

Abstract

In this dissertation several instances of President Mbeki's discourse are identified and shown to reveal an excessive attachment, or "passionate attachment" to 'race' as a marker of social and political identity. It is proposed that this is a pattern cutting across different (discursive) interventions by the President. The interventions examined include: Letters from the President, Mbeki's Two Nations' Theory, Black Economic Empowerment, African Renaissance, Nepad and HIV/AIDS.

Several theorists have been referred to in order to begin putting together a conceptual theoretical framework with which to clarify and account for this emergent pattern. The conceptual framework adumbrated here and employed in the analysis of Mbeki's discourse borrows heavily from Butler and Žižek in particular. The concept of "passionate attachment" comes from Butler and those of "rigid designator" and "social fantasy" from Žižek. Use is made of these theoretical references in order to start accounting for the compulsion that characterizes these discursive interventions which are always in some respect 'inappropriate' or in 'excess' of expectations. They also seem self enclosed and to play a very specific role in Mbeki's discourse. It is in this connection that the concepts of "passionate attachment", "fantasy" and "rigid designator" are deployed.