

# **Structuralism, Colonialism and Development: Understanding the interpellation of the black subject in South Africa**



A Dissertation in Political Studies Presented

by

**ANANDINI DABAS**

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Under the esteemed supervision of  
Dr Stephen Louw

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Studies at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree in any other university.

*ADabas*

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Signature of Candidate

11 May 2018

## **Abstract**

Today a large percentage of the black elite in South Africa have identified with the ideology of the white coloniser and in doing so is reproducing the effects of colonialization albeit in a free and fair democratic country. Structuralist and post-structuralist discourse both provide the conceptual tools that enable the articulation of the subject under the colonial and developmental symbolic. Colonialism is conceived as an overdetermined and asymmetric differential relation and takes forward the understanding of both coloniser and colonised and the structure of their historical trajectories as political subjects. Development as a discourse is undertaken for the Americanisation of the global landscape has rendered the economic as the principal determination of society. Furthermore, the development of the subject is affected by nodal points in history, for example, the effect of liberalism, Marxism and democracy. These dominant discourses intertwine and reveal four principal identifications and experiences of the black colonised subject. The presentation of the four identifications of the black colonised subject is undertaken chronologically from 1962 to present. These identifications include the elementary position of the black subject suffering from subjective destitution; the black colonised subject identifying with the white coloniser but being further pushed into the Real and Steve Biko's positivised black subject. Fourth and lastly, today at a conscious level a very significant number of black citizens have succeeded in moving beyond the elementary colonial definition of who they are as blacks and have enthusiastically embraced the identity the Constitution offers them. But it would be a mistake to think that this signals the eclipse of colonial forms of identification. On the one hand, there are blacks who because of the way they behave towards other blacks, must at some level believe they are white. Consciously, they are empirical black agents who define themselves in non-racial universalist terms but without realising it, they themselves desire to be white and identify with whiteness. On the other hand, the majority of blacks are being treated as they were under colonial conditions, but this time by their black counterparts. The Economic Freedom Fighters push forth an agenda that emancipates the black subject from colonisation via a program of economic liberation.

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## **Abbreviation List**

AMP - Asiatic Mode of Production

ANC – African National Congress

BC – Black Consciousness

BCM – Black Consciousness Movement

C/L – Capital/Labour

CMP - Capitalist Mode of Production

CR – Colonial Relation

CST – Colonialism of a Special Type

DA – Democratic Alliance

EFF – Economic Freedom Fighters

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HSS – Hegemony and Socialist Strategy

IDL – International Division of Labour

IMF - International Monetary Fund

ISA – Ideological State Apparatus

LDC – Late Developing Country

ND – National Democratic

NDR – National Democratic Struggle

NP – Nationalist Party

RSA – Repressive State Apparatus

SA – South Africa

SACP – South African Communist Party

SV – Surplus Value

TRC- Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UN - United Nations

UN ECLA - United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America

UP – United Party

US – United States

WB - World Bank

WST – World Systems Theory

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## **Introduction**

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate how structure, colonialism and development interpellate the black South African subject. The subject-centric nature of this project offers a novel perspective in the understanding of the subject within each topic, for as they build and stack atop one another, an occultation is formed that produces a holistic understanding of the black colonised subject.

The rationale behind understanding the interpellation of the South African black colonised subject under colonialism is because, as is argued, South Africa has inherited a colonial infrastructure in spite of having an alternate political party in power. While apartheid as a regime is declared over, colonialism and apartheid are often conflated and this acts to the detriment of the black colonised subject existing in a democratic narrative and discourse. In the absence of accepting that the post-apartheid regime is a continuation of colonialism there cannot be an acute, critical and holistic understanding of the psychology of the black colonised subject and this in turn affects the decision-making process of the black elite subject in power.

Development as a discourse is undertaken for principally two reasons: firstly, the Americanisation of the global landscape has rendered the economic as the principal determination of society. Insofar as the social and political factors, regimes and systems effect and interpellate the subject, the subject is ultimately determined by its economic position that cuts across multiple axes from daily familial life, to occupancy in a regional landscape and the concomitant associated opportunities, to a global narrative where positionality and opportunities are dependent upon Gross Domestic Product. The second reason that development is analysed is because of its treatment of the subject. As will be discussed later, the Westerns worlds treatment of the subject was either of a self-actualised, liberated, independent entity who has complete control of his destiny, or the subject was not taken into account at all. The treatment of the subject by the Western world intensely affected(s) the matrix of interpellation that the subject exists in.

Structuralist and post-structuralist discourse both provide the conceptual tools that enable to articulation of the subject under the colonial and developmental symbolic. What does Althusser

have to offer when it comes to a theory of South African colonialism and its systemic mutations? Firstly, Althusser provides an anti-essentialist and relational social ontology that is foundational and integral to this project. Althusser's theory of the differential constitution of social identity is utilised to understand colonialism and the coloniser-colonised relationship. Secondly, Althusser's concept of interpellation or hailing demonstrates that the very structure that is the cause of consciousness for and of the subject effaces its own presence and is invisible or absent in virtue of its very structurality. What is left is an effect – the subject of consciousness – which takes itself to be *causa sui*. However, there are limits to the conceptual equipment Althusser provides, in particular, a conception of the subject of transformation or emancipation that is foreclosed in Althusser's ideological subject of repetition and reproduction. Hence the work of Ernesto Laclau is analysed for the distinction between the subject before interpellation and Althusser's ideological subject.

A difference from Althusser subject without agency to Laclau's subject with agency is required in order to be able to account for the determinant shifts in the colonial relation, that is, to account for the emergence of new forms of subjectivity of the coloniser and colonised that punctuate South African history. Structuralist and Post-structuralist theory thus provide the framework and conceptual tools required to proficiently analyse who the black colonised subject is. They furthermore deepen the understanding of colonialism as understood by Frantz Fanon. Colonialism is conceived as a differential relation, one which is moreover overdetermined and asymmetric and takes forward the understanding of both coloniser and colonised and the structure of their historical trajectories as political subjects. This clears the way for an analysis of South African society which recognises that the Colonial Relation still dominates South African society and politics.

This approach is novel to the current body of literature where the subject is viewed in isolation of colonialism, where the subject is negated altogether in narratives of development because development is seen in a technocratic, *homo-economicus* directionality inept of the concept of the subject as *causa sui*. Furthermore, the development of the subject is affected by nodal points in history, for example, the effect of liberalism, Marxism and democracy. These dominant discourses intertwine and reveal four principal identifications and experiences of the black colonised subject.

The presentation of the four identifications of the black colonised subject is undertaken chronologically from 1962 to present. The chronology furthermore iterates the subject as a recipient and manifestation of dominant ideologies of time as well as a catalyst of change for its own sense of being.

The first position of the black colonised subject analysed is what is termed “subjective destitution”. Here it is argued that the advent of colonialization resulted in the eclipse of a sense of self by the black colonised subject that negated his identifications. This forms the elementary position of the colonised. It is thereafter argued that by remaining in a position of a non-identity, a lack, for that is what subjective destitution is, the black colonised subject identifies with the identity of the white colonizer. For the maintenance of his position, the colonizer does not allow this and the black colonised subject is plunged into even greater destitution than before. But, what also occurs is that the black colonised subject represses the desire to be white and stores it within his unconscious.

The third mutation of the subject under analysis, is one not premised on wanting to be the coloniser, but Steve Biko’s black positivised subject. Here Biko invests the term blackness with positivity and fights for installing a black subject of emancipated mind and action. The last and final mutation under analysis is that of the New Black Consciousness of Andile Mngximata and the Economic Freedom Fighters. In post 1994 South Africa, the signifier of universality of non-racialism is entrenched as a master signifier, both in the Constitution and the institutional apparatus of constitutional democracy. Today at a conscious level a very significant number of black citizens have succeeded in moving beyond the elementary or original colonial definition of who they are as blacks and have enthusiastically embraced the identity the Constitution offers them. But it would be a mistake to think that this development signals the eclipse of colonial forms of identification - what it really means is that today it has novel and often surprising ways of returning and resisting the universality of democratic citizenship. The consequence is a bifurcated black subject.

On the one hand, and this argument is propelled by Mngximata, there are blacks who because of the way they behave towards other blacks, must at some level believe they are white. Consciously,

they are empirical black agents who define themselves in non-racial universalist terms but without realising it, they themselves desire to be white, identify with whiteness which they cannot avow. On the other hand, and this argument is the basis for the existence and success of the Economic Freedom Fighters, the majority of blacks are being treated as they were under colonial conditions, but this time by their black counterparts. The Economic Freedom Fighters push forth an agenda that emancipates the black subject from colonisation via a program of economic liberation.

Thus, without understanding the simultaneous influence and impact of colonialism, neo-colonisation and development on the black subject in South Africa there is a large gap that is overlooked, one which, if not recognised and addressed in time could undo the efforts made by the black colonised subject thus far. This dissertation presents a holistic analysis of the significant interpellations of the subject within the mega-structures of colonialization and development as well as all the changes that occur with the transmutation of ideology, the subject and the structure. Structuralist and post-structuralist discourse heavily inform the development of the ideology of the identitarian mutation of the subject. Accordingly, Althusserian Structuralism is the point of departure for the analysis of the subject.

## **Chapter 1: Structure and Interpellation**

Chapter 1 commences with an explication of the concept of structure in Louis Althusser, drawing from Ferdinand de Saussure's conception of the differentiability of the signifier. Importantly it is argued that there is no resting point in a structure where self-sufficing can be reached – no point where identity to itself is finally achieved. A structure just is *sui generis* – it is not the expression or the extension of any identity whatsoever, internal or external to it. How does it hold up and reproduce itself then? Here there is a turn to the other dimension of Althusserian theory, viz the theory of ideological interpellation: the objective is to account for precisely this capacity for reproduction of a set of relations and the conceptual resources of structural causality again comes into the picture, via the absence and metonymic causality of structures. The very structure that is the proximate cause of consciousness for Althusser viz that of everyday discourse, effaces its own presence and is invisible or absent in virtue of its very structurality. What is left is an effect – the

subject of consciousness – which takes itself to be *causa sui*: that is, the subject of ideology is itself the product of the absent structures that constitutes it.

What Althusser terms concrete individuals are interpellated – summoned and inducted into places in the structures. These are only relational semi-identities but when concrete individuals are transformed into subjects via interpellation they live these contingent and inconsistent identities as if they were self-sufficient and autonomous, that is, full ego subjects. And the subject-form is precisely what frames all interpellation and identity formation according to Althusser.

Chapter 1 ends by identifying the impasse in Althusserian structuration and Chapter 2 deals with Ernesto Laclau and the Return of the Subject. Here the focus is on Laclau's distinction between the subject 'before' interpellation and the subject 'after' interpellation.

## **Chapter 2: The Return of the Subject**

As will be explained in the chapter, the distinction between the subject 'before' interpellation and the subject of ideology (between the subject of enunciation and the subject of statement) is conceptual before referring to distinct temporal moments in the constitution of subjectivity. And it does not refer either to the distinction between the concrete individual and the subject of ideology. The subject before interpellation refers to the moment in the practice of signification when a different meaning could have been produced. This subject, that is, the subject of lack who does not yet have an identity but is not extra-structural rather referring to an infra-structural dimension that Althusser misses. A successful interpellation thus depends as much on the decision by the subject of lack to identify as it does on the interpellation with which he identifies. By conceptually carving out a space within the parameters of structural-differential-causality for a subject that can disidentify from existing interpellations and reidentify with new ones, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek) make it possible to account for transformations in the structure of social identities and subjectivities. Without the possibility of drawing on this concept of the subject, the shifts in colonial subjectivity in South Africa that this paper identifies, cannot be accounted for.

In line with this reconceptualization of the subject, Laclau develops a series of novel conceptualisations of the ways in which structures are decomposed, undone and put together in a new way – including the concepts of articulation, dislocation, antagonism and hegemony. The subject *stricto sensu* is located between the indeterminacy of the social (revealed via antagonism and dislocation) and the determinate sedimented forms it has to assume, in between dissolution and reidentification.

### **Chapter 3: Creation of the Colonial Symbolic**

This chapter analyses the manner in which Europe was created, how the Dutch arrived in South Africa with an already superiorised image of self. The first Dutch colonisers brought the colonial symbolic with them – all that was lacking - and the colonisation of South Africa solved this - were black subjects who could fill their place in the colonial symbolic. The process of colonial interpellation is then sketched with a view to throw light on the specificity of the white colonial subject, to showing how the white coloniser comes to be “like the Althusserian Big Subject”, that is, self-referential and maximally self-sufficient. The structure retains its specificity via antagonisms, therefore for the white coloniser to occupy a position of the Althusserian Big Subject it needed an equivalent subject of lack. The delineation of the creation of the coloniser viz the creation of the colonised is taken further by the work of Fanon.

Here, Fanon’s presentation of the colonised as “inexistent” (1952: 139) in the eyes of the coloniser, as offering him “no ontological resistance” (Fanon, 1952: 110) is taken as the point of departure. To further elucidate how this conception of the colonial relation is developed an analysis of it qua Symbolic, Imaginary and Real which is taken from Žižek’s political reading of Jacques Lacan *How to Read Lacan*.

What is initiated in this chapter is an application of the conceptual tools of structuralist and post-structuralist rhetoric to the colonial relation and the subsequent identifications of the black

colonised subject viz the creation of the white coloniser. Essentially, this chapter examines the elementary position of “subjective destitution” experienced by the black colonised subject as the first displacement in the elementary position of the colonised viz. when he unconsciously identifies with whiteness as a way to escape his extreme ontological destitution. The repression of the desire to be white by the black subject features in the post-apartheid era and will be examined further in chapters 8 and 9.

#### **Chapter 4: Development as a new Modernity**

This chapter undertakes the critical analysis of development and its impact on the subject for the following reasons: the development narrative or what is termed the ‘Development Symbolic’ is a continuation of the colonial symbolic albeit in a new incarnation. What is the development symbolic and how is it a continuation of the colonial symbolic? The colonial symbolic is the negativised black colonized subject situated in the Real contrasted with the positivised white colonizer subject situated in the Imaginary, a structure with an absent Symbolic. While on the one hand, the development symbolic maintains the designations and signifiers of the colonial symbolic, on the other hand, under the development symbolic and introduction of capitalism there is, firstly, a subservience to the economic (economic pertains to the superstructural base as defined by Althusser), and secondly, capitalism introduces a Symbolic to the co-constitutionality of relations that shifts the identification from actual personal identification to identifications to the means of production. In the examination of development as a continuation of the colonial symbolic, is the actual means of how development instituted itself as a dominant hegemony. Here, the role of the creation of Gross Domestic Product, Modernisation Theory and Dependency Theory are analysed.

Modernisation Theory, like the colonial project, stripped and dissolved idiosyncrasies, history, cultural and religious practices of countries and directed an implementation of an economic model that would bring destined economic success if the implementation was correct. However, what becomes problematic with this *tabula rasa*/Blank Slate Approach is that the subject, under a particular policy, cannot be negated of itself. Modernisation Theory, by not taking the constitutive attachments and ideological matrix of the subject into account denies the subject of its humanism.

## **Chapter 5: Dependency Theory and the Subject**

Dependency theory suggests that the success of the richer countries was a highly contingent and specific episode in global economic history, one dominated by the highly exploitative colonial relationships of the European powers. A repeat of those relationships is not now highly likely for the poor countries of the world (Ferraro, 2008). In essence, Dependency Theory accounted for the failure of countries inability to rapidly develop on the international division of labour (created by colonialism and corroborated by capitalistic structures) that structurally undermine the development of Third World countries by First World countries. While, on the one hand, Dependency Theory contributes to the acknowledging of a country's history and its starting point in the drive to economic success/maturity, it falls prey to the same criticism of Modernization Theory – that is, it does not accord the subject a role to play in the articulation of its own future. Dependency theory posits the subject as an effect of the structure, not an overdetermined, differential agent. In doing so, Dependency theory eliminates agency, contingency and overdetermination of the structure. Dependency Theory reveals the structurality of the structure in interpellating the subject but proceeds to underscore the subject as a victim of its past and in doing so reduces to the subject to the Althusserian subject without agency.

The effects of liberalisms Modernisation Theory and Dependency Theory's Marxist perspective on the subject feed directly into the changes experienced in South Africa from the 1950's to the late 1970's. This is analysed in the following chapters.

## **Chapter 6: Colonialism and Capitalism in South Africa: Pre-apartheid and Apartheid**

### **- Pre-apartheid (late 1800s-1948)**

In this section examines the impact of the development of capitalism on white colonial subjectivity. On the one hand the position of the coloniser becomes split into English and Afrikaner, and, on the other, significant elements of those falling under Afrikaner fall perilously close to the abyss of

black colonised subjectivity itself. These are the co-ordinates of the structural collapse out of which apartheid eventually emerged.

### - **Apartheid**

In this section apartheid is considered both from the point of view of its historical emergence as well as that of its relationship to the elementary form of the colonial relation. Drawing, on particular, on Aletta Norval, David Howarth and Yannis Stavarakakis, it is argued that apartheid – because it involved even more destitution (if that was possible!), even more ontological devastation for the colonised – was in the end unable to establish the specific boundaries needed for its reproduction. By deepening what it is to start with the Achilles heel of colonialism, that is, the way the Real and its effect of undoing saturate the place of the colonised, Apartheid in effect opened itself up to being antagonised by the discursive exterior embodied in the signifier non-racialism. And 1994, in this perspective, is the third moment referred to earlier when colonial forms of identification are publicly jettisoned for the discourse of generic humanism (equality of citizens). But this does not mark the extinction of such colonial forms of identification. Repressed, but not destroyed, they maintain their pressure on democratic egalitarianism and this issue is taken up in the remaining sections.

## **Chapter 7: Theories of the South African Economy**

Chapter 7 is concerned, firstly, with clearing the way for an analysis of South African society which recognises that the colonial relation still dominates South African society and politics, and that has to be considered in itself, that is, as irreducible to capitalism, with which it nonetheless, of course, intersects. Having worked through the main liberal and Marxist theories of South African society this paper turns to Colonialism of a Special Type as coming as close as possible to such a conception of the *sui generis* character of colonial domination as well as that of the National Democratic Struggle aimed directly at the colonial (much less than at the capitalist) structure of South African society. This section furthermore maps Fanon onto Colonialism of a Special Type and then, shows that this Fanonian conception of colonialism, the colonial relation, is best grasped and strengthened by being understood as a differential symbolic relation.

## **Chapter 8: Democracy and the South African Subject**

In this section begins by outlining Claude Lefort's conception of democracy which is constructed out of the concept of the social as itself Symbolic in the sense frequently explained above. This explains why there is a focus on Lefort's theory of democracy to investigate the impact of the democratic symbolic on the colonial symbolic and vice-versa. It is from this conceptual platform that this paper then turns to the South African political landscape and its discursive struggles, looking at both empirically white and empirically black subjects. The principal aim is to bring out the complexity of the effects produced when democracy is coupled with colonialism. This chapter sketches the configurations of subject positions in contemporary South African politics with a focus on both the white fantasy of plenitude as well as that attached to the National Democratic Revolution as unconscious fantasy.

## **Chapter 9: Black Consciousness and New Black Consciousness**

Black Consciousness and New Black Consciousness constitute the third and fourth mutation of the black colonized subject. While Steve Biko's Black Consciousness signifier played a critical role in the re-thinking of a new signifier, it effaces itself due to the conceptual limitation it gets caught in. New black consciousness, by Andile Mngximata and the Economic Freedom Fighters develops in a post-apartheid era, where, firstly, the desire harbored by the black colonized subject to be white (the second position of the black colonized subject) is realized and manifested in the continued treatment of the black subject in a position of subordination. And secondly, the Economic Freedom Fighters mission in creating a positivised sense of self for the black colonised subject via a program of economic emancipation.

### **- Steve Biko's Black Consciousness theory**

Black consciousness, the subject of black consciousness, is only intelligible on condition that it involves the resignification of both white and black by the subject in the colonised. The positivisation of blackness that defines it is an indispensable moment in the constitution of black

subjects as non-racial, that is, as autonomous generic human subjects. But herein, lies the crucial problem with Black Consciousness. Is the subject position of black positivity and plenitude an end-point or part of a process that goes further? Does it result in a fetishism of race leading to a corresponding anti-colonial racist totalitarianism or, is it to be understood as creating the condition for its own disappearance in the “new humanism” (1952) to which Fanon refers? This ambiguity around the signifier “black consciousness” goes some way to accounting for the ascension to hegemony of the non-racial national democratic discourse of the Congress tradition. While Black Consciousness assisted in the installation of a non-racial signifier, the signifier of a positivised black subject resurfaces with the rise of the Economic Freedom Fighters.

#### - **Andile Mngxitama’s New Black Consciousness**

Chapter 9.2 examines the “new” black consciousness of Mngxitama and its relation to the black consciousness theory of Biko discussed in 9.1. In summary two points are made about the new black consciousness theory. Firstly, its novelty derives from the fact that it confronts a new political landscape in which significant numbers of black subjects have shifted unconsciously to a position where whiteness is dominant in their identity and not their own ‘blackness. Mngxitama does not himself however develop a conception of the subject able to perform and sustain this shift. Secondly, this paper makes the same criticism of Mngxitama as of Biko’s Black Consciousness viz that it is marked by a failure clearly to distinguish two senses of anti-white – one in the name of black plenitude, the other in the name of generic humanism for which all substantial predicates, such as race, are irrelevant.

#### - **Economic Freedom Fighters New Black Consciousness**

While Mngaximata points to the assimilation of a white identitarian logic adopted by the black elite that continues to treat majority of the black populace under the usual circumspect colonial conditions, the EFF draw on the dominance of the economic in determining society and focuses on creating a positivised black subject via economic emancipation. This differs from the account of the African National Congress whose emphasis on political and social emancipation qua

economic liberation causes them to not only maintain the status quo but also lose determination of enforcing the mandate of the National Democratic Revolution.

The simultaneous articulation of colonialism, development, capitalism and democracy serve every subject differently based on the historicity of a country, local region and familial relations. What is witnessed in the South African instance was an arresting of the racial signifier that operated to eliminate the agency of the subject and overdetermination of the structure. The enforcement of conditions under development and the inheriting of a colonial infrastructure in a post-apartheid era results in the emphasis of structures, bureaucracy and institutions to accord the subject agency and self-determination, and in doing the subject itself is negated of its humanism and it effaces itself as an object of change. This is why democratic conditions work temporarily in according the black colonised subject identity, but an economic driven approach is required because the structure is currently premised on that exactly. Without the black colonised subject receiving any type of mass economic opportunities, the black elite who currently hold power will continue to not transform the infrastructure under which the country was run and will continue to enjoy the feeling of plenitude offered by the Imaginary. This is not to say that mass self-totalisation via economic, political and social conditions will occur, but it will work to create symmetry to the skewed system of relations.



## Chapter 1: Althusserian Structuralism

Structuralism developed in France in the 1950s and 1960s through the work of intellectuals in the various fields of anthropology, literary studies, intellectual history and Marxist cultural theory (Gilles, 2002). Structuralists consider how the structures of which we are unconscious – such as language, the psyche and society – operate and how they influence culture and, by extension, us (Culler, 1982: 89). Although he refused to be labelled a structuralist, Althusser is noted for influencing structuralism by not only providing a “symptomatic reading” (Hudson, 1995: 243) of Marx’s early and later writings, but also for discovering an “epistemological break” between the two (Hudson, 1995). Whilst Marx related all aspects of human life to the base or superstructure of economic production, Althusser envisaged a tripartite base composed of economic, politico-legal and ideological practices. Focusing on ideology, which is defined as “the lived relation between persons in the world, in other words, the way that relations are pre-reflectively experienced.” (Hudson, 1995: 282), Althusser in *Essays on Ideological State and Apparatuses* appropriated and transformed the notion of ideology established by Marx and endeavoured to develop a systematic theory of how a supposed abstract system perpetuates itself through its occupants and demonstrated how it operates within a capitalist society.

This chapter will focus on how, through the combinatory effects of structure and ideology, a concrete individual is transformed into an ideological subject and in doing so ensures the stability of society. We specifically look at the role of ideology in creating a social imaginary and the conceptual equipment and infrastructure needed for the optimum functioning of the structure and dissemination of ideology. We use this to analyse not only relations within South Africa, but the impact of global relations and its idiosyncratic outcome when interpenetrated by the South African colonizer and colonised. Without ideology and its accompanying infrastructure there is an inability to account for the ideological tightness and interconnectedness of a global society, as well as, and most importantly, the differentiations of the system in South Africa. Althusser is thus the point of departure.

Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* was instrumental in establishing and showing how and why language is one of the primary structures which is fundamental to how meaning is generated and shaped. This, he achieved, by firstly distinguishing between the synchronic and diachronic strands of linguistic theory. The former perspective considers language as a system of related terms without reference to time whilst the latter perspective refers to the evolutionary dimension of language over time (Saussure, 1974: 81). Privileging the former, Saussure's second major contribution can be captured in his proposition: "Language is a system of signs expressing ideas" (Saussure, 1974: 15). Language as a system of signs or *langue*, alludes to the set of linguistic rules that the speaker needs to adhere to in order to communicate successfully. This "sum of word-images stored in the minds of all individuals" (Saussure, 1983: 13-5) is contrasted with speech or *parole* which refers to the act of speaking. Coherent writing and speech is only made possible through the primary/basic element of language, namely, the sign. Signs are composed of the linking together of a sound-image (signifier) to a concept (signified) (Saussure, 1981: 65-7).

The third key aspect of Saussure's development involves the arbitrary nature of the sign by which he denotes there is no natural relationship between the signifier and signified thereby allowing different sound-images to be attached to a concept. To illustrate this point, Levi-Strauss (1972: 17-22) uses the French word *bricoleur* and *bricolage* to account for the way myths are constructed as will later be discussed. The fourth aspect of Saussure's theory concerns the differential logic that establishes coherence within the linguistic system. "A system is made up of relations. The sounds, or written images, and the meanings of a language exist only in their relations to each other." (Macdonell, 1986: 9). What this means is that each sign gains its identity through its difference to other signs, that is, what the sign is not. For example, the colour green gets its identity from its difference to blue, to yellow to purple. Thus all identities within the linguistic system of signs are conceived in terms of its relational and differential negative values. Thus, "The value of a word is not determined merely by the idea that it represents, but by the contrasts inherent in the system of elements that constitute language (*langue*)." (Howarth, 2000: 21).

Althusser's innovation lies in his having taken this concept of differential identity and recasting it upon the Marxist conception of the relations of production, as capitalism is a system of relations. Althusser's concept of differential identity is critical for the colonial relation and later capitalisms interaction with the colonial symbolic. Casting aside theoretical humanism in which determinate social forms or totalities express the essence of Man, the Marxist equivalent being Species Being, Althusser instead proposes a conception of capitalism as a differential relation, that is, a symbolic or overdetermined relation, the terms of which only acquire any determinate value in the virtue of their reciprocal determination in relation: none of the terms of the capitalist relations of production (capitalist class; working class; means of production) has a determinate identity until and unless locked together in a specific way. None is self-sufficient, including the working class which is thus barred from becoming avant-garde of the species.

A symbolic relationship is thus without foundation and hence faces the problem of unstabilisation or sedimentation. And here, as is already hinted, is where Althusser's theory of ideology becomes relevant – for that is what it is, viz a theory of how this inherently unstable structure achieves sufficient stability to be able to reproduce itself. No element in a differential relation is itself self-sufficient; neither the elements nor the relations is necessary – such a relational semi-identity is contingent and *sui-generis*, that is, it is not an epiphenomenon or something else. It is precisely this complex tension between interdependence and independence that Althusser means by “structural causality” and “overdetermination” as will be discussed below.

### **1.1 Thesis I: Ideology is a representation of the Imaginary Relations of Individuals to their Real Conditions of Existence**

Like Marx, Althusser believes that ideology can only operate through the capitalist system of production because it is within this system that antagonistic relations of production are produced between the capitalist and working class (Althusser, 1971: 137). Two fundamental characteristics of this class relation is the infrastructural (economic) and super-structural (legal-political and ideological) (Althusser, 1971: 137). The former characteristic pertains to society's determination in the last instance by the economic, which as will later be seen, holds several problems for Althusser and his endeavour to emancipate his thought from the Marxist clutches of the economic,

whilst the latter ensures the perpetuation of the system. It is therefore through ideology that the class struggle and the conditions of exploitation and reproduction are maintained (Althusser, 1971: 137).

What Althusser does is attempt to conceive the social in these differential terms rather than in the essentialist terms of theoretical humanism. The differential relation is what holds society together. It is the heart of the subjects' interactions within one another and the society in which it exists in, hankers for and envisions. By understanding the nature of relations as differential, what Althusser does is allow for contingency within a system and not a system or structure that is caught up in its own self. The basis of the differential relation, is that not only does it cause a perpetuation of society but is also introduces a certain degree of independence that enables the subject to determine its own future vis-à-vis being caught in an essentialised structure that pins down the subject continuously. This dialectical relation between the construction of the subject by the structure and the construction of ideology by the subject not only forms Althusser's third theses on ideology, but, also accounts for changes that punctuate history and is the site of the mutation of the subjects' identity. It is for these points precisely that Althusser is drawn on to assist in defining the colonial landscape in South Africa.

Employing Saussure's theory of structure, within the capitalist system of relations, the capitalist class and working class obtain their identities through their difference to one another. "Neither the working class nor the capitalist class exist outside of their respective relations to the means of production. Nor do they exist outside of their relations in which they stand vis-à-vis each other as a result of their respective relations to the means of production." (Althusser, 1971: 261). This is further enabled through an attribute of metonymic causality: structural causality.

Importantly, no element in a structure is self-sufficient, meaning, no element is able to transcend the system since its identity is constituted and is part of the interconnected whole. "All elements exist in a state of tension and incompleteness in which they are simultaneously independent of and dependent on one another." (Hudson, 1995: 244). Structural causality or "the effectivity of a

structure on its elements” (Althusser, 1970: 129) ensures that all elements are expressions of other elements within a specific faculty/instance (economic, political, ideological). The structural cause has no existence outside the relations defining the elements themselves, but this existence is “non-localisable” and invisible (Hudson, 1995: 266). The combined effects of structural and metonymic causality is the misrecognition effect. Metonymic causality is derived from the term metonym “the substitution of the name of an attribute for that of the thing meant, for example, crown for king.” (Hudson, 1995: 266). Metonymic causality is thus defined as “the cause is invisible by virtue of its relation or structure.” (Althusser, 1970: 188-9). Metonymic causality acts in such a way that a part of a structure is seen to denote and encapsulate the entire structure. This assists significantly in producing the misrecognition effect.

Ideology is able to make invisible and distort the true definite identity of its subjects through the mechanism of metonymic causality. To ensure the naturalness of the effects of ideology, ideology never presents itself but acts through metonyms. Inferring from Saussure, same-natured elements obtain their identity through differences to one another - within the capitalist system, the capitalist class acquires its identity by virtue of its difference to the working class and the working class acquires its identity through its difference to the capitalist class. Despite the cause being invisible or absent and ideology inducing its subject to think their identity/position is defined according to the means of production, the effects are present in an entity which is forced to (mis)represent it (Althusser, 1970: 188-9). By giving individuals the notion that he is the cause of himself, ideology is able to remain hidden and be effective. Thus, metonymic causality of the relations of production is part of the mechanism of social illusion (Althusser, 1976: 52).

To ensure the system runs effectively, and antagonistic relations are masked between the capitalist class and the working class, ideology creates the illusion that the capitalist and working classes identities are produced in relation to the means of production.

Metonymic causality can be further understood through fetishism of commodities and fetishism of man. Regarding the former, “The natural attribute of a thing is considered the source of its

economic value as commodity.” (Hudson, 1995: 263). For example, a consumer judges a product on the basis of the material elements used to produce it. What passes under the radar, and what actually gives a commodity its value, is the social labour used to produce it (commodity form). The economic identity cannot be reduced to its material entity with physical and biological properties, although the latter functions as the support or bearer of the former (Hudson, 1995: 263). Similarly, the fetishism of man, who is actually only the material bearer or support of a system of relations, namely the concrete individual, is taken as the source of the effects produced by these relations (Hudson, 1995: 263). “What is represented in ideology is therefore not a system of real relations which governs the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to their real conditions in which they live.” (Althusser, 1971: 125).

The misrecognition effect is “A deforming and mystifying representation of the reality in which males and females have to live.” (Althusser, 1976: 29). Through the effects of misrecognition the subject is understood as the cause of himself, as an autonomous entity and an independent self-sufficient centre of thought and action. It produces a slave who thinks himself a master and in doing so reproduces his position as a slave. It provides individuals with an imaginary understanding of their relationship to their real conditions of existence (Althusser, 1971: 123). The working and capitalist class view their positions in relation to the means of production, they understand themselves as autonomous and as the cause of their existence. The misrecognition effect hides the structure, hides the real cause of their identity, that is, their existence is dependent upon each other.

Furthermore, the working and capitalist class view their positions according to their invisible relations to the means of production and thereby feel as though they are the autonomous authors of society. This is the primary effect of misrecognition. Althusser insisted “When left to its own devices, the proletariat is unable to acquire the knowledge (of the mechanisms of its exploitation and subjugation) indispensable to its constitution into a revolutionary force.” (1990: 35). Although the identity of the subject does not inhere in the concrete individual but is rather a function of its occupation of a determinate place in the ideological system, this is hidden from it by the structural and metonymic causality of the system. The result is that, to the subject itself, it seems obvious

that it is, and always has been, an autonomous subject (Althusser, 1971: 171-2). According to Althusser, this effect is required in all societies to ensure the stability of identities and thereby providing the longevity to the system without which there would be an on-going radical fragmentation (1971a: 170; 1976: 95).

## **1.2 Thesis II: There is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects**

Saussure established two branches within synchronic linguistics - paradigmatic and syntagmatic. On the one hand, paradigmatic shows the stability and tradition of language and its inability to radically change with time. On the other hand, syntagmatic refers to the changes within language (Saussure, 1974). Like language, the structure of society contains traditions and every change to the system has ramifications. The traditions/practices of the social totality and system are present in what Althusser termed Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) and Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) (1971). The development of ISA and RSA resulted from Althusser's response to Marx's view of ideology having a spiritual existence and being an imaginary concept. Being dismissive of such notions, Althusser argues that ideology has a material existence (Althusser, 1971: 126). This second thesis demonstrates and explicates the materiality of ideology and the vantage point is the class struggle.

Marx's analysis of capitalism laid out how wage-earners, to support themselves, are obliged to sell their labour and through their surplus (unpaid) labour generates the capital which reproduces their exploitation. Drawing on this, Michel Pecheux in *The Mechanism of Ideological (Mis)recognition* (1994) states that there is a constant struggle of power between the ruling and subordinate class. This entails, subsequently, that the ISA is *simultaneously* and *contradictorily* the site of the ideological condition of the transformation of the relations of production (reproduction/transformation) (Pecheux, 1994: 142). It is contradictory because the conditions are constituted by the complex set of ISAs (political, religious, ethical, legal) contained in the social formation (Pecheux, 1994: 143). The forces of these elements are constantly tugged at and simultaneously employed thereby producing "contradiction-unevenness" (Pecheux, 1994: 144). It is the relationship between the unevenness-subordination between the regions that constitute a

stake in the ideological struggle as within each region there are a specific set of practices that are adhered to (Pecheux, 1994: 144).

According to Althusser (1971:125) Ideological State Apparatus is defined as “Ideological instances in its concrete materiality which exists in the form of ideological formations.” and the instances mentioned include the church, mass media, education system which together expands the “instrumentalist conception of the state” (Torfing, 2006:18). These mechanisms are utilised by the state to ensure that ruling power is maintained. ISA is thus a mechanism used by the ruling class to impose its belief system and ideology on to other classes. In this way the ruling class is able to exercise its hegemony and totalise thereby ensuring that any possibility of historical change becomes extremely reliant upon class struggle at the level of ideology (Torfing, 2006: 18). Aiding the maintenance of power and influence is the RSA.

The police and/or army generally fall under RSA as they have the duty of ensuring that boundaries are maintained between antagonistic forces. This ensures that ideological formations stay intact so as to avoid revolts and uprisings that could undermine the hegemonic power (Kotsko, 2008: 23). The ISA and RSA or alternatively phrased, the “soft power” and the repressive “state power” work in tandem to guarantee the smooth application of the ruling ideology (Kotsko, 2008: 23). There is thus a superstructural link between the ISA and the RSA which “assigns-verifies-checks identities” (Pecheux, 1994: 147). The ISA and RSA are thus two sides of the superstructure that work together to ensure the longevity and existence of the dominant mode of production (Kotsko, 2008: 23). Longevity is maintained if the dominant ideology can subsume and/or override opposing ideologies (see chapter 2).

Althusser held that even the identity of one ideology is characterised by its difference to another ideology. “...an ideology, however dominant it may be in an ISA, does not exist without some opposing ideology and that opposing ideologies are shaped by each other.” (1971: 126). The ISA is a structure, a material structure, which contains the practices of different sections of the state and human life that the subject naturally is part of and interacts with. Through these evident notions

the subject does not question, or rarely does so, the structures that not only he enables but is enabled by. As Etienne Balibar points out “The class relation is concealed in the operation of the state apparatus by the very mechanism that realises it, such that society, the state and subjects in law are produced-reproduced as ‘naturally evident notions’.” (1994: 341). In so far as ideology exerts its influence on its subject, without the subject ideology itself will cease to exist.

Not only does ideology exert its effects on the subject, but the subject is the reason and bearer of ideology. Ideology thus does not exist without the concrete subject, and the stability of society and identity of the concrete subject is dependent upon the effects and apparatuses of ideology. By creating the illusion that the subject is the cause of himself, ideology is able to prolong its existence. As Althusser holds:

1. “There is no practice except by and in an ideology
2. There is no ideology except by the subject and for the subject.” (Althusser, 1971: 126).

The category of the subject is the constitutive category for all ideology (whatever its determination (regional or class) and whatever its historical date - since ideology has no history) (Althusser, 1971: 125).

*“The category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but at the same time and immediately I add that 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. In this interaction of this double constitution exists the functioning of all ideology, ideology being nothing but its functioning in the material forms of existence of that functioning.”* (Althusser, 1970: 129).

A concrete individual becomes an ideological subject through, what is the crux of Althusser’s argument, interpellation, which will be discussed in the following thesis.

### **1.3 Thesis III: Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects**

Thesis III makes thesis II explicit - there is no ideology except by the subject for subjects. Meaning, ideology's existence is dependent upon a subject and the subjects' existence is dependent upon the effects of ideology (Althusser, 1971). The latter relationship is enabled by the process of interpellation or hailing. "Ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing." (Althusser, 1970: 130). Interpellation is made effective via three processes: Recognise ourselves according to what people label us; the supposed autonomy of individuals; and the process through which concrete individuals become ideological subjects.

### **1.3.1 Recognise ourselves according to what people label us**

Althusser in remarking that an individual is "always-already" a subject designates that even before an individual is born he is already a subject (Althusser, 1971: 132). From inception the subject is the object of a plethora of pre-existing forces and notions which include the subject's family name, race, and gender, one's social standing in society, one's nationality and the complexity of the familial matrix (Althusser, 1971: 132). This configuration is stamped upon the subject even before his birth, so much so that it becomes a natural-given once he is a fully existing member of society. This subjectivisation is compounded through speech and writing.

"Speech is the primary dialogue of discourses: all speech and writing is social." (Macdonell, 1986: 1). Through language the subject posits himself as the cause of himself, not as a subject/victim of an ideological system of control. By the mere usage of I, him, her, me, you, one announces their position as an ideological subject. "The subject is caught in this network - common nouns and proper names, shifting effects, syntactic constructions...such that he results as the cause of himself." (Pecheux, 1994: 149-150). The continued usage of the pronouns symbolises the magnitude and semblance of the effects of ideology.

### **1.3.2 Autonomy of individuals**

As mentioned earlier, through the combined effects of metonymic and structural causality the misrecognition effect is produced. Yet despite the same structural forces acting on the individual

interpellating him into an ideological subject, each subject becomes his own. Indeed there are common threads between individuals but how does ideology account for the differences among its subjects? Are these differences an effect or deformity of the system?

Interpellation, which is responsible for constructing and maintaining the identities of subjects is not accomplished by a single ideology but rather by several ideologies exerting their forces simultaneously which causes the subject to represent a matrix of a plethora of ideologies, existing and acting on different planes. Furthermore, idiosyncrasy can be attributed to “play and space” within the structure (Althusser, 2006: 241). The individual has at his freedom that which prevents stifling and questioning of his identity a “‘play of manoeuvre’ (*jeu de manoeuvre*)” (Althusser, 2006: 241). Owing to this play he can “‘develop’, or even...‘chose’, determine his course (*se determiner*).” (Althusser, 2006: 241). It is under these ideologies and freedoms that the individual “lives and acts his practice” (Althusser, 2006: 241). In spite of the subject being given leeway, the subject is nonetheless heavily embroiled within a system where it cannot easily realise its escape.

### **1.3.3 Process through which concrete individuals become ideological subjects**

Concrete individuals are made into ideological subjects through the interpellation of structure and ideology. It is owing to the misrecognition effect and even more effectively the ‘ideological effect’ that subjects are under the illusion that they are the cause of their own actions, that they are free, autonomous and self-centred self-making entities or in the words of Saint Paul,

*“It is in the ‘Logos’, meaning in ideology, that we ‘live, move and have our being’.... the category of the subject is the primary ‘obviousness’ (obviousnesses are always primary)...like all obviousnesses, including those who make a word; ‘name a thing’ or ‘have a meaning’ (therefore, including the obviousness of the transparency of language), the ‘obviousness’ that you and I are subjects- and that that does not cause any problems- is an Ideological effect, the elementary “Ideological Effect”.” (Althusser, 1971: 129).*

Within a capitalist system one might observe that by working hard the worker is making the capitalist richer and not gaining much for himself besides the means for his survival. In this situation ideology does not tell the worker to abort his occupation as the surplus generated increases the wealth of the capitalist and keeps the worker in the same position with the same occasionally higher wage. Instead ideology says, “Those who work hard are rewarded” or “A strong work ethic is an important virtue” (Kotsko, 2008: 25). Owing to the misrecognition effect, which creates a false representation of worker’s relation to their real conditions of existence, the worker never questions his position. It is because of this that Althusser, paraphrasing Aristotle, says ‘man [sic] is an ideological animal by nature’ (Althusser, 1971: 127). Both the capitalist and working class recognise their ideological beliefs as more or less true and live in such a way as though ideology is the most natural thing in the world (Kotsko, 2008: 25). The subject is therefore the result of a process of metaphysical phantasy. The phantasy effect ensures that the individual is a subject to the Munchhausen effect - baron who lifted himself into the air by his beard/footstraps. The Munchhausen effect thus posits the subject as the origin of the subject, that is, by positing the subject of discourse as the origin of the subject of discourse. By creating the illusion that the subject is the puppeteer, ideology conceals the fact that the subject is actually the puppet (Pecheux, 1994: 146).

#### **1.4 Althusser and the South African subject**

What does Althusser’s structuralism have to offer in our analysis and understanding of the South African subject? That is, what does Althusser have to offer when it comes to a theory of South African colonialism, its systemic mutations and South Africa’s economic development? What is the objective, then, in examining Althusser’s structuralist theory?

Althusser’s structuralism is analysed for two important reasons. Firstly, for his anti-essentialist and relational social ontology. Althusser’s theory of the overdetermined differential constitution of social identity greatly aides in the attempt to understand colonialism and the coloniser-colonised relationship. The relational social ontology is initially applied to the coloniser-colonised relation and later in South African history, the manner in which capitalism and its concomitant relations interact with the coloniser-colonised relation. The interlinkages between the two produce an

idiosyncratic colonial capitalist society. Althusser's anti-essentialist and differential systems greatly assist in accounting for, not only the changes and mutations of the South African subjects respectively but also the manner and infrastructure in which they continue to be constituted by and under.

Secondly, Althusser's theory of the imaginary and of ideology which is developed in the relation to the symbolic or structural causality of the social. Althusser's theories act as equipment that enable the dissection of the vicissitudes of the dominant (colonial/imperial) hegemonic order. Specifically looked upon is the role of ideology in creating a social imaginary and the conceptual equipment and infrastructure needed for the optimum functioning of the structure and dissemination of ideology. This is employed to not only analyse relations within South Africa, but also the impact of global relations and its variegated and binding nature of its effects. Without ideology, and its accompanying infrastructure, there is an inability to account for the ideological tightness and interconnectedness of a global society as well as the differentiations of the system in South Africa. Althusser is thus the point of departure.

But there are limits to the conceptual equipment Althusser can provide. In particular a conception of the subject of transformation or emancipation, as opposed to the ideological subject of repetition and reproduction, seems foreclosed in Althusser. Hence there is a turn to Laclau for the distinction between the subject *stricto sensu*, that is, before interpellation and the ideological (Althusserian) subject of ideology. This is needed in order to be able to account for the determinant shifts in the global and national colonial relation that is examined – to account for the emergence of new forms of subjectivity, of the coloniser and colonised, that punctuate international and South African history. This is why, in addition to Althusser, the post-structuralist critique of Althusser (for example, Ernesto Laclau), is also made use of.

## **Chapter 2: Return of the subject**

Althusser argues for the importance of ideology in interpellating an individual into an ideological subject, such that society will be able to reproduce and perpetuate itself but insists that this ideological subject lacks agency. Ernesto Laclau critiques Althusser on this basis and simultaneously acts as an impetus for the establishment of a subject that has agency in addition to the ideological subject which is equivalent to Laclau's 'subject-position'. Laclau argues that the subject in Althusser's theory is absent. Laclau is able to create a clear differentiation between the subject and subject-position. "Once we accept that history is 'a process without a subject' we end up with not being able to account for history of this process itself, that is, its twists, turns and, above all its transformation." (Hudson, 2006: 299).

This chapter will investigate the manner in which the Laclauian subject is established. This will be conducted by initially explicating discourse, its relevance and significance to post-structuralism. Secondly, it will analyse the effects of the birth of the subject. This subject which occurs when disarray, or antagonism, on the social terrain between dominant and dominated powers causes the fading of the ideological effect culminating in the dislocation of the structure itself. The failure of the social sees the onset of the political field, or the field wherein the subject is free of an ideological and interpellative force and has agency in articulating its decisions. Thirdly, and within this paradigm, the subject constructs or imagines a future involving myths and imaginaries. If these myths and imaginaries are strong enough, they actualise to produce frontiers between the dominant and antagonistic powers. Fifth, once a strong frontier is established the subject articulates or chooses a new identity. It is through articulation or articulatory practice that the empty signifier attaches itself to a new signifier and in doing so sutures/stitches the political terrain and establishes a new hegemony.

What Althusser overlooks is that the articulatory practices (which produce his ideological subject) is contingent and in no way necessary. He thus forces the distinction between the empty subject of possibility and the fixed ideological identity. In spite of poignantly endeavouring to shift away from an essentialised system, Althusser ends up essentialising the subject itself. It is at this juncture

that Laclau's subject viz-a-viz Althusser's subject-position is drawn upon to account for the changes in the hegemonic order and subject in and of itself.

Laclau defines the subject as "the distance between the undecidability of the structure and the decision" (1996: 54) which later issues in an identification with a full identity. In Žižek's terms what we are dealing with is the distinction between the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement, the enounced. Subject refers to the vanishing moment just before the statement locks it down into an identity. It is subject barred, the empty Lacanian subject. For Žižek what the subject lacks is a foundation, there is a 'lack of the subject' which entails we recognise the 'subject of lack'.

Focusing on this immanent dimension of signification and identification underlies the contingency and political character of any socio-symbolic system, hence, retaining Althusser's subject of ideology but seeing that it implies itself as a barred subject – makes revolution and transformation thinkable (which it is not in Althusser). It also makes it possible to understand the shifts in subjectivisation-identification that occur within the parameters of a determinate system.

## **2.1 Critique of Althusser**

All these achievements notwithstanding, Althusser's structuralism suffers at the end of the day from these main problems. Althusser's absolute commitment to Marxism results in the economy being essentialised (unwittingly); His commitment to structuralism is such that he considers structure to have done away with any real explanatory role for the concept of the subject – for Althusser the subject is always an effect of structure and nothing more. The practices that knit together in a symbolic relation are in no way necessary – they are contingent because this is a symbolic construct. Therefore, the agents interpellated as identities and who act in terms of such identities precisely because they are symbolic constructs, are free to dis-identity and re-identity even if they remain stubbornly unaware of this. They are unaware of this because they are in thrall to the master signifier that has interpellated them and provided them with an identity. They are

subjects of lack, that is, lacking a full identity and thus able to assume a very wide range of such identities. However, at the same time these agents are simultaneously egos who believe strongly in themselves, that they are what they are, and that they are masters in control of themselves. This dimension of the subject is a necessary feature of any overdetermined symbolic relation. But as mentioned above, in order for the structure to function it has to be covered over by the imaginary, meaning, the subject has to exist in a relation of misrecognition to his real conditions of life. The ego is necessary but the ego itself cannot be thought independently of the subject, that is, the subject of lack. This is the reason behind the seminal distinction introduced by Laclau between the subject before interpellation, before subjectivisation, and the subject (ego) that results from such identification – that is, the distinction between the subject *stricto sensu* and the ‘subject-position’ (a determinate social identity).

Accordingly, there are several criticisms launched at Althusser’s theory of structuralism and ideology. These include Althusser’s creation of a new essentialism; inability to break away from determination in the last instance by the economic; inability to create a subject resisting interpellation; and resistance against the excess of symbolisation.

One of Althusser’s aims whilst advancing the materialist dialectic as overdetermined was to shy away from all forms of essentialism characteristic in and of Marxist theory. This he desired to achieve through furthering economistic evolutionism and theoretical humanism (Hudson, 1995: 273). “But what emerged from Reading Capital was the possibility of another form of essentialism, neither evolutionist nor humanist but, structuralist.” (Hudson, 1995: 273). Incidentally, Althusser introduced the notion of structural causality which he believed to be the “cornerstone of Marx’s whole work” but the result is “a regression to the very essentialism from which Althusser initially strove to emancipate Marxism.” (Hudson, 1995: 245). Thus secondly, according to Althusser, the thesis of determination in the last instance by the relations of production stipulates that the political and ideological structures of a social totality obey a logic that is only intelligible when understood through the determinations of the relations of production (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). For Laclau this thesis poses two problems.

Firstly, this thought process shows that “a symptom of a residual theoreticism or idealism” was never eliminated from Althusser’s thought (Hudson, 1995: 274). Secondly, and more importantly, this determination reveals that not only will all societies have the same form, but also, this determination in the last instance, is exhaustive of all possible societies (Hudson, 1995: 277). The ramifications for such a rationale is the elimination of contingency as everything is determined a priori (Hudson, 1995: 277). Or in the words of Laclau, history is a “conceptually graspable object” (Laclau, 1990: 83). “Althusser’s adherence to the thesis of economic determination in the last instance results in the suppression of both the complexity and the contingency which Althusser considered to be the distinguishing traits of structural causality.” (Hudson, 1995: 245).

Thirdly, “The function of this centre was not only to orient, balance, and organise the structure - one cannot in fact conceive of an unorganised structure – but above all to make sure that the organising principle of the structure might limit what we might call the play of the structure.” (Derrida, 2001: 352). Play of structure can be understood through the terms *gram* or *différance*. What these terms designate is that no element can function without referring to another element which is absent. Therefore each element is intertwined into the system and this results in each element being constituted on the basis of the trace within it, a trace of the elements constituting the chain or system (Kristeva, 1991: 26). Différance is therefore defined as “the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the spacing by means of which elements are related to each other.” (Kristeva, 1991: 27). This spacing is concurrently active and passive and this indecision is denoted by the ‘a’ of différance (Kristeva, 1991: 27). This play within structures, according to post-structuralism provides enough space for the subject to resist interpellation and re-decide his positioning within society.

When this rupture occurs the signifier and signified detach and signifier becomes transcendental, that is, no longer a part of the chain of signs and “free from interpellation” (Kristeva, 1991: 19-20). Althusser’s structural Marxism is discredited for not accounting for “the specificity of the political” (Torfing, 1999: 18) or the subject free of interpellation. Owing to this absence of the

political, the Althusserian subject never has access to what lies beyond interpellation. It therefore exists in a linear, monotonous manner and is devoured by the gravity of ideology (Kotsko, 2008: 28). The Althusserian subject can only ever escape itself and its relation to the world through the realm of knowledge (Hudson, 1995: 281). “There is no ‘space of the subject’ in Althusser because history is reduced to expressing the logic of the relations of production, to being the expression of an essence albeit one that has the form of a structure.” (Hudson, 1995: 281).

Lastly, Žižek in *Contingency Hegemony and Universality* argues that Althusser does not take into account the “remainder/excess” that resists symbolisation (Žižek, 2000: 115) and, as Mladen Dolar adds, this excess is responsible for the emergence of the subject/political space. “The subject emerges as a correlative effect to some traumatic objectal remainder, to some excess which, precisely, cannot be subjectivised, integrated into a symbolic space.”

## **2.2 What is the subject, how does it emerge?**

The cohesiveness of a structure is maintained when the illusion of self-identification and self-sufficiency is still operative, but in the face of the subject-position thinking itself, the influence of the ideological effect weakens and the structure begins to collapse. With the collapsing of the structure emerges the subject, defined by Žižek as “The name of that unfathomable X called upon, suddenly made accountable, thrown into a position of responsibility, into the urgency of decision in a moment of undecidability.” (1989: 189). There is thus a positive correlation with the failure the social subjectivity/subject as object fails and emergence of the subject (Hudson, 2006: 299-300); that is the subject appears when “The structure cannot ensure its own structurality” (Laclau, 1990: 60; 1996: 92). The subject-position thinks itself to be the ultimate controller of its actions and being, but the position of the subject reveals that he is not the dictator but is being dictated. This revelation as well as having the responsibility of mending the structure (finding a new signified to relate to) results in the subject feeling vertigo/dizziness (Torfing, 1999: 57). This sensation is overcome, and the rupture is mended through the process of articulation or articulatory practice.

During articulatory practice there is a de-identification and re-identification of the subject-position by the subject. The former occurs through the signifier being stripped of the signified, for example, the signifier worker has no meaning and needs to be attached to a signified for a new authenticity and identity - a worker who belonged to a capitalist system now has the freedom to choose if it would like to remain on the capitalist path or it can choose a communist, fascist or socialist regime and in making a decision chooses new interpellatory forces. The worker is thus a “signifier without a signified”; the subject can also be described as a “floating signifier” or an “element” due to its evanescent/ephemeral nature. Articulatory practice thus transforms “elements” into “moments”, “floating signifiers” into “determinate meanings” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 113). How does this transformation occur? How does articulatory practice convert an element into a moment?

Moments are created when the floating signifier reflexively attaches itself to another signifier thereby producing a sign. In theoretical terms, “...we are dealing with a reflexive articulation in which one signifier, ‘worker’, joins to itself qua signifier, another signifier, ‘revolutionary communist’, thus producing itself qua moment, i.e. as ‘revolutionary communist worker’.” (Hudson, 2006: 300). The subject qua moment needs to have enough identity to perform an act of articulation that will transform it into a moment (Hudson, 2006: 302). More concretely, the floating signifier, with enough identity articulates itself to a privileged master signifier, a *point de capiton* (Laclau, 1990: 122). The fusing of the signifiers creates a nodal point or a *bricolage*. “As Levi Strauss argues, the *bricoleur* ‘interrogates all the heterogeneous objects of which his treasury is composed to discover what each of them could “signify” and so to contribute to the definition of a set of which has yet to materialise...’. In a way, *bricolage* is society thinking itself. The *bricoleur*’s task is to provoke a confrontation which is so forceful that a new form of thought, of classification is released into the world.” (Norval, 1996: 64-5). This nodal point bears the paradox of the subject.

“The subject who takes the decisions is only partially a subject; he is also a background of sedimented practices organising a normative framework which operates as a limitation on the horizon of options.” (Laclau, 2000: 83). This statement encompasses the paradox of the subject. On the one hand, the subject is free from all interpellatory forces and is deemed to have freedom

in determining its future course, but, on the other hand, the subject is unable to shake off primary identifications that influence the trajectory of its decision. These primary identifications are termed “constitutive attachments” - the agent’s most deeply sedimented practices of social self-identification, which cannot just be shaken off.” (Laclau, 2000: 83-84). Butler demonstrates how each particular identity is never completely free to achieve self-determination. Every identity is tied to a specific identity such as race, gender, class, ethnicity which cannot be subtracted or dissociated (Butler, 2000: 30). Constitutive attachments are signifiers, examples include, worker, Christian, and do not possess an intrinsic meaning. They are an empty shell. The meaning of signifiers is derived from its linkage to other signifiers (the set of synonyms, paraphrases and antonyms defining them in determinate discursive formations), thereby showing that its meaning is derived from an exterior source that is simultaneously the interior. “There is a structural commonness that all these identities share and that is a constitutive incompleteness.” (Butler, 2000: 30). This process of finding a signifier that is both part of the exterior and interior is known as suturing.

Suture means “external difference is always an internal one, that the external limitation of the field of phenomena always reflects itself within this field, as its inherent impossibility fully to become itself.” (Zizek, 2000: 237). On the other hand, although the subject is conditioned “It is nevertheless ‘topological’ and ‘catachrestic’, that is, what the subject identifies with qua social identity is not pre-determined by either the structure or its dislocation.” (Laclau, 1996: 103). If the subject were determined in such a manner, like Althusser’s ideological subject, Laclau’s subject will face the same downfall. The subject would lose the features of contingency, indeterminacy and agency and would be unable to produce social objectivity. The beliefs, values and demands from which the subject cannot dissociate itself provides the co-ordinates for its possible future identities (Hudson, 2006: 307). Furthermore, the integration of specific subject-positions will determine the individual orientation towards a certain hegemonic system and will simultaneously erect the limitation of the range of hegemonic interventions whose initiation the individual will be able to participate (Hudson, 1995: 13). Individuals will only identify with those hegemonic interventions with which their currently dominant subject-positions, their currently dominant interests allow them to identify.

“It is therefore the existing structure of dominant subject-positions which both delimits the range of effectivity of determinate hegemonic interventions and determines the identity of their possible initiators.” (Hudson, 1995: 12-13). The limitation defined here is intra-discursive and still within the realm of discursive practice. The level and depth of “structural rigidity” and “causal directionality” can be identified without exiting from the domain of the discursive (Hudson, 1995: 14). Within this realm, once the floating signifier has linked to a privileged master signifier, once it has made a decision and fulfilled its responsibility, the attenuated subject, that is, the subject that is dependent on the failure of the structure to emerge begins to vanish and disappear.

After shouldering the responsibility of suturing the broken space the subject begins to vanish and it is on this action it is known as a vanishing mediator. Mediator in the sense that the subject is stitching the gap between one structure and another, vanishing because during stitching, the gap is closing (Hudson, 2006: 280). This demonstrates, furthermore, the reflexive nature and role of the subject in amalgamating two structures. Articulation is therefore reflexive, contingent and not pre-determined. The subject in summation is, “that which is not exhausted by any specific social identity or interpellation, it refers to a lack of intrinsic identity, the ‘ontological void’... and revealed via the experience of subjective destitution produced by dislocation and antagonism.” (Laclau, 1990; Hudson, 2006: 280). With this new order, a new subject-position, subject qua element, with its own set of responsibility emerges.

The subject must be eclipsed so that the subject-position, defined as “The individual as a site or bearer of a social identity (an interpellation) which is experienced as natural or ‘objective’ and which issues in a repetitive practice” (Laclau, 1990) can emerge to produce the “society-effect”. How is the “society-effect” produced and reproduced? The social is produced through the intersecting of two occurrences and constitutions, that is, on the one hand, the subject reflexively sacrifices its agency to produce a subject-position that provides coherence, stability, transparency and obviousness and on the other the social is differential and antagonistic (Hudson, 2006: 307). Through the establishment of a new hegemony, the floating signifier attaches itself to a form of

signification that is most representative of the dominating ideologies being presuppositioned (akin to Claude Lefort's, "empty place of power", see chapter 7). In this articulatory practice the floating signifier acts as a vanishing mediator and the suturing of the dislocated structure occurs. The new seamed structure begins to operate with a new ideology, and in turn, the associated structural and metonymic causality come into effect producing the misrecognition and ideological effect tailored to the new hegemony.

The role of the subject/political is *constitutive* (ontological) whilst the bearing of the subject position/social is *constituted* (objective) (Laclau, 1996: 103). "The concept of the subject is political while that of subject position belongs to the social – the misrecognised product of the political. No (political) subject is ever entirely free of objective social determination, while subject-position, as an objective social identity, is the crystallisation of an act of the subject." (Hudson, 2006: 304). Howarth iterates this point by stating that social relations are shaped through political struggles but these cease to be political when they erode into an institutional ensemble of rules, norms, traditions and regularities, which become part of the agent's everyday life (Howarth, 2000: 70).

Furthermore, Blumenberg is right in claiming that "the primacy of politics 'does not consist in the fact that everything is political, but rather in the fact that the determination of what is to be regarded as unpolitical is itself conceived as falling under the competence of the political'." (1996: 91; Howarth, 2000: 70). The subject-position is just as dependent upon the subject as the subject is dependent upon it. Thus, it is via articulatory practice, through which elements have crystallised into moments, that hegemony is produced (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 134).

### **2.3 Discourse**

*Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (HSS) is one of the seminal texts upon which post-structuralism is developed. The theoretical premise of HSS is the theory of language advanced by Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics* and the subsequent developments by Emile Benveniste, Lacan and Jacques Derrida respectively (Hudson, 1995: 3-4). Saussure inferring and developing the

syntagmatic strand of linguistics argues that society is structured like a language. Language, he argues, is composed of signs – an arbitrary attachment of signifier and signified – standing in relation to each other (Saussure, 1974). Despite the arbitrary relation language is not a nomenclature wherein names are randomly assigned to concepts but the linguistic structure is posited as a system of difference where every sign gets its meaning from its relational position vis-à-vis other signs. “Without language, i.e. apart from its expression in (spoken or written) words, our thought”, argues Saussure, “is only a shapeless and indistinct mass ... a vague uncharted nebula.” (Saussure, 1974: 111).

Saussure’s theory comes under fire by Derrida in his *Writing and Difference* (1976) in which he objects to Saussure’s creation of a “transcendental signifier”- a signifier which surpasses the differential logic of the structure thereby causing the structure to become closed and fixed and thus negating its initiative. In addition to Derrida’s critique, Laclau and Mouffe argue that Saussure gets caught up in himself causing his relational configuration to become fixed and in place for establishing an open-ended contingent system Saussure endorsed essentialism. Saussure recognized this problem and introduced the time-factor in an attempt to rectify it. He postulated that linguistic change can only come from something as undefined and un-theorized as time itself (1974: 73-74).

Taking their cue from Lacan and Derrida, Laclau and Mouffe address Saussure’s problem by dismissing the transcendental signifier and introducing the notion of discourse and the discursive/“field of discursivity” (1985: 111). The field of discursivity alludes to the attempts by a plethora of different meanings to institute themselves as the center and achieve actualization and fulfilment in doing so. The field of discursivity or the discursive encapsulates this surplus of meaning and provides the condition of both possibility and impossibility of a partial fixation of meaning (Torfing, 1999: 92). This partial fixation of meaning is termed discourse and is attained through empty signifiers. The emergence of an empty signifier is co-eval with the dislocation of a structure. “[I]n a situation of radical disorder ‘order’ is present as that which is absent; it becomes an empty signifier, as the signifier of this absence.” (Laclau, 1996: 44). An empty signifier is a signifier stripped of its interpellative force. It is an empty shell surrounded by a plethora of

articulatory elements attempting to bring complete and transcendental identity and closure to the structure and society, that is, produce a discursive formation or hegemonic position. For the structure to suture itself or to re-establish order, the empty signifier needs to choose a respective signified from the competing political forces attempting to occupy the lack. The joining of the signifier and signified produces what Lacan calls a “nodal point” or “*point de capiton*” (Lacan, 1977).

In spite of the impossibility of a signifier and signified amalgamating to produce fixture, the “sliding” of the signifier is arrested at certain junctures and meaning is temporarily fixed to produce a nodal point. The process of this construction is defined by Laclau and Mouffe as “articulatory practice” (1985: 113). These nodal points are established as specific social identities that the subject position is inducted into. In his life, a subject-position confronts several identities from which it recognises and identifies with, “How these are structured, i.e. whether or not they are in contradiction with one another and which is dominant vis-à-vis the determination of the subject’s political identity, is determined neither by “experience” nor some “originary” subjectivity (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 115) but by the matrix or articulatory practices to which the individual is exposed.” (Hudson, 1995: 7). For example, a child learns to identify with boy, girl, worker, citizen, black, adult, female and so forth, and in doing so constructs an identity which is individuated and idiosyncratic. “To the extent to which articulatory practice establishes subject-positions as nodal points, it imposes regularity on the relationships between specific signifiers. And any such ensemble of signifiers is defined by Laclau and Mouffe as a “discourse” or “discursive formation.” (1985: 105). Thus the nodal point signifies the establishment of a new hegemonic project or a new discourse. “Emptiness is now revealed as an essential quality of the nodal point, as an important condition for its hegemonic success.” (Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 9).

Beinveniste in his *Problems of General Linguistics* (1966) develops, on the basis of Saussure’s theory of language, an analysis of the relationship between language and self-consciousness - subjectivity. He states that there can be no subjectivity/awareness of self, which is made possible through the usage of personal pronouns such as “I” and “you”, if there is no differentiation made

between oneself and others. This being said, no element or identity can ever transcend the system of relations or achieve full totalisation. This is due to, firstly, during the discursive formation all demands and particular elements could not be absorbed into the system and, secondly, the suppression of these forces continuously act as antagonistic forces thereby preventing the full structuration of the structure. According to Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 125) antagonisms are thus the “symbol of my non-being”, that which keeps the political project from realizing itself/obtaining a positive identity.

Through antagonistic forces an Other is created that creates the illusion that the fulfilment of an identity (of the One) is possible but there is an exogenous force preventing its realization. Using Torfings wording: “... the outside is not merely posing a threat to the inside, but is actually required for the definition of the inside. The inside is marked by a constitutive lack that the outside helps to fill.” (2004: 11). According to Laclau, the only identity we can obtain is the antagonistic version of being kept from Oneself. Thus once a discourse has been established, its stability is both kept intact and fluctuates owing to the constitutive lack of identities as well as the One-Other relation maintained through antagonism (Laclau, 1996). This linguistic “polarity of persons” (Beinveniste, 1966: 261) is thus the basis of the self-reflexivity constitutive of subjectivity per se (Hudson, 1995: 5).

The discursive field and discourse both contribute to the disruption and longevity of society. They are responsible for society’s meandering nature and it is only by a thorough investigation of each notion can society’s erratic contingent nature be monitored and patterned.

## **2.4 Social antagonism**

Social antagonism was initially defined by Laclau and Mouffe in HSS as “The subversive presence of an identity in another, thus prevents any social identity from being fully identical to itself.” (1985: 125). This definition illustrates two points. Firstly, no entity or discourse can transcend the system as each element is defined in relation to every other element of the same nature in addition

to each element containing a partial signification of every other element. A discourse becomes dominant not by transcendence but through subversion of competing discourses or elements. And secondly, social antagonism dictates the limitations of the symbolic as it is external to it (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 125). Thus social antagonisms not only constitute the limits of social and political objectivity but also prevent entities from becoming fully constituted. Subject A can only achieve its identity through Subject anti-A, that which it is not. This definition was later revised after criticism by Žižek who in *Beyond Discourse Analysis* (1990) argued that social antagonism should not only be responsible for the impossibility of society but should also be understood as a discursive response to dislocation.

Laclau, heeding this criticism, later, in *New Reflections of the Revolution of Our Time* defined social antagonism as “The presence of a constitutive outside which, at the same time, constitutes and denies the identity of the inside.” (Laclau, 1990: 17). In a differential relationship the exterior provides conditions of existence of the interior identity. Likewise, discursive formations establish its limits through excluding a radical otherness that has no similarity with the differential system from which it is excluded and therefore poses a threat to that very system (Laclau, 1995: 151). Inspired by Staten (1984: 19-9) Laclau calls this excluded the constitutive outside. The constitutive outside is co-terminus with social antagonism which, once again, is the condition of possibility and impossibility of the discursive systems of identity (Torfing, 1999: 124). “The constitutive outside has the capacity to put into question the very identity which is constituted through its externalisation.” (Norval, 1994: 122). An antagonism is seen to occur when the presence of an Other prevents an identity (the One) from being totally itself. When the One fully encounters or realises its impossibility of fully totalising because of an Other, antagonism takes one of two forms (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 125).

Laclau and Mouffe classify social antagonism into two categories - popular and democratic. The social space and emergence of either type is dependent upon and determined by the logic of equivalence, “the more predominant the logic of equivalence is, the stronger and the more important becomes the particular social antagonism for the structuration of the social.” (1985: 131). Popular antagonism involves the infinite expansion of a chain of equivalences, establishes

and compounds political frontiers which by definition dichotomises the social space into friends and enemies (1985: 131). Examples of popular antagonism include genocides in Rwanda, Bosnia, Chechnya where the social space was rigidly divided into opposing camps. Democratic antagonism has the opposite effect – complexifying the social space by dividing minor social places. But regardless of the type of antagonism at play there is always an impossibility of fully articulating and representing the fullness of society.

Preceding the onset of antagonism, and that which determines the predominating type of antagonism is “antagonistic fights”. Žižek argues that one should guard against the merging of antagonism and antagonistic fights as the latter is responsible for resisting symbolisation and lays the path for the initiation of the former (1989: 253). It is during these periods that ideological effects or illusion of the status of beings begin to dissipate and consciousness changes from “latent” and “theoretical” to active” and “practical” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 11).

The illusion of emancipatory struggles is that after the elimination of the enemy who was deemed the cursor to the achievement of the One’s full identity, full identification and fulfilment will finally be achieved. But this illusion acts as sinking sand, in that, after the elimination of the enemy the Self confronts the truth - that embodied within its identity - is its very own self blockage. The moment of victory is what Hegel calls ‘the loss of the loss’, that is, that we never had what we were supposed to have lost (Laclau, 1990: 252). Thus the ideological fantasy is not simply the fantasy of the impossible fullness of society as neither is society able to achieve fullness, but impossibility is positivised within the ideological field thereby creating the illusion that fullness is an attainable goal (Žižek, 2000: 100). The ideological illusion is made possible by the externalisation of the constitutive lack of the subject to the antagonistic forces that negate it (Laclau, 1990: 252-3; Torfing, 1999: 52).

Antagonism shows the holes within the fabric of ideological illusion; where identity no longer subscribes to a differential order but is contested by external forces that stand outside or limit the order (Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 9; Howarth, 2000: 274-8). In doing so, social antagonism

is the deconstructive and reconstructive force of the social and political subjectivity - “Social antagonism constitutes a double-edged sword: they both contribute to the stabilisation of a particular discursive formation, and provide a source of destabilisation and disruption.” (Torfing, 1999: 53). Laclau thus incorporates Zizek’s constructive criticism of his initial definition of antagonism and in doing so it is revealed that, “The limit of the social must be given within the social itself as something subverting it, destroying its ambition to constitute a full presence. Society never manages fully to be a society, because everything in it is penetrated by its limits, which prevent it from constituting itself as an objective reality.” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 127). The starting point of this disruptive force is dislocation or the failure of the structure.

## **2.5 Social Dislocations**

Alongside the development of post-structuralism and post-Marxism was the definition and meaning of dislocation. Althusser together with Cohen, Elster and Giddens occupied a shared belief in structural determination and it is within this ambit that dislocation was seen as a “conjectural disturbance” that did not affect the fundamental aspects of a structure (Torfing, 1999: 148-9). Laclau contests this view and conceives dislocation as a permanent phenomenon that fundamentally and significantly affects the structure as there are always forces of symbolisation and resistance that reveal the incapacity and contingency of a discursive system. It is within this trajectory dislocation is defined as “An emergence of an event, or a set of events, that cannot be represented, symbolised, and in other ways domesticated by the discursive structure - which therefore is disrupted.” (Torfing, 1999: 148). In *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time* the concept of dislocation acts as an indicator to the limits of the social reserved earlier for antagonism. Dislocation continuously prevents the full structuration of the structure; it reveals the limitations of objectivity, and, in doing so, becomes a traumatic event of chaos and crisis for the social. Dislocation encapsulates the impossibility of structural determination. As Laclau (1990: 41-3) puts it, “Dislocation is the very form of temporality, possibility and freedom.” There are two consequences that naturally follow the fall of a structure.

A dislocated structure does not possess the means of its own rearticulation (Laclau, 1990a: 50), it cannot determine its reconstitution, precisely because it is dislocated. This dislocation gives way

to the knowledge of society never having the ability of fulfilling itself. Through permanent and repetitive changes society attempts to close off and complete itself but this attempt is always futile, always in vain. There is thus “The impossibility of the full structuration of a structure.” (Derrida, 1978: 282) as society is always trying to symbolise itself. However, dislocations are not only traumatic occurrences, they also have a positive side, “If”, as Laclau puts it, “on the one hand they threaten identities, on the other, they are the foundation on which new identities are constituted.” (Laclau, 1990: 39). In as much as dislocations disrupt identities and discourses they, through suturing the dislocated space, also re-institute and assert a new social subjectivity (Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 13).

Society manages to re-symbolise through the emergence of the subject. The subject is internal to the structure and cannot be domesticated by the broken structure. The subject though is not stripped of all identifications and all historical attachments, as existentialists hold, but is seen as a “failed structural identity” (Laclau, 1990: 44). The incompleteness of the structure posits the subject as the locus of the decision-making process. The subject is given the freedom to re-signify a new symbolic order, one that is always-already dislocated (Laclau, 1990: 30). The absence of a centre, of a cohesive unitary fulfilment, causes the subject to constantly find a pseudo centre that acts as a unifying mechanism, but which is bound to reveal its absence and throw the subject into disarray once again (Torfing, 1999: 189). Derrida therefore states that, “It is necessary to think both the law which somehow governed the desire for a centre and the constitution of structure, and the process of signification which orders the displacements and substitutions for this law of central presence - but a central presence which has never been itself, has already been exiled from itself into its own substitute.” (Derrida, 2001: 353).

Dislocation of the dominant power and the collapse of the structure thus gives way for the subject to think its position within society but furthermore to fantasize and materialise a society that meets its needs, demands and desires. This fantasizing is not restricted to the dominant or subordinate class but both become disillusioned and re-allusioned in the process. The second step in the procedure of re-allusionment is the process of creating a new hegemonic order.

## 2.6 Hegemony

Hegemony as a form of rule pertains to the manner in which subjects accept a new form of power and governance that they may have previously resisted or opposed (Howarth, 2009: 321). This transformation, according to Antonio Gramsci occurs through a threefold process. Gramsci was revolutionary in his ability to establish a form of hegemony that was free of any forms of class reductionism. He argued, firstly, that political subjects cannot be identified within defining social strata or classes but instead have “collective wills” which constitute the political expression of hegemonic systems created through ideology (Vemi, 1981). Secondly, accompanying the formation of collective wills, is the erosion and disintegration of the ideological terrain which opens up a way for an intellectual and moral reform and which rearticulates new ideological elements (Vemi, 1981). Thirdly, the intellectual and moral form should endeavour to form a collective will with a national-popular character. Articulation of the national-popular elements is what allows a particular power to express the interests of the nation and in this way the ruling class represents the majority faction of the population (Torfing, 1999: 29). There are two compository connected aspects of hegemony.

*“On the one hand, hegemony is a kind of political practice that captures the making and breaking of political projects and discourse coalitions. But on the other hand it is also a form of rule or governance that speaks to the maintenance of the policies, practices and regimes that are formed by such forces. This second aspect of hegemony concerns the various ways in which regimes, policies, or practices grip or hold a subject fast, or fail to do so. It also concerns the affective dimension of politics.”* (Howarth, 2009: 310).

Hegemony is no longer understood as an exemplar of paradigmatic ideals and practices that an entity endeavours to attain but as developed by Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 7) is a “response to a crisis”. As mentioned earlier, this crisis is the dethroning of an old hegemony due to the failure of the structure and its response includes the opening of the discursive field - linking of signifier and signified - and through this articulatory process a new hegemony and discourse is instituted. It is

through this process that hegemony is defined as “The expansion of a discourse, or a set of discourses, into a dominant horizon of social orientation and action by means of articulating unfixed elements into partially fixed moments into a context crisscrossed by antagonistic forces.” (Torfing, 1999: 101). This definition will be elucidated by analysing four dimensions that constitute hegemony and will be followed by an analysis of the two types of hegemonies that develop as an outcome.

In *Contingency Hegemony and Universality* (2000) Laclau outlines and elaborates four aspects that constitute the development of hegemony. These include: power as a constitutive force; the relation between universality/particularity; the role of empty signifiers; and how relations of representation are constitutive of the social order. The act of institution of power is always accompanied by a contestation of force and resistance (Norval, 1996: 3). Even in its elementary stage of establishing a new hegemonic order, power is contested, and the outcome - victorious or suppressive - of competing forces continuously has an impact. According to Gramsci an outcome is reached through two means as hegemony denotes both a type of political relation and a substantive achievement. The former instance pertains to the type of articulatory practice whereby persuasion predominates over the use of force whilst the latter alludes to whether or not a particular force has managed to achieve supremacy by imposing its will on the rest of society through the creation of consent and the incorporation of interests of rival forces (Norval, 2000: 229). The second point is in tandem with Robert Dahl’s intuitive concept of - power A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise consider do (Dahl, 1957: 202-3). Supreme power, and the occupation of it, is determined by the second dimension of hegemony, namely the interrelationship between the universal and particular logic of equivalence and logic of difference.

The argument concerning the supersession of the universal over the particular or particular over universal was made null and void when it emerged that the relationship between the two is crucial in formulating or articulating a new hegemony (Laclau, 2000: 193). As discussed earlier, the rudiments of a new hegemony are predicated upon the sediments of the preceding hegemony, the outcome of which uncaps particularistic demands that once vied for institutionalised power. The

suppression of some and assimilation of other particularistic demands into the universal thread is integral in the rendering of new power relations. In order to understand the maintenance of the equilibrium between the universal and the particular it is crucial to understand that the universal emerges from the particular and the particular from the universal. There is thus a cyclical relationship between the two demands. In Butler's words, "What emerges is a kind of political claim which ... is neither exclusively universal nor exclusively particular; where, indeed, the particular interests that inhere in certain cultural formations of universality are exposed. And no universal is freed from its contamination by the particular context from which it emerges and in which it travels." (Butler, 2000: 40).

According to Laclau the universal is an empty space that, one, produces a series of structuration and destructuration of social relations and, second, insofar as it is empty it is always-already filled in that it is the battleground for the hegemonisation of contingent particular content (Laclau, 2000: 5-9). But the question is not which particularistic content has to be hegemonised to temporarily occupy the universal's space and in doing so excludes other possibilities, the question is which demands have to be excluded so that certain particular demands can become institutionalised (Žižek, 2000: 110). Such a question is imperative, as; in the words of Butler (2000: 24) "The assimilation of the particular into the universal leaves its trace, an unassimilable remainder, which renders universality ghostly to itself." The fact that the universal will always be occupied by the particular and that the universal is the grounds of which the particular can fight for institutionalisation reveals that suppression of some particulars lay embedded in the social structure and emerge on the political terrain. This contamination of the universal will always result in hybrids in which particularism and universalism become indissociable. Thus, as far as 1985, in HSS Laclau and Mouffe, as understood by Butler, discern that democratic polities are constituted through exclusions which at some point return to haunt the polities built on their absence (2000: 11). Within the prism of a liberal democracy this haunting becomes politically effective as the place of power is empty and temporarily occupied by a dominant power.

The dominant power emerges from a plethora of multifarious demands all vying for power by anchoring an empty signifier. No one demand can completely trump all other demands. Demands

of a similar nature are assimilated and form an equivalential chain which later result in the formation of collective wills. One of the major aims of the hegemonic project is to construct and stabilise a nodal point so that it articulates as many floating signifiers as possible (Norval, 1996). But if the equivalential chain extends to a large variety of demands it becomes a surface for inscription or a social imaginary, the heart of which are empty signifiers. The equivalential chain reaches a climax in terms of the extent of the demands it absorbs, as it is possible that if the equivalential chain absorbs several demands of differing discourses it negates its appearance and function altogether (Laclau, 2000: 191-2). That is, in the end, they become signifiers of an absent fullness of society, or what was initially lacking (Laclau, 2000: 191-2; 210).

But there is a mixture and contamination of the concrete and abstract. Firstly, the social or historical context has to be understood so that a clear juxtaposition is reached; secondly, the degree to which this emptying of the signifier occurs is contextually dependant; and thirdly, despite being context-dependant the empty signifier has a genealogy of its own – “Its historical actualisation depends on conditions that are not derivable from that possibility.” (Laclau, 2000: 192). It is the empty character of the nodal points or *bricoleur* that universalises a discourse making it the surface of inscription for a plurality of demands beyond particularities. A gap between concrete content and the set of equivalential meaning associated with it need to be maintained (Laclau, 2000: 210).

Thus, it is through anchoring and filling the empty place via an equivalential chain that a dominant power emerges. Historical context is thus imperative to filling the empty signifier as social transformation occurs not through rallying mass numbers to reach a goal but through the way social relations are rearticulated (Bulter, 2000: 14). Hegemony will allude to “An absent totality, and to the diverse attempts at recomposition and rearticulation which, in overcoming this original absence, made it possible for struggles to be given a meaning and for historical forces to be endowed with full positivity.” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 7). Hegemony and discourse are strongly tied in that the dearticulation and rearticulation of hegemony shapes discourse, which in turn provide conditions for the possibility of a new hegemonic order (Howarth, 2000).

“For discourse theory, *hegemonic practices* are an exemplary form of political activity that involves the articulation of different identities and subjectivities into a common project, while *hegemonic formations* are the outcomes of these projects’ endeavours to create new forms of social order from a variety of dispersed or dislocated elements. This notion radicalises Gramsci’s concept of hegemony.” (Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 14). According to Gramsci (1971: 55-9; 106-14; 129-33) it is possible to distinguish two different types of hegemony: transformism and expansive hegemony. Transformism is a defensive type of politics pursued by the hegemonic force in a situation of political and economic crisis. It involves the gradual but continuous absorption, of the active elements produced by allied groups – and even those which come from antagonistic groups and seem irreconcilably hostile (Althusser, 1971: 59; Torfing, 1999: 111). Expansive hegemony involves the formation of a collective will with a national-popular character, which is able to promote the full development of particular demands and lead finally to the resolution of the contradictions they express (Gramsci, 1971: 132-3; Mouffe, 1979: 183; Torfing, 1999: 111). Mouffe develops a third type of hegemony, namely, democratic hegemony.

Whilst social antagonism posits a partition between friends and enemies within the political field and the constitutional outside of the social terrain differentiates between the One and Other, democracy converts this friend-enemy distinction into a healthy relationship between adversaries. “Breaking with the symbolic representation of society as an organic body...a democratic society makes room for the ‘adversary’, i.e. the opponent who is no longer considered an enemy to be destroyed by somebody whose existence is legitimate and whose rights will not be put into question.” (Mouffe, 1995: 107; Norval, 2000: 230). Adversaries deliberate over the running of society but pledge allegiance to liberal democratic ideals that creates a bond of solidarity and transforms ‘us-them’ into ‘we’. A pluralist democracy, Mouffe argues, “Supposes that the opponent is not considered as an enemy to be destroyed but as an adversary whose existence is legitimate and must be tolerated.” (Mouffe, 1998: 16; Norval, 2000: 230). But, it must be noted and stressed, that an opponent is not superseded and extinguished from the framework of hegemony.

Democratic hegemony thrives on the temporary occupation of the empty seat of power and for the purposes of efficacy of the democratic order any entity that opposes the democratic ideal is not considered an enemy (Mouffe, 1995: 107). But unlike a stark relationship between enemies, those who challenge the social order and dominant power not only increase the solidarity between adversaries but also consolidates legitimacy and transparency as it forces the dominant power to constantly check their position in society. As Fiske puts it, “Consent must be constantly won and re-won, for people’s material social experience constantly reminds them of the disadvantages of subordination and thus poses a threat to the dominant class.” (1992: 192-3).

The erection of a new hegemonic power is to temporarily occupy the empty place of power and create the illusion of the fullness of society. Hegemony is articulated through balancing universal and particularistic demands and depending on the social context that preceded dearticulation a certain hegemonic form will hold precedence. Hegemony thus emerges from the political terrain and structures and maintains the social field until it is contingently dethroned. In theoretical terms, ontic content incarnates the ontological function thereby bringing closure to that which was structurally open. In the words of Laclau (2000: 79) hegemony is understood as: “The fullness of society is an impossible object which successive contingent contents try to impersonate through catachrestical displacements.”. There are two faces of hegemony that are interrelated and, as ascertained from above, the first face of hegemony discloses the manner in which regimes are formed out of disparities and demands, but in order to maintain its position and lustre within society it constantly needs to win the active and passive consent of its subjects. “This means that it must offer points of attachment and identification that can grip subjects in particular ways, thus proving benefits and enjoyments that affectively bond them to certain set of actors, while causing them to shun and demonise others.” (Howarth, 2009: 321). In this way solidarity or the ‘we’ is maintained in addition to being defined by an extraneous force. Thus hegemony emerges out of ontic content and establishes an ontological function. This function is maintained through two mutually reinforcing facets, the demise of either causes radical change in society.

## **2.7 Myths and Imaginaries**

A mythical space is “A space of representation through which an attempt is made to provide a principle of reading of a given situation which is experienced as a dislocation.” (Laclau, 1990: 61; Norval, 1996: 66-7). The subject is given the power to decide its location, to decide its new identity, but the paradox of the situation lay in its bearings. The subject is situated between the failed structure and the newly envisioned society that is a manifestation of its desires, but several of the rudiments of the new structure have to be based on the sediments of the broken structure. “In the case of structural dislocation ‘there is a temporalisation of spaces or a widening of the field of the possible, but this takes place within a determinate situation.’” (Laclau, 1990a 43). In other words, despite the disruptive forces of dislocation, there is always a relative structuration of the social which might block the advancement of a certain hegemonic project. In addition, the form of social and political institutions might influence the fate of political strategies. This has been described by Jessop as “the strategic selectivity of institutions.” (cited in Torfing, 1999: 153). Nonetheless, the operation of the myth is nothing other than an endeavour to reconstitute the absent and fulfil the symbolic order (Norval, 1996: 66-7). The plausible completion of a new hegemonic power and thereby a new subject position is only made possible if two pitfalls are avoided.

If on the one hand, a myth remains fixated to the dislocations experienced by a particular group it will not be able to extend its reading to other spheres of social life. Whereas on the other hand, if a new imaginary or vision could be imposed, unequivocally, the possibility of hegemony would be voided as society would be transparent to itself. Neither regressive fixation nor smooth implementation allows for a new hegemony. But if these processes do not lead to a refreshed hegemony what does? Laclau believes that hegemony can only be instituted through struggle - “Indeed, the whole process is one in which struggle is central, both attempts to impose a new order, and its resistance to such impositions.” (Laclau, 1990: 61). Laclau thus argues that the role of myth is essentially hegemonic as “It involves forming a new objectivity by means of a rearticulation of the dislocated elements.” (Laclau, 1990: 61). But a myth does not stay a myth and if the desire for fullness prevails it becomes the horizon for unlimited demands. This brings forth the relation between the dominating myth and its concrete content as all breaks in the structure are not of the same magnitude. Subsequently, the content of a myth is dependent upon the size and scope of the dislocation (Laclau, 1994: 9-10).

Depending on the nature of the dislocation there is the option of *the filling* and *the filling function* (Torfing, 1999: 152). When dislocation penetrates the very bottom of the social, the need for order multiplies and expands exponentially and the need for the filling function overrides that of the filling. For example, following the collapse of communism, regardless of the regime instituted, be it, fascism, reformed communism or democracy, what mattered was the restoration of an order, any order. By contrast, in advanced industrial societies where the dislocation is not as deep, the role of the filling is heightened. Consequentially, debates concerning resolution of the socioeconomic crisis are intensified. Regarding the former scenario, the mere availability of a structural restoration project overrides that of credibility, whereas in the latter instance credibility is of central importance (Laclau, 1990: 66). “To be counted as credible, the political project should not only ensure its consistency with the norms and values esteemed by the portion of the population interpellated by the particular project but also a willingness to discard unsustainable and discredited principles.” (Torfing, 1999: 152).

But a myth does not stay a myth and if the desire for fullness prevails it becomes the horizon for unlimited demands. In order for a new structure to be constructed, myths need to be transformed into imaginaries and the distinction is important as it allows one to understand and analyse the construction of hegemony (Norval, 2000: 227). The transition from myth to imaginary is successful when, the myth which functions as a surface for the inscription of a myriad of social demands neutralises social dislocations and incorporates majority demands (Laclau, 1990: 61; Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 15). “A collective social imaginary is defined by Laclau as “‘a horizon’ or absolute limit which structures a field of intelligibility.” (Laclau, 1990: 64; Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 15-16). Laclau thus argues that the role of a myth is essentially hegemonic as it involves forming a new objectivity by means of rearticulation of the dislocated elements (1990: 61).

## **2.8 Frontiers**

The utilisation of political frontiers is defined as, “A dichotomization of the local political spectrum through the emergence of an equivalential chain of unsatisfied demands.” (Laclau, 1996: 74). Frontiers becomes increasingly important when political identities, emerging in a social terrain, begin deviating and do not “correspond naturalistically to pre-designated elements” ensconced unto them by an agent(s) attempt in maintaining their constructed social identities (Norval, 1994: 120). This deviation, which will be discussed in further detail, ushers in the logic of difference and equivalence as well as the emergence of a homogenous whole - the people - responsible for superseding and reinstituting a new dominant order. The discursive system initially faces dichotomisation when identities cannot be integrated into the existing system of differences (Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 11). This can be explicated through the following example.

A dominant power within a regime will tend to accumulate a large number of demands from various groups citing various problems they deem need to be met. This juncture is reached through single isolated demands (democratic demands) which emerge at various points in the social fabric, at some point collecting, and forming a broad social subjectivity (popular demands). The movement from democratic to popular demands is predicated upon the presupposition of a plurality of subject positions seeking to establish an equivalential bond between them (Laclau, 1996: 186). It is important to consider Zizek’s warning about the dangers of pure particularism at this point. The more particularised a demand the easier it is for it to be absorbed and satisfied; but if the demand is equivalential to a variety and plethora of demands, no partial victory will be considered a feat in a protracted war of position (Zizek, 2000: 209). Thus, if the government continuously denies appeasing the demands posed by various groups, they will share a common experience of a threat to their specific identities as well as a shared sentiment of something equally present in all of their demands, namely, they are in opposition to the regime. They will eventually, in principle, have shared a fantasy and ambition to construct a new social order premised on the particular identities they have built-up (Laclau, 1996: 108). Once democratic demands become popular demands, which embody the absent fullness of society, through an endless chain of equivalences, the relation between the populous become central in deciding whether or not demands are either absorbed or expelled.

Following Carl Schmitt, Mouffe argues that political discourse “attempts to create specific forms of unity among different interests by relating them to a common project and by establishing a frontier to define the forces to be opposed, the “enemy”.” (Mouffe, 2005: 50). There are two dimensions in this regard, that of universality’s dependence upon particularity and that of the particulars dependence upon the universal. Remembering Marx’s model of political emancipation, if the project principally employing the logic of equivalence seeks to divide the social space by condensing meaning around two antagonistic poles, that is, for a particular group to representatively present the demands of the community at large there needs to be another sector which is perceived as a general crime (Torfing, 1998; Howarth, 2000: 107; Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 11). This is the first dimension of power inherent in the universality’s emancipatory project: the very condition of universality presupposes a radical exclusion. The logic of equivalence thus functions by splitting of differences and instituting a frontier between two opposed camps (Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 11).

In contrast to this, the second dimension of power concerns the predomination of the logic of difference. The building of strict, rigid polarities between two antagonistic forces is inhibited when the logic of difference is employed (Norval, 2000: 221). The logic of difference seeks to destabilise the chains of equivalence by incorporating disarticulating elements in the growing order. This is achieved through the ability of a specific group who presupposes that it is in a better position than other groups to assume the function of universal representation. This causes an uneven distribution of power within the social sector (Laclau, 2000: 207-8). The logic of difference “Attempts to displace and weaken antagonism while endeavouring to relegate division to the margins of society.” (Torfing, 1998; Howarth, 2000: 107; Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 11). “These two dimensions of power – unevenness and exclusion – presuppose a dependency on particularity: there is no universality that operates as pure universality, there is only the relative universalization created by expanding the chain of equivalences around a central particularistic core.” (Laclau, 2000: 207-8). Thus insofar as the logic of equivalence and difference strongly endeavour to predominate, both forces are important in the construction and establishment of a new hegemonic project. The third step pertains to the partiality of the universal.

Not all groups are equally capable of becoming hegemonic. The unevenness of the structural positions in society prevents this: not by determining once and for all which among the various political forces is capable of becoming hegemonic, but rather by constraining and facilitating the formulation and realisation of the political strategies of those (Laclau, 1994: 174-5). But what this entails is that,

*“Whatever ontic content we decide to privilege in an ontological investment, the traces of that investment cannot be entirely concealed...the partiality we privilege will also be the point that universality necessarily inhabits.... The particular has transformed its very partiality in the name of a transcendent universality. That is why the ontological function can never be reduced to its ontic content.... But because this ontological function can be present only when it is attached to an ontic content, the latter becomes the horizon of all there is – the point at which the ontic and the ontological fuse into a contingent but indivisible unity.”* (Laclau, 1996: 225-6).

There is a circular relation between the universal and particular. The universal emerges out of the negation of particular identities, but its content is fixed in and through political struggles for hegemony in which particular demands are universalised and others are marginalised (Torfing, 1999: 175).

The fourth point emphasizes the importance of naming. The unity of the social agent, once it sees the coming together of a plurality of demands, solidifies this unification through the naming process which amalgamates the entire process and directs its final trajectory. Because the boundaries of equivalence permanently fluctuate, the naming process is crucial in reigning in and giving meaning to certain concepts which in other paradigms have different meanings and significations (Laclau, 1996: 227). Lastly, historical conditions make the emergence and expansion of popular identities possible. This is due to the multiplication and heterogeneity of social demands which sees unity through “equivalential political articulations.” (Laclau, 1996: 228). The successful attempt by a social group to embody and occupy the empty signifier that signifies the unfilled universal has important ramifications (Laclau, 1994: 177):

*“It might help the particular political force to become hegemonic, but the hegemonic victory would be achieved only at the expense of a loss of identity, the direct result of the universalization of the particular content of the project and demands of the hegemonic agent. As such the hegemonic agent seems to be constitutively split between the particularity of the particular project and demands and the universal function of the latter, which requires the transformation of its very particularity into a surface of inscription through which all political struggles will be expressed.” (Laclau, 1994: 177).*

The various groups will aim to hegemonise the empty place of the universal. The particular identity that succeeds in filling the empty space of the universal has established hegemony (Torfing, 1999: 175).

## **2.9 Why is Laclau a post-structuralist?**

With the introduction of the subject before subjectivisation or interpellation, displacements and shifts, the mobility of identity and meaning, which is always a feature of symbolic systems, can now be accounted for. In a sense the structure is not what it was, hence post-structural, but more importantly, both structural mobility and the subject *stricto sensu* were always necessary features of structure – it just needed the post-structuralist to bring this out: Thus post structuralism is best understood as the coming to terms with the full import of the differentiability or structurality itself.

## **2.10 Why is the distinction between subject and subject-position important in the analysis of colonialism?**

In the first place (and this is another important charge against Althusser) unless such a distinction is made and unless the subject is distinguished from the occupant of a subject-position, it becomes impossible to account for shifts, displacements and transformations in the configuration of subject-

positions and social identities themselves. When such shifts occur, it is postulated that what is happening is that the subject of lack is turning against some or all of its inscriptions in identity and searching for others more able to satisfy its need for stability and identity. The specificity of the subject viz-a-viz subject position is important as later on there is a poignant shedding of light on the shifts that have occurred and continue to occur in specific forms of colonial subjectivity.

Secondly, with the subject *stricto sensu* there is a rigid inability to render interpellation intelligible. All interpellation – this induction of concrete individuals into their symbolic places and identities – depends on the subject insofar as the subject, as ‘want to be’ or subject of lack, itself needs to be interpellated in order to acquire a socially recognised identity. Accordingly, distinguishing subject from subject position is necessary to understand what actually takes place in the process of Althusserian interpellation. What as ‘want to be’ the subject needs, interpellation offers him. Interpellation offers the agent or subject the illusory belief that it is a self-centred autonomous source acting out of pure agency in a society carved, to a certain degree, from its desires and intentions. Interpellation offers the subject the certitude of the Cartesian cogito understood as reflectively and reflexively in total grasp of itself. Interpellation, the ideological effect, and the multiple factors and instances that contribute to the emergence of a subject and hegemony, is critical in not only accounting for changes in history but also why certain forms of governance managed to hegemonise itself, and continues to hegemonise itself, for such an extended period and in the face of continuous resistance and antagonisms. Without understanding the intricate dynamics of the subject, subject-position and the structure itself, there is a lack in concisely tracing why the global order is the way it is, how this affected and continues to affect the colonial symbolic in democratic South Africa and most importantly, how these operations and dynamics affect the interpellation of the black subject in South Africa and in turn how it affects the trajectory of South Africa’s economico-political future.

Thus, when it comes to interpellation the dialectic between empty subject and full identity of the subjects need to be grasped in order to get the proper measure of what is going on in specifically colonial interpellation. The distinction introduced post-Althusser into the discourse-theoretical or structuralist problematic between subject and bearer is very important in carrying out one of the

most important objectives of this dissertation viz to contribute to the analysis of the forms taken by global and national colonial subjectivities especially in the post-apartheid period. Structuralist and post-structuralist theory both provide the sharpest tools and best-versed vocabulary to dissect and assist this paper in meeting its objectives, the principle of which is, understanding the interpellation of the South African black colonised subject as the centre of colonial, developmental and democratic structures.

## **Conclusion**

The fundamental and principal aim of this dissertation is to locate the South African subject in post-colonial thought. In order to sufficiently locate and understand the logic of the black colonised subject in South Africa today, the vantage point is understanding the principal Colonial Relation. In understanding the Colonial Relation, the conceptual and theoretical tools discussed and analysed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 is deployed. To reiterate, Althusserian Structuralism provides the differential logic applied to the capitalist-working class relation and in chapter 3 the relational social ontology is re-cast onto the coloniser-colonised relation. Furthermore, Althusser's three theses of ideology which successively and concurrently interpellate the subject and affects the trajectory of the structure is applied it to the Colonial Symbolic. Laclau's concept of the subject, contra Althusser's subject-position, is used to account for the multiplicitous changes in subjectivity as well as the manner in which the Colonial Symbolic is reproduced. Combined with Althusser and Laclau's concept of the structure and subject, the work of Frantz Fanon is utilised in accounting for the 'elementary position of the subject'. The concatenation of these theories provides a novel form of thinking about the subjects of the Colonial Relation in South Africa.

### Chapter 3: Creation of the Colonial Symbolic

In delineating the manner in which the Colonial Relation was created, and understanding the subject in colonial thought, this section will chronologically follow the analysis of the following topics: Firstly, under discussion is the Creation of Europe and how the Dutch arrived in South Africa with an already superiorised image of self. Secondly analysed is the role of ideological buds (European literature, science, religion, art and language) in inferiorising the black subject. The works of Bernard Magubane's *Construction of Race and the Dispensable Other* and Valentin-Yves Mudimbe's *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* inform this narrative. It is important to mention that the goal is not an in-depth study of how science, religion, art and language de-constituted the subject but to note the role ISA's play in interpellating the subject. Third, a consequence of ideological buds and ideological state apparatus was the bifurcation of the African Other and European One. Up until this juncture, understanding the historicity behind the emergence of the black colonised subject and white colonised subject is important but the development of the subjectivisation of the subjects develop critical henceforth.

In the second half of this chapter, Althusserian Structuralism, post structuralism and the works of Frantz Fanon are drawn upon in defining the colonial symbolic as a differential, *sui generis* system and a site of overdetermination. Thereafter, the psychoanalytic perspectives of Jacques Lacan is introduced. More specifically, his theory of the Imaginary, Symbolic and Real which is applied to the Colonial Relation. Lastly and most crucially, the first two of four identifications experienced by the black colonised subject is postulated.

The first subjectivisation or the elementary position of the black colonised subject is that of 'subjective destitution'. Here, it is argued, that the colonial interpellation does not offer the colonized subject any identity at all. He is not even offered an inferior or subordinate identity but is instead defined in full contrast to the absolute being of the white colonizing master. Colonial difference goes further than capitalism where the capitalist and working class share a common ontological status, that is, their relation to the means of production. However, coloniser and colonised do not. The colonised by definition is not permitted to exist in the way the coloniser

does; and this ontological deficit is thus inscribed in his place and is constituted by the colonial relation.

The position of subjective destitution creates a play or space for the negativised black colonised subject to shift into the second position or identification. Here, the black colonised subject, who is stripped of all identifications only has the identity of the positivised white colonising master to latch onto, and that is precisely what he does. However, the maintenance of antagonisms and the colonial master desirous of strictly retaining his plenitude disallows such a transgression in the Colonial Symbolic and the black colonised subject is forced to repress his desire to be white. This repression of the desire “to be white” (Fanon) emerges in the post-apartheid democratic era and under different circumstances unfolds in a nuanced manner.

[Different regions within Africa experienced alternate forms of colonization, for example, West Africa was steeped in slavery, whereas Southern African developed into settler economies. The aim is not to reduce the colonial symbolic and adopt a blanket approach to the variegated nature of the colonial project. Thus, black colonized subject refers to the indigenous black South African subject, and furthermore the South African colonization process refers to a principally settler-based society. The outcome of this will be discussed in Chapter 7 where it is postulated that under the colonial rule and settler-based economy, South African society becomes defined as a Colonialism of a Special Type (the co-habitation of the same geographic region by both the coloniser and the colonised.) This occupation of land, development of industry and infrastructure, has a different set of economic, social, cultural and psychological bearings on the South African colonized subject vis-à-vis the West African subject of slavery for example].

### **3.1 Creation of Europe**

Husserl explains that prior to the rise and expansion of colonialism there was no Europe in the politico-cultural sense. Geographically, feudal Europe was constituted by mini-towns and villages operative under the *ancien* regime. Ideologically, the *ancien* regime, with its strict rigid hierarchy, was the site of antagonism between the different strata of subjects, and accordingly, it was via the strictures of the regime that subjects were interpellated and the society-effect reproduced. However, from the early 1600's the *ancien* regime began to experience tremors of rupture due to the re-thinking of society - historical moments and personalities such as Galileo and Newton founding science, Descartes' philosophy, Hugo Grotius initiating international law and Thomas Hobbes and John Locke writing extensively on modern political theory. These historic moments were the landscape of mythical spaces and imaginaries, and subsequently, the discursive field was opened.

The discursive field allowed the abovementioned moments to re-think the socio-political order, and consequently, a dislocation/rupture of the *ancien* system occurred. In order for the structure to suture itself or to re-establish order, society needs to convert and transform ephemeral elements into constituted moments via the attaching of a sliding signifier to a signified. While the abovementioned historical moments and personalities created a new paradigm and created new dominant signifiers, they did not create and provide substance for the subject to identify itself with, meaning, it is only via what the subject is not that it becomes defined. The presence of stability in the social, paradoxically, comes in the form of social antagonism.

The creation of Europe was co-eval with the discovery of Africa. This linkage was created by the mercantile class. Valentin-Yves Mudimbe writes in *The Invention of Africa* "The black continent was still on the maps *a terra incognita*, but its people and other material productions were familiar to travellers, students of the human species, merchants and European states." (Mudimbe, 1988: 23). The starting point in the creation of Europe as a civilized, modern, wealthy nation-state was post Vasco da Gama's pioneering voyage to India, the ships of many European nations had berthed at Saldhana and Table Bay, and travellers had brought back to Europe their impressions of the Cape. In time, knowledge of other races and cultures developed into a more systematic observation of the indigenous peoples; collections of data, descriptions and classifications all emphasized(s)

the peculiarity of the physical appearance, clothing, speech, and way of life of the natives, and, as early as 1668 discourses on other races began to emerge, structured around the conceptual opposition between the European and the savage world.

The confluence of the fall of the *ancien* regime, the Scientific Revolution and colonisation by European forces, all acted together in providing the European subject with enough substance to create a *point de capiton*. Thus, Husserl and Joffe argue (and this point is cited and iterated by Magubane in *Construction of Race and the Dispensable Other* (2007: 57) that it was only during the colonial period that Europe was created:

*“Colonialism thereby created Europe itself, with its myth of a ‘European civilisation’ and, thence, the famous ‘civilising mission’. Before capitalist colonialism there was neither Europe in the political or cultural sense. Nor were there Europeans. The very term arose only in the sixteenth century, after da Gama and Columbus and the other ‘discoveries’. All major racial concepts and terms were created by capitalist colonialism. The very divisibility and resulting partition of humanity into sub-species or race were unthinkable and at most exceptional before capitalism. The main ideology capitalist-colonialism on a world scale was and remains racialism or racism open or hidden, patent or latent, colonial or neo-colonial.”* (1994: 11).

The age of discovery, the age of empiricism, the age of socio-political thought and the age of Enlightenment created a fresh set of buoyant signifiers earnestly seeking to attach itself to a signified, for it is only when the signifier and signified lock into one another and produce a sign that the identity of the subject becomes newly constituted and anchored in the social. The weight needed by the subject to experience identification, and escape the vertigo of unidentification, came in the form of colonialism. In the South African instance, colonialism formally began in 1652 with the arrival of the Dutch who were responsible for establishing a refreshment centre for ships on the trade route. As the white Dutch settled and the establishment grew, slaves were imported to help meet the demands, and slowly natives were colonised via conquest.

Conquest of South Africa and its people assumed a tri-pronged approach: the process of acquiring, distributing and exploiting lands (appropriation of physical space); the policies of domesticating natives (the reformation of the native's mind); and the manner of managing ancient organizations and implementing new modes of production (the integration of local economic histories into the Western perspective). The product of this tri-ensemble completely embraced the physical, human and spiritual aspects of the colonizing experience (Christopher, 1984: 87). Of these three forms of conquest, the conquest of mind was vital in stripping the black colonised subject of inherent subjectivisations. The removal of the black colonised subjects corporeal schema/emptying of the black colonised of himself, was undertaken via ideological buds.

### **3.2 Ideological Buds**

Althusser argued that structures are able to maintain their longevity via Ideological States Apparatuses, which he defined as, "Ideological instances in its concrete materiality exists in the form of ideological formations." (Althusser, 1971: 125). Whilst Althusser gave predominant attention to these "instances" - the church, mass media, education system - which uphold dominant ideologies transmitted by the state system, this section will pay closer attention to the creation of ideological buds. Ideological buds are organic apparatus used by the One to institute hegemony and dominance over a newly created Other. To the degree that the ideological buds labour to interpellate the One and Other into their respective positions of dominant and subordinate, they develop into Althusser's Ideological State Apparatus. In the instance of the white coloniser working to interpellate the black colonised into a position of subordination, the ideological buds used were: science, art, literature, language and religion. The role that each of these mechanisms played in the de-valuing of the black subjects identity and, in turn, the creation and appreciation of the white colonising subject, will now briefly be analysed

#### **3.2.1 Art and Architecture**

During the 1500 and 1600s, mercantilists both had and were viewed as conduits of power and control. Jan Nederveen Pieterse in *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (1992) illustrates how all exotic art and craft items created an imagery of other-worlds due to inter-continental trade travels by the mercantilists. Mercantilists unknowingly were

the impetus for the creation of the myth, imaginary and shifting of frontiers of a strong, powerful, transcendental and secure European entity. In the following passage, Pieterse (1992: 18) draws attention to how, in the process of ‘discovering’ the world, Europe’s representation of the continents and its place among the continents of the world was already influenced by the imperial matrix created by the mercantile class:

*“Europe was represented as a queen with crown and spectre, flanked by a horse. Asia as a woman in garments adorned with gold, pearls and other precious stones, carrying spices, herbs and fragrant incense, accompanied by a camel; Africa as a dark woman with loose hair, almost naked, who wears a coral necklace and earrings, with an elephant trunk on her head, and is holding a scorpion in her right hand and cornucopia containing ears of corn on her left. On one side of her is a ferocious lion and on the other are vipers and venomous serpents.”*

As such, when the imperial French, Italian, Dutch and British began the colonizing mission, they arrived at African shores with an already superiorised, positivised identity of self. Upon arrival, colonisers merely corroborated the imaginaries and perceptions fed by the merchants. Consequently, both within Europe and Africa, African art and culture was criticized and denigrated.

Art in Europe was accepted at the epitome of wealth, aristocracy and elegance. Wassing writes, “Arts are based on criteria, and it is difficult to imagine that these standards can emerge from outside the “power-knowledge” field of a given culture, a field which at a historical period, establishes its artistic bible. Therefore it is obvious that fetishes and other “primitive” pieces of art are wonderful because their structure, character, and arrangement demand a designation.” (Wassing, 1988). Furthermore, African art was viewed as an expression of the people, and consequently, writes Mudimbe (1988: 24), art and people were viewed as ““savage” in terms of the evolutionary chain of being and culture, which establishes a correspondence between advancement in the civilizing process and artistic creativity, as well as, intellectual achievement.”

Hammond and Jablow (1977) comment on J. Bruce's expedition into Ethiopia in 1770 and Mungo Park's journey to the river Niger in 1795 - In their journals, Bruce and Parks notes the distinction between "savage Negro" and "civil Mohometan" and "the commentaries on Africa's indolence, their unbridled passions and their cruelty or mental retardation were already there." Their writings paid homage to the dominant logic of the time wherein they remarked on the levels of classification of humans demanded by the logic of the chain of being and stages of progress and social development. Explorers just brought new proofs which could further explicate and compound African inferiority. Since Africans could produce anything of value; the technique of Yoruba statutory must have come from Egyptians; Benin art must have been a Portuguese creation; the architectural achievement of Zimbabwe was due to Arab technicians; and Hausa and Buganda statecraft were inventions of white invaders (Davidson, 1959; Lugard, 1905; Randall-MacIver, 1906; Sanders 1969; Mallows, 1984). This tendency of negating anything the African subject created that was of value or attention to the European appeared and featured in other fields as well.

### **3.2.2. Literature**

This section pays attention to the manner in which the Khoikhoi of South Africa were disembodied vis-à-vis European identities. A cursory glance at early descriptions of the Khoikhoi reveal the trend in European perceptions of blacks. This analysis is important in demonstrating the co-articulation and dependence of the One on the Other in creating and establishing its identity. Europe, and the European identity, were created in juxtaposition to the people in which the mercantile and later colonisers discovered. The Khoikhoi of South Africa were an integral part of the imaginary. Initially, Saussure is drawn upon to emphasize the importance of language – speech and wiring - in creating a hegemonic discourse and associated ideological intrastate that interpellate the subject(s).

Saussure is instrumental in delineating the manner in which language articulates and forms identities within society, and in turn, the structure itself. The language used by the white coloniser against the black colonised, both verbally and in literature is representative of the perspective of the European One. To draw on Saussure, language is one of the primary structures which is

fundamental to how meaning is generated and shaped - "Language is a system of signs expressing ideas" (Saussure, 1983: 15). Saussure postulates that coherent writing and speech is only made possible through the primary/basic element of language, namely, the sign (the formal connection between the signifier and signified). The concept of the signifier is critical to the manner in which the black colonised was interpellated. The white coloniser attributed negative signifiers to the black colonised subject. For example, early writers all touched variously on the Khoikhoi's physical appearance, dress, diet, habitation, utensils and weapons, customs (particularly those at birth, marriage and death), religion (or rather superstition and magic), government and law (or the absence of it), language and character. These categories came to form a conceptual grid into which the descriptions of the Khoikhoi's life came to be placed against. A discursive structure began to emerge from these descriptions, and, significantly, they demonstrated a particular ordering of Otherness; structured around the stark opposition between European and Savage.

The ideological bud of literature worked to interpellate and consolidate both the African Other and European One into their respective positions of black colonised and white coloniser. To demonstrate the operationality of literature as an ideological apparatus, Dapper's *Early Cape Hottentots* will be analysed, for the initial encounter and account of the particularities of the Khoikhoi experienced by the white coloniser:

- "Physical Appearance: In build and shape [they have] ill-formed bodies and insignificant appearance, and yellowish in colour.
- Food: Like other savages, they do not know how to prepare or dress their food, but fall on the dead beasts like dogs, eating it raw, and seldom cooked.
- Character: In faithlessness, inconstancy, lying, cheating, treachery, and infamous concern with every kind of lust they exercise their villainy.
- Art: You might as well look for jewels in a sty for arts in this degraded people
- Trade: They have no great inclination towards trade.
- Religion: No one...has ever been able to find among all the Kaffirs or Hottentots or Beach rangers any trace of religion, or any show of honour to God or the Devil."

Through literature printed and distributed in the West, there were already negativised impressions created of the African people based on superficial cursory glances that later became engrained, absolutely defining and formed the tapestry of racial and colonial ontology and ideology.

### 3.2.3 Science

The Scientific Revolution began during the end of the Renaissance period and continued well into the Age of Enlightenment. Within this period there was a concrete transformation in both the understanding and articulation of society and nature and all that each concept encompassed. According to Dubrunner (1971: 141), “It was an encyclopaedic age – everything was registered, grouped, named and evaluated and ‘laws of nature’ were established. Individual differences were neglected, common denominator of ‘families’ and ‘genre’ established...science became a sort of ‘Ersatz’ religion. This was done both in terms of Aristotelian logic and new biological and anthropological science.” The Scientific Revolution intersected and deeply impacted the manner in which racial identities were understood and was used as a key tool in creating a superior European racial entity over racially weaker others.

Europe’s best brains produced and cultivated the vision that humanity was made of inferior and superior races. “Scientific racism”, understood as, systematic ideas by scientists, anthropologists, historians, and theologians, endeavored to base racism on scientific, historical and theological authority, rested on the negation of the fundamental principle of the unity of the human species (Magubane, 2007: 66). It was based on the hope that science would eventually provide an answer that would establish the permanent subordinate status of people who were not white. This hope came in the form of Carl Linnaeus. Linnaeus, a Swedish botanist developed a biological classification system based on taxonomy and binomial nomenclature in his *Systema Naturae* and *Imperium Naturae*. These concepts were applied within a racial paradigm and the justification and privileging of white as superior was created and enforced. Thus the ideologues of scientific racism which began as an *a priori* assumption were seized upon as factual (Magubane, 2007: 62). Furthermore, the concept of racial superiority was enforced by Social Darwinism, as the eighteenth

century was the period in which both imperialism and anthropology were being shaped simultaneously.

The idea of white supremacy had an enormous influence on the credulous masses of Europe. They came to believe that the horizontal line dividing white from black was perfectly legitimate and sacrosanct. The ordinary white person in the colonies believed he belonged to a racial aristocracy, and the position and status of all people all over the world was determined by the degree of their whiteness. This creed took root among people of European origin wherever they settled – in North America, Canada, South America, New Zealand and South Africa and constructed the Rest as others (Magubane, 2007: 68).

### **3.2.4 Language**

The ideologues developed by science, anthropology and biology were all expressed through the language used. The usage of particular words, the tone and the writers themselves are all indicators of the syntagmatic nature of language. This section underscores the importance of the native speech in the judgment of them by the European subjects.

According to Rhyne - and the classical age to which he belonged - language was one of the distinguishing features between man and animal. In 1665, in his first voyage to South Africa, Thomas Herbert in *Some Years: Travels into Africa and Asia* tried to establish that the Khoikhoi were a mixture between man and ape (based on the language they use) – “Having ‘a voice’ twixt humane and beast, makes the supposition to be of more credit, that they have a beastly copulation or conjuncture. So, as considering the resemblance they bear with baboons, which I could observe kept frequent company with the women, their speech...rather agreeing with beasts than man.” This observation reinforced the contemporary perception that the Khoikhoi were not entirely human, in a period when classification was used to detect similarities and mark out differences between species. The Khoikhoi were seen as outside the family of man, incapable of communication with other peoples because they were bereft of speech. Local settlers at the Cape, who called them “schepsel”, also had their doubts whether the Khoikhoi were entirely human. Landdrost Alberts remarked in 1805 that “According to the unfortunate notion prevalent here, a

heathen is actually not human, but at the same time he cannot really be classed among the animals. He is therefore a sort of creature not known elsewhere.”

For the European settlers, and the Western environment they belonged to, the Khoikhoi represented the most primitive level of linguistic capacity, acquisition and expression. Khoikhoi language signified human language in its purely natural state and hence most undeveloped and inferior state. In addition to the primitiveness and under-developed nature of the Khoikhoi’s language, his environment was also considered state of nature; his social development pre-cultural; and his very existence semi-human and inching towards animal-like.

### **3.2.5 Religion**

Another observation of the Khoikhoi by the Europeans was their “idleness”. Idleness stood in antithesis to Calvinism in Protestant Europe. In Calvinism, as Weber has written, “Waste of time is thus, in principle, the deadliest of sins. The span of human life is infinitely short and precious to make sure of one’s own election. Loss of time through sociability, idle talk, luxury, even more sleep than is necessary for health.” (1984, 157-8). Occupation in labour and productivity were viewed as divine edicts and any activity outside of this productive force was considered sacrilege and heresy. For Protestant Europe, “To be idle was to defy the fundamental divine edict; to be improvident, to look to God to save oneself from starving, was an offence. Without the discipline of unremitting work, mankind would relapse into sin.” (Foucault, 1977: 49). With hardly a dissenting voice, in addition to being categorized as half-man, half-animal, the activities of the Khoikhoi and Africans were condemned as “idle, slothful, indolent and lazy” (*Mentzel, 1919: 272*). According to scientific racism and now religion, the African subject check-marked all the qualities to reinforce its position, life and very being as savage, primitive and in need of civilizing.

Designating the Khoikhoi in these ways gave Europeans proof of their own alterity. The Khoikhoi were classified according to the tenets of western thought and imagination: it was not arts, science or religion, but their absence which described them. Alterity was the opposite, the negative

category of the Same. The Khoikhoi thus became the Other, which by its difference from the norm specified the identity of the Same. At the same time, by proclaiming a series of differences between Europeans and Khoikhoi, these differences were capable of being assimilated into white thought by recognising the ways in which they departed from the white norm; the way in which these differences were identified and arranged was itself a comment upon the epistemological foundations of contemporary Western thought. This alterity took an ideologically nuanced form in the creation of Us/Them; Civilized/Barbaric; and One/Other binaries and ultimately the Colonial Relation.

Ideological buds, with time, consolidated and propounded the ideology of the lack of the black colonised subject, and were subsequently converted into ideological state apparatuses. Furthermore, literature, art, science, religion and language persisted in the creation of binaries between the African black colonised Other and the European white colonising One. The build up to the Colonial Relation is reinforced by the formulation of binaries and its effect on the subject. This analysis will act as a precursor to understanding the principal colonial relation which is based upon and perpetuates itself via antagonism.

### **3.3 Binaries and the Constitutive Outside**

From the acquisition of land and reformation of the African people, a primary set of binaries were formed that continue to be applied and define society in its global application. These include: traditional versus modern; oral versus written and printed; agrarian and customary communities versus urban and industrialized civilization; subsistence economies versus highly productive economies. Why do binaries play a fundamental role in the articulation of identities in society(s)?

The creation and maintenance of binaries is a critical component in the longevity of the social, as binaries become the bearer of social antagonism. In addition to the site of antagonism, binaries play the following key roles that will be analysed in chronological order: Reveal that the identities of subjects are constituted by what they are not, or what Laclau terms the constitutive outside; the

creator of a binary(s) reveals who the dominant hegemonic subject is; binaries create equivalential groups between the two antagonistic parties, and these equivalences create solidarity that perpetuate antagonism itself; lastly, the creation of binaries, delineates a path of catch-up that the Other needs to undertake in order to attain totalisation that the One is supposedly presupposed by. Paradoxically, and analogous to social antagonism, binaries constitute a double-edge sword, in that, in so far as they maintain antagonism between two or more groups, the blind spot of the structure – contingency – is never acknowledged.

The creation of binaries is important for a subject emerging from the political into the social as the definition of what he is not is a prerequisite for defining who he is. This definition of what he is not becomes the site of social antagonism. For that reason, Laclau, in *New Reflections of the Revolution of Our Time*, defined social antagonism as “The presence of a constitutive outside which, at the same time, constitutes and denies the identity of the inside.” (Laclau, 1990: 17). In a differential relationship the exterior provides conditions of existence of the interior identity. In the case of the white coloniser, in as much as he attempts to distance and differentiate himself from the identity and customs of the black colonised subject, it is in fact the latter that provides substance to his identity. Inspired by Staten (1984: 19-9), Laclau calls this excluded the constitutive outside. “The constitutive outside has the capacity to put into question the very identity which is constituted through its externalisation.” (cited in Norval, 1994: 122).

For the manner in which the white coloniser defines himself, the constitutive outside is everything he wishes he is not – the black colonised. For the black colonised, the white coloniser comes to represent everything he aspires to be (As Fanon writes, “What does the black man wish to be? White!”). This relation of what the white coloniser wants not to be and what the black colonised wants to be, represents the Colonial Relation. “Terms such as ‘civilization’ and ‘humanity’”, Hayden White, argues, “are defined by juxtaposition and stipulation, rather than observation and induction” (1972: 5). Thus, understanding what civilisation is can always be illustrated by defining what it is not. African characteristics can be determined by seeing how they differ from the European. What the various terms used to designate the African subject have in common is there not-being European.

The antagonism between European and the African is reduced to the contradictory relationship of European and non-European. Black is the negative, which cannot be directly represented and is thus constituted through an ensemble of specific antagonisms. Whereas European-ness is represented as a tightly woven construction of positive determinations, African life or the life of the black subject is dissolved into a series of negative equivalences lacking any positivity of its own. Thus the African subjects were and are constituted in terms of the subordinate character, established through a series of equivalences constructed by means of antagonisms. In it, the European world came to be the paradigmatic representative of the human species, and the black, the Other, of this idealized image.

Binaries are created by the subject with the dominant holding. In the instance of colonial South Africa, the white coloniser demarcates the lines that can and cannot be crossed by the black colonised subject. At the same time, the hegemonic subject transmits an ideology that simultaneously acts on the subject to ensure that their positions in the societal order is maintained and reproduced. Binaries and ideology work hand-in-hand to produce the ideological effect, a metaphysical phantasy that maintains society's overall longevity. Owing to its position of dominance, the European One articulated an identity in a manner that best befitted himself, and in turn, created an identity of the African Other that labours to uphold the hegemony of the European One.

Hence, in colonising the African Other, there were several frontiers (racial, economic, political, legal, ideological, physical, ethnic) both superstructural and infrastructural, which were always well-guarded and protected by the white colonising European One. Laclau terms these lines of demarcation as political frontiers - "A dichotomization of the local political spectrum through the emergence of an equivalential chain of unsatisfied demands." (Laclau, 1996: 74). The paradox of the frontier is that while it creates a dividing line between the One and Other, it simultaneously acts as a unifying force between the two groups. As a result, for the European One, frontiers were created and maintained so as to enhance their chances, capabilities and position of privilege. However, at the same time, there are "Attempts to create specific forms of unity among different

interests by relating them to a common project and by establishing a frontier to define the forces to be opposed to the “enemy”.” (Norval, 2000: 221). Within their respective identitarian logics, both the European One and African Other minimise their difference and focus their antagonism and differences against the enemy.

In a capitalist system, the capitalist class and working class define their animosity vis-à-vis each other, however, in the colonial relation, due to the absence of an equivalent to the means of production, the relation between the coloniser and colonised takes on a more asymmetrical relation (see below). In the instance that the political lines demarcated by the white coloniser becomes challenged, an even greater and stricter attempt is made by the coloniser to maintain his position, for in the blurring of lines, a glimmer and semblance of the inability of identity-totalisation is witnessed - “When we discover that there are several cultures instead of just one and consequently at the time when we acknowledge the end of a sort of cultural monopoly, be it illusory or real, we are threatened with destruction by our own self-discovery. Suddenly it becomes possible that there are just others, that we ourselves are an “other” among others. All meaning and every goal having disappeared...” (Ricoeur, 1965: 278). While this becomes a beacon of light for the black colonised, it entails destruction and displacement of position for the white coloniser.

The European One and the African Other only gain and propagate their identities and position qua one another, resulting in this relation becoming and being maintained by antagonism. By virtue of this relation and antagonism, the African Other and European One, possess traits of one another thereby disallowing complete totalisation of self. This inability of identity transcendence or totalisation of self perpetuates antagonism and creates space for contingency of both the structure and the subject. It is worth re-quoting Laclau in this regard,

*“Whatever ontic content we decide to privilege in an ontological investment, the traces of that investment cannot be entirely concealed...the partiality we privilege will also be the point that universality necessarily inhabits.... The particular has transformed its very partiality in the name of a transcendent universality. That is why the ontological function can never be reduced to its ontic content.... But because this ontological function can be*

*present only when it is attached to an ontic content, the latter becomes the horizon of all there is – the point at which the ontic and the ontological fuse into a contingent but indivisible unity.” (Laclau, 1996: 225-6).*

In addition to antagonism and ideology, Bigo and Shaw maintain that these binaries are sustained over centuries, by what they call, “marginality”. The space between the binaries, is an intermediate, diffused space in which social and economic events define the extent of marginality (Bigo, 1974: 20; Shaw. 1985: 33-6). Marginality alludes to the gap within bifurcations/frontiers where the subject of subordination or the African Other is forced to constantly reflect upon catching up or attaining the position of privilege/surplus held by the European One. Marginality designates the intermediate space between the so-called African tradition and the projected modernity of colonialism. It is an apparently urbanized space in which, as Amin notes, “vestiges of the past, especially the survival of structures that are still living realities (tribal ties for example), often continue to hide the new structures (ties based on class, or on groups defined by their position in the capitalist system)” (1974: 377). This space reveals not so much that new imperatives could achieve a jump into modernity, it is more the fact that despair gives this intermediate space its precarious pertinence and simultaneously its dangerous importance (Mudimbe, 1988: 16-8).

An explication has been provided in the way the rise of Europe and the positivised white coloniser was co-eval and dependent upon the discovery of Africa and the negativisation of the black colonised subject. This was achieved by the European subject via ideological buds that later consolidated into ideological state apparatus. Ideological buds played a critical role in consolidating the position of the European subject into a position of One, and concurrently operated to cause a disidentification of the African subject from and of itself. The maintenance of the creation of the newly created positions was due to the manner in which binaries acted as ideological boundaries between the white colonising European One and black colonised African Other. The development of the European subject, negation of the black colonised subject and creation and maintenance of binaries, successively worked in creating a symbolic in South African history that continues into the democratic narrative today.

Tracing the creation of Europe and the European One, de-valuation of the African identity and the way in which the colonialization process developed into a system and structure itself, for the purposes of this dissertation, reaches a penultimate in the creation of the South Africa Colonial Symbolic. The abovementioned factors all contribute to what is termed the ‘elementary position’ of the black colonised subject. The elementary position of the black colonised subject is the first of four subjectivisations and identifications explored and coherently developed. While each of the four factors can be understood and explicated in and of itself, at the same time, these identifications and subjectivisations also operate concurrently in interpellating the black colonised subject and white colonising subject. Naturally, with the evolution of time, with the evolution of antagonisms and newly introduced factors such as industrialisation, capitalism, apartheid and democracy, to mention a few, the colonial and interpellatory matrix changes resulting in a diverse set of challenges experienced by both the colonising and colonised subject.

The analysis of the South African landscape was a necessary undertaking in the trajectory towards understanding the interpellation and subjectivisation of the black colonised subject, which will now be critically analysed and discussed. The creation of the Colonial Symbolic and the resultant subjects that are created will be framed within the literary discourse of Althusserian structuralism and post-structuralism. The discussion now turns towards the South Africa Colonial Symbolic followed by two of four of the identitarian mutations of the black colonised subject. Although they constitute two of four positions, the identifications of the black colonised subject revisits the black subject in the democratic, non-racialist universalist plane when the African National Congress occupies the place of power in 1994.

### **3.4 The South African Colonial Symbolic**

The vantage point is elucidating that colonialism is a relation, specifically a differential relation in which the coloniser and the colonised are co-constitutive of each other. As mentioned earlier, this conception of colonialism is arrived at via Althusser’s theory of society being “structured like a language” (Saussure, 1974). While Althusser develops this in the terms of Marxist theory, that

is, the class relations are themselves constitutive of capitalism, this structuralist principle is applied to the colonial relation in this instance. To reiterate, what Althusser takes over is Saussure's argument in *Course in General Linguistics*: Saussure privileges the syntagmatic strand of language in which language is a structure that is constructed relationally, that is, every element is posited as an expression of every other element. What this means is that each sign acquires its identity through its difference to other signs – what the sign is not. All identities are conceived in terms of its relational and differential values. “The value of a word is not determined merely by what that it represents but by the contrasts inherent in the systems of elements that construct language (*langue*).” (Howarth, 2000: 21).

The specificity of the colonial relation resides in the interdependence between the coloniser and the colonised. This is a differential relation (although Fanon does not draw this out and make it explicit: because that definition of what the coloniser is depends internally on what the colonised is, and vice-versa). Torres is helpful here, his argument is that the colonial relation has to be understood as a specific relation of domination, different from other Western modes of mastery in which the Other is transformed, assimilated, or annihilated. The colonised is for Torres the “ballast” of the colonisers own feeling of superiority and power and as such has to be maintained in its colonial subordination in order for the master to be a master (2007).

Under colonialism, the positivised white coloniser created an identity for blacks in complete opposition to its own. For the positivised white coloniser to retain its domination, they had to ensure that the negativised black colonised was kept in a place - a place of nothing, stripped of all plenitude. This was achieved through the ideological buds and later ideological state apparatus - Church and missionaries - who engaged blacks in the thinking that whites were pure and supreme and that they were impure and nothing; through the education system where at an extremely low level, blacks reached a ceiling in being allowed to develop their intellectual, creative and physical pursuits, so that whites would always surpass them in every sphere. As long as the black colonised were kept at nothing, the white coloniser would have everything. The systemic positivisation and negativisation of the whites and blacks had to be strictly maintained at all costs. In order to progress

to a deeper understanding of white subjectivity and white interpellative logic, Althusser's three theses of interpellation will be discussed.

According to the first process of interpellation – “we recognise ourselves according to what people label us as speech is the primary dialogue of all discourses.” (Macdonell, 1986:1). “The subject is caught in this network – common nouns and proper nouns, shifting effects, syntactic constructions etc – such that he results as the cause of himself.” (Pecheux, 1994: 149-150). As Althusser remarks, an individual is “always-already” a subject, because by their familial matrix/configuration before they are even born the interpellation process begins. In the case of the coloniser how does this function? The coloniser is born into a family of colonisers and domination over the colonised is expected of him. The coloniser child is interpellated into believing that his position is greater and above the black colonised subject. Thus, for both the Dutch and later British colonisers, they were “always-already” interpellated into believing that the negativised black colonised subject was lower than him, a failure, and by virtue of this, he elevated himself as the master of himself and others. By language such as I/you, One/Other, we/them the coloniser sees himself as the cause of himself, and others, and is interpellated accordingly.

The second process of interpellation in which the subject sees himself as an autonomous entity, is a result of the effects of misrecognition. No subject can do without a certain (minimum) degree of certainty of feeling stable and in control of himself and the misrecognition effect produces exactly that. According to Elisabeth Roudinesco (2004: 43) “The inherent tendency of human subjectivity is to look for a centre, the fantasy of a centre” - this centre is created through the process of Othering. Through antagonistic forces an Other is created that creates the illusion that the fulfilment of an identity (of the One) is possible, but there is an exogenous force preventing its realisation. Using Torfing's words, “...the outside is not merely posing a threat to the inside, but is actually required for the definition of the inside. The inside is marked by a constitutive lack that the outside helps to fill.” (2004: 11). The relation between coloniser and colonised, in this context, can be elucidated through an example provided by Mullen (1994). Although the example provided is an American one it nonetheless is sufficient and apt in explaining the Colonial Relation.

In a reading of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Mullen takes interest in a black male character named Lucius Brockway. Brockway is employed at the Liberty Paint Company which produces a paint named Optic White whose pure, untainted and perfect whiteness is, according to Brockway, a result of his unique and masterful mixing skills and knowledge of the machinery (Mullen, 1994). Mullen (1994: 76) notes how "Brockway has something to teach the narrator" through how the "elder worker correctly points to the unacknowledged contribution of black men and women to the production (and reproduction) of white America." What this example shows is the subversive presence of one identity in another and that the construction and domination of one identity requires the subordination, sometimes nothingness of being, of another. These relations are maintained over time in order to sustain the "society effect", that is the cohesiveness of society and its preventing from crumbling (dislocation) through subject-positions into free fall and destitution.

The third process represents the crux of interpellation. The coloniser, the positivised white coloniser subject, is the result of phantasy (or Munchhausen) effect. In terms of which, he is under the illusion that he is the cause of his own actions – he is *causa sui*. He does not see that it is because of the subversive presence and position of the negativised black colonised that he is positivised white coloniser and in doing so sees himself as free, autonomous and a self-making self-centred entity. Through interpellation - through speech and writing - the coloniser differentiated himself from the colonised; through the misrecognition effect and ideological effect, he sees himself as autonomous and wholly responsible for himself; and it is through these processes, which hardened over time, that the coloniser comes eventually to be like the Althusserian Big Subject - self-referential and self-sufficient to the maximum possible extent.

Colonialism is built upon the direct negative relation between the coloniser and colonised. The colonial structure is not epiphenomenal but is instead *sui generis*. The latter makes possible the continuity of colonial relations. Lacan's three registers of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real, will now be drawn upon and applied to the colonial relation and colonial subjectivisations.

Lacan's three registers are important to the objectives of this dissertation as it drives the discourse into the sphere of psychoanalysis. Influenced by structuralism and Saussurian linguistics, and together with Fanon, Lacan adds an additional layer to the understanding of the white coloniser and black colonised. In addition to understanding the physical location of the subject, understanding the mind-set of the white colonising subject and black colonised subject, and the vicissitudes it experiences as a result of its subjectivity, is imperative to this dissertation.

### **3.4.1 Lacan's Symbolic, Real and Imaginary**

The theory of the three registers of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real forms the skeletal framework for the various concepts and phases of most of Lacan's intellectual itinerary. The Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real can be thought of as the three fundamental dimensions of psychical subjectivity *à la* Lacan.

Lacan associates the Imaginary with the restricted spheres of consciousness and self-awareness. The Imaginary refers to who and what one imagines other persons to be, what one thereby imagines they mean when communicatively interacting, who and what one imagines oneself to be, including from the imagined perspectives of others. Such a description indicates the ways in which the Imaginary points to core analytic ideas like transference, fantasy, and the ego. As Lacan integrates his early work of the 1930s and 1940s with his structuralist-informed theories of the 1950s, he comes to emphasize the dependence of the Imaginary on the Symbolic. This dependency means that more sensory-perceptual phenomena (images and experiences of one's body, affects as consciously lived emotions, envisioning's of the thoughts and feelings of others) are shaped, steered, and (over)determined by socio-linguistic structures and dynamics. With his choice of the word "imaginary," Lacan designates that which is fictional, simulated, virtual, and the like.

However, the phenomena of the Imaginary are "necessary illusions" (to put it in Kantian locution) or "real abstractions" (to put it in Marxian parlance). This signals two points. First, as one of Lacan's three basic essential registers, the Imaginary is an intrinsic, unavoidable dimension of the existence of speaking, psychical subjects; second, the fictional abstractions of the Imaginary, far

from being merely “unreal” as ineffective, inconsequential epiphenomena, are integral to and have very concrete effects upon actual human realities.

The Lacanian Symbolic initially is theorized on the basis of resources provided by structuralism. Tied to natural languages, as characterized by Saussure, and specific post-Saussurians, this register also refers to the customs, institutions, laws, norms, practices, rituals, rules, traditions, and so on of cultures and societies. These features become entwined in various ways with language. This non-natural universe is an elaborate set of inter-subjective and trans-subjective contexts into which individual human beings are thrown at birth, a pre-existing order preparing places for them in advance, and influencing the vicissitudes of their ensuing lives.

The Real is that which is foreign to the Imaginary-Symbolic reality—this reality is the realm containing conscious apprehension, communicable significance, and the like. It is, as Lacan stresses again and again, an “impossibility” *vis-à-vis* reality- the Symbolic. The focus of our analysis is how colonialism produces its own Real, that is, how the limits of the colonial symbolic, how its inability to achieve totalisation and self-grounding, penetrates the colonial relation itself. The presented argument is that the Real on the one hand, the Symbolic and Imaginary, on the other, do not articulate in the same way it does as under capitalism – this is what frames the analysis in what follows if the subjectivities of both coloniser and colonised, leading us to an argument concerning the fragility of the identity of the colonised. And, to anticipate, it is around this original ontological deficit marking the ‘identity’ of the colonised, that many of the political identities currently organising South African politics need to be understood. Around this specifically colonial void the search for plenitude is particularly intense. This needs to be understood in terms of the original colonised subject-position, which is one of anxiety (see later) – as a reaction to the ‘trauma’, the permanent trauma of the colonised subject-position and subjectivity. This still radiates out into many of the political identities at work in South Africa today – identities that do not have to be conscious (as we will explain) but which still ‘steer’ political decisions and practices. Later on, some of these identities are sketched out and explain themselves as defensive gestures of the subject in the face of its specifically colonial destitution.

The colonial relation is a differential overdetermined relation. It does not have a foundation upon which it rests but is a precarious self-supporting symbolic relation. Neither pole is anything but the difference between it and the other pole, that is, neither pole is a self-sufficient essence with its own intrinsic attributes. Taking this perspective is important because it immediately deflates all the coloniser's claims to inherent superiority and shows the colonised is a symbolic construction of colonialism. The place of the coloniser, the Master, as viewed by himself is one of absolute autonomy and identity, whereas that of the colonised is marked by an ontological incompleteness and instability. The colonial relation and colonial interpellation continue as long as the colonised does not attempt to subvert it by climbing out of his deficit of being and as long as the Master is able to repeat his performance of mastery. Only by grasping the colonial relation as differential is it possible to defend its status as *sui generis*.

As a symbolic differential relation, it is not reducible to any exterior or foundation: It is just a specific symbolic configuration that ultimately depends on itself for its reproduction. One consequence is immediately the coloniser's representation of colonialism as rooted in universal foundations – human nature – is undermined. This is just a symbolic overdetermined relationship – it is not immutable or necessary, but contingent and susceptible therefore of radical transformation, involving its maximum eclipse. As a symbolic relationship it does not rest on or express anything external to itself – in other words, it holds itself up. But it can never do so as if it were an essence – but because it is not one. It holds itself up but never with absolute success: Its own lack of a foundation finds expression in its malfunctioning, in its incoherence – it can never be totalised and yet it rests on nothing else but itself, where itself compromises a relation, in the strict sense, that is, with its elements not being self-sufficient essences but relational semi-identities. This symbolic relation, like the capitalist symbolic, both secretes, and depends, for whatever identity it has, on a specific Imaginary or Ideology in Althusser's sense. These determinate forms of consciousness which screen off from the subject is his mere "relational semi-identity" and provide him with a sense of plenitude and innateness, are what for Althusser (and Lacan and Laclau) stabilise the subject making possible the reproduction of the symbolic relation itself.

But this “screening off” by the Imaginary, by the self-image and sense of identity into which concrete individuals are interpellated in Althusser’s sense, can never in principle be complete. The ultimate lack of foundations and the necessarily incomplete nature, of any differential symbolic relation always makes itself felt within the Symbolic itself, via disturbances in the homeostasis of the imaginary identities into which individuals are interpellated. When this occurs, and to the extent to which it occurs, refers to the intrusion of the Real. This latter refers to the limits of the Symbolic (it is not a totality), that is, to what happens when the Symbolic bumps up against this internal limitation, viz that qua differential it can never attain full identity to itself. So, the Real refers to the effects on the Symbolic of its (the Symbolics) *sui generis* character, of that fact that it compromises a determinate differential relation. In the case of capitalism, following Althusser’s treatment of ideology and the imaginary, what happens, with respect to the intrusion of the Real, is that the capitalist Symbolic, in its Imaginary, ideological, self-representation, cannot totalise the specific void at its core, the point where capitalist meaning breaks down, viz the antagonism between capital and labour. Here is where meaning reaches its limits in the symbolic relation of capitalism because the capitalist system of names just cannot stabilise the experience of the proletariat – here, in the experience of the working class is where the Real of capitalism breaks through this, its imaginary representations and destabilises capitalism as a symbolic system.

Colonialism managed to split the Cartesian Cogito, positing the black colonised subject stripped of all value and plenitude, who is existing in, and facing the Real, against the white coloniser subject-position existing in the Imaginary and saturated with fullness. “What colonialism shows is that all symbolic places are not ontologically equal: the place of the colonial Master offers Cartesian self-certitude and self-possession, the place of the colonised does not.” (Hudson, 2012). Fanon’s “Look Mama” encapsulates the articulation of the Colonial Relation and Colonial Interpellation where the message to the black colonised is “be what you are, nothing!” and to the white coloniser “look at this nothing that you are not and be what you are, which is everything!” (Hudson, 2012).

### **3.5 Principal Identifications of the Black Subject**

The objective of this section is to outline the elementary or fundamental subject-position of the colonised: the primary identification or interpellation of the colonised. It is on the basis of this elementary position of the colonised that, naturally, its secondary identification is developed. The principal rationale behind analysing the identitarian mutations of the black colonised subject is, because as will be discussed later, these identifications very much continue to interpellate the black (and thereby white) subject albeit at differing degrees. Without understanding the foundation of the identity of the black subject there cannot be an account for the behaviours, psychology and power-dynamics of the black subject in South Africa today. As previously mentioned, society and its subjects are articulated as points within a plethora of ideologies existing simultaneously, and historical interpellations plays a critical role in this capacity. The procedure followed involves, as has been explained above, bringing together Fanon and the (post) structuralist conceptions of structure and subject.

In this perspective the colonial structure is built upon the co-constitutional relationship between the coloniser and colonised. The specificity of each identity is not attributed to something innate but to that what it is not. This negative differential relation entails that neither white nor black has an identity value independently of the Colonial Relation (CR) itself and that neither is anything irrespective of each other. The CR is a discursive symbolic relation – which means their poles are constituted by its relationship to each other and nothing else. Each pole (coloniser/white – colonised/black) is penetrated by the other – the interpenetration and overdetermination of identities is what marks their differential co-constitution. This is what Fanon is getting at when he states, “The Negro is not any more than the white man.” (1952: 225-31) – both are products of colonialism as a symbolic system and their identities are intertwined in their very definitions. “This relation is differential, i.e. neither pole is a self-sufficient essence, their very interpenetration bearing witness to their contingency. That this relation rests on nothing but itself (it has no positive terms, only negative differential ones).” (Hudson, 2012).

### **3.5.1 Black subjectivity – Subjective Destitution**

Importing Western ideologies of race, the Dutch coloniser interpellated the black native colonised via a process that can be understood through Fanon's "Look Mama" experience. Look Mama alludes to the experience of the never ending shattering and rendering asunder of any incipient quest for identity on the part of the colonised and demonstrates the nature of the black body, that is, it is a nothing!, from the point of view of the little girl, her mother and the whole colonial system of meaning. Furthermore, excerpted from Fanon, the colonial definition of whiteness – in Western discourse - as embodying value and full identity with blackness embodying less than whiteness. Drawing on Fanon even more, is the idea that – and he makes this point vis-à-vis Lacan – the Other confronting the colonised subject is above all else a White-Other which means that the process of identity formation with respect to the colonised is not going to follow the normal process of interpellation and it is not going to issue an identification with the Althusserian subject-form. Precisely because, defined from the point of view of the Other as white, black identity is constitutively deficient - necessarily failing- in relation to white normativity. And this is borne out by the reading of the Look Mama scenario in Fanon – what is staged here is the experience (of the colonised) – who is left with something “splattered” (Fanon, 1952) whenever he aspires to identity.

In the colonial mirror of recognition what is offered the colonised is not a schema of corporeal coherence, an integral body image (able to support an integral image of self) but a “body manqué” (Gordon, 2011: 11) a body that is always ‘*de trop*’, in excess, an identity for which to fit in is not to fit in (Gordon, 2011), an identity constitutively and irreparably (as long as one moves within its structural orbit) out of joint with itself. “In the white world the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is never a way of attaining a sense of self and identity.” (Fanon, 1952: 110). The black body is not and thus cannot play its normal role in stabilising subjectivity. Thus, the black body cannot contribute to the sense of self certainty, that one is who one is – instead “The body of the colonised is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty.” (Fanon, 1952: 111).

The colonised is not interpellated into the subject form outlined by Althusser as constitutive of all ideology because the identity offered is not one in which it is meant to feel ‘at home’, in full possession of itself. On the one hand, what is offered is an identity which is not really an identity

at all. The Look Mama gaze fluidifies and pulverises the ego of the colonised right from the start and all the way through. Paige Arthur in *Unfinished Projects: decolonization and the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre* (2010) maintains Sartre's argument - the colonised "has no core". The effect of Look Mama is then to shatter any pretensions to agency on the part of the colonised.

The colonial relation is one of ontological subordination – the colonised is prohibited from existing in the same way the coloniser exists and this ontological relation cuts through all the sectors and levels of colonial society. The colonised must be nothing to the colonial master's fullness. The master can only be the master insofar as the slave remains 'a nothing' and this absolute differentiation is the site of the colonial antagonism. Maldonado Torres in *On the Coloniality of Being* (2007) argues that the colonised is pinned down to a non-identity; his nothingness, which anchors the fullness of the master, is the constitution of the colonial relation. The crux of the colonial interpellation is that the colonized is not offered an identity at all; he is not even offered an inferior or subordinate identity but is instead defined in full contrast to the absolute being of the master. Colonial difference goes further than its capitalist counterpart where the bourgeois and working class share a common ontological status even if their projects, capitalism and communism are incommensurable. Coloniser and colonised do not, in that, the colonised by definition is not permitted to exist in the way the coloniser does; and this ontological deficit is thus inscribed in his place and is constituted by the colonial relation.

What is offered the colonised by way of Imaginary and Symbolic identity is not identity at all, but, precisely, its 'failure' or lack. The Imaginary and Symbolic scaffolding of the colonised negates itself, as it were, offering the colonised only the identity of 'nothing'. In contrast with capitalism, where the subject of antagonism (Zizek, 1989) is sheltered by its imaginary ego from the void of the Real, under colonialism the void is directly inscribed in the imaginary dimension, the lived experience of the colonised.

The perspective held in this paper, and informed by Yannis Stavarakakis, *Lacan and the Political*, by Symbolic is meant the ungrounded differential texture of the social; and by Real is meant

precisely this underside of the Symbolic, where the fact that it is not grounded but arbitrary resting on nothing, comes to the fore. Imaginary refers to the ways subjects live their place in the Symbolic and is the subjective dimension responsible for the illusion of identity which covers over and protects subjects from exposure to the contingency on which it depends. In other words, the Real, Symbolic and Imaginary axes seem, under colonialism, to overlap directly, unlike under capitalism. For the colonised, the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary are stacked up in a specific way: here the Symbolic and Imaginary negate themselves because all they offer the colonised, is the real of non-meaning.

It is as if Žižek's (1989; 2004, 2005) subject of antagonism stood alone without any orthopaedic support from the Imaginary and Symbolic: for the colonised the Imaginary and the Symbolic cancel themselves out, leaving pure subjective destitution.

The colonised suffers, in other words, from 'too much of the Real'- the effect of which is anxiety. Here, anxiety, the effect of collapsing Symbolic and Imaginary structures (Badiou, Lacan), is built into the constitution of the colonised from the very start. The colonised "lacks the lack", in that the lack making possible effect of meaning no longer functions as the "absent cause" of the latter. Here the repetition of the collapse of meaning is the normal subject-position (Imaginary and Symbolic) of the colonised.

It is thus the very construction of the ego of the colonised that marks this latter as nothing, as not having a determinate identity but always being at odds with itself, always frustrated in its effort to achieve full social existence. It is the emptiness of the colonised qua ego, that then, accounts for his plunge into thinghood; this is not the primary identity of the colonised qua coloniser but has to be understood as a consequence of the construction of the colonised as a specific form of consciousness deemed incapable of achieving self-determination. It is only because the colonised is constructed as a special sort of subject that the former, the colonised, pursues the project of becoming a thing. It is to flee the anxiety built into the very construction of his body that the colonised pursues thinghood – it is not thinghood that defines him.

And it is only from this highly unstable starting point that one can hope to explain not only the attempt at thingification but also those transgressive projects for white and black subjectivity that so concerned Fanon. This is what accounts for the excess in the pursuit by the colonised for identity - whether this be through seeking the fullness of white subjectivity (with the result that the colonised subject ends up unconsciously identifying himself as white) or, through identification with blackness as fullness (this is an inversion of the Colonial Relation that will be discussed under Biko's Black Consciousness).

On the other hand, the coloniser is defined by a super-hard identity which feels to him, however, (in the context of his lived experience, the dimension of the Imaginary) as if it did not exist – he feels no boundaries or limitations just excess mastery.

Returning, in conclusion, to the elementary position of the colonised there are two points to be stressed. Firstly, the reproduction of the colonised qua bearer of a deficient identity is not somehow predetermined to continue forever. It depends on practices of signification which are not grounded in any extra symbolic substantial Real: in fact the Real as has been explained refers to nothing more than the internal limit of the Symbolic, its impossibility of totalising or essentialising itself, but is contingent. The colonised subject has the capacity to not repeat its elementary identification, to disidentify and reidentify – and in later chapters such 'shifts' in black subjectivity is examined. The second point that needs to be underlined is that the fluidity in the identity of the colonised causes anxiety which has to be overcome before any politics of anti-colonial emancipation can become possible. This incoherence built into the normal steady state of the colonised subject is as much an obstacle as a condition of possibility vis-à-vis resistance to colonialism. These are the issues of concern in Chapters 8 and 9 of Steve Biko's Black Consciousness, Andile Mngxitama and new Black Consciousness, Colonialism and National Democracy.

### **3.5.2 Black Subjectivity – False Identification**

The second position of the black colonised subject is a result of the colonised subject's desperate search for a way out of the impossible structure in which the colonial relation holds him. He does not however directly challenge the white colonial signifier; instead he tries to identify with it: the places of the colonial relation remain the same; all that happens is that a black colonised subject switches places. So, there is evidence here of a colonised subject seeking to step out of the suffocation of his colonial place, but this does not involve a challenge to colonialism in the way the emergence of Black Consciousness did.

Steeped in the destitution of self, the black colonised subject is an agent who at the level of consciousness denies he is white but whose conduct towards whites and blacks involves slippages in which he treats whites as his equal and blacks as if he were white. Of course this is not tolerated under colonial conditions and he is always checked and punished for such transgressions. In other words, he is constantly reminded of what, according to the logic of colonialism, he really is, negativised black colonised subject, a less than nothing, and the identity accorded to him, or lack thereof, is unable to give him the degree of stability and identity he longs for. This throws him back into the same cycle, of fleeing blackness, of (unconsciously) attaching to whiteness, being repressed into blackness and so on.

It is not insignificant that Fanon stresses, more than once, that this is what the black man wants – he wants to be the white master but has to repress this from his consciousness under the threat of colonial punishment, which splits his identity. Note that this can only be a major figure of colonised subjectivity because of the instability and lack of identity that characterises the original place of the colonised in the colonial relation. It is this vacillation of identity that the colonised is responding to when he tries to attach himself to the white signifier. The primary position of subjective destitution of the colonised is pushing him into a secondary identification - a negativised black colonised who is forced to repress the desire to be the white coloniser, in which his identity is split into what he thinks he is doing – being a colonised subject – and what he is really doing, that is, acting as if white.

The model for the analysis is pointed out in Žižek's analysis of anti-Semitism presented in *Organs Without Bodies: Deleuze and Consequences*. On this, the anti-Semite sincerely believes he is not anti-Semitic, but his actual behaviour belies this. Hence, he is forced to suppose that without consciously being aware of it he has attached himself to anti-Semitism. Here what is called the unconscious is not hidden away but is on display for everyone, but the agent concerned that is.

Now, as discussed above, the colonial system is a symbolic system and therefore there is no causal necessity maintaining it: the colonised subject is free to change the meaning of his identity even though he is not aware of this (Laclau, 1990). The point is that his initial inscription into the elementary subject position of the colonised does not have to merely be repeated – there are several ways in which this subject can act back vis-à-vis its structural interpellation and inscription and none of them is predetermined by either the colonial relation or anything else. They are all contingent and therefore supposing the non-causal intervention of the subject in order to be able to account for the emergence and formation. And, in the case under consideration, the elementary identification is not just repeated – what gets repeated is the split between the elementary identification and the unconscious identification with the white signifier.

Under colonialism the subject, the negativised black colonised subject, is denied identity and in a desperate endeavour tries to imitate the identity of the colonial master whom he is being interpellated by. But he is forced to suppress this identification into the unconscious. What is meant by unconscious? Žižek postulates that the unconscious is not unavailable, not hidden, but enacted in everyday social practices (2004). In Žižek's analysis of anti-Semitism, the anti-Semite denies and is consciously not aware of his anti-Semitic conduct. But his conduct is anti-Semitic and this can only be accounted for, (given his denial) if there is a supposition that the agent has to be unconsciously in thrall to a certain “fantasy of the Jew” (2004). Here the unconscious is not a hidden reservoir of meaning but is instead “adverbial” – it refers to a specific modality of social practice. Thus, as Žižek points out, it plays havoc with its standard subjective/objective distinctions – here the unconscious is objective, it is a modality of social practice, and subjective as it has to do with the subject's identification at the same time.

What happens here is that the subject does not resignify race – its meaning in the colonial semantic register – but instead places himself as the negativised black colonised subject, in a place he should not be, in the place of the master. The negativised black colonised subject also has the identity of wanting to be white – whereas only the superiorised white coloniser should desire to be white. The negativised black colonised subject wants to be white but cannot allow himself consciously to acknowledge this. The negativised black colonised subject is forced to repress his desire into the unconscious. What happens in this case (something that Hegel overlooked) is that the subject just – unconsciously – switched places: swaps his place in the spectrum of colonial being for that of the white master. He does not resignify race of the colonial order itself – both the meaning of white and black and their asymmetrical order is ignored.

The negativised black colonised subject places himself in a position, that is, firstly, foreign, and, secondly, strictly prohibited to him. The Law of the Colony, the asymmetry of the Colonial Relation, does not allow such an identification and the negativised black colonised subject is forced to repress it into the unconscious. “...now our negativised black colonised subject also has the same identity of wanting to be white. He wants to be white but cannot allow himself consciously to acknowledge this.” (Fanon, 1952). This intervention of the subject is the one Fanon argues. Fanon in *Black Skins White Masks* dedicates a chapter to Hegel’s master-slave dialectic as delineated in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, entitled, “The Negro and Hegel”. Fanon argues that Hegel has omitted something in his analysis of the master-slave dialectic - Hegel overlooks in other words, the possibility that the slave, the negativised black colonised subject, identifying with the master, the superiorised white coloniser. To identify with the master, is however, for Fanon what the black man, the colonial slave does. For Fanon the negativised black colonised subject desires to be the superiorised white coloniser. Thus he, insists, is what the black subject actually wants. What occurs is that the negativised black colonised subject grasps more identity by aiming at the signifier white itself. He wants to be/become white but the qua negativised black colonised subject is prohibited by the Law of the Colonial Symbolic from even wanting this identity. This desire persists but as the “collective unconscious” (Fanon).

This particular position of the colonised subject, to which colonised subjects are particularly prone according to Fanon, constitutes a large part of the political landscape produced under colonial conditions. One of the problems confronted by any project that seeks to eliminate the colonial relation thus involves wrenching the colonised subject – this subject wrenching himself – away from his unconscious identification with whiteness, that is, not only away from his conscious identification of himself as a colonised subject.

As mentioned earlier, the four subjectivisations that the black colonised subject experiences, develops in a consequential manner but also exists concurrently to different degrees. What occurs during the second subjectivisation of the black colonised subject, that is, wherein the negativised black colonised subject identifies with the full of plenitude positivised white coloniser but is forced to repress that identification, the same unconscious desire to be white and exist in the Imaginary occurs in the post-apartheid era. What is suggested, and termed, the New Black Consciousness (this view is developed by Mngxitama), is that the leadership (at least) of the ANC behaves in ways that shows a hatred of blacks in areas such as service delivery, schooling, housing and health. But what he does not do is provide a concept of the subject able to sustain such conduct whilst, on the other hand, profusely denying it. One can always relent that they are conscious of what they are doing, cynically pretending not to be what they are, and to be what they are not. But the much more interesting (and likely) case involves not assuming such cynicism but not denying the conduct either, and this leads us to negativised black colonised subject/superiorised white coloniser, with the very important difference that today in post 1994 South Africa it is the non-racial signifier – enshrined as Master signifier in the constitution itself that everyone – including the leadership of the ANC – defers to. In the current structure there are now agents who consciously define themselves as non-racial but are still unconsciously striving for whiteness, hence their politics vis-à-vis other blacks. What is shown here is then just how sticky and recalcitrant colonial identification can be, how, in a surprising way it resurfaces under democratic conditions still steering the conduct of the previously colonised.

In this identification the colonial subject does not directly challenge the colonial matrix but seeks refuge under whiteness. At the same time, it needs to be recognised that what is going here is not

the repetition of the elementary position of the colonised but that of a split identity – and this perspective by the white master as transgressive. There is an oblique challenge to the colonial master one which although oblique succeeds in making the antagonism of the colonial relation penetrate the Imaginary of the Master – whose response is to ratchet the colonial injunction and the repression that goes with it. The master's plenitude and transparency have been distributed for the first time, then, by this secondary identification of the colonised subject.

There are other ways of using the schema of the Colonial Relation and its forms of identification to throw light of the current politics of the ANC, ways that invoke other unconscious identifications also in tension with democracy. It is this subjectivity that comes to haunt the black colonised in power. As stated by Laclau, competing ideologies never cease to exist, if they fail to attain dominancy, instead of ceasing altogether they remain dormant and when the opening in the structure appears these dormant ideologies and systems of belief become activated and it attempts to install itself as the hegemony.

## **Conclusion**

Magubane in *Construction of Race and the Dispensable Other* (2007: 53) writes, “It cannot be overstated – it is the most important fact in the history of the last five hundred years – that European peoples were methodically indoctrinated with the ideas of white supremacy and based on might the idea of developing Europe came to include that social, economic, political and cultural complex that had been enriched and become conscious of itself on the basis of colonial conquest. The legacy of the savage injustice still exists today based on Europe's hegemonic dominance of the world economy. There is an international highly connected, complex web of identity-formation that every subject forms a part-and-parcel off and contributes to knowingly or unknowing. Understanding the constitution of the African Other shows us the historicity into why Africa (and the developed West) is the way it is today - socially, economically, politically and globally as well as what the black subject is required to perform to break out of the imprisoning binaries and labels. Understanding the mechanization of ideology via the Africa Other also provides insight to the global identity dynamics that are continuing and prevalent presently. To refuse to give the racially

different life of the African subject any validity except as an antitype of negative instance, the meaning of European and Western life was validated and continues to be, while that of the black was and continues to be denied.

Understanding the subjective destitution followed by the black colonised subject desire to be white uncoincidentally appears in Modernisation Theory where development as a *logos* itself, allows the black colonised subject a semblance of the Imaginary. It introduces, albeit to a minimal degree, a black colonised subject who views himself as a self-centred autonomous entity. Development, together with the ideological effect fulfils the black colonised subject's desire, to draw on Fanon, development creates and weaves the black colonised subject into the interpellation that finally, he is white! Thus, the racial treatment of the non-white, non-Western subjects continues by assuming a new form in the avatar of development economics.

## **Chapter 4: Development and the Subject**

Modernity can be understood as the period in European history inaugurated at the end of the eighteenth century when, "Man (sic) turned the apparatuses of knowledge upon himself in a distancing, self-objectifying fashion, thus originating the forms of inquiry and rationality that characterize today's sciences." (Foucault, 1970). Politically, "The fundamental characteristic of modernity is the advent of the democratic revolution" (Mouffe 1988: 33). Modernity has also been understood as the attempt to provide a foundation for the social, one that is grounded in reason and a project of global emancipation. "This characterization of the modern practices of Reason, rationality and even democracy, although already naturalized through the universalization of European history, implies an anthropological critique: as a peculiar, historically locatable set of practices." (Rabinow 1988: 236). Whilst the transition from pre-modernity to modernity was characterized by the founding of science; the movement from a principally agrarian society to an industrial-driven society; from a rigid hierarchical order with the King as the head of society to one dictated by the masses, a new rationality, a new seemingly-inherent way of being and living was instituted via development.

Development articulated itself as a dominant signifier that assimilated and transmuted principal ways of being and diffused it into a singular form of existence. Development entailed economic success, democracy, technocraticism, massification, bureaucraticism, and commodification. Development as a new modernity, as a new way of thinking, living and acting is premised upon the supremacy of the economic. The shift from pre-modern to modern ways of life was born in the West and attained global standing via colonization. Similarly, the shift from a geo-political modernity to an economic-driven modernity occurred during the waning of colonization, and it was during these moments of uncertainty that the essence of colonization was recaptured and re-packaged as development. “[D]evelopment . . . was an ideology that was born and refined in the North, mainly to meet the needs of the dominant powers in search of a more ‘appropriate’ tool for their economic and geopolitical expansion . . . . [T]he ideology helped a dying and obsolete colonialism to transform itself into an aggressive — even sometimes an attractive — instrument able to recapture new ground.” (Rahnema, 1997: 379).

The rationale for analysing the role of the economic and the role that development plays in interpellating the subject is for the following reasons: Firstly, (and this viewpoint is from the 1950s onwards) there is an agreement with Althusser that society is determined in the last instance by the economic. This does not foreclose the agency of the subject or the *sui generis* nature of the system but as will be discussed later in this chapter, the rise of development as the dominant global hegemony rendered the political and social subservient to its dominance. Whilst the social and politico-legal contribute significantly to the infrastructure of the society at large, he who wields economic power has the ultimate power.

Secondly, the introduction of capitalism to the colonial symbolic creates, what is termed the ‘Development Symbolic’. The Development Symbolic re-configures the manner in which the Real, Imaginary and Symbolic stack-up and interpellates the subject(s). What occurs under development is that coloniser-colonised relation is replaced with the binaries and bifurcations of First, Second and Third World countries. Whilst under the Colonial Symbolic the black colonised subject was stripped of any identifications (subjective destitution) and the co-constitutionality of the Colonial Relation was made aware to him, under the Development Symbolic, the First World

nation-states lend a helping hand to the previously colonised nations and construct a new ideal in which they are required to strive. Under the Law of the Colony the black colonised subject is aggressively disallowed any identification and behavioural application of the white coloniser master, however under the Development Symbolic, the First World countries place a requirement on the Second and Third World nations to 'become like us' (enjoy the shelter and gratification of the Imaginary) or suffer international alienation (continue existing in the Real). The outcome of this is that development is a continuation of colonisation albeit in a new avatar. These two factors contribute to the third and most important reason as to why there is an undertaking of analysing the effects of the economic on the subject.

Most theories of development elucidate the promises modernisation and development can deliver, however very often the subject of development hardly features. Development gears its trajectory towards infrastructure and institutions, policies and agreements and whole new ways of life built upon all things modern. Via the political, development emphasizes and propagates democracy as true freedom, via the United Nations (to cite an example), development demonstrates its philanthropic gaze, via the legal system, an emphasis on statutory updates is required. However, in the creation and positing of a mechanised well-functioning system the subject, and its constitutional attachments, is not taken into account. What is witnessed is an application of development but with varied outcomes throughout the world as the subjects of each country responds differently based on the ideological matrix and infrastructures it is being interpellated by and interpellates itself. How does development and determination by the economic affect the black South African subject?

Development, like the colonial project, sought to strip and dissolve idiosyncrasies, history, cultural and religious practices of countries and implement an economic model that would bring destined economic success if the implementation was correct. However, what becomes problematic with this *tabula rasa* approach is that the subject cannot be negated of itself. Development negates the humanity and human-desires from the subject and creates a belief that structures and policy play a supra-natural role in a country's development. This ideology of structure over subject or object superseding subject, interpellates the black South African subject in a way that allows the second

principal identification (Wherein the black subject who identifies with the positivised white colonizer and replicates his behavior but is forced to deny this identification because of the strictures of the colonial symbolic) to be re-enacted in a society where political, social and economic freedom is both a right and a determination. The effects of development and promises of economic welfare forms the argument of Chapter 8 and 9 respectively.

What follows is a delineation of how development managed to mutate and morph the colonial regime into a new structure with a new mode of operationality. There is a chronological analysis of the role of Gross Domestic Product in suturing a structural breakdown during the Great Depression and because it represents the first motion in directing floating signifiers to economic-oriented signifieds, a critical analysis of Modernisation Theory as articulating the vestiges of the past and creating the possibility of a future propelled by William Rostow, and, lastly and most importantly, an investigation and evaluation of the impact of the Development Symbolic on the subject.

#### **4.1 Gross Domestic Product – “The World’s Most Powerful Number”**

The late 1920’s in America witnessed the severity of an economic breakdown due to stock market crash, that would come to define history as the Great Depression. An alleviation to the ramifications of the Great Depression came in the form of Simon Kuznets who proposed and presented his first report on the design of national income accounts to the US congress in 1934 (Kuznets 1934: 7). It was here that Gross Domestic Product was seen as a numeric that “conflated the amount of spending for goods and services into one single number, which would go up in good times and down in bad times.” (cited in Fioramonti, 2014: 12). Gross Domestic Product was accepted as a metric and system that would drive macro-economic governmental policies and set priorities in the social field and was composed on the following sources:

1. “Discovery and exploitation of riches and natural resources: Revenues from windfall discoveries needed to be converted into durable sources of income
2. Effort: Working harder, increasing hours worked per year, increasing labour market participation, greater effort and discipline

3. Saving and accumulating capital
4. Investing in education and human capital
5. Efficiency: Becoming more efficient and effective in the use of labour, capital, land, intermediate outputs and the ways these can be combined in production...shifting resources from less productive to more productive sectors of the economy for better utilization of labour and capital.
6. Structural change: Shifting resources to new more dynamic sectors and which will benefit the entire economy.
7. Economics of scale: Increasing the scale of production to profit from economies of scale. Producing of a larger scale is more cost effective for it reduces costs.
8. Agglomerations of products: concentrating products in urban areas because it has a greater outreach
9. Technological change: Developing or acquiring new knowledge about how to provide valued goods and services and applying such knowledge in production.” (Szirmai, 2015: 77).

Putting into parentheses the compository factors of GDP and its concomitant effects, the role of Kuznets GDP is relevant to this project for the principal reason that GDP was a response to America’s Great Depression and became the signifier that sutured the dislocation and posited a new form of rationality. During a structural location of the Great Depression, the structure has one of two ways of healing and suturing itself. Depending on the nature of the dislocation there is the option of the filling and the filling function (Torfing, 1999: 152). When dislocation penetrates the very bottom of the social, the need for order multiplies and expands exponentially and the need for the filling function overrides that of the filling. By contrast when the dislocation is not as deep, the role of the filling is heightened. Regarding the former scenario, the mere *availability* of a structural restoration project overrides that of *credibility*, whereas in the latter instance credibility is of central importance (Laclau, 1990a: 66). “To be counted as credible, the political project should not only ensure its consistency with the norms and values esteemed by the portion of the population interpellated by the particular project but also a willingness to discard unsustainable and discredited principles.” (Torfing, 1999: 152).

This dissertation argues that the role of the creation of GDP was a watershed moment in American, and global history, in that it acted as the filling. The dislocated structure required a signifier that would arrest all floating signifiers and this ontological function came in an economic form that would in later years inform development as a global hegemony. It is in the face of indetermination and uncertainty that the subject latches onto the closest possible, and most succinct, signifier so as to not maintain its temporal position in the Real during the articulatory practice. For a subject interpellated and enjoying self-maximisation within the Imaginary, the threat of uncertainty, and the inability to cap it, affects him the most, for it is he who has the most that loss affects the greatest. For the subject of lack, uncertainty is a gift for it creates a possibility of a new future. The absence of a centre, of a cohesive unitary fulfilment, causes the subject to constantly find a pseudo-centre. The pseudo-centre acts as a unifying mechanism but is bound to reveal its absence and throw the subject into disarray once again (Torfing, 1999: 189). It was during the hard times of the Great Depression, governments were desperately seeking some type of indicator to gauge if and how the economy was recovering and GDP acted as this precise pseudo-centre. Not only did GDP represent a new scale in the determination of growth and development but it was also created at a time where the rising of colonial states fighting for independence from their colonial masters was increasing. GDP assisted in the creation of new binaries, frontiers and logics of equivalence and difference.

#### **4.1.1 Gross Domestic Product and the Creation of New Binaries**

Accompanied with the creation and consolidation of GDP was creation of new binaries. GDP as a dominant signifier created a classificatory system of First, Second and Third world countries depending on what their GDP was. GDP was used as an instrument from which the binaries of development were created - Developed/Undeveloped, First World/Third World, Industrialised/Traditional, Progressive/Monolithic and so forth, and while Kuznets, delineated advantages of GDP as a classificatory system, he also, issued grave warnings about the negative impact GDP would have if used for divisive means. For the subject of the Third World that was emerging from the strictures of the colonial structure and colonial relation, GDP created a new framework whereby the subject of the First World was able to articulate the criteria created in

order to be accepted into the One. The First World countries were able to create a criterion and manage who entered the constituency of the One – they were able to manage the lines of inclusion and exclusion. And for a subject located in the Imaginary, he sees himself as the architect of his own future as the referential Althusserian Big Subject.

In the same way that the discovery of Africa was co-eval with the creation of Europe, similarly the creation of the Third World was co-eval with the creation of the First World. By defining itself against what it is not, the subject is able to define who he is.

*“The GDP ‘man’ only exists in so far as he works and spends. He hates pure leisure, unless it is priced and commoditized. For the GDP man, time spent with the family or in the local community is wasted. The GDP man buys new stuff and hates fixing/repairing old things, as whatever is used does not count for GDP. Our physical and infrastructural geography, from the shape of cities and their relation with the countryside to the management of parks and natural resources, is dominated by the type of industrial model supported by GDP.” (Fioramonti, 2014: 15).*

In addition to creating and disseminating a new antagonism and the relevant concomitant binaries, GDP negated the idiosyncrasies of countries, negated their history and negated humanism altogether, as it renders a country’s position in a global scaling to a number. Furthermore, the factors defining GDP would position America and the Western World in a position of privilege viz-a-viz the rest of the world. The propagation of this ideology can be seen in a more nuanced version in the Blank Slate Approach (see below). GDP created new antagonisms, new lines of inclusion and exclusion and set the direction for the supremacy of numbers via the economic. When these binaries interacted with colonialism and capitalism it created an international division of labour that expands the ideology of colonialism and the economic exponentially, and interpellates subjects according to the ideological matrix created by their past, their present and their imaginaries of the future.

What separates the development symbolic from the colonial symbolic is that under the latter there was no effort made by the positivised white colonizer to hide the intention and effort in sustaining

his position within the Imaginary. On the other hand, under the development symbolic, there are efforts made by the subjects of the First World to seemingly lend a helping hand to uplift the position of the subject of the Third World. In essence, GDP became a new means through which the First World countries could retain their stronghold over the Third World countries, however, under the new supremacy of the economic, it is done so under a guise. This guise can be seen through institutions like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, United Nations and Rockfellar Foundation to name some of the ISA's within the development symbolic.

Politically, the propoundment of GDP intersected with America propagating a liberal democratic system to newly independent countries. However this will be discussed in more detail later, but important for the argument at present, America advertised the American dream to the newly colonized nations in the face of the ideologico-geo-political war with Russia. In doing so, the economic and political were seen as a packaged deal that could bring economic success and political freedom at the same time. More prudently however, GDP caused the political to be rendered subservient to the economic. Wherever the economic is present, the political is forced to accept a secondary position. In doing so, GDP caused a shift in the technocratic direction. "Being presented as an essential tool for the design of public policies, the invention of GDP afforded unprecedented power to technocrats. With this almighty number steering us towards progress, our political economy ceased to be a political struggle over 'who gets what' to become a technocratic recipe for the responsible management of the business cycle. With GDP growth, everybody could finally win.... Jobs, income, wellbeing and happiness would then automatically follow. Individuals, both in the industrialized West and in the developing 'rest', were disempowered as citizens and glorified as consumers." (Fioramonti, 2014: 16).

#### **4.1.2 Criticisms of Gross Domestic Product**

Since the early days of the GDP accounts, Kuznets himself had raised doubts about his creature. For instance, he had warned about the risk of using a gross measurement to design policies. He recommended that not only the depreciation of machinery and capital be subtracted from GDP, but also the wearing out of people. Indeed, the system of production takes its toll not only on things

but also on human beings. This is what Kuznets called the “reverse side of income” (Kuznets, 1934: 336). Kuznets was also worried about the way in which GDP growth affected the distribution of income. His famous curve showed how rapid growth is usually associated with rising inequality, which is partly due to the fact that policies aimed at supporting GDP tend to destroy informal economic structures to replace them with formal (often market-based) systems of production. In the process, many people – especially the most marginalized – lose out. He also raised doubts about the reliability of the accounts, for which data was often missing, and took great pains to single out the disparate sources of error in international comparisons, including the use of prices. Finally, he pleaded with policy-makers to always distinguish between the mere quantity of economic growth and its actual quality in order to clarify what type of growth they want to achieve and for what purpose (Kuznets 1962: 29).

Undoubtedly the invention of GDP has helped to reinforce economics a primary role in society. In 1941, Kuznets admitted that the measurement of national income should not be regarded as a morally neutral process, because it is continuously affected by implicit or explicit value judgments’ Looking at the enthusiasm with which his creation was being welcomed by colleagues, he observed that “the apparent relative unanimity produced by empirical writings on national income is due largely to the estimators’ unconscious acceptance of one social philosophy and their natural reluctance to face such fundamental issues as would reveal that estimates are conditioned by controversial criteria.” (Kuznets, Epstein and Jenks, 1941: 5). The invention of GDP not only marked the era in which economics (and economists) became an all-powerful force in society but it also ushered in a new age of market supremacy. As GDP growth became the most important goal of politics, the producers of growth felt their reign of uncontested leadership had finally arrived.

GDP is the lens through which policy-makers, the media and often society as a whole see the human economy. What is not counted by GDP becomes valueless to public policies and social debate. Indeed, personal, social and natural assets must be owned and made productive to be counted by our metric of progress. This is important to this project because by determining the

course in an economic technocratic driven direction, there is a negation of humanism and principality and precedence of institutions and numerics. These institutions and numerics, as will be discussed below, engage in ignoring the role and position of the subject within the structure. This causes an unusual occultation in which the subject became trapped in a super structure created by the amalgamation of colonialism and development.

GDP denies humanism, it denies the inherent desires and needs of people for the pursuit of a numeric. GDP propounds an anti-humanism, whatever has feeling, emotion and desire is dialectically opposed to economics, and in an era where economic trumps all else needs to be negated. GDP has not only undervalued and caused the exploitation of natural resources in the premising of capital accumulation above all else, in doing so, it has also caused the marginalization of subjects that do not feed into the overall well-being of the dominant countries. Together with the conscious forgetting of material, natural and animate resources and items that do not support the grand economic plan is the conscious forgetting of people who do not fit into this imaginary. GDP denies humanism, and at its highest point, denies humans, entities, subjects and agents that do not support the imaginary of the economic and pushes them asunder and renders them irrelevant. GDP was thus the first step taken in the direction of the essentialism of *homo economicus* and whoever and whatever was not conceptualised in this imaginary by the One, was not conceptualised at all.

#### **4.2 The Economic as Development**

GDP laid the foundation for the creation of a new way of life, a new symbolic that opened endless possibilities for the creation of a future that would continue encapsulating subjects in the predominant positions of Real and Imaginary. The anchoring of *homo economicus* as a new ideology entailed a transformation of the entire discursive field beginning with antagonisms, outlined by language, that would define the new ontological field. Like all dislocated structures, the pre-eminence of a new structure always contains remnants of the discourse it was emerging from. In the case of development, and the filling function of the dislocated structure, much of the old colonial structure and discourse was maintained and transferred into the new hegemonic regime under a new set of linguistic tools and causalities.

Understanding development is critical in understanding the position and identification of the South African black colonised subject because, as is argued, together with colonialism, development is the next dominant global hegemony that structures society and the subjects that form part of society. Without a critical and insightful examination of development, there will be a large analytical and psychological absence that will render the analysis of the black colonised subject in South Africa incomplete. It for this reason, that there is a critical analysis of development and its impact on the subject.

To provide a theoretical framework of what is to come, it is argued that the development narrative or what is term the Development Symbolic is a continuation of the Colonial Symbolic albeit in a new incarnation. What is the development symbolic and how is it a continuation of the colonial symbolic? The colonial symbolic is the negativised black colonized subject situated in the Real contrasted with the positivised white colonizer subject situated in the Imaginary, a structure with an absent Symbolic. While on the one hand, the development symbolic maintains the designations and signifiers of the colonial symbolic, on the other hand, under the development symbolic there is a subservience to the economic signifier (where economic activity trumps all other activities and signifiers). The dominance of capitalism creates a Symbolic (because the capitalist class and working class view themselves in relation to the means of production and not against each other vis-à-vis colonial relations) and it is via capitalism that, as will be discussed later, the black colonised subject is given a window into grasping some form of identity, an action strictly prohibited by the positivised white coloniser under the colonial symbolic. The colonial and development symbolic thus creates “contradiction-unevenness” (Pecheux, 1994: 144), for the subject. The ideology of colonialism forces the humanism of the subject to be denied, but the suffrage and engagement accorded by democracy give the subject a rite of passage to flourish in humanism. The subject becomes caught in a tug-of-war of wanting to deny itself, a position it is has forced itself to be accustomed to under the colonial relation, and of wanting to explore and actualise the imaginaries that the economic and political sphere offer.

This section will analyse the manner in which the new dominant signifier of development came to be consolidated beginning with the unique theoretical interplay of structuralism and post-structuralism where Althusser's determination in the last instance by the economic, and Laclau's structure and subject with contingency and agency synthesize and define the development symbolic itself. Thereafter, the antagonisms produced from the development symbolic are analysed followed by the manner in which development forms the new modernity that interpellates the global society.

#### **4.2.1 Structuration of the Development Structure**

One of Althusser's aims whilst advancing the materialist dialectic as overdetermined was to shy away from all forms of essentialism characteristic in and of Marxist theory. This he desired to achieve through furthering economistic evolutionism and theoretical humanism (Hudson, 1995: 273). "But what emerged from *Reading Capital* was the possibility of another form of essentialism, neither evolutionist nor humanist but, structuralist." (Hudson, 1995: 273). Incidentally, Althusser introduced the notion of structural causality which he believed to be the "cornerstone of Marx's whole work" but the result is "a regression to the very essentialism from which Althusser initially strove to emancipate Marxism." (Hudson, 1995: 245). According to Althusser, the thesis of determination in the last instance by the relations of production stipulates that the political and ideological structures of a social totality obey a logic that is only intelligible when understood through the determinations of the relations of production (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).

For Laclau this thesis poses two problems. Firstly, Laclau argues, this thought process shows that "a symptom of a residual theoreticism or idealism" was never eliminated from Althusser's thought (Hudson, 1995: 274). Secondly, and more importantly, this determination reveals that not only will all societies have the same form, but also, this determination in the last instance, is exhaustive of all possible societies (Hudson, 1995: 277). The ramifications for such a rationale is the elimination of contingency as everything is determined *a priori* (Hudson, 1995: 277).

Within the Development Symbolic, that is, under the new hegemony of the structure, neither is Althusser's thesis of society being determined in the last instance negated, nor is Laclau's

viewpoint of a homogenised society without a subject of agency ignored, but there is a unique and interesting play and synthesis of both theories. This dissertation argues that under the Development Symbolic in particular, society is determined in the last instance by the economic, principally because the dominant ideology is that of *homo economicus*. Secondly, the Development Symbolic can only be reached when the agency of the subject and the contingent *sui generis* nature of the structure is taken into account. Without the latter, the Development Symbolic as a point in time and history would never be arrived at and will never progress and mutate.

This construction of the structure by development is also witnessed in Althusser's formulation of society. Althusser postulates that society is composed of a tripartite base: the political and legal which form the infrastructural, and the economic which is the base of society, and therefore the superstructural. He furthermore postulates that it is the former that enables the superstructural to define the structure. "[T]he social construction of development was married to a political design: excising from society and culture an autonomous sphere, the economic sphere, and installing it at the center of politics and ethics. As a conceptual construction, economics strives to subordinate to its rule and to subsume under its logic every other form of social interaction in every society it invades. . . . Establishing economic value requires the devaluing of all other forms of social existence." (Esteva, 1992: 19f). Under the development symbolic, while the economic does form the superstructural base in society, the political, social and cultural, owing to the logics of equivalences come to be defined in a way that it stands in a powerful position but is nonetheless subordinate to the economic.

In the creation of development as a new symbolic, the economic is the foundation of the structure; the political sphere, where entities are accorded the right to engage in universal suffrage, the legal domain where subjects are given human rights, the right to willfully engage in the creating an architectural schematic in which they will live; culturally, the ability to choose particular religions, traditions and practices that add an additional veneer of satisfaction – development is thus the concatenation and intelligent reproduction of these factors that give the gift of illusion to the subject that he is the controller of the system. Under the modernity created by development, society is determined in the last instance by the economic. It is important to note, that the contingency of

the system is always at play, that the subject is a conduit both of perpetuation of a system but also of transformation of the system. As long as the master signifier is enthroned, there will exist series of boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, logics of equivalence and logics of differences, antagonistic relations that bear with them the contingency the structure unbundles itself by. As long as ideology is in play, the threat of Laclau's subject is at play.

As previously discussed, language is composed of syntagmatic and paradigmatic strands, words are not simply nomenclatures associated with randomness but words are associated with ideas and signify the essence and condensation of a narrative. Words are signs, gravid with meaning. Development encompassed social, cultural, political and legal signifiers into its fore, absorbed these diverse particularistic demands of society to enable its perpetuation and longevity. In doing so, these set of equivalences that came to form the development symbolic. At the same time, they guised the abrasive positions of subjects that capitalistic economies create. Meaning, development, unlike the economic, does not solely reduce the subject to either bourgeois or proletariat, but within it, it assimilates other aspects of society – political, cultural, legal aspects, as metonymic and structural causalities to hide the principal misrecognition effect, that being, that within the current structure, the principle form of existence is economic, that the capitalist class exist viz the working class and vice-versa.

#### **4.2.2 Developments antagonisms**

Attached to the development discourse was the principle antagonism of working class and capitalist class. The manifestation of this antagonism occurred on a global proportion, as countries that were previously colonized became the equivalent of the exploited working class/Third World countries, and colonizing nations became the First World countries. In order for America to uphold a position of developed, it needed an undeveloped; in order for America to maintain its position as the beacon of a free world, it need to create an unfree world; in order for America to create a consumer-driven economic, it needed to be juxtaposed against an agrarian economy. Not only did development make central that principality of *homo economicus* but it also devalued the traditional and the non-commodified - “‘Development’ is identified with the capitalist rationality of *homo economicus* and its spread through practices of social technology during modernity and especially colonialism.” (Escobar, 1995: 59f). This economic rationality was linked, according to Esteva, to

“The dis-valuing of traditional or non-commodified practices and knowledge. It was also linked to primitive accumulation and the creation of needs - needs for goods and services which can only be provided by industrialized societies and which are assumed to be finite, establishing the “reign of scarcity” functionally related to the growth imperative of the capitalist system.” (Esteva, 1992: 19–22).

Macro-economically, America, and the Western world were able to define themselves as statues of the future, as trophies of progression, as drivers to a new technological world. In doing so, and in this propagation, America and First World countries posited themselves as the One qua created Second and Third World countries which categorically fell into the Other. Implicit in these designations was a “colonial gaze” – “The gaze that sees the Other merely as a deficient and retarded version of one’s Self, converting ‘geo-cultural differences into historical stages’.” (Nandy, 1992: 146) and disregarding the possibility of non-Western lifestyles being desirable. The First World countries exposed the “‘we are developed, they are less developed and in need of development’ as a typical case of Othering.” (Escobar, 1992: 24). Politically, it is based on a reluctance to be classified, downgraded and governed in the name of development. Development merely became another form and a new process in maintaining colonial relations. It is worth quoting Escobar at length to emphasize these points:

*“Development has functioned as an all-powerful mechanism for the production and management of the Third World in the post-World War II period. A complete reorganization of knowledge production systems, for example, took place in Latin America after 1950 (Fuenzalida 1983, 1987; Escobar 1989). The previous model, organized in the nineteenth century around the European classical professions and centered on education and training, was replaced by a new one patterned after North American institutions and styles. This transformation took place to suit the demands of the new development order, which relied heavily on research and knowledge that could provide a reliable picture of a country’s social and economic problems. Everything that was deemed important became the object of knowledge; this was achieved through the proliferation of development disciplines and sub-disciplines (development economics, agricultural sciences, health, nutrition and educational sciences, demography, city and regional planning, etc). Once Third World countries became the target of new mechanisms of power - embodied in*

*endless programs and “strategies” - their economies, societies and cultures were offered up as new objects of knowledge that, in turn, created new possibilities of power. It was the creation of a vast institutional network (from international organizations and universities to local development agencies) that insured the efficient functioning of this apparatus. Once consolidated, this system determined what could be said, thought, imagined; in short, it defined a perceptual domain, the space of development.” (Escobar, 1992: 24).*

To examine development as discourse requires understanding why so many countries started to see themselves as underdeveloped, that is, how to develop became for them a fundamental problem, and how, finally, it was made real through the deployment of myriad strategies and programs. Development has been the primary mechanism through which these parts of the world have been produced and have produced themselves, thus marginalizing or precluding other ways of seeing and doing. The problem is complicated by the fact that the post-World War II discourse of development is firmly entrenched in Western modernity and economy. (Escobar, 1992: 22).

#### **4.2.3 Development as the New Modernity**

The new global mode of encryption was witnessed in June 1959 during sociologist Edward Shils key note address at the former Rockefeller estate at Dobbs Ferry New York to at a conference on the political problems and prospects of the “new states” in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. He attempted to provide nothing less than a definition of modernity, a term Shils believed provided the linchpin for understanding the ambitions of the postcolonial regions:

*“In the new states “modern” means democratic and equalitarian, scientific, economically advanced and sovereign. “Modern” states are “welfare states”. “Modern” states are meant necessarily to be democratic states in which not merely are the people cared for and looked after by their rulers, but they are, as well, the source of inspiration and guidance of those rulers. Modernity entails democracy, and democracy in the new state is, above all, equalitarian. Modernity therefore entails the dethronement of the rich and traditionally privileged from their positions of pre-eminent influence. It involves land reform. It involves steeply progressive income taxation. Modernity is scientific. It believes the progress of the country rests on rational technology, and ultimately on scientific knowledge. No country could be modern without being economically advanced or progressive. To be advanced*

*economically means to have an economy based on modern technology, to be industrialized and to have a high standard of living. All this requires planning and the employment of economists, statisticians, conducting surveys to control the rate of savings and investments, the construction of new factories, the building of roads and harbors, the development of railways, irrigation schemes, fertilizer production, agricultural research, forestry research, ceramics research, and research on fuel utilization. "Modern" means being western without the onus of following the west. It is the model of the west detached in some ways from its geographic origins and locus.*" (Gilman, 2003: 1-2).

Shils' objective was to create a "foundational certainty" (cited in Gilman, 2003: 2) that the purpose of development was the attainment of modernity the world-over. He furthermore projected the ideal(s) of American post-war society onto the newly post-colonial nation-states thereby treating America not as a contingent, spontaneous society adept to the nature of time, space and subject (*sui generis*) but as a society that was perfectly idealized and constructed on the basis of that imagery – an imagery the rest of the world could follow and attain if they followed the stringent guidelines and delineations provided by America themselves.

It is thus crucial to underscore that development is an ideology. Postulating development as an ideology and as a discourse enables the understanding of the new structural and metonymic causalities that is utilised to produce the misrecognition effect and ultimately the ideological effect. The second point as a natural development of the first is that these causalities/society's ideological infrastructure, transmit certain antagonisms that have deep bifurcatory effects. Third, the effects of these newly created antagonism interact with different subject-positions depending on the historical context they are emerging from and experiencing. Ultimately, this interpellates the subject in both standard and idiosyncratic ways. Chronologically, GDP was the first nodal point in crowning development as the principle signifier. The strengthening of the economic-ideological system was the enunciation of development as the new modernity. The principality of the economic hit a home run when GDP and development intersected and produced Modernisation Theory. Modernisation Theory will now be critically discussed.

### **4.3 Modernisation Theory**

Flourishing between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s in the United States, modernization theory developed under the influence of scholars such as Walt Whitman Rostow, Bert Hoselitz, Daniel Lerner, Seymour Martin Lipset, Neil Smelser, David McClelland, and others. Relying on an idea of a dichotomous split between traditional and modern, modernization theories are firmly rooted in nineteenth-century theorizing. They evoke the polar opposites that Ferdinand Tönnies specified: *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society); they accepted Emile Durkheim's theorizing on mechanical versus organic solidarity; they borrowed Karl Marx's evolutionary progression from feudal-agricultural societies to capitalist-industrial economies; and they built on Max Weber's distinction between the traditional and rational forms of authority (Gereffi, 1983). Overall, modernization theories reject the ideas that "racial or innate deficiencies were responsible for the lowly position that the non-Western peoples" occupied in the hierarchy of the world nations (Adas, 2003). Instead, nations remained poor because whole societies cling to the traditional way of life instead of adapting modern institutions and technology and embracing modern attitudes. The road to modernization was articulated via the concatenation of Evolutionary Theory, Functionalism and most prominently Rostow's famous 'Five Stages of Economic Development', the last of which will now be discussed.

#### **4.3.2 Rostow's 5 stages of economic growth**

One of the most influential articulations of the modernization theory was advanced by American economic historian Walt Whitman Rostow in his "non-communist manifesto" in which he argues that "take-off" toward modernity is achievable for the underdeveloped nations through the spread of modern economic organization and technology. In the post-colonial reality of the 1950s, the threat of newly independent nations embracing the communist path of development was looming large. Simultaneously, the success of postwar reconstruction in Europe (particularly the Marshall Plan) convinced many policymakers that an economic-aid-program could be successful in the postcolonial world and would bring the developing nations into the folds of Western capitalism and liberal democracy (Haefele, 2003). Rostow's ideas were influential beyond the academic circles as he served as the Kennedy administration's deputy special assistant to the president for national security affairs in the late 1950s. His ideas resonated in the wide-sweeping policies

implemented during Kennedy's "Decade of Development" including increased US foreign aid to developing nations, military assistance and overall emphasis on modernization (Haefele, 2003).

Rostow begins by arguing that society transitions through five stages of development of which the traditional-based society is the starting point. A traditional society is one whose structure is developed within limited production functions, based on pre-Newtonian science and technology, and on pre-Newtonian attitudes towards the physical world. The conception of the traditional society is, however, in no sense static and does not exclude increases in output but the central fact about the traditional society was that a ceiling existed on the level of attainable output per head. Traditional societies were predominantly agricultural-based with limited but varying degrees of manufacture. Due to traditional societies devoting a high percentage of their resources to agriculture there was, consequently, a hierarchical social structure with limited scope for vertical mobility. In summation, the term traditional, according to Rostow, totalized, grouped together and homogenized the pre-Newtonian world: the Chinese dynasties, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean civilisation, and medieval Europe. Rostow applies traditional society to a post-Newtonian conception of thought, a shift from agriculture to the manufacturing sector and the usage of the environment and nature to the meet man's economic interests.

Rostow's second stage of evolutionary development is a transitory period when the "preconditions for take-off" are enunciated. The preconditions for take-off were initially developed in Western Europe during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as the insights of modern science were starting to be translated into new production functions in both agriculture and industry. This occurred in a period of lateral expansion of world markets and the international competition for resources. Britain was the first to develop the full preconditions for take-off. This was achieved endogenously by utilization of its geography, natural resources, trading possibilities and social and political structure and exogenously by colonization of traditional societies. Economic progress underscores, indicates and paves the trajectory for a multiplicity of other factors that are now

classified under development. These include - national dignity, enterprise and private profit, overall welfare, education.

An outcome of economic progress is the creation of a newly defined and constructed 'public sphere' – banks and financial institutions for the mobilization and utilization of capital form; domestic and international investments increase; new types of infrastructure are procured and the scope for commerce broadens. But all this activity proceeds at a limited pace within an economy and a society still mainly characterized by traditional low-productivity methods, by the old social structure and values, and by the regionally-based political institutions that developed in conjunction with them.

Interestingly and notably, in many countries, traditional society persisted side by side with modern economic activities, conducted for limited economic purposes by a colonial or quasi-colonial power. Although the period of transition - between the traditional society and the take-off - saw major changes in both the economy itself and in the balance of social values, the decisive feature was often political. Politically, the building of an effective centralized national state - on the basis of coalitions with a new nationalism, in opposition to the traditional landed regional interests, the colonial power, or both, was a decisive aspect during the preconditions period. Certain levels of economic development and political maturity allowed for the passage into the next stage, namely, Take-off.

Take-off - the third stage in this sequence is the great watershed in the life of modern societies as it demarcates the interval when resistance to steady growth is finally overcome. The forces enabling economic progress (which yield limited bursts and enclaves of modern activity) expand and dominate society. One can approximately allocate the take-off of Britain to the two decades after 1783; France and the United States to the several decades preceding 1860; Germany, the third quarter of the nineteenth century; Japan, the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century; Russia and

Canada the quarter-century or so preceding 1914; while during the 1950's India and China have, in quite different ways, launched their respective take-offs.

Earmarked by Britain, the proximate stimulus for take-off was the build-up of social overhead capital; a surge of technological development in industry and agriculture; and the emergence to political power prepared to regard the modernization of the economy as severe, high-order political business. During the take-off, new industries expand rapidly yielding profits, a large proportion of which are reinvested in new plants and these new industries, in turn, stimulate, through their rapidly expanding requirement for factory workers, the services to support them, and for other manufactured goods, a further expansion in urban areas and in other modern industrial plants. The economy exploits hitherto unused natural resources and methods of production. New techniques spread in agriculture as well as industry, as agriculture is commercialized, and increasing numbers of farmers are prepared to accept the new methods and the deep changes they bring to ways of life. The revolutionary changes in agricultural productivity is an essential condition for a successful take-off. In a decade or two both the basic structure of the economy and the social and political structure of the society are transformed in such a way that a steady rate of growth can be sustained.

Approximately sixty years after take-off begins what Rostow calls maturity is attained. This stage is characterized by an economy that demonstrates it has the technological and entrepreneurial skills to produce not everything, but anything that it chooses to produce. It may lack (like Sweden and Switzerland) the raw materials or other supply conditions required to produce a given type of output economically, but its dependence is a matter of economic choice or political priority rather than a technological or institutional necessity. The fifth stage known as high mass-consumption is where leading sectors shift towards durable consumers' goods and services. In this post-maturity stage, through the political process, Western societies have chosen to allocate increased resources to social welfare and security. The emergence of the welfare state is one manifestation of a society's moving beyond technical maturity.

The stages of economic development that Rostow arrives at, are nodal points in the history of the Western world. It is important to underscore that these stages organically transpired due to the social, cultural, political and economic context of particular time periods. Whilst development agencies and theorists do take into account that the ‘starting point’ for each country is different, they nonetheless override this acceptance with an economic model that often took centuries to arrive at. Furthermore, the factors that precipitated the success of the Western world cannot be emulated, for example, the profits created by colonial empires, or the ‘labour’ by the slave trade, the absence of trade unions, trade tariffs, multiple treaties governing military growth, travel and transportation.

#### **4.3.1.1 Rostow and the subject**

The stages of growth delineated by Rostow form the structural causality of the mega-structure of development, and it becomes cleverly cloaked by the metonymic causality given in the form of structural adjustment programs and loans to assist lesser developed countries rise the ranks to the point of maturity. These two causalities, as already discussed, form the misrecognition effect, and hides the reality of the economic capitalistic system, that is, these stages delineated by Rostow, assisted America in defining their position of strength vis-à-vis other countries and by claiming a position at the top they are able to disseminate the way that countries can also reach the top, for that exact reason, that they are already there. The principal misrecognition created by capitalism is that of the hiding the capitalist’s and working classes relation to the means of production. However, in the post-colonial, ideological insurgency period, these signifiers intersected and reproduced themselves in the development symbolic – here, capitalist and working class become entrenched in the signifiers/demarcations of First, Second or Third World.

This relation and this categorisation in itself feeds into the system, and by virtue, into the discourse that, both categories and both forms of interpellation are dependent on each other for the perpetuation of their existence. The capitalist, First World countries become the One and the working, Third World countries become the Other, and this, all-pervasive categorisations define the structure built on the supremacy of the economic. These forms of antagonisms are what define the subject. It is only by being in the position of supremacy and occupying the position of the One

is it possible for the One to seemingly assist the Other, but the assistance offered by the One to the Other is akin to a prisoner having time to leave his cell and enjoy the garden, all within the confines of the prison.

What does Rostow's stages of growth have to offer the argument on the development of the subject? Within Rostow's delineation and description of the trajectory that countries emerge from and grow into, is no mention of the effect that these models and programs have on the subject itself. The position of the subject in economic development, is like the elephant in the room that is sitting at Rostow's blind spot. To quote Althusser, "there is no subject without ideology, and there is no ideology without the subject", meaning, both ideology and the subject are continuously working in conjunction with each other and reproducing the lifespan of the structure. The elimination of one results in the immediate elimination of the other.

However, what is witnessed in the work of Rostow is that in spite of the effort in outlining and describing the stages of economic success, firstly, this path of success is a Western path of success, created over centuries in an organic spontaneous way. There were nodal points that naturally developed due to the conditions of the time, for example, science caused a shift from pre-modernity to modernity; the industrial revolution caused a shift from agricultural based communities to manufacturing-based communities; the French Revolution resulted in the thinking of the political via democracy. Within each nodal point there is a precise role played by the subject – without Newton and Copernicus the proliferation of science would be contained; without people living on extremely low-income levels, rampaged by disease and malnourishment, there would be a limited labour force and the industrial revolution would not have taken off, and without a depraved working class and supra-privileged bourgeois there would be no democracy. Each event that defines history became an event because of the role of people.

However, under modernisation theory, while there is comprehensive plan of economic success, the role of the subject is completely forgotten/negated. The fact that these policies are being affected by people and will affect a grander population is not taken into account. The vantage point of the supreme, First World One, is that the countries in a lower ranking to them seek economic privilege and success. In doing so, the capitalist, First World One is allowing space to explore their

mentality - whatever is projected onto the Other is a notion created by the One. The nascent intention to quickly economically and politically upgrade the working class Third World Other, causes a resonance, and this resonance leads to the inability of the One to ever transcend and self-fulfil itself, for if it could, it would cut all ties to the Third World altogether. But the constant need of affirmation, the constant need to feel defined and privileged as the One, can only be met qua Other.

On the one hand, due to being in a position of greater power, the capitalist, First World One has the ability to demarcate and create the antagonism needed to retain and maintain its position of power (this can also be witnessed in the work of Rostow who fashioned the progression of his stages on the trajectory of the Western world). On the other hand, it is forced to face the perverse reality of what it has created. This too assumes a myriad of forms. For example, the efforts by the United Nations, an American generated organisation to alleviate the conditions of the poor and materially afflicted. By constantly reminding itself of what it is not, the capitalist, First World One reminds itself of what it is. Conditions, such as poverty are created and perpetuated instances that constantly help the capitalist, First World One retain its normality – for example, the great famine of Bengal was induced by the British; approximately 66% of Americans are obese and half the world's population is malnourished from lack of access to food and water (Sifferlin, 2015) – these statistics demonstrate that there is not a lack of food and grain being supplied, but that there is an issue with the distribution of materials.

Stuart Corbridge, states “For many people in the global North, development is something that happens in the South or the Third World. It is something that happens to other people.” (Corbridge, 1986: 1) and reveals the concept as linked to geopolitical Othering, meaning, if social change or modernization takes place in the North, it is not called development, because we are already developed while they are not.

The non-acknowledgement of the working class Third World Other by the capitalist First World One was pronounced by the Blank Slate Approach. The Blank Slate Approach showcased the lengths that were consciously/unconsciously adopted in order for the Western World to retain their

hegemony, both materially and psychologically, by attempting to remain within the realm of the Imaginary that was unremittingly demystifying.

#### **4.4 Blank Slate Approach**

The formation of the Blank Slate Approach occurred during a period when the colonial state was viewed as a benevolent autocrat, during a period when the strength and dominance of America was under ideological geo-political attack. It is under these conditions that the all-American identity was being undermined and vast efforts were being made to ensure the unification and unfragmentation of identity occurred. The concatenation of these factors produced a First-World state hungry for global power and ready to undertake whatever means available to maintain their hegemonic position. As per the co-constitutional differential logic, the super-imposition of the First World nations results in the devaluation of the underdeveloped nations for it is being able to define what they are not were America able to define who they are, and in doing so consolidate a strong well-defined identity for itself.

Experts designed new institutions from scratch based on pure reason. Myrdal had explained in 1932 that the new social policy ideology is “rational, whereas the old . . . was quite sentimental.” (Myrdal, 1932). The expert reformer should be liberated from the inhibitions of any reverence for past experience.” (Myrdal, 1932). Myrdal captured the essence of the technocratic approach as “a purely technical analysis of a social policy question.” The benefits of rendering nothing to a country was that “A malleable Blank Slate... fostered great potential for technocrats to create one-size-fits-all fixes that could be applied widely instead of having to study the historical context in each instance.” (Easterly, 2014). It is on this premise that the Blank Slate Approach was formed as a type of social engineering that engaged in the severe homogenization of all countries in similar economic positions.

In demonstrating the ramifications of the Blank Slate Approach on the structuration of the structure and subjectivisation of the subject, attention is initially drawn to the technocosmopolitanism phase in the development and modernisation rhetoric. This is followed by a description of the similarities and differences between the colonial and development symbolic and thereupon there is an integration of Lacan’s Real, Imaginary and Symbolic into the development symbolic. The

concatenation of this erects the necessary scaffolding required to understand the effects of the Blank Slate Approach on the subject.

#### **4.4.4 Technocosmopolitanism**

Proponents of the technocosmopolitanism believed and argued that modernity, as a new phase of society's evolution and structure, should be predicated on the present pre-existing traditional forms, that is, they hoped to "regulate history, society and culture by working over existent institutions and spaces – cultural, social, and aesthetic – that seem to embody a healthy sedimentation of historical practices." (Rabinow, 2013: 57). The reformist approach drew on Evolutionary Theory. Biological sciences since the last quarter of the eighteenth century studied the growth and development of different species. Studies proved that organisms are ever-evolving and developing in an order natural to each. The biological metaphor was transferred and adopted by the social sciences who viewed political institutions and economies as growing and ever-evolving organisms. The West embodied evolution, growth and superior advancement and thereby represented the natural order and blueprint or prototype for the rest of the world to emulate. Supporters of this approach accepted history and nature as limitations to the extant of the global development project but the rhetoric and practice of development became a Trojan horse for extending the power of the postcolonial state (Gilman, 2003: 11).

Modernisation theorists predicated their dominance and supremacy on the natural evolution of organisms and extended it to society's development. Those societies that were dominant were to become the beacon for other societies to emulate, for it was the manner in which nature, and all its various organisms exists.

#### **4.4.5 Re-creating the Cartesian Cogito**

The actions undertaken by America during their endeavours in anchoring the development signifier is akin to the efforts made the colonisers in establishing the legitimacy of their project. Both, in their dealings, reorganised the Cartesian Cogito, and re-created new symbolics such that the quadrant that they fell into was always positive. The beginning of recreating an external society is the recreation and re-wondering of subject-positions. Once again, it is only by defining what they are not, are subjects able to define what they are and this negative co-constitutionality is the

hallmark of a steady structure. However, in the creation of a steady society, subjects are forced to either remain suspended within the structure and have no definitive place or create a definitive place within the structure and anchor the structure to a new reality, a new supreme ideology. The Blank Slate, like the colonising mission, was another such nodal point in the history of society where it is unequivocally evident that in the creation of dominant subject-positions are forced to create a new antagonistic subordinate subject-position entirely for the sake of their own sanity and reality.

As mentioned in chapter 3, the positivised white coloniser stripped the negativised black colonised of their land, of their culture and heritage, and in doing so, stripped them of their very corporal schematic. This plunged the colonised into a position of subjective destitution and the colonized, in his position as an ontological lack, consequently became a thinghood. The colonised had no reality except the one he witnessed in the foremost sense- the behaviour, attitude and mentality of the positivised white coloniser. However, the coloniser unabashedly disavows the colonised to think that they could share the same reality and the coloniser continues to dig a deeper state within the Real for the colonised to occupy. The result of this action is that the coloniser has a safer, cleaner, smaller, and comfortable space to control, manage and exist in. Within this state of being, the colonised subconsciously parks the idea of wanting to be the coloniser, meaning, he suspends the idea that one day he too could have privilege, control, power, and material comforts. Conversely, under the development symbolic, the neo-coloniser/capitalist First World One allows the neo-colonised/working class Third World Other to live the life it envisioned for itself. For the colonised this comes as a silver lining to occupy the position as the One, to no longer be a figure of subordination and subsist in the Real.

What separates the ideology and action of the development symbolic from the colonial symbolic is the manner in which the Real, Symbolic and Imaginary stack against each other. To recapitulate, under the colonial symbolic, the Symbolic itself is removed and the coloniser and colonised are acutely aware that their positions are constructed viz-a-viz each other. The coloniser becomes the positivised white coloniser living in the Imaginary and the black negativised colonised becomes the antithesis. Under the colonial symbolic the privileging of the racial signifier supersedes all others, and this includes the economic. This extends to the point that the coloniser and colonised

are identities by race before all other signifiers and social constructs. The deletion of the Symbolic is what enables the system to maintain its longevity. On the other hand, under the development symbolic, the signifier of the economic is introduced and plays a more precise and acute role in the subjectivisation of the subject. Here, the role of capitalism de-thrones the racial signifier as the first notion and identifier, and accordingly, the subject is branded working class or capitalist class. Althusser's usages of capitalism in articulating the identities of the subjects is pertinent - The capitalist class and working class are absolved of knowledge that their identities are constructed viz-a-viz each other. They instead see their positions in relation to the means of production. Resultantly, the stage of capitalism is maintained.

Capitalism thus creates a healthy Symbolic that assists the antagonism between the capitalist and working class. In addition to capitalism, the role of democracy, via the inclusion of the political into the development ideology, assists in the creation of a newly defined Symbolic.

There was a radical shift from viewing the development project as a system to maintain and build upon traditional practices to one where the "human material" itself, conceived as "a universal subject whose needs, prospects and norms could be discovered, interpreted and fixed by science." (Gilman, 2003: 11). Concerned with the attractiveness of communism to the decolonizing nations, modernizers "sought to counter Lenin's argument with their own model of historical convergence." (Latham, 2003: 4). To the communist vision of class struggle leading to the abolition of private property and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the modernizers juxtaposed the ideas of "Consensual democracy and liberal capitalism as the engines of progress." (Latham, 2003: 4). Moreover, while communism was still an unrealized utopia, proponents of modernization theory claimed that advanced nations—America, Western Europe, and Japan—have already reached the pinnacle of economic development, the "Age of High Mass-Consumption" (Rostow, 1990). For the negativised black colonised subject, being offered a seat at the newly revealed Symbolic is a healthy and most-wanted departure from the destitution of the Real where all identity is suspended and disallowed whatsoever.

#### **4.4.3 Blank Slate Approach and the subject**

In ascertaining its value and new identity qua plethora of changes circling the American identity two actions occur concurrently. On the one hand, the negativised black colonised subject is being given a helping hand in the form of economic policy that will assist in its development trajectory. To the negativised black colonised subject, the notions of living the life of the positivised white coloniser no longer have to be harboured for they are becoming a reality. On the other hand, the positivised white coloniser is creating a situation that will hamstring the colonised from the start, for the offering of assistance to the newly independent states is a mechanism being utilised by the coloniser to create a stable and secure identity for himself, and in this re-creation he, like during the colonial period, strips the black colonised subject of what it is and what it could potentially be. The black colonised sees itself in a new avatar due to the presentations being offered to him, and the coloniser presents these impressions as a fishing line to secure a future and an identity for itself. The way the colonised sees itself and the coloniser sees the colonised is juxtaposed and contradictory, but this does not stop either of the antagonistic camps from propounding what they endeavour for.

Under the Blank Slate Approach, the negativised black colonised other is given an opportunity to attain economic, political and social equality, but this comes at a price. While the negativised black colonised subject sees an identity and a new future forming for himself, the positivised white coloniser does not see the negativised black colonised the same way the colonised see himself. For the black colonised subject, the economic and political route being offered to it accords it the ability to uplift itself from the position of the Real into the healthier position of the Symbolic. The colonised is furthermore given the vision that it too could live in the realm of the Imaginary – where access to wealth, higher standards of living, political engagement and a healthy social life is the norm. The capitalist First World One is offering the working class Third World Other a form of psychological plenitude via a delineation of processes to be followed to attain development – in the attainment of development, the Other will no longer exist on the periphery but become an architect as the One.

From the stance of the capitalist First World One, the negativised black colonised subject merely becomes a slate, stripped of any plenitude, stripped of materiality and psychological well-being, and is seen as a vessel for the coloniser to create a stable and secure identity for itself that would

enable it to continue on a path that it is used to – a path of supremacy. Neither was the variegated histories of countries taken into account nor the culture, lifestyle and idiosyncrasies of subjects. Countries were categorized into groups and based on their grouping they were homogenized and offered the same economic plan. In the same way the coloniser occupied the land of the colonised, stripped them of culture and heritage and rendered its corporeal schema a nothing, under the creation of a development symbolic, the coloniser is giving the colonised a helping hand so that the former can use it to elevate their position.

The Blank Slate Approach faced severe backlash but persevered in its intention and purpose of remodelling the world on American-style principles and guidelines. Frederick Hayek, for example, addressed the Blank Slate mentality in *The Road to Serfdom* where he criticized the belief that one could simply erase the history and progress of a country and start from the beginning through social engineering or made development. He noticed and objected to the assumption of the creation of a malleable new starting point and instead argued that history is a tool from which we can learn, improve and add to or improve the existing machinery. In spite of reactionary comments and proposals, the Blank Slate Approach succeeded in its efforts of rendering development the ability for America to attain its goal is due to its position of power.

“Power as a constitutive force” - The act of institution of power is always accompanied by a contestation of force and resistance as argued by Foucault (cited in Norval, 1996: 3). Even in its elementary stage of establishing a new hegemonic order, power is contested, and the outcome - victorious or suppressive - of competing forces continuously has an impact. According to Gramsci an outcome is reached through two means as hegemony denotes both a type of political relation and a substantive achievement. The former instance pertains to the type of articulatory practice whereby persuasion predominates over the use of force whilst the latter alludes to whether or not a particular force has managed to achieve supremacy by imposing its will on the rest of society through the creation of consent and the incorporation of interests of rival forces. Power as a constitutive force had an impact on the decolonisation process – As mentioned in chapter 3, in moments of structural weakness, and in the face of the subject of dominance being demoted from its position within the Imaginary, the subject of the Imaginary does its best before, during and after

articulatory practice to ensure that it retains as much of its dominant position as possible, even if it has to relinquish some of its power in the short term.

The subject of the Imaginary, even though it is seemingly giving up its power in the short term, to gratify the subject of the Real, in the long term, the power relations remain unchanged to the greatest possible degree. At the same time, this does not negate the contingent and *sui generis* nature of the structure. Furthermore, the structure is not biased to the subject of privilege, but, as described by Gramsci, and used by Norval, in the creation of a new hegemony, “a particular force has managed to achieve supremacy by imposing its will on the rest of society through the creation of consent and the incorporation of interests of rival forces.” (Norval, 2007: 49). Thus, America, during the decolonisation process, engaged as many of the rival particularistic demands and inculcated it into its system. This flexibility and integration of abstract and concrete demands, by the American hegemony allowed for and enabled the dominant subjects to have a predominant say as to which signifier(s) will replace those of the colonial symbolic.

Power as a constitutive force is dependent upon the degree to which power relations wished to be maintained in the face of adversity, the malleability of demands being rationalized and articulated into the new system. The suppression of some and assimilation of other particularistic demands into the universal thread is integral in the rendering of new power relations as well as the degree of the structural rupture. “Thus, it is through anchoring and filling the empty place via an equivalential chain that a dominant power emerges. Historical context is thus imperative to filling the empty signifier as social transformation occurs not through rallying mass numbers to reach a goal but through the way social relations are rearticulated.” (Butler, 2000: 14).

It is thus fair to say that in construction and determination of a new hegemony, both transformative and expansive hegemony were at play: According to Gramsci (1971: 55-9; 106-14; 129-33) it is possible to distinguish two different types of hegemony: transformism and expansive hegemony. Transformism hegemony is a defensive type of politics pursued by the hegemonic force in a situation of political and economic crisis. It involves the gradual but continuous absorption, of the active elements produced by allied groups – and even those which come from antagonistic groups and seem irreconcilably hostile (Althusser, 1971: 59; Torfing, 1999: 111). Expansive hegemony

involves the formation of a collective will with a national-popular character, which is able to promote the full development of particular demands and lead finally to the resolution of the contradictions they express (Gramsci, 1971: 132-3; Mouffe, 1979: 183; Torfing, 1999: 111).

The Blank Slate Approach was a technocratic endeavour by the capitalist First World One in defining the working class Third World Other, because in the very definition of the Other, the One is consolidated in his identity and position. The effects of the technocratic, *homo economicus* approach to the Third World was witnessed two decades later when the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP's) failed to assist the Third World countries in alleviating themselves from their condition. The Blank Slate Approach also pushed a bureaucratic, structure-driven approach in the reformation of the Third World countries and in doing so negated the presence of the subjects and the humanistic role played by the subject.

#### **4.5 Criticisms of Modernisation Theory**

In addition to not taking the subject into account, Rostow's model was criticised for being ahistorical, meaning, modernization theory failed to make distinctions between countries, regions, structural conditions, or specific historical experiences. There are important differences between the patterns of industrialization in different countries and different historical periods. There is no uniform, unilineal sequence of stages of development. Leftist political economists have often argued that the real purpose of development projects is to aid capitalist penetration into Third World countries. However, such projects do not characteristically succeed in introducing new relations of production, nor do they bring about modernization or significant economic transformations. Nor are they set up in such a way that they ever could. For this reason, it seems a mistake to interpret them simply as part of the historical expansion of capitalism or as elements in a global strategy for controlling peasant production. For industrialization to succeed in late industrializing countries, a plethora of simultaneous changes have to occur in the economy in a very short period of time. If changes are only partial or limited, the required scale of investment will not be attained and the entire process of industrialization will stagnate and become impaired altogether (Szirmai, 2015: 106). The developed countries failed to take the history, geography,

political, cultural and social and resource-pool of countries into account - All underdeveloped countries were treated unequally as what they were seen as, that being, underdeveloped.

Capitalist First World countries pushed the importance of democracy for countries en-route to modernization. The state was posited as vessel through which modernization could infiltrate through different rungs of society – “development agencies present the country’s economy and society as lying within the control of a neutral, unitary and effective national government, and thus almost perfectly responsive to the blueprints of planners. The state is seen as an impartial instrument for implementing plans and the government as a machine for providing social services and engineering growth.” (Ferguson, 1994: 178). Development was seen as something that only comes about through government action; and “lack of development is the result of government neglect.” (Ferguson, 1994: 178). “Needing to construe their roles as “apolitical”, they continued to see government as a machine for delivering services, not as political fact or a means by which certain classes and interests attempted to control the behavior and choices of others.” (Ferguson, 1994: 179). By adopting a blank slate approach to development as well as one size fits all, whenever failures were witnesses it was seen as the internal failures of the people - Modernisation Theory emphasized nations’ internal problems as the cause of underdevelopment. Modernisation theorists viewed modernization as a formula that requires precise fulfillment of all criteria. Any mutations or failures were not due to the theory but due to internal causes. They believe that whatever deficiencies were present in underdeveloped countries is due to their own inadequacies and mal-guidance. Modernization theory seemed to blame the victims themselves for their poverty. Any external causes of poverty and underdevelopment are ignored and invalidated (Roberts and Hite, 2012: 8). Modernization supporters saw the cultural, institutional, and organizational features of poorer countries as roadblocks in their attempts to develop and democratize.

Lastly, a critique was increasingly lodged that the term modernization was only a euphemism of Americanisation. The field was therefore labeled ethnocentric and pro-capitalist, an explicit tool of the American Cold War anti-communist effort. “The utopian impulses of American liberals easily degenerated into endorsing the wholesale destruction of communities and social and political groups as the necessary by-product of “forcing men to be free” in a non-Communist

fashion.” (Gilman, 2003: 11). In his book *Development Theory: Deconstructions/Reconstructions* Nederveen Pieterse stresses the importance of paying attention to the “ideological role of development theory” (2001: 3) and of asking whose interests it serves. He reproaches development theory for Eurocentrism and links it with Western hegemony (2001: 8) and criticizes developmentalism as “intimately intertwined with Western history and culture” (2001: 32) as being “truth from the point of view of the centre of power” as well as “the theorization (or rather, ideologization) of its own path of development” (2001: 18) and as being a “form of symbolic violence” (2001: 71). According to Pieterse, modernization theories of development were a legitimization of US hegemony and even critical development theories had been reproducing developmentalism and economism (2001: 23, 25). Development was representing a Western economic model and the project of development was reminiscent of missionaries and colonialism.

Modernization theorists saw their project as the Enlightenment writ large: a welfare state based on progressive income taxation, democratic accountability, social leveling and integration as a solution to a social conflict, technological fixes and industrial prowess. Modernization theory represented a project of “total history”, one that sought to “reconstitute the overall form of civilisation, the principle – material or spiritual – of a society, the significance common to all the phenomena of a period, the law that accounts for their cohesion – what is called metaphorically the ‘face’ of a period.” (Gilman, 2003: 8). Interestingly, on the one hand, the language and practice of modernization expressed a confidence that the US *should* be a universal model for the world and a sense that the US had a duty to promote this model. However, on the other hand, modernization arose at a moment when Americans felt both unsure about how to define themselves, and challenged by geopolitical ideological competitors (Gilman, 2003: 4). This section is concluded by noting that “Complementing modernisation theory’s elitism of technical expertise was its anti-populism resolve.” (Gilman, 2003: 8). Proponents of modernization theory identified progress with the imposition of elite economic, social and cultural norms onto the masses and saw themselves charged with the responsibility of training with what Ithiel de Sola Pool called the “mandarins of the future”, whose ethic responsibility put them beyond the questioning of the “reasonable strata” of the public (Gilman, 2003: 8).

## Conclusion

Modernisation Theory represented the occultation of the development symbolic. A regime and system that was born from structural rupture and indeterminacy and owing to the reflexive nature of signifier and signified managed to build a new hegemony atop a ruptured one. GDP was the first signifier to advance a trajectory towards a *homo economicus* technocratic society, one that privileges infrastructure, institutions and policies over the very subject that enables ideology itself (Object qua Subject). GDP opened a way for the advancement of a global society to count development as a new modernity. A modernity that would stealthily encompass political, legal and social aspects into its energised state of being, and in doing so present itself as a unified holistic society embraced by the pinnacle of the Imaginary and determined by the economic. In doing so, development as the new hegemony drew on language and disenfranchised colonial linguistics and substituted it with economic-oriented ones. During this occurrence the positions of the subjects in the Colonial Symbolic was retained but the essence and core of the regime remained the same, that is, the positivised white coloniser is replaced with capitalistic developed First World country and negativized black coloniser is replaced with agrarian undeveloped Third World.

The antagonisms, and its concomitant mobile boundaries are a necessary requirement for the longevity of the regime. However, what occurs under the Development Symbolic is a continuation of the colonial logic and colonial antagonisms propounded by economic one's that only serve the entrench and strengthen the divisive boundaries between subjects. A play at this logic was made by the Western World via a charting of economic development that promised economic success. The capitalist One can only retain its position viz that which it is not. The One will always ensure that the Other forms a major part of his overall identification because without knowing what the Other is the One is unable to define itself and this constitutive outside will always form part of itself. The *sui generis* and contingent nature of the regime, the agency of the subject and the ideological matrix in which subjects operate in all differ, and this was unaccounted for in the propagation of Modernisation Theory. While Modernisation Theory adopted a Blank Slate Approach and prioritised institutions and programmes over individuals (Objects qua Subject), the subjects and the diverse historical regimes which they belonged to held precedent. The Object qua Subject cannot overdetermine a hegemony, only form part of it. In the failure of Modernisation

Theory and its programmes, the asymmetric nature of the Development Symbolic was revealed. This skewed dialectical relation which will now be critically analysed, came to be known as Dependency Theory.

The Development Symbolic differs from the Colonial Symbolic in that under the former, a Symbolic is introduced that buffers the co-constitutionality of relations via the means of production. Under the latter, the absence of the Symbolic plunged the black colonised subject into the destitution of the Real and offered the white coloniser the plenitude of the Imaginary. Under the Development Symbolic and the introduction of capitalism and democracy, the Symbolic buffers the relation between the capitalist One and working class Other. This is welcomed by the black colonised subject for it finally affords the subject to have some chance at a concrete form of identity, at the same time, it also entangles the black colonised subject further into a position of dependency, this time, one that he is unaware of. This is crucial in understanding the interpellation of the black colonised subject in South Africa today.

## **Chapter 5: Dependency Theory and the Subject**

The Althusserian subject position qua Laclauian subject, is a subject with marginal agency and possesses the inability to change the axes of master signifiers and dominant ideologies that contribute to its ideological matrix and ultimately its interpellation. But what do Althusser and Dependency theory have in common? Both, inadvertently, view the subject as an effect of the structure, a subject with limited agency, unable to evolve and transform and efface its conditions, but a subject stuck and tied in the structure imposed upon it. Dependency theory's treatment of the subject is akin to the way Althusser saw the subject, that is, as an effect of the structure, and as an effect of interpellation. Dependency theorists view the subject in the same light – a victim of the structures of colonialism and capitalism. Due to the immobility that Dependency Theory casts on the subject, the very overdetermination that defines the differential colonial relation is undermined. The subject loses the features of contingency, indeterminacy and agency and would be unable to produce social objectivity. The beliefs, values and demands from which the subject cannot dissociate itself provides the co-ordinates for its possible future identities (Hudson, 2006: 307). If Dependency Theory's treatment of the subject is an effect of the structure, why is it necessary to analyse and what does it contribute to the interpellation of the black South African subject?

Dependency Theory's principal premise is that First World countries have created political and economic conditions of dependency on Third World nations thereby limiting its agency and development. The maintenance of the positions of First and Third world are enabled by the colonialist structure adopting capitalism as its principal mode of functionality due to the indeterminacy caused by the potential failing of the colonial structure altogether. What emerges is a synthesis of colonialism and capitalism that has deep and far -reaching consequences for and on the subject, and in this instance the black South African subject. Understanding Dependency Theory as an anchored attenuated signifier is critical to the black South African subject for the following reasons:

Dependency Theory firstly, draws attention to the interconnection between the colonial and capitalist system. Previously colonising and colonised countries transmutate into First and Third

World countries respectively. Secondly, in the same way that the colonised acted as a ballast and anchor of identification for the coloniser, similarly, under the newly defined antagonistic boundaries in the global narrative, the Third World nations are defined and kept in a position of subordination to maintain the strictures imposed by the Colonial Symbolic but being determined in a capitalist form. Understanding the concatenation of the capitalism, colonialism and antagonistic boundaries is critical in understanding the black subject under apartheid and post-apartheid conditions. Third, Dependency Theory, via Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems Theory predicates that society is determined in the last instance by the economic, and in this case the economic is capitalism. The outcome of society being overdetermined by the capitalist system is a subordination of social and political signifiers to the economic. Fourth, Dependency Theory factors in history in the articulation and subjectivisation of the subject. This is viz-a-viz Modernisation Theory's Blank Slate Approach. Accounting for the impact of history allows for the recognition that dependency is not an epiphenomenon but a structural creation, and that capitalism is the mode of economic that defines the principal antagonism.

Class antagonism combined with the Colonial Symbolic articulate very differently in South Africa and thereby interpellate the subject according to an idiosyncratic ideological matrix. The simultaneous existence of the coloniser and colonised, now the capitalist class and working, produce Colonialism of a Special Type. Whereas in countries that were colonised, the coloniser was withdrawn from the colonising country during independence, however in South Africa this did not occur. What occurred was the side-by-side existence of the coloniser and colonised during and 'post colonial independence' such that South Africa came to be define as a Colonialism of a Special Type. This idiosyncratic ideological matrix produces an index of varying black subjectivisations (this will be explored in chapters 6 – 9). The ramifications of the synthesis of racialised colonialism and capitalism on the South African subject is that now not only does the black colonized subject have to emancipate himself from the colonial structure but also from class antagonisms. The form of emancipation is articulated via the drawing up of the National Democratic Revolution that addresses classist, racial and political antagonisms that define the black subject in a negativized manner. This conclusion is reached and enabled by the study of Dependency Theory.

Accordingly, in what follows, the constitutive elements of Dependency Theory are described as well as the infrastructural components of the colonial/capitalist system.

### **5.1 Defining Dependency Theory**

Like all dominant signifiers, Dependency Theory had its genesis several decades prior to its hegemonic reign in the 1960s. Dependency Theory was the site of debate among liberal reformers (Raul Prebisch), Marxists (Andre Gunder Frank), and World Systems theorists (Immanuel Wallerstein) but its ideas fully crystallized into a systematic form during the 1940's when Prebisch was appointed the first director of the newly established United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (UN ECLA). Recognizing that economic growth in the advanced industrialized countries did not necessarily lead to growth in the poorer countries, Prebisch and his colleagues suggested that the rich countries have a permanent advantage over the less developed countries.

Dependency explores the interdependence between the rich and powerful nations, and the poor low-income nations and offers an explanation of why some nations remain poor even after they have embraced the values of modern societies. Dependency theory suggests that economic development is determined by external, political, social as well as economic influences on a country's development policies. These ideas were expressed in Dependency Theory's definitions: Osvaldo Sunkel (1969:23) defined Dependency Theory, "As an explanation of the economic development of a state in terms of the external influences - political, economic, and cultural - on national development policies." and Theotonio Dos Santos emphasizes the historical dimension of dependency relationships in his definition: "An historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favors some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economics...a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected." (1971: 226).

Held in opposition to the Ricardian-inspired claims that international specialization catered to the benefit of Third World countries through the exportation of primary goods, Prebisch held that this international division of labour was at the root of the developmental problems of the Third World (Frank, 1967; Preston, 1997). Prebisch argued that the origins and continuation of global poverty cannot be understood without reference to the international economic system - the international marketplace was presented as being uniform and fair whereas in fact the global economic system was divided into the powerful and the weak, that is, into the developed – core/metropolis state and undeveloped – peripheral/satellite states. Dependency theorists claim that this state of existence, and the motive force behind dependency is due to international capitalism. As enunciated by Frank, “...historical research demonstrates that contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries. Furthermore, these relations are an essential part of the capitalist system on a world scale as a whole.” (1972: 3).

There is an asymmetrical relationship between the core and peripheral countries. Peripheral countries become parasitic to the core countries for the overall maintenance of their economies. Third World countries’ identities become defined by their relation to First World countries. Due to the nature of this relation, political and economic events in the First World have a huge impact on the politics and economics of Third World countries, but Third World political and economic events usually have little impact on the First World. Furthermore, another outcome of this relation is that little interest and effort becomes vested in creating healthier ties and interactions with associated peripheral countries. For a majority of Third world countries this has remained true. However, in the 1980s we have witnessed several Asian countries defying the odds and establishing themselves as semi and fully developed First World countries. One of the reasons attributed to this change is the network created by these countries itself.

Another consequence of this asymmetrical relation is the dominant hold that core countries have developed over peripheral countries. This concern is not contained to economic development alone but has cast its net to the political, social, cultural and legal spheres. Owing to their dominance,

First World countries have the power, which they use with a heavy hand, to ensure that their hegemony is maintained.

## **5.2 The International Division of Labour**

In presenting an understanding of the International Division of Labour (IDL), Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems Theory will be principally drawn upon. Immanuel Wallerstein. WST is to a large extent an expansion of Dependency Theory (Pearson and Payaslian, 1999) and Wallerstein's conception of the IDL is influenced by both capitalism and colonialism viz-a-viz earlier notions of the IDL the focused principally on the effect of colonialism. In Wallerstein's view, "The political reality of the world economy is class conflict in different forms: open class awareness confronting the race-state awareness or domestic classes confronting multinational classes." (He, 1999: 199). "World systems theory attempted a comprehensive analysis of the development process not only from a historical perspective, but also through systematic analyses of the operation of capitalism and the global economic system." (Roberts and Hite, 2012: 11). For Wallerstein and Marxist supporters, the dominance of capitalism intercepts all other relations and accordingly all other relations become determined by capitalism. Wallerstein, in line with classic Marxist theory recognizes the over-arching nature of the capitalistic structure, but within the capitalism structure, Wallerstein argues that other signifiers and factors are important in constituting the identity of a subject - family, racism, sex, geo-culture.

The importance of the acceptance of history in interpellating subjects, the understanding that dependency is not an epiphenomenon but a structural creation, and that capitalism is the mode of economic that defines the principal antagonism is critically important to understanding how the subject is impacted.

In this section two composite theories of WST, namely, World Economic Systems and World Political Systems will be critically analysed. Thereafter the relation between capitalism and colonialism will be explored and the conclusion reached is that the International Division of

Labour is a globalized form of colonization cloaked and propelled by an emphasis on development  
- Colonialism survives through capitalism.

### **5.2.1 World Economic System**

Wallerstein analyzed the world-system and world economic system in the first three volumes of *The Modern World-system*. In his view, the world-system is a social system which has its scope, structure, member groups, rational rules and cohesion. The vitality of the world system consists of various conflicts. The world economic system has the following features.

First, the world system has a single world economic foundation - It is an entity containing an extensive division of labour within national and international platforms. The emergence and role of classes and status groups are elements of the world-system as the international division of labour covers functional tasks at all levels. Second, the division of labour divides the world into three zones, that is - core areas, semi-periphery areas, and periphery areas. Core areas are economically developed; periphery areas are economically underdeveloped; and semi-periphery areas are midway between the core and periphery. Third, the global expansion of capitalism involves the peripheral areas into the world economic system and puts them in a peripheral position. The unequal exchange between the core and periphery guarantees capitalists development and capital accumulation.

Fourth, the development of capitalism experiences a long-term cycle of stagnation and expansion. In the expansionist period, economic growth expands from the core to the periphery whilst in the stagnation period the interest of periphery areas is undermined altogether. Fifth, as national economic status changes so do the geographical distribution of the status. The core and periphery status are not fixed, periphery areas may become core areas and vice versa. However, in the stagnation period semi-periphery areas undergo the greatest changes in their status. Sixth, the development of the world economic system tends to widen the economic and social gaps between different areas, showing the trend of polarization famously marked by capitalism.

## 5.2.2 World Political Systems

Wallerstein believes that there are multiple political systems in the world economy which guarantees the prosperity of capitalism in the long run. The world political systems mainly take on the following features:

First, modern states and the state system are the unique outcomes of a capitalist economy. The form, strength and geography of states are constantly changing and expanding. Present within national and international boundaries is a concurrent multiple state system. Second, the evolution of state systems include two processes, namely, the process of becoming core countries and the process of becoming periphery countries. During the former process, core areas use state apparatus to monopolize commodities and seek maximum profits in the world economy and finally entrench their hegemonic status. Periphery areas end up utilizing less advanced technology and unequal commodities. Third, the development of state systems is cyclical or what has come to be known as hegemony cycle. The capitalist world-system as experienced three hegemony cycles and produced three hegemony countries including the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, the UK in the nineteenth century, and the USA in the twentieth century.

Hegemony in the state systems is a mechanism which has three material bases: the hegemony mechanism is in the competition among major countries one country supremely imposes its political, economic, military, diplomatic and cultural principles and will on the other state system. The material base of hegemony is an outcome of efficient industrial and agricultural production, commerce and finance. Notably, its rise and fall is closely related to the efficiency of the three economic sectors. Fourth, hegemonic countries gain advantage first in the industrial and agricultural sector, then in international trade, and at last in the financial sector. Fifth, state systems are temporarily stable during the rule of hegemonic countries. Like the economic pursuit of maximum profits, the political pursuit of hegemony is also the driving force behind the development of the capitalist world-system. Sixth, the pursuit of global dominance entails the enforcement of all ideological and state apparatus to the full utilization of a countries dominance with a 'no holds barred' policy. Hegemonic countries can use their state apparatus to seek

maximum profits for their own monopolistic capitalist enterprise in the world market so as to facilitate their political, cultural, social and ideological hegemony.

Wallerstein via the World Economic and World Political System added a more economic approach to Dependency Theory. Emerging from a Marxist tradition, he predicates that society is determined in the last instance by the economic, and in this case the economic is capitalism. The result of the determination of capitalism as the catalyst and driving force in the articulation of identities results in Wallerstein negating social and political factors/signifiers as forms of change. While on the one hand Wallerstein was criticized for imposing a highly economic aspect to WST, he, important to this project, on the other hand, recognized the importance of colonialism as an historical archetype in precipitating the propulsion and dominance of the antagonisms created by capitalism. This will be discussed next.

### **5.2.3 Colonialism and Capitalism**

Owing to the rising of countries fighting for colonial independence, an antagonism and later dislocation occurred in the structure. Due to this dislocation newly independent countries needed to adopt a new socio-economic system. This caused an ideological battle between America and Russia with the former driving a capitalist-democratic program viz-a-viz the latter's socialism/communism. The ideological war took a geo-political turn with both countries endeavouring to expand into as many countries as possible. The concatenation of these events threatened the colonial super-structure.

At this point, the colonial structure reached a crossroads. The colonial structure can be viewed in two ways – the first lens that is that the colonial structure is a mega-structure that has the ability to imprison signifiers due to vastness of its extent. In the process the structure endures but the antagonisms and signifiers are imprisoned and continue to interpellate the subject in the same manner but with a different set of ideological tools, signifiers and hegemonies. Another perspective is that the colonial relation, in its attempt to endure, invested too heavily in a variety of signifiers alternate to its ideology that it became different of itself and lost itself to development. As such,

development de-throned the colonial megastructure and instituted itself as a mega-hegemony with a combination of economic, social and political signifiers with a more technocratic, *homo economicus* hand. Of these two hypotheses, the former approach is adopted, that is, the colonial mega-structure is very much alive and in existence, cloaking itself via presenting other signifiers as the structure itself. It substitutes other aspects for its own presence (in this case capitalism) and in doing so ensures its perpetuation.

The occurrence of these multiplicitious events forced the colonial structure into either, eradication altogether, or to take a quantum leap in its mode of operationality and adopt new antagonisms that would enable the longevity of the structure. In this incidence, capitalism, at that time, was the economic model that the Western world was operating within, and due to the economic base (among the tripartite base that society is predicated upon – see chapter 1) being the principal driver of radical change in the subjectivisation of the subject, the capitalist system, and its antagonism between capitalist and working class became pre-eminent amongst all signifiers and antagonisms. Capitalism, in this perspective is an economic tool used by the colonial mega-structure to ensure its longevity. How does this impact the subject?

The colonial relation is no longer as crass, the introduction of capitalism entails the capitalist class and working class viewing themselves qua means of production. The means of production, is capitalism's metonymic causality in maintaining itself and together with structural causality produce the ideological effect. For the black colonized subject, capitalism creates a Symbolic, a strongly desired relief from the destitution and ontological deficit of the Real. The Symbolic hides the co-constitutionality of relations and hides the very structure of coloniality itself. The effect of this on the subject is that, now, not only does the black colonized subject have to emancipate himself from the colonial structure but he additionally has to disentangle himself from the headlock that capitalism has put him in. For the black South African subject, he is existing in a global colonial structure, affected by race and now, affected even more by the antagonistic relations created by capitalism. This, in a way, puts the black colonized subject in a straight-jacket preventing him from agency. In the South African instance, the creation of the National Democratic Revolution was due to the recognition of colonialism and capitalism heavily

influencing the ideological options available to the subject to live a life emancipated from the underprivileges of its past but nonetheless heavily extends itself into the present. This will be explored in later chapters.

Whilst modernisation theorists on the one hand sought to witness growth and economic development from the 1950s as the starting point, on the other hand dependency theorists give due attention to the influence and effect of a countries historicity in its economic development. By blatantly ignoring history, First World countries are blatantly ignoring the role that they played and continue to play in a countries' underdevelopment and continued efforts at keeping countries in that position. The IDL is thus a globalized form of colonization cloaked and propelled by an emphasis on development and structured by capitalism.

### **5.3 Enclaves of Modernity**

Export of raw materials and sale of cheap labour often led to “enclaves of modernity” (Roberts and Hite, 2012: 8) in a sea of backwardness. The global international economic order became replicated within each Third World nation-state itself. The nation's centers of economic, political, cultural and military power are found in the national core, and the core's power and wealth grows more rapidly than that of the interior as a result of contacts and interactions between the two areas. The urban sector becomes increasingly powerful, while the rural sector becomes increasingly weaker. The core profits at the expense of the periphery as a result of the movement of products and resources. The passage of time does not bring a growing equality within the country, but rather brings about an increasing gap between life in the capital and that in the countryside. So long as capitalism remains the dominant world economic system there will be no change to the global (and thereby national) power status quo. Instead of, as posited by modernization theory, “catching-up with First World countries”, Third World countries will fall further behind and there will be a greater extrapolation of resources and utilities.

But dependency theorists do not place economic success on external factors alone. They also take into account the influence of local elites in the development process: In the export of raw materials, the internal market became unimportant for producers: the tiny class of wealthy people desired products not produced locally; the masses were too poor to buy more than the very bare necessities. Samir Amin, Alain de Janvry, and Carlos Garramon called these “disarticulated” economies because there was no connection between local producers and consumers, and because there often were no “multiplier” effects created by supplying the export enclaves with locally produced component parts (Roberts and Hite, 2012: 9). Another consequence of this “disarticulated” economy is that it results in a monopolisation of the market creating a bottle-neck effect.

Individuals or companies that have a financial upper-hand begin exploiting the people and the country for their own personal benefit and power. Their national power and prominence derive from their international contacts. It is they (the military, government officials, and commercial and financial leaders) who act as links between the Third World country and the world political and economic system. They direct the country’s contacts with the world, and they direct those contacts in such a way that the world core benefits more than their own country, although they themselves clearly benefit at a personal level. These national leaders may actually have more in common with their counterparts in London or New York than they do with interior citizens of their own country. Local elites therefore become agents of dependency and underdevelopment because the profit from paving the way for transnational corporations, maintaining unfavorable trade and banking arrangements (Roberts and Hite, 2012). “Dependency theorists mainly saw foreign groups “feasting” at the table of poorer nations, but elites from those very poorer countries, they theorized, were the ones who “set the table.” (Roberts and Hite, 2012: 10). This network of individuals contribute and exacerbate the skewed international division of labour, wealth and overall treatment of people.

Critically important is that what emerges, and this did not appear in Modernisation Theory, is a trait of humanistic rhetoric. While Dependency theorists do to a large degree decree the subject as an effect of the structure, there is also a recognition, that when given the opportunity, the access

to power and wealth, the subjects humanism and desires come to the fore. The role of humanism in overdetermining the structure will be analysed in chapter 9.

#### **5.4 Criticisms of Dependency Theory**

Both Modernisation and Dependency Theory made the mistake of treating Late Developing Countries (LDC's) as homogeneous, that is, possessing the same characteristics. Like Modernization Theory, Dependency Theory fails to take into account and understand the existence of diverse value systems and institutions that tend to be culture-specific. For example, Ethiopia and Somalia are neighbouring LDCs but their cultures significantly differ from one another thereby requiring different development programmes. Sociologists therefore argue that each LDC needs to be analysed and understood independently. Second, both theories also make the mistake of treating capitalist societies as homogeneous and consequently fail to acknowledge the different forms of capitalism and cultural reactions to it. For example, American capitalism (formerly based upon Fordism) tends to have a different character to Japanese capitalism (which tends to be more paternalistic). Third, both theories are criticized for being over-deterministic in that they make little attempt to explore the interpretations of people in the LDCs. They fail to acknowledge that LDC people might rationally choose to take a capitalist path, might rationally choose to follow their own culture or may rationally choose to combine elements of capitalism and their own cultures – as in Japan.

Fourth, Foster-Carter accuses both theories of presenting the relationship between LDCs and the West in terms of conflict or them-versus-us. For example, Modernisation theory sees LDCs as 'backward' societies that 'need' help to develop, whilst dependency theory sees 'us' as exploiting 'them' for cheap labour and raw materials. Foster-Carter argues that this disguises the similarities that exist between LDCs and the West and compounds differences and lack of unification and cohesion. Fifth, orthodox Marxists assert that World-Systems theorists have abandoned or insufficiently stressed class analysis, and thereby eliminated the presumption of an inevitable progression of historical stages of development. In addition, they protest against the importance of non-wage labor in capital accumulation, the recognition of modes of social grouping other than

class (race, gender, ethnicity) as crucial explanatory variables, the failure to distinguish adequately between the sphere of production and the sphere of circulation.

### **5.5 Dependency Theory qua Modernisation Theory**

While Dependency Theory takes the history and varying forms of subjectivisations of a country into account, it also *does not* recognize/acknowledge the contingent and freedom that the subject has. Dependency theorists treat the subject in an essentialistic manner akin to Althusser subject-position. However while focusing on the vicissitudes and omni and equi capricious nature of the structure they do not take into account the contingent nature of the subject. Whereas under Modernisation theory the subject superseded the object, under Dependency Theory, the object supersedes and overpowers the freedom / play de jure of the subject. The contingent nature of the subject is not declared in any way. Dependency Theory contributes to the acknowledging of a country's history and its starting point in the drive to economic success/maturity, it falls prey to the same criticism of Modernization Theory – that is, it does not accord the subject a role to play in the articulation of its own future.

Under Modernisation Theory the starting point/history of the subject was not taken into account, but subjectivisations/interpellation is not false consciousness – they have a concrete materiality (Althusser's second thesis on ideology) – they have a material effect and the subject carries with them the ideology of the past into the present and future. In addition to the Blank Slate Approach, there was the paradoxical notion of the subject: On the one hand, modernisation theorists posited a subject responsible and in control of its own destiny – an active agent of change – a subject that modernisation theorists assumed would follow and voluntarily adopt. The universal subject comes to be understood as a rational, voluntaristic, presupposed humanism. On the other hand, there was a strong anti-humanist rhetoric at play, meaning, the role of institutions/infrastructure and policies held greater precedence than the implementers of these programs. Modernisation Theory hypothesized the subject as an architect and driver of its own future. The structuration of the structure was discounted, but the efforts applied to attain modernization was enunciated. However, at the same time, when the process of modernisation did not occur as expected, modernisation

theorists blamed the subject for their doing, or lack thereof. Under Dependency Theory the opposite occurs.

Unlike Modernisation theorists who negated the history of the subject, and thereby did not acknowledge the ideological matrix of the subject, Dependency theory does the opposite. In the same way that the structure contains traces and residue of its past structurations and ideologies, the subjects to contain constitutive attachments and cannot be completely dissociated from the past from which his identity emerges and is being informed by.

What both Modernization Theory and Dependency Theory do is treat the subject as an effect of the structure and the ideological infrastructure governing it. Neither view the subject as a subject. Modernisation Theory's creation of economic development programmes, assumed a subject, assumed an empty nebula, a subject of lack, waiting for fulfilment, that it generously and benevolently accorded, and a subject that would procedurally accept and implement the policies and ideological infrastructure. However, in the failure of structural adjustment programmes, it came to the fore, especially to the white colonizer, that the First World One was in fact dealing with a subject of humanism. In as much as the white colonizer tries to eliminate traces of humanism of the black colonized, the capitalist relations accords the black colonised some identity and this identity becomes a stepping board for the black colonized to grasp, to catch onto identitarian substance and add to itself, as its corporeal schema is blank and translucent to self.

Modernisation Theory, and the First World One/white colonizer suffers from an excess of symbolization. The colonial relation is an asymmetric, a skewed structure and system because of the absence of the Symbolic. The Symbolic creates a mentally healthy space for the antagonistic agents occupying the Relation, but the Logic of the Colonial Colony is one of extremity. Existing in the superhard space of the Imaginary resulted in an excess of symbolization for the white colonizer, and when confronted and when forced to become accustomed to a structure with a Symbolic, a Symbolic that capitalism is dependent upon for its very survival, the white colonizer resists this lack of excess, it resists the misrecognition effect and reacts by imposing itself on the black colonized subject. The excess of symbolization results in the white colonizer wanting to

reproduce the relations of the colonial symbolic but being unable to, does it best to push the black colonized into an anti-humanist space, as an object, as ballast to support its superiorised self.

Under Dependency Theory the subject is being treated as an effect of the system. While Modernisation Theory denies humanism of the subject, Dependency Theory denies agency and freedom of the subject. This perspective reduces Dependency Theory's perspective to one of an essentialised system that is limited, and restricted in its ability to radically change, evolve and transform. Both view the subject as an object of structures. Both deny humanism and agency in different degrees and through different routes.

## **Conclusion**

In transitioning into the next and final phase of this dissertation, which is analyzing the impact of structuralism, colonialism and the models of development on the black colonized subject concretely, it was important to highlight the treatment and understanding of the subject under development. From development, the outcomes of the condensation of economic, political, social and legal as well as the intersecting of capitalist signifier into the Colonial Symbolic was understood. The capitalist differential logic, meaning, the capitalist's class and working classes relations to the means of production created a Symbolic in the colonial Cartesian Cogito. This worked to dissolve the power relations between the colonizer and colonized, and by gaining some identity as a proletariat, as a working class, the negativised black colonized subject in South Africa was/is able to leverage this and create an opening, one that would turn out to convert myths to imaginaries to frontiers and create enough of an antagonistic boundary in South Africa that would challenge and overthrow the apartheid regime altogether. At the time, however, the introduction of a new form of antagonism creates another hurdle on the path for the black colonised subject fighting for an identity of itself. Not only does he have to fight against the Colonial Relation but now the class relation as well. What occurs in the South African instance is that the white coloniser comes to assume the position of the capitalist class and the black colonised that of the working class. While there have been economic transformation programs in South Africa, they have not

infiltrated to the masses, and thereby class relations are not severely intercepted by racial colonial identities.

In what follows is an analysis of how the liberal democratic Modernisation Theory, Marxist-informed Dependency Theory, and the treatment of the subject within development, affects colonisation, capitalism and democracy in South Africa, and most importantly, how when these structures inform each other, and integrate into a greater overarching ideology, how it impacts the subjectivisation of the subject.

## **Chapter 6: Colonialism and Capitalism in South Africa: Pre-apartheid and Apartheid**

The early twentieth century witnessed a threat to the Colonial Relation, not by a surge of energy by the colonised, but by the Afrikaner beginning to slide to the position of lack. This was a result of an increase in industrialisation, urbanisation and proletarianisation owing to the discovery of gold and diamonds and the advent of capitalism as the dominant mode of production (Norval, 1996). The transition had deep changing ramifications which untowardly led to a structural dislocation in the early 1930s within the coloniser Afrikaner community. The Afrikaner began sliding towards the position of the black colonised, but the Colonial Relation does not allow this and in response to the changing circumstances, the Afrikaner retreated to that which he knows best – his *volk* roots. It is here that he is the master, full of plenitude, buffered from the Real, the place he knows best, and in doing so the Afrikaner does all within his power to ensure his superiority and comfort is maintained even if it means of pushing the black colonised into deeper destitution although this never goes so far as to physically destroy the colonised. It needs to be borne in mind that the coloniser needs the colonised as a “ballast” (Torres, 2007) for his superiority. Thus colonialism does not strictly speaking involve genocide or the transformation of the other to the same (that is the colonised into coloniser) but the establishment and reproduction of the colonial relation. This response showcases the acute dimensions of colonialism and pre-apartheid logics - addressing intra-white relations via the establishment of a homogeneous African population.

In what follows, this dissertation traces the pressure exerted on the colonial relation with the advent of capitalism in South Africa. The precise nature of the tension of the colonial relation and the dislocations it produced is realised via the analyses of Aletta Norval, Jacob Torfing and David Howarth. Furthermore adumbrated is the way the colonial relation was affected and how it changed its form as a result.

### **6.1 Pre-apartheid (late 1800s-1948)**

Upon the discovery of precious metal in South Africa, British, American, German and Dutch investors flocked to South Africa to set up and benefit from the mining industry. To meet the demands of the investors thousands of Africans were drawn from the Reserves to cater to the needs as well as to fill the labour gap created by the upsurge in secondary industry. These new demands for labour led to massive proletarianisation and urbanization of Africans and Afrikaners alike. For the latter, urbanization came to mean much more than a relocation to the city, it entailed a loss of the *volkseie*, a loss of one's own religion, spiritual, moral and social values, and even one's own language (Norval, 1996: 20). A set of equivalences were drawn between "The city, Englishness, amorality, relativism, artificiality and atheism, while the platteland (countryside) was associated with a close communion with nature, God, a rounded humanity, simplicity and resoluteness characteristic of the Afrikaner life." (Norval, 1996: 20).

Whilst the Afrikaners accepted modernity and sought to create a positivised image of Afrikaner identity at the same time that industries grew, Africans began occupying semi-skilled positions and posts previously reserved for whites only. The labour process became a site of major antagonism as newly urbanised whites lacked specific work experience and had difficulty working with blacks (Norval, 1996: 15). These circumstances circumvented the existing lines of inclusion and exclusion. According to the colonial relation, there is an incommensurable gap between the signifier black and the signifier white. The occupation of top-spot by one requires the nothingness of the other and the rising positions of Africans and the downward spiral of Afrikaners, challenged and put into question this relationship.

Lefort argues that "Any society, in order to relate to itself, and to exist as a human society, has to forge a representation of its unity." (Lefort, 1986: 204) and the creation of such representations of unity occurs through the drawing of boundaries, political frontiers articulated in discourse. Hence, the question of social division is, from the outset, a question of limits, of the outside. In addition to the changing racial demarcations were a series of disputes between industrial unions which generated acute intra-white struggles (Norval, 1996: 15). These changes resulted in the erasure of the spaces and identitarian logics of the white coloniser and the black colonised.

Segregationists attempted to address intra-white relations by way of a discourse that called for white unity and in establishing a solid frontier where the identity of Africans would also be kept in place and colonial interpellation could resume its normal functioning. In the end this was to be achieved by the fostering of new modes of identification brought into being by the Afrikaner Nationalist movement. This supplemented South Africanism with a novel, narrower conception of Afrikanerdom and through this supplement, intra-white distinctions would be subverted, and a homogenous white capitalist coloniser signifier would define South African discourse. "It is crucial in this respect (to note) that the homogeneity of 'the other', the Native, could only be produced by assuming an equally unified white identity opposing it." (Norval, 1996: 34).

Although a frontier still existed between white coloniser and black colonised, on the side of the coloniser, economic changes caused a deep split between the English and Afrikaner coloniser and Afrikaner subjectivity faced a series of difficulties in re-finding its colonial equilibrium.

*"To understand segregation, as a principle of reading which articulates elements in an ideological unity, one has to take account not only of the particularity and diversity of strands of discourses informing that unity, but also of the unity that is produced as a result of the condensation of those diverse and separate strands.... To locate this source of unity, it is important to recognise that all the constituent discourses of segregation, however different in the minutiae of their analyses, were in the agreement on the fundamental need to exclude the black South African population from the centres of political power, and thus depended on the establishment of a relatively clear-cut political frontier between white and black. The articulated unity thus did not arise from a natural, common subject-matter, either in the form of a given 'white' subjectivity or in the form of an existing black identity. Rather, as Dubow remarks in a different context, segregation initially emerged as a defensive strategy developed by English-speaking liberals to consolidate white supremacy. This could only be done by excluding 'the Native' as other." (Norval, 1996: 29).*

And as Norval argues, “The processes through which reality is constructed and dissimulated are always acts of power and will always be resisted and contested.” (Norval, 1996: 3). Despite the white governments attempts at creating a homogenous white identity, economic differentials between the English and Afrikaner were growing. This endeavour was halted by the Great Depression at the start of the 1930’s which (combined with other economic and social events) caused a structural dislocation. “The reading given to these dislocations was intimately related to the perceived failures of segregationist discourse: the inability to resolve the ‘Native question’, and its failure to construct ‘white’ unity.” (Norval, 1996: 4-5).

A dislocated structure does not possess the means of its own rearticulation, it cannot determine its own reconstitution, precisely because it is dislocated (Laclau, 1990a: 50). Rearticulation therefore always requires some intervention able to make new distinctions and establish new connections in the politico-discursive field in question. However, dislocations are not only traumatic occurrences, they also have a positive side, “If”, as Laclau puts it, “on the one hand they threaten identities, on the other, they are the foundation on which new identities are constituted.” (Laclau, 1990: 39; Stavarakakis, 1999: 68; Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 13). In as much as dislocations disrupt identities and discourses they also re-institute and assert a new social subjectivity (Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 13). Dislocation of the dominant power and the vacillation of the structure thus gives space for the subject to think its position within society and furthermore, to fantasize and materialise a society that meets its needs, demands and desires. In the process of subjective withdrawal and fantasy there occurs first disillusionment, and, then, secondly, reillusionment, the process of creating a new hegemonic order, that is, the creation of mythical space(s).

The mythical space creates a chalkboard where ideas and notions of the possible dominant power and functionality of society can be considered. The dislocated structure does not offer space for outrageous demands instead a decision is taken based upon the rudiments and sedimentation of the broken structure, that is, a certain repetitiveness is always present. The specificity of this repetitiveness can be elucidated by firstly the work of Foucault and his theory of discontinuity and secondly Derrida for his theorisation of the notion of iterability.

Thus, to argue that apartheid is synonymous in thought and function with segregation is misleading but, at the same time, certain elements of the previous hegemony are maintained. "...in short, their continuities as much as their discontinuities have to be taken into account, for the same, the repetitive and the uninterrupted are no less problematic than the rupture." (Norval, 1996: 97). Here the logic of fantasy aids in creating a smooth and seamless transition from one hegemony to another. The role of fantasy in this context is not to set up an illusion that provides a subject with a false picture of the world, but to ensure that the radical contingency of social reality remains firmly in the background (Glynos and Howarth 2008a; Howarth, 2009: 322). Put more fully,

*"The logic of fantasy operates by providing a fantasmatic narrative that promises a fullness-to-come once a named or implied obstacle is overcome, and which foretells of disaster if the obstacle proves insurmountable. The first element might be termed the beatific dimension of fantasy and the second the horrific dimension of fantasy, which work hand-in-hand (Stavrakakis 1999, pp. 108–109, 2007). The beatific side, as Žižek (1998, p. 192) puts it, has 'a stabilizing dimension, which is governed by the dream of a state without disturbances, out of reach of human depravity', while the horrific aspect possesses 'a destabilizing dimension', where the Other – a 'Jewish plot' or the lazy/overzealous immigrant – is presented as a threatening or irritating force that must be rooted out or destroyed. Our subjective desires and identifications are thus sustained by the threats posed to our ideals and dreams." (Howarth, 2009: 322).*

In South Africa the passage from fantasmatic to social logics was made possible through the erection of the signifier of 'Afrikanerdom' into a master signifier able to resolve the widest range of demands. The signifier of Afrikanerdom (apartheid) competed with a series of other discourses attempting to suture the dislocated structure of segregationism. The signifier apartheid was elected from those of continued racial segregation and, of non-racialism as posited by blacks for example. As Levi Strauss argues, the bricoleur "Interrogates all the heterogeneous objects of which his treasury is composed to discover what each of them could signify and so to contribute to the definition of a set of which has yet to materialise." (Strauss, 1966: 18). The fact that apartheid won the battle for signification was not according to some hidden influence or pre-determined essence

but “The results of contingent historical, symbolic practices, and not of underlying, a priori interests.” (Norval, 1996: 56).

Under such circumstances, the myth becomes an imaginary surface of inscription capable of accounting not only for the experiences and demands of a particular group, but for all possible demands that may arise (Norval, 1996: 67). The *volk* acted as an empty signifier – a surface of inscription uniting all the positive elements together, and giving them their meaning, a meaning which, nevertheless, only arises out of a fundamental negativity. This mythical horizon is what enables one to account for the unity of the discourse of the intellectuals in a non-reductionist fashion, for it designates a space of inscription marked by its own constitutive impossibility: in other words the *volkseie* is that which is ours and ours alone, inaccessible to the other, and that which is threatened by theirs. In this sense, the *volkseie* points not simply to the terrain in which an overdetermination of elements associated with the *volk* is constituted – the enumeration of the theological, cultural and racial values – but to the ultimate impossibility of the very identity of the community (Norval, 1996: 96). Owing to the fact that it just cannot get away from what it is not – it cannot get away from the fundamental negativity that constitutes it qua relational identity.

The battle for the heart of Afrikanerdom or as Jessop expresses “the strategic selectivity of institutions” (2008: 36) was thus a battle for hegemony, for the occupation of the terrain of moral and intellectual leadership from which sense could be made of economic changes and other contingent events which disrupted sedimented and naturalised forms of identification. It is in that context that dislocation as a theoretical category has to be understood. Apartheid is thus understood as a response to the dislocation caused by the “Upheavals associated *inter alia* with the increasing capitalisation of agriculture, the concomitant rapid rise in rates of urbanisation, and events such as the Second World War – which characterised the South African political landscape during the 1930s and 1940s.” (Norval, 1996: 5). As the evolution of a myth into an imaginary and with it the passing of the baton from one coloniser to another, a crystallisation of the hegemony of the Afrikaner *volk* as a specific modality of the colonial relation in South Africa.

## 6.2 Apartheid

Whilst most theories of apartheid view apartheid in isolation of colonial studies, choosing to focus of the race/class dynamic and criticising theories of continuity, this dissertation argues for an analysis of apartheid through the thesis of internal colonialism, that is, apartheid entrenched colonial political frontiers and operated within an already constructed functioning symbolic overdetermined system. In the context of this system as has been noted already white is value (the value of all that has value) and this is strictly inseparable from the non-value, the subjective deficiency, of black. Apartheid discourse will be examined against this backdrop. This will be undertaken by firstly defining and analysing apartheid discourse, secondly, examining how positivised white coloniser interpellated others and in doing so ignored the blind spot that ended in its demise, thirdly, the surfacing of the signifiers of blackness and non-racialism and their impact on apartheid discourse.

The investigation of apartheid discourse undertaken here seeks to explicate and enunciate the composition and operationality of the manner in which social reality was produced and reproduced, that is, how Afrikaners rationalise their everyday existence (Norval, 1996: 7). The chief concern of the Afrikaner community was the purification and preservation of their culture and identity that had been polluted in the early part of the century and this new articulation was to be achieved through dissociating Afrikaner from English and separating black from white. The transposition of the apartheid discourse onto the *volk* resulted in the “Recasting of political frontiers – a re-ordering between Afrikaners and English-speaking whites” (Norval, 1996: 7-8). Thus, “...initial articulation took place in terms of the division within Afrikanerdom, and how a true Afrikanerdom was produced by delineating true from non-true Afrikaners by reference to a specific Afrikaner principle of ordering which only was brought into being by distinguishing it from other principles of ordering, and it was only later that this logic was spread and extended to other groups. (Norval, 1996: 7). It is important to point out the caveat: what holds for the production of Afrikanerdom also applies to the formation of its others. It should not be taken that the production of others was born from “natural and given, ‘pre-discursive’ identities” (Norval, 1996: 8) but what is politically relevant is the occupying of the category of the Other within precise

historical circumstances (Norval, 1996: 8). Taking the lead from this point, it is of utmost importance to locate apartheid within the mega or overarching structure of colonialism.

### **6.2.1 Apartheid within Colonialism**

Theoretically, the movement from myth to imaginary entails the solidification of lines of inclusion and exclusion, the process in which binaries become distinct and necessary. The phantasy effect maintains these binaries or social logics so that society can perpetuate itself. But, if these binaries are steadily increasing and political frontiers have no time to set in and take root but are constantly planted and replanted, how does this instability and change affect the nature of the system? If undecidability is the logic and essence of a system, what are the ramifications? The logic of apartheid can be understood in this way, that is, although it transformed a myth into an imaginary, it never consolidated the pursuance of identitary logic to the utmost degree. What then are the logics of apartheid? Firstly, apartheid functioned within the logic of colonialism or the colonial megastructure and therefore depended on the colonial relation. Secondly, apartheid understood as a discourse, maintains itself through specific political frontiers and forms of Othering, and thirdly, these political frontiers come with a certain degree of uncertainty and undecidability that ultimately superseded the regime.

Discourse theory addresses, “The way social practices systematically form the identities of subjects and objects by articulating together a series of contingent signifying elements available in a discursive field.” (Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 7). Discourse theory thus not only emphasises the contingency of structures but also focuses on partial fixations of meaning or nodal points that are necessary in creating social identity (Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 7). In this way neither does discourse theory reduce all discontinuity to an essential logic or principle nor does it deny continuity and fixity of meaning (Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 7).

The emergence of the imaginary has been traced above – the reactionary exclusive Afrikaner nationalism to the dislocation of the 1930s and 1940s where rapid urbanisation, eroding of the

Afrikaner community and culture and their subordination to the English imperial culture, social, economic and political hegemony, made a homogenous and continued identification no longer achievable. Disturbed intra-white relations caused a disjuncture and acted as an impetus for the reconstitution of the *volk* (Norval, 1996: 1969-70). In formulating a response, that is, during the articulatory practice the new structure is built upon the sedimentation of the old regime leading the new social formation to be based on the discourse of continuity and discontinuity. Apartheid was clearly continuous insofar as it maintained the colour frontier and was dedicated to upholding the positivised white coloniser and negativised black colonised colonial relation, but novel in that it instituted a new nationalist cultural frontier in its pursuance of the idea of the *volkseie* (Norval, 1996: 5-6).

The prominence of these new frontiers caused a discontinuation with segregationist discourse that had far-reaching consequences for both the apartheid and colonial structures (Norval, 1996: 5-6). The discourse of apartheid was constructed on the burnt bridge between the English and Afrikaner community. The economic base continued to serve the dominant position of both English and Afrikaner and ensured the subordination of the black colonised, but the nodal point of apartheid saw the transference of politico-legal power and ideological hegemony from the United Party (UP) to the Nationalist Party (NP). These bases and relations informed the trajectory and power-hold of apartheid. In this way, through specific and novel practices of Othering (directed at specific Others) and through the establishment of novel political frontiers, the fundamental colonial relation was maintained. Here we see the way continuity and discontinuity characterise hegemonic shifts and the recomposition of the social in which dislocation is central.

### **6.2.2 Logic of Classification as Exclusion**

Classificatory logics are both inherent and imperative to the functioning of any symbolic system. These logics are actualised through two separate but inextricably intertwined moments creating systems of difference where distinct identities can emerge and produce a series of entities that will oppose and combat the difference, creating systems of exclusion. This notion is clearly expressed by Norval who states:

*“The establishment of and changes in political frontiers result from complex processes of interaction of different and opposing discourses; in Gramscian terms, from wars of position. Moreover, then, if any identity is necessarily constructed with reference to another, that other cannot be regarded as merely passive - otherwise our reading could only reproduce the type of silencing of the other for which liberal histories written in the South African context have been criticized. Rather, the constitutive outside - brought into being through the drawing of boundaries - functions as both a condition of possibility and as a condition of impossibility of identity and objectivity. That is to say, the constitutive outside of any order has the capacity to put into question the very identity which is constituted through its externalization.”* (Norval, 1994: 122).

Apartheid discourse worked with this logic. The architecture of the system of difference could only be upheld through the logic of exclusion. The logics of inclusion and exclusion stand in relation and opposition to one another and is characterised by, as mentioned above, “a war of position” where neither logic can gain an upper hand in the final sense. But this is not to say that a dominant position never emerges, but on the contrary, and as illustrated by apartheid, by the end of the 1940s, when the Fagan Commission had accepted the permanent occupation of cities by blacks, a war was declared against integration. In addition to all that apartheid encompassed, it also prioritised the fight against integration. By the time of the initiation of the regime in 1948 the frontiers of colour and integration were inextricably intertwined. “In its articulation of the ‘colour question’, apartheid both continued the frontiers already in existence under segregation and instituted a novel form of social division.” (Norval, 1996: 170). The consolidation of frontiers is imperative for the dominant hegemony to maintain their stance and power. As will be discussed later, the proliferation of opposition logics caused a continuous redefinition of the fundamental frontiers that apartheid was premised on and resulted eventually in its dissolution. Resistance projects were able to assert themselves as apartheid was founded on the logic of undecidability, which meant, in the end, that it could not control its outside.

For a resistance project to succeed it needs to fight for a very different logic from that of apartheid, a logic that will result in not a simple reversal of the regime and also one that will not be reabsorbed

into the already-existing system of functionality, including its system of exclusion and difference. Under apartheid, for the negativised black colonised, this endeavour became doubly difficult as the negativised black colonised was subordinated twice over, objectively and subjectively. Remember that under colonial conditions as Fanon stresses the black subject is prevented from forming a sense of self as coherent unity out of “residual sensations and perceptions primarily of a tactile, vestibular kinesthetic and visual character.” (Fanon, 1952: 111). The normal pattern of ego formation is barred to the colonised subject – “In the white world the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema.” (Fanon, 1963: 109). The colonised is forced to form a sense of self from the elements provided by the coloniser which impose on the colonised a very specific body, one sprawled out, distorted – a body that is always *de trop* because by definition it does not fit in. To be black, as Gordon says is, “To be too black since to be just right is not to be black at all.” (Gordon, date unknown, 22).

The discourse of apartheid not only reflected pre-discursive experiences (colonial relations, colour frontiers, economic frontiers) but also showed its contingent nature (Norval, 1996: 3). The ideology of the NP was informed by the Calvinist and culturist intellectuals who encouraged the notion of sovereignty of areas, the notion of nationhood and the colour policy. As De Wet Nel argued, Apartheid was not simply an ideological facade; but was a philosophy, a deeply held belief system which was rooted in three hundred years of South African history (cited in Norval, 1996: 160). As discussed earlier an ideology asserts itself and interpellates subjects through legal tactics, mass media, the church and so forth.

In an extremely condensed and redolent phrase, Laclau (1993: 546) contended that power can be grasped as “the trace of contingency within the structure”. Although perplexing and open to a plethora of interpretations, here it will be taken to mean that all social practices are the resultant of political decisions and although acts of power are sometimes windswept and forgotten they leave institutions, norms and practices and policies open to contestation and deliberation. When interpenetrated with the logics of politics and fantasy they open a path for understanding the trace of contingency that critically aids in explaining regimes and the symbolic relations that determined them. This section seeks to analyse the state of the apartheid regime and how the positivised white

coloniser handled the overdetermination of economic and social issues as well as the negativised black colonised claims at having-a-go at signification through the signifiers of blackness developed by Black Consciousness and non-racialism. Through analytically charting the apartheid hegemony, the interpenetration of social, political and fantasmatic logics, the loopholes that allowed for the occupation of a new power are located, and as Foucault suggested, “we could then speak of ‘an agonism – of a relationship which is at the same time reciprocal incitation and struggle; less of a face to face confrontation which paralyzes both sides than a permanent provocation’.” (1982: 222).

Howarth (2009: 321) contends there are two forms of hegemony that reinforce the continuation of a symbolic system. The first face of hegemony emerges from disparate demands and identities and the second requires the development of new projects and coalitions that enable its reproduction and overdetermination, in other words, it needs to win the favour of active and passive subjects or even at least secure the connivance of a wide range of social actors and differing dispositions. This entails that on the one hand, the hegemonic order and dominant actors need to offer points of identification that give the subject an illusion of benefits and enjoyment, it needs to wrap the subordinated subject in a sheet of Imaginary so that it (the dominant actor) can continue its reign of plenitude. “Hegemony as a form of rule speaks in general to the way in which subjects accept and conform to a particular regime, practice, or policy, even though they may have previously resisted or opposed them.” (Howarth, 2009: 321). This is achieved through the amalgamation of three logics – social, political and fantasmatic.

As previously mentioned, social logics allow us to characterise the rules and practices of a regime; political logics open the landscape to alternate hegemonic and identity possibilities once the “ignoble origins” (Howarth, 2009: 326) of the practicing regime are contested; and fantasmatic logics which reveal the manner in which subject identify with and are gripped by discourse (Howarth, 2009: 326). These *maneuvers* are useful in understanding “positive ontopolitical presumptions” (Howarth, 2009: 327) but how is this achievable and under what conditions? Although the social dimension of a practice and ideology predominates, the underside of it reveals and involves the movement of political exclusion (Howarth, 2009: 326-7). Still, Howarth (2009)

draws on Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 153–154) to iterate the complexity of the social space. He does this by drawing on three related aspects of the social practice, the relations of subordination, domination and oppression:

*“Relations of subordination point to those practices which do not invite or need the public contestation of social norms...Relations of domination, by contrast, provide the conceptual means for an analyst to claim that a subject is dominated, though the norms so judged are not explicitly challenged by those absorbed in the practice. Here interpretation may focus on those practices which appear to actively prevent the public contestation of social norms from arising in the first place...relations of oppression indicate those features of a practice, policy or regime that are challenged by subjects in the name of a principle or ideal allegedly denied or violated by the social practice itself. Here the experiences of dislocation are symbolized in terms of a questioning of norms, which may be accompanied by political challenges to the practices or regime of practice examined. But equally they may be met with renewed efforts to offset challenges and maintain the existing social relations, which can be captured with the logic of difference in its various manifestations.”*  
(Howarth, 2009: 327; Hirschman 1970; O’Donnell 1986).

“An antagonism is seen to occur when ‘the presence of [an] “Other” prevents me from being totally myself. The relation arises not from full totalities, but from the impossibility of their constitution.” (Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 10). All processes of identity formation presuppose a moment(s) of exclusion and ousting and if this exclusionary practice is the premise of the identity formation the excluded other has the potential of subverting and subsuming the constructed social division (Norval, 1996: 8-9). Under colonialism (and hence under apartheid) antagonism is constantly present between the Imaginary of the coloniser and Real of the colonised. The colonial relation is the site of antagonism and this is magnified under the apartheid regime which ratcheted-up the degree of colonial domination. Resistance to this relation, to the black/white, ethnic, denationalisation, detribalisation/retribalisation, urban/rural binaries, eventually begins to gnaw away at the apartheid imaginary, meaning it was unable to successfully inscribe all the demands put forth and was consequently re-literalised (Norval, 1996: 4). Apartheid was not able to continue performing its role as a master signifier, able to make sense of and absorb a wide range of

experiences and demands – in other words its metaphoric dimension collapsed and it was reliteralised making it no longer a surface of inscription.

The coloniser is caught up in the fullness of his identity as self-possessed master. He is oblivious to the way in which colonialism continually produces its own antagonistic exterior, to the way in which his identity as master depends on the non-identity of the colonised, to the way in which the colonised is barred access to identity and is forced to exist in a zone of non-being; in other words inscribed in the very identity of the colonised is the collapse of identity. This is the outplace of the colonised, the side of his identity hidden from the master. What the master fails to see is that this place of the colonised exceeds itself, making the colonised immediately and forever out of joint – the identity of the colonised is from the very start a disturbed identity and herein he is the Achilles heel of the system. It cannot, by definition, absorb what it itself creates, that is, the colonised as a subject position which is simultaneously (and constitutively) inside and outside the colonial relation. As long as the mega framework of the colonial relation is maintained it continues itself to generate an antagonism which no discursive strategy is, segregationism or apartheid, can recuperate. Of course how the colonised subject deals with or reacts to his colonial positioning is not predetermined, either by some putative human nature striving for inner reconciliation in some figure of identity, nor by the colonial imbalance itself. At the same time what needs to be stressed – and this is highlighted in our discussion of apartheid - is that colonialism is inherently precarious, inherently and exceptionally prone to collapse because its most fundamental mode of interpellation (of the colonised) cannot in principle, recuperate the outside (of identity and meaning) that its normal functioning necessarily involves: this is the blind-spot that apartheid could not in the end absorb and which nourished a variety of forms of resistance.

Recognizing that colonialism is a system of signification, a symbolic system in which there is therefore an overdetermined interpenetration of identities, in no way by itself smudges the poles of the colonial relation as they are lived by the coloniser and the colonised. Similarly, acknowledging that meaning, and therefore colonial meaning is not just given, not achieved once and for all but involves every time specific practices of enunciation and articulation, and is thus open to inflexion and resignification does not mean that the colonized subject simply confronts an

open field of possibilities in which he is free to signify himself as he chooses – in which his identity becomes the product of a series of discursive transactions. The colonised may well be involved in the practices that structure his identity, but this does not mean he is always-already outside the colonial antagonistic binary. No, this is what constitutes the lived world in which he finds himself, which he finds himself inscribed in, the context in which he may or may not struggle to redefine his identity, and struggle is the operative term because he just is going to have to confront the violence of the master's desire for him not to be. His desire to be and the Masters desire are antagonistic, that is, impossible and he, the colonised, is from the start, caught in this structural tension – structural because so sedimented that it is not going to dissolve by itself, or give way just because the colonized begins to undertake the process of its resignification (that is, does not get just dissolved in the play of difference). The transformation of the colonial relation, just because of what it is, is only thinkable within a context of implacable struggle. The desire of the colonized subject to be is not thinkable outside his location in the colonial relation. Here the subject is located not just within signification, but within colonial signification. On the other hand, as has been explained above, the grip of the colonizer over the colonial relation is never fully secured because the identity of the colonized is itself indeterminate and always on the brink of slipping away.

### **6.3 Apartheid, Capitalism and the Colonial Symbolic**

Capitalism was introduced in South Africa in the early twentieth century post the discovery of gold and diamonds. As a signifier, and as its influence grew globally (particularly during the ideological war between USA and Russia) capitalism simultaneously grew in South Africa. As explicated by Althusser in his symptomatic reading of Marx, the means of production acts as buffer and produces the misrecognition effect between the bourgeois and proletarian allowing the prolongation of the capitalist structure. Capitalism during apartheid (and during colonialism which still predominated relations during the apartheid project) introduced a Symbolic that was alien to the system. The ramifications of capitalism and the opening-up of the Symbolic is that it created several gaps for the black colonized subject to transform its imaginaries into substantial antagonisms and free the signifiers it sought necessary for its emancipation. Insofar as apartheid was an effort by the identity-fragile Afrikaner subject to re-articulate the dislocated structure, owing to its highly fragmental and splintered nature (note, there were too many signifiers to

maintain – inter and intra racial, ethnic, political and so forth), apartheid allowed the black colonized subject to imagine a new future for itself. It did so via the Bill of Rights, the notion of non-racialism, Black Consciousness and universal suffrage.

Capitalism became the Symbolic for the black colonized subject and to a certain degree upgraded the black colonized subject from his physical and psychological destitution and intrepidation to access a life it had only imagined. Capitalism allowed the black subject the opportunity to become the white subject (see later). But, capitalism itself is laced with racial ideologies, owing to the colonial relation which still interpellates the subject-positions, and the black colonized subject becomes hamstrung from the start for thinking that universal suffrage, political freedoms and access in its totality can be realized.

For capitalism, colonialism had already created, and for centuries sustained a strict antagonism between the colonizer and colonized, and capitalism as an economic system propounded by the Western world and adopted by South Africa, easily latched onto and assimilated itself into the already contracted antagonisms resulting in not only a white colonizer and black colonized but a white capitalist colonizer and black proletarian colonized – hence the NDR project. Capitalism became (and continues to be) another dimension and level that the black colonized needs to partake and champion in the gauntlet to self-actualization via the collapsing on the colonial super-structure. By focusing its attention solely on apartheid, the black colonized subject exposes his blind spot, that is, he forgets that the fight is the colonial symbolic and apartheid was only one battle against the mega colonial symbolic.

The advent and growth of capitalism during the apartheid period acted as the perfect orchestration for the colonial structure to seemingly suspend itself or cloak itself in invisibility allowing its longevity. At face-value the colonial and capitalist dynamic seems contorted and asymmetrical from multiple angles, however, when the colonial logic is reduced and condensed to its crux, that is, strict antagonism between the colonizer-colonised need to be maintained in order for the structurality of the structure to be maintained and with time if the demands and needs of either set

of subjects are not met, cracks in the system will start to appear and the contingent light that the subject desperately awaits becomes instantaneously visible. For the fate, longevity and overall screening-off itself from the gaze of the subject, the introduction of the capitalist signifier became the perfect illusionary mechanism the colonial structure needed in order to maintain the omni-capricious and equi-capricious colonial relation.

As mentioned earlier, what would weaken the logic of identity in a far-reaching stroke is an element which cannot be categorised into the dynamic and complex logics of inclusion and exclusion of apartheid discourse, that is, an *indeterminate* element. The “horror of indetermination” (Norval, 1996: 70) has the capacity to put the regime into crisis – to question the identitary logic of the social, when society begins thinking itself (Norval, 1996: 71). In the apartheid context, the signifier non-racialism condensed democracy, justice, and equality for all became the signifier that broke and negated, piece by piece, the inherent characteristics of the apartheid system since it had been instituted in 1948. Several central signifiers circulating around reform became available for rearticulation, and the language of justice, democracy for all, normalcy and reasonableness, foreign to apartheid, became prominent (Norval, 1996: 272). Among these signifiers, the discourse of non-racialism, centred on the Freedom Charter, became the dominant political dialogue in black communities supplanting the language of Black Consciousness (Norval, 1996: 272).

All of these elements of the new discursive configuration, as well as the concrete demands and strategy for struggle, were given programmatic expression in the reactivation of the Freedom Charter as the binding and leading force of the new movement (Howarth, 2000: 183). In Kliptown on the 25-26 June 1955 the Freedom Charter was adopted as the guiding and leading document in the fight against apartheid rule. Whilst at that time apartheid was facing its golden period of consolidation and such logics were easily suppressed, it once again came to light in a big way in the 1980s. Its preamble stated that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, thus signifying the multi-racial spirit of the campaign, which was aimed at establishing unity where apartheid divided.” (Norval, 1996: 152). According to the Theron Commission, resistance implied fighting for a free, non-racial, democratic future (Theron Commission, no date: 513). Non-

racialism created equivalences between different racial and economic groups to foster a common opposition to apartheid logics, and, as a result, the figure black became drastically overdetermined “at once a homogeneous race” (Norval, 1996: 139; 295); “simultaneously noble savage and barbarous other, tribal leader and militant savage.” (Norval, 1996: 139; 295) undoing its colonial and apartheid fixation.

The signifier non-racialism was radical, that is, different and new for both the negativised black colonised and positivised white coloniser, but insofar as it ate away the premise of apartheid, it forced pressure on the NP such that by the 1970s the discourse of *Afrikanerdom/volkseie* was absent and it subverted the rural/urban divide and demanded equality for all citizens regardless of race. It opened up a way for a re-thinking of society and, to an extent, succeeded. The signifier non-racialism was successful in resignifying a new form of society, but the question is, and it will be returned to – Has the collapse of apartheid caused the collapse of colonialism in South Africa?

Skinner (2002: 186) proposes that the more one group succeeds in persuading people that “a given evaluative term” can be applied in a scenario that was never thought applicable, then the more broadly and inclusively the given term gains appraisal in social and political life. The NDR condensed and reflected the demands of all those resisting domination and the logics of apartheid were beginning to be undermined. Resistance began to undo the apartheid imaginary: it could no longer act as a surface for inscription and the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion had become so smudged and distorted that a new order was the only possible solution, it is in this context that the social was re-literalised (Norval, 1996: 4).

The assertion of the logic of non-racialism took form on 2 February 1990 wherein De Klerk, who occupied an enunciative space, took the step that placed South Africa on the path to democratisation. Norval argues that “‘De Klerk’ is nothing but a signifier around which irresistible pressures for reform coagulated, a space which would be marked by all the tensions of a project of radical change in conditions open to articulation in a variety of directions.” (Norval, 1996: 270). With this step forward the fight against racial discrimination was almost won – Whiteness could

be taken neither as a justification for privilege and domination, nor as a basis for humiliation and vengeance. Indeed, it is only once white supremacy is destroyed that the true interests of whites as citizens can be protected. In this manner, the ANC has attempted to eliminate race as a defining feature from the political terrain, while keeping open the space for expression of cultural – rather than racial or ethnic –diversity (Norval, 1996: 294). Non-racialism was the signifier which won the fight for signification and informed post-apartheid South Africa. This dislodging of apartheid by non-racialism while changing the political terrain of South Africa and embodied in the constitution does not necessarily however entail the final eclipse of colonialism and the colonial relation. It is, as has been stressed earlier, important to keep open the question of whether, to what extent and precisely how the colonial relation might still exist in post-94 South Africa – this is addressed in subsequent chapters.

## **Conclusion**

Pre-apartheid conditions caused for a racial dissociation of the white coloniser that threatened to circumvent the colonial symbolic. The white coloniser, a position of equivalence bifurcates into ethnic particularistics. On the one hand the position of the coloniser becomes split into English and Afrikaner and on the other, significant elements of those falling under Afrikaner fall perilously close to the abyss of black colonised subject itself. These are the co-ordinates of the structural collapse out of which apartheid eventually emerged. Apartheid itself was considered both from the point of view of its historical emergence as well as that of its relationship to the elementary form of the colonial relation. In the analysis of apartheid within colonialism, it was argued that capitalism holds a centric and heavily determinate position.

Capitalism's absorption into the Colonial Symbolic inserted the register of Symbolic that was absent from and skewed the Colonial Relation. Furthermore, the Symbolic provided the negativised black colonised subject with an identity – that of a working class. Prior to the advent of capitalism, and the black colonised subject's integration into the labour force he served as a ballast, of ontological lack to the positivisation of the white coloniser. In so far as capitalism has added an identification to the corporal schema of the negativised black colonised subject, it is also

engaged and entangled the black colonised subject deeper into the Colonial Symbolic. While the introduction of capitalism to the Colonial Symbolic under apartheid served the interests of both the Afrikaner white coloniser, and the development of identitarian logic of the black colonised, what emerges is that today, not only does the black colonised have to fight against the signifier race, fight against the colonial system, but it also wages a war against the capitalist mode of production. In South Africa, the fight on several fronts assumes the form of the National Democratic Revolution.

The effect of having an over-burdened proliferation of boundaries and imaginaries to manage by the National Party during apartheid resulted in the emergence of signifiers willing to occupy the place of power. Apartheid in effect opened itself up to being antagonised by the discursive exterior embodied in the signifier non racialism. And “1994”, in this perspective, is the ‘third moment’ when colonial forms of identification are publicly jettisoned for the discourse of generic humanism (equality of citizens). But this should not be thought to mark the extinction of such colonial forms of identification. Repressed, but not destroyed, they maintain their pressure on democratic egalitarianism and this issue is taken up in the remaining sections.

## **Chapter 7: Towards a theory of South African society**

Colonialism as a system and mega-structure has defined and continues to heavily define South African society with variable degrees of visibility. The Colonial Symbolic and Colonial Relation form the spine of South Africa yet much is written about South African politics, economics and social systems in isolation of this. Yet, on this point, particularly the liberal and Marxist theories of South African society analyse, with precipitable inclusion or complete negation and exclusion, the variegated forms colonialism has taken in influencing the trajectory of South Africa leading up to 1994. Accordingly, in response to these theories that define South Africa apart from colonialism and apartheid logics, in what follows is an explication of both liberal and Marxist theories of South African society.

Liberal theories like modernization theory applied an extremely technocratic, economically universal perspective to the vastly complex South African economy. There is a superior economic rationality and that is capitalist rationality. Like Modernisation Theory, liberal theorists (here the works of William Hutt and Merle Lipton are analysed) discount the role of racial signifier, the colonial symbolic and politics in the logic of the market - for the market is seen as rational and therefore a fair and unbiased regulator. Like modernization theory, by rendering socio-political factors, as well as the colonial, racial and ethnic exigencies that the South African economy are existing within, the liberal perspective provided an inept account in its analysis of the South African economy.

The Marxist perspective of the South African economy sees capitalism for what it is - capitalism, with its corollary bourgeois/proletariat antagonistic relation. Harold Wolpe, under the Marxist perspective and whose analysis will be undertaken first, declares that the racial signifier bears little significance on the capitalist relations, as the capitalist relations supersede all differentiators. Colonialism of a Special Type, like Dependency Theory declares that the trajectory of the capitalistic economy is heavily influenced and intertwined with the Colonial Relation and overall colonial symbolic. Emerging from a Marxist tradition, both CST and Dependency theorists maintain the structure of the division of labour but eradicate the role of social and political factors

in the subjectivisation of the subject. CST takes into account the overdetermination of the system and accounts for precisely how capitalism and internal colonialism are related and is open-ended and can change overtime, as it has in South Africa.

Here it is argued that Colonialism of a Special Type represents the most succinct of South African theories as it starts off by accepting the structural on-going effects of colonial conquest – in the form of the coloniser (white) – colonised (black) relations of domination. CST theory, pre-existed the advent of capitalism in South Africa and has survived the mutations in both the economic sphere (the emergence of advanced capitalism) and the political sphere (transition to democracy in 1994). It is for this reason that, firstly, according to CST the national antagonism is the one that defines South African society, and, secondly, the class struggle for socialism. CST is originally communist and has in the first place and for the moment to take the form of a struggle against colonial national domination – this is the dominant contradiction on South African society, and before attention should be focused on capitalist domination, national/racial/colonial domination has to be dealt with first.

This section pays attention to the liberal and Marxist theories that define the South African ideological landscape, and believes that CST best defines the intersectionality and interlinkages in the colonialist, racialist and democratic South Africa. Most importantly, understanding the nature of CST feeds into the third and fourth positions of the negativised black colonised subject. In order to reach our last and final point, what sort of society South Africa is needs to be clarified and this is achieved by defining it by what it is not.

### **7.1 Liberal theories of the South African society**

This is not put forward as a comprehensive survey of liberal theory in South Africa but is rather an attempt to cast light on the specificity of its conceptual problematic and then to show how weak this is when it comes to trying to account for the structure of South African society. To anticipate, the conclusion is that the liberal analysis of South African society is hamstrung from the start by

its reduction of the social to the economic logic of free market exchange and the corollary which is that whatever falls outside of this logic is identified as irrational with the implication that in the long run it is unable to secure its reproduction – precisely because it is deemed not to have a logic of its own – it is irrational. The most enduring and significant feature of South African society the colonial relation between whites and blacks, is thereby just defined out of existence.

The work of William Hutt and Merle Lipton, two liberal theorists, is examined in order to show how the liberal problematic operates. Hutt, because his is a very robust liberalism that makes no concessions at all to the Marxist view that racial domination in South Africa possessed an economic, that is, capitalist, rationality. Lipton because hers is a more flexible liberal analysis and she, unlike Hutt, does appear to make some concessions to the Marxist view. In spite of this difference this dissertation tries to show how both exemplify the inherent limits of the liberal analysis of South African society.

### **7.1.1 William Hutt's Liberal Theory**

William Hutt in his *The Economic of the Colour Bar: A Study of the Economic Origins and Consequences of Racial Segregation in South Africa* (1964) insists that the logic of free-market capitalism comes down to its exclusive concentration on improving productivity: this occurs under the pressure of free competition over resources - goods, services, positions and so forth, and only under this pressure. This for Hutt is economic rationality and economic rationality is rationality – any social practices that operate according to a different logic are irrational, do not really have a logic and cannot sustain themselves over time.

Hutt shows how under colonial and apartheid conditions, legislation and policy imposed such an alien logic on the capitalist economy in South Africa. Job reservation, influx control, border areas, all these prevent the logic of the market from expressing itself. They have nothing at all to do with economic rationality because they impede productivity, output and revenue (Hutt, 1964). These racial practices are not explained at all, beyond the circular positing of racial essences which such

practices are said to express. But even these are irrational in that they violate the putative iron law of the economy – they are wasteful of resources and are therefore irrational in that in the long run they must collapse (under the pressure of their own irrationality). This is not the conceptual status assigned by Hutt to racial practices in South Africa. They are a left-over of rationality, that is, they do not have a *sui generis* rationality of their own – one cannot explain them, perhaps, but it does not really matter because they do not really exist in the strong way that pure economic practice, that is, market practice, exists.

There is thus a contradiction between capitalism and racial domination in South Africa where the latter can in no way whatsoever be seen as falling under the logic of capitalism. Because of the internal logic of this articulating in which rational and irrational practices are counter-posed to each other, liberal theory is conceptually committed to the eventual collapse of racial domination under the pressure of the rational. And what liberal theorists (like Hutt) would say is that when apartheid ‘disappeared’ in 1994 it was because the rationality of the market logic finally prevailed. For a robust liberal like Hutt, the South African economy was fettered from the start by racial practices of domination and the collapse of the latter was long overdue. From the liberal point of view what has happened in South Africa is that capitalism has prevailed, that is, racial practices no longer structure social relations in South Africa. In other words the issue of whether or not colonialism and Colonialism of a Special Type still exists in South Africa is conceptually foreclosed by Hutt’s liberalism (as well as Lipton’s, as will be seen shortly). It is precisely this that *inter alia* sets the Tripartite Alliance apart from its principal liberal antagonist, the Democratic Alliance (DA). For the Alliance and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) (see the Polokwane Statement) Colonialism of a Special Type still exists and the National Democratic Struggle is therefore far from over.

### **7.1.2 Merle Lipton’s Liberal Theory**

In terms of Lipton’s liberal analysis, it is only since the 1970s that the South African economy has found racial domination a fetter. This is because, up until then, the centre of gravity of the South African economy was mining and agriculture both of which involved forms of production that

found racial domination congenial. Here the Capital/Labour (C/L) ratio is low and the proportion of skilled to unskilled workers low. Profits depend not on increases in productivity because, at the point in time, mechanisation was not sufficiently advanced, but in keeping wages as low as possible: this is where racial domination meshes with the interests of agriculture and mining: Once manufacturing and services dominate the economic structure matters change however. Here profits are dependent on increases in productivity and thus a smaller more skilled and better paid labour force emerges. Mechanisation in agriculture and mining has the same effect of changing the basis of production. Racial domination is incompatible with the logic of this specific form of economic production in which both C/L and skilled/unskilled ratios are higher.

Before the conclusion is reached, what is going on here is a massive surrender to Marxism. It needs to be stressed that according to Lipton, agriculture and mining cannot themselves be characterised as capitalist – employment relations in these sectors for the period under consideration were not properly capitalist for Lipton and thus the contradiction between capitalism and apartheid is maintained, as in Hutt. But it is at the same time conceded that for a period, under certain conditions, that is, that of the C/L and skilled/unskilled labour ratios, racial domination did have a certain, even if not capitalist, economic rationality. This is the weak point in Lipton. It looks very much as if what has happened is that in order to block the strength of the Marxist argument she by fiat declares agriculture and mining non-capitalist, leaving them ‘untheorised’. Be that as it may, the *summum bonum* of the conceptual problematic at work in Lipton is the same as that identified in the case of Hutt. Once their external causal prop - low C/L and skilled/unskilled labour ratios has gone, they eventually have to cave in on themselves. If however, as is proposed, colonial domination is seen as a *sui-generis* relation with its own reproductive logic, then, whatever the specific state of the capitalist economy, it can continue to exist and secure its own conditions of reproduction. It is only on this perspective that one can begin to get a handle on post 1994 South Africa.

To conclude, and this refers back to the previous chapters, liberal theory is “essentialist” – it recognises only one social practice as really existing, all others are more appearance with no reality of their own. They have gotten no independent grip and in the end, whenever that occurs, must

give way. This dissertation on the other hand, approaches South African society as compromising of distinct relations and practices, all interacting but all irreducible to any other at the same time, that is, as an overdetermined totality. And each level too is internally organised relationally be it differentially or structurally with the implication, the question which is faced later on, what is the specific difference that characterises the colonial relation?

## **7.2 Harold Wolpe's Marxist Theory**

In juxtaposition to the liberal theories of South Africa is the Marxist analyses of South African society viz that of Harold Wolpe, in this section, Wolpe's primary works of *Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power*, *Internal Colonialism* and *Race, Class and the Apartheid State* is utilised as they conceptually represent one of the strongest Marxist arguments of South African society. These want, at all costs, to be able to account for colonial, racial relations of domination exclusively in terms of capitalist class interests. There are other Marxist approaches, viz that of Nolutshungu and orthodox CST, which while never erasing class gets all the way when it comes to signalling the irreducible *sui generis* structure of the colonial relation. Of course, as has already been made clear, the intention is to defend the orthodox CST theory against Wolpe to enable a concise distinction between Marxist analysis from the Marxism of CST.

A good way of getting a grip on what Wolpe wants to say is by comparing him with Hutt. Against Hutt, Wolpe is saying that capitalism cannot be reduced to/identified with one determinate mode of capitalism. The pursuit of profit through on-going increases of productivity which Hutt identifies as capitalism itself is only one possible form of capitalism. There are other ways in which capitalism can function – that is, the category of capitalism is broader than Hutt (and Lipton too) can acknowledge. Wolpe identifies one such other way in the South African case. Here, up until the 1940s profit did not depend on productivity increases but on pushing and keeping down the cost of capital of labour, the wage bill. And here, this was achieved through the specific articulation of two modes of production, the Capitalist Mode of Production (CMP) and the indigenous kinship-based mode of production. Through migrant labour a significant portion of the wages bill, that capital would otherwise have had to be responsible for, is covered by (unpaid) labour in the

indigenous African mode of production. Maintaining migrant labour requires a very specific and specifically racial apparatus of coercion. So, Wolpe is not reductionist in the narrowest sense, because he stresses the contribution of racial domination to capital accumulation in South Africa, but, on the other hand, racial domination only figures on the Wolpe conceptual radar screen insofar as it contributes to capital accumulation. This is going to be our main point against Wolpe.

Against Hutt, Wolpe wants to maintain that capitalism, that is, private ownership of capital, the dominance of profit and the existence of exploitation, does not only take the form of, in Marxists terms, relative surplus value production. Pushing down the costs of labour – even without any productivity gains – is another possible embodiment of capitalism (that is, absolute surplus value production). So, against Hutt and Lipton, Wolpe in see *Race Class and the Apartheid State* maintains that South African capitalism was always capitalism – not some in-between category as in Lipton, nor never really capitalist as in Hutt. For Wolpe, up until the late 1970s, this capitalism, found racial domination functional for it. This capitalism is only possible on condition that the other mode of production, the one it articulated with, is reproduced. Once this condition is no longer met the sources of profit have shift – to relative surplus value production, which in South Africa only became hegemonic in the 1970s.

The problem is conceptually the same as in the case of liberalism. Wolpe may well have, firstly, “expanded” the concept of capitalism – against both Hutt and Lipton – and, secondly, shown that economic conditions in South Africa from the late nineteenth century to the 1940s fall under the concept of capitalism, and thirdly, shown how colonial racial domination was functional for the Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP) (Here we refer to Marx’s structural feudal system marked by a lack of private ownership, absence of a division of labour and limited external trade) in South Africa. But the fact remains that colonial racial relations of domination are only intelligible to him insofar as they can be shown to be functional for the AMP, that is, for South African capitalism. They are not acknowledged as being a type of social relation at the same level as capitalist relations, that is, as being *sui generis* in relation to capitalism, with their own internal logic of reproduction irreducibly distinct from that of capitalism.

For all his conceptual sophistication with respect to the concept of capitalism, and for all his insistence on the “relative autonomy” (Wolpe, 1990: 17) and “specific effectivity” (Wolpe, 1990: 60) of colonial racial relations of domination, when all is said and done Wolpe ends up, like liberalism, demanding colonialism of any content of its own. Thus, its demise was inscribed in it from the start – as soon as it ceased being functional for capitalism that writing was on the wall – from this perspective it is not that apartheid collapsed that really needs explaining as much as how it was possible for colonialism to run on an empty tank for as long as it did, approximately twenty years, 1940s-1970. In Wolpe’s analysis, this period, after the possibility of continuing to follow the absolute surplus value route was closed – and before the production of relative surplus value had become dominant in the economy.

Turning to Wolpe’s criticism of CST from which he wants to distance himself (see *Theory of Internal Colonialism* and *Race Class and the Apartheid State*) – His two main points of criticism are, firstly, that the colonial racial relation remains “vague” and, secondly, that in CST, capitalism and colonialism are something presented as feeding-off each other, sometimes as incompatible and in contradiction – in other words CST is “contradictory” on the capitalism/colonialism relationship and vague on the colonial relationship itself.

### **7.3 Why CST? Distinctive features of CST qua theory of South African society**

What distinguishes CST is that it does not start of looking at the colonial-racial relation from the point of view of some other social relation – as do both liberalism and Wolpe’s Marxism. It starts of by accepting the structural on-going effects of colonial conquest – in the form of the coloniser (white) – colonised (black) relations of domination. This is the spine of South African society, with its own logic of domination cutting across the social sphere including the economy and reproduction. This, according to CST theory, pre-existed the advent of capitalism in South Africa and has survived the mutations in both the economic sphere (the emergence of advanced capitalism) and the political sphere (transition to democracy in 1994). It is for this reason that, firstly, according to CST the national antagonism is the one that defines South African society,

and, secondly, the class struggle for socialism – remember CST is originally communist – has in the first place and for the moment – to take the form of a struggle against colonial national domination – this is the dominant contradiction in South African society, and before attention is be focused on capitalist domination, national/racial/colonial domination has to be dealt with first. Hence for the South African Communist Party (SACP) the division between the first ‘national democratic’ phase and the second socialist phase (of the struggle for socialism). For non-communist ANC members the point of intersection is the NDR which they also consider a priority. Afterwards they must part ways, but for the moment, as long as the NDR is itself unfinished the Alliance can hold.

CST does not deny the capitalist class relation or its importance vis-à-vis political subjectivity. It claims that only in South Africa, now and in the past, the relation of colonial mastery is the principal. Structural antagonism in South Africa, and that in this light, the appropriate political strategy for here and now has up until now, and including now, the present, been the National Democratic Struggle.

#### **7.4 Althusseriansim and CST**

What is the relationship between the Althusserian concept of overdetermination (see chapter 1 and 2) and CST theory? The whole point of introducing the concept of overdetermination, according to Althusser, is to widen the range of contingency in Marxist theory. Neither can it be specified in advance just what social relations will be found to be dominant, even in capitalist societies, nor can it be specified in advance (that is read-off from capitalism) what the specific hierarchy of effectivity will be amongst the social relations comprising the conjuncture in question. Class struggle is for Althusser a de-essentialising type of cause that in fact opens up this range of distinct and different social relations with which it can be combined and the different effectivities they can have vis-a-vis the social totality. Althusser’s anti-essentialism, that is, his conception of the

overdetermination of the class struggle, provides the meta-theoretical or philosophical endorsement, that CST, with its insistence on the dominance of the national antagonism has always needed.

## **7.5 The Real of Colonialism**

Only by grasping the colonial relation as differential is it possible to defend its status as *sui generis*. As a symbolic differential relation it is not reducible to any exterior or foundation: It is just a specific symbolic configuration that ultimately depends on itself for its reproduction. One consequence is immediately the coloniser's representation of colonialism as rooted in universal foundations – human nature - is undermined. This is just a symbolic overdetermined relationship – it is not immutable or necessary, but contingent and susceptible therefore of radical transformation (involving its maximum eclipse).

As a symbolic relationship it does not rest on or express anything external to itself – in other words, it holds itself up. But it can never do so as if it were an essence – but because it is not one. It holds itself up but never with absolute success: Its own lack of a foundation finds expression in its malfunctioning, in its incoherence – it can never be totalised and yet it rests on nothing else but itself, where itself compromises a relation, in the strict sense, that is, with its elements not being self-sufficient essences but relational semi-identities. This symbolic relation, like the capitalist symbolic, both secretes, and depends, for whatever identity it has, on a specific Imaginary or Ideology in Althusser's sense. These determinate forms of consciousness which screen off from the subject is his mere “relational semi identity” and provide him with a sense of plenitude and innateness, are what for Althusser (and Lacan and Laclau) stabilise the subject making possible the reproduction of the symbolic relation itself.

But this “screening off” by the Imaginary (by the self-image and sense of identity into which concrete individuals are interpellated in Althusser's sense) can never in principle be complete. The ultimate lack of foundations and the necessarily incomplete nature, of any differential symbolic

relation always makes itself felt within the Symbolic itself, via disturbances in the homeostasis of the imaginary identities into which individuals are interpellated. When this occurs, and to the extent to which it occurs, is referred to the intrusion of the Real – this latter refers to the limits of the Symbolic (it is not a totality), that is, to what happens when the Symbolic bumps up against this internal limitation, viz that qua differential it can never attain full identity to itself. The Real refers to the effects on the Symbolic of its *sui generis* character, of that fact that it compromises a determinate differential relation. In the case of capitalism, following Althusser's treatment of ideology and the imaginary, what happens (with respect to the intrusion of the Real) is that the capitalist Symbolic, in its Imaginary, ideological, self-representation, cannot totalise the specific void at its core, the point where capitalist meaning breaks down, viz the antagonism between capital and labour. Here is where meaning reaches its limits in the symbolic relation of capitalism because the capitalist system of names just cannot stabilise the experience of the proletariat – here, in the experience of the working class is where the Real of capitalism breaks through this, its imaginary representations and destabilises capitalism as a symbolic system.

The focus and the analysis is how colonialism produces its own Real, that is, how the limits of the colonial symbolic, how its inability to achieve totalisation and self-grounding, penetrates the colonial relation itself. The Real on the one hand, the Symbolic and Imaginary, on the other, do not articulate in the same way they do under capitalism – this is what frames the analysis in what follows if the subjectivities of both coloniser and colonised, leading to the argument concerning the fragility of the identity of the colonised. And, to anticipate, it is around this original ontological deficit marking the identity of the colonised, that many of the political identities currently organising South African politics need to be understood. Around this specifically colonial void the search for plenitude is particularly intense. Hence the colonised flight into (unconscious) white plenitude, into (conscious) Black plenitude (Negritude and BC) as well as into thingification as a way of getting by on what colonialism offers him as an identity.

This original laceration of colonialism on the identity of the colonised can also be seen at work in the way many in the Alliance turned the NDR itself into a narrative of plenitude and inevitable success instead of the highly contingent process it always has been and remains. Here the NDR

becomes a more or less conscious fantasy of necessity and guarantee, that is, the historic mission of the Alliance. This needs to be understood in terms of the original colonised subject-position, which is one of anxiety, as a reaction to the trauma, the permanent trauma of the colonised subject-position and subjectivity. This still radiates out into many of the political identities at work in South Africa today – identities that do not have to be conscious but which still steer political decisions and practices.

The capitalist and working class mutually share “a common ontological status” (Hudson, 2012) despite their initiatives being impossible and incommensurable. What this implies that, unlike capitalism, within Colonial Relations, antagonism does not emerge in spite of the Symbolic and Imaginary covering up the Real (of class antagonism). Under colonialism the antagonism for the colonised is lived as fully as it possibly can be short of identity breakdown *tout-court* (Hudson, 2012). The central axis of the colonial relation is the built-in mechanism which forcefully holds the colonised in his position and restricts access to subjectivity, that is, denies the colonised any transformative ability. This is the tension and antagonism that inheres in the colonial signifier, the specifically colonial system of signification - the master can only continue to exist as Master on condition the colonized suffer a deficit of being. Although the dislocation produced by capitalism did not, at the end of the day, undo the colonial relation, the Afrikaner community underwent traumatic experiences which brought it and South African society as a whole, close to the brink of fundamental upheaval.

## **Conclusion**

The way in which colonialism produces its own Real, how the limits of the colonial symbolic, how its inability to achieve totalisation and self-grounding, penetrates the colonial relation itself and the totalisation, plenitude and self-satisfaction is also the promise democracy brings. Democracy, and the political engagements associated with it, also posit the subject as the cause of itself, it reminds the subject, the future of the subject, is in its own hands. In the same way that Modernisation Theory assumed a subject of plenitude, a subject of actualisation, democracy disseminates the same ideology. It transmits the notion, that irrespective of one’s constitutive

attachments and identifications, one's history or position - equality is promised. The promise of equality is the site of the desire for totalisation. But, every structure is holding itself up without a cause, without a centre, and a centre-less structure can never achieve totalisation or transcendence, for even the structure itself aims for it but never attains it. When the desire for totalisation, both within the Colonial Relation and within democracy, is not attained, the subject, as will now be discussed, in the South African instance, becomes a "semi-democratic subject".

## **Chapter 8: South African black and white subjectivity and democracy**

In South Africa, the end of the Cold War coincided with the ending of apartheid. Although apartheid was formally abolished, and equality and justice was granted to all South African citizens, negotiations for the transition from apartheid to democracy began from the 1990s. Due to Russia's defeat in the Cold War, liberal democracy as the global political signifier reigned supreme and its supremacy extended to South Africa where democracy was seen as a mechanism that could assist the black colonised subject gain traction in becoming and developing his identitarian schematic. Democracy and the South African constitution awarded the black colonised subject the opportunity to freedoms and rights it was systemically historically deprived off and allowed the black colonised subject to redeem his identity.

However, in articulating a new South Africa, the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) which is composed of the tri-partite alliance of the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP) and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), would become negatively affected. The ANC was the ruling party in South Africa and encapsulated the majority of the black subject's sentiment regarding what a free South Africa would entail (it promulgated the non-racial signifier). The ANC together with the SACP recognised that the struggle against apartheid and the colonial symbolic entailed universal suffrage and political equality as well as the abolishment of capitalism that worked to divide the South African subject. The racial, classist signifier was being attacked by both parties in tandem.

Furthermore, COSATU was created to represent the subjects and entities already absorbed into the capitalistic system and ensure that the fire in the hearts of the proletariat remained strong so that South Africa in future, with time, would transition from a democratic-capitalist society toward a communist society as communism entailed equality in all directions and at all levels. The ending of the Cold War not only collapsed the socialistic/communist signifier but also affected the traction of the NDR that was to transform the South African landscape.

In 1994 the structure of South African society underwent a very significant change – the only question that remains – and here there is a dramatic division in South African politics – concerns just how significant the advent of constitutional democracy has been in the South African context. Whilst the ANC, and the Alliance as a whole, including the Communist Party, stress the significance of 1994 as the “democratic breakthrough”, and consider it a threshold marking a substantial shift in the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, it is at the same time adamant that CST still exists in South Africa. The racial distribution of wealth and poverty in South Africa that existed in 1994 and still does exist, is understood by the ANC and the Alliance, to indicate that the fundamentals of the colonial relation still exist, the democratic breakthrough of 1994 notwithstanding. And it is this insistence that CST still exists in South Africa – and not only in the way its allocation of economic resources still seems to operate, but also in the subjectivity of many white citizens, that separates the Alliance from its liberal opposition in the DA.

The pervasiveness of CST has increased with time and the manifestation and uproar caused by the EFF represents the importance of the eradication of the CST. One of the issues that is examined in this chapter is the relationship between the NDR, which is as deep-rooted as it ever has been in the framework of the Alliance, and the structures of democracy as embodied in the Constitution. Democracy changed the position of the black colonised subject and white coloniser and the influence of the economic signifier caused the black colonised subject to fall into the tidings of its second psychological disposition - the black colonised subject emulates the behaviour and mentality of the white coloniser. Previously, under the strictures of the colonial symbolic, the white coloniser would not allow this, but under democracy, equal access to all rights and institutional capabilities are awarded to the black subject. This leads him to emulate the white coloniser but this time without any ideological barring and fencing. This is discussed under Andile Mngximata's new black consciousness.

The politico-ideological was no longer (from 1994) appropriated *a priori* by the coloniser, but now shared on an equal basis with the previously disenfranchised colonised subjects: the “place of power” (Lefort, 1986) was thus emptied and then contested via elections based on universal

suffrage. What happened is that the ANC democratically won the right to occupy the “place of power” and henceforth pursued its national democratic strategy against colonialism.

## **8.1 Democracy - Lefort**

The theory of democracy is advanced from the understanding of society as a socio-symbolic system premised on the absence of an essence or fixed cause, an “absent cause” (Hudson, 2009; Lefort, 1988). “Modern societies are constructed when it is realised that there are no essential needs and no unity founded *a priori* positive note of reference. The primary terrain on which democracy emerges is the terrain of social dislocation.” (Stavarakakis, 1999: 124). The social system is constructed and erected upon a lack and the place of power which is ontologically empty and intrinsically incomplete – “Whatever the determinate form assumed by the symbolic structure, it is never predetermined (inscribed in some necessary order of things), but the effect of a political construction, of the political qua ‘principle which generates the overall configuration’.” (Lefort 1988: 16). Under democracy, which is defined by the dissolution of the markers of certitude and which leaves people with a sense of indeterminacy, the empty place of power becomes temporarily occupied creating the fantasy or illusion that society is structured on a core and essence and consequently provides traction for the suspicion and fear of the people. Democracy provides the “phantasmagoria of liberty, equality and power...” (Lefort, 1988: 106).

Under pre-modern conditions unity was given *a priori* but with the advent of modernity and democracy the unity of the social is constantly contested and is given a form through a “political hegemonic struggle” (Lefort, 1986: 279). Unity is now dependent upon the establishment of a platform for political competition. Democracy is established by the “dissolution of the markers of certainty”, “Now unity depends of the erection of a stage of political competition. Thus unity is constituted on the basis of recognising division.” (Stavarakakis, 1999: 124). Lefort (1988: 19-20) states, “Under democratic conditions, the exercise of power is subject to procedures of periodical redistribution – which implies an institutionalisation of conflict. The locus of power is an empty place, it cannot be occupied – it is such that no individual and no group can be co-substantial with it – and it cannot be represented.” This phenomenon implies a state of permanent conflict that is

governed by permanent rules. The place of power becomes empty – it can no longer be occupied and represented (Lefort, 1988: 17).

The mechanism through which the recognition of the real is achieved is the democratic election. What Lefort terms the democratic intervention introduces a break in the history of institutions in that democratic society can be determined as a society whose institutional structure includes, as part of its normal, regular reproduction the moment of dissolution of the socio-symbolic bond, the moment of irruption of the Real: elections (Zizek 1989: 147). Thus, to quote Zizek, at “The moment of elections the whole hierarchic network of social relations is in a way suspended, put in parentheses; as an organic unity society ceases to exist; it changes into a contingent collection of abstract units and the result depends on a purely quantitative mechanism of counting.” (1989: 148).

The paradox of democracy can be seen through the institution of universal suffrage. Voting is a mean through which popular sovereignty is assumed to manifest itself, the people are assumed to actualise it by expressing their will (Lefort, 1986: 303). Social interdependence breaks down and the citizen is abstracted from all networks in which social life develops and becomes a mere statistic: “The idea of numbers is opposed to the idea of the substance of society. Number breaks down unity, destroys identity.” (Lefort, 1986: 303). Therefore, democracy through instituting conflict and establishing the public stage of elections, tries to establish unity in a society as a whole, but it results in the fragmentation and atomisation of its individual voters (Lefort, 1988: 19). As Lefort maintains: “The People is sovereign under democracy, but the identity of the People mutates.” (1988: 211). The entire social symbolic framework is put into parenthesis and the fundamental social is suspended.

Democracy attempts to combine the contradictory principles/demands, it combines the rule of law with the representation of particular interests, ensuring observation and respect for the presence and practice of human rights whilst at the same time ensures society is organised in a manner that it is viewed as just (Touraine, 1994: 2-5 in Stavarakakis, 1999: 122-3). To cover-up this ambiguity is to de-democratise democracy. William Connolly terms this “ontologies of concord” (cited in

Stavarakakis, 1999: 123). These ontologies project a conception of harmony to negate the threat of contingency. Democracy then ends in disappointment as it is revealed that there is an antithesis between the “ontology and ethics of concord and harmony” and the ambiguity of democracy – the inherent and institutionalised disharmony of democratic arrangements (Stavarakakis, 1999: 123). Individuals appear only in aggregation in interest groups or as isolated voices in the situations of conflict (Lefort, 1988: 341). Thus modern democracy is “inherently indeterminate” (Jenkins, 2009: 112) since power is perpetually contested. As Lefort comments, “Democracy inaugurates the experience of an ungraspable, uncontrollable society in which the people will be said to be sovereign, of course, but whose identity will constantly be open to question whose identity will remain latent.” (Lefort, 1988: 304).

Lefort’s notion of the subject during elections and under democracy comes under fire based on his argument of elections dissolving or suspending the entire socio-symbolic system. Laclau and Zizek argue that during liberal democratic elections the symbolic is not dissolved but there is a substitution of one symbolic set-up between citizen/individuals in free and equal zones for another (prevailing class and power differentials) (Laclau, 2005; Hudson, 2009). Furthermore, liberal democracy is absolute, meaning, there is a meta-appropriation of the place of power: society does not exist but liberal democracy does (Hudson, 2009: 402). It is worthwhile quoting Zizek at length to illustrate this criticism,

*“The articulation of the symbolic and the real achieved by (liberal) democracy is very specific and requires careful delineation. It is important to underline that the institutions of liberal democracy, including elections, do not really involve the periodic dissolution of the entire socio-symbolic order. Liberal democratic elections themselves involve determinate symbolic procedures and standards – they are more a ‘staging’ of the real per se. Elections of this sort recognise the historicity of the social and institutionalise this recognition via the sovereignty of the people. In this sense, they seek to ‘make present’ the constitutive moment of the political, but they do so via a determinate staging or representation of the real. These means of representation of the will of the people are not neutral or transparent, but have their own specific effectivity vis-à-vis the constitution and actualisation of the will of the people. To believe they are transparent, and thus allow for*

*the emergence of some unalloyed 'people', is to fall victim to the 'democratic illusion'.*"  
(2007a, p. xxvii).

A second criticism of Lefort is related to the phantasy of the People-as-One. He argues that disunity that ruptures forth is due to a disembodied society, that is, modernity leaves those who are disillusioned by it with nostalgia for the unity of the body. The danger lying at the heart of modernity is the temptation to fill in the empty space created by democracy with a new type of embodied unity. In this sense, for Lefort the persistence of religion in modernity is a permanent feature of it and people become enchanted by the phantasy of the People-as-One. Lefort thus takes a wrong turn in assuming that the subject always hankers and longs for plenitude and fullness (the People-as-One) when democracy does not meet its demands. Stavarakakis offers an explanation to the agitated democratic populace, he argues that what democracy needs is a post-fantasmatic subject – “which identifies with an ‘ethics of the real’ and is not tempted by fantasies of plenitude when confronted by the ‘disharmony’ of democracy.” (1999).

This said, Lefort has still made a breakthrough in political theory with his political conception of democracy. Although the emptiness of power may be able to be institutionalised in ways other than liberal democracy – something his critics say he does not take seriously enough, he provides important insight into what democracy implies with respect to how we understand the social – for him this latter is a symbolic relation, that is, it does not have an essence and does not rest on universal foundations: Lefort also provides a way of understanding this relationship between democracy qua institution and the determinate forms of social subjectivity which it requires in order to exist and be reproduced over time. That he does not himself adequately theorise, the conditions of existence of a democratic subject that has freed himself from any longing for the security of foundations – this is the essence of Stavarakakis criticism on this score – is thus of much less importance.

## **8.2 The coloniser, the colonised, and democracy in South Africa**

Thus, related to the South African case where the negativised black colonised subject and positivised white coloniser emerge from polar opposite backgrounds, does democracy facilitate the integration and equality of society by structurally placing everyone regardless of race, colour, religion and so forth on an equal platform and with equal rights? Elections are the mean through which the people can exercise their (popular) will, where they can feel equality as citizens. Whilst elections do reduce the voter to a number, to a single one, in South Africa it is beneficial to the negativised black colonised subject who is accustomed to feeling like a negative 1. But when the highs of elections wear off, democracy is just an ideal, an abstract system, and the colonial infrastructure continues exerting its force and interpellatory attraction.

Universal suffrage and the correlative regime of numbers (see above) have different effects on the colonising and colonised subjects. From the point of view of the colonised, what is important is that he is no longer defined as being of less value than the coloniser. Under the conditions of universal suffrage everyone is assigned the value 1 – this means that acquisition of at least some socially recognised identity for the colonised. Democracy, in this sense, helps to lift the colonised out of the zone of non-being into which the colonial relation casts him and this is one of the most important, but often passed-over, reasons for the democratic enthusiasm of the colonised. On the other hand, the situation of the coloniser vis-à-vis democracy is (at least at first) very different.

The democratic subject is then one who has acknowledged the symbolic nature of the social, that it is a construction and not an absolute. Consequently, the democratic subject is one who has relinquished all claims and desires for an absolute identity – he acknowledges that it is impossible to have it all, to realise one's interests in an absolute and permanent way and is satisfied with the not all. The identity of the coloniser is one of surplus identity - his is the superhard identity of a Master:- under conditions of universal suffrage itself (and this does not necessarily extend immediately throughout all social institutions) the coloniser faces an ontological demotion – whereas the colonised welcomes the 1 that democracy assigns him, the coloniser has to confront being taken down, from more than 1 to (just) 1.

To consider this a little further – what is clear is that democracy, because it invokes the “de-absolutisation” of the subject, is always going to be very difficult for those sedimented into the subject-position of master to swallow. Thus, under democracy, and this will be clarified in a moment, one only temporarily gains access to the place of power and only remains there if this is the outcome of actual universal suffrage – rather than demanding power on the basis of some *a priori* claim. Based on the structural incompatibility of the subject position of the coloniser and the subject position called for by democracy – what we are calling attention to here is just how difficult this transition is and just how much work it calls for to be performed by the subject on himself.

What this structural argument leads to is the existence of a transitional subject, that is a semi-democratic subject which, on the one hand, endorses democracy and its limitations but, on the one hand, still longs for the absolute identity that colonialism gave him. Now it is important to stress that this relationship between a longing for absolute plenitude and an acceptance that it is not possible is variable – what defines a semi-democratic subject is that his inscription in the democratic symbolic outweighs his identitarian longings. His desire for absolute fullness – which, under democratic conditions will always be, if not unconscious, then *sotto voce*, does not lead him to attack the institutions of democracy although his identifications with these latter is incomplete. At the same time this unconscious desire for plenitude, which remember, in this case, involves his self-identification as white (and therefore a master) should not be considered to be in a state of mere idling.

Non-racialism entails the complete designification of colour whereas what is being suggested is that in the case of white South Africans this is incomplete and that although silent (which it has to be!) a residual identification with colonialism and its subject-positions is still at work. Note that this is precisely what Fanon in *Black Skins White Masks* argues is the trajectory of colonial racism under democratic conditions, the only difference being that this “repression into the collective unconscious” (1963: ii) occurs much later in the South African case. This (unconscious) identification still steers white conduct in ways whites themselves might be unaware of (see earlier discussion of the unconscious in Žižek’s analysis of anti-Semitism). It is this that the Polokwane Statement is getting at when it proposes that,

*“In terms of practical experiences especially in the private sector, public discourse and voting patterns, it seems that many in the white community still have to realise that the poverty and inequality spawned by apartheid are not in their long-term interests, and that black people are as capable as anyone else to lead and exercise authority in all spheres of life. This derives in part from the historic socialisation based on the false ideology of racism, which needs continually to be combated.”* (Turok, 2011: 242).

## **Conclusion**

Universal suffrage by giving everyone the value of 1 starts the process of eliminating the ontological deficit of the colonised and in this way explains the enthusiasm of the colonised for democracy. But this analysis is incomplete, because in much the same way that for the coloniser their colonial identity does not make easy the assumption of a democratic identity, so does that of the colonised – remember the colonised seeks security of identity which he cannot get from his primary identification. It may at first seem to him that being counted for one according to the logic of universal suffrage provides him with this: however, as discussed above, the deeper logic of democracy goes in just the opposite direction, that is, it demands of its subjects that they in fact embrace the emptiness of the social and let go of all absolutist identity aspirations. Given the starting point of the elementary primary identification of the colonised, it would be surprising if their integration of the logic of democratic openness were to go smoothly. Until this subject has let go of his longing for some absolute realisation of his identity and interests, his investment in democracy will be that of a semi-democratic subject, as in the white case (discussed above) although their starting points are different.

But the question remains – what specific object plays this role of unconscious point of identification? In the next and final chapter to works of Biko, and the EFF are analysed, all of whom postulate a positivised black subject and a create a black subject of plenitude in different ways.

In post 94 South Africa the signifier of universality of non-racialism is entrenched as a master signifier both in the constitution and the institutional apparatus of constitutional democracy – the consequence is that today at a conscious level a very significant number of black citizens have succeeded in moving beyond the elementary or original colonial definition of who they, as blacks, are, and have enthusiastically embraced the identity the Constitution offers them. But it would be a mistake to think that this development signals the eclipse of colonial forms of identification - what it really means is that today it has novel and often surprising ways of returning and resisting the universality of democratic citizenship.

## **Chapter 9: Black Consciousness and New Black Consciousness**

Steve Biko's Black Consciousness became another way for the colonised subject to deal with his "destitution" imposed on him by colonial interpellation. This time not by obliquely sliding into the position of the white coloniser, but by confronting directly the way colonialism invests whiteness with positive value and plenitude and blackness with their absence. Under the Black Consciousness Movement and ideology, and this represents the third mutation to the black colonised subject, the colonised inverts this colonial binary, investing blackness with the positive ethical existence and whiteness with the predicates previously marking blackness. Here the subject does not seek to occupy the position of the white master because what he does is challenge what it is to be a white master, he challenges, in other words, the very meaning of white mastery itself. Here, there is a resignification of colonial racial predicates such that what was previously negativised is now positivised. While Biko's Black consciousness signifier was displaced by the signifier of Charterism and non-racialism, being a floating signifier, it managed to re-surface in the post 1994 South African era.

Andile Mngxitama's New Black Consciousness, builds upon the ideology of a positivised black subject but is novel in that the socio-politico environment has changed. While the Colonial Symbolic remains tightly intact, the secondary bases of the structure have morphed and mutated and it is within newer conditions that the subject-positions face their newly conceived identities of self. Together with Mngxitama, the proposed argument is that in South Africa today there are blacks who because of the way they behave towards other blacks, must at some level believe they are white (2011). In answer to the question "What does the black man want?" Fanon is unambiguous – "to be white!". Consciously, they are empirical black agents who, define themselves in non-racial universalist terms but without realising it, they themselves desire to be white, identify with whiteness which they cannot avow today for different reasons from previously.

### **9.1 Steve Biko's Black Consciousness theory**

Black Consciousness ideology was developed from the borrowings of Black Power in the USA, the Third Worldist writings of Fanon and Césaire, as well as the existentialist and phenomenological ideas of Sartre, Jaspers and Merleau Ponty. These borrowings were not a mere transposition of concepts, but the repetition of ideas, which in the case of South Africa, resulted in modifications to the original discursive articulations (Howarth, 200: 69). What also contributed to the schema of black consciousness was the development of Africanisation as a discourse. A strong element of black consciousness rhetoric drew on the Africanist myth of a truly man-centred society preceding colonial intervention (Howarth, 2002: 69). It is within this schema that Biko articulated what it meant to be black and what it entailed to have the consciousness of a black man.

For Biko, the signifier ‘black’ became the chief mean for representing and registering resistance to the apartheid and colonial order. “The mobilisation of ‘blackness’ became a condition of possibility for voicing protest irrespective of a particular enunciative position from which protest emanated.” (Howarth, 2011: 175). The basic idea, as Ntshungu explains, was to expunge the negative identification of the oppressed as people falling short of the white norm. Thus, for Biko, “being black” was not an “anomaly” or “deviation from whiteness” (Biko, 1987). Furthermore, not all non-whites are blacks because ‘black’ pertains to a realisation of the deep rootedness of white domination and a strong willed desire to eradicate it (MacDonald, 2003).

Under black consciousness discourse the racial identities African, Indian and Coloured were condensed under the signifier ‘black’, that is, they reciprocally overdetermined one another which made them equivalent and equivalentially defined in opposition to white identity and logic (Ramphalile, 2011). Black and blackness came to represent opposition to white racism (Howarth, 1997: 60) and this precisely is the definitive of social antagonism. A condition of the anti-colonial struggle is to successfully convert “anxiety” into “courage” (Badiou: 2005). What this latter requires is that the subject wrench itself – out of anxiety – its normal steady state and reposit itself into courage, out of the negativised black colonized subject and into positivised black colonized subject or universality. The positivised black colonized subject is the result of the subject this time resignifying the content given to the poles of the coloniser. Here black is turned from negative to positive, and white from positive to negative.

Unlike the colonised subject who takes refuge in the white signifier, here the colonised subject in fact declares open war on the white signifier: He positions himself so that from now on it is impossible for these to co-exist, that is, the white signifier and black consciousness are in on an intractable relationship of antagonism – it is the one or the other, it cannot be both at the same time. This is to be contrasted with the colonised subject who unconsciously thinks he is white – of course as we explained, there is friction here but precisely because this identification is beneath the level of the agents consciousness and already repressed, in other words, it can and does co-exist with colonialism from start to finish, but the decision to invert colonial predicates makes a claim to the whole space of colonialism and cannot co-exist with it. This is why it is propositioned that the assumption of the black consciousness subject-position involves a degree of subjective courage, absent when the colonised subject seeks to hide under the white signifier.

Note how this operation of resignification of the signifier's whiteness and blackness illustrates the arbitrary nature of the signifier and the sign as accounted for by Saussure. Neither whiteness nor blackness have an intrinsic imminent meaning but rather their meaning is dependent upon the relations of equivalence and synonyms established between them and other sets of properties: their meaning, whiteness and blackness depends on their relations with other signifiers which over-determine or co-constitute them: that is, they are differentially constituted. What is seen in the case of Biko and black consciousness is then that in this theory and practice colonialism is treated exactly according to its nature as a discourse, a symbolic practice and system. Against the fetishism and naturalisation of identity promoted by the coloniser and the colonial relation, black consciousness asserts that 'things do not have to be like that', that these meanings of blackness and whiteness are the contingent effects of determinate practices of signification which possess no internal necessity of their own. In calling for their transformation, black consciousness is thus not only implicitly recognising their contingency but also implicitly identifying the subject itself as distinct from its existing identification (subject-positions). In the semantic transformation called for by black consciousness what is going on is that the colonised subject, the subject in the colonised, withdraws from 'blackness = negative' and attaches himself to 'blackness = positive' – this is his new subject-position, the subject-position, that is, of Black Consciousness.

It is within this paradigm that the mission of rescuing African heritage and ideals from colonial intervention, as expressed in Biko's article *Some African Cultural Concepts*, came to life. It is here that Biko contrapositions European and African culture, identities and lifestyles (Howarth, 1997: 69) and where he sought new conceptual resources by employing the discursive logic of equivalence and inversion: of Europeanness and whiteness (Howarth, 11: 174). Accordingly, in 1971 at the Black Peoples Convention, Biko emphasised the need of a revival of authentic African culture, but more importantly, emphasised that this need needs to be realised by Africans themselves. Biko was therefore strongly dismissive of the help of white liberals in assisting the struggle for freedom and the "quest for a true humanity" (Biko, 1987).

Biko was relentless in pursuing the notion of black's self-realisation. He pushed blacks to reject their lack of self and absence of wholeness and located their position as a result of white colonial supremacy and hegemony, that is, as a political form of construction rather than being rooted in something more fundamental. Drawing on Fanon, Biko argued that the dominant element in the composition and reproduction of white domination is the "Dehumanisation of blacks, their reduction to pure form, which induces an attitude of fatalism and the internalisation of their oppression... All in all, the black man has become an empty shell, a shadow of a man, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity." (Biko, 1987: 16). Barney Pityana, another black consciousness theorist (1997: 56) notes, "The bulk of black people...have accepted their degenerate status. The pride of peoplehood in them has been shattered." Biko was aware that psychological freedom and self-awareness held precedence over physical freedom as expressed in his famous dictum "The greatest thing in the hands of the oppressor is the minds of the oppressed." (Biko, 1987: 49). He endeavoured to pull blacks out of their "pathetic nihilism" (Fatton, 1986: 73) and stop the Othering and negation blacks were subject to vis-à-vis whites and whiteness which were normalised and hence privileged (Kumashiro, 2000: 35).

### **9.1.1 Ambiguity of Black Consciousness**

Having said this, it is imperative to immediately point out the ambiguity of this black consciousness subject position, an ambiguity linked to a danger. The ambiguity is this – the subject of black consciousness is an end point, it cannot go any further than what Biko determines and envisions for it, does it bring to an end the process of designification and resignification – or it has to be understood as belonging to a process that goes further, so far as to be completely designifying race – making it irrelevant, beside the point when it comes to the definition of the human subject? Only the latter really gets out of the grip of colonialism, as the former, if it remains at the point of signifying blackness as positive, just inverts, that is, stays within the logic of colonialism. At the same time, the colonised cannot get directly to the desubstantialisation position of the democratic subject, but in order to reach this, must go through, feel the identity-effect of, the black consciousness subject-position.

The ambiguity is that the black consciousness subject-position is at the cross-roads of two trajectories. One leads from colonial destitution to democratic subjectivity and the other from colonial destitution into the cul-de-sac of another substantialisation or essentialisation of identity, this time 'Black' as 'plenitude'. It is a cross-roads that cannot be avoided if the objective is democratic universalism, but it is one that harbours a serious danger, that is, the refetishisation of race, an inverted binary rather than an escape from the confines of the binary. This is why it is suggested that the black consciousness position is itself also a secondary colonial identification - that is, inseparable from negativised black colonized subject. Matters become even more complicated when one tries to look at the crossroads referred to above as closely as one can from the point of the view of the colonised subjects struggling for emancipation themselves.

This issue, it should be remembered, is the one that so sharply divided Sartre and Fanon. Fanon objected to Sartre's insistence that negritude can be seen as a particular, feeding into and being transformed by the universal of communism (Paige, 2010). For Fanon, this way of seeing things did not really do justice to the experience of negritude, subordinated it to, what at the end of the day, for Fanon, was just another example of Western rationality (the forward march of the Species Being towards communism – just another White Mythology). At the same time this complicates matters even further, as elucidated by Torres. Fanon endorsed as a political objective, a new humanism – New, because for the first time generic, and not implicitly modelled on a particular

Western figure of the subject and thereby truly universal. The sensitive point is just how blackness is to be understood in relation to the constitution of this new humanism – to say it gets subsumed under it might seem to deprive it of any permanent effect of emancipation and this seems to be the sticking points between Fanon and Sartre, and may well also be the Achilles heel in Biko's thought.

### **9.1.2 Black Consciousness as a transcendental signifier**

Through the above runs the question concerning the status of the black signifier – black consciousness discourse; is it a transcendental signifier, that is, is it to be understood as a final stopping point, self-sufficient and, self-referential and from which vantage point whiteness becomes secondary, and forever so: or is it a necessary but, by itself and as it is, insufficient basis for the new normal society Biko refers to? And this ambiguity around the signifier black is thought by some to go some way towards accounting for the eclipse in the struggle for hegemony within the forces of anti-apartheid, of black consciousness by Charterism, the NDR discourse of the Alliance headed by the ANC. Thus for Howarth,

*“Although both discourses can be characterised as populist, the clear limitations on BC becoming a collective imaginary did not pertain to Charterism. Whereas BC stressed racial exclusivity, Charterism was avowedly nonracial; while BC was ambiguous about who constituted the South African nation and people, the UDF stressed that all South Africans who were against apartheid could be part of the South African nation, and they drew a set of equivalences along these lines. Moreover, while BC was unclear about its overall political programme, the signifier ‘democracy’ in Charterist discourse was able to include all social classes, and was able to accommodate numerous concrete interpretations of the nature of democracy.” (2000: 185).*

Hence, despite the constant reiteration that black consciousnesses blackness was a political one, it could never quite shake off the suspicion that it harboured a radical identitarian logic ultimately irreconcilable with non-racial universalism (Ramphalile, 2011). What this shows is “the limits of blackness as an empty signifier” (Howarth, 2000: 175).

What happened in the case of black consciousness was that it was not able to function as a surface of inscription of a multiplicity of – most – social demands. Black consciousness remained fixated to the dislocations of too specific a group and could not extend its reading to other spheres of social life (Norval, 1996: 106). As Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000: 8) state “Even if the full closure of the social is not realisable in any actual society, the idea of closure and fullness still functions as an (impossible) ideal. Societies are thus organised and centred on the basis of such (impossible) ideals.” For black consciousness, the development of a radical blackness was intended to be that which was to fill the lack of closure of the social, in other words the absence of a black identity was what characterised the lack of the apartheid social. It is an empty signifier exactly because it signifies the symbolic emptiness of the social (Ramphalile, 2011: 28).

But as it transpired blackness was not sufficiently emptied in black consciousness discourse, it was always haunted by a residual essentialism which finally prevented it from becoming hegemonic under either apartheid or post-apartheid conditions: another way of putting this is to say that black consciousness never succeeded in thinking non-racialism, because, and to the extent that it failed, to develop the concept of a non-antagonistic relationship between white and black.

The main point in connection with Biko’s black consciousness thought and practice is that it constitutes under colonial conditions a necessary moment in the process whereby the colonised pulls himself out of the position of destitution and anxiety on the way to an identity that does not depend on any essentialist notion of identity, that does not depend on the fantasy of plenitude which both coloniser and colonised seek to realise. On the way, in other words, to a non-racial identity in which racial predicates have been completely, that is, de (and not just re) signified: democratic non-racial universalism of the sort embodied in the constitution is the destination point if the subject endeavours for emancipation from colonialism. The black consciousness subject position is a necessary stage on the way to such a political identity because there is no short-cut from the anxiety-ridden colonised subject to the self-confidence required of the subject under democratic conditions. When black consciousness, as a crucial moment of the formation of an

identity for the colonised, is short-circuited, what happens is that the subject although participating in the democratic system still hankers for the sort of full identity that is incompatible with what is expected of a democratic subject. The subject position of black consciousness, on the other hand, gives the colonised subject stability thus helping him claw his way out of the void of his colonial inscription, and this is why it is a necessary moment for the colonised subject seeking to escape colonialism.

Black consciousness is then, from this perspective to be understood in the following way - a new frontier was created “Which requires the production of empty or master signifiers serving as points of condensation or ‘quilting together’ (*bricolage*) of a series of floating signifiers into a discursive structure.” (Howarth, 1997: 54). Blackness was first emptied of its colonial content which made it available as a master signifier able to make sense in a new way of the black experience. It is thus argued that is an empty signifier which articulated and signified a new meaning to the term blackness. Black consciousness sought to re-define what it meant to be black and through introspection, “the inward looking process” (Biko, 1987: 48) and “self-realisation” (Biko, 1987: 50) blacks would dissociate themselves and negate the value of all things associated with whites and whiteness, including whites themselves, and re-institute Africanism as the locus upon which identity formation and society is predicated. “The constitution of BC ideology involved the production of blackness as the master signifier - defined in opposition to ‘whiteness’ – which functioned to institute and organise a new radical political frontier in South Africa.” (Howarth, 1997: 54-5)

## **9.2 Andile Mngxitama’s New Black Consciousness**

Mngxitama and the new black consciousness approach take over where Biko left off but do so under conditions, and confront forms of identification, not considered by Biko and earlier black consciousness theory. On the one hand Mngxitama repeats the message and imperative of Biko viz blacks are still caught in an identity – a way in which they identify themselves as well as how others identify them – according to which because black they can never exist or be in the same way as they believe whites can. Here the landscape is the same as that portrayed by Biko, whose

“black consciousness” message was aimed at those caught in what they have called the original or elementary subject-position of the colonised - those who cannot consciously get away from feeling as if whites are superior beings – here the force of the message is focused on the semantics of race, on the way colonialism constructs whiteness as superior and blackness as correlatively inferior and then imposes this identity onto empirically black colonised subjects. Here the message, as in Biko, is that whiteness does not mean what the colonial world says it does, and neither does blackness – in other words, a practice of resignification of colour predicates. With respect to the first message of the new black consciousness, Mngxitama is quite correct to stress as he does, that the most significant of the dispossessions of colonialism was that of African Being which lent it a condition of unpeopleness. Without Black Consciousness, blacks “Regardless of the constitution, voting rights, liberation - will still have the mind-set of a slave (whose) thinking remains that of a happy hunting dog who fights for bones thrown down by the master.” (Mngxitama, 2011).

White supremacy is understood as a multidimensional practice of white domination that transcends formal political power and extends to law, economy, culture even the cognitive-evaluative and the metaphysical. Like Biko, but in a more contemporary idiom, Mngxitama calls on blacks “To move towards a more ethical existence, which is not *overdetermined* by whiteness (Mngxitama, 2011 – emphasis added) from “the status of ‘sub-human’ without a sense of self” (Mngxitama, 2009) an existence where “Blackness is not an amputation, a lack that can be filled only by white acknowledgement.” (Mngxitama, 2011). As far as the second message of the new black consciousness goes, as Mngxitama puts it.

*“The managers of white supremacy are Black people. In the 21st Century, whiteness needs a bit of melanin. A little bit of melanin to reproduce itself. So in South Africa in 1994 you have Nelson Mandela. In the United States of America today you have Obama, right? ...Now in South Africa it’s the same thing; the ANC are the managers of the white supremacist system and we vote for them year in and year out.”* (Mngxitama, 2010).

Similarly, the “... the ANC has worked hard to sustain the apartheid status quo instead of ending white supremacy to render whites irrelevant so that we may all live in peace. It is constantly

reproducing new forms of black denigration and marginalization while a layer of the politically connected gain access to some white privileges.” (Mngxitama, 2011).

The main point being made is to trace viz-a-viz Mngxitama is the same one discussed previously in connection with Biko and the Black Consciousness movement and ideology of the late 1960’s to late 1980’s. This has to do with whether the black consciousness being proposed is just an inversion of the original colonial relation which now attaches ‘being’ to Black – in which case it has not really escaped the reach of the colonial matrix at all and its promises of liberation are bound to end in repression and closure.

Imperative to the narrative, one might ask –what does Mngxitama mean by “rendering whites irrelevant”? The term and subject-positions of white, need to distinguish empirical whites from whites who identify with whiteness and even them rendering it “irrelevant” could mean inverting the colonial relation or it could mean getting rid of any reference to colour predicates whatsoever. The rendering of white irrelevant, is akin to the proletariat who believes that through the annihilation of the capitalist - the external enemy - antagonism will be abolished and he will arrive at an identity with itself. This proposition of antagonism is correct when understood through the effects of ideological illusion, but when stripped of the illusion, the effects of ideology, when the situation is laid bare, the inverted relationship holds true, that is, it is not an external enemy preventing the subject from achieving plenitude, the subject himself is responsible for his lack. This lack is attributable to the structure being symbolic, that is, to the arbitrary nature of the sign, and the subject deals with the impossibility of achieving and attaining itself by projecting its incapacity onto an external enemy - the Other – “the external enemy is simply the small piece, the rest of the reality upon which we ‘project’ or ‘externalise’ this intrinsic, immanent impossibility.” (Zizek, Butler, Stephens, 2006: 252; Norval, 1996: 64). Thus an antagonism is seen to occur when “the presence of [an] “Other” prevents me from being totally myself. The relation arises not from full totalities, but from the impossibility of their constitution.” (Laclau and Mouffee, 1985; Howarth and Stavarakakis, 2000: 10).

The ambiguity identified here is the same one identified in connection with Biko's Black Consciousness – is it an inversion of colonialism. Yet, is this all resignification of blackness amounts to? Or is this resignification of blackness as positive to be understood as the necessary beginning of the opening out, that is a necessary stage in the process of identity formation of putting together an identity on the way out of colonial destitution? Two different ways of getting the colonised out of the colonised are thus both compatible with the resignification of race. Remember the Fanon-Sartre dispute in this connection. Although it is not being argued that the postivisation of blackness is a particular that has to be subsumed under the communist universal – as Sartre did against Fanon who did not want to have let go of an experience that to him seemed irreducible –this paper suggests that unless the resignification of blackness does open out a new generic humanism, (which Fanon also embraced) unless it moves beyond substantialising a determinate racial particular, it offers no promise of authentic liberation.

With the elite black colonized living its repressed desire of wanting to be white, and as Fanon famously unambiguously wrote, “What does the black man want? To be white!”, it is visible that the subject is not merely an effect of the system, but the ideology of structure and desires of subject produce the system and itself. Unlike Dependency theorists that posited the subject as an effect of the system, or modernization theory that assumes a self-actualised subject desiring the package of development the western world offers, South Africa has instead a subject that uses the ideological tools around him to create a future for itself, regardless of the shape of that future and the effects it has on others. Like any subject that is privy to a certain degree of identitarian substance, he is able to carve a future for itself based on the structure that it is operating in, and if at the level of self-maximization, can articulate a new future altogether. In South Africa, the problem is not a black elite, or black monopoly, or black privilege, the problem is that the black colonized has infused his corporeal schema with that of a white colonizer. Whether he is aware of this or not is irrelevant for the treatment of the black colonized is perpetuated.

### **9.3 The Economic Freedom Fighters and Black Consciousness**

While New Black Consciousness is integral to this project in that it reveals the mentality of the elite black subject, what it does not account for is the semi-democratic black subject that is being perpetuated in the colonial symbolic. It is at this juncture that the role of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) becomes critical for the majority of the black subjects in South Africa.

What do we gain from the EFF? The EFF draw upon the critiques and inabilities of the ANC to create radical change. They poignantly point out that the ANC have become neo-colonisers and in that position are doing little to alleviate the conditions of the black populace. The EFF, like Mngximata, argues that the ANC is promoting colonisation albeit with a black subject in power. Their aim is to undo the colonial logic itself and with the same tools the colonizer used to strip the black subject of itself, they are using the same tools to fill the black subject with plenitude. As mentioned in chapter 3, the colonization process assumed a tri-pronged approach: taking the land of the colonized; Controlling the mind of the colonizer; and taking away the ability to access basic rights and resources. A cursory glance at the EFF Manifesto, as well as statements made by Commander in Chief Julius Malema point to how they wish to undo the colonial logic, but unlike the ANC who overthrew apartheid via a political dimension, here they aim at the heart of colonialism and embark on a program that dismantles it via an economic-driven programme. In the same way the colonizer took the colonised land, the EFF fight for land redistribution and allocation. In the same way the mind of the colonizer was taken away by stripping it of their culture, education, and way of life, the EFF stringently pursues educational ideals, pursue arts and culture and allow for religious and cultural ways of life to easily fix itself into the mind and life of the colonized; in the same way the colonized was prevented access to basic resources, the EFF pushes a program of access to electricity, water, sanitation, sewage and refuse removals and so forth.

The EFF, at this juncture have more in common with the NDR than the ANC itself. In the same way that Biko wished to create a positivised concept of the black subject but was unable to realise this due to their lack of demonstration as to how positivisation will concretely work, the EFF draw on a positivised concept of the black subject and via an economic-driven approach demonstrate how it can come to fruition. But, as the colonizer was able to maintain, and continues to maintain

the colonised in a position of subjugation, the evolution of the social and political space is a surety, for change is constant. It is the form change takes, the humanism that it pursues and denies, and the extent to which it desires self-totalisation that the subjects place in the structure slowly come to be molded, under the watchful gaze of the ideological effect.

## **Conclusion**

Biko's positivised black subject represents the third mutation of the black colonised subject. Biko was novel in conceptualising a positivised black subject and even though a positivised black subject did not manage to institute itself as a master signifier, it, nevertheless, created a long-lasting impression on the ideological landscape in South Africa. The fourth mutation of the subject was witnessed and is being experienced in South African today. A black constituency has been voted into power on the basis that they are 'one of us' and will therefore understand the struggles of the black subject and help alleviate society accordingly. But due to inheriting a colonial state, the black leadership have adopted the mentality of the white colonizer and as a result majority of the black subject is overlooked, becomes invisible and the desire for visibility or the desire to be recognized as a person comes to the fore in the form protests, desecration of public property and at an extreme level xenophobia. It is during these cries for recognition that the black subject gets further entrenched into the labels 'unruly', 'barbaric' 'uncivilised' but is it not just a cry for recognition of existence? Democracy and political rights have been reduced to the occasional 'throwing of bones to the dog' but substantive transformation of the South African landscape will only be achieved when there is recognition of the subject in all spheres of society.

The ANC and black elite believe, at some level, they are white because the term itself is a signifier, an empty shell loaded with the information necessary at a certain time, this speaks to the fluid and syntagmatic nature of the linguistic system elucidated by Saussure in chapter 1 and draws our focus to what Biko tried to do - emptying the term black of its blackness and filling it with positivised concepts/identifications of the subject. This is exactly the mission of the EFF. The EFF not only draw on the political driven agenda of the ANC, the positivised black subject defined by

Biko but also critically underscore, firstly, the importance of the economic in determining a positivised black subject and secondly, seek to dismantle the colonial project altogether.

## Conclusion

The colonial infrastructure strictly maintains antagonistic boundaries between the colonizer and colonized even under democratic conditions. While Biko endeavoured to change the black subject's notion of self, one filled with positivisation, and this does occur to a certain degree under the post-apartheid conditions, due to the antagonisms created by colonialism, the coloniser-colonised relation continues regardless of the racial signifier. Therefore, it was important to keep the colonial relations at the centre of this project for it defines the black colonised subject in the most occult form.

To revise, the colonial relation is a differential overdetermined relation. It does not have a foundation upon which it rests but is a precarious self-supporting symbolic relation. Neither pole is anything but the difference between it and the other pole, that is, neither pole is a self-sufficient essence with its own intrinsic attributes. Taking this perspective is important because it immediately deflates all the coloniser's claims to inherent superiority and shows the colonised is a symbolic construction of colonialism. The place of the coloniser, the Master, is one of absolute autonomy and identity, whereas that of the colonised is marked by an ontological incompleteness and instability. The colonial relation and colonial interpellation continue as long as the colonised does not attempt to subvert it by climbing out of his deficit of being and as long as the Master is able to repeat his performance of mastery. It is imperative for all structures and mega-structures to either, and/or enforce power with an iron-fist or maintain a high degree of flexibility to ensure durability, and accordingly, all structures, to the utmost degree absorb as many diverse ideologies as possible to ensure its longevity. Prior to 1994, the colonial symbolic unabashedly disallowed the black colonized subject freedom of space, freedom of thought, for being in a position of subjective destitution would ensure that the system is never overdetermined, and all contingency by the subject is eliminated. This is simply one of the ways the structure and dominant ideology insures itself.

Under the structure of development, what is witnessed is the same trait of simultaneous acceptance and rejection. The Blank Slate Approach is one such instance where, by not taking the subject's

history into account, all constitutive attachments are eliminated, and a highly technocratic approach is imposed that supposedly ensures all countries attain successful levels of modernization. The acceptance of economic development comes at the price of self-negation. As discussed in Chapter 4, Modernization Theory's treatment of the subject falls in one of two camps, the subject is seen as either a fully liberalized, self-actualized subject, as a rational, voluntaristic conduit of wilful economic transformation, or the subject is not taken into account at all. This treatment of the subject continues to interpellate the economic sphere even though development has absorbed a series of political and social factors.

What is learned from Modernization Theory and the Blank Slate's Approach, and this bleeds into current day economico-politics, is the negation of humanism. It is the mould given by the coloniser that the colonised needs to accept, and by negating any sense of self and instilling and fulfilling the functions offered, the desired economic results will be attained. In spite of the Symbolic that capitalism creates in the South African landscape, the coloniser-colonised relation is the overbearing one and as such the subjects stay interpellated in their roles. Thus, development simply corroborates colonialism's treatment of the black and white colonized and colonizer. The white colonizer denies any humanism of the black colonized subject, for when the black colonized subject is seen as a ballast for the white colonizer, it ensures the white colonizers' maximization of self. The white colonizer thrives of humanism but imposes a strict anti-humanism on the black colonized.

In as much as colonialism and development endeavor to eliminate the traits of the black colonized that could undo the hierarchy of power and relations of power that the structure generates, the subject will always remain a site of overdetermination and the site of a new possibility. The onset of capitalism, the new economic form, was the cause of a structural morphology in colonial and segregationist discourse respectively, by introducing a novel and additional form of antagonism – class antagonism. Under colonialism, antagonism which is responsible for the maintenance of frontiers and the placement of the lines of inclusion and exclusion is concentrated in the figure of the colonised (Hudson, 2012).

According to Nolutshungu, the colonised is in a permanent state of insubordination as he is constructed as an enemy of the coloniser. The coloniser protects his position and supremacy by subordinating to the greatest degree possible the identity and position of the colonised. Remember that the Colonial Relation does not offer the colonised a place in the same way the master is offered a place: he is not just allocated a subordinate and inferior identity but is rather defined in negative contrast to the full being of the master. As stated by Hudson, “Colonial difference goes further than its capitalist counterpart. Bourgeois and working class share a common ontological status even if their projects, capitalism and communism, are impossible and incommensurable. Coloniser and colonised do not, in that the colonised by definition is not permitted to exist in the way the coloniser does, and this ontological deficit is thus inscribed in his place is constituted by the colonial relation.” (Hudson, 2012: 14).

The treatment of the subject under modernisation theory continues in post-apartheid South Africa. Here, the structural institutions/infrastructure become the conduit for change and not the subject itself. Within this technocratic dimension, the role of the subject interpenetrates with the democratic project, the subject is forced to be seen as the conduit of change because without showing growth, without showing any form of results, the party itself will fade due to lack of support. Under the development signifier, accountability is attached to institutions minus the subject, however, under development in a democracy, a non-humanist stance is not accepted, and humanism plays an important role in accountability and legitimacy, both within the party politics and for the populace. Humanism is no longer irrelevant but crucial in the economico-political space. Even if and when the ideological framework denies the role of humanism, this dissertation argues that the very value of humanism is the site of overdetermination and contingency in the overarching structure and the subject is the conduit of this possibility. For example, the colonial structure unabashedly endeavoured and managed to squash all forms of contingency and freedom of thought by the black colonised subject (hence for centuries the black colonised subject was viewed as an “ontological deficit” and entrapped within the subjective destitution of the Real), and the development programme that is constantly transmutating itself to stay relevant in a world it is failing attempts to do the same. The intention of eliminating humanism, a derivative of which was

the Blank Slate Approach, never succeeds for it is always humanism that causes the transformation of a system and posits a new imaginary with an envisioned future of better sense of self and others. While these are the basic underpinnings upon which the structure holds itself erect and produces the ideological effect that holds subjects in their respective positions, it posits them as *causa sui* simultaneously. This Munchhausen effect is what also produces alternate sets of realities.

While during the struggle against apartheid, there was a sacrifice of difference for sameness-sameness, in either wanting to prolong apartheid or overthrow it altogether. The dissolution of difference is what produces sameness, and it is in sameness that a greater power emerges that either overrides or gets overridden. The battle between the NP and ANC dissolved differences between ethnicities, political parties, races and movements in the one-goaled mission to sustain or change the apartheid system. However, in the overthrow of apartheid by the ANC, the glue that created homogeneity weakens, and difference, which democracy feeds off, instated itself. Under democracy in South Africa, neither is there an homogenous black nor an homogenous white. Democracy erased homogeneity and created and continues to create pockets of heterogeneity. It is existing in an heterogeneous sphere where the desire for the People-as-One is born, and it precisely this paradox that drives democracy itself. Capitalism and class formation intersect with race, intersects with political preferences and this creates a hybrid space of subjectivities. It is within this space that the positioning and ideological interpellations underpinning the variety of South African subjects that exists today were navigated.

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