BLACKNESS AS A QUESTION OF FREEDOM: RACIAL BLACKNESS IN SOUTH AFRICAN EMANCIPATORY THOUGHT

by

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DATE: ___17 January 2023_____

for

Mama and Nono

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Abstract

This dissertation, using the theoretical framework of Afropessimism, discusses how Blackness is an ethico-political structure, in which the slave's natal alienation and social death establishes the resilient forms of Black (non)being. This project centrally argues against locating a theory of the production of Blackness in the socio-political relations of colonial subjugation, and instead proposes that Blackness is a structure, an 'abstract code', that must be understood as deriving from racial slavery. This thought enterprise is explored in relation to South African histories of slavery to re-claim the concept of "social death" as inaugurating the structure of Blackness in Southern Africa. By suggesting how it is the absolute negation of the Black slave that creates the conditions for the possibility of the political, ethical, and civil subject – indeed, the very possibility of the Human, this study presents a discussion on how Black studies requires both a temporal and geographical reconstruction in understanding – firstly by extending much further 'back' than the moment of South African colonialism, and secondly, by expanding the geographies of Blackness beyond European colonial rule.

Furthermore, this study explores and exposes the limits of several major South African forms of political and philosophical thought and campaigns for Black emancipation: feminism, liberalism, Marxism, and Black Consciousness. An exploration which serves to highlight how the existing historiography of South Africa has disarticulated the conceptual significance of racial slavery to the making of Blackness in a way that locates it specifically in social death, with all its implications for Black (non)being. While recognizing that the political structure of Blackness precedes or cannot be located in the mechanics of South African colonial settlements, this dissertation exposes the limits and failures of a civil politics of Blackness in both national liberation and 'progressive' struggles.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In this dissertation, I use the framework of Afropessimism in order to investigate the boundaries of emancipatory thought, both liberal and leftist/radical analyses of pre and post-1994 South Africa's political ontology. All to argue that Blackness is a structure that cannot be understood or analysed through the humanist prism of races, economics, filiality or any other Human subjectivity but through the singular technology of modernity's racial slavery and social death. By engaging the boundaries of both the liberal rights-based framework, class analysis, feminist, and intersectional analysis, respectively, to account for and address Blackness in South African political thought; I take on a theoretical framework that is itself non-temporal and is in fact critical of temporality in relation to Blackness, and advance the position that Blackness is an ethico political structure, in which the slave's social death establishes resilient forms of Black (non)being. Essentially, I propose that it is the absolute negation of the Black slave (the figure of absolute negation) that creates the conditions for the possibility of the political, ethical, and civil subject — indeed, the very possibility of the Human. Blackness' function as the Human's ontological necessity disfigures freedom and forecloses any possibility for a Black South African emancipatory project.

The presence of the Black within political thought problematises the very concept of freedom where freedom is equated with those who lead an existence of social life in direct opposition to social death. Where the Black symbolises social death, freedom, political or otherwise, may not fully be realised by blacks. Deploying the Afropessimist conceptual lens, I suggest the freedom white/civil people enjoy in South Africa is acquired and sustained by the social death of the Black in a parasitic relation. I ask what is freedom for the Black when freedom itself demands Black social death? This concern enables an interrogation of the intellectual new left and its reduction of Blackness under the popularised "race question" to merely an effect of class. I will question how the various yet interconnected activist intellectual discourses historically and presently at play in South African political thought occupy a realm of interlocutory imagination which diachronically and synchronically problematically revolves around multifariously deployed notions of "race" as the structuring antagonism to the "essential" modality of domination foregone as and concluded with colonialism/s.

I finally indulge what role this under theorisation has played and does ceaselessly produce in an anti-black racist society. Finally, I look at predominant feminist and intersectionality politics to illuminate the ways in which thinking the Black as gendered and variously located within Human subjectivities disarticulates Blackness ontologically and in material terms within South African progressive politics. Leftist politics make plain how our public discourse has yet to concretely theorise race and ground it in the histories of Blackness and, as I argue, social death.

Furthermore, I suggest that the existing historiography and critical theory of South Africa has disavowed the conceptual significance of racial slavery to the making of Blackness in a way that locates it specifically in the concept of social death with all its implications for Black (non)being. While recognising that the political structure of Blackness cannot be located in the mechanics of South African colonial settlements, I look into the limits and failures of a civil politics of Blackness in both national liberation and progressive struggles. With this dissertation, I suggest that we require both a temporal and geographical/spatial reconstruction in our understandings of Blackness — first, extending much further back into the 17th and 18th century, and second, expanding the geographies of Blackness beyond European colonial rule. Beginning at the theoretical production of Blackness in a socio-political relations of colonial subjugation that concretises Blackness as a structure, an 'abstract code', that must be understood as deriving from racial slavery.

1.1 Rationale

The interest within this dissertation lies where freedom and Blackness intersect, i.e., in how we in South African Studies have come to understand what Blackness structurally means and what the effects of transformation and reformation are on that structure. By looking into what has been our general theory of history, how this has been a product of a dominant Enlightenment philosophy, and how Blackness holds its own history and political ontology within the above and alongside the current philosophical, political, and juridical order. This dissertation pursues an understanding of the pre and post-1994 South African projects of liberationist democratic politics and what they have meant, if anything, for better theorising Blackness in a 'historically' racially divided society.

Specifically, unearthing if post-1994 neo-liberalism and a legal/rights/progressive regime help us understand how and why Black abjection persists; and whether dominant left/progressive projects of emancipation help us understand Black abjection, and/or allow for a Black conscious theory of freedom.

It seems that a liberal democratic dispensation has delivered robust institutions, and it would be difficult to critique the South African liberal democratic state, considering its hybridity at times, as being without at least this value. However, it is not clear if this explicit critique of liberal progressivism provides an alternative conceptualisation of racial, specifically Black freedom. Consequently, I explore to what extent the discourse of race and rights becomes a normative way of understanding what under the juridical order is just and right, and to what extent this remains surrounded by and in tension with the cut and thrust of the political, economic, social, and cultural hegemonies which characterise lives as Black. Additionally, I inquire more broadly into the different emancipatory possibilities for the Human's social existence under Blackness and how, against this formidable modern enlightenment experience, might one begin to imagine a social and political world that is determined along a different set of structural arrangements. Finally, I forward the ways Blackness, in the interstices of subject formation, can be deconstructed.

I embark on this study to put Blackness at the centre of our understanding of South African and African society and enrich even those areas of study which have attempted to locate it within their frameworks such as Postcolonial studies, Black Consciousness (BC) and Critical Race Theory (CRT). This project gives us an opportunity to think Blackness in South Africa, study its relation to global Blackness and think anew about the promise of freedom. Such a thinking enterprise, one which expansively opens up the terrain of Blackness, its histories and structure, will make necessary a deeper consideration and necessity for Black Studies or Black Study in the African academy generally and more pertinently, in the South African academy. It is my contention that Blackness as a field of study can offer a new sense on the question of freedom as an existential Human destiny, broadly presenting this as what I hope to contribute to South African Studies and South African political thought.

1.1.1 Blackness.

There exists a tendency to refuse adequately abstracting Blackness away from the anecdotal, geographically localisable or contextually analogisable definitions that the layperson can nod their head at. This tendency has produced ideas, mysteries and aspirations for the person the world identifies as Black but no satisfying theory of their condition and ontology. The use of race as a category that insists on South Africa's conceptual ideological history of black people and South African juridical raciology definitions, means that volumes upon volumes of text are put out, all about race and Blackness, even Africaness debates covering over 500 years of this territory, ignoring the ethical and ontological questions Blackness addresses to the stabilising of Human and World. As such, Blackness in South Africa, away from fads of playing Black or empathetic attention towards Black lives, has remained defused, obscured and disarticulated under the illogics and specificities of South African Race Studies. Yet, once race is provoked under this Rainbow Nation everyone wants to know "Who is Black?".

Just as in processes of constituting the social body via England through analogising repressed and oppressed communities with the Black slave (Roediger, 1991) to white women globally carving out political gains for suffrage and writing themselves into philosophy in second wave feminism (De Beauvoir, 1953), the concept of Blackness has endured many uses. So plastic is the word and concept Norman Mailer (1967) referred to the Irish as the blacks of Europe. The word in economics histories, gender studies, critical race theory, postcolonial theory, literature and every discipline one can think of has been used to carve out conceptual entities that have nothing to do with the people on whose flesh it is lived/died or the structure that inaugurates and concretises it.

Deployed to propagandise the issues of numerous marginalised communities, it seemed to me it is particularly Africanist scholars who find themselves in irreconcilable squabbles about what Blackness means. Indeed m(any heavy weights in African scholarship have delved into the concept of Blackness to elaborate a variously and unconsciously interpolated antiquity and cultural identities (Mudimbe, 1988; Diop, 1974), a vehicle for diasporic self-making disavowing colonialism and reaching back into pre-colonial Africa to forge a Black consciousness (Senghor, 1946 Césaire, 2000; Biko, 1987) or to identify

social conscious actors united by a set of political objective (see Biko's definition of Blackness in South Africa). Blackness has been vivifying class politics and writing throughout the world producing fine work from writers like Magubane (2007), it has been used as the cornerstone for the social marginality of groups such as the poor (McClintock 1995) and to equate even middle class white women to Black mxn (Comaroffs, 1992). The waters of Blackness are so muddied that in African scholarship in particular, Blackness has become "all things to all men that we might win some" (1 Corinthians 9:23).

On the other hand, Blackness is almost common sense because in the world, as it really matters (Fanon, 1952) Blackness is a matter of pigmentation based on a structural relation birthed in the modern world by racial slavery, first by the Arabs and then Europe, despite the famous Biko quote and Mbembe's critique and turn from describing the state of Blackness in the world in Necropolitics as, "a symbolic sealing off of the slave" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 22). This sealing off has no qualifiers of locality or history. Asian, whether Indian or Chinese, or any other historical or geographical referential, cannot abide the abyss of Blackness, not in the field of vision nor ontologically. I'm talking about the Black on Fanon's train or those disallowed onto trains to safety at the start of the war in Ukraine. The black here is the person of African descent and Blackness is the structural positionality that underwrites their distance from terrorising Human ontology.

Enlightenment education has, in fact, been so thorough going that the world denies analogies to Blackness with but one small child's "look, a negro" (Fanon, 1952, p. 112) and at once the circle grows tighter. It is this Blackness that concerns me, and the peoples it encloses. I want to make no pretence or nuanced philosophical claims about what and who I am talking about, my purpose is too urgent and my attitude too impatient to meet callus scholarly prescriptions of 'troubling' and 'deconstructing' notions of Blackness in the face of 'real' Black death. More than that, I only make reference to these unironic uses of Blackness in Western and continental scholarship to supplant and not supplement their uses for my project. While I am sure the 'African' academy will be chaffed by my recurrent use and definition of Blackness drawn from mostly Brazilian, Caribbean, North America and European Black scholars, my view is that the onus is on the 'African' academy to make a case against my claims.

In South Africa specifically, we have hitched our thinking of Blackness to the wagon of generalisable racism. We must now take seriously how impoverished those explanatory tools have been for the figure of the Black. What is needed now is the development of a radical critique of the structure of the world so we can grow from thinking about Blackness as being about the individual or group identity and their preconscious interests but as a set of global investments. We must come to thinking Blackness as occupying not only a place of expulsion, but also insist on its philosophical grounding in a structure that brings forth the ontological making of the world over and as an estimation of actualisable freedom. As a state of *being* in a structure of relation, where b*eing* sets the Black up in the "zone of nonbeing" (Fanon, 1952, p. xii), so that Black stands in antagonism with Human. The world is anti-black even while the Black remains available for the wanton use of any other in the world with no capacity to recuperate this status of Blackness. The relation of the Black to the world is one of violence that denies relationality so that the Black is in this 'zone of non-being', a genealogical isolate without ontological density.

Thus defining Blackness resolves the tussle of multiple forms of Blackness to free it up for a paradigmatic analysis in the world, the world's Human and the Human's bond with freedom. The above appropriations of Blackness for the service of every other community are used to signal marginality, but upon closer examination reveal the diligent plight of these Human communities to distinguish themselves and create distance between themselves and what the Black truly is, the slave. Consider how the white worker establishes their belonging in the 'social body' through comparison with the Black to establish the lamentable notion of the "slave wage" (Roediger, 1991, p. 84) without which class rhetoric would be anaemic. Or how white women fight for their political place in the Human community and European Philosophy through analogising themselves with the slave for outrage at their positionality (de Beauvoir, 1947). The propaganda went in so deep, John Lennon of the famous Beatles, a white European man and his Far East Asian wife Yoko, wrote a song beginning with the lyric "Woman, is the Niggas of the world" (Lennon and Ono, 1972, p. 1) at the height of the Western woman's movement (Note how you know exactly who John meant to be woman and who he meant to be nigga, the confusion at this level is a callous performance). And who can forget the most iconic Asian figure in history's fight for emancipation in South Africa, Mahatma Gandhi, doing

so under the terms of open resistance to Indian Kafferication or Blackening (Desai, and Vahed, 2015).

To be clear I am talking about the figure of the Black under the modern master slave relational structure. My black is the slave produced by modernity's 'racial' slavery as socially dead. Slavery is defined by Orlando Patterson (1982) as social death constituted by three conditions which do not mark pre-modern slaveries of the world. Social death thus is constituted by gratuitous violence, natal alienation, and general dishonour. Firstly, gratuitous violence, or naked violence, is a unique form of violence experienced without contingency upon transgression. It is violence based on merely existing under modern racial slaveness. This violence underwrites a structural paradigm that exceeds one's existence when that existence is Black. Secondly, natal alienation is "the loss of ties of birth in both ascending and descending generations" (Patterson, 1982, p. 7); it also has the important nuance of a loss of native status, of deracination. It was this alienation of the slave from all formal, legally enforceable ties of 'blood,' and from any attachment to groups or localities other than those named and chosen for them by the master, that gave the relation of slavery its peculiar value to the master. The slave became the ultimate human tool, "as imprint-able and as disposable as the master wished'' (Patterson, 1982, p. 7). Thirdly, according to general dishonour: "The slave could have no honour because of the origin of his status, the indignity and all pervasiveness of his indebtedness, his absence of any independent social existence, but most of all because he was without power except through another" (Patterson, 1982, p. 10). This is my Blackness, my Black is not previously disadvantaged, they are not Biko's black, they are the slave descendant of the "Dark Continent" beyond the grace of God, my Black is a genealogical isolate overdetermined by what is in the field of vision through pencil tests, flatness of noses and skin hue. My Blackness is not recoverable through amalgamation schemes of multi/mixed-racialism, uncomplicated by so called coloured identity whether imposed or embraced by the individual.

1.2 Research aims

I aim to excavate the histories of slavery, social death and Blackness in South Africa in order to place the question of Black emancipation at the heart of any assessment or

evaluation of South African freedom's trajectory and the possibility of emancipation in the contemporary.

1.3 Research objectives

I will theorise Blackness from the structure of slavery, which I argue inaugurates South African society, in order to critique its most dominant forms of political thought.

1.4 Research question

Where the 'problem' of race is shared by opposed ideologies — imperialist expansion, neoliberalism, and leftist radicalism — an historical as well as polemical analysis is necessary. The current liberal, leftist, feminist, and intersectional theorising of race, or, as I illustrate, lack thereof, is the conceptual problem of this dissertation. What good/value have these forms of political thought, politics and discourse presented for the Black? In what ways do liberal, radical, and leftist political discourses converge on the lacuna of Black theorising? In what ways does South African emancipatory thought, through liberationist and radical projects, unravel to map out an anti-black political and social without the capacity to tackle Blackness under its critical question/s of freedom?

1.5 Research purpose

This research will contribute to scholarship on the relationship between ontological Blackness and Human freedom. My examination of Blackness as structural relation inaugurated through slavery will contribute to theorising more structurally revolutionary conceptions of freedom in South African political thought freeing Blackness from reference by analogy to other marginalised groups.

1.6 Ethical considerations

There will be no engagement with living human or animal subjects in the course of my research. I will not be conducting any fieldwork or interviews or using primary sources in the archive. My study and critique will be conducted through secondary texts spanning several periods of political thought and dominance. I do not envisage any immediate or imminent harm or risks to others in the undertaking of this dissertation being that this is

a theoretical undertaking with no implications of overt risk or harm to others in the academy or the general public.

1.7 Background

The hegemonic discourse of mainstream post-apartheid South Africa is that of non-racialism (Milazzo, 2013) even while debates continue to contest its more liberal colour blindness, constructionism, evasions of race and their racist appropriations. The very complexion of class in this country is colour coded and shaped by race which complicates a progressivist class analysis of race. What is more interesting however are the underlying discursive formations at work to manifest this reality while simultaneously leaving intact a set of liberal platitudes that externalise that reality.

As a theoretical framework to undertake this project, I use what I consider critical theories of race to unpack the limited political possibilities for Black freedom through racial reconciliation and economic redistribution. Highlighted in contemporary critiques of the post 1994 project of liberal democracy, specifically Marxist/leftist interpretations of liberation, are their successes and failures to address the "race question". In particular, how they remain mainly transplantations of Marxist discourse into the South African situation that succeed or fail at making Marxism so elastic as to begin to articulate the freedom of Black people beyond ownership of the means of production, i.e., how much it is in fact capable, conceptually of intervening in a post-apartheid political terrain that is so captured by the powerful forces of white supremacy's capital. In these leftist discourses, there are nuances of anti-black racism to be found — especially those discourses that pursue the class question while silencing the race question. More specifically this is evident in South African Western Marxism (SAWM) and its civil society movements, juxtaposed by Black Consciousness thought developing in succession. In light of this study being broadly located within race critiques of and correlations with SAWM theory, I consequently utilise Afropessimism to critique liberal feminist intersectionality and race-blind Marxism (not including Robinson's Black Marxism/Radical Tradition) as theories and politics of race and freedom in contemporary South Africa.

1.7.1 Critical race theorising in South Africa

This study combines research from critical race theory, as applied to post-1994 South Africa, with insights from radical Black thought, in an effort to critically appraise ideologies that deny or obscure the singularity of Blackness within humanist race studies. The guiding principles of Critical Race Theory, based on thinking of race outside of biological essentialism as well as a commitment to social justice and interdisciplinarity, provide a foundation for this thesis. Although, I argue for a stretching of these commitments in South Africa's specific appropriation of Critical Race Theory by veering from the disciplines of social sciences, history, anthropology, sociology, political studies, and cultural studies; and perform a more structural analysis that does not rely on empiricism or quantitative inquiry and goes beyond legal studies and theology in the humanities (Jain, 2011, p. 254; Yosso, 2002, p. 93). It is my intention to make an intervention in Critical race theorising in South Africa that applies Critical Race Studies to Blackness, elevating it to a register of the paradigmatic.

Thus far, the most compelling conceptual ventures into a critical understanding of race within South African Studies have been within Critical Race Studies, primarily in legal studies. While the landscape of race studies in the country is vast and uneven, it scarcely takes the critical edge of Critical Race Studies nor foregrounds the Black experience quite as acutely as legal studies. Scholars in the field have been able to lay bare the systemic denial or erasure of the continuing effects of colonialism and especially Apartheid in limiting our ability to analyse the persisting problem of racial inequality within the rainbow nation. Increasingly, the corpus of discourse analytic research in South Africa is interested in the varying linguistic repertoire and rhetorical assumptions in dialogue on race (Soudien, 2011; Erwin, 2012, p. 95; Slater, 2014; Jain, 2011). Legal scholars such as Joel M. Modiri and theological scholars like M. S. Conradie, thinking through the politics of Blackness, argues for the appropriation of critical perspectives in international Critical Race theory through an interrogation of legal liberal constitutionalism employing more radical and Black thought. Modiri (2011) makes the case for an explication of Critical Race Theory in post-Apartheid South Africa at three levels:

> (1) a critique of law and legal institutions implicated in perpetuating racist ideology; (2) an analysis of the racialised patterns of wealth distribution, economic inequality and poverty […]; and (3) an engagement with the dynamics of race (and also culture and identity) in 'post'-apartheid social and political life. (p. 407).

Taken further, it is an explication of Critical Race Theory that may call into question the very ethical legitimacy of the South African state to uphold law, sustain this juridical order and perhaps drive for some measure of overhaul.

While one could argue that this formulation of the usefulness of Critical Race Theory is precisely the preoccupation of disciplines across the social sciences, Modiri's project in legal studies places a kind of urgency beyond the academy onto public discourse and state instruments of power. However, confronting the public sphere incites an ideological orientation around the self and shared humanity. Vincent (2008) puts it succinctly: "Social ills are crafted as problems located within specific individual relationships and the possibilities for social action are thus undermined. The hegemonic liberal humanist discourse insisting that we focus on our "common humanity" erases the specificities of the so-called raced experiences and evades the question of who has the power to define that humanity" (p. 1432). As a result, Modiri's project for highlighting power and institutions of the state at work in the perpetuation of anti-blackness is indeed a productive one, he has subsequently mounted a critique similarly against the academy's Social Sciences and Humanities (2021), but yet the force of this productivity is limited to the very trap of individuation. Except in this case, only a disciplinary individuation is at play. It suggests at some level that the most important thing to address is at first the law, legal studies, perspectives of legality and jurisprudence, then institutionality. I am therefore interested in presenting alternative ways that the Social Sciences and the Humanities can think being to conceive of this hegemonic liberal humanist discourse subsuming South African life, beyond law and institutions, state or academic.

1.8 Theoretical framework

The identification of Blackness in this dissertation is as a structural position of meaning and value, beyond the position of identity as simply material product as determined by the Social Sciences. Black people, writ large, remain problematised as antagonistic structural elements for society, and are fixed in this position. No matter what embodiments of white identity they may aspire to or attempt to occupy, they remain unredeemable from Blackness. The goal of my analysis and metacritique on Blackness is one that weighs up the relational paradigms of what is understood as social life always juxtaposed with social death as extrapolated and appropriated from Orlando Patterson by Afropessimism. This Afropessimist framing is unlike current research in South African Studies which concludes the Black as an intersectional social construct, but rather seeks no redemption from her ontological antagonism, which cannot grant structural Human positionality. No hope or solution is saved for the end. Grounding this analysis in political theory in South African Studies exposes the space between the political proper and the structural debasement of Black people in organisations, institutions, narratives and at every level of theoretical abstraction.

In my analysis, I employ Black radical thought grounded in the concept of social death and the Black feminism which inaugurates Afropessimism (the meta-theory and analytical lens grounding Blackness in slaveness and not the governance-based idea of an attitude of pessimism towards Africa) in order to explore Black positionality and relationality as the foundational antagonism of political structure, narrative and thought. For the purposes of this thesis, Patterson's work on social death is foundational in understanding how the relational paradigm — Human — is hung on the absolute negation of Blackness. Patterson defines slavery as a relational paradigm instantiated through institutional violence and systemic marginalisation in order to maintain the positional difference and non relationality of the slave (also referred to as social death) to the Master (also referred to as social life). Reading Patterson's work through an Afropessimist lens reserves the structural negation of social death for racial exclusivity to the Black. Within Afropessimism, Blackness cannot be disimbricated from slavery as the two are coterminous. Furthermore, the Black feminism which forms the foundation of Afropessimist thought, mounts a critique of Western/white feminism and Marxism to

argue that gender and economical structural violence is resolvable because of the irreconcilability of Blackness. That is to say, to solve structural conflicts of gender and labour, women could be given more rights and equity. To solve the worker/boss conflict, the worker could be given a fair wage and good working conditions. However, this resolve is possible because of the structural necessity of anti-blackness which over-determines the Master/Slave conflict. What this means is that if the Black was given, as opposed to stealing bits of personhood to conjure up personhood, all systems of relation and structure would collapse because it is the race binary rather than the gender binary in Freud's Oedipus Complex, that organises and influences relation and language. According to Afropessimism then, Blackness is an irresolvable and irrational antagonism that allows for all other subjectivities such as gender and economy to exist as resolvable structural and psychic conflicts.

1.9 Research design

The introduction serves as the first chapter for this dissertation.

The second chapter, "Slavery and Social Death in South Africa," is an exploration of South African histories of slavery, drawing on the work of historians of slavery to reclaim the concept of "social death" as inaugurating the structure of Blackness in Southern Africa. Here I attempt to recover the histories of slavery both in and beyond the Cape by scholars such as Shell, Penn, Worden, Eldridge, Morton, etc. to argue that Black 'South Africans' were enslaved therefore slavery is a constitutive and structuring aspect of South African Blackness. This chapter will consider slavery as a precursor to Dutch colonisation at the Cape subsequent to English rule and settlement as well as Afrikaner rule in order to highlight racial slavery as the originating structure of Blackness, rather than colonial dispossession of land or labour.

The third chapter, "South African Western Marxism and Black Consciousness," is an examination of leftist and Marxism's engagements with race from the SAWM to Black Consciousness, to current discussions/debates in South Africa with the resurgence of Leftist politics in organisations such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). This includes an exploration of the status quo and contemporary drivers of popular and

discursive facets of these ideologies in order to unpack what consideration of old critiques have been infused in new thought and practice. This chapter makes interesting turns from grass roots politics in the figure of Rick Turner through a Marxist existential engagement with his writings and work; while it also engages critically with the existing political philosophies of Black liberation, specifically the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) over time and as a political philosophy. Overall, this chapter will present a programmatic synthesis of ideas on a Black race-conscious emancipatory politics following the findings of the preceding chapters. The purpose of this chapter will be to think through and propose a philosophical-conceptual articulation of the Black subject that envisions freedom in, rather than from, Blackness.

Chapter four, "Madam's Tools: The Problem of Black Gender Subjectivity and its Challenges to Solidarity," explores and exposes the limits of dominant South African political philosophies and attempts at activist projects for Black emancipation, beginning with intersectional feminism. This is the chapter that will most emphatically convey the register of the thesis, taking on a rebellious form and argument structure more viscerally through, at times, personal and lived accounts of the contemporary stage of gender and intersectional politics articulated in an experiment in poetics.

Finally, the conclusion will take the arguments and theorising of the four substantive chapters and synthesise them to analyse the implications of their theorisation, the difficulties they may face in relation to existing criticism in Black thought and conclude the argument for occupying Blackness in our philosophical and political thought.

1.10 Literature review

1.10.1 Race and Blackness

Race is often understood erroneously, as synonymous with racism, which is itself, arguably, an expression of racism. Merely thinking about race as 'discrimination over' does little to deal with the deplorable problem of what it means to be raced as Black. Derrida calls the system of racism under Apartheid the "most racist of all racisms" (Derrida, 1985, p. 378). Here, there is some allusion to a global normativity on race and

racism, and perhaps to the serious challenge constituted worldwide beyond the manifestation that is Apartheid. Regardless of the decades-long empirical studies of race in society — and notwithstanding methods of analysis like deconstruction — we remain bound up in several ideas and realities of race. Social constructionism, taken up in over forty years of critical sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies scholarship, has converged on explanations of social life which are evidently understandings of reality where "reality" is an invention, or a creation of certain groups or individuals wrought by the specific social, economic, and historical circumstances that those groups find or create for themselves. Social constructionism, in all its attempts to prove that what is taken as normal is merely constructed by society, has yet not successfully recovered the idea of race as real and concrete. The persisting idea is that race defines, in "objective" ways, the basis of social relations between people; here, those deemed to be white and those deemed to be Black.

South Africa's history of slavery, colonialism, apartheid/colonialism of a special type and the introduction of democracy provide this thesis an important site for historically understanding how race as an idea is subjected to the pressures of formal law-making. From the intellectual interventions of key socialist thinkers from as early as the 1930s, one sees how these pressures in racial politics are exposed but persists nonetheless as the "rule" which governs the making of reality beyond the law (Soudien, 2011). This dissertation seeks to find how our humanist theory of history, the dominant Enlightenment philosophies, current political economies, and popular culture have entrenched or eased the fixation of race and its materiality today. How these have operated, singly and/or in tandem, to produce categories of distinctions and social orders

that are contradictory, antagonistic, complex, and acquiescent to interpretations that are deeply discordant. Soudien (2011) suggests, very generously, that jurisprudence throughout the world has the evidence within it of having been influenced by the struggles to widen our social understanding — that is to say that the law and its structures have been influential and influenced by the ways we conceive of race and imagine society. It is therefore very important to acknowledge that even as the notion of our

status as equal human beings has moved from a hermeneutic to becoming a normative way of understanding what in legal terms is just and right, it continues to be surrounded by and at odds with the dramatic exchanges of the social, political, economic, and cultural hegemonies which depict our lives (Taylor, 2005). In this process, the actual experience that brings about our understanding of the social is commonly and constantly being reconstituted so that even if it is true that when we take a historical perspective, the tendency is towards a greater sense of our "common humanity". It remains indisputable that this tendency is undermined by the seriousness of deeply embedded misgivings and feelings of distrust that remain grounded in anti-black aversion. This dissertation moves from the point that the society we imagine to be in the past — due to legal abolition of discrimination based on race, formal reconciliation, and liberalism — may in fact still exist in the formal, legal, social and political regime of South African thought, and as a teleological humanist framework, it openly exposes antagonism and violence against Blackness.

1.10.2 Slavery and social death

In his wide-ranging and comparative investigation of slavery prior to European imperialism and colonisation, Orlando Patterson (1982) surveys slave practices and culture from the 625AD Arab slave trade in pre-Africa, Chinese slavery, pre-Columbus Native American slavery, and Trans-Atlantic to chattel slavery. His concept of social death proposes that there are three constituent elements which constitute a slave in relation to the master. These are gratuitous violence, natal alienation, and general dishonour as outlined above. Socially dead, the slave provides psychic rejuvenation for social life and stabilises it; at the same time, the Slave is also dependent on social life for coherence and for world sense making. This mutual dependence, however, is nonreciprocal because the power and structure of the slave's relational paradigm is based on a false ideology of innate superiority for the socially alive Human.

The slave therefore cannot be an outcast because they are essential to the Master, who is dependent on social death to have social life. For Patterson (1982), "The slave came to obey him [Master] not only out of fear, but out of basic need to exist as a quasi-person, however marginal and vicarious that existence might be" (p. 46). While this is a bond,

it is one that is ontologically nonreciprocal for the glue of violence, in other words, the presence of violence as the relational cogent, no consent and affection can be registered, nor can any discursive capacity. Furthermore, the slave is not an outcast because caste "connotes some notion of ritual purity and pollution" (Patterson, 1982, p. 48), so although the slave lacked the essential affinities of humanity, the slave's "imputed consciousness" (Hartman, 1997, p. 52) was perhaps more critical in maintaining and upholding the Human as pure, sovereign, and dominant. Zakiyyah Iman Jackson explains this condition within the hierarchical and taxonomical scale of Being Human in her new book *Becoming Human* (2020) representing a break with Patterson's possibility for incorporation and hierarchisation. For Jackson, the Black does not occupy a diminished position on this hierarchy of Humanness similar to all other non-white positions or perhaps at the bottom of the hierarchy but constitutes the anti-Human in relation to all other Human positions. This conception of Blackness is crucial to understanding the ontological distance of Blackness and Humanness in terms quite different to our common-sense understanding of Black people relative to all others. I will be building on this conceptualisation to rethink the question of Human freedom vis a vis Blackness.

I cast Blackness as a structural positionality that haunts the horizon of post-apartheid liberalism and radicalism so that Black liberation's coming never arrives. Crucially, I must make clear what I mean by Black in this project so as to firstly, grant due recognition to the vast body of work that recognises, uses and loads the term/concept with various meaning to elaborate a range of unconsciously interpolated pre-modern and cultural identities (Mudimbe, 1988; Diop, 1974). Secondly, to coordinate diasporic self-making disavowing colonialism and reaching back into pre-colonial Africa to forge a Black consciousness (Senghor, 1946; Césaire, 2000; Biko, 1978) or identify social conscious actors united by a set of political objectives (see Biko's definition of Blackness in South Africa). While my conception of Blackness is not entirely in line with the conclusive work of what Cedric Robinson (1983) recognises as the Black radical tradition, I find the definition of Blackness elaborated by one of the tradition's most intriguing thinkers, Bryan Wagner, incredibly illuminating and instructive for how I hope, in part, to frame Blackness in this thesis. Wagner is able to both draw a distinction

between Blackness as an ontological historic concept and individuated social cultural blacks and invites us to think of refusal under a structure without the need to deny the complexity of the modern slave. Here I quote Wagner (2009) at length:

> Africa and its diaspora become black at a particular stage in their history. It sounds a little strange to put it this way, but the truth of this description is widely acknowledged. Blackness is an adjunct to racial slavery. […] Blackness is a modern condition that cannot be conceptualised apart from the epochal changes in travel, trade, communication, consumption, industry, technology, taxation, labour, warfare, finance, insurance, government, bureaucracy, science, religion, and philosophy that were together made possible by the European systems of colonial slavery. [...]We can say, however, what blackness indicates: existence without standing in the modern world system. To be black is to exist in exchange without being a party to exchange. Being black means belonging to a state that is organised in part by its ignorance of your perspective — a state that does not, that cannot, know your mind. Adapting a formula from the eve of decolonization, we might say that blackness indicates a situation where you are anonymous to yourself. [...] Conceptualised not as a shared culture but as the condition of statelessness, blackness would seem to deny the perspective that is necessary to communicate a tradition. Because blackness is supernumerary, it is impossible to speak as black without putting yourself into an unavoidable tension with the condition you would claim [...]The politics in this line is often communicated as a chiasmus about persons made into slaves and slaves made into persons, a trope whose limitation lies in the fact that it takes for granted a term ("person") that is unevenly intelligible in the natural rights lineage that determines what blackness means (p. 1-2).

Going back to this lineage of Blackness and its symbolic scene, a people turned Black flesh and slave, we are capable of thinking differently and more concertedly at our predicament of Blackness with no pressure for coming up with a solution or to speak to a remedy. The debate around these two sides of affirming and negating (Marriott, 2007) helps me bolster and more clearly identify my notion of Blackness. In particular, it is the procedure of Afropessimists to do something of an abstraction of this conceptual

framework regarding structural positionality, a methodology Jared Sexton (2011) relates to as a paradigmatic analysis and the libidinal economy brought together. Sexton explains libidinal economy as "a structure of feeling (regarding the politics of antagonism)" (Sexton, 2011, p. 2). Five luminaries in Black Studies concretise the notion of Blackness I take up along the lines of Wagner but raised to another level of abstraction to theorise Blackness as a conceptual framework (Hartman, 1997; Spiller, 1987), a structural positionality (Gordon, 1995; Wilderson III, 2010) following Fanon (1952), and Being within a structure of feeling/libidinal economy (Sexton, 2008) following Lyotard and Foucault. When I invoke Blackness (a condition without ontological density), I am not addressing black people (individuals or groups self-identifying as black according to their own identity politics), I am referencing the longue durée of anti-black racism, slavery and social death and its ongoing afterlife. South Africa is included in this by virtue of the fact of anti-blackness in the world, the gratuitous reality of colonial encounters being a symptom of this fact.

Thinking about race and Blackness as the historical process of being recruited to social death non consensually and recruited to exist under a negated ontology need not imply a discursive capacity and narrativity for the Black before and after official slave status. If this were the case, one should, after her/his/their service, be reintegrated into society as a non-slave such as was the case for recruited captives in the African, Asian, and Native American societies where reincorporation into society as non-captive humans was possible; discursive capacity for ontology and relationality could be structurally recognised and reciprocated. Afropessimism's excavation of Patterson's social death imbricates the Black and the African as integral through slavery and social death.

According to *Ties that Bind* (2011): "Every socius is only such at the point where it can give itself coherence, understand itself. In order to do so it must suture a psychological grounding wire. For the modern world, that grounding wire is the presence of the slave" (Walsh et al., 2011, p. 90). An extension of my comparative analysis will engage how Black people are conditioned to seek redemption and salvation through surrendering to and upholding whiteness as the only way to be accepted and fully realised in the

symbolic world. This, as a state of preconscious self-identification, seeps into masculinist conceptions of Blackness. I will use the text of the self-consciously Black political spaces in the past and in the contemporary to excavate the affinity of Black male/masculinist ideology with phallic whiteness, even where white phallic power takes on a feminine form, to the detriment of non-male/masculinist blacks. Afropessimism's theoretical intervention on Black politics will be foundational to Chapter three and four, which focus on how performance can be mobilised in civic engagement for shared governance as opposed to seeking redemption through embodying structurally adjusting constructs of political activism as depicted in Wilderson's *Incognegro* (2010). Even the Afropessimist intervention on Black politics and performance in the imaginary will be placed under scrutiny for its vulnerability to masculinist appropriations disavowing the foundational feminist taxonomy of Afropessimism. Dionne Brand, Jared Sexton, and Frank Wilderson's theoretical intervention on cartography and presence is reflected in Chapter two, three and four's critical analysis on how the Black cannot fully occupy space or embodiment as a subject who lacks subjectivity. Brand's (2002) intervention on cartography and presence is reflected in Chapter two, three and four, where I consider how the vestige of Black political personhood is unconsciously linked to white guilt, jealousy, and entitlement to Black consumption.

1.10.3 Blackness and slavery

> [T]his world cut in two is inhabited by two different species. Franz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth.* 1963, p. 39

The first major issue when talking about slavery in the taxonomy of South African consciousness is that we have no discursive identification with slavery which we imagine happens on ships leaving West Africa for the Americas, in chains, some distance away from our historical context as South Africa. I argue, firstly, that this amnesia of hundreds of years of slavery and slaving the span of this country is a deliberate and conscious project] of nation building, a project that is impossible with the incorporation of the slave/Black. Secondly, I argue that slavery is an ontological rather than an experiential question using Jared Sexton's (2014) *The Vel of Slavery* which

argues for viewing slavery as a positional structuring of Blackness as a global phenomenon. As South Africans, we have located our thinking on race and indeed Blackness around racism and, more recently, post structuralism and its heralded social constructionism. It is time to recognise how impoverished those explanatory tools have been for the Black. The liberatory aims of the feminist, radical and liberal ideas I approach are what structure ideas of freedom and in turn make a liberatory trajectory insufficient for the Black. What is needed now is the development of a Black radical critique of the structure of the world so that we can shift from thinking of Blackness as just about the individual or group identity and their preconscious interests to Blackness as a set of global investments.

In *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, Denise Ferreira Da Silva examines the definition and function of Blackness brilliantly. In her philosophical meditations on race, she considers Blackness as occupying not only a place of exclusion but insists on its philosophical grounding in a structure that brings forth the ontological making of the world over and an estimation of actual freedom (Ferreira Da Silva, 2007). As a state of being in a structure of relation, Being sets the Black up in Fanon's "zone of non-being" (Fanon, 1986, p. 10), so that Black stands in antagonism with Human. This antagonism makes the world anti-black even while the Black remains available for the wanton use of any other in the world with no capacity to recuperate this status of Blackness. The relation of the Black to the world is one of violence that denies relationality so that the Black is in this zone of non-being, a genealogical isolate (Wilderson, 2020) without ontological resistance or density (Fanon, 1952).

The definition of Blackness emanating from Fanon is now crystallised by Afropessimists to resolve the tussle of multiple forms of Blackness in order to free Blackness up for a paradigmatic analysis of the world, its Human and the Human bond with freedom. These appropriations of Blackness and slavery for the service of every other community are used to signal marginality, but upon closer examination reveal a plight for these Human communities to distinguish themselves and create distance between themselves and what the Black truly is, the slave, subjected to a regime of brutality so normalised that its violence is barely discernible. So that if the original metaphor of slavery continues to

ground dominant symbolic activity across the longue durée, it is then the case that its endless disguises continue to shift and mutate to address the exigencies of the here and now.

My treatment of slavery will be re-conceptualised so that no sea or ocean or square meter of plantation/vineyard/farm or land need be insight for modern enslavism to be always and already taking place, because in general the world remains a plantation for the Black (Warren, 2016). Slavery here is a carceral continuum of over 1300 years producing the dialogical imagination without the capacity to transform time to mark event and transform space into place (Sexton, 2011), it is a condition of social death. I thus seek to recover slavery from the temporality of the 18th and 19th century and for it to take its place as a structuring relation whose constituent elements are natal alienation, general dishonour, and gratuitous violence (Patterson, 1982). This re-conceptualisation of slavery draws us closer to new ways of thinking about the ontology of politics and towards thinking paradigmatically. To use slavery as a structuring paradigm in this way opens up how we can think and engage race in South Africa and the liberatory politics that follow. It throws into relief the limits of race as identity politics and offers a larger, structurally inclusive, global reading because the pathogen ceases to be the black person, but the world structured by colonial slavery.

Consequently, this has implications for what we consider revolutionary and for whatever glimpses of hope and moments of imagination we have in our political struggles for freedom because if we think about Blackness in the structure of where and how one is positioned, paradigmatically, we can think of freedom in relation to that structural positionality. To mis-recognise this structural positionality on the bases of upward mobility, upward sexual and gender positionality, or educational status, at an individuated level, is to do a purely empiricist analysis of Black people and not a paradigmatic study of Blackness. It limits our thinking to what Sexton (2011) refers to as the junior partners of the oppressive framework or as James (2020) puts it, settling/betraying true abolition for fleeting/temporary/non-substantive conveniences. An analysis of Blackness via the former may provide a way out because of the remedies of those disciplinary prescriptions but a paradigmatic analysis brings us to the place that

Fanon (1986) calls “the end of the world” (p. 96) which Afropessimists conceive of, at least in part, as being “the end of the ability to think in the way that we think … We are talking about the end of what sustains people as people. Because what sustains them as people is Black death” (Wilderson, 2016, p. 94). Something portending an ontological catastrophe, an epistemological break beyond what we are prepared to imagine.

Given the complexity of the problem that I map out, this study eschews the idea of a single method and approach altogether. Different and multiple intellectual traditions, political voices and scholarly styles are employed and influence parts of the text differently and unpredictably. Philosophically, the critical political approach is not based on removing the concept of race from thought but on what Joshua Glasgow calls “reconstructionism” (Glasgow, 2009). Racial reconstructionism insists that while race is a socially constructed concept, there still exists a pressing need to talk, think, write, and speak about race and make sense of its implications in our social, political lives. Consequently, race discourses must be employed but in such a way that we desist from referring to race as a biological or scientific fact but rather as an entirely social phenomenon with contingent and varying meanings and value (Mills, 1997). In the reconstructionist view, the recognition of race is crucial for addressing the legacies and ramifications of racialised histories — the ways in which racial groups have been subordinated or privileged through the medium of racial discourse and practice. I identify a critical political ontological approach that is more aligned with theorisation of Blackness, one that recovers Blackness from analogy and solidarity in the tradition of Critical Race Theory.

The biggest challenge for this thesis is one of language and precision because many of the concepts and frameworks that I pick up to elaborate Blackness, its relationship with freedom, world, flesh and body, history (as traceable moving time) and place (as textual place and context) are precisely the concepts I want to challenge as given and “common sense” when it comes to Blackness; and the arguments I must begin with to mount the broader arguments against political and discursive concepts. Setting the scene and context of South African political ontology using theory and analytical lenses from outside the country and mostly outside the content may also set this project up for heavy

criticism such as those posed by theorist like Belinda Bozzoli (1987), Nkiru Uwechia Nzegwu (2006, 1999) and Archie Mafeje (2000) about importing ideas as opposed to creating them from within our context. In this regard, I firstly hope for context, in this dissertation, to function as discursively and socio historically unravelling for the limits and intelligibility context is usually deployed to serve. Secondly, it is not clear to me why locality is already and always prime for bringing forth theory given the age-old reality of technologies of power morphing and mystifying the conditions of the context especially to the people of the context, even where it does bring forth more or less illuminating theory, it is unclear to me why that theory ought not be supplemented by good theory from another time or place. On this point I reiterate Said in stating that where the possibility of nourishing thinking exists, we ought to always take it. Finally, the unique peculiarity of Afropessimism in relation to other meta-theory is that it comes forth out of a charge from South Africa. When Frank Wilderson III left South Africa in 1995 despondent at the already failing so called 1994 revolution, his comrades of the now disbanded uMkhonto Wesizwe (MK)[1] beseech him to take up the mandate of other comrades in the country to labour toward a theory of freedom for our people (Black people) (Wilderson, 2010). It was his time spent here, in South Africa, under Apartheid as an MK operative and communist that evoked him to shed his class and existential lens and break solidarity with the poor and other marginalised communities but Black. Despite the scathing critiques of the American centricity of Afropessimism as an analytical tool, its original imaginative labour and geist comes from the continent. The invocation of Ayi Kwei Amah, Anta Diop, Gloria Emeagwali and Wole Soyinka in particular to make this claim are more concerned with the disruptive effect of Afropessimism on a cliquey and tribalist African academy and the fear of irrelevance with more and more young African students and scholars exploring the effects of the debates in Black Studies across the globe. Having said that, I do not hold the view that Afropessimism as espoused by diasporic or African Afropessimists ought to be the limit

[1] uMkhonto We Sizwe, loosely translated to, the spear of the nation, was the name of the armed wing of the ANC from 16 December 1961. See Ranuga, T. K. (1983). Marxism and Black Nationalism in South Africa (Azania): A Comparative and Critical Analysis of the Ideological Conflict and Consensus Between Marxism and Nationalism in the ANC, The PAC and the BCM. 1920-1980. Brandeis University. Unpublished PhD dissertation.

of how we theorise Blackness, only that for the moment it enables us to zoom in on the fundamental antagonism and at the same time makes the Black circle bigger as it were.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1955) referred to Black people in Africa as those made to recognise themselves as "natives'' (p. 215) through the process of colonisation. This brings attention to the way or ways that African subjects were brought to a place of self-identification and identification of themselves. This was the making both of the brute force of conquest towards colonisation but also through modern sovereignty politics which is, according to Giorgio Agamben (1998; 2005), capable of reducing subjects to "bare life" (p. 10), devoid of effective legal or political participation and subjection to the urges of sovereign forms, in this case colonial sovereign forms (Comaroff, 1995). Agamben (2005; 1998) suggests that the capacity for sovereigns to preserve themselves through time does not only depend on sovereign exceptions to the law but on successfully implying versions of sovereignty directly into images of a unified and "particular privileged" (p. 10) order as an argumentative structure. This state of exception is the conceptual fissure of presumed identity between Human and citizen which makes possible the modern production of "bare life". This dichotomy or doubling in colonial legality grew out of an ontological contradiction at the very core and uniqueness of 19th century colonialism and of colonial law particularly: on one hand, colonisation was rationalised by imperial Europe in the name of "a humane, enlightened universalism that promised, under the sign of its civilising mission, to usher 'non - Europeans' into the 'body of corporate nations,' into citizenship of the modem world" (Comaroff, 2001, p. 305); on the other it based its coherence on the ontological cutting of Black being for the modern Human. Comaroff sees colonial law as having justified itself by sustaining the pre-modernity of foreign subjects; those subjects it ethnicised, tribalised and racialised, persistently acceding the removal of precisely those differences that were held to signify the difference between the coloniser and the colonised, white, and Black (2001).

More fundamentally, my argument is that colonial slavery is constituted by legality and culture. They have served as white supremacy's cyclical logic and practice. The geographies of the paradigm, its cartography relies on this transformative gaze power

over the territories of others making of those spaces real estate and proper place under the protection and rule of the master (Wynter, 1995; Comaroff, 1991, p. 172). It was subsequently through legal devices, Lauren Benton (2001) tells us, that properties, economic rights and entitlements were established, that contracts were certified and slaving legal relations policed and promulgated. Thirdly, it was in legal terms as Tomlins, Shamir, and Hacker (2001) imply that colonial power/knowledge, a taken-for-granted gestalt of seeing and being in the world, was constructed and valorised. Fourthly, it was under legal provisions that the "nature" of colonial subjects was construed, ethnicised, and racialised; their relations to other human beings, to the earth, and to their own cultural practices delineated. Lastly, state authority was ritualised and elaborated, in the service of the colonising power, "to conceal their weaknesses; to invest themselves with an aura of power and to draw their citizenry into a community of consenting clientage." (Comaroff, 1998, p. 309).

Disenfranchisement, dispossession and displacement inculcated as nature to the natives via the argot of European legalise for their accumulation and all terms of trade. Colonial law, however multivalent in appearance, had its essence in the materiality of its ideology, results and legacies. Espeland (2001) demonstrates, for the Yavapai, and Shamir and Hacker make plain, for Bengal, how the juridical orders under which indigenous peoples became irreversibly disposed and the solidity of those implications. In contemporary South Africa, Lazarus-Black and Hirsch (1994) see colonial law as being too easily overdetermined even through the post 1994 lens. They see the law as both and at the same time a tool of "governmentality," and a tool for its subversion, of subjection and emancipation, of dispossession and re-appropriation (Lazarus-Black, 1994). As constitutive of entire worlds of colonies, coloniality became the legal culture, from its abstract systems, its practice lingua franca to the production of citizen and subjected material realities.

1.10.4 Leftism, and the critique of class

Progressive South African civil society, whether in the academy or through social movements, is by and large leftist and influenced by Marxist ideas of a revolutionary society. This is not just a post 1994 reality but one that emerged and posited an analysis

of South African society at the hight of apartheid. Scholars such as Wolpe and Legassick used neo-Marxism to critique apartheid liberalism in the 1970s and advanced a Marxist frame to enact a revolution in South Africa. Steve Biko as cited in Gail Gerhart, (2008) states that:

> You still don't become what you ought to be…A number of whites in this country adopt the class analysis, primarily because they want to detach us from anything relating to race, in case it has a rebound effect on them because they are white. This is the problem. So, a lot of them adopt the class analysis as a defence mechanism and are persuaded of it because they find it more comfortable (p. 34).

was very critical of Marxism and its centralisation of capitalism as the major antagonism, making class the main identity in South African antagonistic identity formation. He saw white supremacy and the white value systems in totality as being the major problem perpetuated in South Africa by all races. For Biko, overarching white supremacy could not be resolved by a blanket socialist struggle that would alter the economic pattern to a socialist pattern because it would leave the Black question unresolved even in a post revolutionary society. Biko (Gerhart, 2008) states that:

> You still don't become what you ought to be…A number of whites in this country adopt the class analysis, primarily because they want to detach us from anything relating to race, in case it has a rebound effect on them because they are white. This is the problem. So, a lot of them adopt the class analysis as a defence mechanism and are persuaded of it because they find it more comfortable (p. 34).

Biko's critique is directed at Marxism but for the most part at the posture that it takes in the South African context in the 1970s. This critique of Marxism was and continues to be sustained and advanced, although from varying aspects, by African scholars such as Andile Mngxitama (2014) Zamansele Nsele (2019) Ncebakazi Manzi (2019) Mlondi Zondi (2020) Mandisa Haarhoff (2020) Athi Joja (2021) Tumi Mogorosi (2021) with regards to contemporary South Africa and in the post-civil rights era of the United States by scholars such as Hortense Spillers, Saidiya Hartman, Frank Wilderson and David Marriott in the United Kingdom. Considering the similarities between the United States

of America and South Africa on the question of Blackness the above critiques of Marxism, although at times ontologically reifying of race, deconstruct the issue more paradigmatically.

Wilderson (2003) moves that the conceptual anxiety of Marxist discourse is its desire to guarantee the coherence of Reformation and Enlightenment's foundational values of progress and productivity through the democratisation of work by keeping work in place in the desire for "socialism on the other side of crisis" (p. 226). This, for him, crowds out any other post-revolutionary possibilities beyond labour. For Spillers (1996), she presents her observation through the Gramscian logic of the quintessential subaltern a set of strategies through which the Black subject emerges as the unthought and thus destabilised historical materialism, distorts and expands Marxist categories in ways that create "a distended organisational calculus" (p. 82). Therefore, if we take seriously the idea of antagonistic identity formation as per Spillers — the mass mobilisation of which can give impulse to a crisis in even the assumptive logic and institutions which undergird post 1994 South Africa — we must then come to terms with the limitations of SAWM discourse when faced with the Black subject, considering that South African society is constructed at the intersection of both a capitalist and white supremacist nexus. If Western Marxism's subaltern is structured by capital and not by white supremacy, it privileges a subject only approached by wage — variable capital. Racism is then not the base but a derivative of political economy. Consequently, this is not adequate for political theorists of the paradigmatic whose major concern is to elaborate a theory of crisis. These present Marxism with the political quandary and desire of the 'Black(ened)' subject position in the Modern world because Marxism intentionally, and in its general reception, lays claim to universal applicability that instils the idea of emancipation for the organic intellectual subject who is also the Black subject; that even though there are historical and cultural differences there is a structural consistency which undergirds all resistance and explains all organics.

The scandal for Wilderson then is the way that the Black subject position threatens this discourse of subjectivity, the scandal of the Black subject's ontological disarticulation. This critique is on Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* (Gramsci, 1971), especially Gramsci's

strategy for a revolution (a "war of position") to be employed in the area of civil society towards gaining access to political power. Gramsci's single organism is the "modern bourgeois-liberal state" (Buttigieg, 1995, p. 28) with two kinds of qualitatively different apparatuses: civil society and political society. The idea is that blacks and whites alike, can have their consent solicited and extend it spontaneously. At the level of analysis this is problematic for Wilderson as it presumes that hegemony at its constitutive levels (influence, leadership, and consent) can be given or withdrawn outside of the terms of race. But while it may be that the consent of Black people may be solicited, and he does not concede this, its withdrawal does not constitute "a crisis in authority" (Wilderson, 2003, p. 229). He puts the Black body and violence towards it as the precondition for the existence of the single entity, political society, its civil society, and their divided apparatus: "the modern bourgeois-state" (Gramsci as cited in Wilderson, 2003, p. 229).

In continuation, Wilderson takes from Sexton's thesis that violence against the Black body is ontological and gratuitous (Sexton, 2008) as opposed to Gramsci's notion that violence against the subaltern is ideological and contingent (1971). Hartman (1997) similarly finds no rupture in the history of "the modern-bourgeois-state" (Wilderson, 2003, p. 229) that transformed the Black body's paradigmatic relation to this entity. This means then that the hegemonic progress within civil society by the Left holds out no further possibility for Black life than the forced backlash of political society. There are gaps in this thinking because, according to Wilderson, any "crisis of authority" that may take place through a Left expansion of civil society does not necessarily diminish but further instantiates the authority of whiteness. He writes that "Black death is the modern-bourgeois-state's recreational pastime…; blacks are fair game as a result of a progressively expanding civil society as well'' (Wilderson, 2003, p. 229). Furthermore, Hartman takes the position that the Black subject under a Marxist or leftist logic experiences "disarticulation" and in this regard, the subject emerges as unthought and functions differently in a modern context of historical materialism (1997). Spillers concurs with this idea in her conception of the Black subject as "a distended organisational calculus" (Spillers, 1996, p. 82) in that the Black subject functions differently within the western desiring machine than the quintessential Gramscian subaltern and its categories: work, progress, production, exploitation, hegemony, and

historical self-awareness. Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* for them poses strategies and structure of the Black subject that expresses only absence for the Black subject in and by contemplating the Black subject's "incommensurability" with the key categories of his theory; the theory of the subaltern and hegemony (Wilderson, 2005).

The unsettling consequences of this theorisation then for Wilderson are in three phases: firstly, there is a radical incoherence posed by the Black subject on the assumptive logic of Gramscian Marxist discourse where the Black subject is a scandal. Secondly, Marxism is exposed in its inability to imagine white supremacy as the base of oppression the way it is viewed by Black subjects themselves and, in so doing, calls into question Marxism's maintenance of detailing a comprehensive, or in the words of Antonio Gramsci "a decisive antagonism". This is all in the way Gramscian Marxism is able to imagine the subject "which transforms her/himself into a mass of antagonistic identity formations, formations which can precipitate a crisis in wage slavery, exploitation, and/or hegemony." This idea however is silent to providing an enabling antagonism toward despotism, unwaged slavery and/or terror. Thirdly, Marxism is exposed as suffering from something of a conceptual anxiety. It is the position of many scholars of Black Consciousness and Afropessimism that capital was "kick-started" through the plunder of the African continent making a reading of capital one that is itself anti-black. According to Wilderson (2005):

> The theoretical importance of emphasising this in the early twenty-first century is two-fold: first, 'the socio-political order of the New World' (Spillers, 1987: 67) was kick-started by approaching a particular body (a black body) with direct relations of force, not by approaching a white body with variable capital…the 'accumulation' of black bodies regardless of their utility as labourers (Hartman; Johnson) through an idiom of despotic power (Patterson) — is closer to capital's primal desire than is waged oppression — the 'exploitation' of unraced bodies (Marx, Lenin, Gramsci) that labour through an idiom of rational/symbolic (the wage) power: A relation of terror as opposed to a relation of hegemony. Secondly, today, late capital is imposing a renaissance of this original desire, direct relations of force…, the despotism of the unwaged relation: and this

> Renaissance of slavery has, once again, as its structuring image in libidinal economy, and its primary target in political economy, the black body (p. 229-230).

This position on the phenomenon of race in capital finds little significant expression in Marxist discourse and forms the crux of my critique of SAWM and civil society.

The history of capitalism in South Africa cannot de-link the question of labour from histories of the Black body and of race, questions pertaining the Black body's constitution as simultaneously commodity and body (Spillers, 1987): a body-commodity whose presence in the realm of capital emerged under the paradoxical sign of "the superfluous'' as stated by Mbembe (cited in Shipley, 2010). This superfluous designate refers to the dialectic of the valorisation of the labour-power of Black people in addition to its dispensability. For Mbembe this dialectic is radicalised post 1994 and in the advent of neoliberalism, i.e., in the sense that the same people who were valorised in labour are now dispensable as labour. They are expendable as persons under a current capitalist form that may prioritise the territory they inhabit - its wildlife, their natural resources (gold, platinum, diamonds etc.) - but not their personal labour. For him the antagonism is no longer to be exploited and liberation is no longer to free oneself from exploitation. Mbembe sees the tragedy as the utter deprivation of the basic means to live and to participate in the general distribution of goods and resources necessary to bring about recognisable life (Shipley, 2010). For the Black person it is the inability to escape "the traps of temporariness" (Mbembe cited in Shipley, 2010, p. 667) that remains a tragedy. Furthermore, Mbembe's analysis forwards that Black South Africans see their lives as always reduced in a country structured to deny them the gratification of finally coming about their living not just in the past, but under the status quo and under the negotiated settlement, democracy, and "liberation". This inscrutable doubt or uncertainty is both existential and social/historical therefore Mbembe sees "class" as a category as being unable to capture this complexity: "— the ghost in life; the ghost of life; a life that has been made to never achieve the status neither of a question, nor of an answer and which, for that matter, cannot be accounted for" (Shipley, 2010, p. 667).

The base of what informs antagonisms then is different from either perspective in relation to progress, where work is not an organic principle for the Black as it is for the leftist. For the above theorists the silence on Black subjectivity from the core of Marxist discourse is supposed to be indicative of the discourse's inability to deal with the possibility that the Black body of the 15th and 16th centuries: the propagative subject of capitalism; and the Black incarcerated, dead, fungible body of the twentieth and twenty-first century: the propagative subject that resolves late-capital overaccumulation crisis, do not reify the principal classifications which construct Marxist conflict: the categories of exploitation, production, hegemony and historical self-awareness. The assembly of questions around Black suffering brings us face to face with a suffering that is increasingly more difficult to speak of, which extends beyond textualisation of a body that experiences white supremacy as a terror of "gratuitous violence". Cornel West (1996) uses the term "black invisibility and namelessness" to speak of this terror and to designate, ontologically, what Hartman (1997) calls a "scandal" discursively. This disarticulation for Mbembe lies in what he calls "the crisis of language" (Shipley, 2010):

> The crisis of language — and I mean language here in the deepest philosophical sense — when it comes to matters African, it is almost as if our language is afflicted by a hole right at its centre. Let us call it the night of language, the sleep of language. When it comes to matters African, our language always seems to hollow out the experience it is called upon to represent and to bring to life. (p. 661).

Thus, the Black subject position in South Africa is similar to Hartman's Black subject position, an antagonism and petition that cannot be resolved through a transfer of ownership/organisation of existing titles. Exploitation and wage slavery as the major category of oppression is inadequate in the face of Black subjectivity in Africa and the 'diaspora'. Its articulation of white supremacy as merely racism or a problem of the superstructure and its view of race as a derivative phenomenon of the capitalist matrix, before thinking of white supremacy as a matrix that makes up the base of antagonism or as the base itself, does not serve the Black condition (Mngxitama, 2014).

The experience of Black South Africans post-1994 has been a painful defeat, disappointment and tangible powerlessness and impossibility in the present moment. Any significant change seems unthinkable, and the current condition is one without closure: "to make sure that so-called alternative imaginations avoid becoming official, recognised institutional languages in their own right; that they always remain fragments" (Shipley, 2010, p. 661). The fragile experiment that is South Africa, according to Mbembe, means that there is no way a category like "class" will be instilled with a new reality when their re-configuration does not incorporate a new politics of revolution under conditions where race keeps evolving outside of the quintessential subaltern.

Mills (1987) and Mngxitama (2014) see Marx himself as being trapped in philosophical Eurocentrism and the anti-black racism of his time. They thus see the foundation of class theory and materialism as anti-black. Mngxitama, in particular, sees class theory as having been used by racists in the service of white supremacy to disarticulate Black subject positionality in the South African contemporary and the insistence of class instead of race to defend settler society during Apartheid. He writes: "We ended with a war without a war when on the side of the white oppressor the black person was the actual subject of exploitation and violent repression" (Mgxitama, 2014, p. 1). He thinks however, that class analysis is still useful as an analytical tool towards a race emancipatory project and would echo Aime Césaire in his desire that "…Marxism and communism be placed in the service of black peoples, and not black peoples in the service of Marxism and communism" (Césaire, 1956, p. 4). For Mngxitama (2014) EFF's innovation is what he terms "the triad of Marx, Lenin and Fanon''(p. 1), an ideological frame that may contribute towards developing a theory and practice of emancipation in the service of Black people in its capacity, through Fanon, to reclaim class from its racist foundations and put it in the service of Black emancipation. Fanon, as the Black thinker of anti-racism, checks the European sensibilities of Marx and Lenin in this holy triumvirate. This is promising as a way towards imagining a theoretical re-articulating of the Black "unthought" but if Spillers and Hartman and even Fanon are to be taken seriously, it would require a reconfiguration of the conceptual discourses that give coherence to the modern world as we know it. Fanon attempted this inversion of the Marxist schema when he argued that in the colony, "…Marxist analysis should

always be slightly stretched…the economic substructure is also a superstructure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich" (Fanon, 1968, p. 40). I am preoccupied with investigating these articulations and attempts to stretch Marxism with the suspicion that Biko may be right on the issue of Marxism's self-interested limits in relation to elasticity. I speculate that the trouble is not with Marxism's reading of South Africa per se, but in its belated and irresponsible unconscious with regards to the colony. Zizek, Hudson, and Turner are my way into this unconscious and diagnosing its belatedness or even blindness to Black thought in Chapter 3.

The treatment of race in much of the body of literature above is ontologically reifying of race and positions race/class as mutually exclusive categories. Mngxitama and Mbembe however see class theory as needing new treatment to capture the Black who has been disarticulated to this point. There remains some tension within these arguments considering their formulation of Marxist foundations and their suggestions towards its capacity for reform and this dissertation intends to explore these two areas. Of course, orthodox Marxism has not had a classical response to the arguments as pointed out by the above writers, but it is in question whether their Cultural-Marxist scholarship which alludes to the historical materialist components at least deserves such a rapprochement. Considering that historical materialism argues out a dialectic that is in the first instance determined by an economic base which then determines social relations of production and reproduction, an argument that race reproduces an abject, classed, subaltern needs to show how race becomes productive and is also part of my dissertation inquiry.

1.10.5 Mobilisation of concepts

This dissertation is an historical analysis and does a conceptual analysis of how freedom is imagined at the intersection of an unflinching meditation on (a) political and libidinal economy, (e.g., Marxism, ala Antonio Negri's work, and psychoanalysis), and (b) the formal and narrative strategies of politically and socially engaged ideologies. In other words, it is a paradigmatic analysis focused on the constituent elements of, and the assumptive logic regarding freedom which underwrites theoretical claims about political and libidinal economy, and how these elements and assumptions manifest in both

political ideology and in political common sense. Rather than privilege a politics of culture(s) — i.e., rather than examine the empirical and accept the cultural/political gestures and declarations which institutions and individuals of the said group under examination makes about themselves — I will privilege a culture of politics. In other words, my concern is how liberalism, radical leftist politics, feminist and intersectional politics as political ideology and concepts articulate and/or disavow the matrix of freedom which constructs the essential positions which in turn structure South African political realities. I explore how these ideologies self-consciously engage political ethics and how their radical political discourse in the era of liberation engage with meta-commentary on the structural positionality of Blackness.

I am aware that this method is unusual and unexpected in this line of scholarship, however, it is the best way to respond to the philosophical questions of this dissertation which are themselves located at the intersection of a theoretical and conceptual rubric. Any intellectually sound response should for the purposes of this dissertation take seriously liberalism, Marxism, feminism, BC and their productions, nationalisms, and intersectionality as political ideologies with an appreciation of the live forms they take. There are two registers in which I will explore the questions posed here as the subject of my proposed study: the first conceptual/theoretical, and the second interpretive. In the first, I will explore the questions I have posed theoretically by interrogating the conceptual apparatuses of left and liberal discourses of race in South Africa to understand what possibilities they hold for an understanding of Blackness and freedom. In the second I will apply these theoretical/conceptual considerations to moments in South African political history where they respectively find significance in the public imagination. This project means that I study particular kinds of ideological expression via a set of texts, that is to say circulating forms of discursive formation.

1.10.6 Methodological/theoretical application of concepts

This thesis is a project of subversive critical theorising in the vein of what Wendy Brown explains as the capacity to "contest settled accounts" and official narratives and "to grasp the times by thinking against the times" (Brown, 2009, p 4). Brown most aptly captures the method, spirit, and impulse of the kind of theory I pursue for this thesis in "Critical

Essays on Knowledge and Politics": "Theory must work to one side of direct referents, or at least it must disregard the conventional meanings and locations of those referents. She further states: "Theory violates the self- representation of things in order to represent those things and their relation — the world — differently." (Brown, 2009, p. 81). In this sense then theory is not about exposing what is correct but illuminating, imagining, and provoking a new thinking with compelling explanatory power.

My theoretical project is grounded within the political and intellectual 'world' of Black radical thought and aims to think with and beyond specifically Afropessimism to attend to the ethical and paradigmatic problem of Blackness in South African emancipatory thought. Thus, this thesis is not to be understood as rooted in theory that is grounded in empirical description, application, prescription, problem-solving and policy (see Brown, 2009). Rather, as theoretical counter-readings of the present in a method of retrieval (as described by Hook, following Edward Said) through reading early critical texts from another time or place in a way that illuminates the present and disrupts current orders of knowledge, understanding and common sense. In this way, the classic (canonical) text is released from its exclusive ties to its original context in order to speak to a problem it may not have recognised as 'problem'. Secondly, I will attempt to bring that thought to bear on disciplinary formation as supported by Said's recognition of travelling theory or theories travelling; that is, the way in which "ideas and theories travel – from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another" (Said, 1983, p. 226). As Said (1983) further states: "cultural and intellectual life are usually nourished and often sustained by this circulation of ideas." (p. 226).

Of course, "retrieval" always suggests a search for or a re-discovery of something that has been lost or taken away. In another view, it suggests a certain romanticisation or idealisation of the object in question and also involves a drive to (re-)possess that object. While I do not aim to recover or repossess nor claim that there is only one self-evident and incontrovertibly correct way of reading and remembering the major theorists explored here, and while it is not my primary interest here to reconcile or play up the tensions between different readings of these theories, one animating impulse of this study is the desire to challenge readings of, and discourses on Blackness that work to

either analogise (multi racialising), trivialise or domesticate (by individuation). In short, this theoretical and paradigmatic reading of Blackness attempts not only to disclose its incommensurability but its centrality as a fundamental antagonism of modern South Africa.

My study and critique will be in secondary texts spanning centuries to analyse Racial slavery and emancipatory thought throughout modernity globally and their South African iterations (dates specified in chapter breakdown). I employ the works of luminaries in Black radical thought, specifically Afropessimist thought, as articulated retrospectively from Orlando Patterson's seminal text *Slavery and Social Death* in 1982 to think about Blackness and its relation to freedom and social life from the inauguration of racial slavery to its present afterlife. I apply a Black Radical theoretic perspective to the logic of humanism in South African emancipatory thought from the age of South African slavery to the "Fallist " wave of intersectional feminism in the contemporary. This study is qualitative in how it "encompasses many dimensions and layers" of critical theory (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005, p. 133) considering that the central issue and assembly of questions I engage on Blackness are multifaceted. Additionally, I will be using the work of Fanon and contemporary Afropessimist scholars Hortense Spillers, Saidiya Hartman, Frank Wilderson III, David Marriott, Jared Sexton, Orlando Patterson, and Lewis Gordon to formulate a theoretical framework.

My treatment of history, time and space is inspired by Saidiya Hartman's concept of "afterlives" in relation to global racial slavery (1997). When I refer to era or period of slavery and colonialism, I am not referring to the dates 1653 to the late 1800s with the capture, chaining and exportation and importation of Africans from and to the Cape of Good Hope to the north-eastern parts of the country (though the third chapter reviews this period and practice to attend to lesser-known histories and examinations of South African enslavement). Rather, I am referring to an encounter that inaugurates the epoch of racial slavery, one though pronounced over in the 17th and 18th century at varying places over time, persists to the current period as a structuring relation. While these dates are important to give form to this structure that is slavery, they slip the conceptual claim and general stance of this thesis that slavery is not a period but fundamental antagonism

that seals the Black off from the world. The dates and historical evidence serve to attend to mystifications, erasure and disavowals that have since become common sense. Much of the interdisciplinary data, texts, and secondary literature to be used in the development of this thesis come out of archives of history, economics, law, anthropology, sociology, and political study. I also take up the work of scholars on the continent and in the 'Black diaspora' who are preoccupied with similar questions of Black Consciousness, existentialism, ontology and doing a paradigmatic analysis of modernity even while they do not cover Blackness specifically or the vast scope of the foremost South African political frames at the same time. As a work of political philosophy, this project is in a tussle between reading and situating the modern paradigm through reading the existing Euro-centric cannon and tilting its analytical lens to read what it has not thought before in order to centre Blackness. Secondary textual analysis thus opens up opportunities for me to re-analyse, replicate, and re-interpret existing research. Here I am able to test new frameworks against old theories and models (Johnston, 2014). To delineate a study of Blackness based on country specificity invites a reading that is limited by nationalistic teleology of race relations. This becomes an insufficient framework for a theoretical critique of Blackness and the project of liberation (as it were). To read Blackness as condition and the anti-black world as pathogen requires a broader theoretical engagement with Blackness.

I embark upon this study with a view to articulating theoretically my abiding impression that the state of Black people's lives — physically, economically, culturally, and psychologically — remains the fundamental ethical and political emergency of our time. The combined insights of Critical Race Theory, African and Black existential philosophy, Black radical and Pan-Africanist thought including Black feminism, cultural studies and South African historiography have been central to such an articulation and have been instructive in the development of a critical theoretical apparatus that could perform a radical epistemic and political challenge to "post-" apartheid liberalism, constitutionalism, progressivism, and human rights discourse. At least two problematic currents of thought and discourse could be targeted as part of this challenge to address Blackness specifically in South Africa and I shall discuss each in turn.

Chapter Two: Slavery and Social Death in South Africa

> You think also, in this moment, about the unspeakable, perhaps unimaginable ways that black lives have been devalued, and you have trouble determining when to start the story—or history or mythology or fable — or how far afield to draw your sphere of concern. (Jared Sexton, 2015, p. 159).

Narratives of South African origin, peoples and territory are astonishing webs of convolution and investments that pertain to race, land, and history. It is almost of no use to tell a new story firstly because the dominant narrative does so much to relieve South Africans of a shameful and humiliating history of slavery; and secondly because of the fatigue and failures of the many restorative missions of recovering histories. South Africa does not deny it's regime of slavery it just limits the scope of its practice and denies its extension to South African blacks. Where slaves are South African Black people, they are furnished in the record with quite different categorising in the labour force but consistently recalled as 'virtual' slaves even while historians may themselves distinguish them as existing under conditions of coercion, objectification, suppression and as a servile working class.

Over the last 15 or so years the question of restorative justice, in light of the failure and the promise of 1994, has kicked back up the question of land in South Africa. Ringing in bars, on the streets, on social media, in political debates, in the courts, in the news and the hallways of academia is the conversation which ultimately leads everyone to inquire after the 'first peoples' of South Africa. Popular is the 19th century myth that the Khoikhoi and San were invaded upon by the Northern African Blacks, and that it was the first 'European encounter' to elaborate a history of dispossession. Syncretic forms of colonial and Vervoodian[2] ideologies and indigenous people's rights formed the

2 A racially naturalist Calvinism masterminded by the father of Apartheid and former South African Prime Minister Hendrick Frencsh Verwoerd.

departure point of understanding justice through the 19th century. There have been many focuses and versions of this history during several moments when the question of land and origin have surfaced to lay claim to dues and restoration: the PAC/ANC breakaway of 1959; the Black Consciousness movement of the 1970s and their various infractions over the 1980s; the debate over land redistribution in the 90s; African Renaissance flare-ups in the 2000; the Fallist movement; and the popularisation off the People's Manifesto by the Economic Freedom Fighters, authored by the political movement Blackwash. Most recently the question of origin and South Africa's theory of history have seen their interlocutors coming out of popular politics, legal and policy paradigmatic contestations and the revised debates emanating from the academy in the form of books such as Charles van Onselen's *The Seed is Mine* (1996), Thembeka Ngcukaithobi's *The Land is Ours* (2018), and *Land Matters* (2021), the provocatively titled *The Lie of 1652* by Patric Tariq Mellet (2020) and *Land in South Africa* edited by Bulelwa Mabasa and Khwezi Mabasa (2021) to name a few of the most widely circulated.

No single concept shapes the political consciousness of South Africans to date, young and old, more than that of the encounter of 1652. It is, for South Africans, the event of race becoming a historical question. I suggest this history, lay and academic, requires examination at the level of structure and consideration as the ontological question. When telling the story of South African political history, the tendency is to begin with the date 1652 with the arrival of three ships carrying the Dutch led by their captain to be Cape Governor, Jan van Riebeek, a few Germans and a regiment of Ambonya soldiers under the Dutch (Mellet, 2020). In the minds of South Africans, race is a political phenomenon that structures the world at the landing of Jan van Riebeeck and on social media platforms, young Black people have come to refer to white people as "1652s". South Africa's collective conscious clarity on the man and the date is how political thinking moves over the historical landscape and maps a way through what South Africans perceive to be the history race and Blackness in particular. Jan van Riebeeck is tightly linked with colonisation and settlement but is rarely examined against the broader African slave trade of the Dutch empire nor referred to as a figure immersed in the global plantocracy prior to 1652. Colonial settlement itself is a central marker for how South Africans think about the early formations of Blackness, race, and racism. Black

enslavement and the slave trade are fixed, in this imaginary, to the Americas and West Africa where there were slave ships, dungeons and plantations. In one sense, South Africans view the fate of those poor West Africans kidnapped and sold as much worse than theirs because they were dislocated from their homes, peoples, culture, and language. In another sense, South Africans envy their location in the West and begrudge its influence and hegemony at the perceived peril of Africanness and authentic, persisting, 'originary' location which ought to be preserved and fiercely defended. As such, South Africans are socially and intellectually sensitive to any comparison or globalising conceptions of Africanness, in particular, Blackness.

If the so-called event of 1652 or moment of encounter with Europeans is so fundamental to the epoch of anti-black racism, might a paradigmatic version of this history adjust or evolve our symbolic system of race and Humanness? What sets of investments drive retelling Blackness as 'history' prior and exceeding 1652, and what are the implications for thinking history outside the prescriptions and precepts of South African historiography? Upon telling or un-telling the history of whiteness and Blackness in South Africa, what modalities of being and being making take route to inaugurate the structure of valuation and the standing structure of antagonism? What is 1652, where does it come from and what does it mean?

In this chapter, I trouble the historiography which dominates South African Studies in order to shape the collective common place consciousness of South Africa's particular Blackness. I critique the discursive dominance of this Historiography as it is linked to race and I contest much of the thinking in South African Studies that has emerged to drive focus on race, not Blackness, on colonialism, not slavery. I want to move that marking race through the landing of white settlers in South Africa and then their settlement and colonialising as the originary moment of race, Blackness in particular, for South Africa, is a fabrication of an anti-black culture of politics that has been the engineering of the South African imaginary that does not form a part of the long durée of racial slavery in Indian oceanic and Atlantic history. I disabuse this social history in the first instance of thinking of Blackness as an unconsciously and diversely interpolated identity, or as consciousness of social action driven by legibly Black political interests.

Rather, I mobilise the kernel of Afropessimism's proposition that Blackness is a structural position of non-communicability in relation to all Human positions (Wilderson 2010); in the vein of Achille Mbembe's (2001) formulation of the "symbolic sealing off of the slave" (p. 22) one might conceive of as the sealing off of the world from the slave to present a different orientation in relation to the Black South African past. The procedure of this line of Black thought and theorising involves the abstraction of a conceptual framework regarding structural positionality. Its methodology regards paradigmatic analysis and the libidinal economy; a structure of feeling regarding the politics of antagonism as a crucial lens through which to view slavery. It draws from the work of luminaries in the field of Black Studies such as Franz Fanon, Sylvia Wynter, Bernard Magubane, Hortense Spillers, Saidiya Hartman, David Marriott, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Lewis Gordon, Frank B Wilderson, and Jared Sexton. The full implications of this perspective become evident when this lens is raised to a higher level of abstraction in my attempt here to reach analytical description for Blackness and its constitution of ontological, social, and political history in South Africa that makes no reach at providing political prescription.

I suggest that far from being a break from the global system of trading Africans as slaves, colonialism in South Africa combined the two modalities of modern slavery and genocide which are the ontological and cultural erasure of Black being and the genocide of indigeneity, two modalities which approach the Black being in simultaneous and overlapping ways. I explicate social death to the entire relational structure and condition of slavery, colonisation, and their aftermath in the country. Denise Ferreira da Silva's category of affectability in *Toward a Global Idea of Race,* (2009) or the assumption, central to the development of whiteness and its modern global projection, that the integrity of the sovereign Human subject requires a boundary (which Da Silva calls the "horizon of death") beyond which lies a realm of pure domination and violence with impunity (Da Silva, 2009, p. 234) is instructive for interpolating Blackness the world over. If boundary making is the function and position of Blackness then actual enslavement, as historical and event, provides evidence for the fact that the world needs anti-Black violence, yet anti-black violence can hardly be its 'proof'. Incidentally, the distinction between 'slavery' and 'enslavism', where the latter defines white

epistemology's modality of onto-epistemic reproduction, is never clarified as separate or constitutive of the marching epoch which is important with regards South Africa's 1652 Van Riebeek. Ross Baker's epiphany of the 'bleak totality' of modern slavery in relation to all other pre/historic forms of slavery, is clarifying and distinguishes what he terms "The mere fact of slavery". He continues: "No amount of tortured logic could permit the analogy to be drawn between a slave population and an immigrant population no matter how low flung the latter group'' (Baker, 1983, p. 21). A distinction which might allow us to look through the language and its evidence of slavery to read the adjunct 'foreign' Black in the company of indentured Malay and Indian servants. In this chapter I set up the argument that racial slavery, the precursor of the notion of difference refigured in signifiers of racial difference, produces the Black subject as a global boundary marker to the political in the singular form of the modern slave.

As a political-symbolic toolkit, Blackness inaugurates an ethico-juridical orientation which belongs in the place of exteriority, one which is not addressed, understandable and does not figure under post-Enlightenment articulations of universality and historicity. I dislocate and distinguish Blackness from race and even Africanness beyond cultural and geographic locations to attend to the structure rather than the lived experience as a riposte for a theoretical lens that is hotly debated in the contemporary field of Black and African Studies. This turn occurs because theorising race has not satisfactorily served theorising Blackness nor addressed the specificity of its relation to suffering, gratuitous violence and global generalised and consistent dishonour bound up with Blackness' distinctive relation to global racial slavery and enslavism. The history of slavery in Southern Africa to follow is not for the purpose of doing a history of the actual experience of slaves but to give broad context to a structure and an epistemic and ontological order that informs Being itself and creates Blackness to stabilising it. Historicising 1652 and slavery in South Africa as a historical process for its history, is not where the stakes of my intervention lie, they lie with the figure of the slave as bound to Blackness and apart from a broader theory of race as standing alone outside of world and its Humanity (Wynter, 1995). More than that, this context, littered with names and traceable territory more deeply expresses the severance of meaningful ties of birth, the natal alienation of the Black, along with the general dishonour and gratuitous violence

which constitutes Blackness outside the social. The implications of this structural location of Blackness reach further than academic notions of hierarchised Human valuation in race theory to the heart of what it means to 'Be' 'Human'.

As such, I want to directly challenge the set of analytics in contemporary South African scholarship which attempt to explain South Africa in the absence of the paradigm or of engaging a structural analysis. I argue that analysis on race and Africanness which does not think of Blackness in the register of a paradigmatic structural positionality of antagonism under the overarching structure of white supremacy is inadequate and will always conclude it's thinking on Blackness without a compelling theory of Blackness. As evidenced by the lived social histories interventions to Afropessimism of the likes of Greg Thomas (2018), Annie Olaloku-Teriba (2018), Michael C. Dawson (2021), Vinson Cunningham (2020), even unofficial interlocutors in the South African academy circulating official critiques or recalling Appiah (1992), Eze (2008) Eze (2011, 2014), or Mamdani (1996) imagining they have complicated Blackness, miss the opportunity to genuinely engage the debate at the register that it is pitched (the paradigmatic) and reach at its philosophical and conceptual issue. Instead, they cleave to the Human in so doing deploy universality and historicity as the privileged modern ontological descriptors without ever justifying their relational structure to the Black who must be subsumed and subsumable under these descriptors. I argue that this is illegitimate but more than that, that these privileged perspectives are themselves diachronically anti-black and parasitic on the Black for their explanatory power because while they do not account for Blackness under their various subjectivity, they require the figure of the Black to themselves be thinkable and the Black body in generous measure as legitimation for the valorising of their subjective causes to the detriment of black people.

This chapter gives greater theoretical rigour to that category of Blackness by grounding it not in the historical contingencies of abjected populations, but--as Orlando Patterson in his 1982 study on slavery and social death does--in a paradigmatic account of how Black enslavement redefines the very meaning of both slavery and social death, particularly how Blackness breaks from and deforms the ancient institution of slavery. I attend to the sloppiness with which the Western and or white history academy throws

around the concept of slavery and social death such as Robert Ross (1983) and Nigel Worden (1985) analysing the condition of slavery as "social and psychic damage" that disabled the slave from mounting meaningful resistance and from which the slave does not recover. Psychic and social damage to the slave are points of agreement between the opposing sides of the slaves' failure or triumph in engagement with John Edwin Mason's *Social Death and Resurrection: Slavery and Emancipation in South Africa* (2003) as the optimistic rebuff years later that slaves escaped social death because they would not "play along" with the master's oppression; having the social weapons of family and faith helping them survive and eventually resist the "soul murder", in Nell Irvin Painter's much recited formulation, (1995) of modern slavery and "struggle against social death and for social rebirth" (Mason 2003, p. 52). Where social death is mentioned, for example in Worden's early work, Ross or even Mason, it is treated as a metaphor justified by close reading of often individuated lived experiences and not constitutive of the slave and master relation that is necessitated by the slave farm as first coined and conceptualised by Orlando Paterson. The consistency of avoidance and faddish buzz word appropriations to Patterson's concept of social death is striking being that this work came out in 1982 after many years, involving an army of researchers at Harvard University. This is in some form or another consistent with the general historical works on South African slavery or Cape history with the exception of Robert Shell (1994) who extends Patterson's structure of relation frame in his perception of the Cape.

I broach the sensitive constitutive element of natal alienation in a preconsciously 'cultural' Black context of people sentimental about perceived links to ancestors along with gratuitous violence and permanent dishonour, which go unexamined across South African history. The questions here pertain to what historians want to see as a fundamental distinction between the Middle Passage of racial slavery, the Indian Ocean slave trade and African colonialism (as the former allegedly implied the severing of all links to territory and community and the latter did not). It is a distinction that I disagree with, rather thinking that the violence unleashed by the Indian Ocean and the Middle Passage redefined the totality of African onto-socio-cultural coordinates in ways that, even where, as in South Africa, African land ownership was partially recognized and African kin was not overtly obliterated, those forms of recognition took place more in

the form of mockery without recourse and diminution rather than historical continuity or cultural sovereignty. In other words, though slaves enjoyed strong emotive bonds as groups their filiality did not constitute meaningful ties of birth but functioned in the service of white reconstitution of Black existence for the sake of the settler's polity.

Ultimately, I want to unveil the history of South Africa's slavery as constituting a paradigm of Black social death before and beyond the era of South African enslavement. While this is a chapter on history, it does not proceed with the historian's caution of avoiding totalising as it ultimately aims to edge towards theorising for precisely an overarching premise that will inform a thesis. My engagement with history is not to discount empirical knowledge or even to contribute to it substantially, but to highlight Blackness as a structural condition that exceeds actual accounts of slavery and oppression in South Africa. As a writer engaged with historiographical work, I do not present the false appearance of being an aloof, independent surveyor of evidence and written sources. In the process of observing this historiographical survey, I am at once reflecting on and becoming part of that very historiography. I do not occupy a panoramic vantage point, nor do I pontificate on the work of South African professional historians in order to render myself invisible. Historiographical writing about the past, written over layers of time can no more be handled from a neutral place than can record based historical work that attempts to explain the past. The claims of objectivity made by and for historians is pretentious at best (Maylam, 2001). So, as a disclaimer, at the outset, I do not write from the throne of South African history. This is not an authoritative overview produced after research over a lifetime on South Africa's slavery and racism. Rather it is a chapter deeply interested in revising this history in a place where it is no longer spoken of or claimed, and of a sense that the different strands of this history need to be brought together for a theoretical application of social death. Certainly, my coverage of the literature on the history of slavery and racism is not fully comprehensive — there will be historiographical gaps and unmentioned texts on the subject. However, I still capture something of this historical procession and make plain the extent of what the 'evidence' claims and contests — to explore how we might think through Blackness and social death in the context of complex evidence. Thus, while I will be theorising Blackness utilising history, history is never to be taken as the evidence of Blackness.

By situating an intellectual analysis of South Africa and its issue in this founding structure of antagonism, what is thought of as the encounter of 1652, through the figure of the slave animating and constituting Blackness as ante-Human, propels one's thinking through the failures of Humanist modern political thought, finally enabling an assessment of how and why freedom has consistently ebbed away from Black peoples. Castrated cultural trinkets and African pride slogans remain, but Black peoples' cultures and affirmations do not end the possibility of their enslaveability. Without deepening the philosophical debate over Blackness, socio-political histories will continuously serve as brittle weight bearers as opposed to a more satisfactory analytical register of the structure. While these social, historical, and graphical accounts of Blackness dominate the mainstream of African Studies as conclusive, there remains an attachment to hopefulness, a psychic safety, which resists an encounter with the abyss of Blackness. The resuscitation and repackaging of old intellectual pieties in African and Black Studies as a defence against the provocation of social death to theorise Blackness does a disservice to the seriousness and the urgency of Black emancipation. They have yet to broach an historical value chain for Black death and deathliness.

2.1 Blackness vs South African historiography's race maze

This chapter stands in the awkward place of doing a history and a historiography of South African slave race thinking to better clarify what is suffered as Blackness in this context. Awkward because white supremacy and its discrimination-as-norm was a global project propagated by a handful of very powerful European countries across the world. Between, because it attempts to periodise, to an extent, the consolidation of South Africa as an anti-black slave society while also attempting to uncover the historiography of this racial order. Paul Maylam exposes the tenuous nature of this kind of interface in his book, *South Africa's Racial Past* disavowing the distinction between history and historiography to essentially conclude that they are one and the same. What this means then is that the past remains in the realm of the bygone and can itself not be perfectly recreated. We must accept then that history is a recollection of imprecise, imperfect reconstructions and explanations (Maylam, 2001). I read this as an unavoidable

methodological reductionism on the part of historiography whenever decisions have been made over what evidence is selectable and selected. I make similar decisions when focusing on sources that primarily engage with and contest some of the debates on the questions of Human categories, racism and Blackness in South Africa, pre-South Africa and since the dawn of slavery on the continent, down to the Southwest and East Coast.

Much work, much of which is not unproblematic, has been done to attempt an overview of South Africa's racial past and order. It is an epistemological minefield. While this is a standard feature of modern historiography, so too are paradigm conflicts which have also been most evident in the historiography of the South African racial past and order. For the purposes of this chapter, that overview is useful and instructive to the extent that it is able to restore in the reader's consciousness, first, a history of South African slavery as standing up to a place where it is accessible among the world making racial slavery of modernity. Secondly, to put slavery in South Africa back under the spotlight as being among the inaugurating moments for the South Africa we have come to understand as historically holding the place of, "the most racist of all racisms'' (Derrida, 1985, p 378). The idealist/materialist divide, with variations on either side, has dominated the debate. Here I quote Maylam (2001) at length:

> Idealists have tended either towards the conservative position - that races are real entities and that the racial order was therefore natural, simply an expression of the fundamental differences between South Africa's various racial groups. Or towards the liberal position - that racial differences and divisions were at the root of conflict in South African history, but were aggravated by an illiberal racial order that paid scant respect to the worth and rights of individuals. Orthodox materialists on the other hand have dismissed racial categories as artificial constructs, racism as false consciousness, and the racial order as superstructural. Racism, in the materialist view, is essentially an expression of class interests; and in the South African case the racial order was designed largely to further the growth of capitalism (p. 4).

The above speculation, for historians, has been locked up in whether racial theory served to legitimate and systematise the already existing policy of slaving racialised

communities, consciousness, and practice or whether racial theory shaped racial policy, consciousness, and practice. The answers to which do not help us better understand what conditions either created or established for the quality of being in the master/slave relation. Perhaps a more political, even ideological concern, is better suited to identify the roots of South Africa's 'race problem'. It is, however, still important to have a historical analysis in order to better understand/establish the fact of slavery in South Africa. Of course, we draw insights from politics, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and other fields of study, but ultimately, I would argue, identity formation can best be properly unpacked through a historic contextualisation even while approximations of racism in South Africa will surely remain clouded and loaded by paradigms and their essential contestations. This effort is merely an experiment in the attempt at an analytical approach that may produce something of a state of knowledge, a discursive practice available for reading the contemporary as well as the more distant past.

The 1970s mark the height of these debates and indeed a paradigm shift in the arena of South African history but there has since been very little in terms of innovation in the theory produced. For the most part, it is the shift towards a greater interest in the more raced aspects of this history that has been a shift away from more reductionist, economics centrism of Marxist scholarship as a kind of postmodernist retaliation. Whatever the positions of historians and their work, few have been able to avoid associated historical racism in South Africa with the northern tradition of European racism and then the 19th century Boer Orange Free State and the South African Republic — in contrast to the so-called 'less racist' English Cape liberals. The standing assumption being that British settlers and their descendants are less racist than the heavy-footed Boers, an assumption entrenched by the commonly held idea that Apartheid was the unique innovation and product of the post-1948 National Party government of the Boer settlers. This binary has split theoreticians on either side of the question and to what point in South African history one can trace the source of racial discrimination and separation. But this question is one that bases racism on the scale of intensity from keeping slaves, for example, to who treated them better and eventually advocated and legislated their 'emancipation'. It is a strange question due to its vantage point and the

conclusion it draws, as though slavery is not the central issue but the individual grins on the faces of various Europeans at the time. The distinctions are hung on the imagined warmth of a domestic interior versus the isolation of the exterior field; the protected, invisible versus the tragic and spectacular body in chains. It is, then, conditioned by the polarity of unproblematized binaries that disavow racialised interiority. Scholars in Indian Ocean slavery demystify the "good treatment" thesis that for decades characterized modern African slavery histories as irrelevant: gentle, seamless histories. By highlighting how historical significance is binarised due to interior exterior gendered experiences, such scholarship reactivates the crucial and suppressed relationship between imagination and historicity, between fact and the socially informed structures that prescribe fact's intelligibility. This reactivation has always been intrinsic to the political endeavour underlying Black Studies as a disciplinary formation whose origins lie in the disruption of common sense and the untraining of academic blindness (Loyd, 2019). The critique of Human civilization launched by the study of Blackness is one that positions or reveals Blackness as standing in an antagonistic relation to time and space, posing the question of history within unique and often experimental orientations.

On that basis, I pose the question: do we take it all the way back to 1652 and the first white settlements at the Cape: where servitude was extended by Europeans from their other territories in South America and Asia; Van Riebeeck's hedge, slavery and the treatment of the indigenous Khoi in the Cape, or is the frontier era of the 18th and 19th centuries more significant? Furthermore: was it the expansion more characteristic of British contact and conflict with the Bantu warriors in the more Easterly direction that aught fix our interest? Or could race and Blackness have been concretised in a moment of coalescing between the two European groups in the 19th century mineral revolution of cheap Black labour demand and radicalised policies based on clearer racial differentiation? According to Magubane (1979):

> The political history of South Africa in the decade prior to the formation of the Union demonstrates quite clearly that "race" while remaining a biological category, under exploitative conditions becomes a social category and an important element in the functioning of the

> socioeconomic formation. The structures of racial inequality in South Africa were the creation of people who systematically and deliberately fashioned conditions to separate blacks from whites in order to live off the former. The architects of the Constitution of the Union of South Africa decided that political, economic, and social power was to be an exclusive European preserve, a decision that foreclosed the possibility of building a nonracial society based on cooperation between the races (p. 12).

Magubane and social theorists such as David Goldberg had strayed from having to make clear determination about race by specifying how Blackness in South Africa lived and their insights may be as attune to contemporary sentiments as the time at which they were writing: "race is whatever anyone is using that term or its cognates conceives of collective social relations'' (Goldberg, 1993, p. 81). David Theo Goldberg would reign in his theorisation in his book *Racist Culture* where he offers more of a definition of race as, "the irrational (or prejudicial) belief in or practice of differentiating population groups on the basis of their typical phenomenal characteristics, and the hierarchical ordering of the racial groups so distinguished as superior or inferior." (Goldberg, 1993, p. 93). In a similarly postmodern vein, historian Kenan Malik remarks that, "everyone 'knows' what a 'race' is, but no one can quite define it" (Malik, 1996, p. 2). Consequently, the socially constructed racial formation status of the concept of race is so widely recognized (Omi & Winant, 1986) that it may even go as conservative to argue that race is an illusion. As a result, task of racial theory today is no longer critiquing "natural" or "common sense" concepts of race but rather to study and pay attention to its continued significance. It must engage the novel discovery of illusory race, against popular notions of race transcendence, with the "death of the concept of race", its replacement by other supposedly more impartial ethnic, national, or class categories. It must ask what lies behind the intellectual dishonesty driving these moves to evade, avoid and disavow Blackness.

Fanon is particularly concerned with how representations of Blackness and the 'negro' constructed ideas about race within ideologies of colonial institutions: "The evidence

was there, unalterable. My blackness was there, dark and unarguable" (Fanon, 1952, p. 19). These representations presented as natural, even scientific, provided evidence of the degree of absence of being even while they were themselves without 'evidence' or illusory. As such, the negro, those represented under Blackness, experience Fanon's "Look, a Negro" moment, that signal to ontological breach, without a word said, in "the solecism of a still silence" (Bhabha, 2000, p. 354). It is a disjunctive moment for the emancipatory promise of the modern contemporary, a kind of projective past whose history and signification function under the mode of negativity where Blackness is concerned. Fanon invokes with the "Look, a negro" scene the time of modernity, and the conditions of authorisation for the figure of the Human to single out the figure of the Black. His "Fact of Blackness" is generalisable as such and breaks beyond the historicity of the Black person, it is, in Bhabha's (2000) formulation, what Fanon marks as the "temporality of emergence", severing the Black from the terms of Human ontology while giving the very understanding of Humanity under modernity. This is a scene no different to the scene Wynter replays as the anticipation of the negro in her text *1492* (Wynter, 1995) There, knowledge of the negro exceeds and anticipates the negro so that when the little white girl finally sees the negro for the first time, she can only see the negro through the gaze of the preceding representation before "landing at Senegal" and seeing such a negro and being, always and already, in frightful awe. Blackness falls prey to pluralistic positions in their fever to make complex which affirm Blackness as an open signifier and seeks to celebrate complex portrayals of particularities in Blackness (Gilroy, 1993). Any singular Blackness is processed from and at the level of the preconscious and repudiated as farce representation centring very particular histories vested in particular distortions. What is recognised as essentialism is replaced by a libertarian alternative: the saturnalia which attends the dissolution and emptiness of the essential Black subject (Marriott, 2016). The signs and signifiers of racial Blackness are appropriated into a chain of equivalences that empower subordinate oppressed identities within Human society. But race is not Blackness.

The first English use of the word 'race' is traced back to the early 16th century by Michael Banton in his book, *Racial Theories* (1987). That concept of race was quite evidently heavily influenced by Darwinian thinking and remained as such right through racial

conceptualisation in the late 19th century. While this conceptualisation was the hegemonic paradigm in the global north of conquering nations, it is the persuasion of this chapter, and indeed thesis, that even though South African thinkers waged debates on the basis of idealism, radicalism and materialism, both of which found their core ideology in European conceptualisations; where Blackness is concerned, South African racial thought followed patterns of thought that were globally (that is to say Northern and Western) hegemonic at its conception. To bring to light the sheer gravity of this perspective as it seeps through the historical lens through which economists viewed Apartheid South Africa, I must quote Magubane's (1979) devastating remarks here:

> Every country is unique, but South Africa is so unique that it almost defies imagination […] the African is everywhere: in the fields, in the factories, in the mines, in the shops, and in the offices. Every white person, no matter how poor he or she may be, keeps an African servant. The whites have reserved for Africans those hard and dirty tasks that they have refused to mechanize. South Africa's achievement in economic development, sports, or any other field of endeavor cannot be conceived of without the existence of the forced labor of Africans" (p. 2).

This process of modern racialist theories grounded in ideas of inherent "superior" and "inferior" among races seems to date back to racial slavery in America as a justification for the subjection of the economically lucrative slaves turned into property. The scientifically false doctrines of Calvinism underwriting Apartheid South Africa which gained open support before any policies were laid down or implemented, does not stray from similar Spanish notions of the white man's god given superiority over blacks who are natural slaves in the Americas; nor from long held Aristotelian ideas which state that societies are comprised of people varying not just in skin colour but in ability and worth. The master race among them holds achievements that span the world; where the slave race achieves and is capable of nothing. They are "the manure of history" as Gramsci (1992) would put it fated to slavery for the master race's advancements (Aristotle, 1998). Following are the ideas W.E.B. DuBois (1915) abstracts in his assessment of a then consolidated imperialism:

> Most persons have accepted the tacit but clear modern philosophy which assigns to the white race alone the hegemony of the world and assumes that other races, and particularly the Negro race, will either be content to serve the interests of whites or die out before the all-conquering march. This philosophy is the child of the African slave trade and the expansion of Europe during the nineteenth century.' (p. 233).

Up to this point in thinking, a race theory of South Africa is haunted by a narrow focus on the character and experiences of the Afrikaner or the English in what are viewed as their nation making moments, so that the paradigmatic aspects of imperialism that inaugurate Blackness and race in the national entity, fostering degradation and racism, are scarcely the concern of the Humanities and Social Sciences. Before, for example, Afrikaner racism gained its structure and its own consciousness, the social processes and juridical order that it would take advantage of were already in operation far away from South Africa and that geography was coerced into a more global racial structure (Fredrickson, 1981). Thus, as a first brush in the formulation of a theory of race in South Africa, one must recover a sense of the European, slave and colonial legacy, against which to contemplate any perceived contemporary development. Without this knowledge, we are incapable of knowing the standing structure and its development. Deliberately structured by anti-black racial laws and socioeconomic arrangements and propelled by past and present subjection and exploitation, the current racist and anti-black system can only morph and reproduce paradigmatically consistent patterns of anti-black racial subjugation.

What is clear and important is that even though some argue for the rejection of classical racist ideology and argued for the jettisoning of races or racial categories, that it still remains appropriate to use categories such as Black (coloured included or excluded), Indian, White in the South African context to demarcate what are understood as natural racial categories with a material impact. The Parliamentary report drafted by Sakhile Mokoena on the 26 January 2017 titled "Don't Call Us Coloured, We Are Khoisan" evidences the battle over scientific racialisation and its implications for legislative legibility and territorial claims (Mokoena, 2017). It is also clear that identifying any

group according to ancestral descent or what were formed as tribal groups under colonialism remains an important feature of contemporary racialisation that we should not lose sight of. Given how complex the developments in South African racial categorisation and history are, the focus of this chapter is severely limited, and thus the focus must be directed towards what Franz Fanon calls "the first encounter" (Fanon, 1961, p. 37) or what Perry Anderson (2012) views as the essential 'event'. Which, in light of the development of race and racism in South Africa, may prove to have the most explanatory value. For the purposes of this chapter, these are: (1) the 17th century settlement by the Dutch in 1652 and the settlement of the British in the 19th century; and (2) the long march of slavery across the Southern African territories as neither brief nor mild (Keegan, 1996).

While determining the validity of current modern racialisation in South Africa is complicated in the minds of many, an analysis of the structure of Blackness is more clarifying as the conception of Blackness is very deeply rooted in the development of Human subjectivity which is made legible through race (Wynter, 1995) throughout the world and in this country. Perhaps what mystifies South African racial formations all the more is that the history moved too quickly from the moment of first/key encounter with Europeans to the system of colonial settlement and even Apartheid, which was although brutal and crass, only a brief moment of rule by the Afrikaner government from 1947 to ostensibly 1990 (all of 43 years). Spelling this out is not an attempt at rewriting or rectifying South African history, it is only to bring out what is a crucial aspect of that history towards explaining Blackness and racial formations in the country, something which requires intellectual histories of racial thought and formation. The time and space of the arrival or the settling of Jan van Riebeeck to the Cape in 1652 and the time of the dominance of the Dutch turned Boer Afrikaners in the early 1900s to what became the era of Apartheid are made so vivid in the collective mind of South Africans at every level of society. Fierce battle rage over temporal, liberal originary and Calvinist first-ist fetishist notions of entitlement. Contestations over dates such 1652 or the 1913 Land Act and their dispossessive impact do little to compel a rigorous theory of Blackness coming out of these moments and their nationalist propaganda. What they do is point to the alternative opportunities I take here for expanded spatiality in thinking about

Blackness via these temporal contests that may give way to a frame that exceeds the event and the 'nation'.

For the purposes of my observations, what is crucial about those times is the engagements between very different European nations and very different African indigenous people found by Europeans in South Africa at the time. Too often the history of those relations in the South African context is described as engagements that are fuelled by nothing more than happenstance, that it was never the intention of the Dutch to settle in and enslave Southern Africa, that in fact many European colonial powers predate the Dutch in the Cape such as the Portuguese and the Spaniards, and that they found South Africa to be a place that was utterly uninhabitable and beyond the grace of God (Taviani, 1991). Additionally, that it was later useless in relation to colonies in South Asia and South America projected to yield better profits in crops and delicacies not found in Europe (Mellet, 2020). My own view or perspective is that the narrative of South African racial history is in the vein of, what I will illustrate here and throughout, another form of South African exceptionalism when dealing with history. Somehow, South African accounts of history have managed to erase African and global history around many of the major phenomena within South African history and imagines itself as existing under quite unique paradigmatic and structural terms. How the most glaring global phenomenon and development: racial slavery, of the time of van Riebeeck's arrival at the refreshment stop in the Cape, one which the VOC was itself a leading competitive player in, sees scant discursive historical attention in its own context boggles the rigorous mind. How the fixation on the date 1652 and its politics does not produce a more global reach for understanding the making and unmaking of Blackness and Being in South Africa, must take the most profound labour of dissonance; and must be very necessary for the jouissance Being calibrates as its structure of the reality form in the face of non-being.

Pan-Africanist historians on the continent have long thought South Africa to be a classic African example of how the master-slave relation is established and maintained for white supremacist epistemology. According to Nkrumah (1970):

> Slavery, the master-servant relationship, and cheap labour were basic to it. The classic example is South Africa, where Africans experience a double exploitation both on the ground of colour and of class. Similar conditions exist in the U.S.A, the Caribbean, in Latin America, and in other parts of the world where the nature of the development of productive forces has resulted in a racist class structure. In these areas, even shades of colour count the degree of blackness being a yardstick by which social status is measured. (p. 27)

Nkrumah here, is clear in his careful study of the development of race and class in South Africa, a place he considers a slave society like America and the Caribbean, it's relational structure of master-slave, is the cause and not the effect of racism. This problem and its matrix of plural investments inevitably leads from a social scientist orientation to arbitrarily select those factors which any period or study deems to be pertinent in any given case, which is Historiography's necessary reductionism brought on by the demand for specificity and thus the experimentally necessary selective discrimination. The disciplines of Anthropology, History, even Sociology, their ethnographies and 'scientific method', require this reduction, white supremacy simply dictates where and how, which subgroup to subgroup and subject to historiography's violent technologies. Within South African Studies there is clearly a conflict of perspectives, paradigm and politics in this apathetic endeavour as previously examined. In order to inject more rigour into the study of race and Blackness we must seek the formation of Blackness in this epic and not privilege the ideological predispositions of white South Africa and its academy to select only those symptoms and phases of its manifestation that only produce fantastic distortions and what Mellet (2020) considers *The lie of 1652*.

2.2 Slavery in South Africa

The recognition of slave roots, its memory in South Africa has been marginalised to around 60 000 slaves estimated to have been imported in the small area of the Cape pre South Africa and by subsequent decades of subjugation and selective promotion of settler histories. Slave descendants were mainly classified by the colonial state as "coloured" (a technical racial term appearing first in the 1911 census (Mellet, 2018) as well as "black African". These descendants of slaves had to cope with the added traumas

of forced removals from their only known homes to remote and violent racialised locations and townships characteristic of Apartheid, then to white dominated and racist public spaces and residential areas for the few in the integrationist period post-Apartheid. These traumas have overshadowed investments and interest in ancestral roots to slavery and weakened the capacity of the Black community to form a sense of its own histories or even remember slavery. The remaining legacy of colonial and Apartheid states is the still keen promotion of white history through education programs, formal schooling, constructed museums and public iconography that suits white interests. By the time 'New South Africa' dawned in 1994, slavery had long been neglected as a public history even as a concern of formal and professional history. I thus use an analytical paradigm that comes out of the Black world in Black Studies, the African 'diaspora', and the Black radical cannon of thinking about slavery as a constitutive of Blackness. For its centralisation of Blackness, Black thought, and Afropessimism in particular, draw the analytical lens of race studies to slavery, it seems the most apt and rigorous frame of analysis because it attends to the silences and slippages of the idealist/Marxist/materialist historical debate in relation to race, specifically Blackness. It is a perspective that is largely espoused by those who think of themselves as forming a part of Fanonian scholarship with a particular orientation towards Blackness and the African 'diaspora'. In relation to world historical developments, I thus take the position that racial slavery, not colonialism, is the essential dynamic for how we can best understand modern race and Blackness and that anti-blackness subtends and structures Black living the world over. While many critical race theorists, Pan-Africanist, Black existential philosophers, and Black optimists have thought of slavery as the structuring antagonism that sutures race relations in the West, analysing Blackness as slavery indexed to the Black from the African continent, specifically from South Africa is muted. This is due to dominant social and intellectual histories having locked up South Africa's slave experience to its initial iteration of the 18th century to 1731 when the majority of indentured labour came from the Malay and Indonesian Islands and the subcontinent of India. This fixation with early indenture in the Cape, induced by the greater lie of 1652, has allowed South African slavery scholars to lose themselves from studies of racial slavery on the continent via the Indian and Atlantic Ocean and the

African ‘diaspora’ because, apparently, South African enslavism was unique in its diversity in terms of race. According to George M. Fredrickson’s comparative study *White Supremacy in South Africa and America*, “it is even more difficult to establish a nexus between physical prejudice and enslavement in the South African case. A large proportion of the slaves brought to the Cape by the Dutch were not African at all but East Asians (Northrup, 1995) their dark-skinned pigmentation did not prevent the Dutch from generally regarding them as superior to the lighter-skinned Khoikhoi” (Fredrickson, 1981, p. 74). Orlando Patterson clarifies the terms that distinguish the modern Black African slave from all other forms of slavery to have preceded it by looking to the essential dynamic of Blackness which enters the fold of ancient slaveries in his study of slavery on all the continents over time, to produce a genealogical isolate constituted by non-contingent violence, natal alienation, and general dishonour (1982). I would argue that the replacement of people of colour slaves to exclusively Black African in both contexts opened up the Human community for those very people of colour and secured their place among the races of humanity even if in an albeit denigrated position relative to the master race. It presented what Sylvia Wynter characterises as a moment of bonding between whites and even dissenting people of colour. What DuBois recognises as a growing acceptance of a general Humanity where “We grant full citizenship in the world-Commonwealth to the “Anglo-Saxon” (whatever that might mean), the Teuten and the Latin; with just a shade of reluctance we extend it to the Celt and the Slav, we half deny it to the yellow races of Asia, admit the brown Indian to an ante-room only on the strength of an indisputable past; but with the Negros of Africa we come to a full stop, and in its heart the civilized world with one accord denies that these come within the pale of nineteenth century Humanity” (1899, p. 386-387), revealing the cultural logic that racial slavery produced.

Looking at Atlantic slavery, even this similarity of people of colour diversity in the first decades of slaving (native Americans prior to the Christian conversion and fellowship in the community of European Christian nations) is striking and itself a moment of racial distinction and anti-black consensus (Pandian, 1985; Wynter, 1991). We neglect entirely

the more than hundred years to follow where South East, South West and the territory now known as South Africa became the exclusive sources of slave raiding and slave making for all of South Africa so that, with the exception of very few free Blacks in the Cape, all Black people in South Africa were slaves navigating captivity and available to enslaveability by the Portuguese, Dutch/French/German/Boers, English or any other European group. Utilising this history, I locate a theory of Blackness to centre race in South African studies which may be useful for thinking afresh the forms of political thought underpinning revolutionary Black politics. I turn to look at the history of racial thought in South Africa and respond to the crevices and loopholes of African or Black exceptionalism and the forms of borrowed institutionality it attempts.

2.3 Southern African peoples under slavery

Slavery systemically took off in South Africa through the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the Cape became a slave society for nearly 200 years. Just over 63,000 enslaved people were brought to the Cape by the Dutch, English and other slave trading European Nations. The main sources for slaves were from the Indian Ocean areas of Mozambique, Madagascar, Zambia, India and the Indonesian and Malaysian Islands, Angola, Zanzibar, Sailon, Burma, the Philippines and Japan with India making up the majority of imports from the early 1700s to 1731 when the European powers of South Africa turned exclusively to Africa for slaves. Many indentured migrant servants, chiefly Indians, returned home — some 70 per cent of those sent to other Asian colonies and around a third of those shipped to Africa, the Caribbean and South America. Relative to the Atlantic slave trade around the same time, the numbers of slaves imported at just over 63,000 appears to be insignificant, but if you consider that for most of the 1700s there were more slaves than free people at the Cape the ratios prove quite significant. The number increases if we consider that Black African peoples found in the Cape would have themselves ostensibly become slaves. The Cape colony was intensely afraid of slave mutiny and resistance which meant slaves existed under “violent and extreme” conditions of force (Worden, 1985, p. 4) being subdued under “the massive use of

judicial force" (Ross, 1983, p. 2).

Slavery had far-reaching consequences for the people living in the Cape and over time, on all of what would become South Africa. It set the foundation for racial distinction and exploitative labour practices which morph out of the era of slavery. Apartheid pass-laws, for example, are rooted in the Cape with slaves being the first people in South Africa to carry passes if and when away from the slave lodge after prescribed hours. A system developed into an elaborate mechanism for controlling the movement of all Black people under Apartheid. Ann Eichmann points out that in the decades following slave emancipation in South Africa, now commemorated on the 1st of December (1834), there were widespread public commemorations of Emancipation Day. However, the rise of segregationist politics in the early 20th century, which led to more distinct racial identities, these public events dissipated ushering in an area of amnesia and what Zoë Wicomb (2000) has argued, in relation to those identified as coloured, was an amnesia or repression of memory that had its roots in a shame of the origins of slavery in South Africa; and its ties to miscegenation, rape and shame as colonial racism became institutionalised and made it most shameful to be Black. For a long time, the story of South African racial slavery was not acknowledged, and it was only really in the 1980s that there was renewed interest in slavery at the Cape as academics began to look critically at the slave past of South Africa. Part of the reason was that prior to the 1980s, historiography in South Africa tended to explain racism in relation to the Frontier Wars, land dispossession, the development of mining capital and the creation of the migrant labour system all of which was set under the umbrella of colonial rule without any ties to the global slave trade of the 16th, 17th and 18th century and the global expansion of racial slavery well into 19th century.

Entering into the post-Apartheid period in South Africa, the prominence of research linked to the struggle against apartheid, once again, land dispossession and the history of the townships migrant labour, meant that slavery would once again not be high on the discursive agenda so that communities in Cape Town became the first to move towards what is now the December 1st movement led by the likes of Reverend Michael Weeder. This movement argued that the history of slavery would help coloured communities to

uncover who they really are, where they come from and where they belong in the field of identity politics. After a very short life span, the December 1st movement was accused of fostering ethnic politics and undermining the nation building effort by the ANC. UNESCO's 1999 attempt to set up the Slave Route in the Cape resulted in government representatives, at one of the first workshops on Robben Island, arguing that slavery should be defined in such a way as to form part of other forms of exploitative labour practices such as indenture, debt bondage and migrant labour. It took more efforts before, at least in the academy, one could once again look at slavery and its history in South Africa as a subject in its own right. By the year 2000, there was significant genealogical research on slave ancestry. Nigel Worden and students from the University of Cape Town set up the slave Genealogy Research Database in 2002 and a group of Cape Flats community members established the Cape Family Research Forum.

In 2003 during construction work at Prestwich Street in the city of Cape Town around 3000 human remains suspected to be the remains of slaves were uncovered, leading to a struggle between authorities, property developers, slave descendant communities and academics. The curator of the exhibition themed "From Human Wrongs to Human Rights''(2000) at the Iziko Slave Lodge Museum, Habiba Abrams, was promptly accused of "focusing too much on the suffering of slaves at the expense of agency" (Eichmann, 2013, p 755). Today, the museum is attacked for being too clinical and not bringing to the fore the 'human' voices of the slaves as stories of 'humans'. Robert Shell, a South African historian on slavery, took the position that "The Lodge containing both slaves and lunatics was the colony's central symbol and repository of the socially dead'' (Shell 1994). Shell became the one South African historian to read an African context of slavery under the terms of social death, borrowing the concept from Orlando Patterson's study of slavery, a concept discussed throughout this dissertation at length. But even he read slavery as social death only within the confines of the Cape and within a Humanist debate of slave agency in South African History studies. The curious thing within this discussion of slavery in South Africa is that the Khoikhoi and the San (who are Black Africans) are hardly linked to slavery in the Cape, as though they form a different and separate colonial nativist position unchanged or not subsumed by African slavery. The favourites in the study of slavery in the Cape are mixed-race so-called

coloured, Indian and Malay people, all distinct from mysteriously absent Africans/Blacks. The slavery of the Black in South African memory is so natural and commonplace that it does not register as atrocious and as suffering at the level of the so-called formal enslavement of the Malay and the indenture of the Indians, as such it is always 'tricky' to name, periodise and mark with an ending, only more 'tricky' terms and titles never rupture. Such an ambivalent temporality and space means that the conventions that structure history and its implements such as record, and the archive are not only discernible as discursive effect but as organising principles as well. These effects appear as fact so that their visibility today must be understood as something guaranteed by the particular organising principles of the structure they maintain. The inability to appear fully from within slavery's discourse in this context, appearing neither within slavery nor the legal system that authorised it as an exercise in control over what may and may not be said about slavery and its system of valuation (Hartman, 2008). What the disciplining history requires as evidence is precisely what cannot be said because even if not a single pick or shovel were picked up in the vastly agreed upon small scale, mostly benign Cape slavery by the Black South African, their status as the quintessential slave remained a matter of cause. Social death does not require a square meter of land or a drop of sweat to instantiate itself, something we are incapable of thinking within the boundaries of history and geography.

Firstly, then, let us do a broad, brief outline and mapping of slavery throughout South Africa to establish grounds for examining the argument that South Africa is itself a slave plantation on quite similar terms as the continent, before we have even begun to think through the Atlantic and the New World in order to reach the paradigmatic implications for Blackness which are beyond the practice of enslavement itself. While it is yet to be determined the extent to which the practice of slavery was pervasive in South Africa, scholars have established that during the 17th and 18th century, the Dutch East India Company imported slaves to the Cape from East and West Africa including the island of Madagascar and the East Indies to work for private gain, wine estates and company employees. But first contact and periodic enslavement by Europeans on South African territory precedes 1652 with the already enslaving Portuguese in 1488, then the slaving Spaniards whom the Khoikhoi fought to the beach of Salt River in 1510 (Vergunst,

2011). New research elaborated in Mullet's 2020 text shows evidence of the Chinese rounding the Cape even earlier in 1421; having been introduced to racial slavery by the Arabs and with African slaves, mostly from Madagascar, peaking during the Tang and Song dynasties (906 AD-1279 AD) and the Indonesians as far back as the 8th century.

Nevertheless, the Dutch were organised and persistent so that in 1657 the building of the castle, a symbol of slave trading on the West African shore since the 14th century, was to go forward and required extensive back breaking building work. So determined was Van Riebeek that he made a plea to the VOC to import large shipments of slaves. At this point the indigenous Khoikhoi had already been forcibly moved from their territory to build the castle in the most optimal spot near the coast and must have been the first slaves building the castle whose lodge was to house coming slaves. In 1958 the Dutch ship Amersfoort got lucky and hijacked half of a Portuguese ship's slave cargo of mainly Angolan children. They are the first large group of slaves to be shipped to South Africa. The next large group would arrive later that year consisting of slaves from Benin, Sao Tome, and Guinea. Among the leading slaving and trading powers in 1641, the Dutch were to seize the power of the slave trade in Angola away from the Portuguese and were in control of it until 1648 when the Portuguese took back control so that Angola only became a Portuguese colonial settlement after the decline of the slave trade in the 19th century. To be clear, the slaving Dutch were a significant force in the transatlantic slave trade as far back as 1636, after the Dutch West India Company (WIC) had established a plantation colony in Brazil. The taking of Elmina by the Dutch on the then gold Coast and Luanda from the Portuguese was to regulate trade in African slaves.

What is also not broadly entertained is the fact that slavery was extensively practised beyond the Cape with then native South Africans themselves being systematically enslaved (Morton, 1994). In their study, *Slavery in South Africa: Captive labour on the Dutch Frontier*" (1994), Eldridge and Morton and their contributors elaborate how the expansion of the Dutch frontier systematically conducted slave raids, dispossessed local South Africans of land and cattle while holding South Africans as chattel for commercial gain. What Morton terms Frontier slaving, began at least a century before legal abolition of slavery with commandos capturing Khoisan people (Black South Africans) as early

as 1730 and conducting raids on the Tswana, Sotho and Nguni-speaking people on the fringes of the then Transvaal as late as the 1870s. Along the moving horizon of the 'Great Trek,' people living in the Eastern and Northern Cape, Orange Free State, and Natal were attacked and seized […] Young captive labourers, often bound to Boer households and raised to adulthood without parents or kin, helped to sustain and consolidate the advancing Dutch frontier (p. 1-2).

The record of this history has long been made available through published sources. A summary describing how South African slaves being integrated into the mercantile system as was the case with slavery in the Americas is written as early as the 1950's (see Curtis, 1969; Armstrong, 1979; Boeseken, 1977; Greenstein, 1973). To circumvent the more powerful South African community among the slavers and settlers, conflict was promoted among African groups due to outright conquest not always being a feasible option between the Africans and settlers, numbers wise (Penn,

1989; Eldridge et al., 1994). In the Cape for example, it was the practice of the official military arm of the Colony to conscript mixed Khoisan (slaves resulting from miscegenation with Europeans called 'Bastaard-Hottentots') into its military ranks to conduct raids capturing specifically women and children of the Khoisan. By 1770, Penn (1999) concludes, "the status of both free and captive Khoisan differed little from each other, or indeed, from the status of slaves." (p. 17). The Mfecane upheaval in the Southeast, Cobbing (1988) controversially concluded at the time, resulted from slave raiding and trading by British missionaries, British and Portuguese traders in the areas rather than a tyrannical blood-thirsty Shaka Zulu. Penn (1989) goes further to accuse generations of historians of concealing and neglecting the history of mass slavery and slave raiding in the Natal interior.

The Northern Cape was a prime area for runaway slaves from the Cape to seek refuge and though being of mixed heritage, their desire for freedom landed them in the Northern Cape under the name 'Drosters' (Penn, 1999). Still pursued there for capture and slavery, it is clear from first hand records from a veldwagtmeester, Johannes Lubbe, that ethnic distinctions among them were scarcely relevant, referring to them only as 'black nation' in a communication he sends for raids: "It is high time we saved our country and (not)

to succumb to the black nation, for it seems as if they all have been incited; be armed and ready" (Lubbe, 1793 as cited in Penn, 1999, p. 159-160). There, together with Khoikhoi, Baastards, San and legally defined 'black' slaves, they shared the same status of virtual slavery according to Penn who belabours the conditions of the severe constraints they lived under whether they were captured as indigenous South Africans or imported African slaves. "Inhumanity honed by a lifetime of enslavement" (Penn, 1989, p. 41), was the condition of brutality and violence endured by non-European women, children and men reduced to slaves in the Northern Cape.

In the Eastern Cape, slaves came to be known as 'apprentices' on Boer farms. Decades before the legal abolition, the farmers in the Eastern Cape, outnumbered, realised that they needed to grant their slaves with benefits such as livestock and allot them small plots on 'their' land. According to John Mason, slaves on farms in the Eastern Cape were often even allowed to marry and exchange goods and property, but they lived as such wholly at the prerogative of their masters. Every aspect of their daily existence was at the whim of their master who could brutalise them, take back the property and do with their 'families' as s/he/they pleased, even though they could be considered more "fortunate" slaves (Mason, 1994). One slave from Graaff-Reinet reported, "his Master is in the habit of hiring him out with his wife and children, for one month to one person and two months to another, in consequence of which [when he cultivates] a garden for himself in one place he is obliged to leave it without reaping the fruits of it" (Mason, 2003, p. 137). The terminology of slave and free labourers drew a distinction between those slaves coming from the Cape and the native Khoikhoi, San and Bantu-speaking Africans in the Northeast and Eastern Cape, but the distinction in their existence can hardly be discerned. According to Ross, "Slaves lived and worked besides these servants, performing the same tasks — shepherds, cattle herd, field laborer, household servant, and sometimes overseer-and experienced the same form of labour control, which was a blend of coercion and incentives" (Ross, 1983, p 264).

From Limpopo, Mpumalanga down to the Free State in South Africa, even further north to Mozambique, it is estimated that between a thousand and four thousand slaves were exported from Delagoa Bay per annum. Entire communities and social groups were

destroyed, falling prey to famine and slave raiding. Scholars have documented that in the 1830's slave raiders supplying the slave trade in Delagoa Bay conducted extensive raids in the North and Eastern Transvaal at the same time that the Boers reaching the region wreaked havoc in the area and conducted slave raids themselves. "For the next few decades, Africans across a wide area, from Natal to the Transvaal, were subject to enslavement and sale both at Delagoa Bay and in the newly established Boer society of the Orange Free State and Transvaal, as the slaving frontiers in Natal and the Transvaal converged." (Eldredge, 1994, p. 129). The African people impacted by this vast practice of slavery in the region range from the Mpfumo, Magaia, Mambe, Matake, Madolo, Tembe, Mabudo, Khumale, Gumede, Ngubane, Mathethwa, Qwabe, Ndwandwe, Moamba, Panyelle, Tshopi, various sects of AmaZulu, Mmanaana BaKgatla, BaKwena, BaPedi, BaRolong, BaNgwaketse, BaLanga, BaKekana, BaTlhaping, Kora, BaLobedu, AmaSwati, BaRolong, VhaTsonga, VhaVenda, Mgwamba, BaKekane, BaLetwaba, BaLobedu and God knows who else" (Eldredge, 1994, p. 129). The upsurge of slave trade at the bay resulted from conflicts being spurred on and caused by the brutish Portuguese in an attempt to dominate the East coast and prevent British expansion and interference. According to Owen's report: "nevertheless war was excited solely to make slaves to pay for merchandise. The same also occurred at English River to a still smaller extent, yet sufficiently so to keep the neighbouring tribes in a ferment and continual state of warfare" (Eldredge, 1994, p. 128).

Many may argue that similar kinds of raids, plunder, genocide, and capture have occurred in many parts of the world during various periods of conquest. However, Orlando Patterson's study is crucial in making a distinction between the regime of violence which subtends slaveries throughout the world and that which saturates Black life under modern racial slavery. Patterson's concept of social death spells out this distinction and is crucial to this work. Orlando Patterson first developed the concept of social death in his 1982 study, *Slavery and Social Death*. There, Patterson broke slavery down to more than just an event in an era or a place in spaces in the world but as a relational dynamic. The first distinction he draws from all other forms of slavery is a relational structure of gratuitous violence. That is to say, the slave is now structured to the world in terms of violence and a violence which is not contingent on transgression

(war between concerned groups or stepping outside of the boundaries of agreed upon codes) but is instead whimsical and gratuitous. The slave is now subsumed by a condition of total powerlessness in the greater political and social schema. And secondly, the slave is now natally alienated, what he terms "the loss of ties of birth in both ascending and descending generation". Thirdly, the slave exists under generalized dishonour, this being a direct effect of the first and second elements of distinction. Orlando Patterson in his synthetic 1982 study thinks of social death in modern slavery as being constituted by these three elements. Afropessimism as a perspective explores the explanatory power of this magnum opus on matters of political theory, philosophy and for the purposes of our study here, history and historiography.

Here I get at these matters through a critical thinking of modern racial slavery and its own reflections and encounter not only in the Cape but in greater South Africa. As demonstrated by the period and span of slavery throughout South Africa, gratuitous violence, natal alienation, and general dishonour (social death) was the structure of relation between the Black slave and the free whites. To analyse the essential condition of slaves and slavery in South Africa, Shell is crucial though limited. Shell (1994) tells us of a possibility of retaining the place of subjective, moral, and ethical considerations in the modern sciences of Man when he chose to read Cape slavery with American historians and sociologists of racial slavery. He summarises the condition for blacks in South Africa as social death in relation to a thriving foreign white population of social life borrowing this concept from Orlando Patterson's (1982) study. Shell (1994) recalls:

> My interpretations are fashioned, in part, by having lived in South Africa for the first twenty-five years of the apartheid era. As an undergraduate I was struck by the similarities between the system of apartheid and the slave society of the past. The interpretation was denied by historians, including revisionists, but I am not sure that my early intuition was wrong after all. There are compelling legal and demographic similarities. Violence and coercion undergirded both systems. Cape slaves and twentieth-century black South African workers were both denied a broad and suspiciously similar range of basic human rights. They could not move freely. They could not own land. Under both apartheid and slavery,

> workers were carefully selected by age and sex and were brought in from outside the core area of the economy. Both groups were natally alienated, that is, their condition at birth limited their future rights, neither could have an independent family life. The systematic natal alienation of black men and the informal incorporation of black women in the white domestic arena are profoundly similar in both societies...Both slaves and modern workers in South Africa were, in Orlando Patterson's striking phrase "socially dead (p. xix – xx).

It is an intriguing yet almost intuitive comparative which may offer up a more persuasive theorisation of Blackness and slaveness if stretched along the march of slavery from the West to the East Coast by the 'end' of slavery in 1838. Slavery and social death inaugurated Blackness and not landlessness, labour exploitation and discrimination. Even while these are important features of the Black experience which are the structuring relation of colonised people, they are not essential to this dynamic of slavery. Blackness as a Being without ontological density consolidated the colony as community, functioning as its boundary marker to even the most rudely subjected community identity positionality.

2.4 Slavery, Blackness, and slave classification

We have and often do talk about Blackness as a very contextual phenomenon, such as when we think about what was happening in the European context when Blackness became part of the linguistic or ontological lexicon to form the idea of race and how that can be brought back to understanding Blackness there within. More often than not, that is a means of clarifying how we have come to a global consensus that has people of African origin called, and come to understand themselves as, Black all throughout the world (Wynter, 1991). Pre-modernity, Blackness appears in the earliest text of the most globally circulated written text, the bible, with the story of Noah's sons and one raced as black for the first time, Ham. Of course, even in biblical interpretation, he is more than just darkest skinned, but imbued with values or interpolated according to a denigrated state of being. For the purposes of this project, it is perhaps best to think of Blackness in relation to Africa, or for the purposes of a globalising experiential phenomenon, to think about Blackness in relation to slavery, the thing which produces

a ‘diaspora’ that gives Blackness legibility in the contemporary.

The libidinal economy of the world was underwritten by Blackness and consensus was reached without war or solicitation of consent from the place or peoples who would concretely be Black. This consensus introduces into the global lexicon two words that had not been there before and they are ‘Africa’ and ‘Black’ with reference to place and people respectively. These first instantiations of Africa and human Blackness become elaborated through this global consensus of a geographic location for the picking up of slaves outside of the recruitment of Africa or Blacks themselves to this idea (Wynter, 1995). As such, the switch over from Khoikhoi or Zulu to Black and Africa has nothing to do with the Khoikhoi and the Zulu, nevertheless Black people’s preconscious attachment to those identities have no way of structurally recovering them as such in terms of their historic and structural positionality to the rest of the world. A paradigmatic shift had happened outside of Black Africa and it has since then exceeded and anticipated its people; with the triumph of humanism, they became, as Fanon’s formulation goes, “… over determined from without’ (Fanon, 1952, p. 196). This psychic lens was passed on from the Arabs to the Portuguese and it is there that it becomes the organising principle for life itself in the modern age (Wynter, 1995). The threatening significance of theoretically considering both Indian Ocean world slaveries (IOW) and Atlantic world slaveries under the same frame, can only be described in terms of an unthought, perhaps unthinkable yet looming history of Blackness. IOW in South Africa and European routes of enslavement and trade illuminate their coevality. IOW scholars, however, can only anachronistically engage the problem of Blackness as difference through the supposed modern inheritance of the concept of race. Just as they are likely or unlikely to notice the conflations of Blackness with slave status, historians are equally likely or unlikely to perceive that anti-blackness abounds as dispersed anecdotal information throughout Perso-Arab, Indian, and Northern and Western literary history in forms illegible to modern historiography. The threat of this joining or thinking together, in such terms embodies the anxiety of slavery memory — Atlantic or Indian — which reminds its impossible South African witness that the memory of slavery is not the memory of an ‘event’ (Warren, 2016) or legible encounter. Pathos driven historiography and confessional memoirs develop a unique experimentalism that betrays its induced

deflections.

The traumatic confrontation with African involvement in slave trading and even the shame of miscegenation frays its own representation and exhausts narrative coherence and historiographical scale. Black political romanticism too is broken with, when Blackness figures as a world-historical crisis who's unbearable narrativisation takes cover under forgettable anecdotes which render Blackness temporally and spatially boundless. It is in this context of a crisis in boundary, more specifically, that my interest is peaked in what I see as a deeply historicist approach that dominates slavery studies and a deep historical reluctance that manifests most clearly in the turn toward metaphysical language and disciplinary epistemologies in some contemporary Black scholarship. Theoretically, to think of racial slavery is to simultaneously preserve and rupture the very fantasy of historical specificity — to make specificity a problem, rather than treat it as a self-evident starting point — and this applies as much to geographic as to temporal specificity. I continue to insist that the temporal and spatial breadth of Black enslavism connects to the problem of the immemorial and the meta documentary. Enslavement is foundational to the very possibility of Human civilization, and thus of the Human as we know it. Slavery's connection to the history of racialised Blackness thus always risks slipping back into a vertiginous void that could vacate this relation of all specificity and meaning, imploding the periodization of race and along with it Blackness, imploding time's dark dizzying abyss and the violent temporality of knowledge. Rather than choose between flattening historical difference and reproducing the laundry list of exceptionalisms typical of much IOW slavery and Atlantic slave scholarship, I want to enquire into their cryptic constitution, where difference and comparison are stored and reproduced as a disavowal of the difficult fusion of Blackness and race.

What does it mean for Africa to bring forth the world's slave thereby severing the Black from the Human and its races? What does it mean for how slavery is understood in the continent and specifically in South Africa? What happens when we approach slavery and delve into it without the reflexive drive towards a redemptive process or the ontogenetic priorities of the Human? It is my contention that South Africa is and has

since the dawn of modernity been a slave dwelling alongside the plantations of the Caribbean, South America, North America, and Europe. Those places are not the African diaspora for Black people because Africa is not a distinct home and place of previous Human plenitude to return to in the global lexicon and historical memory, only a very big plantation (Wilderson 2020) and Sartre's terra nullius. Since the dawn of modern enslavism Black people in Africa have been marked to navigate slavery and captivity. Some navigated slavery by becoming conspirators with Europeans such as the Khoikhoi or Mbagala people; some negotiated captivity by trying to go further north like the San or into the interior where there were no white settlements at the time; some negotiated captivity on the farm, the vineyard, the household, the dungeons of the castle; some threw themselves overboard en route to the Islands or Americas; and others survived the long journey (Morton, 1994). It was not the experience of capture and enslavement but the essential dynamic of captivity and social death which situated South Africa, the place, and its people, on the continent and the world over in the zone of non-being, as truly terra nullius after its self-fulfilling prophecy.

Spillers (2003) approaches the history of modernity in terms of "the ruling episteme that releases the dynamics of naming and valuation" (p. 208). What she finds over the century and a half since the Emancipation Proclamation, is not any great variation or shifting in the discourse apropos of the Black in the world. Instead, in a famous passage from her book *Black, White and in Color*, she finds, "dominant symbolic activity […] remains grounded in the originating metaphors of captivity and mutilation so that it is as if neither time nor history, nor historiography and its topics, show movement, as the human subject is 'murdered' over and over again by the passions of a bloodless and anonymous archaism, showing itself in endless disguise" (Spillers, 2003, p. 208). Since the modern formation of Blackness, what one sees each time Blackness appears in space is the retreat or the absence of 'the world' and civil society's libidinal investment innate to all but the Black. Using the lens of Afropessimism to apprehend this history, what we discover is that the collective unconscious of modernity's civil society itself is essentially anti-black. This is perhaps truer of liberals and radicals than for 'conservative racists' in the South African political space. Blackness is better able to point out the position of right-wing racists, because they have the integrity of walking around with the old flag and

Apartheid regalia overtly living out their unconscious. Liberals, progressives, and Radicals lack that integrity so that the place to locate that integrity is in their unconscious (Hudson 2013). And their unconscious, as I discuss in chapter 4, will show that they cannot relate to Blacks as contemporaries, as subjects imbued with what Fanon calls, ontological resistance/density (Fanon, 1952). Simply because, if it was possible to grant sovereign integrity to Blackness, then everyone else in the world would "lose their psychic bearings" (Wilderson, 2011), bearings underwritten by Blackness to establish the sovereign integrity and the racial positionality of every other group.

Certainly, there is a thinking problem in South African Studies in relation to Blackness. Part of the thinking problem in South Africa is that much of the radical or left are unwilling or unable to think against the very national project within the aforementioned racial slavery context. Slavery in South Africa is treated, historically in nationalist terms. As a result, to theorise the New South Africa as being unethical in its synchronic arrangements, rather than theorising it as an essentially benign arrangement of power which only needs to be reformed in its practice and paradigms of policy, seems the only available plain of thought. Consequently, this leads to reformist responses from the ranks of so-called radicals; leftist revolutionaries who ended up playing the role of the loyal opposition. However, the Left is generally unable to think against New South Africa because the unethical set of synchronic structural arrangements of its history of racial slavery has scarcely been understood as such. The Left thinks in terms of improving or correcting the discriminatory practices of the Rainbow Nation and not in terms of destroying South Africa, the national entity. The Left is genuinely invested in access and making less contrary to the boundaries of civil society, its labour arrangements, the distribution of its social currencies; and aggressively opposed to the notion that civil society itself is a 'murderous' machine (Wilderson, 2010). The Left has failed to break down the nation's conservative ensemble of desires and innately conservative frameworks. Thus, there remains a block against thinking overhaul because thinking about greater access is to leave unthought the ethical standing of the state, or country or community that is South Africa. Examples such as the protests and subsequent massacre at Marikana, #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall student movements, and national shutdown lay bare that the South African Left constantly misses prime opportunities to

craft a radical anti-university and, by extension, anti-police, anti-capital and essentially anti-nation discourse. Instead, the Left dwells on the illegality or constitutionality of these movement practices. The same practices that pre- and post-1652 South Africans took up in the Cape, Transvaal, Ciskei etc. (Mellet, 2020); and that the Portuguese, Dutch and English have used, that European immigrants in the New World used on their slaves on plantations with a great measure of violence. 1652 as the signifying moment gives coherence to this orientation and the unexamined exclusion of racial slavery as the founding antagonism. Why not see, in the practice of anti-black institutional culture and police violence, something more profound than exclusion, exploitation and brutality? Lewis Gordon (2010) puts his finger on the anxiety that prevents what is otherwise an intuitive trajectory of thought:

> Theory in black...is...a phobogenic designation, it occasions anxiety of thought. It is theory in jeopardy. [...] There is a form of elicit seeing ... at the very beginnings of seeing black which makes the designation of seeing in black, theorising in black, more than oxymoronic. It has the mythic poetics of sin. [...] Blackness in all of its metaphors and historical submergence reaches out to theory as theory split from itself, it is the dark side of theory which in the end is none other than theory itself understood as self reflective outside itself. All thought, in so far as it is genuine thinking, might best be conceived of as black thought. All researchers, insofar as they are genuinely critical in their thinking, aspire to black studies. Blackness is theory itself, anti-blackness, the resistance to theory. (p. 196-8).

The antagonism between Blacks and the world is a problem of vision: the presence of my body "evidence" (Fanon), or "flesh" (Spillers). Fanon endeavoured to educate on the issue of Black presence: that it is psychically a much more traumatic fear than the fear of, in his example, the Jewish takeover of the banking system because civil society is afraid, and fear has a grounding wire in concepts. South African civil society is fundamentally terrorised by Blacks. There is no grounding wire which could articulate what it is that South African civil society fears or hates (negrophobia) nor in fact what it loves (Negrophilia). If we think through Blackness that way, what we are able to see

is that there is a real conflict between Asian people (even Asians in South Africa) and Europeans (even Europeans in South Africa), it is a conflict, though often violent and expensive, with a thinkable knowable resolution in the world. It is not an antagonism of irreconcilability; however much blood is shed at any moment, it remains at the level of a conflict, it is not so much an antagonism in the way that Blackness stands in an antagonistic zero-sum relation to the world and its Human. Here one needs to particularly observe the theoretical status of social death as a concept in relation to slavery as it is the one to distinguish Black racial slavery from all other forms of slavism and subjection. The political significance of racial difference and structures of power needs a somatechnic and paradigmatic treatment due to the persistence of these terms of differentiation and their technologies of force (Pugliese & Stryker, 2009). We need to view racial difference as a political signifier, a moment of power deployed for the denomination of modes of Being Human — the very structure of the concept 'Humanity' now woven into our worlding taxonomy, discourse, and vocabulary. How it is consistently the case that the limit of that which should never happen to the Human being continues to delineate the existence of those whose bodies are Blackened under modernity to signify that which seems to slip all that should be understandable under Enlightenment's notion of the Human, it's onto-epistemological chassis, particularly historicity and universality.

The predominant historiographical treatment of African slavery (albeit methodologically varied and contextually specific), struggles more or less collectively, sometimes silently, often unsystematically, with the critical conundrums raised by Blackness as a geographically and temporally "situated," while a thoroughly naturalised term. For wherever it appears, Blackness recollects the tortuous, disavowed historicity of the Human. This is a struggle to grapple with or even to name Blackness as it discursively reveals itself in slavery through a number of deeply imbricated themes: the status of the concept of race, archival dearth, and the authority of writing. And, finally, a beleaguered distinction between Black and white slavery, on the one hand, and, on the other, between the historicity of whiteness and Blackness. If historiography is, as Edouard Glissant perceives, the form proper to the modern, and non-history is the improper form that Blackens dislocation (1992), what is the form or mode capable of

registering the immemorial that makes legible the atemporal slave/Black? At stake in the elaboration of slavery's geographic chronology lies something more than a welter of details. Africa's ignominious history denies the anonymous fever that assures historical recovery as cure. As minor freestanding detail, the story is both mute and brim-full; beyond genre, tradition, definition; beyond history, knowledge; beyond truth (Gossman, 2003). Thus Africa, terra nullius in modern cartography, does not constitute home to the Black. The land of non Being is cordoned off to Blackness, exile from Africa then is fundamentally different from any other diasporic condition, because any other diaspora has actually been dispersed from a place that has geographic sovereign integrity. And Africa, including pre-South Africa in 1652, has never had sovereign integrity since it gained conceptual coherence as Africa (Wilderson, 2010). The continent has always existed in what Loïc Wacquant would call a "carceral continuum: (2001): simply put, the place known as Africa has always been a place of no community and stands in relation to the world as a continent-wide slave estate. That has been, and I argue, still is the global consensus. The sovereign integrity of what feminists might call the "body" doesn't exist for Black South African wxmxn or mxn. What exists for them is an absence of integrity — what Spillers theorises as the "flesh". Spillers (1987) writes:

> I would make a distinction in this case between the "body" and the "flesh" and impose that distinction as the central one between captive and liberated subject positions. In that sense, before the "body", there is the "flesh", that zero degree of social conceptualisation that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse, or the reflexes of iconography. […] a theft of the body - a willful and violent (and unimaginable from this distance) serving of the captive body from its motive will, its active desire. Under these conditions…the female body and the male body become a territory of cultural and political manoeuvre (p. 67).

The cloaks of preconscious identification are only borrowable through disavowed and structural adjustment for the Human performance of the manoeuvres of this carceral continuum and the product is the same: mutilated black flesh.

2.5 Slavery and social death in South Africa across modern time and space

Blackness and African origin become categorical eligibility not just at the level of function for and to slavery, but at the ontological and structural level away from the Human to form the anti-human (Wynter, 1991). This symbolic sealing off of the slave cannot be recovered structurally by history imported or borrowed institutionality in the present. To this end, no 'third worldist' conception of racism or generalised conception of modern racial terror is legitimate in subsuming slavery under the general rubric of colonialism which Wilderson (2020) accounts for as being a rubric of land dispossession vis a vis slavery and its rubric of social death. The above social formations are distinct even if they are overlapping but in the case of modern slavery, cannot be generalised together with them and under the same terms, under the instrumentalisation of Human existence. Modern racial slavery marks the singular permanent excommunication of the Black from the Human being as it reveals "[t]hat structure of gratuitous violence in which a body is rendered as flesh to be accumulated and exchanged'' (Sexton, 2010, p. 33). Accumulation and exchange were extended to varying groups under the South African slave rubric of race, but it is gratuitous violence, natal alienation and generalised dishonour which came to mark particularly African beings as fungible and as the singular and natural beneficiaries of social death. Discussions of racial inequality in South Africa continue along and perpetuate this conceptual inflation locking thought up in a strange and uneasy continuum of tense social and political solidarity. Glaringly, any discussion of slavery in South Africa is confined to the Cape and even there, it is directed, almost always to people identifying as Indian, Malay and their Coloured relations who functioned as a non-African minority by the 1960's and a buffer to the African Black in the official hierarchy of races (Mellet, 2018). The fact of the matter is that slavery in South Africa spans nearly the entire territory from the Western Cape all the way to Mozambique, often overlapping into Namibia and Botswana (Eldredge et al., 1994). That that is not commonplace in South African historical studies must be by design.

Without any doubt, South African studies and African cultural studies generally, suffers a difficulty venturing into the ontological and paradigmatic implications of slavery let

alone its afterlife in the figure of the Black, preferring to remain within and challenge truth claims within the disciplines (see Ross 1983; Warden 1985; Mandela & Castro 1991; Maylam, 2001; Eldredge et al, 1994; Van Onselen, 1996; Dooling, 2008; Gqola, 2010; Mellet, 2018; Ngcukaithobi, 2018; Mabasa, et al, 2021). Thus, it is necessary to make the connection to seemingly presently internal discussions on slavery in small corners of Black Studies in the 'diaspora', to the broader conceptual inflations, slippages and problems faced in articulations and analysis of slavery in the country. On this path is first the acknowledging of the expansion, ethnic, economic, and geographic historical span of slavery in South Africa. The exposition of this history, remapping of South African historiography and literature will suggest that what South Africans thought they knew and understood by South African slave history and modern racial slavery, in particular, has consistently understated its enormity, its profundity not just in terms of its scale and scope, but the paradigm and structure it inaugurates. Southern African intellectual histories and Historiography has yet to uncover the depth, scope, and scale of racial slavery below the Congo. I suggest that we unreservedly abandon the concepts we have used in South African Studies to represent the political subject, in particular that of 1652. The stakes of 1652 are not essentially in its fetishisation or its proper true retelling, but what represents what we are capable of knowing about Blackness long after it has passed. For the moment, we must bring ourselves to think of the Black as structurally synonymous with the slave and existing under Patterson's conception of social death as liminally illuminated by Shell for the South African context. This argument is crucial ala Patterson and reference to his concept of social death by Shell and me in thinking what comes of and 'after' the inaugural encounter (couched as 1652) and indeed what comes after colonialism, apartheid and 1994 via systems sutured by resilient anti-blackness and social death. This argument enables us to think through the non-temporality of what Hartman terms "the afterlife of slavery" (2007, p. 6), its futurity and applicability to 2022. The modern world is ushered in by Black social death before 1652 and Black social death persisted as Apartheid, and it persists under South Africa's post-1994 Rainbow democracy. Thus, South African Studies must excavate its political philosophy, building it again from the figure of the Black. The first implication of this move is the bringing into crisis of the originary fiction of sovereignty and of the nation

state because it is this fiction that creates a conceptual fissure that supposes an identity between the Human and the citizen, which make possible the modern production of Agamben's (1995) "bare life" (p. I). Secondly, it renders available for thought the tautological affirmation that the law is ontologically prior to establishment of its juridical field. Mbembe (2003) discusses the exemplary manifestation of the state of exception at play in the plantation system's very structure consistent through its aftermath of power and terror. As such he describes Atlantic world racial slavery as being among the first instances of bio political experimentation. Furthermore, Hartman's (2007), "afterlife of slavery" (p. 6) draws Africa back into the Atlantic as plantation par excellence, revealing the peculiar "terror formation" that is institutionalised and put in place as the political juridical structure of slavery in the 'New World' which is in crucial ways forged through Africa, and South Africa is by no means an exception.

The ocean of violence that establishes modernity, did so on the racialised slave. Central to Afropessimist theory of Blackness is that every other structural position comes in relation to the slave, the Black who is without consent, sovereignty, nor recognition; and the Black who is fungible, property and violated without boundary or socially accepted tolerance. It is according to Patterson (1982) "a pre-logical violence" (p. 2-5) that remains pre-logical because it has a utility that is more than just establishing the master and slave plantation relation. Its utility is an ontological one, which is to say, the violence that subtends the slave is one which produces knowledge about what it means to Be. Without it or with its undoing the social death of Black flesh and the World would be on the cusp of an epistemological break. The psychic ideas which are infused into the notion of what it means to Be, Human, in the modern era, structured Blackness as the base against which everyone else can know themselves to Be (Wynter, 1991). Blackness as produced by modern slavery then is a necessary abjection from which the preconscious cannot strategize itself away from. It is a concept that cannot be generalised, "It is indexed to slavery and it does not travel'' (Sexton, 2011, p. 21). Therefore, the binary that is drawn between African Blackness and diasporic Blackness in the work of luminary African Studies thinkers is ineffectual for Black people whom the world registers as coterminous with general dishonour, gratuitous violence and natal alienation that is not locating Blackness in any place in the world, not sparing it a distinction so

essential it would revoke Fanon's (1986) skin as "evidence" of Blackness' slave status in the world. The regionalisation or continental peculiarity of Blackness really serves a self-interested pre-modern recovery through history. A history that could never stand if our thought enterprise zoomed in on the singularity of Blackness because Blackness is without history (Brand, 2002).

While it may be challenging to consider this theoretically as it presents somewhat of a theory of everything, what it implies is that Black people's relation to the apparatuses of the nation state and the institutions of civil society is gratuitous violence, so that if it seems that these organs engage other races with varying forms of violence it is actually the case that the generative mechanism of that identical performance of violence do not have an identical structure of violence. What is so crucial about the structure is that it is where determinations of utility are made and under the structure of violence meted out against colonial subject, women, queer bodies, workers, and other subjected forms of being within the Human community and even peripheral members of civil society is in line with their consent. But as Hartman (1997) demonstrates in her elucidating study of slave subjection, there is no such thing as Black consent, it has never been solicited because Blackness has always been coerced with a generous measure of gratuitous violence. For Hartman "Consent presents a 'repressive problematic' for bodies (of thought) marked by a 'racial calculus' of slavery" (Hartman, 1997, p. 207). As a result, instruments of political society only enforce standing agreements and consent from civil society when they mete out violence against members, but those same instruments create an order, make the law, and define its boundaries when they meet the whimsical, nonsensical, and senseless routine violence against the Black everywhere in the world (see black non-distinction at Ukrainian war trains saga 2022). This violence must be spectacular, it must be gratuitous, and it must be repeated and circulated in order for the boundaries of world coherence to hold. There is now a way of suffering that cannot be analogised with other groups present through South African racial slavery and it means that since that with racial slavery there was a "tear in the world" (Brand, 2002, p. 4-5) that made singular to Blackness an entirely different set of questions pertaining to Being and freedom. With this in mind, the progressing question may go something like this, "What does it take to defeat the boundaries placed around our Black political

imaginations?". The answer would be an indeterminate shape out of time and history, in the recesses of creative thought that pays sustained attention to the African, and certainly South African condition of social death since entry into this grave or door of no return.

The allure of writing history as event inspires the repetition of the violence that then defines Blackness as social death. Encounter as violence and as scaffolding for the communicatory life of the very encounter's social life, it's Human, public, interlocutor: white politics of competing empires, world trade in commodities, the inscription of the archive onto emancipation narratives as ""the eventfulness of subjects' triumphs against "evil" and "adversity."" (Barchiesi, 2019, p. 52) via the historian so that encounters organise terror into legible rubrics of the civil Human of sociality, historicity, motivation, kin, and community. Narrative is thereby reachable via Human rubrics and sentimentality is able to lure narrative to reprieve and recovery without having to theorise the im/possibility of interlocution and encounter under the paradigm and its horrors. Thus, only history without encounter and its bond with relationality is antagonistic to the violence of social death via historicism and its instruments. The repudiation of the isomorphic structure of Blackness and slaveness represents resistance to the abyss from which Human thought must be kept, even while the spectre of the plantation remains ominously implied by the imagination of 1652. As a result, the Cape is nowhere other than the halfway house of ancient and modern developments of the Human as Slavery, etches out the Human boundary at Africa's shores with Atlantic and Indian oceanic history

Chapter Three: South African Western Marxism and Black Consciousness: Sisters from a Human Father

In January and February of 1973, mass strikes broke out throughout the city of Durban in the province of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal). This series of strike action followed an intellectual movement which was constituted by the novel confluence of New Left student radicalism, BC, and shop-floor action by African workers. These culminated in what has come to be known as the "Durban Moment", a period which Alex Lichtenstein (2016) notes as having placed the industrial working class at the centre of the challenge to Apartheid. In light of this, in this chapter I argue that Marxism, even its most hailed iteration in South Africa, SAWM has been ineffective in drawing black people nearer to their emancipation and freedom from the world which structures them as Black. That in fact, SAWM has derailed and disarticulated the Black struggle and has been damaging for Black revolutionary thinking. BC, in particular, took up a brand of socialism that resembled the non-Marxist socialism in vogue on the continent in the 1960's (Pillay, 2012). Yet it remained theoretically attached to the Humanism of South African Western Marxism and its existentialist proponents.

My reading of the political and social history of South Africa at the height of SAWM and BC elaborates Stephen Bantu Biko and Richard Turner's (the most influential and prominent figures) philosophical traditions and engagements on the question of Blackness. I interrogate the activism and political thought of SAWM and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) respectively to illuminate how their commitment to existential Humanism and refusal to privilege the condition of Blackness in their assembly of emancipatory questions is ineffective for Black liberation. Here, I focus on the moments of the convergence between SAWM and BC over the question of class vs Blackness, a moment at least in the early 1970's that cannot be adequately brought into view without invoking these fields of thought in sharp discursive opposition. In the sections of this chapter that follow I weave together the history of these two forms of South African emancipatory thought invoking their most influential figures and organisations respectively. Marxist influences from Jean Paul Sartre, the 'New School' and Franz Fanon, the Civil Rights movement and Black Power Movement of the United States, Pan-

Africanism and the Negritude movement of the Caribbean were to influence Biko and BCM thought in South Africa. Most acutely, I zoom in on the influences of Sartre over Turner, and Fanon over Biko to sharpen the friction between existential Marxism and Fanonian BC. Ultimately, I highlight the thread of Humanism uniting these two distinct fields of thought in their "quest for a true humanity" (Biko, 2004, p. 96–108) to collapse their variously held notions of Blackness and avail them to ontological scrutiny.

It is my intention to uncover what have, more importantly, what can these forms of thought offer to Black emancipation or anti-blackness? How does anti-blackness come to suture the affective and ethical solidarity between ideological extremes? How does the conceptual framework, the semantic field, the ethical ground that allows whiteness to do ideological battle-giving coherence of both the resolution and the fight rely on mute and mutilated Black Being? How does this necessary Black evacuation cast up a structural prohibition against whiteness, enabling it to be authorised by the desire and the libidinal economy in relation to the ethical dilemmas of Blackness? I indulge the questions of Being, possibility, and autonomy established under canonical modern enlightenment ontology in relation to the question of Blackness and freedom. The past events and moments touched on here serve the function of grounding my critique of both forms of thought (SAWM and BC) in order to make a set of theoretical arguments indicting SAWM and drawing attention to the silences in BC's thoughts on Blackness. I argue that at stake here is the foregone faith in existing forms of South African thought in relation to Black freedom and its malleability at the level of thought for the health of all other subject positions. I labour to expose the long-standing currency and purchase of SAWM thought as it elaborates the plight of the Black as a challenge of capitalism and not as a challenge of Blackness relating its grounding logic to that of BC's aspirational Humanism.

3.1 A brief history of South African Marxism in the 1970's

Marxism has been a strong and persisting political thought in the South African imaginary and it has been utilised as a theory suturing Black emancipatory dreams. Various iterations of Marxism have swept South African political thought as a compelling theoretical tool for providing an analysis of society and have been informative for how South African

theorists perceive Blackness and imagine a 'good' future society. In South African social historiography and thought, Marxism has gone through several stages taking the form of vanguard Leninism after the turn of the century, SAWM in the 1960's, 70's and 80's, to current African National Congress/South African Communist Party (henceforth ANC/SACP) socialism and its so-called "two-stage revolution" which aspires first to nationalism, then socialism (Lichtenstein, 2016). The adoption of global New Left Marxism to SAWM in South Africa was orchestrated in the 1970s through a critique of South African capitalism. The earlier Liberal view of racial domination as left-over from the Dutch colonial past was crucially broken away from by the likes of Harold Wolpe (1980) an intellectual activist who had been exiled in the UK and Martin Legassick (1974), a Rhodes scholar who obtained his Ph.D. from the USA under Leonard Thompson, the pre-eminent liberal South African scholar. Stanley Trapido, Frederick Johnstone, Shula Marks, Martin Legassick, and Harold Wolpe, all in Britain in the late 1960s, initiated a new elucidation of South African historiography viewed through the lens of Western Marxism. The cohort to follow, also mainly in the United Kingdom by the 1970s, included a few who developed a structuralist analysis of South Africa influenced by the work of Poulantzas, and then a further intersecting scholarship that leaned towards a more empirical reading of community and culture inspired by E. P. Thompson. A third and broader group were graduating from English medium South African universities by the end of the 1970s, often in different disciplines which were all increasingly informed by a Marxist analysis of South African history (Nash, 1999). There have been Black histories of engagements and degrees of adoption of Western Marxism autonomous and independent of this history of South African However this adoption of Marxism, despite its formal or vernacular black appropriations, does not redeem Marxism from its silences in theorising on Blackness.

Consequently, with the idiom of Marxism now being heard in the most varied aspects of the broader South African intellectual and political culture, the distinction was that the broadly shared Western Marxist orientation of this generation of radical historians and trade Unionists broke from the Soviet Marxist orientation which preceded it. Their shared reading of history and political orientation recommended that this Western Marxism was the crucial force of the South African liberation struggle and were broadly critical of the

strategic reliance of the SACP on African nationalism (Pillay, 2012). At the fore of the radical historians' analysis was their "dynamic nature of consciousness", distinguishing them from the Communist historians, who viewed nationalism as imbricated with the consciousness of the African masses (Nash, 1999).

Formations such as the ANC and the SACP, more inclined toward democratic centralism, faced new competition in the terrain of class politics and contestation over participatory democratisation and false consciousness (Pillay, 2012). This critique coming from SAWM was without precedence in the country and it was viewed as radical as it possibly called into question all structures of identity as the result of a resistance without a natural stopping point. Under the segregated system of apartheid that often-prohibited interracial interaction of political concerns, black political organisations were harassed and violently snuffed out. The systemic suppression of black political organisations after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 gave amplified importance to the role to be played by white student politics. At the time, white student political organisations were in a far better place to select and construct their own political and social identities as free citizens under the law, in political circles. The limitation was that they could only do so as conscious and ethical individuals, being it that they "had no living history of struggle" to draw from and no self-evident role for their organisations (Ally, 2010). While that remained the case, intellectual commitment was plausibly tantamount to political activity. Radicalised by their association with the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) in the aftermath of the Sharpeville Massacre, this generation of white students produced many of the prominent figures who challenged liberalism in South Africa. Many of these white students were active both in the intellectual project of South African revisionist historiography and in the social and trade union movement on ground. Identified as the 'historians' they came to be known diversely as radical revisionist, neo-Marxist, Marxist — partly, but not completely, to avoid the provisions of the Suppression of Communism Act. They also acquired the looser description of "the new school" through Frederick Johnstone (1978, 1982), just as their contesting discourse to liberalism came to be overtaken by political activity resulting in arrests, bans, and murders.

It is not easy to think of these historians as comprising a single generation based on the perspective of their discipline and given their differences in theoretical background and approach (Bozzoli & Delius, 1990). But one among this generation is still acknowledged by veterans of NUSAS and stalwarts of the trade union movement for his influence and contribution in thought and praxis: Rick Turner (*Two Trade Unionists*, 1987, p. 66; Webster, 1984 & 1993). Though there is no evident sign of his deep influence amongst the historians themselves, New Marxist historiography would have already been well articulated by the 1970s upon Turner's settlement in Natal, yet the continuities between the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the historians can hardly be brought into view without describing the reliance of both on the philosophical premises laid down and theorised in Turner's work and activism. Additionally, Turner was also the one to most prominently engage in a tussle with BC with his alleged friend Biko, BC's main interlocutor, an engagement animated by Turner's commitment to existentialism as opposed to the more Thomsonian social history Marxism.

South African radical philosopher and socialist Humanist, Rick Turner (1941–1978), is the most eminent scholar of Marxist Existentialism in the South African academy and his engagements with BC on this basis are crucial to the intellectual/political mix that births one of the most significant freedom movements of South African history and to my argument against Humanism. Turner is remembered for being influential in intellectual circles of the English medium University in South Africa, and an important figure in the workers strikes of 1973's anti-apartheid political conjuncture known as the "Durban Moment". Turner taught politics at the University of Natal as a young intellectual in a space that allowed him relative independence in the exercise of his non-sectarian radicalism and anti-authoritarianism at the height of apartheid, as neither a communist, nor a Trotskyist in a climate of socialists who were either or both. In 1966 he moved to the University of Cape Town where he became the Sartrean attraction. As a supposed friend of Biko, Turner also represents a small fringe of white intellectuals who were receptive to BC, which, combined with his commitment to participatory democracy and "workers' control" (Lichtenstein, 2016) under his vision of radical pedagogy, he supported the Black working class's mobilisation to birth the South African trade union movement.

Turner is perhaps the character who best embodies the peculiarities that characterise the Western Marxism that took root in South Africa during the 1970s. He greatly influenced the formation and organisation of the trade movements imagined to have contested power around the 'Durban Moment' and this relationship between activism and intellectual work continued to enhance the political work of democratic movements such as the United Democratic Front (UDF) well into the 1980's and 1990's. Turner himself was averse to the political party and saw it as a way for policy making power to be moved away from mass membership and into the hands of a power group which is the political party (Hudson, 2013). In his critique of "Dialectical Reason", Turner argues his non-essentialism via his formulation of the process of socialisation through which the profit motive comes to hold its common-sensical weight, with the political ramifications of inhibiting forms of social expression, which is to say the essentialisation of Human processes for the limiting of individual autonomy. According to Turner, this is the point at which the Human loses its capacity to evaluate itself, more than that, to forge itself according to its own ways. At base, this is the Sartrean theme of transcendence in existentialism which prescribes the autonomy of one to stand at a distance from socially prescribed and approved roles, to assess them and potentially exceed them. Upon losing this capacity, Humans lose the essence of what it means to be Human and this is the theoretical ground upon which I begin my critique of existential Marxism's ontology of the Human against its critique of Capitalist Human models of consumption, from Sartre (his engagements with Fanon) to Turner (and his engagements with Biko).

3.2 From Sartre and Fanon to Turner and Biko

Turner's philosophical influence came from Jean Paul Sartre and 1960's France where he studied at the Sorbonne Universitè specialising in Sartre and Existentialism even while he himself trained in the philosophic tradition of empiricism. The Politics in Paris at the time were undergoing a shift from a vague kind of liberalism towards a libertarian New Left Marxism, with influences of existential ideas of freedom and responsibility. This was not the cloth of the English-medium academy of South Africa (with no interest in continental philosophy) to which he would return, nor the adjacent Afrikaans-medium academy

(averse to political radicalism and anti-apartheid activists with its liberal and Leninist mix). Turner became very involved with NUSAS, to be outlined in the chapter as a radicalised movement of white university students, and still figures as a kind of intellectual mentor to NUSAS in the 1970s. As a teacher, he drew on the Socratic method and introduced ideas of the New Left, Paulo Freire, and Ivan Illich, promoting black trade union organisations through training projects mixing unionists, ex-NUSAS students and the Christian left. These particular strata of South Africans were to be the fodder that would give life to SAWM's revolution of a liberated and empowered working class.

Turner's book, *The Eye of the Needle* (1972), was a manifesto for participatory democratic socialism echoing the radical culture of the sixties — New Left egalitarian socialism, grounded in existential values of freedom and responsibility, democracy and his thought and activities. A work of South African political philosophy, it proposed a politics grounded in 'utopian thinking' and resistance outside the Leninist, Black nationalists, and BC traditions. His view was that "the trade union is the means by which workers can combine to exercise some power over their destinies." (Turner, 1972). Eddie Webster, Institute for Industrial Education fellow (IIE, a group initiated by Turner) has termed Turner's method a "combination of a radical vision with a strategy of reform" (1986). William Hemingway Keniston, on the contrary, views Turner's utopianism and radical democratic thought as a "firm advocate of socialism rooted in [personal] autonomy and small-scale democracy," (Keniston, 2010, p. 5). Turner's line of thought stems distinctly from two trajectories of the time: mainstream South African political science preoccupied with reformism and Apartheid's discriminatory political institutions and the traditional left influenced by the South African Communist Party, which provided a stern quantitative critique of capital. In a piece entitled "The Relevance of Contemporary Radical Thought" (1971) Turner wrote: "the "Old Left" criticised capitalism largely on the grounds that it leads to an unfair distribution of wealth and an inefficient use of productive resources. On the whole, it accepted the capitalist human model of fulfilment through the consumption and possession of material goods" (1971, p. 76). Turner was more interested in a liberated society concerned with more than the distribution of goods but also the changing of values and life forms with a particular focus on political community and work relations. His view was that 1) work relations aught be the channel for the expression of Human capacities

and creativity and not merely a means to material goods, and 2) that political community aught be constituted by individuals taking pleasure in the activities of fellow individual citizens as opposed to using others as instruments for their own advancement (Turner, 1980). On this question, he is influenced by Sartre, Herbert Marcuse, Karl Marx, and Jean Jacques Rousseau, specifically in his questioning of the nature of institutions of social life. 'Common-sense thinking' (the widespread acceptance of various social institutions of modern life as unalterable and permanent) is revealed as the problem in his analysis of the erasure of social institutions which had once been taken for granted, such as slavery. Turner warned of holding such an attitude to standing institutions with his major focus on the 'common sense' of private ownership of the means of production, racial domination, and the education system (Turner, 1980). He writes that "Dominant values are internalised through forms of discipline [...] and through varieties of social interaction; as a result, both dominated and dominator come to accept the system and their roles within it." (Turner, 1980). This is how he attempted to give a theoretical account of South African society under apartheid in an effort to denaturalise race and its categories as justification and norm. As an ethical argument against racial capital, Turner delinks race from Blackness in an attempt to mute its structural significance and reduces it to a third term in the South African antagonism so as to make headway in an appeal for a common Human unjustly exploited.

Turner's major innovation and contribution to socialist political culture was in a kind of theoretical forthrightness (Nash, 1999; Keniston, 2010). Turner's work thus reveals most clearly the precise character of the course of assimilation of Western Marxist ideas in South Africa and allows us to grapple with the role of trade unions and the historians in that process. In the major historiography of the 1970s this continuity is clearest in what Andrew Nash (1999) has expressed as the "Western Marxist point of view of analysis" (p. 72). The radical challenge depended, for its coherence, on a sharp distinction between two methodological paradigms (liberal and radical) and the individual historian was faced with this choice. Towards the conveyance of this contrast, it was essential to assume for the historian a point of view fundamentally external to the historical process and only related to it through the individual's ethical choice. The radical challenge rested principally on an unusual way of doing methodology — a belief in the significant role of the paradigm. As

such many of the voices I introduce as critiques of SAWM are important to recognising the state and purchase of SAWM'S politics according to the academic culture of the time and Marxism's own emphasis on the structure. The paradigmatic argument I pose on the basis of Marxism's analysis of the structure and its existential Humanist paradigm is essential to getting to the root of the ideology as well as its expressions.

3.2.1 Turner's vision of a good society

Underwriting Turner's politics is a specific philosophical existential ideal of autonomy – "the facilitation of opportunities for individuals to run their own lives in a context of maximum individual freedom" (Lichtenstein, 2016, p. 6). His essential problem is the granting of maximum individual power over the self without that power extending over the autonomy of the other. Freedom, for Turner, is more than the absence of intervention from the state; it is freedom from Human created social confinement bleeding over from an individuals' "free" ways. Sartre (1991), explores this idea at length drawing from Marx, who points to the illusion concocted by capitalism to make all believe that because they are not directly inhibited by social forces then they are free: "Thus, in imagination, individuals seem freer under the dominance of the bourgeoisie than before, because their conditions of life seem accidental: in reality, of course, they are less free, because they are more subject to the violence of things" (Marx, 1970, p. 84).

Like Marx and Sartre, Turner understood the market to be a historically developed social institution distributing coercion and freedom in a decidedly unequal way through the consent of individuals: "the limitations imposed on the capitalist by a slump cannot be meaningful compared with the limits placed on the workers' freedom of action when they are unemployed" (Turner, 1980, p. 52-53). However, Turner's philosophical ideas face the rejoinder of being antiquated in their claim that the only feasible future is one governed by the limited democracy characteristic of the advanced industrial states in a global context which is determined by market forces (Keniston, 2010). He refutes this criticism via his methodology of contesting the 'common sense' idea (Turner, 1980,). For Turner (1980), the ideal social system for the satisfaction of Human needs must be "one that 1) enables individuals to have maximum control over their social and material environment, and 2) encourages them to interact creatively with other people" (p. 34). Furthermore, he

supposes that the set of social structures that made and propelled the Apartheid system of South Africa victimised both whites and blacks, the resolve to which was rearranged terms of power as Turner (1980) wrote: “a situation in which merely removing apartheid brakes on mobility and ending racial discrimination will not fundamentally alter the position of the black people of South Africa. A real change can be brought about only by a fundamental redistribution of wealth and power” (p. 76).

On the other hand, SAWM positioned itself theoretically as finally engaging the knot of class and race and even in the face of critique from BC which emphasised Blackness and questioned the relevance of white intellectuals and liberals in black people’s struggles. BC’s steadfast criticism of Marxists and liberals resulted in a shifting of the debates within white radical circles to a point where the central intellectual claim of SAWM was the identification of the Apartheid state as being a “racial capitalist” state. This was, according to Ally (2008), the way that Marxism, “recoded the role of race, firmly enmeshing it with the materialism of class” (p. 175). They formed a closer link between social theory and political practice, what Ari Sitas (1998) reflected on as being the authentically indigenous hybrids of the struggle years, where intellectual formation was being developed outside the disciplines of the academy to develop a social discourse with what Sitas would come to view as both a “normative” and “political foundation” (2017, p. 18). This innovation would also be the hobble of SAWM because it is silent on the figure of the Black/slave, a structural positionality which confounded Marx’s own analysis of capital (Marx, 1976).

3.2.2 Mapping Black Consciousness thought

The core of BC’s communiqué (to follow in this chapter) could not be elaborated within Marxist conception of labour power or even liberal conceptions of rights for that matter. BC’s communique is dispersed through a range of gratuitous violations indexical of a structure of its capacity to lay claim to these concepts; to mediating objects and not subjects under this structure. It cathected itself in the conditions of possibility elaborated by “violence too comprehensive to comprehend: violence without analogy, violence so totalising it prevents the closure of bodily schema” (Wilderson, 2014, p. 200). The Black’s only assembly of questions is, according to Biko, characterised by unnamed objects fighting for the very status of subjectivity. This is what made these questions too terrifying

for white radical Marxists and white liberals to withstand, what BC thought was beginning to elaborate was a tearing down of the gates. South African civil society writ large, remained genuinely terrified of a Black liberation project because it threatened, in Marriott's (2000) formulation, the stabilising calm that fashions selfhood for non-black people. In the South African political economy, there are no rational explanations for the boundless play of violence undertaken by the Apartheid state even beyond the factory or the mine, none that would make either economic or political sense; but in South African libidinal economy, there are no forms of violence so excessive that they would be considered too evil to visit upon the Black.

BCM's Stephen Bantu Biko was a South African intellectual who attended the Durban Medical School at the University of Natal Non-European section. He was excluded from the school in 1972 due to his engagements with the greater BCM and banned to his hometown and district of King William's Town by the Apartheid government in 1973. He founded the South African Students Organisation (SASO) after orchestrating the beginning of a breakaway of black students from NUSAS in Grahamstown 1968. He started publishing articles titled "I Write What I Like'' under the pseudonym Frank Talk in the SASO newsletter, articles which have been collated into his BC manifesto and book, *I Write What I Like* (2004). As evidenced by Biko's writings to analyse South Africa, BC took much of its theoretical and analytical tools from the work of Franz Fanon, Léopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire, and Sartre to run a psychoanalytical and existential analytic of Blackness (More, 2017). Fanon, more than others, carries the load of BCM's critique of South African society and is the place where from Biko was capable of reading Marxism and Liberalism in the 1970's. Biko gleaned from Fanon what he refers to as "the philosophy of Black Consciousness" (Biko 1996, p. 92) and himself became known as the father of the BCM.

Perhaps a more sustained deliberation on the paradigm, in a debate with SWAM could have brought about a coherent politics of antagonism in the vein of Fanon's "end of the world". To this end, BC would have needed to undergo an adjustment in its basic assumptive logic. This kind of drive towards Fanon in the structure would have no doubt moved BC further from its pragmatic interpretation of Fanon's disalienation ideal. BC

could have found itself, as a result, in a position that more deeply comprehends a reading of Fanon 's work that recognises the tension between the dispossession of the African being to a slave thing, versus Blackness and the dispossession of the colonial subject. As it stood, they were drawn more towards Fanon's symptomatic revelations that the Black colony exists oxymoronically when troubled by the slave dynamic of sub-Sahara because Blacks are essentially dispossessed of being and while they are also dispossessed of labour power and land, this is not their essential dynamic in relation to the world (Wilderson, 2010). This kind of adjustment would have been one that would have allowed the assumptive logic of the movement's philosophy to embrace the abject delinquency implied in Fanon's resolute paradigmatic analysis, beyond his aspirational psychoanalytic ideal of disalienation.

This choice to extract, a predominantly, utilitarian reading of Fanon's "Fact of Blackness", for example, exposes the slippages in BC to elaborate the hydraulics of draconian state terror in the 70's. However, there is no understanding from this distance what measures of censorship and pressure came from the terrorising state to inhibit such a denouncement; being that one was hamstrung to even call for the end of the evil that was Apartheid thereby leaving intellectual activism with only nuanced allegory and slight. More than that, the expediency of organising, mobilising, and forming coalitions during Apartheid were great and the above provides reason to proceed with admiration for the philosophical work of BC, limited, belated and selective as it was. My critique notwithstanding, this was a time where privileging pragmatic politics far outstretched the need to understand through strenuous sustained analysis. I proceed then, with what I view as a proper analysis of BC and Biko as a thinker, tracing his philosophical heritage. I therefore locate him within a decisively Africana existential philosopher, as understood mainly by Lewis Gordon and Mobogo More, in order to move BC from featuring exclusively as a social/political movement towards engaging it in the field of thought. As stated by Fawkes:

Black forms of philosophy are legible through a more intertextual and interdisciplinary discursive practice, not the absolutely autonomous, separate and distinct discursive practice of academia (More, 2008). According to Mobogo More, "Africana existential philosophy" articulates the existential questions of liberation and identity "within the

context and framework of the situation of black people" (More, 2008, p. 47). In South Africa this tradition emerges from the very lived experiences of thinkers and is sustained in protest literature, novels, poetry, igwijo, and the autobiographies of South African writers. These varying and dispersant genres are the bedrock of a strong Black philosophical existentialist tradition in South Africa (Mphahlele, 1963). Africana Philosophy, as a term, was coined by American philosophy scholar Lucius Outlaw as an "umbrella" term where under many collections of practices and traditions of African and African derived peoples may congregate. Such a philosophy "addresses problems across a wide range of philosophical and social issues" (Gordon, 1997, p. 6) that preoccupy the Black assembly of questions through imperialism, slavery, colonialism, racism, and resistance. Here the philosophical labour is concerned with emerging questions of Black suffering, selfhood, embodied agency, freedom, racism, bad faith, and liberation: what it means to be Black in the world.

Lewis Gordon observes that Oruka is thinking through this problem of racism faced by black people in the world just as Biko is thinking the reality of Black life under Apartheid. His centering then of the problem of anti-blackness fully situates Biko under the umbrella of the Africana existential philosophical tradition despite the often marginalised status of African and Africana Philosophy (Dladla, 2017). His condition for freedom, a true Humanity subsuming freedom (Biko, 1972), situates BCM thought under the arch of modern Humanism.

According to More (2008) "As a philosopher, Biko's concern was not with theoretical abstractions, but with the concrete and existential struggles which shape human — especially black — existence, what Fanon discussed in chapter five of *Black Skin, White Masks*, 'The Fact of Blackness'" (1986, p. 108). Fanon constitutes the stabilising mind of BC, drawing from both *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, the classic texts by Fanon, Biko grounds the texts of the BC philosophy in South Africa on Fanon. Thus, Fanon's philosophy was very prevalent in the liberation struggles of the BCM and continues to prove quite relevant to the South African instance. Turner and Alan (1986) put their finger on the essence of Fanonian thought's contribution to analysing the antagonistic relation of the African colony: "It was Fanon who had deepened the Hegelian

concept of self-consciousness and in his sharp critique of 'reciprocity,' denied that there is any reciprocity when the relationship of Master and Slave has the additive of color" (Turner and Alan, 1986, p. 38). To the extent that Biko's grounding wire is Fanon, BC philosophy enters an array of discussions of an existential, ontological, and epistemological nature bearing to bare notions of Africana existentialism quite like those developed within Lewis Gordon's (1995 & 1997) work. Central to Biko's writing is influence coming out of the Hegelian dialectic, much more sophisticated under his pragmatic approach and less so in the paradigmatic. Biko's most impactful use of the dialectic may still be found in "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity," where he mounts a poignant critique of liberals and their synthetic thinking that is always in search for a "synthesis" between two extremes under Apartheid. writes:

Under Biko's formulation, "The thesis is in fact a strong white racism and therefore, the antithesis to this must, ipso facto, be a strong solidarity amongst the blacks on whom this white racism seeks to prey" (Biko, 1993, p. 99–100). This is also the point where Biko begins to reject Sartre's thinking, in response to Fanon's similar injunction that black solidarity is by itself insufficient. Biko reads Black solidarity as always and already embedded in the dialectic of negation without the need, even use, of class as a unifier outside of Blackness: "They tell us that the situation is a class struggle, rather than a racial one. Let them go to van Tonder in the Free State and tell him this" (Biko as cited in Sono, 1993, p. 102). Turner's retort to Biko was that BC sets in motion a new dialectic based on an insistence that the only path to change in South Africa is through the affected peoples who have lost their Humanity (Gordon et al., 1996). Biko attempts to transcend a preceding analytical moment in Humanism and offers a new kind of Humanity/Humanism in BC that was placed to usher in a new form of self-consciousness through BC. As an aspirational ideal, Biko's Humanism does not take place under the terms of a Humanism other than the one he disposes off. Humanity, as presence, cannot be based on an anti-humanity, of absence.

While Biko calls into question liberalism, he does not go deep enough to create a crisis for liberal Humanism. In an anti-black world, the Black is structurally positioned beyond Human relations, outside and not merely below or on the margins. If we take Fanon

(1965), Gordon (1995) and Wilderson (2010), the "Black Human," is a contradiction of politically ontological terms, it is an oxymoron. The absence that is Blackness lies with the trouble of recognising that the "register of Black suffering" is itself beyond "the political subject [as] imagined to be dispossessed of citizenship and access to civil society" (Wilderson, 2008, p. 99). This grammar of Black suffering goes beyond the formulations of class analysis coming out of the SACP's formulation and the radicalism of SAWM, which both interpret the political subject as cast in an unethical set of relations due to being dispossessed of labour power. Neither formulation nor analyses of South African society adequately elaborate a grammar of Black suffering. Fanon's philosophy of BC labours towards the possibility of speaking this kind of grammar, nonetheless, this is a criticism that is hung on the perspective and interpretation of Hegelian dialectical thought and Fanon's critique of Sartre. That aside, Biko commits himself to this paradigmatic slippage in his own right as one who has grounded his philosophy in Fanon to do an ontological polemic: "We have to imprison ourselves in the ideal of humanity. Humanity is beyond freedom. To be human is to be more than free. Freedom is subservient to humanity" (Biko, 1972, p. 10). Biko (1996) adds:

> The overall analysis therefore, based on the Hegelian theory of dialectic… is as follows...The thesis is in fact a strong white racism and therefore, the antithesis to this must, ipso facto, be a strong solidarity amongst the blacks on whom this white racism seeks to prey. Out of these two situations we can therefore hope to reach a form of balance — a true humanity (p. 51 & 90).

In this light, Biko aspirationally adjusts absence to presences and elaborates freedom for absence/Blackness as such, and thus elaborates a counter intuitive synthesis of irreconcilable terms under the ontological Fanonian frame he appropriates to underwrite his theory of Being. Scholars reading Fanon in light of slavery such as Warren, Hartman, Sexton, Gordon, Marriott and others argue that the vulnerability of Black life is best understood through a reformulation of Orlando Patterson's theory of slavery as social death as illustrated by Shell in the previous chapter. They essentialise Patterson's slavery as a social death constituted essentially by subjection to dishonour, violence, and alienation rather than coerced labour (Patterson, 1982). The relation to Being is set up

antagonistically between the Human and the Black under the philosophy of BC, in a decisive structure of antagonism so that liberation from social death requires a politics of destruction in the service of heretofore unthinkable possibilities within the frameworks of either SAWM or Biko's BCM.

Turner's humanism and Sartrean existential philosophy of society being essentially constituted by individual choices, for example, did not engage the "fact of Blackness" in South Africa quite as rigorously as the rest of his work with trade unions and the lived experience of blacks. More than that, Black life in South Africa was not primarily confronted by the wage but conditioned by white violence/supremacy/dominion. It is to this effect that the corollary sentiment of AZAPO's manifesto is enlightening. In this country, it is one's race that determines one's class and in Fanon's words "You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich" (Fanon, 1965, p. 40). Here, Biko is correct in his identification of the problem of black people advocating a class politics that does not immediately engage race: "…your problems are not solved completely when you alter the economic pattern. You still don't become what you ought to be" (Gerhart, 2008, p. 155). If Biko is to be taken seriously here, even if the best imaginable outcomes had seen some success in the contemporary, which cannot be argued for as South Africa currently holds the record for the highest rates of economic inequality in the world (Naidoo, 2021) not to speak on the decline of participatory democratic practice, black people would remain subsumed by the violence of anti-blackness. That said, it does not seem Biko's own prerequisite to Black emancipation, decolonisation of the mind and its resulting victory giving the world a true Humanity and more Human face, attends to the symbolic order he critiques above as not remedying the structure that positions Blackness antagonistically to the Human face: once again "You still don't become what you ought to be" (Biko in Gerhart interview, 2008, p. 34). Going further, it is my contention that that "be" ought to stand for "emancipation from the Human," highlighting how the limits of Biko's BC are made apparent in the crisis that followed its era so that not even BC conceived of the rupture which brings into sharp focus its contemporary failures in the second wave of decolonial BC under the RhodesMustFall and FeesMustFall movements.

3.3 A Black radical paradigm

Sartre (1995) mentions the concept of "alienated consciousness" when one contends with occupying the position of "the other". In examining this concept, Fanon finds it wanting when applied to the Black who has always only been "the other" and never "the master" in either the real or imaginary world (Fanon, 1967); that is to say its only alterity is whiteness. Sartre's investigation of Humanity holds in disdain the concrete syntheses generated by Western history and does not himself admit the existence of Blackness but refers other races to a third term, only referring to the existence of the term 'Human' who is identical in all of space and time. For Sartre, the body is only composed of living molecules, the Human however is imbued with the power of existence and Humanity is narrowed to this scope (Sartre, 1995a). On the other hand, for Fanon (1986), Humanity is examined as rigid, static, and fixed under terms of "insularity":

> I (black man) move slowly in the world, […] I progress by crawling. And already I am being dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes. I am fixed. Having adjusted their microtomes, they objectively cut away slices of my reality. I am laid bare. I feel, I see in those white faces that it is not a new man who has come in, but a new kind of man, a new genus. Why, it's a Negro! (p. 116).

While Sartre and Fanon hold a long engagement over race, existence and philosophy, Sartre resists an encounter between the Human and the Black as constitutive terms for existence. He takes for granted an essential Human with the potential for existence via the physical body. But the body itself remains unexamined, a prerequisite to existence and as potential for autonomy towards authenticity. Here existentialism does not go far enough to critique the essentialisation and naturalisation of metaphysics and sociality. The intervention of Hortense Spillers on the question of the body and Black flesh breaks open this quiet in thought and will be engaged in-depth in Chapter four. Biko comes to this position via Fanon who comes to it as he rebuts the phenomenological existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodied consciousness. Both Biko and Fanon launch this conclusion off the slave/Black in recognition of the

philosophical distinction between the quality of the black's ontology as opposed to their material varied experience.

The history of BC is elaborated here in relation to SAWM for the purposes of bringing to head Marxist Existential thought with BC. The BCM has over the past 60 years or so faced much criticism for its failures in mobilisation, its unsustainable self-help projects in South African townships over closer alignment with worker struggles and structures and even its inability to analyse the hydraulics of institutions. These failures are at times used to somewhat blame the movement and its thinking for the backlash the movement saw in the late 1970's and 1980's. In my view, much of this criticism seems out of time considering the massive mobilisation against the movement on the part of the state and even the academy at the time. I see the BCM's strategy in this regard as quite an appropriate though limited intervention at a time when the repetition of political formations within the black quarters seemed ineffective and redundant. My view is that the BCM's calculus of critique and a black centric analysis of South Africa was apt and timely. My critique is based on the strength and veracity of that analysis to undress the political ontology of Blackness in South African society and its shortcomings therein to read the structural situation of black people under the terms of slavery, colonialism, and Apartheid. Through an examination of BC philosophy, I make a philosophical critique of BC and its position on Culture, Negritude and Being using Fanon's paradigmatic analysis of the same. In the end, while upholding the validity of the truth claims of BC, I argue that BC did not provide a sustainable and complete empowerment for Blackness nor did its version of emancipatory politics provide for a Human making moment for the Black.

In response to the Humanist tendency to analogise Human suffering, Fanon (1986) retorts, "I am the slave not of the "idea" that others have of me but of my own appearance" (p. 116). Consequently, it is important to frame the phenomenological existential perspective from which Fanon launches this theoretical deployment of the somatic appearance and clarify how it does not engage the metaphysics of black skin nor the lived experience of the Black's being-in-the-world which is reduced to a hermeneutic sign (Lamola, 2018; Fanon [1961],1991; Serequeberhan, 2000). Following on from this existential phenomenological stream Biko (2004) adds: "[b]eing black is not a matter of pigmentation

— being black is a reflection of a mental attitude" (p. 52). This switch by Biko from exteriority to interiority in meaning combines at once "intrasubjective consciousness" and "external institutional impositions on one's self-consciousness", not excluding the external gaze (Lamola, 2018). As a result, the fact of Blackness necessitates only one manoeuvre: the external and internal determinants of one's Blackness. Going back to Sartre's "Other-as-a-look" (1992, p. 364 & 389) in *Being and Nothingness*, Fanon contends that the harmless Human conception of alterity, objectifying and othering through the gaze of the other, dredges up quite different implications when the being is Black encountering a white being. The Black seen through the white gaze has no resistance to their alteration nor reflexive power to self-determine the view of white anti-blackness. Black being observed, branded and thingified, does not articulate or form the being "for-itself" as ens casui su [a being that causes itself] as Sartre's (1992) 'Man' who is "nothing else but that which he makes of himself" (p. 23). In this light, Black African slave-colonial ontology is legible only as quintessential "being-for-others", "being-outside/without-being", and even "being-through-others". Bearing in mind that self-consciousness is crucial to being existentially Human, so that overdetermined from without elaborates a being outside the world of determining beings with the power to ascribe self-pre-reflexive being that situates itself in relation to others, space, and time.

To drive the nail into the heart of hallucinatory Black self-making, Fanon takes up the following quote from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*: "Self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it is only by being acknowledged or recognized" (Hegel as cited in Fanon 1986, p. 168). Recognition, therefore, diminishes under the terms of Fanon's master-slave relation where non-being turns not to the object but to the master who neither projects nor requires recognition from the slave[3]. We are deceived then if we are swept up in the hope that Blackness fell away, is a semiotic sign referring to something else or left in the history of capricious European imaginations as is the opinion of Achille Mbembe in his celebrated *A Critique of Black Reason* (2017). Instead, Blackness forms the social ontology of being Black-African-diasporic in a world which still ascribes Mearleau-Ponty's phenomenon of

[3]This is as opposed to the Hegelian master slave relation where the Other has the independence to turn towards the object position and away from the subject position of the master.

perspective, when concerning the emergence of the black body (1965). Blackness, non-being, the qualia, is an expression of Black ontology as well as a historical materiality. The existentiality of existentialism raises the ontological question, the question of how Blackness figures and lives in an anti-black white supremacist world in denial of Black Humanity to black 'bodies'. To Be, Seinsfrage, (Heidegger) is an expression of being 'ek-sistent' transcendental ('supra-physis') in the world (Heidegger, 1987), yet "standing out from the world" (Heidegger, 1987, p. 17–21) of mere things among things (Fanon, 1986).

This ontological moment of expulsion from world and thingification troubles the possibility of the Black individuated 'body', variously located under the subjectivities of Human culture, to focus on Black structural positionality and emphasises Blackness as a situation that gives form to a structure of relations in which it is presented only as constitutive absence. This clarity of register enables me to deconstruct an epistemological blind spot in many of the ways recuperative thinking conflates absence with presence: hypervisibility with invisibility, mis-recognising representation as real and thus reiterating Black invisibility as constitutive for white civil society. By doing this, even apparently progressive or radical advances are transformed to conservative undertakings. Rather than figuring Blackness as just one position whose claims in the struggle for hegemony are based on dialectics and degrees of difference, or as being just one position among others within the discourse of civil society; but as a structural position which persists in its analysis of the structural exclusion of black people as the basic foundation for the articulation of Human conflicts within its civil society, focusing our deliberations on the Human. At this point, I propose a critique of SAWM's Humanist theorisation of the subject whose assertions within civil society are based on a supposed possession of the self and the rights thereto that are constitutionally opposed to the literal possession of the Black as commodity, fungible as slave. This subject's claim, based on (self) definitions, neither dispensable nor disposable, ultimately amounts to declaring that one is not Black/slave thus barring any such claims for the Black/slave. Thus, what is articulated by the subject as a conflict within the discourse of civil society amounts, for the slave, to a structural antagonism that cannot be articulated within this discourse and can only be resolved by dissolving that discourse along with its modes of understanding and production.

Conceiving Black being as Sartre and therefore Turner does, the being-in-the-world, (Dasein) of black people, could have only occurred under certain terms of what Sartre terms "bad faith". For Turner at least, Blackness cannot merely be a metaphysical problem of 'common sense' pigmentation if he took Biko at all seriously but had to rise to the level of an existentialist–phenomenological construct demanding examination at that level and under those terms. Blackness in the context of the height of Apartheid, as would have been all the time that Turner was conscious, ought to have been the cardinal[4] category in maintaining, justifying, and designing South African Studies as a socio-ontologically delimited field of inquiry and engagement, with questions arising from "the fact" of Black-being-in-the-world. The template of Turner's analysis of South Africa and his argument for existential Marxism is scandalised by a missing meditation on South Africa's immediate Black–white problem emblematic of the context. Questions of relationality, recognition and intersubjectivity are not addressed or resolved under Turner's Sartrean existentialism, thus the Being of the Human and its body are scandalised by the appearance of the Black flesh and its non-Humanness. Fanon poses this opposition to his desire for mutual recognition time and again; recognition remains a relation among and between white people and their junior partners (Fanon as cited in Gibson, 2003, p. 28-29). Fanon took the position that Humanity is tied to relativity in a paradoxical mode of being simultaneously absolute and relative, entangled with Human belonging and cognition; a mode that came out of the Humanism and Enlightenment of colonialism (Fanon, 1967). Sentient beings irresistibly embrace this being, defining themselves automatically with even the hostile terms of thinkers like Hegel and Kant who elaborate Blackness as lacking in will power, childish and as an idle race that lacks civilization and Humanity (Gibson, 2010). Therefore, from the black man's purview, the white man stands in contrast with his own non-being as merely living which implies only physical survival; but the white man exists, which implies a deep involvement with the process of being and becoming. Man is what it means to stand out and apart against and from what merely is and or lives. The condition of the Human is acutely existential and it at the same time constitutes an epistemic-ontological antagonism to an Other whose existence is denied and pre-cursed

[4]From its Latin root cardinalis, which means to form the hinge, here, the 'guiding principle' of any procedure.

by the flesh and not the body. Humanity as raced, racially discriminative, and hegemonic social and epistemic practice (Fanon, 1967) has only one path away from what Sartre views as a gratuitous freedom, towards the solution he terms "authenticity", and that path is anti-blackness. In order to lift, discursively, the discourse of race and racial experience from a biological-metaphysical paradigm to a hermeneutical–phenomenological paradigm, existentialism makes this delineation between living and existing to recover the Human from essential destiny towards freedom, empowerment, autonomy and authentic existence. It is noteworthy that the common thread to the meanings of all these designations of Human social ontology is how whiteness is privileged/privileges whiteness and its assumptive logic, taken for granted and routineised as the norm in an anti-black racialised world. The Human Being, according to Heidegger, is enabled cognitive capacity where existence is facilitated through enabled understanding, or *Verstehen* (Heidegger, 1962, p. 67), while the authentic self-creating person according to Sartre, the "for-itself" person, results from a self-dependent and intentional consciousness (Sartre, 1992, p. 541). However, as Fanon tells us, though the Black be intentional in their own consciousness, the Black is not self-dependent or self-determining in the world that matters. Spillers adds that though the black be sentient, the Black is not body but flesh in a Human world of bodies, thus the phenomenological challenge of authentic existence must address the non-being of the Black as flesh not body.

This "grammar of suffering" (Wilderson, 2011, p. 5) for the Black expresses itself in terms of immediate gratuitous physical violence and concealed by the epistemic puzzle which conceals its politico-ontological nature. It is through posing the question of this puzzle that reveals its impending relevance for South African Studies, especially in attempts to come to grips with the so-called non-racial moment.

Instead of a perpetual celebration of progress in protest, the miracle of 1994 and the dawning of a non-racial era, what needs to be done is a tracing of pessimist permutations. Accordingly, I argue that historical events of the Charterist movements or the class movement have not tampered with the structural position of the Black within civil society. Rather, these moments must be read through the conservative dynamics they unleashed, such as the black codes and the propagation of forced cheap black labour after the class

movement or the inability to escape "the traps of temporariness", even post 1994, that remain a tragedy. There is a lack of a grammar of suffering that highlights how cast outside humanity, history and family Blackness is and how it cannot be grasped in the standard SAWM framework of materialism. This frustration with the limitations of SAWM comes through in South African post-colonial theory, not to argue for South African post-colonial theory, but a frame more adequate to Black political ontology is not its challenge. As such, the focus needs to shift from the possible demands of black people to the capacity for articulating Black demands within civil society's grammar from a position of social and civic death that is the constitutive moment of whiteness and its civil society.

Within this axiom, the Black is presented bluntly as slave, not as a "body" (Sartre) but "flesh" (Spillers), not a "human subject" but a "sentient being". Additionally, she/they/he is situated to discourse in a relation of gratuitous violence, accumulation, fungibility and terror not in a relation of contingent violence, exploitation, alienation, and hegemonic contestation (Patterson, 1982; Spillers, 1987). The implications of this are manifold. Under SAWM, the Black yet again emerges as the 'unthought', reiterated as unthought. Even where the condition given attention and giving credence to SAWM pertains to a specifically Black condition under Apartheid, the figure of the Black is never the target for scrutiny. The figure of the Black is evacuated at the level of thought and structurally adjusted to lowly Humanness in the field of practice and sight as "every attempt to employ the slave in a narrative ultimately resulted in his or her obliteration" (Hartman, 2003, p. 185). This does not only describe the positionality of the Black but marks the constitution of the non-black through the exclusion of the Black through "political ontology". Essentially, it is because of this ontological role that (anti-)blackness is not only the subject of SAWM, but the matrix of all South African Studies.

3.4 White ethical dilemmas: On ontology

The large critical and systemic problem presented so far is that there is a structural incompatibility and irreconcilability in linking the figure of the Black and the figure of the Human. It is my belief that this structural antagonism can be asserted by exploring the ontological irreconcilability between Black death and any form of Human life one

imagines. Grasping the rationale of why there can be no ontological resistance between the Human and the Black, the living, and the dead, illuminates how modern political thought and activism are unavoidably derisory to, and parasitic on, the Black and its issue towards emancipation. Once we are able to understand how SAWM's political thought and action are simultaneously inadequate to, and parasitic on Blackness, then we can see how the "imaginative labour" of white radicalism works inevitably through the same structure of feeling and ensemble of questions as does white supremacy. This is to say that while the people on multi-racial strikes, doing so due to their confrontation by the wage, appear to be affronting white supremacy's front line, their direction towards capital means that their Blackness is mute and that they are in the service of augmenting white radicalism's always already ongoing patrol of a zone more sacred than the streets they march on: the zone of white ethical dilemmas and the zone of civil society.

The nature of the impasse which allows the Black to catalyse white-to-white thought without risking a white-to-Black encounter is not a lack of good faith or the custom of rhetorical discrimination. Nor, even in this case, the imperatives of the profit motive that prevent the hyperbolic circulation of Blackness from destabilising civil society's ontological structure of empathy — even while it cracks and "destabilises previously accepted categories of thought about politics, race, and the early republic" (Dorsey, 2003, p. 355). The key to this structural embargo barring Blackness from the conceptual framework of Human empathy is in the symbolic value of the preservation and reproduction of whiteness as Human. The Black, once she/they/he became an object accumulated in service to the emergence of Human presence is morphed through history into an object to be traded between the dilemmas of Human freedom. In the process of confronting the wage, the Black is only representable as the exploited Human and worker in a conflict with capital but may not appear as an absent being, constituting an antagonism with presence and its only plain of legibility: representation. Unthought and unaddressed, the 'slave' endures as a structuring constituent of the Black. As such the most radical SAWM struggles function under the same embargo, capable at best of converting Black objects to currency for Human dilemmas between the worker and the boss. Just as the security police of Apartheid or the slave raiders during slavery, SAWM, instead of policing the streets, inadvertently polices the agenda for a Black grammar of suffering

which stands as a threat to Human grammar. This was ultimately the effect of SAWM in the Black political space, it worked to manage and police Black boundaries of thinking.

As a charge towards political struggle and social agency, SAWM agitates towards narrative political chronologies of material and historical loss, the loss of labour power, land ownership and unequal distribution of means, and political ideals of restoration and liberation. The Marxist narrative of loss depends on exploitation and alienation as the dual constitutive elements of its grammar of suffering. It shares in modernity's emancipatory political narratives predicated on stories which Humans have the capacity to tell — concerning Human losses in time and in space. And Human political dreams are consequently predicated on the restoration and liberation of their lost time and space. Given this situation, the Black — as an agent of politics — is simultaneously artificially fixed to Human value and mooched for the sustained coherence of Human value. This is to say, the Black can only reflect on politics as an ontologist; or move politically as an activist; or pontificate about politics as a pundit, to the extent that she/they/he is willing to be "structurally adjusted" (Wilderson, 2010). Modernity's Marxist emancipatory discourses and their grammar of suffering exploitation and/or alienation have crowded out the Black grammar of suffering accumulation and fungibility — how the Black may only ponder on, or act politically as a worker, or in other modern emancipatory discourses, as a postcolonial, queer or woman (Human subject positions) — but not as a Black/slave, absent, non-anti-human. And since we can read that the very precondition of Human subjectivity is anti-blackness, this then means that the Black must assume a structurally adjusted position in order to act politically. The political ensemble of questions on origin, society, and agency requires a Human subject. One may attempt at performing an "anthropology of sentiment" (Sexton, 2010, p. 40) on the Black and make a note of how often the black person feels as an occupant of these subject positionalities. Those feelings are important, but they are not essential at the level of ontology nor the level of structure. Those feelings have no capacity to ultimately alter the structure of the Black's relation to the world of modern enlightenment: that being the relation of an accumulated and fungible thing and a whole variety of exploited and alienated Human beings. In other words, none of those feelings are powerful enough to amend the structural relation among the living and the dead; not if the work of those feelings is charged in the service of a project which

seeks to make living out of the dead. The question of Black suffering as a phobogenic designation asks too much of Marxism and is the reason for the overwhelming question of race vs class in the 1970s. Ultimately, BC may have been on the cuff of beginning a politics predicated on a Black grammar of suffering and on the other hand, SAWM structurally adjusted the Black into a politics of exploitation and alienation where the dead are dressed to join the living when Black South African study should insist the living joining the dead.

3.5 Nothingness and infinity: Being's impossibility

Dealing with the problem of 'categories', Fanon distilled its generative power to the operations of white supremacy. He excavates a world divided in two (Fanon, 1963, p. 36) operating in an unreflective dualism that could not question nor achieve its own notion of "good" (Sartre and Elkaïm-Sartre, 1995b, p. 44 & 53). Fanon perceived the vagueness of this spatial and temporal schema while regarding it as the persisting wrangle and struggle of existence: "when he (the black) has fought for Liberty and Justice ... these were always white liberty and white justice; that is, values secreted by his masters' ' (Fanon, 1967, p. 220-221). Therefore, by using the methodology of existentialism, as Gordon claims, Fanon interrogates the universal Human existence and its difference with Black humanity and existence. In talking about the existence of the Black body, he does so in all three registers of his work but when it comes to the paradigmatic, he couples it with "black people's blood": "I wanted to rise, but the disemboweled silence fell back upon me, its wings paralyzed. Without responsibility, straddling 'Nothingness' and 'Infinity', I began to weep" (Fanon, 1967, p. 45). The spectre of nothingness that is presented by Blackness in the field of Being haunts Fanon as he feels condemned to wear flesh masked by whiteness in order to hold any legibility/integrity, leaving him rigid and stagnant stating "I am fixed" (Fanon, 1967, p. 116). Caught in the zone of non-being precisely under the existentialist atmosphere, Fanon is inducted into BC in this precise and unique manner. A manner difficult to disavow as it stands.

In relation to Turner, an existential humanist, he was very receptive to the South African strain of BC as articulated by Biko. He held a similar dialectical view to Biko concerning "no genuine change in South Africa," an outlook that "forced white student activists to reconsider their role in the process of social change." Something which Turner regarded as an invitation to white South Africa. Notwithstanding his critical gaze directed at Apartheid, I argue that even Rick Turner could not imagine or articulate a utopian South Africa without white Humanness privileged and left intact. While Turner agreed with Biko and BC that social change would have to come from blacks, he sought to reserve an important role to be played by whites in addressing the limits of white consciousness as an obstacle. Paradoxically, however, it was towards a class analysis of South African society that Turner directed his students in teaching interactions and not BC, as is pointed out by his colleague Andrew Duminy: "through Sartre he (Turner) approached Marx and, like them, he became convinced that capitalism is by its very nature exploitative and therefore unjust." (Duminy, 1973, p. 5). In his revolutionary description, Turner had very steadfast faith in creation under the terms of Maoism whose leap is to infuse into existence "the creative spirit" (Tao Dong-feng, 2001, p. 22). In this light, Turner replaces authenticity with creativity and asks intellectuals to employ the method of knowledge extraction to recreate "local characteristics of authenticity", with "culture" obtaining its own autonomous status and independent spirit with national liberation (Yang Ming-min, 2005). The power of creation therefore resides entirely and essentially on the side of negativity — and not at all on the side of affirmation. Concomitantly, to invoke such power actually entails an unmitigated refusal of habits of affirmation; affirmation does not name or support, but on the contrary, denies the power of creation. Given the double-bind in which modernity positions Blackness, this is to say that the negativity of the non, in virtue of its immanence with a force of creation, indexes Blackness as a power of non-being, as that which is without need of — and in fact opposed to — reliance on the affirmative. This argument can be used to negotiate a tension between the Afropessimist emphasis on irresolvable negativity and the concern of BC to emphasise a power named by Blackness. While the former's emphasis on negativity extends to habits of affirmation as such, this negativity imminently involves — and thus does not abandon — an insistence on the power of creation. Consequently, the BC concern to speak of the power of

Blackness may be satisfied entirely within the space of negativity, or social death, on which Afropessimism insists. Such satisfaction does not then require recourse to qualifications that would mitigate the negativity of this space, on the contrary, power is immanent to a redoubled negativity, or a negativity toward both being and the affirmation of the possibility of being-otherwise. An insistence on affirmation in relation to Blackness results in the kind of humanist pitfalls inscribed in notions such as Afropolitanism which is, at best, affirmative BC through the back door.

3.6 Consciousness on the outside

In order to expose the identities of South Africans within the binary matrix of the white supremacist paradigm, Biko mobilises the semiological function of BC. For him, BC is located within a fluid semiological notion hung on a fragile balance at each point of Blackness and whiteness identifications. It is thus a term that sheds the light on the identities of all people, all of whom occupy the identity at a point less than the ideal, necessitating the existence of one for the other. In this exercise, Biko does well to bring under critical reflection the formation of whiteness' grounding through his theorisation of Fanon's critique of Hegel and the question of recognition. Fanon elaborates, in his two seminal texts, the argument that white supremacy structures the Black beyond the ethical struggles of the self and the other: beyond the dialectics of recognition. Where this semiotics of opposition is read in the colonial context, it is in the extreme and continually pushed to the extremes of these poles of identity. According to Gordon (1999), the result is a struggle to enter ethico-political relations, ironically to establish the self both as 'self' and 'other.' The not-self-and-not-other is characterised by Fanon as the "zone of nonbeing" (1986, p. 10). The Blackened schema Fanon insists on, below the Hegelian model of dialectics, means that the contradiction of addressing the "lived experience" in order to construct a point of view under BC and interpreting that point of view as no point of view under his paradigmatic analysis, must be acknowledged under the structure of ethical relations. It seems there is then nothing to analyse when the Black is barred from the above discursive semiological opposition.

This highlights how any attempt of the Black to do politics for the purposes of establishing politics casts the Black out of the norm of politics, rendering the Black as a violent illegitimate actor unrecognised under these discursive limits while edifying its discourse. This calls into crisis the very notion of politics and exposes it as one that is parasitic on Black/absence. If civil and political society are to be legitimate, dominant, and potent, then the Black languishes in the pursuit of freedom, beyond politics. However, what Biko did not realise at the time was that even the capacity to narrate and make demands exceeds Blackness whose narrative arch itself does not hold the integrity of a narrative schema beginning with plenitude, then loss, and finally recovery (equilibrium-disequilibrium-equilibrium restored). Thus, the analogy of the oppressed black masses and a child who will grow and make demands is a ruse. The child suffered the withholding of knowledge and the dues of man, and it is this loss or withholding that mitigates the terms of their demand. The Black on the other hand has never enjoyed presence but was always the structural position of absence, so that their demand for presence is not mitigated by a prior place of ontological presence from which demands can be made to restore equilibrium.

What Biko did realise was that the very existence of the Apartheid state and its relation to the black person meant that politics itself was usurped from the black person. As stated by Gordon (2008) “His (Biko) genius included rendering politics black” (p. 87). This is where I part with Gordon’s reading of Biko’s realisation of this state of politics in crisis as Gordon continues to consider Biko’s elucidation of white supremacy in South Africa and its opposition to Blackness as being an opposition to politics. My own reading of Apartheid is that white supremacy is in fact what indeed constitutes politics because Blackness under modernity is the thing against which what we understand as the civic and politics is constructed. It is in fact politics, and not Apartheid in its form in the 60’s and 70’s, that evacuates the Black from the “city walls”. We thus cannot conceive of Biko’s question of the slave and the master along the same terms of Mahmood Mamdani’s formulation of the position of citizenship instead of subject, as one for interrogating white legitimacy in political terms. The slave is not the illegitimately ruled, oppressed and peripheralised within the city, instead the slave is the outside against which the inside can know itself, recalling that the questions of legitimacy based on the ethical already presumes the self/other dialectic. The ‘city’ is only ‘the city’ because the Black is absent.

Biko's (1987) assertion that "In time we shall be in a position to bestow upon South Africa the greatest gift possible—a more human face", (1973, p. 83) had to be made under certain terms of disavowal considering that according to Fanon's paradigmatic analysis, the only means of rupturing these unethical set of relations, unethical through the lens of a self-imminent BC, is through the end of this semiological world as we know it and not its improvement.

Biko makes politics and Blackness identical in the South African Apartheid context because the state declares war on politics. The implications are that the risk of taking part in politics is the risk of being Blackened. More than that, the scope of BC is increased as a political concept because if Blackness is politics, then Blackness holds the potential of decimating an anti-democratic state according to Gordon (2008). Once again, Biko's aspirational elevation of Blackness to the realm of Human questions and civil societal dilemmas within politics, imbues Blackness with a sovereignty and presence that it does not hold as social death. Instead of Blackness making up politics, politics emanates from the making of Blackness. The brutality of slavery, colonialism, the beatings, murders, and incarcerations of Apartheid are not the state waging war on politics but the state making politics on the Black and through Blackness. In essence, the Apartheid State did not break statutes or the law when it terrorised the Black, the Apartheid state made the law on the Black under Apartheid, a law already in place under the juridical order of slavery.

3.7 Structural positionality of the Black

> Just as the Black body is a corpus (or corpse) of fated WHEN (when will I be arrested, when will I be shunned, when will I be a threat), the Black "homeland," and the Black "continent" on which it sits, is a map of fated WHEN "battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave ships, and above all else, above all 'Sho good eatin'" (Fanon, 1967, p. 112)". (Wilderson, 2008, p. 99)

From the tellurian scale of cartography to the corporeal scale of the body, Blackness suffers through a commensurateness of Absence. The manifestations of Black absence that our experiences recognise are Black absence from the political hegemony of the Charterist grammar of suffering, "the ANC/UDF formulation in which the political subject is imagined to be dispossessed of citizenship and access to civil society, to lukewarm—the South African Communist Party's (SACP) formulation in which the political subject is imagined to be dis-possessed of labor power" (Wilderson, 2008, p. 99). Neither formulation ventures up towards what Wilderson calls the Black's grammar of suffering. How, inside these emancipatory political movements, can this grammar have been capable of articulate a political line that is beyond supplemental but essential to a suffering indexed to Blacks; a grammar of suffering in which the subject is a sentient being dispossessed of Being not merely dispossessed of land, rights, or labour power? For Biko, the mere awakening of the Black to their Humanity puts the Black in a place where they are able to articulate their grammar of suffering.

In the acclaimed anthology, Wilderson attempts to provide much needed clarity on the questions of contradictions in Fanon's work in order to properly identify what legacy Biko and thereby BC takes from its intellectual father. He does this using Marx's wage relation and Freud's Oedipal relation to introduce his own relation, the Human relation — a relation underwritten by the slave (Wilderson, 2008). In the case of Fanon, he addresses the three levels of the divided subject beginning with the level of the subject's preconscious interest. These are the aspects of the subject that can be articulated and pronounced by the subject about them-self. This level is almost the opposite of the second level which entails the aspects of the subject's desire or unconscious identifications, which are often in conflict with what appears, is said and known at the first level. Unconscious identifications are never quite as tangible as precocious interest and resolution; neither are they "known" at the time of identification. Fanon starts from the level of unconscious identifications in his quest for psychic disalienation where he tries to uproot a neurosis in the Black that desires "lactification", what he clinically terms, "hallucinatory whitening" (Fanon, 1967, p. 47) writes:

Biko invested heavily in this idea that the Black psyche is the first point of healing: “the first step in the process of disalienation and decolonization is the eradication of Western values...[which] make it difficult for blacks to reverse their position of subservience and dependency.” (Biko as cited in Ranuga, 1986, p. 183). In the above, both Biko and Fanon deal with the first two levels of the divided subject and agree with similar clarity although their texts are not divided to identify one level in a book or chapter. Where they part, and with much controversy among those who desire to use their work respectively, is at the level of the structure and paradigm. Fanon is far more attentive to this level and its implications, in particular, in the realm of political ontology. Biko favours the pragmatic even while he is attentive and aware of the paradigm as espoused by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*.

Fanon, especially in *Black Skin, White Masks*, pays specific attention to the Black subject, particularly their structural positionality in the world and uses it to teach us its bearing on the political paradigm. The level of structural positionality “most profoundly exceeds and anticipates the subject” (Wilderson, 2008, p. 107) implying that one is predetermined and situated in the world even before their arrival into the world; a place literally waits for, “anticipates” one, and envelopes or “exceeds" one by the time they arrive in the world. Under the filial structure for example, that position is gendered as son or daughter, but one may challenge that position upon evolving within the filial, gendered, and often Oedipal paradigm (Fanon, 1967). That means that one can be positioned but assert another identity at the preconscious interest level, or at the level of the unconscious desire for another identity even unknowingly. At the level of structural positionality, one cannot dismantle, in this case, the filial economy that always and already positions one under a sex and gender. The subject is exceeded and anticipated under the Marxist economic paradigm of political economy (Fortunati, 1995). Here also there is no dismantling of the Oedipal paradigm that positions one and uses the filial structure for its demands without subverting and destroying the very thing we understand to be family, community, and State.

As already stated, Fanon unveils a new structural relation that is yet more irreconcilable and essential than the filial and economic paradigm and that is the Human relation. This

relation is more unethical because it subsumes the world in asymmetric power relations based on social death by not only racialising and anticipating us but also throwing the Black outside its farthest margins. The vertical racial structure organises Humanity and distributes value therein, but the Black, although a sentient being like all others, is structured beyond this vertical structure of value distribution and not as oppositional. For Wilderson (2008), "The Black/Human dyad is essential to the Human relation(s), or to relationality as an ensemble of capacities (i.e., Gordon's perspectivity) through which one knows one is among the living. For without the Black, Human relationality would be illegible" (p. 108). Therefore, were the Black to be given even very lowly Human status, then the category Human would cease to have coherence or hold integrity because the Black functions to give the Human legibility in this parasitic and necessary relation. Consequently, the filial structure is unethical because one is overdetermined by their father and his name and subsumed in a system of patriarchy that distributes value according to gender asymmetrically. It is parasitic on the position of the woman and sets them as the other. Similarly, the capitalist relation is unethical because it subsumes the world in unequal economic relations overdetermined by capital and is parasitic on the worker for the class that owns the means of production. It is also parasitic on the worker (Marx's proletariat) and sets them up as the other. Furthermore, the Human relation is unethical because whatever form it takes, filial, capitalist and even when it is able to make less contrary the boundaries of those categories and democratise them, it is necessarily parasitic to the Black and requires the Black as the big other for its coherence.

On the face of things, Biko is driven by two pressing goals, and he is united with Fanon on the first: to achieve disalienation in the hearts and minds of black people by making change at the level of unconscious desire. The second is perhaps more challenging and pressing considering the South African context at the time: mobilising Black people to take over the country by creating change at the level of precocious interests. It is difficult to say, from this distance, whether any of the above objectives took any long-standing roots or had the capacity to save the Black Liberation Movement. What is certain is that it was impossible to save the Black Liberation Movement through the rubric of Human relationality which stands antagonistically to Blackness throughout the long march of modernity.

3.8 Modern ontology and Blackness as presence

Biko introduces BC using Fanon's formulation in *Black Skin White Masks*: "My black consciousness is immanent in its own eyes". Biko was also concerned with this particular work that BC was capable of doing in the psyche of the Black who has internalised a complex of inferiority relative to whiteness, which symbolises presence at every level of civil society, the domestic dynamics overseen by the structure and the corporeal of the Black in South African colonial life. Wilderson's intervention is not at the level of the preconscious remedy of BC in the hearts and minds of those it attempts to draw back towards disalienation or even the analysant on whom it performs a therapeutic function. At that level, Wilderson argues that BC produces a level of insanity when perceived through the paradigm of Black non-being, at best it may make the Black marginally empowered. His broader critique is at the level of the structure using the very Fanon delivering this BC as remedy to a damaged psyche, when he makes the paradigmatic conclusion that my Black being "has no resistance in the eyes of the White man" (Fanon, 1967, p. 110)

This is to say that while my Black consciousness does not perceive itself as lack and is 'immanent' in its own eyes, my black eyes are not the eyes of presence or the gaze that distributes meaning and valuation. Black vision does not have the ontological capacity nor the ontological density as Fanon would put it, to adjust me to a position of presence under the paradigm because to do so would collapse the paradigm's coherence, which at every level of abstraction maintains its integrity, the integrity of the Human (the corporeal, domestic, civic, national) on the production and reproduction of Blackness as non-being. As such, the Black is not merely 'the darker brother' of ontological resistance or a degraded Human but can make no claim to rationality at all (Patterson, 1982). Understood this way, my Negritude and Black Consciousness does not pump life into my empty shell of Blackness that can give me relationality, "It is an unworldly claim upon the world — a leap of faith. Through it I may find a place in heaven (or in hell) but I remain unplaced here on earth" (Wilderson, 2008, p. 111). All that my BC can conjure up is a kind of Black "presence" in my own imagination or within my pre-conscious cultural identity

conception of Blackness, but even my Black "presence" constitutes absence structurally, "for to see a Black is to see the Black, an ontological frieze that waits for a gaze, rather than a living ontology moving with agency in the field of vision" (Wilderson, 2008, p. 98).

Therefore, the rubric of exploitation and alienation (or a grammar of suffering predicated on the intensification of work and the extraction of surplus value) is not up to the task of (a) describing the structure of the antagonism, (b) delineating a proper revolutionary subject, or (c) elaborating a trajectory of institutional iconoclasm comprehensive enough to start "the only thing in the world that's worth the effort of starting: the end of the world, by God!" (Césaire in Fanon 1967, p. 96). This is important because we understand that Black suffering, whether we locate its essence in economic exploitation or in anti-blackness, has a direct impact on how we imagine freedom; and on how we foment revolution (Gordon, 1995). According to Wilderson ``Blackness penetrates three layers of black Absence in the libidinal economy; (an economy that organizes the structure of reality in ways that were too often eschewed by South African Marxists, and Charterists more broadly, in favor of the "verifiable" data of political economy; an economy that in many respects was at the center of Steven Biko's meditations and the foundation of Black Consciousness)" (Wilderson, 2008, p. 97). Like Steve Biko before him, Lewis Gordon takes us back to the serious pitfalls and "limitations [in] excluding the evasive aspects of affect from interpretation of reality" (Gordon, 1995, p. 103). Thinking then from Gordon's ontological schema of Absence and Presence, itself an elaboration and reconstruction of Fanon's ontological arguments in *Black Skin, White Masks,* Wilderson (2008) designates three layers of Black Absence: "subjective, cartographic, and political, through which we might read the cheering that erupted as affective (rather than discursive) symptoms of an ontological "discovery", rather than a living ontology moving with agency in the field of vision. The Black's moment of recognition by the Other is always already "Blackness," upon which "supplements are lavished — American, Caribbean, Xhosa, Zulu, etc. But the supplements are superfluous rather than substantive, they don't unblacken" (Wilderson, 2008, p. 97). Essentially, Blackness destructs presence at every level of seeing Black before it may speak of its own cultural identity interests.

Having been exposed by Biko for the internal hypocrisy of liberalism in South Africa, white politicos were radicalised by BC in the late 1960s as outlined in the previous section. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, white politicos returned to this radicalisation with the resentment implied by the rejection of Biko in his thinking of BC. They attached themselves to trade unions and political organisations such as United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and situated themselves back at the centre of political life under the guise of a "non-racial" class analysis. They, "had returned to...opposition politics with a sense of revenge and vengeance towards the B.C.M." (Marx, 1991, p. 319) and through their access to the instruments of civil society, they ultimately succeeded in snuffing out the movement. They did so without even having to delineate between Biko and BC's compulsion to read Fanon pragmatically rather than theoretically; the most damning aspect of BC's analysis relative to the more disturbing aspects of *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) where Fanon explains Blackness as anti-relational; that is to say, as an impossible subjectivity for Black sentient beings who have "no recognition in the eyes of the Other" (Fanon, 1967, p. 110). Fanon's Black, as this fetishised subject, is used antithetically in BC thought, when his pragmatic aspirations for healing and disalienation work is preferred over his theoretical work on Blackness and the paradigm.

BC's structure of feeling is grounded on Black dispossession and subjection using a discourse that imagines Black dereliction through the rubric of coloniality. What this means is that BC's structure of feeling is elaborated through a grammar of exploitation and alienation as opposed to the structure of feeling which Fanon's theorisation is grounded on: a grammar of slavery, fungibility and accumulation. When it comes to the Black BC is hamstrung in a similar manner to SAWM and Existential Marxism, by the terms under which it contemplates the unethical relations of the world: the subsumption of Black slaves by relations of capital which are exploitation and dispossession. But what Fanon teaches us is that the world is subsumed by the slave relation of fungibility and Black accumulation and that is why it is unethical. If we take Fanon seriously, capital relations of the worker and the capitalist cannot be perceived as an antagonism but a

conflict because if that relation were to be resolved or cease, the world would remain unethical due to the slave relation and therein be subsumed: a relation that sets up an antagonism between the Black and the Human. Here Patterson's lasting corrective that forced labour or work is not a constituent element of slavery but a common place experience of the slave, is crucial because Patterson's theorising enables us to view slavery as more than a historical experience of the Black but as constitutive of Human interaction under a paradigm whose relations it structures. Consequently, Human relationality is so overdetermined by the slave that in the absence of the slave there can be no grounding wire for Human exchange. Following Gordon's notation that where the Human is absent, something is absent, Wilderson (2008) conceives that "humanity can only occur at the place and in the time where the slave is not; but the slave, however, must be present" (p. 104-105) if Humanity is to experience its time and place imbued with coherence. The homologies between Patterson's slave and Gordon's Black, are striking; and they subtend two points fundamental to my argument: (1) that exploitation and alienation is not the essential rubric of suffering for a being who is a "being for the captor"— this rubric must be replaced by accumulation and fungibility; and (2) that it is impossible to disentangle both Blackness and Africanness from the constituent elements of slavery since their emergence and legibility are inextricably bound with the centuries old process through which subjects were turned into objects.

In my analysis of the above, perhaps a BCM with more longevity could have come to a place of thinking through negotiating a "politics of a dead relation" and a revolution of "nothing, absolutely nothing" once the psychoanalytic work of Fanon's desalination had reached its logical conclusion. However, I imagine the expediency of Apartheid required that young black students build a political movement that could be sustained for a living and restore something: "to pump life into his empty shell . . . to infuse him with pride and dignity" (Pityana as cited in Hirschmann 1990, p. 5). Instead, BC in its short span of time resorted to monumentalising the "ego" of a "dead relation". Here, Pityana's quote reflects the Black pride sloganeering of BCM which was an ethos of BCM and other Black Power Movements whose psychological analyses of the world do not contend with the paradigm of white supremacy at the level of understanding.

Perhaps, while white South African progressive politicos and society in general may not have identified the racist world they enjoyed as one constituted by social death, they may have very acutely appreciated its third constitutive element, that of general dishonour and powerlessness. Paterson outlines this constitutive element as such when he points out that slaves are "dishonored in a generalized way . . . due to the origin of his status, the indignity and all-pervasiveness of his indebtedness, his absence of any independent social existence, but most of all because he was without power except through another" (Paterson, 1982, p. 10). It is that last constitutive that I argue brings to bear the awareness of power and explains the ways in which even the most progressive white comrades took advantage of and employed, at best, a misguided effort to restore themselves and community to an ethical place. It is the recognition that the Black experiences an "absence … most of all because he was without power except through another" (Patterson, 1982, p. 10) with that "another", in an anti-black Apartheid context representing the white and non-black person. The trouble for BC is that it radicalised the very "another" that insisted on holding power for the Black without representing the desirable new world of the Black. As interpolators, fully aware of their power and prerogative to do representivity, they insisted on foregrounding the conflict between them and "political society" even in the minds of black movements' thinking towards liberation, at the expense of resolving the antagonism that makes and needs Black in the world.

White English intellectualism could not suffer a politics of Black presence; it was too dangerous in the white mind; it had no rejoinder to the question of race whose response would have had to have some way to address Black loss, a loss that cannot be made conceptually coherent. For black people, every Human dilemma is a figurative metaphor, we fit with great ease into every politics of loss be it women, queer, worker, postcolonial, disability, environmentalism, or landless movements etc. This is precisely why Marxism was so great a defence mechanism for SAWM, it could and does adjust the Black mass in and under the Marxist metaphor of loss. Yet the Black is never captured by any one Human dilemma because so incommunicable is Black loss that it warrants a rupture of Human itself. Without that the Black is always and already coerced within and for the dilemmas of Humans.

The articulation of the being of freedom — the very link between being and freedom — can only be made through Black ontological denial and its status as non-being. This is especially the case when freedom is linked to possibility — possibility itself being locked up with the emergent ontological being — so that possibility itself cannot articulate non-being with 'being' denied even by emergence in order to elaborate the Black condition.

Marxisms' freedom elaborates the gradation of being(s) of freedom, it does not address non-being logically prior to being and therefore prior to the possibility as linked to freedom and its being. It is not that Marxism is silent to the axiomatic operation of modern philosophy's classic concerns such as 'being', 'ontology', 'possibility' and knowledge, their coherence generating grammar for world, it is that Marxisms cannot articulate the essential antagonism of non-being. Without ever articulating that, the very possibility of being is hung on the denial of non-being, Blackness, that which is without the possibility of being free. SAWM had no means to attend to the (Black), the slave, the flesh and even innovative, contextual and critical Marxism, responsive to the contemporary foreclosure of the future (or to the relative negativity therein), remains complicit in anti-blackness. Turner demonstrates this point in his ability to attend to the ways in which conceiving racial capitalism as a matter of power seems to require attention to anti-blackness, a point that he nonetheless evades. To attend to capitalism's violence and give it analytic priority over economic rationality as did traditional South African Marxists, as Turner does, begins to theorise capitalism's constitutive violence — the gratuitous violence of slavery and social death. The slave position perdures in Apartheid capitalism and the power that is enacted in the workerist-owner relation, thus, must be treated as the power to accumulate. Therefore, Marxist emphasis on affirmation, which underwrites historically progressive development, is called into question by the present foreclosure of the future and Turner permits theorisation of the foreclosure of possibility: if the affirmative basis on which progress depends is refused, then the foreclosure of progress into the future ceases to be inexplicable.

Chapter Four: Madam's Tools: The problem of Black gender and Human subjectivity and its challenges to solidarity.

> Let's face it. I am a marked woman, but not everybody knows my name. "Peaches" and "Brown Sugar," "Sapphire" and "Earth Mother," "Aunty," "Granny," God's "Holy Fool," a "Miss Ebony First," or "Black Woman at the Podium": I describe a locus of confounded identities, a meeting ground of investments and privations in the national treasury of rhetorical wealth. My country needs me, and if I were not here, I would have to be invented (Spillers,1987, p. 1).

> Sometimes I woke up, and found her bending over me. At other times she whispered in my ear, as though it were her husband who was speaking to me, and listened to hear what I would answer. If she startled me on such occasion, she would glide stealthily away; and the next morning she would tell me I had been talking in my sleep, and ask who I was talking to. At last, I began to be fearful for my life (Brent, 1973, p. 33 as cited in Spillers, 1987, p 77)

Hortense J Spillers quotes Harriet Jacobs' historic narrative or fantastic dream account of sexual violation under slavery in *Life of a Slave Girl* (1973), in her prolific essay *Mama's Baby Papa's Maybe* (1987). In the essay Spillers addresses the analogy of the master with the jealous mistress/madam as they relate to the slave woman. In this dream or scene, the mistress violently rides the slave woman like an incubus in her sleep as the master does while she wakes. Upon waking to this symmetry, the slave woman arrives at a terrifying relief, "At last," in the realisation that she needed to adjust her coordinating sentiments towards the mistress we had always imagined shares her status as woman in the filial structure under patriarchy. She snapped out of the safety she had conjured to return to the

essential structuring relation of social death, stating "I began to fear for my life" (Brent, 1973, p. 33). Through Jacobs, Spillers begins to deal with the generalised notions of Human gender subjectivity in order to redress it to read the category of Black female gender as a privation altogether apart and without analogy to Human gender categories. Spillers calls into question Being itself, alternative or otherwise, and subjects it to critical scrutiny by splitting the hairs between the universalised term of gender and how it functions when applied to the Black female flesh. I employ Spiller's articulation of Black female genderedness in this chapter to address the specificity of Black gender in general through the Black femme/female, a being, according to Spillers, we may not figure as a body proper but whose figuration languishes in the form of deathly genderbending flesh. To symbolise this negation of the Human proper in relation to the Black, I replace the o and a/e in woma/en with an x to denote the term's non-applicability so that the Human subjectivities of gender reflected through the nouns and figures man and woman read as mxn and wxmxn when Black. Methodologically, this is not the affirmation of gender per se but a signal of non-being, a kind of corrective signal to the universalism that these words intuit[5]. I am thus not using a common-sense or affirmative notion of Blackness as a preconscious political, anthropological, or social identity but as a part of a structuring relation at the level of the paradigm to denote/signify a 0 in being or, in Fanon's famous formulation taken into the realm of gender by Spillers (1987) and Christina Sharpe (2010) and sexuality by Calvin Warren (2017): a universal "zone of non-being" (Fanon, 1986, p. 10).

In the moment that Blackness becomes opposite to Humanity, the ontological thrust of Human subjective identities like gender, disintegrates. Using the work of Hortense Spillers, Christina Sharpe and Calvin Warren as models for the ways that Black intellectual histories track the making of the Black wxmxn, I extrapolate this relational structure to read what I view as a parasitic gratuitous violence. As Sharpe states in an interview with Terrefe (2016) "We can theorize, we can meditate on black suffering, we

[5]The x has been used in redress of the term woman to express a gender expansiveness that disrupts the gender binary 'womxn'. My use of the x in woman to spell wxmxn here is solely for the purpose to entail nonbeing. My use and method is not a challenge to its progressive utility in gender and queer studies to reflect the plasticity of gendered identification.

can experience the violence, we're marked. But we cannot be. . . since the idea of being is foreclosed to us: we're non-being." (Terrefe, 2016). In this chapter I follow Spillers' theoretical provocation to analyse particular moments of South African women's political and intellectual activism in relation to multiracial feminist thought under this anti-black universal field of Being. These moments of activism[6], some of which I am personally steeped in, represent moments to theorise Black gender in South Africa against a mainstream moniker of feminism and the generalised and generalisable Human subjectivity of gender, in order to argue that phallic potentiality as a stabilising force of white supremacy transcends sacred notions of femininity and sexuality when viewed from the position of the Black in the gender sexual drama. I argue that multiracial feminism is bound to the modern conception of the Human which is ontologically distant and externalises Blackness and ultimately that this quiet lends itself to white supremacist flare ups in multiracial feminist solidarity, which demonstrate the essential anti-blackness of these movements even when they are overtly pro-women, queer or self-consciously blacks only. These movements and moments serve as examples in a context wherein I attempt to theorise Black gender in South African political thought as distinct from the metaphysical sketch of "pussies" and "dicks" as they do not rise to the temperature of the essential, and less as case studies in the convention of social science inquiry. I read the master and madam's phallic status as indistinguishable on the psyche and materiality of the flesh so as to understand the un-making of Black gender for the essential making of free female gender and sexuation. Contested as these histories of gender and struggle are, I do not attempt a revision of that history or to verify South African gender historiography. Quite the opposite: what I endeavour toward while utilizing these histories is an examination of their politics and pulse on the question of Blackness, its ontology, structuring condition and issues pertaining to gender and sexuality.

[6]These moments of activism refer to the Woman's March of 1956, FeesMustFall movement of 2015/16 and the 1in9 March at Johannesburg Pride 2012. I am personally steeped in these moments because I was an organising member of (not an office but a voluntary role available to all participants) the FeesMustFall movement at the University of the Witwatersrand and an organising member and editor of the RhodesMustFall book and movement at Oxford University. Additionally, I was very closely affiliated with 1in9 and the post March strategising and galvanising for a separate Pride Movement.

On this path I ask, what is the function of the phallus in the making of gender? What are the implications of indistinguishable phallic power on either side of the Human gender sexuality binary? And ultimately, if the black wxmxn figures as the quintessential victim of sexual violence, what do we make of gender-based violence when the generative force of the violence emanates not from the forms of violence on display but where gender itself is constituted by anti-blackness? Have we truly considered the madam and her tools in the dismantling of the master's house[7]?

4.1 A genderbending 'Queer' intersection for black bodies in the face of all human others

Under a regime not of individual women/wxmxn or organisations' making, black wxmxn are subjected to an essential form of anti-black violence; a violence not hung on shared womanness under the same terms as Human women, but on their Blackness as un-gendered non-being (Spillers, 1987; Sharp, 2016; Douglass, 2016). This violence constructs the nexus of their Blackness and femaleness as the making of their non-being, a non-being unqualified for Human subjectivity thus unrepresentable as 'woman' or as citizen and subject. As a political theoretician interested in Black cultural studies, emancipatory politics, I am a Black radical feminist, critical theorist and intellectual activist who has often been unsettled by what is presented as Black feminist theory and politics in South Africa; or by what I view as it's obvious (deliberate or not) limitations and oversights on the question of Blackness. As evidenced by South African feminism's theoretical output and political/cultural interventions, Blackness is under-scrutinised and yet opened up to people of non-African descent and thus represents all but the white race; at the same time that it is nicodemously brought to bear in the field of vision through the black wxmxn. The most clarifying conception of Blackness under what we are made to believe is Black feminism at its best, is succinctly generalised in the recent book, *Surfacing: On Being Black and Feminist in South Africa,* as:

[7]This refers to Audre Lorde's 1984 book, The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House and functions here with a twist as the instruments and implements of White/Western Feminist thought for emancipation.

> Blackness in this anthology is conceptualised in line with Stuart Hall's emphasis on identification, rather than the state or condition of 'having identities': that is, a dynamic recognition of oneself in the range of possibilities called blackness. The present continuous signalled in being black does not imply a fixed identity. Instead, it gestures towards the provisional standpoints and strategic locations that shape writers' perspectives on freedom, power and justice without essentialising, homogenising or hardening ways of seeing. The need to avoid fixing black feminist ways of seeing becomes clear when we acknowledge the global and regional diversity of black feminisms. Black feminism has accrued meanings that are both wide-ranging and very particular. The histories and the breadth of the category, alongside its many applications, warrant an exploration of terms and the parameters of this anthology. As discussed in the next section, black feminism in the global imaginary is often synonymous with African- American feminist thought. Black and African diasporic writings are usually understood to be writings by those of African descent around the world, but not within Africa (Lewis & Baderoon, 2021).

In this introduction the editors, Desiree Lewis and Gabeba Baderoon, attempt to define South Africa's approach to Black feminism and its lamented marginalisation in the global academy. The Stuart Hall conceptualisation of Blackness here can be thought of contextually as the much-favoured BC Blackness of Steve Biko via Franz Fanon, although not identical with Fanon's paradigmatic Blackness under the same philosophy. Biko asserts that Blackness is "not a matter of pigmentation — being black is a reflection of a mental attitude" (Biko, 1978, p. 48). The political implications of this officially adopted ideological outlook in South Africa are that all groups considered to be disadvantaged under Apartheid may consider themselves, according to themselves, as Black. Thus, anyone but state certified whites can choose to be Black politically without their Being being Black. However, Gordon in *Existentia Africana: Understanding Africana Existential Thought* (2000) calls this out as a perverse and convenient fad "of playing blackness" (p. 87) without ever having to or even being prepared to pay "the costs of anti-blackness on a global scale" (p. 87). The disavowal and bad faith are cringe worthy and

the experience is intuitively awkward for Black people[8], but Blackness in this structural conceptualisation is only appropriate as appropriated/able under the emergence of multiracial feminist discourse in South Africa. Black feminism in South Africa is, as a result, open, attitudinal, and for almost anyone according to the most popular, accomplished, and public feminists along with twenty-two of South Africa's finest "Black feminists" in the acclaimed anthology, *Surfacing: On Being Black and Feminist in South Africa* (2021). The lament expressed by this feminism is that it is side-lined under understandings of global Black feminisms despite their porous and generous orientation, their fixed Black feminist ways of seeing, and their overseas headquarters. There are two things to note here: firstly, it is not explained why responding to fixed forms of power, justice and freedom with fixed Blackness and feminist perspectives is ineffectual other than the overreliance on the unpopularity of the 'essential' and the 'fixed' in recent South African academic lexicon. Secondly it is unclear in the ethical structure of this lament why it is perfectly acceptable to induct women of, for example Asian or Arabic decent, into the corridors of South African Black feminism but not Black wxmxn who "pay the price of anti-blackness on a global scale" because they are no longer based on African soil. What is showing is this asserted Black feminism's green eyes[9], though there are black people with green eyes, stay woke!).

Without a rigorous theory of Black gender, South Africa's Black feminism is a club run by the purse strings of a still white academy locally and internationally at worst, a sisterhood lacking the critical tools of efficacy in analysing the condition of Black wxmxn in South Africa or anywhere else, sadly, without a revolutionary project in the most violently patriarchal country in the world. For many of the feminists properly defined as

[8]The awkwardness is consistently demonstrated on social media and at the site of protest action where white and non-black women take the fore in managing and organising the politics and action. Couched in materiality, the question posed probes at the essential irreconcilability of the two gendered figures. Most recent have been the discussions and subsequent boycotting of the #NationalShutDown movement against gender-based violence by black wxmxn. Retrievable to some extent from the Facebook group, #THETOTALSHUTDOWN: Intersectional Womxn's Movement Against GBV: https://www.facebook.com/groups/449268378857683/

9. A paraphrase of Erykah Badu's song "Green Eyes" from the album "Mama's Gun". The colour green in a reference in the song and here to "the Green-Eyed Monster of jealousy and its unfounded denial.

leading Black feminists under this open/closed rubric, Black feminism functions as a kind of poetic sensibility where the feminist aspect attends to the affective and experiential and the qualifying Black aspect attends to the rainbow nation's transformation recuperative politics which must perform solidarity, unity, and sisterhood. Unfortunately, neither of these aspects are attentive to dismantling the structure which figures the Black wxmxn as oppressed and subjected (feminism's most abject figure).

Firstly, and again, despite gestures towards radical[10] and decolonial feminisms, both of which await the sisterhood's definition as Black, Black feminist South African thought does not unhand progressive White liberal feminism nor even other strands of white-normative feminist theory. For its own possibility and distinction from a dead relation (slavery), white progressive and normative feminist thought has to purge the black wxmxn from its theoretical meditations so as not to risk a white to Black exchange. Using three examples I examine the coerced solidarity of Blackness, the violence of womanhood and the inconsequential gender and sexual positionality of the phallic/white madam. The Woman's March of 1956, FeesMustFall movement of 2015/16 and the One in Nine March at Johannesburg Pride 2012 are deployed to illustrate this necessary anti-black expulsion. This chapter necessarily questions the dullness with which the Humanities and Social Sciences in South Africa have defined and examined gender and Blackness. These limitations, largely due to the silencing and suppression of mostly younger, non-academic self-identifying Black, radical,[11] feminist voices, and an unethical expectation that black's and black wxmxn's truth disavows itself and so may only be accommodated in structurally adjusting Black speech, compelling black wxmxn to adopt a borrowed gender and sexuality ontology. It is important to highlight that the personal textures of this chapter are a reclamation of such 'truth' and tries to push back against the assumptive logic of such institutionality as it provides a small outlet as the terror persists.

[10]The political term radical in South Africa has a long history and varied meanings claimed by a few different popular movements. Raymond Suttner suggests that it has always referred to attending to "the root of something" (2014). It evokes those ideas, organisations and individuals whose response to social ills is holistic, substantial radical/extreme changes. This has in the past been taken up under Marxisms, anarchisms and now feminism.

[11]The term radical is used colloquially by these young women to denote a feminism which is intersectional and organisationally black wxmxn/femmes and gender non-conforming Black people only.

In my near 10-year experience in the South African academy it has taken backbreaking explaining and defence to raise Afropessimist theorising to the frequency of academic thought as though firstly, resonance has no place in argumentation and persuasiveness; and secondly Black thinking is apriori incoherent (which makes me incoherent to myself) to make an argument using the voracity of Black thought its explanatory purchase. The boundaries of South African debates over race, gender, feminism, and Blackness are so narrowly defined by the comfort zones of white progressivism and a non-racial political ethos that, to introduce anything newly thought-provoking requires painstaking over explication and labour with otherwise legible philosophical concepts, to then be straw-manned into context disavowals of Blackness itself. The problem is made worse by the theoretical agnotology in Sabine Broeck's (1999) sense of "deliberate ignorance" (p. 238) through which South Africa's academic discourse has shut itself off from developments in Black thought and Black womxn's theorising that demands, on a global scale, ultimate authority in determining the very meaning of thinking critically. At a time when as never before, theory is Black (Sexton, 2016; Gordon, 2010; Mogorosi, 2021), the intellectual conversation of the settler colony responds by undercutting the demands of theory with the requirement of "historical evidence" which relies on dead, bubbling flesh, and a tragic state of non-being. Anti-blackness as a mobilising psychic historic force is well at work in the South African academy, sustained by evident and spectacular statistics of violence, sexual and otherwise, against black wxmxn: endemic disease, domestic violence, and institutional exclusion to mention but a few, under a paradigm of social death that requires spectacular structural and gratuitous violence. The experiential, epistemological and paradigmatic are thus acutely aligned as anti-black, unethical and the epitome of violence. Together these render the labour of Black wxmxn feminists ineffective, as if Noni Jabavu (1960), Audre Lorde (1983) (1984), Miriam Tlali ([1975]2004) or bell hooks (1982) never wrote or that multiracial ‘sisterhood’ has not already been dispensed with by Black feminists. This chapter pushes past the general dishonour Black intellectual labour is subjected to, a suffering necessitated by what I perceive to be epistemic and institutional harassment constraints within which I am expected to express my thinking, often grounded in my metaphysics - for the purpose of a PhD. In the practice of writing, this

means that key tenets of my analytic (Afropessimism) have to be spelt out to prevent misunderstanding or refusal, the common denial of understanding. Often embedded in the argumentation are the details of the frameworks that I am questioning (liberal multiracial feminism), and then the key targets in those frameworks; in this case, the deployment of "gender" for the purpose of a coalition politics centred on rights thereby making it impossible to write Black gender in ontological and structural terms.

As a Black queer wxmxn failing to reclaim a voice grounded in the structural positionality which informs my experience, I am at pains to balance the labour of the scene/text and the theories I glean from them to give the scene/text legibility. In the vein of Sylvia Wynter's Black, I advocate for the liberal humanist academia's demise even while I am not nearly as optimistic, in the Gramscian sense, of the academy. All the same, I do declare that my theorising is as central to my voice--as arising from a unique structural and ethical positionality—as my narrative. Besides declaring it, I will show it by delving into my own intellectual activist experience and open it up to speak to the fact of being a queer/ed Black womxn in relation to liberal multiracial feminism as it has been painstakingly argued (without being heeded) by generations of Black womxn (Tlali, [1975]2004; Hull et al., 1982; Ngcobo, 1990; Chantiluke et al., 2018). I ultimately draw a link between liberal multiracial feminism's anti-blackness and the slave foundations of South African society which un-gendered slave/Black wxmxn and their performance of gender pansexual non-normativity as other, hyper-sexualised, dirty, and always un/inviolable. In a country wherein the active/physical violence of subjugating 'women' is overwhelmingly borne by black wxmxn within a spatial-temporal cartography that is both physical and metaphorical, and still corresponds to white-supremacist slavery co-ordinates, I move that one should not be able to make a rigorous theoretical deliberation on gender in South Africa without bearing in mind that the Human-Black divide, even in empirical terms. This divide, I argue, makes the structuring of gender parasitic to the Black, making the structure and experiences of all other women and those of Black wxmxn worlds apart. The intended result is to subject the unproblematic universalisation of the concepts "woman" and "man" to white, of colour and black female or male sexed bodies to greater critical scrutiny and make obsolete any stabilising of the gender binary.

4.2 Gendered in Black

Under-examined in South African political thought is precisely this critical suspicion of the presumption that Black wxmxn are women like white women and all others, presenting a profound nexus where the infrastructural crisis of the woman question is concerned. It remains "unthought" (Hartman, 2003) and the lasting implications are that Blackness and those in question for concern, Black wxmxn, remain unthought in a kind of emblematic irony. To think the unthought I use Jacob's scene/dream to think through the incubus (a kind of Pinky Pinky demon[12]) properties of so-called or presumed 'sisters' in the struggle against patriarchy.

The politics of difference in South Africa are lopsided by a theoretical tautology that presumes what Luce Irigarey (1993) formulates as self sameness, a departure from the same with a commitment to forgetting what is not the same in order to reach the same in the genealogy of sexes. White progressive liberal feminism departs from itself, committed to itself in order to return to itself in a circular philosophy of violence. This philosophy is grounded on the very ontology that retains and sustains the figure 'woman' and it is not a philosophy that this feminism can give up because it would have to give up the coherence of the category woman proper, as Being bound to the Human and freedom. Thereby presenting an unresolved thought dilemma for the Black wxmxn who is cast outside Being itself with no passageway to the Human. Where Black gender is not aptly thought as outside of and a category of no resemblance, all of its own, critiques of gender mis-recognise and elide the figure of the Black wxmxn. Black wxmxn, for their use in South African feminist activism, occupy a liminal space of dual invocation as both silenced and presented through the demand for them to perform and structurally adjust themselves out of either absence/negation or presence (their incalculability as supernumerary). As a

12 Pinky Pinky is an urban legend which emerges at the period of democratisation and reconciliation in South Africa (around 1994). This demon is a pink-ish (similar to white people's pink skin) intersexed monster that accosts and sexually violates young black girls, to a lesser degree young black boys, often in school toilets.

result, Black wxmxn make the case for rampant violence as gendered violence but do not begin to make the case for why it is that violence underwrites their condition of Being in a manner that cannot be dis-imbricated from their Blackness. What this means is that at every scale of abstraction Black wxmxn can only ever play a game of 'insider-outsider' without and around the political space accumulating measurable conditional gains for other groups of women, but never gains in the direction of rupturing their structural condition.

Thus, the glaring reality that whites and non-black people of colour, women included, continue gaining more ground as the drivers of intellectual, institutional, juridical, and economic spheres of South African life is overlooked or underplayed as one of those things that will gradually wither away with the proper implementation of now BBBEE and affirmative action policies. What this conceals is that the ruling party or parties and organs of civil society are still playing within the parameters circumscribed by white supremacy or that their every iteration gives white supremacist infrastructure legitimacy. In other words, white supremacy, in order to perpetuate itself in a 'Black country', had to seek out B/black management. The reality of South Africa is sustained by Black anger management where the state and civil society in their anti-blackness behave as if they are attentive to the woes of black people thus pre-empting any rapture that would cause a fissure and disrupt the coordinates of civil society to expose that 28 years after 'freedom', Blackness has not moved an inch in the direction of free Human subjects and that "post-apartheid" was a strategy for white-supremacy to morph, re-legitimise itself, and advance under the guise of transformation, restructuring even decolonisation with minimal opposition. This is becoming more and more clear as the ANC black led government imposes neo-liberal policies that worsen the lives of black people and exponentially benefits white and other people of colour. Feminism, black feminists especially, need to come to terms with this burden of Blackness; with the constitutive violence that structures Being as an essential result of us (black wxmxn) being Blacks in an anti-black white supremacist heteronormative ableist world and not essentially from being biologically female or social women.

4.3 Interracial feminism in South Africa

Post-Apartheid, there has been a growing interest in Women's Studies, politics, and struggle in South Africa. The predominant defining feature of South African society, whether one thinks the world as being structured by economics, culture, or gender, Apartheid and its codified forms of inclusion and exclusion. Post-Apartheid South African political thought thus figures Apartheid prominently almost to the point of erasing its colonial slavery and imperial experiments which underwrite and are themselves Apartheid beyond the simply understood definition of being a system of racial inclusion and exclusion, not social life and social death. For the purposes of thinking Blackness, this liminal focus on Apartheid snuffs discourse on Blackness for a more normative discourse on racialisation rather than ontological difference/deference, so that racialisation/race difference is seen as something that has been/can be/ought to be overcome to arrive at a politics of solidarity in a decolonial shift for the sustenance of the nation. Thinkers such as Mamdani (2020) for example, use the South African non-racial political schema as example par excellence because of how it is able to remain in the terrain of the intellectual and essentially because its grounding antagonism is discrimination on the basis of race and not a more epochal, paradigmatically structural grounding antagonism based on the master slave relation of Fanon (1963) in the post-colony. It is my contention that Gender politics and feminist thought are no different in their critique of patriarchy and state power.

4.3.1 A brief history of FEDSAW and the march of 1956

> "We, the women of South Africa, have come here today. We African women know too well the effect this law has upon our homes, our children. We, who are not African women, know how our sisters suffer. For to us, an insult to African women is an insult to all women.
> * That homes will be broken up when women are arrested under pass laws.
> * That women and young girls will be exposed to humiliation and degradation at

> the hands of pass-searching policemen.
> * That women will lose their right to move freely from one place to another. We, voters and voteless, call upon your government not to issue passes to African women. We shall resist until we have won for our children their fundamental rights of freedom, justice and security." — FEDSAW petition presented to Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom, 9 August 1956.

The most notable and celebrated feminist movement in South African multiracial feminism is the FEDSAW movement which was, in the 1950's, theoretically overly represented by western liberal progressivism (Walker, 1991) and constituted by a negligible number of white women. Ray Alexander formed this organisation which undertook the 20 000 women strong march action in 1956 after many smaller anti-pass law, anti-eviction protest actions undertaken by black wxmxn in homelands and black townships in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Gauteng. During this point in Apartheid, various provincial or regional authorities had been attempting to implement Pass laws and conduct evictions of black wxmxn who worked in the city as street hawkers, washer women, shebeen queens, maids and sex workers. Black wxmxn had been resisting through varying forms of political action and civil disobedience. To be clear, these women were not fighting to be equal to black mxn or men of any other racial group. Quite the opposite: the destabilisation of their traditional families, marriages and familial support systems since white people landed on the shores of this country and their barring from formal markets as workers meant that they were forced to subsist and/or urbanise while barely feeding themselves and their families. Their cause was one to stay alive, what white historians often refer to as a struggle of "bread and butter issues."

It is against this backdrop that Alexander was able to collect 123,000 signatures and membership with the ANC Women's League (ANCWL) being very useful in this project firstly, to give FEDSAW credibility upon the election of its first president, Ida Mntwana, who was then also the president of the ANCWL, leaving Ray the position of secretary. And secondly, injecting the ANC's much needed organisational power in black areas that came with over 40 years of experience in this field. Only a few months before, in August

1956, the ANCWL had marched over 5000 women to the Union Buildings. However, the ANCWL was by no means the founding organisation nor the author of the movement's ideology (Walker, 1991).

The pinnacle of this strand of feminist organising was the 'multiracial' Woman's March of 1956 against the incorporation of black wxmxn into the pass law system[13]. This moment is thought to have been the best expression of women's unity across the racial categories of Apartheid (white, Indian, coloured, and black) and continues to be used to advance the project of coalition politics in the country to date. The South African History Organisation website still reads, "Although the issues that women fought for remained unsolved, the march in 1956 was a victory in its own right" (SAHO, 2014). At the end of Apartheid, this seemingly coherent form of feminist politics was critiqued by black wxmxn as featuring the same racial fissures as the broader South African society if tilted to think through and represent black wxmxn specifically. Mamphela Ramphele, a prominent figure in black wxmxn's politics from the 70's to the 90's, brings to the fore the theme of collaborative multiracial feminism in the struggle steeped in intersecting complexities. What Ramphele (1990) thought was the need "to address unequal power relative to those who were participating, namely, partitions at all levels" (p. 17), not left to interpretation from context to context, which is "particularly relevant to those parts of the world where power differentials form a mesh around *racial* institutions'' (Ramphele, 1990, p. 13) (emphasis mine). Here, Ramphele refers to the solidarity impulse of South African feminism as the collaborative effort in theorising whose inclusivity is "inevitable'' (p. 13) and she poses this question towards the restructuring of South Africa which would later be asked after the much hailed National Women's Coalition launched in 1992: ''[H]ow does one begin to understand the problems faced by black, migrant, poor women living clandestinely in officially single-sex male labour compounds outside an integrated analysis?''(Ramphele, 1990, p. 13). Essentially, what Ramphele is asking is how does one

[13]The pass law system in South Africa has its roots in slavery. When slaves left the households, plantations of their masters or the dungeon they were housed in, they had to carry a pass document to demonstrate that they had permission to move. This system was reinstituted under the era of Apartheid and the passbook comes to be known as the dompas, which all black males above the age of 16 needed to carry at all times to avoid imprisonment, disappearance or death.

begin to understand the question of the Black and how do we begin to think through the set of conditions which constitute the condition of these bodies which do not register under notions of femininity and sisterhood as projected under feminism? At the same time, she is exposing the lacking attention on the movement's assembly of questions even while the official documentation of the movement is radical in its own eyes. As a point of later discussion, Spillers (1987) begins to answer this question by drawing us to the base of the flesh and the filial natal constitution of the state itself in a more compelling theoretical abstraction than Ramphele does.

According to Kathy E. Ferguson (1984), juridico-legal discourse, characteristic of humanist feminism, is necessary when women attempt to gain access to civil resources and power and responds to the actual needs of peoples to defend themselves against the power of those distributing resources and opportunities. In the context of the FEDSAW these humanist feminist juridico-legal aims constituted the core of the movements' agenda. The constitution of FEDSAW stipulates that the movement seeks to "secure equality of opportunity regardless of race, colour or creed," and to "remove social, legal and economic disabilities… (and) protect South African women and children" (as cited in Thipe, 2012). In her Master's thesis, Thuto Thipe (2012) quotes the rights specifically outlined by FEDSAW as being due to all women regardless of their race: "equality of opportunity in employment; equal pay for equal work; equal rights in relation to property, marriage and children; and the removal of all laws and customs that denied women such equality" (p. 52). The prevalence of legal and economic discourse signals the engagement of the feminist movement's action at the Union building in 1956, in the process of feminist political restriction and in modern feminism's quest to establishing women as equal political subjects under the cis-hetero-patriarchal Apartheid regime. This mission seemed to be on a promising course when in the early 1990's Mabandla, one of the ANC negotiators at The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), and then a cabinet minister in Parliament, commented that the first formal participation of all women, black and white, in public life signalled a dramatic leap in the history of South Africa.

If we analyse the coalition of women of all races in South Africa from the Women's March moment of 1956, we are confronted primarily with this power of a patriarchal state to distribute opportunity; but metaphysically, symbolically and aesthetically, the sea of black wxmxn and the very few women of colour and white women at the front invoke Mampele's "unequal power relative to those who were participating," and "this collaborative effort to make it inevitable." (Ramphele, 1990, p. 13). Granted FEDSAW made it a point to foreground black wxmxn in the movement due to their oppression under Apartheid and as the overwhelming majority, but the representation on the big stage and their political communiqué is awkward to say the least, as evidenced by popular images of the disproportionate crowds.

The very black wxmxn they stood in solidarity with would have to return to their over-policed warzones in the decrepit township and Bantustans; over-policed for the security of the white minority community with white women being 'particularly vulnerable' in the presence of blacks, conditioned by violence. Violence was suspended at the march not by the discipline of black wxmxn, for a change, but by the presence of the relatively few white women and white children who as a group are oppressed by patriarchy but nonetheless protected from unmitigated violence by the state as extensions of whiteness and as voting citizens in good standing and members of South African community. Even as a tiny minority of black wxmxn may have been more middle class in 1956 the fact of their non-community and availability to forms of violence unimaginable to non-black people, the fact of their Blackness, and their slavery under Apartheid, remained. So that equal pay for equal work and child care at work demands are made on the very flesh that is supposedly meant to strive towards equality of opportunity in employment; equal pay for equal work; equal rights in relation to property, marriage and children"; and the removal of all laws and customs that denied women such equality under a regime that held no coherence of black wxmxn as women entitled to human rights and dues.

Furthermore, what the collaborative effort makes invisible is the very thing that the naked eye makes evident, specifically where the question of women's liberation is concerned in that moment of the legislative incorporation of black wxmxn in the Apartheid 'pass law'

system. This heinous legislation presents the first moment for mass organisation in the name of South African women. The question of why this legislative act did not concern white women and other women of colour en masse is not resolved but it is answered by the state: they (South African women) are not Black. But the question of why Helen Joseph and Raima Musa in those iconic photographs are holding thousands of petitions at the podium and making speeches is not a personal question but a political and ontological one, which may not be asked politely even as it may bring to the surface a thought space or pause for black wxmxn. The response may be that the obvious calculus of 'unity is power' was being applied although thousands of black wxmxn stood united at the same fort in great numbers, 5000, exclusively just months before. Perhaps the non-black and white women may have been a means of communicating to the state that all women, across the racial divides, were united on the issue, something a properly constituted multiracial crowd could have communicated, all but with less representative efficacy than four woman/wxmxn, (Helen Joseph, Raima Musa, Sophie Williams and Lilian Ngoyi) from all four of the Apartheid racial categories (white, Indian, coloured and black) would have. It still remains to be answered why four 'women' from the racial categories at the front escape the almost exclusively black representation on the ground (the crowd). Finally, a response that attends to the question of Blackness and its possibility for emplotment into political subjectivity, which drives the concern of this section with multiracial feminism and the function of black wxmxn and their issue, might be given. I argue that that response may go as such, in order for the demands for political and legal redress to be made, pertaining the incorporation of black wxmxn into the pass law system, political subjects needed to represent those demands and Human interlocutors are necessary for its conveyance.

The white and non-black women who showed up in solidarity and on the stage of the Union Buildings in 1956 were of a multiracial feminist political orientation represented by progressive movements such as Black Sash in the 1950s to the 1980s, 1950s trade unionist mostly constituted by non-black member and represented less than one percent of all adult Black African wxmxn (SAHO, 2011). No doubt they held the Apartheid government in similar contempt as black people living under it and meant no ill will

towards black wxmxn at this event. However, this is not an ethical examination of their person and intentions, but an elucidation of multiracial politics, specifically a moment considered to be South African feminism at its best (Walker, 1991). Especially while moments of black wxmxn activism such as a similar ANCWL march of about 5000 women over pass laws just months before (27 October 1955) led by the same president, Ida Mntwana, then also president of FEDSAW (Thipe, 2012) are virtually forgotten in feminist national and social significance. In extending my analysis I look to more contemporary moments of solidarity and coalition when concerned with my primary subject, the black wxmxn, with the same distance from particular movements and personalities.

The same essential violence of anti-blackness, a violence not hung on womanness, underwrites coalition politics be it the Women's March of 1956, FeesMustFall, RhodesMustFall intersectional feminism in 2015/16 or the 1 in 9 Pride March of 2012. This violence constructs the nexus of Blackness and genderdness/sexuation as the point of non-being making, the making of a non-being unqualified for Human subjectivity thus unrepresentable as woman writ large. This along with other positions emphasising inclusion and the primacy of the black majority in the organisation's frame of intersectionality, reflect the core issue with a politics confined to the preconscious and not subjected to paradigmatic scrutiny. What results is an intersectional politics without ideology where everyone is considered to suffer in similar ways that are intensified by how many identity groups they can check off as occupying at the intersection of, identity groups assumed to be similarly repressive to all peoples under a particular regime of identity politics. This has seemed fair and rigorously attentive to all "social identity" groups but it in fact does not attend to the paradigmatic question of the Human (Heidegger, 1977) and the flesh (Spillers, 1987). Were it the case that all sentient beings/homo sapiens are Humans and therefore enjoy Human subjectivity similarly then this framework would more than suffice to make black wxmxn represented and representable and resolve the intricate assembly of questions via the laws of said regime if pursued to transform the conditions of all included. Curiously, it has not, and some may attribute this to a failure to implement or follow through on age-old FEDSAW ideals, but that is not its essential

problem though it may be an important one. The true failure in the intersectional framework itself, in true humanist fashion, is that it structurally adjusts the flesh to represent Human subjectivities of the body as 'able', gendered, worker, having a sexuality and a nation. Under the paradigm of lived experience, not structure, this intersectional formulation makes the living out of the dead. Without flattening the intent and aspirations of South African intersectional thinking and taking it at its most considered non-colloquial form and application, intersectionality reaches out to theorising black wxmxn more accurately sociologically and legally, and thus demonstrates the irreconcilability of emplotting white women and black wxmxn as similarly women in the same subjectivity schema as does liberal feminism. Though the most rigorous application ought to produce a sociological/legal theory of gendering Blackness that is different from the gendering schema of all other women, it (Black gender) too is knowable as gender. What is not made known by intersectionality is the generative ideological structure which produces Black gender as dysfunctional in this intersection. That is not to critique intersectionality according to the standards of my paradigmatic emphasis but to critique it by its own central inquiry, its recuperative effort and directive impulse. It seeks, in its most generously considered form, to diagnose the irreconcilability of the structural position of white feminism and Black wxmxnhood and it misses thoroughly diagnosing that structure without exploring the intersecting Human subjectivity identities under the modern paradigm of the Human subject. In their dreams black wxmxn fear for their lives and intersectionality's knowability just does not begin to know what we know beyond emplotment and structural adjustment. The implications of treating a structural problem with the accoutre of identity politics is that the structure precedes and anticipates even the most niche cultural or political identities to set in place a paradigm of structuring antagonisms. Said in the more readily understandable terms of feminism but not conceding to them, filiality (the Modern Human family structure) and its patriarchy (the naturalisation of the filial structure as the ordering episteme of social life) is the structuring antagonism of a gender paradigm that confronts all Human women[14]. But my Black

[14]Here it is important to distinguish various conceptual histories of intersectionality from my critique of its more vernacular deployments politically and those presumptions that Blackness indeed constitutes a social identity category, rather than a structural position.

theoretical lens suggests that woman is not merely a socio-biological construct, but a subjectivity bound to the Human which the Black is not legally inscribed into, nor attitudinally motivated to becoming through coalition activism.

At the time of the march, Johannes Gerhardus Strijdom (Prime Minister in 1956) sought to legislate a mechanism used by South Africa since its conceptual inauguration in the Cape, despite the territory's many names since conquest, that bars all black people, black wxmxn included, from being South African subjects and as forming part of South African community. By introducing a pass law for black woxmxn, the South African state said, as it always had, that black wxmxn are Blacks and should legally exist as such. The pass law system's re-inscription of black wxmxn at this juncture was merely a performance of a standing, widely practised relational structure of power in place since European conquest and South African slavery and settlement. Thereby implementing the structuring relation that was inaugurated at the moment of conquest by slavers and colonists and persists to create a Black condition of repeated conquest (King, 2016). Consequently, white and non-black progressive and anti-Apartheid women retorted that black wxmxn are women too and they, hopefully aspiring the same for all black people, need not be subjected to pass laws but given an opportunity to participate fully in South Africa. Where Blackness' antagonism with legal arrangements such as the pass law or any other plantation law is rooted in South Africa itself as unethical in its very existence under this relation, white and non-black progressive women's issue with the pass laws or any other slave law was that it limited the access of black wxmxn, and hopefully all black people, to South Africa. If we are to think ungenerously, white, and Asian women would have been perturbed at the idea that Mavis[15] cannot sleep over in the servants' quarters or stay past 4pm so that they could work equal jobs with white men or chill some more. This is not merely an asserted reading of the period but one emerging out of reading the protracted struggle of black people against Pass laws since the era of slavery to the end of Apartheid as outlined in Chapter one on "South African Slavery". Whether this antagonism was evident to

[15]A common renaming name for African women without comfortable European/Christian first or second names.

organisers and participants at the time does not matter from this distance, what is important are its implications for black wxmxn and all others not Black.

It bears remarking that this was not the only highly publicised encounter black wxmxn had had with the state on the matter of Pass laws at the time. Moving forward, in Sharpeville 1960 black wxmxn would stand with black mxn led by the Pan-African Congress (PAC) in burning pass books as a condemnation of the unethical structure of South Africa (see Africanist Breakaway debate 1955). Unsurprisingly, there were no non-black and white people, let alone non-black women, to be found, only a crowd of black people with black "Leaders at the Front! "(PAC slogan) to be indiscriminately shot at for over 2 minutes before the world. 200 were gunned down and 69 died; neither were men nor women, but certainly Black. And yet only 4 years before, black wxmxn confronted with the acceleration of the same unethical structure and a sea of them stood before the world led by women figures from all the racial categories of Apartheid, non-blacks included. They were not gathered at police stations in designated black areas, but at the footsteps of power with no casualties resulting. The moment was ripe in global politics for "the time of the woman", and what state legislated the marginalisation of women in as spectacular a fashion as the Apartheid state? The history of that measure, pass laws, as a plantation tool of slavery which became indexal to Blackness, was inconsequential to the expedient demands of Human gender liberation, the most abject figuration of violable vulva had to be recruited for the optimisation of gender political efficacy. Of course, the Apartheid government paid this protest no mind and proceeded with Apartheid Pass laws to all adult blacks. Black wxmxn made no real or imagined gains in this moment beyond propping Lilian Ngoyi up for future ventriloquising in the service of coalition feminist whims, and Black Sash came to prominence as the foremost feminist structure to be recognised, specifically by black wxmxn, and followed for the liberation of all in South Africa. The deployment of gender for the purpose of a coalitional *politics* cantered on rights took root in South African feminist political thought at this time and would thereafter, determine what was 'good feminism' and who were 'good feminists.'

4.4 Fallism: A case of South African feminist and intersectionality politics

What would become the Fallist movement, up until 2015, was a vehicle for the expression of South African liberal feminism. The movement built itself from and off the Decolonial movement and ideas of the post-colonial 1960's. It is self-consciously a Black Consciousness Movement in the vein of the intellectual movement of the 1970's as Ndelu (2017) writes, the Fallist movement elevated Black Consciousness, together with Pan-Africanism and Black Radical Feminism, as pillars that instructed the movement's theory and its praxis. For the first time in South Africa post-1994 student politics, a self-proclaimed blacks-only activist space within institutions of higher learning emerged. In October of 2015 this movement orchestrated a nationwide shut down of all universities to force a conversation on the racially unequal access to higher education in the country and the colonial configuration of educational content and its form in the post-Apartheid era (Mqolomba et al., 2022). As a self-proclaimed Decolonial and BC movement, the fallists barricaded and demarcated blacks-only spaces in the heart of English-speaking universities such as the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the University of Cape Town (UCT), and the University Currently Known as Rhodes (Rhodes University). These spaces served to develop and critically engage a politics emerging out of a resurgent Fanonian school of thought. This began with the engagement of literature coming out of the Civil Rights movement in the United States, Black Marxist, Pan-African and literary Decolonial thought coming out of the Makerere school and the Caribbean, Biko's *I Write What I Like* and BCM literature, and Black Radical Feminism and Queer Studies from the continent and the Black diaspora. Critical to this was an examination of Frank B Wilderson III's *Incognegro* (2007) (his work tethering South Africa to the assembly of black questions of slavery and the mandate to build theory there). *Incognegro* (2007) led us to its foundational texts such as *Black, White, and in Color* (2003) by Hortense Spillers, *Scenes of Subjection* (1997) by Saidiya Hartman and *Shadowboxing* (1999) by Joy James.

Here, in these black-only spaces carved out by fallists in white English universities, we (black fallists activists of the movement) were able to, for the first time since BCM, assert

our desire as black people to speak without the coercive and repressive forces of white physical presence and oversight. We made the space. White academics, students, friends, and spies were momentarily relegated to the periphery of the defining intellectual moment of our time. In retrospect we made no space and took up no time, it was all a blink, a shadow. Still, we relished in this minor victory under slogans about resistance and reimagining. But no sooner than these slogans had been chanted were we required to suspend our thinking for the expedient strategic questions of protest action and negotiations with various university management structures and the South African government. The more male-centric texts characteristic of the Makerere school and continental Pan-Africanism were now being re-canonised as seminal to elaborate our ideological outlook towards decoloniality as part of this male-centric strategy of comrade politics. It was clear, even at the time, that these were yet more impositions of domineering party politics promulgated by the ANC Youth League (ANCYL), the Economic Freedom Fighters Student Command (EFFSC), and to a lesser degree (depending on which university) Pan Africanist Youth Congress (PAYCO). The veil of pragmatics and finite political considerations was drawn to prevent a deeper interrogation of the increasingly aesthetically masculinist performance of our politics and posture of leadership as our public profile.

This will perhaps be the image that will be etched into Fallist history. Here I must say that 'history' is a crucial and far contested terrain in the South African political imaginary. While it has yet to yield a black revolution, it sets the parameters of what that is and its terms of possibilities. Thus far, such an image has largely been a "big man" (Manzi, 2019, p. 98), a once militaristic beret wearing youth, a struggle hero who led the black masses in a unison of slogans about the plight of the black man, and a hero who leaves behind quotes and revolutionary imagery. Like revolutionary politics everywhere else on the continent and perhaps all through the black diaspora, it is a history that relegates the position of the black wxmxn to the unthought at worst, and to help-mate at best, similar to the pushing aside of black wxmxn thinkers by black mxn comrades and their innumerable sexual violations in those black spaces. Black radical feminist comrades were pushed aside to centre male voices and domineering party politics. Sexual violations and

assaults plagued our occupations and 'black universities'[16] and black female assigned people were subjected to name calling and open harassment in this moment of student solidarity. This particular set of circumstances is why the so-called Decolonial movement was reborn in South African universities in the first place. In one sense the original decolonial movement (1960's) was not preoccupied with the gendered dimensions of Blackness, only focusing on liberating the colony, while in another sense its 2.0 was the addressing of those very dimensions. However, in every sense, the Fallist movement was birthed by and through the intellectual labour and agitation of young black wxmxn (Chantiluke et al., 2018).

The fable is that the Fallist movement began with the throwing of faeces at the Rhodes Statue at the University of Cape Town by an archetypal male comrade figure on the 9th of April 2015. This moment seemingly shook up the world and resulted in similar movements against imperial and colonial iconography, greater university access for Blacks and people of colour and for curriculum reform. Allegedly, Assata Shakur, an exile in Cuba from the Black Liberation Army and the Black Panthers, sent a message of encouragement and solidarity to students in Cape Town as sister movements rose up in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Ghana, Palestine, Burma, Boston, New York, Oxford, Cambridge, London, Belgium, and France (Chantiluke et al., 2018). It was an invigorating and exciting moment, but unsurprising considering the protest traditions of South African black youth. However, that moment on the 9th of April, by no means the beginning of the Decolonising students' movement in South Africa, was to mark its demise, black temporality being what it is or is not. That moment was to lay the seeds for the dissipation of the movement and expose the most charged questions surrounding what had purported to be a shining victory for the Black intramural. The Black wxmxn, trans, and queer people who had founded the movement intellectually through disseminating Black radical feminist literature which illuminated the ways in which we were being educated and recruited by and for a system of white supremacist patriarchal heteronormative ableist capitalism, would now

[16] At the time of #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall occupations and protests of 2015, we called our occupied spaces within previously white Universities such as Wits, UCT, the University Currently Known as Rhodes, Black Universities unofficially.

effectively be relegated to become runners and fodder in a movement of their own making (Dlakavu, 2017; Maringira et al., 2022). The old PAC and ANCesque demands for single-minded 'Black first' politics would step in to take over the educational spaces created through Blacks only universities within old white colonial universities (Ramaru, 2018, p. 151-152). The university of Azania within UCT, Solomon Mahlangu House within Wits and others like them would move from reading and thinking through, in the Solomon Mahlangu example, *Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe* (1987), *Scenes of Subjection* (1997), *Call Me Woman* (1985), *Shadow Boxing* (1999) and other Black feminist literature against and with the canonical postcolonial texts, to fighting over the un-Africanness of queerness and radical feminism at all these sites. These were now viewed as appropriations of Western ideals working against the ethos of Decolonisation.

At this point, the founding constituencies of the Fallist movement, Black radical feminists, the queer and trans collectives, were caught up in, and made to constantly defend their right to exist within this now perceptively black cis-gendered, male-dominated space, always fighting off accusations of sowing division in the family (Ndelu, 2017) and ultimately being labelled colonised liberal feminists sent by white colonising forces. It was a devastating blow in activist legitimacy and credentials because in South African liberation politics, rhetoric is key. On both sides, comrades left the protected Black space, if such a thing is not an eternal oxymoron. Male comrades claiming to represent the most radical fringes of the Pan- African leanings became unprepared to be engaged in petty 'gender politics' with femme, queer and trans comrades who were being forced to break away to form their own sub-collectives that focused on their marginalised identities within Blackness (Mavuso, 2017; Xaba, 2017). Such movements and counter protests to the Fallist protests were led under the slogan "This revolution will be intersectional or it will be Bullshit" (Kunene, 2018, p. 3). The Trans/Gender Queer collective protest at the Center for African studies at the University of Cape Town in 2016 (see Ndelu, 2017), being a perfect example of these counter protests.

When the Rhodes statue at UCT was finally removed on the 9th of April 2016 (Chantiluke et al., 2018) under the spotlight brought on by the more than 10 000 people who showed

up to witness its removal, this historic event was also unfortunately part of the Fallist movement's undoing. On that stage the fissures and gendered divisions became visible and well publicised. However, rather than garnering support from non-black liberal feminist quarters, these divisions were used to mount an attack on black wxmxn who remained part of the movement (Ramaru, 2018) and I was among those black wxmxn. We were called the worst of the patriarchal apologists by non-black academic and public feminists because we were giving legitimacy to the misogynist culture of Black politics and thus the Fallist movement. We were thereby dubbed "Patriarchal Princesses"[17] (Nwadeyi, 2016) and our criticism of the Black space we were the founders of, went unheard as the presence of division was used once again, now by non-black women, to mount an attack on black wxmxn. The largely non-black intellectual Left and liberal feminists came out in condemnation of black wxmxn who remained a part of the movement, consequently employing the age-old technologies in South African intellectual activism to evade and destroy black speech and thought just as in the intellectual movements destroyed by white radical and liberal intellectual forces (in chapter four). Black wxmxn persisted as insider-outsider with the political space even if/and when that political space exists only in the imagination of blacks, an imagination formed through the thought and praxis of black 'bodies' identifying as 'women' and queer (Ramaru, 2018). It is clear then that multiracial solidarity moments are the historical referential points still utilised in favour of white liberal feminism and its beneficiaries who are non-black women, and which also set the stage for black wxmxn being insider-outsiders in political spaces.

I began with this contextualisation in a fleeting attempt at recording or revising a record of violence and violation of the Black female gendered flesh. What it should expose is the immediate, visceral experience of violence and violation in perpetuity and without protections. Perhaps this is why while we are interested in and explore the ideas of Black feminism with self-care, preservation and pleasure, we are almost always charged with

[17]South African appropriation of the Disney-esque critique first publicly discussed, according to my knowledge, on a Radio 702 Interview with Lovelyn Nwadeyi on the 29 April 2016 on the #RUReferenceList of rape allegations at the University Currently Known as Rhodes. Accessed:https://twitter.com/Radio702/status/725968288526774272

the desperation of addressing routine gratuitous violence. At every turn of recorded history, black South African wxmxn disrupt the organising and pragmatic political space with an imposition of the question of violence. Often, they have to rethink our politics and patterns to draw attention to it and inject it, not only as philosophy, a postured or performative simulacra, but as always, and immediate, and endless and a possibility (see Mandela, 2014; Gunne, 2012; Ngcobo, 1999; Miller, 1998)

Consistently, the efforts of the state and civil society have been to invisibilise this role of Black wxmxn and where that fails, to demonise their propagation of violence as a means of settling or mobilizing violence as means like a gagged mental patient under and overwritten by something of which they may never speak. The body of work produced by black South African wxmxn on the question is barely accessible, particularly to student activists or civic organisers, while black wxmxn figures are rubbished, criminalised and slut shamed on the most popular forms of literature and media. A striking example being that of Winifred (Winnie) Nomzamo Madikizela Mandela who was a guerrilla general and kept the anti-Apartheid struggle alive by any means necessary while the predictable state incarcerated and killed any predictably male political leader. Her book *491 Days* (2014) belabours an experience of violence unimaginable from this distance and about which mam'Winnie confessed an inability to speak of. On the surface, the torture mam'Winnie faced served, for the Apartheid state, as a means of torture for someone else: Nelson her then husband. This rigid patriarchal frame was, I imagine, how she managed to slip in and out of sight to organise and train a standing guerrilla army throughout the continent. Upon the release of the male political figures from prison in the early 90s, mam'Winnie had exceeded a boundary of the analysis of violence within Black Nationalism and white Liberal Feminism (Gous, 2018)[18]. Black mxn could only appropriate analysis of violence from the perspectives of humanist political, civil contrariness and conflict for the purposes of situating Black politics within the main frame of South African political imagination. Mam'Winnie's practice recognised another kind of violence so intimate as to 'whisper in

[18]"Winnie disobeyed orders from ANC leadership to disband football club": Mbeki 03 April 2018 - 19:58 by Nico Gous https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2018-04-03-winnie-disobeyed-orders- from-anc-leadership-to-disband-football-club-mbeki/ retrieved 24 May 2020

your ear' as a spy or penetrate your captive body at will and with impunity. In the week of her death, many a black male commentator such as in Mondli Makhanya's 2018 article in the City Press[19], wrote of her lasciviousness and her ungovernability as a woman (also see Msimang, 2019).

As such we may find it useful to extend the Du Boisian sociological question of what it means to be a 'problem' (2005), but only within an analysis of the Black intramural space to think about the black wxmxn in particular: where Du Bois elaborates the question for the Black in the extramural white supremacist world that is civil society to think the Black. As a result, we are perpetually wrapped in the problem of theorising and politicising violence while being immersed in it. This, as Jared Saxton (2018) identifies in our political and theoretical orientations as the trouble of "indicating the wetness of water, while submerged in it" (p. 79).

4.5 Reflections of a Patriarchal Princess

In the following poem I wrestle with the loss of my bearing upon resigning faith in the Fallist movement in order to say the things that cannot live in the intellectual and yet which texture the "fact" in the fact of Blackness. I wrote it when I was made to stop for the first time since Rhodes Must Fall Oxford, on a long layover in the Middle East on my way to present a paper at an Existentialism conference in Washington DC. It is a collision and a clearing symbolised by this liminal geographic triad to begin to say a thing about the condition of Black wxmxnhood.

A graph of the supernumerary: Ramblings in Black wxmxn: A poetics

Every 26 seconds, every 26 seconds in South Africa a womxn is raped
As thought our violation marks ticking lateral time itself

[19]Mondli Makhanya "We must not want to be Winnie", 9 April 2018. City Press, retrieved 24 May 2020 https://www.news24.com/citypress/News/mondli-makhanya-we-must-not-want-to-be-winnie-20180409

Two by two, our forced penetration and rupture marks.
Contestable, those facts can't be right, it's every minute.
To speak of it, that would seem far-fetched.
Far-fetched, we are not across the Atlantic, we are home.
What we do know for sure is that a black girl here is more likely to be raped and or killed than to learn how to read or write. What do we ask of the Plantation?
Things must have changed. This is the post of post-apartheid (our "Colonialism of a special type"[20]).
Don't be an alarmist! Alarmist!
Fine, what can we politely speak of? What are the conditions on the ground?
We constitute the poor!?
Black wxmxn constitute the poorest demographic in the country
49% of us live in poverty, under a dollar a day.
We've the highest rates of unemployment, more than 50% unemployed, unemployable
Caught hustling in subsistence by day and the streets by night.
There are some positives! Yeah, for most of us, HIV
Highest HIV infection rates,
Lowest mortality rates
Death by birth, still a plague in Baragwanath.
It's an intimate genocide!
The Madam's tools we'd hoped would break the Master's house
Are pillaging us to death
Delivering us from and to Deathliness
They're repurposed with our Flesh

As evidenced in this thesis, every form of feminist politics we approach seems not only fundamentally anti-black but holds as its foundation the expulsion of our Being down to our flesh, leaving debasement as all that remains to politik. We are trained and experienced

[20]A theory popularised as CST in the 1963 "The Road to South African Freedom: Programme of the South African Communist Party" asserting that the structure of South African economic and social structure essentially reflected the coloniser and the colony even while South Africa was technically independent and not a colony proper.

in the antithesis of solidarity. Once, we imagined we were the Human race and kin in the rainbow nation, then we were anti-Apartheid, then in more radical (in the colloquial sense) and smaller groups. And yet we still cleaved to Black Power, BC, and eventually Afropessimism. At least that's how we set the scale of gradation for radical Black thought in this context.

As far as the movement for these ideas are concerned, we were never anything but structurally adjusted flesh calculable and dressed up as the masses. Sure, we took care of the thinking, the catering, galvanising, the binding of wounds, the mas'ngcwabane (the burial society), the undertakers, the nurses, the tea girls serving and even mistresses; but we were never anything. Nothing but slaves on slaves too wretched even for the oppression olympics of "all women are white and all blacks are men" (Hull, 1982). Black wxmxn were and still are the most abject and degraded beings that ever lived, and though many of us are brave, we still remain the wretched of the earth and the residue at the bottom of the barrel of Human life. We are mostly invisible and unthought, becoming a tough and detestable archetype when encountered. In both states we cannot and will not be heard. Furthermore, no one that matters cares to the extent that they are willing to hear or see us if we had the power of speech and presence.

All the same, this is not an appeal to powers or signification nor is it a manifesto as we long gave up our belief in politics. Neither it is an attempt to count nor give a record of the loss in a narrative arch which seeks equilibrium as Black wxmxn have no previous place of plenitude to recover ourselves from and find such balance. Unlike those who can imagine themselves men while Black or Humans imbued with culture and history, the Black wxmxn of South Africa, even the most conservative traditionalists among us, recognize our culture as often and immemorially repressive. We live by the saying, "wxmxn must and always have held the knife of life on the sharp side", as a way of imagining ourselves through history and noting how arbitrary perseverance is our purpose. Additionally, producing, reproducing, and suffering for the suffering is hot-wired into our structural positionality as the "womb of Western Theory's reproductive labour machine" (James, 2016) as we toyi-toyi, strike, wail and shout outside courtrooms and hide corpses,

but never for politics. Consequently, the hope, if hope is at all appropriate in such an endeavour in thinking, is to set the scene for what ways this deathly way of being (Marriot, 2021) and captivity, continues to be instantiated most viscerally in the flesh Blackened, queered and gendered as wxmxn/femme. On the other hand, we still traverse for there has to be a way to articulate the urge to wail, in the language of black wxmxn, outside courtrooms and at graveyards. A way to ask how *dead* forms of life, let alone the political forms they foster, persevere in such spaces? Extending Elizabeth A. Povinelli's gender economic quest in the wake of Giorgio Agamben's reflections on Deleuze's immanent philosophy and the biopolitical, I ask: How can this social world endure the wavering of death that defines these spaces from the place of social death?

4.6 On White liberal feminists

There's a long history of deracializing politics in South Africa simply based on the fact that an openly white-supremacist patriarchal, white-minority society is far better able to achieve coherence and equality among its own, within its own logic, and Calvinist[21] normativity of being innately special. Even the boundaries of its civil society are elastic and can be made less and less contrary, especially when that white minority society has a majority black population to slave for it as captive homeland migrant labour. This makes the terrain of political activism merely an intellectual experiment, and in this form, is not ever something that can garner momentum towards thoroughgoing social justice, equity, let alone equality, freedom, and revolution. Therefore, there are no masses to mobilise except on the plantation of black slaves and any politicking the black masses are herded in to vivify can only yield gains for that very white society and its junior partners (in Sexton's formulation as non-black people of the Human community). Outlined above is merely a revision of that same political impulse taking a particularly Hutsonian (2013) bare "colonial unconscious" turn.

[21]The strengthened mythical religious belief in post South African War South Africa that Afrikaner nationalism was the predestination of God's chosen whites.

This, as a “Reflection of a Patriarchal Princess” represents this unconscious tendency taking a contemporary term whose closer analysis reveals an age-old non-novelty of the structural frame and positionality of the Black wxmxn in the imaginary space of black radical politics, resistance, and refusal (imaginary because it does not immediately contemplate the omnipresence of white as presence of space and omnipresence). Concerning white liberal feminists, this unconscious turn is revealed in the various moments of Black Power, BC, and now Fallist/Afropessimist articulations as the term ‘Patriarchal Princess’ has its own tradition of name-calling ‘bad feminists’, where in South Africa it is juxtaposed to the more legible black liberal feminist in politics. This is a black skinned feminist who is greatly favoured and famed in the contemporary but scarcely steps outside the prescribed lines of thinking the relationship of Blackness and gender. The black feminist is important in South African circles of feminists even while we have no idea why, or why she must be black to be essentially important in the field of thought. The academy appreciates her voice as a Black ‘woman’ and as an activist, but mostly — it seems to me — as long as that voice is expressed in the form of narrative (for example around the anti-Apartheid women's movement of the 1950s, June 16, 1976-80s, or the Fallist movement); she translates that voice into theory that academia and civil society develop problems from, as if — in the case of Blackness — narrative has to police the boundaries of "legible" experience, leading this theory to be read as excessively complicated, incoherent, or, in general out of place. This bad faith is reminiscent of the point Sabine Broeck makes in both *Re-reading de Beauvoir after race: Woman-as-slave revisited* (2011) and *Gender and the Abjection of Blackness* (2018), a book exposing the origins of white feminism's attitude to black wxmxn, when she brilliantly argues that white feminists have only (if ever) related to black wxmxn's activism and writing to the extent they expressed and narrativised either (auto)biography or the specific ethnographic viewpoint of a "race", but not when Black feminism appropriates theory as a weapon to subvert and rewrite key conceptual coordinates of critical discourse, starting with gender itself (2018). This is not unfamiliar to the tolerance of black intellectual production in anthropology, sociology, or cultural studies, nor is it a unique form of white misrecognition only that here it is useful to examine white feminism, which is burdened with doing better than patriarchal, heteronormative, or otherwise arbitrarily discriminatory

scholarship of old. Therefore, while it may sometimes be true that white South African feminists have never really ignored the difference in Black wxmxn's status it misses the point being made here, which is that difference and status are categories white liberal feminism deploys while recognizing other women's standpoints in order to confine that standpoint to a contingently and culturally defined particularity within the broad universal category of woman, or even gender. It is not white women's recognition of the specific suffering of black wxmxn that is at stake here, but white women's preparedness to recognise that such specificity is what makes the very notion of "women" ontologically inessential to Blackness (even if sociologically or historically important). As such, fulfilling the need to unreservedly abandon the usual considerations of gender when the subject is Black.

In this long and circular South African story of women and race, I recognise a third term that introduces itself along the seams of a hardly discernible theory in our contemporary Black Conscious student politics. A form of intellectual practice which we attempt to call politics; a hardly discernible theory best spelled out by the fall out Fallist the movement faced as a result of its solidarity induced pseudo-ideology void of ideology in what we attempted to practise as intersectionality.

4.7 Inculcating intersectionality

At every turn this old-new thing demands both risk and abandon from this being for any other i.e. the Black wxmxn/femme, who has been created as the quintessential Other (Mbembe, 2001) within the womb of parasitic western theory and politics (James, 2016). Every cranny of the Black ‘body’ queered and un-gendered as woman, our thinking and doing, has and continues to be weaponised and mobilised for evading and erasing the same.

As a Patriarchal Princess, I must go back further still to begin to clarify the critique we provided to the problem of misogynoir (Bailey, 2010) and masculinist Blackness which

white liberal feminists presumed we were blind deaf and dumb to, even while we founded the movement on it and while we were problematic black masculinity's targets and material victims. A critique that was concurrent with the new wave of BC in student politics through formations such as Blackwash and the September National Imbizo (Manzi, 2019), the taking over of these leadership formations by black wxmxn/femmes and gender non-conforming persons and their reinfusion of radical Black thought to articulate a distinctly Black feminist theorisation. This came as a response to the violence which was meted out against black wxmxn by so-called 'black men' in so-called radical Black movements pre-Fallism, with impunity. As stated by Ramaru (2018) "Black womxn and queer people had to deal with fighting police harassment and police brutality. They also had to contend with their fellow men comrades who sexually assaulted and raped in the space" (p. 156). As a result, no gains were up for grabs here and more than that, revolution through our political methodology is an impossibility when black wxmxness occupies this placeless, timeless positionality. Blackness presents a challenge of thought to the Human subjectivities such as woman, so we borrow to create a narrative arch of plenitude, then loss to make claims for redress. And yet subjectivity presents the following equation: blackness = violence + necessary death. While affirming the position of the black wxmxn/femmes and queers who revise the perspective that mxn, even black revolutionaries who borrow the institutionality of the phallus on the basis of their penis, are trash in the time of Fallism; I would add the nuance or clarification that a dynamic that exists within SA Black political spaces that are cis gender and or heteronormative, does not travel to all black males, penises and is by no means an attempt to consolidate the problematic binary at play here nor to generalise the "rapacious black penis" to all black males or penises.

However, Hortense Spillers (1987) offers what I view as a field to think about the utility of an overdetermined malleability as she writes: "In order for me to speak a truer word concerning myself, I must strip down through layers of attenuated meanings, made an excess in time, over time, assigned by a particular historical order, and there await whatever marvels of my own inventiveness" (p. 1). While I don't know yet what to do with it or that anything is possible for doing, I am quite convinced that there's nothing

else worth doing other than whatever we imagine as a practice of resistance or refusal in our own inventiveness; and yet it is this will to Be, this generative force that is used to devise new technologies of subjection and is parasitic to that Being and its practice. If we ever took this seriously, could we think out a Black intramural that demanded nothing short of a destruction of history and its world so that whiteness may mourn the true "destruction of history" (Ramaru, 2018, p. 154), in the vein of how white South African society viewed the falling of the Rhodes statue.

4.8 Human difference and un-differentiable non-being

The black wxmxn and queer person as articulated in South African philosophic-political thought occupies a "problem space" particularly in the circuit of violence which is endemic routine in this context. The formulation Black wxmxn or Black queer is fractured at two points: firstly, the division of Human difference and secondly, the undifferentiated zone of non-being/Blackness. The two terms of this formulation brought into alignment in political speech and rhetoric, Black and woman, are both formations of historical, sociopolitical, and philosophical violence. Discerning the workings of this violence is crucial to exposing the collision between these two terms because they point to a particular ontological violation that is the precondition to physical injury. They mark the site of what Warren (2017) terms "a double exclusion," (p. 393) or what Wilderson (2010) notes as a murderous machine. Furthermore, this collision through language or the juxtaposition of these terms creates what Alain Badiou (2007) refers to as "the inexistent existence." That is to say, a paradox in which existence takes on such a low frequency that its very appearance undercuts it and makes it so obsolete as to be inconceivable so that it must operate under the terms of being somewhat "speculative," (Warren, 2017, p. 393) or only conceptual (Badiou, 2007, p. 383). In light of this, the existential cartography of Black wxmxn and Black queer is unmappable and due to the conceptual contradiction brought on by this juxtaposition it is non-existent, nor does it appear on the horizon of existing entities. If, on the other hand, the Black wxmxn or Black queer can be said to "exist" at all then we may insist that the dead "exist" at such an inconsequentially low frequency on

the spectrum of existence (Warren, 2014). This dissonance between Humanism and fungibility is what presents the "problem space" of thought, but it is one which travels to all sexuality, genderedness, childhood, masculinity, and all such Human subjectivity markers once they are juxtaposed with Blackness. While these markers all elaborate Human difference, Blackness is excluded from this space of Human difference as a fungible commodity, therefore these markers are not as malleable as to apply to the figure of the Black.

Considering these markers of difference and the favouring of intersectionality as a panacea to this problem space by peddlers of post-racial post-modern and post ideological multiculturalism, intersectionality in South Africa is mobilised to mean that the constitutive violence or, as Fanon would put it, absolute dereliction of Black people as (anti)ontological (non)subjects and the general patriarchy of white supremacy-of which white women are subjects and the proper beneficiaries-are analogous/comparable. Structurally adjusted for the Black, these markers are given equal weight, and this can only be achieved by the muting of ideology and the ontology of Blackness and its issue, even while white liberal feminism would be obsolete without appropriating and using the flesh of black wxmxn as bodies of evidence to reveal the scourge and violence of patriarchy. Furthermore, another interrelated phenomenon in South Africa, that of LGBTIA+ politics, adapts the same modality. To demonstrate the perilous effects of this second hand of disavowal, I will recount a recent popular incident that irked and exasperated the Black LGBTIA+ community to irreconcilability.

During the yearly Gay Pride parade in 2012, where black members of a mainly Black wxmxn organisation, 1 in 9, used their bodies to blockade the Gay Pride procession at Zoo Lake in order to demand a moment of silence for the black lesbians who were victims of violent murders and the so-called corrective rape in townships in endemic proportions (Davis, 2012). This seemingly intuitive concern in mid-2012, where black lesbians were facing hate crimes, was met with hostility by our white comrades who were hurling insults, throwing objects, and even heard saying "Go back to your townships" and "This is my Pride" (Ditsie, 2019, p. 1). A few weeks later the company that has been responsible for

organising the parade/festival issued a statement in which they stated that they were discontinuing their organising and management of the event. This incident generated a lot of publicity, especially on social networks where 1 in 9 was ultimately blamed for disrupting the event and threatening its future. Those who were more sympathetic only faulted 1 in 9's approach: a moment of silence and die-in.

I bring this particular incident to the fore because the "black lesbian" is the new cause championed by white women's rights intersectional civil society because it produces the most gruesome instance of black-on-black sexual violence next to and along with rape. However, the silent wager is that the black lesbian should not speak or gesture for herself but become a thing to suture the void of white feminist's paucity of causes for political activism. This brings to mind Hortense Spillers' account of how during slavery black 'bodies' were sought out as cadavers for medical experimentation for the health of white women, serving as mere flesh not bodies that once belonged to agents . The queer community has numerous practices that bear evidence to this dynamic; that the precondition for championing Black causes is that there should be silence on the constitutive violence that de-subjectivises and makes objects of black people of whatever gender, sexual orientation, and class while categories of black re/presentation must be provided by whiteness itself for whatever political and ethical ends. This echoes Fanon's philosophical observation that blacks are "beings for the other " (Fanon, 1967, p. 217) and used whenever whiteness's ethical edifice is in crisis. The post-Apartheid, or more appropriately neo-Apartheid reality, is what generates and sustains this naivety of Black politics with the lie that the death of formal Apartheid coincided with black 'political power' and has recuperated the Black as properly Human and political subject making equal citizens and subjects of Black and Human people.

4.9 Afropessimism: The double bind of gender and queerness in the intramural

The Afropessimistic analysis presented here produces a kind of double bind when one must analyse the violence that takes place upon the bodies of black wxmxn and queers in

the intramural. An Afropessimist analysis would read this violence on black wxmxn in black spaces as an extension of the hand of anti-blackness and somewhat disregard the marker "wxmxn" that is the precondition for the violence and its form as a structural adjustment (Wilderson, 2010) problem. That it is to say the borrowed institution of gender gives a gratuitous underwriting of violence, shape, and form, but is not generative of the violence as a fixed condition. The question that this realisation must bring on, if we take the scale and expanse of this particular form of violence (sexual assault) in black spaces seriously is, what alternative designation would allow us to capture the black wxmxn's violation within an Afropessimist frame? Given this, are we able to elaborate a discourse that counteracts the rapacious proliferation of anti-blackness among non-cis, differently abled, non-adult, non-male identified and or identifying blacks within the Black intramural?

It is a curious thing: the violence, rape, and sexual assault of people in spaces designed specifically and particularly for addressing safety, inequality, oppression, and violence. Yet this was unsurprising in 2016 in South Africa and did not even make many university newspapers nor did university administrators find and charge culprits. It is clear then how Black rape and sexual assault is a non-scandal in South Africa, as it is non-scandal in the world. The two forces of ideology or philosophy colliding on Black flesh are called out and named by Calvin Warren in his 2016 essay "Onticide" as "Humanism" and "fungibility" as they are first approached by Spillers. According to Warren, these two forces are the product of modernity's push towards discovering and defining the essence of Man as a differentiating being (Heidegger, 1977) and creating a metaphysical discourse of the Human. According to Heidegger, Humanism is the unified essence of Man, their schematised and calculable nature, and the philosophy of Man's sovereign, solipsistic power. Warren takes Heidegger's idea of man as differentiating to be crucial to Humanism's discursive schema because it is through difference that man is sealed off and concretised as unique. However, man only enjoys uniqueness if they can be established as such against an "Other" with the "Other" laying the foundation for all ontological development and shoring up any path to self-actualization. Therefore, according to Warren (2017) "To be human is to carry out the task of endless differentiation" (p. 395)

with this differentiation being driven through projectionality, or man's unique and indivisible capacity and entitlement towards Being a subject of 'knowledge' (Warren, 2016). In further analysis, Tony Davies' (2008) study of essence in the longue durée of the histories of Humanism might distil it as being a production of knowledge and ideas pertaining difference, with difference being the bedrock of man's emergence as unique being in the world. Thus, the essence of Man and the foundation of Human is the capacity for them to stand distinctly as differing from forms of Being against which they are not but a form of Being that may only be knowable as differentiated and separate in quality.

If differentiation is the final nail in the sealing off of man for ontological development, then there must be a means in place for this ontological development to be secured and perpetuated. Wilderson (2010) suggests that "Violence is a paradigm of ontology," (p. 84) as security for the Human-Being against the "other", referring to the service of violence towards securing the boundaries of the Human against ontological attack and encroachment. Therefore, the "other" must be fixed in a position of alterity so that violence must always be at hand to police this boundary with "an arsenal of destructive practices" (Wilderson, 2010, p. 84). Taken seriously, the issue of man's differentiating push is fundamentally about forms of violence, being that ontological cutting (Warren, 2016) requires a generous measure of violence to secure this realm. In *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1976), Hegel shows how the "other" is established for the purposes of securing the establishment of uniqueness so that these two processes are ontologically necessary and mutually constitutive. In this same vein but towards a more elucidating thesis on the question of violence, Warren advances that "'The human' then, is a repository of violent practices and technologies that has crystallized over time" (Warren, 2017, p. 395). We may thus suggest that it is Humanism, precisely, that stands in as the very requisite and evolution of the central philosophy of this violence. Human difference, as a result, employs violence for differentiating through the "other" and makes violence necessary for boundary policing. We must then reconsider the terms under which we have thought of Humanity and markers of subjectivities such as man, woman, gay or straight as the discursive vehicles of differentiating violence; to the extent that these are subjugated and privileged positions solidly within the genre as it stands and prior to any attempts for its

recuperation (Wynter and McKittrick, 2015). In this light, what these terms actually do is mark the dialectic between self-constitution and differentiation. A dialectic which stands "as the Hegelian 'synthesis' of this dialectical violence" (Warren, 2016, p. 395) which enables the Human-Being to take up their entitled place as form in world signification. I have deliberately left out the category of race, particularly Blackness in the realm of subjectivity markers because Blackness under this analysis has always been expelled from the forming terms in Human difference. Were it to be allowed in along with woman and worker for example, as intersectionality requires, it would not be testing the contrariness of the boundary of violence from inside, but rupturing the boundaries entirely from the outside to dissipate the very coherence of Man's essence or the Human.

Spillers (1987), speaks of the moment of racial slavery that transformed African bodies into Black flesh and thus rendered "oceanic" the Black slave's gender. Not to deny that black wxmxn do experience womb or social specific violence but one is raped at endemic proportions because of how one is viewed as a void and a target for the exercise of violence and unchecked power. Additionally, one is more or less susceptible to certain kinds of violence and violation because one is female under this modern structure or male domination. However, gender does not stand in the way of those same kinds of violence taking place in aid of Human gatekeeping for all positionalities in the Human drama, only the perception of "gender" violation and violability stands as therapy and panacea to those Black but not female/femme. Zakiyyah Iman Jackson suggests that the burden of non-representability motivating movement or the historically outside im/possibility that nevertheless organises epistemic ordering in history does so at the limit of Aristotelian and Hegelian thought. The most enduring conceptual problem of Black Feminism being with the frustration and impossibility in ontological capacitation to re/present the Black wxmxn, "the black female body" is actually an abject-conditioning material metaphor that takes on the social regulatory role of myth in a system of "universal" sex-gender" (Jackson, 2018, p. 620-621). Thus, Black feminism needs to frame these questions differently. Firstly, we need to take into account that Black spaces in SA are underwritten and over-determined by gratuitous, undifferentiated and undeterminable violence. Black existence is defined by this vortex of indiscriminate undifferentiating violence, or what

Zizek (2008) calls “ontological violence” (p. 58) and Patterson (1982) and Wilderson (2008) view as a constitutive violence. One experiences instances of what is called, using Zizek’s distinction again, ontical violence: specific-contingent forms in which violence manifests itself empirically. These ontical distinctions should be taken seriously enough but should not be divorced from their ontological source nor confused with it. As a result, what becomes apparent is the bad faith inherent in white feminism appropriating the black wxmxn’s ontical experiences of violence and deflecting them from their ontological source which is the structuring condition of black wxmxn as objects outside of civil society or containing an excremental excess that problematises the collective womanness of black wxmxn ‘flesh’ with white Human women ‘bodies’ and all others.

The Gay Parade incident as well as the interjection into Azania and Solomon Mahlangu House, once again, point to the incommensurability of the Black and white structural positionality. They put in the light the proposition that the ethical dilemmas of the black improper-lesbian and the white lesbian, and the Black wxmxn and the white woman, are not comparable contemporaries nor are they light and dark versions of the same. The white lesbian is Judith Butler’s subject in that she has a recognisable body and a subjectivity and agency which is stalled and frustrated by patriarchal heteronormativity and her only dilemma is how to shatter the coordinates of gender performativity enforced by heteronormativity. On the other hand, the black improper-lesbian has totally different priorities as Spillers’ ‘oceanic’ subject who has no body that matters because the alchemy of slavery has turned it into mere flesh (Spillers, 1987). Their priorities are to shatter global white supremacy and anti-black normativity to get her body beyond matter. Displayed that day at the encounter during the Gay Pride Parade at Zoo Lake was the black improper-lesbian’s trajectory of desire as quite different from the white or non-black lesbian’s. The demand for the black lesbian to go back to the township and claim over Johannesburg Pride, an LGBTIA+ movement fought for by and established by black queer persons in the City of Johannesburg, was the Human’s refusal to be drawn into the void of the Black subject’s constitutive lack and its trajectory of desire-death drive, die-in, to the “end the world” (Fanon, 1967, p. 96).

Consequently, if we were to meditate on the possibility of emancipation for these black lowly flung groups in South Africa or wage our version of what is called classical revolution, we would have to totally uproot the coordinates of white supremacy and their operative anti-blackness. Jared Sexton in his lecture on *Unbearable Blackness* (2015) and the spectre of slavery quotes Peter Howard on Afro-modernity who, in turn, evokes the Faucauldian dispositif or apparatus in a kind of Gilroyan argument. He says that one needs to take account of the apparatus, the machinery, institutions etc. that created the Afro-modern. Sexton (2015) suggests that on either side of the Atlantic, the middle passage was the decisive moment as those who went aboard the slave ship and those who remained were equally caught in the apparatus of slave making and turning African subjects into Black objects and later, forms of subjugation. We are, therefore, merely a continuum of this initial and decisive encounter. This spectre of slavery, in essence, made modern colonial imperialism, neo-colonialism, and Apartheid possible and until this is addressed black people everywhere may never be able to attain true emancipation/liberty/freedom in the world. As a result, formal freedom that does not problematise the different entry points of whiteness and Blackness into modernity can have no way of knowing the destructiveness of the present machinery and apparatus that South Africa's so-called freedom is based on nor understand why after 28 years in South Africa, and more than 50 years of formal freedom in Africa, its black people have not come close to attaining the resemblance of true freedom. Although this may sound like a decisive decision, there is something left in the matter of the intramural within an Afropessimistic analysis.

4.10 Gratuitous violence through black things.

Most clarifying and in need of theorising within this psycho-political terrain, is the projection of the 'black man' (a category that collapses in the furtherance of this argument) in black radical and revolutionary spaces. While coming from the quarters of white liberal feminists and directed towards black wxmxn who remain within problematic black radical spaces, the term Patriarchal Princess is best applicable to the black mxn who imagine themselves to hold a potentially or properly Human structural position of relationality.

Perhaps black mxn are best theorised as the proper princesses of patriarchy, where the connotations of princess here represent a naive minor with delusions of grandeur. They are fixated with patriarchy's charm allowing it to woo and seduce them while always refusing them the throne proper. Each time the exertion of their power, through harassment, assault, aggressivity, and rape promises to bring them closer to the whole, sealed off and omnipotent man, the shores of that phallic potency and protection ebb back towards Patriarchy proper and away from Blackness. In this equation, Black mxn play the handmaidens through the avenues of borrowed institutionality (Sexton, 2018) in an aspiration to the phallus through the penis (Warren 2017). They are the extension, tool, or hand of anti-black racist violence in the black intramural where all are Being for the other, even while they remain outside a relation of Being Men among other Men: a socio-political problematique that throws Black unification and solidarity into crisis.

If we follow David Marriott's theorising in *On Black Men* (2000) of the black penis as an unrelenting and fetishised object because it is Being physically that must mark nothing or the absence of Being ontologically, thereby existing at a distance from the phallus the way that existence is at a distance from Being. It then becomes crucial to examine, in the intramural, what psycho-political conditions and terms prohibit a relationality, sometimes understood as 'unity' between black males and black females. Of course, suspending for the moment any preconscious identifications of culture, sexuality, or gender by purely making consideration at a place of the paradigmatic and structural, it is clear that the relationship of the Black to Being is underwritten by a terrible violence. It is what makes the Black magnetise bullets in what Marriott (2021) calls a deathly way of being. This is made evident in that when we take into consideration police brutality, mass incarceration of the Black the world over, Black migration death, epidemic rape, pandemic disparity, or whatever form gratuitous violence takes in any given place or time where the Black exists, we can be sure the modern world is parasitic on the Black for its psychic health and reproduction. It is a necessary condition because whiteness, as not merely penis but phallus, can only know itself to be as such through the ontological castration of Black Being. This is to mean, as Warren puts it, that the strangling or shooting or stabbing or drowning or suffocating of the Black is always and already in place at the ontological

place. The physical strangulation is merely the production of the corps (Wilderson, 2010), not dying as transcendence (Sexton, 2016) but the production of deathly life (Marriott, 2000 & 2021). The castration of Being, with Being here equated to the phallus potentiality of Man, is an ontological condition and not a physical one that pertains to the presence or absence of the penis. It then remains for us to ask: what is the psychological production of an onto-castration where the physical penis remains? As outlined before, one cultural production is fetishization, however, the product for the intramural is a constant Fanonian moment of devastation at discovering oneself to constantly find they are "merely a thing among things" when their psycho-socialisation was that they are in fact Human, Man, and deserving of paritii. On the other hand, black mxn attempt a mimicry of being with thinking through the penis, at least through the awareness of its presences, which leads to a conflation of the penis with the phallus in so far as the phallus is Being (Warren, 2014). However, in as far as the Black's relation with Being has always been gratuitous violence, this enactment of Being must itself take on the force of gratuitous violence which is prohibited against the Human. Charged with protecting the Human from non-being, this violence may therefore only take place within the Black intramural: the Bantustan, the favela, the township, the shebeen, the mine, or the ghetto. It is the logic of this patriarchal phallic mimicry that the Black female is an intuitive target for dishonour, alienation, and violence. As a result, Black unity is impossible.

Ultimately, the result of creating a Black space in a white university and academy yielded the violence of the ghetto, where rape and sexual violation is a minute-by-minute affair as the much hoped for relationality maintained its distance and the hand of Human Being's violence had its way. There was no register for violence and violation within and all we could see was a kind of confirmation of something about the perpetrating penis, which is a part of this non-community where in this performance there is only nothing that can do nothing. This is not to say that it cannot be mobilised to aspire towards something. The hierarchies of rape in South African academy (Gqola, 2015) are indicative of the spectacular, the infant, the girl child, the 86-year-old granny, the "yellow bone" young woman raped then burnt alive in a garbage bin, and the UCT student raped and murdered in white suburbia. These act as the fodder for soliciting relationality at the level of

sympathy in civil society, a culture of politics that does not make more legible the issue that pertains the spectacular violent condition of Blackness. On the other hand, black male death, which is the highest of any other demographic in South Africa, registers nothing and is inversely caught in this same illegible status of being invisible while spectacular.

If the Black as interpolated by Afropessimism is without a grammar of suffering, the incredible work of disavowal appropriated by masculinist postures of Afropessimism (Manzi, 2019,) as evidenced is movements such as the September National Imbizo and it's ANC aligned Black First, Land First, eviscerates even the innovation of the means to say so. To say we are without a grammar of suffering, because there is no gender in Blackness and at the exact same time, that the Black is the man emasculated, means the black wxmxn/femme is less than invisible; it means their 'becoming visible' is the tool of emasculation and their distinguishing in any gendered even experiential terms is counterrevolutionary to the ends of Black emancipation. While there is a lot of rhetorical expression for understanding the double bind of Black wxmxnhood there is less exploration of the implications of hypervisibility and invisibility: the straight jacket put upon black wxmxn where allies are concerned. This is evidenced in the offensives coming from the extramural feminist sisterhood of non-black and white comrades, and within the intramural with brothers, sons, and fathers. Caught in this unfreedom and violence from without and within, whatever experiments in fabulation and speculative histories of Black optimism may promise for the chorus (Hartman) or the huddle (Du Bois) and the outside (Moten) of social life in social death, Black wxmxnhood represents the visceral conscious standpoint from which social death may be perceived as steady, deathly non-community.

4.11 White sisters and black brothers all at once, same-same but different.

Blackness has come to literally occupy the architectural domain between the space of woman and man with Blackness' own sexuation and gendering slipping away from the gendered spaces of the private and public. As a result, Black ungendering consolidates and guards a gender binarism and hierarchy as embodying its mutilated, vestibular

remainder, and thus enabling the distinctly political and sociality (Silko, 1991). Excluded from the telluric domain of Human maturation and procreation, and therefore, outside time and history, the Black onto-castrated is the Black incarnated gender difference while a Being alienated from gender, a kind of "demonic being" that ultimately mirrors the mythical figuration of the gendered Black wxmxn (Jackson, 2018) whose mythical projections of sexual violation depict her/their openly violable Pansexual ungendered status. Therefore, her/their history/story can hardly be read but between the lines of what constitutes facts and among the most conspicuous improbable fictions. Consequently, I propose we take Spiller's lead once again to think the unthinkable outside the bounds of the measurable and evidenced in order to consider the relations of a Being coming out of the immaterial and emerging through the material world of invention, dream, and speculation. I explore this relation through the early representations of a fear/dream in my own context, through the legend of Pinky Pinky. An opening Spillers cracks-up in a brief moment through her illustration of Harriet Jacob's/Brent's revelatory historical account/dream which we opened with and which I quote here at length:

There is an urban legend in South Africa, popularised by black school going girls in the 1990s and early 2000s, of a mythic tormentor called Pinky Pinky: "Pinky Pinky seems to have emerged in 1994. A pink, hybrid creature, it is half-man half-woman, [...] Pinky Pinky, for example, terrorizes prepubescent children, lying in wait for them at school toilets...." (Adapted from curatorial notes on Pinky Pinky and other Xeni, Penny Siopis, at the The Goodman Gallery in Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education (Moletsane, Mitchell, Smith, & Chisholm, 2008, p. 35). Most accounts of Pinky Pinky incidents[22], real or imagined, stipulate that boy children, though equally available to torment, cannot physically see Pinky Pinky. Like the incubus of Greek mythology which

[22]I must add that some current modalities of popular culture have reformatted the urban legend as it emerged in the early 1990s. Where Pinky Pinky is represented through pink skin and as intersexed in early accounts by black wxmxn and girls, more recent representations, specifically movies such as Pinky Pinky on Showmax figure the tormentor as a black mxn or art works such as the conceptual imagery project collaboration of Lutendo Malatji, Thapelo Motsumi and Livhuwani Masindi Muthubi who is the Pinky Pinky model as a black wxmxn in a pink wig. I read this as curious in light of their representation through blackness, and I am particularly struck by the ease of this slippage from a white intersexed predator to the readily available stereotype/trope of the sexually insatiable black amazon/wild black wxmxn and the rapacious black penis.

appears in Jacob's historical or dream account in the epigraph, Pinky Pinky supposedly accosts women and children and abuses, rapes or attempts to kill them. Unlike incubus, Pinky Pinky terrorises black prepubescents while they wake as a hybrid female/male mythic body capable of violating males and females, though males do not see them. Additionally, unlike incubus, who is identified as male with a female counterpart succubus, Pinky Pinky is understood to be intersexed/Pan gendered. However, whether Pinky Pinky is *real* or not, the material world of myth work stabilises the racialised phallic terror of his/her potentiality just as it does in Jacob's material world of "dream work" (Spillers, 1987, p. 77). Pinky Pinky emerges in the post-Apartheid of supposed freedom and peace as a mancing manifestation of Black fears and terror, a spectre of violence and continued open vulnerability under freedom, and as persisting white terror transcending periodisation and declarations in frightful pink skin. The under examined meaning of this post-Apartheid mythical being is curious but not surprising in a South African context where the occult world of muthi and witchcraft (spells, magic, and medicine) is on the surface of a shared consciousness but always the exclusive preserve of black people: somehow non-black people do not witch or voodoo. A hang-over no doubt, of the manically Christian imperial epoch that seeks to distance Man from darkness with its witch raids and inquisitions.

In this study, I invoke Pinky Pinky due to the striking correlations in the two creatures' relations of sexualised violence and their open terrorising of black wxmxn in particular. Under the gender binary that Spillers troubles, rape exposes the 'male alibi' of ecstasy in forced penile penetration and unchecked power via the prosthetic motion (penile implement) AND its all-encompassing effort "to inculcate his or her will onto the vulnerable supine body," (Spillers, 1987, p. 77) in order to produce a captive body violable by either and both female/male Humans. The maleness of the alibi is representable through the prosthetic motion of the male 'existing' penis BUT the effort, the conscious exertion of power, is phallic, which is the generative creative force of Being. The madam uses her innate phallic prowess to mimic the master in an instance wherein otherwise, the presumed absence of a physical biological penis conceals her phallic status, just as the slave wxmxn did not realise to "fear for my life" (Brent, 1973, p. 33 as cited in Spillers, 1987, p 77)

while the madam shared the vulva as a cultural social condition: just as the slave wxmxn could not identify the repetitious process of ungendering as one which the madam also stands in for while the madam is white BUT woman too in the absence of this prosthetic and its motion.

The inverse, essentially, is the relational status of the black wxmxn and black mxn or rather the Black penis and the Black clitoris. Each is stripped of the conscious exertion of power which is inherent to the generative creative force of the phallus. Therefore, whatever violations each commits on the other, these violations are grossly skewed by the general conflation in relation to the Black intramural of the penile with the phallus. There is no function for Human Jouissance (Lacan, 1969–1970), that illogical enjoyment driving repetition and reserved for the Human-making value of overtaking the captive non-being and its will. A captive will cannot itself capture a captive will to constitute free will, phallic potentiality or earn a place in the Human community of differentiating power. The mimicry of the forms of violence (here read as rape and the host of sexual violations we are aware of) which are necessary for Human differentiation and constitutive of Humanness as necessary violence, is not itself the making of the Human. Black mxn sexually assault all manner of Black wxmxn in every imaginable way through physical, and psychological force using the penis or the threat of its unchecked phallic power. However, Black mxn do not become Man/Human in the process just as they do not become Human in the physical intercourse (or psychological attachment or political solidarity) with white women (Fanon, 1952, p. 45). Put differently, Black South African mxn violate and psychologically terrorise Black South African wxmxn in particular, their action, even the violent action of rape, does not have the effect of frustrating the phallic power of the Black wxmxn in this "woman *exists* for the man" (Spillers, 1987) gender disparity dynamic of unchecked power: the figure of the Black wxmxn expresses a zero-sum being.

The legend of Pinky Pinky and the 'dream' of incubus, do not just provide evidence of madams as rapey murderous maniacs like the master, they reveal a repetitive sustained adherence to an integral gender/ungender dyadic relation where the Human (sign) = penis

(signifier)/phallus (signified) through the particular invention of Black wxmxnness, "my country needs me", Human B/being making 'an excess in time, over time,' as we know it; without proof, evidence or data but essentially and boundlessly inventable, mulliable and avail/viol/able to the politics of the Human's differentiating onticide. Crucially, the differentiating march of the Human relies on this repeated sequence and scene of terror, which commingles its signals (those elements of the semiotic system not open to interpretation and belonging to a singular plain of the semiotic) with the imaginary. Occult relations as manifestation with the same essential productive force as the necessary terror of the 'real'. A truly explosive moment in what we may consider 'gender history'.

If these aforementioned movements, The Women's March of 1956, The Fallist Movement and One in Nine, Black Lives Matter included, have taught us anything it is that power is deranged from Blackness and that nothing Black is unchecked. Nothing is registered at the level of Being-making on either side of rape or killing enacted by Black mxn on women/wxmxn but a repetition of the same ungendering profit for the master on the plantation: the physical practice of forced penetration for the master's profit by the master or any of his slaves. Forced breeding, mutilating, and killing of slave wxmxn is essential to externalising 'evil' to all of Blackness via this standing *Partus Sequitur Ventrem* onto-principle to reproduce not only the slave machine, but the Human and their world of social life. Females of all races and forms of being are forcibly sexually penetrated with impunity, unfortunately, and the seriousness and sensitivity with which that needs to be addressed at the level of experience is not lost on me, hence this theorisation does not reach down to the place of a decidedly political instructive, it instead reaches out to a knowable diagnosis. Rape is a state of Human conflict due to the dynamic of consent, and a state of conflict due to its thinkability and resolvability within the Human community. Yet, no "slut walk" or "pussy protest"[23] can grant consent to the being for the other, let alone one that can make NO mean NO out of the Black wxmxn's mouth, while the madam persists.

[23] These as two examples of popularised women's protests against physical and political violence. 'Slut walks' represent a more global movement against sexual violence and policing while 'pussy protests' have emerged globally following the first in the United States after the inauguration of Donald Trump as president.

The issues surrounding the Women's march of 1956, 1 in 9's March in 2012 and particularly the Fallist movement of 2015/16 further exposes the failure of emplotment through interraciality and intersectionality relieved of ideology in the political dynamics and internal logistics at work in the intramural, intra-political relations among black people. These dramas expose the political forces at work in the intra-personal and among black people; transhistorical problems at work in these historic instances; and universal principles in our particular examples and vice versa. As fallists, we have undergone a profound, multidimensional lesson all while transforming a longstanding melancholia into a properly punctuated mourning of the 1976 generation of intellectual activists. We should finally come to understand that the child's fate is linked, inescapably, to the mother's plight, a point we may comprehend through evoking the likes of mam'Winnie Mandela or Bessie Head, through a violent "struggle to death" against "a series of antagonists'' (Hegel, [1807]2018, p. 476; Sharpe, 2010; Buck-Morss, 2009; O'Neil 1996). Our memorialising of past struggle has in a sense blocked our capacity to remember, and so to live with that memory of a "struggle to death" (Marriott, 2016) rather than to perpetually defend against it. That memory is in fact a spectre whose ghost story haunts the scene of our imaginary paralysis so that we might subvert the inherited narrative of Black revolt — or anti-Apartheid demonstration — as heroic masculine endeavour on the continent generally and in South Africa particularly. Our resistance to anti-black institutions and intellectual culture, as this study has shown, is a resistance bound to failure and futility in any external and objective sense.

In the end we accomplished a strained, momentary reprieve and our objectives have already been appropriated for anti-black ends and will likely be applied in that anti-black service so that any benefits from our greater efforts are, for us, ultimately interior and subjective. We were able to act in a space that gags and erases us but as far as actually decolonising the academy, we rehearsed a memory and its strategy for record and in all likeliness another unconscious rehearsal of the same in the future, as the 2016 version of protests demonstrates, awaits. Ultimately, black wxmxn are called into solidarity coalitions in order to vivify the action and clarify the urgency of cause, they are less agents

and more fodder, and evidence of violence. Additionally, they may not show up to these moments of political action as Black because to show up as Black is to undo the work of imagining a new politics of feminist freedom. As evidenced by the scandalous manifesto of FEDSAW at the height of Apartheid, black womxn are the flesh against which everyone else may know themselves to be Be, Human, free. Spillers (2003) states that "In order for me to speak a truer word concerning myself, I must strip down through layers of attenuated meanings, made an excess in time, over time, assigned by a particular historical order, and there await whatever marvels of my own inventiveness." (p. 203). Spillers' analysis here presents a massive epistemic attack on white gender theory for its refusal to theorise enslavement in its deliberations of the post-enslavement categorical distinction between the free Human gendered body and Black enslaved ungendered flesh. It's implications as I have spelled them out here, should decimate our idea and practice of politics, scandalise Human solidarity as necessarily anti-black and these implications should finally relieve us black wxmxn, at the very least, of the compulsion to take up everyone's cross but our own.

Notes to Conclude: Chapter Five

This dissertation asks: how does a theoretical orientation locked up in modern humanism respond at this time, a time like any modern time, to the urgent question of Blackness as theory and Black life as theorised outside of Human social life? What do we make of the academy's complicity in directing Black thought, which has no business with the world other than being the fungible currency of the world's libidinal economy, away from anything pertaining to the specificity of the Black condition? What has civil-society along with the Academy's disciplining and disciplinarity produced for Black knowledge making towards Black Emancipation? What limits have that disciplining and disciplinarity produced and for what purpose? And ultimately, what ways does its theory of the free Human reproduce Blackness, slavery and social death?

This thesis concludes, through the examination of slavery in relation to the proletariat the post-colonial the woman and the queer person of the LGBTIAQ+ community that none of the theories which elaborate these Human subjectivities elaborates the being that is Black and thus cannot be used to give any explanatory power for and to the structural positionality of Blackness under the very Humanist regime and paradigm which produces it. From the position of Blackness, the rejoinder to Turner's critique of liberalism in South Africa as short sighted: "On the whole it accepted the capitalist human model of fulfilment through the consumption and possession of material goods" (Turner, 1971, p. 76) should be that, the Humanist model of fulfilment gains its coherence through the consumption and fungibility of Blackness. They do not question the unethical set of arrangements which produce not the worker, the proletariat, the woman, the post-colonial, or the queer person, but the world, the slave, the Black.

But in the Conscious or preconscious expressions of political orientations or organisations that were able to see the investments of the unconscious and structural libidinal economy of desire. It matters less the sense-making of any political thought than it does its senseless evasion and disavowal of Blackness. The avoidance and erasure of the slave in humanist political thought aught lead us to asking the question, what set of arrangements does that

evasion, erasure and disavowal leave intact, and how do supposedly progressive ideologies reflect back to us the figure of the slave as socially dead? The parallels drawn here between South Africa and West Africa, greater Southern Africa, and the Americas do not assert that the parallels themselves take the social, political, cultural and economic dynamics in those geographic places to be the same as those dynamics in South Africa. What the parallels serve to do is to point to an essential globally produced geopolitical dynamic in relation to the void that is Africa tout court and produces Blackness structurally and in the libidinal economy of world.

5.1 Industrialised sexual violability and/as Gender

I am convinced that it is through the living histories of captive wxmxn that we are wedded to slavery. More than that it is slavery which weds Black wxmxness to sexual violence. This indisputable form of gratuitous violence belies the fibs of freedom and emancipation. It's the careless abandon of sexual violators, desperate at the whiff of the Human prerogative to take. The routine mass sexual violation of Black wxmxn takes on a different guise when violation is not preceded by contingency but naturalised by the condition of Blackness. It becomes the steady and necessary coerced reproduction of phallic imaginaries. These imaginaries make the world and their very power must invent Saartjie and the Venus girls for our present, mutilated, parcelled up and reproduced.

Can you imagine the world outside of Black wxmxn being subjected to the invariable forms of violence we are subjected to, and for it to be so routine, commonplace and yet still unimaginable at Human distance? I am persuaded that the silencing of Blackness in our psycho-politico consciousness is related to the life of its modus operandi, the routine sexual subjection of Black wxmxn. Those outside of the Human subjectivity of gender and its protections and boundaries of violence. Sexual violation is so deeply a part of the dishonour and violence of slavery it is an underwriting truth of slavery and it is coerced as a mechanism of dehumanising and commodifying the slave. Dehumanising so as to create a version of being that is securable and commodifying so as to make fungible life that must reproduce to increase value. Our historical scholarship has been loath to acknowledge the routine sexual violation that is wedded to slavery as it has been loathed

to acknowledging slavery itself. Every solution that has been peddled is palliative because contemporary multiracialism relies on an enabling erasure of state-sanctioned antiblack sexual violence—which is to say a fundamental negation of Black feminism's naming and combating of such violence —in order to valorise itself as redemptive, or at least ameliorative, in the present and future tenses (Hine, 1997) (Sexton, 2018). South Africa is founded and empowered by these deeply sedimented relations of power and prerogative. The country relies on an obfuscated history of sexual violence, which leaves the load at the feet of the rapacious Black penis, principally and paradigmatically against Black wxmxn, so that it can keep its hands clean of the jungle beyond its gated community. This manoeuvre of time simultaneously justifies the steady reinforcement of the gates against those of no community. This is made possible by harnessing the lasting force of terra nullius and the shield of partus sequitur ventrem.

5.2 Politics' promise of Freedom

> Oh, I say, and I say it again, you been had! You been took! You been hoodwinked! Bamboozled! Led astray! Run amok! ~Denzel Washington as Malcolm X. 1992

Why do things get worse after each hard fought revolution? Where do we locate the genius of the system? Something is left out of the account; it runs through our fingers, escaping our grasp. All attempts to explain the malicious standard operating procedure of white supremacy in South Africa find themselves hamstrung by conceptual inadequacy; it remains describable, but not comprehensible. The story can be told but the ethical meaning remains beyond the discursive resources of civil society, outside the framework for thinkable thought. It exceeds the capacity of representation. (The ideological and cultural structure that conceives of and enables doing violence to a person in the first place is inarticulable.) The inner dynamic of our attempts to understand its supposedly underlying meaning or purpose masks its ethic of impunity from us. White supremacy is nothing more

than what we perceive of it; there is nothing beyond it to give it legitimacy, nothing beneath it nor outside it to give it justification. The structure of its banality is the surface on which it operates. Whatever mythic content it pretends to claim is a priori empty. Its secret is that it has no depth. There is no dark corner that, once brought to the light of reason, will unravel its system. In each instance of repetition, 'what is repeated is the emptiness of repetition', an articulation that "does not speak and yet has always been said" (Foucault, 1989, p. 54). In other words, its truth lies in the rituals that sustain its circuitous, content-less logic; it is, in fact, nothing but it's very practices. There, there is no paraontological distance distinguishing the black and their preconscious epistemological consciousness from Blackness. The project of injecting life into the empty shell of Black personhood via the speculation of a meaningful distinction between Blackness and black people is yet another recuperative gesture induced by the phoebogenic designation of theorising while abiding the abyss of Blackness. It is a reach for Humanity, community and social life via the basement. It is the non/being which produces the paradigm of anti-Black social death. The flesh is not inserted after Blackness is established, the flesh is always and at the same time Black.

White supremacy and it secreted values towards emancipatory formulation rehearse the modern ontological presupposition of transparency, when deploying universality and as the privileged modern ontological descriptors: progressivism suggests that racial emancipation comes about when the juridical and economic inclusion of the racial subaltern and their historic and cultural voices and representations finally realize universality in postmodern social configurations. Anti-black violence makes these configurations distinct and so it must be gratuitous to distinguish Human value from mere flesh and it must be routine so that abject Black flesh provides the evidence, the juice and the energy for civil society's dilemmas, organise them under more fluid forms of racialised Human distribution, all the while reinforcing the forces which police the boundaries of social life from social death. The Human's freedom is an impossibility for the Black. Were the world not to be structured by anti-black antagonism, sense itself would dissolve, the world would end if the Black could reach in the direction of freedom. The Black may only end Blackness with the end of freedom. No world, no Humans, no free.

The structure of Anti-Black racism is unalterable in the world as such. The Human safeguards that fact as a permanent threat to the possibility of Black Being. There are no emancipatory dreams big enough, ambitious enough, revolutionary enough to alter the status of social death for the slave in a Human world. Certainly, Blackness and slaveness are untouched under the emancipatory objectives and aspirations of the major fields of political thought appropriated in South Africa from the world. Freedom aught mean nothing to the Black, the knowledge of the fact of social death aught expose politics and its weddedness to Human solidarity as the entrenchment and emphasis of horrors of the afterlife of slavery. Accounts of Blackness that center politics, culture, cosmology are ruses designed to accost and coerce the Black into fungibility. They appear affirming of the Black through alterity and even a complete rejection of Western modes of Being, but they have the effect of rejuvenating the irresistible self-determining desires of the proper Human subject. They require the Human schema of Being for their persuasive legibility under a ruse only analogous to the Human proper. The desired subject requires freedom through politics to construct itself, freedom is a necessity. But the Black is not the desired subject, the Black represents a full stop in political ontology and transcendental freedom is the tool of an indifferent callousness. Whatever sources of life or history or sociality Black people hold in their own hearts as intrinsic to their subjecthood, is a product of this inculcated freedom ideation.

The "Slave/Human paradigm" is at the heart of the world's antagonism where the Human is a being of community that must define itself against the slave, the Black, the anti/ante-human. Social death must thus be internal to Blackness, coterminous with Blackness, otherwise the community falls apart and freedom offers the Human nothing. That phenomenon is new under a theorising of social death that no longer seeks origins, Blackness has no origins, it is presented by the paradigm. It cannot be made into a story because there is no origionary Black plenitude, Black community, Black language, Black anthropological accoutrement. Cultural/political and even social performances of Black maleness, queerness, post-colonial or worker, are dangerous experiments in dead ways of dying which the intramural cannot afford because Being has a different history to Blackness; it is history tout court. What kind of thinking response retorts to Afropessims as such, 'Afropessimism is a paradigmatic meta- theory and therefore without much use

to us, what we need are more poignant social theories.'? How can we know Theory or anything to be social without understanding its essential sets of relations? It is the kind of thinking response which finally exposes the unconscious of the academy onto the surface, it reveals the true phoebogenic stimulus to theory in Black, the antagonist of the Human.

Moreover, do we not theorise with and for the social? Is the world not always faced with eminent skewed labour relations resulting in death and suffering when theorists are immersed in paradigmatic meta-theories of superstructures and revolution? Is UCT Political Studies not the safe space of South African Western Marxism and Labour Studies, Is WITS Sociology not the golden child of post structuralist critique of class? Since when has theorising become a zero sum game between the paradigmatic and the empirical? If one takes nothing away from this long experiment in thinking Blackness, might they take this; the relation of the Human and the Black is not only non-relational (we are not lighter and darker brothers, The Human is a being of relationality while the black is a genealogical isolate) it is very crucially parasitic (the Human is a being of relationality because the Black is a genealogical isolate and that condition is necessary). Humans need Blacks, violated and reproduced as Black, to legitimate their status as presence, rationality and therefore thinking and theorising. While we may never explore or delve into black thought/s, Blackness is necessary to the structure of white thinking. There is no SAWM without at first the figure of the Black and then the fodder that is black herds. There is no feminist movement without the flesh of black slave/wxmxn by the millions, no intersection if Blackness is present, no transparent I If we unveil the spectre. This is the anxiety of the Human and its academy, the white political theorist without an antagonism, the Africanist without a fad. The Human is parasitic on the Black, to be Black means to be available for whatever the Human needs and expelled with what it does not need, so as to always be coerced under the Human's prerogative. Surely now we don't ask, what does it mean to resist, abandon, go underground and build movements? But how do we navigate the persisting oceanic being of slavery, beyond prescriptions of right doing and wrong doing.

5.3 Concluding theory without ends

What do we make of the shadow cast by European/Modern/enlightenment's exhaustion in thought? How might we think differently about concepts of power and contingent value against the political implications of social death. I suggest through this thesis that the overly deterministic presumptions of South African historiography, political currents, culture and ideological outlooks, might benefit from being placed in perspective with Blackness as slavery and social death. Slavery as both an eventuality and the spectre of Blackness. As a student not bound up in didactics, my arguments here are those of embodied fluidity that transcends disciplinary decadence and nihilism. Nothing here is examined as an aspiration to outcomes. My enquiries determine what the heuristic value of understanding oneself or the group for who this heuristic is concerning. Well what is it? what does the production of my image and figure do on either side if we take the world to be anti-black? Wilderson provides what I am satisfied with as a historical value chain for Black death. Psychic rejuvenation is what Black abjection does for everyone not Black, Gordon makes this clear through exposing the relief value of anti-Black terror, "At least don't be Black!'. Most importantly I see in the heart of Spiller's assembly of questions a peering into the value which emanates from a lens of the world that always anticipated and produces the black as deathly breathing or bubbling? This question is precisely what drives the chapters of this thesis in an inverted way. What good/value have these forms of political thought, politics and discourse presented for the Black? I conclude here, nothing. They have been the technologies of production through the ruse of analogising the living with the dead and through the relentless impetus towards hope and solidarity in the face of deathly anti-blackness, as the sole vehicle for thinking and worlding modern enlightenment.

The clarity, even insistence of Afropessimism over Blackness and Death from this distance opens up what I am tempted to characterise as theft time: you (the black person) now have the opportunity in your own sense making avenues to think the thoughts of a slave who has tried the book, joined the abolitionists and waged resistance to labour to no avail. You may now think obliteration. It means you may now reach a conclusion to run or burn without the false hope that those contextual insurgencies or subsections rise to the

temperature of paradigmatic rupture in the structure of antagonism. Most pertinently, you may whet your appetite for thought experiments that transcend positionally because something other than world is necessary to break your suffering. It is once again faith, hope in and reliance on the tools of Western modes of thought, ironically, that creates the impression that this meta-theorisation presents an end to thought when it suggests the Black is a problem for thought and unthought. When infant Afropessimism offers an opportunity such as this one, to think Blackness dialogically, and free of disciplinary prescriptions and anxiety, in the academy and via political and social modes of discipline, dogma for Historiography, methodology and exhaustion.

Our solidarity with anti-blackness is demanded, not solicited. Civil society's insistence, need for Blackness, in order to reproduce itself, and aggressively mounting artillery against indexes of thinking Blackness emerging from black people themselves, is indicative of the violence required to secure civil coherence through Blackness as a deathly grounding wire for European/Western/Whiteness' sovereign ego exercising the will to master and dominate, even Whiteness' own conceptual anxiety with existence. The bounds we are forced to respect with respect to critique, History and Geography are the very binarising institutions and juridicies that stabilise Human subjectivity. The awfully curious self-parochialising of the decolonial subject in decolonial scholarship's fetish for the specificity of the local dismantles our capacity to think Blackness in relation to the paradigm in favour of a coerced South-South solidarity. To outline that and prove it is not Eurocentrism, any assertion to that effect is anti-intellectual. Thinking Blackness as such does not in fact empower Western thinking as the only thinking that Black and Southern people should embrace, but in fact de-robes those elements of its structuring logic that are so pervasive as to need not speak, that may create vulnerability if exposed and made available for thought. Thus, reading modern enlightenment as an Afropessimist does not necessitate upholding the truth claims of canonical Western thought, it is in fact disabusing the quintessential Other of the hope they cultivate through a faith in those truth claims, importantly the truth claim of the Human is inevitable, desirable, attainable for the Black and inevitable for all sentient Homo sapiens.

The rumour also, that Afropessimism is the preoccupation of narrow western academics is a farce. It misses in the first place the origins of Afropessimism's initial experiments analysed by African literary scholars and most importantly the demand for its theorisation into the political and social by veterans of the armed struggle, Umkhonto We Sizwe, which is not to say the 'broad church', the ANC in its entirety. Afropessimism is diagnostic, it appreciates the power of understanding as value for the Black person in and of itself. The shortcoming of being educated in the Anglo-phonic modern world is that we are raised to encounter problems with the same breath of solutions so that the emotional capacity of intellectuals to peer into the abyss of Blackness and encounter problems for which there is no solution, is bound up. The intellectual's objections to such a perspective are sentimental, they anticipate the implications of this vacuum and they express their emotional resistance of it as critique. That however is not analytical feedback, it represents emotions which the Afropessimist is not exempt from. The faith is that Black people ducking in the street, as my generation would say, will take up the solution when they understand this precipice of an epistemological dispensation. A diagnostic paradigmatic analysis need not prescribe nor police solution. As for our brittle emotional disposition to intellectual analysis and diagnosis, Afropessimism presents an opportunity for maturity. That maturity will require not only that we suffer the abyss but deal with the tantrums inevitable from white power in the form of violence, harassment, closed ranks and tightening of the boarders of civil society, as well as the tantrum of those who insist on remaining attached to a parochial way of thinking Blackness as circumscribed by 'History' and 'Geography'. To take up Lewis Gordon's analogy of the city once again, the walls and gates are bound to tighten. We now have an opportunity to admit our abiding fear as Black people even as a nod to the diagnosis of the world coming out of Afropessimism, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." (Baldwin 1962, p. 103).

One is welcome to reject social death as a concept because it's present a kind of knowing that is not knowledge in their view or as a means to resist the psychically traumatising implications in the Black condition and intramural or merely out of a fear or resentment

of the unknown (to them at least) after lifelong efforts to establish themselves among/in the Known. That does not depreciate the explanatory power it generates from the concerns of Blackness. Why am I black, why does anything that can be done do nothing to "deliver me from the body of this death?" (KJV, Romans 7:25). It recognises the power modernity invests, even incrementally in anti-blackness and releases the Black from subjection to the ethics that justify that asymmetry. It opens up a brand new can of maggots for world indelibly bound to the dead.

This meta-theory of Blackness means we are capable of entering space while understanding not entering it as Being or presence at all. A back door to a quasi-psychic health of our own, shiiit! So we present our flesh in a suit and at the boardroom table but keep the knowledge that we constitute absence there individually, and if we are absent but there we might choose differently pertaining our energy distribution, affective labour and God willing, we might make for impactful spies of an black move of some kind. Black people may now say a great many things about their condition in the 'safety' of the heads, the Bantustans and shacks, without self-blame, self-hatred and policing. I accept a mandate of Blackness to theorise the destruction of being in tandem with the making of the Human since Modernity's dawn, I do not conjure something up from the corridor of academia to ordinary village blacks, minors and domestics. To suggest that is to express a fundamental ineloquence, even bar from Black knowledge. We represent the end of politics, we are not agents of politics, what do we do with this knowledge? Well, everything, whatever we like even if nothing at all. I would never presume to tell the Black person what to do, but once we know, the time is ripe! Aluta.

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