

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

This chapter will discuss and analyse four issues that will form the theoretical framework of this dissertation. First, the main tools of analysis, the theoretical concepts to be deployed in the analysis of Mbeki's discourse on race, ie "passionate attachment" and of "rigid designator" will be discussed.

Second, Mouffe's arguments for making a distinction between legitimate adversaries and antagonists are important in analysing Mbeki's discourse, especially on the question of tolerance in a democracy and the limitations and possibilities of this within a radical democratic project.

Third, theories of discourse, which are elucidated by Pecheux's and Althusser's analysis of ideology and how they traverse the whole of social discourse, will be discussed.

The last part of the chapter is a discussion of race in South Africa today focussing on the problem with the term non-racialism. In particular it is concerned with distinguishing between the emancipatory project of Mandela, where the "rainbow nation" metaphor was all important and where transformation may not have been engaged with in any real sense, on the one hand, and that of Mbeki's attachment, arguably his obsession, with race and transformation, on the other.

Butler's The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection and Žižek's The Sublime Object of Ideology are the two main texts deployed in forming the conceptual framework, especially in the use of their respective concepts "passionate attachments" and "rigid designator".

To understand Butler's concept of "passionate attachment", it is necessary to elucidate firstly her framework, which is her theory of subjection. The starting point is the notion that the subject and the individual are not interchangeable entities. The subject is a site occupied by the individual. Subjection is paradoxical, in other words, "power is both external to the subject and the very venue of the subject"¹⁶.

The subject cannot be thought of without the psyche as the subject is constituted through a reflexive application to power. The process of subject formation is about being subordinated by power with power. This power is not just the power that presses on one from the outside, but is also internal, hence the paradox of subjection. For Butler, the subject is constantly subjected and constantly emerging. By reflexive application to power she means that there is a turning back upon oneself. This, she refers to as a "violent", "passionate", sometimes "melancholic" turn. No subject, she theorises, emerges without a passionate attachment to norms, the very norms that oppress. To become a subject you are dependent on a reiteration of norms. However, norms are not fixed, and even within these reiterations there are possibilities that they will be repeated in unpredictable ways, that they will be re-appropriated in other words, showing "resignifications".

¹⁶ Butler (1997:15)

Butler's theory is that subjects become attached to the conditions of their own subjectivity *even* if these conditions are oppressive. In response to those who question her theory that a subject is passionately attached to his or her own subordination by asking whether she means that final responsibility for subordination lies within that subject, Butler points out that the subject is formed by a will that turns back upon itself, that the subject is the effect of power in recoil. "The analysis of subjection is always double, tracing the conditions of subject formation and tracing the turn against those conditions for the subject – and its perspective – to emerge."¹⁷

The subjectivity that she talks about is historical and contingent and exists in the social. There is, she argues, a radical dependency on norms, a reiteration of norms', not of one's own making. It is these very norms that cause subjection. Because there are possibilities of resignification, identity is contingent and need not be rooted and fixed. The subject can detach from a signifier and look towards other possibilities.

The value of Butler for this analysis of Mbeki will become obvious during the course of the dissertation. Her theories of subjection are useful in analysing Mbeki's relationship to the signifier, "race", where I show that in Mbeki's discourse, race is not one of many floating signifiers, it is in fact the master signifier.

To place my argument even further in Butlerian terms, Mbeki embraces the very terms that injure him resulting in a repetition of norms, to which he is passionately attached.

Butler would argue that there are possibilities if he detaches from the signifier race. She argues that the self-colonising path of certain types of identity politics is a symptom of

¹⁷ Butler (1999:29)

the paradoxical embrace of the terms that injure one. Only by occupying the terms that injure one, can one resist or oppose them. This theory has clear implications for Mbeki and race, particularly when one has to ask the questions: For how long does he need to continue to embrace the terms that injure him before there is some liberation? For how long does there have to be the reiteration of the norms of race? Butler does point out that the subject can take on norms in unpredictable ways. In other words, there are always choices. This is why she makes the distinction between the subject and the individual. These are not two interchangeable entities. As indicated, the subject is a site occupied by the individual.

While Butler mainly applies her theories of subjection to gender, culture and philosophy, I use her tools of analysis for Mbeki's relationship to the signifier, race.

Butler's theories overlap with Žižek's on many levels. For example, how the signifier, in this case "race", becomes the master signifier, as well as the issue of "psychic excess". Her concept of reflexivity is important too in that the pursuit of wretchedness and attachment to it is both the condition and potential for undoing subjection.¹⁸

I intend to show that Butler's central point that no subject emerges without a psychical and passionate attachment to norms, the very norms that subjugate it, can be directly applied to race.

This also tallies with Žižek's theory of "unconscious fantasy" theory. In a blend of psychoanalysis, politics and philosophy, he tackles the concept of the unconscious – of how things must seem, objectively, to the subject, even if they don't appear that way to

¹⁸ Butler (1997:61)

the (same) subject. Žižek discusses the concept of the “unconscious fantasy” using racism as an example, that of anti-Semitism or the paranoid construction of the Jew, or of “Jew” being a fetish, and a social symptom. He argues that negativity is projected on to the figure of the Jew, who is thus labelled: sly, greedy, dirty, lying, cheating and so forth. Fantasy, writes Peter Hudson¹⁹, subverts the standard objective/subjective distinction. Fantasy is not ‘objective’ in the naïve sense of existing independently of the subject’s perceptions, he argues. However, it is also not ‘subjective’ in the sense of being reducible to the subject’s conscious experience. Fantasy, belongs to the ‘bizarre category’ of the ‘objective-subjective’.

In “going through” the social fantasy, Žižek argues, Jews become the social symptom, the point at which it becomes obvious that society does not work – they are therefore responsible for all societal ills. In other words, if it were not for Jews all would be well in society, thus making Jews into scapegoats. Žižek argues that we must recognise in the properties attributed to the Jews, in the “excesses” attributed to them, the truth about ourselves (or the truth about those who attribute these excesses).

Race constitutes a large part of Mbeki’s traumatic reference, in ‘white’ is the social symptom, and if he loses this reference, he would lose his identity and even his “enjoyment”. I intend to show in Chapter 4: Letters from the President that whites, and others who do not agree with him, are social symptoms in Mbeki’s discourse.

¹⁹ Hudson (2005) unpublished presentation to the WISER symposium: Rethinking the Social: Psychoanalytical Approaches: University of the Witwatersrand September 2005

Zizek explains the Lacanian symptom as a “certain signifying formation, penetrated with enjoyment: it is a signifier as a bearer of *jouis-sense*, enjoyment-in-sense”²⁰. He elucidates this by explaining that the symptom is the way subjects are, to ‘avoid madness’, the way we choose something instead of nothing, through the binding of our enjoyment to a certain signifying, symbolic formation which assures a minimum of consistency to our being in the world – hence the identification with a symptom. Where there is an excessive binding to a symptom, there is rigidity. The clinging on to a symptom as though it were a lifeline, resonates with Butler’s theories of subjection – a turning back on oneself and the reiteration of the norms that oppress but constitute the subject. Confronted with the symptom, Zizek writes²¹, “we are always in a position of an impossible choice”. This, he continues, is illustrated by the well-known joke about the chief editor of one of Hearst’s newspapers: in spite of persuasion from Hearst, he did not want to take well-deserved leave. Zizek writes that when Hearst asked him why he did not want to go on leave, the editor replied that ‘I am afraid that if I were absent for a couple of weeks, the sales of the newspaper would fall; but I am even more afraid that in spite of my absence, the sales would *not* fall!’ . “This is the symptom: an element which causes a great deal of trouble, but its absence would mean even greater trouble: total catastrophe.”²²

The main concept of Zizek’s that I employ in this dissertation is the concept of the “rigid designator”. To explain this term, Zizek uses the anti-descriptivist analysis of Saul Kripke, that is - what is in the object more than the object, beyond that which describes it, in other words, more than its descriptive features - that constitutes its identity, “that is

²⁰ Zizek (1989:75)

²¹ Ibid p, 78

²² Ibid

to say, what is it that constitutes the objective correlative of the 'rigid designator'.²³ The rigid designator aims at what is in the object more than the object, at a surplus, produced by the signifying operation, writes Žižek. "The radical contingency of naming implies an irreducible gap between the Real and modes of its symbolization."²⁴

In Mbeki's case race functions as the ideological signifier, as the rigid designator, ie as circular and thus foreclosing *a priori* any empirical resistance. The definition of the signifier in Žižek is the circular definition he borrows from Jacques Lacan: a signifier is that which 'represents the subject for another signifier'.²⁵ In this definition, the signifier is that, in my symbolic representation, there is always a kind of surplus with regard to the concrete. "The master signifier is the unconscious *sinthome*, the cipher of enjoyment, to which the subject was unknowingly subjected."²⁶ This will be more fully deciphered in the course of the dissertation.

One of the direct results of this excess is the symptom, according to Žižek. In a similar way, the Jews were the social symptom for the racists in Europe at a particular point in time. In South Africa the social symptom for Mbeki are critics of the government, including – but not always – whites. Tutu is one such example. As I show in Chapter 3, by the end of Mbeki's criticism of Tutu, he is, in a convoluted and bizarre way, interpellated as a racist too. The need for political unity on Mbeki's part, and the excesses attached to race and the passion invested in the issue by Mbeki as seen in the Letters from the President as well as the HIV/Aids debate, are explored, using the concepts of Žižek and Butler.

²³ Žižek (1989:xiii)

²⁴ Ibid p97

²⁵ Žižek (2004:132) *Iraq: the borrowed kettle*: Verso London New York

²⁶ Ibid (2004:142)

Another important theoretical notion framing this investigation is the issue of democracy and tolerance verses the need for political unity and loyalty. The debate between Tutu and Mbeki over transformation and debate itself is an example illustrating this dynamic. The reason for including this issue is that it illustrates how race can be stretched to excessive limits – Mbeki, in a convoluted way, ends up calling Tutu a racist, an elitist and a puppet in white hands²⁷.

Using Mouffe's arguments on democracy and tolerance and the distinction between adversaries and antagonists, it is argued that Mbeki's clash with Tutu reiterates his passionate attachment to race. Mbeki does not make any distinction between antagonists and adversaries, legitimate or otherwise. Mouffe²⁸ argues for legitimate dissent among friends: "The category of the adversary is crucial to re-defining liberal democracy in a way that does not negate the political in its antagonistic dimension." For Mouffe, although adversaries fight against each other this does not put into question the legitimacy of their respective positions. Her analysis that democratic debate is not a deliberation aimed at reaching *the one* rational solution to be accepted by all but rather a confrontation by adversaries is an important one for this dissertation. The issue relates to inclusion and exclusion and to the concept of "consensus" and "loyalty", and can be clearly seen in Mbeki's attack on Tutu, in his Letters from the President where he talks of "us and them", and in his handling of the HIV/Aids issue. Zizek explains Laclau and Mouffe's thesis on democracy and what it entails: "A pluralistic democratic order supposes that the opponent is not seen as an enemy to be destroyed, but as an adversary whose existence is legitimate and must be tolerated. We will fight against his/her ideas, but we will not put into question his/her right to defend them...An

²⁷ See Chapter 3: The key issues of Mbeki's Presidency for the Mbeki/Tutu debate

²⁸ Mouffe (1999:4)

adversary is a legitimate enemy, with whom we have a shared adhesion to the ethico-political principles of democracy. But our disagreement concerning their meaning and implementation is not one that can be resolved through rational agreement, hence the antagonistic element in the relation.”²⁹ What Mouffe grapples with in her argument with Carl Schmitt is the issue of the political unity of the state, pluralism, democracy and tolerance. Schmitt’s thesis challenges the belief that there is in politics today a blurring of left and right, friend and enemy. In tackling the blindspots and deadlocks of liberalism today, Mouffe argues that while it might be necessary to “constitute the people politically”, antagonisms will not disappear. This is not the same as denying the possibility of any form of pluralism within the realm of politics. She argues for a distinction between legitimate adversaries and antagonists with the key task facing democratic politics today to make room for conflictual pluralism, given the “increasing fragmentation of identities and the multiplication of new forms of conflictuality”.³⁰

In Mouffe’s critique of Schmitt, there is potential and there are possibilities in pluralism. She rejects Schmitt’s fears of “the loss of common premises and consequent destruction of the political unity which he sees as inherent in the pluralism that accompanies mass democracy”.³¹ This argument of Schmitt has echoes with Mbeki’s discourse.

IV. Theories of Discourse

To discuss the role of race in Mbeki’s discourse, it is necessary to outline what discourse is and how meanings are constructed. Diane Macdonell³² argues that the field of discourse is not homogeneous. Discourse is social, and the “statement made, the words used and the meanings of the words used, depends on where and against what the

²⁹ Zizek (2004:89)

³⁰ Mouffe (1999:5)

³¹ Mouffe (1999:50)

³² Macdonell (1986:54)

statement is made". She draws on the works of Pecheux, for whom "words, expressions, propositions etc, change their meaning according to the positions held by those who use them"³³ and "conflicting discourses develop, therefore, even when where there is supposedly common language".

Macdonell³⁴ cites examples of the words "rights" and "liberty" and shows how within different ideological frameworks, liberal and conservative, these terms take on substantially different meanings. In other words, words do not have universal meanings that change over time. At any given moment, the same word can hold different meanings.

Pecheux³⁵ argues that meanings are part of the "ideological sphere" and discourse is one of ideology's principal forms. He constructs his argument on the basis of Althusser's concept of the Ideological State Apparatuses and proposes that "ideological struggle traverses the whole of discourse".

For Pecheux and Macdonell³⁶ meaning is not intrinsic but exists antagonistically: "it comes from positions in struggle, so that words change their meaning according to positions from which they are used".

For example, in Conservative discourse, "liberties", "rights" and "natural" are often tied to inheritance. "Liberty" can be regarded as a noble freedom, and rights are synonymous with privilege³⁷.

³³ See also Norval (1996:3), who argues that discourse is not a passive medium which merely reflects 'pre-discursive experiences' or objective interests. "... no discourse succeeds entirely in concealing its socially constructed and, therefore, ultimately contingent nature".

³⁴ Macdonell (1986:50)

³⁵ *ibid* (1986:46)

³⁶ *ibid* pp47

Macdonell³⁸ cites a study with two sets of students who all hailed from the same social class – the French petite bourgeoisie. In analysing a particular text, which was ambiguous but contained the same words and phrases, such as “planning”, “political change”, “radical reform” and “government action”, the two groups construed different meanings. One group used the word “planning” to focus on the need for planning of consumption and the other focused on the idea of centralised planning pertaining to production. Macdonell concludes that universal semantics is impossible outside the realm of politics and ideology.

Pecheux³⁹ discusses Althusser’s work on subject and meaning. “Like all evident facts, including those that make a word ‘name a thing’ or ‘have a meaning’ (therefore including the fact of the transparency of language), the ‘evident fact’ that you and I are subjects – and that does not cause any problems, is an ideological effect, the elementary ideological effect.” Quoting Althusser, Pecheux⁴⁰ says that the “masses are not a subject”. “You cannot hold the masses and say, that’s it”, something that is “identifiable by the unity of its personality”. As Butler argues too, an individual and a subject are not interchangeable entities, an individual does not precede a subject and a subject is a site occupied by the individual.

Pecheux’s thesis drawing on the work of Althusser, whose central thesis is that ‘Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects’, is important in analysing Mbeki’s discourse on race particularly in relation to the role of ideology in discourse as well as on the issue of meanings and contingency. According to this thesis it is indeed the ‘non subject’ that is interpellated-constituted as subject by Ideology. The paradox is precisely that

³⁷ ibid pp50

³⁸ ibid pp53

³⁹ Pecheux (1982:16)

⁴⁰ ibid pp88

interpellation has, as it were, a *retroactive effect*, with the result that every individual is 'always-already a subject'.⁴¹ Althusser explains what he means by this in his thesis Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation), "the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology only in so far as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects".⁴² He explains the paradox or double bind thus: the person who is writing these lines, and the person who is reading them are themselves subjects, and therefore ideological subjects. This tautological proposition, he explains, is that the author and the reader both live in 'spontaneously' or 'naturally' in ideology, in the sense in which he has asserted that 'man is an ideological animal by nature'. As Pecheux⁴³ says, there are ideological effects in all discourses, because "words, expressions ...change their meanings according to the positions held by those who use them".

As a final example of how meanings are contingent, David Theo Goldberg⁴⁴, in a chapter Truth Reference and the Pragmatics of (Racial) Meaning, writes: "How in any but context-bound pragmatic ways would one distinguish between the referentiality **and** admissibility of claims like 'Nigger do as I command!' issued by a white person in Jim Crowe Georgia, and 'Nigger, please!' addressed ironically or castigatingly by one black person to another, between, 'Don't act like a nigger' expressed by white teacher to a student, (white or black), and 'Never use the word "nigger" addressed by a mother, (black or white)?"

Turning to the South African current socio-political environment, what is critical to the issue of ideology is the question of identity. Will identity always be based on race, and

⁴¹ Pecheux (eds 1994:148)

⁴² Althusser (eds 1994: 129)

⁴³ Pecheux (1982:111)

⁴⁴ Goldberg (1998:236),

thus be closed, or is it possible for more open and fluid identity in post-apartheid South Africa⁴⁵? Will race be one of many floating signifiers, or ordinary signifiers, or will it remain in some discourses, a master signifier, rigidly designated and to which all meanings are tied?

The crucial question to be asked is “if race is an effect of apartheid, then can the change from apartheid (the cause) eliminate the emphasis on race (the effect)? In other words, if institutionalised apartheid has been quashed, are the effects of apartheid over?” The obvious answer is no. Racism can be reproduced. This can take the form of overt racism, residual racism or reverse racism (in the latter case, the formerly oppressed can imitate their old oppressors).

III. Race in South Africa today

The Freedom Charter in 1955, which declared that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, became a guiding document for non-racial unity for the African National Congress in the struggle for democracy. The Charter was formulated through a collection of demands and represented an alternative vision for a new society free from racial oppression.

Yet, the very term “non-racialism” is difficult to define. As mentioned briefly in the introductory chapter, the “rainbowism” of the Mandela era was idealistic and did little, if anything, to engage with the issue of transformation. The rainbow metaphor conjured an image of all South Africans as equal citizens before the law, living in non-racial harmony without acknowledging the deep divisions and inequalities left after decades of

⁴⁵ See also Howarth and Norval (1998:3) “...instead of either reducing “race” to class, or assuming race to have the status of a natural category, analyses have increasingly begun to focus on processes of ‘racialisation’, that is, on the historical and political formation and deployment of categories of race and ethnicity ...has led to a renewed investigation of the politico-historical processes through which these identities are produced and have structured the political landscape.”

apartheid. The key concepts during the period of the Mandela emancipatory project of 1994-1999 were 'reconciliation', 'nation building' and 'non-racialism'. The slogan of the time, which has echoes of multicultural theory, was one nation, many cultures – the celebration of diversity. The difference between Mandela and Mbeki's emphasis is encapsulated in a quote by Jeremy Cronin, one of South Africa's major left-wing theoreticians, 'Mandela leads by example. Mbeki leads by seeking to articulate a vision.'" from William Gumede's book⁴⁶:

The upshot was that Mandela, with his emphasis on unity and alleviating white fears and insecurities, did not engage in transformation issues, making non-racialism, in a sense, an empty place. How non-racialism would be realised was not engaged with during the adoption of the Freedom Charter, nor was it elucidated on during the Mandela era. However, the way in which Mbeki has sought, and continues to seek, this vision in his transformation project is up for scrutiny in this dissertation. How is the paradox of transforming the country married with the project of non-racialism?

Moodley and Adam⁴⁷ capture the tension of race in politics today: "Paradoxically, with the death of legal racism racial assertiveness abounds. To overcome these legacies a new counter-racist consciousness has emerged, particularly among the elite. In the new South Africa, there are more exclusively black professional organisations and black business lobbies than in the apartheid state. Social integration is not even regularly practised at the elite level, let alone among the still residentially poor." While this presents the paradox succinctly, it is also perhaps rather pessimistic about transformation and non-racialism.

⁴⁶ Gumede (2005)

⁴⁷ Moodley and Adam (2000)

Constitutional Court judge Albie Sachs, quoted by Norval⁴⁸, speaking on non-racialism in the Charter, captures the essence of the problem when he states, “We give the last word to freedom, yet we know not what it is. This is the central irony of the deep passionate struggle in South Africa – that *it is for something that exists only in relation to what it seeks to eliminate.*”⁴⁹

Equally, if one accepts Sachs’ comment, the concept of non-racialism can be deemed to be defined not only by what it seeks to promote, but also by what it wishes to overcome. “In this sense, ‘the other’ of non-racialism, is apartheid, a highly over-determined signifier”, which links together forms racial oppression and economic exploitation, according to Norval⁵⁰.

Norval captures this dissertation’s perspective on non-racialism in her proposal that, “If apartheid is not only a precise and historically determinate mode of social division, but also an identitary logic which attempts to resist the never-ending quest for identification by fixing boundaries between identities for all time, then the central question with regard to non-racialism concerns the extent to which it will be able to foster and sustain difference in such a manner as to keep spaces open for identification within a democratic order,”⁵¹ is important. This has echoes of the Butlerian “resignification” possibilities. In other words, identity need not remain fixed. There can be new possibilities and unpredictable ways of repeating norms. Indeed the statement resonates with Žižek’s theory too, when he argues about how Jews became the social symptom

⁴⁸ Norval (1996:293)

⁴⁹ Norval (1996:293)

⁵⁰ *ibid* pp293

⁵¹ *ibid*

and how the through ideology certain social fantasies permeate society and serve to glue it together.

In an investigation of race during the first decade of democracy (post-1994) in South Africa, Erasmus⁵² investigates three dimensions to the issue of race. She considers race as a political and socio-historical construct and challenges the notion that the term has any fixed biological construct or cultural bias. This does not, however, make it an illusion. Most South Africans, Erasmus⁵³ argues, would say that racism is a disease to be cured or an evil practice to be eradicated.

She argues that indeed race intersects with other areas of inequality. Taking the argument further, however, with the creation of a new class in South Africa, the black petit bourgeoisie, the old context has changed. Erasmus⁵⁴ states that "...when race intersects with class, its impact on the lives of poor black people in South Africa is different from that on wealthier black people, producing different experiences of race among black people".

Erasmus⁵⁵ also points out that the implementation of legislation to end racist practices "continues to be a site of division and exclusion among South Africans". Her third argument is that measures adopted in response to racial inequalities, such as BEE, have had unintended consequences. She says, for example, such measures have had little impact on the upliftment of the working class and the poor and have benefited a small section of blacks. Erasmus warns that race is not however, irrelevant, nor should we adopt a colour-blind approach, the way the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) is

⁵² Erasmus (2004:9)

⁵³ Erasmus (2004:28)

⁵⁴ ibid pp10

⁵⁵ ibid pp7

sometimes purported to do “as a defence to protect privilege”⁵⁶. On the contrary, she refers to Goldberg’s argument⁵⁷ that this would mean giving up on race before and without addressing the legacy, the roots, and the scars of racism’s histories. However, on the flipside of the “let’s forget about race”⁵⁸ and “move on” approach, is the “let’s hold on to race and make sure it determines everything we do” approach. For Erasmus, this is over-deterministic, limiting and imprisoning⁵⁹.

The most significant change in South African society since the 1990s, Erasmus⁶⁰ argues, using Jeremy Seekings and Nicola Nattrass’s analysis, has been the increasing and rapid growth of the black middle classes so that in South Africa today one cannot assume that blackness equates to disadvantage. But, “...while the new black African elite may have been able to escape race discrimination, poor black Africans remain its victim”.⁶¹ There must be new ways to deal with the race issue other than “moralising discourses” of good and bad, “us and them”, which tend to be exclusionary. For instance, Erasmus⁶² suggests we should acknowledge race as an issue to be dealt with, but critically engage with it in an open manner while abandoning political correctness. She argues that through reflective practice while abandoning the use polar opposite could emerge a more constructive way of working with race.

⁵⁶ *ibid* pp23

⁵⁷ *ibid* pp22

⁵⁸ See Anthea Jeffrey, in *the Mail & Guardian* 25-31 August 2001: The fight against racism must be colour-blind, who argued, *grosso modo*, the DA position on race: “The fight against racism should be colour-blind.” Jeffrey wrote: “It was the moral vision of a colour-blind society that was finally attained in 1994 under a Constitution that entrenched equality before the law. Now the colour-blind ideal is being undermined by a shift towards the new conception of racism.” In fact Jeffrey is incorrect. The Constitution makes provision for affirmative action to redress imbalances of the past, and does not argue for a “colour-blind society”.

⁵⁹ Erasmus (2004:29)

⁶⁰ *ibid* pp12

⁶¹ Seekings and Nattrass (2004:11) show that incomes of the richest 10% of African households rose by 17%, whilst incomes of the poorest 40% of these households fell by 21%.

⁶² Erasmus (2004:29)

Erasmus refers to Mbeki's position on HIV/Aids⁶³, which will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5: Thabo Mbeki and the issues of HIV/Aids and Race. She observes that in defence of the government's position on HIV/Aids and its initial reluctance to provide anti-retroviral medication, Mbeki accuses activists protesting in favour of such medication of racist assumptions about black Africans. Erasmus⁶⁴ writes, "President Mbeki works with race in a way that suggests anyone who holds alternative views to and is critical of the government, by implication, holds Eurocentric racist views of black Africans." In her argument then, this would not be the most constructive way of dealing with race.

This above explication of the theories of Butler and Zizek *vis-à-vis* passionate attachment and the rigid designator respectively will be deployed in the analysis; as will the theories of Mouffe in relation to pluralism and democracy. The arguments of Norval and Erasmus form the backdrop of the South African context of race and non-racialism. These theories will be "operationalised" through the analysis of Mbeki's discourse. First we need to chart Mbeki's rise to power within the ANC.

⁶³ Erasmus (2004:26) quotes Mbeki in 2001: "Others who consider themselves to be our leaders take to the streets carrying their placards, to demand that because we are germ carriers, and human beings of a lower order that cannot subject our passions to reason, we must perforce adopt strange opinions, to save a depraved and diseased people from perishing from self-inflicted disease."

⁶⁴ Erasmus (2004:26)