

**FANON AND THE POSITIONALITY OF  
SEEPE, MANGCU AND MNGXITAMA  
AS BLACK PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS  
IN THE POST-1994 SOUTH AFRICA**

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## **DECLARATION**

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I, Tendayi Sithole, declare that the dissertation – **Fanon and the positionality of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama as black public intellectuals in the post-1994 South Africa** – is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

06 March 2012

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Signature

## **ABSTRACT**

This study uses Frantz Fanon's thoughts on race and blackness, the black elite and black public intellectuals as the theoretical framework and examines the positionality of Siphon Seepe, Xolela Mangcu and Andile Mngxitama as black public intellectuals in order to understand how they view the post-1994 political discourse. Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama's views are studied by analysing themes emerging from newspaper columns they have written. This study reveals that the three black public intellectuals examined have been radical and forthright, though they display different understandings of race and blackness, the black elite and black public intellectuals. However, the study reveals that only Mngxitama's positionality has been consistently radical, whereas Seepe and Mangcu's views have been fluid and are now considered moderate. This study concludes by highlighting the relevance of Fanon's thoughts in enabling a new reading of post-1994 South Africa. Of central importance is the creation of the 'new being', who is informed by the process of liberation, which is the antithesis of the black condition.

**Key terms:** Fanon, black public intellectuals, positionality, black condition, race and blackness, black elites, liberation

## **DEDICATION**

In memory of my mother Lebohang Thelma Sithole

(1 August 1956 to 9 August 1999)

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background to the study**

This study applies a Fanonian perspective in an attempt to understand post-1994 South African political discourses. More specifically, this study is concerned with the problematics of race and blackness, the means of accumulation by the black elite and the dilemma of black public intellectuals, with specific reference to power and ideas. These problematics are explored through the positionality of Sipho Seepe, Xolela Mangcu and Andile Mngxitama, by means of case studies and a literature review in various chapters.

Fanon's work provides a critique of colonial, liberation and post-liberation political settings. The South African situation since the first democratic elections in 1994 is fraught with complexity, contestations and contradictions. South Africa is recovering from the clutches of apartheid, so that its transition to democracy makes it typical of a post-liberation state. It is the purpose of this study to introduce Fanonian thought into an analysis of the post-1994 era in South Africa and to use this lens to understand the positionality of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama as black public intellectuals in this arena.

Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama's views originate from the Black Consciousness political tradition and they claim to be influenced by its philosophy. Their critical contributions also invariably resonate with Fanonian thinking on the post-liberation condition of betrayal of the



poor by elites who have access to make into state power. All three are black public intellectuals known for their controversial analysis and commentary in post-1994 South African political discourses. Their intellectual contributions refer to various spheres of society, but the focus of this study is on selected columns published in newspapers on selected themes and issues relating to race and blackness, black elites and the space occupied by black public intellectuals.

### **Problem statement**

The focus of this study concerns the relevance of Fanon's ideas to an understanding of the post-1994 realities in South Africa. In part, this entails asking fundamental questions and re-thinking the political life in the post-1994 era using Fanonian lenses. The problem addressed in this study is the way in which Fanon articulates race and blackness, the black elite and black public intellectuals. The study also seeks to investigate whether or not the political and intellectual views of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama in the post-1994 political discourses are indeed fundamental in understanding the aforementioned issues.

Furthermore, the study also investigates how Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama build on Fanon's and each other's work, and complicate each other's views and intellectual perspectives on the South African political discourse. This focus in the study also entails a critical interrogation of the terms in which post-1994 South African realities are [re]formulated in relation to the thrust of the intellectual debates of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama since 1994. Taken together, these issues reflect the character of the post-1994 dispensation as a complex terrain of unfulfilled dreams of liberation and as a sphere that is still enmeshed in complex racial problems that exacerbate the black condition.

## **Aim**

The aim of this research is to apply Fanon's political thought by examining his politics within the limited context of race and blackness, the means of accumulation by the black elite and the dilemma of black public intellectuals in relation to power and ideas in South Africa. Fanon's political thought is analysed to ascertain the extent to which Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama, as black public intellectuals, connect their intellectual contributions to these key issues in post-1994 political discourse. Examining the positionality of these three black public intellectuals by means of a Fanonian perspective will help to gauge the manner in which they advance the understanding of the post-1994 era with regard to the aforementioned political issues.

## **Research question**

The research question for this study is formulated as follows:

What is the relevance of Fanon in post-1994 South Africa and how do his ideas on race and blackness, the black elite and black public intellectuals inform the discourses of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama?

The sub-questions are the following:

1. In what ways do Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama address the politics of race and blackness, the black elite and black public intellectuals as articulated by Fanon?
2. What is their positionality or what ideological standpoint have they adopted, and to what extent do the newly authorised discourses of the black public intellectual confirm or subvert post-1994 realities?

3. Is the articulation of the post-1994 era by Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama as original as Fanon's articulation of the post-liberation state?

## **Rationale**

The framing of the black public intellectual from Fanon's vantage is helpful in understanding the dynamics in which Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama exist and operate, with particular reference to the notion of positionality in post-1994 political discourse. Positionality is understood here as the ideological location of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama in articulating their notions of race and blackness, the black elite and black public intellectuals in order to understand post-1994 political discourse. In short, positionality encapsulates a locus for the enunciation of issues. The examination of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama as black public intellectuals through Fanon's perspective is the contribution this research will make to the discourses that prevail in the post-1994 era.

Admittedly, Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama are not the only black public intellectuals in the post-1994 political landscape. Others, such as Pumla Dineo-Gqola, William Gumede, Mohau Pheko, Prince Mashele, Eusebius McKaiser, Mcebisi Ndletyana and Achille Mbembe, amongst others, are associated with black public intellectualism. Black public intellectuals have a unique positionality in the post-1994 era, since 'politics have coloured them differently from other racial groups' (Sono 1993:58).

The selection of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama as the units of analysis for this study rather than other black public intellectuals is informed by the association of these three intellectuals with, and their advocacy for, Black Consciousness. Their selection is justified on the basis of their common views regarding the strength of Fanon's views on the lived experience of blacks. Hence, the contribution of the comparative study of these three black public intellectuals is

studied through the Fanonian lens. Furthermore, these three South African black public intellectuals have articulated some of Fanon's ideas in their writings and have attempted to link these ideas to post-1994 South African realities. Consequently, the study focuses solely on Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama in terms of their positionality as black public intellectuals and the contribution they make in understanding the post-1994 political discourse.

## **Research methodology**

The study is embedded in the relationship between text and context. Fanon's thoughts were articulated in texts written more than fifty years ago, whereas the study is located in the post-1994 era, which is the context. The study merges the two by applying Fanon's perspectives to ascertain his relevance to South African post-1994 discourse. The study was mainly qualitative, because it 'encompasses many dimensions and layers' (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:133), since the central issue of this study is multifaceted.

The qualitative bent of this study allowed the 'necessary modification or adjustment based on the views emerging during the course of the study' (Creswell 2009:65). A thematic analysis of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama's newspaper columns was undertaken to understand their ideological positionalities in relation to post-1994 political discourses. Thematic analysis was used, since this research aimed to identify themes in the texts and the data that they contain to the larger scheme of understanding the positionality of these black public intellectuals in relation to post-1994 political discourse. Since thematic analysis is descriptive, the nature of the description can also lead to exploration in relation to what the text reveals.

Thematic analysis does not aim to generate a theory, but rather 'pays greater attention to the qualitative aspects of the material analysed' (Joffe & Yardley 2003:56). It is a process of induction which focuses on describing and exploring the nature of the theory. This is because

the specific patterns that were analysed required interpretation. Hence, this study is about text and context. As Stone (1997) argues, text analysis needs to take the context in which a text was generated into account, because context dictates how public intellectuals articulate their ideological positionality in a particular political discourse.

A thematic analysis is a form of a discourse analysis, since there are conversations in the text (newspaper columns) in which similar or related ideas are merged. Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama as black public intellectuals have focused and still focus on a variety of issues that are part of post-1994 political discourse. However, the analysis was limited to the selected themes, namely, race and blackness, the black elite and the black public intellectuals which dominated the columns that were analysed. The analysis was limited to these selected themes since they resonate with Fanonian thought and this enabled a deeper understanding of the themes under review. Furthermore, it was essential to identify aspects that are representative of the contrasting development of these three black public intellectual's political narratives.

The themes were collated and reported upon to understand the positionality of these three black public intellectuals in relation to post-1994 political discourses. This extends to engaging the different discourses within the text and different ways in which they are engaged. The themes on their own have no coherent meaning unless they are read in the larger scheme of the research process by means of collation and analysis.

Firstly, data was drawn from the major themes through selected columns, because thematic analysis allows a decision on the themes to look for in the data. Secondly, the themes which do not relate to the focus of this study were filtered out. Thirdly, the motives of the three black public intellectuals with regard to what they write were interpreted. This was necessary for the purpose of in-depth understanding arising from interpreting and making sense of the phenomena being studied, as suggested by Leedy and Ormrod (2005).

Thematic analysis was also fundamental to analysing selected texts, which are the columns written by Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama. This methodology was necessary for this research because it could shed light on the dynamics and complexities of the political discourse after 1994. As such, it was useful in terms of identifying the ways in which Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama articulate race and blackness, the black elite and the black public intellectuals in the post-1994 era through the lens of a Fanonian perspective.

### **Limitations of the study**

The number of post-1994 South African political issues and phenomena is vast and thus they cannot be captured in a single study. The scope of Fanonian thought is also broad and there are many interpretations of this thought. It falls beyond the scope of this study to analyse Fanon's entire *oeuvre*. It was therefore necessary to limit this study to Fanonian interpretations of race and blackness, the black elite and black public intellectuals.

The discourse of black public intellectualism is not homogeneous, and this study could not trace and analyse all possible examples. Instead, as stated earlier in the chapter, this study focuses only on Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama. Another limitation to the study is the number of columns studied. The selection of the columns was based on their relevance to the themes of race and blackness, the black elite and the black public intellectual.

### **Chapter outline**

This study consists of six chapters.

Chapter One provides the introduction and discusses the scope of the study with reference to the background, aim, rationale, research methodology, limitations and chapter outline. Essentially, this chapter outlines what the study entails.

Chapter Two provides the theoretical framework, focusing on Fanon and his theories to provide a foundation for this study.

Race and blackness, in relation to the positionality of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama, are examined in Chapter Three.

In Chapter Four, the focus falls on examining the problems regarding the modes of accumulation of the black elite, as articulated by Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama.

Chapter Five engages with the concept of the black public intellectual and examines the positionality of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama regarding this topic.

Finally, Chapter Six draws conclusions on the study by interrogating the notion of liberation, and illustrating Fanon's relevance for the public political discourse since 1994.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **FRANTZ FANON: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides the theoretical framework for the study, which is presented with specific reference to three themes that feature in Fanon's thinking. The first of these themes is race and blackness, and it relates to Fanon's thinking about the African colonial situation, which continues to haunt the continent even in the post-liberation era. Secondly, Fanon is famous for his critique of a national bourgeoisie. This chapter maps Fanon's thoughts and debates the relevance of this critique for a deeper understanding of the post-liberation political state. Finally, his thinking includes the notion of a native intellectual consciousness, a topic which is explored in this study with a view to investigating how such native intellectuals are related to the socio-political landscape, and what those relations should be and their role.

The chapter focuses on Fanon's prophetic articulation of liberation as a state of becoming, with the potential to create a new world or to be betrayed. This argument can be used to understand the complexities and dynamics that form a large part of liberation, especially in the post-liberation era. This chapter examines Fanon's ideas to provide a backdrop against which the thinking of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama may be analysed. This is an attempt to read Fanon's texts in the context of post-1994 South Africa. As a theoretical framework, this chapter helps to situate Fanon's thoughts in post-1994 South Africa, as discussed in more detail in the



subsequent chapters in relation to the themes of race and blackness, the black elite and the black public intellectual.

### **Fanon on race and blackness**

The question of race and blackness continues to haunt the post-colonial world. In the case of South Africa, this situation continues because of the legacy of apartheid. Fanon ([1952] 2008) detects and unmask racism at the psychological and social level where human oppression resides. According to Fanon (1967:32), '[r]acism is not the whole but the most visible, the most day-to-day and, not to mince matters, the crudest element of a given structure'.

Fanon argues that racism mutates its melanin (the pigment that gives skin its colour) to adapt itself to the socio-political condition of the context it finds itself. Racism tends to change its form in order to create and re-create blackness in order to sustain itself. This is done in multiple implicit ways. In contexts where people declare that race does not exist or where racism is condemned, racism usually occurs in an institutionalised form. In this form, the logic of its operation is hidden, but continues to give effect to racism. However, paradoxically, the effect will be declared not to be racism, because it is effectively normalised and institutionalised. Fanon sees racism is a systemic form of oppression of a people which is justified to such an extent that it remains a part of reality.

Blackness emerged as a matter of racial 'othering', involving tormented and troubled psyches. Blackness is related to pathology, and stands in a position that renders it devoid of being; blackness operates in an anti-black world, where 'the Negro, the African, the native, the black, the dirty, was rejected, despised: cursed' (Fanon 1967:26). This attitude creates an inferiority complex which is imposed and reinforced in the form of the existence of blackness as the

universe of whiteness. Consequently, blacks desire to be white. To counter this attitude, Fanon calls for combined action from the black standpoint, from both individuals and groups.

Fanon's conception of race can be understood from the manner in which he unpacks the notion of blackness. Fanon ([1952] 2008) suggests that blackness is always read in comparison with, and aspires to, whiteness in a self-loathing manner. Blackness, according to Fanon, is preoccupied by constant comparison – that is, it mirrors itself in relation to whiteness. In other words, it is whiteness that manufactures blackness. As Vergès (1997:583) puts it, '[t]he white world makes the "Negro"'. Self-evaluation and the ego-ideal in terms of Fanon's thinking renders blackness devoid of the self, as the self is constructed by whiteness. Furthermore, Fanon ([1952] 2008:165) points out that '[s]ince in all periods the Negro has been an inferior, he (or she) attempts to react with a superior complex'.

A superiority complex corresponds interchangeably with inferiority, something which is expressed in the social, political and economic spheres: 'Once [the] black skin is categori[s]ed as a sign of moral inferiority, black individuals become interchangeable units of an evil group' (JanMohamed 1983:269). An inferiority complex combined with skin colour is associated with blackness. This allows blackness to be frowned upon. As a result, accommodation is sought outside blackness. Fanon adds that what the black subject desires is to be white. According to Fanon, discussing the inhabitants of Martinique, which remains under French rule, as an example of people trapped in such an experience of blackness,

The Martinicans are greedy for security. They want to compel the acceptance of their fiction. They want to be recogni[s]ed in their quest for [humanity]. They want to make an appearance. Each one of them is isolated, sterile, salient atom which sharply defined rights of passage, each one of them *is*. Each one of them wants to *be*, to

*emerge*. Everything the Antillean does is done for The Other. (Fanon [1952] 2008:165, original emphasis).

The whole weight of blackness presses down on blacks in a form of a neurosis – the problem of an inferiority complex produced by the white racial gaze and socio-economic realities. This gives life to structures which militate against black humanity and leaves blackness with the absence of recognition of humanity. This creates the black condition, where the ontology of blackness is objectification, since blacks are regarded as objects and not as subjects. Blackness cries out for a humanity which is denied to those who are black by an anti-black world. To understand the anti-black world, it is important to understand ‘its real coordinates’ (Fanon [1952] 2008:61). Gibson cautions:

It is not Blacks who are neurotics, but the anti-Black society; yet it is the analysis of the neurotic, who happen to be Black, that gives insight into the sociodiagnostic of the quest for recognition. These symptoms are expressed in racial terms. (Gibson 2003:9).

Fanon ([1952] 2008:2) claims that ‘[t]here is a zone of nonbeing, an extraordinary sterile and arid region, an utterly naked declivity where an authentic upheaval can be born’. Blackness symbolises the negation of being and this is the aspect of the black life which breeds aggressiveness (Fanon [1961] 1990). In the dynamics of the black condition, the self-destruction that seems to be the nature of the black being takes centre stage. The subject position of blackness implies being restricted, excluded, dehumanised and to the lesser extent, acted upon.

In short, blackness has been and is still that which is objectified, because ‘every ontology is made unattainable’ in that ‘it does not permit [the] understanding of the black *being in the anti-Black world which is unethical par excellence*’ (Fanon [1952] 2008:82, emphasis added). To

study blackness is to examine the ways in which blackness is interlocked and confused with emancipation instead of liberation in the post-colonial or post-liberation period.

Blackness is a negation which exists as a result of the white gaze. This gaze, even if it does not recognise blackness, means that the inferior complex is still in operation, since blacks want to be afforded concessions by whites – they want recognition and affirmation. The existence of blackness is not only problematic, but it is a scandal, as it exposes as a lie the notion of universal liberal democracy, which propounds human equality whilst masking injustice.

In framing Fanon's thought within the twin loci of race and racism, Kane (2007) argues that race is embedded in human ontology and that Fanon's work is seminal in engaging in conversations on race in the global landscape. According to Kane (2007:360), 'race is not essential but rather socially constructed and culturally imposed'. Blackness determines the way politics of race are lived and experienced, because racism modifies social constellations and political conditions (Fanon 1967).

Kane's (2007) stance opposes the absence of a 'racial optic', and allows an exploration of the context of Fanon's thinking. An erasure of race and racism through colour-blindness is a re-formulation of racism, since, historically, capitalism in itself is a racial structure in the way it organises the division of labour. Racism remains pervasive and, once it has been denied, can take on new guises of allegedly non-racialism.

Although some claim that we live in a post-racial world, which means a world where race is considered irrelevant, blackness remains a predicament in terms of Fanon's understanding of racism during and after colonialism. Fanon's thinking can be applied in various ways, as he calls for the creation of emancipatory potential within the realm of post-colonial or post-racial socio-political contexts. Kane (2007) suggests that Fanon calls for a rejection of essentialist

racial categories and, by doing so, giving birth to racial equality, which comes into being when the notion of race as the organising principle of colonisation is unpacked, bringing about understanding and advocacy for creating a forum for human emancipation from oppressive structures.

Gordon (2007) warns that blackness is often associated only with the lived experience; and both blackness and the lived experience often lead to a collapse, or symbiosis – hence the danger of the experience itself. As a result, this denies or negates the agency of the black experience, the experience which reflects blackness as a problematic stance in a world which is constructed by race, where blackness features at the lower level of humanity or absence of humanity. Gordon (2007) argues that it is essential to look into the lived-reality of people hidden in plain sight – people who are submerged and, consequently, do not exist.

Gordon (2007) notes that Fanon understood the grammar of meaning which enables the articulation of the imaginary of human subordination in the modern world. In terms of the lived reality, Gordon adds that Fanon, in his thinking and articulation, engaged with what is referred to as ‘speaking from that grammar of articulation’ (Gordon 2007:10), because Fanon wrote of disaster in all his works – a ‘hellish zone’ within which blackness is entrapped.

Welcome (2007:179) suggests that there is a struggle for blackness to articulate its existence in the mode of race-in-itself, and race-for-itself. Such a struggle occurs within the possibility of creating a new society, and this society has the possibility of becoming more egalitarian (Welcome 2007:179). It is this change that will transform the entire social, political and economic reality, since those who were marginalised and oppressed will be afforded new forms of life. This means that they must be given liberation in the form of justice and reparations to restructure their lives in such a way that they will attain human dignity. This affordance is not one of racial showcasing where a select few can amass wealth while

excluding the majority. Race-in-itself is what blackness should assert in its route toward or against both explicit and implicit domination. Welcome argues that race-in-itself and race-for-itself are central to, and intimately part of, a programme for black liberation in which the racialised subjects articulate their racial existence: 'The situation faced by individuals plays a major role in the dynamics of race' (Welcome 2007:182).

According to Manganyi (1973:7), 'a tolerable environment maintains a distinction between 'the people' (whose rights and existence are recognised) and the 'non-people', whose existence and rights are not seriously considered. In this regard, 'the people' are the subject, while the 'non-people' are the object – the patterns which fits well with the making and the operation of the Manichean structure. Manganyi argues that an individual experiences the body as an object, the body outside itself. This brings about alienation, as Fanon ([1961] 1990:122) argues, which means that the condition is a 'pathological state'. This refers to an illness which is institutionalised and naturalised, since the normal state of being black is a perpetual state of dehumanisation and terror. By contrast, the body that sees itself as the subject 'does not experience the body as something outside itself' (Manganyi 1973:30). Manganyi's articulation of blackness brings to the fore the existential category of being-in-the-world with objects or things. A person's attitude to objects is determined by the social, economic, political and cultural conditions that the subjects exist in.

Being-in-the-world implies that existence is a given, as the basic structure of existence is historical (Manganyi 1973). The human mode of existence is characterised by being black-in-the-world and being white-in-the-world, which suggests that there are differences, and sometimes this negates blackness. Put simply, black humanity becomes absent in the world, as the body itself carries with it the undesirable, and ceases to be part of the view and therefore has to register to the world.

More (2008) argues that by virtue of the historical fact of oppression, the reality of blacks is that of race and racism. He states that the selfhood of blacks deals with being-black-in-the-world, where the question of existence is embodied in the lived experience of black. Thus, for a black, there are questions and struggles around the issues of existence and suffering which embody the predicament of race and racism. According to More (2008), racism not only constitutes (mere) discrimination, but includes the manner in which power is practised, exercised and manipulated to control the lives of oppressed and excluded blacks. This allows the issue of race to claim hierarchy and, as such, it is reduced to a level where racism is normalised and naturalised. As a result, a life of blackness is that of a racialised reality.

Zahar (1974) posits that blacks suffer principally for not being white. A racist infrastructure indicts blackness, and that is why racism systematically and crudely attacks the black body. According to JanMohamed (1983:5), 'the colonialist ideology is designated to confine the native in a confused and subservient position'. The black body which is the object, and also a possession, stands to be emptied of all humanity, and is associated with negativity. Zahar (1974) also points out that blackness is alien to whiteness – in this regard, Fanon states clearly that blackness cannot integrate itself into whiteness, since blackness is seen everywhere; that is, blackness is over-determined without. Zahar (1974:35) writes that 'racial discrimination which is mediated by all the institutions of colonial society, determines the individual and social conduct of the coloni[s]ed person both in his living together with the other coloni[s]ed and his relations with the coloni[s]er'.

Gordon (1995:17) points out that '[t]he dynamics of visibility and invisibility play important roles not only in Fanon's thought, but also in the whole corpus of phenomenological efforts to describe social reality'. Skewed visibility in terms of existential experience amounts to bad faith. Gordon states that the dimensions of bad faith, which assume the form of the individual and

the institutional, determine whether the black subject is seen or not, since the dimension itself is about 'the seer and the seen'.

Gordon (2007) engages with the primary condition of appearance, the black skin. It is through this condition of experience where the non-existence of black is unravelled: 'There is a zone of nonbeing, an extraordinary sterile and arid region, an utterly naked declivity where an authentic upheaval can be born' (Fanon [1952] 2008:2). Since the structures of oppression use race as the organising principle, Gordon (2007:5) argues that such structures are 'embedded in anti-black racism and the problematic presence of the black's subject'. Gordon (2007) foregrounds the condition of appearance which is a form of emergence, namely black skin reflecting an ontology of non-being. His thinking can be connected with Fanon's existential political thought, in which the black subject appears as something that is ultimately turned into an object. The objectification of blackness can be directed at the black condition which is pathology *par excellence*.

According Zahar (1974:27), 'Fanon formulates his own experiences with the intention of demonstrating to his fellow-sufferers the socio-psychological mechanisms which conceal the causes of their oppression' as a way to rid them of the complexities of colonialism that are packaged in racial discrimination and its ideological function of oppression. The modes of oppression are hidden to make it impossible to point out the real source of oppression.

According to JanMohamed (1983:3), '[s]ocial pathology is produced by the fact of domination and race'. Blackness is an experience that often finds itself in structural violence. Such violence takes the form of slavery, colonialism and racism. This means that blackness is negated by structural violence to realise its agency, and therefore, blacks are organised by violence as the workings of race and racism take shape as something 'normal'.



The facts of the historical scandal and conditions of those who are affected come to light when one studies Fanon (Bulhan 1985). According to Bulhan (1985), the oppressor dehumanises the oppressed to maintain power and privilege, the oppressed forfeit their humanity and fear confronting institutional violence. This state of affairs allows the black condition to remain intact. This dehumanisation, as Bulhan (1985:12) shows, is something that can be referred to as 'physical, psychological and social death'. It is in this state of affairs that the black condition is a challenge that needs to be met to make a life of blackness sufficiently bearable to survive in the hellish zone of non-being (Gordon 2007).

Bulhan (1985) argues that the life of blacks is characterised by violence which dehumanises the personality of blacks. He identifies three forms of violence, namely personal, institutional and structural violence, none of which can exist and operate in isolation, as they reinforce and depend on each other. However, Bulhan warns that these three levels of violence are contextual – therefore, they cannot always be looked at together, because in some societies they serve a common purpose and in others a different purpose. This creates a condition between victims and perpetrators whereby 'structural violence enjoys sanctions of ruling authorities and appears diffuse and very much linked with social reality' (Bulhan 1985:136). Bulhan's (1985) conceptualisation indicates that structural violence cannot occur without institutions and persons, through which it finds expression.

Wilderson III (2008) argues that blacks do not possess a human life, but a 'black life' – that is, a life that is already dead, since blacks die because they lived. Building on Gordon's ontological schema of presence as absence, Wilderson III (2008) introduces three layers of black absence. The first layer is absence as subjective presence, which means that the world cannot accommodate blackness at the level of subjectivity. In terms of this layer, seeing a black is seeing a black – something which precedes humanity because of the visibility of

blackness is a *priori*. Wilderson III (2008:98) argues that blackness is 'an ontological freeze that waits for a gaze, rather than a living ontology moving with agency to the field of vision'. The second layer is the absence of a cartographic presence, which means that the life of the black is about fate, while that of the white is about freedom. According to Wilderson III, the life of blacks is about 'when'. In other words 'when will I be arrested, stopped by police, get violated' and so forth. The third and final layer is the absence of political presence, which does not allow for 'the temperature of the black's grammar of suffering' (Wilderson III 2008:99). This implies that when blacks make demands, these demands are not met, since they are rendered impossible. The agency of blacks is thus negated, since blackness is something that is absent from the political world.

Wilderson III (2003) argues that blackness is a scandal in that its structural position threatens the status quo. He suggests that blackness as a subjective position presents an antagonism that cannot be satisfied. The existing structures deprive black modes of articulation; as such blacks, who are slaves, have no transactional value. Blackness does not call for taking into account and the plague of pathologies that befall blacks in the black condition reduces them to non-entities.

Hook (2004:115) is of the view that in the Fanonian sense, human psychology is intimately linked to socio-political and historical forces, which explains how the workings of power come into play. Hook also maintains that analysing power brings to light ways in which the logic and workings of power are dramatised, particularly those of colonial racism. Such analysis is possible through the critique and excavation of power in which the conceptual and theoretical framework is related to the black experience and the black condition.

Furthermore, Hook (2004:115) argues that in analysing power, race needs to be taken into account. Hook (2004:128) defines racism as a complex phenomenon as 'a system of values

using both the racism of the body and racism of the mind'. According to Hook, racism of the body is related to concrete physical or material defects, while racism of the mind is abstract and includes intangible attributes such as culture, psychology and values, to name but a few. Each is used to justify and legitimate the other, on the basis of Manichean thinking and structures, which are dynamic in fertilising self-perpetuating cycles of racism. However, not all blacks are subject to an in-between position, as some are well off economically and socially and 'they might not be subject to the level of racist objectification, that is a scandal' (Hook 2004:136).

### **The national bourgeoisie as parasites**

Fanon ([1961] 1990:123) is a severe critic of 'the national middle class [as they] have nothing better to do than to take the role of the manager'. This means they are content with an intermediary role rather than a revolutionary role. In this form, the national bourgeoisie assumes the role of being a manager for the capitalist system. Because they are reduced to mere managers, the national bourgeoisie have no control or ownership of the economy or in fact of the political system other than to ensure the status quo. Fanon emphasises this notion as follows:

Seen through its eyes, [the bourgeoisie's] mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists; prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the masque of neo-colonialism. (Fanon [1961] 1990:122).

Fanon ([1961] 1990:122) accuses the bourgeoisie by pointing out that 'the spirit of indulgence is rife among the national bourgeoisie' even in the face of abject poverty. Thus a politics of acquisition, pleasure and consumption, do not transform the economy for the benefit of the

people and they are rampant. In essence, the role of a black national bourgeoisie is taking over from the white master without changing anything, which demonstrates the paralysis of this class. Fanon ([1961] 1990:122) argues that 'nationali[s]ation quite simply means the transfer into the native hands of those unfair advantages which are the legacy of the colonial period'.

Fanon's contempt for a national bourgeoisie arises from his view that they insult the black majority by using collective rhetorical phrases such as 'our people' or 'we as the nation' while serving their own interests at the expense of the excluded black majority. These interests are sectional and narrow, but may be concealed by the claim of serving national interests (Pillay 2004). Such rhetoric, though it is a lie, is something that has turned into a truism which is regarded as blasphemous to oppose, and whose merits may not be questioned. Their role is to enjoy privileges wedded to political patronage, and they will fight to the bitter end to remain part of the cabal of the ruling elite.

Intellectual alienation is a creation of middle class society. What I call middle class-society is any society that becomes rigidified in predetermined forms, forbidding all evolution, all gains, all progress, all discovery. I call middle-class a closed society in which life has no taste, in which the air is tainted, in which ideas and men are corrupt. And I think that a man who takes a stand against this is in a sense a revolutionary.  
(Fanon [1952] 2008:175)

The black bourgeoisie are mere poseurs as when they are 'reduced in numbers and without capital... [and they] will fall into deplorable stagnation' (Fanon [1961] 1990:121). They are devoid of rootedness, as their status does not reflect the reality of the black majority, who are the damned as Fanon calls them, they are trapped in the black condition of dispossession, landlessness and oppressive labour relations, which a black bourgeoisie tends to perpetuate,

because revolutionary change is absent from their political imagination. They were and are characterised by paralysis, which creates a form of contemporary slavery for the black majority.

The black national bourgeoisie are a comprador class, who are the poor imitation of the colonialist bourgeoisie, as their race betrays the condition of their parasitic accumulation and/or possession of wealth. They live a life of capitalism without being capitalist, that is, they are mere appendages of capitalism. Fanon ([1961] 1990:122) points out that 'the national middle class consistently demands the nationali[s]ation of the economy and of the trading sectors'. This demand is not underpinned by crude plans to distribute wealth to the masses but is intended purely to serve the bourgeoisie's own interests.

According to Hansen (1977), the national bourgeoisie have little or no revolutionary potential, and this constitutes an absence of consciousness. Any revolutionary potential that the national bourgeoisie might possess disappears as soon as political reform sets in, either by means of independence or liberation. Hansen (1977) states that the unchangeability of the colonial institutions suggests that there will be no change in the relations between the ruler and the ruled. Put simply, if the institutions remain the way they are when liberation takes place, there will be no fundamental change to the lives of those who are or were oppressed. As a result, oppression will continue in many guises, since these institutions militate against the fundamental change that should take place in the lives of the oppressed. Change means the recreation and destruction, if necessary, of the colonialist institutions and structures in order to create the new forms of life.

It is argued that when the national bourgeoisie assume power and have access to such untransformed institutions, they reproduce, even in the worst perpetual form, much that militates against the interests of blacks who are excluded and oppressed. As Fanon ([1961] 1990) argues, the intellectual laziness of the black elite blocks all forms of political imagination,

as they would prefer to maintain the status quo. Hansen (1977) suggests that the intellectual laziness of the black elite allows the phenomenon of alienation of the oppressed to persist, since change is abstract and cosmetic, allowing regression to occur.

The national bourgeoisie are slavish in their mimicking of the colonialist bourgeoisie. Moreover, they are worse than their model, in that they are mere midwives, since they do not produce anything to the benefit of the nation. Hansen (1977) warns that Fanon's characterisation of the national bourgeoisie is sometimes flawed. Firstly, Fanon sees the black elite in a mechanistic way in that he suggests that they operate in a deterministic manner. Secondly, he homogenises them, as if there are no conflicts among them. Lastly, Fanon is criticised for not taking the contextual factors into account with regard to the bourgeoisie and the non-bourgeoisie, because relations between them are not always antagonistic.

Hansen (1977:139) argues that 'Fanon's attitude toward the national bourgeoisie is also ambivalent' because Fanon argues for the abolition of the native bourgeoisie, while he also argues that they could play a progressive role. However, it is clear from Fanon's account that the native bourgeoisie are discounted and disfavoured since they are devoid of the revolutionary spirit that Fanon advocates because they are caught in the dilemma of mimicry. Regarding this mimicry, Fairchild (1994) goes further, claiming that the mentality of the national bourgeoisie is colonised, in that they have turned into the spokespersons of the coloniser. This is done at the expense of the peasants on whom the national bourgeoisie turn their backs to be closer to whiteness. 'Moreover, the nationalist bourgeoisie – those who assume leadership after the revolution – are caught in an approach-avoidance conflict in seeking to be independent of the colonial system but friendly to it' (Fairchild 1994:195). In this friendliness, there is a high level of fiscal dependence and indebtedness to former colonialist structures and some fear of recreating or overhauling the whole system. This means, 'government should be

deconstructed and decentralised, and privileged classes are to be vigorously opposed' (Fairchild 1994:197).

Mbeki (2009) argues that independence did not bring about economic change in Africa but entrenched inequalities inherited from colonialism. This means that change only occurred at the political level. According to Mbeki, this creates a situation, as Fanon puts it, where the national bourgeoisie replace white bourgeoisie. Such elites do not address the real change that is desired, and nor does it direct change towards changing the template of the economy and redistributing and empowering those who are marginalised. Instead 'the exploitation of the black masses continue[s] as before' (Mbeki 2009:7). According to this view, the national bourgeoisie are a liability.

Agreeing with Fanon, Mbeki (2009:19) writes: 'African elites today sustain and reproduce themselves by perpetuating the neo-colonial state and its attendant socio-economic systems of exploitation, devised by the colonialists'. Mbeki also concurs with Fanon that this state of affairs does not benefit the masses, but only a politically connected few. In other words, this does not benefit the nation, rather, it benefits only the national bourgeoisie, who merely consume and who are unable to absorb the new methods in which the economy can benefit the masses. This puts the national bourgeoisie into perpetual defeat, as there is a lack of political organisation for the poor; hence their demands are frowned upon as impossible. However, the national bourgeoisie continue to live in a manner that is an insult to the excluded.

Furthermore, the national bourgeoisie bring the economy to stagnation, as they only consume without producing anything. Mbeki adds that they are made into new masters who are junior partners anyway, and they are corrupted to defeat their own nation and fail their own people whilst thinking they are progressive. This situation reflects the artificiality that Fanon is against, and the corruption of the national bourgeoisie then refers to those who are mere managers and

who use the same template of exclusion and exploitation that has been used by the colonial masters, but possibly in an exacerbated form.

In this state of affairs, the national bourgeoisie become the midwife of a white capitalist economy in that, like whites, they perpetuate black suffering and make no contribution to bringing about fundamental changes in the lives of the black majority, even though they themselves are black. The national bourgeoisie live a political life that is in most instances non-democratic and in opposition to the will of the people. Their political imagination is a mirage, devoid of any sense of liberation. This is confirmed by Salih:

The elite's monopoly of the democratic process, through non-democratic structures, has strengthened its control over the state and development. Rather than being democratised, state and development have become instruments for the political legitimisation of an exclusive political elite. (Salih 2001:39)

The national bourgeoisie represent themselves, and they can claim in rhetoric that they have the best interests of the people at heart. However, they enrich themselves at the expense of the people who voted them to power (Salih 2001). Self-interest typifies the national bourgeoisie, who manipulate and suppress the consciousness of the oppressed to keep them docile. Salih (2001) argues that legitimacy, leadership and opportunities for political participation in a post-colonial context are artificial, since they are undermined or do not exist in totality.

Salih (2001) proposes that there should be greater political education to increase political awareness to counteract indoctrination. In his view, raising the political consciousness of the black masses is desirable. An embryonic national bourgeoisie has no strong base, which shortens their political imagination so that they fail to see the importance of building a nation from the ruins of colonialism and do not recognise the predicament of a post-liberationist state.



Hence, they act in a manner that serves the status quo, in line with a desire to fill their own pockets.

Gibson (2003:113) believes that 'the national bourgeoisie cannot be real... but only a poor copy, a huckstering caste'. They cannot create a condition where there are new ways of life which are necessary to bring fundamental change to the oppressed. As a result, they themselves will end up as oppressors and will engage in witch-hunts to eliminate those who question their self-interested and contradictory lives. This situation implies that the legacies of the colonial world will be reinforced and that what is claimed to be liberation will be a mere illusion since things will remain the same for the oppressed.

The national bourgeoisie do not want to be awakened, because their only long-held fantasy is to replace the master. Such a replacement will ultimately serve the master, since structures and conditions remain unchanged. Gibson (2003) argues that the national bourgeoisie will not have any hostility to the master, but may become hostile towards their own people: 'The native's mimicry of colonial action, which represents a reaction to colonialism, is expressed in the wish to take the masters' place' (Gibson 2003:114).

### **Native intellectuals' consciousness**

Native intellectuals should derive their ideas from the people's lived experiences and they 'must fashion the revolution with the people' (Fanon [1961] 1990:167). It is in this form that the ideas of the intellectuals will be the rhythm of the people. A native intellectual's role should be central to the processes of acting and practising with the masses. The claims of the native intellectual are a 'necessity in a coherent programme' (Fanon [1961] 1990:170). Fanon therefore engaged with the notion of the native intellectual, and calls for intellectual activity to be grounded and mainly focused on dismantling the denial of human agency:

The native intellectual who takes up arms to defend his nation's legitimacy and who wants to bring proofs to bear out that legitimacy, who is willing to strip himself naked to study the history of his body is obliged to dissect the heart of his people. (Fanon [1961] 1990:170)

Following his sustained critique on the predicaments of the decolonisation phase and its aftermath, Fanon argues that a native intellectual should think *with* the people. Intellectual work should not be about enlightening people through opinion and analysis – but rather the creation of a reality that dismantles the conditions that oppress and dehumanise blacks.

Fanon ([1961] 1990:178) warns that the native intellectual should not 'talk down' to people, since doing so is 'a banal search for exoticism'. He adds that a 'native intellectual who comes to his people by way of cultural achievement behaves in fact like a foreigner' (Fanon [1961] 1990:180). This implies that native intellectuals who write with the high sense of cultural purpose could be deemed irrelevant because they perpetuate the civilising mission and are not in sync with the lived experience of black people. Fanon also adds that such behaviour is opportunistic, since such an intellectual does not have the interests of the people at heart but is merely furthering his or her own interests.

Native intellectuals should think with the oppressed people in a manner that allows the people to question their ways of existence. Fanon warns:

Colonialism is not satisfied with merely holding a people in its grip and in emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of a perverted logic, it turns the past of the oppressed people, and distorts it, disfigures and destroys it. (Fanon [1961] 1990:169)

The distortions which are propagated as the truth and the complexities that are found in the spider's web of this state of affairs are the issues that the native intellectuals should

disentangle. That is to say that the native intellectuals as the torch bearers for the people must think with the masses in a manner that ensures mutual cooperation and, to a large extent, solidarity. Fanon ([1961] 1990) suggests that the role of native intellectuals in the process of decolonisation must be directed towards bringing about agency, which is brought into being through consciousness.

Fanon mentions three phases of the activity of native intellectuals. In the first phase, there are native intellectuals who give proof that they have been assimilated. In the second phase, the native intellectual is disturbed and tries to remember what he or she is. The third and final phase, the intellectual will awaken the people, and this is the phase that Fanon regards as the fighting phase: 'If the action of the native intellectual is limited historically, there remains nevertheless the fact that it contributes greatly upholding and justifying the actions of politicians' (Fanon [1961] 1990:175).

Fanon points out that the predicament of the native intellectual arises from a desire to be assimilated. This occurs in the form of native intellectuals' often adopting intellectual tools that are alien to the condition that they must address, and thus often the thought pattern of the colonial bourgeoisie (Fanon [1961] 1990). He states that this creates a condition where native intellectuals carry out two-sided discussions in which they 'can eliminate themselves when they are confronted with an object or idea' (Fanon [1961] 1990:38). Such a native intellectual has a slim chance of credibility, since he or she is uncritical and may even claim to be the mouthpiece of the masses and/or the colonial masters.

According to Fanon ([1961] 1990:47), '[t]he native intellectual has clothed his aggressiveness in his barely veiled desire to assimilate himself to the colonial world. He uses his aggressiveness to serve his own individual interests'. Such a person, living in the mode of double discussion, is caught up in the dilemma of being accepted and rejected by both worlds.

Fanon ([1961] 1990:39) explains that '[t]he native [intellectual] replies to the living lie of the colonial situation by an equal falsehood'.

Fanon also argues that there is a possibility of rehabilitation of the native intellectual only if the intellectual understands the direction in which resources should be pulled. The native intellectual should be astute enough to understand the condition which affects the masses, as well as the masses' desire, though they do not spell it out, to stand in a place that allows them to live the life due to them. This life will make them humans, subjects, not objects. Native intellectuals should ground their work in the realities of the masses, but this is possible only through 'having nothing to lose and everything to gain' (Fanon [1961] 1990:47).

With the call to ground their intellectual work, Fanon (cited in Gibson 2007:37) puts forward a challenge to native intellectuals to 'locate the site of their struggle with the poor'. Intellectuals are often in a dilemma in rejecting the colonialist world and at the same time being in collaboration with it. Gibson (2007) argues that an intellectual who claims to have rejected colonialism may fail to understand the notion of the anti-colonial struggle and the contradictions which inform, or are part of, the struggle itself. In this regard, nationalist intellectuals are sometimes opportunistic and haphazardly propagating the essentialist aspects of culture through populist rhetoric which holds no benefits for the national struggle. Gibson (2003) believes that one of the pitfalls for intellectuals and the middle class is their unpreparedness with regard to national liberation as they lack political imagination. The native intellectual's role is that of being informed by action, while agency is brought about by a dialectic from below (Gibson 2003).

Native intellectuals struggle between the poles of being progressive and being reactionary. Those who are progressive are a bane to the hegemony, and face marginalisation, or worse, they may face being incarcerated for their ideas. Gibson (2003) argues that Fanon's

understanding of the native intellectual suggests that such a figure plays both a critical and a problematic role in the movement toward liberation, but should be part of the nucleus of the struggle for liberation. This is the movement which is agitating for liberation, a movement that is in the interests of the people, and critical of those in power. Those at the other pole are indeed enjoying the benefits when they stand for the powers that be. This polarisation has characterised the political world to a large extent.

According to Fanon ([1961] 1990:179), political education advocates action, which then makes the native intellectual 'the awakener of the people'. Gibson (2003) argues that political education brings fundamental shifts to politics in which the dialectic of black liberation is continuous and deepened. Political education should encourage the excluded black majority to think and to speak for themselves, not to be spoken for by native intellectuals. He explains that it is of 'central importance, even as Fanon introduces the need for organising, [to build] up the self-confidence of the masses' (Gibson 2003:165).

Maldonado-Torres (2005) comments that intellectualism faces the predicament of conformity, which is a denial of humanity in an anti-black world. He therefore calls for intellectual activity to be grounded and to focus mainly on dismantling a denial of injustices that goes against humanity. By virtue of being black, native intellectuals are positioned in a predicament of subject formulation, as they are considered 'to be devoid of any rationality' (Maldonado-Torres 2005:151). According to Maldonado-Torres, Fanon followed a route of a sustained critique of the colonial project. 'The task is to end up with inhumanity and to restore humanity' (Maldonado-Torres 2005:159). Intellectual work should be about awakening people's consciousness and to create a reality that is not antithetical to this consciousness.

Gibson (2007:38) describes the militant on the run, expelled from the nationalist party and trade union – one who finds protection in shantytowns and marginal spaces outside the

colonial city. Political organisation and mobilisation occurs at the 'local zones' and this has seen the growth of grassroots organisations and social movements. The militant intellectual is located within this zone and builds an existence among those whom Fanon calls the damned (Gibson 2007:38). The limitation to or the dilemma in this lies in the question of whether the militant might not be a spokesperson for the poor under the guise of revolution while in fact benefiting from the exploitation and exclusion of the poor.

The pursuit of the creation of a new society for new personhood, the disruption and upsetting of social relations and arrangements of the (neo-) colonial structures and thinking, requires both the intellectuals and the people – what Fanon calls the damned of the earth (those blacks who are excluded, criminalised, and who live in the indignity of the black condition).

Gibson (2007:39) claims that '[a]ll slogans and rhetoric on national unity, liberation and freedom fall away to reveal that the political kingdom is nothing other than a means to get rich'. This argument holds water if intellectuals become elitist and as a result are co-opted or silenced, and the struggle is demobilised, which results in the collapse of the new forms of life. However, as a result of this, '[t]he honest intellectuals are imprisoned, the military takes over and the demonstrations are crushed' (Gibson 2007:40).

Gordon (1995) argues that liberation constitutes existential dimensions, and it is in this case that masked reality should be uncovered. Gordon warns against bad faith, which involves writing away reality, and introduces a state where the alternative reality is written by the native intellectual. The native intellectual needs to engage on a deeper level with the absence of the black subject, since presence can only be brought about if there is recognition and awareness. In contrast to this role, native intellectuals can choose to be seduced by privileges and profits. Whether they do so determines their stance. If they succumb to this seduction, they will indeed act in the interests of capital and at the expense of the people. Essentially, what this means is

that, if the logic of capital does indeed deny the oppression of black people, such intellectuals would be intellectualising in a manner that is alien to black ways of life.

According to Sono (1993), there are members of the political intelligentsia who toe the party line. These are the loyal and disciplined cadres who defend the party and government line by all means necessary. The political intelligentsia often becomes radical before being incorporated into power structures. Once they are in power and enjoy its trappings, they change. Sono (1993:55) argues that they are 'always at the heart of representative politics'. It is in this kind of political order where they must engage in a politics of promise, as they bow to the necessity of attaining and preserving political power.

Such positionality differs from the power of intellectual analysis which aims to critique the site and the operations of power, which is possible through the 'transformative power of ideas' (Crick 2006:131) and seldom sits well with the commissars of power or the political intelligentsia, as they propagate the hegemony of ideas. The politics of promise that are advocated by political intelligentsia or the commissars who serve power are based on manipulation, because the promises are never fulfilled while the politicians are in power. Thus, the political intelligentsia is necessary to propagate these promises as gospel truth and to the level where the fact that the promises are not fulfilled is often justified in a politically correct manner. The political party's or government's line is entrenched, to the point where populism may masquerade as intellectual analysis. The political intelligentsia reduces society to objects which must simply accept political rhetoric. Society in the gaze of the political intelligentsia is reduced to an 'ideological prism and prison' (Sono 1993:57).

Gagnon (1987) believes that intellectuals serve a duality that renders them both servants and critics of power. The intellectuals' perspectives suggest that there are varied interrelations between intellectuals and power. There are some intellectuals who subordinate themselves to

the ideas of the elites and others who maintain a critical stance. This also includes the issue of being passive and that of being active in the political discourse. Gagnon argues that intellectuals provide competing views, ideas which are diluted with access to power. There are some who legitimise dominant political views. They tend to be closer to power and therefore serve as protectors of power. By contrast, there are intellectuals who reject dominant political views by calling them into question if they are not in line with the public spirit or good. They are often not close to power, and are at times, marginalised. They are forces of change who maintain the line of speaking out against the status quo.

West (1993) argues that black intellectuals should live the life of the mind, which is an isolated and much-insulted world. According to West (1993), becoming a black public intellectual presents a dilemma, which consists of wanting to remain within the realm of blackness (which implies being stigmatised) and at the same time wanting to stop resisting the pressure to achieve status, recognition, affluence and benefit from materialistic gains. Public intellectuals in their mid-way role are located between the great minds and the people as they transmit and popularise philosophical knowledge (Crick 2006).

West (1993:67) argues that becoming a black intellectual is 'a self-imposed marginality resulting to marginality in the black community and also to it'. West adds that there are two camps of predicament of the black intellectuals, namely successful and unsuccessful ones. The successful ones are distant and condescending towards the black community. The unsuccessful ones are disdainful of the white intellectual world, as they are also scornful about white rejection. Both dangle between two worlds, as they have no institutional infrastructure. By their very nature, native intellectuals thus tend to respond with anger and are in fact antagonistic, because they are located in a problematic existence. Being black, and being intellectuals, Fanon ([1961] 1990) argues that they are by nature aggressive in response to



colonialism. According to Fanon, intellectuals substantiate the proof of the nation in the fight against oppression, and they must not be latecomers.

### **Fanon and the meaning of liberation and being free**

The struggle for freedom and national liberation is dialectically linked to the struggle against colonialism (Fanon 1967). According to Fanon's thinking, this struggle requires a re-conversion of the colonial oppression. Liberation is informed by action and this is brought into being by 'the dialectics of liberation' (Fanon 1967:173). Solidarity or agitation towards the realisation of liberation should not be just a rhetorical device – a mere voice devoid of action. Rather, as Fanon ([1952] 2008:135) argues, there should be 'knock[ing] down the system and break[ing] the treaties'. This is because freedom must be taken and defended, as it is not something given (Bulhan 1985; Gibson 2001, 2003; Gordon 1995). Fanon calls for the ethical reform of the world, where the black subject must be liberated from the yoke of oppression and its effects in a post-colonial situation.

For Fanon (1965), the struggle for liberation undergoes modifications and does not follow a doctrine or dogma, because the struggle is based on an overarching reality. In the quest for liberation, there should be a concerted effort to break away from the status quo, and this requires political imagination. Fanon ([1952] 2008) thus argues that risking life is not the only method to obtain freedom, but rather, going beyond life towards the invention of the 'new self' and living for the other.

Fanon ([1952] 2008:171) also refers to a pseudo-liberation, which he finds unsettling, namely that the 'black man was acted upon', and it is in this instance where there is no fundamental change in the post-liberation phase. For there to be a fundamental change, there needs to be a

concerted effort in which the masses effect the change. If they do so, such a change should speak directly to their condition. Since change signifies the invention of a new self, there should a modification of the problem(s) that the masses encounter (Fanon 1965).

In putting Fanon's thinking into the context of national liberation, consciousness and freedom, Wright (1992:427) argues that 'the pre-colonial nation is liberated and the creation of the 'new' is the result of the national struggle'. The discourses of decolonisation, nationalism and the problem of freedom are disrupted by colonialism and the complicity of the black compradors who are still fond of the colonial residue that they reproduce. This situation reproduces black suffering with the complicity and willing collusion of the black 'comprador class'. Fanon expresses this notion by arguing that oppression may wear a black face. For a new society to be created, 'the colonial paradigm needs to be eliminated and destroyed altogether' (Wright 1992:428).

To counter this 'law of repetition', Fanon (1965:6) argues that 'it is inevitable that the people must take its destiny into its own hands'. It is they, not the national bourgeoisie, who are at the forefront of suffering, and are caught in the trap of the effects of colonialism and post-colonial cosmetic changes. Thus, the people must create and achieve their own liberation. For there to be fundamental change, there needs to be people-driven social change, not change which is managed to perpetuate historical exclusions, which are then legitimated in the contemporary post-colonial condition. Such legitimacy exists on the basis that the beneficiaries of the colonial crumbs seek to stand for all the formerly oppressed, and they become annoyed when they are reminded that they are not in service of the nation, as Fanon points out.

The consolidation and unification of the people – the oppressed in particular – is of cardinal importance (Fanon 1965). This allows them to push for change, since they are should belong to the world in which they sense reality, and their expression should not be in vain. The

oppressed must be new beings in the world, and as such, they must be their own political directors, who should not be spoken for, or acted upon. Fanon (1965) argues that change resulting from liberation is not a back-and-forth emergence from ambivalence, but it is a 'dialectical progression'. This is not a romanticisation of the African past and culture, but a new language articulated to pursue the very basis of the consciousness that will speak directly to liberation.

The precondition for liberation is that the oppressed must confront their reality by objecting to its negative aspects and acting upon that reality (Freire 1972). This is only possible if the oppressed agitate for genuine liberation, which is the anti-thesis to the black condition, for there cannot be any liberation in the presence of the black condition of oppression. In this sense, the oppressed should be part of the process of liberation and it should not be mediated on their behalf, as happened during the transition from apartheid to democracy, which led the oppressed into 'the populist pitfall *which transform[s]* them into masses which can be manipulated' (Freire 1972:41, original emphasis).

In most post-liberationist societies, there are often calls to turn back to a given culture, in which narratives of rigid traditionalism dominate and appeals are made to return to an overly romanticised and idealised culture. Such an approach assumes that culture is static and serves as an important source of liberation. Wright (1992) argues that Fanon rejects such a stance because it will not yield black liberation in the sense of bringing about a new personhood. For there to be a national liberation, the 'social revolution must distribute the fruits of national liberation struggle to the nation' (Wright 1992:432). This is not often the case, because national liberation is still unborn and the majority of blacks are suffering and are still excluded from the forms of lives that will bring liberation.

True liberation is a politics of renewal, where there is a (re)construction of the oppressed who have been deprived of humanity and subjectivity. Wright (1992:432) argues that 'this new order must eradicate the inequalities that are an integral part of the colonial society'. This reflects genuine liberation in which the new personhood emerges in a new order in which blacks enjoy the fruits of liberation. In support of such a revolution, Wright (1992:433) supports a liberation struggle as necessary for a construction and deconstruction of the new order.

According to Wright (1992:428), the 'elimination of the colonial paradigm is a vital part of the (re)construction of the new social reality'. Wright sees this elimination through the prism of the national liberation struggle and social revolution, both which can occur in isolation or in tandem and at a personal and/or national level. Such a (re)construction is necessary because colonial society is in constant flux, and creates its own structures that militate against the oppressed.

The oppressed need to take into account that colonisation is about a domination and exploitation that dehumanises and objectifies blacks. The lines of the national liberation struggle and social revolution are the atomised machinery of blacks, which Fanon describes as the site where the leadership of the national liberation struggle and social revolution is contested. It can be argued that colonialist institutions remain intact, hence the psychological bondage of blacks.

Gordon (2007) insists that whites are the ones that should render life to blacks; even freedom should be 'from' white – that is, blacks are wholly dependent on whites for their existence. However, such an existence is disastrous in terms of the recognition of people; hence, Gordon (2007:11) argues that 'damnation means that the black lives the irrelevance of innocence'. He suggests that the absence of the self-other dialectic in racist situations implies an ethical eradication of relations. Maldonado-Torres (2008:103) holds a similar view and argues against

a 'radicali(s)ation and naturali(s)ation of [an] ethics of war'. The absence of a self-other dialectic means living in the possibility of subjective death (Gordon 2007).

Gordon (1995) also argues that human reality is characterised by contradiction, and human survival is the manifestation of that struggle. Such contradiction, Gordon (1995:16) posits, is 'linked both to the free and unfree' mode of existence of human beings. Liberty extends itself in relation to desire, fulfilment and completeness, but the 'factual horizon', that is, the black condition under the Manichean structure determines how that reality can extend. 'Individual bad faith is lived by individuals in different situations in their lives' (Gordon 2007:19). Individual bad faith discourages recognition, and it takes the form of attracting humanity in the name of humanity, whereas there is no humanity with regard to blackness.

According to Hansen (1977), Fanon was committed to praxis in pursuit of the liberation of the colonised subject. Hansen points out that Fanon's thinking in the quest for liberation is an action-oriented programme. A liberation of the consciousness is achieved through political education, because 'freedom is the supreme destiny' of humankind, especially for blacks, 'who have been denied such freedom' (Hansen 1977:202).

Freedom and liberation are inseparable for the black being; they should be achieved in totality in order to be realised. Hansen (1977) adds that alienation is an obstacle to the realisation of liberation, and needs to be overcome in order for liberation to be realised. According to Hansen (1977:119), it 'is a fundamental change in the consciousness of the people of the country'. This is the change that permeates all structures of society, be they be political, social, cultural and/or economic. This is a new consciousness that changes even the perspective and manner in which blacks relate to the world – a new consciousness and a new form of life.

Conceptions of liberation, though much-lauded, often fall short when it comes to the black condition. The struggle for the decolonised is the articulation of the ideas of freedom. 'Individual liberation cannot proceed without social liberation' (Maldonado-Torres 2005:157). The structural oppression which militates against black humanity and the recognition of this oppression creates a situation in which blacks by their lived experience are in a position to choose. Such a choice is dictated by action as a result of the 'formation of subjectivity, self-reflection, and the praxis of liberation' (Maldonado-Torres 2005:159). 'Liberation can be achieved only through praxis, not with brass bands and national anthems, not with a flag and a few reforms at the top while faceless and "medieval" masses continue to stir down below' (Cherki 2006:176). Fanon calls for fighting for genuine liberation in which there will be no flag freedoms. For this genuine liberation to exist, there must be a confrontation with the colonialist regime, and the aim and the mission which is actional should be a way of totally dismantling that regime. The mercy of the colonial master is something to be rejected, since the master has no interest in the freedom of the slave or former slave.

The audacity to transform and expand the political imagination is the driver of a quest for liberation for which there should be no ceiling. People in a struggle towards liberation should have one common goal: winning. Fanon ([1961] 1990:136) admits that 'it must be said that the masses show themselves totally incapable of appreciating the long way they have come'. For Fanon, it is not only important to fight oppression and advance liberation. It is equally important to forge ahead to continue to fight in the post-liberation phase against liberators who might oppress their own people.

Liberation is often seen as a necessary condition for freedom. For the black world to reclaim itself and unshackle itself from captivity and bondage, it needs 'complete independence from colonial power' (Pillay 2004:94). For Pillay, national consciousness comes into being with the

realisation of liberation. It is a self-awareness that provides agency towards a realisation of a new self. Essentially, this means that the realisation of the new being is an awareness of the absence of recognition in relation to the black subject. Pillay (2004) argues that Fanon's new (hu)man emerges through a national consciousness which is universal, not nationalism, which Fanon regards as sectional and narrow.

Gibson (2003) argues that liberation has to be fought for, since independence that arises from a struggle to realise liberation is something that will make real gains, as opposed to cosmetic changes. If cosmetic changes continue to prevail, genuine liberation will continue to elude the masses. The masses will witness what Fanon refers to as pseudo-liberation in the form of flag parades and the singing of anthems. Fanon ([1961] 1990) regards pseudo-liberation or flag freedoms as a transfer of colonial power into the hands of national bourgeoisie who were in the forefront of black liberation, but who are quick to make concessions to their former masters. Such concessions will not result in changes aimed at unsettling the political reality.

The national bourgeoisie will not bring about change, but will block the process of full decolonisation and will not allow the contradictions to the status quo to emerge (Gibson 2003). If these contradictions were to emerge, society will witness new rules as the old ones are abolished, so that the liberation that is afforded to the oppressed is not a mere masquerade instituted by parasitic national bourgeoisie, but one of 'land and bread'. Simply put, Gibson argues that social change is real change, where mass activity agitates for fundamental change, as opposed to the pseudo-equality assumed by the national bourgeoisie. The change they have undergone is superficial and deceptive, since it is merely a shift from one life to the other (Bulhan 1985).

In true liberation, the oppressed are infused with a new sense of consciousness in which self-determination and revolution are wedded to realise their being, as they transcend the state of

non-being – that is, an absence of subjectivity. Bulhan (1985) points out that self-determination and freedom should be claimed, and this is the contradiction to the misguided converts and assimilated elites who are ‘self-delusions elaborated into a culture of lies’ (Bulhan 1985:117). These contradictions do not point to the reformist politics of the national bourgeoisie which cannot come to terms with the notion of social change, but are contaminated by the goal of taking the place of the master without changing anything (Gibson 2003).

Wilderson III (2010) asks what it means for blackness to be free. He argues that a liberation which constitutes a structure of recognition and cooperation is far from blacks, which implies that blacks have no access to liberation, and blackness is peripheral to the structure of recognition and cooperation. The agency of blacks, which can inject enthusiasm for attaining freedom by themselves, is negated and to a large extent absent, in that agency is withheld. As a result, there is no mode of blackness raising questions of recognition and cooperation. The liberation of blacks needs to occur at a deeper level, namely praxis. Wilderson III (2010:138) argues that blacks do not belong to themselves but ‘are already claimed by direct relations of forces’. These forces have made blacks, even in the post-liberation era, unable to rid themselves of the curse of subservience and dependency.

The world is characterised by the arrangement of an unethical political economy – that is, the world is anti-black. As Wilderson III (2008:111) believes that ‘the world is sutured by anti-Black solidarity’. The political victory of liberation in an anti-black world remains an oxymoron, since blacks cannot attain recognition because there is no integrity of humanity for blacks. ‘For the [b]lack, freedom is an ontological, rather than experiential, question’ (Wilderson III 2010:23). For there to be humanity for blacks, Wilderson III (2010) calls for the destruction of relationality, since it is in opposition to blackness. The prevailing discourses of liberation allow ‘slaveocracy’



of blackness in a neo-colonised way. This is a form of liberation that parasitises on blacks and maintains black suffering (Wilderson III 2010).

### **The relevance of Fanon in South Africa after 1994**

The relevance of Fanon in post-1994 South Africa needs to be discussed. Firstly, the extent to which Fanonian thought relates to race and blackness is useful to the local arena since 1994, as race and blackness have become increasingly contested terrains in South Africa, and there are many narratives regarding what they constitute, many questions regarding its relevance, and how race and blackness are linked to the lived socio-political reality.

Secondly, in using the analogy of a parasite for the national bourgeoisie as a parasite, Fanon acts as a prophet of doom. The presence and modes of operation of the black elite and their middle class represent the predicament of the post-liberation era, as they act out of self-interest. Their politics of eating and exhibition are obscene, as Fanon forewarned.

Lastly, native intellectual consciousness in the post-colonial era is important because native intellectuals should offer a lens through which the complexities affecting political life can be engaged. Hence, Fanon's thinking can be grappled with in respect of the role of the native intellectual.

These three themes are indeed topical in that they are issues that form part of the socio-political discourse and are highly contested. They bring to the fore the importance of understanding Fanon, particularly in relation to the post-1994 challenges. This chapter has sought to provide a background from whence to engage some of the political questions confronting South Africa. It has also shed some light into the manner in which existing social relations or existing power networks are rationalised under the mask of validity, fact and objectivity.

While the context of Fanon's thinking is different to the one currently experienced in post-1994 South Africa, his works, *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* have proved to show tremendous foresight. It is clear that some of the diagnoses he made more than fifty years ago are still relevant to the post-1994 era. Maldonado-Torres (2008) suggests that Fanon's analysis of social dialectics penetrates deep into coloniality, and it is for this reason that Fanon's work remains relevant in the post-1994 era. The black condition which is encapsulated in Fanon's political thought is the lens through which this study will engage the post-1994 era in South Africa, and the thinking of three native intellectuals in that era.

The post-1994 era in South Africa does not represent liberation as much as a transition which is still half way. No existential freedoms exist as yet as far as the black condition is concerned. Being in solidarity with the masses and betraying capitalism has not been high on the agenda in the transition from apartheid to the post-1994 political set-up. The black psyche is not yet liberated, and the African National Congress (ANC) manifests a colonial mentality of reproducing the former conditions and a weak imagination vis-à-vis a radical resolution of the black condition. This is in line with Fanon's caution:

The political party may well speak in moving terms of the nation, but what it is concerned with is that the people who are listening understand the need to take part in the fight if, quite simply, they wish to continue to exist. (Fanon [1961] 1990:167).

Fanon's radical thought is provocative in that it allows for many of the issues in the current discourses to be engaged with. The location of Fanon's thought within South African political discourse calls for a number of trajectories and phenomena to be engaged with, and this chapter has sought provide the background to doing so.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the political thought of Fanon in relation to race and blackness, the nationalist bourgeoisie, native intellectuals' consciousness and the pitfalls of liberation. Clarification of these notions is necessary for this study, because they allow an understanding of how Fanon engaged with these ideas in relation to a post-liberation political era. This chapter has drawn on Fanon's theoretical underpinnings in order to explicate his thoughts in relation to the contemporary era.

This chapter has located the notion of race and blackness in Fanon's thinking by unpacking them in the world of the oppressor and the oppressed, black and white, master and the slave – thus race and blackness can be understood as asymmetrical power relations in which race is the determining factor. This suggests that the condition of race and blackness cannot assume relationality, but will remain in the order of the colonial era, with the black faces doing the work for white supremacy.

Fanon's warning with regard to the national bourgeoisie as figures who engage in the politics of eating insatiably in the face of the poor and hungry majority is relevant. However, this critique of the national bourgeoisie is a warning which is largely ignored. The presence of the national bourgeoisie is an anti-thesis to the life of blacks, not even shaking off the pathology which is the black condition.

The importance of native intellectuals' consciousness lies in the role the native intellectual can play in awakening the people – that is, blacks who are entrapped in the black condition. In the socio-political landscape, the relations of the native intellectual and the people call for the removal of the lines between them, so that they can be fused in the interests of their common struggle. Fanon's prophetic articulation of liberation in terms of its becoming, the pitfalls and

the creation of a new world clearly shows that most states which claim to be liberated must still face the challenges that come with liberation.

Fanon forewarns readers concerning the reactionary tendencies that will arise as a result of wanting to claim the successes of liberation when in fact liberation has not taken place, since the legacy of the past is reproduced or extended by the black ruling class. Fanon understands the complexities and dynamics that constitute liberation, especially in the post-liberation phase, and hence he calls for the emergence of the black subject. Hence, the next chapter focuses on the positionality of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama in relation to the problematics of race and blackness.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **SEEPE, MANGCU AND MNGXITAMA ON THE PROBLEMATIC OF RACE AND BLACKNESS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to critically analyse the ways in which three black public intellectuals, Siphon Seepe, Xolela Mangcu and Andile Mngxitama, articulate and apply the notions of race and blackness in South Africa's post-1994 political landscape. In doing so, this study seeks to explore the positionality of these three black public intellectuals in relation to race and blackness by examining selected newspaper columns they have written. The factors that inform their positionality are important to understand. These include the ways they imagine the political, as far as race and blackness are concerned. The eventual outcome will shed some light on the extent to which they engage with the post-1994 discourse through the lens of Frantz Fanon's thinking.

### **Seepe on race and blackness**

The argument advanced here is that Seepe's positionality is clear, but that there have been some shifts in his rhetoric. Seepe's articulation of race leans towards the black consciousness philosophy, which he uses as a lens through which to analyse race and blackness. In Seepe's writings, race is considered fundamental to understanding South African political discourse. It

is clear from his writings that an understanding of race is important, because it continues to persist as a discourse in society. According to Seepe (2007b), the notion of race can be used in a seductive manner to justify or make claims by citing victimology and applying essentialism by those who possess political connections in gaining access to white privilege and the establishment without fundamentally changing it (Rottenburg 2003).

Seepe has been grappling with race in the historical-contemporary South African situation. According to Seepe (2009a, 2009c), oppression does not have only physical and material dimensions, but also psychological and cultural dimensions which are part of socio-political discourse. It is clear that oppression in South Africa has been largely understood in material and physical terms. The discourse of domination was largely driven by slavery and colonialism before apartheid, which was a solidification of black oppression. The oppression of the black majority was institutionalised and normalised. Thus, Seepe's discourse deliberates on the fact that race and racism are issues that could be traced through history and have left undesirable effects on the psyche of the black majority.

Seepe traces the presence of domination to language and culture, which he argues embodies the racialised black being. Historical realities are distorted to feature in the present frame of the post-1994 era in which the issue of race and racism are engaged in a manner that is apologetic to the sensitivities of whites, which are pandered to, creating silences in the discourses of race. There are claims amongst a large section of society, especially those who are not the victims of racism or those affected by racism whether individually or institutionally, that the debates around race are not important, since they do not take the country forward. Their major concern is building South Africa into a better country.

Seepe (2008a) argues that race is deeply woven into the fibre of the South African political set-up and that its effects are felt in every facet of black life, since it forms part of the reality

experienced by the black majority. Although there are a variety of factors that blur this perspective, race still largely informs the socio-economic and political landscape in South Africa. As Gordon (1995) points out, race has been the basis on which society is organised, and it has become a mode of living. Hence, the continuing effects of this institutionalised and normalised arrangement cannot be dismissed, since it now forms part of the social script.

In Seepe's view, the existence of blackness in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been characterised by being colonised, powerless, despised, poor and landless (Seepe 1999). As a result of blacks being systematically dehumanised, dispossession has become associated with blackness (Gordon 1995, 2000; Wilderson III 2003, 2008; More 2008). The redressing of socio-economic injustices caused by race and racism are an integral component of building the nation and ensuring the flourishing of democracy. According to Durrheim and Mtose (2006), exclusion, oppression and marginalisation are issues rooted in apartheid. Racial hierarchies of power are still in operation in South Africa after 1994, and their effects perpetuate the legacy of apartheid (Seepe 2000a). However, some dispute that these hierarchies continue to exist – nevertheless, such hierarchies seem to be implicit, even though blacks currently manage political power.

One of the complex issues of the post-1994 era is whether the current pathologies continued to be blamed on the past, while the present black government continues to marginalise and exclude the black majority, with only a few being rewarded for patronage through political loyalty. Kasese-Hara (2006:245) argues that 'redressing social, economic and psychological imbalances is seen as the huge task to be undertaken to ensure equitable, unified and democratic society'. This means that society is still evolving and that claims to the contrary are a form of an illusion. The legacy of the past is a reality, and to address this, change has to take place at the social, economic and psychological levels. Kasese-Hara (2006) argues that often structures of segregation, racism and racial discrimination are seen as interchangeable. This

implies that one has to take into account that they are still in operation, even if they are not recognisable.

Seepe (2008a) believes that a system that dehumanises some human beings produces dehumanised human beings across the board. Seepe argues that history is littered with abuse and the inferiorisation of blacks, which remains entrenched in the living memory of the majority of blacks. Gordon (1995) has expressed a similar view, arguing that institutionalised power squeezes the socialisation of blacks into a dehumanised form. This is a condition that creates a pathology in the lives of the black majority, whose everyday reality is signified in their everyday living circumstances in places such as Soweto, Alexandra, Evaton and Yeoville.

JanMohamed (1983:3) argues that '[s]ocial pathology is produced by the facts of domination and race'. The concern for Gordon (1995) is that the form of life that is attached to blackness is a phenomenon of racial oppression. This means that racism is a 'phenomenon which has historical, economic and social political connotations, in-built into all social systems' (Kasese-Hara 2006:248). In this state of affairs, what is often proposed is not only overcoming oppression and advancing the cause of liberation, but also challenging the systems of oppression even in the post-liberation phase. Social and political reality suggests that, due to race and racism, and its after-effects in post-1994 discourses, blackness is associated with pathology.

Seepe (2008a:20) concludes that any 'discussion on race and racism that fails to highlight whiteness as beneficiaries of racism would be grossly inadequate'. Seepe makes four propositions in this regard. The first is that modern racism should be understood as a lived experience. This means analysing the manner in which blacks articulate their own suffering under racism, which is occasionally covert. In this way, it is concerned with how such a lived experience is understood and whether blacks who are at the receiving end have enough space



to articulate racism in their own terms. The second proposition is that the experiences of racial discrimination are not only painful and stressful, but also have an impact on the whole lived experience of blackness (Seepe 2008a:20). The third proposition Seepe (2008a:20) outlines is that daily experiences affect the manner in which blacks behave. Lastly, daily experiences of racial hostility and discrimination are constituent elements of interlocking social structures and processes. Thus institutional racism has an invisible face and hands, but is felt in terms of its operations and effects. Apartheid consistently institutionalised and normalised race and racism in all facets of life. This concurs with the view expressed by Gibson (2003) that whiteness, backed by power, privilege and resources is seen as normalcy. Whiteness and economic power and privilege are closely intertwined in South Africa in the post-1994 era, although it is not always clear how those who oppose such a reality may be entangled in it, or assimilated in it while the status quo remains.

Maldonado-Torres (2008:136) argues that there is a 'fundamental contradiction between the existence of the world at large and one's own existence'. He argues that the concrete reality of the black subject cannot be diluted. Essentially, he argues that there needs to be a thorough understanding of the power structures and the lived experience of blacks, since this cannot be simply reduced to a hybrid or entanglement while the legacy of the past still persists in defining the black condition, despite the tenacity of racism which continues to suffocate blacks in the post-1994 era.

Seepe (1999) argues that race should be discussed and debated in an open and frank manner in South African political discourse. Race-related matters and issues should be confronted, since they continue to operate and constitute a part of the country's reality. It is this confrontation that ensures that measures are devised to deal with race and racism, and not deny its existence in and impact on society.

Seepe (1999) accuses both black scholars and intellectuals of being silent about the issue of race. He exclaims that ignorance is not the issue, but rather a fear to point out race. This fear is linked to the fact that these scholars and intellectuals avoid appraisals which could in effect make them unpopular. It can be argued here that this silence is a result of black scholars' and intellectuals' yearning for acceptance, since being unpopular because of pointing out racism will cause them to be marginalised. Thus, this silence often pushes black scholars and intellectuals to shift their focus to the domain of non-racialism, which in effect says nothing about racialised realities. Seepe (2009a:11) contends that 'blacks whose views coincide with those held by a majority of whites are said to be independent'. It is in the pursuit of this independence and walking a tightrope that they will do nothing to unsettle white sensitivities, which are intricately linked to the claims of blacks regarding their own experiences. To ensure that such sensitivities are not shaken, Seepe argues that blacks are required not to act outside the script.

Kasese-Hara (2006) suggests that blackness is regarded as something that should be civilised, and should, in effect, be in line with the aspiration to be white, but not totally white. Yancy (2005) argues that whiteness is performed and need not to be grasped, as it is a norm. According to this view, blacks behave according to the will of the white gaze in the ritual sense, since blackness is policed by the white gaze. This in turn creates the boundaries of policing the black body, where rigid boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are erected under the guise of fluidity and non-existence, as if the black body were something that is a free subject, whereas it is not.

According to Seepe (2008a:20), 'political correctness weighs so heavily on our lives that we have (un)consciously banished certain words in our daily discourse'. In this state of affairs, blackness must behave according to the white norm and standard, and the contradiction in this

is the marginalisation of blacks. The model of black life is regarded as a deficit and the construction of white culture is treated as superior and normative, as a template in which the totality of society should be accommodated. This essentially means that blackness must seek accommodation into whiteness. In such an accommodationist arrangement, there is no race, since there are no races. This clearly implies an absence of racism, since it is something that is outlawed in the non-racial context.

Seepe (2009a:11) points out that '[n]onracialism requires a deeper understanding of racism, its effects and all its manifestations'. This is something that is absent in post-1994 South African narratives, which suggests the embracing of the constitutional principles with its guarantees. Due to black rule, the claims of justice and reparations that are due for the marginalised blacks seem to be absent, even at the level of the national imagination, and this prepares the way for equal participation to be absent as well, although it is touted to be at the forefront of the political reality. In this regard, Durrheim and Mtose (2006:153) claim that 'race and segregation have been outlawed and Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment and other progressive policies for change have been legislated and implemented'. It is under this rubric that the black lived experience is rendered incapable of articulating the notion of race and racism, which creates fertile ground for whites to believe it is appropriate to speak on behalf of blacks.

According to Seepe (1999:7), 'we have allowed ourselves to be hoodwinked by seductive phrases such as rainbowism and non-racialism as if evoking these phrases in our speeches and literary footnotes would magically transport the country to the idyllic future'. In this arrangement, the black experience is something that will be rendered useless by both whites and blacks who see the black experience as something that does not concern them. Blackness

cannot be reduced to oneness with whiteness as the rainbow nation miracle suggests, and as the political narrative of non-racialism propagates.

Though there are some blacks in power, based on political power, the very structures that militate against blackness still remain intact. Blackness matches exact historical accounts, and is masked as if to suggest that it is not part of a socio-political reality which is reproducing itself. Anti-blackness is something that is stained deeply into the black skin and is structurally embedded to entrench the pathological state of affairs facing the black majority, but it is not inherently natural. Instead, it is something that is historically linked, because the legacy of apartheid is something that has changed structural arrangements to maintain a system of relation that makes race a determining marker in the manner in which society is constituted. As Gibson (2004) argues, if apartheid ended with the apartheid laws, it did not end the law of capital, leaving the black condition to continue to be a predicament even in the post-1994 era.

Seepe (1998) argues that 'whites oppressed and whites spoke on behalf of blacks as a matter of course'. He is of the view that this practice has been and still is pervasive. This view is informed by the tendency for issues to get more attention when they are raised by whites. Seepe challenges the ANC for its tendency to use white party members to articulate the conditions which the majority of black people were subjected to. Seepe refers to this practice as 'rent-a-white' and poses the question of why a predominantly black African organisation should have to deploy a white person to speak on matters that directly affect and afflict the black African community. Seepe goes further, claiming that there is nothing 'new' in the new South Africa, because the struggle about affirmation and the validation of experience continues. Oppression is something that has been internalised by blackness, and the consciousness of blackness is structured by oppression (Bulhan 1985; Maldonado-Torres 2008).

According to Seepe (1999), the black experience can be dismissed and can be referred to as a false consciousness. Seepe (1999) concurs with Peggy McIntosh in her essay, 'White privilege: unpacking the knapsack', which argues that whites are taught not to recognise their privilege. Such a situation implies that white purity is prevalent and that translates into white supremacy, where only whites count and others do not, or blacks must be trying – not very successfully – to be like whites. This scenario has permitted most whites to be sufficiently arrogant to mediate the black experience and therefore act as spokespersons for blacks, even going so far as dictating the terms in which the race discourse should be facilitated. This tendency creates a situation where whites continue to dominate, and such domination is conferred by a privilege which is regarded as normal. Where this situation prevails, those who dare to point out that this privilege exists are quickly accused of playing a victim role.

Blackness is still the issue, as there are organisations such as the Black Lawyers Association, the Black Management Forum and the now banned Forum for Black Journalists. The existence of these organisations suggest that the issue of race and blackness are part of a larger socio-political landscape. Deeming them to be absent and declaring them irrelevant is to engage in the obscene, an illusion at best, which masks reality as far as the black condition is concerned. Seepe (2008b) writes that the disbanding of the Forum for Black Journalists was informed by the practice of using black people to discredit other blacks – a tried and tested strategy.

Seepe (2008b:11) adds that 'whites could rely on some blacks to validate their experiences' as these are blacks who will be quick to condemn those who speak about their lived experiences. These are blacks who are referred to as champions of racial transcendence as they are quick to deny any experiences of discrimination and racism. They reduce race and acts of racism to mere isolated incidents and call for thinking beyond and outside race. These are blacks whom Seepe, drawing on Malcolm X's typology, refers to as the in-house Negroes and field Negroes

(in-house Negros is a term referring to slaves living and eating in the house of the master). These are blacks who are determined to defend whites, even at the expense of the legitimacy of the black experience. The term 'field Negros' refers to slaves who do not like the master and would not even save the house of the master if it burned. Both are enslaved, even though the in-house Negros may be in a seemingly privileged position.

Seepe (2008b) argues that this uneven treatment of the oppressed has been played out throughout history. In this scheme of things, if the field Negro dares to stand up against the master, he or she would be roundly condemned or even lynched. According to Rottenberg (2003:444), '[s]o long as blackness is coded as undesirable under white supremacist regimes, only those black-identified subjects who strive to embody attributes associated with whiteness will gain admittance to some of the benefits of privilege and power'. Blackness in these terms is something that should collapse itself into whiteness. However, the very same proximity to whiteness or aspirations to access its spoils often leads blacks to rebel against blackness, because white supremacy wants to ensure the totality of whiteness.

Blackness often engages in survival mode since it is centred on a desire for 'a civilised and (white) cultured life' (Rottenberg 2003:444) Blackness, even if it is assimilated into whiteness and is lactified (from the Latin prefix *lac-*, *lact-*, for milk, implying made milky white), is not wholly white. Seepe argues that although racist legislation has been eradicated, and other forms of discrimination are decreasing, subtle forms of race discrimination still exist. Seepe (2008b:11) warns that 'we need to disabuse ourselves of the notion of a South African miracle'.

According to Kasese-Hara (2006), white conservatives provide a rationale based on biological terms and theological explanations. White liberals may reject these, but at the same time be complicit in it. This complicity perpetuates a culture of implicit racism. The effects of some of the white liberals' and white conservative actions become explicitly racist. Kasese-Hara (2006)

warns that explicit racism will continue to feature in South Africa for the foreseeable future. 'The Reitz Saga' where five black employees were videotaped eating food that had been urinated on, the 'Skielik Shooting' where black people were killed without any reason, and white police officers beating a prominent Vereeniging lawyer are only a few explicitly racist actions that elicited shock and condemnation, although the reactions did nothing to solve racism.

Seepe indicates that the notion of blackness is influenced by the Black Consciousness philosophy. Seepe (2007c) argues that Steve Biko grappled with the question of blackness, concluding that being black is a state of mind – that is, there is a need for psychological decolonisation. What this understanding of blackness overlooks is that blackness cannot be repaired by mere psychological forces. Indeed, Wilderson III (2008) argues that no programme of self-worth or psychological empowerment can bring blacks into humanity, because the structures that militate against blackness are designed to keep the anti-black world unchanged, or even to solidify itself through various guises in the form of cosmetic changes. As Wilderson III (2003:111) puts it, blacks 'cannot attain relationality'. He makes this statement on the basis of the argument that human relationality is absolutely in opposition to black humanity. Thus blacks cannot be restored to humanity because race is a vertical distribution of values within humanity. However, the black is a sentient being positioned below: the 'unethical structure of humanity lies in the fact that its Other is the black' (Wilderson III 2008:108).

In Seepe's (2007c) view, blackness is related to the issue of identity and the manner in which dignity is affirmed by blacks in their realisation of aligning themselves with transformation. He claims that the pertinent question for black consciousness is the continued submission or complicity of blacks surrendering under apartheid. Seepe (2007c) argues that racial consciousness and a sense of pride are the weapons of a state of mind which are used to

challenge white racism. As political entities, blacks can see themselves even in the face of pathological narratives and experiences as agents of change and resistance: they have internalised oppression to the point of negation.

Even though blacks are a numerical majority, this may not be enough to make them the political majority, rather than a minority of whites who have the upper hand in political and economic terms. In order to overcome this political minority, Durrheim and Mtose (2006) propose that a change in black identity is possible through class consciousness, rather than individual change. The overarching vision of blackness is, multiplicity and conflict of identity, which suggests that liberation takes away what stands in front of blackness. According to this vision, blackness knows itself in terms of whiteness. That is, the white norms and standards are the ones that construct the mode of the existence of blackness.

Durrheim and Mtose (2006) identify three overarching visions of blackness, namely psychological inferiority, political minority and, multiplicity and conflict of identity. Psychological inferiority internalises oppression which results and perpetuates the effects of self-deprecation, self-rejection and low self-esteem. This even leads to a (re)creation of the black condition since the psychological surroundings are nothing but a concentration camp in that life itself is lived on the basis of a fatalistic kind of being. Blackness is a predicament which survives by means of wanting to appear in the world. That is, because blacks do not exist, they want the approval and the affirmation of whites. The second vision of blackness, political minority, is paradoxical regarding the term minority itself, since in population terms blacks may be a majority, but possess a marginal stake in the economy, which actually means that they account for less in political terms. Blackness is that which shares the experience of racial oppression.

Seepe (2005) states that blacks do not matter and they have to know their place. He makes two propositions with regard to the notion of blackness. The first is that blackness is the



deviation from the norm, and it is something that should be objectified. Secondly, he argues that blacks aspire to be white or equal to whites. This is indeed the problem that has plagued blackness and it is in these terms that blacks who aspire to be white despise their fellow blacks and their blackness.

Seepe (1995) claims that blackness has been glued together with centuries of denigration, dehumanisation and oppression. Similarly, Wilderson III (2010) argues that the predicament of blackness is informed by structural imposition, which goes with monotheism and gratuitous violence – something that threatens the agency of the black subject. This means that the humanity of the black subject, through the black condition, is animated. The black condition is that of the downtrodden and oppressed, and this is the normalised and institutionalised state of affairs. As Bulhan (1985:123) puts it, '[p]rolonged oppression reduces the oppressed into mere individuals without a community or a history, fostering a tendency to private[s]e a shared victimi[s]ation'. This is what constitutes the black experience, and for blacks to move forward, blackness needs to be filled with assertion of cultural reclamation.

Seepe (2005) affirms that this assertion of black identity needs to be turned into a positive force. For this force to exist, Seepe argues that blackness needs to be rid of alienation and self-loathing. As such, blacks must take ownership of the native question in that the 'new South African identity should be informed by South African realities' (Seepe 2005:9).

It is confusing for all races to declare themselves one when there are structures and institutions that are in total opposition to with this 'oneness'. What is there to be transformed or liberated if there is oneness? Seepe (2008b) contends that the very initiative of building a nation that clearly indicates that there are differences. The black race was adversely affected by historical injustices – although a selected few blacks are now in power, this has failed to change the discriminatory institutional and structural arrangements. Blackness is something that cannot be

reduced to oneness, since it is linked to the experiential reality of landlessness, poverty, and illiteracy which is in turn linked to historical exploitation, creating dispossession and affording whiteness privilege. As Saldanha (2006:11) states, '[t]he embodiment of race therefore encompasses certain ethical stances and moral choices. It informs what one can do, what one should do, in certain spaces and situations'.

## **Mangu and racial transcendence**

Mangu's (2000a) articulation of race and blackness is still part of the political discourse and the fibre of South African society, despite the end of apartheid. He argues that race and blackness need to be transcended, based on the understanding that South Africa is a nation under construction. Thus, there is currently a contestation of identities and political means are used to agitate for the struggle for human dignity and justice, a principled stance that Mangu claims to take. Although he acknowledges that racism exists in covert forms, he argues that there is a tendency not to transcend racial solidarity.

Mangu (2000b) points out that there is a need to address racially inflected opposition politics. Paradoxically, even though the issue of race can be avoided by calling for non-racialism, or diluted through a politics of transcendence, race still haunts post-1994 South Africa. The legacy of apartheid continues with potent categories in the post-1994 era, with debilitating binaries of that system and order (Geertsema 2004). According to Geertsema, in the post-1994 era, race matters, and essentialist discourse is part of it – even though there are projects such as nation-building and the illusion of the rainbow nation.

The black condition in itself is something which cannot be accounted for in that the narrative of the post-1994 era, which is that of non-racial unity under the banner of the rainbow nation, 'does not require any form of sacrifice from whites beyond the rhetorical accommodation and

psyche adjustments' (Hill 1997:67). Therefore the post-1994 era, which is still haunted by the black condition, has demonstrated that liberation was stillborn, and that seeing South Africa as pregnant with possibility is a very remote hope indeed.

Mangcu (2000a) argues that both blackness and whiteness must undergo some modification in order to build a non-racial democracy. The modification referred to here is racial syncretism, in which, according to Mangcu, the change of black people in relation to their identities is linked to the changing circumstances in which they find themselves. The transition that South Africa is undergoing, especially at the site of identity, goes hand in hand with white denial of the issue of race and historic injustice inflicted on the black majority. This may also be described as a denial of a crime against humanity.

Dealing with race by trying to find ways to create a better South Africa without uprooting the country's institutionalised and naturalised hegemonic structures seems to be a mockery. The country is still divided socially, politically and economically, and these divisions are a testimony to the reality of the country. It is even hard to deal with the question of race in the country. South Africa is still caught in a dichotomy of white privilege and black exclusion which serves as proof that the legacy of the past is continuing under the black government.

There is a tendency to believe that race is no longer the issue since apartheid has been dismantled, but this viewpoint is silent on the legacy of apartheid that is still part of the post-1994 political era. 'Whites claim that racism is the thing of the past and they are suffering reverse racism' (Mbembe 2007:2). Some whites have even resorted to emigrating to foreign countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia. These Whites have argued that they cannot be part of a system that aims to marginalise them and they would rather export their skills. Although this argument seems to be non-racialist, it does not interrogate the real condition which is that the imbalances of the past need to be redressed.

Mangcu (2004b) argues that to deal with the question of race there needs to be race-skeptical leadership that neither denies race nor relies on race, but deals with questions of race and racism. Mangcu does not agree with leaders who declare that South Africa has arrived at a racial nirvana and that racial discourse is irrelevant. He claims that even hardened non-racialists would throw up their hands in despair, but he acknowledges that racism persists in the post-1994 era and that there need to be creative anti-racist strategies to deal with it.

Mangcu (2010) argues that the fantasy of the rainbow nation was triggered by the illusion that racial barriers would be eradicated. The assumption is that the country will preserve a spirit of togetherness, since messages of peace, reconciliation and unity have been propagated. Amongst other things, speeches, policy documents, advertisements, and the ideological set-up echoed the notion of a new world – rainbow nation. Race and racism stood out in the discourse of the rainbow nation and non-racialism as issues that were supposed to be buried in the past. The main theme brought to the fore was building a new nation and how the legacy of apartheid could be silenced, but it continues to haunt the post-1994 era.

Mangcu (2009b) boldly declares that he does not see himself ‘as a messenger carrying messages from the black world to the white world’. He adds that he is not ‘the Uncle Tom – grinning from ear to ear to assure the master that all is well with the natives’. This view suggests that he is neither a race denialist nor a racial blackmailer, but a race transcendent critic who speaks the truth to both blackness and whiteness, even in the face of injustice. Because race is central and dominant in the South African political discourse, it is central to Mangcu to point out that this discourse has produced race denialists and racial blackmailers.

Race denialists are those who state that there is no race, and that all people are the same. They even claim that conditions facing the different races, whether social, political or economic, cannot be linked to race or racism. Thus, the problems that the black majority face are not

racial, but the cause and perpetuation of such problems is said to be black people themselves. Furthermore, though racial acts are clearly visible, race denialists cannot view them as such, and link them to the black condition which allows race and racism to function with impunity. Van Dijk (2002) argues that positive self-representation or keeping face (by those who are racist but do not want to be seen as such) and use of denialism and disclaimers (avoiding negative impressions) are dominant discourses in the post-1994 era. In this state of affairs, those who cry racism are silenced, because denialists challenge the legitimacy of anti-racist analysis and are part of denying discourse and race management. Thus, Van Dijk (2002) believes that race denialists negate or crush resistance through marginalising, ridiculing and delegitimising.

Racial mobilisers can be described as paranoid black individuals and groups who tend to regard even legitimate criticism as racist. In instances when they are challenged by fellow blacks, they label their opponents 'stooges' or 'foot lickers' of whites. Racial mobilisation was prevalent in the era of Thabo Mbeki and was used as a deliberate strategy to disengage relevant criticism. Under the Mbeki administration, his intellectual sympathisers, Christine Qunta, Sandile Memela and Ronald Suresh Roberts were infamous for engaging in the politics of labelling. They referred to Mbeki's critics as 'sell-outs', 'coconut intellectuals', 'foot lickers' of the white man and 'white apologists', amongst a host of other labels.

Mbembe (2001b) argues that the mobilisation of race can be a hegemonic political project. This creates a situation where conformity is preferred to criticism, since to criticise is regarded as racism. The location of such a project constitutes race as a part of political life, since it lives in 'institutional, discourses and epistemologies, and officially sanctioned practices' (Mbembe 2001b:9). Mbembe (2001b:9) argues that race as a technology derives its fantasy from power because it is associated with 'complicated relationships between subjects and their symbolic

and unconscious structures'. Besides being complex, race is something that assumes specificity, since the focus and the target is the black body.

Mangcu's (2000a) positionality calls for political socialisation where the challenge is the creation of identity. His stance on the politics of race is changing, as he increasingly calls on South Africans to uphold their identities, at the same time becoming part of the broader identities. The challenge that South Africa faces is thus creating new identities. As Mbembe (2001b) states, different networks and social relations are ways of relating – changed and assimilated new forms of existence and life. Mangcu (2006b) points out that South Africans' identity is ambivalent, which refers to its cosmopolitan nature. Blackness is sought out and coupled with a vast array of identities. This is against the ideal of having a politics of inclusivity and diversity which opposes ethnic blackmail. Mangcu (2005b) states that a politics of ethnic blackmailing dominates the discourse and is politicising people along ethnic lines and will eventually create a situation where ethnic groups will converge in seamless conformity.

The process of re-invention is needed to bring about the processes involved in building a new identity. Mangcu (2000a:6) notes that there is a need to link race and non-racialism in particular to the reality we live in and this new identity should be closer to the 'experiential realities of colour-conscious groups'. The post-1994 era, then, according to Bhabha (1994:43), can be regarded as society in hybridity – that is a society characterised by a 'double edgedness' in the process of iteration and differentiation. Bhabha (1994:43) comments that hybridity 'informs the political space of its enunciation'. This, as Bhabha explains, is not self-contradictory, since there is a contribution to the in-between.

JanMohamed (1985) argues that the condition within which the coloniser and the colonised operate in the nexus of Manicheanism. This adds to the view that Bhabha reduces the colonial discourse to something that occurs in a vacuum. For whiteness to exist, it has to be an inherent

condition – in the case of South Africa, life has always been comfortable and the state under apartheid was secure. The same circumstances can be said to exist in the post-1994 era. This means for whiteness to live and survive in its surroundings, it needs to be secure.

The best proposition put forward under the banner of race transcendence argues that the best way of overcoming apartheid is unifying the nation. This is a noble proposition, but it is devoid of actual content – it fails to spell out how this will be achieved. The proponents of race transcendence see South Africa as a nation that has untold potential for becoming the greatest nation in terms of fitting in the notion of cosmopolitanism where there is transcendence of race but celebrating difference. However, this potential is often detached from reality, which is experienced in all its harshness by people who are at the receiving end of racism and cannot condemn racism when it occurs or even voice their concerns in the presence of institutional racism.

Mangcu (2006c) is of the opinion that the new forms of political life should not be about racial nativism. He suggests that nativism comes with a high level of political intolerance, and warns South Africans not to be drawn into racial nativism. Mbembe (2001b) argues that nativism is an ideology of difference *par excellence*. He states that disciplines that give life to nativism have led to its being perceived as a corpse which rises repeatedly. Instead of nativism, Mbembe proposes that there should be constructive cosmopolitanism, which seeks to construct the African identity in line with a universalist principle. This means that blackness is relational to the world, and implies that nativism fabricates social and political utopias, and is a fake philosophy (Mbembe 2001b).

Mbembe negates the view that the universe is permeated by race – that is, that the world is anti-black. It is in this form that Parry (1999) criticises race transcendence for downplaying nativism and reducing it to a discourse of mere essentialism, racism and victimhood. Because

nativism dares to challenge hegemonic discourses, it is reduced to a mere reverse discourse. This form of critique promotes a politics of censure, which promotes hegemony 'dependent on who is doing the remembering and why' (Parry 1999:218). In this state of affairs, nativism is made to resign from itself and is no longer part of the fibre of narratives of decolonisation. That is, the opposition must be muzzled, and therefore, no nativist alternative should exist. Blackness as a subject position which attracts anti-blackness must then deny itself a sense of agency and desist from counter-hegemonic discourses.

Mangcu (2007a) argues that there is a need to think outside the racial framework. The vision that the nation should operate across all races is a vision of being non-racial, while in fact South Africa as a nation is 'raced', hence the sensitivity to race itself. He adds that respect for each other's identities is more valuable than the pursuit of non-racialism (Mangcu 2001). Envisioning a non-racial South Africa involves recognising the open-endedness of the race question, which should be made visible and talked about. There should be a multiplicity of identities, and even ethnic values need to be multiplied – that is, 'there should be multiple ways of being African' (Mangcu 2001:9). In this multiplicity, people will celebrate their identities and the histories associated with them, without violating others (Nuttall 2008).

Mangcu (2000b) articulates the notion of double omission in the white community, which is predicated on a failure to act against apartheid and a refusal to act on that failure. Mangcu engages with the complicity of whites during apartheid, but his positionality in this regard appears to be changing. A critique of non-racialism should not deny the existence of racism and race being a nodal point in the South African political life. In terms of Mangcu's positionality, non-racialism is not colour-blindness, and race consciousness should remain, while not being essentialist. A non-racialist discourse claims that race should be transcended; its seductive power is that it argues that universal values such freedom, justice and equality



should be pursued. Race as the social marker is then reduced to irrational prejudice, while downplaying the institutionality and naturalisation of racism itself. Mangcu seems to reject non-racialism in the liberalist sense, and prefers an approach in which there will be tolerance among different social groups.

Rottenberg (2003) sees race as consisting of complexities and contradictions. The point of departure central to this thesis is the foundations of these complexities and contradictions and the question of whether they are in line with addressing the problematic presence of race and the identity marker 'blackness'. In such a stance, blackness is regarded as relative. Mangcu (2001) defines blackness as being beyond skin colour – that is, blackness is not a matter of pigmentation, as Biko envisioned and articulated it. Mangcu (2001) states that blackness is a political and ethical construct with which blacks identify in moving forward for self-definition to realise their freedom. He argues that blackness was well articulated by the Black Consciousness movement, where the values of self-respect, self-reliance and dignity were sought and reclaimed. He states that these are the same values that underpin the vision of a democratic society, and that these values go beyond political rights. Furthermore, he demonstrates the marriage between Black Consciousness and non-racialism through a cultural politics of meaning creation, since non-racialism was a dominant political concept. According to Mangcu (2001:9), 'Black Consciousness and non-racialism stood toe to toe with competing visions of political and cultural identity'.

Mangcu (2001) points out that integration is something that Black Consciousness has rejected, as in it blacks are reduced to mere tokens. So, for integration to take place, it has to put both blacks and whites on an equal footing. Mangcu (2001) also propounds the view that both blacks and whites can build a common culture – which suggests that this is a culture that has to be sought and created for the benefit of this country-in-the-making. Mangcu's (2001) central

arguments are that race shapes experiences and that there is a need to accept and recognise racial identities, as these define people and their nationhood.

The post-1994 era is a paradox of 'in-between'. Bhabha (1994) regards this kind of situation as a 'liminal space' of 'symbolic interaction'. It represents a situation where the quality of change is still a contested terrain. The in-between provides the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – 'that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself' (Bhabha 1994:2).

For JanMohamed (1985), the in-between, is the ambivalence and the confusion of the discourse. JanMohamed deploys the notion of Manichean allegory which is not a fixed binary, but rather a diverse and yet interchangeable opposition between black and white, good and evil, civilised and savage. According to JanMohamed (1985:64), Manichean allegory 'functions as the currency, the medium of exchange, for the entire colonialist discursive system'. Bhabha (1994) would argue that the post-1994 era, and its transition, constitutes hybridity, in which binary divisions are replaced and complicated by their own intimacy.

In this way, the transition of space and time, results in complexities of criss-crossing which in effect undermine the Manichean structure. Hybridity refers to cultural forms emerging from cross-cultural relations. Such criss-crossing occurs at the level of 'difference and identity, past and present, inclusion and exclusion' (Bhabha 1994:2). In this form, there is an inter-subjective negotiation of the collective experiences of a nation, community, interest and cultural value – the notion of the South African rainbow nation can be regarded as a case in point.

In articulating the situation in the post-1994 era, Nuttall (2009) formulates the notion of entanglement, in which social relations are complicated in the sense that humanity is in its complexity. In relation to race, Nuttall deploys the notion of 'racial entanglement' and also links

race to ways of being, modes of identity-making and material life. Similar to Bhabha, she states that the notion of entanglement unravels binaries such as coloniser and colonised, revealing that these binaries are simplistic. Nuttall (2009:30) also argues that theorists who engage these binaries in the socio-political reality focus mainly on 'conflict, violence, social hierarchy and inequality'. She proposes that the more racial boundaries are erected, the more there should be a continued search for transcendence.

Both Bhabha (1994) and Nuttall (2009) regard race as a burden if it dominates the discourse – thus, they call for its erasure under the guise of diluting it, while reality expresses its concreteness as far as the black condition is concerned. Both theorists call for living together through difference to produce sameness. Nuttall (2009) goes further in arguing that the social involves mutual entanglement and that it is in its constant search of definition in which sameness and difference are entangled. Even though entanglement is 'becoming something you were not in the beginning' (Nuttall 2009:58), it can be argued here that a flirtation with blackness does not necessarily mean all is equal and the same, since such a marriage occurs outside the black condition.

The explicit acts and scenes of racism, the condition which denies the presence and the effects of racism, have pushed racism underground. This makes it difficult to eliminate and even point racism out, since its modes of articulation and expression are dismissed at first glance. Kasese-Hara (2006) argues that race continues to be a contentious issue in the post-1994 era. The reality is that blacks control political power, while whites continue to control economic power, since the 1994 transition left the beneficiaries of white privilege untouched. The country still has a long way to go in transcending race, as there are narratives that race has to be or should be transcended (Bhabha 1994; Mbembe 2001; Nuttall 2009). The argument here is

that race matters and that affects the majority of blacks, and it is disingenuous to call for blacks to stop engaging in race and blackness.

By contrast, Hill (1997) claims that the legacy of apartheid is too recent to be forgotten by the newly enfranchised black majority affected by the black condition. The world has been racially created, and those who were at the receiving end were, and still are, blacks. Geertsema (2004) makes the following contribution to the race debate issue:

The idea of how the non-racial ideal is to be attained hinges on how essentialised, racialised, identities are to be overcome: by first insisting on them, violently if need be, or by 'comfortably' letting them slide away (Geertsema 2004:754).

Mangcu (2000b) maintains that there are whites who are committed to seeing racial equality without being recognised. Daniels (2006:26) posits that non-racialism is hard to define and that the 'rainbowism' of the Mandela era was idealistic and did little, if anything, to engage with the issue of transformation. She states that key concepts in the Mandela era were reconciliation, nation-building and non-racialism: 'The upshot was that Mandela, with [the] emphasis on unity and alleviating white fears and insecurities, did not engage with transformation issues, making non-racialism a sense on an empty space' (Daniels 2006:28).

Mangcu (2010) believes that the notion of the rainbow nation as a generative metaphor dominates South African political discourses. Despite this dominance, it is a mirage in that underneath it 'is replaced by appalling poverty, inequality and racism' (Mangcu 2010:19). This is the reality that centres the post-1994 political settlement, as opposed to referring to it as a rainbow nation, since the vision must inevitably be short-lived as the realities outweigh rhetoric. In this regard, Mangcu (2010) refers to Thabo Mbeki, who was highly regarded by the white media when he ascended to power, but whose fortunes turned as soon as he resorted to radical rhetoric in his call for transformation. Mangcu (2010) is concerned with the issue of

racial nativism, which he regards as problematic for the post-1994 democratic project. Mangcu (2007a) argues that the politics of racial nativism are given enough leverage to dominate South African political discourses, because there is race-denialism.

Mangcu (2009a:11) claims that since 1994, 'the burden of forgiveness has fallen on black people while white people and their leaders have remained instinctively punitive in this country'. Cock and Bernstein (2002) argue that non-racialism is the new ideology of post-1994 South Africa, given a commitment to building a nation and getting over the country's dark past, and that non-racialism is the spirit of the Constitution. In this way, the value of non-racialism is seen as something that South Africans are striving towards, since this creates a better society. Non-racialism strives to create a new struggle that is not based on race, but rather on an imaginary community where race is no longer the issue. In this community, which is 'colour-blind', identities are not based on race. It is in this notion of identity where all South Africans are facing challenges such as crime, HIV/AIDS, and a lack of service delivery.

South Africa is said to maintain strong principles of non-racialism, although the discourse is racialised, because South Africa in the 1994 euphoria claimed that the country was new and thus far away from the dark past of apartheid. These claims, however, do not match the pertinent issue of the black condition and how to dismantle the apartheid legacy which continues to haunt the post-1994 era. Mangcu (2010) has expressed concern that in the post-1994 era, racial thinking is pervasive and that it is a framework outside of which it is impossible to think. Non-racialism, by its very idealistic nature, creates a society in which discrimination finds no place, as people should live together in their differences and embrace diversity. South Africans are always reminded that they have the task of building a new non-racial society. Non-racialism is against racial discrimination in that the principles of racial equality and the Constitution of the country suggest a commitment to non-racism.

Wilderson III (2008) concedes that Biko opposed non-racialism as a mere integration of black people into white values. A non-racialist approach does not mean a denial of race, but calls for multiracial solidarity and a common South African citizenship without colour or identity. Cock and Bernstein (2002) maintain that beyond ideology and the 'rainbow', several demographic and economic factors make non-racialism more possible and more palatable in South Africa than in the United States of America. They argue that blacks are in a majority in South Africa, unlike in the United States of America. The ANC can also rely on a sense of place and history to unite all South Africans. Finally, South Africa cannot survive without black labour. This does not necessarily mean that non-racialism is working at its best – there are still some racial divisions and the race card is played by the ruling party in dealing with differences between blacks and whites on the issue of crime and migration.

A non-racialist approach strives to create a new struggle that is not based on race, but rather on an imaginary community. In this community, which is 'colour-blind', identities are not based on race, but rather on a notion of identity, where all South Africans are facing challenges such as crime, HIV/AIDS, and a lack of service delivery among black communities. Mangcu (2000a) is aware of the black condition, but believes that blacks in this condition should uplift themselves. He calls for values to create a new social vision so that the issue of racism is addressed.

This kind of racial framework has been difficult to escape from. Mangcu (2010) believes that non-racialism was one of the attempts to escape race, although the values of the non-racialists remain. He argues that black nationalists in power use racial nativism in the manner that suits their own interests, using rhetoric such as 'you are with us or against us'. The view that Mangcu (2010) often expresses is that it is in the politics of transcendence that South Africans

should take the lead in terms of democratisation and cultural diversity. This is a good political dream, but it goes against reality.

According to Kasese-Hare (2006), the banning of explicit racism creates sophistication and increases the complexity of racism, in that it has assumed an implicit form, which is why whites react to racism through denial. They do not choose to engage it, but rather, they choose to retreat. They push for narratives which argue that the legacy of the past has been won over, and this is the new political dispensation and the important issue is to move on and build a better country. These sweeping statements are not only expressed by whites, but the argument proposed here is that it is these narratives that show the larger part of their political reality.

Most of these narratives are silent on the narratives discussing the black condition and the fact that racism is still part of the socio-political condition, especially for the black majority. Furthermore, most whites argue that the engagement with the issue of race takes the country backwards, a sentiment echoed even by President Jacob Zuma. These are narratives which point to the fact that many consider race and apartheid an exhausted topic, without taking into account its effects and legacy.

Furthermore, race denialism is an instrument used by blacks who deny the lived experience of the black majority. Black race denialists are often detached from the black condition, part of white privilege. There are even some who are totally reject the notion of blackness. These are blacks who want to escape their raced bodies, since these are the bodies which are part of the black experience. As such, these individuals are the gatekeepers of white supremacy and will engage in bad faith, even in crude injustices towards other blacks. Race denialists have a tendency to blame the victims of racism and they also absolve the perpetrators. They even point to the pathologies that are facing blacks as something that blacks have brought upon

themselves and do little to engage with the question of historical accountability or any other means of redress that should be afforded to blacks.

### **Mngxitama and blackness as the fatal attraction of the white gaze**

According to Mngxitama (2008b), race suffers from conceptual fidelity, as South Africans do not understand racism. Mngxitama (2008b:22) claims that 'racism is a concept referring specifically to the violent encounter over the ages between blacks and whites'. Race is part of South Africa's political reality, and as such it affects the black majority through the effects of racism. Racism, according to Mngxitama, is enmeshed in the totality of black life, which is pathological *par excellence*.

Mngxitama states that there is no crime called racism in the post-1994 era – instead, acts of racism are given ludicrous names such as *crimen injuria*. Mngxitama (2009c:26) writes: 'Yes, racism is not a crime in a country which has experienced more than 300 years of racism. As long as blacks remain a powerless numerical majority there is no hope that white racism will end.' He further argues that the psychological oppression of blacks allows them to continue to give power to whites to oppress and dehumanise them. This is of course, done with the help of black assistants who keep blacks docile.

According to Mngxitama (2009c), blacks cannot claim dignity and cannot make claims for justice. Reconciliation without justice means a 'politics [that] focuses on reassuring the beneficiaries and perpetrators of racism that they have nothing to worry about, all is forgiven' (Mngxitama 2009b:23). He adds that the interests of the black victim do not matter and are sidelined. The political rituals of condemnation are popular in the South African socio-political discourse, but fail to take decisive action in dealing with what they condemn. Mngxitama



argues that such political rituals normalise historical injustices against blacks, since they fail to locate the root of these injustices and clarify the place of blacks in the world.

Furthermore, Mngxitama (2008c, 2009a) argues that the ANC as a party legitimises black exploitation and exclusion with regard to the post-liberation cosmetic changes for the majority of blacks. It leaves racist infrastructure intact. Hill (1997) indicates that the political discourse was supposed to be driven by a politics of justice, reparation and restoration, and that a liberalist political discourse dominated the site of constitutional rights and equality which prevailed in the post-1994 era.

The effects of race and racism are not seen as done to' blacks because they are black. This implies that the post-1994 era claims blindness when it comes to the black condition, due to the fact that it sees class as an *a priori* reality, although there are some who claim that class and race intersect. The final analysis of this intersection is complicated when race is collapsed into class. The project of (re)constructing the post-1994 era is made difficult by the lack of certainty about whether there will be material change for what Fanon called the damned.

The legacy of apartheid still continues, with a black government under the banner of the ANC. The black condition, which is a creation of white domination, is perpetuated by the ANC, who are said to protect the white racialist economy and infrastructure (Mbeki 2009), which is kept intact by 'encourag(ing) the development of bloated middle and senior level management (and who are mostly politically connected to the ANC) and who are vastly overpaid' (Mbeki 2009:91). Mbeki is essentially arguing that the social, economic, cultural and political spheres should be analysed, as they are the loci of existence, and black public intellectuals should be a relay to make things easier for those who are excluded.

The dehumanisation of the black body can be demonstrated to have formed the basis of slavery, colonialism and apartheid. According Mngxitama (2009b), the politics of dehumanisation are framed in such a manner that dehumanisation often goes unpunished, since the black body is the 'fatal attraction'. Gordon (2000:62) also argues that the black experience represents the nadir of a world of racial pollution in that blackness is the primary racial marker – a scandal.

According to this logic, it seems that black public intellectuals cannot escape the predicament of the black condition; hence, they cannot be divorced from the raced body they find themselves in and which is caught up in the racist infrastructure. People have a choice to live freely or unfreely, and bad faith constitutes a 'flight from one's presence and the assumption of thing-like existence or completeness in various situations' (Gordon 2007:199). Thus, the black subject should constantly pursue critical good faith instead of bad faith to realise the potential of becoming a new being in the midst of dehumanisation.

As Maldonado-Torres (2005:159) states, 'the task is to end up with inhumanity and to restore humanity'. But this cannot be reduced to humanism, which is the popular consciousness and popular will which connotes the universal socio-political world, because humanism says little or nothing about the subject position of blackness, and, at worst, it also means the absence of blackness. What Maldonado-Torres proposes instead is the creation of a new life – the 'effort to create a social structure that facilitates the location of power in the condemned' (Maldonado-Torres 2005:162).

Mngxitama (2010f) believes that 'most South Africans cannot decode white supremacists' texts and actions', because what is condemned are overt acts of racism, while silence reigns on covert acts, which are normalised and naturalised. The social, economic and political

conditions reflect the fact that poor black communities are stripped of their dignity and humanity, as they are living in dire conditions.

According to Mngxitama, the distinction between individual racism and institutional racism is important to understand in relation to how whiteness functions. He argues that individual racism occurs occasionally, while institutional racism occurs all the time, in everyday life, and it is often difficult to recognise. Mngxitama argues that the post-1994 era is characterised by paternalistic white supremacists who regard white supremacy as normal and therefore fail to challenge it. Mngxitama (2008a:21) argues that '[w]hite superiority is a state mind. But this state of mind is not just a figment of imagination. It's real'. There is a lack of understanding of racism on the basis of its overt and covert nature. Mngxitama states that 'racism reproduces itself through whiteness' and the system of oppression is carried out by the agents of white supremacy, who are both black and white.

Blackness cannot be fully understood in the South African political discourse if the issue of white supremacy, which breeds privilege, is not analysed. There are dominant ways of thinking that deny the analysis of white supremacy which puts black people in bondage and which disconnects them from the past. White supremacy labels and categorises good and evil, and frames the manner in which what it does to blackness serve that supremacy in a material and non-material sense. As Wilson (1993:103) explain, white supremacy 'requires that [b]lackness involuntarily and obsessively deceive themselves'. It is in this self-deception where blackness goes out of its way to script itself in a manner that is consistent with white expectations and also to be relationally distant from blackness. Wilson states:

Once the ideology which rationali[s]es and legiti[m]ises a particular authority structure gains general social acceptance and the political appropriation of the ruling regime, it not only tends to deligitim[i]s[e] alternative or opposing ideologies but also tends to

empower and legitimate the ruling regime along with those who control its operational apparatus. (Wilson 1993:105)

Wilson's (1993) contribution to the discourse is that although there is much rhetoric and the white insult, the right questions are not asked and it is in this state of affairs where things remain unchanged. To unpack the notion of race as the organising principle of colonisation and to bring about understanding and advocacy, creating a forum for human emancipation, is to start by separating from the oppressive aspects that condone the black condition.

Mngxitama (2008b) argues that racism, if it becomes an elastic concept, loses its meaning. Mngxitama (2008b:22) argues that 'blacks – by virtue of their historical position – can't be racist'. He states that blacks can be nasty and capable of brutal oppression of their own people. He states that racism is about 'how whites dominated and violated blacks and continue to do so by virtue of their historical power and privileges bestowed upon them through violence' (Mngxitama 2008b:22). The violence Mngxitama refers to is slavery, colonialism and apartheid. Race denialism allows race denialists to reduce the black experience in relation to racism as something that is an isolated incident or the ontological frozen subject. As such, there is a refusal to go beyond non-racialism, which is an ideology that induces forgetting, usually with some blacks as spokespersons of white supremacy. This is done to get applause and approval from whites and other black race denialists. The post-1994 era panders to non-racialism, but reality suggests that it cannot withdraw from racial politics, since the infrastructure of South Africa is racial and racist.

The post-1994 era is characterised by a vacuum in terms of radical and pro-black political movements, and this is why there is no articulation of the 'black grammar of suffering'. For Mngxitama (2009b), the black grammar of suffering is one that ends dialogue and demands justice. 'Such [a] grammar locates the creation of blackness at the vortex of three

dispossessions: land, labour and the sense of African being' (Wilderson III 2008). These are the dispossessions that he claims create and perpetuate black poverty on the one hand, and on the other hand, entrench white wealth. The post-1994 era in South Africa bears this out, and it is seen as normal – that is, blackness equals dispossession.

Mngxitama (2009b) argues that blacks have no language and they cannot even articulate their lived experience. This language is a grammar of suffering, and the absence of this language means that blacks cannot be heard and cannot make their demands and hence must live in obscurity. This allows racism to continue under black government, which, in the service of white supremacy continues to deny dispossessed blacks the opportunity to articulate their own language of demands, which may unsettle the post-1994 set-up. Mngxitama writes:

Racism is not going anywhere as long as the structures of white supremacy remain intact, covered in the language of democracy and nonracialism. But this is not the indictment of whites on whites. It's rather a reflection on blacks, a pathetic numer[ic]al majority (Mngxitama 2009b:23).

Mngxitama (2007) argues that what blacks lack is a sense of ownership of the country and its wealth. Goldberg (2006) makes a distinction between non-racialism and anti-racism and argues that non-racialism is about forgetting, not recounting and redressing. Hence, it bans racism from the public domain, only to reproduce it in private. Non-racialism denies that racism exists, since it does not have the vocabulary to express both implicit and explicit racism and issues of equality.

As opposed to non-racialism, anti-racism deals with racism directly, in that it demobilises and removes the structures of racism as a condition. It seeks reparations and justice and is fuelled by a spirit of resistance. The hegemony of the discourses in the post-1994 era downplay race in the quick chase for non-racialism, as if there are no problems confronting blacks trapped in

the black condition. South Africa is trying to move beyond apartheid while there is a resurgence in racialisation and ethnicity (Geertsema 2004).

To engage the issue of race is to engage with racialised power networks – that is, the power matrix of coloniality and the Manichean structure. To study the black condition is to examine the ways in which blackness is interlocked and confused, only to remain in subservience. The black condition is the result of exclusion from, and subjugation by a system of power which determines or markets what form life should be assumed.

The subject position of blackness has meant being restricted, excluded, dehumanised and, to a lesser extent, being acted upon. In short, blackness has been, and still is objectified. Maldonado-Torres (2008:99) argues that blacks have lost ontology; then this ontology became objectified and there was a need for subjectivity – that is, for the black body to be a living subject, the creation of the ‘new being’. In the post-1994 era tagged as the new nation or the nation-in-becoming it is necessary to examine the lived experience of subjects with the black condition, and how black public intellectuals engage with the political discourse. Race is a pervasive concept, since it takes the guises of non-racialism, and even though it can take or materialise in a very secret and polarised forms, shifts between these polarised worlds are possible (Kane 2007).

National symbols which aim to create a national identity, and the metaphor of the rainbow nation was coined by Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, and it was based on reconciliation, nation building and non-racialism (Daniels 2006). This imagination was triggered by the hope, which was later exposed as an illusion, that racial barriers or racial discourse markers would be done away with. The assumption was that the country would preserve a spirit of togetherness, since a message of peace, reconciliation and unity was promoted. The condition in this state of affairs indicates how identities are lived, constructed and deconstructed. The notion of

tolerance and equality among different identities seeks to create order, the condition of harmony and the polity existing in peace while celebrating differences. There is a pretence that because the post-1994 state is considered a rainbow nation, race is no longer part of the national vocabulary.

With this in mind, the historical condition in which most blacks find themselves makes the promises of the 1994 'miracle' a distant dream. Mngxitama (2008a) argues that institutionalised and legalised violence against black people is an important factor in the creation of modern South African society. He claims that South Africa and the condition of most black people should be understood on the basis of dispossession of land, labour and African being. According to Mngxitama (2010c), the ANC has failed blacks dismally, particularly farm workers who are landless. He writes: 'Farm workers are regularly brutalised and murdered with little consequences' (Mngxitama 2010c:13). These are the current conditions that most black people live under and which exist under a black government. Thus, the notion of better life for has been a lie to society. There are gaps in terms of race and class – Mngxitama (2008a) states that although 1994 came and went, the structures of white power remained intact, arguing that it is under the very same democracy that poor blacks are harassed, imprisoned and shot with rubber bullets when they protest for their legitimate rights.

Maldonado-Torres (2008:233) believes that the colonised in this sense are operating based on not being colonised directly, but exist within the effects of a colonial structure which continues its legacy. The black subject, Maldonado-Torres (2008) argues, is not a being or is simply nothingness. The existence of blacks in this hellish zone becomes ordinary in a colonised world which wears a racial cap. The hell that Maldonado-Torres (2008) and Gordon (1995; 2007) refer to is the anti-black world. The question this study now raises is what this means for

the post-1994 era and the possibility of not seeing race as a discourse marker, since there are loud cheers that apartheid has been defeated.

Mngxitama (2008b) points out that black people have been 'unpeopled' under democracy. The oppressed lose all their ontological weight in the hellish condition they exist in (Maldonado-Torres 2008). This suggests that blackness as a centre of being does not exist, hence they are not human beings in the face of the white gaze. Therefore, blackness stands outside the rubric of being human, since its existence lacks the substance of being human.

Mngxitama states that blackness has no analogy: 'Black suffering on its own has no standing; it does not exist. In fact it doesn't matter' (Mngxitama 2009b:23). The normalisation and naturalisation of black suffering renders it unheard. Mngxitama states that most blacks who are trapped in black suffering are not seen and they are therefore forced to join the greater group of the forgotten masses who are caught in the pathology of destitution and even death. Wilderson III (2003) argues that blackness is an oxymoron because it lacks relationality. The pain and suffering that has been inflicted upon the black body cannot be related to any form of recourse or justice, since blackness is devoid of humanity. Therefore, the demands of blacks cannot be met.

Blackness is not content with being viewed as something related to the status of being – that is, there is no ontology when it comes to blackness, which finds its objection from the world – the anti-black world. Blackness is at the margins of recognition and representation. To see is to see not a being, but a black person. The white gaze shapes the optical economy and its function is to police the black body (Rottenberg 2003).

Identities of the marginalised seek to contest space and work their way towards asserting their identities to counter exclusion, marginalisation and humiliation if they are at the receiving end



of racism or other forms of discriminations based on identity. The condition in this state of affairs indicates how identities are lived, constructed and deconstructed. The notion of tolerance and equality among different identities seeks to create order, the condition of harmony and the polity existing in peace, while celebrating differences.

Identity cannot be fully understood in the South African political discourse if the issue of white supremacy, which breeds privilege, is not analysed. There are dominant ways of thinking that deny the analysis of white supremacy, which tends to put black people in bondage, in that they are encouraged to forget about the past. The pretence is that race is not an issue any longer, since the post-1994 state is typified by rainbowism, while the historical condition that most blacks find themselves in makes the promises of the 1994 miracle a farce. Mngxitama (2010b:13) argues that institutionalised and legalised violence against black people is a factor in the creation of the modern South African society – as ‘the ruling party made a pact with the devil’. Black powerlessness is considered normal in small towns and farms as the survival of blacks is wholly dependent on the white masters.

Mngxitama argues that black powerlessness is characterised by fear and tension. According to Mngxitama (2010b:13), ‘blacks live in servitude’. The lived experience of the black subject is that of the transportation and exportation of a negative image, in which the existence of blacks is dehumanised systematically. As such, blackness needs to be objectified and exploited, hence the continuous comparison between blacks and whites just to maintain the racist infrastructure.

The treatment of these black communities who protest for their legitimate right is unjust in that these are people who are fuelled with hope that they will have a better life. It will be argued here that ontology counts less in the black experience, since blacks have always been denied

a human existence through slavery, colonialism and apartheid, and this ultimately slips into bad faith.

The notion that race is a social construct fails to account for the manner in which racism continues to affect those who are at the receiving end. This perspective tends to turn a blind eye on the continued effects of racism which has been pushed underground. The perspective that race is a social construct tends to silence sites where agency is coming into being and where the black condition is put under the spotlight as people question their ways of being (Gordon 2000).

Essed (2002) suggests that to understand racism is to understand its everyday operation and its location, and how it is experienced by those it affects. According to him, blacks are familiar with the dominant group interpretation of reality, and have an idea of and knowledge of racist ideas and interpretations of reality. Racism connects structural forces and everyday reality as things which are normal since it 'involves only systematic, recurrent, familiar practices' (Essed 2002:177). Essed further states that the Manichean structure – a force that gave rise to oppression and domination, makes racism exist in a plural way, rather than in a specific form. This ultimately makes it hard to see. That in itself is an aspect of the power matrix of coloniality and the Manichean structure. Van Dijk (2002), in examining the strategy and discourse of race denialism, claims that the discourse of racism and its denialism is prominent in reproducing a normalised and institutionalised version of reality. He argues as follows:

The concept of everyday racism qualifies how ordinary situations become racist situations. The study and analysis of these situations can be disturbing to comfortable worlds of racial privilege. (Van Dijk 2002:461)

In the post-1994 era, there is often a claim that South Africa is a rainbow nation, and everything should be buried in the past. This claim flies in the face of reality, since the

structures of white privilege remain intact, and the political economy of racism still haunts the black body. For Southall (2004), this leads to a paralysis in which realities on the ground do not reflect what is being advocated by these statements. For instance, it does not amount to a non-racial issue if there is a lack of commitment in dealing robustly with the legacy of apartheid. He argues that non-racialism can be regarded as a form of forgetting and moving on, instead of demanding justice and historical accountability. As More (2008) argues, addressing racism is not to address the basis on which racism rests (racialism). Rather, there should be the means to dismantle the structures that are perpetuating racism.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter attempted to analyse the ways in which race and blackness are applied in the post-1994 South African political landscape. Furthermore, the positionality of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama were analysed in relation to race and blackness. It was argued that race and blackness have not only been complex issues in the post-1994 political landscape, but are problematic if they are interrogated at a deeper level. Unpacking them should mean engaging with factors that are outside the script of the rainbow nation, nation-building and reconciliation, since the black condition is more problematic than this.

Seepe's rhetoric and subsequent positionality regarding race and blackness is radical. His positionality helps to conceptualise race and blackness in relation to the lived experience of blacks, at the same time linking them to the political culture that the post-1994 era envisions. Race is fundamental to Seepe's positionality, as he believes it can be used by those in power to demean those to whom they are antagonistic. Furthermore, he argues that race can be used seductively through essentialist means, while engaging in a politics of labelling to defend and

justify political loyalty. Seepe argues that race and blackness must be engaged with in an open manner because they are part of the post-1994 political reality.

Mangcu's positionality with regard to race and blackness raises the complexity of these questions in the post-1994 era, as is clear from his ever-changing views on race and blackness. Mangcu comes from a radical Black Consciousness philosophy background, which he often refers to, and he envisions the transcendence of race, if any, or, conversely, the deepening of racial consciousness, but a racial consciousness that is inclusive and pluralistic. The problem in South Africa has centred around the racial question of targeting blackness, and Mangcu's positionality can be read as ambivalent and contested. This country was and continues to be organised along racial lines, but claims non-racialism to be altruism, despite the fact that this discourse is contested.

Mngxitama's positionality is consistent. He regards race and blackness as being tangled up in and embedded in the post-1994 era, which implies that the era is the epitome of white supremacy. Blackness is a creation of whiteness and therefore blackness operates as the gatekeeper of white supremacy. Mngxitama contends that blacks' race makes them targets of racism, since they find themselves in an anti-black world, and also makes them subject to the pathologies that define the black existence – the black condition.

The problematics of race and blackness are not unique to South Africa. Their articulation in the form of public intellectual contributions by Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama highlight the realisation that these authors occupy different positionalities. Their positionality is informed by the manner in which they imagine the political, as far as race and blackness are concerned. Mangcu and Seepe emphasise the use of race as a tool to silence critics or to close down debate. Both Seepe and Mangcu imagine the possibility or at times the existence of non-racism, but Mngxitama does not agree in this respect at all.

Race and blackness are problematic in the anti-black world, and the post-1994 era in South Africa is no exception. Claiming to transcend race as if there were no racism and systematic oppression would be an illusion, since the infrastructure of racism is intact. Furthermore, to condemn blackness as essentialist if it is evoked is denying the lived experience of blacks who are caught up in the black condition. Race and blackness will continue to be problematic if the black condition is not done away with by dismantling the logic and infrastructure of racism. The next chapter explores how Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama articulate the black elite in post-1994 South Africa.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **SEEPE, MANGCU AND MNGXITAMA ON THE BLACK ELITE**

### **Introduction**

This chapter seeks to explore and provide an understanding of the manner in which Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama view the presence and modes of accumulation of the black elite in the post-1994 era. The chapter commences with an examination of Seepe's positionality with regard to the black elite in terms of their connection to the state for the purposes of economic benefit. The dependency complex between the elite and the state is examined where there is some enrichment of the politically connected few at the expense of the majority. The extent to which Mangcu's contributions differ from or are similar to those of Seepe is also discussed. Here, the chapter focuses on Mangcu's fluid and shifting position regarding the aspirations of the black middle class. Finally, the chapter analyses Mngxitama's radical positionality with regard to the black elite.

### **Seepe, the black elite and their connection to the state**

Sipho Seepe's emphasises how the black elite is trapped in state political patronage. In this scenario, the black elite are rewarded on the basis of political loyalty and they must, therefore, serve the interests of the state in exchange for a path leading to wealth accumulation through tenders and lucrative contracts (Seepe 2006b). As Calland (2006) argues, the black elite find itself in a dilemma of being caught between the state and old capital. Thus the black elite in

South Africa, for example, are dependent on the state and white capital, because what should enrich them is concentrated in white hands. Therefore, the remains of what should be (re-)distributed in egalitarian terms, and in order to redress the predicament of the black majority, only benefit a politically select and connected few. There are some who engage in patronage, which is a gateway to established white capital. For the black elite to gain access to white capital, they have to show loyalty to the state or become agents of white capital.

The concept of the black elite in the post-1994 era includes the ruling political elite and the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) private sector elite or capitalists (Calland 2006). The emergence of BEE in the post-1994 era is widely regarded as a much-desired outcome of the liberation struggle (McKinley 2011). However, selling BEE as the solution to economic imbalances is a cosmetic solution, since the gap between the rich and the poor is widening continuously, so that the black majority are left at the margins of the economy – a bleak picture of economic transformation.

According to Seepe (2006b), the members of the black elite are connected to the state, and it is through the state that they are able to extract what they need for their benefit. According to Gumede (2007:289), '[m]any post-liberation African societies continue to feature a small rich elite, often connected to the ruling elite and the poor masses, with a small middle class sandwiched between'. Political patronage is pervasive, since the accumulated wealth of the black elite does not create benefits for the whole society. Their opulent lifestyle and a culture of materialism reduce the black elite to mere advertising billboards, displaying how they consume their wealth. This is the wealth that comes from political connections, and which does not benefit the masses, as it circulates only in the hands of a few.

According to Seepe (2006b), this situation means that a consolidation of political hegemony where the state is the centre of the strategic goals and visions of BEE, and the BEE elite must

be reinforced by the state. In this regard, Calland (2006) argues that there is little space in which the black elite can move, and they therefore depend on the state, which is a gateway to capital accumulation. As a result, black elites have no political imagination beyond the framework of the capitalist economic template (Gibson 2006).

Since 1994, South Africa has clearly demonstrated that it has failed to address the issue of economic emancipation, and instead the elite have rushed for political office. This state of affairs creates a situation in which the wealth of South Africa will not benefit the black majority. McKinley (2011) suggests that the ascension to and capturing of political power clearly indicates that the ANC has quickly abandoned the mandate of the people in a bid to embrace the quick upsurge of a small black elite. Although BEE was touted as a solution that would uplift the masses, it has instead led to a perpetuation of neo-colonial conditions where blacks who are trapped in the black condition are tightly squeezed in the pathology of this condition. As Mbeki (2009:16) exclaims, 'African elites today sustain and reproduce themselves by perpetuating the neo-colonial state and its attendant socio-economic systems of exploitation, devised by the colonialists'.

The existence of a black elite has not transform the lives of the black majority. Since political power in the post-1994 era is not translating to economic power, Mbeki (2009) argues that State power thus becomes an instrument to re-distribute wealth in favour of the black elite, rather than to re-direct wealth from consumption to productive investment. The growing inequality between the black elite and the black masses is a clear manifestation of this wealth redistribution. The projection of the black elite through fronting and tokenism shows that this is indeed a trickle-down effect.

As a result, the real change expected by the black majority is absent. As Butler states:



The liberation movement would protect private property and business freedom. In return, big business would not obstruct transition and would later help redress the racial injustice that characteri[s]e the economy. (Butler 2009:76)

Seepe (2006b) refers to ANC comradeship during the struggle as being informed by the vision of liberating the country and redressing the imbalances created by apartheid. However, in the post-1994 period, these comrades are given government contracts, tenders and other private sector privileges, which result in the very antithesis of what they fought for: the perpetuation of the economic marginalisation of the majority of South Africans.

Mbeki (2009) argues that the black elite are not property owners and do not own the economy. Moreover, he adds that they cannot use state power to create systems and structures that advance the property they do not have. The black elite are thus part of the political problem, since their presence and role in the post-liberation state are always suspect. According to Seepe (2006b), the state is used as a contact point to kick-start the path of members of the black elite, as it funds their establishment, existence and sustenance.

However, although the state can be a source through which the enrichment of the small elite is realised, such a condition might be constraining to the state since the black elite is parasitic. This creates dependency on the state by the ANC and its comrade elites. Thus, the money from the state is a source through which the elite are able to display their wealth, which they have accumulated through political networks. As a result, this can ferment political corruption in which state coffers are milked to the point where socio-economic conditions cannot be addressed.

Seepe (2006b) argues that a situation arises where the appointment of incompetent individuals occurs at the expense of capable individuals, whose only misfortune is that they are outside the political establishment. These skilled individuals are left at the fringes of the economy. The

politicisation of the economy along political party lines creates a condition where the political party will not consider technical skills, something there is a dire shortage of. Seepe (2006b) points out that the average skill level ratio of blacks in relation to whites in South Africa is one to five. Thus, for every skill that is lost, five individuals who could have benefited from such skills suffer. The fallacy leading to the creation of the black elite is that they are agents of and pillars in building a democracy and also ensure a deepening of non-racialism. However, the neglect of the poor majority and its being made invisible in the projection of wealth is the reality. Seepe's positionality centres on the fact that South Africa creates a false impression of itself through the emergence of a small black elite, whilst the vast majority in the country suffer poverty, unemployment, a lack of education and health services, exploitative working conditions and indignity, all of which are racially marked as belonging to the black condition.

Gumede (2007:288) argues, that 'the government has done well to advance the rise of the new black middle class, at the same time improving the lot of the white middle class, but it has a mixed record in terms of improving the living conditions of the poor'. This is the picture that shows what is meant to improve the lives of the black majority is in fact a flawed socio-political project. The advancement of the black middle class is something that was, and is, done at the expense of the black majority. The formation and the existence of a black elite has been blamed on a foundation of weakness and vulnerability. According to Mbeki (2009), the rise of the black elite is a relatively new phenomenon in South Africa, under the tutelage and monitoring of white rule. The 'natives' had to be good and act in the interests of the white master who afforded them missionary education and civilisation. The black elite has two factions, namely an accommodationist faction which is openly white (as it imbibed liberalism similar to that of the white British missionary) and the nationalist faction, which was arguing for black independence in the economy along the ideological lines of African nationalism and social democracy (Mbeki 2009). However, as Mbeki states, both factions were long weak and

vulnerable, since they did not have control of labour or capital, nor did they possess a strong institutional base. The white elite did not leave to make way for the creation of a stronghold black elite, and even in the post-1994 era, it does not exist. 'BEE creates a small class of unproductive but wealthy black crony capitalists made up of ANC politicians' (Mbeki 2009:61). It is this state of affairs that allows BEE not to threaten the economic hegemony of the white minority. It is in these terms that BEE cannot be regarded as a force that will lead to fundamental change, but is indeed one that will help keep the status quo.

### **Mangcu, the black elite and contested aspirations**

Since most blacks are still trapped in the trenches of economic exclusion, they aspire to enjoy the benefits that come with economic privilege. As Mangcu (2005a) contends, the middle class position should inspire the majority of blacks to engage in upward mobility. He states that it should not be a problem issue when blacks have aspirations to be rich and accumulate wealth.

Mangcu argues that the media fixation on the black elite is like an anthropological gaze peddling stereotypes which advocates, in undertones, the pauperisation of the black majority in which there should be no black elite. It is this pauperisation which has consolidated the white elite, since competition and modes of accessing capital are uneven, or at worst, non-existent for the aspiring black elite. The historical mapping of South Africa clearly shows the role that the state has played in helping English-speaking people and Afrikaners to accumulate capital whilst simultaneously excluding, exploiting and dispossessing blacks. The creation and the consolidation of the white elite was achieved on the basis of maximal state intervention. The state was a means to the accumulation of wealth by these white groups. The South African state of the past was used to advance, protect and entrench white privilege (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012 forthcoming).

Mangcu (2005a) argues that there is a tendency to make white capital immune to scrutiny, and to criminalise black capital accumulation, even if it is done in legitimate terms. Under the former white regimes, capital accumulation and the consolidation of elites was not regarded as corruption, nor was it racialised. However, in the post-1994 era, the discourse of corruption has become racialised, since a number of senior figures in the ruling party have been implicated in corrupt practices. According to Mangcu (2005e), corruption became rampant in the post-1994 era and it is through this means that many of the black elite gain access to wealth. The upward mobility of the black elite comes with strings attached, and links to the political establishment, as access to wealth is gained through tenders and lucrative government contracts. This has led to the labelling of the black middle class or the elite as 'tenderpreneurs' instead of entrepreneurs. Essentially, this means that the primary modes of accumulation for the black elite are tenders circulated among the politically connected few.

The political lives of the black elite are centred on entitlement. Schlemmer (1998) argues that this sense of entitlement is prevalent in the lower levels of the middle class. The emergence of the white elite, as stated above, happened along similar lines of entitlement. The discourse used to disguise structural inequality in the post-1994 era says little about white capital in explicit terms, if it is threatened by the black elite, who are considered parasitic. The prevalent tendency here is to project these structures of capital as if they are serving the interests of the whole nation.

The discourse of corruption is located only in the post-1994 era and creates an impression that corruption is a recent phenomenon. The English and the Afrikaner South African states and the emergence and conduct of the white elite are not regarded as corrupt. Even those who were advocating apartheid have changed the terms of the debate in the post-1994 era claiming that the past should be forgotten and there should not be any discussion about race and white

privilege. This in turn creates a basis on which the black elite can get what they want, which is to get rich by accumulating capital. Mangcu (2005d) argues that the black elite have a social and political function. The emergence of the black elite has been historically interrupted, and the black elite in the post-1994 era is resuming the path to accumulation. In this emergence, the members of the black elite who are touted as the agents of change and transformation show little evidence to demonstrate that they fulfil this role. However, the advocacy for this change is met with resistance, since in the reality this change is regarded as very small, or at worst, non-existent.

According to Schlemmer (1998), although there is a call for the emergence of the black elite in the economic engine, there is also a call for white power to remain. He contends that the advancement of the black middle class, and the emergence thereof is regarded with disfavour. The argument here is that the emergence of a black elite results in cosmetic changes, even though it calls for resistance from both white and black racial formations. The rise and consolidation of the black elite is thus not a threat to white capital. For Schlemmer, the position of a racial balance is complex, since there are black professionals in the apex of power, and there is the rise of the black middle class. However, most of the black majority are excluded, while there is a small elite who project themselves as representatives of the black majority. This complexity should be read in its historical context, and reference should again be made to how the state assisted some classes to accumulate wealth at the expense of others.

It will be argued here that political power is monopolised by the black majority, while the economy is in the hands of the white minority and a small black elite. According to Gumede (2007:289), '[m]any post-liberation African societies continued to feature a small rich elite, often connected to the ruling elite and the poor masses, with a small middle class sandwiched between'. Mangcu (2005d) concurs with Seepe that the modes of accumulation and the mode

of being is something that flourished because of political patronage. As Gibson (2004) argues, BEE is a form of social treason, since it betrays the essence of upward mobility for the majority of blacks. Gibson also adds that the black elite hurriedly and greedily inherited the neo-liberal policy framework that determines the economy.

As Mangcu (2005d) argues, the impulse of a black elite with middle class values is material, but it is also a repository of social and cultural values. According to Mangcu, there are varying dynamics within the black elite and thus they should not be understood as a homogeneous entity. The positive value that Mangcu ascribes to is the fact that the black middle class are a beacon of hope to the black majority. The emergence of the black elite with middle class values in South Africa indicates some level of content and discontent that the aspirations of the black majority needs to be reflected upon. Interestingly, Mangcu is not against the idea of a black elite. However, he argues that their enrichment should not come at the expense of the black majority. Even though there are some blacks who rise above poverty, exclusion and dispossession to enter the ranks of middle class and even the elite, their numbers in proportion to the black majority who are in the trenches of the black condition needs to be engaged. What informs the aspirations of the black elite in general is the issue of ownership of material forces. The black elite are, in a way, the ones in a dilemma.

Even though there are indeed improvements in the lives of some blacks, large gaps still remain in respect of the socio-economic condition that reflects blackness. BEE is regarded as the centrepiece of this redistributive strategy. However, as the African elite are not historically an entrepreneurial class, the wealth diverted to them is used for consumption, not investment (Mbeki 2009). According to Mangcu (2005d), to suggest that the black elite are the source of inspiration for blacks trapped in the black condition is a view that is limited in two regards. In the first instance, the rise of a black elite will not inspire those who are trapped in the black

condition since their means of accumulation are an insult to the black majority. Blacks in the black condition cannot be proud to look up to those who treat them with contempt and insult them in the manner which they consume capital and their display of how wealthy they are. Secondly, the black elite emerges from the structures which do not create an enabling environment, thus confining the black majority to their current position.

According to Mangcu (2005a), because the black elite have a loyalty pact with the ruling party, they often pay allegiance to the party. This is similar to what Seepe alludes to, but the point of convergence, as far as Mangcu's positionality is concerned, is the complexities that the black elite find themselves in. Initially, the issue of black aspiration centres on the issues of a black elite who are emerging and engaging in upward class mobility. The same can be said of the English and Afrikaner elite: they pay allegiance to the ruling structures of the state. Mangcu (2005d) is concerned about the fact that the black elite trigger extreme reactions, while there is silence on the white elite who control the economy. In this instance, the black elite are detached from the communities they come from in terms of contributing as agents of change, instead they display opulence. In fact, the elite fear the masses, as the elite are clothed in consumerism and parasitism.

Southall (2006) argues that blacks were excluded, and the racial bargains in the South African political reality came as a response to address the oppression that befell the black majority. He states that there are two strands of criticism with regard to BEE. The first is that BEE has created a tiny clique of the rich who are connected to the ANC, and they are dependent on the ANC to extract these riches. The ANC is said to be breeding the elite, who are not seen to realise the aspirations of the black majority. The second criticism concerns the fact that BEE distorts the logic of the market, and as a result has a negative impact on the efficiency and growth of the economy. This is linked to the fact that the BEE class is inept and does not

contribute to the strengthening of the economy, but is merely trapped in consumerism. However, these criticisms should not be taken at face value, but instead should be understood in the South African socio-political context, since the status quo is being preserved. In fact, there is a need for socio-economic redress, which lies at the heart of the aspirations of the black majority.

Gumede (2007:291) argues that, 'sadly, in a country where the majority of blacks live their entire lives in abject poverty and drudgery, many of the *nouveau noir* rich shamelessly flaunt their wealth'. The black elite are obscene and cruel since they are quick to resign themselves to the predicament of the black condition. Their lives are centred on illusion, since they think that what they have gained is the power that they were anticipating in the war of liberation. However, there is no liberation for those who are trapped in the black condition. Their lives are like fiction, since they are embedded in an array of fashion parades and prestigious luncheons. The lifestyle of the elite is an embodiment of consumption, and characterised by a lifestyle of opulence and greasy political wealth which has no foundation, since it depends on political power as the access point. The BEE class come out to flaunt their 'bling' – that is, the tendency to show off their politically created wealth, in a form of the life of display of crass materialism.

This life is in direct opposition to the daily hardships of the majority of blacks. According to Mbeki (2009), the detachment of the black elite from the local population is indeed a detachment from the economy itself, since their role and presence preserves white capital. The national economy that they must produce, one that is reflective of the black population, becomes a fossil in the crude state of decay. As Mbeki (2009) counsels, there is no emphasis on the elite's and the state's to invest in the upliftment and the development of services that are beneficial to the nation, such as education, healthcare, housing and infrastructure.



The legitimacy of the black elite always comes into question, and that silences the question of whether the white elite are also engaging in a politics of excess. Mangcu accuses the media of engaging in the racial double standards, since they focus on the excesses of the black elite while remaining silent about the white elite. Essentially, the media's role here implies that the black elite should not be in white spaces and forms of life.

According to Durrheim and Mtose (2006), exclusion, oppression and marginalisation are seen as things experienced under apartheid, because black rule has been regarded as absent since the issues of equal participation and the emergence of the black middle class have taken centre stage. The view expressed by Durrheim and Mtose (2006:153) is that '[r]acism and segregation have been outlawed and Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment and other progressive policies for change have been legislated and implemented'. This view suggests that there has indeed been progress, but the structural conditions which entrap blackness are absent. These are the structures of the past which are viewed as intangible, and which should not be taken into account. However, the reality is that they are still in operation and the black elite functions on the basis of not meddling with such rigid structures.

The positionality of Mangcu signifies a shift in the justification of the middle class, whom Mangcu argues to have some historical relevance. He argues that the existence of a middle class triggers the aspirations of the black majority. Mangcu also warns against a culture of discouragement which gives the impression that being rich is morally wrong and alien to blackness. He argues that the aspiration of affluence in the black population should be encouraged. Nevertheless, this can only be beneficial if it is done in a responsible manner and which has the effect of changing the lives of the marginalised. However, this is far from articulating the manner in which structures of white capital should be dismantled, for the economy to benefit and work in order to address the black condition. The black elite will

continue to be an oxymoron as long as the black condition remains. The black elite serves white economic interests, and it is in these terms that they are a buffer zone in relation to black aspirations.

### **Mngxitama, the black elite and untransformed capital**

The positionality of Mngxitama (2010d) suggests that BEE is a deliberate project created by the old white settler capitalist class to maintain its power over the economy by creating an illusion of a united country. This is done achieved by the co-option of the black elite into a white economic infrastructure. The black elite is at the apex of the socio-political strata and they engage in a politics of accumulation, consumption and serve their own interests. According to Mitrovic (2010:5), this group 'is a predatory class of the nouveau riche and often bon vivant and parasitic upstarts'. Mngxitama agrees with Mitrovic that the black elite, who often display their wealth, form only a fraction in the larger context and are usually politically connected. According to Mngxitama (2010d:1), 'blacks could only become part of the economy through political connectivity, by getting a tender and scheming'.

Mngxitama (2010d) goes further than Seepe and Mangcu in arguing that capitalism is a historical injustice to the black majority as it was enmeshed with apartheid and the black elite are its managers in the post-1994 era. The white elite were created and sustained through the dispossession of blacks. White dominance rooted in apartheid precedes political power, since political power of the black political administration of the ANC is devoid of economic power. The interests of white capital in the post-1994 era were guaranteed in apartheid and even in the post-1994 era, white privilege remains untouched. However, this raises the question of beneficiaries. Kasese-Hara (2006) argues that blacks do not possess economic production. Thus, those who own the means of production are those who benefit. This includes both the

white elite and the small black elite. The business community which has capital indeed has an advantage over the rest of society (Fine & Levin 2005). Both Fine and Levin posit that although business has advantages, business is not, in its capitalist sense, a monolithic whole, but rather, a site where competing interests intersect. This even relates to the manner in which business operates the relations between the state and capital. As Fine and Levin (2005) argue, relations between the state and capital are in tandem at particular points in time, as they are simultaneously harmonious and conflictual. They claim that the partnership is mutually beneficial, in that for the capital to exist, it needs the protection of the state. Capital is also important for the survival of the state.

Black capitalists, as Mngxitama argues, are in fact the anti-thesis of blackness and they are acting in a manner that is blind to the black condition, since their only interest is parasitism. The black elite rely on the un-transformed economy to make their gains, which occur at the exclusion of the black majority. Mbeki (2009) argues that the black elite are on the fringes of the economy, as they are not property owners. Mbeki's (2009) view suggests that the black elite cannot use state power to create systems and structures that advance the property they do not have. In the hands of the non-propertied black elite, state power thus becomes an instrument used to re-distribute wealth in favour of the elite. The growing inequality between the black middle class and the black masses is a clear manifestation of this wealth re-distribution. He proposes that there should be an effort to re-direct wealth from consumption to productive investment.

Mngxitama (2010d) argues that the black elite are modern slave catchers, who seek inclusion in the capitalist and untransformed white economy. They eat the crumbs of the economy through their politics of being the spokespersons of white interest, while using the language of victimhood. According to McKinley (2011), the post-1994 economy is a capitalist political

economy grounded in apartheid's socio-economic formation, which keeps the economy unchanged. The black elite legitimises black exclusion and are recruited into whiteness as exhibits who will counter the claims of the legitimacy of the black condition as they engage in primitive accumulation.

According to Mitrovic (2010), the black elite are a comprador bourgeoisie who are peripheral to capitalism and who rule societies which are heavily segregated and exploited. The black elite are heavily dependent, corrupt, and they are managers of the structures that militate against the well-being of the majority of blacks. Mitrovic (2010) focuses on the elite in the Third World countries who are appendages of capitalism, which leads him to conclude that they are pseudo-elites. In this sense, they are a rigid administrative clique ignorant of power structures. In this context, they are ignorant of the white capital which is necessary to transform the pathologies that exist in societies.

The black elite, as Mngxitama (2010) argues, are incapable of articulating the grammar of black suffering. They always take the easy option of leaving the structures of the white system untransformed: 'In other words, the fundamental logic of the apartheid and colonial economy would remain intact as a few blacks were allowed to accumulate and consume at the rate of old white capital' (Mngxitama 2010d: 1). Black elite are to a large extent mere tokens who drain the nation's wealth, which could have been (re-)distributed. Calland (2006) adds that they are a comprador bourgeoisie who are dependent on political patronage and clientelism. They form a class which amasses capital and exhibits an opulent lifestyle, but are not creators of such capital. Furthermore, they cannot function on their own, since they do not possess nor do they work towards the creation of the forces of production. They are enmeshed in the untransformed capitalist system, which does not work for the benefit of those disadvantaged by their socio-political condition. Rather, as Calland (2006:264) argues, the comprador

bourgeoisie 'are turncoats: people who lose sight of their revolutionary ideals, ensnared by the drive for personal profit'.

According to Mngxitama (2011), the BEE class is a creation of white capital, and this creation enables the BEE class to manage legalised thieving practices. Mitrovic (2010) argues that this class survives through massive exploitation of the workforce. Secondly, this class is driven by profit motive and consumption. Finally, this class is not sympathetic to the plight of the workers and the poor. This testifies to the fact that the existence of the BEE class is a social, political and economic defect which perpetuates the historical arrangements of apartheid. This is the class that follows its interests and fails to consider a national consciousness that can in some way bring meaningful change to the lives of the black majority.

The black elite are a minority claiming to represent the interests of the many, they are appendages of the white capitalist economy and are reduced to mere tokens. They are mere clones, which, in fact, do not come close to reflecting originality. According to Gumede (2007:290), in 'many empowerment companies, whites ran the operational and management functions and held the posts of executive directors, with blacks in non-executive positions'.

Gibson (2004) further states that although the end of apartheid ended apartheid laws, it did not end the law of capital. This means that the law of capital from the apartheid era applies in the post-1994 political reality. Mbeki (2009) argues that BEE was not created by blacks, but by white oligarchs. The black elite does not represent the change in the black condition, or even the face of the economic ownership.

The black elite are a buffer zone, as they serve the old white capital, and this reduces them to mere tokens of white capital. The alleged 'trickledown effect' of capitalism is used as a justification, while in fact there is opulent consumption. The desire to accumulate more wealth

at the expense of the poor is the moral code of primitive accumulation which is embedded in capitalism. So the capitalist mode of production must always be present to create an enabling environment for primitive accumulation. Ndlovu-Gatsheni comments as follows:

A few black people were able to take advantage of favourable state policies such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and Affirmative Action (AA) to climb up the social and economic ladder into the middle stratum/middle class status. Examples include Cyril Ramaphosa, Patrice Motsepe, Irvin Khoza and others termed the 'black diamonds'. These people were used by dominant white groups as showcases to counter accusations of racial discrimination and to hide continuations of racial discrimination. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012 forthcoming)

Mngxitama (2010d) argues that the black elite are managers of the untransformed economy and that the continued dispossession of blacks is legitimated by the black government in their elite clique. That is why a few trusted natives who are not a threat to white capital will be co-opted to run the untransformed economy and eat the leftovers of capital, since they neither drive the economy nor produce capital. The spatial economy which breeds and perpetuates inequalities between black and whites and amongst blacks is something that leaves the majority of blacks at a disadvantage.

The black elite in the post-1994 era run what Mitrovic (2010:4) refers to as 'bandit economy', which is politically, structurally and developmentally untransformed. Mitrovic states that this stems from the fact that the neo-elite accept their former oppressors to be their mentors. As a result, instead of bringing about radical reform, this transitional state results in 'mass unemployment, enormous exploitation, social inequalities, [and] the rise in social contradiction' (Mitrovic 2010:4). These pathologies affect blacks who are trapped in squalid conditions and are condemned to a life of non-existence in townships, shacks and RDP houses, which are an

insult to the dignity of blacks. When the black majority rise to protest their legitimate and basic demands, by demanding basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation and housing, they are met with police brutality. This clearly shows that the legacy of the past is still haunting those at the bottom of society.

The legacy of the past, through structural and institutional arrangements, thus remains intact, since the spatial settlement patterns in South Africa in general remain the same, with few blacks gaining the point of access. This is made possible by the presence and the establishment of the oligarchs who have been, and who are still, in control of the economy. Mbeki (2009) points to the establishment of New Africa Investment Limited, which was formed before the ANC was awarded political power in 1994:

The object[ive] of BEE was to co-opt leaders of the black resistance movement by literally buying them off with what looked like a transfer to them of massive assets at no cost. To the oligarchs, of course, these assets were small change. (Mbeki 2009:67)

The revolution or liberation is betrayed, since there is an absence of those ideas which were the driving force of the liberation struggle. Therefore, another language, the language of capital, is engaged upon. This is an antithesis to overcoming the black condition, since this black elite does not understand in clear terms the language of capital, since they are not the creators of capital or its forces of production. By being mere mediators, they stand outside the theatre, since they do not understand the script, and as a result, their performance will leave much to be desired in the audience.

According to Gibson (2004), the black elite seek empowerment in that it is a parasite on the state. They are also dependent on white capital – the real locus of power. As McDonald (2006:177) argues, by ‘re-organising state power, making it democratic and “non-racial”,

capitalism was re-grounded and sustained. But the political economy was not de-racialised, it was multi-racialised'.

According to Mngxitama (2010d), primitive accumulation of the black elite is essentially following the tendencies of the white elite, but not benefiting the larger part of the majority in order to address the black condition. Mngxitama argues that this form of accumulation serves white interests and worsens the black condition. Bonefeld (2001) argues that primitive accumulation is not just a period of transition, but a systematic and constitutive part and process of capitalism. It is the foundation of capital and the way in which it is accumulated. Bonefeld (2001) points out that there are two forms of accumulation which are interconnected, namely accumulation by dispossession and accumulation by valorisation. Though they negate each other in dialectic terms, their interconnectivity produces something new.

However, this occurs under the same structure and the mode of accumulation, that is, primitive accumulation. Mbembe (2001a) argues that the modes of accumulation in general and primitive accumulation in particular suggest that humans are caught between bare life and sovereign power. Primitive accumulation continues in the process of expropriation, since that is what informs its logic and mode of operation. Bonefeld (2001) argues that under these conditions, the masses are divorced and alienated from the means of production, since this is a result of primitive accumulation, which works on the logic of accumulation by any means, and the logic of dispossession.

The politics of the enrichment of the few at the expense of the masses is indeed a form of existence. In the post-1994 era, the black capitalists are, in a way, pursuing primitive modes of accumulation where they consume without producing and even exhibit their wealth and their modes of consumption. For Bonefeld (2001), there is interconnection between capitalist accumulation and primitive accumulation, because capitalism consists of primitive



accumulation, which then gave birth to capitalist accumulation. Bonefeld (2001) argues that capitalist accumulation and primitive accumulation co-exists in the forms of social relations, even if when they are declared changed, since the infrastructure of capitalism (which always forms part of accumulation) will exist in the logic that it desires (material wealth). Since the post-1994 era has a residue of capitalism inherited from the racist economy of apartheid, in the transition period between 1990 and 1994 it allied itself with the neo-liberal paradigm, which resulted in cosmetic changes.

As Southall (2004) argues, the emphasis by the ANC-led government on national reconciliation after 1994 meant that the BEE initial ideals were non-threatening to white interests. Primitive accumulation was legitimated by capitalism and it has been turned into a myth which is seen as indisputable because of its proclaimed altruism. In that form, the myth is legitimated to the extent no alternative is seen outside its modes of operation, since it has been embedded in a sacrosanct political economy. Essentially, it is institutionalised and naturalised at a level at which inequalities and socio-economic injustices are justified.

Mngxitama (2007:24) argues that '[c]apitalism thrives by excluding and impoverishing the majority and in our case the black majority'. He also states that the post-1994 state has been trapped in the chasm of capital. Bonefeld (2001) explains that abstractions take a leading role in determining social relations, which can be regarded as the market forces in which capital takes on a life of its own which attracts the existence and all the abstractions of the universe, with the intention of making them rational to itself. As Bonefeld (2001) argues, capital assumes a persona, that is, it becomes a subject or structural power that defines social relations and becomes constitutive of society. There must be exploitation through primitive accumulation for capitalism to exist and to justify itself based on the genesis required to transform its mode of existence, and to become a product of its own production (Bonefeld 2001). Primitive

accumulation resists demystification, and presupposes a concentration of wealth in the hands of the few. Capital should be accumulated and primitive accumulation creates and sustains the infrastructure of that capital.

Furthermore, political power provides the path to the accumulation of capital if it creates an enabling environment. The foundation of capital and the modes of accumulation – that is, primitive accumulation – create a situation where the status quo is entrenched. As Mngxitama (2007:24) comments: ‘How else do you develop capitalism if not by theft and plunder?’ The South African political economy inherited from apartheid a racist infrastructure which serves as the template.

Primitive accumulation relies on the foundational basis of a racialised economy, as it originates from capitalism. This form of accumulation is based on structural violence and power which mutate their content, form and mode of operation across time and space to be relevant. Thus, there has been no fundamental change since 1994, as the presence of black capitalists is indeed still peripheral, since, although the economic infrastructure has changed cosmetically, the possession of capital is still the preserve of the white economy.

Mngxitama (2011) points out that the critique of the black elite should also point to the real beneficiaries, who include the white oligarchy which commanded the South African economy during and after apartheid and who are not mentioned when there is an outcry about the rise or the existence of a black elite. Mngxitama complains that there is a resounding silence about the white rich who live in a safe ‘heaven’, whereas blacks live in a hellish condition – that is, the black condition. Mngxitama (2011) therefore accuses the ANC of being the gatekeepers of white privilege and bodyguards who serve white interests. He argues that this condition allows the country to be governed in the interests of a white minority.

Mbeki (2009) agrees with this outlook and states that the wrongdoer will not pay reparations while still maintaining a privileged position. Mbeki raises a red flag for a brief moment when it comes to reparations, issuing a stern warning in the problematic relationship that the black elite have with the state. The black elite continue to see themselves as the sole beneficiaries, at the expense of the black majority. He also criticises the presence of Previously Disadvantaged Individuals (PDIs) in the elitist circles. Mngxitama (2011) agrees with Mbeki here and argues that they use the language of victimhood while desiring inclusion in the white economy. Their role is that of keeping the status quo intact. As Mbeki (2011) states, 'the approach of the black elite to the state is, therefore, not that of using the state to serve the needs of the people but rather of using it, in the first instance, to advance the material interests of the PDIs'.

Mbeki (2009) states that BEE was a bribe offered by the white economic oligarchy to the black middle class to erase their call for nationalisation, which would have meant the transformation of the economy at the secretive Codesa II. As McDonald (2006:177) rightly argues: 'Forced to choose between preserving racism and saving capitalism, conservatives in business and the state opted to negotiate a new constitution with the ANC.'

It is argued that the blacks cannot be left on their own, as they cannot be trusted. So they must follow the script written by whiteness, since to them it is about meeting the expectations. Although blacks may reach high positions, white men remain in control (Roberts 2007). The emerging black elite must align themselves or change their values to fit those of their white counterparts. Roberts (2007:249) argues that this helps to alleviate the anxieties of the old establishment, since the natives are non-threatening and they speak in their master's voice – the 'black must be likeable'.

Capitalism is ontologically corrupt. Capitalism's modus operandi is exploitation, dispossession and expropriation (Bonefeld 2001). The post-1994 era in its economic crisis is something that

shows that its policy choice, neo-liberalism, is a part of the creation of the BEE elite. Kasese-Hara (2006:245) argues that 'redressing social, economic and psychological imbalances is seen as the huge task to be undertaken to ensure equitable, unified and democratic society'. Mngxitama (2010d) argues that corruption should be seen as the apartheid-inherited part of the logic of the accumulation path that is pursued by the black elite, and which is now legalised and protected by the ANC. Capitalism is, by its very nature and origins, corrupt, in that it is based on over-accumulation and exploitation. It is impossible to regard capitalism as an economic system just needing reformation to best serve humanity based on erasing inequalities and injustices, because capitalism cannot be matched with an ethics in line with addressing socio-political inequalities and injustices.

Capitalist accumulation can only occur and fatten itself through unjust means, and its evil profiteering has never stopped in the post-1994 era (Mngxitama 2010d). In relation to post-1994 South Africa, the ambition was to create a black capitalist class in a so-called mixed economy, which was in a way, and continues to be, neo-liberal. Since the fall of apartheid, the residue that the apartheid infrastructure has left is in a sense defining the current reality.

Mngxitama (2010d) concurs with Mangcu that the scandals of small examples of corruption will often be revealed. However, there is silence on the issue of addressing corruption on a larger and historical scale, as such large-scale corruption is normalised – there is no mention of the creation and the sustainability of the apartheid theft which has been protected by the ANC, which in turn facilitates the continuation of this theft. The presence of the black elite serves white supremacy and white capital which they must not disturb.

Alexander (2004) argues that the black elite do not reflect blackness and that they cannot change white capital. She argues that this creates a situation where blacks have no space and they must function in a manner that warrants white guidance and supervision: 'Just like colonial

administrators, African leaders embarked on state consolidation that privileged the freedom of a clique of people and the clients and patrons rather than expansion of frontiers of freedom to the citizens' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012 forthcoming). This is a top-down approach, where the masses are neglected, and what really matters is the image of the black elite, and that in itself is regarded as being progressive.

White privilege creates the black condition, and this means that white capital is privileged over and against blackness (Rottenburg 2003). According to Rottenburg (2003:446), in order to access privilege, it seems, subjects interpolated into the symbolic order as blacks must constantly endeavour to embody attitudes associated with whiteness'. Essentially, this means that to access privilege, blacks must aspire to be white in order not to be prevented or discouraged from accessing many privileges enjoyed by whites. Nevertheless, when it comes to its enjoyment, this should be done in a just and equitable manner. The black elite are irrelevant with regard to the black condition, since to them this is an issue they are ashamed of and thus they seek inclusion into whiteness. It is in this inclusion where the black elite will project their success onto the black majority. They therefore become exhibitionist, and as a result, downplay the serious condition of neglect and exclusion that is part of the black condition.

Gibson (2004) argues that the black elite has emerged at the expense of the black majority, so their wealth does not have the desired effect on the lives of the black majority. Black billionaires remain mere managers of white capital, and they inherit a legacy that is exploitative and does not eradicate poverty, but exacerbates it. Mitrovic (2010) therefore calls for a radical change in the modes of production, but for this to occur, the entire political and economic infrastructure needs to be changed. This call for action is in opposition to the notion of gradual economic reform that sometimes allows a number of piecemeal changes. For there to be

serious economic change, there needs to be a radical re-thinking, instead of a situation where society is haunted by an immature pseudo-elite which serves white capital.

## **Conclusion**

Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama agree that the creation and the emergence of a black elite is not beneficial to the country, but is rather parasitic to the state. The dependency complex suffered by the black elite is embedded in parasitic modes of accumulation and renders the black elite largely powerless. The black elite are non-productive, but parasitise on the state, which they must pay allegiance to. Seepe and Mangcu seem to criticise the black elite and their BEE project without relating the rise of the black elite or BEE to the continuity of history. This suggests that there is a need for perspectives which go deeper into the complexities that brought about the existence of the black elite and their modes of operation and may even question who benefits from white capital.

Mngxitama's positionality goes further than that of Seepe and Mangcu, as he argues that BEE is a post-1994 predicament, since it leaves white capital untouched, and the elite few are used as a front as if they were representative of the excluded black majority. This means that the black elite are an oxymoron. It is white capital that has brought into existence the black elite, who lack the political imagination to overhaul the capitalist system. In addition, the black elite are not a threat to white capital, and their existence is the perpetuation of the black condition. The creation of white capital and the emergence and consolidation of the white elite was made possible by the exploitation and exclusion of the black majority. The same logic operates in the post-1994 era, where the black government is in power, with the black elite engaging in primitive accumulation in parasitic terms. Thus, the economy is untransformed, as it remains under the control of the white elite.

It is important to note that the genesis of the formation and consolidation of the black elite cannot be understood outside of the English and Afrikaner elite. The state played an interventionist role to ensure the formation of the white elite, and the same applies to the black elite, who are paradoxically serving white interests.

The notion of the black elite has been considered in the post-1994 political discourse. The black condition will remain as long as the victory of 1994 lies only political power, but cannot be articulated in economic terms. There will continue to be small cosmetic changes which must be regarded as irrelevant to genuine transformation and which only serve to exhibit the opulence and the modes of consumption of the black elite. It was noted that the black elite are a creation of white capitalism, and that, as a result, their existence is not a threat to white capital. That is why they are reduced to mere managers of an untransformed economy. Therefore, the black elite are an oxymoron. The next chapter will focus on the role and nature of black public intellectuals in the context of power and ideas.

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **POWER AND IDEAS: THE PUBLIC INTELLECTUALISM OF SEEPE, MANGCU AND MNGXITAMA**

### **Introduction**

This chapter seeks to explore and analyse the dilemma of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama in the post-1994 era in relation to the notion of power and ideas. The dilemma of black public intellectuals in the post-1994 era in South Africa is that whilst they claim to speak truth to power, they are caught in the centre between the state, white capital and neo-liberal ideology and the black majority. To understand the locus of power and the ideas of these black public intellectuals, the post-1994 era 'needs to be thought through threefold: socio-economic, political and ideological' (Mamdani 1999:126).

The problem this chapter engages with is that there is a belief that democracy has come to South Africa, and hence there is no need to engage with the legacy of apartheid any further. Moreover, there is a belief that since the state is led by a black government elected by the black majority, the black government should not be criticised by blacks, because this is disloyal or unpatriotic. As Mkandawire (2005a:20) explains, there 'was always tension between the intellectual's critical mentality and his/her affinities, especially among those who insisted on sycophancy and blind faith'.



Nowhere in the discourse of the post-1994 era has the idea of public intellectual emerged as strongly as in the politics of the Native Club, which was housed in the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA). The Native Club, which was accused of reverse racism, arose out of the belief that there was no black public intellectualism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008). This chapter therefore also engages the discourse of the Native Club, which arose among other think-tanks which were formed both before and after 1994 and the chapter attempts to establish why there was such an uproar concerning the founding of the Native Club.

### **Seepe and speaking truth to power**

Seepe (1995) believes that there is a lack of interrogation and concrete definition of black public intellectuals, particularly when it comes to issues affecting post-1994 South African political discourse. A black public intellectual has to negotiate the contested space between power and ideas. This is a unique feature of the post-1994 era, and the battle lines are blurred. The positionality of black public intellectuals should arguably be on the side of the black majority, but as it happens, in many cases, they are distant from that majority.

Nzimande (2005) maintains that during apartheid black public intellectual discourse was informed by strategies and tactics to defeat the apartheid regime. For Nzimande, the post-1994 political discourse should also be informed about issues facing this era. This suggests that public intellectuals should ask questions that have not been posed and fearlessly engage with such issues in an intellectually vigorous and rigorous manner.

Seepe (2007a) also argues that public intellectuals should not be on the periphery in matters of influencing ideas and knowledge production, for example, on the periphery regarding matters relating to the black condition. They regard themselves as being in the centre when they feature in or make some contribution in matters that are considered part of a 'national debate'.

This raises the question of whether, if anyone engages society on the matters that affect society, such an individual can be regarded as a public intellectual. Furthermore, is the public (broadly, in terms of interests) affected by the same matters? Particularly in a society such as South Africa, which is highly differentiated racially and ethnically and in class terms, can public intellectuals be spokespersons for the whole society, and at what vantage point will they be positioned?

In the era of former president Thabo Mbeki, Seepe was more critical of political power than he is at present. Seepe's critique was directed particularly at Mbeki's HIV/AIDS stance, his foreign policy on Zimbabwe, including those who sympathised with it, and he was even harsh to others who spoke truth for power. Under the current president, Jacob Zuma, Seepe is no longer a fierce critic of political power and he defends such power. The stance that Seepe adopted after Zuma was elected as the South African president puts Seepe on the opposite side from that which he occupied before. Black public intellectuals are always caught in a dilemma of metamorphosing from being critical of power versus becoming its ideologues and then its propagandists.

Seepe (2000b) argues that systematic attacks launched against black intellectuals were fuelled by Mbeki's paranoia, who often called on black intellectuals to engage in the issues of transformation. According to Seepe, the agenda of black public intellectuals and other intellectuals alike should not be prescribed by those in power, but should be something that exists in the public domain. Those in power include the state, white capital, institutions and the ideological apparatus which are finding a political life in post-1994 political discourses.

The formation of the Native Club in 2005 elicited controversy regarding the role and relevance of such a club in post-1994 political discourse. As already mentioned above, the formation of the Native Club arose out of a belief that there were no organised black public intellectuals,

based on the fact that although there are black intellectuals in some intellectual circles, their agenda was not in line with the aspirations of the black majority. Mamdani (1999) argues that most black public intellectuals are a product of colonialism and that their ideas enable and advocate assimilation to the colonial construction of the intellectual thought.

According to Seepe (2007a), the formation of the Native Club was a sharp relief for black [public] intellectuals who had withdrawn from public engagement. He adds that its formation created a meaningful dialogue between and among black intellectuals. Mamdani (1999) amplifies this view by noting that public intellectuals should engage in a re-awakening of thought, and be drivers of social change.

Thabo Mbeki was seen as the brain behind the formation of the Native Club, which allowed it to operate as a presidential initiative and as an ANC project. The Native Club was meant to provide impetus to his ideas concerning the African Renaissance and those reflecting African society. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008) argues that the Native Club was in fact a call to focus on the issues that are of concern to the African society. This even included a call to 'produce ideas that drive African society' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008:70). According to Roberts (2008:266), 'the Native Club was an attempt at bringing blacks and whites together for deconstruction of some racial legacy'. He states that the members of the Native Club made an error in suggesting that there are only black indigenous Africans. Roberts's claim is refuted by the reaction and resistance that came from most whites, and some blacks, who had a problem with the word 'native', while others went further in suggesting that this was a 'blacks only' initiative.

Seepe (2006a:9) explains that the 'Native Club is a presidential project that aims to realise a vibrant critical consciousness among Africans'. He also warned that the Native Club could be reduced to a mere apologetic platform, loyal to the president, instead of being a robust intellectual platform. Although Mbeki made it publicly known that everyone was welcome, there

was still resistance from whites, which can be attributed to the word 'native'. Roberts (2008) argues that Mbeki corrected the inaccurate perception that the Native Club was subordinate to him, as exemplified by Gumede (2007), who regarded the Native Club as an invitation-only club of black intellectuals and argues that everything was 'presidentialised', as the office of the president was given more powers.

*Fair Lady Magazine* covered a debate feature titled 'So what's all the fuss about the Native Club?' Both Seepe and Jonathan Jansen were interviewed using the same set of questions. Seepe claimed that 'the fuss around the word native is misplaced arguing that naming oneself is an act of liberation'. He stated that there was a need for the Native Club, since white privilege and dominance are pervasive. He added that comparing the Native Club with the Broederbond was nothing but intellectual dishonesty and mischief. Seepe emphasised the importance of redress of past injustices and indicated that a look should be taken at evident racial disparities in the post-1994 era. The assertion of an African identity and turning it into a positive force requires the total eradication of the state of alienation and self-loathing that has afflicted the black majority (Seepe 2005). Jansen strongly attacked the members of the Native Club for labelling themselves as 'native intellectuals', while excluding others as 'settler intellectuals'. He claimed that the Native Club divided rather than united and described it as the president's project. Jansen argued that people do not want the Native Club, because its intentions do not concern the future of the country.

According to Masango (2009:2), the source of the furore surrounding the formation of the Native Club was 'its perceived link to the ruling party and the office of then President Thabo Mbeki'. She states that much of the commentary concerned the motives and the relevance of the Native Club. The argument here is that there would be no need for the Native Club if there was no concern about the legacy of the apartheid.

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008:66), 'black intellectuals of South Africa have always reacted to white racial nationalism with their own black populist strategies of black liberation, designed to mobilise across class divides and ethnic divisions'. Thus the formation of the Native Club was informed by an ethos of being resistant in the mode of operation of the Club against the institutionalised and normalised legacy of apartheid. Ndlovu-Gatsheni points out the following:

The supporters and the critics of the Native Club focused their attention on the murky present with a view to prescribing the mysterious future. No one historicised and contextualised the Native Club in the complex history of the South African liberation struggle. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008:54)

Ndlovu-Gatsheni draws attention to the fact that the Native Club should be understood in relation to black political thought rooted in the tradition of resistance that has informed and still informs the ideologies and the politics of most black liberation movements. These traditions stand in opposition to the idea of the rainbow nation, since they advocate for the ideas of radicalism which can be labelled racial nativism, although not always in essentialist terms. Thus, the injection of black populist thought into political discourse, though it often fits more into the marginal discourse, is part of a black intellectual political tradition.

Seepe (2006a) expresses a similar view by stating that issues that were at the centre of the Native Club were the following: the contribution of African intellectuals to African liberation and development, the idea and the relevance of the notion of the 'native', African identity, African languages, gender politics, knowledge production and a vibrant intellectual culture. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008:54) argues that, 'dismissing nativism as fake philosophy and as anti-racist racism is too simplistic'. He points out that rainbowism found itself in a state of tension with nativism and populism, which led to the rise of Native Club.

Seepe (2000b) states that when Mbeki raised the question about the whereabouts of black intellectuals, he was searching for those who shared his views and not for critics. It will be argued here that Mbeki challenged black intellectuals to define themselves, and called on them to engage in critical issues facing society. In this regard, Mamdani (1999) comments that the 'only guarantee of deracialised knowledge is an African focused intelligentsia'. It is according to such a view that the contribution of black public intellectuals is fundamental to the process of social change. Mamdani argues as follows:

There is a need for urgent action by the state, but not only the state, to create enabling conditions for the nurture of an African-focused intelligentsia. These conditions will need to create an institutional context receptive to such thought.  
(Mamdani 1999:134)

It is evident that what was of concern and what Mbeki raised in particular, was the absence of black intellectuals in determining and shaping the agenda of the political discourse and the direction of the country (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008). In amplifying this view, Masango writes:

In many speeches he had presented at various forums, former President Thabo Mbeki, consistently asked the black intelligentsia to be more visible and vocal in the socio-political arena. Mbeki had not only made the call in South Africa, but throughout the continent as well. In one of his earliest attempts to call for the vigorous participation of intellectuals, Mbeki used the forum of [the] Z.K. Matthews Memorial Lecture held at the University of Fort Hare on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2001. (Masango 2009:3)

Masango (2009) argues that this call appeared to influence some of the intellectuals, since the intellectual discourse had previously been white-dominated. However, although this was a genuine call, it was received with scepticism in some circles, because Mbeki was infamous for

dismissing and labelling those who criticised his government as if they were enemies of the state (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008; Ndebele 2007; Daniels 2006; Kadalie 2001).

Seepe's (2000b) response was that Mbeki was calling for praise singers, since those who criticised the government were demonised. For Kadalie (2001), independent and critical views were marginalised and the use of the race card was deployed whenever suitable in the Mbeki era. Kadalie (2001) highlighted the fact that political power might be consolidated and abused in subtle ways in what she called 'Democracy of a Special Type', which she argued was prevalent in post-independent eras where those in power are sensitive to criticism, and such criticism will also be silenced in subtle ways. 'People do not speak as easily for fear of being called racist, right-wing, sell-out, disloyal and unpatriotic' (Kadalie 2001:224).

Seepe (2000b) believes that public intellectuals should not be dictated to in terms of the activity that they must carry out. Though this view is not far from the truth, it missed the importance of such a question posed by Thabo Mbeki. This view further creates the impression that Thabo Mbeki should not engage in political discourse, because he was a very opinionated president who made his views known every Friday in *ANC Today*, a mouth-piece journal, writing in a column called 'Letter from the President'. Although public intellectuals have the right to speak in public, since this is not the exclusive domain of politicians, this does not mean that they are all agents of truth. Seepe (2000b) subscribes to the ideal formulated by Said that there should be a 'free floating' intellectual who guards against the interference of their independence since independence is an indispensable aspect of public intellectualism. They are agents who speak truth and they enlighten society (Said 1994).

The notion of intellectual autonomy is problematic, since it is always seen as confronting political power. Nothing is said about independence, in so far as it applies to the institutions that public intellectuals are attached to – white capital and even neo-liberal ideology. Black

public intellectuals cannot be relied on as independent voices in society, since they can act in the interests of the power of the state, the market and the hegemony of popular ideology or ideologies.

Even though it is claimed that their ideas tower over those of politicians, little is said about black public intellectuals who have no power to rise above being caught in the demands of white capital, the state and the neo-liberal ideological apparatus. Although they are defined by the ideas they disseminate and exchange in society, it is important to establish whose ideas they propagate in ideological terms and what interests they serve.

The role of public intellectuals is problematic in most liberal democracies, and the post-1994 era is a case in point. Masango (2009) conceptualises power as the power of the government authority or state power, because intellectuals often cross swords with this form of power. However, economic or institutional power, which is also ideological, under the mission and vision or unwritten rules of thumb, are absent from Masango's conceptualisation.

Thus there is silence regarding the institutions that public intellectuals are attached to and/or the companies that fund them, if any; and whether they are independent from them. South Africa has a large number of think-tanks in Africa and some of them were already present in the apartheid era. This includes the South African Institute of Race Relations, the Centre for Policy Studies, the South African Institute of International Affairs, the Helen Suzman Foundation, and the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research. Most of these institutions subscribe to the values of liberal democracy and do not allow for Marxist, pan-Africanist or black consciousness ideologies or world views. However, the Africa Institute for South Africa is informed by pan-Africanist ideals, hence it even accommodated the Native Club. These think-tanks host, employ, consult and provide a forum to black public intellectuals. Subsequently, it is important to know who owns these institutions, whose interests they serve, who funds them



and for what reasons. Radical black intellectuals are in the margins of these institutions, since they did not determine their agenda and ideological content (Mamdani 1999). Some feared being on the margins and they were co-opted and even reduced to the level of native informants even though they held high positions.

According to Mamdani (1999), a change of pigmentation cannot be equated with deracialisation. A public intellectual might be black but his/her products might not be black enough or touch the pulse of the black condition at all. The structural constraints remain even in institutions representing the interests of society. Black public intellectuals should frame and engage in debates on their own terms (Seepe 2009b).

What motivates public intellectuals who are in conflict with the state or political authority is a 'state of creative tension with the rules and restrictions imposed by the prevailing institutions on everyday life' (Ferudi 2004:32). Seepe (2000b) agrees with Ferudi that distance from the conventions and pressures of everyday life is necessary, since detachment informs positionality. Detachment involves defying the dictates or schedules of institutions or other locations and modes of power in the political scene. Black public intellectuals need not be detached, but should be allied with progressive forces and oppressed groups. However, it is arguable to what degree such detachment is possible, since public intellectuals do not operate in a vacuum. Ferudi (2004) sees autonomy as the ability to pursue the public intellectual's own life. However, linked to the above mentioned institutions are the ideological apparatus and white capital. These are forces operating in hidden forms which inform the agenda and perspective of a black public intellectual. Even though black public intellectuals take pride in their work and ideas, there needs to be some engagement in relation to how such pride is consistent with the institutions they are attached to via the notion of independence.

Seepe (2000b) called for intellectuals and more black public intellectuals in particular to be detached and critical of power. Despite this call, Seepe himself has become attached to power under the Zuma administration. Public intellectuals should not be co-opted or be praise singers, because otherwise they may betray their intellectual principles by means of well-reasoned intellectual deceit. The state is the embodiment of power, and it is therefore necessary that public intellectuals should be non-aligned and 'should clearly define their political allegiance and stand out as independents' (Masango 2009:12). However, due to the dilemmas they face, this is not always the case, as public intellectuals are aligned with structures such as those of power, particular institutions and/or market forces.

It is in these terms that the notion of independence becomes blurred. Furthermore, their ideological stances do not allow all public intellectuals to be wholly independent, as they are influenced by their socio-political acculturation. The idea of detachment and independence is a liberal bourgeois ideal. Black public intellectuals need a clear locus of enunciation – that is, they must be embedded in the location that they speak from. Black public intellectuals should speak on behalf of the oppressed groups; they must be the voice of the voiceless.

This is in line with the potential agenda of the public intellectual that Seepe indicates that the nature and character of each black public intellectual is not the same, and that also applies to the issues they engage upon. Seepe (2009d) suggests that the government should not engage in intellectual suppression, because this creates the symptom of intellectual withdrawal, and then intellectual space is reduced to a mere recycling of ideas. Intellectual suppression creates a conspiracy of silence, which allows vulgarisation and political correctness to take centre stage. According to Seepe, black public intellectuals should not affirm the ideas of the president or the powers that be. Seepe states that politicians clamour for uncritical endorsement, but that criticism raises and enriches the level of conversation and rigour of

thought. But what does Seepe mean by power? Seepe, who is infamous for his systematic attack on Mbeki, justified this form of intellectual tradition based on Edward Said's notion of 'speaking truth to power'. Seepe (2008c:11) argues that the truth and complexities characterising the post-1994 era can be reduced to dispensable inconveniences, in which 'deliberate misrepresentation and pigeonholing are the order of the day'. This, in Seepe's view, breeds a situation where only the views that protect the government are allowed to prevail. The notion of speaking truth to power connotes the idea that the public intellectual has the prerogative to enjoy the privilege of being free-spirited – a free-floating intellectual.

As Said (1994) argues, the public intellectual has the conviction of speaking truth to power and should not be compelled or expected to toe a party line, utter some slogan, hold orthodox ideas or be constrained by fixed dogma. In terms of speaking truth to power, 'the first imperative is to find out what occurred and then why, not as isolated events but as part of an unfolding history whose broad contours include one's own nation as an actor' (Said 1994:99), because the public intellectual is supposed to appeal to the wider public and is an individual with a specific role in society.

According to Nzimande (2005), the role of black public intellectuals in Gramscian terms as an organic intellectual is that they articulate public interests from the class they serve and they are shapers and contesters of ideas. Fuller (2006), by contrast, argues that public intellectuals are those related to ideas, and they motivate political action with those ideas. Said (1994) argues that tolerating the tempering and abandoning of freedom of opinion is a betrayal of the intellectual exercise. The intellectual role is that of 'questioning, not to say undermin(ing) authority' (Said 1994:91). Thus, speaking truth to power in this sense is to raise issues which political authorities are not paying attention to or choosing to silence. The notion of speaking truth to power only speaks to political authority, such as that of the ANC, for example, not to

power in totality. The notion of speaking could have just been called 'speaking truth to political power'; however, the notion of speaking should be applied to speaking truth to power in its totality. Africa is a location of coloniality and imperial power in place since the fifteenth century.

Power also manifests itself in different forms that public intellectuals are not aware of or choose to ignore, but they do feel the effects of such power structures. Therefore, speaking truth to power should mean a confrontation with political power and authority in their varied manifestations, in order to avoid concentrating on criticising only the most visible or organised political institutions. It means not choosing consensus, but operating outside the 'space controlled by experts and professionals' (Said 1994:87).

Since the norms of power conform or accept what is already institutionalised, the norms of public intellectuals should aim to disrupt narratives of organised (and sometimes disorganised) authoritarian forms of political power. This is pertinent if public intellectuals serve the public good and in good faith. Said (1994) points out that public intellectuals should be positioned in relation to the concept of justice and fairness. However, he acknowledges the impracticalities and challenges of such a positionality, as public intellectuals are located in various socio-structural conditions and dynamics.

Seepe (2008c:11) exclaims that '[o]ne can be critical of a party without becoming the enemy'. Seepe also argues that for the intellectual engagement and for the purpose of sanity prevailing, elements of arguments which are bereft of truth or logic should be exposed. In their commitment and principles as the agents of truth, which they often speak to power, Du Toit (2000) adds that they are known as figures representing the marginalised with the mandate of following truth and justice. This implies that the positionality of the black public intellectual is an alternative stance that should breed the space of speaking truth to power.

Said (1994:102) declared that '[y]es, the intellectual voice is lonely, but it has resonance only because it associates itself freely with the reality of a movement, the aspirations of a "people", the common pursuits of a shared ideal'. This is the basis upon which the public intellectual does not owe any allegiance to or solidarity with the institutionalisation of power. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2001) argue that criticism is the key function of public intellectuals since this provides a location in or from which such a figure speaks truth to power. Speaking truth to power is the means by which public intellectuals are exercising their freedom of expression and opinion. This is informed by the power of resistance, and 'this means taking a stand against one's own government' (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 2001:39) and other expressions of oppression and authoritarian tendencies that can shift into private spheres.

According to Tendi (2008), speaking truth to power means engaging with public opinion, which entails acting as a guardian of the public good in the face of excesses of state power and which frequently undermines the interests of society. Currently, black public intellectuals are expected to be state-aligned, and to benefit from its propaganda machinery. In this form, they will be distorting their analysis and maintaining the status quo. Due to political differences or maintaining dissent, engaging in intellectual debate is often reduced to a liability. This is an ideological positionality that can be transcended by public intellectuals who choose to be critical of power and oppression in all its manifestations.

Similarly, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2001:39) argue that '[t]he point of speaking truth to power in contemporary societies is to effect better conditions to achieve peace, reconciliation and justice'. These authors acknowledge that the positionality of a public intellectual can be very complex and ambivalent, but the key is for the public intellectual to assume the positionality of 'politics [that] links criticism to the possibility of a different world' rather than a politics of attributing blame (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 2001:40).

Furthermore, they suggest that public intellectuals should act to remind us of the evils of colonialism and 'its continuing effects as well as to clarify and expand space with which to check post-colonial societies have been able to carve out for themselves' (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 2001:40). Black intellectuals in the post-1994 South Africa are far away from taking the debate up to this level of engaging with the invisible colonial matrix of power.

Seepe (2007b) sees the notion of speaking truth to power as essential to the intellectual project. Lazarus (2005) regards the notion of speaking truth to power as not being critical enough from its own introspection, since intellectuals are located in the sphere of power and serve power according to an ideological script. He questions the romanticisation of the intellectual and argues that intellectuals benefit, as they are in possession of cultural capital. The notion of speaking truth to power is mere sloganeering in that it means 'speaking truth in the face of power' (Lazarus 2005:120). Lazarus argues that the practice of public intellectualism is materially implicated. The notion of intellectual autonomy is problematic, because black public intellectuals are caught up within the complexity of the institutions of power, both as critics and propagandists. Lazarus posits that the notion of speaking truth to power displays flawed logic, since power can also speak its truth through which it manipulates ordinary people and intellectuals to agree with it in a relation of coercion and consent (Gramsci 1971). Mbembe (2001a) adds that the relationship between public intellectuals is not always adversarial, because intellectuals can toy with power in a relationship of conviviality.

This suggests that the mode of ideological insertion of the South African public sphere can be contradictory; it can involve or manifest, simultaneously, the politics of resistance, adaptation, co-optation and collaboration (Hall 1994). Furthermore, Lyon (2009) asserts that speaking truth to power is fraught with complexities and contradictions, in that if the views of opponents are deemed dangerous, opponents may be labelled public enemies.

According to Seepe (2000b:10), public intellectuals 'should also not be friends with those in power since these individuals do not seek validation and affirmation from the powers that be, including the presidency, that some find them threatening and irksome'. Seepe adds that political and intellectual authority do not mean the same thing. Seepe pleads that black public intellectuals should not be propagandists and ideologues in power contestations. He further argues that public intellectuals should not be praise singers, just like those who serve power. However, considering the current position that Seepe holds as a policy advisor to the Department of Defence and Military Veteran Association Minister Lindiwe Sisulu, the ministry which is in the centre of political power, it is problematic for him to propose steering clear from being an ideologue or propagandist in defence of power.

Tendi (2008) provides a distinction between two types of intellectuals, the first being commissars who serve power and the second being dissenters who are opposed to power. According to him, power privileges political commissars and defies dissenters. Seepe (2000b) warns that the intellectual tradition can be easily disarmed, and reduced to silence – buried in an intellectual graveyard. Dissent may be demonised and even, at worst, crushed.

The current position that Seepe occupies is contrary to what he has advocated in the past. Although he may be linked with political power with a view to remaining independent, the notion of the meta-intellectual applies to Seepe. As articulated by Farred (2009), a meta-intellectual is the one who exercises an intellectual duty from the centre or a location closer to political power. Seepe provides his intellectual labour in the service of the state, while at the same time engaging in a public intellectual function. Thus, Seepe thinks and performs in the service of the state and the public.

According to Farred (2009), political power can be disguised as intellectual rigour, since there is some contestation of ideas in post-1994 political discourse. The coming into being of the

meta-intellectual is a modality of intellectuality. 'This is to say, the intellectual takes another shape, a different articulation' (Farred 2009:73).

The public intellectual is aware that the state changes both internally and externally since the state often experiences institutional changes. Such changes include change in terms of a transfer of power, socio-economic crisis or political revolution. These dynamics often pose or create problems for public intellectuals, no matter what their relationships with the state are. In their desire to speak truth to power, public intellectuals may be driven by something individual, rather than institutional, to say something in the contested place of ideas (Lyon 2009).

Seepe (2000b), like Said (1994), argues that black public intellectuals should, in their intellectual endeavour, ask embarrassing questions. Secondly, they cannot be dictated to and are not obliged to toe the party line and follow party orthodoxy. Thirdly, they must be of the conviction that speaking truth to power is a vital principle and that no world power is immune from criticism.

Bennett (2007) states that changing uses of mutable relations between government and social rather than social control arising from a general historical closure of state or society relations can also complicate the identities of public intellectuals. This can happen because institutions of public culture sometimes assume or depict both past and present discrimination as unacceptable; they call instead for new forms of living the political life. For Bennett (2007), the activities of the intellectual working in the cultural sphere should neither be that of critic nor that of bureaucrat.

Black public intellectuals, and Seepe in particular, find themselves with a vibrant discourse, they cannot be manufactured by order, and yet there is a need to engage the post-1994 political discourse. Bennett (2007) states that Said's work on the intellectual appropriately



places the politics of the intellectual life in the context it finds expression in, despite its being fraught with ambiguities and contradictions. He argues that Said only sees the adversarial role of the intellectual. This is also the case with Seepe, and it will be interesting to analyse his views now that he is a meta-intellectual.

## **Mangcu and racial nativism**

Mangcu (2004a) argues that intellectual history should be given a place and ideas should be fought for in political discourse. It is not clear who the contenders in this battle of ideas are, but the state, with the potential of its excess of power, is seen as being antagonistic to critical ideas. Mangcu (2004:12b) states that 'to be an intellectual is something out of the ordinary for black people'. Mangcu's positionality has been that of the public intellectual, a title which he has claimed for himself. His work has been likened to the practices of Cornel West, a prominent black public intellectual in the United States.

Mangcu (2004c) offers a critique which seeks to change the landscape of the politics of identity. According to Banks (1995), public intellectuals should be committed to ideas and they should be grounded in grassroots issues. The ideas that black public intellectuals are committed to may be ideas which might not have relevance to the black condition and such ideas might not be regarded as important.

False universalism is a form of institutionalised power that black public intellectuals often succumb to by 'distancing themselves from the groups of their origin' (Banks 1995:77). This prevents them from connecting with the black community. The black condition is something that the universalism of freedom, justice, equality and fairness has no relevance for. Banks also points out that although black public intellectuals have imbibed universalism tutelage, this is a matter of positionality which forces them to embrace hegemonic discourses. As such, in

their acculturation, they 'would tend to confirm the effect of institutionalised hegemony on the intellectual trajectory of (black public) intellectuals' (Banks 1995).

The positionality of black public intellectuals may express strong advocacy for or close affinity to the black condition. However, in an environment where the black condition is regarded as unimportant, a black intellectual will not make it the centre of his/her intellectual labour. According to Mangcu (2005c:14), '[p]ublic intellectuals have often remained the only truly independent voices of their societies, sometimes even towering over heads of states'. This view is narrowly focused on the heads of states, instead of looking at colonial matrices of power and global imperial designs at the apex of institutional and ideological apparatus. These are the sites of power which determine the agenda, which in turn shapes the articulation of black public intellectuals ideas. It has to be stated that such an agenda might not be put in written or verbal terms, but operates as an unwritten rule and according to what is relevant in the post-1994 era.

The dominant view in reference to black public intellectuals is that they work with the truth. Truth is something that differs, depending on the location that the intellectual finds himself in, and truth depends also on the position of the state, institutional and ideological apparatus. The questions then arise – whose truth? Which truth? The argument here is that there are various regimes of truth. According to Mangcu,

The intellectual engagement would occur in its full complexity inside the triangle. For that interaction to be fruitful and productive there would have to be an understanding that government intellectuals, independent intellectuals operate according to their own logic. (Mangcu 2006a:12)

This means that the intellectual sphere that Mangcu regards as a triangle is in fact a contested terrain and there are different lenses through which intellectuals located in this triangle see the political world. Mangcu continues to explain this difference:

Government intellectuals tend to be informed by the logic of practicality, organic intellectuals tend to be informed by the wisdom that emanates from everyday struggles, and independent intellectuals tend to be informed by the logic of critical autonomy. But all this requires government intellectuals who are willing to enter the inside of the triangle fully prepared to be taken on both by the independent and the organic intellectuals, without a resort to name calling. (Mangcu 2006a:12)

From the distinction above, the positionality of Mangcu is unclear. For Mangcu to be positioned as a critical intellectual, what then needs to be explored is the site of power. Public intellectuals are engaged in public opinion, acting as the guardians of public good, yet this occurs in the face of the excesses of state power which undermines the interests of society (Tendi 2008:381). Tendi (2008) is silent about the excess of capital or what Gordon (2010) refers to as market colonisation of the intellectual. Lyon (2009) explains the relationship between public intellectuals, the state, civil society, both in the form of manifestations and the public. The role of the public intellectual is social engineering, that is, to make society to politically conscious. In their role, 'public intellectuals are driven by something individual to say in the contested terrain of the market place of ideas' (Lyon 2009:83). However, this view seems to gloss over the reality that public intellectuals serve ideological interests even if they pursue the truth or engage in a blatant lie by means of intellectual deceit, and they work within their frame of reference, something which is not a universal truth but applies to and differs from one context to the next.

Mangcu (2005c) suggests that public intellectuals should use public lectures as they are powerful deliberative platforms. As a 'cross-section of individuals, the public lectures become a microcosmic enactment of a pluralistic, deliberative, democratic national community' (Mangcu 2005c:14). Nzimande (2005) argues that the recommended development in the post-1994 era is the development of progressive public deliberation platforms. He writes that what 'is heartening about these developments is that progressive foundations, notably the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the Chris Hani Institute and the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust, lead these new progressive platforms for debate' (Nzimande 2005:1).

According to Mangcu (2005c), democracy should be pluralistic and deliberative, as this will harness the cross-sectional democratic national community. Public lectures are even a forum where the centrality and closeness of power is undermined, since citizens ask those in power critical questions. Public lectures are, in a way, elitist discourses accessed by a selected portion of the public whilst claiming to be representative of the whole public. There is not a single public deliberative platform, since existing platforms feature some issues at the exclusion of others, whether they are of national importance or not. The public platform is informed by plurality, difference and heterogeneity, with some similarities, and cannot be reduced to homogeneity.

Gumede (2009) argues that in a democracy, public intellectuals should provide ideas on how to deal with the maladies in the polity and develop alternative frameworks. Like Gumede, Crick (2006) suggests that public intellectuals should be responsive to problems and challenges in society, and even to exigent problems and they must be the exigent managers. He calls on them to be broader in terms of space and time, thus being capable of transforming the socio-historical situation(s). Gumede (2009:12) further argues that public intellectuals, which he frames as 'progressive intellectuals' are important in building a democratic political culture. He

adds that a culture of criticism, dialogue and discussion is necessary with regard to social, political, cultural and economic problems or challenges facing the polity.

As Mangcu (2004a) argues that public intellectuals should expose their ideas in the public domain and should contribute to the culture of public debate. They should go further and argues that they should be seen as partners in search of the truth and should not be given labels such as coconuts or ultra-leftists. Gumede warns of the regression effect that characterises most post-liberation societies, a phenomenon which gives birth to ghost democracies. This leads the progressive intellectual space to become limited. He cautions that intellectuals may find themselves in situations in which 'they are labelled disloyal, anti-revolutionary, enemies of the state' (Gumede 2009:15).

Mangcu (2007a) views this as a problem of political intolerance in the political discourse stemming from conflictual political and intellectual identities. Mangcu believes that black public intellectuals are often labelled when they speak truth to power. The problem centres on the fact that those critical of racial nativism are not equally critical of longstanding white racism. This is due to racial nativism which he argues is anti-intellectual, since it creates a condition where there is political intolerance. The criticism of racial nativism is not accepted, but there is silence when it comes to white liberal prejudice. Mangcu complains that public intellectuals are driven by the enterprise of ideas which is characterised by rational analysis rather than ideological outcomes. According to Mangcu (2006d), new forms of political life should not be based on racial nativism. He argues that racial nativism comes with a culture of political intolerance.

Mangcu proposes that South Africa should take a lead in democratisation and cultural diversity, and this will prevent it from being absorbed into the new racial nativism. This absorption is, according to Mangcu, a contamination of the new public culture. The political culture of intolerance negates debate or dissent, and as a result, this creates withdrawal or silence. It is

important to understand the origins of racial nativism and further the interrogation of what allows racial nativism to occur in the post-1994 domain.

The importance of black public intellectuals and their role in society is to make the public vigilant and enlightened. However, this does not mean that society is homogenous. There must be a contestation of ideas as the prerogative to speak in public is not that of politicians alone, but the domain of the broader citizenry. However, it is this 'broader society' where the black condition is still suffered in silence.

For Mangcu (2006d), black public intellectuals are vital in terms of the domestication of power, and they must grapple with the contemporary issues that society faces. Black public intellectuals should reframe the political discourse, in that when an intolerant political culture arises, there should be debate and dissent rather than a withdrawal from the political discourse. In terms of where black public intellectuals can stand, what they can speak, and how they can articulate – that is, their positionality, this brings to mind the role of the black public intellectual in the post-1994 context. Davis (2009) argues that their role is providing a basic frame which can contribute to civil society discourse, mediating emancipation and repression.

Mangcu (2005a) argues that intolerant political cultures often provoke debate and dissent. This comes from resistant and counter-power circles of public intellectuals who are bent on defending their stances, even if they are unpopular. This view triggers agency for public intellectuals who retreat in fear of being politically incorrect and also prevents their being made irrelevant. The discourse around the issue of the black public intellectual has been a trend of decline and retreat. However, the stances of the black public intellectuals are informed by the interests they serve, advance or defend.

Mangcu charges that during the Mbeki era, the intellectual sphere was one of retreat and decline, something which gave Mbeki the power to claim absolute truth immune from intellectual challenge and criticism. This implies a sense of decline, deficiency, even crisis and that intellectuals have lost credibility, also the ability to speak with authority and the right to be heard (Davis 2009). The decline of the intellectual is not seen only in the context of the state's interference and no mention is made of the institutional and ideological apparatus. The terms of authority and the desire to be heard are situational because even the institutions that black public intellectuals serve and/or represent might not legitimate their authority and hear or accept their ideas.

According to Coetzee (2000:109), 'people function as intellectuals in social discourse insofar as they relate our present and our future to our past'. Park (2006) argues that public intellectuals should be understood in terms of communicative connection – which negates past/present purity and understanding complexities. This is a turning away from a 'traditional emphasis on the ostensibly independent intellectual' (Park 2006:127). This allows for an understanding of the public intellectual's connection to society. Park argues that the decline narrative is useful in providing a historical context from the past for the role of the public intellectual. According to Park (2006), the narrative of decline is informed by socio-cultural authority – and this is why it becomes the dominant understanding of the public intellectual. The public intellectual debate has focused more on decline, since people's needs are ignored, but the remedy is direct contact with the people.

Park (2006) applies communication theory to understand public intellectuals, firstly, by comparing public intellectuals and journalists. He argues that public intellectuals are free-floating, while journalists are committed to the public they serve, in the public interest. Free-floating intellectuals cannot have an interest in influencing society. This seems idealistic, since

public intellectuals are there for the purpose of influencing the public, whether positively or negatively.

Lyon (2009) cautions that in the contemporary world, the public is not a passive collection of individuals who will simply listen to a public intellectual who translates and disseminates universal truths. That is, the arena in which the public intellectual is engaging with ideas is a contested terrain, since there is a contestation of ideas. Crick (2006:129) argues that public intellectuals are not only valued for their ideas, but rather, 'for their ideas-in-practice-with-others'. These are ideas which are not accepted easily, due to their abstraction, so for them to have any impact they must be given concrete expression. Fuller (2006:149) argues that public intellectuals should be responsible 'for their ideas, since the fate of those ideas is taken out of their hands and placed in some reception of community, who may chose to adopt, amplify, distort, or simply ignore them'. Simply put, they should not only explain democratic rights to citizens, but should also reinforce the idea that power should be limited (Gumede 2009).

Mangcu (2005a) argues that the substance and style of public intellectuals differ, and even black public intellectuals cannot be reduced to a homogeneous whole. Dikeni (2009) identifies four types of intellectuals in the post-1994 era. For Dikeni, there are pseudo-intellectuals, whom he describes as the celebrity intellectual, the commercial intellectual, the policy analyst and the new gender activist. These are the intellectual groups whom Dikeni states have dominated post-1994 socio-political discourse. Celebrity intellectuals are driven by a desire to 'gain face and not to lose face' (Dikeni 2009:36) and their focus is to track the scandals in society. Their intellectuality is based on their popularity. The commercial intellectuals on the other hand, who claim the monopoly of the truth, as they seek to make a profit in the marketplace. Dikeni argues that commercial intellectuals do not have a 'social consciousness' and, as a result, they contribute to the decline of the intellectual. A policy analyst is an



intellectual who is close to power, and policy analysis is put before anything else. This intellectual exercise, Dikeni (2009:41) argues, is confined 'to an elitist and pragmatic paradigm'. A gender activist is a new intellectual who has questioned the exclusion of gender politics or black women politics from mainstream thought.

Mangcu (2007a) clearly states that the intellectual is someone who should uphold the principle of independence, since this lends credibility. The issue of the independence of the public intellectual is contested and, as has been mentioned earlier, independence is problematic, as public intellectuals do not operate in a vacuum. The political economy of public intellectuals suggests that they promote their material interests and serve the ideological hegemony, including those who are in institutional, economic and/or political power.

Mangcu (2007b) argues that in the case of Batho Bonke shares, there was no link in the public intellectual's writing and these shares. He states that intellectual ideas cannot influence the public to think otherwise about the owner of the shares, who is Tokyo Sexwale. Mangcu went on to say that his writings cannot influence the public to support Sexwale who was suspected of having ANC presidential ambitions and putting his money behind those who would be likely to endorse him. Mangcu (2007b:12) writes: 'However, I am also smart enough to know that the extent of my influence is grossly exaggerated.' Mangcu rejects the idea of being bought by Sexwale to lobby for him for the ANC presidency. Mangcu's defence is that he accepts as a matter of principle, only legitimate and legal donations, as long as there are no strings attached. He argues that he made unpopular decisions by criticising the *Sunday Independent* for not promoting Mathatha Tsedu to take up the editorship position. Secondly, he resigned from a R800 000 per annum salary job at the Human Social Research Council when he was told to follow its media policy of not criticising the government. Lastly, he states that he hailed Steve Biko's legacy in the middle of silence. It is on the basis of these defences that Mangcu

states that he values independence and claims that his public intellectual agenda cannot be tampered with.

Du Toit (2000) claims that public intellectuals in the post-1994 era are failing to discharge their roles. Mangcu did not advocate the agenda of the black condition and expose the hidden and contrary political agendas of the post-1994 era, including injustices which are part of the black condition.

### **Mngxitama and the failure to ask the right questions**

Mngxitama (2010b) suggests that black public intellectuals are failing to ask the right questions in relation to the state of the country. In neglecting this duty, they shy away from the questions that are in fact part of the black condition. As Mngxitama charges, the ink of the black public intellectual becomes dry when they need to write about the black condition, because they are far removed from this condition. Essentially, Mngxitama's positionality suggests that black public intellectuals often engage in abstractions which are peripheral to the black condition and that they do not have the power to pose questions which should fuel agency. He argues that this could make them irrelevant in the market place of ideas which is colonised by ideas that cannot attack the Constitution or the total failure of the post-1994 state.

Black public intellectuals keep avoiding the black question and the black condition and seek solace in the practice of fence-sitting whilst claiming objectivity. They are praised for speaking truth to power in their systematic attack on the ANC, despite the fact that they fail to address the historical question and questions of white privilege and wealth, which are served and guarded by the ANC.

Mngxitama (2010a) argues that black public intellectuals are happy to accommodate betrayal, which is in fact the backbone of the post-1994 domain, instead of penetrating deeper into the

existential question and the conditions facing the black majority. The black condition persists indefinitely even when liberation is claimed to be in place, with some occasional cosmetic changes. Crick (2006:133), with the black condition in mind, argues that 'situations certainly come and go in the moment, but they also develop and linger over time'. Reflecting the qualities of the black condition or preparing a way to change such a condition, black public intellectuals as agents should also keep in mind the politics of memory, which are located in the past, present and future.

According to Crick (2006), public intellectuals should, in their abstract intellectual work, produce a productive or tangible art form which will be beneficial to public consciousness, by means of transforming the habits and common sense of a culture. Crick (2006) adds that memory, which is essential, should not only be about the past, but should be about the fluidity of time, place and context. Such fluidity refers to how the past, present and the future connect and influence one another. This also extends to understanding what can be learnt from these three to build a better future – where public intellectuals will influence the manner in which another world is possible.

According to Mngxitama (2010a), the work of black public intellectuals should be informed by posing difficult questions which centre on historical injustice, reparations and the demand for land. If black public intellectuals raise such questions, their work, which takes time to influence the broader society, needs to be internalised in the psyche of those who need awakening. Public audiences are those who are already aware or are at the centre of the public sphere or have access to it. 'However, once the ideas of the public intellectual work their way into the culture over time, they begin to take over a life of their own' (Crick 2006:136). Such ideas need to be given concrete expression by the public intellectual to have a lasting impact. This calls for new forms of life – a new language and political imagination. The damned, those who are

under the yoke of the black condition, can thus derive some form of consciousness from this new language and political imagination.

According to Mngxitama (2010e), the black experience is reduced to rational logical abstractions which have no bearing on the extraordinary reality befalling the black condition. As such, these abstractions are detached from reality. Public intellectuals in their public role should engage with reality as they see it. The black intellectual is in dire need of a definition, something which is related to the black condition. This is a condition which has no grammar of suffering and cannot speak on itself – a condition which has no urgency due to its naturalisation and normalisation. In this mode of existence, it is a continuous systematisation and institutionalisation, viewed as requiring change but not agency – a drive towards radical change.

Tillman and Tillman (1972) posit that the black condition is the absence of ontology. There is an intimate relationship between the social object and the perceived subjects in which the power to define determines how the social object will be engaged. They charge black public intellectuals of often being complicit and of not having a sense of the urgency to change the black condition. Tillman and Tillman (1972:58) argue that black public intellectuals are on ‘a balancing wheel’, which finds enough ground in race denialism. Intellectuals are driven by the ‘race relations improvement motif’ and as such, the black public intellectual will fear to call things as they see them, and would rather drown in abstractions than try to explain the complexity and universality of the race issue (Tillman & Tillman 1972:59). This creates enough ground for the issue of race not to be debated; hence, the post-1994 era, with its non-racial ideal, shies away from the issue of race and its pigmentation, which is blackness which positioned as a reception of structural violence.

As Mngxitama (2010e) states, there is a fear of calling white racism what it is, and there is some sophistication in race denialism, which as a result comes *a priori*, as it is projected as something complex, hence the black public intellectual driven by upward mobility claims to be emancipated, while most of their fellow blacks are a powerless majority. This is a situation where the issue of race is deleted from the political discourse and this allows more ground to deny or negate the black condition.

According to Mngxitama (2010e), there is a fear amongst black public intellectuals to argue that Constitutional rights are not in line with the aspirations of the black majority. He argues that if black public intellectuals fail to unmask the making of the discourse, they have failed 'to speak truth to power'.

Park (2006) firstly introduces the notion of the political economy of the public intellectual. He then argues that it is related to three common trends. Firstly, there is the rise of celebrity intellectuals. Secondly, there is the commoditisation of the public intellectual. Finally, the ideological position of intellectuals is moulded to fit the position of the media industry. This suggests that the ritual approach of the public intellectual is the connection with society and this connection is subject to congruence and incongruence. Park further states that public intellectuals are not expected to maintain or possess 'objectivity'. Their commentary is subjective and is essential for their value as public intellectuals.

Du Toit (2000) asks: if the intellectual is singled out as the only agent, what about the discourse itself? This invokes a specific social basis and institutional setting within which the intellectual work finds itself. Intellectual production is not neutral, as the socialisation and worldview of the public, like that of an individual member of the public, is socially, politically, culturally and ideologically embedded. 'It should be clear by now [that] the notion of the universal and representative public intellectual is a naive and romantic fiction' (Du Toit

2000:93). It is argued here that the black public intellectual cannot claim universality or avoid particularity:

In the context of post-apartheid South Africa, this issue has been further complicated in a number of ways: former struggle intellectuals have had to make rapid and ambiguous accommodations in turning themselves into constructive policy analysts if not senior officials of government departments. (Du Toit 2000:95)

According to Tendi (2008), public intellectuals who are aligned with the state stand to benefit and they will pursue their intellectual trade in defence of the state. Tendi (2008) does not mention that these intellectuals are not only aligned with the state or with party machinery, but some are also institutionally and/or philanthropically aligned. Hence, they will propagate ideologies and not offend the values which create the image of these institutions. Even though they may not overtly defend their institutions, sponsors and donors, they will use sophisticated means of intellectual engagement while treading carefully to maintain beneficial relations.

Mngxitama (2010e) states that the post-1994 era has given birth to a breed of professional black, anti-black public intellectuals who serve white interests. These black public intellectuals propagate the notion of a 'raceless' society which is embedded in entanglement and ambivalence. According to Posnock (1997:329), '[t]his perspective sponsors a raceless society without erasing the historical experience of racism that unites all blacks and coloni(s)ed people'. Most black public intellectuals fear to engage in race openly from the perspective of the black condition as Mngxitama does, since this is labelled as anger and victimology.

As Tendi (2008) argues, public intellectuals do at times adapt their analysis or their intellectual work and this reduces them to pleasing and protectionist agents who are reluctant to challenge and disrupt the status quo. Hanchard (1996) points out that the fear of challenging the status quo arises because marginalisation looms large and the discourse is saturated or remains

closed. This is the comfort zone of the black public intellectuals. Moreover, black public intellectuals depend on the media, since the media chooses which public intellectuals are relevant and which are not. Park (2006) highlights the fact that most of the media are owned by corporate or other institutions – hence, public intellectuals do not control the media. The shape and dynamics of a media organisation are ‘linked to patterns in intellectual communication’ (Park 2006:120). As McClay (2002) argues, the political pressure and the pressure of the market place puts black public intellectuals in a precarious position, where public intellectuals’ lust for exposure and popularity compromises their integrity and vigorous standards of intellectualism.

Farmer (2002:203) adds that public intellectuals open themselves to attack in the act of ‘respond[ing] to what the media rewards’. Such a reward has little to do with the quality and the contentment of intellectual work, but has everything to do with fame and celebrity status. In that case, sound reasoning, mature and valid conclusions and predictions are left on the wayside (Farmer 2002). This state of affairs renders public intellectuals powerless. Oslender (2007:118) argues that ‘the intellectual’s celebrity status has often come hand in hand with a loss of critical position, and an eroding radical edge in public interventions’.

For Mngxitama (2010e), rational logical abstractions involve the erosion of critical thinking, in that rationality is used as a weapon. In the political discourse and for the public; this has led to a crisis of public intellectualism. This is because the unprecedented media demand for ‘experts’ on all sorts of topics has given rise to celebrities in the public sphere and a media frenzy imagination. The media creates this kind of intellectual to fulfil its demands, desires and ideological orientations. Gordon (2010) argues that public intellectuals are in the job market, which governs everything they produce. This means that the ideas they produce and articulate

do not possess power, but are possessed by power. As Gordon (2010:4) puts it, in 'a market-oriented society that means knowing how to play the game of making oneself marketable'.

Mngxitama (2010e) suggests that the fear of black public intellectuals is that of challenging the status quo. This creates a powerless position since their ideas should be in line with this status quo. Hanchard (1996) presents a similar argument, namely that the political powerlessness of some black public intellectuals is the result of their fear of sanction and exclusion from the apparatus they are affiliated with or serve. It is this complex apparatus for which the market is the maternity ward. As such, if public intellectuals raise views contrary to the hegemonic discourse or that of the logic of the market, they will be rendered irrelevant and shut out from the public platform or spotlight, losing their celebrity status. As Gordon (2010) argues, public intellectuals have bourgeois aspirations and their epistemology should fit that of the market logic. This is done on the basis of selling their intellectual labour and intellectual goods, since the service of capital is *a priori*. It is in this conundrum that they seek refuge in the notion of speaking truth to power, whilst also entertaining the white audience by not engaging white sensitivities – which are too important to keep the rainbow nation intact.

Looking at the coordinates and meeting points of the public discourse and state power, Hanchard (1996) posits that black public intellectuals are rendered powerless. They are often trapped in pandering to neo-liberalism, and in the South African context, they are only concerned with the threat to the Constitution. It is in this activity that there is often a failure to unpack ideology in relation to the black condition, an expression of political imagination to overhaul their whole ideological apparatus complex. This is the role of the black public intellectual if the ideological apparatus complex does not make an impact on the lives of the black majority. In the face of the excesses of state power, it should be their task to stand for



humanity and justice, and fight the dominant discourses. Independence from state power is the main source of leverage that an intellectual has.

For Mngxitama (2010e), the black public intellectual should support the struggle of the black majority who are trapped in the black condition. The role and the position of the black public intellectual is an important issue. To maintain relevance, Banks (1995) deploys the Gramscian notion that intellectuals should be grounded by maintaining historical ties, which rejects the universalist idea as hegemonic. For Hanchard (1996), the struggle of the black public intellectual is one of engaging and challenging institutional power relations, and such a struggle defines the intellectual's strength and weaknesses. An understanding of speaking truth to power does not take institutional power relations and ideological apparatus complexes into account.

For institutional power relations and ideological apparatus to be understood, there needs to be an understanding of the totality of power. In other words, various manifestations, locations, expressions and effects of power should be understood in terms of how they operate in isolation and in tandem to create complexity. It is in this complexity that the totality of power is constituted and lived, and which hegemonises itself for it not to be recognisable between the relations that form part of the subjected and objectified.

Record (1954) argues that black public intellectuals do not, in many cases, have the power of choice and flexibility to deal with the black condition, since it is complex. Each form of intellectual choice is important in its own right. The notion of a passionate intellectual inquiry and ultimate social practices should inform the discourse and the nature of the black public intellectual. Crick (2006) argues that the ideas of public intellectuals need to be given concrete expression to have a lasting impact.

Mngxitama (2010e) charges that black public intellectuals are vocal in denying racism as an experience that is unique to black people. He regards these black public intellectuals as professional black anti-black intellectuals. He writes: 'In general, they speak on behalf of the white racist liberal section of society. They are sophisticated hired guns of the post-1994 white racism' (Mngxitama 2010e:35).

According to Fuller (2006), convenient forgetfulness is the strategy applied by black public intellectuals to serve the racist infrastructure. It is in this form that the circumstances they find themselves in should always be rewarded with incentives. As Fuller explains, convenient forgetting is a deliberate choice public intellectuals make in their path towards celebrity stardom. This is a different path from that of the people they have pledged to serve.

Mngxitama (2009b) states that the discourse in South Africa is one of denying historical injustices and accommodation betrayal with the impression that all possible gains have been made. This suggests that black public intellectuals can be propagators of the integrationist programmes of the post-1994 discourse. This path can at times be initiated on their behalf by means of co-optation. The dictum in this process is that 'the key to progress is not to look back and to never regret' (Fuller 2006:153).

In Gordon's (2010) terms, if the agenda of the intellectuals speaking against and unravelling racism and its infrastructure is contrary to the logic of the market, then public intellectuals will defend the market logic, since they are rewarded for doing so. This means that these intellectuals are in secure intellectual spaces and regard those who speak truth to power in its totality – that is, critiquing the market logic, as reckless. Thus, they fear to 'bite the hand that feeds them' by speaking truth to totality of power, because speaking truth to power is a risk which is high when compared to the benefits of silence or collusion (Fuller 2006).

Mngxitama (2010e) argues that black public intellectuals who are race denialists are protected by a hegemony which makes the act of denying racism something that seems logical and philosophical. As a result of this protectionist and denialist role, they are in the service of the structures of white supremacy which deny agency to those in the black condition. The incentives are a 'rapid intellectual progress and greater professional recognition' (Fuller 2006:152). This allows these black public intellectuals to defend the hegemonic post-1994 social script and the status quo. In other words, they will not raise views that are contrary to the dominant ideas, or the institution(s) they serve.

This tendency, as Fuller notes, is informed by a high form of self-deception. This means that public intellectuals might claim to be free from government and other forces, but at the same time they are tied to the lure of the market forces (Fuller 2006). 'Nothing in my view is more reprehensible than those habits of mind in the intellectual that induce avoidance, that characteristic [of] turning away from a difficult and principled position which you know to be the right one, but who decide not to take' (Said 1994: 101).

In most post-liberation states, intellectuals want to maintain the status quo, and do not want to appear too political. Mngxitama (2010a) amplifies this view in the light of the fact that the silence of black public intellectuals is not a silence in literal terms, but the silence of not asking critical questions. These are questions which are fundamental to the post-1994 era, and include the issue of land, justice and reparations which rightfully belong to the black majority. Black public intellectuals have a tendency to be silent on what the dominant narratives do not say. The silence of the black public intellectual is often a dilemma that is self-imposed and this is based on a self-conscious perception of something that is invisible and/or non-existent (Mkandawire 2005b).

Gibson (2007) warns that even a militant public intellectual can be co-opted or silenced, and the struggle is demobilised, which this means a collapse of new forms of life. In this condition, black public intellectuals are silent or become ideologues and propagandists of the state and other sites of power – that is, the apparatus complex of power. With the call for public intellectuals to ground their intellectual works, Gibson (2007) challenges intellectuals to locate their site of the struggle with the poor. Intellectuals are often in a dilemma of rejecting the unjust world and at the same time being in collaboration with it.

Mngxitama is an open critic of the post-1994 discourse. This includes racism, white supremacy, capitalism, injustice to blacks and blacks who are native assistants who keep the legacy of apartheid alive by reproducing its structures. The post-1994 discourse inherited apartheid infrastructure, which must be destroyed. According Gibson (2007), intellectuals who reject colonialism sometimes fail to understand the notion of the anti-colonial struggle and the contradictions which inform it, or which are part of the struggle itself.

Gibson adds that most black public intellectuals may be seen as opportunistic and as haphazardly packing up the aspects of culture through a populist rhetoric which holds no benefits for the national struggle –rather there will be creative mutations for the mutation of culture. Black public intellectuals are often silent about the post-1994 racist infrastructure. They rather hide behind the rhetoric of defending the Constitution and consolidating democracy, while paying scant attention to issues that are really affecting the nation, especially if these are a legacy of apartheid which is managed by the ANC and some members of the black elite.

According to Farmer (2002), public intellectuals should trigger local agency to effect social change. He argues that directing intellectual efforts for the purpose of bringing to public discussions and issues of societal importance is essential for social change. This does not suggest that issues have to be common or universal, but they must be issues which are

pertinent in engaging with the lived experience, which is unique. Alcoff (2002) argues that black public intellectuals should open up new vistas of life for the marginalised and those in the underside of the lived experience by exposing marginality.

Being outspoken, Mngxitama is one of the few black public intellectuals who consistently defends their positionality and intellectual agenda. He engages in innovative analysis involving genealogy and problematises the black condition. This is going beyond a snapshot analysis that leaves the mode of existence at the wayside and analyses symptoms. Alcoff (2002) argues that public intellectuals are always faced with the demand to act in the service of their community and confront injustices in it. In this sense, the issue of social responsibility and accountability looms large and it is a matter of concern. However, public intellectuals are able to survive in defiance of this, as they regard themselves as independent. This is sometimes a dilemma in that some dislike biting the hand that feeds them.

Gibson (2007) argues that the pitfalls for intellectuals and middle class are their unpreparedness with regard to national liberation, and it will be added here, their lack of political imagination. The problem here is whether a militant will not be a spokesperson for the poor under the guise of revolution while benefiting from their exploitation and exclusion. To elaborate this point, former ANC spokesperson Smuts Ngonyama is infamous for stating that he did not join the struggle to be poor. The militant, Gibson (2007) warns, is co-opted or silenced, and the struggle is demobilised, and this means the collapse of the new forms of life. As a result of this, '[t]he honest intellectuals are imprisoned, the military takes over and the demonstrations are crushed' (Gibson 2007:40). These issues are common in post-colonial societies and have been prevalent in the post-1994 state, coupled with police brutality. Gibson (2007) emphasises the emergence of the new world through agency as the organising force in the political movements of the damned, excluded and dehumanised.

According to Mngxitama (2004), white leftist intellectuals in their role of struggling with the poor are in fact mediating black identity and aspirations. They act as a buffer zone, and negate the agency and demands of poor blacks in the black social movements. It may be argued here that intellectuals and leaders of movements project social movements in romanticised terms. It is in this manner that the suffering of blacks is commercialised. Tillman and Tillman (1972) submit that white liberals often act as spokespersons for blacks. In this particular form, which is often paternalistic, the black and white encounter no matter how concealed under the racist infrastructure cannot be the one that allows the black voice to speak for itself.

The black intellectuals seek to experience the world as if they occupy the social, political and economic superstructure like their white counterparts (Tillman & Tillman 1972). They are in search of the truth while they pander to the ideology of whiteness which perverts the black mind of the intellectual. West (1993) argues that public intellectuals should live the life of the mind, which is the isolated and insulated world between the great minds and the people they transmit and popularise philosophical knowledge to (Crick 2006).

Crick argues that public intellectuals are a modern product of the Enlightenment as they enlighten the state about public opinion by replacing traditional rational society. In other words, they popularise a given discourse, instead of making it a closed circle to include the public as the recipient of their ideas. Today's intellectual representation is rarely exceptionally heroic, due to being rendered banal.

Ferudi (2004) argues that the complacency and conformity of public intellectuals is brought about by a number of things. Firstly, they do not have a mission, project or desire to uphold the truth. Secondly, public intellectuals fail to uphold authority by making those who are in authority accountable. Lastly, they lack engagement in pursuit of truth. Public intellectuals should have enough political imagination 'to see beyond the sober realities of everyday existence' (Ferudi

2004:32). Becoming a black intellectual involves a 'self-imposed marginality resulting to marginality in the black community and also to it' (West 1993:67).

In addition, West also points out that there are two camps among the black intellectuals, namely successful and unsuccessful ones. The former are distant and condescending towards black community. The latter are disdainful of the white intellectual world, and they are scornful of white rejection. Both dangle between two worlds as they have no institutional infrastructure. For Posnock (1997), black public intellectuals become alienated if their intellectual engagement is distanced from the black condition.

According to Mngxitama (2010a), most black public intellectuals fear to state that Constitutional rights and protection are an illusion to the defeated black majority. He also argues that they fear to call white supremacy and racism for what they are. Ramphele (2000) argues that citizens advocate the notion of a 'good society', and they are different from individuals who happen not to live for their own sake because those who do not advocate for a good society, but the preserving of their individual interests. Citizens speak freely without fear, they live the truth as they see it 'and are not simply voices for other people's sense of discomfort' (Ramphele 2000:105).

There cannot be a declaration of speaking freely without fear when most black public intellectuals are alienated from the black condition and are not interested in engaging it. To resolve this predicament, black public intellectuals have the need to be grounded in the struggle with the lived experience of the black condition. A black public intellectual is not like any other intellectual, in that such a figure is rooted in the black condition, since blacks are judged by their skin colour.

The nostalgic projection or propagation of an idealised African past does not help to engage the black condition. Posnock (1997) explains that this production of nostalgia distracts black public intellectuals from joining forces with those who are trapped in the black condition. For there to be an end to the black condition, black public intellectuals should raise matters that bring an end to it, not intellectual abstractions which have no relevance.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter examined the problematic of the black public intellectuals' dilemma in relation to power and ideas. It also sketched the role, nature and character of black public intellectuals in the post-1994 era in relation to the positionality of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama. The landscape of black public intellectualism often points to complexity which leads to continuous contestations, which suggests the futility of having a homogeneous intellectual tradition. That is, the positionality of these three public intellectuals is also seen in the manner in which public intellectuals view and understand post-1994 discourse.

Said (1994) suggests, though with pessimism due to impracticalities, that public intellectuals should be positioned on the side of justice and fairness. The black public intellectuals should be at the centre in terms of contesting and setting the terms of the debate in political discourse and play a meaningful role by operating in the interests of pursuing the public good. As such, the black public intellectual is the guardian of the public interest, and should not be dictated to by those in power. It is a popularised view that public intellectuals engage and critique the dominant narratives or orthodoxy, as they are independent and free-floating (Said 1994). However, this view is limited in that it does not take into account the complexity of relations and systems that public intellectuals are aligned with, whether it is the state, an institution, white capital or ideology.



Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama do hold the same view that the black public intellectual should critique the status quo, and have the audacity to pose questions. This is informed by the view that there should be a space for debate and deliberation – a public sphere through public lectures and other public intellectual registers. However, a question arises regarding what ‘public’ a public intellectual is representing or engaging. The spaces for intellectual engagement are not public as they claim; they are still only accessible to a public few instead of being pluralised.

Post-1994 political discourse is a contested terrain and the positionality of these three black public intellectuals differs in terms of their questioning. That is to say, they differ in terms of what questions to ask, how to ask them and in what spaces or location such questions should be asked. Hence, the duty of the public intellectual is to speak truth to power. Nonetheless, and as indicated in this chapter, speaking truth to power should be done in totality. The notion of speaking truth to power should not be understood as speaking truth to political power only.

Both Seepe and Mangcu regard the notion of speaking truth to power as Said coined it, which is simply speaking truth to political power. This is evident in their systematic critique of Thabo Mbeki as a person who has created a culture of intolerance, fermenting nativism, and also his politics of labelling. Such a perspective does not allow for the understanding of power in totality which involves looking at other avenues where power is embedded and expressed.

In Mngxitama’s terms, there can be no speaking truth to power without looking at whose interests are being served. In other words, there needs to be a speaking of truth to those who are served by political power. This then goes to the problematic presence of the celebrity intellectual, the one who lives for popularity, fame and money by means of commoditising his/her intellectual labour. It is in these terms that the issues of black public intellectuals’

independence, truth and objectivity are problematised, since market forces are in place and intellectuals dance to the tune of the market for fear of exclusion and marginalisation.

Mngxitama believes that black public intellectuals often leave the structural condition unchanged. This can be attributed to the fact that they support the dominant narratives which are created and re-created to be the part of the social scripting. In some cases, the apparatus of power determines the agenda of the public intellectuals, but in post-1994 discourse, an attack is made on the black government which is seen as a threat to the Constitution due to its alleged excesses of power. Most importantly, the target of black public intellectuals, if they are on the side of the oppressed in their thinking and writing, should be power in its totality. This is not limited to speaking truth to power, which targets only political power.

The modes of articulation of the black public intellectual should be mean-spirited to open the vistas of political imagination, rather than debating for the sake of debating. The position of black public intellectuals as far as the black condition is concerned is that they should be located in a positionality that aims to unravel the complexities which are a mere buffer zone in the post-1994 era, instead of being the seat of objectivity and speaking truth to political power. The positionality of the black public intellectual should be clearly known and it should be embedded in the black experience, since being a black public intellectual implies that they are raced in the same manner as all other blacks with regard to their raced black condition.

# CHAPTER SIX

## CONCLUSION

This study has reached four sets of conclusions which highlight Fanonian insights on a post-colonial state. Fanon was used as lens to understand the positionality of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama as black public intellectuals in relation to race and blackness, the role of the black elite and black public intellectuals in the post-1994 political dispensation in South Africa. This application of Fanonian thought to the post-1994 era was informed by the relationship between text and context. Although the text and context span different times, the text (Fanon's ideas) remains relevant to the context (the post-1994 era in South Africa). Fanon's thoughts were articulated in writings done more than five decades ago, in which he engaged with the conditions he was experiencing. Therefore, this study uses as its point of departure these thoughts to create a deeper understanding of contemporary African realities in general, and the post-1994 South African experience in particular.

The first set of conclusions is that the study shows that the context which Fanon referred to reveals tremendous insight in its critique of the colonial condition and its aftermath. The post-1994 era in South Africa follows the same logic of 'repetition without difference' which is also relevant to other post-colonial states – that is, a betrayal of the revolutionary ideals to make way for an elite pact, such as a negotiated settlement. A systematic deployment of Fanon's ideas to the post-1994 era enabled a new reading of South African national liberation as a tragedy rather than a romance, because of its failure to bring a new life to the black condition. It

is a tragedy because liberation has resulted in a form of neo-apartheid, with blacks as a powerless majority possessing only political power, whilst cosmetic changes have been all that has been achieved, and fundamental socio-economic transformation is absent. Fanon ([1952] 2008:171) affirms this sense of tragedy with his warning that 'the black man (sic) was acted upon'.

Although blacks in South Africa have been given political rights, these rights do not translate into a means for dismantling the legacy of apartheid, which remains evident in the black condition. As an elite project, the national liberation struggle underwent an embourgeoisement, which culminated in a negotiated settlement that is now equated with liberation. In the post-1994 era democratisation, black depoliticisation and pacification has led to liberation becoming a mere illusion. Although South Africa celebrates the post-1994 era as a triumph of democracy, its history is still too closely bound up with colonialism, racial segregation and apartheid (Pillay 2004). Liberation cannot occur when those who are in the black condition are brutally crushed by the state apparatus when they demand conditions of a better life. It has become normalised in the post-1994 era for the police to shoot and even kill unarmed protesters who demand basic services such as water, electricity, houses and even toilets. This is where the black condition is located, a hellish zone of existence, where black humanity is trapped in structural violence which crushes black life into objecthood.

The bourgeois-imagined liberation does not possess the capacity to imagine a total overhaul of the anti-black structures that perpetuate the black condition. It is this imagination which results in liberation being an illusion, since it intends only to reform the colonial infrastructure, instead of dismantling it. This repetition of past patterns signals and brings to the fore the betrayal of liberation which is managed by a black comprador bourgeoisie, whose sole aspiration is to

capture state power and manage it, and in doing so fail to fundamentally change it in line with the aspirations that informed liberation.

In the post-1994 era, blacks are a political majority, but in economic terms, they are marginalised, with only a few members of a black elite included in the mainstream of the economy. If the post-1994 era is plagued by the black condition, it means that apartheid was reformed on the basis of continuing its legacy by means of this pseudo-liberation. The victories of South Africa are said to be non-racialism, a 'progressive' constitution, free and fair elections, freedom and equality. However, Fanon had tremendous foresight regarding this kind of situation when he stated the following:

The white man, in the capacity of the master, said to the Negro, "From now you are free". But the Negro knows nothing of the cost of freedom, for he has not fought for it. From time to time he has fought for Liberty and Justice, but these were always white liberty and white justice; that is, values secreted by his masters. (Fanon [1961] 2008:172)

The post-1994 era has a romantic view that is premised on the notion that diverse people should be united to create a rainbow nation. However, this process will not continue indefinitely and for the rainbow to transform there should be incentives to think in unitary terms. The black condition must not only symbolically disappear, but must also disappear in realistic terms. Economic freedom, reparations and justice must ensure that collective goods benefit all people, not only a small black elite. Thus far in South Africa, there has been a consistent failure to bring about a total end to the black condition.

To counter the existing black condition, there must be a clear understanding of the structures of oppression (hooks 1996). The only way to unmask these structures of oppression is to have the 'new self-invention and alternative habits of being' (hooks 1996:15). By contrast, Gibson (1999) argues that the subject in its fragmentation constitutes, or is in a dynamic dialectic

rather than a static one. The black being is supposed to become a new being, since his or her ontology was a mere 'thing' – the object in the colonial condition. Subjectivity becomes objectivity through revolutionary praxis, where those who are engulfed by the black condition become the agents of their own liberation.

The second set of conclusions in this study reveals that in terms of race and blackness, there is a crisis of co-presence. Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama have indeed kept the debate and discourse on race and blackness alive. With regard to race and blackness, Seepe's radical positionality points to the fact that the problematics of race and blackness are part and parcel of the post-1994 era, and they are a predicament to blacks. He confronts and engages with white supremacy as a legacy of the past which continues to haunt the present. Seepe's lenses help him to conceptualise race and blackness in relation to the lived experience of blacks, linking them to the political life of the post-1994 era which continues to demonstrate the effects of apartheid.

Seepe's positionality is that race and blackness must be engaged with in an open manner, as they are part of the post-1994 political reality. Seepe opposes a tendency to deny and ridicule the experiences of racism, and to regard them as a normal fact of life present in the post-1994 era. Since race affects the black experience, blacks should engage in the issues of race and racism in line with their lived experience. However, not all blacks are experiencing racism, since there are black race denialists who believe there is no racism; post-racialists who claim that there is a need to transcend race; and even black anti-blacks who vilify their fellow blacks when they raise questions around race and racism.

Mangcu's positionality with regard to race and blackness brings to the fore the complexity of these questions in the post-1994 era, and this is clear from his fluid positionality. Simply put, his views are constantly changing, since he calls for blacks to transcend race because there is

a new meaning to blackness, not a meaning which deepens racial consciousness, but a meaning which is inclusive and pluralistic. Although the problem in South Africa has centred on the racial question of targeting blackness, Mangcu's positionality can be regarded as ambivalent because the black condition calls for justice and reparations, rather than transcendence. Since South Africa was and continues to be organised along racial lines, it is the country that claims non-racialism as a form of altruism, although with some contestation in other sites of the discourse.

Mngxitama's positionality is consistent. It is a negation of Seepe and Mangcu's views, as he regards race and blackness as two issues that are inextricably intertwined in the post-1994 era, which remains the epitome of white supremacy. Mngxitama argues that blackness is a creation of whiteness and, therefore, blackness is linked to the dispossession of labour, land and African humanity. Blackness is always there, and it is a fatal attraction to the white gaze. Before the human is seen, blackness precedes everything in that what is seen is black. Mngxitama contends that blacks' race makes them targets for racism, and they find themselves in an anti-black world. Furthermore, this makes them a magnet for the pathologies that define the black existence – the black condition. There is a failure in his work to articulate and engage racism openly since sensitiveness is seen as important to preserve the illusion of a rainbow nation.

It becomes difficult for blackness to absorb other races around the nodal point of the black nation which the post-1994 claims to be, whereas it is not. There is no possibility for the entanglement of races. This raises a question of white sensitivities which are accommodated even in the face of black aspirations, which are in fact sometimes regarded as impossible demands to meet because they are informed by the notions of reparation and justice rather

than just service delivery. They call for the end of the anti-black world, which is the end of apartheid infrastructure and the invention of a new black being.

The ideology of non-racialism does not address the issue of race and blackness. The discourse of non-racialism assumes that race has been dealt with and blackness is no longer relevant. However, the structures of the legacy of apartheid continue to affect blackness. The conundrum of the post-1994 era is that race is still an issue, but there are ways to avoid discussing it. This conundrum fails to link blackness with 'being, freedom and reason' (Gordon 2010b:198). This situation is permeated by economic inequality, so it is an illusion to believe that it is possible to transcend race and to treat blackness as if it is irrelevant. The striving of the nation is in fact to go beyond where blackness exists in the hellish conditions – the black condition.

The third set of conclusions arising from this study is that, linked to the issue of race and blackness, the post-1994 era is fraught with another predicament, the problem of modes of accumulation by the black elite. The black elite has become the centre of race and blackness and they even mask the black condition, as they create the impression that they represent the black majority. This blocks the aspirations of the black majority and also perpetuates the structures of exclusion that have been layered over one another by white capital.

The black elite have no problem with race and blackness and they articulate these concepts in terms of racial nativism only if their path to accumulating white capital is threatened. They only seek inclusion in the modes of white capital and are not concerned with changing its logic and structures, which perpetuate the black condition. They project values which are contemptuous of the black majority who are trapped in the black condition, as they engage in their politics of opulence.



Seepe and Mangcu are critical of the black elite and their BEE project, without relating it to the continuity of history. This suggests that there is a need for articulations which go deeper into the complexities that brought into existence the black elite and their modes of operation and even to question who benefits. The post-1994 era black elite symbolises the material lack and gravity of the black condition, since it was the white elite, with maximal state intervention that led to their creation. Both the Anglicisation and Afrikanerisation of South Africa saw the state playing a major role in ensuring that the white elite accumulated wealth ahead of and in exclusion of the black majority.

Mngxitama's positionality goes further than that of Seepe and Mangcu, since he argues that BEE is a post-1994 predicament, as it leaves white capital untouched. He argues that an elite few are fronted, as if they were representative of the black majority. Essentially, Mngxitama argues that the black elite are an oxymoron, since it is white capital that brought them into existence. Moreover, the black elite do not have the political imagination to overhaul the entire capitalist system, which would be necessary to achieve economic emancipation for the black majority. Mngxitama does not regard the black elite as a threat to white capital, and their existence is the perpetuation of the black condition. The creation of white capital and the emergence and consolidation of a white elite was made possible by the exploitation and exclusion of the black majority. The same logic operates in the post-1994 era, where a black government is in power, with a black elite engaging in primitive accumulation. The black elite does not have the political imagination to change the status quo. They are mere managers who perpetuate structures of exclusion by means of structural violence. Primitive accumulation is a long-standing pattern and logic of accumulating capital. The black elite have imbibed the colonial logic of primitive accumulation and they have become alienated from the black condition.

Blacks often argue that when one of them emerges from the black condition, they are constantly monitored. White capital not only attracts a black elite, but also creates a wedge between the black elite and blacks still confined to the black condition. This furthers the impression that the black elite is responsible for impoverishing the black majority. The effect of this is that it absolves white capital from its historical sins regarding the manner in which the capital was accumulated. This accumulation was facilitated through structural violence, systematic exclusion, dispossession and exploitation. It is on this basis that race was used as the organising principle, with the state playing a maximal and interventionist role to create and sustain the white elite.

In the post-1994 era, white capital is immune, since the discourse of this era focuses on forgiveness of the past, as opposed to a claim to justice and reparations due to blacks. The discourse of corruption is racialised and selective, in that it naturalises and normalises the corruption of white capital. It is considered almost blasphemous to question the past and present accumulation of white capital. The present accumulation is criminalised, whereas the previous accumulation is immune from scrutiny.

It is not only whites who monitor the moves of the black elite. The black majority who are trapped in the black condition also monitor the emergence of the black elite. The predicament of the black elite is the question of nearness to white capital. Any black person emerging from the black condition or means of accumulation is placed under severe scrutiny by the media. When they try to move out of the hellish black condition, they are constantly questioned. The discourse of corruption is similar to a speed trap which aims to regulate black mobility.

It is important to note that this study does not condone corruption. The discourse of corruption should not be racialised, since apartheid was a grand project of white corruption. Modes of accumulation, both before and after 1994, should be criminalised if evidence of corruption is

found. The notion of primitive accumulation should, therefore, however be criminalised as a whole, since it is, by its very nature, corrupt. Furthermore, it is also embedded in capitalism, which is ontologically corrupt.

If South Africa is a capitalist system, the logic of primitive accumulation will always operate. Is there any other path to accumulation rather than primitive accumulation in the capitalist system? The issue is structures such as white capital were not dislodged during the transition, but were rather entrenched. These structures perpetuate primitive accumulation, a process which in itself produces similar results of corruption and inequality. The debate that is not present and that is needed in South Africa is one on ethical modes of accumulation. Thus, further research is needed on such modes.

The fourth set of conclusions of this study concerns black public intellectuals in the post-1994 era and their dilemma with regard to the locus of power and ideas. Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama hold the view that black public intellectuals should be critics, and should have the courage to pose difficult questions. This is informed by the view that there should be a space for debate and deliberation – a public sphere including public lectures and other public intellectual registers. However, what is considered a public arena that public intellectuals represent. In relation to power and ideas, it is unclear how public such intellectuals are and what public they serve. In the post-1994 era, black public intellectuals cry out for independence. The question is independence from what? The notion of speaking truth to power has limits, since it only focuses on political power, but neglects the institutional, white capital and the ideological apparatus of power. For there to be true independence, black public intellectuals would have to challenge and to separate themselves from the hegemonic power structures which shape the realm of ideas.

Political discourse in South Africa since 1994 is a contested terrain and the positionality of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama differs in terms what questions they ask, how they ask these questions and in what spaces or location such questions should be asked. Thus, the role of black public intellectuals also invites and requires political action and agency in order to create the possibility of a new world.

Both Seepe and Mangcu value the notion of speaking truth to power, as Said (1994) called it, which is simply speaking truth to political power. In Mngxitama's terms, there can be no speaking truth to power without looking at the totality of power, which goes beyond political power. Speaking truth to power seems irrelevant in the post-1994 era, if power is seen only in political terms. The interrogation of structural power and its vested interests is what a black public intellectual should speak truth to. This will then allow an understanding of power in totality which looks at other avenues and arenas where power is embedded and expressed.

In terms of Mngxitama's positionality, black public intellectuals often leave the structural condition unchanged. This then leads to the problematic presence of the celebrity intellectual, one who lives for popularity, fame and money, commoditising his or her intellectual labour. Market colonisation is what has trapped the black public intellectual. The logic of the market results in black public intellectuals not being the militant intellectuals they need to be. A militant intellectual is one who is located in the black condition, who is a bane to the powers that be by engaging in politics from below. Such black public intellectuals engage oppressive structures and the post-liberation logic of repetition without difference to understand the socio-political complexity of the post-1994 era.

Controversial as it was, the Native Club was formed on the idea encapsulated by Mamdani (1999) that for an African Renaissance to be realised, there was a need for a focused African intelligentsia. This is because there was a need to enunciate the black position in social,

political, cultural and economic conditions. The critics of the Native Club saw it as a backward move which does not contribute to nation-building, based on the view that there is a zero point, one where to enunciate the black intellectual agenda, since this agenda is not seen as a neo-liberal democratic site of struggle.

The black public intellectuals who speak and write about, for and with the people trapped in the black condition are marginalised from the mainstream discourse. Even if they are involved in the mainstream discourse, their ideas can easily be branded nativist and do not take the country forward – the vilification that was directed to the Native Club. Most black public intellectuals are part of the black elite, who are ideologically aligned with hegemonic ideas as they fear to be marginalised and vilified.

Having engaged Fanon and the columns of Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama, these four sets of conclusions suggest that the post-1994 state is essentially post-colonial in nature. This study rejects the view that post-1994 South Africa is different from any other post-colonial state. It is this exceptionalism that suggests that the bad past is gone and that there is a good future waiting ahead to be discovered, while, in fact, the past continues to haunt the present. There was no miracle in 1994 which gave birth to a new South Africa. The old refused to die and the new is not yet born. Post-1994 South Africa is marked by failure to bring about material changes and benefits to the black majority. The elite pact in a form of a negotiated settlement is seen as liberation, whereas it was an event where a small black elite compromised with their former oppressors. It is in this arrangement that the former oppressors retained their economic power and gave political freedoms to the black elite, with only a small black elite benefiting from the exclusion of the black majority. The black majority, who are trapped in the black condition, are oppressed by the leaders through the state force apparatus when they pressure the post-1994 ANC government to deliver on its own promises. These issues point to the fact

that there is nothing exceptional about post-1994 South Africa. It is essentially a post-colonial state.

Post-1994 South Africa under ANC rule does not have the political will or imagination to bring about fundamental changes, for fear that this will disturb the status quo. In the post-1994 political discourse, the curses of racism, land dispossession and the monopoly of capital are not engaged directly. There is silence, or in absence of it, self-censorship on these fundamental questions, which are considered sensitive. As a result, this pretence is a mere sleight of hand, claiming to defend one of the most progressive constitutions and deepening democracies in the world, whilst in fact, there is a crisis in the black condition. Post-1994 South Africa is marked by failure to learn from Fanon (1967) who warned against phantom freedoms. The year 1994 was coined a 'South African Miracle', with Nelson Mandela becoming a worldwide brand. However, this miracle did not change the black condition and the infrastructure of racism.

A re-reading of Fanon in application to Seepe, Mangcu and Mngxitama with regard to race and blackness, the black elite and black public intellectuals is the contribution that this study has made. Complex as it is, the post-1994 era needs to be re-thought and re-analysed on a continuous basis, since the issues dealt with in the study are complex in their own right and enable us to make sense of a problematic past and the murky present, and to make some forecast on a mysterious future.

Therefore, it is necessary to engage in future research taking the stance that post-1994 South Africa is not born from liberation but rather from compromise. Further analysis of the structures that reproduce the effects of the post-colonial state and the causes for it. The contribution in this study does not claim to be completely novel but rather adds a Fanonian perspective to the readings of post-1994 South Africa and the writing of three black public intellectuals. It is

therefore recommended that studies of this nature should explore how to resolve the paradoxes, dilemmas and tensions that characterise the post-1994 political discourse with the intention of understanding the lived experience of those who continue to be trapped in the black condition.

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