

**STEVE BIKO'S AFRICANA EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY:
ON BLACKNESS, BLACK SOLIDARITY,
AND LIBERATION**

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DECLARATION

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I, Cyprian Lucky Mpungose, declare that the dissertation, *Steve Biko's Africana Existential Phenomenology: On Blackness, Black Solidarity, and Liberation* is my own work; and that all the sources that I have used or quoted herein have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature

July 2016

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on Steve Biko's Africana existential phenomenology, with particular emphasis on the themes of blackness, black solidarity and liberation. The theoretical foundation of this thesis is Africana existential phenomenology, which is used as a lens to understand Biko's political thought. The study argues that thematic areas of blackness, black solidarity, and liberation are inherent in Africana existential phenomenology. These thematic areas give a better understanding of existential questions of being black in the antiblack world. What is highlighted is the importance and the relevance of the revival of Biko's thinking towards creating other modes of being that are necessary for the actualisation of blacks as full human subjects.

Key terms: Africana existential phenomenology, antiblack racism, Black Consciousness, blackness, black solidarity, liberation, Steve Biko.

DEDICATION

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My fallen brother, Nhlanhla Charles Ndumo (1962-2013); you always stood by me when everybody deserted me. May your soul Rest in Peace; you will always be missed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) came into being as a response to the political vacuum that existed after the banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). The resurgence of the Movement, which takes various forms, has moved from the psychological and spiritual realms to infuse even the political arena. Therefore, the Black Consciousness Movement emerged as an independent political and intellectual force aimed at liberating black subjects from the clutches of racial oppression and affirming their humanity (since they were dehumanised by racism). The basic tenets of Black Consciousness hold that blacks should reject value systems which made them foreigners in their country of birth and create their own value system that would empower them to view themselves through their own lenses, and not as defined by others.

Stephen Bantu Biko (1946-1977) arose within the ranks of the Black Consciousness Movement and became not only an intellectual figure, but a philosopher of existence (More 2008). His lived experiences sharpened his political thought with regard to race and blackness, black solidarity and the liberation of those oppressed by the apartheid system. It is on this basis that Biko should be understood as engaging in meditation of Africana existentialist phenomenology.

This study locates Biko within the Africana existential phenomenology. Africana existential phenomenology refers to social and political meditations that grapple with the lived experience of the racialised subjects, who have been, and continue to be at the receiving end of oppression, alienation and exploitation (Gordon 2000). This would then be the foregrounding narrative of this study.

Problem statement

The main focus of this study is to locate Steve Biko within the tradition of Africana existential phenomenology and further elaborate on or examine his meditations on the

idea of blackness, political contestations of black solidarity and the politics of possibility that are predicated on the idea of liberation.

Research question

What is Biko's conception of blackness, black solidarity and liberation, and to what extent are these relevant to Africana existential phenomenology?

Rationale

The rationale behind the study is to engage the political thought of Biko within the philosophical tradition of Africana existential phenomenology. Furthermore, this study will build upon the proposition of More (2008) that Biko is the Africana existential philosopher. Therefore, a gap exists in the literature as most studies focus only on Biko's lived experiences and legacy. Furthermore, the question addressed in this study is how Biko approached the problem of the existence of racialised subjects and their existential conditions.

This study will trace Biko's political thought and bring to the fore the ways in which he grappled with blackness, black solidarity and liberation *qua* Africana existential phenomenology. Furthermore, this study will build upon the proposition of More (2008) that Biko is *the* Africana existential philosopher. More importantly, this study will contribute to understanding Biko as a philosopher of existence and also, further enrich the contested legacies of Biko; though most arguments will be drawn from the political philosophical angle.

Literature overview

According to Manganyi (1981), it was premature for Black Consciousness to claim victory over oppression as it was then a psychological and spiritual force. Furthermore, this study will build upon the proposition of (Chipkin 2002) who contends that Black Consciousness calls for blacks to be the agents of their freedom, and this is simply because it is *their* freedom. This also means that the end of apartheid is a falsity in itself—even in the current era the notion of Black Consciousness still needs to be inculcated in the minds of many, as blacks are still 'on their own' and blackness remains in a state of crisis.

According to Manganyi (1981:168), ‘Black Consciousness is informed by the “level of an ontological system”’. In amplification, Mbembe (2007: 137) states that Black Consciousness is ‘a philosophy of life and a philosophy of hope’. Biko ([1978]2004: 97) states that ‘[t]he racism we meet does not only exist on an individual basis; it is also institutional to make it look like the South African way of life’. And, as a way of life, it renders blackness a problem and the manner of addressing that problem is to oppress blacks to be subjects without essence. Biko ([1978]2004: 30) charges thus: ‘this is the extent to which the process of dehumanisation has advanced’. More (2012) acutely points out, Biko demonstrates the dehumanising effect of racism towards blacks—a specific form of racism which militates against blacks in all forms of life—antiblack racism. It is this form of racism that questions and denies blacks their humanity. More elaborates:

Apartheid racism is misanthropy, total and complete hate. It is the hatred of the being of the Black victim. The original project of this hate is the total suppression of the Other’s consciousness; it is the desire to annihilate and kill the Other (More 2012: 31).

Black solidarity does not emerge for its own sake, but it is informed by the conditions that blacks find themselves in, the foremost one being antiblackness, which structurally writes off blackness from the realm of ontology. Biko supports black solidarity by asserting that:

The quintessence of it is the realisation by the blacks that, in order to feature well in this game of power politics, they have to use the concept of group power and to build a strong foundation for this. Being a historically, politically, socially and economically disinherited and dispossessed group, they have the strongest foundation from which to operate. (Biko [1978] 2004: 74)

Black solidarity is the solid commitment to resistance of white domination and oppression (Ramphalile 2011). Hook writes:

We need to read Biko’s Black Consciousness as *a radical humanist politics of solidarity* that operationalizes blackness and concomitant notions of identity and culture around the political objective of liberation rather than simply as psychological ends in and of themselves (Hook 2011: 26 emphasis in original).

Self-definition of blacks is the basis of Black Consciousness; and is a philosophical outlook. On their own, it means that blacks take ownership of themselves by means of

black solidarity. Black Consciousness is a collective entity which serves as the very basis of black solidarity. It means that blacks must make every effort to overcome the oppression that impacts on them; and the absence of black solidarity in the wave of the oppression of blacks means that blacks must not become complacent and do nothing about their condition. As Gordon (2008: 88) asserts, '[o]ne group wants to claim benevolence to those whom they dominate, and the other must seize its freedom'.

Demands made by Biko are in themselves political and are what Wilderson (2010) refers to as insatiable demands. These are demands that are predicated on the liberation of blacks and since they are non-negotiable demands, there is an effort to deny their realisation as they are deemed impossible to meet. For blacks to move towards attaining liberation they must make political demands in their own right. These demands are not demands in the simple sense of the word, but those that would turn current realities upside down. To demand is to live, to live is to render dead what brings difficulty to the possibility of living. Biko as a subject of resistance defies the status of the martyr, which is something that is teleologically suspending him (Sithole 2013).

Biko continues to call for black liberation since he did not pronounce the horizons of Black Consciousness; this is something that makes him the outlawed subject to this day, since the call for black liberation is something that is criminalised as it disturbs the racist system and its logical order of white supremacy. Therefore, Biko's demands for the liberation of the blacks calls for the death of white oppression and the birth of a liberation that is genuine and just for blacks. Blacks when liberated, should not be accommodated by whiteness; they should be liberated on their own terms.

Methodology

A thematic analysis will be undertaken for the purposes of this study. Thematic analysis examines existing texts and the discourses which are emerging in these texts. It is also, according to Guest (2012), the method that is content-driven, and searches for themes within textual data—and is complementary to Grounded Theory on many levels and it is phenomenological in nature.

The study is embedded in the relationship between text and context. Since thematic analysis is descriptive, the nature of the description can also lead to exploration in relation to what the text reveals. According to Creswell (2003), thematic analysis generates meaning from the texts that are being examined. This is also important to understand what does that meaning signify, and in what context is it constructed and encoded. In this study, thematic analysis is based on Steve Biko and Africana existential phenomenology.

More specifically, the textual analysis undertaken here is limited to three selected themes, namely; blackness, black solidarity and liberation. The analysis was limited to these themes for the mere fact that they resonate with Biko's 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. 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. This methodology is necessary as it will shed some light onto the complexities of blackness, black solidarity and liberation, and will weave different postulations and interpretations together. As such, it was useful in terms of identifying the ways in which Biko's thought is embedded in Africana existential phenomenology.

Limitations of the study

The study is mainly theoretical and conceptual, with a key focus on Biko within Africana existential phenomenology, and on him as an existentialist political philosopher. Specifically, the study focuses on themes such as meditations on blackness, black solidarity and liberation, which are some of the basic tenets of Africana existential phenomenology. It is of importance to note that the study does not enter into the debate on the relevance of Biko to the post-1994 era in South Africa; but makes the case that the application of Africana existential phenomenology to his political thought is essential in understanding him as a philosopher of existence.

Biko's articulations with regard to blackness, black solidarity, and liberation are still relevant within the African context, as well as within the tradition of Africana existential phenomenology. There is huge research interest and vigorous debate on the relevance of Biko in the post-1994 era in South Africa. More importantly there are

many authors who have written and explored Biko's thoughts and legacy. As mentioned, this study will not focus on those debates. However, it is necessary to limit this study to Biko's thoughts and interpretations of blackness, black solidarity and liberation. Biko's political thought and interpretations are referred to, in this context, as meditations, which are foregrounded in Africana existential phenomenology.

Chapter outline

The first chapter is an introduction to the study. The second chapter applies Africana existential phenomenology as a theoretical framework. The third chapter focuses on the thematic area of blackness with regards to the thinking of Steve Biko. The fourth chapter focuses on the thematic area of solidarity and a critical examination of Biko's thinking is applied. The fifth chapter focuses on the thematic area of liberation and shows the ways in which it is embedded in Biko's thinking. The sixth chapter serves as a conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

AFRICANA EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter seeks to apply Africana existential phenomenology as a theoretical framework to understand the Black Consciousness Movement in general and Biko's thought in particular. The fundamental premise of this chapter, more specifically, is that Biko's Africana existentialist phenomenology is still relevant in accounting to the existential conditions of being black in the antiblack world. This is mainly because the thematic of blackness, black solidarity and liberation are inherent in Africana existential phenomenology. As a theoretical framework, it will be applied; teasing out the aforementioned themes and foregrounding them in the political discourses that resonate with Biko's thought.

This chapter first gives an exposition of Africana existential phenomenology by extending it from Outlaw's definition of Africana Philosophy. Secondly, this chapter situates Biko's political thoughts within the tradition of Africana existential phenomenology. This is done through examining other political thoughts or literature and incorporating them into Biko's political thoughts with regard to the thematic of blackness, black solidarity, and liberation.

Africana existential phenomenology: the exposition

Africana existential phenomenology is a philosophical tradition which emerged with the aim of exposing the most pertinent issues that affected the existential conditions and lived experiences of African subjects and African descendants under the rule of colonialism. Africana existential phenomenology departs from the notion that African people are black subjects who are subjected to harsh conditions of colonisation against their will. Colonisation subjected black subjects to oppression, alienation, racism, dehumanisation and enslavement. Being 'oppressed' meant that black subjects were

regarded as silenced and non-existing human beings in the antiblack world. Outlaw defines Africana philosophy as:

A “gathering” notion under which to situate the articulations (writings, speeches etc.) and traditions of the same, of Africans and peoples of African descent collectively, as well as sub-discipline—or field-forming, tradition-defining, tradition—organizing reconstructive efforts which are (to be) regarded as philosophy (Outlaw 1997:267).

According to the definition by Outlaw, Africana philosophy reclaims the position of the existence of Africans in the antiblack world which had been regarded by colonisers as not being worthy of philosophizing. Africana existential phenomenology, which is akin to Africana philosophy, unearths the voices of the voiceless from the past stages to be heard and recognised by the present and future generations. Outlaw (1997:266) further states, ‘in the context of such endeavours, persons of the past and present without formal training or degrees in philosophy are being worked into developing canons’. This is to say Africana existential phenomenology takes cognisance of the rich histories of black subjects, which were not recorded or if recorded, were inaccessible to black subjects, owing to colonial policies which did not regard them as human beings with histories.

In essence, Africana existential phenomenology endeavours to reclaim the position or the existence of black subjects in the antiblack world. More (2008:47) asserts that ‘by virtue of the historical fact of racial oppression, colonisation, and slavery, Africana philosophy raises questions of identity and liberation by focusing on the reality that black subjects are affected by the significance of race and racism’. Racial ideology divides people on racial grounds. Racism promotes the superiority of whiteness over blackness. Whiteness enjoys the privilege of superiority and black subjects consequently experience inferiority in the existential condition of dispossession.

Africana existential phenomenology puts emphasis on the rejection of oppression. Oppression alienated black subjects in all facets of life. It rendered blackness dead in the face of whiteness. Furthermore, oppression excluded Africans in academic fields. African intellectuals were made to depend on the Western episteme in order for their work to be accepted or recognised. Africana existential phenomenology embarks on the restoration of the identities, histories and the recognition of African subjects as well as the recognition of African intellectuals academically.

Identity is self-realisation and self-acceptance of black subjects in the antiblack world. Gordon (2008:87) states, 'Put differently, the self is posed as the self through the realisation of the others, which means that a social framework for selfhood is that upon which even identity (an effort to recognise the self) relies'. The dispersion of African subjects as a result of colonisation and enslavement eroded their sense of identity and belonging globally.

Self-realisation is to accept who you are and what you wish to be. In this instance, black subjects accept their blackness and reflect on their lived experiences. Reflecting on lived experiences is to know your past (roots and histories) and use these reflections to shape the future. More (2008:47) asserts that 'Africana existential philosophy, therefore, consists in reflections, rooted in black experience, on the boundaries of human existence and the utilization of such reflections to challenges confronting African and African-descended people in Diaspora'.

To be black is equated with non-existence in the antiblack world. Africana existential phenomenology calls for unity amongst black subjects, regardless of their geographical location, to fight against the evils of oppression. Being black is a problem in the antiblack world. Blackness is criminalised by whiteness. The existence of blackness is always questioned in the antiblack world. In order for black subjects to redeem themselves from oppression, Africana existential phenomenology calls for unity and liberation.

Colonialism and white traditions created a culture of superiority and an inferiority complex between races. Gratton (2003:62) writes: 'The imposition of colonial governance, the forced conversions and intellectual enslavement of a number of African peoples, cut many on the African continent away from their traditions'. Gratton's argument is consistent with the articulations of Africana existential phenomenology in the sense that it is predicated on the idea of reconstructing African histories and the rejection of black subjects' sufferings under colonialism. It is however colonialism that enforced white traditions over black subjects; and thus black identity and traditions were destroyed. Whiteness became 'superior' to blackness. Black subjects are oppressed and white people enjoy the privilege of superiority that they do not deserve. Africana existential phenomenology speaks to the black subjects as oppressed subjects and is for black subjects only.

Being oppressed means following the masters' orders. Gordon (2008:89) elaborates: 'In these instances, oppression is an effort to erase the face and eliminate the gesticulating of hands; it is an effort to render a subject speechless'. For black subject, following the masters' orders is equated with survival. Rendering the subject speechless means undermining their existence. Black subjects are denied of their existence by white rule. Blackness only exists for exploitation and enslavement, not as human beings; as far as the antiblack world is concerned.

However, Africana existential phenomenology is about reflections on black subjects' lived experiences and existence. 'There is, therefore, convergence between questions of identity and questions of liberation; they intersect at the question: "*Who* is to be liberated?"' (More2008:48). More's perspective complements that of Africana existential phenomenology. Knowing their identity means that black subject as the oppressed subjects need to first know what it means to be black in the antiblack world. Moreover, knowing their identity also means that black subjects should understand that being black equals to common oppression in the antiblack world. By reflecting on their lived experiences, black subjects will see the need to reject oppression and engage in the struggle for liberation. Black liberation is when the black subjects use their collective power to reclaim their sense of worth.

Africana existential phenomenology is concerned with the suffering of black subjects in the antiblack world. It raises the ontological question: What does it mean to be black in the antiblack world? This is not just an ontological question, but a fundamental question, since blackness is rendered non-existent at the ontological level. However, Africana existential phenomenology deals with the aforementioned question and confronts oppression.

These problems raise a question which has an existential impetus; and they also inform the perspective of the racialised and oppressed subject as a form of inquiry itself. 'Africana existential philosophy deals with issues of the emergence of the black selfhood, black suffering, embodied agency, freedom, bad faith, racism, and liberation'(More 2008:47). In implication of the above, it is however evident that Africana existential phenomenology ties well with Black Consciousness and Biko's political thought. As a theoretical framework, this chapter situates Biko within the tradition of Africana existential phenomenology, as will be discussed in more detail in

the subsequent chapters in relation to the themes of blackness, black solidarity and liberation.

The thematic of blackness

Blackness is the way of being in the antiblack world which is contaminated by racism and oppression. Blackness is therefore, the identity marker, which creates colour prejudice, wherein blackness is structurally positioned in its existential lived experiences. Africana existential phenomenology reveals what it means for blackness to be a problem (Gordon 2000). Blackness is always a problem in the antiblack world as it is criminalised and dehumanised. The humanity of blackness is not only doubted, but questioned. Being black amounts to criminality and animality, and as a black person one is faced with arrest or death. This entails that blackness is denied justice as it is regarded as non-existent. Fanon ([1952] 2008:82-83) points out ‘not only must the black man be black, he must be in relation to the white man’. Blackness only exists because of whiteness. Whiteness is literally the creator of blackness. This further implies that blackness cannot exist without whiteness. This practically shows the level of dehumanisation of blackness in the antiblack world.

Africana existential phenomenology endeavours to reclaim the position of existence of blackness in the antiblack world. More (2010:73) asserts that ‘it is a systematic existential-phenomenological approach to the lived experiences of black people in an intrinsically antiblack world’. Africana existential phenomenology exposes the existential conditions of blackness within the clutches of oppression, racism and alienation from colonisation. More (2010:73) adds that ‘in Africana existential philosophy, this reality has meant detailed explorations of this dominating factor in the lived experience of African people’. Blackness is faced with racial problems, which affect blacks and their existential conditions. Racism denounces the existence of blackness as null and void in the antiblack world. Fanon ([1952]2008:86) argues, ‘[t]he white world, the only honourable one, barred me from all participation’. Fanon uses his own lived experience to demonstrate how blackness suffers in the antiblack world. To be excluded means that blackness is not recognised as being human.

The exclusion of blackness from participation is the exclusion from political life by the oppressive and racist system. Oppression, accompanied by racism, silences the existence of blackness in the antiblack world. Oppression allows whiteness to enjoy the

privilege of being human and the right to create and recreate programmes of existence at will, whereas blackness in the antiblack world does not have such rights and privileges. Manganyi (1973:30) posits that '[b]eing-in-the-world implies that the existence is a given, as the basic structure of existence is historical'. This existence militates against the emergence of blackness being a given. The existence that is a given is the existence that is taken. History has structured blackness as the subject of negation. In effect, this means that history is the structure of negation because it is informed by colonialism, segregation and apartheid. This history is the maker of ontological difference where humanity is questioned. Being black in the world is problematic. These articulations are filled with the same negation of history and subjectivity. Africana existential philosophy is a phenomenology that is not interested in negating, but unmask, exposes, names and shames such negation and renders it scandalous.

In corroboration of the above, blackness has been regarded as something that does not have histories to be written about. Sithole (2012) argues, the black subjects only existed in exclusionary structures of reality, which renders their existence superfluous. Blackness is relegated to the margins outside the community of life, which is the antiblack world. Blackness has been dispossessed by whiteness and has been created as a criminalised and dishonoured ontology. To be black is to be a criminal in the face of whiteness, and to be excluded from the politics of life. To be excluded means not to be accorded citizenship and access to civil society. Africana existential phenomenology endeavours to reclaim the position of existence of blackness in the antiblack world.

Ontological corruption of blackness by whiteness shows how whiteness has erased blackness. This suggests the absence of blackness ontologically. Whiteness dishonours blackness as the contaminator of the purity of whiteness, and this serves as justification for the depletion of blackness. To be depleted is to be removed from the catalogue of being. Blackness in the form of criminalised and dishonoured subjects has no chance of being redeemed and welcomed back into the community of being. Fanon ([1952] 2008:83) states that '[t]he black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man'—simply because the antiblack world has been created by whiteness for blackness. What whiteness has with black subjects is a master-slave relationship, and nothing more. Blackness as the ontological subject is a non-entity. This is because whiteness is the master creator of the antiblack world. At the ontological level, whiteness is superior and blackness is inferior; and this is not a matter of blackness

choosing to see itself as inferior but the structural position of their existence which perpetuates alienation, enslavement, oppression and worst of all, dehumanisation.

The lived experiences of black subjects in the antiblack world are precisely informed by the politics and ontology. ‘Many thinkers argue for the separation of “political” from the “ontological” as they would argue for the separation of ontology from ethics’ (More 2012:23). Ontology and politics are inseparable. Dealing with the being of blackness implies ontology and politics. Ontology and politics create existential conditions of being. Politics has racial patterns, which influence the nature of human behaviour. Neither can be addressed separately because they both have great influence in the lived experiences of blackness in the antiblack world.

The ontology of blackness and the politics of blackness are discursive markers of being black in the antiblack world. This is to say in order to address the inequalities, injustice, and the sufferings of the black subject, both ontology and politics should be approached holistically. Blackness was lost to humanity and got subjected to enslavement by whiteness. The humanity of blackness is negated and always questioned. In the eyes of whiteness, to be born black is to be a criminal, animal, thief etc. The oppression of blackness in the antiblack world is a way of life. Blackness is regarded as a negative pathology and a contaminator of white purity. On that basis, blackness is relegated outside the margins of the community of life. To be excluded from the community of life means to be excluded from the white system. The notion of blackness as a negative pathology means that in the midst of the reconciliatory gestures that are paraded, where past wrongs are forgiven and whiteness is removed from the base, blackness has to stop and ask fundamental questions regarding its state of oppression. The most important thing is that blackness should never enter into reconciliatory gestures because that would mean that black freedom is conditional, and it’s at the behest of colonisers.

Treatment of the black subject as being of body in general and of genitalia in particular, is tantamount to emptying the black subject of all ontological content. Whiteness as the constructor of blackness perpetuates the racial divide, taking as its organising principle the removal of blackness outside the ontological scheme of things; this has relegated blackness to the ontological margins of being non-human. Chipkin (2002:569) engages the conception of blackness, which is ‘detached from its historical referents (notions of

oppression, alienation and exploitation)', which actually means that those referents are outside the existential reality of blackness.

To think of black subjects in such terms and to even echo such sentiments is to engage the body. It is the body which does not possess life, by virtue of the fact that what is possessed is externally owned; it is contingent to that which is outside the body. As a full subject, whiteness possesses ontology. This is a being which is not contingent upon something but a being in its own right—that is, it determines its form of life through the political practice of determining and choosing. Gordon (2007) foregrounds the condition of appearance which is a form of emergence; namely black skin reflecting the ontology of non-being. Blackness appears at the level of the body and is an empty shell which does not possess life in the antiblack world.

What makes Biko relevant is his political articulations regarding the political landscape in South Africa. Biko criticised the apartheid regime, citing amongst other things, that racism was used as a tool to divide blacks according to the colour of their skin and oppress them. Racism was also used as a tool to render blackness a problem. Biko ([1978]2004:97) asserts that '[t]he racism we meet does not only exist on an individual basis, it is also institutionalised to make it look like the South African way of life'. As a way of life, racism renders blackness a problem and the manner of addressing that problem is to oppress blackness to be without essence.

The thematic of black solidarity

Black solidarity is the collective response of black subjects towards the rejection of oppression, alienation, dehumanisation and exclusion in the world. Black solidarity is predicated on the idea that blacks must be on their own to combat the existential injustices that befall them; and is a necessity and not a convenience. The existential conditions of blackness which are plagued with the history and contemporaneity of oppression, dictate black solidarity. Since oppression affects blackness as a collective, collective action is warranted. Black solidarity rejects oppression which exacerbates the existential violation of blackness.

Black solidarity is a political position of living in a world that is hostile to blacks. This position is informed by blackness *qua* blackness, affirming humanity in the antiblack world. Black solidarity wants the humanity of blackness to be recognised and accepted

in the antiblack world. Africana existential phenomenology is pre-occupied by the question of being black in the antiblack world; the response is, in no uncertain terms, black solidarity. Therefore, black solidarity is not a political formation but a political practice.

The affirmation of the humanity of blackness is only possible and effective in the political formation of black solidarity. Moreover, antiblackness is a colossal force which cannot be engaged upon outside the political formation of black solidarity. Black solidarity is the least experienced collective. Africana existential phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of the collective identity of being black in the world. For blackness to respond adequately to oppression, it must assume the politics of solidarity.

In Biko's Black Consciousness philosophy the world is a collective within a collective. Whiteness is a collective that oppresses black subjects. Black solidarity as collective rejects the collective oppression by whiteness. Existential conditions of blackness are predicated by violence. This violence excavates itself through appropriation, dispossession and conquest. Black subjects, therefore, collectively reject the injustices of oppression, of responses exemplified by brutal force, death and detention without trial.

Black solidarity emerges out of common experiences of oppression, alienation, dehumanisation and enslavement of black subjects at the hands of the oppressors. This therefore means that black solidarity is for blacks only as they are the ones who are oppressed. Black solidarity happens when blacks use their group power to reject the system that imposed itself over them. Shelby (2002:236) adds that 'it is based on the common experience of antiblack racism and joint commitment to bringing it to an end and should play an important role in the fight against racial injustices'. Racism is the breeding ground for oppression. Racism creates a racist state whereby the distribution of wealth is based on the colour of one's skin. Blacks are always on the receiving end since they do not form part of the white register. Therefore, black solidarity conscientises blacks to reject the value system that was designed for them and use their group power to design a system which will be owned and implemented by them without external interference.

Black solidarity emphasises and encourages blacks to see themselves as human beings which will lead to their self-realisation. Blacks should form a united front and work towards the attainment of their freedom. Therefore, black solidarity was necessary in order to afford humanity the opportunity to break away from dehumanisation. Africana existential phenomenology also deliberates on the question of black solidarity because blacks are on the receiving end of exploitation. The living conditions of black subjects will only improve if they come together and fight the system of oppression.

Black solidarity is not accidental, but is informed by the lived experiences which blacks go through each and every day of their lives. However, Africana existential phenomenology deals with the original existence of blacks and does not compromise. It further puts emphasis on the fact that blacks should meet on their own terms, and not on the terms dictated by others. It states that black solidarity is for blacks and about blacks only—which means that blacks are on their own. It is therefore imperative for blacks to be in solidarity so that they could collectively confront any life-threatening situations head-on.

Black solidarity is also emphasised by the Black Consciousness Movement in that black subjects should unite and reject all value systems that seek to make them foreigners in their country of birth. It further encourages blacks to build up a value system that is self-defined, and not defined by others or forcing them to view themselves through others' lenses. Once black solidarity is achieved, demands aimed at improving their living conditions will follow. In essence, black solidarity emphasises that blacks should first know the importance of coming together to fight a common enemy. More(2008:48) points out that 'to know what we ought to do requires knowing who we are, and to know who we are we frequently have to discover what we ought to be doing'. Black solidarity, therefore, emphasises the question of identity.

Black solidarity engages black subjects to regroup, to identify with one another and use their powerbase to reclaim their existence in the antiblack world. The strategy of divide and rule, introduced by colonisers, sowed a great deal of confusion and divisions amongst the blacks who were oppressed. For Shelby (2002:233), '[a] collective black identity is essential for an effective black solidarity whose aim is liberation from racial oppression; therefore, blacks who are committed to emancipatory group solidarity must embrace and preserve their distinctive black identity'. In actual fact, the oppression that

Africans are exposed to is a result of white solidarity. White solidarity can only be counteracted by black solidarity. Unity amongst blacks is imperative to counteract white solidarity, which is informed by oppression.

Apartheid first created racial boundaries between blacks and whites and further entrenched divisions amongst blacks themselves through tribalism and black-on-black violence. ‘The “truth” of apartheid was thus a primitive alienation that estranged the black man from himself’ (Chipkin 2002:572). Again, to be black was to be a problem and that meant blacks were on their own. However, black solidarity has become relevant to the concept of Africana existential phenomenology as it rests on the lived experiences of African or black subjects to embark on collective action against their existential misery. In essence, black solidarity responds to the lived experiences of the black subject by claiming that black subjects are fully human beings, not as predicated by colonisers or oppressors.

Black subjects’ lived experiences warrant that they engage in black solidarity strategies, which are aimed at liberating them. Africana existential phenomenology emphasises reflections on lived experiences and identification of commonalities amongst black subjects as part of engaging in the struggle for liberation. Reflecting on lived experiences will strengthen group solidarity and built up bonds which speak to their plight of being collectively oppressed. Antiblack solidarity groups criminalise black solidarity and claim that it is racist and immoral. Appiah (1992:17) states that ‘[b]lack solidarity constitutes racism of a special kind, but racism all the same, namely intrinsic racism’. Appiah’s claim denies that racism does exist. Indeed his claims should be rejected because racism exists through white superiority and black subjects’ inferiority. It is the same racist structures that exploit, alienate and oppress the black subject in the antiblack world. Appiah’s and others’ sentiments perpetuate the liberal ideology, which maintains that blacks do not exist in the world. More (2009:31) posits that ‘there is definitely no mistaking their liberalism and its antipathy to any collectivism that puts individuality in jeopardy’.

The fact of the matter is that racism does exist and renders the black subject non-existent outside the community of life. It is therefore improper to render black solidarity racist, since by its very nature, it is incapable of being racist in the face of antiblack racism. This is a far-fetched reality in the sense that black solidarity aims at liberating

blacks from racism. Resisting black solidarity only means that black subjects are not allowed to be people in their own right, but to be the mimic of something they are not. Black solidarity is something that is prohibited and criminalised. The criminalisation is sensationalised by accusing blacks who engage in the political practice of black solidarity as practicing reverse racism.

However, the truth is that black subjects are collectively oppressed by white domination. The collective attack on blacks triggers a collective response. Black solidarity is self-justified due to the positionality of the world which is antiblack. Therefore, a collective response of black solidarity is necessary for blacks to confront antiblackness. Black solidarity is the self-definition of blacks. Black solidarity is for blacks and about blacks only. Blacks should then make every effort to overcome the oppression that affects their existential conditions. As the oppressed subject, black solidarity excludes the involvement of whiteness because whites are oppressors and not the oppressed. White superiority and domination is the cause of black suffering. Gordon (2008:88) claims that '[o]ne group wants to claim benevolence to those whom they dominate and the other must seize its freedom'. In essence, whiteness enjoys the privilege of power, domination and superiority over the black subject. Black solidarity rejects such domination and calls for black subjects to unite and reclaim their position of power in the antiblack world. This concludes that black solidarity is for blacks only, as the oppressed subjects challenging their exclusion in the antiblack world.

Africana existential phenomenology challenges the black subjects' existential conditions, which are not acted upon, but can be agents of their own freedom. This complements the interrelatedness of black solidarity as they share the same arguments about the existential conditions of blacks in the antiblack world and the rejection of oppression. More (2009:21) poses a question, 'how should black people, for example, respond when they are grouped together and oppressed on the basis of the contingency of their characteristic?' Blacks are oppressed because of the colour of their skin and because of blackness, which does not feature in the white register. Being black is to suffer, whereas being white is to be prosperous, arrogant and powerful in the antiblack world.

Africana existential phenomenology rejects the oppression of black subjects, which has been made to look like a way of life in the antiblack world. It calls for blacks to identify

with one another and understand that all blacks are collectively oppressed, and that their freedom will require a collective black response. Oppression operates on the basis of identity, which is antiblack. Blacks should therefore mobilise themselves on the basis of identity because their oppression is based on the negative construction of their identity. Black collectivisation will result in black solidarity, which will set up goals and values, upon which freedom will be attained. Shelby (2002:233) argues that 'blacks can strengthen the bonds of sympathy and loyalty that will enable them to overcome the barriers to the collective action'. Once black subjects have identified with one another and collectively understood that they are not individually oppressed, then they will be sympathetic towards one another and starts seeing the need for collectively facing the clutches of oppression.

The thematic of liberation

The first two focus areas in this study are engaged as a mean of charting the terrain of liberation. The thematic area is one of Africana existential phenomenology. Africana existential phenomenology is predicated on the idea of identity and liberation and epistemological formations of being black in the antiblack world. Liberation is the means to overcome oppression experienced by the oppressed. The oppressed are black subjects, who are oppressed by white colonisers. Colonisers alienated, exploited, and degraded black subjects to the level of non-existence. Therefore, liberation aims at reclaiming what was lost to the colonisers. More (2009:20) states that 'the questions of liberation from oppression involve questions about the means to overcome that oppression'. Liberation is informed by lived experiences. Lived experiences extend to existence. The existential conditions of black subjects amount to injustice, exploitation, and exclusion from economic gains and being relegated to the margins of the antiblack world. Liberation unmask the realities that black subjects are human beings and should be recognised as such by the oppressors.

The existential conditions of the black subjects are a result of their exploitation, dehumanisation and exclusion from the community of life by the colonisers. Oppression is targeted towards blacks to deny them liberation. Blacks are oppressed because of their bodies, which are racialised and have certain notions imposed on them. Black liberation engages blacks' existential reality, which is plagued by oppression external to their bodily experience. Blacks are on their own and must, through their own solidarity,

liberate themselves from the clutches of oppression. However it is crucial that once people are liberated, they then address the realities of their existential conditions in their own terms.

Black liberation should not be articulated from the positionality of the oppressors; simply because if it is contemplated and articulated from the positionality of oppressors it will be distorted. Africana existential phenomenology agitates for liberation to be attained by blacks, and not given to them. A given freedom will mean blacks do not have control over it. Liberation that is given borders on bad faith. Bad faith means not to take responsibility. More (2008:60) argues that ‘in the antiblack apartheid world, bad faith is an “effort to evade one’s humanity” by asserting this “humanity as what it is not”’. Apartheid dehumanised blackness; and black humanity is therefore, not recognised in the antiblack world. Africana existential phenomenology emphasises that black liberation is the quest for black humanity, but not humanity as identical to that of whiteness.

Black liberation articulates the idea of the recognition of black humanity in the antiblack world. Malcom X (1970:56) posits, ‘[w]e declare our right on this earth to be man, to be human beings, to be respected as human being, to be given rights of a human being in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence by any means necessary’. Any human being born to this earth has every right to be treated as a full human being and be respected. It is an unfortunate situation that blacks are dehumanised at birth because of their black pigmentation.

The dehumanisation of black subjects relegates them to the realm of the antiblack world. To be a human being is to be recognised as such. Unfortunately, black subjects do not deserve that status in the face of whiteness. Black liberation therefore, strives to reclaim the human value of black subjects in the antiblack world. Africana existential phenomenology advances the question of the dehumanisation of black subjects in the antiblack world and calls for the recognition of black humanity, which has, for decades, been regarded as non-existent. This unity, according to Africana existential phenomenology, can only be realised through black liberation, whereby the end itself will result in the end of the antiblack world.

Black subjects have for years been following a programme designed by their oppressors. Black liberation therefore, rejects the value system that has been designed

for them and replaces it with the programme developed by blacks, for blacks. Thus, Black liberation aligns with the principles of Africana existential phenomenology. The emergence of black subjects in pursuit of liberation is vital to overthrow the structures of oppression and create a just world where humanity is central. In essence, freedom can only be achieved when blacks are liberated. Liberation will enable them to design a programme of their own free from the dictates of others. Genuine freedom is the one that has been fought for, not obtained as a gesture from the oppressors. There should be, in the quest for liberation, a concerted effort to break away from the status quo, and this requires political imagination. In the struggle, political education is very important as it keeps members committed to one common cause. Fanon ([1952] 2008) 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’. During the process of liberation, the colonised should know that the coloniser might respond with brute force.’

The colonisers will always preserve their position and will fight back. In the colonisers’ minds they don’t see themselves as foreigners in the country they have colonised. So they uphold the view that being in power is their right, whereas it is a privilege that they have appropriated for themselves. The oppressed should commit to the struggle and to the process of liberation, but also bear in mind that in any struggle there are always casualties. They must also be careful not to let their liberation be negotiated by the oppressors because that might compromise the aspirations of the majority.

Once blacks have been liberated, they can make demands, and those demands will be for freedom. However, black solidarity and liberation are the cornerstones towards the attainment of freedom. Black liberation is interrelated with African existential phenomenology, since their ideological make up is based on articulating the idea of identity and liberation. Africana existential phenomenology originates from the struggles of the oppressed against oppression.

Liberation should not be viewed as an individual effort, but as a collective effort because even the oppressors are united in their efforts to oppress, alienate and dehumanise black subjects. The existential conditions or lived experiences of black subjects were not their choice, but were created and imposed on them. The situation leaves them with no choice but to engage in the struggle for liberation for the betterment of their existential conditions. Fanon writes:

[T]he settler makes history and is conscious of making it. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country, he clearly indicates that he himself is the extension of that mother country. Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his own nation in regard to all that she skims off, all that she violates and starves (Fanon [1965]2001:40).

Black liberation is criminalised by the anti-liberation groups—criminalised because it disturbs the racist system and its illogical norms of white supremacy. To be criminalised means that black subjects live with the fear of being killed, arrested and exposed to structural violence and not being allowed to challenge the racist system that has erased their existence in the antiblack world. More (2012:31) asserts, ‘in human terms, to live under the threat of non-being is to live in what existentialists call a condition of finitude, the constant possibility of disintegration and death and, therefore, anguish and anxiety’. In essence, black solidarity calls for the death of white oppression and a liberation that is genuine and just for blacks only. This will mean that black subjects will be able to formulate a programme for themselves and by themselves, not the one that has been dictated to them by others. Black liberation calls for the death of white oppression and a liberation that is genuine and just for blacks. When blacks are liberated, they should be truly liberated, they should not be accommodated by whiteness; but should be liberated on their own terms.

On relevance: Africana existential phenomenology and Black Consciousness

Black Consciousness emerged as an independent political and intellectual force and was born out of the struggle against white domination in South Africa. Its philosophy revolves around the question of black submission to apartheid. However, its central contention is that giving into racial domination is an expression of self-hatred and has major implications. Biko emerged within this political discursive terrain to articulate the conception of subjectivity that puts blackness on the march to re-humanisation.

According to the Black Consciousness viewpoint, the fact that apartheid was tied up with white supremacy, capitalist exploitation and deliberate oppression made the problem more complex. However, the emergence of Black Consciousness infused the ideology of black liberation as the product of lived experiences of black subjects under the harsh realities of the apartheid system. It was also a response to white consciousness that sought to appropriate and dominate the consciousness, and thus the freedom of

black subjects. Black Consciousness emerged to conscientise black subjects to unite and reject the injustices and inequalities created by white domination. Biko's articulations were based on his experiences of racism. Racism bred the oppression of the black subject. Biko believed that racism created inhuman hierarchical structures of injustices and inequalities amongst black subjects, and fostered white domination.

As an advocate of Black Consciousness, Biko believed that the struggles against racism would conscientise blacks to resist the dehumanising and demoralising effects of apartheid ideology and its practices. As the oppressed people, blacks had to unite and challenge the apartheid ideology and its practices. Furthermore, the basic tenets of Black Consciousness were that black subjects should reject the value system that was intent on making them foreigners in their own country of birth, and that they should reformulate their value system to view themselves as self-defined and not defined by others.

Black Consciousness philosophy, however, aligns with Africana existential phenomenology since they share the same principles; that is, the liberation of the oppressed Africans, amongst others. Moreover, Black Consciousness principles resemble those of Africana existential phenomenology in the sense that they both articulate the idea of identity and the liberation of the oppressed. The oppressed in this regard are Africans all over the world. The only solution to this dilemma of African oppression was to forge unity of all Africans, which was purposely obstructed by racial discrimination and the brutal systems of colonisation on the African continent. Bringing racial awareness will enhance and develop a sense of African solidarity and the realisation of liberation of all Africans. In essence, black subjects are oppressed just because of the colour of their skins, which is black, not white. This creates black dependency on whiteness for survival. In order to sustain this dependence, some black subjects end up defending white domination at the expense of their fellow black subjects. Halisi (1991: 100) posits that '[t]he black person's low sense of self-esteem fostered political disunity, allowed ethnic leaders and other moderates to usurp the role of spokespersons for the black masses, and encouraged a dependence on white leadership'. On the African continent generally, colonisation was predicated on Africans' dependence on white domination and racial discrimination, but in South Africa it was both colonisation and the policy of apartheid that was introduced by the Nationalist party. The apartheid system divided black subjects and forced them to be

dependent on white subjects in whatever they did. This dependency created the hierarchical stratification between black subjects and whites. Blacks were labelled as inferior compared to whites who possessed a superior status over black subjects purely because of the colour of their skin. The culprits in this regard were white liberal articulations which protected the oppressive system and denounced the existential rights of the black subjects. The rise of Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement identified white liberals as the main obstruction towards the black subjects' liberation struggle. Biko ([1978]2004:71) states that 'because of their inferiority complex, blacks have tended to listen seriously to what the liberals had to say'.

Biko believed that it was white liberals who arrested the progress of the black man's struggle. White liberals pretended to be in solidarity with black subjects during the struggle, whereas their loyalty was with the apartheid system. 'It is not as if whites are allowed to enjoy privileges only when they affirm their solidarity with the ruling party. They are born into privilege and are nourished by it and natured in the system of ruthless exploitation of black energy' (Biko [1978] 2004:71). More (2008:58) argues that '[t]he liberal is as a matter-of-fact an assimilationist, one who wants blacks to be full members of humanity only if they renounce their blackness'. Liberals believed that blacks cannot achieve anything without the inclusion of whites in their endeavours. This definitely shows the arrogance of liberals towards black subjects. More (2008:58) asserts, '[i]n other words, black liberation would therefore mean the elimination of the black race'.

Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement were opposed to the white liberal ideology, as it perpetrated the existential conditions of blacks in the antiblack world. Biko profusely criticised white liberals for their arrogance in thinking that they always knew what was good for blacks and could dictate to them. Biko ([1978]2004:23) states that '[t]hey want to remain in good books with both the black and white worlds'. In essence, the white liberals benefited from the system and whatever they were doing was to protect the system for continued benefit from the system at the expense of black suffering and exclusion in the antiblack world.

The liberals' integration process, according to Biko, was meant to manipulate and mislead blacks from attaining true liberation. This is simply because they believed there was no way blacks would achieve freedom without the inclusion of white liberals. Biko

([1978]2004:21) claims that ‘the integration they talk about is first of all artificial in that it is a response to conscious manoeuvre rather than to the dictates of the inner souls’. The integration process was not for the benefit of black subjects but was meant to indirectly perpetuate the oppression of black subjects in the face of whiteness. To be black in South Africa meant to be exploited and oppressed. If and when blacks revolted against the system, they were killed or arrested. Biko emerged from within the ranks of the Black Consciousness Movement and became a force to be reckoned with. Biko’s political articulations confronted the issue of the black subject’s oppression by the apartheid system. Biko ([1978]2004:66) asserts that ‘the white man’s quest for power has led him to destroy with utter ruthlessness whatever has stood in his way’. When blacks objected to the rule of the oppressive system, they were faced with arrest or death at the hands of the apartheid regime.

Black Consciousness rejected white domination and made a call to black subjects to use the concept of group power to create a strong foundation for the struggle against the apartheid system. The philosophy of Black Consciousness expressed group pride and a determination by blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self. Biko believed that black subjects should use their economic power to their advantage. It was the black man who worked in the mines, banks, shops and industries; which only made the white man and his governments rich, whereas blacks remained poor. It is for this reason that Biko believed that the time had come for black subjects to use their economic power during the process of liberation. Once black subjects were liberated, they would then be able to reject the value system that was created to make them foreigners in their country of birth. Biko’s lived experiences sharpened his political thoughts both with regard to race and blackness, as well as to black solidarity and the liberation of the oppressed from the apartheid system.

Biko confronted the identity question. Racism creates identity boundaries—that is, white identity, accompanied by superiority and power; versus black identity, accompanied by inferiority and powerlessness. Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement believed that the sufferings encountered by blacks were the products of white domination and racism, which required collective black unity as a response. More (2008:56) posits that ‘black identity needed to be grounded in a concrete consciousness of the situation of being black in an antiblack world’. Black subjects should be conscious of the fact that their sufferings are a direct result of discrimination and of

being black in the antiblack world. Blacks should therefore, act upon such a situation through collectively rejecting the evils of oppression.

Biko and Black Consciousness political ideology interrelate with Africana existential phenomenology in the extent to which they share the same sentiments of dealing with the lived experiences of black subject in the antiblack world and the remedies of such experiences. Biko believed that if black subjects could liberate themselves and fight for the common objective then freedom would be realised.

Black Consciousness was also concerned with the question of being in the antiblack world. The question of being is an ontological question, which asks precisely what it means to be black in the antiblack world. The Black Consciousness Movement was a response to what it meant to be black in South Africa and in the broader antiblack world. More (2012:24) asserts, ‘this response has mainly been in the form of a concern for the category of “being” (especially the “being” of the Black human being in an antiblack world)’. In essence, being black in the antiblack world meant to suffer, to be alienated, oppressed, dehumanised and to be excluded from the politics of life.

The emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement was aimed at restoring or reclaiming black subjects’ humanity and dignity in the antiblack world. Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement believed that racism was a major force in South Africa. Racism created inhuman structures, which divided the South African society on racial grounds. According to Biko, white racism played a dominating role towards the oppression of black subjects in South Africa. Biko’s political thoughts relate to those of Africana existential phenomenology. Africana existential phenomenology deals with the lived experiences of black subjects in the antiblack world. Within the South African context, apartheid racism dehumanised and oppressed black subjects. Antiblack racism was a menace to the sufferings of black subjects in South Africa. Apartheid racism created white superiority over black inferiority. Whites enjoyed privileged status of superiority over black inferiority. More (2012:26) argues that ‘in this sense, racism is a form of dehumanization and dehumanization is a form of bad faith’. Being black is to be denied an opportunity of being recognised as a human being in the antiblack world. Bad faith writes away reality and introduces a state where alternative reality is written by the native intellectual. Dehumanisation is only aimed at black subjects in the antiblack world. Biko ([1978]2004:30) charges, ‘this is the extent to which the process of

dehumanisation has advanced'. Bulhan (1985:12) adds that 'dehumanisation can be referred to as "physical, psychological and social death"'.

According to Black Consciousness, the dehumanisation of blacks is a deliberate act of white domination. It is a deliberate act in that dehumanising entails taking the 'human' essence of someone. More (2012:27) points out, '[a]ny act of dehumanization is paradoxically an acknowledgement of the humanity of those one attempts to reduce to the status of the nonhuman'. Black Consciousness, therefore, became a tool for engaging with those whose humanity and existence is constantly questioned in the antiblack world.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed Africana existential phenomenology as a theoretical framework. Africana existential phenomenology has been elucidated as a philosophical tradition that emerged to expose issues that affected the lived experiences of black subjects and African descendants in the diaspora under the clutches of colonialism. Africana philosophy, therefore reclaims the position of the existence of Africans in the antiblack world which has regarded by colonisers as not worthy of philosophising.

The chapter detailed the thematic area of blackness by focusing primarily on the lived experiences of being black in the antiblack world; thus arguing that politics and ontology are inseparable. Blackness has been discussed and explained as the identity marker which created colour prejudice. This colour prejudice further created a situation where blackness is not only a problem in the antiblack world but is also criminalised and dehumanised just through being black. For black subjects to redeem themselves from the oppressive system of colonisation, they had to be united and be in solidarity.

The chapter emphasised the importance of black solidarity as a tool in confronting the oppression, alienation, and dehumanisation experienced by Black subjects in the antiblack world. Black solidarity has been outlined as a necessity. It is a necessity in the sense that black subjects are collectively oppressed, thus it requires black subjects' collective rejection of the white oppression that is aimed at them. Black solidarity has also been discussed as the mode of engaging in politics which is the aspiration of liberation.

Liberation is the thematic area which was explored and it is inherent in Africana existential phenomenology. This is because Africana existential phenomenology is the philosophy of liberation. All these three thematic meditations of Africana existential phenomenology are clearly articulated in Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness. The next chapter will examine Biko and the conception of blackness.

CHAPTER 3

BIKO AND BLACKNESS

Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine Biko's conception of blackness. The conception of blackness cannot be separated from the idea of race as an organising principle and racism as a socio-political practice. This breeds the dehumanisation practices that are directed at blackness. Biko's phenomenological intervention, through his philosophy of Black Consciousness, clearly articulates the conception of blackness.

In South Africa, Biko's question of blackness is pertinent, as blacks were oppressed on the basis of race. It therefore means that Biko was directly challenging the state and its racist infrastructure. This infrastructure manifested itself through apartheid as a regime and prior to that regime, Biko also implicated colonialism and racism. Thus, colonialism, segregation and apartheid were all informed by the same logic of antiblack racism.

The idea of the racist state

The coming into power of the apartheid government in 1948 created a situation whereby black subjects legally became subordinates of white masters (domination), and this was inscribed as a way of life. The introduction of the apartheid policies endorsed racism, which implied that black subjects were not part of South Africa. The apartheid policies of divide-and-rule eradicated the existence of black subjects. In essence, South Africa became a racist state by creating conditions which perpetuated the oppression of black subjects. The apartheid racist state created both superior and inferior human beings, based on the colour of their skin. This resulted in a racist state that endorsed the superiority of white domination over black subjects. To be superior means to be powerful and inferiority amounts to being powerless.

More importantly, the introduction of apartheid policies resulted in the erosion of cultural practices, religion and customs that sustained unity amongst black subjects and

replaced it with the fusion of cultures. Biko ([1978]2004:45) comments 'the two major cultures that met and 'fused' were the African culture and the Anglo-Boer Culture'. The fusion of these cultures contributed to a lot of confusion among black subjects as it was one-sided. Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement were opposed to the idea of acculturation as it exacerbated and perpetuated the oppression of black subjects. Nolutshungu (1978:170) posits that 'the main thrust of the political work of black consciousness organisations was to raise the political consciousness of the people in preparation for some future active phase of liberation struggle'. The main purpose of Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement was to restore the dignity of black subjects and to unite them to reclaim their humanity in the antiblack world; this humanity and dignity was slowly fading away or had dwindled due to the arrogance of the apartheid oppressive system. African customs were labelled as barbaric and dirty while Western customs were considered genuine and scientifically correct. Biko ([1978]2004:31) argues that 'religious practices and customs were referred to as superstition'. This comparison implied that African religion and customs were not scientifically proven as compared to those of the apartheid masters. This shows the level of arrogance on the part of the white masters as well as the level of dehumanisation of black subjects at the hands of the apartheid racist state.

The apartheid racist state also corrupted the education system. Black subjects were exposed to Bantu Education, which did not produce competitive results for self-development or employment. The education system deliberately made black graduates the subordinates of their white counterparts. To be subordinates means to be unable to compete with your equals. Superior white education curricula included imparting skills and training, which prepared them to obtain more employment easily than black subjects. The Bantu Education system was designed to produce compliant blacks for the apartheid system and also to replace African culture with Western culture. The school environment was used as another tool of the apartheid racist regime to brainwash and teach Western cultures to black school children. The system contributed to the dehumanisation of black subjects and the loss of black identity. Black subjects discarded their cultures and slowly absorbed the foreign cultures imposed on them by the apartheid racist system. Their identity was a cornerstone of their survival and its erosion by the system was disastrous. Black subjects had a culture of respect and regard amongst themselves. The western culture destroyed the pride that blacks had in their

heritage. Biko ([1978]2004:31) points out, ‘the history of African Society was reduced to tribal battles and internecine wars’. Fatton (1986:67) posits that ‘the Black Consciousness Movement sought to develop a culture of the oppressed as a means of transforming the whole of society into a new and superior ethical order’.

The racist state completely brainwashed black subjects, to the extent of believing that the ‘state’ was perfect and should not be challenged as they have learned to live with the injustices. ‘All in black man has become a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity’ (Biko [1978] 2004:31). Black subjects were made to be hopeless and that they would never get rid of the apartheid system. They accepted defeat even before they attempted to resist the clutches of oppression.

Biko emerged from within the ranks of Black Consciousness and became a thorn in critiquing the unjust policies of the apartheid racist state, with policies which outlawed black subjects—this means that black subjects were deliberately excluded from the political register. They existed only outside of the state, thus becoming its enemies. Gordon (2008:88) argues that ‘in other words, the apartheid state was not only a war on peoples of color; it was also war on politics’. The apartheid state fought for the subjection of blacks in order to render them defenceless, docile subjects. This suggests that black subjects’ exclusion and oppression meant they could not freely unite against the apartheid racist state.

Biko was also concerned about the concept of Bantustans, averring that they were evil and cruel and should be rejected at all costs. The idea behind the Bantustans was to divide South African society according to ethnic groupings, suggesting that each ethnic group should develop in its own homeland; this was tantamount to a policy of separate development, albeit on a local scale. Biko ([1978]2004:88) argues that ‘the concept of “Bantustans”, or independent/autonomous African “homelands”, is the cornerstone of the Nationalist Government’s “native” policy’. According to the provisions of the native policy, black subjects do not belong to South Africa as a whole but only to certain parts of South Africa. As Wilderson (2008:99) points out ‘[t]he “black homeland” is a fated place where Black bodies are domiciled’. Being fated means your life is predetermined by the powerful and in this instance; the apartheid racist state had full control of the homelands, which blacks had no real control over.

In essence, the idea of homelands was to create independent states for blacks and for South Africa to become a democratic state in the eyes of the world. Therefore, black subjects would only come to South Africa as immigrants from their respective homelands. In effect, this meant that black South Africans would be stripped of their citizenship. Fatton (1986:50) posits that ‘in other words, racial segregation was to be encouraged as long as it did not conflict with the requirements of white economy’. Blacks were only exploited for cheap labour and barred from benefiting from the white economy because of their blackness. Biko ([1978]2004:90) adds: ‘In a land rightfully ours we find people coming to tell us where to stay and what powers we shall have without even consulting us’. The white racist state dictated terms and conditions for the indigenous majority of black subjects in their country of birth. Biko ([1978]2004:29) posits that ‘[n]othing can justify the arrogant assumption that a clique of foreigners has the right to decide on the lives of a majority’. To be dictated to meant that black subjects had to follow the orders of the apartheid racist state without question. More (2008:51) argues that ‘apartheid was “settler-colonialism” or “colonialism of a special kind” this definition captures the kind of racism that one finds in a colonial situation’. Since oppression and racism began during the colonisation of African states, apartheid was thus born out of colonialism. Biko ([1978]2004:152), reflecting on Bantustans, insists ‘but we reject this, what we want is a total accommodation of our interest in the total country, not in some portion of it’. Biko maintained that black subjects belong to the whole of South Africa, not to certain portions as determined by the apartheid racist state.

The apartheid racist state created the structural dominance and exclusion of black subjects in their country. Apartheid policies, both grand and petty, exposed black subjects to intimidation by police and restricted their movement within South Africa. Whites enjoyed more rights under the apartheid laws. Blacks were not protected by the apartheid racist laws, but were outlawed by them, by virtue of their body having been racialised. To be black meant to be enemy of the state, especially if they showed some resistance to apartheid policies; thus laws dealt with blacks as enemies of the apartheid racist state.

It is a community of people who sit to enjoy a privileged position that they do not deserve, are aware of this, and therefore spend their time trying to justify why they are doing so. Biko regards whites as homogenous in that they enjoy white privilege at the

expense of blacks who live in dispossession. To be white in South Africa meant to be born into an abundance of privileges; privileges which were protected by apartheid racist laws. Biko ([1978]2004:30) points out that '[t]he logic behind white domination is to prepare the black man for the subservient role in this country'. A subservient role means to be subordinates of the white-led government and not to question the system. Biko (2004:30) further asserts, '[t]he fact that apartheid has been tied up with white supremacy, capitalist exploitation, and deliberate oppression makes the problem much more complex'. Black subjects were exploited through cheap labour and excluded from the economic gains of the country. Fatton (1986:50) posits that 'thus, apartheid is an oppressive system of labor exploitation determined by a particular pattern of class domination expressed and shaped by racial and ethnic criteria'. The powerful apartheid racist state was the main architect of racist policies, which exploited and humiliated the existence of the powerless black subjects.

The racist policies entrenched separate development. Separate development meant black subjects had to be developed on the outskirts of rural areas of South Africa, not within the cities or in urban areas which were reserved for the development of whites. Biko ([1978]2004:20) states that 'with their theory of 'separate freedoms for the various nations in the multinational state of South Africa' the Nationalist have gone a long way towards giving most of white South Africa some sort of moral explanation for what is happening'. It is a fact that even before colonialism, South Africa was made up of different ethnic groups, but they were able to resolve their challenges peacefully. Gerhart (1978:11) noted "'separate development" proposes to create a collection of African states based on tribal identity'. The independence of Africans was only to be realised within these false states, which are in South Africa only due to their geographic location, but not according to the ideological make-up of the apartheid racist state. As Fanon ([1952]2008:97) argued, 'the white man wants the world; he wants it for himself alone'. Whites were obsessed with power and with oppressing the powerless. The apartheid racist state was obsessed with having South Africa all to itself, even at the expense of oppressing and alienating any existing groups of people who were not white. These groups rightfully also belonged to South Africa and ought to have enjoyed citizenship as South Africans.

The theory of separate development classified blacks as non-human beings who belonged only to homelands. Biko refuted the idea of separate development, citing that

its aim was to dispossess blacks and strips them of their rights as citizens of South Africa, whereas they formed part of South Africa as a whole; not only parts of it. Gerhart (1978:11) added, 'it is the hope of the apartheid strategists that these states will foster the growth of parochial nationalist sentiments which will work against any wider black unity'. The intention of the apartheid racist state was to further entrench the divide-and-rule system to blacks in these homelands. Biko strongly believed that the interests of black subjects should be accommodated within South Africa, and not in the homelands as predicated by the apartheid racist state. Biko ([1978]2004:20) points out that 'everyone is quite content to point out that these people—meaning the blacks—will be free when they are ready to run their own affairs in their own areas'. Biko confronted the idea of separate freedoms and maintained that black subjects yearned to enjoy freedom in the whole of South Africa—the kind of freedom that will allow blacks to have free movement, and benefit from the economy, which would improve their living conditions. This, according to Biko, would be genuine freedom.

Blackness and police

As criminalised subjects, blackness was rendered as the object that was grabbed by what Agamben (2005) refers to as the state of exception—that is, if there were laws and ethics they were immediately suspended as far as blackness was concerned. Blackness did not exist in the realm of the law. As a racist state, apartheid created laws that outlawed and racialised the existence and the ontology of blackness. In this instance, black subjects were not protected by law, and that the only purpose of the law was to violate their existence. The apartheid racist states' laws protected its law-abiding citizens; who were white subjects. To maintain its superiority, the apartheid racist state created racist institutions, which maintained and controlled blackness. Within these apartheid racist institutions, blackness was negated and criminalised. Racism was therefore institutionalised to make it look like a South African way of life. One state apparatus, which was problematic and is the focus here, is the police as the institution that cements the brutality of the state, while also being one of the representations of the state.

The existence of blackness in the paradigm of policing was a racialised ontology. To be black was to be a criminal under the apartheid racist state. To police was to control black subjects who were already implicated as criminals, thus militating against the

existence of black subjects in their own country of birth. Biko ([1978]2004:80) states that '[m]y premise has always been that black people should not at any one stage be surprised at some of the atrocities committed by the government'. The cruel acts of the apartheid racist police were meant to ensure the maintenance of the apartheid racist government and as such, the police would stop at nothing to carry out the master's orders. The use of brutal force by the police was endorsed by the apartheid racist state, thus the arrests and killings of black subjects became the order of the day. Biko ([1978]2004:80-81) argues that 'this to me follows logically after their initial assumption that they, being a settler minority, can have the right to be supreme masters'. The apartheid racist state composed by and of settlers, imposed control measures over the majority of black subjects in their own country of birth. The apartheid racist state introduced or developed a police force, which intimidated and used brutal force towards black subjects. Fanon ([1965]2001:41) posits that '[c]onfronted with a world ruled by the settler, the native is always presumed guilty'. Biko ([1978]2004:82) states that '[n]o average black man can ever at any moment be absolutely sure that he is not breaking a law'. For the police of the apartheid racist state, seeing or meeting a black subject meant seeing an enemy of the law and the state, who had to be arrested or violated; with the use of brutal force being the accepted norm if the subject resisted.

The use of violence and brutal force through the paradigm of policing was intentional and would continue to exist for as long as the apartheid racist state was in power. 'If they could be cruel enough to cow the natives down with brutal force and install themselves as perpetual rulers in a foreign land, then anything else they do to the same black people becomes logical in terms of the initial cruelty' (Biko [1978] 2004:81). The apartheid state's police, however, did not have any relationship of a service nature to black subjects, the relationship was only and consistently that of force. Fanon ([1965]2001:42) amplifies this to say, 'the settler-native relationship is a mass relationship'. The settler always made use of brutal force towards the native to prove that the settler was in power, and that he was the master of the natives. The very same brutal force was used by the apartheid racist state's police towards black subjects. The fundamental aim was to instil fear into the black subject, so that the white subjects would retain their supremacy.

One should not try and understand the apartheid racist state police in isolation, but as constituting part of an overall state apparatus and its structural mechanics, that was antiblack. The apartheid racist state vested special powers in its police force, which the state viewed as being suitably qualified to employ violence in furtherance of its racist aims. Wilson (1991:71) argues that ‘South Africa’s security laws enabled policeman to be unaccountable’. To be a policeman was to both be the law and to be above the law, without needing to account for one’s actions, as the police were legally empowered by the apartheid racist state to be deadly and brutal when it came to the treatment of black subjects. There was no law that protected black subjects because the same apartheid laws outlawed them. Martinot and Sexton (2003:172) amplify that ‘the state assigns the police to brutalise, hunt and even kill fugitives who happen to be black’. The mandate of the police was to erase the existence of black subjects in the antiblack world. Biko ([1978]2004:81) adds that ‘to expect justice from them at any stage is to be naïve’. Justice did not prevail when it came to black subjects, as their brutalisation by the apartheid racist police was permitted by the laws of the apartheid racist state.

The apartheid racist state electorate was white, as black subjects did not form part of the white register nor were they allowed to vote. Biko ([1978]2004:81) states that whites ‘almost have duty to themselves and to their “electorate” to show that they still have the upper hand over black people.’ To maintain its supremacy; the apartheid racist state used the police to violate the existence of blacks so as to convince the whites and the white electorate that they were safe within the apartheid racist regime. The paradigm of policing was the model of the apartheid racist state, which contained destructive violence aimed at black subjects. Martinot and Sexton (2003:172) explain that ‘as the state apparatus, the police are the structure of wanton violence whose source is the paradigm of policing’. The paradigm of policing is the paradigm of the state. Police brutalisation of blacks is aimed at retaining the continuation of white supremacy. The paradigm of policing further allows police to be violent and the nature of this violence is both systematic and systemic.

The laws of the apartheid racist government were created for monitoring and arresting black subjects as criminalised subjects.’ There are so many laws governing the lives and behaviour of black people that sometimes one feels that the police only need to page at random through their statute book to be able to get a law under which to charge a victim’ (Biko [1978] 2004:82). These laws empowered the judiciary and security agents

to unfairly apply any law in their statute book to oppress and dehumanise any black subject that they encountered. This affirms that the paradigm of policing and the judiciary were racist projects with blackness as their main target and concern. Blackness was always suspected, criminalised and had to be policed. Biko ([1978]2004:81) asserts that 'these men must always report something to their masters in order to justify their employment'. Police had to arrest and detain any black subject whom they encountered in order to retain their employment. Blackness became the object for harassment and oppression by the police state, in order to ensure continuity of white supremacy. Biko ([1978]2004:82) argues that 'to look for instances of cruelty directed at those who fall into disfavour with the security police is perhaps to look too far'. To fall into disfavour is to be in a state of being disliked. Black subjects were constantly harassed by the security police just for being black in the antiblack world. Pityana (1991:203) posits that 'in security-related cases the security police have enjoyed wide powers of arrest and detention without trial'. The security police could detain black subjects for the longest time possible without trial, and yet not be questioned about it, owing to the powers that were vested in them by the apartheid racist government. Comaroff and Comaroff (2004:809) note that 'the security branch was seen as the ethical enforcer of the state in that it defended the state against evil, namely: terrorists, treason and savage insurrection'. Essentially, police ensured the protection and maintenance of white supremacy through 'dealing' with any black subject who opposed and challenged the apartheid racist state.

To be policed is to be subjected to constant violence and this violence means the condition of being solely identified with criminality. This affirms that blackness was placed in the wrong place in the world, and this justified the logic of the world to be antiblack. The paradigm of policing was antiblack in the sense that blackness was a problem, a deviance to be disciplined either through detention or death. Any action that was taken by police against blackness was law, and had to be adhered to and respected. Biko ([1978]2004:81) posits that 'the strangest thing is that people are hauled in for almost nothing to be tried under the most vicious of Acts—like the Terrorism Act'. Black subjects were arrested just for being black and tried even if there was no crime committed. The law of the apartheid racist state, together with its judicial system, was created to further the oppression of blackness. There was no sovereignty between the police and courts. Black subjects were detained and tortured whilst in police custody,

and no action was taken against the security police by the courts of law. Wilson (1991:72) asserts, ‘the security laws allowed detainees to be held in terror without any protection’. The security laws were created not to protect black subjects because to be black was to be a fugitive who needed to be destroyed. Black subjects were kept in a state of terror so that they would fear the apartheid racist state, and not challenge or oppose its injustices. Biko ([1978]2004:83) adds, ‘[t]he South African police—have come to realise that golden rule maxim—if you cannot make a man respect you, then make him fear you’. Security police terrorised and tortured black subjects to instil fear in them.

The rule of law and the maintenance of law and order within the paradigm of policing were fraudulent when blackness was introduced. The paradigm of policing is said to serve and protect society by maintaining law and order. Black subjects were outlawed subjects; which means that they were not protected by the apartheid racist laws, thus the response of police was violence where blackness was concerned. Comaroff and Comaroff (2004:803) posit that ‘police come, in the public imagination to wanton violence in the excessive maintenance of law and order’. Wanton violence referred to cruel and violent actions of police towards black subjects. The practice of violence by police was designed to conceal the structural operations of the paradigm of policing. It was in this condition where the ‘crime’ of blackness was fixated on by the obsessive imagination as one which needed police and for that matter, a militarised police force.

Biko openly critiqued the participation of black police who were employed by the apartheid racist state. Biko ([1978]2004:86) states that ‘there is no such thing as a black policeman’. To be a black policeman was to perpetuate oppression of black subjects by the apartheid racist state. This was precisely because the apartheid racist state exemplified a paradigm of policing. Police were the machinery of the oppressor. Biko ([1978]2004:86) argues that ‘any black man who props the system up actively has lost the right to being considered part of the black world’. The black police force saw itself as better positioned, superior and not oppressed like their fellow black subjects. More (2008:61) acutely notes ‘[t]his serves to boost up their own ego to the extent of making them feel slightly superior to those blacks who do not get similar treatment from whites’. Black police were treated differently than any other ordinary blacks but they were also oppressed like their fellow blacks. Mixing with whiteness convinced them that at some stage they would be treated like whites, whereas the clear truth remained

that their blackness would remain black and would never change to whiteness. Biko ([1978]2004:86) also argues that ‘these are colourless white lackeys who live in a marginal world of unhappiness’. Black police created their own false world, where they thought that one day they might become as whites, and in essence escape their blackened bodies. According to Biko, black police had surrendered themselves to the apartheid racist state, and also betrayed their fellow black subjects. Lloyd (2003:27) amplifies Biko, ‘black people—real black people—are those who can manage to hold their heads high in defiance rather than willingly surrender their souls to the white man’. Black police did not have the backbone to resist white oppression, but opted to be part of the system that perpetuated the oppression of blackness. More (2008:61) adds that ‘they assert a white consciousness by adopting an antiblack standpoint on human reality’. Black police adopted a standpoint that being police meant they were no longer blacks because the paradigm of policing was racist and antiblack.

According to Biko, black police are the servants of apartheid. They assumed a position which was against blacks—that is, they were engaged in the act of self-violation. It is in the context of bad faith where black police situate themselves at the side of the oppressed or to oppress their fellow blacks. More points out that:

[B]y assuming an antiblack consciousness, by trying to flee from the black reality, by attempting to cut themselves off from the mistakes of race, by making themselves judges of other blacks, they evince a consciousness in bad faith and lack of authenticity (More 2008:62).

The black police, being part of the prevalent paradigm of policing, harassed, tortured, and applied brute force to other fellow black subjects as they had the power to judge other blacks as fugitives. The paradigm of policing was law and above the law; and this implied that black police, by virtue of being police, adopted the white mentality that a policeman could harass and kill black subjects because the law would protect them. More (2008:62) adds that ‘they conceal from themselves the truth, which, despite their futile attempts to deny, they nevertheless carry in the depths of their being’. The black police force was still in captivity, since blackness was caught in the clutches of oppression. No matter how vehemently black police denied their blackness, they were similarly oppressed; like all the other black subjects. Bad faith as an option for black

police appeared to be an escape route, but the destination was still captivity; since blackness was still caught in the clutches of oppression.

More importantly, Biko's conception of the police and the policing paradigm, which was tyranny, should be viewed as an example of bad faith; since the oppressed wanted to become the agents of the apartheid racist state, which was antiblack. Fatton (1986:89) points out that 'in this sense, some blacks became auxiliaries of the white system and also participated in the exploitation of their fellow blacks'. Black police who worked for the apartheid system were sell-outs as they were willing participants towards the exploitation and oppression of their fellow black subjects; which was the main objective of the apartheid racist state. Serving the racist order, they became oppressors themselves.

The psyche of the black police was the suppression of the conscious self to bracket the self from reality. Moreover, the apartheid racist state employed the black police to turn them against their fellow black subjects. When black subjects fought against the state paradigm of policing that would mean they were fighting against other blacks. More (2008:62) amplifies this to say that 'this is normally called black-on-black violence'. Biko argues as to what it means to be black subjects in the antiblack world. The judgment of the apartheid racist state was that to be a black subject was to be a criminal. According to this perspective, to be a black subject is to be policed, harassed, and arrested; and have your existence constantly questioned by the apartheid paradigm of policing. This is the very same predicament experienced by black subjects in the new South Africa.

The new South Africa continues the legacy of the apartheid racist paradigm of policing. Blackness is still profiled as criminal, and blacks are still vulnerable as victims of police brutality, arrests and harassment. Police strategies to combat crime still focus on black subjects and black residential townships and leave the white suburbs by the wayside. When black subjects are found in the white residential areas, they are stopped and searched because they possess a criminalised and racialised body. To see a black subject is to see a criminal. When black subjects are in their townships, they are raided by police, harassed and even detained; something that does not happen in the white suburbs because white areas must at all costs be protected from potential criminals, who are blacks. This affirms the racist logic of police in terms of profiling blackness, and is

evident in the common assumption that a black suspect must be a foreigner, which is the reason why black subjects must be stopped and asked to produce identity books, ironically similar to the passbook norm during the apartheid regime. If the person fails to produce such a document, they are arrested.

In the post-1994 state, the paradigm of policing still resembles that of the apartheid state. The post-1994 state inherited the infrastructure of violence from the apartheid racist state *qua* policing. The regime of policing was not decolonised, and that is why the police still act against blacks. Incidents of police brutality are still routinely observed to date. The brutal killings of Andries Tatane and Mido Macia are two such cases of police brutality towards blacks. Thirty-three year old Andries Tatane led a protest march to demand basic services in Meqheleng, Ficksburg—an area that is inhabited by black subjects who subsist in undignified living conditions; he was assaulted and shot by police, and his subsequent collapse and death at the scene was captured live on camera. This occurred on 13 April 2012, and the video footage that exposed the brutal manner in which Tatane was killed went viral. Although this caused a lot of havoc, nothing was done as it happened to be a black body that was put to death by the police. In this instance police used their paradigm of policing, something which absolves police from any kind of responsibility. None of the police came forward to point out who shot Tatane, with the police incredibly claiming that since all the police were wearing helmets it was difficult to identify who shot Tatane. His death is not extraordinary; it depicts the condition of being black, the everyday experience of black subjects, whose lives are held cheap by the police. Police take black lives at will, in that they are confronted by a criminal subject who is black, and killing a black subject does not matter; since blackness is equated with criminality. The wanton violence that surrounds and makes the body captive is dramatised by this paradigm of policing.

Tatane was murdered by the police, and the arrest of police as murderers is deemed impossible; and this has been proven as such. ‘The “lack of evidence” is the jurists’ semantic and the case on basis of such technician nature will be thrown out of court’ (Sithole 2013:23). In this way, justice will be done where justice is essentially a game of semantics among jurists where technicality often takes precedence. The death of Tatane was brutal and happened in public view; but still there had to be an ‘investigation’ into his murder. In other words, a black subject’s life does not matter, and the violence that put it to death is left untainted; even though there was outrage about Tatane’s killing.

Similarly, despite the outrage regarding the cases of Mthuli Shezi, who was pushed in front of an oncoming train at Germiston in 1972, and Mapetla Mohapi, who was murdered whilst in police custody in East London in 1976 (Pityana1991:206), life went back to normal because it was a black subject who had died; and no level of moralist political rhetoric which claims to condemn police violence will have any practical effect.

Mido Marcia (27), a taxi driver from Ekurhuleni, but who is believed to have come from Mozambique, died in police custody on 1 March 2013, after he had been assaulted and fastened behind a police van, which dragged him along the street, on 26 February. The post-mortem revealed that he sustained serious head injuries and internal bleeding. As a result, police claimed that they would conduct their own second post-mortem; in other words, to dispute the results of the first post-mortem. What emerged in both cases (Tatane and Marcia) is the brutality of the police that was involved in these killings of the black subjects, which can be regarded as a form of a ritual. 'This ritual is performed in public' (Martinot 2003:205).

In both cases (Marcia and Tatane), police were suspended, the banal outcome which clearly demonstrates that they will get away with murder and would also return to their jobs after the case has been thrown out of court. This clearly indicates that when a black subject dies nothing has to be done about it because blackness does not correspond with justice; so justice is always denied since blackness is equated with criminality. What also cannot be forgotten is the Marikana Massacre, where police shot and killed mine workers in Marikana on 16 August 2012. This event actually demonstrated how police had inherited practices engaged in during the apartheid era; as this event is brutally similar to what occurred in Sharpeville, where on 21 March 1960 the apartheid police shot black subjects who were protesting against the Pass Laws.

This essentially shows that to be a black subject is tantamount to waiting for persecution, which can come at any time and in any form; and that death is always imminent where blackness is concerned. This further explains the inescapable brutality of the paradigm of policing, which confronts each and every black subject as a result of his criminalised and racialised body. Being a black subject means being likely to face untimely death at the hands of the state police, as was the case during the apartheid racist era. Biko himself could not escape the paradigm of policing, and his life was

liquidated by it. Biko was arrested, interrogated for many hours and put to death. Wilson (1991:71) amplifies this by saying, 'Biko was transported, naked, in the back of a Land Rover for the distance of hundreds of miles from Port Elizabeth to Pretoria'. This underlines the cruelty of the police, who had the black body to objectify. 'The objectification is breaking the black body and destroying it from the bone to the marrow and even to soul' (Sithole 2013:24).

The embodiment of blackness

Embodiment means being in the world. Embodiment should be understood as how the black subject's body is positioned or placed in the world. Blackness is positioned in the antiblack world, and it is this positionality that determines its existence in the world. The position of blackness in the antiblack world clearly means that blackness has no place in the world.

The body of a black subject is a problem in a sense that it is black, and also being in the ontological form. The black subject's body is a sight of the least experienced, and it is racialised. It is the level of the body that engages with blackness. The existence of blackness is militated against by antiblackness. Being a black subject is a problem; as a black subject, one is forever in an existential predicament, caught in the negative of whiteness. This state of negativity encapsulates the idea that blackness is inferior and that whiteness is superior. Biko ([1978]2004:97) states that 'it is not surprising, therefore, that in South Africa, after generations of exploitation, white people on the whole have come to believe in the inferiority of the black man'. The white subject's imposition of superiority, dominance and exploitation on black subjects created an inferiority status of black subjects. Being inferior is to be undermined and not be recognised as a human being but as existing in the exclusionary realities of life. Blackness is excluded in the political register by whiteness; thus the exploitation and oppression exacerbates their living conditions. Gordon (2007:12) posits, 'political life is fundamentally about appearance'. The exclusion of black subjects from the political register by the white subject erases the recognition and the existence of black subjects from the antiblack world—something that is challenged by Biko and Black Consciousness because black subjects do exist as human beings in the world. More (2008:50) posits, 'through various means—economic, religious, social, political, and legal—white self-consciousness subjugated and controlled black self-consciousness

thus denying blacks their existential freedom'. To be subjugated is to be brought under control. Black subjects are forcefully brought under the control of white superiority, owing to their racialised body and existence in the antiblack world.

Black subjects are discriminated against by whiteness because of their blackened body. Racism is therefore used by whiteness as a tool to render blackness a problem and the manner of addressing that problem is to oppress black subjects to be subjects without essence. Garrett (2011:8) points out, 'antiblack racism is the bad faith treatment of Black bodies as absence and White bodies as presence'. The existence of black subject is erased by whiteness, since whiteness is in power and in control; thus the absence of blackness in the world. This therefore, banishes the existence of black subjects to beyond recognition in the antiblack world. Wilderson (2008:98) adds that 'blackness is the destruction of presence'. As a destruction of presence blackness exists for the sake of existing, but is valueless; thus its existence is problematic. Furthermore, Mbembe (2001:187) points out that 'from the stand point of colonialism, the colonized does not truly exist, as a person or as subject'. The existence of the colonised, which is blackness in this matter, is not recognised as human beings; and only exists as the non-entity. Wilderson (2008:98) states, 'it means that to be valued [is to] *receive* value outside of blackness'. This implies that blackness does not hold human value because of their racialised body, and that it is only whiteness that has human value.

Blackness as a non-entity is the racial formation created and sustained by the antiblack reality, which serves to alienate and negate blackness. Blackness as a non-existence subject is systematically positioned at the receiving end of antiblackness. Biko ([1978]2004:97) states that 'the system derives its nourishment from the existence of the antiblack attitudes in society'. According to Biko, the system derives its growth from the black subject's inferiority, resulting in the continuation of white domination. Biko (2004:97) laments, 'they actually believe that black is inferior and bad'. Accordingly, black subjects deserve to be oppressed and dehumanised as they are not good enough to be recognised as human beings.

In short, to be a black subject amounts to discrimination and dispossession of economic benefits or gains due to racialised bodies. Biko ([1978]2004:96) argues that 'there is no doubt that the colour question in South African politics was originally introduced for economic reasons'. Whiteness uses racism as a tool to racially discriminate against

black subjects from benefiting in the economy of the country, thus creating black subjects' dependency on whiteness for survival. In this scenario, for black subjects to survive they have to render themselves as cheap labour to whiteness in exchange for monetary value; this tendency also creates whites' unfair dependency on blackness as the raw material that need to be extracted at for their (white) gain. Mbembe (2001:188-189) posits that 'the colonizer is only conscious of self in the enjoyment of the thing that he or she produces and possesses, and the appetite this brings'. Blackness has a master-slave relationship, with whiteness and nothing more. It is this relationship that is rejected by Biko and Black Consciousness since black subjects want to benefit equally as white subjects and as human beings because they are human beings. Fanon ([1965] 2001:42) adds, 'the settler-native relationship is a mass relationship'. The interdependency is skewed as it does not benefit blackness but exacerbates their existential conditions, owing to the fact that it is exploitative. Biko ([1978]2004:30) charges thus; 'material want is bad enough, but coupled with spiritual poverty it kills'. Being exploited is destructive to humankind, and blackness is unwillingly subjected by whiteness to such destructive tendencies in order to survive. Wilderson (2008:104) sums it up well when he says, 'the slave over determines Human relationality because without the slave there would be no foundation for Human exchange'. It is the existence of blackness in the antiblack world that is a problem of whiteness. Whiteness, however' erases blackness because they know that blackness exists.

The self of blackness as the construction of whiteness is to keep the infrastructure of the negative. Biko ([1978]2004:30) argues that 'to a large extent the evil-doer have succeeded in producing at the output of their machine a kind of black man who is man in form'. The level of dehumanisation, oppression and exploitation has destroyed the self of blackness. The self of the black subject is self-objectified, and its humanity is crushed by whiteness through the constant questioning; reminding them that blackness is the entity that is non-entity; which constitutes negativity and deficiencies. The black subject's self is the self in relation to other black selves by virtue of being structurally positioned by the antiblack world. As Gordon explains,

The self is not a complete formation of itself but a dialectical unfolding of overcoming through which selves and correlated concepts of domination, bondage, and freedom emerge. The self, so to speak, is always struggling with its own fragmentation, and

incompleteness in relation to a world that resists it and through which other selves emerge through such struggles (Gordon 2008:84).

The self, in the form of the black subject's self, is the self that is a predicament. Biko, as the self, is such by the very nature of his blackness and his relationality to the antiblack world. The self of the black subject is the self that does not exist in the antiblack world because to be a black subject equates to non-existence and non-humanness. The existence of blackness in the antiblack world is the phenomenon that is operationalised by racism as the existential infrastructure. Biko was concerned about white racism. White subjects are deriving pleasure and security from entrenching and exploiting the minds and bodies of unsuspecting black subjects *en masse*. The position of blackness in the antiblack world is that of being alienated, dehumanised and exploited. More (2009:36) notes, '[r]acism is dehumanisation and human alienation par excellence'. This implies that racism is about discriminating against the other, which is black subject in this matter. Blackness is dehumanised and racially discriminated for the benefit of whiteness.

Biko is concerned about the existential conditions of black subjects, whose humanity is constantly subjected to questioning by whiteness. Black subjects are excluded by whites in the political register; thus the existence of blackness is a problem in the antiblack world—a problem which is deliberately exposed to white oppression. Biko ([1978]2004:30) posits, 'this is the extent to which the process of dehumanisation has advanced'. Blackness is dehumanised by white superiority, and its ontological existence is constantly questioned. To be a black subject in the antiblack world is to be subjected to deliberate, unbearable existential conditions. More (2008:60) argues, 'because of the injustices, differential treatment, inequality, you begin to feel that there is something incomplete in your humanity, and that completeness goes with whiteness'. Black subjects feel inferior in the face of whiteness, and that makes them hesitant as to whether they truly exist as human beings in the presence of whiteness. Their inferiority makes them believe that their existence adds no value to humankind; that only whiteness exists as human. Fanon ([1952]2008:82) notes, 'for not only must the black man be black; but he must be black in relation to the white man'. Blackness cannot be black and be proud, but must somehow be linked to whiteness for recognition. The fate of a black subject is determined and decided in relation to whiteness which is a state of unfair comparison. Gordon (2008:85) adds that 'blackness is always too black except in

relation to its distance from itself, which means that one is always too black in relation to white but never white enough'. Blackness is a problem of the problem, in the sense that the nature of the problem is that blackness is unresolvable.

These existential questions are rooted in the actual political practices of Black Consciousness, and Biko, as a racial subject, asked distinct ontological questions. It is for these reasons that he insists that black subjects should ask fundamental questions about their existential condition. Biko ([1978]2004:29) states that 'hence whatever is improvised as a remedy will hardly cure the condition'. No provision from outside blackness can relieve the clutches of oppression; black subjects need to come together and face the evils of oppression. The problem would be asking the wrong questions, which are outside the realm of blackness, as the subject that is positioned as the problem in the antiblack world. The ontological questions that black subjects should ask are categorically distinct. Sithole (2013:4) argues that '[t]hey stem from *what does it* as opposed to *what it is*, and this is the case as blackness is the ontological position that Black Consciousness always asks what does it mean to be black in the antiblack world' (emphasis in original). Also as Wilderson (2008:97) questions: 'what does it mean to suffer?' To be a black subject in the antiblack world is to be a problem and to suffer means to be exploited, oppressed and discriminated against, and also excluded from the political register of life. Buthelezi (1991:120) points out, 'blacks were defined as those who are by law or tradition politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a unit in the struggle towards the realization of their aspirations'. To be born as a black subject is to be refused existence through oppression and dehumanisation in the face of whiteness. Fanon ([1952]2008:103) notes, 'my *black consciousness* is immanent in its own eyes, but my *Black being* 'has no resistance in the eyes of the White man'. This implies that black subjects are conscious of the fact that they are living human beings, but in the eyes of whiteness they are non-human beings and possess a dead life. Biko ([1978]2004:102) argues that 'hence thinking along lines of Black Consciousness makes the black man see himself as himself as a being complete in himself'. Black Consciousness conscientises black subjects about their being and leads them to see that they are oppressed because of their racialised body. Hali (1991:101) states 'at the core, Black Consciousness philosophy embraced the existentialist view that individuals and communities choose freedom or enslavement'. The black subjects' responsibility is to challenge the oppressive system and reject it at all costs; in order for the black subjects

to improve their existential conditions - nobody else can do it for them. Biko ([1978]2004:100) adds that 'we must learn to accept that no group, however benevolent, can ever hand power to the vanquished on a plate'. Black subjects should fight for their own freedom as it cannot be handed over to them, since those in power, white subjects in this case, are obsessed and would not relent.

Key in rethinking the existential conditions that preoccupied Biko's radical political philosophical intervention is the question of the black subject's body—that is the manner in which the black subject's body is positioned in the antiblack world; as well as how existential crisis renders that body superfluous. It is from this existential crisis that the embodiment of blackness expresses itself. Mbembe (2001:187) notes, 'the colonized subject *is* an embodiment'. The black subject lives a life of uncertainties, owing to the fact that whiteness erases its existence; and thus it is regarded as absent from the antiblack world. Garret (2011:9) posits, 'the human experience is forever a dance of absence and presence'. The existence of black subjects is predetermined by whiteness at its own will and whim, and this banishes blackness to exist in the exterior realities of life. This implies that the existence of black subjects in the antiblack world is made impossible by the white subject's supremacy and its infrastructure of racism. The agency of black subjects is negated since blackness is something that is absent from the political world.

The absentia of black subjects from the political register and in the world equates to the erasure of the black subject's historicity by whiteness. This absence of history also implies that black subjects do not have freedom because they are regarded as not existing at all. Mbembe (2001:190) adds that 'the colonized has no freedom, no history, no individuality in any real sense'. The existence of blackness in the antiblack world is totally not recognised and erased by whiteness. Furthermore the ontological existence of blackness does not possess life at all. Goldberg (2004:227) argues that 'the absence of ontology clearly means that there is no life at all'. It is in the antiblack world that there is no history of those not remembered, whose past is not made present, and whose past is deemed to have no presence. The black subject's existence in the antiblack world is not recognised, and this denies blackness any possibility to claim its recognition, thus their past, present and future become a mystery. The absence of history, as Goldberg states, means ontological absence. Blackness does not exist even in the contemporary as

it has no history to be remembered with. ‘This is to say the ontological absence means that blackness has no ground to stand on’ (Sithole 2013:9). Mbembe writes:

The removal of the native from the historically existing occurs when the colonizer chooses—and has the means to—not to look at, see, or hear him/her—not, that is, to acknowledge any human attribute in him /her (Mbembe 2001:187).

The black subject’s historicity is erased by whiteness at its will and predetermined and determined by whiteness as they please. Wilderson (2008) elaborates that ‘black suffering as the dispossession of being is making blacks to be ontologically absent’. Wilderson (2008: 99) asserts that ‘from the terrestrial scale of cartography to the corporeal scale of the body, Blackness suffers through homologies of Absence’. As for Wilderson, the presence of blackness is also a form of absence. Manganyi (1973:30) posits, ‘[b]eing-in-the-world implies that the existence is a given, as the basic structure of existence is historical’. The existence of any human being is an existence that is unquestionable; because to exist in the world is an individual’s right and not a privilege. Mbembe (2001:190) adds that ‘there are two modes of being, two only: being in itself, that of objects arrayed in space, and being for itself, that of consciousness’. Considering Mbembe’s modes of being, blackness exists as an object in the antiblack world as it is dehumanised and oppressed by whiteness. The existential conditions of blackness do not permit black subjects to be conscious of their being-ness, since they are regarded as non-human beings. Sithole (2012:15) adds, building on Manganyi, ‘the human mode of existence is that of being-black-in-the-world and being-white-in-the-world which is black consciousness and white consciousness’. Being in the world is racially based, which means that the colour of the skin plays as a deciding factor; and as a matter of fact, whiteness erases blackness due to its superiority over blackness. However, under these conditions, the existence of blackness in the antiblack world is mainly that of survival. As a matter of fact, Biko was not about the presence of blackness in the world, because once blackness ascends in the world it becomes presence.

The problem with blackness is that which is assigned to the body. Racism is in the body, which means that to see a black subject is to see a black and to see a white subject is to see a white. Biko ([1978]2004:108) argues that ‘[r]acism does not only imply exclusion of one race by another- it always pre-supposes that the exclusion is for the purpose of subjugation’. Racism is about discrimination and oppression. Blackness is

discriminated against and oppressed by whiteness because of their racialised bodies and inferiority. Sithole (2013:6) posits that ‘the body of the black is a problem of it being black and also a problem of being in the ontological form’. Being a black subject is a problem of the problem, something which deserves to be oppressed because its existence is a problem in the antiblack world. Racism is structural in its banal form in that it insulates from sight by changing its melanin, and yet its effects are the same in the black body. Racism is practiced and felt everywhere by black subjects, owing to their existential conditions and their racialised bodies.

The Black Consciousness Movement was about reviving the spirit of black subjects so that they can confront their existential conditions and regain their recognition as human beings in the antiblack world. ‘The Black Consciousness Movement sought to develop a culture of the oppressed as a means of transforming the whole of society into a new and superior order’ (Fatton 1986:67). Put simply, Black Consciousness is for black subjects and about black subjects who are the oppressed subjects in the antiblack world.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how the conception of blackness is important in Biko’s thought, as well as the black subject’s existential condition in general. Furthermore this chapter elaborated extensively on the most pertinent issues that affect the black subject in the antiblack world. The idea of the racist state; criticism of white liberals; blackness as a racialised ontology; blackness and police and the embodiment of blackness formed the core of how blackness is affected by white oppression, and remedies from such is important to black subjects since they reject white oppression at all costs. As part of the process of reclaiming their position which is of being treated humanely, it becomes important for blackness to be reconceptualised as a fundamental political and philosophical ontology. The thematic meditations of blackness are necessary to examine the ontological position of blackness. It is clear from this chapter that the ontological position of blackness is its relationality to antiblackness. The thematic area of blackness shows how—as a racialised ontology—blackness is animated by dehumanisation. This is what Biko’s intervention is aimed at; revealing this problem of existence, as well as the effect racism has on black subjects. Racism appeared to be practiced by the racist state to discriminate against blackness because of their racialised bodies and to further entrench oppression to maintain white superiority.

The thematic area of blackness is an important area of Biko's meditation precisely because the lived realities of blackness are to be accounted for. The infrastructure of antiblack racism has proven that race is the organizing principle that sediments white superiority and black inferiority. Meditations on blackness expose the existential matrix of colonialism, slavery, segregation and apartheid; including its aftermath of white supremacy in post-1994 South Africa. This is what Biko rallied against in his meditations on blackness through the Black Consciousness philosophy. As a continuum of this inquiry, it is therefore important to examine Biko's meditations on black solidarity in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

BIKO AND BLACK SOLIDARITY

Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine Biko's conception of black solidarity. It is important to examine Biko's position on black solidarity as it underpins the reasons behind Black Consciousness philosophy. However, black solidarity has been criticised from a number of fronts as irrelevant and as producing racist effects. What underpins this criticism is the antiblack black solidarity position that denies black subjects from articulating their lived experience as a collective.

The main argument in this chapter is that black solidarity is a necessity, and this is even made clear in Biko's thought it is important to accept the fact that black subjects are oppressed as a group, and not as individuals. As such, they have to respond as a collective to the oppressive conditions under which they exist. As a people, they have the right to respond collectively as they want oppression to come to an end and to be free.

Black solidarity and the collective experience

Black solidarity is the collective response of black subjects towards the rejection of racism, oppression and dehumanisation. It is predicated on the idea that black subjects must act on their own to combat the existential conditions that befall them. Black subjects are experiencing racism as a collective and not as individuals; thus the response should be a black collective response towards challenging such conditions. White racism targets other groups by labelling them inferior. This implies that white dominance is sustained by racism, which empowers whites to enjoy the privileged status of superiority, while manipulating other groups to perceive themselves as inferior. In this instance, black subjects are collectively oppressed because of their racialised ontology, and also as a collective. Moreover, racism is evident in all racist institutions, and is aimed at oppressing black subjects. It is against this background that Biko elaborates on the racism experienced by black subjects under the apartheid regime. This emphasises Biko's convictions about racism, which is institutionalised, the sole purpose

of which is to perpetuate the oppression and exclusion of black subjects within the political register of life. To respond to deliberate exclusion requires black solidarity to engage with the clutches of oppression. Thus, black solidarity does not just emerge on its own, but is informed by the existential conditions of black subjects which need to be addressed by blacks as a collective. More (2008:50) points out that ‘central to Biko’s thinking is first and foremost the problem of racism, especially of the apartheid type’. Biko was more concerned about racial practices of the apartheid regime, which were targeted at black subjects and perpetuated their oppression. Halisi (1991:103) affirms this and writes: ‘racism is a personal imperative for white rule’. Racism serves as a tool for white subjects to sustain their white dominance and discriminate against black subjects. Black subjects are oppressed by the white collective; which means that whites are in solidarity as far as the oppression of blacks is concerned; thus black subjects also need to respond as a collective.

By definition, racism is structural exclusion and dehumanisation of one race by the other for the sole purpose of maintaining asymmetrical oppressive relations. Since racism is systematic and systemic, it is cemented by the social, economic, cultural, and political institutions that make it an existential banal fact. It therefore follows that racism goes beyond individual discriminating practices or prejudices. It involves acts of exclusion. Therefore, black subjects are deliberately excluded because of their racialised bodies for the sole purpose of being oppressed; and nothing else. Racism therefore, becomes the breeding ground for oppressing blacks as a collective. Halisi (1991:103) amplifies, ‘the internalisation of racial norms is a requirement for white mobilisation on behalf of racial privilege’. Whites are born into an abundance of privileges, which gives them the upper hand to oppress whatever is non-white or black. Biko’s position is very clear—racism affects black subjects; and should be confronted by black subjects themselves on their own terms, which are determined by themselves, and not by others.

Black Consciousness encourages black subjects to collectively reflect on their existential conditions and respond as a group, since they are not individually oppressed, but oppressed as a group; owing to their being black. ‘The philosophy of Black Consciousness, therefore, expresses group pride and determination by the blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self’ (Biko [1978]2004:74). Fatton (1986:71) points out, ‘Black Consciousness was essentially an open-ended articulation of blacks’ existential situation’. Black Consciousness fought against the unfair and unjust treatment of black

subjects in the antiblack world, which perpetuated their existential conditions. It further mobilised black subjects to be conscious of their lived experiences and to collectively reject the clutches of oppression.

Black Consciousness conscientised black subjects about the need to fight back, and also developed a sense of belief that it is only through black solidarity that they could overcome their plight of oppression and white domination. 'Black Consciousness sought to infuse the black community with a new-found pride in themselves' (Wilderson 2008:106). Black solidarity emphasised by Black Consciousness was that black subjects should regroup and use their power base to reclaim their existence in the antiblack world. This again affirms Black Consciousness as a collective, the very basis of black solidarity. Biko supports black solidarity and asserts that:

The quintessence of it is the realisation by the blacks that, in order to feature well in this game of power politics, they have to use the concept of group power and to build a strong foundation for this. Being an historically, politically, socially and economically disinherited and dispossessed group, they have the strongest foundation from which to operate. (Biko [1978] 2004:74)

Black subjects are oppressed as a group because of their blackened and racialised bodies. As a commonly oppressed group therefore, black subjects can use their group power base to challenge and reject their plight of oppression and injustices aimed at exacerbating their existential condition. This again entails that the collective response of black solidarity is necessary for black subjects to confront antiblackness and oppression. Shelby (2002:236) asserts, 'it is based on the common experience of antiblack racism'. Racism affects all who are black; and this therefore triggers black solidarity to confront common oppression, which is experienced by black subjects from the white subject's domination and racism. More (2009:28) posits that 'if the problem is racism, and racism is predicated on race, race becomes the legitimate ground and point of departure for emancipatory solidarity'. Racism becomes a dominating factor towards the oppression of black subjects because of being black. However, black solidarity becomes necessary as it is a black subject's collective response towards the attainment of their freedom from racial oppression. Black solidarity is the collective reaction of black subjects towards oppression, which affects their existential condition. More importantly, oppression is targeted at black subjects to deny them freedom and liberation. Black

solidarity therefore becomes the tool towards the attainment of the freedom of black subjects from the clutches of white oppression.

White oppression targets all those who are non-white, and does not consider ethnic groupings; whoever possesses a blackened body is oppressed. According to Biko, all those who are non-white should regroup and face the reality that they are oppressed because of being black and fight to free themselves. Hlasi (1991:105) points out that 'Biko realised that black people, despite class and ethnic divisions, shared a common oppression'. White oppression targeted whoever possessed a black body. Moreover oppression was aimed at black subjects only; therefore it is only black subjects that can reject and retaliate to reclaim their existence.

As a point of affirmation, Biko ([1978]2004:108) argues that 'we must use the very concept to unite ourselves and to respond as a cohesive group'. All non-whites as the oppressed subjects should form a united front and reject and fight the evils of oppression that affect them. Turner (2008:69) posits, '[b]eing an historically, politically, socially and economically disinherited and dispossessed group, they have the strongest foundation from which to operate'. Shelby (2002:232) adds; 'Blacks should unite and work together because they suffer a common oppression; and they can overcome or ameliorate their shared condition only through black solidarity'. The collective of black subjects oppressed by white subjects must find common ground and collectively fight the plight of oppression in order to improve their existential conditions. Buthelezi (1991:124) avers that 'the emancipation of the Black people depends on the role the Black people themselves are prepared to play'. The freedom of black subjects depends on them; whether they are willing to fight oppression until the end or allow it to continue to ruin their lives.

According to Biko, racism and the oppression of black subjects was multidimensional and multifactorial; and was a skilfully orchestrated plan by whiteness to make black subjects miserable as long as they exist in the antiblack world - the life of being hated to the point of being expelled from humanity. Being dispossessed and subjected to humiliation, exploitation, and alienation on the basis of being black underlines that black subjects possessed a lifeless body in the antiblack world. In this situation, black subjects are excluded from all economic benefits within the political spectrum of white oppression because of their blackness. The economic gains only benefited whites, who

enjoyed the status of superiority over the black subjects' inferior status. This however, also means that blacks as racialised ontologies are excluded from the economic benefits of the country. To put it simply, racism plays a dominant role in the oppression and dehumanisation of black subjects. Turner (2008:76) points out, 'the racism of this state machine involves a productive process of dehumanization of black people'. Black subjects are exploited for the benefit of white domination; however the exploitation and dehumanisation of blacks by white domination becomes the source of black solidarity; as black subjects want to free themselves from such unbearably oppressive conditions.

Black subjects are oppressed by white subjects as a collective, and a black collective response is therefore required; which is black solidarity. 'The black subjects should wish to rid themselves of a system that locks up the wealth of the country in the hands of a few' (Biko [1978] 2004:68). In addition to this, More (2008:50) points out that 'white self-consciousness subjugated and controlled black self-consciousness thus denying blacks existential freedom'. In black solidarity, black subjects use their group power and make every effort to overcome the injustices and oppression that affects them. Halisi (1991:101) posits that '[a]t the core, Black Consciousness philosophy embraced the existentialist view that individuals and communities choose freedom or enslavement'. Black subjects had to choose whether to challenge the oppression that affected their existence or to surrender their souls to enslavement; because there was no way the oppression would end itself without 'someone' resisting it.

The superciliousness of white domination creates black subjects' dependency on whiteness. Furthermore, this escalates to making black subjects subordinates of white oppression. This therefore, entails that black subjects become objects of exploitation and oppression at the hands of white subjects without questioning white domination or challenging their existential condition. This therefore, affirms the importance of black solidarity; in the sense that black subjects are affected by oppression and are determined to liberate themselves. Black subjects are oppressed by white dominance and superiority, thus their existential conditions are perpetuated by oppression. More (2009:21) poses a question; 'how should black people, for example, respond when they are grouped together and oppressed together on the basis of the contingency of their physical characteristics'? Black subjects are oppressed because of the colour of their skin, which is black, and they are oppressed by whiteness. This therefore, requires a collective black response to the collective whiteness that perpetuates black subjects'

oppression. It is imperative to point out that black solidarity emerges because blacks are oppressed on the basis of them being black; thus black solidarity becomes a necessity for their freedom. As Ramphalile (2011) asserts, 'black solidarity is the solid commitment to resistance of white domination and oppression'. In this situation black subjects should present a united front in order to reject and resist the oppression that affects their existence.

According to Biko, to be oppressed because of being black is a provocation which needs a collective response; which is black solidarity. In addition to this, Biko ([1978]2004:17) claims that 'the blacks are tired of standing at the touchlines to witness a game that they should be playing'. Black subjects are delinking themselves from those who have been dictators of their lives and want to be hands-on, in whatever affects their existence. From the standpoint of black solidarity, black subjects become responsible and are able to design a programme that they decided themselves, for themselves; without external interference.

Black subjects have been oppressed and dehumanised by the apartheid racism to an extent that their existence appears merely at the level of the body; meaning they possess a lifeless body. 'To a large extent the evil-doers have succeeded in producing at the output end of their machine a kind of black man who is human only in form' (Biko [1978] 2004:30). White racism deliberately erases the existence of black subjects in the antiblack world. This erasure relegates black subjects to barely exist as human beings in the antiblack world. It for this reason that Biko and Black Consciousness call for black solidarity as it is the only solution towards recognition of black subjects in the antiblack world. Furthermore black solidarity reclaims the existence and recognition of black subjects and refutes the dehumanisation of black subjects in the antiblack world. Dehumanisation of black subjects is spearheaded and purported by white racism and black subjects cease to exist in the face of whiteness. More (2009:36) elaborates that 'racism is dehumanisation and human alienation par excellence'. This affirms the cruelty of white oppression, which requires black collective (black solidarity) response that would reject whiteness and its ideals. Black solidarity emphasises that black subjects are also human beings and encourages them to see themselves as such; and also to dispel the myth purveyed by white subjects that they are less human and valueless. Black Consciousness works on the premise that black subjects are oppressed and should collectively face and reject the injustices of white oppression. 'Black Consciousness

therefore seeks to give positivity in the outlook of the black subjects to their problems' (Biko [1978]2004:33).

The self-definition of black subjects is the very basis on which Black Consciousness is founded; and it is a philosophical outlook. Biko ([1978]2004:101) posits that 'Black Consciousness is an attitude of mind and a way of life, the most positive call to emanate from the black world for a long time'. Black Consciousness conscientises black subjects to reflect on their existential conditions and emphasises the need to collectively respond to the shackles of oppression that affect their existence. Through this positive outlook, Biko ([1978]2004:101) adds that '[o]n his own, therefore, the black man wishes to explore his surroundings and test his possibilities—in other words to make his freedom real by whatever means he deems fit'. In addition to this, Biko ([1978]2004:108) writes: 'we must realise that prophetic cry of black students: 'Black man, you are on your own!' On their own, means that black subjects should take ownership of themselves by means of black solidarity.

Black Consciousness revived the hope of black subjects who had submitted their souls to white control—the philosophy made them realise the need to use their group power and end white subjects' oppression, which had affected their existential conditions because of their blackness and racialised bodies. 'Black Consciousness was black solidarity in the face of subjugation and domination, a solidarity of those and by those who were subjugated and certainly did not regard themselves as inherently superior to whites' (More 2008:56). Ally and Ally (2008:172) point out, 'the phrase captured the liberation ideology underpinning Black Consciousness as a philosophy speaking directly and collectively to the oppressed black majority'. Black Consciousness uses language that was understood by blacks as the oppressed subjects, and was aimed at them only. Buthelezi (1991:123) adds, 'they therefore (black subjects) needed to mobilise themselves as a group in order to translate this awareness into political action and then to overcome racist oppression'. Black solidarity is a political action, since the oppression of black subjects is predicated on white racism, which is politically influenced. However, the only form of black subjects' mobilisation is that of black solidarity, which emphasises their collective response towards overcoming oppression.

Oppression operates on the basis of identity, which is antiblack and as such, blacks should mobilise themselves on the basis of the same identity (black solidarity). Biko comments as follows:

Black Consciousness is in essence the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their operation—the blackness of their skin—and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude (Biko [1978] 2004:53).

According to Biko, once black subjects pledge solidarity with each other, they will be able to attain their liberation and bring white oppression to an end. Shelby (2002:233) suggests that ‘blacks can strengthen the bonds of sympathy and loyalty that will enable them to overcome these barriers to collective action’. Put simply, when black subjects operate as a group and share their common experiences regarding oppression they will realise that they are collectively oppressed; and will develop feelings of mutual trust, which will sustain them in their quest for their fight against oppression. Shelby (2002:261) further states that ‘group loyalty and mutual trust can be cultivated through our individual and collective struggles against racial domination and inequality’. White oppression is targeted at black subjects; therefore, black solidarity strengthens the desire of black subjects to reject oppression and bring white domination to an end; because oppression, racial discrimination and inequalities will not organically come to an end; except by the black collective’s resilience and quest to attain freedom. Fatton (1986:66) points out that ‘blacks began to assert that their future lay in their own black hands’. According to Fatton, through black solidarity, black subjects are able to design a programme, which will be owned by themselves and implemented by themselves without any external interference.

Black solidarity is therefore, a political position of blackness. The structure and logic of antiblackness does not only attack blackness at the level of individuality, but also as a collective identity. The world is collective within a collective, which means that whiteness is a collective that oppresses black subjects. This therefore, affirms that the collective response of black solidarity is necessary for black subjects to confront antiblackness.

Biko’s political thoughts and Black Consciousness form the basis for the group solidarity position; therefore, commitment is not accidental, but constitutes part of the

reality of blackness. There is no way that black subjects could attain liberation without engaging their existential reality, which is plagued by oppression external to their bodies, which are racialised, with certain notions imposed on them. The lived experiences of blacks demands that they engage in black solidarity strategies. Biko is aware of those who are antiblack solidarity, but refutes their claims because black solidarity is necessary for black subjects. White domination is in solidarity towards oppressing black subjects; thus this requires the collective of blacks in response to the shackles of oppression.

The politics of black solidarity

Biko is aware of and concerned about the criticism against black solidarity, which is levelled by anti-solidarity groups. According to Biko, their criticism is predicated on denying black subjects the right to be on their own; when challenging white oppression that affects blacks' existential conditions. Critics of black solidarity also emphasise that the liberation of individuals against the collective is something that is problematic for black solidarity, because blacks are oppressed as a group; and there is no way they can respond on the basis of individuality.

White oppression is targeted at black subjects as a collective; therefore the collective response of blacks against white oppression is necessary—something that is opposed by antiblack solidarity groups. More (2009: 35) points out that 'it is impossible to fight racism as an autonomous individual'. Moreover, anti-solidarity sentiments and political formations suggest that black solidarity is racist and immoral and should be rejected. Biko ([1978]2004:26) poses the question: 'what of the claim that the blacks are becoming racist?' In essence, when black subjects detach from whiteness to be on their own, white liberals feel betrayed and see them as racist; because they don't approve blacks to be on their own and do their own thing.

According to Biko, white oppression uses a racist approach to oppress and discriminate against black subjects but when black subjects reject oppression on their own they are labelled racists; even as racism serves as the underlying factor of their oppression that denies them their existence in the antiblack world. 'Some will charge that we are racist but these people are using exactly the values we reject' (Biko [1978] 2004:108). Appiah (1992:17) writes, 'Black Solidarity constitutes racism of a special kind, but racism all the same, namely intrinsic racism'. Appiah's claims deny that racism does

exist. This further indicates the level of resistance that is aimed at denying black subjects the right to engage with the clutches of oppression on their own. More (2010:79) posits that ‘for Appiah, any efforts to promote racial solidarity in order to fight racism are itself racist’. Black solidarity cannot be racist since it is the response towards white oppression that determines their existential conditions—therefore, there is no way in which they can be racist because they do not possess the power to subjugate and control; since such power is possessed by white subjects. Biko ([1978]2004:108) claims that ‘we do not have the power to subjugate anyone’. Black subjects are responding to oppression that affects them; so to be labelled racist by the anti-solidarity groups in effect denies them the agency to be on their own. More (2009:37) points out that ‘in Appiah’s view, is simply to demonstrate that races do not exist in order to bring the racist ideology tumbling down’. Appiah’s denial of the existence of races is to deny black subjects the right to pledge solidarity, which attacks white racism.

Appiah denies black subjects’ own lived realities and imposes on them something that is not of their making. That is, Appiah tends to accuse black subjects of being racist; while in fact, they are responding to the very racism that they are exposed to. In actual fact, black subjects are oppressed by white racists; and it is bogus for Appiah to claim that racism does not exist. More (2009:34) points out, ‘[r]acism is predicated on the assumption of the existence of races’. Racism does exist because black subjects are human beings that are targeted by racism; thus the myth of anti-solidarity groups that racism does not exist is unfounded and should be rejected. Biko ([1978]2004:24) adds, ‘white racism is only possible because whites are indifferent to suffering and patient with cruelty meted out to the black man’. It is black subjects who endure white oppression because of being black; whereas whites are not being oppressed; thus black solidarity is about black subjects and for black subjects. The idea is that they should chart their liberation from white oppression; something that is denied and opposed by anti-solidarity groups. Ruch comments as follows:

In order therefore to find their own identity as a race, they [Black Consciousness advocates] become racialist in their turn, belittling their former superiors, burning what they used to adore, and showing by all means at their disposal that they themselves and not their oppressors are in fact the superior beings. (Ruch 1981:201)

Black subjects are prohibited to pledge solidarity with each other for their own liberation; which means that in order to be perceived as not racist they must surrender themselves to whiteness, which will mean the end of black liberation—something that is impossible for black subjects to do because they want to be free from the oppressive system. Biko ([1978]2004:5) adds that ‘what we want is not black visibility but real black participation’. Black subjects surrendering to whiteness will mean the end of black liberation. Biko ([1978]2004:108) states that ‘blacks have had enough experience as objects of racism not to wish to turn the tables’. According to Biko, black subjects are confronting white racism that affects them on their own without being thwarted by other groups, which is something that anti-solidarity groups deny them. More (2009:30) points out that ‘Appiah insists that racial solidarity should be rejected not only on the grounds that it is predicated on a falsehood but because it involves treating an irrelevant factor’. Within this view, black subjects are denied the right to confront oppression on their own because anti-solidarity groups hold a view that races do not exist, therefore black solidarity is immaterial. Biko ([1978]2004:108) argues that ‘[w]e are merely responding to provocation in the most realistic possible way’. Black solidarity responds to white oppression, which is the creation of white racism that affects black subjects’ living conditions. Appiah (1992:72) points out that ‘the truth is that there are no races: there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask race to do for us’. According to Appiah there is no need for black solidarity because races do not exist; and this becomes problematic because black subjects are oppressed by white racism, which confirms that races do exist.

In essence, black subjects are not being racist as claimed by Appiah and other anti-solidarity groups, but they are confronting the white oppression that affects them on their own, with the exclusion of white participation because whites are not oppressed, but form part of the white oppressive system. ‘Appiah’s position commits him to the unwarranted claim that attempts by oppressed racial groups to promote racial solidarity are themselves racist’ (More 2009:29). In Biko’s dialectic, black consciousness is not only a response to white consciousness but also its product’ (More 2008:56). Black subjects are responding directly to the ills of white oppression, which directly affects their existential conditions. As a matter of fact, Appiah’s claims resonate with those of the liberal ideology, which maintain and advocate that black subjects do not exist in the world. More (2009:31) states that ‘there is definitely no mistaking their liberalism and

its antipathy to any collectivism that puts individuality in jeopardy'. Put simply, critics of black solidarity are influenced by liberalism which is antiblackness.

The liberals set about their business with the utmost efficiency. 'They made it a political dogma that all groups opposing the *status quo* must *necessarily* be non-racial in structure' (Biko [1978] 2004:69). In essence, this entails that black subjects could not engage in the politics of solidarity without the involvement of whiteness or white liberals. However, black subjects are denied the right to engage in politics of black solidarity on their own; because doing so would be seen as reverse racism by critics of black solidarity. More (2009:31) posits that 'for the liberal humanist, therefore, the black person does not exist; there is no Black consciousness or Jewish consciousness, there is only human consciousness'. In this regard blackness is an empty shell which does not have rights or privileges to fight for in the antiblack world, therefore according to critics of black solidarity there is no need for black solidarity. Liberalism insists that race is a morally irrelevant category because it is not earned but an accident of nature. Liberalism rejects black solidarity and black consciousness because belonging to a certain racial group is just an identity marker for human existence, thus black engagement in the politics of black solidarity is unwarranted.

Anomaly means something that is irregular, and this would then mean black subjects deciding on their own—that is, something which the white liberals will not allow. As Biko ([1978]2004:27) asserts, 'when blacks want to do their thing the liberal establishment seems to detect an anomaly'. More (2010:83) points out, 'the liberal is as a matter of fact an assimilationist, one who wants blacks to be full members of humanity only if they renounce their blackness'. In simple terms, black subjects should surrender to whiteness if they want to be recognised as human beings; and such action will mean the erasure of black subjects' existence in the world and the end of black liberation, which is what black subjects yearn to achieve, owing to their existential conditions. More (2008:58) points out, 'by assimilation generally, is meant the attempt to have one racial or ethnic group absorbed, physically and/ or culturally, by another'. White liberals want black subjects to be assimilated into whiteness. Thus, denying black subjects the right to confront oppression without the involvement of white liberals as that poses a threat to white domination which is the antithesis of black solidarity. Gordon (1995a:40) posits the 'phenomenology of disappearance of black people' which is the end of black subjects and black solidarity. More (2010:83) adds that

‘[a]ssimilation operates in the same category as absolute hatred’. In essence, for black subjects to be denied the right to confront their existential conditions on their own is tantamount to hatred from the critics of black solidarity; this also means that the continuation of the oppression of black subject is the very same thing that blacks wants to overcome. More (2010:83) adds that ‘liberation would therefore mean the elimination of the black race’. The erasure of the existence of black subjects in the antiblack world would retain the white oppressive system in power. According to Gordon (1995b: 153), ‘[a]ssimilation, therefore, is misanthropy to the greatest degree’. This implies that assimilation is unacceptable and should be rejected.

According to Biko, these ‘gags’ were meant to prevent blacks from engaging in the politics of solidarity; thus black solidarity found itself in the middle of political censure. ‘Black people must recognise the various institutions of apartheid for what they are—gags intended to get black people fighting separately for certain ‘freedoms’ and ‘gains’; which were prescribed for them long ago’ (Biko [1978] 2004:42). More importantly; to censure blackness in the realm of solidarity is not only to gag but to erase the politics of possibility. Parry (1999:218) elaborates that ‘[s]uch censure surely depends on who is doing the remembering and why? This entails that the asymmetric power relations and the violation of the ontology of blackness will be denied the privilege to remember from its vantage point of being at the receiving end of antiblack racism.

Separate freedoms defocused and divided black subjects to see black solidarity as unnecessary; and some black leaders who were co-opted by the oppressive system sang the same tune with the oppressive system, which renounced black solidarity. ‘In an effort to maintain our solidarity and relevance to the situation we must resist all attempts at the fragmentation of our resistance’ (Biko [1978]2004:42). This again entails that the co-opted black leaders became an obstacle towards black solidarity. Black solidarity was however, even denied and opposed by some other black subjects. This co-option, according to Biko ([1978]2004:92) was meant ‘to create a false sense of hope amongst the black people so that any further attempts by blacks to collectively enunciate their aspirations should be dampened’. Co-option made some black subjects feel superior to other black subjects and closer to whiteness—therefore, they opposed and rejected any black formations that toppled the oppressive system. This again affirms the erasure of blackness as well as the possibilities of them engaging in the politics of solidarity on their own, as it becomes rejected by black subjects who have been assimilated into the

oppressive system. Fatton (1986:89) posits that ‘Black Consciousness argued that white supremacy was not simply the result of military conquest; it also depended on co-opting a black minority into the structure and superstructure of the white system’. As indicated earlier, the co-option was meant to create animosity amongst black subjects and to dampen their spirit of collective approach towards rejecting the white oppressive system that affects their existential condition. Furthermore, once black subjects get absorbed by the white system they lose their identity as their loyalty now lies with the oppressive system that denies blacks their existence in the antiblack world.

According to Mbembe (2007:137), ‘Biko believed that black solidarity would one day make it possible for the members of all races to live together free in one nation’. What seems to be problematic here is that black solidarity is resisted by members of all races, including other black subjects. This implies that black solidarity is not in service of all members of all races as Mbembe claims. If that was actually what Biko aspired to, then there would have been no need to criminalise black solidarity. Mbembe also makes another assertion, which claims that Biko’s defence of black solidarity was not predicated on race. According to Mbembe (2007:140), this defence was dedicated to ‘eliminating unjust racial inequalities, and to improving the life prospects of those racialized as blacks’. The contention here is still that Biko’s defence of black solidarity is that which is predicated on race, since it was black subjects who were oppressed as a collective, based on racial grounds. To further elaborate, Biko was not a non-racialist, since this is predicated on the very integrationist political arrangement which he rejected. More clarifies:

Biko was both a (non) separatist and a (non) integrationist. As a separatist, Biko’s arguments was consequentialist because he strongly believed that given the apartheid circumstances, the only practical means to achieve freedom for blacks was through separation from whites (More 2008:57).

Biko believed that black subjects as the oppressed subjects would be free if they engaged in the politics of solidarity on their own, without the inclusion of whites; because whites were never oppressed, and their quest was to retain the white status quo at the expense of black subject oppression—something that is criticised and refuted by the critics of black solidarity, who maintains that it is criminal and racist for black subjects to be on their own. Moreover, black solidarity would be criminalised in the

non-racialist order, where naïve claims that propagate that there is no race or racism are the order of the day.

Appiah's claims denounce any black formation that attempts to confront oppression on their own because together with others, Appiah claims that such an approach resembles racialism. 'The Pan Africanist must abandon the idea of race as a regulative principle in order to 'escape from racism fully, and from racialism it presupposes' (Appiah 1992:20). Jansen (2007:130) adds that 'the challenge in the face of invidious racism is not to regress into some obscure nativism or race essentialism, as a moral obtuse project of the Native Club tried clumsily to enforce'. This indicates that black subjects were not allowed to be on their own or even to form black-led organisations that confront issues that affect their living conditions. More (2009:29) argues that 'both Jansen and Mbembe, echo Appiah's claim; that the very use of ordinary racial categories is racist, and accuse the Native Club, not only of racism but of 'nativism', essentialism and Black Nationalism also'. The Native Club is imported from the very white racism targeting black subjects, so that they could be racist when they engage in the politics of solidarity; because they have no choice as white oppression affects them. What Jansen and other critics forget is that black solidarity is birthed within white racism, and is a collective of black subjects towards the rejection of oppression. According to Biko, for black subjects to attain freedom it is imperative that they exclude or not form alliances with whites; because such alliances will mean the end of black liberation. More importantly, such alliances will inherit the oppressors' structures; which is precisely what black solidarity seeks to reject. More (2009:37) poses a question, 'how can those who suffer from racism hope to succeed in their liberation by utilising the very same false instruments of 'race' used by their oppressors?' Put simply, when black subjects are absorbed into the white structures, black liberation will come to an end, as it would be impossible for them to fight the white system from within.

Black solidarity is criminalised and labelled racist because when blacks are on their own, whiteness see potential criminals and the escalation of crime. Appiah (1992) criminalises black solidarity and blames it on being racist. This presupposition by Appiah is problematic by the very nature of being far from antiblack reality. Black solidarity is not racist as it is a collective response towards white oppression. Mbembe (2007:147) enforces the notion 'that fosters of cross-racial solidarity'. This denies black subjects the right to confront oppression on their own, since Mbembe suggests that there

should be cross-racial solidarity. How could blacks involve whites in the struggle for their liberation from white oppression? Jansen (2007:132) charges, for ‘a world without race, a broader cosmopolitanism’. Black solidarity that also includes oppressors won’t be black solidarity. More (2009:29) states that ‘Jansen, Mbembe and Appiah agree that nativism in Africa presents itself as an opposition to universalism’. Black solidarity is for the oppressed and about rejecting oppression that affect black subjects and is a direct response to antiblack racism.

Black Consciousness conscientised black subjects about the clutches of white oppression that affected their existential condition; and underlined the need for a collective black response towards the rejection of white racism. Black Consciousness was not racist but its philosophy was to channel the pent-up forces of the angry black masses into meaningful and directed opposition, basing its entire struggle on the realities of the situation (Biko [1978] 2004:33). This therefore charts the way for black solidarity as a necessity—a necessity in the sense that blacks are oppressed and want to liberate themselves from white racism and oppression. Black subjects as the oppressed subjects do not have a choice to engage in politics of black solidarity; because they want to bring oppression to an end and free themselves, and if they don’t engage in the politics of solidarity that will mean oppression will never come to an end because nobody will be challenging it. More importantly, black solidarity charts the path of black liberation from white racism, oppression and antiblack racism. According to Shelby (2002:256), ‘black solidarity is a constitutive part of black liberation from the effects of white domination’. To put it simply, once black subjects become united against the common enemy, which is white domination, then total black liberation will be realised and the erasure of white domination achieved.

Black solidarity as a necessity

Black solidarity is a necessity because as oppressed subjects blacks are affected by antiblack racism, which exacerbates their existential conditions. It is therefore necessary for black subjects to collectively confront white oppression by embarking on black solidarity. Black Consciousness emerged as a response to white oppression; and the philosophy became an ideal tool for the realisation of their liberation.

The rise of Black Consciousness was not a response to apartheid, but to the antiblack structural position. In tracing colonial structures, black subjects were building on the

colonial structures that oppressed black subjects. It is also important to note that Black Consciousness is often mistakenly described as criticism of apartheid, which is not true. Black Consciousness, as a soul unity, was a response to the scandal of antiblack existential oppression. Black solidarity is therefore a necessity; as being in solidarity does not come automatically, but is informed by white oppression which targets blackness. Oppression is in two or more registers—while it oppresses, it excludes the majority, but co-opts some few black subjects into its system. This is done deliberately in order to create antipathy among black subjects.

White oppression affects black subjects and their existential condition, which would continue to exist unless black subjects themselves confront their oppression head-on. ‘Under oppression the blacks are experiencing a situation from which they are unable to escape at any given moment’ (Biko [1978] 2004:24). This therefore, brings to the fore the importance and necessity of black solidarity, since the oppression that affects blacks requires a collective response. Fatton (1986:73) asserts that ‘since oppression was the outcome of conscious human activities, further human action could result in the demise of oppression’. It is therefore, the responsibility of black subjects as the oppressed subjects to engage in the politics of solidarity in order to free themselves from the clutches of oppression; and this is a necessary political task. Biko ([1978]2004:27) points out that ‘[w]e are in the position in which we are because of our skin’. According to Biko, this exclusion from the white political register should be used as an advantage by black subjects to reject white domination. Black solidarity, writes Shelby (2002:256) ‘is a constitutive part of black liberation from the effects of white domination’. Black subjects as the oppressed subjects need to embark on the politics of solidarity in order to liberate themselves and reject the white domination that affects their existential condition.

White supremacy is maintained by white racist structures. Biko ([1978]2004:30) amplifies, ‘[t]he fact that apartheid has been tied up with supremacy, capitalist exploitation and deliberate oppression makes the problem much more complex’. These structures discriminate against and oppress black subjects. Fatton (1986:73) points out, ‘white hegemony had in effect rendered blackness synonymous with evil, backwardness and nothingness’. Hegemony refers to the dominance by a social group over others. In this situation black subjects are oppressed by the self-imposed dominance of whiteness; and this creates white subject superiority and black subject inferiority. Biko

([1978]2004:29) claims that '[n]othing can justify the arrogant assumption that a clique of foreigners has the right to decide on the lives of a majority'. White subjects as a minority group enjoy the status of dominance and superiority over the black subject majority in their country of birth. It is however, for this reason that Biko urges black subjects to rally together as a group and confront the white dominance and oppression that affects their existential conditions. Black subjects should use the group power at their disposal to bring white dominance to an end because they are deeply affected by white oppression.

It is necessary for black subjects to engage in the politics of black solidarity and work as a united force to reject the evils of oppression. 'We must cling to each other with a tenacity that will shock the perpetrators of evil' (Biko [1978] 2004:108). This again affirms the necessity for black solidarity because white oppression affects black subjects and it is black subjects on their own that have to work as a collective to confront the oppression that affects them. Moodley (1991:144) points out, 'the collective segregation and oppression based on skin colour therefore provided an eminently logical basis for self-assertion and independent organisation'. Black subjects are segregated and alienated by white racism, and are collectively oppressed because of being black; thus they should use the same situation of oppression to fight against the white oppressive system that affects their existential condition. Shelby (2002:258) points out that 'black people can also bond together to collectively combat racial oppression in a more coordinated way'. Black subjects need to form a united force (black solidarity) to confront white oppression because confronting it as individuals will be a fruitless exercise since white subjects are united against the oppression of black subjects.

When black subjects challenge the white oppressive system on their own they are labelled racists by the same oppressive system, which means that they are not allowed to fight the white system that affects them on their own. 'White racism's greatest ally to date has been the refusal by us to club together as blacks because we are told that to do so would be racist' (Biko [1978] 2004:54-55). Gordon (2008:86) posits, 'antiblack racism structures blacks outside of the dialectics of recognition and the ethical struggle of self and other'. White racism militates against black subjects because of their existential positionality in the antiblack world. This therefore, affirms the necessity for black subjects to engage in black solidarity, as its purpose is to reject white domination and reclaim their recognition in the antiblack world. Whites are born into a privileged

position of power and superiority, whereas being a black subject is to be powerless and inferior. It is therefore the responsibility of black subjects as the oppressed subject to engage in the politics of solidarity in order to confront and reject the evils of white racism that affect their existential conditions. Biko ([1978]2004:33) states that 'Black Consciousness wants to ensure a singularity of purpose in the minds of the black people and to make possible total involvement of the masses in a struggle essentially theirs'. Black consciousness conscientised black subjects about the evils of white oppression and encouraged them to engage in the politics of solidarity in order to confront and reject oppression, which affected their existential condition.

White liberals claim to be fighting the struggle of oppression with black subjects, and on behalf of black subjects. 'The biggest mistake that the black world ever made was to assume that whoever opposed apartheid was an ally' (Biko [1978] 2004:68). In essence, Biko was referring to the confusing and misleading role played by white liberals in the affairs of black subjects. According to Biko, that was not true, since their loyalty lies with the white oppressive system. This also entails that they formed part of the white collective, which was against and oppressed black subjects. In addition to this, Biko ([1978]2004: 68-69) adds that 'for a long time the black world has been looking only at the governing party and not so much at the whole power structure as the object of their rage'. Black subjects had overlooked that all whites were in a collective against whatever possessed a black body, which means that there were no whites who genuinely fought the evils of oppression on behalf of black subjects, as that would mean the betrayal of the white oppressive system that benefits them.

Biko suggested that black subjects should detach from white liberals and engage in the politics of solidarity, which will be the programme decided by black subjects, not by outsiders. Ally and Ally (2008:173) point out that the 'Black Consciousness movement was birthed in the rejection of that group of whites who purported to support the struggle for liberation'. Black consciousness rejected the involvement of white liberals in the affairs of black subjects because they were not oppressed; which means that they were not genuine in the struggle for the oppressed. 'The fact that though whites are our problem, it is still other whites who want to tell us how to deal with that problem' (Biko [1978] 2004:99). White liberals claim to know the problems confronting black subjects and the solutions thereof. This, according to Biko, is a deliberate obstruction, which denies black subjects the opportunity to confront the problems that affect them on their

own; and at their own pace and time. Gerhart (1978:36) points out, 'the well-intentioned advice offered by the white liberals stressed patience, hope and the necessity for African self-improvement'. White liberals do not perceive the oppression of black subjects as a problem that needs urgent attention; so black subjects should wait and hope that one day oppression will go away; a view that is problematic, as black subjects are affected by oppression and need to free themselves from such conditions. Fatton (1986:58) adds that 'a white could sympathize with a black, yet economic advantages almost inexorably kept him white'. In essence no matter how much whites can sympathise with black subjects, their whiteness will always make them beneficiaries within the white oppressive system. 'The role of the white liberal in the black man's history in South Africa is a curious one' (Biko [1978] 2004:21).

In this regard, white liberals have always been involved in the black subjects' struggle for liberation, but with no good results as blacks continue to experience oppression. Biko ([1978] 2004:98) writes: 'Any proposals for change emanating from the black world are viewed with great indignation'. Put simply, any demands for change by black subjects are perceived as unfair by white liberals and the white oppressive system; therefore, instead of black subjects being on their own they propose that they (blacks) should integrate into the white system. More (2008:57) asserts, 'they want to tell the blacks that they see integration as the ideal solution'. Black subjects are denied the right to engage in the politics of solidarity on their own, but must agree to be integrated as proposed by white liberals.

The role of white liberals in the struggle of black subjects was to obstruct and deny black subjects the right to challenge the oppression that affected their existential conditions on their own. Furthermore, the integration articulated by white liberals was pretentious, as its sole purpose was to prevent black subjects from being on their own. 'The concept of integration, whose virtues are often extolled in white liberal circles, is full of unquestioned assumptions that embrace white values' (Biko [1978] 2004:100). Black solidarity is a necessity in the face of the elimination of blackness, as well as an end to black liberation, as blacks will become part and parcel of the oppressive system. Ally and Ally (2008:174) assert, that 'It is an integration in which the black man will have to prove himself in terms of those (white) values before meriting acceptance and ultimate assimilation'. In essence black subjects will have to submit to white control and show their loyalty to whites and also prove their worth through adhering to whites'

instructions before they are totally accepted by them. Biko ([1978]2004:100) adds, 'it is a concept long defined by whites and never examined by blacks'. According to Biko, the integration articulated and promoted by white liberals is based on the terms of whiteness by whiteness, and for whiteness, which means that black subjects are acted upon. Biko writes:

The myth of integration as propounded under the banner of liberal ideology must be cracked and killed because it makes people believe that something is being done when in actual fact the artificial integrated circles are a soporific on the blacks and provide a vague satisfaction for the guilty-stricken whites (Biko [1978] 2004:23).

This integration serves the interests of whites rather than addressing white oppression, which affects the existential condition of black subjects in the antiblack world. According to Biko, this must be rejected and denied; since it does not make any difference to the existential condition of black subjects, who experience oppression on a daily basis, whilst whites remain beneficiaries. Turner (2008:75) points out that the '[b]lack mind had of necessity to have a very different actuality for its freedom'. In this situation it becomes necessary for black subjects to engage in the politics of solidarity; which will free them from the clutches of oppression; something that is not offered by the white liberal ideology of integration.

White liberal integration was not genuine integration, as it served only to please the conscience of white liberals at the expense of black subjects. 'The integration that the white liberal talks about is first of all artificial in that it is a response to conscious manoeuvre rather than to the dictates of the inner souls' (Biko [1978] 2004:21). Biko ([1978]2004:22) adds that '[a] hastily arranged integration cannot be the solution to the problem'. In this regard the beliefs of the black subjects as well as their quest for liberation is denied and erased. Biko comments:

In other words the people forming the integrated complex have been extracted from various segregated societies with their inbuilt complexes of superiority and inferiority and these continue to manifest themselves even in the 'nonracial' set up of the integrated complex (Biko [1978] 2004:21).

Biko rejects the integrated complex since it was divisive amongst black subjects who yearned for their own liberation without the inclusion of white subjects who were not affected by white oppression. Furthermore within the integrated complex, some black

subjects have been co-opted by and assimilated into the white oppressive system and even where that is the case, they are still seen as black subjects, and treated as black subjects. More (2008:58) posits that '[b]y assimilation generally, is meant the attempt to have one racial or ethnic group absorbed, physically and/ or culturally, by another'. Put simply black subjects who are co-opted and assimilated into the white system relinquish their blackness, which poses a threat to black solidarity; as they also become obstacles towards black liberation. According to Biko, integration and black subjects' assimilation into whiteness should be opposed and rejected as it does not provide a solution to the problems that black subjects are facing; but rather perpetuates the oppression of black subjects. Fatton (1986:59) posits, 'the non-whites emulated everything white and repudiated everything black'. By being assimilated into the white system the 'co-opted' black subjects, who felt slightly superior to other black subjects, would have rejected their blackness and embraced the values of others. Biko ([1978]2004:25) claims that 'these are sort of people who are a danger to the community'. Co-opted black subjects, according to Biko, have betrayed their fellow black subjects in the struggle and have become obstacles towards the attainment of black liberation. More importantly co-opted black subjects continue to lie to themselves that they do not feel oppression like other black subjects but the truth of the matter is that they do.

According to More (2008:61), 'oppression often makes blacks turn against their own in an attempt to flee and evade their blackness'. These black subjects who are traitors and cowards have no courage to face the effects of white oppression and opt instead to work for the oppressive system as a matter of survival. To elaborate further, it is the black police who are employed by the apartheid system who harass, arrest and even torture their fellow black subjects who challenge the system, just to please their masters. What the researcher is trying to convey is that the oppressive system uses some black subjects to oppress others in order to maintain white superiority. However, the same black policemen's lives are endangered because when they are off duty the system does not protect them—they go back to the township, to the very same people they have been harassing and detaining during the day. This shows that no matter what they are willing to do for their masters they are still seen as black subjects and treated as such, since they do not reside in the suburbs like their white counterparts, due to their blackened and racialised bodies; which are feared by whiteness.

Black subjects should engage in the politics of solidarity, which confront and reject white domination, rather than surrender to the white oppressive system—because doing so will never change the fact that as black subjects, they are still affected by the evils of oppression. ‘Black people—real black people—are those who can manage to hold their heads up high in defiance rather than willingly surrender their souls to the white man’ (Biko[1978] 2004:52). More (2008:61-62) posits that ‘in so doing they lie to themselves because they know perfectly well that they cannot cease being black’. The very fact of their blackness is the rallying point of solidarity. This suggests that even though they can get preferential treatment and mix with ‘them’ they are still seen as black subjects; and will continue to be treated as such.

Biko totally rejects integration and charts a way forward for the necessity of black solidarity and the attainment of black subjects’ total liberation from the clutches of white oppression that affects their existential condition. Biko poses a question:

Does this mean that I am against integration? If by integration you understand a breakthrough into white society by blacks, an assimilation and acceptance of blacks into an already established set of norms and code of behaviour set up by blacks and maintained by whites, then Yes I am against it (Biko [1978] 2004:26).

Biko opposed such integration because it was a concept decided upon by whites without the involvement of black subjects, which means that the needs and problems of black subjects will never be addressed; as integration was imposed on them, and was dictated by whites. It is for this reason that Biko calls for black subjects to unite and engage in the politics of solidarity in order to confront their problems on their own, without external influences. Shelby (2002:258) correctly writes: ‘Given the widespread internalization of antiblack race prejudice, it becomes necessary for black people to be a significant force behind their liberation from racial subordination’. Black subjects are discriminated against by whites because of their blackness; it therefore becomes imperative that they unite as black subjects and reject racism as a collective, since it affects them as a collective. Biko ([1978]2004:72) adds that ‘not only have they kicked the black but they have also told him how to react to the kick’. Whites have manipulated black subjects to such an extent that they ceased to think for themselves (about the problems that affected them), since they (whites) did things on behalf of black subjects

for their own benefit; whilst black subjects continue to suffer as a result of the oppression.

It is necessary for black subjects to begin to react, oppose, challenge and confront the evils of white oppression on their own; and at their own pace without the involvement of whites as was previously the case. Fatton (1986:66) points out, 'blacks began to assert that their future lay in their own black hands'. In this regard black subjects began to realise the necessity of engaging in the politics of solidarity as the means to end the white oppression and antiblack racism that affected their existential condition in the antiblack world. Biko ([1978]2004:72) adds that 'with painful slowness he is now beginning to show the signs that it his right and duty to respond to the kick *in the way he sees fit*'. Black subjects began to deal with the problems that affected their conditions on their own terms, without the involvement of whites, since their experiences of oppression affect them, not white subjects. Buthelezi (1991:122) points out, 'the black man must build up his value systems; see himself as self-defined and not defined by others'. Black subjects must embrace their own values and set their own programme for liberation, based on their own values.

Black subjects began to rally together and confronted the clutches of white oppression on their own, and for their own emancipation. They are beginning to rid their minds of imprisoning notions which are the legacy of the control of their attitude by whites' (Biko [1978] 2004:74). Buthelezi (1991:124) posits, 'the emancipation of the Black people depends on the role Black people themselves are prepared to play'. Put simply, black subjects' freedom from white oppression will only be realised when black subjects work together as a solid force in their struggle. Furthermore, being subjected to extreme poverty and white oppression, black subjects have no choice but to engage in the politics of solidarity to free themselves; as this is their mutual concern. Black solidarity is therefore, about the spirit of mutuality—a mutual exchange of political values for a greater goal. The very fact that black subjects are living under oppression and are defying it, means that they have a collective responsibility towards each other. This therefore shows that black solidarity is necessary and is the embodiment of Biko's Black Consciousness, which was solidarity in both form and content.

Conclusion

This chapter engaged the thematic area of black solidarity. It detailed the concept of black solidarity and the collective experiences of black subjects. Black subjects needed to engage in the politics of solidarity in order to free themselves from the clutches of oppression. The antiblack solidarity position finds itself as the hegemonic position, emphasising that black solidarity is racist. This notion, from Biko's subjectivity, is rejected on the basis that there is no way that black subjects who are oppressed as a collective could respond on an individual basis. The very fact that racism affects black subjects as a collective, also calls for black solidarity. As much as solidarity is opposed, it remains imperative if black subjects are to overcome both white racism and oppression.

The chapter engaged with the critique of antiblack solidarity, and what came out is the assimilationist and integrationist tendency of white liberals, who want to act on behalf of black subjects. It is therefore, up to black subjects to take it upon themselves to confront oppression and not accept any dictated terms of engagement. Therefore, black solidarity is necessary; and it is still important for black subjects since they are affected by white oppression, which they want to bring to an end. To further engage Biko's meditations, the subject of liberation will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

BIKO AND LIBERATION

Introduction

The chapter seeks to examine Biko's conception of liberation, which is regarded as a necessary intervention for one to understand the subjective horizons of blackness. The question of liberation is constitutive and foundational to Black Consciousness in that it articulates the demands of black subjects in the face of oppressive, existential conditions. This also includes the ways in which these demands articulate the necessity of having to call for oppression to be brought to an end; thus envisioning the political future where blackness can be re-humanised after the plague brought by the history of dehumanisation.

The chapter will also presents a distinction between liberation and emancipation; and also bring to the fore their actual meanings and the purposes thereof. The political demands of blackness will be examined in terms of what blackness strives to achieve; linked to that being the question of the kind of society that Biko's meditations envisions—with the purpose of uncovering the existential conditions, wherein the way forward would be informed by the creation of a new humanism.

Liberation is not emancipation

Emancipation and liberation are not from the same ontological or epistemological register. Therefore, they cannot produce the same end results as their meanings and applications are parallel to each other. Liberation is informed by insatiable demands for the recognition and re-humanisation of black subjects, who are oppressed by the white oppressive system, and want to free themselves from the clutches of oppression. In this instance black subjects who are oppressed engage in the struggle for liberation in order to attain freedom from the oppression that affects their existential condition in the antiblack world. This further entails that their freedom is earned, not given, since they have fought for it. Liberation is however, the struggle for freedom, which is about fundamental changes to the existential conditions.

Emancipation on the other hand, refers to the freedom given to the oppressed by the oppressor. This is the kind of freedom given to black subjects on the terms and conditions set by white oppressive system, which means they are acted upon. Such freedom is by no means genuine freedom. It is certainly not the kind of freedom that black subjects were/are fighting for. Being acted upon means that black subjects are being given the freedom which is determined by the oppressor and simply means that they are co-opted into the system and simply have to comply and assimilate the values and standards of the white subject—this is the elimination of blackness in a very subtle way; since blacks could not fight for their liberation within the white system. This therefore, becomes a superficial freedom, as black subjects are still subjected to the same oppressive conditions, which exacerbate their existence in the antiblack world. Biko problematises and rejects the integration which is proposed by the white liberal establishment. The white liberal's idea of integration is aimed at suppressing and dampening black subjects' spirit of challenging the white oppressive system and this is something that Biko and Black Consciousness want to bring to an end as black subjects are affected by white oppression and want to be free from such conditions.

The kind of liberation that Biko envisaged is that which allows the black subject to become human; which in turn, is denied by the oppressor, and which doesn't give the black man the option to choose to be human or not. More (2008:59) asserts that 'Biko insists on a synthetic moment that preserves the interplay of unity and diversity, that is recognition of difference within sameness, of the universal, and the particular'. Biko advocated for total black liberation, whereby black subjects would be recognised as human beings, embrace their own values and reject the oppressor's values. Fatton (1986:76) adds that 'Black consciousness was in fact the antithetical stage in the long and difficult process of dialectical liberation'. Black Consciousness rejected white racism as well as the integration of black subjects into the oppressive system; as doing so will obstruct and undermine the struggle for total liberation from the clutches of white oppression. As a matter of fact, integration was meant to erase the existence of black subjects in the antiblack world.

The Negro was given freedom as a gesture of kindness by the oppressor, and this cannot be mistaken for liberation; because the latter cannot be given. 'The white man, in the capacity of master, said to the Negro, "From now on you are free"' (Fanon [1952]2008:172). The freedom given to the oppressed by the oppressor means reverse

oppression, since the structures of oppression remain the same; which is something that black subjects want to bring to an end by engaging in the struggle for their liberation. The release of Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1990 by the apartheid oppressive regime is a case in point—the then apartheid president, Mr F. W. De Klerk, said to Nelson Mandela, ‘from now on you are free’. Mandela was, in Fanon’s terms, acted upon by the apartheid regime with this gesture of freedom. This means that Mandela’s freedom was subject to him accepting the apartheid oppressive system with its oppressive structures that affects black subjects’ existential condition; which is contrary to what black subjects yearned for—total liberation from the apartheid racist state. In addition to this, Fanon ([1952] 2008:171) adds that ‘the Negro steeped in the inessentiality of servitude was set free by his master’.

Essentially, when black subjects are acted upon, it means that the freedom they have is not genuine freedom, but that the oppressor is indirectly creating oppression for the oppressed based on the pretence that the oppressed is free. It is clear from Biko’s meditations that there cannot be such a thing as the freedom of the oppressor. For there to be freedom, there should be no oppressor. The freedom that is given to the oppressed means nothing except that the oppressed is still exposed to the experiences of oppression because the structures of oppression remain the same; unlike when freedom is attained through the liberation struggle, because liberation is about fundamental changes; which means that black subjects who are oppressed are not acted upon; as they dictate their own terms of freedom.

According to Biko, emancipation is a superficial freedom designed by whites to thwart black subject’s aspirations of engaging in the struggle for liberation from the clutches of white oppression. Freedom *qua* emancipation ‘is a concept long defined by whites and never examined by blacks’ (Biko [1978] 2004:100). Moreover, it is a well-planned white strategy to perpetuate the oppression of black subjects in order to maintain white superiority and white dominance. Fanon ([1952]2008:171) avers that ‘the blacks went from one way of life to another, but not from one life to another’. According to Fanon, freedom given to the oppressed does not bring any changes as black subjects continue to be subjected to the evils of oppression. This affirms the evils of freedom received as a gesture from the oppressor because black subjects are denied the right to make demands; since they do not have a say. It is against this background that Biko’s political articulation rejects the concept of integration because he strongly believed in the total

liberation of black subjects from white oppression, as black subjects were severely affected by it. Sithole (2012:12) points out, 'the subject position of blackness implies being restricted, excluded, dehumanised and to the lesser extent, acted upon'. As far as this perspective goes, emancipation gave white subjects the upper hand to control and contain black subjects within their limits; as demands made by black subjects were not entertained and considered. More (2010:82) posits that 'it is an attempt to hide the superiority and inferiority complexes of whites and blacks respectively that are ingrained elements of the South African society'. Put simply, emancipation is an impression that was created for black subjects to see or feel that they were free from white oppression, but the fact of the matter is that what black subjects were given was a superficial kind of a freedom, whereby they continued to suffer from white oppression, while whites continued to enjoy the status of superiority over blacks. Fanon ([1952]2008:3) posits, '[w]hite men consider themselves superior to black men'. In emancipation black subjects embrace the white subjects' values and white subjects continue to see themselves as superior to black subjects, as the latter continue to possess racialised bodies, with no prospects for them to challenge whiteness; owing to the fact that they did not fight for their freedom, but it was given to them. It is for these reasons that Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement opposed and rejected emancipation because it meant the continuation of black subjects' oppression at the hands of the white oppressive system.

Furthermore once black subjects are emancipated, which is to be swallowed by the white oppressive regime, they continue to be exploited by the white oppressive system, which again perpetuates black subjects' existential conditions. Biko is totally against white dominance and its claims of superiority; whereas in essence, they (white subjects) were in the minority as compared to black subjects; and worse still, in the latter's country of birth. More importantly, it is for this reason that Biko urges black subjects to engage in the politics of the struggle for black liberation in order to bring white dominance to an end; together with the antiblack world, because black subjects are affected by white supremacy and want to liberate themselves and want their humanity to be recognised in the antiblack world. Biko emphasised the importance of black subjects' liberation and not emancipation since whiteness was obsessed with superiority and oppression of black subjects and would never easily forfeit this comfort zone just for the sake of the black subjects' freedom. Furthermore whiteness will never surrender to

blackness without being challenged in a way that the struggle should, as whiteness benefits from the oppression of black subjects. As a Black Consciousness proponent, Biko claims that the responsibility for the attainment of liberation from the clutches of white oppression lies with the dehumanised black subjects themselves. Bulhan (1985:12) asserts, 'dehumanisation is something that can be referred to as physical, psychological, and social death'. In the case of black subjects, racism targets the physic of the black subject which is racialised because of blackness; while oppression affects black subjects' psychological functioning.

Black Consciousness conscientised black subjects about the cruelty of white oppression, which affected their existential condition, and about the need for black subjects to engage in the struggle for liberation to free themselves from such conditions. 'Through our political articulation of the aspiration of black people, many black people have come to appreciate the need to stand up and be counted against the system' (Biko [1978] 2004:165). According to Biko, black subjects should realise the cruelty of white oppression and become aware that it is their responsibility to change the white oppressive conditions that affect their existence and this can only be achieved and realised through the struggle for liberation. As a matter of fact, black liberation articulates the idea of the recognition of the black subjects' humanity in the antiblack world; therefore liberation becomes a necessity for black subjects to end the antiblack world that affects their existential condition. Fatton (1986:79) points out '[i]t was only when blacks understood their alienated and exploited condition that they would take upon themselves the responsibility of transforming their historical reality'. In this instance, it was up to black subjects to realise that white oppression affected their existential conditions and that they had no other alternative but to engage in the black subjects' liberation struggle in order to free themselves from such conditions. Fatton's views complement those of Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement in that black subjects should fight with all that they have at their disposal in order to free themselves from the clutches of white oppression.

In addition to the above, Fatton (1986:79) adds that 'the role of the Black Consciousness Movement was to liberate blacks from both their enslavement to white values and from their existential misery'. The Black Consciousness Movement is of the view that black subjects should engage in the struggle for liberation in order to bring white oppression to an end. Gibson (2008:136) further points out, '[a]gainst the force of

the South African state, Biko placed the force of the liberatory idea - the creative subjectivity of the black masses'. According to Gibson, even in the face of violent acts by the apartheid system, Biko continued to urge black subjects to stand up and fight the apartheid system in order to free themselves from the clutches of oppression. Biko ([1978]2004:31) states that '[i]t becomes more necessary to see the truth as it is if you realize that the only vehicle for change are these people who have lost their personality or humanity'. According to Biko, the re-humanisation of black subjects was key for black subjects' liberation; since their common experience of white dehumanisation will strengthen their zeal and resistance, towards the realisation or attainment of freedom from the clutches of white oppression that affected their existential condition. Biko writes:

In a true bid for change we have to take off our coats, be prepared to lose our comfort and security, our jobs and positions of prestige, and our families, for just as it true that 'leadership and security are basically incompatible', a struggle without casualties is no struggle (Biko [1978] 2004:108).

In essence, Biko did not just conscientise black subjects about the need to engage in the politics of liberation, but also made them aware that it is possible for them to face resistance from whiteness; and that the black subjects' liberation struggle won't be easy; as there will be casualties, but they must stay focused to the end; as their quest would be to do away with the antiblack; and possibly usher in a new world, whereby black subjects would be recognised as human beings and respected. Fanon ([1952]2008:170) posits, 'in a savage struggle I am willing to accept convulsions of death, invincible, dissolutions, but also the possibility of the impossible'. This tells us that in the struggle for liberation, according to Fanon; anything is possible; death was imminent, much as prosperity, which is the actualisation of the self, was also possible. Therefore, black subjects should not cower at the thought of these imminent possibilities.

Blacks wanted or geared for total liberation from the white oppressive system; which affected their existential condition. 'Blacks no longer seek to reform the system because so doing implies acceptance of the major points around which the system revolves' (Biko [1978]2004:53). Fatton (1986:76) posits that 'Black Consciousness's immediate task was to make possible the complete transformation of the white system and liberation of the black people'. The primary purpose of Black Consciousness, amongst

others, was to restore the dignity and humanity of black subjects, which was eroded by the white oppressive system, which opposed the black liberation struggle. Biko ([1978]2004:53) claims, 'blacks are out to completely transform the system and to make of it what they wish'. Black subjects had no choice but to vigorously overthrow the white oppressive system and take charge of their own destiny. Accordingly this would enable black subjects to develop programmes for change on their own, without those programmes being thwarted or influenced by others.

Once black subjects become conscious of the evils of white oppression; then they have to engage in the struggle for their liberation; since this is the only way to overcome enslavement and bring white supremacy to an end. 'Liberation therefore, is of paramount importance in the concept of Black Consciousness, for we cannot be conscious of ourselves and yet remain in bondage' (Biko [1978] 2004:53). Fanon ([1952]2008:3) points out that 'black men want to prove to the white men at all cost, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect'. According to Fanon, black subjects wanted total detachment from whiteness; and also needed to prove that their humanity is worth recognising by the antiblack world since they existed as human beings side by side with white subjects; and that they could take charge of their lives without the white man's involvement. It is the politics of necessity for black subjects to engage in the struggle for liberation; which was articulated by the proponents of Black Consciousness, and for the fruits of liberation to be realised.

What does the black want?

The black wants to be human and this is the answer to this Fanonian question. Being human, for black subjects, means that their humanity needs to be recognised and respected in the antiblack world. The black man's demand to be treated as human emanates from the evil destructive nature of white supremacy and domination, which placed him at the exteriority. To be put at the exteriority mean that white supremacy excludes blacks from the political register; thus their existence is non-existence, which further means that blacks exist as non-human beings in the antiblack world.

White racism dehumanises, exploits, enslaves and oppresses black subjects in the antiblack world. 'It is perhaps fitting to start by examining why it is necessary for us to think collectively about a problem we never created' (Biko [1978] 2004:96). The 'problem' Biko is referring to here is white racism, which affects black subjects'

existential condition, owing to their racialised. Fanon ([1952] 2008:91) posits that ‘[t]wo centuries ago I was lost to humanity, I was a slave forever’. To be lost to humanity is to be not treated as a human being like other human beings, but treated as an object for enslavement. This further entails that the existential condition of black subjects constitutes a zone of non-being, which means that they do not exist at all in the antiblack world. Put simply, being black in the antiblack world is to exist in the exclusionary reality—that is, to exist without. In this instance black subjects are not recognised as human beings who have rights to live like all other human beings, which is problematic to them because they want to be recognised as such and also to be treated like equals with their white counterparts; however, this is resisted by white supremacy. Manganyi (1973:27) points out, ‘being-in-the-world (existence) is a given’. According to Manganyi anybody has the right to freely exist in the world without being judged or controlled by the other, because the world is for everyone and does not discriminate as to who has the right to exist. Furthermore Manganyi’s sentiments echo Biko’s views on the discrimination experienced by black subjects in the antiblack world which, according to Biko, need black subjects as a collective to reclaim their recognition as existence is a given in the antiblack world.

The imposed inferiority of black subjects by white supremacy escalates to black subjects being obstructed or denied any opportunity for empowerment because they are side-lined from the gains of the country of their birth. Fanon ([1952]2008: xiii) asserts that ‘to be white is to be powerful, superior and enjoy economic benefits’. To be born white is to be born into a privileged position of power and superiority; whereas to be a black subject is to be born to be inferior and powerless; and to be exploited through enslavement; which is cause for concern as black subjects don’t want to be treated as slaves by foreigners in their country of birth. As oppressed subjects, black subjects want to bring white supremacy to an end and become the architects of their own destiny without their plans being thwarted or influenced by other groups. Manganyi (1973:19) points out, ‘the black people share the experience of having been abused and exploited’. To be a black subject in the antiblack world is to be subjected to exploitation by white supremacy. This further amounts to dehumanisation of black subjects as they are not treated with the respect and human dignity that they deserve. Woods (1978:31) adds that ‘the lack of human dignity experienced by Africans is the direct result of the policy of white supremacy’. The dehumanisation of black subjects is a deliberate act of white

supremacy aimed at maintaining its status quo and perpetuating the oppression of black subjects in the antiblack world.

White racism discriminates against black subjects because of their racialised bodies and also for the purpose of subjugation. Being discriminated against also includes being denied your humanity and existence. Black subjects were denied their humanity by the apartheid state simply due to their racialised bodies. 'In terms of the Black Consciousness approach we recognize the existence of one major force in South Africa. This is White racism' (Biko[1978] 2004:54). Blacks also face struggles in their daily lives. Gordon (1995a) points out that 'antiblack racism is not only the self-deceiving belief that one's race is superior to another race but also a belief that 'ones' race is the only race qualified to be considered human'. Antiblack racism denies black subjects their humanity. To be denied one's humanity means one is regarded not as a human being; and it is for this very reason that black people demanded that their humanity be recognised as they are human beings like all other human beings; not as predicated by the racist apartheid state. More (2012:26) further posits that 'racism is a form of dehumanization and dehumanization is a form of bad faith'. Bad faith means to deny someone of their humanity, knowing very well that they exist. The apartheid racist state denied black subjects their humanity for the purpose of maintaining its white dominance and to perpetuate the oppression of black subjects; which blacks vehemently opposed and rejected, since they wanted to be recognised as existing human beings in the antiblack world.

One can be estranged, from one's humanness', from one's body and sense of self, from one's sense of belonging to one's people, all on the basis of race (Hook 2004:95). Racism of the body refers to judging one by the colour of their skin; thus white racism dehumanised black subjects on the basis of their colour, and imposed white values on them. Biko writes:

The leaders of the white community had to create some kind of barrier between blacks and whites so that the whites could enjoy privileges at the expense of blacks and still feel free to give a moral justification for the obvious exploitation that pricked the hardest of white consciousness (Biko [1978] 2004:97).

The racism practiced by the apartheid racist state is meant to discriminate against and oppress black subjects, while white subjects enjoyed privileges of power and superiority

that they do not deserve. Woods (1978:31) asserts that ‘Africans wants just a share in the whole of South Africa’. This suggests that black subjects wanted their humanity to be recognised and to be allowed to benefit from the economic gains of the country. In addition to this, Woods (1978:38) adds that ‘blacks reject the exploitative nature of white society’. Simply put, black subjects were exploited because they were regarded as mere objects of exploitation. Fanon ([1952]2008:181) posits, ‘I want the world to recognize, with me, the open door of every consciousness’. Fanon wanted to be recognised as a human being amongst other human beings, and be treated with the dignity and respect as he is also a human being. Woods (1978:32) asserts that ‘blacks want equal political rights because without them blacks disabilities will be permanent’. Black subjects wanted to be free to enjoy all political rights in their own country of birth; and this can only be realised when white oppression is brought to an end.

In essence, black subjects’ attainment of re-humanisation will only be achieved when black subjects engage in the struggle for black liberation, because if they fail to do so they will continue to feel the oppression. More (2009:20) points out that ‘questions of liberation from oppression involve questions about the means to overcome that oppression’. Black subjects had to develop a strategy as to how they would overcome the oppression. In essence, these questions also involve the understanding of black subjects that they are collectively oppressed; therefore a collective response towards the rejection of white oppression was necessary, since it was impossible for them to bring white oppression to an end as individuals. Black subjects as the oppressed subjects should take it upon themselves to reject and fight white oppression on their own as it affected their existential conditions—nobody will come do this on their behalf. Biko ([1978]2004:107) adds that ‘now we know that we are on our own, it is an absolute duty for us to fulfil these needs’. Woods (1978:39) posits that ‘black people must build themselves into a position of non-dependence upon whites’. According to Woods, black subjects in the quest to reclaim their true humanity in the antiblack world, should detach themselves from white paternalism as whites are in solidarity towards the dehumanisation of black subjects; thus it was unlikely that they would assist them to turn against their own white brothers towards the realisation of total liberation from the clutches of white oppression. .

The strategy of the white supremacist was to oppress and dehumanise black subjects in order to maintain the status quo. Fanon ([1952]2008:3) asserts that ‘white men consider

themselves superior to black men'. To be white was to be born into a privileged position of power and superiority, while to be a black subject was to be born with the inferiority complex; where the humanity of black subjects was always questioned—and this is something that black subjects profusely rejected and opposed. In pursuit of liberation, black subjects fought for their humanity to be recognised because existing in the world is given.

Humanity that was permitted to exist and recognised in the antiblack world was that of whites—black subject's humanity was denied since blackness was denied to exist in the antiblack world. 'One group wants to claim benevolence to those whom they dominate and other ceases its freedom' (Gordon 2008:88). Gates and West (1996:88) comment, this is 'the overwhelming onslaught of white dehumanization'. Black subjects were deprived of their humanity by whiteness to exist as human beings in the antiblack world. Biko ([1978]2004:30) claims that the type of black man we have today has lost his humanity'. Black subjects only existed at the level of the body and are hopeless; thus black subjects must challenge in order to restore their humanity which has been erased by white supremacy.

It becomes more necessary to see the truth as it is if you realise that the only vehicle for change are these people who have lost their personality (Biko[1978] 2004:31). According to Biko, change could emanate from black subjects themselves if they wanted their humanity restored, and this could be achieved when black subjects engage in the politics of solidarity and work as a group. Fanon writes:

I am my own foundation and it is by going beyond the historical, instrumental hypothesis that I will initiate the cycle of my freedom. The disaster of the man of color lies in the fact that he was enslaved (Fanon [1952]2008:180).

Fanon was of the view that black subjects must draw their strength for the plight of the common enemy, which is oppression and enslavement; and fight for their humanity and freedom from white domination. Moreover the antiblack world could be changed by black people themselves, as they were the ones who were affected by white oppression. Biko ([1978] 2004:108) adds that 'we must use the very concept to unite ourselves and to respond as a cohesive group'. Black subjects being the oppressed subjects, must unite as a group which is engaged in the politics of solidarity in order to liberate themselves from the clutches of oppression that deny them their humanity, and determine their

existential condition. For liberation to be pursued and attained, black subjects had to face the reality that they were affected by white oppression; and that it would never end, except when black subjects do something about it.

The white policies racially discriminated against and dehumanised black subjects simply because they were black. ‘The lack of human dignity experienced by Africans is the direct result of the policy of White Supremacy’ (Mandela 1995:437). Furthermore, the apartheid racist policies only recognised whites as human beings and not black subjects. More (2012:31) takes the debate further and poses these questions: ‘If a person’s humanity is questioned or denied, what else can the person do except assert his or her humanity? How could it be otherwise?’ The answer to this is that black subjects as the oppressed subjects had a responsibility to work together to reclaim the recognition of their humanity in the antiblack world.

Black Consciousness, however, became the foundational basis for black re-humanisation from white dehumanisation in the sense that it revived the pride and dignity of blacks, and made them see themselves as complete human beings worthy of respect. Wilderson (2008:106) posits that ‘[a] political movement must be built and sustained on behalf of *someone* who has lost *something*’. Black Consciousness was founded on behalf of black subjects who had lost their humanity; and was sustained by those who tirelessly fought to bring the antiblack world to an end, and usher in a new world with a human face.

Biko and his Black Consciousness Movement were concerned with actual human existence. They articulated that for black subjects to be treated as human beings they had to collectively embark on the struggle for the quest of true humanity. This actualisation of humanity would mean the end of the antiblack world; as well as the emergence of blacks and the creation of the new world—hence Black Consciousness became the vehicle for the transformation of black subjects towards the realisation of this new world. Woods (1978:39) points out that ‘Black Consciousness was a new totality of black response to white power, and with it a new era in the racial struggle in South Africa’. Black Consciousness advocated for the total liberation of black subjects from the oppressive, apartheid system, which affected their existential condition. More (2012:30) asserts, ‘Black Consciousness becomes the way to critically engage that human being through so-called non-human beings’ struggle for humanity’. Existential

conditions of the black subjects are a zone of non-beings in the antiblack world of both zones; because either of them is destructive. This further suggests that Black Consciousness became the black subjects' fundamental project towards the struggle for true humanity; which means the beginning of the new world, where blacks would be treated as human beings. Biko elaborates:

We have set out on a quest for true humanity, and somewhere on the distant horizon we can see the glittering prize. Let us march forth with courage and determination, drawing strength from our common plight and our brotherhood. In time we shall be in a position to bestow upon South Africa the greatest gift possible—a human face (Biko [1978] 2004:108).

Biko strongly believed that black subjects as a collective should embark on the liberation struggle to liberate themselves from the historical challenges of white dehumanisation and oppression. According to Biko, once the liberation struggle is over that will mean the end of the antiblack world which will signify the emergence of black subjects as fully constituted subjects.

The politics of becoming: Towards a new humanism

The end of the antiblack world is not the end of the world in a sense of the apocalypse; but the possibility of another world, replacing the 'old' order. The end of the antiblack world also signifies the emergence of black subjects as fully constituted subjects. In other words, black subjects emerge as human beings as liberation would mean coming into being in another world.

Of importance, the end of the antiblack world is the end of the dehumanisation of black subjects; as for a long time the humanity of black subjects had been questioned. The fact that the world is made of antiblackness means it must come to an end. It's the world that is not hospitable to blackness. There is no question of justification of the antiblack world because it is indefensible. For liberation to be realised, the antiblack world had to come to an end. This is what Biko imagined—through his intervention (Black Consciousness philosophy)—the possibility of another world, a world without blackness. What is central to Biko's thinking is giving black subjects a new human face, through the creation of another world, as the antiblack world was the world without humans. Furthermore, the conception of the human has been compromised by the politics of difference. These differences have created superiority and inferiority and this

complex has been foundational to the racist logic that militated against the politics of liberation.

Biko's intervention, through the Black Consciousness philosophy, began with the conscientisation of black subjects about the cruelty of the apartheid policies, which targeted blacks; owing to their racialised bodies in the antiblack world. Biko criticised the apartheid policies, viewing them as a result of colonialism, which meant that foreigners dictated terms and conditions for black subjects in their country of birth. Apartheid policies favoured whatever was white and disfavoured whatever possessed a blackened body, in this case black subjects. Accordingly, white subjects who are colonial settlers and a minority group, imposed apartheid policies on black subjects who were in the majority, in their own country, for the purpose of subjugation. This again, entails that black subjects existed in the exclusionary realities of life. To exist in the exclusionary realities of life means that black humanity is denied and also excluded from the political register of life. This further entails that the values, norms, beliefs, and cultures of black subjects were discarded and replaced with foreign white cultures; thus the histories of black people were erased in this way. Fanon elaborates:

The settler makes history and is conscious of making it. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country, he clearly indicates that he himself is the extension of that mother country. Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his own nation in regard to all that she skims off, all that she violates and starves (Fanon [1965] 2001:40).

Put simply, the settlers' quest was, according to Fanon, to make and impose foreign history over black subjects, thus erasing black history in the antiblack world. In this regard once the history of black subjects had been erased, the culture would automatically be erased, and something that Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement challenged and objected to, as Africans had to preserve their culture. This preservation of African culture could, according to Biko, only happen when black subjects stand in unity and reject white culture, which denied black subjects their existence in the antiblack world. Furthermore, the sustenance of African culture could not take place whilst the antiblack world still existed, which meant that the antiblack world must come to an end. Black liberation, according to Biko, becomes a necessity for black subjects if they want to be free from the clutches of white superiority. Manganyi (1973:32) points out, 'the white culture proclaims the superiority of its

cultural heritage'. According to Manganyi white culture is presumed by whites as superior and rich in heritage; whilst black subjects' culture is the culture made of defeats; and does not have heritage that black subjects can be proud of. Biko elaborates thus:

Our culture, our history and indeed all aspects of the black man's life have been battered nearly out of shape in the greatest collusion between the indigenous values and the Anglo-Boer Culture (Biko [1978] 2004:102).

In point of fact, the culture of black subjects had been on the verge of extinction since the advent of the Angle-Boer culture. The aspect of the black subjects' life that Biko refers to here is that African culture is man-centred, which means that it is based on sharing while the white/Boer culture emphasises individuality, which means that the individual is all on their own. This collusion therefore brought confusion since the African culture had been misrepresented by whites for the sole purpose of alienating, dehumanising, exploiting and oppressing black subjects and maintaining white superiority. Oliphant (2008:220) points out that 'African life is based on cooperation and joint human action'. African life or culture is based on caring and sharing; meaning communities help each other without expecting anything in return. Biko rejected and opposed the adoption of the apartheid Boer culture, due to the fact that it is misleading; and its aim is to deny black subjects humanity and erase the existence of black subjects in the antiblack world. Oliphant (2008:225) avers, 'Anglo-Boer culture, results in the remorseless dehumanization of people'. The introduction of the Anglo-Boer culture denies blacks humanity, thus black subjects exist as non-human beings.

In essence, culture makes a nation and the nation prides itself on the heritage of its culture. 'Culture, Woods (1978: 38) argues, 'is a living tradition, a collection of ideas and beliefs which represent a people's collective way of life'. Therefore, no nation can enforce its culture on another nation; because cultural background and beliefs are dissimilar to each other. Manganyi (1973:33) adds that 'the white dominant cultures have enshrined freedom and security for members of their kind ensuring the maximum absence of black condition'. According to Manganyi, whites ensured the protection of whites through the dehumanisation of black subjects; which were regarded as non-human beings in the antiblack world. Biko comments thus:

Whenever colonization sets in with its dominant culture it devours the native culture and leaves behind a bastardised culture that can only thrive at the rate and pace allowed it by the dominant culture (Biko [1978] 2004:51).

According to Biko, the advent of the colonial dominant culture changed the outlook of the natives' culture by (re-)creating the natives' culture as some sort of sub-culture to the colonisers' culture. Furthermore the colonisers' culture remained the legitimate culture; while the culture of the native was declared illegitimate. This therefore, affirms the necessity of Black Consciousness ideals for black subjects; since they fight for the re-humanisation of black subjects, who have been dehumanised by the white dominant culture. More (2012:30) adds 'then Black Consciousness becomes the way to critically engage that human being through so-called non-human beings struggle for humanity'. This entails that Black Consciousness; through the liberation struggle, challenged the recognition of the humanity of black subjects in the antiblack world which had been denied by colonisers. Fanon writes:

Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it (Fanon [1965] 2001:169).

The coloniser did not only dehumanise the colonised; but also distorted and devalued the history of the colonised. The existence of blackness is eliminated in the antiblack world; since the coloniser is the creator of the antiblack world. This therefore, concludes that black subjects' recognition in the world would only be realised when the antiblack world, as articulated by Biko, came to an end. In addition to this, Fanon ([1965] 2001:169) adds that '[c]olonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness'. According to Fanon, the coloniser created a dependency relationship with the colonised. This dependency convinced black subjects to believe and trust the coloniser, with all its evil deeds, which militated against the existence of blackness in the antiblack world. In essence, there is no way the coloniser could bring lightness to black subjects; since the coloniser is the creator of black darkness. The only lightness that could be achieved by blackness was through engaging in the politics of liberation; because the politics of liberation call for the end of the antiblack world; which is against blackness. Manganyi (1973:19) argues that 'African cultures were assaulted almost beyond recognition'. African cultures were devalued, distorted and misrepresented as African history; thus promoting white culture as

superior through the inferiorisation of other cultures. Through this process Africans were forced to celebrate the cultural heritage of the coloniser, which slowly erased African cultures—since black subjects had to denounce their cultures and embrace the culture of the colonisers. The erasure of African cultures also meant the erasure of black subjects' existence in the antiblack world, something that Biko sought to restore through the politics of liberation, since black subjects couldn't afford to be treated inhumanly by foreigners in their country of birth. In addition to this, Manganyi (1973:20) points out that '[o]ur spirit of communalism was gradually eroded until we were left with individualism and its stable-mate materialism'. The culture of the coloniser emphasised individualism, whereas black subject's culture puts emphasis to collectiveness. Biko ([1978] 2004:45) comments; 'ours has always been a Man-centered society'. This is to say the culture of a black subject is about caring for each other; and communities would help each other without expecting anything in return. It is therefore, for this reason that Biko and Black Consciousness became relevant to black subjects, since it sought to restore the humanity of black subjects as well as their dignity, which has been eroded by the antiblack world, which militates against the existence of blackness. Black Consciousness also sought to bring an end to white dominance. This would then mean the creation of another world where black subjects will have a human face.

White subjects forced their culture on black subjects and created black dependency on whiteness. 'In being forced to accept the Anglo-Boer culture, the blacks have allowed themselves to be at the mercy of the white man and to have him as their eternal supervisor' (Biko [1978] 2004:104-105). Black subjects had to follow whatever whites dictated to them, no matter how foreign this was to them; and that erased their independence. In actual fact, the bone of contention here is that Biko called for the detachment of black subjects from white subjects and their cultures in order to have their humanity recognised; since this dependency rendered them subhuman. Fanon ([1965]2001: 171) points out, 'colonialism did not dream of wasting its time in denying the existence of one national cultures after another'. Colonialism declared its culture as the only culture to be adopted by the colonised subjects; all other nations' culture was thus eliminated by the 'superior' culture. This elimination of other cultures meant that only the colonisers' human race was recognised. Oliphant (2008:225) posits that 'Anglo Boer culture results in the remorseless dehumanization of people'. The Anglo-Boer

cultures erased the existence of whatever is not white. To be dehumanised means one is being denied the right to be human. In this case black subjects were denied their right to be human by the antiblack world; which is against blackness. In addition to this Oliphant (2008:225) avers that ‘the colonial subject is completely drained of its humanity and treated as nothing but an object of use to the colonizers in economic terms’. The colonised subject’s humanity has been denied and exploited by the coloniser to an extent that the colonised possesses a lifeless body.

The Anglo-Boer culture was enforced by military force and threats of death against those who opposed it. ‘Where it was impossible to convert, firearms were readily available and used to advantage’ (Biko [1978] 2004:45). Black subjects’ cultures were erased by force. The human face of black subjects was eliminated by force in the antiblack world. This therefore entails that for black subjects to get their humanity back, the antiblack world must cease to exist; something that Biko and Black Consciousness fight for on behalf of black subjects and with black subjects. Fanon ([1965]2001:31) asserts that ‘in the colonies, the economic substructure is also a superstructure’. Biko elaborates thus:

Our culture must be defined in concrete terms. We must relate the past to the present and demonstrate a historical evolution of the modern black man. There is a tendency to think of our culture as a static culture that was arrested in 1652 and has never developed since (Biko [1978] 2004:106).

According to Biko the black subjects’ culture should be defined, based on its richness and values; man-centred—meaning it is a culture of caring, as opposed to the Anglo-Boer culture, which is individualistic. Oliphant (2008:217) asserts that ‘African culture changed over time in response to changing circumstances while still retaining some of its ‘fundamental aspects’. In actual fact, African culture kept on gradually developing; even though it was suppressed by the white dominant culture. However, Biko urged black subjects to build on these developments in order to resuscitate their culture and reject the white dominant culture, which aimed to totally erase the history of black subjects in the antiblack world. This, according to Biko, could only be actualised when black subjects engage in the politics of liberation; thus ending the antiblack and ushering in a new world; a classless society. Sibisi (1991:134) posits that ‘the black people’s culture has been denigrated so they have developed a hatred for it’. The black

subjects' culture has been deformed and undermined by the white dominant culture to an extent that black subjects became ashamed of their blackness and also developed hatred for their own cultures. This is what Biko, through the Black Consciousness Movement, sought to restore by urging black subjects to embark on the liberation struggle.

Biko advocated for the restoration of the black subjects' culture in order to restore pride and dignity to black subjects, which has been destroyed by the white dominant culture. 'We have to rewrite our history and produce in it the heroes that formed the core of our resistance to the white invaders' (Biko [1978] 2004:105). This is what Biko calls for - the rewriting of African history, because the past black leaders who made history by resisting colonialism have been misrepresented, and denigrated by whites to mislead black subjects for the purpose of subjugation. Oliphant (2008:225) points out, 'Biko's discourse on African culture is an attempt at the recuperation and restoration of African culture'. What is amazing about Biko is that he always uses the pronoun 'we', referring to the collective of black subjects to rally together in order to overcome white oppression that affected their existential conditions—but he was also aware that the conscientisation of black subjects would have to take place for a meaningful liberation to occur. Biko strongly believed in the unique capacity of humankind to make and remake its own conscious life (Halisi 1991:109). Biko believed that the attainment of true humanity in the antiblack world would be actualised through individual contribution towards a collective in the liberation struggle. In essence; once individuals are conscious of the impact of white dehumanisation then they will be able to willingly contribute to the liberation struggle for their own freedom. Gibson (2008:136) asserts, that 'what is powerful and new about Biko's ideas is that he always centres the possibility for change within the subjectivity of the oppressed person'. Biko emphasised that freedom from white dehumanisation could only emanate from black subjects, who experienced the evils of white oppression, which militated against their existential condition in the antiblack world; and that freedom would only be realised through the liberation struggle; which would bring an end to the antiblack world and usher in a non-racial, classless society.

Black Consciousness infused self-confidence and restored the dignity of black subjects; which was eroded by the white dehumanisation of black subjects in the antiblack world. In essence, Black Consciousness called for the end of the antiblack world and the re-

humanisation of black subjects. Gibson (2008:137) points out, '[a]s Black Consciousness develops there is a need to work out further the quest for a new humanity'. Black Consciousness had to intensify the liberation struggle to bring the antiblack world to end; with the possibility of another world, whereby black subjects would be fully recognised. Halisi (1991:110) avers that '[t]hrough Black Consciousness philosophy, the Black Consciousness Movement evolved what can be referred to as a prefigurative approach to politics'. Black Consciousness philosophy mutated throughout the infusion of younger generation to articulate fresh ideas of the liberation struggle. This therefore means that the political articulations of the Black Consciousness Movement envisioned the possibilities of an end to the antiblack world; and the creation of another world, which was non-racial and classless in its makeup. Fatton (1986:76) posits that 'Black Consciousness' immediate task was to make possible this complete transformation of the white system and this liberation of black people'. The role of Black Consciousness was to ensure that black subjects are totally liberated from the antiblack world and that the re-humanisation of black subjects is realised in a non-racial and classless world.

Biko urged black subjects to rally together in order to liberate themselves from white oppression. 'We are of the view that we should operate as one united whole toward attainment of an egalitarian society for the whole of Azania' (Biko [1978] 2004:166). Azania is another name used to refer to South Africa. By the same token, Biko's political articulations are inclusive; and that means, according to him the attainment of an egalitarian society would not be for black subjects only but for all South Africans to enjoy; including the oppressors; and that is new humanism. Fanon ([1965]2001:198) points out that '[t]his new humanity cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism both for itself and for others'. According to Fanon the attainment of new humanism would be a gift to be cherished by all South Africans, and not by the victors only. Fatton (1986:77) posits that 'a "true humanity" in the Black Consciousness scheme was the revolutionary and dialectical actualization of a color-blind and classless society'. The main aim of Black Consciousness was to re-humanise black subjects in the antiblack world; and that could only be achieved through the liberation struggle—resulting in the creation of another world; which would be a non-racial and classless society.

Biko emphasised that black subjects should be united in the liberation struggle in their quest for true humanity. 'We speak as one combined whole, directing ourselves to a

common enemy, and we reject anyone who wishes to destroy that unity' (Biko [1978] 2004:166). Fanon ([1965]2001:198) avers that 'after the conflict there is not only the disappearance of colonialism but also disappearance of the colonized man'. According to Fanon, the attainment of the freedom of black subjects from the clutches of white oppression and dehumanisation would mean the end of the antiblack world; which militated against the existence of blackness and the beginning of another world with new humanism, which would mean the end of colonialism and the colonised; since it will be a non-racist and classless society. Fanon's views echo that of Biko's ideological make up in that black subjects as a collective should embark on the struggle to liberate themselves from the historical challenges of white dehumanisation and oppression. According to Biko, once the liberation struggle is over, there would be peace and freedom for all races or citizens who live on the shores of South Africa and that will be an egalitarian society with a human face. Sibisi (1991:136) comments, '[o]nly when people are at peace with themselves, can they appreciate and live with the strengths and weaknesses of their fellow human beings. This would mean the beginning of a new world that would offer respect and regard and a caring society, which would live in peace and harmony.

Africana existential phenomenology: another subjectivity is possible

Africana existential phenomenology is about liberation. Liberation gives hope that another world is possible. Africana existential phenomenology further articulates the new form of horizon, which means another life outside of oppression. Central to Biko's political articulations or thinking is the quest to give black subjects a new face, which means that another world is possible. This world would mean the emergence of black subjects from white subjugation and oppression. The politics of becoming, which is humanism, requires that the conception of humanity is radically rethought. The conception of humanity has been distorted by the politics of difference. The politics of difference has created superiority and inferiority complexes; and these complexes have been foundational to the racist logic that militated against the politics of liberation.

Biko has shown the importance of the political present; arguing forcefully that black subjects must get rid of their inferiority complex. The politics of liberation, in Biko's meditations on Black Consciousness and in relation to Africana existential

phenomenology, has shown that liberation is a necessity, and as such, its actualisation could not be postponed to the future; but must be radically attended to in the present.

If liberation is something that is the maturity of the future, or something which must be attended to in the future, it means that it will be compromised because oppression is not confronted at the present time. Confronting oppression in the present, as Biko's meditations shows; means that liberation would be actualised; while Africana existential phenomenology shows that confrontation of the oppression must be deepened.

Black Consciousness emerged as an independent and intellectual force to confront oppression that affected the existential conditions of black subjects in the antiblack world. In essence, the Black Consciousness Movement is a movement born out of the struggle against white domination in South Africa. Its philosophy revolved around the identity and liberation of black subjects from the clutches of white oppression and supremacy.

White supremacy and black subjects' oppression was a major concern of Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement since it deliberately oppressed and exploited black subjects. White supremacy used apartheid policies to exclude black subjects from economic gains and from the political register of life just because of their racialised bodies. To be excluded from the political register of life means that black subjects' existence was not recognised—meaning that they existed at the exteriority. According to Biko, these existential conditions of black subjects were unpalatable and needed a political intervention; which is the politics of liberation. Liberation in this case becomes the means to overcome the oppression. Biko therefore, urged and mobilised black subjects to engage in the liberation struggle in order to free themselves from the clutches of oppression that affected their existential condition. The liberation struggle was meant to fight for the creation of another world, where black humanity will be recognised. Biko's articulations of liberation politics are consistent with Africana existential phenomenology, which advocates for the liberation of all African subjects from historical oppression. The sentiments of Africana existential phenomenology ties in well with the ideological make up of Biko and the Black Consciousness philosophy as it is predicated on that fact that South Africans are affected by the apartheid racist state and must be set free.

Biko and his Black Consciousness articulations on the liberation of black subjects from the clutches of the apartheid system affirm his philosophy and positionality within Africana existential phenomenology, since it advocates the liberation of Africans from historical oppression. Within the parameters of Black Consciousness, historical oppression, which affects the existential condition of black subjects, requires intervention and response from black subjects themselves; which is to rally together in the struggle for liberation. This therefore, concludes that liberation is articulated from the position of the oppressed; not from the positionality of the oppressor, which is consistent with the articulations of Africana existential phenomenology—which agitates that liberation must be attained by black subjects; and not be given to them as a gesture of kindness from the oppressor—because such freedom borders on bad faith. Bad faith means not to take responsibility. More (2008:60) posits that ‘in the antiblack apartheid world, bad faith is an “effort to evade ones humanity” by asserting this humanity as what it is not’. To evade is to avoid, which means the humanity of black subjects is deliberately not recognised, which means that black subjects exist in an ontological void. Being ontologically void reflects that the humanity of black subjects is being denied in the antiblack world and that is what Biko and his Black Consciousness rejected and challenged through the liberation politics. Liberation however became an ideal tool for Black Consciousness in sensitizing black subjects about the need to rally together and object to the unjust and unfair treatment from the white oppressive system.

In this regard, Black Consciousness articulates the idea of the liberation of black subjects from enslavement and white oppression, which is to bring an end to the antiblack world; and the creation of another world where the humanity of black subjects will be recognised. This is also emphasised in Africana existential phenomenology articulations; that black liberation is the quest for black subjects’ humanity, but not as identical to that of the oppressor. More (2010: 75) explains that ‘from a liberation perspective, Black Consciousness meant black people’s intense desire to annihilate this social reality, and to move towards the creation of a new reality, a fair social reality as a condition for universal humanism’. Black Consciousness conscientised black subjects about the cruelty of oppression, which affected their existential condition and urged black subjects to rally together in the struggle for their own liberation. The participation of black subjects in the liberation struggle would further bring the antiblack world to an end; ushering in another world, which would be non-racial and classless.

More importantly, Black Consciousness was however, a positive call because it confronted the oppression of black subjects head-on and focused on the existential conditions that affected black subjects in the antiblack world. It also conscientised black subjects about the evils of oppression and urged them to rally together and liberate themselves from the shackles of oppression that affected them. Black Consciousness conscientised black subjects about the reality that white oppression affected their existential condition; and that there is a pressing need for them to engage in the liberation struggle to bring white oppression to an end; which implies that there is a possibility of creating another world, where the humanity of blacks would be recognised. Hook (2004:105) adds that '[c]onscientization involves what Biko referred to as 'protest talk', talk about circumstances of oppression'. Conscientising black subjects in Biko's political articulations means that they should engage in the politics of liberation and fight against the oppression that affected their existential condition. By protest talk Biko meant black subjects should take action and make demands, which simply meant that they should engage in the struggle for liberation. Fatton (1986:79) declares that 'the role of Black Consciousness Movement was to liberate blacks from both their enslavement to white values and from their existential misery'. In essence, the quest for Black Consciousness philosophy was to liberate black subjects, who were exploited and oppressed by the white oppressive system.

Furthermore, the political strategy adopted by the Black Consciousness Movement was to mobilise the oppressed in order to attain liberation. More importantly, Biko, as an advocate of the Black Consciousness movement, was conscious of the obstacles and challenges that black subjects might encounter in their quest for liberation, which included resisting the apartheid system; which was obsessed with power and the dehumanisation of black subjects in the antiblack world. Biko ([1978]2004:74) thus counsels; 'being an historically, politically, socially and economically disinherited and dispossessed group, they have the strongest foundation in which to operate'. According to Biko, oppression affected the existential condition of black subjects—however; black subjects themselves have to work as a united force in the liberation struggle; which was aimed at transforming their existential condition in the antiblack world. Furthermore, Black Consciousness infused self-confidence and resilience in black subjects, who were affected by the plight of the oppressed; which translated into their willingness to fight for their liberation.

Further implications of Black Consciousness relate to correcting false images of ourselves in terms of Culture, Education, Religion, and Economics. The importance of this must not be understated (Biko [1978] 2004:57). In Biko's view, the misconceptions to be corrected were born out of colonialism; which disfigured and distorted the history of the black subject and imposed its own history over the colonised subject. In this regard, colonisation not only affected the people, but has also succeeded in eroding and destroying the history of the colonised subjects. The colonised, by virtue of having been assimilated into the cultures of the colonisers, ended up not being proud of their history. So the colonised had nothing left to be remembered with. Biko ([1978] 2004:76) argues, that '[w]e have to rewrite our history and describe in it the heroes that formed the core resistance to the white invaders'. Colonialism erased anything that had to do with black subjects and disfigured them. According to Biko, for meaningful change and liberation to take place, attention should be paid to rewriting the history of the black subjects, which would serve as an inspiration towards the liberation struggle of black subjects. Buthelezi (1991:123) points out that 'the central proposition of Black Consciousness was that blacks in South Africa had a certain common historical experience which arose out of colonialism and of which they needed to be collectively aware'. Black Consciousness had the duty to teach black subjects about their rich cultural heritage and how it had evolved since colonialism. Hook (2004:105) asserts that 'the challenge confronting Black Consciousness was to reverse years of negative self-image and to replace it with an affirming and positive form of identity'. The negative self-image of black subjects was a result of the dehumanisation of black subjects by whites, which means they were denied their humanity in the antiblack world. Black Consciousness had to infuse self-confidence and restore the dignity of black subjects in the antiblack world. Biko explains:

What Black Consciousness seeks to do is to produce at the output end of the process real black people who do not regard themselves as appendages to white society. This truth cannot be reversed (Biko [1978] 2004:55).

According to Biko, Black Consciousness will, through the liberation struggle; be able to give a human face to black subjects; who have been denied their humanity in the antiblack world. Hook (2004:107) correctly notes that 'the process of 'correcting false images' must be undertaken by black men and women themselves'. In actual fact it was

the responsibility of black subjects to engage in the liberation struggle in order to correct the past and reclaim their humanity in the antiblack world.

In the process of reclaiming the black subjects' humanity, Black Consciousness conscientised black subjects about the evils of oppression and encouraged them to work as a united force in the liberation struggle. Manganyi (1973:19) points out that the 'consciousness of our experience of suffering also means on the positive side that we share the 'mutual knowledge' of wanting to escape from that suffering'. Black subjects were aware that they were collectively oppressed and wanted to free themselves from such conditions because they wanted their humanity to be recognised in the antiblack world. Buthelezi (1991:122) avers that 'the mobilizing function of the ideology of Black Consciousness was seen as decisive in the advancement of what was called the totality of involvement of the oppressed people'. Black Consciousness as part of its liberation strategy; sought to mobilise all those who were oppressed by the system to engage in the liberation struggle; which would free them from the shackles of oppression.

In the quest to free black subjects from the clutches of oppression, Biko emphasised that the liberation struggle could only be actualised through conscientising and reviving self-confidence and dignity in black subjects who had lost hope in themselves as a result of white dehumanisation, who left them with lifeless bodies. In essence, the greatest result that Biko refers to here is the attainment of an egalitarian society, in a new world with new humanism. Fanon ([1965]2001:198) adds that 'this new humanity cannot do otherwise than to define a new humanism both for itself and for others'. According to Fanon, once the liberation struggle is over or completed it will deliver new humanism for everybody; and not only for the victors. Biko ([1978] 2004:51) states that 'the great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military outlook, but the greatest gift still has to come from Africa—giving the world a more human face'. By this Biko is referring to the world with new humanism and an egalitarian society; the one that Biko envisioned.

Conclusion

This chapter engaged Biko's meditations on liberation. The differences between emancipation and liberation were clearly outlined and discussed in depth. The

discussion revealed that liberation is informed by insatiable demands for the recognition and re-humanisation of black subjects who are oppressed by the white oppressive system, whereas emancipation refers to the freedom given to the oppressed by the oppressor. This background set a necessary tone to engage Biko's thought about black subjects' liberation from the clutches of the white oppressive system. It is clear from Biko's thinking that liberation is fundamental; and is an essential aspect of Black Consciousness. What arises as the fundamental aspect of Biko's meditations is that black subjects should emerge as humans in the face of dehumanisation. The necessity of liberation cannot be overemphasised, as it is at the core of Biko's subjectivity.

If liberation is a necessity, it should be pursued by all means as it is the very embodiment of the human existential condition. This is clearly foundational in Biko's meditations, because there was the negation of liberation by the oppressive existential conditions that plagued blackness. It is in Biko's meditations on liberation that oppression is confronted and blacks emerge as human beings. This would mean the end of dehumanisation, but it is black subjects on their own who must initiate the process of being liberated.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Steve Biko is the Africana existential philosopher; hence his political engagement assumes the form of meditations—that is, the political thought that is not thought in itself but the actualisation of the existential realities and being in confrontation with the existential conditions. In Biko's Africana existential meditations of blackness, black solidarity and liberation are particularly profound in foregrounding his philosophical interventions that are still relevant to South Africa post-1994. Therefore, this study elaborated on Biko's meditations to also show his continued relevance, and position them as being a very important discursive practice in Africana existential phenomenology. The results of this study attest to the fact that meditations on blackness, black solidarity, and liberation cannot be understood in isolation; but are co-constitutive thematics that are foundational to Biko's subjectivity.

The study applied Africana existential phenomenology as a theoretical framework and a lens through which to understand the Black Consciousness Movement in general, and Biko's political thought in particular. This is mainly done because Biko's thematic areas of blackness, black solidarity, and liberation are inherent in Africana existential phenomenology. Biko's meditations are inherent in Africana existential phenomenology in the sense that they deal with the existential conditions that affect black subjects who are asymmetrically positioned to be at the receiving end of antiblack racism. This is something that is clearly articulated in Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness. As the Africana philosopher of existence, Biko grounds his meditations, which qualify the examination of the existential conditions of the black subjects in the antiblack world.

As the first focal point, the study detailed the thematic area of blackness by focusing primarily on the lived experiences of being a black subject in the antiblack world. Blackness is the way of being in the antiblack world, which is contaminated by racism and oppression. This therefore means that blackness is the identity marker, which creates colour prejudice, wherein blackness is a lived experience. This notion of blackness relates to Africana existential phenomenology. Africana existential phenomenology reveals what it is like to be a problem; which is blackness in the

antiblack world; as it is criminalised and dehumanised. The criminalisation of blackness means that blackness exists as a non-entity and faces arrest and harassment in the antiblack world.

This, therefore, brings to the fore the importance of Africana existential phenomenology, since it is a systematic existential phenomenological approach to the lived experiences in an intrinsically antiblack world. In essence, Africana existential phenomenology exposes the existential conditions of black subjects, which are the result of myriad forms of subjection. Colonisation instituted racism, which discriminated against black subjects based on the colour of their skin. Racism therefore, becomes the dominating factor in creating a racialised world, which militates against the existence of blackness in the antiblack world.

It is clear and indicative from the above that the existential conditions of black subjects in the antiblack world create the need for black solidarity. More so, the thematic area of black solidarity becomes the important component of Africana existential phenomenology; since it calls for Africans to unite against one common enemy, which is colonisation. Black solidarity rejects oppression; which exacerbates the existential conditions of black subjects in the antiblack world. It is a political position of being a black subject in the world. This position is informed by blackness and blackness affirming humanity in the antiblack world. However, black solidarity becomes relevant to Africana existential phenomenology and also to Biko's philosophy of Black consciousness. This is because both call for black solidarity as black subjects are on the receiving end of exploitation and oppression in the antiblack world. This then confirms that black solidarity is not accidental, but is informed by the lived experiences of black subjects in the antiblack world. However, Africana existential phenomenology deals with the original existential conditions of black subjects and does not at all concede to a compromise. It further emphasises that black subjects should meet on their own terms and not terms dictated to by others.

More importantly, the Africana existential phenomenology approach to black solidarity is the same approach which is emphasised in Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness, in that black subjects should unite and engage in the politics of solidarity and reject all the value systems that militate against the existence of black subjects in the antiblack world. Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness also

encourages black subjects to create the value system that will allow them to define themselves, and not be defined by others. Black solidarity is therefore, the self-definition of black subjects in the sense that it is for black subjects and about black subjects who are the oppressed subjects. The importance of the self-definition of black subjects becomes important in that it amounts to the prohibition of black solidarity when black subjects are defined by others.

The antiblack solidarity groups reject black solidarity and claim that it is racist and immoral. These claims are rejected; as racism feeds on white superiority and black subject's inferiority. It is again the same racist structures that exploit, alienate, oppress, and dehumanise black subjects in the antiblack world. The resistance against black solidarity is that black subjects are not allowed to be on their own but to mimic others. The solidarity of black subjects is something that is prohibited and criminalised. The criminalisation is sensationalised in the manner of referring to black subjects who engage in the political practice, and accusations that black solidarity is reverse racism. It is therefore problematic to label black solidarity racist, since by its very nature it is incapable of being racist in the face of antiblack racism. In this instance black solidarity becomes a necessity; since it is a way of engaging in politics and is the inspiration for liberation. Liberation is the thematic area, which is explored and inherent in Africana existential phenomenology.

Africana existential phenomenology is predicated on the idea of being a black subject in the antiblack world. It further focuses on the reality that African subjects are black subjects; and hence they are affected by the significance of oppression and racism. Liberation is therefore, a means to overcome the oppression experienced by the black subjects. Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness calls for the liberation of black subjects from the clutches of oppression. This liberation, according to Biko's political articulations, becomes necessary because black subjects, as the oppressed subjects, want to free themselves from the clutches of oppression that affect their existence. To be liberated means to emerge. Liberation is therefore, the emergence of black subjects with a new kind of humanism; that is, their re-humanisation in the new world. Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness, which calls for the liberation of black subjects, affirms his positionality as the Africana philosopher of existence.

Africana existential phenomenology further agitates that the question of liberation must be attained by black subjects themselves. This means that black liberation should contemplate and articulate from the positionality of the oppressed; because if it is articulated from the positionality of the oppressor it will be scandalous—meaning it will border on bad faith. Indeed; it is scandalous because the structures of oppression remain the same; which means that it is not genuine freedom but cosmetic. Africana existential phenomenology calls for the disarticulations of the politics of consent, which put the existential predicaments of the black subject on the margins or on complete mute. Put simply, the dependency of blackness on whiteness arrests the progress of liberation; therefore, the detachment of black subjects from whiteness is imperative if liberation is to be realised. In this regard, liberation is about the emergence of black subjects and the overthrowing of the structures of oppression in order to create a just world; where humanity is central.

In essence, the freedom of black subjects could only be achieved through the liberation struggle; and not by any other means. This is because freedom achieved through the liberation struggle is genuine freedom; since it has been fought for. In this type of liberation, black subjects are able to design a programme of their own without being dictated to by others. The call for the liberation of Africa and Africans, made by Africana existential phenomenology, is similar to the call made by Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness—in that they both use the existential phenomenology of blackness. To elaborate further, the emergence of Biko and Black Consciousness infused the ideology of black liberation to be the product of the lived experiences of black subjects under the harsh realities of the apartheid system. So, black liberation in South Africa was informed by the existential conditions of black subjects. It was however, a response to white consciousness that sought to appropriate and dominate the consciousness and thus the freedom of black subjects. Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness and the ideal of liberation situate him within the tradition of Africana existential phenomenology. This is because the existential concerns of black subjects and the call made for the liberation struggle are the same concerns expressed by the Africana existential phenomenology; which calls for Africa's liberation from colonialism.

It is important to punctuate that Black Consciousness emerged from the existential conditions of subjection and had to wage the existential struggle. It is against this

backdrop that Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness becomes relevant to Africana existential phenomenology, since these meditations are preoccupied by the question of the human to become human in the face of dehumanisation. This clearly shows that Africana existential phenomenology is preoccupied with the question of the politics of becoming—that is, the subjectivity of the human *qua* human. As such, the Africana existential phenomenology's thematic area of liberation is clearly articulated in Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness.

This study argued that Biko's conception of blackness cannot be separated from the idea of race as the organising principle and racism as the socio-political practice. Race is a matter of ontological difference and asymmetrical relations, which breeds the dehumanisation practices that are directed at blackness. Biko's phenomenological intervention through his political philosophy of Black Consciousness echoes these sentiments.

The study argued that the racialisation of blackness is dehumanisation and oppression. Exploitation, dispossession and death were all practices of the apartheid racist state. These practices were justified in order to racialise the ontology of blackness. In so doing, blackness was erased from ontology and race preceded everything. This also means that the idea of the racist state, according to Biko, creates the antiblack world; which militates against the existence of blackness. Being black in the antiblack world, the black subject is faced with ontological emptiness. Being ontologically void, the black subject has no ontological density to determine, define and appropriate. This further means that the ontological status of blackness is void because black subjects are bound to define, frame and create the world as they see it—the inhospitable world that black subjects inhabit. In this world, black subjects cannot have a future since; the antiblack world, which created the apartheid racist state, is made in the exclusion and elimination of blackness.

Biko's positionality on blackness is that the state and its racist infrastructure should be directly challenged, since it perpetuates the oppression and the existential condition of black subjects in the antiblack world. This infrastructure manifests itself through apartheid as a form of regime and preceding that, Biko also implicated colonialism and racism—thus colonialism, segregation and apartheid had the same logic of antiblack racism.

The apartheid racist state creates the ‘Superior’ other, and the ‘Inferior’ other. In this instance black subjects become inferior to whiteness because of their racialised bodies. Biko’s positionality denounces the acts of the apartheid racist state since it exacerbates the unjust treatment of black subjects in the antiblack world. However, Biko’s philosophy of Black Consciousness raises the political consciousness of black subjects in preparation for some future active phase of liberation. The study has demonstrated how important the conception of blackness in Biko’s thoughts is, as well as their existential conditions in general. According to Biko, it is important for black subjects to be reconceptualised as a fundamental political and philosophical question.

The study also showed that the thematic area of the racist state revealed that the racist state determined the laws which defined black subjects as outlaws. Black subjects were outlawed subjects because they were not protected by the racist state laws—thus they are subjected to oppression, exploitation and dehumanisation at the hands of the racist state. Biko’s philosophy of Black Consciousness fights for the freedom of black subjects and calls for the end of the antiblack world, which is antiblackness. The end of the antiblack world will mean the emergence of black subjects.

The thematic area of blackness as a racialised ontology was revealed by the study as having effects of racism aimed at black subjects in the antiblack world. Racism appeared to be practiced by the racist state to discriminate against blackness because of their racialised bodies, and to further entrench oppression in order to maintain white supremacy. The thematic area of the paradigm of policing revealed that the racist state used police as a tool to oppress, harass, and dehumanise black subjects in order to maintain white domination over black subjects. The thematic area of the embodiment of blackness was discussed in this study in reference to how the black subject’s body is positioned in the antiblack world.

The positionality of blackness in the antiblack world clearly means that blackness has no place in the world because of their racialised and blackened bodies. Biko’s philosophy of Black Consciousness clearly articulates the phenomenology of blackness and the call for black solidarity and the liberation of black subjects from the clutches of white racism that affect black subjects’ existential conditions in the antiblack world.

Linked to the oppression of black subjects by the apartheid racist state, black solidarity becomes a necessity. Black solidarity is the collective response of black subjects

towards the rejection, oppression and white dehumanisation that affected their existential conditions. It is predicated on the idea that black subjects must be on their own to combat the existential conditions that befall them.

Racism is central to Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness. Racism is the discrimination by one group against another, for the purpose of maintaining subjection. In order to actualise a non-racial society, Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness conscientises black subjects about the evils of white racism. It further expresses group pride and the determination of black subjects to rise and attain self. In this regard black subjects should engage in the politics of solidarity in order to liberate themselves from the clutches of white racism that affect their existential condition.

The study further argued that Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness rejects the criticism of the antiblack solidarity groups, who claim that black solidarity is reverse racism. The reason for such rejection is that the antiblack solidarity groups opposed black solidarity because they don't want to see black subjects being on their own or independent from the influences of whiteness. Antiblack solidarity sentiments and attendant political formations suggest that black solidarity is racist, immoral and should be rejected. According to Biko, the antiblack solidarity groups include whites and white liberals who are not affected by oppression—therefore, Biko rejected the involvement or alliances with whites in the liberation struggle and called for black subjects to detach themselves from white dependency and fight for their own liberation. The study therefore, revealed that black solidarity was a necessity; since black subjects were collectively oppressed by the collective of whiteness and white domination, thus the collective response of black subjects is required.

Liberation is of paramount importance to the freedom of black subjects from the clutches of white oppression that affect their existential condition. Liberation is informed by the insatiable demands for recognition and the re-humanisation of black subjects in the antiblack world. Liberation is therefore, the struggle for freedom, which is about fundamental changes. These fundamental changes include the end of the antiblack world, which is the emergence of black subjects in the new world, which is egalitarian in nature.

The study also argued that liberation and emancipation should not be confused with each other as their conceptual meanings are totally different and do not deliver the same

results. Emancipation is a reform, which means the structures of oppression remain the same. As such it is a freedom that is cosmetic in nature; which means that the oppressed is given freedom by the oppressor as a gesture of kindness. In essence, the oppressed did not fight for the freedom; and does not know the cost thereof, as the oppressed has been acted upon by the oppressor. According to Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness, such freedom should be rejected because it is the recreation of black subjects' oppression. On the other hand, liberation is the struggle for freedom, which means the total destruction of the oppressive structures and the end of the antiblack world. The liberation, with which Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness is concerned, is that of black subjects becoming human; which is denied by the antiblack world. The end of the antiblack world means the creation of a new world with new humanism. In the new world black subjects' humanity is restored and recognised; since it is a world which is a non-racial and classless society.

Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness attracted some criticism within this study. The criticism arises from the fact that Biko uses the concepts of liberation and emancipation interchangeably as if they yield the same outcomes. This explains that Biko's philosophy on Black Consciousness must be taken to task and be blamed for submitting that liberation and emancipation deliver or yield the same results. Biko should be accused of sexism in his political articulations and ideology. In his writings and political statements his focus is on the black man, everything he says is about a black subject, and have very little or anything to say about the improvement of specific conditions applying to the sexist oppression of black women.

The study recommends that more research be conducted with regard to Biko's thinking. Indeed, numerous studies have been conducted on this figure. There is therefore, a need to take Biko's thinking seriously. This means engaging with the philosophical, political and existential themes of his writings. The study also recommends that the revival of Biko's thinking should be its original mission of creating other forms of life that are necessary for the actualisation of black subjects as full human subjects. The mere fact that black subjects who have been dehumanised are still affected by continued forms of white supremacy serves as testimony to the fact that Biko's thinking is of importance simply because his mission has not been realised. Until this is realised and fulfilled, serious research that embodies theory and practice should be paramount. Biko's thought is important as it serves as a testimony that his legacy lives!

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