and its ideological diversity. The ANC youth league leader at the time, Julius Malema, began casting doubts on the authenticity of Black leaders in the DA. Lindiwe Mazibuko, also a DA leader, was labelled a 'tea girl' by Malema in the run-up to local elections in May 2011. These events demonstrated a contested space in the meaning of being Black. The many shades of Blackness were used for political gains, but it has become more difficult to define what it means to be Black.

At the same time, the ethics and morality of the Black bourgeoisie, especially those associated with the ANC, were called into question. Mngxitama penned an article titled 'DEAR Comrade Malema, I write this open letter to express my utter disappointment in you...'.[39] In the article, he argued,

> …the wealth and comfort enjoyed by whites in South Africa is a product of historical violent theft of our land, labour and destruction of the African way of life…Instead of fighting to redress these historical injustices, you have now literally joined those who stole from us to set yourself up, while the people continue to suffer.

Malema, at this time, I argue, was a key player in the ANC political sphere which shaped debates around Blackness. His provocations resulted in him being expelled from the ANC in the same year.

The tension in and controversy around the Black bourgeoisie continued unabated. In September 2011, *News 24* reported that:

> President Jacob Zuma says South African prisons are full of black faces because black people in South Africa have no opportunities…

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[39] http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/columnists/2011/07/26/comrade-malema-you-are-just-another-ruthless-politician.

There are very few white prisoners because they are busy doing business, but we have no opportunities…Black people are unemployed and hungry and then end up in prison.[40]

While Zuma was narrating the rationale that prisons are full of Black people due to a lack of opportunities, the DA put out a campaign seeking to expand access to opportunities. 'At the end of October, the DA's spokeswoman Lindiwe Mazibuko won a famous victory over Athol Trollip to become the party's leader in Parliament...'.[41] Maimane was then appointed as spokesperson for the party.

Mazibuko is described in the Telegraph as follows: 'She speaks English with an accent honed by her one experience of serving tea for a living - a gap year spent working at a branch of Starbucks in London's Notting Hill.'[42] In the interview with the newspaper, Mazibuko asserted that fellow Black people thought of her as not being Black enough. 'The neighbour's kids used to say: "You think you're better than us, you think you're white" and we used to go crying to my dad and he would say: "But you are better than them. I don't understand the problem"'.[43] Being viewed as too white became a problem for her in Parliament: *News24* reported that 'DA Parliamentary leader Lindiwe Mazibuko was jeered and labelled a "coconut" as unionists and teachers gate-crashed a protest march by the party on Friday demanding better education in the Eastern Cape.'[44]

Coinciding with this narrative was an emphasis on the fact that Black people are the least resourced. Malema then organised a march with the ANCYL from Johannesburg to the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in Sandton, ending in Pretoria on October 27 2011. 'Thousands of protesters have staged a rally in the centre of the city to highlight the problems of unemployment among black youths and also to demand

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[40] http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/Zuma-Black-people-have-no-opportunities-20110907.

[41] http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2011-12-14-meet-mmusi-maimane-the-das-new-spokesperson#.VnZbPPl97IU.

[42] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/southafrica/8886383/Interview-Lindwe-Mazibuko-the-new-black-face-of-South-Africas-white-party.html.

[43] Ibid.

[44] http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/Gate-crashers-brand-Mazibuko-a-coconut-20121109.

greater economic power for the nation's disenfranchised black majority.'[45] The ANCYL marched for 'economic reforms and the nationalisation of major business sectors, including the all-important mining industry'.[46]

From November 28 to December 9 2011, the Congress of the Parties (COP17), part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), was hosted in Durban. Many leftist commentaries argued that most of the concessions taken at the event were anti-poor. In South Africa, the majority of the poor are Black. 'Many of the solutions to climate change that have been put forward ignore indigenous people or even worse, threaten them with further dispossession…' Defining Black people was extended to debates on climate change.

The years 2011-2012 accented sharp contradictions about being Black in South Africa. However, this debate started much earlier. In April 2008, Malema was elected as Youth League president, and was one of Zuma's key supporters.[47] In campaigning for Zuma, the *Mail and Guardian* quoted Malema declaring that he would 'take up arms and kill for African National Congress president Jacob Zuma at a youth day rally at Thaba 'Nchu in the Free State'.[48] This was during the time that Zuma was battling a court case which 'included allegations of racketeering, corruption, money laundering and fraud'.[49] Later in 2008, Thabo Mbeki resigned as the President of South Africa 'after a damning judgement by Pietermaritzburg high court judge Chris Nicholson, which scrapped corruption charges against Zuma'.[50] Malema then ignited discussion on who can be called authentically Black by critiquing the then Education Minister Naledi Pandor for not taking action to resolve a salary dispute at the Tshwane University of Technology. He then suggested the London-educated minister should 'use her fake American accent to address our problems'. [51]

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[45]http://www.ibtimes.com/occupy-johannesburg-thousands-black-south-africans-protest-joblessness-poverty-362230.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Zuma was elected President of the Republic of South Africa in 2009.
[48]http://mg.co.za/article/2011-08-30-malema-presidency-of-controversy. .

[49] Ibid.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid.

In 2009, Malema called one of the Black DA members, Khume Ramulifho, 'Helen Zille's garden boy'.[52] He further labelled Zille 'a racist little girl'.[53] His debates on race were not only focused on labelling Black people with English accents non-Black; he also called for the nationalisation of mines for 'economic freedom in our lifetime' with the vision of emancipating Black people. His first call, according to the *Mail and Guardian* (2011), was in July 2009, 'saying imperialist forces needed to accept the failures of capitalism [and prepare for] the state to own the mines and other means of production as called for in the Freedom Charter'. He added, 'We [black people] cannot just be reduced to security [guards] and the very important issue of the economy is given to minorities.' Malema's controversies attracted innumerable news headlines, marking him as the 'darling' of the media - virtually every move that he made from 2009 onwards was documented and reported on.

In the same year, he defended National Commissioner of Police, Jackie Selebi, who was arrested for fraud, by stating he was prosecuted because 'he was black'.[54] In defending Selebi, he noted: 'In Jackie Selebi, they want to prove a point they failed to prove in Zuma: that we [Africans] are corrupt, we like easy money, we like alcohol, we like women and we've got no skill…'[55] His debate on race captured the social imagination.

He further intensified his call for nationalisation in 2010. He evoked Mandela in his fight:

> We stand opposed to any peacetime heroes who want to oppose nationalisation as not being a policy of the ANC. Madiba himself is better placed to give a proper interpretation of the Freedom Charter, because Madiba was in the forefront as a volunteer-in-chief.[56]

Later in the same year Malema was accused of corruption stemming from alleged tender fraud in Limpopo. Meanwhile, Malema was publicly defending Zuma who was

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[52] Helen Zille was the leader of the DA at the time.

[53] http://mg.co.za/article/2011-08-30-malema-presidency-of-controversy. .

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

facing charges of rape - a flashpoint which Malema used to stir racial debates - and attracted convictions for hate speech:

> Malema is convicted of hate speech following his comments made about the woman who accused Zuma of rape. The Equality Court orders Malema to make an unconditional apology and pay R50 000. On the same day, Afriforum[57] lays another hate speech complaint against Malema at the Equality Court for singing Ayesaba amaGwala which contains the words *dubul' ibhunu* ('kill the boer').[58]

Malema vowed to continue singing the song.

Following a public falling-out with Zuma, Malema appeared at an ANC disciplinary hearing, chaired by Derek Hanekom and deputy-chairperson Febe Potgieter, with whom I had a conversation which is analysed later. The charges were as follows:[59]

- Criticising President Zuma while drawing comparisons between the leadership of Zuma and former president Thabo Mbeki
- Controversially pronouncing support for the Zanu-PF in Zimbabwe
- A public altercation with BBC journalist Fisher; and
- Continued singing of the *Ayesaba amaGwala* despite an ANC order not to do so, following the death of white supremacist Eugene Terre'blanche.

He was suspended from the ANC in October 2011 along with several members of the ANCYL leadership. After appealing the suspension in February 2012, Malema and company were expelled from the party. Several months after his expulsion, he formed the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) as a political party. The point to be made here is that Malema advanced the discussion of racial questions. Many young and Black middle-class people gravitated towards his call of economic freedom.

Malema's public pronouncements gave momentum to discussions around issues of race, which grew amongst the public. When *The Spear* - a painting by Brett

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[57] It is a right-wing political party which is based on Afrikaaner nationalism.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

Murray depicting Zuma in a pose reminiscent of LenIN, yet with his penis exposed - was displayed in the Goodman Gallery and published by the *City Press* newspaper, the ANC and some quarters of society argued that it was racist.[60] The ANC even launched a campaign that the newspaper should be banned. The painting was defaced by an individual who wanted to protect the dignity of the president and a few hundred protesters marched to the gallery.[61]

At the same time the mining sector was responding to Malema's call for nationalisation. A series of *Mining for Change* seminars were hosted by Motjoli Resources[62] and Anglo Gold Ashanti. *Mining for Change* noted:

> South Africa is yet to resolve the question of how to manage her natural resources in a manner that benefits the country as a whole. This process needs open spaces where stakeholders can share ideas, openly discuss their hopes and fears and, most important of all, gather accurate and useful information on the subject.[63]

Opinion pieces with titles like 'How Mandela sold out blacks'[64] were becoming regular occurrences in many South African newspapers in 2012. The debate around race was further exacerbated by the killing by the police of Lonmin platinum miners at Marikana. 'Police opened fire with automatic weapons when 3,000 striking drill operators ignored orders to disperse…At least 30 people were killed at the security crackdown at Lonmin's Marikana platinum mine, reigniting memories of apartheid-era brutality.'[65] The killing of mine workers was narrated by Malema and several others in the left as anti-Black, and they interpreted the killings to indicate that the ANC had betrayed Black people (see Andile Mngxitama' Facebook profile). These analyses which called attention to anti-Black tendencies penetrated to other levels of society.

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[60] http://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2012/05/21/anc-brands-zuma-painting-racist.

[61] Ibid.

[62] I interviewed the CEO of Motjoli Resources.
[63]www.miningforchange.co.za.

[64]http://www.news24.com/MyNews24/How-Mandela-sold-out-blacks-20120717.

[65]http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/southafrica/9482175/Police-shoot-strikers-at-South-Africas-Lonmin-Marikana-mine.html.

In October 2012, One-in-Nine feminist activists stopped the annual Gay Pride in Rosebank, claiming that pride had become 'depoliticised' and it had abandoned Black working class homosexual issues. The organisation has also accused *Jo'burg Pride* organisers of racism.'[66] The following year, *Jo'burg Pride* was disbanded, and now there are several Prides operating in the city. One of the pro-Black and politicised Prides is the *Jo'burg People's Pride.*

In the course of my research, these were some of the dynamics which captured public discourse. Part of Conversation Analysis is not only to talk to people about the meanings of Blackness, but also to report on the context in which these conceptions originate. Context through content analysis of newspapers and online social media enables the researcher to look beyond meaning-making and situate conversations held within a broader discussion which moulds people's realities. I argue that the period from 2011 to 2012 shaped and influenced the conversations I had with people in thinking about being Black.

4.4. Selection

The process of selection and accessing the 'elites' and 'ordinary' people proved difficult. This section illustrates the process I underwent in finding the people whom I engaged. I had conversations with eight 'elites': Xolela Mangcu, Febe Potgieter, Kenny Kunene, Mmusi Maimane, Eric Miyeni, Pumla Gqola, Lesley Dikane and Nomqubela Mazwai. There were other people I wanted to talk to, but accessing them was challenging. These individuals included Neville Alexander, Moeletsi Mbeki, Andile Mngxitama, Floyd Shivambu, Julius Malema, Lindiwe Mazibuko and Siphiwe Dana.

Let me start by describing how each 'elite' with whom I had a conversation, was selected, and the process of gaining access. Xolela Mangcu previously worked at the Biko Foundation and wrote several articles and books on Blackness and Biko's perspective in analysing the South African context. When I spoke to him, he was working at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). When he first arrived at the University, he was appointed Director of the Transformation Platform, and later moved to the Centre for Sociological Research (CSR). Two years prior to this, I had worked at the same centre. For reasons that I do not want to explain in this dissertation, the then

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[66]http://www.mambaonline.com/article.asp?artid=7484.

Director Peter Alexander and his team, including me, left the CSR, and started working at a newly established research unit, namely the National Research Foundation Chair for Social Change. Tapiwa Changonda, a former doctoral student of Alexander's who worked at the CSR as a post-doctoral fellow with Mangcu, assisted me to secure a conversation with Mangcu. This was just before Mangcu published his biography on Biko, which I cite in the previous chapter.

I asked Changonda for Mangcu's cellphone number and to put in a good word for me about the conversation I wanted to have with him. About a week later, I heard Mangcu was leaving UJ to be an associate professor at the Sociology Department of the University of Cape Town, and received his number. When I sent him an email requesting a talk, he was already in Cape Town. He thus offered to do a telephonic conversation. I selected Mangcu primarily because he was writing both opinion pieces and academic papers on issues which related to Blackness, either directly or indirectly. When he launched his biography on Biko, he and Mngxitama had exchanged bitter words in oppositional opinion pieces on the legacy of Biko. Their debate appeared in the *Mail & Guardian*. Mngxitama penned a newspaper article titled: 'Biography was found wanting'*,* accusing Mangcu of inaccurate accounts relating to Biko's life. Mangcu made counter-claims in a newspaper article titled: 'Designed to deceive'*,* noting that Mngxitama was dishonest. We had a two-hour conversation during which he was very graceful and friendly.

As mentioned above, Febe Potgieter was part of Malema's ANC Disciplinary Committee. She and Derek Hanekom chaired all the disciplinary hearings which led to Malema eventually being expelled from the ANC. I found Potgieter through Joel Netshitenzhe who is part of the National Executive Committee of the ANC. I got to know Netshitenzhe when we attended the same conference in Moscow in 2011 and stayed in the same hotel. After almost two weeks of smoking, sharing ideas, shopping and attending the conference together, we became fairly well acquainted with each other. I asked to have a conversation with him and he offered to find me other people to engage with when we got home. Indeed, when we got back, I sent him a reminder of our conversation and he sent me Potgieter's email. I emailed Potgieter and scheduled a conversation with her.

I originally had no intention of interviewing her as she was not a dominant figure in newspaper articles; however while conducting research about her in preparation for our conversation, I became aware of her role in the ANC and the importance of the

conversation. Apart from her role in the disciplinary hearing, she was also a former ambassador. We met at Nunos in Melville in the evening. I offered to buy her dinner, which she refused, opting for coffee instead. She brought her two children to the interview. The children played and drew while we talked. In our conversation, understandably, she did not want to talk about Malema's hearing.

Kenny Kunene, unlike Potgieter, was regularly the subject of controversy in the newspapers. As discussed above, he created controversy around questions of the Black bourgeoisie and their consumption patterns. Moreover, he was not afraid to showcase his wealth. Apart from extravagant parties (with the display of naked women covered in sushi), he also had a reality TV show, *So What?* depicting his lifestyle. He was therefore very much a person of interest to my research. We met at the annual Gay Pride in Rosebank in 2011. With a crowd of people surrounding him and cameras shooting his every move, I managed to squeeze myself between them and told him about my project. He then referred me to his personal assistant (PA) who was among his entourage. I spoke to the white, gay personal assistant who gave me his office number and asked me to call 'on Monday' to schedule an appointment.

When I called on Monday, the PA said Kunene was unavailable, and that I should try again in four weeks. Four weeks later, I was told to call again in a week. I persevered. A week later I called and was finally told to come to his office in Sandton Twin Towers the next day. When I got there, the PA, a white woman, and Kunene's business partner were all waiting for Kunene. He arrived two hours later. On his arrival, I told him once more about the project. He agreed, but his business partner was hesitant, wanting me to sign a legal document. I explained again that I was a student and the project was for my studies. His business partner then agreed to me having a conversation with Kunene. Contrary to popular belief, he was a most pleasant person. He switched off his cell phone and told me that I had his full attention.

Mmusi Maimane was the DA Gauteng premier candidate at the time I met him. I found Maimane's contact information via the DA database which contains all the Gauteng leadership and councillors' contact details. I called him and explained my project. He asked me to email his PA. Within minutes of sending the email, the PA responded that she would check his diary and get back to me. Three days later, I was scheduled to meet Maimane who proposed that we meet at the Mugg and Bean restaurant at Clear Waters Mall. I got there early and he was on time. I introduced myself and told him about the project. He was eager to talk and very welcoming. The

main reason for wanting to have a conversation with him was my interest in Black liberals and how they articulate their Blackness.

Eric Miyeni is a regular diner in Melville, so I see him there very often. At the time I reached out to him for a conversation, he had just screened his documentary titled *Mining for Change,* which I went to see at the Bioscope in Maboneng precinct. The documentary was mainly a debate about whether South Africa should nationalise its mines or not. The portrait of Malema in the documentary was sympathetic to his call. When the documentary came out, Malema was a hot topic in most corners of society and facing suspension from the ANC. The documentary was part of the on-going dialogues hosted by Anglo Gold Ashanti and Motjoli Resources (a mining company). The week after seeing the documentary, I saw Miyeni in Melville and decided to approach him. With his welcoming attitude, he agreed and we scheduled a time and place there and then. We met at a place now called Poppy's in Melville where we had coffee and a conversation.

Pumla Gqola was one of the few Black woman academics who were professors at the University of Witwatersrand at the time we had our conversation. She also refers to herself as a feminist scholar. I wanted to talk to her mainly to get a perspective on how feminists view Blackness and to speak about her role in the articulation of Blackness in academia. I first emailed her after I asked Grace Khunou, my co-supervisor, for her contact details. I sent two emails to which she did not reply. I then went back to Khunou and asked her to arrange a conversation with Gqola. Khunou then came back to me with the time and place for the meeting. The place of meeting was at Gqola's office on campus, in the Department of African Literature. We had an intense and a thought-provoking conversation for over three hours.

Lesley Dikane was one of the people Netshitenzhe referred me to. He was one of the people who went into exile during apartheid and was part of the MK struggle. It was thus important to interview him, especially to hear the MK perspective on Blackness. After receiving his contact details from Netshitenzhe, I emailed him and he responded immediately. I met him at his workplace in Woodmead where he works for Netshitenzhe. We started the conversation at his office and later he invited me to his place. The conversation was both on and off the record but lasted until late. I went to the meeting with a friend and we both went to his place.

Ms. Mazwai is how Nomqubela Mazwai preferred to be called. Ms. Mazwai is the CEO of Motjoli Resources. I was referred to her by Eric Miyeni. After our

conversation, Miyeni invited me to attend one of the *Mining for Change breakfast* seminars in Ilovo. I went and he introduced me to her. She asked me to contact her PA, which I did. I met her for the conversation at Motjoli's offices in Rosebank. She was open and welcoming.

I had hoped to access several other people for a conversation. However, my efforts proved to be in vain. For instance, I tried numerous times to get hold of Neville Alexander, but he was very ill and passed away before I could arrange to meet him. Moeletsi Mbeki's PA noted that he was fully booked for the next two years. Andile Mngxitama refused to meet me. He had initially agreed to have a conversation, but at the last minute he sent me a text to cancel our meeting. His text stated our political differences, and that it would be unethical for him to proceed. I emailed Floyd Shivambu and Julius Malema, but neither of them responded. After several phone call conversations during which Lindiwe Mazibuko assured me of a meeting, it never transpired. She eventually went to Harvard University. Simphiwe Dana wanted money to have a conversation with me which I was not willing to give. Arranging conversations with 'elites' is not a clear-cut formula. It is a combination of referrals, luck and persistence.

Selecting the 'ordinary' for a conversation was also not easy; it brought its own dynamics and limitations. During my fieldwork between 2011 and 2012, I attended a large number of seminars held at Wits, UJ, and outside the academy such as the Freedom Station in Westdene, plus coffee shops which hosted events about race and/or Blackness. As mentioned in the context section, several seminars were held, especially on themes surrounding Malema, the Marikana massacre or the Zuma painting. This is how I met some people. The particular group of individuals who took part in these discussions were made up of students, artists, business people and professionals. Before and after the seminars, I would approach anyone who was willing to talk. For example, I met Neo at the Freedom Station where he was playing music, and while having a drink, we began to talk about the evolution of Hip-Hop.

Apart from attending seminars, I asked my mother's friends. My mother is over 70 years old, and therefore knows many people who lived the majority of their adulthood during apartheid. I targeted people by classifying them according to age and generation to test if there was a correlation between different generations and their views on Blackness. My mother thus became a key source for finding pensioners. I also went to community halls during the day, where most pensioners and child grant

recipients receive their monies. I would queue and conduct conversations with individuals willing to talk.

I also managed to have conversations with school pupils who went to Model C and township schools. The learners were between 16 to 18 years old. At the time I conducted these conversations, the UJ ethics committee was not yet established; it was formally approved in 2014.[67] Specific rules on how to conduct such research therefore did not exist at the time. However I sought their consent and fully explained the research prior to recording them. In addition, I conducted the research in focus-group discussions with the learners. I asked about topical debates, to ensure I did not infringe on their dignity and privacy or cause double psychological victimhood.

Shisa-nyama pubs were also key sites for finding various people. During my grocery shopping, I spoke to cashiers and scheduled conversations with them during their lunch breaks. I walked down the streets of Melville and asked homeless people if they would talk to me, and I would have a conversation with them on the street. I also visited people's houses and/or bought them food at restaurants. I met Koketso while waiting for a friend at the Primi restaurant in Eastgate Mall, for example.

4.5. Space, Ethics and Limits

Selecting people and conducting Conversation Analysis has limitations even though the methods allow the researcher to elicit how people construct their Blackness. The conversations were skewed. I found myself spending a large amount of time talking to professionals, pensioners and students about their meanings of being Black. Inversely, my conversations with recipients of child grants, cashiers and the homeless were much shorter. The short amount of time I had with cashiers, among others, was necessitated by the fact that I found them in their workplace settings and hence they needed to return to work after 30 minute lunch breaks. Professionals, on the other hand, scheduled some of the meetings in restaurants, and were able to control their time and space.

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[67]https://www.uj.ac.za/faculties/humanities/Documents/BoF%20Approved%20Charter%20Ethics%20Committee.pdf.

Johannesburg was chosen as a research site. According to Nuttall and Mbembe (2007: 282), 'In Johannesburg the formal and informal, official and unofficial, cohabit and at times become entangled…' This entanglement makes Johannesburg

> …a place in which the prejudices that race and color engender have always hidden a close weaving of black and white. A place where there has always been a tension between apparent fixity of race and the potential of unfixing commodity form. (Nuttall and Mbembe 2007: 282)

Johannesburg was established in 1886 as a shanty town and 'in a period of 10 years, it grew to a 100,000 people with no official financial assistance…' (Sihlongonyane 2015: 2135).

The discovery of gold created rapid increases in urbanisation. The hidden tension of race was a permanent feature of the city:

> By the 1950s and 1960s, a 'full apartheid system: was enforced and the remaining black and mixed areas in the city such as Fietas and Sophiatown were erased and relocated to the south… This was manifested in the urban landscape through the growth of Soweto, what emerged as, 'a large, sprawling urbanised area without true urban amenities'. (Sihlongonyane 2015: 2138)

Because of this contradiction, the city became a volatile place of active politics fighting the regime of apartheid. In the 1980s there was a surge of unrest:

> … trade unions engaged in numerous crippling strikes e.g. the school children rose in revolt in Soweto, the mass democratic movement reformed, and the United Democratic Front appeared openly on public platforms. Protest images were on the rise in various forms of display such as novels, songs, events, paintings, etc. (Sihlongonyane 2015: 2138)

Since the end of apartheid, Johannesburg has labelled itself a 'world class city'. The city is politically relevant in thinking about Blackness, and historically the most politically conscious working class people reside in this city. Famous Black political struggles such as the Sharpeville massacre and the Soweto uprising unsurprisingly

happened near and around the city. In addition, it had the highest number of elites living in the area.[68] It is the hub of the economy which means various people from all parts of Africa and elsewhere reside in the area, making it a cosmopolitan city. Coupled with this wealth, Johannesburg is the headquarters to multinational financial firms, media houses and retail stores. The headquarters of the ANC and COSATU are also based in the city. The Universities of Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand are among the best in South Africa.

When thinking about Blackness, Johannesburg is an important site as it fuses all the contradictions which are accumulated by race, class, gender and sexuality. I do however believe that if I conducted my research at a different site it would have given me different results. In my current occupation, I have been doing a lot of work in Limpopo which has the least number of white people compared to all other nine provinces. How does the absence of white people in that area for instance, shape Blackness? Could I have found different answers regarding the conceptualisation of Blackness in a province which once had several Bantustans? How does the chieftaincy in that area shape and re-shape their Blackness? These are some of the questions I asked as I move around the province for different agendas. Apart from the already mentioned reasons I selected Johannesburg, I was limited to the area and its surroundings such as Bedfordview, Melville, Westdene, Sandton, Alexandra, Soweto, Katlehong/Thokoza and Kagiso because of funding constraints.

Regarding ethical considerations: throughout my research, I explained in detail the purpose of my project and sought consent prior to recording conversations. I was more sensitive and cautious when dealing with vulnerable groups, and carefully explained the process of research and the aim of my project. This enabled my interviewees to exercise agency and reformulate and shape the questions I asked. For the 'elites' I drafted some questions to guide me through the conversations. I asked all individuals to give their consent on record.

Transcribing and analysing the conversations afterwards can be difficult, especially when the aim is to preserve people's dignity. I therefore carefully selected extracts from conversations which intend to answer the question but also to put individuals' meanings in context. I hope this will give dignity to all the people who participated in this project.

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[68]See http://mg.co.za/article/2015-03-12-sas-richest-people-live-where.

Furthermore, I aim to give a copy of my dissertation to each of the 'elites' and 'ordinary' people who are still traceable as a thank you gesture after completing the dissertation, and I aim to conduct feedback meetings with the 'ordinary' in the various areas where I did my research. In those feedback meetings, I intend to have some of the individuals I had conversations with respond to my presentation. Feedback meetings will enable me to report on these findings as well and have conversations with people on how best to take my research forward.

4.6. Conclusion

Conversation analysis was the best method to use in trying to answer my research questions. The method enabled me to have in-depth dialogues with people and offered most of them the opportunity to shape the research to some extent. Moreover, it allowed me to adapt the research process to various contested issues which were relevant during the period, namely the years 2011 and 2012, which signified the formation of future debates on Blackness.

The meaning of Blackness during that period evoked questions relating to language, culture and class differences among Black people. I used these arguments to elicit insight in trying to understand how meanings attached to being Black are constructed. I also used the method as a means to test the conceptual definitions put forward by having a conversation with people. The next chapters demonstrate how meaning-making of Blackness is defined. It will show some differences and continuities in the articulation of Blackness. Being Black is a shared experience, but it is disrupted by various dynamics such as language, culture, ethnicity and current events.

Chapter 5

Black Gold:[69] Being Black and 'Elite'

5.1. Introduction

This chapter gives a sense of how the 'elites' understood their Blackness. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the term 'elites' is loosely defined as people who have social status, either through wealth, intellectual, political or business influence. In my case, the 'elites' comprised commentators in newspapers and shapers of public debates. This chapter demonstrates how the biographies of individuals shape their articulation of Blackness. The historical burden of being oppressed and discriminated against cuts across the meanings attached to being Black.

Histories of oppression unify, yet this unity is disrupted by other dimensions such as childhood memories, geography, culture, class and language among other influences. In other words, Blackness on a broader level is a unifying term, but this unity is fragmented by a number of dimensions at different points. When one folds one's hands into a fist, the fingers create a unifying shape of various sizes, yet the dividing lines between the fingers have the potential to disrupt that unity. Historical struggles, current affairs and public discourse of the time *construct* and *reconstruct* the meanings attached to the concept of Blackness. The ideas of Fanon and Biko in particular were evoked by the 'elites' in their attempts to define what Blackness means to them.

The next section gives a brief biographical account of the 'elite.' These biographies are based on their own self-imagery. The aim of inserting biographical accounts into this dissertation is to illustrate the diverse backgrounds of Black people, even though there are some commonalities amongst them. The findings indicate that most of the 'elites' originate from a Black middle-class background; most of them had parents who were teachers.[70]

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[69] This title was inspired by a Nina Simone album. The album featured the song which was popular in civil rights protests.

[70] Teachers during apartheid formed part of the Black middle class (See Southhall 2004 and Phadi 2011).

5.2. Descriptive Biographies

> When a society is industrialized, a peasant becomes a worker; a feudal lord is liquidated or becomes a businessman. When classes rise or fall, a man is employed or unemployed; when the rate of investment goes up or down, a man takes new heart or goes broke. When wars happen, an insurance salesman becomes a rocket launcher; a store clerk, a radar man; a wife lives alone; a child grows up without a father. Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both (Mills 1959:3).

There is a deep interconnection between biography and history. Most of the 'elites' were either second or third generation middle class, and their average age was 40. Their recollection of history was primarily based on the experience of apartheid and how it haunted their teenager years. The spatial divide was a constant reminder that they are Black, along with the gaze of the white people (who will also be referred to as the *other* - Fanon's term), which located them in a structure that legalised Black people as inferior. Their class position, however, allowed some access to the *other* as their parents interacted in white spaces; they were in closer proximity to the world in which poor Black people were not permitted. Upward mobility among the 'elites' was reinforced by the trajectory of their backgrounds. The assertion that the middle classes are more likely to shape and influence the landscape of South Africa correlates with the biographical histories of these individuals. As Mills (1959) argues, individual accounts are part of understanding the epoch of the time. Teachers raised the majority of the 'elite'; compared to most Black people, they were slightly better off. The social origins of such groups are important to understand how history and biographies *construct* and *reconstruct* the articulation or expression of Blackness (Mills 1959:73).

At the time I had a conversation with Mazwai, a 39 year old black woman: 'I have four kids… My mother is a retired teacher… My mother was a Needle Work and Home Economics teacher...' Being raised in a Black middle-class[71] household, Mazwai identified herself as a 'country girl' who grew up in the Eastern Cape. She notes:

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[71] Black middle class is used here to indicate that there are differences between the white and Black middle class in South Africa, in terms of wealth and cultural attributes (see Khunou 2015).

> I come from the Eastern Cape, so I'm a country girl, bred there. Joburg is a place of work for me. I run a mining company, which has a lot of coal and manganese. I'm also the Chairman of a cement company. I live in Johannesburg in Parktown North. When I am not at work, I'm a farmer in the Free State. I breed cattle, and I also have a game farm in the Eastern Cape.

Kunene, on the other hand, had an unemployed mother who was a prophet. He was raised by his grandmother who was a nurse:

> Okay, my father and my mother divorced the year I was born. They separated, my sister and I went to stay with our grandparents on our mother's side. My brother went to stay with our grandparents on our father's side. So I grew up, I was raised by my mother who was not always there at home. She didn't work at all; she was more of a praying person, a prophet. Then my grandmother was a midwife…

At the time I spoke to Kunene, he was 41 years old, and a business mogul of ZAR Lounge:

> I've got a teachers' qualification - that's how far I went. And I own my businesses. At the moment I am the owner of ZAR Empire. And I'm also the Marketing Director of ZAR Empire. I have my reality show. ZAR Empire has got different subsidiaries under it.

Gqola, 39 years old at that time, described herself as a mother, activist, author, public speaker and associate professor at Wits. Her father was a professor at Fort Hare University and she spent her childhood living on the university's campus. Mangcu also located himself within a family setting, by indicating he is both a father and associate professor at UCT, in Sociology. He stated that he comes from a middle-class family with a teacher mother who bought him many 'fancy toys'. Miyeni also had a middle class background and he noted that he had mastered the act of 'not working':

> I am 45 years old. I did a BA Law degree at the University of Natal Pietermaritzburg, now called UKZN… I have perfected the art of doing nothing. So most of the time I live in my head and think about stuff… I am a film-maker and writer…I work for myself…

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Maimane, like Miyeni, grew up in Soweto. He is a father and DA politician leader. In speaking about his parents, he located himself in terms of ethnicity:

> I grew up in a mixed family of Xhosa and Tswana parents. My mother works for a pharmaceutical company and my dad for a lock company. I had a parallel upbringing; there are things I remember about my Tswana upbringing.

Potgieter, on the other hand, was a bit reserved in reflecting about her background. She did, however, reveal that her father was a minister and her mother a teacher. Similar to most 'elites' who are in their 40s, she was 46 years old at the time:

> What do I do? Hmmm (laughs). At the moment I'm on sabbatical, but I am also doing my PhD. But I've worked in the developmental sector. Particularly youth development and youth unemployment… I worked for the ANC as well, as the coordinator of the National Working Committee. Then I spent 5 years with the Department of Foreign Affairs as South Africa's ambassador to Poland. I left Foreign Affairs about 2 years ago.

Dikane, unlike the other 'elites,' came from a working class family. His parents both had standard six (Grade 8). His mother was a domestic worker, and his father was a member of the PAC. Dikane was a Senior Researcher in Political Economy at Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA) when I spoke to him. In describing his family he said: 'I remember the people selling coal.' His father was in jail, and his mother a domestic worker.

The evidence presented illustrates that the majority of the 'elites' came from a middle-class background except for Dikane. This biographical history will later show that there are strong parallels between biographies and the meanings given to define Blackness. Their narratives show they have slightly better opportunities to occupy certain spaces which differ from Black people of a different class. In their reflection, as I will illustrate in the next section, Blackness cannot escape the gaze of the *other*. Furthermore, their narrative of Blackness is articulated as a political orientation which demonstrates exposure and engagement with various scholarly debates. Their current

context enables them to participate in broader engagements, hence, they have in-depth, global perspectives.

The next section teases out childhood memories to emphasise the linkages of biography and history further. Moreover, the section demonstrates that age matters in the re-telling of history. Because of their age, memories of the apartheid regime were more intensified. As already mentioned, most of the 'elites' were in their prime years during apartheid. Hence, spatial segregation signified a clear and vivid binary between the *constructions* of being Black and white. Even though none of the 'elites' referred to Du Bois, the notion of the veil is strong in their memories: barriers which limited them as Black people from accessing opportunities and liberties moulded their present realities.

5.3. Childhood, Small Freedoms and Being Black

When one thinks of childhood memories and being Black, one recalls Smethurst (2002:7) who in his analysis of Phillip's novels argues that the author is haunted by the

> …sufferings of African slaves and their descendants [which] are double and equivalent ghosts in the common memory of European history. This haunting of history seems to have no beginning and no end, or perhaps many beginnings and no ends, and it is this idea that organises the disparate fragments of history, memory and imagination.

The *construction* of Blackness thus permeates *reconstruction.* The old conception of Blackness interacts with new conditions. Memories of childhood are a marker of this process, where the past informs the realities of the present. In essence, being Black is partly locked into its *construction.* As a result, fragments of the past collide and are embedded in the present context. The *reconstruction* of Blackness is not a linear process; it has contradictions and is tied to memories which shaped people's childhoods. The *reconstruction* therefore manifests itself in multiple ways and folds (see De Mul 2014:13).

Indeed, how history is remembered is still locked in the oppressive grip of what structurally made Black people who they are. The pain and limited resources are hovering images which linger on through spatial segregation. In the case of Potgieter,

this 'act' of her childhood was articulated through separation and differentiation of physical space; comparison of the *other* through infrastructure made one feel Black. Potgieter remembers that white people had 'better' services while Black people were deprived:

> I think it was a very typical apartheid town. You had your white town in the middle, and then there was the African township on the one hand, and the Coloured township on the other hand. I suppose that sort of starkness of apartheid was something that was sort of obvious. Not just the fact that people live in segregated areas, but also the fact that segregation means different qualities of infrastructure. So we didn't have access to electricity, my parent's home got electrified in 1996 for the first time. We didn't have tarred roads. So it was very stark in that way.

Spatial segregation was also tied to one's access to work opportunities. For Dikane, in addition to having poor infrastructures, being Black was linked to the working conditions of Black people. Working for the *other* is coupled with emotional labour. For instance, a domestic worker becomes a caregiver to white people. The position of being a domestic worker is the most antagonistic work. At one level, the emotional labour coerces one to reconcile with seeing their children become workers and playmates for the *other.* A temporal experience of equality occurs; but, when 'play time' ends, one is reminded of their ontological position. Each child then returns to their structurally *constructed* spaces. Paradoxically, in the temporal moment, sharing space with the *other* brings a sense of happiness and possibility that all can be seen as human, but permanent structural and physical divisions continuously disrupt this fantasy. Dikane narrates this contradiction:

> I was born in 1968, that's when my father was jailed. In fact, my mother gave birth to me when my father was in jail. So as I grew up, I grew up being conscious of the fact that I am Black; there was no way in that context, small town of Victoria West. Here is a town where you are not allowed to go to the same toilets, there is a bucket system and you knew that other people had [proper sanitation]. I remember my aunt who was also a domestic worker, who was asked by the madam for us to be garden boys but were playing

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with him [white boy] and he's enjoying it. But he goes into the house, and we
have to go at the back.

The apartheid regime was a state built only to accommodate the minority and ultimately exclude the majority of Black people. The well-maintained infrastructure of the *other* was a juxtaposition to the realisation of what it means to be Black. Apartheid was further complicated by its dependency on the Black labour force to function. The majority of Black people were subjected to exploitation, low-income occupations, and their ability to sell their labour, which was interlocked with emotional labour. Playing with the madam's children created a blurred dilemma of seeing the *other* as both the oppressor and human. In other words, there are temporal moments in being Black, of seeing the possibility of the *other* as a human with the hope that it will be replicated; to see the madam's children as innocent children and suspend the experience of their parents as oppressors point to moments of, if not joy, the potential thereof.

Joy is part of the *construction* and *reconstruction* of Blackness. Mangcu recalls his immediate childhood memory through a big storm which occurred in the 1970s. He narrates that it wrecked the township and destroyed the bridge which connected them to town: 'The river was impossible and the fright of that… the traumatisation of black people and how we had to journey from the township to town, having to cross this river.' Even in that disaster, he still has fond memories of playing rugby in the local squad in Ginsberg and running around following Steve Biko as he would come from his office in town to their township. The moments of joy and pleasure were further emphasised by Miyeni when reflecting on his parents:

Well, I think one of the most important of my childhood memories is, I must
have been 5, maybe 6 or somewhere there. I thought my parents were about
to have an argument; I remember looking and thinking I have never seen this
before. When I was thinking they walked to the bedroom and later they came
back, hand in hand smiling and I remember that was the most powerful
images…it was quiet conflict resolution without anyone getting hurt…

These fond memories indicate the tension between oppression and small 'freedoms' (see Gilroy 2000). Gilroy gives an example of a Jazz singer who had no solution to his 'moral' and 'metaphysical' symbolic Black historical problems, but could air some of the tensions through song. These small freedoms enabled the singer to have some

joy. Driving a beautiful car and listening to jazz did not give the singer human freedom but eased the pain that s/he was confronted with. This easing of pain is what Mangcu and Miyeni are pointing to; they could not stop the violence, but the joys of playing rugby allowed a space of bliss in trying circumstances. These little pleasures and small freedoms among Black people allowed for some Black pride to prevail in a narrow community setting. Small freedoms created a Black world where Blackness was not questioned or shamed, but it made them feel they were human, even for a moment. As I have attempted to demonstrate in this dissertation, joy within Blackness is temporal. The narrative of violence and struggles overshadows these small freedoms.

The spatial divide of apartheid strengthens Pattillo's (2003) analysis that class conflict has long existed among Black people. Kunene noted that the township where he grew up was not only separated from white people but different sections within it were also ethnically divided:

> Fighting. Yeah. Where I come from Odendalsrus, Kutlwanong, the township is divided into blocks. Block 1, block 2, block 3, block 4, block 5. Now Block 1 was mainly Zulu and Xhosa speaking people. I come from Block 1, because of my surname. White people grouped us according to our tribes, so it was a tribal arrangement. As they always did. Block 4 was more Sothos; block 5 was Tswanas, and so on. So there were tribal fights now and then. The Xhosas and the Zulus would always fight with the Sothos, over no issues really.

Ethnic spatial divisions in the township was accompanied by violence. Memories of violence were also evoked in some narratives. Kunene further notes:

> Sometimes it would just be young guys that fought, and the parents take that thing, and the community takes it. So I grew up fighting, and unfortunately, I went to a Sotho school. The Sotho school was in Block 4, and at the end of Block 4, my mom's house was the last street that was facing block 4. So I couldn't avoid the fight. When I had to go to school when there were those tribal fights, I couldn't walk through Block 4 to school. I had to walk through the veld and go to the back and go to school. Coming back that way again, which was a big risk. So I lived taking risks, fighting, planning my way to

school, planning my way back from school. Sometimes I will walk through
Block 4 and I will fight before I get home.

He reflects on how these tensions were managed, and the rationale behind the ethnic fights:

> At that time it was a plan of apartheid forces. To make sure that black people constantly keep fighting against each other, so that there's no unity. Because apartheid, I think, recognised that if Black people could be unified ... that's why they created homelands. The Sothos - put them there; the Tswanas - put them there. The Zulus, put them there, the Xhosas there. So that we can't come together. They recognised the fact that if all black people had to come together, they would easily overthrow apartheid. And it came out at a later stage because with the emergence of cities and towns. Black people came together because they had to go to the mines and work. So that's when black people realised that we shouldn't be fighting as different tribes. So it was a strategic plan of apartheid to divide us and rule us.

Skin complexion, which further complicates ethnic divisions, in most scholarly work negates joy and small freedoms. The variation of skin shade among Black people also perpetuated internal conflicts; lighter skinned Black people were seen as prettier than darker ones. The variety of skin pigmentation destabilises the unifying concept of Blackness. Mazwai explained:

> I also remember getting into fights a lot with my sisters. I used to try and bully my older sister. I remember that. I also remember at some point thinking I was adopted at home because I'm relatively lighter in complexion... I started thinking maybe I'm adopted…

Childhood memories indicate that the biographies of individuals tell part of history. The physical segregation of the apartheid regime is still rooted in people's imaginations. These narratives nullify the assumption that there is amnesia regarding apartheid. Labour as a form of exploitation not only came with a wage but it was laced with emotions which temporarily blurred the line between the oppressor and the human. As a result, small freedoms manifested through playing rugby, and peaceful

conflict resolutions within the family, among others. However, these moments of joy were permanently disrupted by violence which at times included in-fighting among Black people either because of ethnicity or skin pigmentation which privileges lighter skin tone. These interruptions complicate the unity of Blackness which has a shared history of oppression and struggle. The diverse experiences (including childhood) create a multiplicity of what Blackness means.

In many ways, the 'elites' childhood narratives speak to Du Bois' articulation when he realised he was Black for the first time. He notes:

> I remember well when the shadow swept across me. I was a little thing, away up the hills of New England, where the dark Housatonic winds between Hoosac and Taghkanic to the sea. In a wee wooden schoolhouse, something put it into boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting cards - ten cents package and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card … Then it dawned on me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil. (1903:8)

5.4. Blackness Broadly Defined

In theorising Blackness, some contemporary scholars argue that Blackness is an 'absent' identity until Black people meet the *other,* or Blackness is evoked when Black people are confronted with whiteness. In other words, Blackness is a relational position, and alone it does not have a position. In an analysis of Stuart Hall's work, Wright (2016: 86) argues that '[h]e has repeatedly argued for rethinking [Black] identity not as singular, essential, ahistorical, given and fixed but as multiple, conjuncture and always in process.' However, Wright (2016:87) notes '… African blackness, in particular, [is] in fact rather complex and … this ought to be taken up more seriously and rigorously in conceptualizations of blackness…' In critiquing Fanon, Wright (2016:88) argues that Blackness in Fanon's work is juxtaposed to whiteness while in 'much of postcolonial black Africa the very ubiquity of blackness and the absence of a direct, dominant white gaze renders race as phenotype and racial politics largely inconsequential'. Citing Soyinka, Wright (2016:88) further notes that in most parts of Africa, Blackness is the unspoken identity, '…paradoxically because of its ubiquity; an

identification that is overtly recognized as coming to light as identity principally beyond the continent'.

On the other hand, Schultz argues that 'Blackness' as it is produced in mass media and popular culture operates as a 'cultural signifier' of 'difference' (2005:338). Looking at the US Open, Schultz (2005) locates the debates around Serena Williams' cat suit by conceptualising Blackness. Schultz (2005: 339) notes that '[i]n this case, blackness, as a protean marker of difference, is primarily constructed in contrast with discussions of normalised, white female tennis athletes.' Hence, the dualism of Black as self-defined and defined by the *other* is critical. James (2010) sees Blackness in a permanent position of being locked in an anti-black narrative. He argues that there has been an increase in the number of Black politicians, but even in their participation in these positions, there is an anti-black narrative surrounding the participation (James 2010:27). Thus '… blackness remains fixed as negation…'. As a result, 'Under white supremacy, only non-whites collectively struggle… hence only they collectively possess the trait of defective citizenry' (James 2010:27).

I argue that Blackness has *multiple consciousness.* Due to its *construction* by capitalism embedded in structural racism, the collective aspect of Blackness is important in its formation. However, in the process of *reconstruction,* various dimensions disrupt the collective aspect. Thus the interaction with different dynamics re-makes and *reconstructs* Blackness and makes *multiple consciousness.* This process is contextual and is always moulding and remoulding itself. Blackness for Potgieter is a political and philosophical identity:

> I think that when one talks about a black identity, it's a political identity. But it's also a philosophical orientation. Both in a South African context and a global context. The issue of race ha[s] been one of the dominant issues of the 20th century and I think it will go into the 21st century as well. Not just because of colonialism, but also a whole range of issues around people of colour across the world. So for me, it's both a political as well as a philosophical identity.

She complicates Blackness, however, by adding the experience of being a Black woman to her definition. The assertion of being Black and woman shows that Blackness and how it is experienced and lived varies for different genders. Black women were historically excluded from voting, education and certain occupations

which men were allowed. Historically and presently, women are expected to be the primary caregivers and are thereby subjected to the private sphere of the home. Their right to control their sexual reproduction and bodily autonomy was and still is contested compared to men. Women are permanently in an antagonistic position in relation to their gender and racial positions. Some scholars have argued that women have subhuman status since they are confronted by both sexism and racial discrimination. Potgieter notes:

> I think that comes into play at different points. But for me, my dominant identity has always been, at least the last, since I got involved, it's always been that I'm a black South African. I suppose other identities that play into that is the fact that I'm female. I often find that more challenging than your racial identity.

Similar to Potgieter, Gqola also defines being Black as a philosophical and political orientation. Her definition reinforces Carmichael's call for reclaiming identity, and for Black people to have self-recognition. Hence, always knowing her Blackness is an intentional act:

> … blackness is a political orientation towards the world, its recognition of… it's not phenotype, and it's a variety of things, a certain orientation towards the south, it's a chosen politics in the world, it's an anti-racist orientation towards the world. It's not just an oppositional stance; it was always more than anti-racist. It is as much anti-racist as it is pro-Black. So it's a commitment to anti-racism, a recognition, re-owning and reclaiming of what has been disowned or what white supremacy says we should disown. It's a questioning orientation towards the world and the self. It's also a deliberate loving which recognises orientation towards the self. When I say self, I don't mean the individual self but towards Blackness. It's a deliberate decision to love Blackness and to think-act that way. It's a deliberate attempt as much as possible. I mean it's not 100% possible, so you have to be self-reflexive. It's all those things. It's the anti-racist stuff; it's the embracing of the Black beauty, and the recognition of black love stuff is part of that project. But also realising that we are not the sum total of our victimisation.

When zooming in on the definition of Blackness, multiple facets are revealed. Political resistance forms part of the meaning alongside ethnicity, and the gaze of the *other.* Kunene locates his Blackness in a comparison with Black American experience. He evokes struggle as a signifier. Blackness is de-humanised, easily tossed away and disregarded:

> I've always asked myself 'but why do these American guys still talk this 'nigger nigger'? Being black, up until now - I got to understand why, you know. Because black is an ongoing struggle. It's very okay to hit at a black man. It's justifiable and my standing up against that has made me enemies, even from black guys. 'He's arrogant,' somebody says; 'No he just says it as it is.'

Dikane extends the notion of Black struggle by pointing to the inferiority complex:

> I'm giving you a scene of a white boy playing with me; I could see this boy, his life, but he could never see my life. I could see that we are just same people who do things similarly but whose don't and dos are differentiated, you see. It was quite clear for me that this issue is a biological issue not as what was made of out of us which is others are superior, and you are less superior.

This inferiority complex is exacerbated when Black people encounter the *other.* I argue that the closer Blackness gets to the *other,* the more inferior one feels. Miyeni demonstrates:

> When my father's artist friends came to the house, and they were white…and they had these dogs and I remember that they were white people and I realised that I was black. It was when I came into contact with whiteness that I realised that I was black in an intimate space for the first time…
>
> I remember, visiting their house…I remember thinking white people had a good life and had a really nice house. When we got there, they gave us toys. It seemed like people who had an amazing life… I had middle-class parents;

I eat every day, but it seemed like there is more out there and these people have it…

This feeling of inferiority is based on a history of using different tactics against oppression and exploitation yet still fighting for equality and freedom. The struggle and politics are at the centre of being Black, as Mangcu explains:

I define myself as black, because of my political background and my orientation. But I'm also African, in the continental sense. Other people prefer to call themselves African, in the South African context. You can really make sense of it in the context in which it is used. There was a time, I suppose, in our history when that kind of conceptual clarity was a matter of life and death. It's a matter of sub-definition and context.

Similarly to Du Bois, Fanon and Biko, Mangcu experiences a doubleness in his articulation of Blackness. This doubleness lies beyond skin pigmentation. However, Mazwai points to skin pigmentation in defining Blackness:

Many people are black as far as their skin pigmentation is concerned, but they don't consider themselves such. Because of their lifestyles, whether or not they believe this whole cultural thing, so on and so forth. So it's beyond pigmentation if you ask me…

But it starts with pigmentation - when you interact with another person - because before you even get to know a person, what they see is your skin tone. Depending on their predisposition, until they get to know you, you are judged. I don't think it should be like that. There are black people who, I think, consciously they are more white than some white people I know. So for me it is not about that, but unfortunately, it is the front you present anywhere.

Black people who are lighter skinned are seen as pretty; skin pigmentation surfaces as a reference point even when Blackness is oriented as a political and historical position. The question of how other Black people see lighter skinned Blacks throws some unsettling light on the discourses of Black beauty and what it means in relation to Blackness. Mazwai points to this dilemma:

…The fact that I was slightly lighter in complexion, even amongst black people; people tend to think if you are lighter, you are prettier…

Maimane, on the other hand, locates his Blackness outside slavery and struggles of the past. He states that Blackness goes beyond skin colour and focuses on structural manifestations of the black experience. According to him:

There are many angles [from which] you can look at this issue, but one thing we cannot reduce ourselves into is black being about the colour of skin. I think sometimes we can conflate too many issues…. We have degrees of blackness; suddenly you went to a different school so you must be less black than I am... Julius Malema has a particularly different accent from mine by upbringing, by function of education, for argument's sake. But he is more black than I am in other people's interpretation.

His argument and definition of Blackness is fluid. To him, Blackness is multiple and flexible, and reflects one of many instances of oppression in world history. Hence the link between individual biographies and the particular history of Black oppression is elided in favour of a more global perspective. In other words, daily experiences are the manifestation of structure; they shape how people see themselves and the definitions they attach to their Blackness. He notes:

…a historical narrative that shares a common story…I don't think we can use that definition of blackness. Because equally so, there are many other oppression narratives that are global. Then if you begin to understand this under a global mentality, then you have to ask the question about the Jews. Does that make them black, simply because they have a slave narrative to them? So to be black to me has to do with the genetic component, with the cultural affirmation of those issues that connected to that. Equally so, to be black is to be connected with this continent. It has to do with your understanding the broader interpretations of what this continent means and what it speaks to…

The majority of the 'elites' expressed commonality in defining Blackness. In many, except Maimane, these commonalities evoke what ties Du Bois, Fanon and Biko together - the politics of Blackness. The politics of Blackness can exist outside

the veil of the *other,* and interacts at multiple facets. Blackness is political; ethnicity and skin pigmentation still matter. At times, Blackness is fluid; it inheres in multiple consciousnes*s* which expands and compresses. The next section looks at how the concept African is linked to being Black.

5.5. Being Black and African

Blackness is further complicated by a distinction between being Black and being African. Being African is interchangeable with being Black. Kunene illustrates:

> Number one, being born in Africa makes me an African, being black makes me an African. The culture, the tradition that I come from. If you have to speak to anyone from East, North, West Africa, and we all come together in one room, and we speak about our culture and tradition, it's interlinked. It's almost the same things, and that makes us African…

Mangcu further emphasises the impossibility of separating the two concepts and locates it in preference. Rather than distinguishing the two concepts, Gqola collapses them into 'Black African.' She explains:

> In my family it was always important that I was Black African, I knew what black meant, and being African is the same. Fort Hare students from all over the world, this thing about cultural nationalism that would come later. Even at a gut level, this was such a weird thing.

Mazwai, similar to Gqola, could also not make a clear distinction between being Black and being African:

> For me it goes hand in hand: I am an African, and I am black. I don't know which one comes first. I particularly feel strongly about that because as black people we discriminate amongst ourselves. Which becomes philosophically difficult for me to get around somebody who will have an issue with a white person discriminating against them. What is the difference? So it has to go beyond your clan, beyond our countries, to uproot the continent. We co-exist

anyway. And if you look at the Nguni Languages, you go to different African countries - you can't separate.

My findings show that making neat distinctions between Africans and Blacks is hard. The 'elites' are more inclined to use the term Black as a way of positioning themselves. Being Black evokes elements of politics and reclaiming oneself. The inability to distinguish between the two terms shows that the 'elites' are signifying a political claim which differentiates them from white South Africans who might also see themselves as African. Geography and where someone is born can embolden people to assert that they are African.

Thus, claiming being Black rather than being African is to emphasise the oppression more than the geographical location. The point here is that the 'elites' could not translate Blackness into how it relates to other Black Africans because in many ways they still see their own experiences as specifically South African. Thus, the 'elites' could not show how their experiences are similar and at the same time different from the other Black people on the continent. Here, African is an 'absent' identity infused to mean Black at the same time. Black throughout has adopted various, multi-faceted definitions.

When people were asked about the recent xenophobic attacks, all were appalled. Their disapproval was, however, not informed by having a shared identity, but rather by the view that other Africans needed support since they assisted South Africa during the apartheid struggle. The responses move between morality and paternalistic empathy.

5.6. Xenophobia

In thinking about Africa, most of the 'elites' denounced the xenophobic attacks which were occurring during these conversations. Gqola said she was devastated and explained the attacks as Black self-hate:

> Devastating not because I didn't know who we were as South African citizens, devastating because I wanted to believe up until that point, that even though we were those horrible people who hated ourselves so much that we were self-medicating and had a grip on it, sort of. We will continue to

be mean, ethnic-nationalists, negrophobic and self-hating, but I had hoped that we would continue to inflict the horrible violence on ourselves in the way until that point even though we shouldn't be, ideally…

Mangcu could not comprehend the attacks since most activists resided in the countries in question during the apartheid struggle:

It's wrong: it's stupid, very wrong. It's people who forget easily. During our liberation struggle, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Angola, and many other countries, they took care of us in their own countries. The worst part is, the apartheid forces went in there and they killed their kids, their mothers and their fathers. So that they can get us out of their land, out of their homes, but they never [did]. Although they were being killed, they did not. Apartheid forces killed people in Zimbabwe, in Mozambique, in the name of them, to get rid of us. They did not. Today we are not even being killed for them, yet we victimise them. Yet we kill them; we are violent against them. We have forgotten that if it weren't for them, all our liberation army forces wouldn't have had a home. It's the worst thing that can happen in this country.

Dikane, on the other hand, condemned the attacks but stated it was not a South African problem but a global one:

There's no country that has no xenophobic tendencies, wherever you go. We lived in exile and we have to be honest in these debates. There are countries in which we were not well accepted for some people, either by the state or by civil society or just normally by people who lived in those countries. We know our histories, there are structural conditions that rises when these things happen- poverty, inequality. I mean I can't say to a guy from Senegal when I arrive in Senegal that he shouldn't get a job and I should because I am ANC. For him not to get angry, is unfair, I mean this Xhosa French speaking gets my thing…

Potgieter links the attacks to poverty:

I think it's a terrible blight on us as a society. Because what we are doing is venting our anger on people that [are] in a very similar position as us. In terms of [how] they also can't make a living where they are, that's why they move. People don't migrate, travel thousands of kilometres because they feel like it. It's conditions that drive people to that. So I think it is a problem. But I think it reflects a broader sense of disconnect within our society. Because we then turn inwardly.

The 'elites' disapproved of the violence. Part of their criticism however was laced with their class position. Some narrated that their workers were from other parts of the continent, as a result, these attacks might mean losing their workers. Mazwai notes that she was concerned about the safety of her domestic worker:

It was actually quite sad that we would have such a thing. I grapple with it in my household now. Because I am employing a Zimbabwean, very competent woman. And the current lady who works for me has a problem with this thing. I like her very much; I wanna keep her. But she does not have a problem because she's a bad person, but it's because she relies on what she reads, or 'Zimbabwean people are like this'. I can't tolerate those sort of things, so it's sad. It really is a pity that we go to those levels. It goes back wena Mosa, to those discrimination things.

However, even in their feelings of devastation about the attacks, the 'elites' could not make a link between their Blackness as South Africans and other Black people on the continent. Their historical reading of Blackness was still South African-centred, and they could not fathom linkages to other Black struggles and revolutionaries.

Part of being Black can define itself without the interference from the *other.* Moreover, Blackness is not only a translation of pride and beauty; it is enveloped in contradictory manifestations of self-hatred.

5.7. Language and being Black

Alexander (n.d.) argues that race has dominated our discourse, and how South Africans see their realities: '…[the] racial fault line was the most prominent feature of

the South African socio-political landscape for most of the 20th century.' However, he argues that the race debates have overshadowed discussions on language. It is only '[o]n occasion, the apparently antagonistic contradictions in the language domain became manifest with respect to the status and use of Afrikaans…' (Alexander n.d.). During the apartheid years, Afrikaans was used as the medium of teaching in educational institutions – something which still persists in some parts of the country today. The guiding rationale of the 'Afrikaans-speaking elite' in imposing the language was to challenge the 'hegemonic status' of English. Their contestation, however, was not entirely successful in capturing the imagination of Black people; Alexander states that a 'passive but powerful support of most black people for the continued dominance of English … [was] one of the ways in which they could demonstrate their rejection of the racial order…' (Alexander n.d.). As a result, Afrikaans was confined to being the 'language of the oppressor' and English became the 'language of aspiration and eventually the language of national unity and of liberation for the black elites' (Alexander n.d.).

In my findings, language is one of the key indicators in defining being Black. Unlike Alexander's assertion that English was seen by the Black elite as part of aspiration and liberation, the 'elites' had conflicting relationships with the hegemony of English; they are no longer 'passive' and 'powerful' supporters of the language. The battle with speaking English is related to the fact other Black people cannot speak their own African language. The need to know one's own language is part of retaining one's Blackness. However, at the same time, they are torn due to their privilege. Since their children attended previously white schools where the medium of education is English they find themselves in agonising positions because some of their children barely speak any African languages. The issue of language is entangled with African culture. There are two parts to the debate on language: on the one hand, it is a useful communication tool for navigating the world; on the other hand, and as more young people speak English, it is perceived as a source of the erosion of their culture. Kunene notes:

> Language is very, very important. That is why my 7 year old daughter goes to a private school; my daughter seldom speaks English at home…My son goes to a private school; he speaks Sotho. My eldest daughter is 17; she goes to a private school; she speaks Sotho at home. Language is very

important. I don't make my kids snobs. I don't get impressed by my child speaking big English. That doesn't impress me. I hear most of these black people say 'ooh my child only speaks English,' as if English makes you a better person in life. It doesn't. We learnt English through Karl Marx; we learnt English through *Long Walk to Freedom*. We learnt English through those books, through the political material. My grandfather said to me 'you must learn their language. Your advantage is you will hear them, but they won't hear you'. And I did exactly that, so language is very important. If you can't speak an African language and you are an African, there's a problem. There's kids that grew out of this country, they came back and can only speak English. We understand their parents didn't have time to teach them the language, but now they must strive to learn the language. Language is key, that is why you see countries like China, Russia, their celebrities, they don't give a damn about English. You interview them, they speak their language, you go get an interpreter. Those are the people I respect. When our own speak their language, we laugh at them.

Rejection of the primacy of English is part of defining oneself beyond the *other's* gaze and asserting one's Blackness. It is seen as a personal failure when children of the 'elites' only speak English. Some send their children to private schools to master English, but they try to speak an African language at home. There have been both successes and failures in the tactic. Mazwai laments:

…one of the things I consider to be a failure, if you like, even though I haven't given up on it, is that my younger children at home are not fluent in Xhosa. That's something that I worked on from day one. The biggest one, it was easier because every holiday he would go home to my parents and stuff like that. Their father grew up, is a black South African man, but he spent a lot of time overseas. And they went to all the multi-racial schools and the private schools, so the issue of language at home really was on my shoulders. But then again, in the work environment in Joburg, I actually work with a lot of Xhosa-speaking people. So I had to make a conscious decision every time I get home, to speak Xhosa. They understand that you must be consistent, so on and so forth. But the younger ones, it's a bit of a challenge, and that's something I still grapple with in terms of being consistent. I do whatever I can, and get additional classes, and so on and so forth. That, if I could

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change, would make me happier. But then again, language doesn't just end with the spoken language - you must come with the culture. And have them appreciate and embrace those things that are important in our culture.

Dikane, on the other hand, argues that language should be regarded as a tool of communicating. However, because of our struggle, language cannot be ignored in the historical oppression of Black people. Rather than questioning the hegemony of English, he reminds us of the oppression of Afrikaans in defining the Black struggle. In many senses, his argument affirms Alexander's (n.d.) statement that Black elites were supporters of the English language, but saw Afrikaans as the language of the oppressor. Dikane states:

> Language is a very important factor in shaping consciousness, because it's there for communicating. That is what language really is for me - to communicate. So how do you expect me to communicate with you if you do not want to accommodate me, which is what happened in South Africa, historically. Apartheid Afrikaans… but I don't want to get into that. Those experiences informed me to become different. I don't have to become the same fascist… We gained power, there are certain elements amongst the oppressed majority and you don't want to become that guy. Particularly because of my experience, I don't want to do that…

Miyeni questioned whether the hegemony of language was really problematic. He argued that for a nation to progress it might be useful to have fewer languages:

> I guess it does, but for me, from an aesthetic perspective, it is so nice to have German traditional wear, Tsonga traditional wear, Japanese traditional wear, there is something beautiful about that… That level of diversity makes the world beautiful and less homogenous… But then what is language for? Language is for communication. It is for me to touch the other people's soul and get understood… If that's what language is for, then what's wrong with having one universal language? If the wrong thing is to have less languages…Managing diversity is a tricky thing, and maybe we should be homogenous to manage better… Why did America become the power that they are now? ... Some of the biggest powers had a level of homogeneity which forces a level of unity amongst them…

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Gqola goes beyond the idea of language as communication and unpacks the location of African languages in relation to culture:

> I think the state of African languages in the continent is not separate from the condition of African people. And so, of course it matters. When people matter, their language matters then of course they can kill it. And it's fine. Right we cannot have this discussion about language not mattering as if we are in a place where language is a completely separate issue. When people stop needing language, it dies out. All languages eventually die out and move into something else. That has everything to do with culture and politics. Culture in a sense that language allows you to do a number of things. It allows you to have a certain orientation to the world. I don't think it's just a tool for communication. It's a way of being in the world.

In the process of trying to reconcile with the fact that knowing can advance Black people, English is used as a tool for assimilating the *other* world which has resources. The conversations on language show that the contention around English is based on the accents people use and the fluency of English, and thus cannot be construed as only as a medium of communication. They touch on how Black people use English as social currency to assimilate the *other* and to expand their pool of opportunities to advance in that world. Dikane explained:

> I'm sceptical of the notion of born-free. I guess what it seeks to depict [is] the difference between '94 kids, it's very hard for me to answer because as I said I grew up in a township where I'm Xhosa and the other guy speaks Afrikaans and Xhosa, vice versa. Because of the space I was located in, I have tread very carefully - my historical-cultural influences - and my answer will be towards that, it is means of communicating in the world. I had to speak French, one of the most difficult … languages, it was hard but I speak it now. I write French. I learnt because it was the language of which we had to communicate in, despite the colonial burden and in fact because of its colonial nature 50% of Africa speaks the language which was one of the reasons which motivated me. If I want to communicate with Fanon in Algeria, let's use Fanon, how was I going to do that in Xhosa or Zulu. But then the problem with this - I think we are talking accents here, phonetics in language

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that people have adopted. That is a very specific problem we are critiquing. The fact that these kids are learning this language at school is good, but it mustn't influence and shape their consciousness to be English. Secondly, they must stop mimicking like a parrot; those are the real effects of the culture of colonialism and imperialism.

The 'elites' were torn between whether language is a tool of communication or part of the domination of western culture. This points to the desire to be globally competitive by knowing English which signifies social currency, and a desire to preserve culture which at times is seen as non-enlightening.

5.8. Culture

Language is intertwined with culture. Black culture here needs to be understood in two folds. One, it speaks to the rituals that people perform. Second, it reflects on the values and morality of what is regarded as respectable and dignified - which moulds behaviour and is often gendered. In conversation with the 'elites' a clear distinction was not apparent; the two folds were interchangeable.

There is a sense among the 'elites' that Black self-love is located in their ability to preserve and speak their own language. In its philosophical and political orientation, there are key signifiers which distinguish Blackness from white people. Language and culture are part of the discourse which locates images and imagination of Blackness outside the *other. Some* of the 'elites' want to preserve African culture, but are wavering in a global context, and therefore some want to participate in both worlds. Kunene explains the need for culture, but he also acknowledges his dual position as a man who is Black. His narrative emphasises the masculine view which emboldens sexism within cultural scripts:

Very key, very important. I said to Noeleen, she asked me, she said 'Kunene, if anyone wants to really piss you off, what must they do?' I said insult my culture and tradition. I wasn't born in a very cultural home; I was born in a Christian home. But my mother was very cultural. My grandmother wasn't really, she didn't diss it, but it didn't matter. I got to realise the importance of culture and tradition. That is why I'm even against people that insult polygamy. Because they are insulting our forefathers' intelligence. If you say

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it's stupid, you are saying our grandparents are stupid. Polygamy worked then; polygamy still works now. It is people that make things not to work. Whatever is African culture, I get very angry when it's insulted. People complain about virginity tests, they complain about HIV/AIDS. If girls know they are going to be tested for virginity, they don't sleep around. But now that they know that they won't be tested, they sleep around. They are complaining about a mechanism, claiming that it is violating human rights - people are insulting African culture in the name of human rights, in the name of morality? Whose morality? The same Europeans that are telling us how barbaric our culture is. They do the worst. White people have this thing called swingers, where they exchange wives. Take my wife fuck her; I'll take your wife and fuck her. They have sex with each other's wives. As Africans, we will never do that. Now we must buy into going there and sitting and having women playing on top of us. Our sisters and daughters have been turned to stand on the corners, not by African culture, by European way of doing things. You look at Christianity, [it] is not a problem. I'm a Christian [but] Christianity doesn't say you must not worship your ancestors. Some black guy who reads the Bible upside down, who wants to make money from vulnerable people tells you that [by] going to a grave, you are talking to the devil…

Mazwai emphasises language as more important than culture. Aware of the global context, she is cautious to make culture an important part of Blackness:

I'm all for adopting the positive aspects because I can't claim that my culture or the black culture is the best. There are good elements to it, there are elements I think I can do without. If I go to the Chinese culture, different communities, there are things you'd never be caught doing. But there are certain values you would get there. That realisation that 'I am because you are' - those are cultural traits you find more often in some communities, and less of it in others. I think language is important 'cause that's how you express yourself. I think it plays a key role, 'cause if you do express yourself in your language it means you embrace it and have a certain pride in it. So it begins by you, the self, and who you think you are. If you think your language is inferior or you don't know it, then your predisposition will always be...I remember one of my sons when he was little, we were watching TV and he says 'Oh those Xhosa people,' 'What do you mean those Xhosa people?' 'Those black people.' I don't think that time he was actually

conscious of it. So that again sort of shapes your attitude towards your culture, your blackness, so on and so forth. I think it's a must that one must speak their language. Because without that it becomes difficult to appreciate the culture, and to relate to it. Or to relate to the community that is in the same space. It's a really integral part, I can't emphasise it more. The ability to express yourself, and that confidence and everything.

In a similar vein, Dikane does not want to confine his Blackness to culture, and distinguishes culture from tradition:

Culture is always - not in being black alone but for any human being - is very important. You can't be a being without culture, but we have to differentiate the different forms of culture. If we talk of being cultured in terms of the French and also tastes defines the culture - of course Bourdieu. So it's important to define but I think what you are referring to is the form of culture of colonial vs non-colonial culture. Let me answer by saying people often confuse and conflate culture and tradition. Colonial culture [and] practices, and tradition, these have to be differentiated, though one is part intermingled to the other one. Though what we should say, reflecting on this country, is that one form of culture dominated another culture, so there is no evolution in that sense because there is power. For me culture is evolutionary, and if we agree, then Cultural Revolution is not one culture dominating over another. It is an encounter between and among different forms of cultures. But tradition, we have to understand, exists and it can be static. That is my problem with tradition is that it doesn't recognise that society changes…The fact that gay people are being lynched now is a dangerous phenomenon which we justify through tradition. But it's not only SA where gay people were lynched or in Africa, they were lynched in Europe too. This is the role of intellectuals, Foucault moving away from Bourdieu now on the history of sexuality and the bio-politics which he construct[ed]…a very useful concept that helped Europe to understand how barbaric it was against lesbian and gay people, that type of atrocity they had created. Despite that the bio-politics also addresses notions of power between genders…

Gqola acknowledges the fluidity of culture and questions the rationale of why people still hold on to culture:

I don't think it's the stuff of ethnic-nationalism. I mean, obviously it is that too. I think that culture is what it should be, it will matter differently to different people…What Fanon says is culture is culture. I don't think there is a culture that is all the wonderful things we pretend it to be. We need a sense to make our place in the world. I think it roots you - us. It gives us a sense of continuity and all of these things. It matters as differently, at different times. It will always be contested... People want to go to initiation school, fine. I'm not going to go; it's not even interesting to me. But you can't kill people and be irresponsible. Then the other things, this thing that has started again and the women who get abducted and it's [called] culture again. Then its rubbish, there is nothing any more cultural about that than human trafficking. It's the same thing. You think she doesn't want anything to do with me, let me just abduct her. It happens all over. It's not even about going on about African polygamy, it's the most boring thing in the world. Monogamy is the most boring thing in the world. It's all very boring. It's not African or not un-African. I get irritated when people try to make specific things African. You don't need to call yourself anything if you are going to act in a fascist way, you're going to do what you do anyway. I am often irritated by the discourse of culture when it means that kind of unchanging thing when people say 'But our ancestors said…'. There's no way that our ancestors agreed, they were humans too. Some of my ancestors didn't agree, I've decided. But I'm also someone's ancestor. Human beings are never going to agree completely. So I am irritated with what that discourse has done in the name of culture. As for culture being different, I mean culture in the sense of Black cultural experience I was talking about earlier. People can do their Xitsonga tradition. I don't care. People should be able to do whatever they want to do as long as it does not mess with my things. So long as it's not racist, misogynist, homophobic, it's not any of those things…

The 'elites' straddle the tension that underpins invocations of culture as part of Blackness: they are aware that it can be conservative and not progressive for Black emancipation, yet are wary of dismissing it. There is a danger that freedom can be limited in the name of culture. Thus, arguing for the flexibility of culture is more prudent than endorsing the total protection of it. Language as a marker of Blackness among the 'elites' is more important than culture since it is seen as a fight between the hegemony which they strive for and the aspiration to be seen as global citizens.

Language allows space to move between asserting Blackness and assimilating into the *other* world which comes with rewards. Culture can be denounced as uncivilised, and therefore limits the 'elites' to integrate into the *other* world. At the same time, for people like Kunene, resistance against assimilating into the *other's* world provokes an often uncritical defence of, for instance, sexist practices justified in the name of culture.

Distancing culture in understanding Blackness leads to the question of class. In discussing language and culture, the 'elites' inherently differentiated themselves from other Black people who do not have the luxury of sending their children to private schools and consciously teaching them how to speak their African languages. Culture signals the contestation on what aspects of being Black are important in the *reconstruction.*

5.9. Class and Being Black

While the English language is contested, knowing and preserving the language is a process of class formation in itself. Those who can fluently articulate themselves in English are most likely to have more opportunities. Class differences expressed through language or material accumulation form part of thinking about Blackness. The pejorative term 'coconut' - which implies that someone is 'Black on the outside but white on the inside' – is just one indication of how access and class can disrupt the unity of Blackness. Southall (2015) also traces Black elites and the Black middle class from the 1900s to the present. He shows different trajectories in the formation of this class. However, even with growing evidence that class matters among Black people, Miyeni still argues the number is too small to matter:

> As far as distributing the basic necessities to poor people we are exemplary. No one in the world has given people access to water, telephone, houses faster, nobody… But these are stepping stones… Your black, rich people are not your problem. They are so minuscule that no-one should be talking about them. They constitute less than 1 percent. The concentration on them is black on black violence. Your money is still with the Oppenheimers… Your money is still in white hands… We should embrace progress and embrace our stars…

Gqola, however, affirms that there is a middle class and makes a distinction between the old and the new middle class:

> Historically we know there has been different middle class[es]. I think the black middle class has functioned in the main differently from the new middle class. I do think the new middle class is unfairly demonised, but I can see why it is, it has to be, as part of the larger project - the black-faced white supremacy. Historically it was nurses, teachers, social workers, doctors and so on. I wouldn't say that class didn't matter, but it mattered differently. It was visible, obviously enabled you to do things that the poor could not do…. We [new middle class] don't even want land but that corner at the golf estate. We don't own anything. We are a professional class that is growing not a middle class in its historical sense. We are in debt. We self-medicate, drink a bottle of wine every day or whisky. We shove cocaine. We do whatever we need to do to silence ourselves rather than revolt...

Gqola argues that the current Black middle class are self-hating people who are seeking to be part of the *other* world with full access to liberties and freedoms. Mangcu also reflects on race and class and comes to the same conclusion as Gqola:

> Where I grew up, class was not a cultural thing you had. For example, if your parents were teachers they were not necessarily better off than the shopkeeper. Now in classic Marxist terms the shopkeeper is the capitalist but the teacher [is] framed as the petty bourgeoisie. If you look at black life, it's turned upside down. … to the educated professionals…class for a very long time was not an economic concept… it was a cultural concept, essentially…Class matters because you've got a growing middle-class group of black people. Even then, they are basically still what we call the petty bourgeoisie for most of the time. There are very few black people who own the means of production in this country... They do not own resources…

Kunene, on the contrary, argues that some 'elites', including himself, can still relate to the poor:

> I relate to them, they relate to me. I'm one of the most basic people you can get. Some so-called 'sophisticated black people' - I don't know what that

means - tell me that I'm unsophisticated; they tell me that I lack class, [that] I should be hanging out at certain spots - black people. When I go to my hometown, I go to car washes in the township. I drink there, I party there. I didn't start doing it when I was in the media. That is my life.

Mazwai argues that self-hating does not only affect a particular class. Moreover, wealth is not only about material accumulation - morality also plays a role:

It depends on what we define poor to be: there's poor in material respects; there's poor in terms of happy with wherever you are, and what you have or don't have. You've got a lot of people with money but are unhappy. I know it sounds philosophical, but it's not as straight forward as poor in terms of...one can be rich in terms of who they are, the energy they give off to other people. A straight answer to that is, I relate very well. But my definition of poor is beyond material respects. It's all very relative as well, there are many people who are rich in terms of their contexts. You know, big fish in a small pond.

Dikane reminds us that wealth has been accumulated in South Africa mostly through the abuse of power. We therefore have responsibility to question the discrepancies between the poor and the rich: 'Then there's economic power and we must at all times speak truth to that power when that power is becoming a negative form of power in society. So in the sense of the resourced and less resourced, which is economic power…'

Kunene and Mazwai affirm Frazier's (1957:25) conclusion because they still feel close to the poor even though their realities and lived experiences surpass the majority of Black people:

Since the world of the make-believe cannot insulate the black bourgeoisie completely from the world of reality, the members of this class exhibit considerable confusion and conflict in their personalities. Their emotional and mental conflict arises partly from their constant striving status within the Negro world, as well as in the estimation of whites. Moreover, they have accepted unconditionally the values of the white bourgeois world; its morals and its canons of respectability, its standards of beauty and consumption. In fact, they have tended to overemphasize their conformity to white ideals…Since they do not truly identify themselves with Negroes, the

hollowness of the black bourgeoisie's pretend 'racial pride' is revealed in the value which it places upon a white or light complexion.

My findings so far have demonstrated that Blackness can exist outside the imagination of the *other.* It can be beautiful, expressing joy and pride, and at the same time it can be divided through ethnic distinctions. However, Blackness still has a conflicting relationship to the *other.* The Black 'elites' want to preserve their African language and want their children to do the same, yet this task remains difficult. They know that acquiring English allows a space to wrest opportunities in the *other* world, and send their children to previously white schools. Even though none admitted this, previously white schools are a marker for better education and opportunities compared to Black schools. Thus, many 'elites' unconsciously seek and long to assimilate into that world rather than fight for radical change in Black schools.

Moreover, culture was debated through the notion of fluidity. This is important since there is an element of shame in fully expressing support for African culture which for centuries has been regarded as uncivilised. This position held by the 'elites' contradicts their need to protect their language. If Black people want to be part of the cosmopolitan world, why discard culture but keep a language? Why not discard both? I understand that culture has some non-progressive rituals, but we also live in a world where not all of us speak the same language.

English enables communication. The problem with culture is that it does not have social currency to navigate both worlds: Black and the global context. The English language enables one to be in two worlds. In other words, one can speak one's own language *and* English; the former allows one to relate to other Black people and the latter gives one access to opportunities in the *other* world. Language is a process of class formation and most 'elites' acknowledge it. However some of the 'elites' rejected the idea since it is hard to establish a counter-hegemonic language which can elevate class mobility. Thus, fighting for the preservation of language is easier than fighting for the preservation of culture. There seems to be a need among the 'elites' to assert their Blackness, but they are not willing to tackle issues which will compromise their advancement. This dualism is based on the fact that the liberties of the Black 'elites' are still limited. Dikane interprets this limitation through the lens of maintaining class differences among Black people within the existing framework. He advocates for

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assimilation, but also calls for more creative ways in which the Black capitalist class can become independent of the state:

> We have created these problems. It's not to say we should not deal with racial inequality. No, I was a victim myself. We must change the racial inequalities but let's find the right remedies. Stop with just being emotive, think like scientists. The problem with BEE, is that [it] was also created on those bases, without analysing the fact that what is actually happening is not addressing the inequalities that exist. And it's not a question of them being bourgeois or not. It's the fact that they are milking state resources because they are relying on the state resources to become what they are. And when state actors are arguing and telling us openly that we need to create this class. One should not be in denial, of course. Karl Marx argued that we need to develop a capitalist class but he didn't mean that the capitalist must be uncreative. The process of developing that class must not be one that is not creative. As a working class person the state must not pour on you. A good capitalist is a creative person who understands the market and who gets his resources from that market. It doesn't have to be the state. Our working class, in order to become rich, plunders state resources. That's the problem with BEE. To develop this bourgeoisie, the state creates it. Yet what Marx was saying, in my view, they develop themselves creatively.

5.10. Current Affairs and Being Black

I asked the 'elites' about current events which were prominent during my fieldwork. The aim of these questions was to explore how being Black relates to public discourse. As mentioned before, Malema dominated debates with his views on the Black condition after 20 years of democracy which created conversations among Black people. Miyeni confirms that Malema has become an important figure in the South African context:

> Malema is important, as now we can push it…Now we can say you can't keep our miners in hostels…When we say you can't and we look you in the eye, put your tail between your legs and say you are right. We could not do it in 1994. [Since] that time we haven't been static. We have built schools but messed up the education content of it but we are fixing that. We have

given water…we have done all these basic things… But now the next step is economic freedom and it should be in our life time…

Malema's slogan, 'Economic freedom in our lifetime,' captured the success and failures of the ANC. Dikane notes that factionalism in the ANC was unveiled by Malema which led people to ask if Black people have achieved the aspirations of liberation:

…The problem and the dilemma with Julius Malema and squabbles within the ANC, we have to once again look at the structural level. How the organisation transformed itself and how is it possible to change its culture. As I was saying in the article, liberally mocking the ANC in a provocative manner, we are becoming like Animal Farm [by] George Orwell. When we have to start asking 'Who are pigs?' and be careful when people say 'We are taking champagne on your behalf'. This is what the pigs said, 'Whisky is bad. Let's destroy these bottles'. Suddenly we are drinking whisky. We are saying, 'No comrades we are drinking whisky on your behalf.'

The failures of the ANC are still received with excuses as Mazwai argues the problem is implementation:

There [are] a lot of points that Malema makes, that are legitimate. The poverty, the gap, those things are true. For me it's how then we go about or how do I relate that - put that point across to Mosa, the president...What I call emotional intelligence. 'Cause it makes all the difference sometimes in terms of how we appoint leaders and how it's received and whether someone is going to do something about it. It also goes back to who we are, the values we grew up with.

At the height of mounting doubts about the ANC government, service delivery protests proliferated across the country. Protestors demanded basic access to services and resources. Potgieter asserts that the catalyst of these protests is the fact that there is no connection between the ANC and the masses:

I think that reflects two things: one of them is the fact that the link between the ANC and its mass base, there's a disconnection. I'm talking about the ANC both as a movement and as a governing party. I think that we've

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reached a stage where it's not just bureaucratic indifference, but a sense that we know what's good for people. So we go through the processes of the IDPs.[72] But we don't go back to people and say, actually, we've got this amount of money, do you want a clinic? So they say 'okay we think that we need a road rather than a clinic'. Then we are surprised when people protest.

Dikane argues that people have caught on to the patronage and corruption operating within the ANC, hence the protests:

... My problem with state intervention practice is that the state fails to recognise the capacities of people to act and construct their own lives. Therefore, then, the state learning from that process, those are the methods of intervention, which of course come to the question of what policies - that would be one variable that people can look at. The other one, poverty caused by corruption if you like, or by patronage - because a lot of people claim its patronage. The kind of findings begin to emerge from the research we are doing, we have four case studies in the country, the kinds of questions we are beginning to pose is, for example, what is the correlation between patronage and corruption? When do we say people are corrupt, as a state, as civil society groups? And so on. Given our history, this is my argument based on the findings, is what do we do with people who were forcefully removed from a piece of land in a place called Kleinwood who used to live next to the sea, would fish, [use] natural resources and were removed from the habitat and they are not allowed to fish again….

Gqola adds that the poor are protesting across the country because they are tired of being lied to:

I don't think these are service delivery protests. It's people taking themselves seriously in saying we are not going to be treated like we are not people, like we don't matter. It's not about service. I think it's people not buying into the lie that is success of post-apartheid South Africa. … I think it's people who have nothing to lose - have less to lose - and who are not going to take any more excuses. And who are asserting that they matter. They are making

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[72] Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) are the five-year development plans adopted by municipalities, ostensibly in consultation with local communities.

demands to have them respected in all the ways that matter…We think people matter because of their financial things so they do. What they are asking for can't be people demanding dignity… people who want a physical, tangible thing, an object. Which in any event the state is not providing and there's no excuse for that. So to think that the real radical face of post-apartheid activism are the things we call service delivery [protests] because they are untidy and we don't know what to call that. It's complicated and we don't have the language - yeah exactly because they are doing something we can't contain, those of us who think we are smart. That is the beginning of new language, grammar and vocabulary. We don't own it. I think that what we do need to figure out is how to support allies and help amplify that. I don't think what we're trying to do, the middle class, the working class struggles need to be working class led. This is true of all struggles. We haven't figured it out. It's like Spivak's subaltern is talking, talking, talking but we can't hear the talking–talking because we want to speak. The only way the subaltern can speak to be audible or their speech to be complete is if the world changes.

The disgruntlement with and the contradictions within the ANC government are starting to appear more intensely in people's minds. The dream that a Black government will liberate all Blacks from their oppression has been sharply falsified. Malema's utterances seem to force Blackness to confront the reality of what it means to be liberated. In addition, the service delivery protests show that the Black poor can no longer tolerate their alienated conditions.

5.10.1. The ANC and the Future of South Africa

South Africa has been referred to as the most unequal society in the world (see Alexander 2012). Potgieter introspectively admits that the lives of Black people have not changed radically after 1994 and that there is a need to understand why. Furthermore, this lack of change not only affects economic and political spheres but also creates divisions among Black people. Potgieter notes:

If you look at inequality over the last 18 years, there's increasing gravitation of the majority of your people from, say, the Indian community, towards the standards of living of white South Africans. So we need to understand why

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that has happened. What you see about the Coloured and African communities [is] the predominance of poverty and those kind of issues. We need to understand. That's the one part of the question. The second part of the critique, particular[ly] in an area like the Western Cape, different from say, for example, the Northern Cape, where there's been a deliberate attempt, I think in the ANC as well, to organise around racial identities, without looking at solidarity issues. For example, the fight between Africans and Coloureds is that we are fighting about the crumbs. White people are still predominantly in control in the Western Cape. And I'm talking about economic social power. So we are fighting about each other, whereas in fact, the issues [are] much broader: even if that pie gets distributed equally amongst us, it's not gonna make any difference because it's so small. I think that's the unfortunate part about our identity in the Western Cape. We are not building non-racial solidarity that looks at some of the issues. Because the reality is if you look at Gugulethu and Bonteheuwel, the standards of living, there's not much difference. Bonteheuwel face gangs in Mannenburg, so [does] Gugulethu. It's those kind of issues. Whereas in the Northern Cape, it's interesting, it's quite different in the sense of there is much greater solidarities across Coloured and African communities. Whether it goes to language, whether it goes to the issues that they face because they acknowledge that they are all poor. Fighting amongst ourselves is not going to address this issue. That would be my long answer to that but I think we have to understand what's happening. I also think that we need to have a much more nuanced approach towards how we build solidarity. That address[es] where the real problem lies.

Gqola traces history and predictions that Black Consciousness is on the rise because the Black government has not radically changed Black conditions under democracy:

I think it is on the rise; historically BC was not that powerful. For those of us who love BC like to pretend, but it wasn't…One of the reasons I think there is a resurgence of BC is that we are going to continue to see a rise in that. I am quite optimistic that there will be a rise. It is because we are sitting 18 years into a democracy that has contradictions that can only be explained by BC. The whole kind of nationalist, not only but in terms of race, can only be explained by BC or BC ideology. They can only be explained by an ideology that does more than look at the physical, material world. Because given

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where we have come from, the reason we had BC, it's because people needed explanations and something the ANC could not offer. I don't think any ideology could absolutely explain everything. All those years when we were saying that we would do things differently if we were in power, we have to explain, find ways to explain. BC alone is not going to do it either. But I think the reason we see a rise in BC, is because [it's] one of the ways that offer[s] an explanation. I think we are going to see, or maybe we won't but we should also be... see a resurgence in other slightly out of fashion old ideologies. Probably the reason that we won't be seeing as much rise in the old fashioned Marxist thinking is because [of] SACP-COSATU and their implication in the nonsense…

Dikane expands on the disappointing performance of the Black government to advance Black people's lives. The ANC is increasingly becoming more divided and 'corrupt', and the poor remain poorer which has created a problem for the Black experience. Moreover, open discussions and self-reflection are lacking in the party which makes them unable to confront their failures:

I think the problem with the post-1994 ANC is that there was nothing of that subjective-objective critique, it was either or. A dichotomised approach…If every member of the ANC [did] as we were taught in the underground that we must critique: you can't go and give a report that everything is happening nicely in the country, you must come back and [say] we are messing up at some points.

Most 'elites' recognise that the current socio-political conditions of Black people have to change and alternatives need to be implemented. For the most part, the 'elites' advocated for reforms that need to be made to the current system to improve the lives of the poor and increase the middle class. Gqola had the most pessimistic outlook and was very critical of the strategies which are currently employed:

I suppose that is part of my distance and disinterest in that macho party. The shift in my thinking on what politics means has to do with approach in party political politics, which has everything to do with relationships to the state. I think it is easier when you are outside, I think it's much easier during the transition and late apartheid to very comfortably identify with a certain

political party process whatever that political party is. I know a million plus disagree. But one of the interesting things about post-apartheid South Africa is that a lot of people have an ambivalent or contradictory relationship with the state. I pay taxes, so clearly I don't need this completely. I do believe in active citizenship. Obviously as part of the formal structure, I pay my bond, taxes, have a driver's licence, most of the time within the boundaries of the law. At the same time, I belong in spaces such as the One in Nine [campaign], where [we] unapologetically think of the state as the enemy. On the one hand I'm not one of those people who think nothing has changed. I was 21 when apartheid ended, I am very clear I live in a different country. At the same time, when you think about where the majority of Black people live and the failure of the state to transform - failure is one level but if you look at how the state is complicit in perpetuating material apartheid, in terms of how and where most Black people live. There has been a lot of abdication of responsibility. We are not holding the state accountable. And yes I know the arguments about the world changing and the independence of states, still, I don't think this is a state that is pro all of the groups that I think you have to be in order to be a progressive state. It's still a state that is directly implicated in structural violence against black people, poor black people mostly.

When the 'elites' talk about the failures of the ANC, there was a sense of seeing themselves as different from poor Blacks. Hence, they used words like the 'subaltern' and there is a call for the lives of the Black poor to be improved. Moreover, there is a disappointment that the liberties which are given by a Black government still limit Black people's abilities to achieve universal goals of freedom and being human. Most are still stuck in the normative script of increasing the Black middle class and the 'elites' in the very system which has historically created reforms but has not freed Blackness from its struggle to gain recognition and to attain freedom as human beings. The 'elites' are also battling to find radical alternatives other than just saying we need 'radical alternatives' and proposing some reforms in policy from in their respective disciplines. Blackness is still tied in a knot of dualism; able to define itself but constrained in fully finding freedom even under a Black-led government.

Even though there is an acknowledgement of ANC failures, there are small signs of positive thinking about the future of South Africa. Mazwai says:

I mean I've travelled far, there is just no place like South Africa, which happens to be a home for me. The climate, the offerings, the people...there's just no place like it. A lot of people, black and white, who have expatriated [emigrated] or have gone to other countries, I know 98 percent regret it. Because there was a burning problem at that point. Like the grass is greener on the other side. It's always a problem if you have accumulated some things because you accumulate them with the view that maybe some of your children, if not, family people will take those things. But they might say, 'You know what, I think New Zealand they've got more sheep than people.'

Similarly, Kunene hopes the country can overcome its difficulties and become globally competitive:

I want South Africa to look like the east, the Arab states. Where the Arabs have full control over their economic stability. Over how money is run in their country. I want South Africa to look like the Arabs about enforcing respect for their culture and their tradition. And for imprisoning anyone that insults their culture. I want South Africa to look like a truly liberated country. That's what I want.

5.11. Conclusion

The majority of the 'elites' interviewed came from middle-class backgrounds, except for Dikane. This chapter has demonstrated that there are strong parallels between biographies and the meanings given in defining Blackness. The narratives expressed by the 'elites' show that they now have far better opportunities to occupy certain spaces of the *other* which Black people from a different class previously could not occupy.

Childhood memories indicate that the biographies of individuals tell part of history. The physical segregation of the apartheid regime is still rooted in people's imaginations, and the *construction* of Blackness during apartheid still forms part of the *reconstruction*. Labour, in addition to spatial separation, is laced with emotions which temporarily blur the lines of oppressor and human. As a result, small freedoms are manifested through playing rugby and appreciating peaceful conflict resolutions. However, these moments of joy are permanently disrupted by violence which at times include in-fighting among Black people caused by ethnicity or skin pigmentation.

These interruptions complicate the unity of Blackness which has a shared history of oppression and struggle. Blackness is, therefore expressed through *multiple consciousness* which both expands and confines the definition. Being African has become an 'absent' identity in relation to Blackness. The inability to distinguish between the two terms also shows that South Africans are isolated when it comes to reflecting on Black experiences. Blackness has acquired various, multi-faceted definitions. The 'elites' were torn over whether language is a tool for communication or part of the domination of western culture. They want to be globally competitive by knowing English which signifies social currency, and also preserve their culture which at times is seen as non-enlightening.

The 'elites' are careful to use culture as part of Blackness as they are aware that culture can be conservative and not progressive in terms of Black emancipation; in other words, freedom can be limited in the name of culture. Arguing for flexibility in culture is thus easier than totally protecting it. The disappointment in the ANC for its inability to govern is expressed in protests over service delivery, and the rise of Malema shows the extent of the disgruntlement. 'Corruption' and 'patronage' were some of the terms used to define the ANC. The reality that a Black government will not necessarily liberate Black people has, unfortunately, come true.

This chapter has shown that Blackness can unify Black people as we share the same history of oppression and struggle, but multiple consciousness simultaneously contradicts and reinforces Blackness. I therefore coin the term *multiple consciousness* to capture all the aspects which compress and expand the different shades of Blackness.

The next chapter looks at perceptions of Blackness through the narratives of 'ordinary' people.

Chapter 6

Kulu sé Mama:[73] Being Black and 'Ordinary'

6.1. Introduction

This chapter gives a sense of how 'ordinary' people understand Blackness in the current epoch. In contrast with the 'elites', there is dynamism in their articulation of being Black, and their views of the world and their contexts were not highly influenced by theoretical jargon. Rather, their perspectives offered complex and sophisticated ways of theorising the meanings they attach to being Black. Moreover, their analyses highlighted sharper revelations of the paradoxes and contradictions in the *reconstruction* of Blackness. This chapter shows that even though the majority of the people did not cite Du Bois, Fanon and Biko in their expressions, some of these writers' articulations of Blackness are carried over to the present. There are elements of seeing Blackness as inferior, but also as self-determined. Among those who went to multi-racial schools, the confrontation with the *other constructed* and *reconstructed* their definitions, while those who attended township schools never questioned their Blackness.

For most people I spoke to, culture[74] was seen as fluid but important. This chapter has a similar structure to Chapter 5, allowing the reader to compare how Blackness is articulated by 'ordinary' people. The reader will notice some similarities to the narratives of the 'elite', but the differences lie in the manner and the details given to their meanings. The chapter first reviews a few individual biographies with childhood details, followed by what Blackness means, showing that class matters in their definitions. Being African and Black are seen as interchangeable. I will argue throughout the chapter that Blackness is a shared experience, but that it is defined by *multiple consciousness;* that is, Blackness is disrupted by class, language, culture and

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[73] In 1965, John Coltrane recorded his last album in his lifetime: *Kulu Sé Mama* is an abstract expression evoking African spirituality. The musical instruments were influenced by African melodies. When listening to the album, I feel it provokes the dynamic nature of Black people's spirituality and a state of mind. I used the title of album as ways to capture the complexities of 'ordinary' people.

[74] As already discussed in Chapter 5, culture was understood as both rituals and values. There was an overlap between various ways culture is expressed and it is hard to make a clear distinction.

current affairs. The next section looks at the biographies of a few people who were willing to share their memories and where they came from, and how that has shaped their Blackness.

6.2. Descriptive Biographies

In trying to understand how biography is linked to history, I asked the people I interacted with to give a brief description of who they are. Not all of them were able to give detailed biographies of their lives. I had conversations with cashiers, cleaners, security guards, high school learners and university students, professionals, teachers, nurses, and poets, among others. In total, in the 'ordinary' people category I spoke to 46 Black people: 21 women and 25 men. I do not reflect on all the people I talked to in this chapter; I use their responses to emphasise patterns and anomalies which relate to particular themes. The professionals gave more detailed accounts of who they are; mostly people gave very brief answers. With some individuals, I did not have the opportunity for lengthy conversations, and thus could not discuss some aspects of their experiences. The findings illustrate that the accounts of people's lives and what they share and consider important is based on where they are located in society.

The majority of cashiers and security guards whom I had conversations with gave accounts of themselves which included their age, occupation and where they live:

> **Coney**: I live in Orange farm and I am 40 years old. I am a cashier at Pick 'n Pay.

> **Emily**: I also live in Orange Farm. I am a cashier at Pick 'n Pay.

> **Mandla**: I work at Pick 'n Pay… I have been working here for 11 years. I live in Alexandra.

> **Sizwe**: I am a security [guard], and I am 25 years old. I grew up in Soweto.

The only exceptions were Linda and Lesego who gave brief indications that in the past few years, they had relocated to Gauteng:

Linda: I am 31 years, I have been working for four years here. I grew up in the Free State. And I came to Jozi in 1997.

Lesego: I've been working in this job for 6 years. Before this, I used to be a domestic worker. I am 37 years old. I grew up in Limpopo, and I relocated to Johannesburg in 2007.

The findings show that those in precarious occupations tended to emphasise age, occupation and where they live as important elements in their self-description. This demonstrates how personal narratives are linked to class. Unlike the 'elites' who mentioned the class position of their families, class was de-emphasised among the 'ordinary' people. The absence of a holistic representation of themselves was also seen among homeless people, township learners and pensioners. Those who were homeless described themselves as individuals who live in the streets. Township pupils noted their ages and their school grades. Among young people, school, age and their family class position was important to their narrative. However, the de-emphasis on class was more noticeable among pensioners:

Thabo: I live in the streets.

Masha: I am 16 years old.

Ntokoza: I am 18 years old, born free!

Zozo: I am in grade 10, I am 16.

Aliza: I am 16.

Ntate: I am 69 years and I was born in Alexandra.

University students mentioned the links between themselves and their parents:

Kagiso: I am 19, I grew up in Vosloorus. Right now I am in varsity doing corporate communication. My dad is some sort of supervisor at Barloworld and my mom is a graphic designer assistant in Germiston.

Tumi: I am 20 years old. My first grade I went to a Black school. And then I went to multi-racial school. My mom works at Correctional Services and she does logistics. And my father is a map-something, works with chemicals or whatever.

Bongani: I'm 24 this year… My mother is Case Manager at CCMA [Center for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration].

University students were naturally occupied with what they were studying. Yet, the link to their parents shows their family background is important in the making of self. Narrating their parents' occupations is an illustration of where they come from, but also a signifier of how they have surpassed their class positions. It is a moment of showing off; they are trying to exceed their parents' dreams and go beyond the realities they know:

Cynthia: I'm Cynthia, 28 years old. I am a teacher. I live in Westdene, I've lived here for the last 3 years… My mother is a domestic worker. She's currently unemployed because her crazy boss fired her. We're gonna take him to the CCMA. My dad is a welder in mining. He works in Witbank.

The more established Black middle class did not only place their families' positions in their accounts of themselves, but also highlighted how their family relations moulded their formations of self:

Manaka: I am 26. I am person who writes poems to liberate the mind from social ills such as xenophobia. I grew up in a household where there was free and independent thinking. My father was a poet, playwright, and painter. My mother is a dancer and choreographer. You can imagine that we spoke about art - but art for social transformation. That this blackness of yours is limiting the way you think because, yes, apartheid was fascist but abo-Mphahlele open your mind to Ngugi...They tried to bring that through art. Watch a play, laugh but also think this is true, we are in a slave house.

Kwezi: I am feminist, activist…Talking about race in my family was not uncommon… We were taught what it meant to be Black in various ways…

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My father used to read Fanon to me as a joke but honestly… and for me it was that moment of this is what [it] is called and this is how it feels…

In relating themselves to their families, there were three strands of reflection among the Black middle class. The *first strand* is based on how talking about politics was a norm in their households. People who grew up in households which had political discussions were either the second or third generation of the middle class. The *second strand* reflects the harsh conditions that the first-generation middle class had growing up. This strand situated their families by connecting their personal narratives to the poverty they had endured as children. Some mentioned their absent fathers and the fact that their mothers occupied provider roles in the families. For some, the strategies applied by their mothers contributed to unpredictable lives:

> **Zodwa**: I currently work for government as a spokesperson. Worked on the communications team of a trade union. Grew up in Vosloorus, early years in Katlehong (primary school), High school in Kensington… I have two siblings, grew up in one room bedroom, and a three-quarter bed and we would share (it) and at times my sister (she's older and understanding) would sleep on the floor. But it was a space, childhood of fun and love amongst each other. Public schooling was crap, public schooling under those conditions I mean under the age of 6 you pee in the classroom and you're being beaten up for the smallest of things. For some reason I have always understood that there was a particular discrimination if you were poor. Parents would try but schooling without proper books or shoes… but they tried. So the better off ones were treated better…

> **Namhla**: I am Communication Specialist… My father isn't much of a feature. My mother was a typical beauty queen of the 80s and used to sing as well and had a lot of influence in her community and participated in street committees. She decided to go back to church but cut ties and went to work at the guest house. She made a sandwich for her boss at that time. When she tasted the sandwich my mother made, she thought of ways of paying for the bond, and so my mother cooked at the guesthouse. Things went sour. She then became a domestic worker, still is at 59. I told her that she must really quit.

The *third strand* of reflection concerned achievements, and what they were currently doing, and their dreams:

> **Kwena**: I am 44 years, I grew up in Soweto-Rockville. Studied at Wits (History) and UK, University of Leeds (Development Studies). It's hard to pin down to say this is my job; I regard myself as a cultural activist mainly with a strong impulse towards youth development. I spent most of my working life focusing on young people, writing or thinking about young people' issues in society. I have worked with NGOs, government. I was the first executive chief of the National Youth Commission, international foundations but now I work as filmmaker and historian. I have just established the *Afrikan Freedom Station* as a cultural space and the mission statement is to connect with the next generation through art. [I] paint and I write as well.

Personal accounts of the 'ordinary' people show that histories of where people come from and their class backgrounds are fundamental. Among those who have precarious jobs and live or study in townships, self-descriptions were based on age, occupation and/or residence. It suggests that self-perception in the working class and the poor is based on immediate tasks and needs. The Black middle class varied: among the emerging middle class such as university students and/or teachers, personal accounts were linked to their own studies and their parents' occupations. This association with their parents, I argue, was to indicate progress compared to their backgrounds. Those who were second- or third-generation middle class related their biographies to a household which debated politics. It was a norm to discuss ideas about racial discourses. The first generation middle class spoke of the poverty they endured while growing up which moulded who they were and how they defined themselves. For those who have reached an element of self-achievement there was an emphasis on their individuality.

In thinking about Blackness, people's biographies are fundamental. I have established that narratives are interlinked with class. As I demonstrate in the following sections, people's backgrounds are impacted by how they perceive their childhood experiences and how these mould their conceptions of Blackness.

6.3. Childhood, Small Freedom and Being Black

The history of apartheid, which structurally alienated the majority of Black people economically and spatially, was reflected in some people's childhood memories. Their narratives were entangled with memories of violence, ethnic divisions and small freedoms. Some aspects of their childhood coincided with those of the 'elites.' In essence, race is the common thread of being historically oppressed and permeates more than class differences. Bongani recalled his childhood as a 'struggle'. Without missing a beat, he noted: 'Poverty!' Closely coupled with poverty is violence. Zodwa remembers threats of violence disrupting her playtime in the street:

> Violence of the late 80s/early 90s. [In] '92 I was doing Grade 1. I remember interrupted schooling. Playing outside, hearing gun shots and [being] told to come indoors. Violence pretty much defined those early years of schooling. I remember the assassination of Chris Hani in 1993 - I was in Grade 2. I didn't understand much at the time but my parents were conscious and political. So from their understanding, their feelings rubbed off on me as a child. It was a childhood of poverty with my dad as a migrant worker in the North West - clerical work of one of the companies which closed down but now it's back in SA.
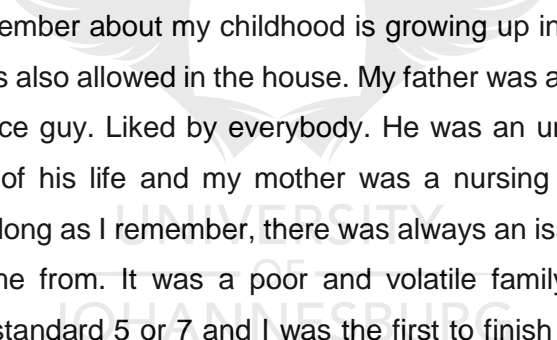
The violence was not only physical, but the permanent surveillance of mobility during the apartheid regime was the everyday experience of Black people. Trevor explains:

> There are many incidents like that when I came to Jo'burg, I had to go to Albert Street and show them my genitals…You know, when I was student at Fort Hare, I used to do temporary work, vocational work here in Jo'burg …I used to use the train and when you got off [in] Braamfontein, you must watch out for the police because they want *dompas*…As I said in Fort Hare it was just white Afrikaners, you know, humiliating us, failing us… I won't say it is because I was Black but had a lot to do with my Blackness…

This covert violence experienced through continuous monitoring - either through the *dompas* or through humiliation - provided hidden reminders to Black people that they did not belong in certain spaces. Kwezi notes:

...you find it in various ways, today. It is something I noticed all over the city, when you walk in a certain type of shop and you walk out. But in certain part[s] of [the] city, certain shops, when you walk in your bag is searched and when you walk out, it is searched and those are the shops in downtown. In Eastgate, that will never happen… Most of the Black people I have spoken to have the experience of being watched in shops that looked a bit more expensive ones. Being raised in a coconut environment you have the experience of being told how articulate you are or how well-spoken you are.

Some of the relocations of violence are connected to living in poverty; some shared their personal struggles of witnessing violence, not only overtly manifested but sometimes also psychologically. External violence was at times manifested through self-destruction. Kwena speaks of his unemployed father and how his mother set herself alight:

First thing I remember about my childhood is growing up in a big, eccentric family which was also allowed in the house. My father was a jazz enthusiast, an all-around nice guy. Liked by everybody. He was an unemployed truck driver for most of his life and my mother was a nursing assistant at the hospital. For as long as I remember, there was always an issue of where the food would come from. It was a poor and volatile family. My two older brothers left in standard 5 or 7 and I was the first to finish high school. My 3 sisters who are all younger than me, they come after me. It was a conflicted space, dynamic and eventful. The overrid[ing] memory of my childhood must be my mother's accident. My mother set herself on fire when I was 7. I have interviewed both my parents on film about this encounter, it all boils down to stresses and the trauma of being poor in the township and trying to bring up children in the township and the conflict between this couple.

The violence of apartheid paralysed Black people. The permanent experience of Black people was the need to justify or obtain permission to enter certain spaces. Its remnants are still felt in the current context. Childhood innocence was taken away; being a witness to physical violence was a constant threat. Violence was exacerbated further in a context of poverty. Thus, some of their parents suffered psychological trauma. Structural violence, when interlocked with the everyday life of being Black,

creates a context of personal alienation which causes self-inflicted pain. The monitoring of space was reinforced by a separate geography which has not yet been transformed. Jay recalls:

> I am a child of the 80s so I grew up seeing injustices…where you can go there and you can't go there but it is really not explained to me, a lot of segregation…then I was thrown into a multiracial environment where you are told 'we are the same', but when you go to the township you are quickly reminded that we are not the same…the ghetto will show you things while in the suburbs you don't see that…in the ghetto we are literally on top of each other…in the township there is a sense of togetherness…while when you go to the suburbs it is individualistic…

The spatial constraints of townships, along with limited access to resources and the city, pitted Black people against each other to create further divisions. Ethnic[75] tension separated Black people, Tumi explains:

> If for example, let me be typical. If I say to a Zulu man are you Xhosa, they will attack me. Why? They will say I am not Xhosa, I am Zulu…

Koketso notes that ethnic tensions are still very much part of current realities:

> In the context of the [ANC] Youth League…the other day we were having a meeting, this one guy I was speaking to is Zulu *wa bona*[76] … he was speaking to me in Zulu and I told him my Zulu is not polished, I speak Tswana I don't speak it… And he is like why don't you speak it and I said I speak a little bit of it… I said you either speak English or come over to seTswana to understand what you are saying…He really didn't want to compromise and he was saying he is Zulu… Tribalism does create factionalism immediately… I am not going to look down on people because they are Venda, Zulu or Sotho…

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[75] Ethnicity is based on whether one is umu Zulu, mo Tswana among others. Officially South Africa has eleven ethnic groups but there are several who are yet to be recognised.

[76] *Wa bona* means 'you see'.

Ethnic factionalism in some ways also caused certain groups to occupy particular jobs or businesses. Bongani shares that taxi owners and drivers are amaZulu:

> But obviously, the past situations where certain groups are favoured...uhm for example, if you go into town *ko Bree*, *go o namela* (when you get into a) taxi, the first thing that you would have to speak is Zulu...

The narrative of the 'ordinary' people is similar to the 'elites'. The two cohorts reflected on the spatial segregation which existed in apartheid. The 'ordinary' people, however, emphasised that this reality is still present. Moreover, the policing of Black people's access and presence in the city continues to shape urban Black experience among some of the 'ordinary'. The 'elites' spoke of ethnic tensions as part of their past but for the 'ordinary' people these are everyday experiences. Even though there are parallels between the 'elites' and 'ordinary' people regarding their childhood memories, for the 'elites' the recollections are in the past, while for the 'ordinary' they still persist.

These divisions have created distrust among Black people. The possibility of unity is fractured. Some of the people argued that it is very difficult to unify Black people:

> **Lesego**: There is no unity among Black people as Black people are a problem. I lost all faith. It is not easy for Black people to unite as we all are going in different directions.

> **Linda**: There is no unity among Black people…Most of the time you are on your own. Even when you need support you are on your own…

> **Nathi**: Black people do not care about us. When you ask a Black person for food, they will tell you 'what I am supposed to eat?'' White people will give us food.

> **Kagiso:** You know during apartheid it was white people against Black people. Now, it's Black people against Black people…What's going on now? We don't want to see ourselves progressing…Every Black person is putting each other down…Let's do township talk now: for example the mother from next-door just bought a tea set and invites her neighbour. Immediately after the tea the neighbour goes and gets the exact tea set …We always want to

compete for stupid things. Then we will gossip about her, saying she wants to be classy…

However, some noted that there is a possibility for unity, but that it will require mediation to reach consensus:

Mpho: Black people can unite but after a lot of discussions and negotiations…

Even though there is pessimism in the possibility of a unified Black people in the current context, some people spoke about small freedoms. For most of the people I interacted with, music seemed to be the acme of joy - a source of Black pleasure. Black music evokes a sense that, even in the midst of difficulties, there are moments of happiness:

Kwena: To this day, his [referring to his father] love for music has been a creative gateway into a bigger life and imagination beyond the squalor of our four room house… The older I get the more I understand how there is an organic social process that gives you your tool box, an urban tool box. I suppose if you grew up *ko magaeng*[77] you learn the songs, poetry and oral stories, how people dress and you get all of that. But if you grew up in Soweto or Daveyton and go to anyone's house, look at their father's records you will find that it's a canyon/canon of black music across genres. You will find the people we aspire to be. My father was obsessed with Mohammed Ali. And there came a time when we started to acquire the culture for ourselves like Michael Jackson. It's transcontinental, that diasporic black culture that comes through TV and magazines is an idealised thing about black aspiration… Then there are popular sports like football in the township. Then you realise that these are all platforms and territories that black people expressed themselves with great eloquence and elegance in the way that there are no white equivalents of that. Theoretically someone can say we were put in an existential position where we have to desire aspects of whiteness, [but] there are critical parts of our cultural repertoire which are not derived from whiteness at all. We don't want to be essentialist about these

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[77] *Ko magaeng* means 'rural areas'.

things but generally we grow up with this sense that our things are fine, music is better.

Namhla: Music, people. At my house, it was shebeen - sort of but it wasn't really - that people would come regularly. But it started with my uncle and mother's friends would come over and bring drinks from all over and listen to music… Billy Jackson, Isaac Hayes things like that - I used to sing a lot, I was also their entertainer. My sister would tell me to sing *Soul to Soul* and [I] felt the song but the words couldn't come out. Those people have contributed to the person I am. What I like about childhood [is that] it shapes who you become…

Small freedoms were attributed to music. Music frees the imagination outside confrontational realities. Music evokes moments for Black people to be a collective in their own spaces, to feel small freedoms of non-interrogation, and to be themselves; it evokes a blissful nature in which one feels that being Black can be a place of joy.

This section has argued that there are parallels between the 'elites' and ordinary' people in how childhood is remembered. Similar to the 'elites,' the 'ordinary' people also spoke of the poverty which confronts Black people. This commonality indicates that at the heart of Blackness, there is shared oppression and struggle. Blackness becomes political because of this shared history; it cuts across class divisions. The narrative of the past and how one's childhood is moulded shows the unity of Blackness. However, the 'elites' reminded us that shared *history* is exactly that; and their tendency to use the past tense in their narration illustrates the point. For the majority of the 'ordinary,' people's past recollections remain their present realities. The structural violence of apartheid through economic and spatial segregations and, ultimately, ethnic division of Black people has mutated and permeated the current context.

Present realities have created conditions in which some people have witnessed violence, for example. Moreover, in some instances, the oppression of Black people resulted for some in psychological deterioration, as the 'harsh' conditions became too overwhelming to comprehend. Most people were sceptical about the unity of Black people, noting that they were too divided and jealous of each other. However, even in those negative accounts, small freedoms were noted. Black joy is possible through

music; some people recalled how music gave them collective cohesion and happiness in the midst of the inferiority one feels as a Black person.

If Black people can have a shared history from different vantage points and yet feel no unity, how do they then define Blackness?

6.4. Blackness Broadly Defined

'After 20 years of democracy it's still nicer being a white South African than being a black one' (McKaiser 2014). The reason for this is because Black people are focusing on one particular problem: the 'economic injustices.' But, he argues, this is 'not the entire problem'. As a result, '… we're often our own worst nightmare, a fact masked by the presence of race-based structural inequalities that focus our collective anti-whiteness attention' Coupled with this, McKaiser notes that there are tendencies 'among some black people to hate other blacks who excel or who are actively chipping away at their goals as they march towards excellence, towards self-actualisation'. He further argues that the cause of this Black hate is because '… injustices were not and seldom are meted out to individuals. Our legacy of injustices – sexism, class-based racism – are structured in group terms. And strategies to eliminate their impact must be structural interventions. It does not mean group identities are compulsory.' McKaiser states that Blacks as a collective were systematically discriminated against; however there was still a possibility to be an individual in that history. Yet, his analysis of being Black is still tied to the *other,* and this is a permanent confrontation.

Chigumadzi (2015) also narrates her Blackness through the antagonising reality of being confronted with the *other. '*At the age of six I had already begun the dance that many black people know too well, with our names just one of the many important sites of struggle as we manoeuvre in spaces that do not truly accommodate our blackness.' She identifies herself as a coconut: 'It's a person who is "black on the outside" but 'white on the inside".' The use of coconut, she argues, is '…an act of problematising myself – and others – within the landscape of South Africa as part of the black middle class that is supposed to be the buffer against more 'radical elements'. By using the term, she is asserting that the Black middle class are struggling with the gaze of the *other* in the process of self-definition. This fight has militarised the Black middle class and/or the 'coconuts':

> Instead of becoming the trusted mediators between black and white, we are now turning to conceptions of blackness and mobilising anger at the very concept of the rainbow nation. The fantasy of a colour-blind, post-racial South Africa has been projected onto us coconuts, but our lived experiences are far from free of racism (Chigumadzi 2015).

Citing Du Bois, she, Chigumadzi, became aware of the veil 'through persistent experiences of racism at my predominantly white private school'. As I have shown throughout this thesis, South Africa post-1994 has given liberties. Yet, even with those liberties, the *reconstruction* and contradiction of Blackness still continues. McKaiser and Chigumadzi illustrate this battle which Blacks continuously confront through evoking the *other* in their formation of Blackness.

In a similar vein as McKaiser, the narrative of Blackness in its relation to the *other* comes out in Msimang (n.d.). She notes:

> On the one hand, our progress in improving the conditions of black people must be central and must be guided not by a desire for blacks and whites to be friends, but by the need for black people to live dignified and equal lives that are commensurate with those of their white compatriots. In defence of this, we must be prepared to alienate whites (and for that matter blacks) who do not accept this as a fundamental reality and to be unconcerned if they leave and seek their fortunes elsewhere.

Indeed, Blackness among 'ordinary' people encompasses a history of suffering; a history not only of been confronted by the *other,* but also of class division. This was evident in the manner in which those who are in a precarious/working class situation articulated their definitions of Blackness differently from those who are in the emerging and older middle class. The emerging middle class includes those who went to multi-racial schools and young professionals. The older middle class comprises those who mostly grew up in apartheid - those who were teenagers in that era and now are established middle class. Those who have less contact with the *other* also varied in their conceptualisation of Blackness. McKaiser, Chigumadzi and Msimang's analyses of Blackness touch on some elements of the definition; however, they negate the variation of Black people in the meanings they attach to the term.

The precarious/working class and poor in this case refers to individuals who work in insecure, low-wage, exploitative working conditions such as cashiers, cleaners and security guards. The poor here means the homeless and the unemployed. In defining what Blackness meant to them, suffering was a recurring concept:

> **Coney**: You know, being a black person is a painful experience. I'm hurting. Things don't go well for us black people…We are still struggling, even now. We voted but there is no difference. There are no jobs, we don't receive housing ... it's still the same. When it rains, we are affected, because we are poor. Maybe when you're a white person it's better, because they live a different life.

> **Thabo**: [To be Black] Is to be a nobody in the world, people see us as a nothing, a nobody not only by the fact that I am homeless but I am homeless and black…

> **Linda**: To be Black it means you suffer more than other nations…When you are Black, you are permanently oppressed…Some things have changed but not so much…You are just a worker.

> **Nathi**: Being Black is about suffering. I am seen as not human.

For those in precarious jobs, for the poor and the unemployed, everyday struggles defined their Blackness. This daily struggle included the need to have access to housing and better working conditions. The suffering was also described as a lack of recognition. This absence of existence resulted in some, especially homeless people, not seeing themselves as human. Not being seen as human evoked feelings which at times made them wish to be the *other*. Mandla notes:

> I wish I was white. As you can see white people are rich. I want to be white and rich…

The aspiration to be the *other* is primarily caused by economic and social alienation. Lack of material prosperity limits people's abilities to negotiate and be recognised which evokes feelings of being non-human. The *other,* however, had and continues to enjoy structural opportunities which enable possibilities, and they are positioned as

human. Everyday sufferings mean losing one's dignity which erodes a sense of self and recognition. It finally nullifies the possibility of being human.

The theme of suffering or rather the 'hell' of being Black also appeared among the emerging middle class. The emerging middle class are people who went to multi-racial schools and now are young professionals and/or students in universities. Blackness was seen through the gaze of the *other*. Their non-human status as Black people was felt strongly because they are in constant confrontation with the *other* - the *other* who has a better life; the *other* who is different from them; the *other* who reminds them that they are different; the *other* who makes them question themselves and feel inferior.

Kwezi notes that being Black is measured by the 'standard' of the *other:*

> Then it was not a nuanced analysis. I was six but from that moment I became aware of other things that set me apart from people who were lighter skinned. I think that is the prime and signifier for whiteness - that is what hit me first but everything started to make sense and not make sense and I started to question what it means to be walking around with my skin… It is hell, an absolute hell. I mean you have, with all the socialisation and all the teaching you have, that is within me, everything I am told is that you need to be more. So there is a standard, a whiteness standard and you could never measure up to that and you could never be that.

This standard of 'whiteness' manifests itself by questioning Blackness. The 'standard of whiteness' causes Black people to know a place of being inferior. Koketso explained how her inferiority was provoked:

> …I would say the first time when I really felt it was when we were in Durban, in primary school when this boy called me *kaffir*…I even went home and asked my parents 'What is a *kaffir?'* - this word is very strange to me, I never really heard it, you know. And when I was in primary school another guy asked me why my nose is so flat, and I asked my dad 'Why do I have a flat nose, not a pointy nose like my other friends?' and my dad said, 'You are black so you will have African features'. It is mainly through my primary schools...by then I really, really knew I was black…you can't tell when a person is gay or straight but you can tell when they are black, you carry that with you all the time…if you ask me how does it feel to be black you never

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know…it is like asking a cheater how is it like to be a cheater, you never know…

Questioning Koketso's physical features was a deliberate attempt by the *other* to de-humanise the ontology of her Blackness, to inflict self-doubt. For those who went to multi-racial schools and/or had close encounters with 'whiteness', Blackness was a surrender to a process of being victimised and explaining - overtly and covertly - their essence of self. Kagiso, Tumi, Bongani and Namhla narrate what being Black in the world defined by 'white standards' meant. For Kagiso, the covert smile of the *other* makes being Black uncomfortable, telling you that you do not belong in certain spaces:

> **Kagiso:** The first time I realised I was Black was in primary [school]. It was a multi-racial school. I started to notice that, that person is not like me, I am different…I noticed how Black people are, how we are treated and how we allow to be treated in a certain way…Like we looking down on other Black people so white people treat us that way…When you walk in a mall for example, white people will always give you that fake smile, why? Because you are Black.

For Tumi, the notion of belonging is tied to remarks made that Black people have their place elsewhere:

> **Tumi**: I remember at grade 3, we had a recorder and we were a group. So we decided to play with the recorder. Then the teacher who was teaching us, her child was in the same group as me. And she was sitting at the back, then one of the Black children who was in the group went also to sit at the back. Then this child said she won't allow a Black person to sit next to her, that's when I realised that I am Black and it is reality… My English teacher in matric when we used to make noise, he would say 'this is not the taxi rank'. Basically saying it is Black people who are noisy.

Bongani notes that the feeling of inferiority as a Black person comes with visible material differences; the *other* is superior:

> When I went to primary school was when I saw a first bit of white people. I saw that they were different compared to me, so I think round about then,

that's when I realised like: 'You're not like me.' You know, 'You do things differently.' But that time, I wore underpants, they wore boxers, I'm like 'You're not wearing any underwear.' So that's when I realised like, whites and blacks do things very differently. Not lavish per say, not all of them do have a lavish lifestyle, but it's more modern compared to blacks. Yes black people have a lavish lifestyle now but it's not the same. Uhm…. I won't judge and say they never had a difficult upbringing, but our upbringing was more kind of difficult. Because we were looking forward to being on the same level with them. So we had to catch up in some sense.

For Namhla, being poor in a multi-racial school sharpened the contradiction of being Black as an alienated being:

Namhla: It's hard, the fact that I was black in that multi-racial school as opposed to being black in the community. I never needed to feel black. But at the school there were dynamics. [Amongst] the 10 that we were there, I don't think they classified themselves as black, I was the stand-out black. I had a hectic accent; my parents didn't drive a big car. My mother wasn't a housewife, my father wasn't a corporate guy. I wasn't invited to the sleepovers.

The closer Black people are to the *other,* the more they feel an inferiority complex. Unlike the working class who narrated their Blackness through suffering, the plight of the working class was mostly based on the ability to meet daily necessities. The inability to survive is based on the fact that people live in poverty and some are doing menial work which hardly pays minimum wages. Recognition and being human is not possible under such conditions. Some wished to be white in order to have material means and to retain dignity, recognition and human status. For the emerging middle class, de-humanising was covert. A hidden process starts with Black people being questioned about their physical features which results in self-doubt. The process escalates. The more Black people assimilate, as they get appraised for their efforts, the more they are nonetheless reminded that the *other* world is not theirs. References to how the Black world is different from the *other* is an everyday experience for Black people.

This process evolves into the 'politics of niceness' when the *other* smiles in discomfort at Black people. Black people already know the *other* is not being nice; it is a reminder that you are not welcome in their spaces which erodes your sense of belonging and creates an inferiority complex. The inferiority complex manifests itself by making Black people want to prove their worth and over compensate for their space in the *other* world. This becomes vivid through material differences and reminds Black people of the historical alienation they have endured. Being Black in close encounter with the *other* is a process of fragmentation in the human status of Blackness. Confrontation and direct encounters of the *other* reinforce the inferiority complex which forms part of Blackness.

Among the established middle class who lived most of their teenage years during apartheid, Blackness is evoked through the historical oppression of Black people. There was also great emphasis that Blackness is about suffering, but the condition is embedded in a long history which is tied to the struggle for emancipation. In narrating their Blackness, they also cited Biko and/or Fanon which indicated that they are well-read and politicised in theories of Blackness. The history of Black people was a daily confrontation with 'harsh' experiences which mould Blackness. Black history and its realities are brutal. Even though he is successful, Owen still experiences the 'harsh' condition He narrates this brutality:

> Aai Mosa, I was born Black…I can't answer directly… It is how we define Blackness is key. It is key to define Blackness. I know there is a notion of Biko that it is not about the pigmentation, it is not about your skin is about your state of mind…For me that's too abstract, it is too intellectual. For me to make it a layman's description: If you are Black, you…you know what it is, not only the economic conditions we find ourselves in - No! It is about the whole unjust history that defines our people. In fact, if you look at slavery, colonialism, you look at everything that has happened to the Black race, it is much deeper than economic conditions. It is the fact that I don't have exposure to nice things in life you know…I grew-up in a household where we were more than twenty in one household. A car? There was no car at all. My grandmother used to wake up at 2 am just to catch a bus. First she catches a train, gets to Park Station, she takes a bus at Eloff Street, she goes to the Johannesburg northern suburbs and she is going to work for a white person. Look after their house, clean their dirty linen, look after their kids and knocks-

off at about two or three. Takes a bus again, gets into a train and get back home and I grew up in that environment. For me that is what Blackness is…it is about that history that experience. The harsh experience that was brought to me when I was growing up…I have left so many people behind me growing up in those harshest conditions.

This 'harsh' reality tainted their childhood and politicised some of them. Blackness was not only about suffering, but also emphasised the need to struggle for emancipation. Nevertheless, Blackness in history is a continuous battle with the gaze of the *other* who have better lives. Kwena notes how in the midst of the Black struggle for liberation he was sent to his aunt, and how the gaze of the *other* formed his Blackness. He defines Blackness as both a political and suffering term:

> This Blackness thing is inherited memory - the unspoken/spoken bitterness which coloured our childhood. In '76, '78 there were recurrent protests, the township was very unsafe and I was taken to my aunt who was a domestic worker *ko di kitchening* (in suburbs) in Florida. That for me, they were seminal. Here I am in a house bigger than ours with a white family, where my aunt stayed at the back and I stayed with her there. She tells us - sometimes I was there alone but sometimes with my brothers - how to behave in such a way that we are not an inconvenience to the white folks. This was an immigrant Italian family; the father was this charming guy who liked to sing opera. He treated us just like other children, the friendship we created with his boys was interesting because during holidays … for us and when they were back from their holidays, we would play in the field just as boys and a dog, we threw stones. But there was a clear thing that his life was way better than mine and in a Fanonian sense, it's no longer just a question: the desire to have what whiteness presents, particularly in terms of the material things that are put in front of you creates a discomfort with the black thing that you are.

Historically, Blackness was seen as non-human, inferior being, and for the established middle class, this still informs their definitions. Blackness as a result cannot escape its history and this structure; Blackness cannot escape that the *other* has a better life. Constitutionally, whites were given supreme rights and opportunities which Blackness was denied, and this defines being Black. The established middle class also

had close encounters with the gaze of the *other.* Defining Blackness through history means that the *other* formed part of the conceptualisation of Blackness.

The *other,* however, was not present among the individuals who went to township schools and those who had less contact with 'whiteness'. Their Blackness was not in question; they did not speak of an inferiority complex, but of pride in their Blackness:

> **Masha**: It is to be natural. White people look like they are forged but us we are natural. They change, they turn pink, purple. But us we are just Black… When it's hot we are Black, when it is cold we are Black…

> **Ntokoza**: Some poet said, I think she is Xhosa, she said, 'I am Black, I am beautiful and I am African…'

> **Zozo**: We're just beautiful, we don't have too many things. It means a lot to be Black. I am just me, Black and proud.

> **Aliza**: To be Black means unity…We are the chosen ones from the rest of other nations…

> **Ntate**: I have always been Black. Even when I look at myself in the mirror, I see that I am Black. I am proud to be Black.

Their skin pigmentation made them Black and they never questioned it further. All they knew is that they are Black, beautiful and proud. It suggests that when other Black people surround Blacks, there is no sense of self-doubt in their Blackness. The less encounter with the *other,* the more confident and reassured they are with their Blackness.

There were a few people across the different classes who saw their Blackness through class and others who defined themselves as 'colour-blind'. The ones who evoked class were conflicted, and in the end linked class to their concepts of Blackness. For instance, Zodwa explains how class is linked to being Black:

> Blackness is also relative. If you were to ask me 4 years ago and now and with a slight change in my class position, I suppose I am middle class

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> because I can buy my way into certain things, out of things in certain respects. My class position insulates me from some of the tribulations or the struggles I would have gone through earlier in my life. I'm not sure if it's correct to say that you buy your way out of the issues in society in which whiteness is supreme despite the changes. But sometimes you can't escape it, because when you return to township…

Even in linking class and Blackness, the historical condition of Blackness subsumed in suffering is still dominant in the narrative. The suffering varies according to different classes. Mmantshadi, however, reminds us that affordability and moving class position comes with debt. She narrates how in her early career as a nurse, she was highly indebted because she wanted a better life and to change her condition. The relationship between Blackness and debt is hardly written about; escaping struggle is done through the accumulation of debt. Economic alienation means wealth accumulation; for the majority of the middle class to gain recognition and human status can only be attained through debt:

> As a nurse you know people who create debt for you are always there…. When I was young, my pay cheque would disappear after getting in but with age I know how to budget. But really as Black people, nothing has really changed, the hustle is still there and if you are lucky you get something.

The method of accumulation through being indebted has not changed for the majority of Black people. Blackness, especially for the middle class, is linked to debt. Part of thinking and understanding Blackness is linking the connections and histories of debt; how Blackness and debt reinforce and shape each other. Due to limited economic access, part of the *reconstruction* of Blackness in the present is to create a Black middle class through access to bank loans so they are able to have purchasing power.

For the people who noted that they are colour blind, sexual orientation was important. Being discriminated against because of sexual orientation and fighting for acceptance can mould one's ontology in the world. The ontology of being Black is never divorced from sexual orientation or gender; these identities reinforce Blackness, even when people do not see the explicit connections. Jay, a gay man, notes his battle with his sexual orientation:

That is very interesting when you are talking about the topic, whatever…
what do I know about Black? For a long time for me, race was never quite
an issue for me… I quickly become conscious of sexual orientation…race
and other things it is just whatever, I was so into sexual orientation…What
does Black mean to me… I really do not have an answer for that…I am
colour-blind.

Debt and sexual orientation form part of the understanding of Blackness. Difference
and similarities reinforce Blackness. Shared history rooted in oppression and struggle
define Blackness. However, at times class plays a role in how Blackness through this
shared history is manifested.

This section has shown that suffering and struggle are fundamental words in
defining Blackness. Among the working class, the suffering of Blackness was
expressed through the everyday. The inability to access basic needs and better
working conditions led most individuals in this class to see Blackness as a struggle.
This battle further indicates the erosion of recognition and dignity which gives people
a non-human status. Those who have regular encounters with the *other* were
dehumanised and the interactions created inferiority complexes. Inferiority complexes
result when Black people question who they are. The encounter with the *other* makes
Black people question their physical features, which erodes self-esteem and pride in
being Black. This erosion of self-esteem leads to questioning one's self-worth. Even
when Black people try to assimilate, the *other* interrogates participation in their world.
The lack of belonging is exacerbated by material differences; they can never catch up
to 'whiteness standards'. The more encounters Black people have with the *other,* the
greater their inferiority complexes. Those who went to multi-racial schools highlighted
how self-esteem was eroded. Among the more established middle class, suffering was
also present in their definitions, but they historicised it. They cited either Biko or Fanon.
Blackness is thus *multiple consciousness* which is embedded in the history of suffering
and politics but varies and is shaped by class differences. Furthermore, Blackness is
moulded by debt and sexual orientation. The next section looks at how Blackness as
multiple consciousness is shaped by being African.

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6.5. Being Black and African

Being African was seen by the majority of the people as a synonym for being Black. **Zodwa** notes:

> I use the two interchangeably.

Bongani further elaborates:

> To me, it's the same thing. Even if you come from Ghana, you know, you're still a black person. White people in Ghana take you the same way white people in South Africa take me.

Ntate also explains:

> This place is for Black people. Therefore to be Black and African is one thing. African is we Black people. There is no other people I can call African except for Black people. You can't call white people African. It is us who are Black from Cape to Cairo, it is a Black man's land.

Using the term interchangeably was explained further by some of the 'ordinary' people; even though the majority were in consensus that African and Black have the same meaning, they explained why this is the case. Namhla notes that African and Black should be the same, but colonisation created the illusion that they are different:

> South Africans are socialised like that, there's a difference with being black and African. I think we don't see ourselves as Africans – yes, we are aware of the concept of Africa but we are South Africans. I'm not sure if it was colonialism or the revolution or the new dimension/Rainbow Nation. A part of me feels we lost it with the Rainbow Nation, one of my cousins is from Lusaka. It has never been a surprising issue. I don't think there's a difference, being an African is what I ideally see myself as such.

Those who saw African and being Black as different placed emphasis on geography. Being African results from belonging to a particular continent:

> **Tumi**: Let me say you can be Black but not African. Being African, it is a continental nationality…You can be Black but be somewhere else…

> **Cynthia**: For me being African means being on the African continent.

Similar to the 'elites,' Blackness in South Africa seems to be disjointed from continental experiences. Blackness is still seen as a narrow experience confined within the South African context. Even though Blackness was disconnected from the experiences of the continent, a few people attached their Blackness to being African. Neo narrates:

> Firstly my provenance is African, I live in Africa, my dreams and aspirations are African. A better Africa. My creativity comes from an African place, comes from an African heart. My problems, and I think my solutions, are African. Being, being…I work here and I live for here, I dream for here…

In his narrative, he argues that his reality is shaped, moulded and mutated by seeing himself as African; it is beyond geography. But he also seeks a better Africa which opens spaces outside the South African context.

The interconnections between being African and being Black are limited in both the experiences of the 'ordinary' people and the 'elites'. As I argued in the previous chapter, South Africa during apartheid was isolated from the world and the continent due to sanctions, except for those who were politically active and were able to move around the continent. This isolation created parochial identity. As a result, there is a strong South African identity which does not see itself as part of a continent. Being African is seen as a symbolic meaning to locate South Africa geographically, but does not speak to the ontology and a history of being Black. Being Black, rather than re-claiming being African, demonstrates that the definition of Blackness has not transcended the borders of South Africa.

As I have shown, there is a disconnect between being African and being Black. I asked people about the xenophobic attacks which were occurring during the time of my fieldwork. The next section fleshes out how they understood these attacks.

6.6. Xenophobia

In responding to the xenophobic attacks, the 'ordinary' had varied responses. Some condemned the killing of other Africans. They were appalled by the brutality. Lesego says:

> Killing them is not right. They came to South Africa because they were impressed by the country. So killing them is not right. They are [here] also for work and money just like me.

Even though Lesego did not want anyone to be killed, his use of 'they' and his justification for why 'they' came to South Africa illustrates that he does not see them as equal citizens of this country. Bongani uses the term 'technically Black' to show that he does not recognise other Africans as fully Black:

> So it was...I have family in, obviously outside South Africa, so I can imagine how it is, how they felt. Like being beaten up for just being the person who you are. Technically, they are black, they're just coming from [a] different part of the world.

Ntate also condemns the killings but blames border controls as the problem:

> Killing people is wrong. I blame Mandela for opening the doors for them to come here. We don't have jobs and he still opened our borders.

The response to the xenophobia attacks shows the prevalence of poverty in South Africa. Most of the people noted that there is high competition for job opportunities among the poor. In addition, most of the people blamed the poor for the violence:

> **Coney:** Xenophobia is because there are no job[s]. People are fighting to get jobs.

> **Tumi:** Let's look at the xenophobic attacks, they wanted to get rid of foreigners but they ended up attacking maVhenda, maTsonga you know... I

don't think it's any Black person, it's the poor. It is the poor Black person, the lazy, narrow Black person who are attacking them…If a guy works they won't attack them… It is those people who sit around the whole day and they have time to plan this thing. A guy who works is planning around his income.

Mandla: I think the issue was that foreigners were taking our work but when I look, whether they are here or not it does not matter. We live in poverty anyway…White people are the problem. With them it does not matter whether they are here or not…We just don't have work.

Again, these narratives highlight that most people in South Africa are looking for work, and according to them, this is the cause of the attacks. The narratives emphasise that poor Blacks are to be blamed for the violence since they are the ignorant perpetrators who have nothing else to do but kill immigrants. The observers of this violence positioned themselves as progressive, yet failed to introspect about how they see immigrants as not part of their Blackness. The narratives show a misalignment between being African and being Black. Zodwa argues that the attacks exposed the left:

The attacks were an indictment of the left - they failed to conscientise people. People are meant to be united, [fighting] against the principal enemy and not amongst themselves.

Other people indicate that there is more to the attacks; a slight denial that people are really xenophobic:

Kwena: I don't think the truth has been told about the Alex one. I was filming and talking to people, I think that there's a lot more about the actors that got called about xenophobic conflict - there's a lot we don't know.

The remarks about xenophobia verify the point that Black people see themselves outside of being African. Being African plays a symbolic role. Rather than being seen as part of the struggle and history of being Black, most people condemned the violence against immigrants, but even in their sympathy the immigrants were seen

as outsiders. The next section looks at how language shapes the definition of Blackness.

6.7. Language and Being Black

The importance of preserving African languages was crucial among the majority of the people. Most did not have a problem with people being fluent in English, but strongly stressed that it should not be at the expense of abandoning African languages. Lesego explains:

> Our democracy allows us to know all the languages. Even though it is difficult as we can't know all the languages, we must not discriminate. I do have a problem with those children who only speak English, but they should know their language. If you are Pedi you should know SePedi…as well as English. You are not white so you have to know Black people's languages because you are Black.

Parents and lack of discipline were the reasons used to explain why some opted to speak English only:

> **Mandla**: You should blame their parents. No one should lose their culture… I blame their parents. They must first learn their language so they can speak to other Black people…it is our culture.

> **Ntate**: We try to show them the path but we have failed. They don't want to listen and they will die young because they think they know too much.

There were however parents and relatives who sent their children to multi-racial schools, and they insisted that they make efforts to ensure that their children speak African languages:

> **Mmantshadi**: I still feel children should know their language. I don't feel multiracial schools are the ones which influenced them not to speak their languages. I taught my children that you go to school, they teach you that English, and when you get home you speak our home language.

Cynthia: In the house we speak freely, like he'll be like '*mama eskolweni…*'[78] then he'll finish off in English. We speak both languages interchangeably and fluently. *Nam' meng'khuluma naye*[79], I can start *ngesiZulu* or English. It's not an issue, where he'll forget what a word is in Zulu, then he'll use an English word. His Zulu is very good for a 5 year old.

Namhla: my niece and nephew, their parents told themselves that they would socialise their children in English because they are in JHB but when they engage their grandparents they speak Xhosa fluently.

Even though most parents who sent their children to multi-racial schools wanted them to speak English, there was also an assumption that people who resisted English were uneducated. Bongani illustrates this:

But to some people it may be irritating, no offence. But typically for people that never went to...or that were not exposed to a certain education, will find it irritating to say: 'no these people are just showing off or just keeping themselves high'. You know, so those are the situations but for me, I don't have a problem with people talking strictly English.

The tension of language is twofold. First, there is the issue of heritage and what makes one Black. African languages and being able to speak them demonstrate authenticity. Moreover, it shows that Blackness has not entirely been subsumed by the *other* world. Blackness is holding on to some roots. On the other hand, English complicates the need to preserve a heritage which defines Blackness. Those who sent their children to 'better schools' (which usually equates to multi-racial schools) had to deal with the fact that English gave social currency and the ability to access opportunities in the *other* world. It was thus important to be fluent in the language of opportunities. Some people resolve this by encouraging their children to be multi-lingual. Others found comfort in speaking English only, and accused those who resisted of being unprogressive. In this way, language becomes a contested space in

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[78] *Eskolweni* means 'school'.

[79] *Nam' meng'khuluma naye* means 'I speak freely'.

defining Blackness. It holds and defines Blackness, but Black people cannot disregard English and have to find ways to wrestle with this tension. This means language becomes a marker of who is authentically Black and who is not. As Kwezi notes, language is important, but it can be used as power to reinforce or resist the *other*:

> I am not very attached to the fact that I am Xhosa…I think is useful in knowing
> my language…I struggle to find things that are exclusively Xhosa, that's my
> issue…I use it sometimes to fight some of the idiotic fundamentalist that go
> around sometimes… When someone says smoking is a white girl thing then
> I would say Xhosa women have being smoking for decades.

A different process operates in culture: some people see its importance and others do not. The next section looks at these dynamics.

6.8. Culture

Some people affirmed that culture is fundamental:

> **Linda:** Culture is important.

> **Lebo**: Culture makes you Black…We don't follow them especially the new
> generation…

> **Ntate**: Tradition matters. I think as a Black person it matters.

> **Mandla**: Culture is very important… We are Black and you can't change to
> be white. So culture is what makes you Black … There are certain rituals as
> a Black person which you need to do.

Young people noted that they were selective in their cultural practices. While they do not want to disrespect their parents, and support certain rituals, they do not follow aspects which are unprogressive and which oppress gender rights:

Kagiso: I do it because it's there and I don't wanna disrespect my parents. I do it but I don't believe in it, not a 100 percent…I don't want to disrespect my parents…I believe in lobola, I want him to pay-up!

Tumi: I used to think it matters until last year or something like that when I was watching *3ʳᵈ Degree*[80]… Older men were talking about young girls, they were abusing them you know… They were taking to the guys and they said it was our culture. That is when I said 'You know what, culture to me can go so far. I can't let things get this far because of culture, it has limits.'

Khwezi: For me I see value in certain rituals…and I see value in bringing together people and sharing the meal, bringing together people...and humbling yourself in front of elders - those who have passed and those who are here … I value those thing. I don't believe people can hear you and I don't believe in an afterlife … People getting together sharing how to be better and how to love more, those are useful … My problem … is the hatred and the exclusionary [nature] to it … People are my higher power.

Some people did not find culture that important. Either they grew up not participating in rituals or did not see any significance in it:

Thando: No I'm not a person with culture because I grew up in [the] northern region, Northern Cape. Which is Kimberley. In Kimberley when I grew up, we don't practice culture things. For example we don't do seven days, for example, other cultures when you bury a person this weekend, the following week they say that there's ten days. We don't have such things, you understand?

Linda: I don't follow culture but as Black people, some people follow it … I don't…

Bongani: culture won't play much of a role because I'm so Westernised.

The contestation of culture was not as intense as that of language. Some people felt that culture was the formation of Blackness and others were selective. Some did

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[80] Investigative journalism television programme on eTV.

not practice and did not feel it was an infringement on their Blackness. The absence of tension when it came to culture indicates that most aspects of it do not carry the same social currency as the English language. It can exist outside the *other*. Whether one believes in culture or not, it does not adversely affect the opportunities which the *other* world brings. The tension is about whether culture is progressive enough to align and rethink its position on issues such as gender equality.

6.9. Class and Being Black

Class exists among Black people. In understanding what it means to be Black, there is no doubt that class matters. Class, however, cannot be understood without race. Being Black has a particular history. As a result, class manifests itself differently compared to other races. Being economically, socially and politically alienated creates different dynamics which makes Black people share a particular history regardless of class. However, this shared experience does not nullify class. The majority of people affirmed that class matters:

> **Linda**: There is a difference between us Black people. Those who live in the suburbs don't have the same lives as those who live in informal settlement. In the informal settlements there is no electricity or water. Those who live in the suburbs have everything…

> **Kagiso**: There are somewhat differences between Black people… The ones in the suburbs are trying to progress and want to change their lifestyle, they want a better life … Poor Blacks are used to the lifestyle so they don't want to get out of it. They are just used to it, that's what they know. They don't want to get better …

> **Tumi**: Within poverty there [are] levels, some people can afford and they dress well so you won't classify them as poor. And then, my mom did research at some mine, she interviewed these people when they talk. They talk about HIV and everyone had it. They also said that there is a mine nearby so when those guys get paid on Friday, they come over and take our daughters … There is different levels of poverty. There is poverty where people go to bed without food. There is poverty where you relatively can afford …

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Coney: Those of us who live in the township, the suburban Black don't care about us. The suburban Black have their things. They don't care for us.

Mandla: I grew-up in the rural areas so those who were born in the township became better-off than some of us. I been living in Gauteng for 17 years. Those who were born in the township - some were able to move to the suburbs and get a better life…They [have] more money than us…

Linda There are a few who made it at least…Maybe they got the support to get there…

Zozo: Some Black people have upgraded so they live in Sandton. We have improved as Black people.

Ntokoza; Most of the people who live in informal settlements [do so] because they are not educated. Some Black people are educated and doing better for themselves…

Ntate: There is a difference between us. Those who have money went to the suburbs and us we die from our poverty.

Bongani: Someone that lives on the street or in an informal settlement where there's shacks, without any DSTV.[81] For me, that's poverty. But obviously you do get people that stay in shacks who can afford a DSTV, you know … There is a distance because black people nowadays are … they're getting successful, you know. Obviously the world is changing and some people are stepping ahead, and obviously, progressing much faster than others.

I deliberately cite the above quotes to illustrate that Black people are aware of class differences between them. Some see the differences as progress and are proud of the fact that some Black people can afford and have access to better living conditions and can escape struggling conditions and the grip of poverty. In all instances, living conditions shape the manifestation of Blackness. Others feel that

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[81] Digital Satellite Television package offered by the Multichoice media company.

those who have advanced no longer care about them and it has created divisions among Black people. Class difference does not necessarily come with the assumption that those who have moved up betrayed the poor or that they are no longer authentically Black. However, among the poor, there is a perception that some of the Black people have 'made' it, and the wish that they can also one day make it. They hope that those who have made it can still re-connect with those who have not made it. This admiration of upward class mobility changes when people relate it to the ANC government. The notion of betrayal is strong when they reflect on the government.

6.10. Current Affairs and Being Black

This section is divided into sub-themes. I start with the theme of how Black people perceive the ANC, then move to a discussion about Marikana, then Malema, and end with how people felt about *The Spear* painting by Brett Murray which attracted a lot of attention. These themes are based on events which were occurring while I was doing my fieldwork. Regarding the ANC, there were two discourses: a significant number of people felt that the ANC had betrayed them and that the policies they have chosen were 'anti-black.' However, the others felt (there were no particular characteristics in terms of age, class among others, which underpinned differences of opinion) that, compared to where we came from, the ANC has done fairly well in liberating Black people.

6.10.1. ANC: 'Anti-Black' or Liberation Movement?

Black people were divided on whether the ANC had delivered on its mission to liberate Black people. A significant number of people felt that the ANC would not fulfil its mission since they were already compromising on Black life. Manaka notes:

> The first thing they did they changed the flag but not the name of the country, Mugabe did both, now that is independence. South Africa is the Commonwealth, land of the Queen. You asked yourself what were they doing in those negotiations and this led to the stroke of [former ANC President O.R.] Tambo and he couldn't believe that they came this far, it stressed him. [Late SACP General Secretary] Chris Hani comes out to say the negotiations are bullshit and kept on it for some time and they took him

out. Some conspiracy theorists say the ANC, Mandela, took him out because there are things they promised.

De Klerk walked out peacefully, Sobukwe and Tambo didn't want that. It was surrender unconditionally and then Mandela puts a heavy condition: 'let's forgive'. What did they give him to smoke in prison?

This compromise, according to Zodwa, led the ANC to choose neoliberal policies which were 'anti-Black':

It was always going to betray the people for as long as it chose the route that it did - basically to pursue a neoliberal agenda, to basically insulate the South African bourgeoisie, restore capitalist profitability in the country and that's what the ANC has been doing. It has been very faithful to neo-liberalism. There was no way that the ANC could remain as faithful as it did on neoliberalism and not be alienated from the majority of the people of which it is something that is starting to happen now. Yes if a different route of economic policies was taken, we would be speaking of a different reality of how people perceive the ANC, how black people perceive the ANC. I don't see how the ANC could have changed what is now anti-black, anti-poor, anti-women policies, which is what neoliberalism is in a broad scale. From country to country it has produced the same results, South-South or even Europe. They were foolish in thinking that different results would be attained. On one end it was good that the ANC chose this path as it has sharpened the contradictions to come out of the current trajectory that we are in, so the consciousness of our people rises up. But beyond race – yes, and race and class are closely connected - but capital remains the key challenge.

The 'anti-Black' neoliberal policies created a sense of disappointment as the realisation became clearer that not all Black people would be liberated from these policies. Namhla demonstrates:

I'm disappointed about the state of education because first and foremost, you don't liberate your people and not empower them. Liberation is one thing, it's a small piece of the big pie. The bigger slice is education, and healthcare. There's many other dimensions. They can do more, I know they

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can. If my mother did something for us, what's holding them. I feel the ANC
has set us back, they've put us in a trap.

As the contradiction in the ANC sharpened, most Blacks felt oppressed by the
government:

> **Linda**: The oppression I feel is from these Black people who are governing
> us.

> **Lesego**: Our government is very weak. To be honest it is the one which is
> oppressing us.

> **Kagiso:** There is everything wrong with the leadership of the ANC and they
> are too old.

The oppression comes with failed promises which were made to Black people, namely
that they would one day be liberated:

> **Tumi:** There are people who registered for RDP[82] [houses] when they came
> to policy, even now they are still waiting… Did we really vote for the right
> people? I think those people who are still waiting for their RDP should ask
> those questions…We should ask those questions…

> **Coney**: We voted for them but we still don't have jobs. They promised us
> things, jobs. But we still don't have…

As inequality increases among Black people, some noted that politically
connected individuals are the ones who have been liberated while the majority are still
in the same historical position of Blackness which is defined by struggle. Emily says:

> They are in the gravy train. Our president marries a lot of women while we
> live in poverty.

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[82] The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), developed in the early 1990s by the ANC,
included provisions for the mass roll-out of free housing for the poor. The building of RDP housing
continues today, although many have waited for many years for their promised house to materialize.

Awareness of this disjuncture does not necessarily mean Black people are moving away from the ANC. Ntate is aware that the ANC is feeding Black people empty promises, but he is still a member of the party:

> Even though we joined, it is only because we don't want white people to take our land back. It is not doing anything for us. It is killing us with lies all the time. They bring us books with no pages, just a cover but no pages during the election time! ANC is no longer the old ANC. The current ANC is by force. They have empty promises, they are not treating us well.

By contrast, some individuals felt that the ANC government is doing fairly well, especially if Black people consider history. They were optimistic that things were much better than in the past:

> **Mandla**: They are doing fairly well compared to where we are coming from…We just don't trust them but they are doing okay…I will vote for the ANC…

> **Masha**: I think South Africa since the end of apartheid has been a better country. I was not there during apartheid but I think is better.

> **Ntokoza**: We have options, I think we have choices. They listen to us. There are opportunities…

> **Zozo**: We have rights…We can get married to a white people…

> **Aliza**: Things are much better.

The ANC government has given Black people a complex and they are confronted by this unsettling reality. The black government has not liberated Blackness from alienation and an inferiority complex. This has made some Black people highly critical of the government. Yet, even though they criticise it, some find it difficult to abandon the ANC as they still feel that the dream of liberation might one day come true. On the other hand, some genuinely believe that the ANC has done well. They

measure how far we have come from the oppression which Black people endured during apartheid.

6.10.2. Marikana

Many people were shocked by the killing of miners at Marikana. There was a sense of disbelief in most of the narratives, and profound discomfort because Black police officers were able to shoot their own citizens. Zodwa reflects this shock:

> I was shocked and in disbelief. I mourned and got angry. From that point it became clear. The apartheid state did survive on black policemen, the constables but the bigger part of its police force and might were Afrikaner people shooting and pulling triggers. But to see that type of situation where you've got person, a Black man, shooting another …

Others could not understand why workers were not given their wage demands:

> **Linda**: What happened at Marikana is not right as they were fighting for money. And if there was a quick response to their demands that incident would not have happened. The police would not have killed them and they would not have killed the police if there was a quick response.
>
> **Zozo**: They must give them that money.
>
> **Aliza**: Most of those people do risky work. They must just give them the money for their families…Those who sit in offices get more money than them. I know they don't have qualifications but qualifications can't dig…

Class differences between management and workers were also evoked. The fate of the lowly paid workers resonated with the brutal history of apartheid. Some people could not understand why there had not been any change in the working conditions of the employees:

> **Emily**: The issue of Marikana is the reason why we are in poverty. These mine workers live in poverty. They killed them and now those families are

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living in poverty…Government killed them and now their families live in poverty…

Mandla: It is because of poverty which led those people to strike. If they got enough money it would have never happened. Those white CEOs are getting a lot of money and us, we are getting nothing. This is why they went on strike. You never see a white person going on strike…

Cynthia: I think we all feel the same about this Marikana thing. It's all about the top dogs getting...it's just about the bottom line for them. Forgetting about how hard people hustle to get what they want in life, it's just about them. They don't care about the average guy who is under the ground half of his life. I think it's bullshit, unacceptable and I believe in the cause.

Marikana showed an uncomfortable reality about Blackness: Black policemen are capable of shooting other Black people. The shared history of Blackness does not necessarily mean unity and solidarity among Black people, and the working conditions of Black people have not radically changed. The history of jobs which perpetuates poverty still exists. The character of the elites protecting their interests remains, and they will do whatever it takes to oppress the Black working class who refused to surrender to their oppressive demands. The ontology of Blackness, which is in a permanent state of fighting for liberty, was vividly shown through Marikana.

6.10.3. Julius Malema

Blackness in the current context cannot be understood without understanding Malema. He has arguably become the most prominent figure in this regard. The majority of the people I spoke to believed he has highlighted issues which Black people have been grappling with but failed to act on. The dominance of the *other* is still strong, and Black people feel it. Black people have not found liberation and freedom even though there is a Black government. The disappointment of this government and its inability to assert the power of Black people are the very issues that Malema has opened up. Most people agree that change needs to happen. Blackness needs to find its rightful place to liberate itself, but some do not like his tactics. Kagiso asserts:

Malema is boss! He is just telling the truth…But somehow, how he went about it, it is not okay…He is standing-up for what he believes.

Some people affirm that he is fighting for Black people, and that he understands what Black people are going through daily:

> **Kwena**: It was historic because it had a direct attack on capital, took a march right to Sandton where the power is, usually these marches end around here and he went there with a programme. But that now is taken over by the power fights within the ANC... I think it comes too easily because it's this inherited memory that white people have the better and if you talk that language there is truth in it that we cannot escape.

> **Linda**: Julius Malema is right, what he is talking about makes sense to me. I hope what he is saying could happen. For example he spoke about ending contracts, he understand[s] what contracts are doing to Black people. He is a good guy.

> **Mandla**: Julius Malema is fighting for Black people…He is standing for us with the hope that we get a better life… We are struggling.

Others acknowledge that Malema is right but his tactics are completely unnecessary and there is a distrust about whether he can deliver on his promises:

> **Namhla**: [With] Julius I took a conscious decision not to follow him, or what is said about him. Julius is on point, if and if only he went about his business and ideas in a progressive manner. He isn't going forward with what he's saying. It might be good and well but listening to him, guy, you are on it, you are asking questions that we want answers of, these are things we should be asking. Let's first plant ideas in our people so they move from waiting for things to happen to them. But there's no way that Julius will give us economic freedom in our lifetime.

> **Tumi**: Malema man, I think he is unnecessary. There are some things he says that are correct. For example, when [South African gold-medallist athlete] Castor [Semenya] came back [from the World Athletics

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Championships in 2009], he asked where the white people to welcome her are. And definitely where are the white people… Where are they? For example when the Springbok (South African rugby team) comes back, it is a mixed crowd welcoming them back … He says somethings that are true but the way he goes about it is unnecessary.

Zodwa feels that Malema shows the weakness of the left in South Africa:

[He] is a product of a weak left in the country. People should ask themselves why Malema, especially as the ANC leadership, was able to rally about 15,000 [people], led by a non-trade union, whereas the left is unable to do that. Why was he able to appeal to people so strongly? People dismissed him [saying] that he is stupid and doesn't have support, but even us the middle-class people - he was speaking about the contradictions that face us in the workplace etc. He raised the consciousness of the people, profiled issues around economic inequality, racial nuances of those inequalities - for that I think he has done his job, I like him.

Other people however felt that he was a corrupt individual who had fallen out of favour with the politicians who once protected him, and was using rhetoric to maintain some power. Others viewed him as disrespectful, and noted that he was not engaging constructively on pressing issues:

Emily: He was once in the gravy train, now he is no longer there. He has become disrespectful.

Masha: He must go to jail. He is very disrespectful, especially [to] the elders…

Ntokoza: He does not know a human being. He has no respect and holds on to grudges…

Zozo: He is full of pride … He is a politician, he must then learn to communicate with people. If you can't communicate no one will listen … Even when he is right, we don't listen because it's him …

Ntate: There is nothing I can say about Malema. He was doing nothing for people of Alexandra. He was helping people from Pietersburg.

Bongani: … that's a different character. For me, he's, he's outspoken ... he's outspoken but he doesn't speak in a very educational way. He's more of ... he makes statements that are not constructive, or he doesn't foresee or consider the after-effects of those statements. So to me, I find him to speak a lot, but he doesn't think about what he is saying.

Malema has opened a can of worms in two ways. First, some people agree that the veil of democracy and its contradictions were lifted. He has shown that Blackness has not reached its historical mission, namely freedom. The rhetoric of the 'Rainbow Nation' has been questioned and complicated by his utterances. Black people are now asking what Blackness means in democracy and whether they are really free. Secondly, his tactics as a Black child were questioned. The manner in which he engaged with adults about the future of South Africa was questioned. As much as he was questioning Blackness, his Blackness was also questioned with regard to African behaviour. Most signalled that his manners were not respectful and thus they did not follow him. They also had problems with the fact that he had benefited from the ANC. Malema nevertheless addresses what it means to be Black and how Black people engage with the Blackness.

6.10.4. The Spear

When *The Spear* painting came out, debates about whether it was racist or not were in the public imagination. Some people I spoke to thought it was disrespectful. A few did not see it as such. Manaka noted that if it had been a white president, the artist would have been destroyed:

You don't have to be black or white, if an artist drew Verwoerd with his dick he could have been shot or hung. I think it's insensitive of the Goodman's Gallery. The country is still young and is this what we are teaching our children? Remember we are in Africa. Art bears witness to people's myths and beliefs.

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Other people also thought it was disrespectful:

> **Namhla**: There's so many things he could have done, cartoons of animals, he could have made an interesting depiction. For me it was disrespectful.

> **Masha**: It was disrespectful…

However, some people did not see anything wrong with the painting. Rather, it reflected the current conditions of the government:

> **Zodwa**: When *The Spear* painting came out and I said I did not read it as an attack of a black person and a white person, I thought it was Lenin-Zuma, he wasn't trying to compare them. Lenin who curiously carried himself sexually was rumoured to have died of syphilis but had Zuma's penis exposed. What if the artist was Black? Luckily enough [there is] this artist from Khayelitsha [who is] basically saying the same thing - why must we get into race? The moment of the painting showed that the bourgeois nationalist are able to rise, I mean how many times do people rise? Women get raped every 4 seconds or Black people are [mis]treated in the farms - who is marching for them? But we had to march for an exposed penis of an elite? It was also a distraction from their misrule of the country in terms of what the poor expect from them since they are doing well with the markets. I didn't sympathise with Zuma.

> **Ntokoza**: He deserve it! Zuma also does not respect us. He is busy with all these women.

> **Zozo**: Zuma used our tax money to build his house for those wives. He deserve it!

Some thought that the painting was not necessary, but perceived it as a reflection on how the current government was failing to deliver on their promises. Moreover, it showed that Zuma was a womaniser and abused tax money through patronage.

This section has shown that most Black people are disgruntled with the ANC. Some feel the Black government is still oppressing Black people. The emancipatory moment which will give Blackness its freedom is no longer attainable. However even in this reality most Black people are still attached to the ANC, because they feel things

are much better than the historical past. Marikana was a confrontation with Blackness and broke the shared history and solidarity of Blackness. The shock was that the elites and Black policemen protected themselves against workers who were fighting for better wages to alleviate perpetual poverty. Malema, on the other hand, has become an important figure. His Blackness is also in the spotlight as some have questioned his disrespectful manners. The spear was seen by some to portray Zuma's leadership which is characterised by patronage and womanising.

6.11. Conclusion

The 'ordinary' people have shown that being Black is dynamic and complicated. Black people might have a shared history, but this interacts with various dimensions which creates *multiple consciousness*. In biographies, the 'ordinary' people show that the histories of where people come from and their class background are fundamental. Among those who have precarious jobs and live or study in townships, self-descriptions were based on age, occupation and/or where they reside. It suggests that the self-perception of the working class and the poor is based on their immediate tasks and needs. The Black middle class varied. Among the emerging middle class such as university students and/or teachers, personal accounts were linked to their studies and their parents' occupations. This association with their parents, I argue, was to indicate progress compared to their backgrounds. The second or third generation middle class related their biographies to households which debated politics where it had been the norm to be introduced to various racial discourses. The first generation middle class spoke of the poverty they endured while growing up. This moulded who they were and how they defined themselves. Those who reached an element of self-achievement described themselves individually.

There are parallels between the 'elites' and the ordinary' people in how childhood memories were evoked in relation to the question of Blackness. Similar to the 'elites,' 'ordinary' people also spoke of the poverty which confronts Black people. This commonality indicates the idea that at the heart of Blackness, oppression is part of the shared struggle. Blackness is political concept because of this shared history which cuts across class divisions. The narrative of the past and how childhood was moulded illustrates the unity of Blackness. However, this unity has become complicated: the 'elites' reminded us that shared history is exactly that and used the

past tense in their narratives; for the majority of the 'ordinary' people, their recollections are also present realities.

Among the unemployed and the poor, the word 'struggle' was used to define their everyday condition as Black people. Class also impacted on people's understandings of being Black. People from middle class backgrounds articulated their meanings of being Black differently from those who grew up in working class environments. Some people were delighted that there was an upward mobility among Black people, while others argued that the elites have forgotten about the poor. Most of the 'ordinary' people were conflicted about the ANC government and disappointed about its failure to liberate Black people.

Blackness is an interaction of multiple folds, which also has some shared experiences. Memories of oppression was a present reality among the 'ordinary' people. Some people reflected on how their parents psychologically deteriorated because they could not cope with 'harsh' conditions. Being Black, however, gets interrupted by various dynamics. English as a language was contested. People were torn on whether culture matters in the *reconstruction* of Blackness. People who went to previously white schools reflected on how that encounter perpetuated their inferiority complex. When these multiple folds interact with and penetrate each other, being Black creates a *multiple consciousness*. In the current moment, the *reconstruction* of Blackness is held by *multiple consciousness*.

Chapter 7

Zabalaza:[83] Summary and Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

This dissertation attempted to answer the question: **What does it mean to be Black in South Africa?** The empirical findings in Chapters 5 and 6 answer the question by claiming that being Black involves *multiple consciousness.* I showed in Chapter 2 that the theories of Du Bois, Fanon and Biko conceptualised Blackness within the ideas of submission and rebellions; Blackness was *constructed* and, in searching for freedom, it became *reconstructed*. I have demonstrated the importance of Du Bois throughout the dissertation, especially in the South African context. As discussed, the *construction* of Blackness forms part of the foundation of capitalism – in which structural racism is embedded and which defines Black as inferior. As capitalism expands and mutates itself into new formations, specifically to accommodate or adapt to demands forcibly put forward by Black struggles, a process of structural assimilation takes place: there is incorporation of some Black demands through liberties but genuine self-determination is not achieved; instead, being Black is *reconstructed. Reconstruction* has confronted Blackness with old and new structural racism under capitalism. The process of *reconstruction* is not a fixed distinction. It is fluid, and emanates from contradictions and paradoxes which overlap but can differ. *Multiple consciousness* demonstrates this embroilment; the fundamental characteristics of racialised capitalism that underpinned the *construction* of Blackness has remained, but it has reformulated itself, and permeated the *reconstruction.*

Chapter 3 has shown that Du Bois is important for thinking about the *reconstruction* of Blackness in the current context. In order to understand being Black, Conversation Analysis was used as a method. This was central in allowing people to define their conceptual understanding of what it means to be Black. The method gave ordinary people the power to shape, adapt or dismiss scholarly definitions, thus disrupting formative conceptual framing. The research was based in Gauteng.

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[83] In 2004, Thandiswa Mazwai released her solo project. *Zabalaza* is an isiZulu word meaning protest. As a conclusion I found the term fits ways of thinking about the present and alternative of the future.

However, I believe if the research was conducted elsewhere, different results could have emerged. For example, I have been doing other research in the Limpopo province which has the lowest number of white people and has villages which operate under chieftaincy rule. The research seems to suggest that being Black is more articulated in ethnic and cultural terms. Most people I interacted with did not doubt their Blackness, and asserted their ethnic identity. I therefore recommend that further studies should occur in various parts of South Africa. Secondly, gender came up in various ways in my study. Since I was foregrounding the notion and meanings of being Black, more concentrated research which explores how gender relations shape and *reconstruct* Blackness will add to my current research.

The following section explores some of the key findings. As I have demonstrated throughout this dissertation, Du Bois in particular informs most of my perspectives. My findings thus build on his theories - my study sits on the shoulders of a giant. I have established Du Bois' theoretical importance in the understanding of what it means to be Black. I have also shown the significance of his work and his involvement in the South African political struggle which ranged from 1904 until his death. Moreover, Du Bois was an activist who linked the abstract to the concrete, and advanced a thoroughgoing critique of capitalism in framing the predicaments faced by Black people. Ultimately, he wanted a world where Black people can be free. Following a similar trajectory, I conclude by analysing his vision of the world and its political relevance.

7.2. My Findings in Relation to Du Bois

Overall, I have shown that being Black means occupying a *multiple consciousness*. The 'elites' defined being Black through the lens of 'political' and 'philosophical' orientations; at times they used theoretical concepts in their articulations. Meanings attached to being Black were drawn from Fanon and Biko. The history of oppression and how it informed their present reality was fundamental in its formation. Collective oppression was narrated as part of childhood memories. *Construction* is a process where Black people were created to be non-human or 'beasts' without any rights. Structurally locating Black people as inferior *constructed* the ontology of Blackness: a process where Black people were legally, politically, economically and socially excluded. *Reconstruction* is the process which responded to Black struggle and found

mechanisms to assimilate some of their demands. *Reconstruction* also infuses ideas of *construction* within its context.

In other words, the 'elites' demonstrated how *construction* interacts with and penetrates the *reconstruction* of Blackness. On the other hand, the 'ordinary' people were more fluid in how they defined their Blackness. Various factors such as class background, education and generational experiences impacted on their definitions of being Black. The *reconstruction* of being Black is still tied to the *construction*. By this I mean that ongoing daily realities of being oppressed and inferiority complexes are embedded in the making of being Black. The *construction* of Blackness is infused in *reconstruction* among the 'ordinary' people.

The theoretical contribution of this dissertation is, first, that it shows that the process of *construction* and *reconstruction* is based on the objective relations produced by structural racism of capitalism. The process, in other words, is formed within relations of structural racism, it does not arise from individual consciousness. Of course, although it is an objective process, it does clash with and influence individual experiences in various forms. It is important for the reader to note that the concept of *multiple consciousness* drawn from the findings should be seen as an objective formation which is embedded in new forms of racial structural capitalism. In South Africa, liberation which occurred under capitalism has remained laced within structural racism which has produced objective relations of *multiple consciousness* that interact with present realities of being Black. These antagonistic realities have created a collective experience of Black people and at the same time has produced various forms of concrete realities.

The theoretical implication of understanding *multiple consciousness* as an objective process forces Marxists to think about the revolutionary implications of this claim. As I noted at the beginning of this dissertation, this research sought to challenge Marxism and its thinking on race and class, but also to find ways to enhance revolutionary thinking. Therefore, *multiple consciousness* is fluid; it can express itself collectively, fighting forms of oppression. Findings drawn from some of the 'elites' and the 'ordinary' indicated that their ideas of what it means to be Black have elements of a politicised orientation - rebelling against the system. Yet, at the same, the collective expressions were also confined within boundaries of conservative ideas. This conservativeness was most acute in the discussion of culture. Some of the 'elites' and

the 'ordinary' held on to culture in ways that constrains gains made around gender relations and empowerment of women.

At the same time, there are elements of individual consciousness: biographies, for example, express individual histories of people and how these have shaped their outlook on the world. This individual outlook is fluid, but it can express itself either in reactionary or revolutionary manner. This fluidity cannot be measured. The reactionary or revolutionary moments of expression cannot be predicted. But context does change these meandering responses. As contradictions sharpen in the South African context, we have seen various service delivery protests, which have politicised the collective struggles of the poor. Yet, at the same time, ideas of xenophobia against fellow Africans have also grown – a conservative reactionary response has increased.

The methodological approach used in this dissertation, Conversational Analysis, gave a conceptual framing on how people define their Blackness. The methodology also highlighted a gap in how scholarship defines terms and how people use concepts. Through this approach, I have filled a gap which is often not explored theoretically and empirically. The dissertation attempted to trace ideas of Blackness theoretically by using Du Bois, Fanon and Biko. But it also sought to trace emergent ideas by considering how people arrive at the meanings they attach to their Blackness. The empirical evidence gave people a voice, and demonstrated there is a gap between what has been understood about being Black in scholarship and what the concrete present realities of people are.

Since part of this dissertation is also concerned about revolutionary implication of Blackness, I find it most fitting to use some of the key findings which have emerged to expand Du Bois' theoretical framing. This emphasis on Du Bois does not, however, take away the importance of Fanon and Biko, but as discussed across this dissertation, Du Bois is often relegated as a forgotten scholar, especially in South African scholarship. Part of the contribution of this research is to revive and add to both the theoretical and activist impact he had in South Africa. This conclusion does two things: first, it expands Du Bois' theory on *double consciousness*, and second, as my orientation is towards Marxism, the question of what must be done politically is also central. Thus, both abstract and concrete questions are equally fundamental in the context where the working class is seeking their self-determination.

Du Bois initially described being Black as having two-ness, a *double consciousness*. In summary, *double consciousness* entails the predicament of

wrestling with being American and Black when the former seeks to alienate and negate the latter into a realm of non-being. While the Black person aims to get inside the veil which is prosperous with opportunities, the veil in the alienated world quickly reminds being Black of its dispossession. My findings stretch Du Bois' theory and show that there is an element of *double consciousness* at play in how people articulate the meanings attached to being Black. Among the 'elites' and some 'ordinary' people, for example, the *construction* of being Black in apartheid was based on denying Black people basic material conditions which constrained their abilities to enter the world of opportunities, namely the white world. Even though some 'elites' had interactions with the white world, the veil explicitly confined them to their Blackness.

This *double consciousness* gets more complicated in the democratic state. On one level, in a democratic state, the structural barriers which acutely separated the alienated worlds of Black and white have become blurred because of the constitutional framework which has made South Africa a unified state. The constitution has enabled anyone who has the economic ability to partially enter beyond the veil. For example those who can afford it can attend previously white schools and cross the veil. In the process, a peculiar *reconstruction* of consciousness occurs. The veil which Black people once fought against is partially open. Access to dazzling opportunities is possible for Black people with material means. But entrance beyond the veil only superficially gives the impression that being Black can now be recognised as human. Entry is complex: it requires Black people to prove their worth within that participation. The material resources which partially elevate Black people to some equality are confronted by compromises and complicity. Entry is distorted. Access to liberties does not necessarily equate to acquiring human status. For instance, my findings demonstrate that those who went to previously white schools wrestle with their entrance to the veil. Their inferiority is evoked, their worthiness is tested, their ability to think and find a space within the given liberties is in a perpetual state of contestation. They can never be worthy enough despite efforts to match up with those who *constructed* them as inferior. The 'freedman has not yet found his promised land' (Du Bois 1903:11). The unfulfilled promised land is an ongoing crisis for those who have crossed the veil.

The contradiction of being declared free through liberties which are only offered to a few, while the majority still concretely encounter perpetual brutality, cannot simply be conceptualised as *double consciousness*. Du Bois also was aware of this. Hence,

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after the *Souls of Black Folks,* he no longer used the term. Even though the term was discarded, its analytical use was present in all of his work which followed. *Double consciousness* limits a broader view of how the *reconstruction* of being Black is enmeshed within capitalism. *Multiple consciousness* encompasses all classes of Black people and how their location in society is part of the making of fragmented conceptions of being Black.

Among the 'elites' and 'ordinary' middle class people, knowing the English language signified aspects of recognition, but this was unsettled when people became aware that their need to be recognised as human did not become a reality. In other words, fluency in English allows Black people a certain amount of social currency to prosper inside the veil, but they also question the compromises that have to be made to attain those liberties. As shown in Chapter 5, most 'elites' were disturbed by the fact that their children were not able to speak African languages. I argue that this contention evokes what makes one Black. What makes one Black is also based on relating to various classes of Black people. The ability to speak an African language establishes a connection with and is not far removed from the poor. Yet at the same time the 'elites' are content that they are not living in conditions of poverty. Knowing an African language is also a reminder that one has not given holistic worthiness to the veil. More specifically, the need to know an African language among the 'elites' is a need to retain power, to demonstrate that they have not completely surrendered to the veil. Language and how it manifests itself in the South African context could not have been imagined by Du Bois. However I argue it is key in disrupting and expanding the two-ness of being Black.

As a result, being Black is stretched from within, towards itself. *From* itself because they have access beyond the veil. *Within* itself by attempts to balance an equilibrium of having access to the veil and maintaining relations with those left behind. *Towards* itself as they are confronted with the *reconstruction* of being Black which disrupts, assimilates and questions what it means to be Black. *Reconstruction* requires them to acquire habits of the veil to maintain social currency, yet subverts those habits which lock them within the paradigm of the veil. Through *reconstruction,* being Black is forced to see the contradictions and differences within its ontology, but it also complicates being Black that has adjusted to the veil.

In *Black Reconstruction* (1935), Du Bois argued that being Black mutually depends on the expansion of capitalism. Structural racism facilitated capital

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accumulation. The *construction* of a slave as a non-human was legalised and formed part of the universal tool to impose imperial domination. The rationale of non-being status permeated capitalism even after the eradication of slavery. Capital accumulation and its expansion required, and is dependent upon, the ideology of constructing Black people as inferior. The inferiority status of Black people has enabled their exploitation. Hence, even in the current formation of capitalism, Black people are still the most exploited and poor, and constitute a significant layer of cheap labour. Du Bois encourages us to rethink capitalism and being Black – which I discuss below in detail.

Being Black in structural racism within capitalism means never escaping racial oppression. Even when a certain layer of Black people are incorporated into the capitalist class, racism remains (see Du Bois 1935). Hence, the 'elites' narrated their Blackness and evoked words such as 'political and philosophical'. Being Black is political as it is a declaration of the historical and daily experiences of racial oppression. Black people have to permanently agitate the structure which excludes them. Du Bois (1946) noted that the central thread of our history is racial oppression. Even though Black people brought democracy to the world, Blackness is forced to fight for its implementation. This imposition makes being Black political. This ongoing struggle has moved beyond tangible material artefacts; it is philosophical, ontological experience. The idea is further reinforced by the fact that Black people are in power in this country. However, their governance is still linked to capitalism which universally exploits and alienates the working class. Additionally, the system of capitalism has not eradicated structural racism which has reinforced the inferiority complex of Black people - Chapter 3 speaks in detail about this paradox.

For those who are exploited by capitalism, who sell their labour and will never taste some of the opportunities enabled by the veil, being Black is a painful reality. It is the reality of living under conditions of poverty. It is a reality that you are 'nobody', one who, apart from being exploited, 'neither [has] freedom nor democracy' (Du Bois 1946:194). The system of structural racism within capitalism is complex. Those who do not actively participate; the 'ordinary' people surrounded by other Black people never question being Black. It remains intact. They cannot explain it, but they know that Black is beautiful. Being surrounded by Black people means never doubting one's ontology. I argue that this lack of doubt is an affirmation that being Black is perfect and that one can, temporarily, acquire a sense of being. On the flip-side, for the poor who

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are isolated from the veil, this sense of knowing can demonstrate the extent of oppression. Apartheid's spatial segregation and pervasive poverty in the township has been normalised as part of the making of being Black. Rather than challenging this reality, formulating it as part of being Black makes the burden of life a little easier to comprehend and bear.

My findings also implicitly point to the possibility that Blackness can exist outside structural confinements. Both the 'elites' and 'ordinary' people, remembered that small freedoms such as listening to music, for example, allowed a place of escape from structural limitations and enabled a possibility to ignite joyful memories. Playing sport also offered temporary respite from the violence they endured. Seeing their parents love each other gave them a sense of fantasy, a space that elevated hardship and humanised the non-human. This complexity of Blackness is embedded in multiple folds which overlap and differentiate making being Black a *multiple consciousness*.

Du Bois has offered us a path to navigate how the articulation of being Black is *constructed* and *reconstructed.* The meaning of being Black is tied to structural configurations and how their manifestations interact with everyday realities. My findings highlight how the current epoch of the South African democratic state has *reconstructed* being Black. Democratic South Africa has managed to assimilate Black representatives into the state and incorporated Black elites into the machinery of accumulation without truly dismantling the foundation of structural racism and capitalism. The disappointment in the ANC which people spoke about highlights this fact. Even though some of the 'elites' noted that class among Black people is not an issue, most of the 'ordinary' people argued that the Black people who have been incorporated into the capitalist system have forgotten the poor. Some of the 'ordinary' people were delighted that some Black people had upward mobility; however, their dissent was aimed at the Black government which still speaks a rhetoric of 'blank pages', hence empty promises to the poor. The class differences which exists among Black people have not truly given the 'elites' freedom. One of the 'elites' lamented the 'self-hate' which manifests among the Black middle class.

The 1994 dispensation saw the majority exercising their democratic voting rights and electing a Black president into power. The representatives in the ANC entered positions in a *democratic state*. Through these representatives, the *democratic state* power shifted from the white minority to the Black majority. The period signified 'deracialised capitalism' by incorporating a few Black people into the elite class.

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However, eradication of poverty and inequality did not materialise with the legislated human rights that were achieved. Rather, the exploitation of the Black working class was entrenched. Self-determination was located in the state, which has meant that the executives who control political power have directed what ought to be freedom by excluding a massive layer of people. As these contradictions become sharper, Black people started searching for freedom. In a climate where political and business elites collude by swinging procurement contracts in their favour, the poor remain in poverty and a new dominant opposition party has emerged. The EFF has positioned itself as the party to salvage the upsurge of this corruption and inequalities. However, Du Bois warns that the intention of some opposition parties is simply to *reconstruct* capitalism. It would not be long before they too taste the 'rewards of monopoly and privilege… and the powers bestowed so tremendous' (Du Bois 1935:583). I argue that the EFF, which some 'ordinary' people see as the alternative, has the potential to become such an opposition. Some of the 'ordinary' people in fact noted their distrust of its leader, Malema. As a result, being Black will remain in a perpetual state of *reconstruction* – in *multiple consciousness*.

Du Bois imagined a world where the emancipation of Black people can be realised. Similarly, my dissertation attempts not only to fill a gap in scholarship knowledge but seeks to expand the political relevance of being Black. I have illustrated that South African sociology has not yet fully grasped the analytical inner workings which inform the *construction* and *reconstruction* of being Black. Moreover, Marxists have failed to use Du Bois' work in their endeavours to change the world. The next section evaluates Du Bois' vision of an alternative world. I argue that he was a Marxist who understood the ontology of Black people as important in overthrowing capitalism. The Gordian knots of *multiple consciousness* must be taken into account if we want to advocate for socialism.

7.3. Du Bois and Revolution

Du Bois did not only abstractly understand how being Black is *reconstructed* within capitalist structural racism, but wanted to concretely change these conditions. In his attempts to change the conditions, he appreciated firstly Marx's analytical position about how capitalism operates. He notes:

> Without doubt the greatest figure in the science of modern industry is Karl
> Marx. He had been a centre of violent controversy for three-quarters of a
> century, and for that reason there are some people who so are afraid of his
> doctrines that they are dare not to study the man and his work (Du Bois
> 1933:1).

Du Bois thus advocated that Black people familiarise themselves with Marx' work and his articulation of the contradictions which originate from capitalism. He acknowledged that Marx initially did not speak about slavery. According to Du Bois, Marx ignored the topic because his 'comrades' who migrated to the United States from Germany failed to link capitalism to the plight of slavery (Du Bois 1933:1). Rather, Marx's 'comrades' became advocates for the 'widespread serfdom of blacks' (Du Bois 1933:1-2). Du Bois argued that the tradition misunderstood the core of Marxist philosophy and how it relates to Black people. Du Bois in fact highlighted how Marxism and its inability to fuse race and class with their struggle was because some of the 'comrades' benefitted from the oppression of Black people. It was only during the Civil War that Marx 'began to give the situation attention' (Du Bois 1933:1-2). Citing Marx from 1861, Du Bois illustrates a turn in Marxist analyses:

> The present struggle between the South and North, is… nothing but a
> struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery and the system
> of free labour. Because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side
> by side on the North of American continent, the struggle has broken out.
> (1933:2)

As a result, Marx 'stood with the Abolitionist democracy', condemning slavery and degradation on the basis of skin colour (Du Bois 1933:2). Although Marx did not fully understand and study the peculiarity of Black people, and his analysis required modification when it comes to the experiences of Black people, his theory enables Black people to recognise the process of *reconstruction* of capitalism after the abolishment of slavery, which exhibits new forms of betrayals and 'great exploitation of land in favour of the railways, mining companies' (Du Bois 1933:3). Moreover, Marx:

…did know the plight of the working class in England, France and Germany, and American Negroes must understand what his panacea was for those folks if they would see their way clearly in the future (Du Bois 1933:3).

Du Bois emphasised the need to understand Marx because he knew that the Black struggle could take a reformist turn. He argued that reformism is a sacrifice of the working class even though their 'name will remain forgotten':

The need of sacrifice. The world demands sacrifice from ordinary people, from the poor, from folk who are not personally attractive as well as from others. This sacrifice will call for the endurance of insult, sorrow, loneliness, pain, silent patience and hard work for the benefit of other people even to the extent of death. The reward for this is vast but it may not come while the man who is making the sacrifice lives. Eventually the sacrifice will make him a co-worker with the great and the strong even though his name is forgotten (Du Bois 1937:4).

The above assertion is further extended by Barker, who also argued that reformism which is located in maintaining an existing system cannot emancipate the working class:

[reform is] … a difficult phenomenon to pin down, for it is defined by its internal contradictions. It expresses a complex mixture of opposites; it arises from structural antagonisms and conflicts of class society, yet it also contains protest and opposition within the limits of this society. In one of its shapes… it gives organisational expression to workers' everyday experience of capitalism… it contests some of the effects of capitalist power…while simultaneously recognising and accommodating to capitalist power in general. (Barker 1987:221)

Aware of reformism, Du Bois (1940:2) further explains how the *reconstruction* of capitalism occurs. He notes the *reconstruction* of capitalism comes with other problems, and 'new problems' emphasise the old. The *reconstruction* of capitalism is accompanied by (i) the monopoly of land and raw materials, (ii) the value of the finished product, and (iii) the ownership of the materials, and product, resulting in the 'swelling' of 'private fortunes' by those who own land and raw materials (Du Bois 1940:2).

Ownership of resources 'gives the owner, not simply present income but the vaster power of controlling the character and extent of future production' (Du Bois 1940: 3). Those who sell their labour are given a wage which can afford to purchase the necessities, if they are fortunate (Du Bois 1940: 3). Among Black workers this privilege is not often attained as capitalism still views them as inferior.

To change this reality, Du Bois was inspired by the events that were happening in Russia during the 1917 Revolution. He notes: 'I believe that the greatest events of the twentieth century have been the Russian Revolution and freeing India' (Du Bois 1947:1). In order to eradicate problems confronted by Black people, an alternative world needs to be formed; socialism, because it '[attacks] the fundamental problem of our day, the problem of poverty, ignorance and disease of the great mass of mankind' (Du Bois 1947:1). In searching for that world, Du Bois advocated that Black people fight for social revolution. Social revolution 'will dispossess all capitalists by force' and introduce a 'maximum of … freedom' for Black people (Du Bois 1940:4).

Although Du Bois' notion of social revolution was not initially embedded in socialism from below, where the working class are the agent of their destiny, I argue that if Du Bois had become aware of Lenin's break from Stalinism and his removal from the party as the General Secretary much earlier, his definition would have been closer to Draper's. Prior to social revolution, political revolution which blurs the boundaries of different arrangements of the 'social system' will occur. This ambiguity involves 'changes in political structure,' 'state forms' which can be democratic but can take other forms which are not democratic such as 'military dictatorship, fascism' (Draper 1978:18). According to Draper (1978:18) political revolution includes 'changes in governmental leadership and forms'. However, such political revolution is limited in transforming the:

> … social stratum; even within the ruling class, a social element is plainly entailed. Political revolutions run the gamut, from those involving almost no social side, to those with a very important element, even if it is within the class boundaries we have assumed. (Draper 1978:18)

Thus, social revolution is a change of society 'from one type of society to another' (Draper 1978:19). It is not only a change of society, but requires changes in the 'socioeconomic whole' (Draper 1978:19).

In order to achieve social revolution, Du Bois evokes Lenin. He argues that Lenin was integral in establishing the 'great Communist nation' (Du Bois 1959: 1). Du Bois notes that although Lenin's writings did not specifically mention Africa, his ideas were still important for Africa: 'I do know that his doctrines must be a guide to this continent if it hopes to stand before the present conspiracy against it on the part of the United States, Britain, Germany, France and Belgium' (Du Bois 1959:1).

During this period he was inspired by Ghana's revolution and notes: 'Lenin was responsible for the world revolution which is today transforming civilisation not only in Europe but in Africa' (Du Bois 1959:2). Additionally, 'most of the African leaders are more fortunate than American Negroes in their knowledge of Lenin and his work' (Du Bois 1959:2). As a result, he wanted the ideas of Lenin to spread across the continent and to be translated into various African languages. Du Bois saw the importance of Lenin's ideas because he understood them to be instrumental in directing struggles to prepare for a new world – socialism. Furthermore, according to him, Lenin's words embodied a clearer articulation of Marxian analysis (Du Bois 1959:3).

Although Du Bois was strongly influenced by Lenin's ideas in his fight for socialism, his version of socialism was highly influenced by the Soviet Union. He did however celebrate the victory of the workers in creating a workers' state. Socialism to Du Bois meant a state which is able to give workers autonomy. Socialism from below is when the working class self-determine their revolution: 'The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves…' (Draper 1978:148). This can be achieved through the global overturn of the existing system. Du Bois at the time, however, saw state control and owning the means of production as central to socialism:

> I have watched the Soviet experiment in planning for thirty years. I have seen no other modern nation which has brought into service for the state and its welfare so much ability, devotion and understanding as the Soviet Union, and that too in the midst of poverty, of war, of aggression, of treachery and deliberate lies (Du Bois 1959:5).

To the contrary, Lenin (1917) noted that the state under capitalism was created to manage class conflict but as its mechanisms become more refined, it creates alienation. Under the Soviet Union the working class did not hold power – rather it was

state capitalism. State capitalism and the Soviet Union are organised in such a manner where a few override self-determination of the majority. As a result:

> The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without; just as little is it 'the reality of the ethical idea', 'the image and reality of reason', as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state (Lenin 1917:npn).

The state is inherently 'a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms' (Lenin 1917). The state is 'an organ' of the ruling class which aims at oppressing other classes. It was built to legitimise and legislate oppression and moderate conflict which may occur in the process. When the working class starts recognising the state for what it is, this class will have no choice but to struggle to abolish the state (Lenin 1917).

Even though there are fundamental differences between the way Lenin and Du Bois articulate socialism, it is important to note that at the time when Du Bois was writing, the contradictions between the Soviet Union and Stalinism were not yet explicit (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion); the Soviet Union was still apparently an alternative world order to capitalism. Although I disagree with Du Bois' version of socialism, at the core of his argument is the notion that the emancipation of Black people cannot occur within the existing system which means that a socialist world is the only possibility for freedom. Moreover, he noted, it cannot happen in only one country: 'The world today faces socialism and communism' (Du Bois 1959:7); Africa as a continent ought to struggle and fight for that world. Unlike Lenin and many other Marxists, for Du Bois Africa and its struggles for self-determination were central to his ideology and activism as a socialist. Moreover, Du Bois had an internationalist approach and strongly asserted that socialism in one country was not enough as it

might 'break down here and there, now and then', and to be 'successful', 'socialism [must] persist and spread' (Du Bois 1959:3). Du Bois as a Marxist pushed the boundaries of the tradition by interlocking Black people's ontology and socialism.

According to him, a socialist world will eradicate the 'chains' which *construct* and *reconstruct* being Black. In a socialist world, Black people will 'laugh and cry; they work and rest' (Du Bois 1959:1). In socialist countries, the fears which 'never leave the waking hours of Western lands, nor always the hours of sleep' are absent (Du Bois 1959:2). Moreover, fears of unemployment and losing work will not exist in socialism. In a socialist world, 'People may have to change work, [people] may have to change the place of work' (Du Bois 1959:2). In capitalism:

> We fear old age. What will we do when we're old? We are desperate to save enough to insure a decent life when we are too old to earn. Thousands of people walk our streets each day sick with the fear of age. The citizens of socialist countries do not fear age. Every citizen is certain of support, of food and shelter and clothes, as long as he lives (Du Bois 1959:2).

For human freedom to prevail, socialism must be implemented. Capitalism, which is based on a '[monopoly]…ownership of property, and distribution of income, is directed by the owners of capital goods and by the men who own or control the labor of human beings' and must be dismantled (Du Bois 1959:4). Additionally, he notes:

> We may not deceive ourselves by assuming that the industry of the United States and Western Europe is not planned. It is planned, and most elaborately. But who plans it and for what ends? It is planned by the owners of capital and for the individual profit which the enterprises bring. This may lead to much prosperity, but it also may and does lead to financial crises, to poverty, to exploitation and unemployment, and to crime (Du Bois 1959:4).

Thus, socialism aims to plan for 'general welfare of all citizens', and seeks to produce and distribute wealth and property to all people (Du Bois 1959:4). 'This kind of planning is not easy.' Most people who oppose socialism argue along the lines that: 'human nature …[is] too selfish, too ignorant and criminal to achieve this end' (Du Bois 1959:5). However, concrete evidence which Du Bois has observed for 'thirty years' illustrates that these such arguments are false and have been ignored.

According to his experience, which he asserts is not based on theory but practice, socialism can bring universal freedom and equality for Black people (Du Bois 1959:7). He urged Black people to fight for a socialist world which 'means that progress must so often come by revolution instead of by peaceful reason. Today, then, in this great change to socialism it is importance that every intelligent citizen try to learn and not simply to rejoice in standing still' (Du Bois 1959:7). We have seen all around the world, as the world becomes more polarised and capitalism is failing, that the working class is fighting for change. Although the change which this class seeks is at times met by conservative forces within its ranks, there are people who want radical change. For Black people, not to be confined to *multiple consciousness* by compromise and complicity within the existing system, an alternative world is needed. A revolution can bring socialism. Waiting for capitalism which is embedded in structural racism to reform itself is no longer an option. It will simply perpetuate the *reconstruction* of being Black. Now is the time for the working class to re-imagine a new world.

Appendix: Social Participation of Elites

The appendix demonstrates public influence of 'elites'. There is no social media profile for 'ordinary' people because of the unevenness of the conversation (refer to Chapter 4 for details).

➢ Xolela Mangcu. Active on social media; he has published numerous commentary articles in the *City Press, Sowetan, Daily Vox* and *Mail and Guardian* newspapers*.*

➢ Febe Potgieter. In September 2016 she had 1,971 Facebook followers, and in April 2017 she had 1,989.

➢ Kenny Kunene. In September 2016, he had 4,515 Facebook followers, and in April 2017 this had increased to 64,548. He had also had a television reality show.

➢ Mmusi Maimane. In September 2016, he had 179,974 followers on his Facebook page, and in April 2017 had 212,410.

➢ Eric Miyeni. In September 2016, he had 178,000 Twitter followers which has increased to 371,000. I could not access his Facebook followers because this is blocked for the public. He has written several commentaries for *City Press* and *The Sowetan* newspapers.

➢ Pumla Gqola. In September 2016 she had 4,637 Facebook followers; by April 2017 this had increased to 4,828.

➢ Lesley Dikane. I could not find his Facebook and Twitter accounts. It seems he is not on social media.

➢ Nomqubela Mazwai. I could not find her Facebook and Twitter accounts. It seems she is not on social media.

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